CROSSING THE LINE: CONTEMPORARY MEDIATED

PERFORMANCES OF HYBRIDITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Within the U.S., particular anxieties surrounding racially and ethnically marked "others" reflect particular historical moments, and today ours are prompted by contemporized fears of immigration and terrorism. In this dissertation, I take up these issues, focusing on contemporary instantiations and negotiations of hybridity within U.S. culture. While hybridity has been examined at length, the ways in which hybridity is mobilized in distinctive ways through or by various bodies have been relatively overlooked. Thus, I examine the ways in which hybridity is rhetorically embodied and mobilized within contemporary mainstream media. I take up these issues with a focus on two questions: (a) How is hybridity mobilized in distinctive ways in, through, or by various bodies, particularly as reflective of historical context? (b) How does "the body"—in particular, specific deployments of the body—feature in contemporary articulations of hybridity?

I answer these questions through a critical analysis of texts, drawing from both critical rhetoric and critical performance studies. I focus on two competition-style reality dance shows, *So You Think You Can Dance* (*SYTYCD*) and *Dancing with the Stars* (*DWTS*); the competition-style reality show *America's Next Top Model* (*ANTM*); and three Food Network cooking shows, *Simply Delicioso with Ingrid Hoffmann, Aarti Party,* and *Everyday Italian*. Analysis of these texts suggest that hybridity is mobilized in varied and distinctive ways by, through, and on variously marked bodies. Ultimately, this study

refines extant theorizing on hybridity: While borders are inevitably critical to any conceptualizations of hybridity, this project reveals nuance and complexities of how borders are accomplished and navigated across these various embodied mobilizations and illuminate particularized contemporary anxieties regarding race/ethnicity. Hybridity in a current context appears to be articulated as—conflated with—individual uniqueness and authenticity, the expression of which is encouraged and celebrated, but only within very specific contexts or confines. Ultimately, then, via its location in and deployment by particular bodies, hybridity is articulated as a feature and expression of the unique, authentic *self*, as opposed to a politics of identity, in ways that justify discipline of race/ethnicity if and when hybridity "crosses the line."

To my Nana and her generation—they all paved the way for me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When I was a child, my mother would often take me and my siblings out with her to run errands. Without fail, almost every time we were out together, a stranger would approach my mother and ask her if she was our nanny. Apparently, the thought that my (relatively dark-skinned) mother could be biologically related to four (relatively light-skinned) children was unfathomable. Although this surely bothered my mother, it never occurred to me that our respectively racially marked appearances categorized us as racially different, nor did it occur to me that other people would apprehend us as different. Growing up as a multiracial child was highly unremarkable for me; I was raised primarily by my mother's side of the family, identified variously as Mexican, Latina, and Chicano, and paid little attention to whether or not the color of my skin or my appearance matched the way I identified.

As I grew older, I became more aware of the salience of race/ethnicity[1] and my relation to it; however, a full awareness of the impact that multiraciality has had on my life and identity was put in sharp relief one day while teaching a class. After explaining the particulars of an upcoming exam, I asked the class if they had any questions. When one of my students raised his hand, I called on him, and, to my complete surprise, he asked, "So, what's up with your name? Did you marry a Mexican, or what's going on with that?" Shocked, I considered my possible range of responses, from asserting that I

did, indeed, identify as Latina, to explaining that not only was Gomez my actual last name, but that I shared it with my decidedly English/Irish father. I settled for explaining that it was my actual last name, given to me by my parents, and then changed the subject. This exchange made me stop to consider what it means to be multiracial, and to confound clear racial categorizations. It also prompted me to consider how notions of multiraciality and racial/ethnic hybridity are navigated within a U.S. culture that has always been and continues to be marked by tension and volatility around the matter of race and ethnicity.

In this dissertation, I take up these issues, focusing on contemporary instantiations and negotiations of hybridity within U.S. culture. Hybridity occupies a curious place in terms of understanding of race and ethnicity, particularly in a contemporary moment that asserts a postrace ideology; at the same time, distinctions regarding race and ethnicity are extremely salient in practical, material ways in contemporary U.S. culture (Joseph, 2013). That is, within the U.S., race is purported to be completely meaningless; race and ethnicity no longer matter. However, this assertion is extremely contentious; as aforementioned, race does, in fact, have material impacts on people's lives. I am interested in exploring tensions between incommensurate ways in which race is erased/marked, meaningless/exotic, and more specifically, where and how hybridity is configured within those tensions.

While representations of hybridity have been examined by a number of cultural studies scholars, especially against the backdrop of significant scholarship regarding mediated articulations of race/ethnicity as more specifically marked, hybridity remains understudied; moreover, contemporary instantiations and mobilizations of hybridity feature novel aspects that reflect exigent contextual tensions and anxieties around race

and ethnicity. Thus, in this dissertation, I seek to examine the ways in which hybridity is rhetorically instantiated and mobilized within contemporary mainstream media. More specifically, I want to take up these issues with a focus on two questions: (a) How is hybridity mobilized in distinctive ways in, through, or by various bodies, particularly as reflective of historical context? (b) How does "the body"—in particular, specific deployments of the body—feature in contemporary articulations of hybridity?

## Rationale

With this study, my goal is twofold. While a number of scholars (Anzaldúa, 1999; Beltran, 2005; Beltran & Fojas, 2008; Bhabha, 1994d, 2013; Flores & Moon, 2002; Fojas, 2008; Joseph, 2013, 2009; Kraidy, 2002; Moon & Flores, 2000; Moraga, 2000; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Ono, 1998; Shugart, 2007) have discussed hybridity in terms of what Bhabha refers to as a "third space," I contend that hybridity as a theoretical concept can and ought to be refined, particularly in regard to the ways in which hybridity might rhetorically "play" differently on differently marked bodies. Thus, first, I want to focus on an area that has been comparatively ignored in current research: that of the relationship between hybridity and the body. While hybridity has been examined at length, as have issues related to the body and deployment of bodies on their own terms, the ways in which hybridity is mobilized in distinctive ways through or by various bodies have been relatively overlooked. Race/ethnicity is always already marked on the body; the racial/ethnic body is a visible one. While the hybrid body is also marked, also visible, it is marked and understood in different ways from the unambiguously raced/ethnic body. That is, the hybrid body is often a mystery; in many cases, the hybrid body is clearly an "other,"[2] yet the exact racial/ethnic mixture is unclear. Nonetheless, hybridity is also

written on the body, and both engaged and mobilized by and through the body. Without an understanding of how hybridity is mobilized, it is practically impossible to fully understand hybridity as a concept, particularly in regard to the ways in which it functions.

Second, as Kraidy (2002) astutely notes, hybridity is an important concept to understand, yet it has not been taken up to the degree that it arguably should by Communication, and especially rhetorical, scholars, who are furthermore ideally poised to examine hybridity. For Kraidy, hybridity is important in that "it is always in the process of occurring, unfolding, and undoing the fixity of binary oppositions" and is a "conceptual inevitability" (p. 332). That is, hybridity is unavoidable in a contemporary age of global capitalism and transnationalism, and is always occurring and present. The inevitability of hybridity, particularly within contemporary mainstream media, is echoed by Beltran (2005) and Beltran and Fojas (2008). Given that hybridity is, essentially, everywhere, Kraidy (2002) argues that it is important to not only understand what it is, but also how it might work. Furthermore, as Kraidy notes, hybridity, as an open, ambiguous concept, always has the "propensity for conceptual and political slippage" (p. 332). Hybridity can potentially be liberating, yet can also be appropriated for "antiprogressive" use (Kraidy, 2002, p. 332). Although Kraidy raises important points about hybridity, particularly regarding hybridity as a Communication concept, he does so in relatively generic and abstract terms. Thus, in this dissertation, I aim to contribute to the field of Communication in general and rhetorical studies in particular by refining hybridity as a concept and thus perhaps challenging extant cultural studies and rhetorical scholarship on mediated representations of race, through an examination of race/ethnicity as nuanced, ambiguous, and wholly embodied. In so doing, I aim to understand how

various contemporary incarnations of hybridity can shed light on broader concurrent cultural tensions, anxieties, and negotiations of race/ethnicity and identity. I want to examine various instantiations of hybridity with a particular eye towards the embodiments/deployments of hybridity in order to further contextualize, refine, and complicate the theoretical understanding, as well as practical implications, of hybridity.

## Literature Review

The study of mediated representations of conventionally marked races and ethnicities, in cultural studies literature as well as Communication, has been very well established (see, e.g., Balthrope, 2004; Boylorn, 2008; Cooke-Jackson & Hansen, 2008; Drummond & Orbe, 3010; Dubrofsky, 2006; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008; Green, 1975; Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; Hall, 2001, 2003; Joseph, 2009; Lichter & Amundson, 1997; Lindenfeld, 2007; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Nishime, 2005; Perks, 2010; Ramasubramanian, 2005; Ramirez-Berg, 2002; Rivadeneyra, Ward, & Gordon, 2007; Shome, 1996; Shugart, 2006; Solozano-Thompson, 2008; Tierney, 2006). However, as noted, racial hybridity has been comparatively less studied, particularly within Communication (Kraidy, 2002). Hybridity is, perhaps appropriately, an amorphous concept that overlaps with intersectionality and multiraciality.

Intersectionality, on a basic level, assumes that no one identity with which people identify determines their social positions or creates the essence of their identities (see, e.g., Crenshaw, 1991). Rather, all facets of people's identities work together to create not only their sense of self, but also their social relationships with others. Race and ethnicity are axial components of intersectional research (e.g., Balaji, 2009; Berenstein, 1994; Dickinson, Ott, & Aoki, 2005; Enck-Wanzer, 2009; Gray, 2012; Griffin, 2012; Henry,

2002; Holland, 2009; Joseph, 2009; Lavelle, 2010; Lester & Goggin, 2005; Mandziuk, 2003; McGrath, 2007; Moriizumi, 2011; Patton, 2004a, 2004b; Pompper, 2007; Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012; Richardson &Taylor, 2009; Scott, 2013; Thomas, 2013; Walters, 2011); in this sense, hybridity and intersectionality are related in that they both look at the ways in which race and ethnicity are mobilized and articulated. Whereas hybridity research has traditionally focused on race and ethnicity, intersectionality includes race and ethnicity as one component of identity.

Intersectionality seeks to examine how various conventional identity markers configure and align with each other; to some extent, I will be doing the same, insofar as I will take into account such identity markers as gender, nation, and class in this project. However, in this project, I want to privilege race and ethnicity, which goes against the grain of intersectional studies to the extent that intersectional work explicitly refuses a privileging of any one identity marker, and typically construes race and ethnicity in conventional and rather static terms (i.e., as a single identity marker), whereas I want to examine specific instantiations in which race and ethnicity, in particular, are ambiguous, diverse, and complicated. Thus, while I acknowledge the usefulness of intersectionality for complicating identities, here I investigate the ways in which hybridity might complicate straightforward conceptualizations of race and ethnicity.

Hybridity is sometimes understood as interchangeable with multiraciality, or the confluence in one body of two or more different races and/or ethnicities as conventionally construed (Anzaldúa, 1999; Beltran, 2005, 2008; Moraga, 2000). There is some overlap between multiraciality and hybridity, which is why many scholars use the terms interchangeably. However, the ways in which scholars talk about and use the

concept of multiraciality is slightly different from the ways in which hybridity is generally taken up in cultural studies and Communication research. More specifically, multiraciality typically refers to the confluence of two (rarely more) distinct and marked races/ethnicities, whereas hybridity is a more ambiguous concept in terms of both which and/or how many races and ethnicities are merged. Multiraciality is often implicated in hybridity, but hybridity typically does not rely on static and distinct conventional markers of race and/or ethnicity. Moreover, culture is more often a key factor in hybridity than it is in multiraciality—perhaps because conventionally defined races and ethnicities are less salient. For instance, hybrid individuals—actual or depicted—may identify with certain races and/or ethnicities, but feel connected to another culture entirely, or they may connect to a particular race and/or ethnicity via culture, rather than the other way around, given the ambiguity that characterizes their race and/or ethnicity (Moreman, 2009; Moreman & McIntosh, 2010; Nishime, 2012; Pineda, 2009; Young, 2009). In this project, I am interested in hybridity because I want to examine how racial and ethnic *ambiguity* is navigated, rather than how *race* and/or *ethnicity* per se are navigated. However, I recognize the overlap, both in the literature and theoretically, between hybridity and multiraciality, so for practical purposes, as I proceed, I will engage multiraciality under the broader rubric of hybridity as necessary and appropriate.

Rather than a concept that has remained stable over time, hybridity has been a relatively fluid concept that can best be understood confluent with a variety of contextual considerations. Indeed, hybridity has been engaged in myriad ways reflective of various historical, political, and cultural imperatives. In the following sections, I assess hybridity as mobilized in particular historical moments, placing it in the context of salient political

and cultural tensions and anxieties of the time.

**Miscegenation**

The fear of miscegenation within the U.S. permeated the late 19th and early 20th centuries and materialized in the form of concrete practices and policies—namely, antimiscegenation laws that prevented people of different races from marrying. Moreover, the assumption that races were categorically distinct and rigidly marshaled was exemplified in other ways, as well; for instance, social mixing between races was proscribed and heavily policed. Although rules and laws governing miscegenation span different eras, contexts, and cultures, all antimiscegenation legislation is primarily driven by a fear of racial and ethnic "mixing" (i.e., hybridity). These fears of racial mixing primarily hinged upon slavery-era conceptualizations of race, including the perception of whiteness[3] as equivalent with humanness, and people of color as dangerous, primitive savages. Of course, there is a double standard here, insofar as under slavery, perpetrated by White men on Black female slaves, miscegenation was acceptable and justified by warrants of ownership and property that contained the threat—generally, offspring became slaves themselves; absent slavery, however, miscegenation was far more threatening and dangerous.

One example of the threat of miscegenation is the trope of the "tragic mulatto/a" (Beltran, 2005). First instantiated within the media in the film *Birth of a Nation,* the tragic mulatto/a figure represents the terrible consequences of multiraciality and the threat that mixed-race people posed. Positioned as the evil that follows from miscegenation, the tragic mulatto/a, as Beltran argues, was an early subject of interest for media studies scholars. Gaines (1987) also discusses the tragic mulatto/a trope within silent films,

explaining that early media portrayals of multiraciality depicted mixed-race people as partially fortunate and "good," based on their association with whiteness, but also tragic in their inevitable failure to live up to the promise of a pure, white ideal. The figure of the tragic mulatto/a underscores the tensions surrounding the threat of miscegenation in that it represents the supposed social and moral catastrophe that results from racial mixing and the ways in which miscegenation threatens whiteness. Different cultures have engaged this figure in different ways, but typically always in ways that reinforce white privilege. South Africa, for instance, had, and still has, a racial class of "colored" people—Black, White, and colored are the races noted there (McKaiser, 2012).

Perhaps the most famous challenge to antimiscegenation laws was the landmark Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), during which Richard Loving, a White man, and Mildred Loving, a Black woman, fought to uphold the legality of their marriage, which was considered illegal in their home state of Virginia due to the state's Racial Integrity Act of 1924. In a scathing indictment against the Lovings' marriage and miscegenation more generally, Judge Leon M. Bazile claimed that "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay, and red, and he placed them on separate continents…The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix" (cited in Ibrahim, 2012, p. 46). Judge Bazile's opinion was hardly the minority, as many people feared the threat of miscegenation, which entailed a threat to the imagined order of racial purity more generally, but white supremacy more specifically (Ibrahim, 2012). Indeed, perhaps most telling about antimiscegenation legislation is which racial/ethnic groups were included; racial mixing was prohibited between White people and people of all other races, but legal between anyone of non-White descent.

That is, the threat of miscegenation was less about racial mixing in a general sense, but rather represented the threat toward whiteness.

Also stemming from the context of miscegenation is the concept of "passing," a mobilization of hybridity that is drawn specifically against laws and policies policing miscegenation. Passing, essentially, is the act of concealing one's "true" identity, while simultaneously performing another, more socially acceptable identity (Blackmer, 1995). Typically, passing serves the function of allowing people to reap the benefits of a socially advantageous identity, while avoiding the stigma often associated with their socially ascribed identity. Historically, passing has been tied to race, racial stigma, and racial discrimination, particularly within the U.S. In a contemporary context, passing is most familiar as relevant to sexuality (Squires & Brouwer, 2002); in any scenario, however, passing relies upon the notion that one's physical appearance and performance can feasibly conform to the socially advantageous identity.

Passing, similar to the trope of the tragic mulatto/a, is based on anxieties surrounding the notion of racial purity and white supremacy (Davis, 1991; Horton, 1994; Ramsey, 1976). As a type of hybridity, passing was, similar to miscegenation, prompted by the end of slavery: Attempting to draw clear lines around race/ethnicity once slavery no longer provided that function. The many occurrences of Black people passing as White have been well-documented, specifically during the beginning of the 20th century, when Black people were widely discriminated against, and miscegenation that was justified under the auspices of slavery—specifically, the rape of Black women by their White slaveholders—led to Black people who could not be easily identified based on the color of their skin (Davis, 1991; Gubar, 1997).

However, while passing often served to grant social privilege to those who would otherwise be relatively disadvantaged, it also provoked anxiety regarding racial categories. That is, passing confounds racial categorization; as Ginsberg (1996) notes, "When 'race' is no longer visible, it is no longer intelligible: if 'white' can be 'black,' what is white? Race passing not only creates, to use Garber's term, a *category crisis* but also destabilizes the grounds of privilege founded on racial identity" (p. 8). Suddenly, people who could pass could not be identified based on their appearances; passing bodies are bodies marked with highly unstable and ambiguous racial signifiers. Thus, tensions surrounding passing often centered on trying to definitively "prove" the races of people suspected of passing. As such, passing as a practice and performance of hybridity was often tied to legal cases, wherein the "real" races of individuals were, quite literally, put on trial, with their material positions, social statuses, and identities at stake (Carlson, 1999; Haney Lopez, 1994; Hasian Jr., 2004; Hasian Jr. & Nakayama, 1998). Those who successfully passed as White were allowed to retain their relative privilege, while those who failed to pass often faced devastating consequences, including social stigma (Hasian Jr., 2004), divorce (Carlson, 1999), or even being sold into slavery (Haney Lopez, 1994).

Although racial/ethnic passing, as a type of hybridity, may seem tied to a specific historical period, particularly the antebellum U.S., passing is a phenomenon that has persisted, albeit with less frequency. For instance, Squires and Brouwer (2002) analyze mainstream and vernacular media coverage of Susie Guillory Phipps, a Black woman who attempted to pass as White; the authors claim that while Phipps attempted to transgress racial norms, media coverage stubbornly identified her as Black or White, but never engaged the possibility that she could be anything in between. Liera-

Schwichtenberg (2000), similarly, argues that Selena, the Latina pop singer, effectively passed as White when she crossed over into mainstream pop music. Liera-Schwichtenberg claims that Selena, rather than maintain her Latina identity, watered down her ethnic heritage in order to obtain fame and success. In a somewhat more positive view of passing, Watts (2005) explores the ways in which Eminem, a White rapper, passes as Black in his semiautobiographical film *8 Mile*. Eminem's performance as a rapper, along with his working-class socioeconomic status, helped him to pass as an "authentic" (read: Black) rapper, which in turn bolstered his success within the arena of rap music. Edgar (2014), somewhat similarly, investigates Adele, a British blues singer, noting the ways in which she uses "Black voice" to transgress racial expectations. Edgar argues that the juxtaposition of Adele's light skin and "Black voice" fractures standard categories of race and opens up space for play within racial boundaries. These two examples speak to my earlier point that hybridity, especially as taken up in contemporary contexts, entails cultural identity and makes it incredibly salient; hybridity is not just about race and/or ethnicity as marked on the body, but also as it is performed. Hybridity as cultural identity also raises interesting questions about cultural appropriation; when White bodies take up "other" races/ethnicities/identities, the line between passing and appropriation is quite thin, and often arguably nonexistent. Elvis, for instance, as perhaps a precursor to the aforementioned Adele, has often been accused of having appropriated a "Black sound" for his own monetary gain.

Perhaps a more positive instantiation of miscegenation is that of mestizaje, popularized by Anzaldúa (2012) and Moraga (2000; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). Taking up Vasconcelos' (1997) argument about the inevitable racial mixing of the world,

Anzaldúa heralds the beginning of what she calls the "new mestizaje," or "Nepantla," a racially-mixed group that lives and performs within a borderland that refuses to identify with a single racial category. For Anzaldúa, identifying as mestizaje functions as a type of resistance to colonizers; rather than accept a marginalized identity, people who identify as mestizaje recognize their own autonomy in understanding and framing their identities, particularly as drawn against the infiltration of their geographical and physical locations from White colonizers. As a type of hybridity, a mestizo/a identity is, in many ways, superior to a single-raced identity, in that it combines the best elements of each race. Mestizo/a identities are thus able to disrupt racial purity and fixity. Douglas (1971) also notes that multiracial people evade categorization because they cannot be pinned down as any one race, and thus avoid an essentializing trap of classification. Similarly, Moreman (2009) sees the liberatory potential of multiracial subjects, claiming that fluid identities are necessarily opposed to a rigid concept of race as fixed or pure.

However, despite the potential to disrupt classification, Anzaldúa (2012) encourages the remembrance that the mestizaje identity arises from pain, both physical and psychic. The borderlands, both materially and figuratively, are sites of contestation and anxiety about the corruption of racial purity. In *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983), women of color recount the pain and trauma inherent within the creation of interstitial identities, including the physical rape and conquest that has historically precipitated hybrid subjects. Moreover, Moraga (2000) contends that mestizaje identities are products of tensions surrounding racial mixing, similar to the threat of miscegenation. While this particular hybrid identity is relevant here because it is predicated on miscegenation, it is informed by a legacy of colonization, which I will

address in more detail below.

Historically, the threat of miscegenation, manifested in a variety of forms, was
one predominant way in which hybridity was configured. Tensions and anxieties
surrounding the possibility of racial/ethnic mixing and the dilution of a pure White race
configured hybridity as an imminent threat to a dominant frame of white supremacy, yet
was also seen as resistance to colonization, in that hybridity functioned as a reminder that
colonizers could not completely eradicate indigenous groups. Moreover, hybridity has not
only been characterized as the threat of miscegenation. In the colonial and postcolonial
era, hybridity was often articulated as racial/ethnic mimicry.

**Postcolonial Mimicry**

The blurring of clearly delineated racial/ethnic categories within a context of
colonization, as suggested in my discussion of mestizaje, features particular tensions as
well as attendant performances and practices as relevant to hybridity. For instance, during
the colonial period, race was used to further the British Empire. That is, the colonized
were configured as radically different from the colonizers via racial difference. By
positioning "others" as primitive and uncivilized, colonizers argued that the people they
colonized could not rule themselves, so required the benevolence of the British Empire to
order and create a civilized society (Said, 1978). However, the extreme racial difference
of the colonial era eventually shifted due to a number of factors, including racial mixing
between the colonizers and the colonized and the desire for some of the colonized people
to identify with the colonizers (Bhabha, 1994a, 1994b, 2013; Fanon, 2004). Indeed,
Fanon notes that in the colonial period, many "othered" people wanted to substitute
themselves in the position of their colonizers, thus identifying with, and attempting to

mimic, the often White colonizers. This desire for identification led to hybrid people who, to borrow Bhabha's (1994a) phrase, are "not white/not quite," people who are still marked as racially different, through skin color, but culturally similar to the colonizers, again, pointing up to the relevance of *cultural* identity to hybridity that, if contingent upon marked racial or ethnic identity, is not interchangeable with it.

This type of hybridity, characterized by the mimicry of Western culture, can, and did, reaffirm the primacy of whiteness through the impulse to assimilate as a survival strategy (Bhabha, 1994a). In a more contemporary example of mimicry, Steeves (2008), in an analysis of representations of Africa on U.S. television programming, explains that these representations serve to place Americans on the programs in a space of "hybrid encounters" with Africa. These encounters, Steeves argues, reinforce Western dominance within a hybrid situation and reaffirm colonial narratives. Similarly, Jhally and Lewis (1992) discuss how *The Cosby Show* is assimilationist but tries to temper that with references to African culture (e.g., artwork and music). Thus, if not definitively or inevitably assimilative, hybridity can clearly feature an assimilationist impulse.

Yet just as postcolonial instantiations of hybridity feature assimilation, Bhabha (1994b, 2013) also sees postcolonial hybridity as liberatory. One way in which this is taken up is through identification with mestizaje, as noted above, but that is predicated on race and ethnicity as marked and reclaimed in hybrid form. In this variation, hybridity is about *ambiguity* of race and ethnicity, inasmuch as through mimicking the colonizers, hybrid bodies become both/and, "other" and White/Western at the same time. In a postcolonial moment that hinges on racial difference, hybridity, Bhabha argues, undermines racial difference by pointing to similarities between the colonizers and

colonized. "Othered" people, situated as hybrid, are different through skin color alone. Similarly, Gershenson (2003) notes that as an unstable signifier, hybridity points to the instability of race as a whole, shedding light on the constructedness of racial categorization and belying the fiction of difference between colonizers and colonized people. For Bhabha (1994b, 2013) and Fanon (2004), hybrid people have a voice that completely "othered" people do not have; through the mimicking of White/Western characteristics, hybridity allows people to bridge the gap between colonizers and colonized.

Postcolonial notions of hybridity, similar to the threat of miscegenation, thus engages anxieties attendant to notions of racial purity, white sovereignty, and civility (as opposed to primitiveness). Characterized by both mimicry and agency, postcolonial hybridity also allows for liberatory potential, in that it unhinges and destabilizes whiteness; however, hybridity simultaneously acknowledges and retains whiteness.

**Transnationalism**

While the nation-state has historically been considered both powerful and self-contained, globalization necessitates a decline of the power of the nation-state (Appadurai, 2011; Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 2005; Hall, 1997; Hardt & Negri, 2004). That is, the material and symbolic borders surrounding nation-states have become highly permeable and ephemeral, and people, traditions, rituals, languages, etc. are able to move, or flow, across those borders. This notion of cultural flows, however, does not simply imply a one-way flow of information from dominant, hegemonic nation-states (Appadurai, 2005, 2011; Pieterse, 1994; Straubhaar, 2006). Rather than the common conception of the "Westernization" of other nations, deterritorialization of people and

cultures occur across the world, meaning that while so-called "dominant" countries, including the U.S., do influence other nations, they are also influenced by the people crossing their borders.

Deterritorialization, according to Appadurai (2011), is motivated by imagination. Imagination, in contrast to fantasy, functions as an active, motivating agency that propels people to take action. In this modern age of globalization and transnationalism, Appadurai argues:

> More people than ever before seem to imagine routinely the possibility that they or their children will live and work in places other than where they were born: this is the wellspring of the increased rates of migration at every level of social, national, and global life. (p. 6)

That is, the work of the imagination is generative of previously unthinkable opportunities; it allows people to believe in, and realize, lives different from the ones they have, and to imagine the possibility of leaving their nation of origin and traveling somewhere new. Essentially, the "American Dream" has become transnational; people are encouraged to migrate from their countries of origin, in the hope of a more prosperous life. This increased migration has inextricably led to a world characterized by weakened nation-states and diasporic cultures. Kraidy (2002) argues that hybridity is a way of understanding transnationalism and global communication; that is, it can help critics to understand neo-colonial relations between nations due to global and cultural flows.

These cultural flows can be enabling and constraining, fostering diversity yet also stifling it. While U.S. culture has been enriched by an influx of diverse "other" cultures, it has also served to assimilate and tame cultural variety. Nation-states, including the U.S., often attempt to unite people in order to erase their differences, thus making singular people into an undifferentiated mass (Appadurai, 2011; Hardt & Negri, 2004).

While globalization's permeable boundaries allow people to migrate to the U.S., creating diasporic cultures, this movement still does not guarantee the free expression of a multiplicity of cultures. Indeed, Appadurai (2011), as well as Gellner (2006), argue that nationalism is inevitably linked to homogeneity, not because nationalism causes homogeneity, but that "a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism" (Gellner, 2006, p. 38). While globalization creates opportunities for singularities to be expressed, it also creates situations in which singularities are reduced to sameness from without, through the taming and consumption of racialized and gendered bodies.

This reduction can have serious consequences; as Hall (1997) warns, "when the era of nation-states in globalization begins to decline, one can see a regression to a very defensive and highly dangerous form of national identity which is driven by a very aggressive form of racism" (p. 26). Even with a greater array of diverse bodies crossing borders, and nation-states becoming more permeable, people are still at risk of encountering oppression and domination from the waning nation-state. This typically happens around raced and ethnic "otherness," suggesting the degree to which racial and ethnic continence are built into the integrity of the nation-state, in abstract as well as concrete terms. Moreover, transnationalism, globalization, and diaspora cultures, particularly within the U.S., often invoke anxieties surrounding the weakening of nationalism and the threat of infiltration from racially and ethnically marked "othered" bodies.

For instance, immigration is, and has long been, part of the understanding of transnationalism. Indeed, given the increasing fluidity and permeability of people and

borders, and the dissolution of discrete nation-states, immigration remains salient, even if transnationalism and immigration are not interchangeable. In recent years, tensions surrounding the threat of immigration have mounted within the U.S., particularly in regard to the highly contested U.S./Mexico border. Additionally, the threat of terrorism, often imagined to be perpetuated only by racially/ethnically marked "others," and inextricably informed by and informative of said fears around immigration, has become a salient concern to many U.S. citizens, evident, for instance, in increased security measures in public places, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and the signing into law of the P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act. Against this particular historic moment of transnationalism and globalization, and attendant fears of infiltration by "dangerous others," I argue that a novel form of hybridity and its attendant implications have emerged, on which this present dissertation focuses. Moreover, hybridity is not instantiated the same way in all contemporary contexts; rather, hybridity plays out differently on different bodies as relevant to informing races and/or ethnicities.

Although thus far hybridity has perhaps appeared to be a progressive move towards understanding the complex messiness of racial identity, Kraidy (2002) also warns that there has been sustained criticism against hybridity within the discipline of Communication. Specifically, critics (e.g., Gomez-Pena, 1996; Werbner & Moddod, 1997) have noted that while hybridity is often heralded as a progressive resistance to dominant ideas about race, it is also pervasive; hybridity is everywhere without being clearly defined or understood. However, Kraidy is also quick to note that Communication scholars should work to theoretically ground the concept of hybridity so as to help define the contours and parameters of hybridity as a conceptual terrain. Moreover, Kraidy, as

well as Valdivia (2005), argue for a theory of hybridity that attends to power flows through and within hybrid identities and their attendant social relations, as well as a conception of hybridity as a communicative practice that is always already intertwined with notions of shifting power. In this dissertation, I aim to take up Kraidy's (2002) and Valdivia's (2005) call by examining hybridity in a contemporary context in concrete terms, as practiced and performed by specific hybrid bodies.

Moreover, as noted earlier, research on hybridity has often curiously avoided mention of the body and the ways in which hybridity is deployed by and through bodies—critical to assess because it is through, on, and by the body that ambiguity is navigated and negotiated. Thus, to that end, I also seek to assess how hybridity is mobilized and negotiated by and through embodied performances of hybridity in various ways, in the hopes of further refining and complicating a Communication-based theory of hybridity. In this dissertation, hybridity is apprehended as idiosyncratic, inasmuch as it is articulated as the expression of the unique, authentic self, which is ostensibly celebrated, but only insofar as it conforms to specific regulations. Thus, whenever bodies "get out of line" and transgress those regulations, the discipline of race/ethnicity is justified via the guise of hybridity as inappropriate expression: a breach of aesthetic form or social etiquette.

**Body**

While scholarship regarding the body is vast and diverse, the theoretical foundations that inform this project as relevant to the body are furnished by cultural and performance studies. Specifically, for the purpose of this present study, the most salient aspects of research on the body is in regard to mediated representations of raced/ethnic

bodies and embodied performances, with a particular focus on the ways in which race, ethnicity, and culture are collectively accomplished and performed by and through bodies.

**Cultural studies: Mediated representations of raced/ethnic bodies.** Although there is a large body of cultural studies and Communication literature that focuses on mediated representations of race and ethnicity (e.g., Boylorn, 2008; Cooke-Jackson & Hansen, 2008; Drummond & Orbe, 3010; Dubrofsky, 2006; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008; Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; Joseph, 2009; Lichter & Amundson, 1997; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Nishime, 2005; Ramasubramanian, 2005; Ramirez-Berg, 2002; Shome, 1996; Shugart, 2007), I want to focus on raced and ethnic *bodies* more literally. The majority of this research has focused on the trope of the primitive raced and ethnic body, specifically regarding Black and Latina/o bodies. For instance, scholars have called attention to the representations of the exotic, hypersexualized Latina/o, as exemplified, particularly regarding Latinas, through the curvaceous (and thus sexualized) body (Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Ramirez-Berg, 2002; Shugart, 2007; Valdivia, 2005). Similarly, the Latina body is commonly represented in the media as "tropical" and exotic; that is, Latina women are often depicted wearing large jewelry and bright, neon clothing (Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; Ramirez-Berg, 2002; Shugart, 2007). Here, the body communicates excessiveness and the trope of the exotic Latina. Similarly, the Latino body is often constructed as virile and hypersexual, aligning with the "Latin lover" stereotype (Ramirez-Berg, 2002). However, as Ceisel (2011) claims, the Latino body is often highly gendered; rather than a generic hypersexuality, Latino (as opposed to Latina) bodies are portrayed as hypermasculine and heterosexual.

Gender seems to make a difference in respect to Latina/o bodies; they are depicted as aggressively (and traditionally) masculine, or obviously feminine.

Mediated representations of the Black body are, in some ways, similar to the Latina/o body, in that the Black body is also typically depicted as hypersexual and exotic (hooks, 1992). Whereas the Latina/o body is tropicalized, the Black body is viewed as dark and mysterious, as hooks notes, similar to the trope of Africa as the "dark continent." Relative to representations of the Latina/o body, however, representations of the Black body often draw more explicitly on colonialist tropes (Hall, 2003; hooks, 1992). As hooks claims, the Black body is often apprehended, particularly in popular media, as primitive, backwards, and animalistic, specifically as juxtaposed with the sophistication of White bodies, hearkening to a colonial legacy of the primitive "othered" bodies in need of the White savior. Hall (2003), similarly, argues that the Black body is often aligned with the slave trope, which works to marginalize and dehumanize Black men and women. Just as the Latina/o body is gendered, so too is the Black body; for instance, Black women are often portrayed as excessive, loud, and unruly (Dubrofsky, 2006; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008; Joseph, 2009) and passive objects of the sexual desire of (White) men (hooks, 1992). Black men are typically shown as criminals (hooks, 1992), virile athletes (Li-Vollmer, 2002), or buffoons (Hall, 2003). Although gendered, the bodies of both Black men and women, similar to Latin men and women, are highly objectified and "othered."

Hall (2003) argues that Asian people, similarly to Black people, are often configured along the lines of the docile slave trope: subservient, quiet, and unassuming. Mediated representations of the Asian body have, perhaps predictably, followed the

gendered tropes noted above. For instance, Asian women are typically portrayed as sexually submissive to (White) men, but simultaneously hypersexualized and fetishized in the media (Ciment & Radzilowski, 2015; Ono & Pham, 2009; Shimizu, 2007). Thus, their seductive threat is minimized, insofar as they are submissive. Asian men are typically portrayed as both dangerous and threatening, in line with tropes of the "dark Orient" (Nakayama, 1994; Said, 1978). However, while Asian women are often apprehended as hypersexual, Asian men are often constructed as asexual in many ways (Nakayama, 1994; Ono & Pham, 2009). Again, despite the gendered differences apparent in these representations, the bodies of Asian men and women are objectified and exoticized.

While some studies have been conducted on racial and ethnic bodies other than Latina/o, Black, and Asian, there have not been many. Hall (2003) claims that Native American people are often depicted as the "noble savage" stereotype. Similarly, Ono and Buesher (2001) argue that the Native American woman, as exemplified in Disney's *Pocahontas,* is portrayed as a hypersexualized and commodified body; essentially, the Native American body functions as a cipher into which (White) men can project their colonial desires.

Throughout the "othering" of the raced and ethnic body as portrayed in the media, the White body remains centered (Dubrofsky, 2006; Hall, 2003; hooks, 1992). That is, the "othered" body is drawn as exotic, enticing, or threatening against the "normal" White body, and the raced and/or ethnic body becomes desirable insofar as it deviates from the everydayness of whiteness (hooks, 1992). Simultaneously, though, the White body is invisible; it functions as the standard against which "otherness" is measured,

without announcing itself as the standard. As Shome (2000) notes, "whiteness, as an institutionalized and systemic problem, is maintained and produced not by overt rhetorics of whiteness, but rather, by its 'everydayness,' by the everyday, unquestioned racialized social relations that have acquired a seeming normativity" (p. 366). Essentially, whiteness is configured as invisible (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). The White body, accepted as normal, implicitly "others" raced and ethnic bodies. This dissertation adds to extant research on mediated portrayals of "othered" bodies in that it demonstrates the ways in which hybridity disciplines, shapes, and negotiates different bodies in various ways. In the cases I discuss, embodied hybridity appears to secure a perception of race/ethnicity as an expressed aspect of the authentic self rather than a politics of identity, effectively depoliticizing race/ethnicity and justifying discipline thereof on the grounds of "appropriate" expression.

**Bodies and performance.** Performance is bound up with bodies and identity in that it is a strategic, embodied expression of one's identity and culture, and is "located at the creative, *improvisatory* edge of practice in the moment it is carried out" (Schieffelin, 1998, p. 199, emphasis in the original). Performance exists in the moment, and while it may draw inspiration from other performances, it is improvisation; performances can never be duplicated exactly. Although not always conscious, performance is not mere repetition or practice, but rather a means of (re)creating identity through and by the body (Butler, 2006). That is, identity only "exists" to the extent that it is performed and enacted by the body.

However, although performance was traditionally thought of as acting or pretending (e.g., Goffman, 1959), an understanding of performance as fundamentally

fake or imitative is of little heuristic value in understanding cultural processes and the everyday actions, behaviors, and relations in which people engage. In an effort to better understand cultural processes, Turner (1979, 1982), an anthropologist, extended the notion of performance, conceptualizing performance as a real, constitutive process. That is, Turner famously argues that performance is "making, not faking." Rather than simply *mimesis*, or imitative, performance is *poeisis*—the making of the real of life, culture, and identity. This shift to a focus on performance as real, not fake, allows for a greater understanding of the ways in which performance is inextricably imbricated with culture and the creation of identities. When people perform their identities, they are not pretending to be something, but actively *becoming*, shaping identities through their words and actions.

As such, performance is always already an embodied process; as a number of scholars (Conquergood, 1985, 1988, 1992, 2002a, 2002b; Foster, 1998; Holling & Calafell, 2007; Madison, 2010; Moreman & McIntosh, 2010; Pollock, 2006) note, performance is always of and in the body. Performance as embodied is a move away from post-positivistic, Enlightenment thinking that valorizes rationality and objectivity, resisting a strict Cartesian dualism that separates mind and body and privileges mind over body. Here, performance can be thought of as experiential, something that is done through and with the body. As Diamond (1996) astutely claims, performance can best be thought of as a verb, not a noun—it is something that one *does*. Performance is thus an experiential epistemology, or a way of knowing that is grounded in the body. Thus, the body is always already a performing body; to theorize about the body is to theorize about the way the body performs.

**The performance of raced/ethnic bodies.** As a means of (re)creating identities, performance is intertwined with notions of race/ethnicity, and, by extension, multiracial or ambiguously raced bodies. However, despite the importance of race/ethnicity as an identity category, the majority of performance scholarship on the body has focused on the creation of gendered bodies (e.g., Butler, 1988, 1993, 2006). According to Butler, gender is something that one does, rather than is; gender is a continuous embodied performance. I do not discount the importance of understanding the ways in which gender is performed and embodied, and I will attend to gendered performances in this dissertation to the extent that they inevitably inform particular instantiations and accomplishments of hybridity. Indeed, this dissertation stands to highlight the inherent instability of gendered performances as well as refine our understanding of the ways in which gender and race/ethnicity intersect on particular bodies in ways that variously prompt, permit, or deny specific practices relevant to the marshalling of race/ethnicity. However, more salient to my interest in hybridity is the performance of raced/ethnic bodies.

In comparison to work on gender as performance, the notion of race/ethnicity as performance has been relatively overlooked. Dubrofsky and Hardy (2008), analyze the raced bodies that performed on the reality television shows *Flavor of Love* and *The Bachelor*, focusing on the ways in which Black women strategically performed race, particularly in *Flavor of Love*. According to Dubrofsky and Hardy, Black women were criticized for being "too Black" when they asserted their identities as Black women, and conversely critiqued for being inauthentic when they did not perform their identities based on stereotypical notions of Black women. In this sense, these women were stuck in a racial double-bind; their bodies simultaneously read as "not Black enough" and "too

Black." Also commenting on the bind of racial authenticity, Moreman (2009) details the complexities and difficulties of performing multiracial and hybrid identities. Through an analysis of three memoirs written by bi- and multiracial authors, Moreman examines the ways in which the performance of racial identity often hinges on authenticity, and the ability to perform one's identity "correctly."

Focusing more explicitly on staged performances, Holling and Calafell (2007) investigate the ways that race becomes a key component of Latina/o performance art, detailing the emancipatory potential of performing one's racial identity. According to Holling and Calafell, the performance of race/ethnicity allows for the performers and the audience to work through tensions surrounding race/ethnicity, and also provides a space where colonial notions of race/ethnicity can be repudiated through the deployment of the body. In a similar vein, Moreman and McIntosh (2010) investigate the raced/ethnic dimensions of the performances of Latino drag queens; although they also attend to the importance of gender and sexuality in these performances, Moreman and McIntosh foreground the importance of understanding how race/ethnicity is performed through the bodies of Latin drag queens who often perform as races other than the one(s) they claim. Here, race becomes a complex configuration of the actual bodies of the performers and the race/ethnicity they are performing. While the authors take up the notion of hybridity insofar as they argue that Latina/o is a hybrid identity, they do not use hybridity as a lens through which to examine these performances. My project is motivated by similar questions, but I want to examine them specifically though a lens of hybridity.

Scholarship on the performance of race/ethnicity has perhaps been taken up the most within the area of dance. For instance, Murphy (2011) interrogates choreographer

Santee Smith's *Kaha:wi*, an evening-length dance that tells the story of the

Haudenosaunee people. Murphy argues that this dance mobilizes bodies to (re)present the

Haudenosaunee culture and history. Similarly, Srinivasan (2011), in her analysis of the

female Bharata Natyam dancing body, argues that this body does a particular type of

labor, working through and negotiating tensions surrounding the Orientalized female

body. Hammergren (2011), in a study of three choreographers/dancers connected to

India, analyzes the ways in which these choreographers performed identity and politics in

a Northern-European context; ultimately, Hammergren argues that these choreographers

had to negotiate rigid boundaries of power and essentialized identity classifications, and

often had to deal with challenges to the authenticity of their identities. Additionally,

commonly known dances such as the hula, flamenco, salsa, samba, Bollywood, hip-hop,

and so forth all have roots in specific racial/ethnic identities and locales, and serve as

expressions of those identities.

Overall, outside of research on dance, the relationships between performance, the

body, and race/ethnicity have not been a focus in Communication scholarship.

Furthermore, the body and embodied performances have been conspicuously absent

within research about hybridity. I hope to fill this gap in the literature with this present

study by focusing on the ways that the body is deployed in the performance of hybridity,

particularly within mediated portrayals of the body. I aim to analyze the different ways

that the body is taken up in various mobilizations of hybridity, as well as the ways in

which hybridity is articulated through the body. More clearly understanding various

embodied articulations of hybridity should illuminate latent and exigent contemporary

tensions and anxieties surrounding race/ethnicity writ large, as well as the negotiation of

those tensions. At this juncture, it is important to note that while I employ performance studies perspectives in this dissertation, I situate myself as a media scholar rather than a performance scholar, per se. When I discuss embodiment and performance, I am referring to a mediated embodiment and performance—mediated by a specific set of relations between spectator and screen.

## Homeland Hybridity

In this current moment, characterized by transnationalism, globalization, and permeable borders, how we understand race and ethnicity is inevitably different from earlier ways of apprehending race and ethnicity. More specifically, the rising threats of immigration and terrorism create new understandings and articulations of race and ethnicity, frequently mobilized as hybridity. As Appadurai (2011) notes, globalization and diaspora cultures entail a new sense of racial, ethnic, and cultural hybridity that rearticulates notions of nationalism, race, ethnicity, and culture. These contexts reconfigure, for example, postcolonial notions of hybridity; hybridity becomes articulated in new ways within new global and transnational contexts. One way that these new articulations of hybridity play is through concerns of infiltration by racially and ethnically "othered" bodies, motivated by globalization and transnationalism. This hinges on the notion, again, of white supremacy and its conflation with the integrity of the nation-state.

At the same time, postidentity politics, as Joseph (2011, 2013) explains, have led to a proliferation of a "colorblind" ideal—race no longer appears to matter. As Joseph notes, postidentity politics presumes that in a post-Civil Rights movement society, people of all races and ethnicities have reached equality, thus negating the need for a politics focused on race. Indeed, mentioning race is often viewed as anathema in U.S. discourse;

not only is race unnecessary, but drawing attention to race, within a postrace ideology, serves to negatively highlight difference. However, a common critique of postidentity politics is that they ignore historical inequality and disavow the material reality of people who are still disadvantaged precisely because of their race and/or ethnicity. Thus, postidentity politics often function to foreclose critical engagement. Within a contemporary context of postidentity politics, race and ethnicity are configured much differently than they have been historically, in that there is a distinct gap between the understandings of race as incredibly salient and, simultaneously, not important or "real" at all. For instance, the late 2014 occurrence in Ferguson, Missouri, when Michael Brown, a Black man, was shot and killed by a White police officer, was understood as racially motivated by many people, yet was not framed as a race issue by authorial/institutional entities—that is, the police force particularly were careful to distance themselves from accusations of racism, and, in fact, framed Brown's murder as the necessary means of keeping citizens safe. Similarly, the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin in February 2012, along with a number of other murders of men and women of color at the hands of White police officers and citizens, have been understood in contradictory ways; nonetheless, postrace is advanced by some entities, and media coverage has and does present it as at least as salient as charges of racism, if not more legitimate due to the authorial/culturally sanctioned voices advocating it. The tension between virulent racism and the negation of the salience of race is apparent in all of those examples; in this dissertation, I am interested in examining hybridity within this gap.

Beltran (2005) further discusses the changing terrain of multiraciality, particularly within media research. Beltran (Beltran & Fojas, 2008) contends that within the changing

demographic landscape of the U.S., in particular, multiraciality has become more visible. Arguing from Appadurai's (2005, 2011) position that national borders are (relatively) more permeable (although, arguably not equally permeable for all groups), Beltran claims that the contemporary U.S. cultural milieu of multiraciality and multiethnicity has led to an explosion of mixed-race protagonists and characters within U.S.-based media. Yet Beltran is also quick to note that these mixed-race portrayals are always ambiguously racial/ethnic, speaking to no particular racial/ethnic group, while appealing to many. Moreover, the increase and greater acceptance of multiracial characters in the media always includes whiteness; mixed-race characters are only acceptable if part of their racial mixture is White. Nevertheless, Beltran sees an increased need for media studies scholars to take up the issues of hybridity and multiraciality, as depictions of multiraciality have recently proliferated within the media. Even though Beltran's work is focused primarily on multiracial subjects, I would contend that the ways in which she discusses contemporary portrayals of multiraciality as fluid prompts theorizing about hybridity, rather than multiraciality per se. All of these contemporary influences, as I have argued, shape how we think about race and ethnicity, and in contemporary, mainstream media, these portrayals of hybridity are inevitably projections of tensions, anxieties, and aspirations about race and ethnicity. In this dissertation, I take up Beltran's call to focus on racial/ethnic ambiguity and hybridity within the media, specifically focusing on the ways in which bodies are salient foci of race, ethnicity, and hybridity. In this dissertation, via embodiment, hybridity is conflated with authentic selfhood and expression thereof, valorized as such, but also more readily available for discipline to the extent that it is thus depoliticized.

It is important to note here that when I discuss race and ethnicity, on their own terms or as hybrid identities, I am not subscribing to ideals of racial or ethnic authenticity. Like Jackson (2005), I understand racial and ethnic authenticity as "the restrictive script we use to authenticate some versions of blackness, whiteness, brownness, yellowness, and redness while simultaneously prohibiting others" (p. 13). The use of racial authenticity as a yardstick reduces racial identity to a unitary, stable category; it configures an ideal racial identity that people either do or do not attain. Authenticity "imagines racial subjects as always already trapped within an inanimate, unthinking, and thing like objecthood" (Jackson, 2005, p. 226). Instead, following Jackson, I claim that there are certain cultural practices that are marked historically, and I draw from Jackson's concept of racial sincerity. A focus on racial sincerity focuses on the messy, *multiple* identities that are associated with race, and the ways in which those multiple identities are continuously (re)negotiated, implicitly invoking hybridity. That is, "instead of creating some authenticating puppeteer who predetermines the movements of racialized marionettes, sincerity sees racial identity as a continual debate between culpable subjects" (Jackson, 2005, p 226). As Jackson argues, racial identity, as a fluid construct, is never finalized, never complete; racial identity is a *process* of making and becoming. Moreover, hybridity, in particular, is complex because by definition it refuses or at least confuses imaginaries of authenticity.

**Method**

For the present study, I have conducted a critical analysis of texts. Specifically, my approach draws from both critical rhetoric and critical performance studies. In taking this approach, I align myself with scholars such as Conquergood (1985, 1988, 1989,

1992, 2002b) and Pezzullo (2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2006) who advocate the merging of conventional techniques of rhetorical analysis and performance methodologies. As Conquergood (1992) claims, rhetoricians who use performance approaches and performance scholars who use rhetorical approaches "destabilize an essentialist worldview anchored in Being and replace it with a constructional view of reality in a process of Becoming" (p. 81). That is, performance methodologies can contribute to rhetoric by exposing the constructedness of reason, evidence, and argument, yet rhetoric can also contribute to performance through a focus on how performing bodies create meaning and negotiate power relationships. As Hauser (1999) notes, "moved to the level of performance, rhetoric opens invitational spaces: places where ideas, relationships, emotional bonds, and course of action can be experienced in novel, sometimes transformative, ways" (p. 33). Performance provides a new way of looking at rhetoric, just as rhetoric provides a different means of looking at performance.

Much of Conquergood's (1985, 1988, 1989, 1992, 2002a, 2002b) and Pezzullo's (2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2006) work negotiates how politics and power are negotiated within, and through, public contexts and performances, as well as how rhetoric functions as part of these contexts. I do not investigate public performances in this dissertation; that is, all of my texts are mediated representations of bodies and performances, and I am not conducting *in situ* research by being in the same physical space as the performing bodies featured in all of my texts. Nonetheless, I do, as Pezzullo (2003a) suggests, "emphasize the usefulness of performance theory" for illuminating facets of discourses not readily apparent through a more conventional rhetorical method (p. 349). This is not to say that performance is not discourse, but rather that discourse is best captured and understood by

looking at it as both rhetoric and performance.

Despite attempts to clearly delineate and define critical rhetoric, it resists clear, easy description. Critical rhetoric is not a method or, for that matter, a conventional theory, but is rather a perspective that influences the types of texts that critics take up, as well as the types of questions that they ask. As distinct from the tradition of rhetorical criticism, critical rhetoric focuses on flows and relations of power; that is, critical rhetoric attends to the ways in which power is rhetorically mobilized and instantiated (McKerrow, 1989). Moreover, as McKerrow notes, critical rhetoric serves a demystifying function to the extent that it attempts to demonstrate the relationships between rhetoric, power, and knowledge. I align myself here with Owen and Ehrenhaus (1993), who note that "the politics of representation is the central concern of the critical study of rhetoric" (p. 170). That is, critical rhetoric attempts to understand how and what texts mean, particularly in regard to identities, politics, and power. How identities are represented are thus a key focus of critical rhetoric and this present study. However, critical rhetoric goes beyond discovering meaning in a text; it also "takes up a text and re-circulates it, that is, 'says' or 'does' the text differently, and asks the listener or reader to re-understand and re-evaluate the text, to see and judge it in new ways suggested by the critic" (Nothstine, Blair, & Copeland, 2002, p. 3). That is, my goal in using critical rhetoric is not simply to report the surface meaning of race and ethnicity within the texts, but to also interpret that meaning alongside contextual and historical considerations.

As an approach focused on demystifying representational politics, critical rhetoric diverges from more conventional approaches to rhetorical criticism, in that it assumes that texts are not whole or complete, but are rather a "dense web" of meanings, consisting

of seemingly disparate "scraps" of rhetoric that are constructed—and teased apart—by the critic (McKerrow, 1989, pp. 101-102). Similarly, McGee (1990) explains that rhetoric is not a coherent, seamless text, but rather fragments of text that the critic pieces together. Thus, as at least partial creator of rhetoric, the critic should be self-reflexive in recognizing her/his own positionality within the fragmented text that she/he creates (Madison, 2010; McGee, 1990; McKerrow, 1989; Said, 1983).

A critical performance perspective is confluent with a critical rhetorical approach more broadly in that they both focus on power relations and have political imperatives. As Conquergood (1992) notes, attending to performance within texts can bring a depth and richness of analysis to research. To the extent that performances exist within sites of struggle and are imbricated with notions of power relations, a performance perspective encourages the critic to attend to issues of identity negotiation and articulation (Alexander, 2011; Conquergood, 1989, 2002b; Holling & Calafell, 2007). The inherent risks of performance, along with the possibilities of identity creation, are where Butler (1988, 1997, 2006) sees a space for politics. That is, Butler conceives of performance as a political process with, as aforementioned, real consequences. Politically, performance can be seen as one way of (re)negotiating relations of power, in that performances can be resistive. Thus, a performance perspective takes into account the ways in which performances can both reinscribe dominant ideologies and function as resistance to those ideologies.

An important aspect of a critical performance perspective is the recognition that performances are always in and of the body. As such, performance is always already an embodied process; as a number of scholars (Conquergood, 1985, 1988, 1992, 2002a,

2002b; Foster, 1998; Holling & Calafell, 2007; Madison, 2010; Moreman & McIntosh, 2010; Pollock, 2006) note. Methodologically, the blending of critical rhetoric and performance criticism is in many ways similar to rhetorical field methods (Middleton, Senda-Cook, & Endres, 2011), in that my aim here is to "identify a critical practice aimed at how texts and embodied, lived experiences interanimate each other" (p. 393). Although I am not doing field methods, in that I am not analyzing what Middleton, et al. (2011) refer to as "live rhetorics," I do embrace the call to investigate how bodies might complicate a straightforward understanding of texts.

An approach that pairs critical rhetoric and critical performance is suited to this project because I am apprehending hybridity as a cultural, political phenomenon, and I examine its deployment via various bodies across contemporary mediated texts. As noted earlier, hybridity should be more closely interrogated to understand the role that flows of power play in the articulation of race/ethnicity in particular historical moments and contexts. Since hybridity can be both positive *and* negative, the ways in which power is imbricated with hybridity are salient. Moreover, the inclusion of the body is, as I argue, necessary for this project, as race/ethnicity are always accomplished by bodies—identity is always lived and embodied. Hybridity, too, is always expressed by, through, and in bodies; it is impossible to apprehend hybridity other than by focusing on how it is embodied and performed. The mobilizations of bodies stand to draw particular relations between self and identity, which I want to explore here: more specifically, self that is conflated with personal uniqueness and "authenticity," as drawn against identity, which speaks to external, cultural notions of "authenticity"; the embodied performances of hybridity in the contexts I examine seem to force a bifurcation of the two.

More specifically, however, a critical rhetorical approach is helpful in that in this study, I attempt to not only uncover meanings about representations and identities embedded in the texts, but also to apprehend and interpret what these meanings communicate about contemporary cultural notions of race, ethnicity, and hybridity, particularly vis-à-vis historical contextual considerations. Moreover, as Conquergood (1991) explains:

> The performance paradigm privileges particular, participatory, dynamic, intimate, precarious, embodied experience grounded in historical process, contingency, and ideology. Another way of saying it is that performance-centered research takes as both its subject matter and method the experience body situated in time, place, and history. (p. 187)

Conquergood calls critics to apprehend the body not as an ahistorical text out of context, but rather as a contingent body situated within, and articulated to, cultural imperatives and contexts. Methodologically, this means that rather than attending to embodied performances as complete, whole texts, critics should look for the ways in which these performances draw from both historical and cultural imperatives. Practically, rather than analyze, for example, a television program as an isolated event, a performance perspective urges critics to also examine the contemporary political and social contexts that surround and are part of the television program. Similarly, in this dissertation I attend to the ways in which performances of race/ethnicity and hybridity reflect current anxieties and tensions surrounding race/ethnicity within the U.S. Contemporary hybridity, at least within the forthcoming analysis, is related to the expression of the "authentic self," which elides notions of identity politics, per se, and instead suggests that hybridity should be celebrated and valorized insofar as it conforms to very specific definitions and borders.

In this project, my own actions as a critic are informed by two key precepts of both critical rhetoric and critical performance approaches: an understanding of the necessity and value of a critical stance and an awareness of, and responsiveness to, its contingent nature. I have attempted to remain aware of the fluctuations and structures of power that undergird the discourses and texts that I examine, while understanding that power is not absolute; that is, I do not subscribe to the concepts of complete domination or complete oppression, but rather have tried to be aware of the ways in which power relations are constantly in flux. I also recognize that I am engaged in piecing together texts, and, to that end, my goal is to remain cognizant of my own positionality within the text that I create. For instance, as a multiracial woman, my identity is, in some ways, impossible to separate from the particular foci of this project, in that my own experiences will inevitably affect the ways in which I read these texts. Thus, it is imperative for me to attempt to be aware of the ways in which my own racial/ethnic and gender identities impact my experiences and understandings of the texts.

**Texts**

In this dissertation, I examine the ways in which hybridity is mobilized in distinctive ways in, through, and/or by various bodies, as well as how specific deployments of the body feature in articulations of hybridity. In order to do so, I focus on mainstream contemporary television, in particular. While mediated representations may not be immediately apprehended as performances in the same way as, for instance, Conquergood (1988, 1992, 2002b) approached performances, the media still provide a site for the dissemination and exploration of performances. That is, while mediated performances are not "live," in the same way as protests or performance art, they function

as what Taylor (2003) refers to as an "archive," or a repository of performances that compliments the study of the "repertoire," or live events. As such, mediated performances, including those on television, can still be understood from a performance perspective; here, my focus on performative aspects of contemporary mainstream television are complemented with a critical rhetorical approach, both of which are suited for examining texts.

I examine mainstream television for two key reasons. First, as Hall (1981) argues, the popular, which includes mainstream television, is a site of struggle, a terrain on which battles—plural—for meanings and identities occur. Simply put, one should study popular culture because of the political implications that it has. Popular culture both produces and reflects ideologies about gender and race, so is an important arena where negotiations about identities take place (Dow, 1996, 2003; Nakayama, 1994; Ono & Buesher, 2001). Thus, popular culture contains political implications that are imbricated with flows of power, as a site where discourses surrounding identities are communicated.

More specifically, as Gitlin (1979) explains, ideology is often relayed through mainstream television programming, via structure or format, genre, characters, topics, and proposed solutions. Fiske (2011) also claims, "television-as-culture is a crucial part of the social dynamics by which the social structure maintains itself in a constant process of production and reproduction: meanings, popular pleasures, and their circulation are therefore part and parcel of this social structure" (p. 1). Similarly, Dow (1996) argues that television texts are "rhetorical entities that can be interpreted as performing particular functions at particular times. These are *persuasive* functions that work to make some ideas, positions, and alternatives more attractive, accessible, and powerful to audiences

than others" (p. 7, emphasis in the original). That is, television not only creates meanings about race, ethnicity, and gender, but it also reflects culturally understood meanings about race, ethnicity, and gender; it both produces and reproduces notions of identity. Contemporary mainstream television is an important site to consider when attempting to understand the ways that race and ethnicity in general, and hybridity in particular, are both depicted and understood culturally. However, it is important to note here that I am not concerned with intent; as Dow (1996) explains, television criticism does not require critics to know or understand intent because television programs can have effects and meanings beyond, and even contradictory to, the creator's original intention.

The second reason for analyzing television texts is that while television may be thought of as an archaic medium, it is still powerfully influential and remains a primary index of popular culture (Dow, 1996; Dubrofsky, 2006; Hill, 2005; Spigel & Olsson, 2004). Spigel (2004) argues that television has transitioned over the years in order to remain contemporary and popular, and still remains highly available and accessible for consumption. As Spigel aptly notes, virtually every household includes a television, making access to television widespread.

Moreover, the increase in crossover between Internet and television means that even households that do not have a television but do have Internet have access to traditional television programming via computers, smartphones, and tablets. That is, television is accomplished differently than it once was; instead of being watched solely on television sets, it is now accessible in a variety of formats and media, and it is disingenuous to neatly partition media formats or venues as in the past. Televised fare is highly accessible online, and even then in different formats: YouTube, Netflix, Hulu, and

Amazon are all popular sites for watching television content. In fact, I viewed the majority of my texts on websites that host television content, including the aforementioned YouTube, Netflix, and Hulu, as well as the Food Network website. However, because the texts I am examining were all originally televised broadcasts, shown on traditional cable television before being available online, I am characterizing them as televised texts.

Additionally, it is disingenuous to assume that the growth of Internet popularity necessarily means that people are not engaging in televised content. For instance, Jenkins (2003) claims that "all evidence suggests that computers don't cancel out other media; instead computer owners consume on average significantly more television, movies, CDs, and related media than the general population" (para. 4). According to the 2010 United States Census Bureau (n.d.), multimedia audiences accessed television more than any other medium, followed by prime time television viewing, cable television viewing, radio listening, Internet, and, finally, newspaper reading.[4] Thus, even with changing technologies and the rising popularity of alternative media, such as computers, television remains culturally relevant. Indeed, this arguably makes television fare, or at least some of it, even more culturally resonant and significant, because particular programming can be replayed and redistributed by various agents, *ad infinitum*—certain content that once quickly disappeared can and does become iconic in ways it never could before.

More specifically, I analyze reality television (RTV) programming, for two important reasons. First, as Hill (2005) argues, reality television in particular has mass appeal; Hill further notes that reality television typically captures at least 50% of the market share in the U.S. Grego (2009) explains that in the 18-49-year-old demographic,

RTV accounted for six of the top 25 shows in 2009, leading networks to include more RTV programming in subsequent seasons. Aside from the mass appeal of RTV, it is also easily available and accessible; due to the low production costs—particularly compared with network programming that features professional actors—RTV programming is found on every major network and has saturated television programming in general (Raphael, 2009). Moreover, with the rise in popularity of RTV and, as aforementioned, the multiplatform (traditional television sets, laptops, tablets, smart phones, and so forth) access to television programming that is currently available, audience participation has been encouraged across the majority of RTV programs (García-Avilés, 2012). That is, audiences are encouraged to engage with television texts in ways not previously thought of, including, but not limited to, voting for their favorite contestants via text message and social media; "tweeting" their opinions about the show on Twitter; and posting comments about television programming on YouTube.

Second, to the extent that contemporary mainstream RTV produces and purports to reflect "the real" of cultural identities, it does so in a way that Debord (1983) calls spectacular. That is, television functions as the image or simulation of the real; Baudrillard (1994), like Debord (1983), refers to television as the hyperreal, the intense spectacle of identities writ large on the television screen. For noted RTV scholar Andrejevic (2004), along with others (Andrejevic & Colby, 2006; Hearn, 2006; Kilborn, 2003), RTV is so popular because even though audiences, on some level, recognize that RTV is not necessarily *real*, they still search for authenticity. As a consequence, RTV becomes increasingly extreme and detached from reality, which, Andrejevic (2004) claims, makes audiences believe that RTV is *more* real. Thus, RTV purports to showcase

reality, while presenting a heightened spectacle of such. In regard to identities, and, in particular, race and ethnicity, RTV becomes a staging of the spectacle of race and ethnicity. Hybrid bodies, displayed on this stage of RTV, are thus mediated in ways that are powerful, in that they reach a significant amount of people, purport to represent authentic identities, and are reflective of contemporary notions regarding racial and ethnic hybridity.

In this dissertation, I hope to contribute to extant television studies literature, specifically in regard to RTV, in two key ways. First, I aim to complicate more straightforward analyses of mediated representations of race/ethnicity through a focus on hybridity and racial/ethnic ambiguity. While Beltran (2005), for instance, calls for more scholarly attention to racial/ethnic ambiguity within the media, hybridity scholars have rarely focused on the media. Second, and more importantly, I include the salient component of the body, a component that is missing from much scholarship on mediated representations of race/ethnicity *and* hybridity. That is, I aim to analyze the ways in which the body features in mediated representations of racial/ethnic hybridity, particularly within RTV. Ultimately, this dissertation suggests that embodied hybridity, specifically within the rubric of RTV, is often apprehended as free, unique self-expression, as a function of the "authentic self." This reflects contemporary anxieties around race/ethnicity to the extent that it captures liberal sentiments that valorize individual worth and expression, including around race/ethnicity, but it makes race/ethnicity far more available for discipline in line with more conservative sensibilities, especially around containing and confining race. As such, hybridity, here, is articulated as opposed to a politics of identity, thus justifying the disciplining of

race/ethnicity if and when bodies attempt to cross the rigidly drawn borders of "appropriate" expression. This encouragement to express oneself and simultaneous critique of any expression that is out of line is further accomplished precisely because so much of RTV programming *does* ostensibly encourage freedom of expression, particularly when bodies are engaged in a variety of creative practices that align with liberal sensibilities of self-actualization and personal growth.

Thus, in this project, I use a variety of televised texts that feature hybrid bodies deployed in dancing, modeling, and cooking. Specifically, I first analyze two popular reality television series centered on dance. *So You Think You Can Dance* is a competition-style reality television show that features amateur (but typically highly trained) dancers who are paired up to compete in a variety of dance styles from week to week. Dancers are eliminated each week, leading up to a finale where "America's Favorite Dancer," a title garnered by fan votes, is crowned. *Dancing with the Stars* is, similarly, a competition-style reality television show featuring couples dancing together each week; however, as opposed to *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Dancing with the Stars* has an added twist: celebrities are paired with professional ballroom dancers throughout the course of the season. Each week, a couple is eliminated, and the season ends with the celebrity with the most audience votes receiving the coveted "mirror ball trophy" and the title of champion. Second, I investigate the long-running reality television series *America's Next Top Model*. Produced and orchestrated by legendary supermodel Tyra Banks, *America's Next Top Model* focuses on a group of aspiring models who must compete in a new photo shoot challenge each week, followed by the elimination of the weakest model of the challenge. In the finale, the final two contestants compete in a

fashion show, after which the panel of judges (including Banks) chooses the winner.

Third, I analyze three cooking shows on The Food Network: *Simply Delicioso with Ingrid Hoffmann*, which features Latin cuisine; *Aarti Party* with Aarti Sequiera, which focuses on traditional Indian food with a contemporary twist; and *Everyday Italian* with Giada de Laurentiis, which includes Italian-American fare.

I chose each of these texts as representative of various instantiations of hybridity. Each practice—dance, modeling, and cooking—is engaged in and navigates very specific tensions relevant to hybridity; moreover, various bodies within each of those practices negotiate the relevant tensions in distinctive ways. Thus, this selection of texts collectively furnishes various mobilizations of hybridity across a host of embodiments and embodied practices. Moreover, these respective mobilizations of hybridity reveal distinctive anxieties and tensions. Assessing them can illuminate what and how hybridity means in this historical moment, as well as extend and refine theoretical understanding of hybridity more broadly.

**Procedures**

In order to conduct my analysis, I watched the most recent three seasons of *So You Think You Can Dance* (seasons 9, 10, and 11) and *Dancing with the Stars* (seasons 17, 18, and 19). I have chosen the most recent three seasons of these shows as it is a sufficient time frame to understand contemporary manifestations of hybridity in the media. Similarly, I have analyzed the most recent three "cycles" of *America's Next Top Model* (cycles 19, 20, and 21); the most recent two include male models alongside female models. I watched all of these seasons/cycles during their original broadcast, but revisited them, as needed, online when conducting my analysis. Additionally, I watched clips of

the Food Network shows online, at www.foodnetwork.com, where these specific shows are readily available. Food Network shows are often only produced for one or two seasons, and then syndicated for many years afterwards. Thus, while the shows I am focusing on in this study air repeatedly on the Food Network, I had the best and most extended access to the selected texts online.

As stated above, I analyze these texts through the perspectives of critical rhetoric and critical performance by focusing on the ways in which the various bodies featured in the texts perform hybridity. This approach is similar to a textual analysis in that I am "reading" the texts for meaning, but differs in that I am going to "read" the performing bodies in the texts for meanings surrounding racial and/or ethnic hybridity, as well as, to some extent, gender. My analytical process began with repeated viewings of all of my texts, during which I took extensive notes. As I viewed these texts, I focused on performances of racial and/or ethnic hybridity, including more implicit instances where the body is marked as racially/ethnically hybrid as well as more explicit, discursive engagement with hybrid identities and/or performances. More specifically, I looked for instances where racially and/or ethnically marked bodies inhabit and perform "other" racially and/or ethnically marked identities; for instance, I attended to moments when White bodies perform hip-hop, a dance historically associated with working-class, urban youth of color, and moments when bodies of color perform dances historically marked as "white," including but not limited to waltz, foxtrot, and quickstep. Additionally, I focused on instances where one or more racially and/or ethnically marked identities are merged on or in one body, and the subsequent creation of the ethnically ambiguous body is valorized and encouraged, such as that which occurs within the arena of modeling, where

vaguely exotic—but still ambiguous enough to "pass" as White—models often meet more success than both their "lacking" (Probyn, 2001), White counterparts and "overly" ethnic peers. Finally, I looked for instances in which an "other" race and/or ethnicity is consumed by or permeates a body, such as occurs during the preparation and consumption of racially and ethnically marked food.

These various mobilizations of hybridity each draw upon different historical and cultural imperatives and contexts; although they are all contemporary, the peculiar configuration of specific races and/or ethnicities in each case, as well as the distinctive bodily deployments of the same, make sense in light of particular anxieties and tensions relevant to particular hybridities, which I argue is inseparable from the texts themselves. Aligned with McGee's (1990) concept of textual fragmentation, this present study attempts to piece together myriad instantiations of hybridity, alongside their historical-cultural contexts, in order to draw out the discourses of racial and/or ethnic hybridity represented within the texts. Confluent with a critical rhetorical approach, this dissertation focuses on the politics of representation within a text—how racially and/or ethnically hybrid bodies are depicted, and what this means in contemporary culture, given both contemporary and historical understandings of race and ethnicity within the U.S. Moreover, aligned with a critical performance approach, I apprehend hybridity as something that bodies *do*, through their habits of production and consumption, movements, discourse, and visual markings.

After repeated viewings of my texts, I read through my notes, looking for events and processes regarding the ways in which racial and/or ethnic hybridity is visually and discursively displayed. While my focus was on the aforementioned types, or

instantiations, of hybridity, I also attended to other possible mobilizations of hybridity that I had not initially foreseen, in an effort to avoid beginning my analysis with *a priori* categories that I then applied to the texts. Once I coded my notes, and grouped the various articulations of hybridity into specific events or processes, I located the relevant historical and cultural contexts of each mobilization of hybridity.

It is important to note that I do not attribute intent to the producers, writers, or "performers" featured in my texts, and it is also beyond the scope of this study to examine or assess reception, or even characterize the audience; rather, I am interested in evaluating articulations of otherness and whiteness as evidenced by consistent patterns apparent in the shows, respectively and collectively. Accordingly, audience demographics are not directly relevant; moreover, I do not want to assume that demographics are indices of cultural identity—first, as I have noted, I do not wish to reinforce notions of authenticity, in general, and especially as relevant to race and ethnicity, and second, whiteness and otherness are both cultural constructs that are not interchangeable with White bodies and raced or ethnic bodies.

**Endnotes**

1. Although I recognize that race and ethnicity are two separate constructs, they are often conflated in work about hybridity. Beltran, for instance, argues that in many ways, the notions of being multiethnic and multiracial are interchangeable. For instance, there has been much debate about whether or not Latina/o is a racial or ethnic category. Beltran argues that while Latina/os are more properly considered an ethnic, rather than racial, group, Latina/o people in the U.S. have become a "racialized ethnic group," and Latina/o is often treated as a race (Beltran, 2005).

2. I in no way subscribe to the idea that there is an objective "other," but am invoking this term in the same theoretical vein as hooks (1992) and Said (1978), to describe people who are not included within the rubric of whiteness and are treated, by dominant groups, as minority populations who are different from, and less than, the dominant groups. That is, those who are "othered" are marked as different from those who are dominant; they are positioned, discursively, rhetorically, and ideologically, as outside of an established (although, I must reiterate, not objectively existing) norm.

3. In capitalizing "White" and "Black," I follow Wachal (2000), who argues that when referring to people and race, both "White" and "Black" are not color terms, but rather proper nouns. However, in line with Nakayama and Krizek (1995), I do not capitalize terms such as "whiteness," "white supremacy," or "white superiority," nor do I capitalize "white" when not referring to people (e.g., "white dances" and "white spaces") because in these cases, white refers not to race or people per se, but rather to sociocultural constructs.

4. According to Census data, the total percentages of media consumption are as follows: (a) 92.91% of people watched television; (b) 83.06% of people watched prime time television; (c) 82.61% of people watched cable television; (d) 82.14% of people listened to the radio; (e) 77.31% of people accessed the Internet; and (f) 67.19% of people read the newspaper. In general, there was little variation with respect to age, with the exception of 18-24-year-olds, who accessed the Internet slightly more (92.7%) than television (89.61%). Even taking into account factors such as gender, race, and ethnicity, television viewing remained consistently more predominant than other forms of media access. Even amongst the lowest income group surveyed (those making less than $10,000 a year), 89.85% watched some form of television, suggesting the wide availability and relative affordability of television access.

CHAPTER II

CHOREOGRAPHING RACE: DANCE AND

THE PERFORMANCE OF HYBRIDITY

An ostensible belief in cultural acceptance and inclusivity has long been a salient part of the U.S. ethos, a country that prides itself on being, variously, a "melting pot," "salad bowl," and "mosaic" comprised of rich racial and ethnic diversity. Indeed, the U.S. "is a nation composed of immigrants, so the oft-repeated narrative goes, and its promise as a land of opportunity for hard-working, law-abiding citizens continues to be exalted as among its preeminent gifts" (DeChaine, 2009, p. 44). To be sure, there is a continued insistence that the U.S. values and encourages difference and equality. However, despite these lofty aims, division and difference persist within U.S. borders. As Anzaldúa (2012) reminds us, borders can be thought of as both literal, as in the actual physical borders surrounding nation-states (e.g., the fence that demarcates the U.S.-Mexico border), and symbolic, as in the psychical borders separating cultures. As "bounding, ordering apparatuses, whose primary function is to designate, produce, and/or regulate the space of difference," borders function to differentiate "the self from others, one culture from another, desirable elements from undesirable ones, and, often enough, 'us' from 'them'" (DeChaine, 2009, p. 44). Whether literal or symbolic, borders function to separate the centers from the margins in an attempt to neatly order and categorize people and cultures.

Here, I focus on the symbolic nature of borders within the U.S., specifically focusing on those borders that are established precisely—ironically—via a guise of fusion and hybridity.

The establishment of symbolic borders within actual ones is often predicated on the decline of stable nation-states and the development of permeable literal borders, both characteristics of current political, geographical, economical, and sociocultural conditions (Appadurai, 2005, 2011). As DeChaine (2009) astutely notes:

> As economic borders loosen, sociocultural borders tighten; as the U.S. economy becomes ever more subject to the disjunctive flows of a global cultural economy, its majoritarian reaction is to ally its anxieties by maintaining control where it can on cultural terrain. In a post-9/11 climate stoked by an omnipresent affect of terror—the threat of a cellular enemy who is both outside and potentially inside our national borders—it is perhaps unsurprising that the population's fears and uncertainties, as well as its search for enemies, turn inward. (p. 50)

That is, current tensions surrounding the implosion and disintegration of the nation-state prompted in part by fears of terrorist activity on U.S. soil have been projected within the U.S., such that the feared "other" no longer only lurks mysteriously outside the borders, threatening to permeate closely defined boundaries, but is also inside the parameters of the U.S. This is illustrated, for instance, by not only contemporary efforts directed to keeping "others" out (i.e., border control to staunch the flow of immigrants), but identifying, exposing, and ejecting those who have already infiltrated. Of course, the concept of domestic terrorism certainly is not new; many U.S. citizens remember the so-called Unabomber, the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, and the Centennial Olympic Park bombing in 1996. However, domestic terrorism has become a salient and pressing issue post-9/11; for instance, a 2014 CNN poll indicated that U.S. citizens are increasingly concerned about domestic

terrorism, particularly in light of the currently prevalent belief that ISIS "has operatives within the U.S. able to commit an act of terrorism at any time" ("CNN poll," 2014, para. 3). Uncertainty about the location of the inevitable threat to security and, in many ways, cultural purity and fixedness, is a catalyst for what Appadurai (2006) refers to as the "anxiety of incompleteness," which is "always latent in the project of complete national purity" and often leads to "the sense of social uncertainty about the large-scale ethnoracial categories" (pp. 7-9). These anxieties and tensions, as Appadurai suggests, are often manifested as distrust of racially and ethnically marked "others," leading to the desire to create clearly demarcated boundaries and barriers. Here, the threat is not so much external—although, to be sure, the threat of "infiltration" of "others" into the U.S. remains a salient tension—as it is internal. In this chapter, I interrogate the ways that globalization, permeable borders, and the twin threats of immigration and terrorism from *outside* of the U.S. become internalized and managed as threats from *within* the U.S. Hybridity is particularly implicated here because of its ambiguity and inherent resistance to clear classification and, thus, marshalling of differences and symbolic borders within the U.S.

Hybridity, and the hybrid body, are obvious disruptions to a desire for clearly marked boundaries. Despite what Appadurai (2006) claims is a desire to "de-melt the melting pot," so to speak, hybrid bodies refuse clear stratification; they insist on staying melted across and between borders. In this current climate, hybrid bodies present a threat to "real" America and Americans, with "real" standing in for a signifier for racial purity, specifically whiteness. Exacerbating present tensions about immigration and terrorism within and between borders and nation-states is the recognition that the hybrid body

remains largely unmarked and fluid, able to transcend boundaries *within* nation-states with apparent ease. Salient to this chapter is the ways in which this "melting pot" ethos, and its attendant anxieties surrounding the "other," are managed rhetorically by and through particular bodies, and how hybridity becomes one way of managing these tensions surrounding the disruptive "othered" body. With the increased permeability of borders, particularly those physically and psychically demarcating the nation-state, comes an increased need to categorize race and ethnicity within the U.S. Diversity within the U.S., while often celebrated, still remains a contentious issue, and an understanding of how this diversity is conceptualized and managed, symbolically and rhetorically, on, by, and through bodies, can illuminate tensions regarding race, ethnicity, and diversity as they are accomplished throughout the contemporary U.S. In this chapter, I focus specifically on hybridity apprehended and/or accomplished as ostensible *traveling* through and across "otherness." There are two particular instantiations of this that speak to distinctive mobilizations of anxieties around hybridity: first, the occupation of an "other" body as a means of hybridizing the self and affirming the primacy and privilege of whiteness; and second, the denial of the possibility of hybridity, and attendant exoticization of the "other," as a means of heightening difference and clearly delimiting borders.

To further explore the ways that hybridity and fears thereof are rhetorically mobilized relative to occupation in order to manage anxieties surrounding racial and ethnic "others," I conduct an analysis of two competition-based reality dance shows, *So You Think You Can Dance* (*SYTYCD*) and *Dancing with the Stars* (*DWTS*). As a medium of performance inextricably tied to historical and sociocultural imperatives, dance is

frequently if not inevitably imbued with race and/or ethnicity, thus it is appropriate to investigate the ways in which particular dance performances, performed by particular bodies, accomplish race and/or ethnicity. In this chapter, I discuss the performers/performances featured on *SYTYCD* and *DWTS* and focus on the ways in which hybridity is mobilized as *traveling*, in various ways, to manage and negotiate the threat and anxieties posed by "otherness." In the following section, I will explicate the ways in which dance is connected to historical and sociocultural imperatives, followed by a description and analysis of my artifacts.

## Dance and the Performance of Identities

Dance has served myriad functions throughout the years. From the celebratory or cultural dances endemic to specific regions, to the social dances popular in 14th- to 16th-century England, all the way to the current iterations of dance seen on television shows such as *SYTYCD* and *DWTS,* dance has played a prominent role in society. Dance often serves a number of functions, some of which are seemingly in tension with each other. Most saliently, dance can—and often does—express meaning, in general, and of identity or subjectivity, in particular.

### Dance as Expression of Identity

Dance is further complicated in that it can, in some instances, work as a type of performance that is capable of transmitting meaning via dancers' bodies. As Foster (2010) notes, choreographers were the first to recognize the communicative potential of dance, claiming that "dance makers saw the body itself as meaning-filled, and they believed that the pragmatic execution of movement offered a glimpse into the self of the

performer that felt more real and revealing than any performances in which the dancer enacted a character" (p. 64). Foster further illustrates that "conceptions of the kinesthetic imbued dance with a unique capacity for communication" and that this kinesthetic movement works to "…awaken and enliven feelings" (p. 118). For example, modern dancer and choreographer Martha Graham was well known for her ability to move audiences and evoke their emotions; actor Gregory Peck, who worked with Graham, once noted that Graham believed that "body language expresses inner feelings and the emotions of the moment. The words are libretto, the emotions the music and the body the instrument" (cited in Anderson, 1991, para. 5). Similarly, Agnes De Mille was known for choreographing pieces that deeply affected audiences; her pieces were often praised for the feelings that they evoked. Through dance, the body becomes a transmitter of meaning that can communicate to audiences through performance and movement.

Moreover, another dimension of dance as a performance is that it is not only able to convey emotions, but also identities and subject positions. For instance, hip-hop has historically, and contemporarily, been mobilized as an urban dance style that embodies resistance against dominant groups, including upper-class, wealthy White people. As such, performing this dance is an instance of performing resistance to domination and traditional norms. Although dance began as a general study and representation of movement, in the late 20th century it became "…an interest in all movement as varieties of signifying cultural and individual identity" (Foster, 2010, p. 66). Foster additionally notes, "each moment of watching a dance can be read as the product of choices, inherited, invented, or selected, about what kinds of bodies and subjects are being constructed and what kinds of arguments about these bodies and subjects are being put forth" (p. 4). That

is, dance, like other types of performances, works to construct identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and so forth) through performance. Indeed, as Hamera (2011) reminds us, the power of dance to (re)create identities should not be underestimated, since

> Every day, urban communities are danced into being. This is more than a metaphor. It is a testament to the power of performance as a social force, as cultural poesis, as communication infrastructure that makes identity, solidarity, and memory shareable. (p. 1)

Dance as a performance calls into being positionalities and identities through its wholly embodied enactment.

As such, dance can be conceptualized as always already political, as relevant to bespeaking cultural location, as well as a process of (re)shaping subjectivities. This crafting of subjectivities is particularly important in light of my interest in assessing the mobilizations and implications of hybridity. For example, DeFrantz (2006) claims that dance has the capability of transmitting notions of race and class, as well as an "unusual nodule of everyday American politics" (p. xvi). In the bringing together of multiple bodies, Martin (1998) asserts, dance can mobilize the enactment of politics and bring about new political subjectivities. Similarly, Franko (2002) recognizes the power of choreographed dance to (re)order "the physical potentials and limitations of the human body's movement," and through this ability, Franko argues, dance has the power to represent social and political spheres of human action (pp. 1-2). Novak (1990) argues that dance, specifically improvisational dance, has the ability to produce and reflect identities, including gender, race, and class. Hamera (2011) also emphasizes the political potential of dance, stating:

> Vernacular landscapes made through dance are deeply and thoroughly political.

These   landscapes are shot through with contestatory notions of appropriate gender performances and gender resistances, culture- and class-inflected expectations of the relationship between art and life, and issues of discipline and authority (p. 61).

More specifically, scholars have argued for the capabilities of dance to shape gender and race/ethnicity, both salient features in my discussion of hybridity. Foster (2010) contends, "not only do dancers perform specific constructions of gender, and various bodily practices cultivate specifically gendered identities, but the very notion of choreography itself has been variously gendered over time" (p. 13). That is, women and men typically have very different types of dance choreography that are acceptable to perform, and are placed into socially approved gendered roles through the type of choreography that they enact. For instance, in ballet as well as more contemporary forms of dance, such as jazz, *fouetté* turns are typically only performed by women, whereas men typically perform the similar *á la seconde* turns. Additionally, men are expected to complete more rotations in their pirouette turns than women, jump higher than women, and lift women in the air; whereas women are expected to perform more sustained leg extensions, dance *en pointe*, and be lifted by men. Moreover, the way in which one dances is highly gendered; men are often expected to be strong, aggressive, and grounded, while women are often expected to be elegant, graceful, and ethereal. As such, bodily movement becomes one way of engraining gender roles not only into the comportment of bodies, but their very materiality.

Dance also has the potential to communicate messages about race/ethnicity. For instance, Murphy (2011) interrogates choreographer Santee Smith's Kaha:wi, an evening-length dance that tells the story of the Haudenosaunee people. Murphy argues that this dance mobilizes bodies to (re)present the Haudenosaunee culture and history.

Similarly, Srinivasan (2011), in her analysis of the female Bharata Natyam dancing body, argues that this body negotiates tensions surrounding the Orientalized female body. Franken (1996) analyzes the popular reception of Egyptian dances, claiming that the film and television depictions of a particular dancer, Farida Fahmy, communicates notions of Egyptian dance as modest and respectable throughout the Middle East.

**Dance as Cultural Fusion**

Dance can, and has, been addressed as bringing communities of different cultures and histories together, and dance has also been traced as migrating and evolving across cultures and histories. While dance does, in many ways, distinguish and create sociocultural identities, it can also serve to construct cultural structures of feeling and *communitas*—to borrow a phrase from Victor Turner (1982)—that enmesh and imbricate dancing bodies in a web of textured sociality, and can suture people and cultures together (Hamera, 2011). As Martin (1998) argues, when people see dance, they are interpellated to literally dance along. That is, viewers of dance are called to experience the emotions that the dancers are portraying, participating in the dance through a sort of communion with the performers on stage. Further, Delgado and Munoz (1997) state that dance "…bring[s] people together in rhythmic affinity where identification takes the form of histories written on the body through gesture" and that through the enactment of dance, "a shifting sense of community is configured and reconfigured—day after day and night after night" (p. 9). Dance has the ability to (re)create communities and cultures through movement, and has the capability to "[organize] relationships across culture and class to form affective environments, geographies of the heart" (Hamera, 2011, p. 60). Thus, dance has the unique capacity to move past differences of race, class, gender, age,

socioeconomic status, and so on, to form communities of emotionality. Of course, this is

not to say that dance always accomplishes this; however, dance can function to bring

people together.

**Dance as Performance of Culture**

Like hybridity, dance can and has been seen as both a response to, and reflection

of, the historical contexts in which it is found. As Foster (2010) states, both choreography

and performance "…derive their meaning from a specific historical and cultural moment"

(p. 5). That is, dance in many ways is temporally and historically bound, drawing

meanings from cultural contexts and responding to those contexts through movement.

Implicated in this expression are the dancing bodies that perform history and meanings;

indeed, "the dancer's performance draws upon and engages with prevailing senses of the

body and of subjectivity in a given historical moment" (Foster, 2010, p. 2). For instance,

Argentine tango originated in the brothels of Argentina, with the original dance created as

an expression of the relationship between the brothel workers and the gauchos, or

cowboys, who visited the sex workers. However, once the dance became popular in

Europe, and Paris particularly, it became associated with high society and socioeconomic

privilege. Later, Argentine tango moved into Hollywood, with noted "Latin lover"

Rudolph Valentino ushering in its popularity. Dance, then, is an important facet of

culture and is inextricably intertwined with the contexts in which it is found.

As a type of performance that occurs, and is transmitted, worldwide, dance

additionally has the potential to communicate hybridity. For example, Wulff (2005) notes

that the Irish dancing body, through globalized media and movement, has been seen

throughout the world, particularly through the televised and live phenomenon of

Riverdance. Ness (1997) investigates Ingorot, a transnational style of ballet based in the Philippines, arguing that mediated representations of this dance style in the Western world has led to cultural hybridity and the fusion of Eastern and Western dance styles, an argument that dovetails with the communal potential of dance described above. On a less positive note, Savigliana (1995) claims that through global transmission, the Argentine tango has become a commodity and product of imperial consumption.

Additionally, commonly known dances such as the hula, flamenco, salsa, samba, Bollywood, hip-hop, and so forth all have roots in specific racial/ethnic identities and locales, but have migrated geographically; they can be understood as hybrid forms of dance. For instance, samba music originated in Africa, but the dance itself (combined with the music) was created and made popular in Brazil, where it is traditionally danced during Carnival. That is, samba in itself is a hybrid dance, with ties to specific cultures. Similarly, Bollywood dance can also be considered hybrid; movies filmed and produced in India, referred to as "Bollywood" (a take on the Western Hollywood industry), often include lavish and intricately choreographed musical numbers, featuring a distinct style of dance. With the advent of globalization, the dance style featured in these movies, colloquially called "Bollywood" in the U.S., became popular throughout the world. Hula, as often practiced and performed in the U.S., can also be deemed a hybrid dance of sorts. Originating in the Hawaiian Islands, hula, or at least the Western conceptualization of it, actually encompasses a number of cultures and dance styles, including Tongan, Polynesian, and Tahitian. Originally practiced as a form of worship and reverence, hula was radically affected by Western missionaries, who demanded that women and men wear more modest costumes and, in some cases, that women stop performing the dances

completely. Following this period of Western intervention, hula dancing gradually transitioned to a more tourist-friendly, commercialized enterprise, as largely performed within the contemporary U.S. In addition to the aforementioned examples, a number of dances are closely tied to historical and sociocultural contexts, and in many cases, are connected to race and ethnicity within the social imaginary. It is notable that, in the popular imaginary, each of these dances and the bodies that perform them are very clearly delineated in terms of race and/or ethnicity; their hybrid features are erased, suggesting an impulse, when it comes to dance, to cultural discreteness, making it all the more suitable as a subject of study for this project.

Dance thus serves an important function in the positioning and expressing of identities, specifically those of gender, race, and ethnicity. These identities are (re)created through physical movement and the performance of dance. As Madison (2010) claims, embodied performances "become a transformation of knowledge that literally moves our musculature and the rhythms of our breath and heart, as corporeal knowledge conjoins cognition through enfleshment knowledge" (p. 7). Although Madison is speaking of emergent performances, and not necessarily choreographed dance, dance has the ability to etch identity markers into the very bodies of dancers. Perhaps most telling is a common expression among dancers that movements have to be practiced until they are in one's "muscle memory"; the phrase "muscle memory" evokes a body that remembers, that knows, and that is capable of expressing identities through performance and movement.

It is important to note here that although dance is tied to historical, cultural, racial, and ethnic contexts, I am not arguing for any authenticity associated with any dance. That

is, it is not my goal to claim that, for instance, samba can only be performed by "authentic" Brazilian people, or that Bollywood can only be performed by dancers who are "authentically" Indian. Rather, what is salient for my purposes is the fact that, as discussed above, many if not most dances are clearly and definitively associated with specific races, ethnicities, and bodies in the popular imaginary—that is, they are perceived as "authentically" representative of a particular racial or ethnic culture. I seek to assess accomplishments of these dances by dissonant (per that imaginary) bodies in the texts under review in order to illuminate the contemporary anxieties and tensions around "otherness" as well as how they are managed.

## Hybridity on the Television Screen

*SYTYCD* is a competition-style reality show that premiered on Fox on July 20, 2005 *("So You Think You Can Dance,"* n.d.). The show completed its 11th season on September 3, 2014, with the 12th season set to begin in summer of 2015. Although the show has undergone several iterations throughout its 11 seasons, the basic premise remains the same: A group of dancers compete to be crowned "America's Favorite Dancer." The format of the show is straightforward and proceeds in three phases. First is the audition phase, which follows auditions in four different cities (the chosen cities have changed over the years; in Season 1, auditions were held in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York, while in Season 11, auditions were held in New Orleans, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Atlanta). The show only broadcasts a small number of the actual auditions, while making brief mention of others. After each audition, a panel of four judges confers and either grants the dancer a pass to the Las Vegas stage of auditions, invites the dancer back for a second round of judging, or sends the dancer

home. Dancers invited for the second round of judging must learn and perform choreography, and after that round, some dancers are given a pass for Las Vegas and some are sent home. Second is the Las Vegas phase; during this episode, dancers convene in Las Vegas and compete in three fast-paced, intensive days of competition, during which the dancers must learn and perform choreography in a variety of dance genres. After each performance, dancers are eliminated. Finally, a cohort of 20 dancers (10 men, 10 women) are selected and announced.

In the third and final phase of the show (the only phase that is broadcast live), dancers partner with each other and randomly choose a style of dance that they will perform every week. Once a week, the pairs perform their chosen dance style, and viewers are asked to vote on their favorite dancers. During the results portion of the show, the three women and three men with the fewest votes are up for elimination. The four judges for that week confer and choose one woman and one man to be eliminated. This process continues once a week until there are only eight dancers (four women, four men). At that point, eliminations are solely at the discretion of the audience, and the judges only offer their input on the quality of dances/dancers. Eventually, there are four dancers (two women, two men) remaining in the competition, and they are ranked from first-fourth place based on viewer's votes. One notable exception is that from seasons 9-11, one male and one female dancer were announced as winners; in previous seasons, there was only one winner.

*SYTYCD* is one of the longest-running dance reality shows in the U.S. and includes a wide variety of dance styles throughout each season. As "America's Favorite Series" ("*So You Think You Can Dance*," n.d.), the show reaches a large audience. Since

its inception, *SYTYCD* has been nominated for over 50 Emmy Awards, and has won more than 13. The show has also met with high critical acclaim, ranking as the number one watched show during its premiere season and enjoying similarly high ratings well into its 11th season. As a popular, well-known show, *SYTYCD* is poised to communicate information about dance to a large U.S. audience, particularly since a key component of the show (eliminations and the choice of a winner) depends upon audience participation. Thus, *SYTYCD* is a productive site for investigating the ways in which hybridity is performed by and through various dancing bodies.

DWTS is also a competition-style reality show, and it premiered on ABC on June 1, 2005 ("*Dancing with the Stars*," n.d.). The 20th season of *DWTS* is currently underway, having premiered on March 15, 2015. Based on the U.K. show *Strictly Come Dancing, DWTS* has a simple premise: It pairs professional ballroom dancers with celebrities (ranging from actors, reality show stars, professional athletes, singers/musicians, talk show hosts, and so forth), and each week the couples compete against each other by performing a variety of dance styles. Although the format of the show has changed over time, most notably in regard to the dance styles performed, the judging panel, the professional dancers, and the number of couples competing, the basic premise remains the same throughout the seasons. After each dance, a panel of three or four judges (this varies, although in seasons 19 and 20, there are consistently four judges) provides critique, followed by an individual score ranging from 1-10. These scores count towards the elimination of a couple, and are added to scores obtained from audience votes— audiences can vote by calling or texting, or through social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Each episode features an opening number, including the *DWTS* troupe,

professional dance partners, and celebrities, followed by at least one individual dance by each couple. At the end of the show, the eliminated couple is announced. As the season progresses, and fewer couples remain, the dancers are required to complete a number of challenges, including performing more than one dance per episode, choreographing and performing in group routines, competing in a dance-off for extra judges' points, and so forth.

Both *SYTYCD* and *DWTS* premiered in June 2005, meaning that they are the two longest-running competition style reality dance shows. Although *DWTS* began as a traditional ballroom dance show, featuring smooth/standard dances (waltz, Viennese waltz, foxtrot, tango, quickstep), Latin/rhythm dances (paso doble, cha cha, rumba, samba, jive) and club dances (salsa), in more recent seasons the show has also included nontraditional dance styles, such as contemporary and jazz. Since *DWTS* premiered, it has garnered over 90 Emmy nominations, and has received over 13 Emmy Awards. In its 19th season, *DWTS* was the most-watched entertainment program on Monday nights for 5 straight weeks, garnering approximately 14.9 million viewers (Kondolojy, 2014). As a program with consistently high ratings, *DWTS* is a popular show, which, similar to *SYTYCD*, encourages audience participation and engagement. As such, it is also a key site through which hybrid identities are performed and disseminated.

Despite the clear popularity of both *SYTYCD* and *DWTS,* they have both received comparatively little scholarly attention. Egbert and Belcher (2012), in a study of the relationship between viewing competition-based reality television shows, including *DWTS*, and body satisfaction, discovered that viewers of *DWTS* reported greater dissatisfaction with their bodies and an increased desire for thinness. There have,

however, been scholars who have looked at cultural identity aspects of reality dance shows, in ways that confirm extant literature on dance, as discussed above. For instance, Boyd (2012) analyzes the Canadian version of *SYTYCD*, arguing that dance is typically understood as representing freedom, affinity, and creativity, but in the context of the show dance becomes more about competition and individuality. Moreover, Boyd notes that the structure of the show itself serves to epitomize a Canadian national identity of multiculturalism. Quinlan and Bates (2008) investigate *DWTS*; more specifically they analyze the discourses of disability surrounding Heather Mills, activist and former wife of Sir Paul McCartney, who was the first celebrity contestant to perform on *DWTS* with a visible disability. The authors argue that while disabled dancers and athletes are often marginalized, Mills' appearance on *DWTS* served to insert disabled dancers into mainstream discourses, a key component of asserting agency within dance. No analyses have been conducted on either dance show relevant to race and/or ethnicity, much less hybridity. In this chapter, I focus on seasons 9, 10, and 11 of *SYTYCD* and seasons 17, 18, and 19 of *DWTS*; although *DWTS* is currently airing season 20, the season is not yet completed, and so season 19 is the most recent completed season. My aim in this chapter is to examine the ways in which racial and ethnic hybridity is invoked and navigated by and through various bodies within both *SYTYCD* and *DWTS*, and in doing so extend the understanding of how culture and identity are corporeally accomplished in/through dance. In both *SYTYCD* and *DWTS, traveling* is the motif by which hybridity is navigated and accomplished through these texts.

**Have Dance Will Travel: Managing Hybridity Through Dance**

The dancers on *SYTYCD* and *DWTS* manifest both received cultural (including racial or ethnic) identity and hybridity primarily through their embodied performances, including movements, dance styles, costumes, music, and discourses surrounding those performances. Ostensibly, hybrid dance performances become a vehicle through which fears regarding infiltration of "otherness" and the "othered" bodies can be managed; the particular accomplishments of traveling through race and ethnicity via dance in these shows serves to assuage anxieties surrounding the "out of control" borderless "other" within the U.S. While these performances suggest, on the face of it, celebration of diversity as well as the irrelevance of racial and/or ethnic distinctions, they in fact overwhelmingly serve to reify and underscore racial and ethnic difference as well as recenter white privilege. It is important to note that in both *SYTYCD* and *DWTS*, hybridity is rhetorically and performatively articulated through the bodies and performances of the dancers in various ways, suggesting that hybridity, rather than a static concept, is nimble and can itself "flow," or travel, in different ways. Each articulation of hybridity illuminates key nodes regarding the anxieties surrounding difference within the borders of the U.S. and, more specifically, the permeability thereof.

**Staging the Spectacle of Race: Exoticization of "Otherness"**

Many dances on both *SYTYCD* and *DWTS* are clearly marked as "other" even before dancers inhabit them. The music, scenery, costumes, and choreography of these dances all signal a staging of the spectacle of race and ethnicity. For instance, both *SYTYCD* and *DWTS* often feature what might be thought of as "othered" dance styles, including, for example, Latin dances, such as the cha cha, paso doble, samba, and salsa;

Bollywood; hip-hop; krumping; and African jazz. These dances, with few exceptions, largely conform to standard tropes common to the races and/or ethnicities associated with these dances. For instance, on *DWTS* in particular, Latin dances are often referred to as "hot," "spicy," "exotic," and "sexy" by competitors, announcers, and judges alike, signaling key tropes of Latinidad (Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; Ramirez-Berg, 2002; Valdivia, 2005). In almost every season, *DWTS* has one week dedicated solely to Latin dances; for instance, in season 19, one week is deemed "Pitbull Night"—so named after the rapper/entertainer Pitbull, a self-identified Latino-American who serves as a guest judge that week—which is referred to throughout the episode as being "hot," "wild," and "sexy" (episode 6). Similarly, Bollywood, as performed on *SYTYCD,* is often discussed as "difficult" and "hot and sexy" (season 11, episode 9), and on *DWTS* as "hard" and "exotic" (season 19, episode 5), with particular emphasis placed on how extraordinarily different Bollywood is from the more Western styles of dance with which the majority of the competitors are familiar. African jazz is, without exception, referred to on *SYTYCD* as "primal" and "animalistic" (season 11, episode 7; season 11, episode 14).

The staging of the spectacle of racial and ethnic "otherness" is emphasized and further accomplished when the dancing bodies conform, per the cultural imaginary, to the tropes at hand. For example, during one episode of *SYTYCD* (season 11, episode 13), Ricky Ubeda performs a cha-cha. During the rehearsal footage, choreographer Jean-Marc Genereaux states that cha-cha is from Cuba, and since Ubeda is from Cuba as well, "we want Mr. *El Papucho* [Spanish slang for a physically attractive man] to stand out and be hot." Despite Ubeda's initial hesitance to be "sexy," he performs the Latin dance with aplomb, and Nigel Lithgow announces that Ubeda "looked like he had been doing this

[cha-cha] for years," and that he is "utterly believable." That is, despite Ubeda's admitted lack of cha-cha training, he is apprehended as being a "natural" and expertly performing a dance style associated with his culture.

Interestingly, there is crossover permitted among and between identities and imaginaries of "otherness," suggesting that it is acceptable for "them." For instance, on one episode of *DWTS* (season 19, episode 6), Janel Parrish, a self-identified Hawaiian woman, performs a samba to a traditional samba song. Parrish wears a ruffled, neon yellow shirt and neon pink skirt, and has her hair slicked back in a bun with a center part. Embodying the tropicality often associated with Latinidad, Parrish is praised after her performance by judge Bruno Tonioli, who states, "well that is how you corner the market on hot Latinas! Yes!" Despite the fact that Parrish is not identified, by herself or others, as Latina, her body signals Latina stereotypes, including hypersexualization and a distinct tropicality; her physical features and costuming signals "foreign" or "other" in ways consistent with the tropes associated with samba and Latinidad. Similarly, in season 19 of *DWTS*, when Antonio Sabato, Jr., a self-identified Italian man, whose "Italianness" is regularly and explicitly addressed on the show, performs Latin dances, he is often referred to using tropes common to Latinidad, including being called "hot," and receiving praise from Bruno Tonioli for taking him "back to the sultry mood of the streets of old Havana" during a salsa routine (season 19, episode 6). Again, despite the fact that Sabato, Jr. is not identified by himself or others as Latino, his body and features conform to Latin tropes and are received as consonant with the Latin dances.

Similarly, during one episode of *SYTYCD* (season 11, episode 7), Jacque LeWarne, a White woman, and Zachary Everhart, Jr., a White man, perform an African

jazz dance, described by choreographer Sean Cheesman as "animalistic." Following the performance, both dancers receive praise for embodying the "correct" spirit of the dance, with judge Mary Murphy noting, "And man, you were animalistic and down in tonight. You were hot out there! You were a beast out there!"; and judge Misty Copeland referring to LeWarne as "earthy and animalistic." Later in the same season (episode 14), contestants Valerie Rockey, a White woman, and Ricky Ubeda, a Cuban man, perform another African jazz dance, after which Mary Murphy again refers to the dancers as "uninhibited, animalistic" and judge Nigel Lithgow expounds on how "those African routines just require so much stamina," implicitly signaling the greater physicality of "African" dance forms. As hooks (1992) notes, the Black body, hearkened here via African jazz (even though the bodies performing the dance are not marked specifically as Black), is often apprehended as primitive, earthy, and virile. More specifically, Lithgow's comment regarding the athleticism and stamina necessary for dancing African jazz calls to mind the trope of the Black body as hyperathletic and almost superhuman (Li-Vollmer, 2002).

Of course, the spectacle of race is underscored by dancers who read and/or identify as White embodying what might be thought of as traditionally "white" dances (e.g., foxtrot, waltz, classical ballet, and so forth). This is often subtler, speaking to the invisibility and normativity of whiteness, especially as performed by White bodies. For instance, on an episode of *DWTS* (season 17, episode 1), Jack Osbourne performs a traditional foxtrot, and judge Carrie Ann Inaba notes that he has "this incredible nobility and cultivated presence that I have not seen on our ballroom dance floor in a long time." Similarly, on *SYTYCD* (season 19, episode 11), Jacque LeWarne performs a

contemporary ballet piece and is uniformly praised by the judges for her classical

technique. In both of these examples, the judges call attention to the "natural" fit of

White bodies performing dance styles traditionally marked as white; that is, standard

ballroom dance (including foxtrot) is often associated with wealth, nobility, and

whiteness, as is classical ballet. Indeed, there is a clear class component as well, insofar

as both styles of dance often require a great deal of money, time, and investment in order

for dancers to become proficient, whereas "ethnic" dances are often assumed to be

learned within one's culture (e.g., from family members or friends) thus not requiring the

money and time necessary for formal dance lessons. Here, whiteness is marked as the

default, such that there appears to be no need to exoticize or call attention to the White

bodies performing these dance styles. In fact, any time White bodies perform dances

traditionally marked as "white," race/ethnicity, whether marked explicitly or implicitly, is

patently ignored, in sharp contrast to "othered" counterparts; that is, the "otherness" of

other dances and the bodies performing them is drawn in opposition to the invisibility of

the "white" dances and bodies on stage.

Overall, the staging of the spectacle of race serves to reinforce the naturalness of

bodies belonging in certain contexts. Cultures here are articulated as different, a

hearkening to the doctrine of "separate but equal," wherein "other" cultures are

celebrated and valorized, but only insofar as they are drawn clearly against the "standard"

of whiteness, and only when, as I will discuss in the following sections, the "right" bodies

perform the "right" dances; that is, bodies out of context are frequently represented and

remarked upon as unusual in a number of ways. Staging race as a spectacle thus

forecloses on the possibility of hybridity; there is an insistence on carefully classifying

bodies based on the dances they are expected to perform.

**White Men: Party Tourists**

One mode of hybridity as evinced in these shows is that of *tourism* or *touring*. As a manifestation of traveling, touring presupposes an easy moving through and within cultures, transgressing symbolic borders with ease. Just as tourism is accomplished by people with the means and economic capital to travel, the sort of party tourism parlayed in these shows is accomplished by those with cultural (e.g., gender and racial) capital. In a sense, it is similar to attending a costume party, in which people can put on and take off costumes/identities with few—if any—attendant consequences. Marked by a sense of over-the-top camp and parody, party tourists are playful, not serious, about their tourism. Moreover, party tourism is reserved, as mentioned above, for White men.

This concept of being a party tourist is primarily exemplified in the embodied performances of a variety of dance styles. For instance, in one episode of *DWTS* (season 19, episode 2), self-proclaimed "redneck" and professional race-car driver, Michael Waltrip, performs a samba. At issue here is that Waltrip's whiteness is heightened and sharpened, in counterpoint to the "othered" hybrid/Brazilian dance, reinforcing the border between himself and "other." First, samba music is distinct, with an obvious beat that is repeated in any song that one might dance samba to; however, rather than what might be thought of as a traditional samba song, Waltrip dances to "Girls in Bikinis," a contemporary country Western song. Dressed in loose white pants and a plain, pastel blue collared shirt, and in the midst of a ballroom decorated with light-up plastic palm trees and other beach-inspired set decoration, Waltrip awkwardly negotiates a relatively simply samba routine, obviously struggling with the rhythm of the dance (one of, if not the, most

important components of the samba). Throughout the dance, Waltrip's whiteness is retained and reinforced, underwriting his position as "tourist"; he is only visiting and has the cultural capital to partake of the "native" culture in camp, fun ways. Rather than chastise Waltrip for his failure to properly execute the routine, the judging panel notes that the dance "wasn't much of a samba," but otherwise effusively praises Waltrip, with judge Carrie Ann Inaba stating that Waltrip was "pure joy" and reminds her of her dad. Waltrip's dance may, indeed, have been fun and enjoyable, as noted by the judges and Waltrip himself. However, it also bolsters the position of Waltrip as party tourist: He is able to engage with an "other" culture in enjoyable, campy ways, but it is ultimately clear that he is only a visitor who is able to, through the privilege of his conspicuous whiteness, leave at any moment.

In a similar moment to Waltrip's samba, on another episode of *DWTS* (season 17, episode 4), another self-identified "redneck"—and Waltrip's good friend—Bill Engvall also performs a samba (and in another instance of symmetry, also performs with Emma Slater, Waltrip's professional partner). Like Waltrip, Engvall's dance has a kitschy, touristy feel to it: He dances in an outfit similar to Waltrip's, with a background of plastic light-up palm trees. Unlike Waltrip, Engvall dances to a song with a more Latin/samba feel: "Cuban Pete." However, regardless of song choice, Engvall's actual performance is far from resembling a samba. There is a distinctly "campy," over-the-top feel to the performance, which serves to reinforce the unnaturalness of Engvall inhabiting the samba identity/culture. Engvall appears to be playing a character, including overly animated facial expressions and pretending to play the bongos on Slater's backside, using highly emphasized hand gestures. This excessive, over-the-top characterization demonstrates

that Engvall is essentially playing a character: the casual tourist passing through an "other" culture, who could leave at any time. Perhaps characteristically, while the actual execution of Engvall's dance is not endorsed, the performance of kitschy tourism is; the judges praise Engvall's performance, noting that he was off time, but simultaneously lauding him as "the heart of the show," which in some ways serves to highlight and center White masculinity: Engvall as the linchpin who anchors the show, attracts viewers, and entertains the judges.

SYTYCD works somewhat differently, as the dancers on the show are all pre-professional or professional, which means that they can often more easily technically accomplish a variety of dance styles than the untrained celebrities on DWTS. Nonetheless, White men on SYTYCD also inhabit the role of party tourist; it is not "campy" party in this case, and is undertaken with more seriousness, but it is still definitively performative and thus "theme party" nonetheless, in ways that serve similarly to underscore that this is not "really" who they are. For instance, Zack Everhart, Jr., a White man born within the U.S., performs an African jazz routine (season 11, episode 7). During this routine, Everhart wears a multicolored unitard and a spiky, unkempt hairstyle. While it is normal for dancers to wear specific costumes and style their hair in particular ways, dancers, particularly male dancers, who are performing more classical styles, such as standard ballroom, jazz, or contemporary, are often asked to wear their hair neatly styled and slicked back away from their faces; moreover, men very rarely, particularly on this show, wear unitards and are instead typically styled in slacks, shorts, or jazz pants. The party tourism element is less about Everhart wearing a costume—indeed, all of the dancers on this show wear costumes—and more about the sense of

difference and "otherness" that this particular costume evokes. Here, Everhart's unconventional costume and messy hairstyle signal that he is doing a different, "other" style of dance that strays from what is considered the norm. As a tap dancer who notes that he typically performs classical tap routines, which are known for conventional costuming (e.g., slacks and a shirt), Everhart is conspicuously different from the rainbow spandex wearing, "wild" character he portrays in the dance. Later in the season (episode 14), Everhart performs a paso doble as a Dracula-inspired character, after which judge Mary Murphy exclaims over his ability to go "full tilt into the character." In both of these cases, while the dances do not exhibit the same campy feel as, for instance, Engvall's and Waltrip's samba dances, there is a theatrical, performative element that serves to draw the "real" dancer against the dance.

Of course, it is fairly common for dancers to play specific characters while performing dances. However, the characters are usually slightly exaggerated versions of the dancers, and, perhaps more importantly, the characters are typically congruent with the dance styles themselves. That is, dancers performing the waltz might be asked to portray elegance, which is in line with the style of waltz itself; more surprising would be a waltz where dancers were asked to portray, for instance, urban youth or police officers, or really any specific character. Classical ballerinas might be asked to perform the role of Sleeping Beauty or Juliet from *Romeo and Juliet,* but again, this is congruent with the scope and style of classical ballet, which usually draws on adaptations of classic stories and motifs. Similar to the dance styles of waltz, classical ballet, and foxtrot, the paso doble has a specific influence and feel: It was created to signify and portray a Spanish bullfight, with the man, or "lead," dancer playing the matador and the woman, or

"follow," playing the matador's cape and, occasionally, the bull. All that is to say that while dancers all play characters, the paso doble character is more grounded in specific and established cultural practices than the fictional character of Dracula, which Everhart portrays in his paso doble. As such, Everhart's paso doble underscores his ability to wear a literal and figurative costume, sampling other cultures and cultural practices without becoming any of them.

Of course, it is important to note here that I am not claiming some authenticity to Brazilian samba, African jazz, or Latin paso doble. It is not to say that White men cannot, or should not, perform these dances. Rather, my point here is relevant to *how* these men perform these dances, and the ways in which cultural, racial, and ethnic personae are variously inhabited and performed. Here, the privilege of White masculinity allows White male dancers to become party tourists, sampling a number of "other" cultures for a brief amount of time before returning to their "natural" cultural location. That is, they have the ability to playfully and superficially move into and out of cultures with little attendant risk or resistance. Moreover, parody and conspicuous performance are salient features here; it is similar to instances where White U.S. tourists go to luaus in Hawaii and wear plastic leis, sarongs, and imitation coconut bras, which all work to underscore that they do not actually belong in that culture, but are only staying for a brief time. This is most evident within *DWTS*, where dancers like Engvall and Waltrip perform Latin dances as distinctly campy and kitschy, which conspicuously points to their lack of earnestness and belonging within Latin cultures; however, it is also evident in performances such as Everhart's, which underscore the character or acting aspect of embodying other cultures. Rather than being taken seriously and as worthy of

consideration, "otherness" here is boiled down to costume changes, incongruous musical choices (e.g., country Western music for a Latin dance), plastic palm trees, unusual costumes made of rainbow striped spandex, and unkempt hair. Simultaneously, White men are positioned as the party tourists who can investigate these cultures before returning safely back to their own.

**White Women: Cultural Tourists**

While White men are often portrayed as tourists who engage with cultures in campy, kitschy ways, White women are often portrayed as *cultural tourists.* Cultural tourism, which is growing in popularity due to globalization and greater global mobility, is characterized by an interest in viewing and participating in local cultures, customs, and practices; rather than visit conspicuous, typical tourist destinations, cultural tourists immerse themselves in the specific and local in an effort to gather more information about the cultures they are touring (Richards, 2011). In *SYTYCD* and *DWTS*, White women are committed, dedicated, studied, and earnest in their performances, much like cultural tourists. This also bespeaks privilege, notably, in that White women, like White men, are able to not only tour, but do so with presumption of access and impunity. If White men on these shows are the White U.S. tourists who go to kitschy tour bus Hawaiian luaus and wear cheap plastic leis, White women on these shows are the White U.S. tourists who read about Hawaiian culture, arrange for personalized tours, and take hula lessons before attending the Hawaiian luaus. Moreover, there is a clear assumption that these women should be able to be proficient and highly capable at embodying a number of cultures, races, and ethnicities outside of their own; these women are studied and polished, immersing themselves in the cultures which they portray. Nonetheless,

these performances of cultural earnestness again makes conspicuous that it is a performance, and still a type of tourism.

Perhaps most notable is an episode of *SYTYCD* (season 9, episode 12) featuring Witney Carson, a very young, White (also very blonde, underscoring her whiteness) ballroom dancer who regularly discusses growing up in a relatively wealthy, privileged household. Along with professional partner Stephen "tWitch" Boss, Carson is tasked with performing an East Coast hip-hop number. On the show, Carson is seen entering the dance studio while mockingly "throwing up" gang signs, which she continues doing throughout the rehearsal time. As the rehearsal begins, the choreographer warns Carson that she is "about to get rachet," to which she naively replies "what is rachet?", a question that apparently goes unanswered for Carson throughout her practice session. Despite Carson's lack of knowledge about the dance she is to perform, the judges subsequently laud her performance, affirming that she was, indeed, "rachet." Here, Carson is articulated in such a way as to suggest two key motifs: First, that she is not *really* "other," as evidenced by her naïveté about East Coast hip-hop and its associated terms (e.g., "rachet"). Second, despite Carson's talent at temporarily embodying "other," she is fully restored to her "real" White self once her performance is completed.

Carson's naïveté and subsequent bravura performance is echoed by Bethany Mota on *DWTS*. During one episode (season 19, episode 5), Mota, who reads as White, is tasked with performing a hip-hop routine. During the rehearsal time, Mota interviews that the dance "is going to require some swag, so I have to bring my swag out in this routine. See, I don't know what swag is. So… I hope I have it." She then asks her choreographer and professional partner, Mark Ballas, what swag is; Ballas responds that swag is

"confidence in everything you do." During the subsequent performance, Mota appears confident and fully immersed in the feel of the dance. Judge Carrie Ann Inaba remarks, "For sure you have swag… I did not expect you to be that loose. You have swag, for real. Like when you listen to that music, it's just through your body… I love the way you did the hip-hop. I thought it was fantastic, you have the hip-hop vibe going." Like Carson, Mota appears unaware of the hip-hop slang that she is supposed to embody, and yet she manages to embody hip-hop "swag" with panache, as based on the judges' reactions to her routine. Mota's lack of knowledge about hip-hop culture and slang suggests that she is just visiting there, performing a culture without permanently becoming part of the culture, but in earnest and committed ways that underscore her distinction from it.

These motifs are apparent in the performances of other White women as well. For instance, on season 17 of *DWTS*, Elizabeth Berkeley, a White woman, is one of the celebrity performers. She performs a number of Latin dances, including a notable samba on episode 2 of the show. After each performance, the judges laud her talent and ability to fully embody Latin dance styles, while Berkeley often expresses surprise that she is considered "sexy." Again, here Berkeley is implicitly articulated as not "really" Latin; she does not expect to be apprehended as such, yet is successful in this embodiment during every dance she performs. Similarly, on season 11 of *SYTYCD*, Valerie Rockey, a White woman, performs a hip-hop dance (episode 10). One of the judges, Mary Murphy, enthusiastically asserts, "You got your get down down. It was sick, it was frozen, it was buck, it was ridiculous, it was just everything." Murphy's use of slang associated with hip-hop, such as "sick," "frozen," and "buck" bespeaks Rockey's seamless ability to inhabit a dance and, implicitly, identity not only outside of her culture, but her preferred

dance style (Rockey identifies as a tap dancer). Yet, the disconnect between these terms and Rockey's body—and Rockey's bemused expression as Murphy recites them—suggests that Rockey is able to rather effortlessly embody a cultural identity that she can then shed at her leisure, another marker of her cultural capital in this virtual tourism; she can visit and leave at will, just as economic capital affords literal tourism.

Similarly, in another episode (season 11, episode 13), Rockey performs another hip-hop dance. Despite her own doubt about her ability to embody a dance style with which she is unfamiliar, the judges' reactions are once again overwhelmingly positive; Nigel Lithgow notes, "Valerie is such a great performer that she can do whatever and entertain the audience," while Mary Murphy again uses hip-hop slang to describe Rockey's performance, stating, "Valerie you were swagarocious [sic] right there….You just broke it down. Willdabeest [the choreographer] and tWitch [Rockey's dance partner], you brought out the beast in her, what can I say." Although Murphy's use of the word "beast" may or may not be in reference to the choreographer of the piece, who goes by the name Willdabeest, it still hearkens to animalistic, primitive tropes, which Rockey—as a White woman who is often characterized on the show as "innocent," "youthful," and "all smiles"—is distinctly disassociated from when not performing dance routines. Again, Rockey, as the earnest White woman, is not only expected to perfectly perform a culture outside of her own, but also receives praise and affirmation when she does so.

Moreover, Murphy herself, a White woman, liberally uses phrases associated with hip-hop culture, such as "sick," "frozen," "buck," "swag," and her own word, "swagarocious" in order to describe dances and dancers. In so doing, she is able to borrow pieces of a culture for her own use and assume a privileged persona; also

important to note is that there is always an element of excess and performance to Murphy's appropriation of those "other" terms, although they are a regular part of her repertoire—suggesting, again, cultural tourism, but done very well and seamlessly.

While the metaphor of tourism applies to both White men and White women on this show, there are distinct gendered differences. That is, White men have the privilege of assuming an ironic stance towards their tourism; they are able to be party tourists who perform parody and "camp" and are not criticized for failing to embody "other" cultures in serious ways. Conversely, White women do not have this privilege, in that they are expected to be cultural tourists who are proficient at not only a number of different dance styles, but a number of different cultural performances. White women on these shows cannot, for instance, eschew having "swag" when performing hip-hop, but instead must be talented, believable hip-hop dancers. However, in both cases, the conspicuousness of their performances, accomplished in different ways, nonetheless recenters and reaffirms whiteness.

**Men of Color: Trespassers**

While White men and women on both shows are afforded a number of opportunities to freely tour between, in, and through a variety of cultures, the possibility of this type of mobility is typically foreclosed for men of color. That is, for men of color, hybridity, to the extent that it entails traverse into "white" dances, is articulated as a type of *trespass,* wherein men of color are chastised for intruding on white spaces. In these instances, men of color are subtly disciplined, with the suggestion being that they are politicizing or resisting an ostensibly apolitical act: whiteness as accomplished through dance. In so doing, men of color are implicitly accused of "playing the race card."

This motif of trespass is typically predicated on hip-hop, which is often understood, as aforementioned, as being associated with poor, inner-city, urban youth of color who began dancing hip-hop as a form of resistance to the upper-class and dominant powers (Foster, 2010). However, on both *SYTYCD* and *DWTS,* the race politics implicated in hip-hop dance are articulated as inappropriate, a breach of the art of dance, such that those accused of being "too hip-hop" are effectively being accused of not being "white enough." For instance, on season 17 of *DWTS*, Corbin Bleu, a self-identified Jamaican-Italian actor and dancer, is one of the contestants. Despite overtly stating that he is trained in a number of different dance styles, Bleu is known primarily as a hip-hop dancer because of his star-making role in *High School Musical*. At one point during the season (episode 3), Bleu performs a quickstep, which is not only one of the most technically precise standard ballroom dances, but is also the ballroom dance performed at the quickest tempo (hence the name). After his performance, judge Carrie Ann Inaba states, "You have to be careful, you started with great form and then sometimes your hip-hop background kind of comes back in, you get all into it and then you gotta come right back. You gotta keep that up there okay," to which Bleu's professional partner, Karina Smirnoff, replies, "I'll kick it out of him. I'll kick it out of you." Ostensibly, "it" here refers to Bleu's hip-hop style. In the subsequent episode (episode 4), Bleu performs a paso doble. Although a dance not conventionally marked as white, but rather Latin, it is still differentiated from hip-hop in a number of ways, and still requires a great deal of technical precision. Following Bleu's performance, Inaba notes, "Just a little bit of hip-hop still came in. When you were doing this [imitates his arms] the arms were just a little low." Bleu is again taken to task for being too "street" or "hip-hop" for the dance styles

he is embodying.

Similar to Bleu, *DWTS* season 19 contestant Alfonso Ribeiro, a Black actor and classically trained Broadway dancer, often faces critiques of dancing too much like a hip-hop dancer. For instance, during episode 2, Ribeiro dances a samba to a hip-hop song (not of his choosing). The judges subsequently comment that it is not "authentic" enough, with Julianne Hough commenting, "I'm really looking forward to seeing you do something that is more in the samba groove… I kind of want to see the Latin and the ballroom groove," and Len Goodman stating, "You were poppin' like buttons on a tight shirt….Next week I think you got the Viennese waltz. You see, you've had two [dance styles] that were right up your alley. All nice and aye [sic], come on baby. I want to see you in ballroom." The implication here is that Ribeiro is only talented when performing hip-hop (although he does not even identify as a hip-hop dancer), but his talents for performing the more refined dance styles are presumed to be suspect. This classifying of Ribeiro continues throughout the following week (episode 3), when Ribeiro performs a quickstep (not the Viennese waltz, as Goodman had assumed), and Inaba comments, "you're kind of like the hip-hop guy," with the implication being that he should not, in fact, be the "hip-hop guy." During yet another episode (episode 6), Ribeiro dances a salsa, and Hough subsequently states, "To me, I would've loved to see a little bit more salsa. It was very hip-hop." Repeatedly, Ribeiro is criticized for embodying dances marked as variously white and Latin in ways that are not consistent with those understandings, that is, for making his dances "too hip-hop." As aforementioned, hip-hop here stands for race, in that Ribeiro is essentially being charged with making his dancing too much about his own race, and not enough about the race/ethnicity/culture he is

supposed to be embodying. Moreover, playfulness is not in evidence here; these men's performances are not ever read in the spirit of "fun" or "camp" or theatricality in the way that White men's are. Men of color are expected to either fully "embody" the dance, or fail by being too much unlike the dance.

Hip-hop is often characterized as relatively unrefined, particularly in relation to other, more technically precise, dance styles; as a style of dance that is often learned outside of dance studios that offer more formal dance training, hip-hop is typically associated with urban spaces and places inhabited by youth of color. In *SYTYCD* and *DWTS*, while critiques regarding lack of technique are not *necessarily* racialized, in the context I have established, they can arguably be read that way; moreover, these serious critiques (i.e., not dismissed as fun, "camp" performance) are far more consistent for men of color than others. For instance, on season 17 of *DWTS*, Keyshawn Johnson, a Black wide receiver in the NFL, was one of the celebrity performers. During episode 2, host Brooke Burke-Charvet introduces Johnson as "the football hero who the judges say needs to refine his technique just a bit"; indeed, during Johnson's short tenure on the series, the judges continually comment on his lack of proper technique, with judge Carrie Ann Inaba noting that Johnson is "rough around the edges." Again, "lack of refinement" or "rough around the edges" can be read in raced terms; although the comments are not specifically about race, Johnson, unlike his White counterparts, is not lauded for his irrepressible, fun personality—his "real" self needs to be disciplined and refined. Indeed, in the cases of Black men performing "white" dances, such as waltz, foxtrot, and quickstep, lack of refinement and elegance is consistently and distinctly remarked on by judges in ways that make the men's bodies conspicuous. That is, whereas the White men's and women's

*performances* are themselves conspicuous—men's performances campy, women's earnest and studied—Black men's *bodies* are marked as conspicuous.

This lack of refinement is also noted on *SYTYCD*; for instance, during season 11, Marcquet Hill, a Black Latin ballroom dancer, is a contestant on the series. During episode 9, Hill performs a foxtrot, a dance style known, as aforementioned, for smooth lines and technical precision; moreover, foxtrot differs significantly from Latin ballroom, Hill's specialty. Following his performance, judge Mary Murphy criticizes his "frame" (the term for a dance hold in standard ballroom dances, such as waltz, foxtrot, and quickstep), and comments that the technique during his pivots and feather steps was terrible. Judge Nigel Lithgow, rather than offer specific technical advice or critique, simply tells Hill that he "felt a little uncomfortable" with him, without further explaining why. Important to note is that Hill's partner, Jessica Richens, a White woman and jazz dancer, is uniformly praised for her effort and ability in embodying a dance outside of her preferred style, while conversely, Hill's presence makes at least one of the judges "uncomfortable." As a man of color tasked with performing a style of dance often marked as white, Hill's body is called out, specifically as relevant to nonconformity to convention, without the fun, camp element. That is, whiteness is not a "place" to joke about or to interpret, unlike other races and ethnicities; these dances marked as white should not be engaged in those terms.

In both *DWTS* and *SYTYCD*, men of color are portrayed as trespassers into whiteness. Rather than being able to transcend symbolic cultural, racial, and ethnic borders, men of color, specifically Black men, are often judged to be somehow inauthentic in their performance of dances other than those marked as Black or African.

The possibility of hybridity, while not exactly foreclosed upon insofar as men of color are certainly allowed to *try* to embody whiteness, is somewhat mitigated by an impulse towards white supremacy and ostensible purity. With their very bodies, men of color disrupt the narrative of white privilege, and inserting dancing bodies of color into styles typically marked as white does call into question an ethos of the purity of whiteness. Nonetheless, rather than being celebrated for bringing cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity, men of color are implicitly criticized for corrupting some concept of white purity by making dance too much about race. Men of color are chastised specifically for things that play directly into established cultural tropes of men of color that specifically bespeak threat to whiteness: certainly, the earnestness of these critiques, in sharp contrast to how White men, for instance, are essentially lauded for their lacking performances, underscores this.

**Women of Color: Interlopers**

While White women on *DWTS* and *SYTYCD* are lauded for their successful cultural tourism and bravura performances, women of color on both shows are conversely criticized as being incapable of embodying dances, cultures, races, and ethnicities outside of their own. Moreover, on the rare occasions when women of color *are* capable of performing hybridity, they are simultaneously apprehended as nonthreatening or ineffectual. For women of color, hybridity is articulated as *interloping*. That is, women of color are not necessarily malicious or dangerous in the ways that men of color are, but they are out of place, awkward, and do not belong: they are interlopers. Similar to men of color, women of color are shown to be inappropriate when traversing symbolic borders, and are often assumed to only be capable of successfully performing their own identities.

However, while men of color are apprehended as political and threatening, women of color are simply incompetent; they are apparently perceived as not having the political substance that requires containment, but at the same time are rendered ineffective and awkward in assuming the mantle of whiteness. It is important to note at this juncture that women of color are rarely featured on either *DWTS* or *SYTYCD*, in comparison to White women, an absence that might be conspicuous and speak to the erasure of women of color from dance more generally and the performance of hybridity more specifically. However, when women of color are included on these shows, they are portrayed in such a way as to suggest that they are only effective to the extent that they conform to stereotypes and tropes associated with women of color.

These tropes regarding women of color are reinforced repeatedly throughout both shows whenever women of color are included in the casts. For instance, on season 11 of *SYTYCD*, contestant Casey Askew is partnered with Comfort Fedoke, a previous contestant on the show and a Black hip-hop dancer. During the routine, Fedoke plays the part of a spider (complete with a large web), while Askew is her prey, again reifying the trope of the animalistic woman of color in an obvious and literal manner. On season 9 of *SYTYCD,* Janelle Issis, a woman who does not overtly self-identify as any specific race, ethnicity, or nationality, but is often apprehended on the show as a woman of color, performs a contemporary dance (episode 10). Contemporary has roots in classical ballet, and as such, relies on technical skill and emotional quality, and is often marked as white. During the dance, Issis wears her hair down in its naturally curly state, which is likely a choice made for her by her hair and makeup team. Following her dance, guest judge Michael Nunn states that he found himself "looking at your hair more than the

choreography… maybe it needed a little more clarity," while Nigel Lithgow praises Issis, but reminds her, "I love you when your eyes are smiling, and your teeth are smiling, and you're shaking your hips." Lithgow's comment is particularly telling here, in that while he enjoyed the dance, he overtly states that he prefers Issis in her more "natural" state of smiling and being sexy, rather than in the more somber routine that she had just performed.

Similarly, on one episode of *DWTS* (season 19, episode 5), Cheryl Burke, a professional ballroom dancer who self-identifies as Irish-Russian-Filipina but is often apprehended as a woman of color, is partnered with Alfonso Ribeiro. Although Ribeiro was partnered for the season with Witney Carson, week 5 features a partner switch. During their rehearsals, Burke interviews that "Witney is a lot younger and kind of innocent, so this week I'm giving Alfonso that feisty woman that you've been looking for." Ultimately, the judges praise their pairing, noting their outstanding chemistry that is, according to Bruno Tonioli, "scorching." When asked about his experience performing with Burke, Ribeiro replies, "Cheryl has a lot of energy and the mouth doesn't have a filter, so it just rolls out"; indeed, Burke is often portrayed cursing during her rehearsals with Ribeiro. While Burke's treatment could be read as the worldly woman (Burke) as juxtaposed with the young, innocent woman (Carson), the emphasis on Burke being "feisty" and crude lends credence to reading this against established racialized tropes, especially in the context I have described.

Women of color who do not conform to these tropes, or attempt to perform dances marked as white, are characterized as interlopers who do not belong in the white spaces they are trying to inhabit. For instance, during season 17 of *DWTS*, Christina

Milian, a Black singer and television show host, competes. During episode 2, Milian

performs a sultry paso doble that requires her to be, per pro partner Mark Ballas, both

strong and sexy. After her performance, judge Bruno Tonioli praises Milian by calling

her "a foxy lady and intriguing little monster" and stating that he "loved a paso doble

with its own twist and plenty of quirks." As aforementioned, paso doble is, in fact, a

technically precise and demanding dance, but Tonioli's pronouncement that this paso

doble is different, "quirkier," suggests Milian performed a less formal, more stylized

dance. Moreover, as a woman of color, Milian is apprehended at excelling at this "other"

style of dance.

Conversely, though, during episode 4, Milian performs a foxtrot; as noted, an

elegant, smooth dance that relies on stellar technique and precision. This particular dance,

as imagined by Mark Ballas, the choreographer and Milian's professional partner, is

sexually charged and features Milian behind bars in a jail cell, wearing a form-fitting

dress with a high slit up to her thigh. After Milian's performance, Bruno Tonioli states,

"spunky and sultry, you really are a foxy lady….It wasn't traditional, you've gotta work

on the sections in hold. You're very comfortable, very strong." Julianne Hough agrees,

saying, "Every week so far we have seen you being a strong, sexy gorgeous woman. But

this week I was kind of, like, hoping for more of a softer side." Both of these comments

are telling in that they call out the incongruity of Milian's Black body performing a dance

imbued with whiteness; rather than be able to effectively perform whiteness, the

implication is that Milian must rely on her sexuality to give a good performance. Further,

Hough's comment reveals Milian to be one-dimensional—she is only capable of being

strong and sexy (both tropes associated with women of color). Milian is positioned as an

interloper into white spaces; while she is comfortable—a "natural" according to judge Carrie Ann Inaba—when performing "other" dance styles, such as a sexy, quirky paso doble (season 17, episode 2), she is out of place when performing "white" styles of dance, such as the foxtrot.

Janel Parrish, a Hawaiian woman, is similarly reduced to her ability to portray a sexy, sultry woman of color on season 19 of *DWTS*. During episode 3, Parrish performs a jazz routine to "America," a song from the famous musical and movie *West Side Story*. This song features Latin percussion and Spanish guitar, and is sung by a group of Puerto Rican women discussing the relative merits of America as compared to Puerto Rico; it has a distinctly Latin feel. After Parrish's performance of this number, the judges uniformly praise Parrish's excellence, with judge Julianne Hough, a White woman, noting that "in my *opiniones* it is *perfecto*." Hough's "Spanglish" phrasing and the judge's praise of Parrish suggest that she is well-suited to playing an "other," again, despite the fact that Parrish explicitly identifies as Hawaiian, and not Latina.

However, when performing dances marked at white, Parrish is revealed to be ineffectual, an interloper. For instance, during episode 1, Parrish performs a jive. While finding its roots in more urban and blues music, jive is currently thought of as a dance marked as white, and is often performed to Big Band style music. Parrish's jive, however, is set to a modern pop/rap song, and at the conclusion of her dance, Bruno Tonioli uses a number of adjectives to describe Parrish that again recall tropes associated with women of color: "spicy," "sultry," "exotic," and so forth. Carrie Ann Inaba agrees, stating, "Out of control. You just go for it and I love that. Keep it in control." Similarly, Len Goodman notes, "A little bit untidy on occasion, but overall great job." Here, Parrish, as a woman

of color, is undisciplined, and her body is perceived as out of control. Despite the overwhelming praise that Parrish receives for this dance, the judges still imply that Parrish is an interloper within white spaces and places: she is too sexy, too wild, and too untamable to successfully perform a "white" dance.

Amber Riley, a Black woman, singer, and actress, who ended up winning season 17 of *DWTS,* is an interesting case precisely because she manages to win the season despite being a woman of color who is occasionally tasked with performing dances marked as white. However, her win could arguably be attributed to the fact that her dances are themselves hybridized to some extent, so that her transgression into whiteness is mitigated, occurring only under certain conditions. That Riley is apprehended as a woman of color in the first place is clear; during the judges' critique after her first dance on the show (episode 1), Bruno Tonioli declares Riley "the tigress of season 17." Again, referring to Riley as a literal animal calls to mind tropes of the primitive, wild woman of color.

Yet as aforementioned, Riley does many, although not all, of her dances to hip-hop and R&B music. For instance, in episode 3, Riley dances a Charleston, a distinctive style of dance from the 1920s danced to a specific type of music. Instead of dancing to a more traditional Charleston song, however, Riley's dance is set to a modern hip-hop remix that samples from traditional Charleston music. When performing a tango during episode 4, Riley dances to a Kanye West rap/R&B song. During episode 10, Riley's Viennese waltz is choreographed to a Bruno Mars R&B song. Of course, this is not to say that dances traditionally marked as white cannot be danced to nontraditional music, or that Riley is somehow responsible for these choices; in fact, producers make all music

choices for the show. However, what this does suggest is that Riley, as a woman of color, is lauded for her performances of tempered whiteness, although there are no instances where she performed dances that conformed to the conventions, on all fronts, of whiteness. Riley's status as interloper is only mitigated because she is not constructed as traveling into "authentically" white spaces in the first place, thus she does not pose the same type of threat that other women of color pose.

Women of color are thus relegated to being sexy, sultry, and animalistic, and yet are criticized as interlopers whenever they attempt to transgress their carefully delineated raced/ethnic boundaries and enter in white spaces by performing dances marked as white. Rather than being able to easily traverse cultural, racial, and ethnic borders, women of color are often classified based on stereotypes and tropes, and are not expected to exceed those symbolic borders. Similar to men of color, women of color are typically not accepted as hybrid beings, at least as hybridized with whiteness. Overall, women of color are often seeing as interlopers, trying out new identities, but failing in a way that the culturally touring White women do not.

**Choreographing Culture: Conclusions on Hybridity in Dance**

Within both *DWTS* and *SYTYCD*, hybridity is overall articulated as *traveling*. However, within the larger matrix of fluidity, hybridity is variously articulated on different bodies. That is, White men are portrayed as *party tourists*, playfully and presumptively moving within and through cultures as hybrid beings. Within this idea of White men as party tourists is a strong undercurrent of camp and/or theatricality, or the privilege to not take cultures, races, and ethnicities seriously; rather than actual people, cultures, races, and ethnicities are characters with which White men can play. White

women are portrayed as more *cultural tourists*, in that they are easily and expertly able to embody any and all cultures, races, and ethnicities outside of their own. Moreover, they are expected to, and praised for, doing so. Similar to White men, White women are fluid in their hybridity, able to transgress boundaries and symbolic borders through the embodiment of a number of cultures, races, and ethnicities. Conversely, men of color, particularly Black men, are portrayed as *trespassers*, muddying the ostensibly pure waters of whiteness with their "otherness" and, more importantly, inserting too much of themselves into these conventionally white forms, thus corrupting those forms. Black men are often covertly accused of being too "other" to "accurately" and "authentically" perform dances conventionally marked as white, and are criticized for making dance about race. Women of color are articulated as interlopers, assumed to not belong in white spaces and places, and portrayed as incompetent at trying to travel through them.

This analysis brings to light three important implications. First, it lends insight into which particular bodies are particularly threatening and how that threat is construed, as well as how to police it. The bodies of men of color, for instance, are constructed as trespassers and pose the ultimate threat to white supremacy through the enactment of embodied politics. Similarly, but also differently, the bodies of women of color are apprehended as interlopers, inefficient and ineffectual at performing and traveling through whiteness.

Second, it suggests that dance, in these cases, stands in for culturally marked places, and that particular bodies are assessed in relation to those places, regarding how and under what conditions they inhabit them. This is tied, in many ways, to symbolic borders and the breaching thereof, suggesting a disciplining of transnational and global

travel. Perhaps similar to the fear of cultural, racial, and ethnic "others" breaching the symbolic borders within the U.S., these shows also attempt to suppress "others," specifically men of color, from crossing over into or playing with whiteness, while simultaneously constructing women of color as either being of no threat to whiteness, or even to be able to breach whiteness in the first place. Simultaneously, however, White dancing bodies serve to powerfully reinforce the presumption and privilege of whiteness, albeit in notably gendered ways: White men are apprehended as able to playfully sample from other cultures, much like they are attending culturally themed parties, while White women earnestly, and studiously, embody a number of cultures. As such, the dancing body can serve to conspicuously reify and normalize whiteness, by either underscoring the "natural" ability of White bodies to cross borders, or emphasizing the threat to whiteness that men of color pose, or identifying women of color as politically ineffectual.

Third, in regard to hybridity more specifically, this analysis suggests myriad ways by which hybridity can be articulated and understood. That is, in parsing out the ways in which hybridity is articulated by, on, and through different bodies, this analysis serves a heuristic function by which hybridity can more clearly be understood. Rather than a straightforward concept, hybridity, as suggested within this chapter, is a nimble, fluid concept that means differently based on the bodies through which it is articulated. Specifically, hybridity is imagined here as breaching—as inhabiting, appropriating— borders, which reinforces and underscores racial and ethnic continence and the centrality of whiteness, despite what may appear to be profligate and enthusiastic mobility.

CHAPTER III

MODEL HYBRIDITY

In recent years, the refrain that one simply "doesn't see race" has become part of the cultural lexicon, with political figures, celebrities, and fictional characters in the media espousing the philosophy. Much of the political conversation about the salience (or lack thereof) of race has centered on President Barack Obama, with critics of the President affirming that their dislike has nothing to do with race. For instance, in February 2015, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani created a controversy by publicly stating that President Barack Obama did not love America. When asked to clarify his comments, Giuliani was quick to note that "there's a real attempt to make it a racial criticism. It has nothing to do with race" (Diamond, 2015, para. 15). Other politicians have actively tried to distance themselves from talk of race; in 2012, Tim Scott, a Black politician involved in the Tea Party movement, campaigned to be elected to the House of Representatives. Part of his platform was an active repudiation of his racial identity; he publicly stated that he was not "the Black Republican," but was rather "a Republican who happened to be Black" (Brody, 2012, para. 35–36). In the contemporary U.S. political climate, mention of race is anathema; politicians are quick to dismiss claims that race has any bearing or material force.

The invisibility and lack of importance of race is not only evident within the realm of politics, but is also frequently referenced within popular culture; for example,

during an interview, actress Zoe Saldana professed, "I literally run away from people who use words like ethnic. It's preposterous! To me there is no such thing as people of color 'cause in reality people aren't white. Paper is white. People are pink" (Diaz, 2013, para. 2). Eve, a rapper and celebrity, revealed that she was going to raise her biracial children to be colorblind, stating, "I don't want them to see color. I never did. I grew up in the 'hood and my mother was very good at it not being a black thing, even though I grew up around all black people" (Millner, 2013, para. 3). Moreover, one only has to look to the late 2014 events in Ferguson, Missouri, as a stark example of the colorblind attitude toward race in the U.S.: Following Michael Brown's death at the hands of a police officer, a number of people, from politicians to celebrities to residents of Ferguson, have asserted that Brown was shot not because of his race, but because of his behavior, a cry that has echoed throughout the U.S. as a counterpoint to the protests against the indictment of the officer who killed Brown. This same attitude was reflected across the spate of similar events—police shootings and killings of Black boys and men—that grabbed headlines in the weeks and months following Ferguson. Clearly, the contemporary approach to race within the U.S. is to simply ignore it and pretend that it does not really exist.

This colorblind approach to race relations is closely related to theories of postrace, or the idea that as a nation, the U.S. is "past" racial difference, as I will shortly discuss in more detail. Similarly, colorblindness is undergirded by the insistent denial of symbolic borders, in that it implies a belief in the lack of racial/ethnic difference and concomitant borders surrounding racial and ethnic "others." That is, rather than focus on the bodily performance of borders, this chapter interrogates the bodily performance of *the*

*denial* of borders. This is similar, in many ways, to hybridity, in that both are predicated on erasure of race in a "we all are one" type of belief. To be sure, borders are imagined here as fluid, but in ways that erase rather than feature difference, and accordingly, avowedly deny power relevant to those differences. Here, borders are less fixed demarcations that separate nation-states, but are rather "borders that travel" (Ono, 2012). Indeed, "the border moves with migrants into those social spaces where they live: in the interior of the nation, their workplaces, and their homes" (Ono, 2012, p. 24). In this instance, borders can be thought of as surrounding people, regardless of their proximity to actual, physical borders. As Flores (2003) notes, "suspect bodies carry the border *on* them. These bodies, even when present at physical locations quite distant from the geopolitical border, are susceptible targets" (p. 381, emphasis mine). Yet the belief in a colorblind society denies difference, and thus denies these borders, assuming that, in fact, bodies are not bordered in any way.

While the hybrid body may work, in many ways, to draw attention to the figural borders surrounding "othered" bodies, it also blurs the lines between bodies. That is, the hybrid body could conceivably be mobilized or deployed as the quintessential example of colorblindness, in that if everyone is hybrid, then there is no color and no difference between people. Of course, this is not to say that this is always the case; however, attendant to arguably exaggerated speculation that the majority of the people within the U.S. will be mixed race by the end of this century, based on Census data that show a rapidly growing mixed-race population (Douthat, 2012; "Most children younger than age 1 are minorities, Census Bureau reports," 2012), the hybrid body often serves as a metonym for a postrace, colorblind future. In this context, hybridity becomes a means of

(re)centering whiteness and eliding the real, material, structural differences that "othered" bodies sustain and manage within the U.S. Thus, how the hybrid body is apprehended and negotiated, symbolically and rhetorically, within the contemporary U.S. is salient for understanding colorblind (post)politics and U.S. race relations. In this chapter, I focus specifically on hybridity performed and accomplished as *distillation* of otherness. In particular, *distillation* speaks to the denial of borders and the ability of people to perfectly calibrate the "right" mixture of "White" and "other"; accordingly, race/ethnicity become something that can be both diffused and infused.

To more closely investigate the ways in which hybridity and fears thereof are rhetorically mobilized as relevant to distillation as an operationalization of postrace and colorblind sensibilities, as well as how it is accomplished in practice, I analyze the competition-based reality show *America's Next Top Model* (*ANTM*). Modeling is a context wherein whiteness and Western notions of beauty have historically been valorized, and the exclusion of women and men of color was rampant throughout most of the 20th century. Although now-famous supermodels of color, such as Tyra Banks, Naomi Campbell, and Iman, were eventually accepted in the fashion industry, models of color were often, and arguably continue to be, objectified, exoticized, and fetishized (Thompson, 2010; Vats, 2014). That is, while White models were ideally erased and used as a vehicle for fashion, models of color were deployed precisely for their "otherness," showcasing their race/ethnicity. For instance, Tyra Banks was first noticed and was hired for her "exotic" appearance: light green eyes paired with her darker skin and "voluptuous" body (Thompson, 2010). Currently, using models of color for difference and even shock value is certainly still in play, but a focus on ambiguous race/ethnicity, as

well as the ability to easily transcend racial and ethnic borders, are staple characteristics of contemporary fashion modeling (Hasinoff, 2008; Thompson, 2010; Vats, 2014). There are a number of instances where models are asked to "play" a race/ethnicity other than their own; for instance, in 2009, *V Magazine* included two White models wrestling, but one was in blackface; *Vogue Paris* also featured White models in blackface during their 90th anniversary issue; and Karl Lagerfeld, during a fashion show in Shanghai, featured women in yellowface (Vats, 2014).

Modeling, in a contemporary context, thus often relies upon hybridity, and *ANTM* is no exception; indeed, hybridity is consistently accomplished as what I describe as distillation in *ANTM*, which serves as a good example of colorblind sensibilities. Thus, *ANTM* is an appropriate example through which to understand the embodiment of race, ethnicity, and racial/ethnic hybridity, as well as the ways in which hybridity is articulated by, in, and through the modeling/ed body. In this chapter, I discuss the models/contestants featured on the most recent three cycles of *ANTM* (cycles 19, 20, and 21) and focus specifically on the way in which hybridity is variously mobilized in order to manage anxieties provoked by "othered" bodies. In the following section, I will further discuss postrace ideologies and colorblindness, followed by a description and analysis of *ANTM*.

### Postrace, Colorblindness, and the Denial of Difference

In some of the literature, postrace and colorblindness are conflated, perhaps because colorblindness is, in many ways, the operationalization of postrace tenets. However, it is worthwhile to draw a distinction between them, as some scholars do, especially since colorblindness is mobilized in a way that precisely does not acknowledge

race, whereas postrace does acknowledge race insofar as it claims that race was once, but

no longer is, important. Attendant to this belief is the insistence that racial oppression is

no longer an issue within the U.S.; that is, some of the warrants for postrace rest on the

assumption that racism is by and large historically distant, and if/when apparent, limited

to concrete, violent actions perpetrated by specific individuals, which denies structural,

institutional, and/or cultural inequities and perceptions. One common (mis)conception

that undergirds postrace is an avowal that racism ended when slavery ended; however,

while not all who subscribe to postrace relegate racism to slavery, most cite some

historical watershed moment that effectively eradicated racism or at least initiated that

process, which has long since concluded. For many, Civil Rights is that moment; it is

often "popularly assumed that the civil rights movement effectively eradicated racism to

the extent that not only does racism no longer exist, but race itself no longer matters"

(Joseph, 2011, p. 239). Moreover, as Ono (2010) notes, a postrace ideology is a type of

forgetting, and is

> The suggestion that racism might have been important historically but is no longer
> so. In this sense it is passé, part of a bygone era, an anachronism, and continuing
> efforts to eliminate it appear 'trapped in the past' and misguided, rendering social
> policies explicitly attempting to redress racism out of place, indeed essentially
> alien. (p. 228)

While a postrace ideology certainly does not deny that race was important at one

historical time, it does assert that contemporarily, race and race relations are not

problematic within the U.S.

Some of the research on postrace ideology focuses on mediated representations of

race and postrace. For instance, some scholars (e.g., Gilbert & Rossing, 2013; Thornton,

2011) analyze postrace as it functions through comedy, arguing that comedy obscures the

realities of race relations through encouraging audiences to laugh at race. Similarly, a number of scholars (e.g., Downing, 1988; Jhally & Lewis, 1992) focus on *The Cosby Show*, noting that seemingly progressive portrayals of racial equality mask postrace sensibilities that serve as a form of what Jhally and Lewis term "enlightened racism." Dubrofsky (2013), in an examination of the popular television show *Glee*, argues that beginning from the assumption that race does not matter allows television characters to make overtly racist jokes and reify stereotypes, which ultimately belie the fact that race does, in fact, matter. Moshin and Jackson II (2011) as well as Laurie (2012) both analyze popular films (*Crash* and *Dreamgirls*, respectively), noting that both of these films promote the notion that collectively, the U.S. has long espoused postrace sensibilities, in which all members of society are equally valued and have similar opportunities and privileges. Ultimately, what all of these analyses suggest is that contemporary media often shore up discourses of postrace through portrayals of race as inconsequential.

The practical mobilization of postrace sensibilities is affirming one's "colorblindness," or stating that one "does not see race." As aforementioned, colorblindness has become part of the U.S. national consciousness, such that, for instance, President Obama is heralded as a harbinger of a "raceless" nation. A colorblind sensibility affirms race as invisible and unimportant, rather than a salient marker of identity with attendant sociocultural and political considerations. Perhaps a well-intentioned impetus for denying race is a fear of appearing racist or biased. As Apfelbaum, Sommers, and Norton (2008) claim, White people will often avoid overt mentions of race in order to appear neutral and enlightened; rather than make an unintentionally racist remark, people will act as if race does not exist and avoid

discussing it. However, more often, colorblindness is typically invoked as a means of denying material oppression that racial and ethnic "others" face.

Within this paradigm, those who proclaim the importance of race/ethnicity are often sanctioned or openly criticized for "playing the race card." Colloquially, "the race card" refers to the perception that people of color intentionally bring up their race in order to shame or blame White people, thus seeking special treatment or otherwise exploiting to their advantage a supposedly (but, it is assumed, not really) marginalized racial status. Contemporary U.S. culture is rife with people accusing others of "playing the race card" to win some sort of advantage. For example, according to the Rasmussen Reports public opinion poll, 78% of those polled believe that politicians "play the race card" in order to win reelection, while only 9% of those polled believe that politicians discuss race in order to call attention to real racial issues; moreover, these findings were consistent across races, suggesting that White people are not the only group who is hesitant to discuss race ("78% say politicians play 'race card' just to get reelected," 2014). Similarly, Arnold (2014) claims that those who claim that negative critique of President Obama is racially motivated are "playing the race card," and that, in fact, "there is a certain element within the broader Left that will always play the race card" (para. 1). Moreover, many conservative politicians have accused President Obama himself of "playing the race card": Sarah Palin launched the accusation on Martin Luther King, Jr., day in 2014; John McCain asserted that not only did President Obama "play the race card," but did so "from the bottom of the deck"; and Rush Limbaugh often claims that President Obama's frequent "playing of the race" card has only served to divide, not unite, people (Giacomazzo, 2014, para. 6).

Yet despite the frequent accusations of racial and/or ethnic "others" "playing the race card" in order to gain some sort of advantage, Ford (2010) claims that "it is not Black people who play the race card to their advantage; it is Whites who hold the race card that trumps all cards dealt to Blacks, by conferring privileged access to power, freedom, and rights on themselves" (p. 287). That is, recognizing the importance of race and the ways in which race is always already imbricated with discourses of power is not some underhanded attempt to "win," but rather a means of calling attention to systemic structures of oppression within which racial and ethnic "others" often live.

Moreover, although pretending not to notice race may, as aforementioned, appear well intentioned, taking a colorblind approach can often serve to reify whiteness as a dominant frame/ideology for viewing the world (Herakova, Jelaca, Sibii, & Cooks, 2011). As Simpson (2008) argues:

> By dismissing the difference in lived experience of White people and people of color as an irrelevant distinction, [colorblindness] upholds and affirms dominant ways of being, knowing, and doing at the expense of alternatives. Furthermore, the socially dominant position of Whiteness enables discourses of color blindness to be challenged only with great difficulty. (p. 142)

Similarly, as Zamudio and Rios (2006) assert, colorblindness serves as a more covert, liberal form of racism, wherein whiteness is still privileged, although in much subtler ways. It is not that racism does not exist, it is that people are not allowed to say that it exists. Gallagher (2003) claims that "embracing a post-race, colorblind perspective allows whites to imagine that being white or black or brown has no bearing on an individual's or a group's relative place in the socioeconomic hierarchy," adding, "the color-blind perspective removes from personal thought and public discussion any taint or suggestion of white supremacy or white guilt while legitimating the existing social,

political and economic arrangements, which privilege whites" (p. 22). Colorblindness, far from ushering in equality, serves to further entrench whiteness as a dominant frame. Indeed, my imminent analysis of *ANTM* identifies and assesses specific rhetorical strategies by which this is accomplished. In many ways, colorblindness serves as a counterpoint to the more overt forms of racial discrimination elucidated in the other chapters. Rather than being motivated by overt fears and anxieties surrounding infiltration, colorblindness speaks to more subtle forms of racism and white supremacy. Here, whiteness is still reified; being too "other" and "playing the race card" is chastised, but in a way that obfuscates and negates the undergirding discourses of whiteness and racial privilege by ostensibly positing that whiteness, too, is fair game for tempering and/or mitigation.

Hybridity is easily drafted into service for colorblindness, as it can be construed as an erasure or leveler of race. What is interesting about this, however, is that hybridity poses an interesting dilemma for the white privilege that arguably undergirds colorblindness, in that hybridity mobilizes colorblindness in a way that gives the lie to it. In order to shore up white privilege without explicitly claiming it, there are proscribed structures regarding hybridity and how it is mobilized. First, the hybrid body negates strict divisions between whiteness and "otherness," such that it is not immediately apparent how to categorize and classify hybrid bodies. Second, hybridity also works to shore up a myth of racial and ethnic fluidity, such that race becomes something one can incorporate, divest, and adjust to one's liking. Hybridity, operating under the guise of colorblindness, becomes an ostensibly inclusive project wherein all races can become one; however, under the surface, there is in fact a very specific, narrow, and static version

of hybridity that is permitted. This is not to say that hybrid bodies are *necessarily* static or that they reify whiteness; rather, it is to say that hybrid bodies, as they operate within a context of colorblindness, can serve to conceal the limiting, white-centric discourse operating below the surface.

In this chapter, my goal is to take up the ways in which hybridity, within the context of contemporary colorblindness, is rhetorically articulated by, in, and through bodies as portrayed in contemporary mediated contexts. In order to do so, I turn to a discussion of *ANTM*. The body is a regular and prominent feature of *ANTM*, which is why I am studying it here: to see how contemporary anxieties surrounding race/ethnicity, especially as engaged via an ostensible colorblind perspective, are negotiated on and through the hybrid body, as well as identify particular strategies by which this is accomplished.

## "Wanna Be on Top?": America's Next Top Model,
## Racial Hierarchy, and Hybridity

*ANTM* cannot be understood without first understanding Tyra Banks, the creator, producer, and head judge of the show. Banks rose to stardom and celebrity status in the 1990s, when she appeared on the covers of *GQ* and *Sports Illustrated*. Her fuller figured (by modeling standards) body led to her becoming a lingerie model for Victoria's Secret; she parlayed this fame into a talk show, several book deals, a number of lucrative business opportunities, and, of course, *ANTM*.  *ANTM* is based loosely on Banks' journey within the modeling world, as well as the struggles she faced as a "curvy" Black model. That is, many of the challenges that models are tasked with are activities that Banks herself had to complete during her modeling career. Banks makes no secret about her

goals of empowering women and protecting "her girls," although whether and how modeling, in general or in the context of a reality competition show, empowers girls and women is, of course, a contentious issue.

Produced by Banks' production company, "Bankable Productions," *ANTM* currently airs on the CW network. Premiering on May 20, 2003, *ANTM* has, at the time of this writing, recently completed its 21st season, or "cycle" (as seasons are termed on the show), and is currently casting for its 22nd cycle. Although the format of the show has changed somewhat in the almost 15 years it has been on the air, and the judges (with the exception of Banks) have all changed,[1] the basic premise remains the same: Each season begins with a number of aspiring models who are competing to become crowned "America's Next Top Model." The women (or, in the case of cycles 20 and 21, women *and* men) live together in a large house located in Los Angeles, California (although earlier cycles were set in New York, the most recent cycles all take place in Los Angeles). During the second half of the cycle, the remaining contestants are all flown to an international location—past locations have included Seoul, South Korea; France, Italy, Japan, Thailand, and Jamaica—where they continue the competition.

Each week, models take part in modeling challenges, which include runway walking, acting, makeovers, press interviews, dancing, and so forth. In the most recent three cycles (19, 20, and 21), these challenges are scored with a point system of 1-10, with the winner of each challenge earning a number of prizes and the key to the "Tyra Suite," a lavish bedroom much larger than the others. In the second half of each episode, models take part in a themed photo shoot. Each episode ends with a judging panel, wherein models stand in front of the judges and are evaluated on their performance in

both the challenge and the photo shoot. After commentary, each of the judges gives each model a score from 1-10, which is added to their challenge score. For cycles 19, 20, and 21, another component was added to scoring: a social media score. For this score, audience members voted via social media, which was added to the models' challenge scores and judges' scores. At the conclusion of each episode, the model with the lowest score is eliminated, until there are three models left. In the final episode, the remaining contestants participate in a fashion show, after which "America's Next Top Model" is crowned.

A number of analyses have focused on the figure of Banks herself, as well as *ANTM*, particularly as relevant to her often paradoxical performances of race/ethnicity. For instance, Joseph (2009) analyze the ways in which Banks functions within a postrace society, and as a postrace icon. Hasinoff (2008) investigates how neoliberal and postracist ideologies undergird one season of *ANTM*, claiming that the show "signals a new neoliberal rhetoric of race in popular culture in which instead of silently and superficially representing racial difference, the show's explicit discussions about race and racialized identity transformation are promoted as a valuable commodity" (p. 324). Thompson (2010) studies the first 10 seasons of the show, arguing that the portrayals of ethnicity as optional align with neoliberal and postracist notions of choice, in that models are able to "choose" to highlight their ethnicity. While the choice and malleability of ethnicity is certainly salient to my own analysis, it is important to note that while Thompson assesses *postracism*, I am assessing its mobilization in the *postrace* body, as well as particular rhetorical strategies of said hybrid mobilizations. Also important to note is that none of these analyses have included hybridity as a key component; thus, I depart from extant

literature on *ANTM* in that I analyze more recent seasons and include a focus on hybridity and the hybrid body within the context of colorblind sensibilities.

## Modeling Cultures: Hybridity as Distillation

In *ANTM,* colorblindness is celebrated and cultivated in narrowly construed hybrid bodies when race/ethnicity are invoked, albeit in ways that ultimately reify whiteness. Hybrid performances of modeling serve as a means of affirming colorblind sensibilities through which fears and anxieties surrounding "otherness" and "othered" bodies can be assuaged. I argue that hybridity is articulated here as a type of *distillation*, wherein the "correct" features and degrees of racial and/or ethnic "otherness" can be combined with whiteness in such a way as to ignore racial and/or ethnic difference and recenter and reify whiteness. The performances of modeling may at first appear to celebrate and recognize racial difference, but as I argue, this occurs within the rubric of a very narrowly construed hybridity, one that rests on an assumption that race is effectively immaterial, literally and figuratively. Moreover, although race and ethnicity are purported to be fluid on the show, implicitly or explicitly, they are in fact highly disciplined, tightly controlled, and contained. This process is accomplished in different ways across differently marked bodies, but always with this "distilled" hybridity as the end goal.

### "Otherness" as Excess: In Need of Diffusion

One way that this distilled hybridity is articulated within *ANTM* is through *diffusion*. Here, diffusion refers to the need for "otherness" and "othered" bodies to be toned down, calibrated in such a way that difference is erased and whiteness is more clearly manifest. In *ANTM*, diffusion occurs in a number of ways. One way that diffusion

occurs is through the chastisement of women of color for being "too sexy"; while much of this is accomplished aesthetically, this also occurs as relevant to conventional tropes of race/ethnicity that are called out and disciplined (Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; hooks, 1992; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Ramirez-Berg, 2002; Shugart, 2007; Valdivia, 2005). For instance, during one challenge (cycle 19, episode 2), the models are required to dance on the top of a bar while bar patrons cheer them on. Following the challenge, Destiny, a woman of color, expresses disappointment in her low challenge score, to which Kiara replies, "maybe because…um…they thought it was a little bit too sexy? Too, like, stripper?" Important to note here is that Kiara is a Latina model, yet she still chastises another woman of color for being too excessive. Neither woman mentions that they were all required to dance on a bar, a sexually charged situation to begin with, nor that the judges were specifically looking for them to be sexy. Instead, the focus is on how Destiny's body has overstepped its bounds.

Similarly, in another cycle (cycle 20, episode 3), Renee, a Black woman, takes part in a wedding-themed photo shoot. She interviews that "I'm just, like, the debutante Barbie that's prim and proper and getting married to this guy to make my dad upset." Wearing a classic strapless wedding gown, a tasteful diamond necklace, and a diamond tiara, Renee poses demurely next to her "bad-boy husband." Yet during the judging panel, Renee is accused by Banks as being "hoochie," who notes, "that's not your story, you're supposed to be innocent." Despite a comparatively modest gown and demure pose, Renee's body signifies an excess of sexuality that is out of place. In another example, one of the narrative arcs of cycle 21 was Mirjana's excessive sexuality. A woman of color, Mirjana is constantly critiqued for posing in a sexually provocative

manner. This overt sexuality that Mirjana displays is compared to her more demure

White counterparts (cycle 21, episode 4), when Banks specifically announces, during the

judging panel, that some of the other (White) models can pose in ways that Mirjana

cannot; for instance, Banks is clear that while the White models can pose with their

mouths slightly open, Mirjana looks too "hoochie" when she does so. Here, Mirjana is

specifically differentiated from other White women, yet racial difference is

simultaneously denied, as she is instructed to pose with her mouth closed specifically so

she can appear less sexy and more like the White women against whom she is competing.

In the same cycle, Shei, an Asian woman, is also chastised for being overly sexual;

during episode 14, Shei interviews that she knows that she needs to "reel it in" and be

less sexy and "hoochie." Similar to Mirjana, Shei is consistently told to tone her sexuality

down; that is, diffuse it, in an effort to be a more successful model. The consistency with

which women of color are told to "tone down" their sexuality, and the commensurate

consistent absence of similar advice to White women, suggests that what these women

are being asked to dial down is their gendered race/ethnicity.

Another way that diffusion occurs per conventional raced/ethnic tropes is through

the chastisement of models of color for being too "angry." This, of course, calls to mind

the trope of the angry Black woman (Dubrofsky, 2006; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008; hooks,

1992; Joseph, 2009) and the criminal Black man. For instance, in cycle 19 (episode 8),

the spectacle of excessive anger is attached to Kiara. The photo shoot for this episode

takes place inside a prison; during an interview, Kiara reveals that when she was younger,

she went to prison for shoplifting, and she shares that she is very affected by being in that

space. Johnny Wujek, the creative director for the shoot, encourages Kiara to do whatever

it takes to loosen up, including screaming. Kiara starts yelling and cursing in a frustrated manner, which takes everyone by surprise. Next, Brittany, a White woman, is interviewed, and she expresses her fear at Kiara's outburst, stating, "It kind of came out of nowhere and I was a little bit scared. I was like, 'ahh!' Luckily there was, like, these bars separating us right now." This hearkens back to the trope of the angry woman of color in that Kiara is portrayed as completely out of control, despite the fact that she was specifically instructed to act in that manner. Yvonne, a Black woman, is similarly demonized throughout cycle 19 for being too angry and having a poor attitude. In episode 6, which proves to be her last episode, Yvonne sticks out her tongue and rolls her eyes in frustration at her outfit being changed several times, thus holding up the photo shoot. Bryanboy—judge, social media correspondent, and co-director of that particular shoot— becomes enraged at Yvonne's behavior, which leads to a prolonged argument between the two, after which Yvonne apologizes. Again, Yvonne is interpellated as the angry, out-of-control woman of color, against which the male directors of the photo shoot are drawn as the hapless victims.

Just as models of color are portrayed as angry and excessive, they are also portrayed as frightening and/or criminal, tropes often related to people of color who are here being disciplined, diffused, and toned down. As aforementioned, for instance, Kiara's prison experiences are highlighted throughout the episode (cycle 19, episode 8), bringing to mind the incarcerated body of color. Similarly, Don, a Black male model, is often criticized for being frightening and criminal by the judges. During one judging panel (cycle 20, episode 4), judge Kelly Cutrone heavily critiques his photo with Alexandria, a White woman; Cutrone states, "You don't look like a guy that's about to

give it to her, you look like a guy who's about to give her a gun and take her wallet."

Later in the cycle (episode 12), Banks also critiques Don, saying, "You have that rare

thing, Don. The guy that is street fine and the guy that can be a model too….But there are

some weeks and some photo shoots that judges look at your pictures, and they're like,

'umm maybe he's not a model.'" In both of these instances, Don's "street" bodily

appearance (aside from being a Black man, Don also has a number of large, visible

tattoos) cause the judges to question his ability to be a "real" model.

Don's treatment on *ANTM*, however, is largely atypical for men of color on the

series. That is, there is an important distinction between women and men of color on

*ANTM* that actually surfaces intersectional considerations, but still complements the

notion of distillation and, in this case, diffusion. That is, concerns about femininity

relevant to male models appear to permit greater allowance of "danger" (i.e., "otherness")

in order to counteract perceptions of effeminacy. For instance, Corey, a biracial, gay man,

is often chastised throughout cycle 20 for not being masculine enough, and praised when

he "pulls off" being a man; indeed, during one judging panel, judge Rob Evans notes, "if

I didn't know any better, I'd think you were a dude" (cycle 20, episode 5). Although Tyra

Banks quickly interjects that Corey is, in fact, a man, the judging panel continues to

praise Corey for looking like a man in his photograph. Corey openly identifies as biracial,

and has light brown skin, yet judges never express the need for Corey to tone it down;

rather, he is encouraged to toughen up, be *more* "dangerous," in order to also be more

"manly." Similarly, Marvin, a Latino, is often upbraided for looking too feminine and too

"childlike" (cycle 20, episode 9), particularly at the beginning of the cycle. He is not

asked to "tone down" his race; his "otherness" is permitted seemingly in an effort to

eradicate femininity from his body. This is, however, hardly a valorization of "otherness" even if it is presented in that way: to the contrary, it is squarely centered in and activates tropes that peg "otherness" as dangerous and deviant.

A final way that diffusion occurs is through the judges encouraging models of color to literally bring their *bodies* into alignment with whiteness—accomplishing it aesthetically in very narrowly drawn ways. For example, in cycle 19, Yvonne's skin appears consistently lighter in all of her photographs. Banks freely admits to retouching all of the photographs, which is standard practice for modeling; however, skin lightening is not an unfortunate byproduct of retouching, but rather something that has to be purposefully done. For Yvonne, a Black woman with darker skin, to have lighter skin in her finished photographs suggests that she is in need of diffusion and a sort of *toning down* in order to be more in line with whiteness; it suggests that the most ideal, most beautiful self—which is what the retouched, finished photographs are supposed to present—is relatively light-skinned. Although this is a less explicitly stated encouragement to be more diffused, there are more explicit examples of encouragement within *ANTM*. For instance, during one judging panel (cycle 19, episode 2), Banks chastises Kiara: "You look like an African dance teacher. Like take those earrings off, take the hair down." The suggestion here is that African dance teachers are not models, nor could they ever be; moreover, Banks' statement implies that Kiara, a Latina, needs to tone down her appearance.

Perhaps nowhere is the encouragement to engage in diffusion more obvious than during the makeover episodes. At the beginning stages of every cycle, *ANTM* airs a special makeover episode, during which each model receives a drastic hair makeover

based on Banks' instructions. These makeovers often end up subverting racial difference and toning down the bodies of models of color. The makeover for cycle 19 occurs in episode 3; in the previous episode, Bryanboy informs Darian, a Black woman, that she has a low social media score because the fans "hate her braids." Nonplussed, Darian replies that she hopes that her impending makeover will win her more fan support. Indeed, on the following episode, Darian's braids are completely cut off and hair stylists sew in a straightened weave, which is then cut into a long bob. Darian excitedly interviews that she loves her new hair because now she can "walk into any casting call and get picked." While her more traditionally "Black" hairstyle alienated viewers, Darian is confident that her new, "whiter" hairstyle will make her far more marketable—which it does, as her fan vote increases after her makeover.

Similarly, during cycle 20 (episode 4), several women of color have makeovers that help them to conform to Western notions of beauty. For instance, Renee, a Black woman, has her hair straightened, and Chlea, a Black woman, has her hair highlighted a honey blonde and also straightened, with both hairstyles conforming to White notions of beauty. Similarly, Kanani, a Cuban woman from cycle 20, has a drastic makeover in episode 4. She interviews that "instead of a Cuban girl from Chicago, I look like a real model now," and, as she speaks, viewers are shown a photograph of Kanani with her naturally curly hair, followed by a photograph of Kanani with a short, straight pixie cut. The implication here is that Cuban girls cannot be real models, but must be transformed into them through diffusion and a "whiter" hairstyle. Kanani's makeover also proves to be a success, as Banks later compliments Kanani by referring to her as the "Latina Audrey Hepburn." Aubrey Hepburn is the iconic White standard of beauty, and a little

dash of Latina is just enough difference to be interesting but not render whiteness unrecognizable.

Throughout *ANTM*, hybridity is articulated as *distillation*, a tightly controlled "fluidity" that permits a colorblind sensibility. Distillation is accomplished via *diffusion* on bodies of color. Models of color are encouraged to hybridize themselves in order to assuage tensions associated with difference and calibrate the "correct" amount of whiteness for their bodies. In a sense, models of color are implicitly chastised for "playing the race card" and encouraged to tone down their "otherness." Within these very narrowly construed hybrid confines, a colorblind sensibility is reified, wherein marked racial difference is erased and whiteness is centered. As Joseph (2013) aptly notes, diversity and hybridity are celebrated insofar as part of that hybridity includes whiteness, and inasmuch as whiteness is centralized within the hybrid body. This is true also for diffusion, in that hybridity is actively encouraged within *ANTM*, as long as it is for the purpose of reaffirming the centrality and presumption of whiteness.

**Whiteness as Blank Space: In Need of Infusion**

Yet at the same time that whiteness is valorized, it is also recognized on *ANTM* as being too generic or boring. That is, hybridity is also articulated on *ANTM* as *infusion*. Just as models of color need to be diffused with whiteness to create the proper blend of hybridity, so too do White models need to be infused with something "other" in order to be more exciting and marketable. As Probyn (2001) notes, "whiteness is increasingly seen as a 'state of incompleteness' that needs to be supplemented by racial difference" (p. 83), such that whiteness is seen as lacking some essential quality. Moreover, for a colorblind sensibility to sustain itself, anyone or anything that is too or glaringly White

requires a bit of modification, which occurs on *ANTM*. Whiteness and white privilege, in other words, must undergird colorblindness, but it cannot overtly define or direct it—that would expose the lie. That is, although race, and racial difference, are recognized as important and exciting, it is only so inasmuch as it serves whiteness; this is undergirded by an assumption that race/ethnicity other than White is inherently deviant, dangerous, and unpredictable.

In every cycle of *ANTM*, one or two White models are included in a "boring" narrative, in which they are constantly and consistently described as "boring," "bland," and "innocent." For instance, in cycle 19, Kristin serves as the designated "boring" woman. Beginning from episode 2, judges continually critique Kristin for being the pretty blonde woman with nothing interesting about her. However, Kristin reveals in the first episode that she has recently been suspended from college for getting in a "number of physical and verbal altercations." Her backstory is continually emphasized throughout the cycle; while I cannot speculate on the intentions behind this, the result is that Kristin is portrayed as a boring, pretty White woman who also has a dangerous side. In this way, Kristin borrows some of Kiara's "edge" in order to differentiate herself from the other White models in cycle 19.

The infusion of race/ethnicity, or at least qualities consistently associated with women of color, are the primary way that this alleviation of blandness is achieved. For example, Laura, a White woman and the eventual winner of cycle 19, is included in a "boring" narrative for about the first half of the cycle. During this time, judges lob similar critiques at Laura as they do at Kristin, admonishing Laura that she is just a pretty blonde woman with nothing unique about her. However, at about the halfway point of the

season, the judges, with seemingly no impetus, decide that Laura is "too sexy," which, while appearing to be a critique, never has any material impact on Laura's success on the show, as she continues to win challenges and, in fact, wins the entire cycle. It is important to note here that "sexiness" is a detriment that must be toned down for women of color (e.g., Mirjana and Shei from cycle 21, who are both chastised for their sexiness, consistently receive low scores, and are eliminated fairly early from the competition), consistent with tropes of the dangerous, hypersexualized woman of color (Collins, 2000; Hall, 2003; hooks, 1992, 2009). However, for White women, "sexiness" functions as an "edge" that eliminates the "incompleteness" of whiteness (Probyn, 2001). That is, for Laura, "sexiness" is the saving grace for her thorough and problematic whiteness; essentially, her sexiness is read as making her less White, which logically means that she has been infused with a bit of "color." Indeed, this "edge" ultimately proves to be necessary for Laura, who is deemed the eventual winner of cycle 19.

Jourdan's (cycle 20) narrative closely parallels Laura's. A young, sheltered White woman from a small town, Jourdan is often dismissed as boring by judges and fellow contestants alike. During episode 9, Renee compares Jourdan to "a cracker with no salt," and Banks comments to Jourdan that she "stands as a more typical model. So once you enter that world in Fashion Week, your look becomes more run-of-the-mill. So it's up to you to have that personality that's going to get you a booking." In a later episode (episode 12), Jourdan states, "growing up in a small town I'm used to just the things that are in my comfort zone. I've never left the United States, so coming to Bali is like a total culture shock." Following this admission, Corey, a biracial contestant on the same cycle, notes in an interview that Jourdan is "just very sheltered. She hasn't seen a lot. I mean

when we were in L.A., she was like [said in a mocking voice] 'oh my God, look at that. Oh my God I've never seen a Black person before. I thought they only existed on TV.'"

Yet Jourdan is able to "escape" her blandness by eventually, much like Laura, embracing her "sexier" side (although this does not occur until the cycle nears its end). Indeed, Jourdan's ability to be "sexier" during her photographs blossoms when the contestants move to Bali. Specifically, during her first photo shoot in Bali (cycle 20, episode 13), Jourdan is photographed in a rice paddy, wearing a copious amount of bronzer—thus making her skin darker—and tropical flowers in her hair, while holding a basket on her head. The judges uniformly praise Jourdan's photograph, suggesting that she has finally learned how to be "sexy" and stand out from the crowd. That Bali, a location explicitly marked as a hotbed of raced/ethnic "others," is a catalyst for Jourdan's transformation is notable, in that it lends credence to the idea that taking a bit of "otherness" on/in is warranted, reifying whiteness as normative and "otherness" as deviant/dangerous, and promoting an ideal admixture. During the last two episodes of cycle 20 (episodes 15 and 16), judges comment on how sexy Jourdan has become, and how she has learned to embrace her sexiness. During the final episode, Kelly Cutrone, who had previously harshly critiqued Jourdan, states, "This photo for me is a Jourdan flag and it's flying super high. And it's white and it's glorious and it's powerful. You look amazing." As was the case for Laura, Jourdan finally becoming "edgier" (read: more "othered") ultimately leads to her success and her ability to win cycle 20.

During cycle 21, Lenox, a White woman, is the model designated as most boring. A continual narrative shaping Lenox's time on the show involved her inability to be sexy. Shei notes that Lenox is "so sweet and innocent" and that "you don't really think 'sexy'

when you see Lenox" (cycle 21, episode 14). Judges urge Lenox to be sexier in her photographs and criticize her for holding back; Lenox herself even frequently admits that she feels profoundly uncomfortable posing and acting in a sexy manner. In episode 5, Lenox reveals that she is a virgin, which she feels inhibits her and keeps her from being able to be sexy. Interestingly enough, however, Raelia, a Black woman who also competes in cycle 21, also reveals that she is a virgin, but that "you don't have to have sex to be sexy" (cycle 21, episode 5). Despite Lenox and Raelia having similar sexual (in)experience, Lenox is portrayed as having much more difficulty being sexy, suggesting that Raelia, as a Black woman, has some innate, embodied knowledge about how to be sexy that Lenox does not possess. Again, this suggests, as noted above, that sexiness is conflated with race/ethnicity; even more so, in fact, than it is conflated with sex.

Unlike the two White, blonde winners of cycles 19 and 20, Victoria, a contestant on cycle 19, is differentiated from the other White models by her claims of a marginalized racial/ethnic heritage. Judges apprehend her as White, and indeed, her light skin and light brown hair suggest that she is White. However, Victoria rejects this identification; when creative director Johnny Wujek comments on her "bigger nose" (cycle 19, episode 1), Victoria replies, "Well that's Jewish. I always get Native American heritage, Jewish, but I'm proud of it." Upon discovering that Melissa, an *ANTM* viewer, had negatively commented on her face via social media, Victoria responds by stating, "I'm Jewish, Native American. Our people were let off on the Trail of Tears and the Holocaust, so if you have a problem with my face, well…you're a racist." Victoria's "otherness" is what makes her interesting in this case; however, despite Victoria's "edge," her whiteness is always centered: while not White in the sense that, say, Kristin

and Laura are White, Victoria still has traditional markers of whiteness, including light skin. Moreover, she is White enough that she has to continually make the explicit point that she is not White, in ways that are designed to add to her cachet.

White men on *ANTM* are not exempt from encouragement to infuse their whiteness with something more interesting, which is consistent with what I described above, in the prior section, relevant to men of color; in fact, confluent with the intersectional considerations raised earlier, infusion for White men occurs somewhat differently than infusion for White women. Anxieties surrounding the perceived or possibly effeminacy of male models, in this case, intensifies the need for White men to be infused with "otherness," in that "otherness" provides the necessary "edge" and "danger" that offsets the threat of femininity. For instance, Chris, a White man, participates in a wedding-themed photo shoot (cycle 20, episode 3). The specific wedding theme is "hip-hop mixed-race wedding," and Renee, a Black woman, is asked to portray a wealthy debutante, while Chris is charged with embodying a hip-hop "bad boy." As Chris gleefully notes in an interview, "this little Texas boy is gonna be a thug today." During the photo shoot, Chris wears a tacky white suit with oversized, obviously fake gold chains and a white baseball cap with gold stud detailing. As the shoot begins, Chris starts exaggeratedly posturing, making fake gang signs, saying "yo" a lot, and slouching with his hands in his pockets. Here, Chris infuses his bland whiteness with hip-hop "swagger," suggesting that being a "thug" infuses the necessary amount of edge to Chris' White body. This photo shoot also suggests that infusion can be a temporary state, in that he infuses his body with "otherness" for the sake of the photo shoot, but then divests himself of that "otherness" when the shoot is over. Similarly, race/ethnicity is situated as a

substance that can be drawn upon or removed at will; it is a material resource, insofar as it is accomplished/calibrated via embodied performance, and is a prop thereof.

The White models' success on *ANTM*—Laura and Jourdan, both White, blonde women, are the winners of cycles 19 and 20, respectively—further centers whiteness while embodying a colorblind sensibility. Although Laura and Jourdan are both deemed boring at first, they are still rewarded by winning their respective cycles, suggesting that infusion of "color," without losing one's sense of whiteness, is important for success. Models of color, however, were typically eliminated from the competition, despite their efforts to diffuse themselves with the "appropriate" amount of whiteness.

**A Perfect Balance: Recentering Whiteness**

The twin strategies of *diffusion* and *infusion* point to a hybridity that is a very precisely calibrated admixture of race/ethnicity—that is, a specific distillation—giving the lie to the ostensible valorization of the (simultaneous) insignificance and fluidity of race/ethnicity. Those models who are successfully able to calibrate their racial/ethnic identities according to this precise formula are lauded as the perfect models. Indeed, models are encouraged to become what Beltran (2005) calls "ambiguously ethnic": "othered" enough to be interesting, but White enough to be safe. As Banks tells Victoria after Victoria refuses to get a makeover (cycle 19, episode 3):

> When I see a model say that they don't want to do something because it's connected to them and when it's something that's temporary, it makes me question if they should be in the fashion industry… *because the fashion industry is really not about you. You are a canvas.*" (emphasis mine)

The body, particularly the modeling body, is meant to be a *tabula rasa* on which racial and ethnic identity is written, a blank slate on which the "perfect" balance of whiteness

and "otherness" can be achieved. This suggests agency on the part of hybrid bodies, and the ability to "infuse" or "diffuse" oneself as appropriate. For instance, Victoria, despite being apprehended as White, consistently refutes this interpellation, affirming that she is, in fact, "other." That Victoria has the ability to self-identify here is indicative of a perspective of race/ethnicity that suggests choice and agency are imperative, and further, that race and ethnicity are mobile and malleable, which is predicated on very specific, perfectly calibrated notions of appropriate balance: a particular distillation of hybridity. This very notion of "colorblind" hybridity, however, relies upon highly convention racial/ethnic tropes that must be appropriated or divested, in precisely calibrated measure to achieve it.

This motif of calibration can be seen in Banks herself, who is a Black woman who often wears a long, straight wig, and who exhibits an ability to flow between cultures, races, and ethnicities. For instance, during any given judging panel, Banks alternately speaks using an extensive, sophisticated vocabulary, employs slang associated with urban youth, and angrily yells at contestants. During the latter half of cycle 19, which takes place in Jamaica, Banks seamlessly moves in and out of a Jamaican accent during judging. These instances point up the performative nature of hybridity that is key to its mobilization here: race/ethnicity are things to put on or take off (infuse or diffuse) in relation to a presumed core of whiteness. It appears fluid, but again, it is precisely controlled amounts and kinds of fluidity. Moreover, Banks' moving in and out of various admixtures could be read as a privilege earned by dint of her status, but it is not available to people seeking to succeed.

Like Banks, some of the contestants also exhibit a perfectly calibrated

racial/ethnic identity from the beginning, which, in every case, leads to their relative success on the show. Most notably, Corey, a self-identified androgynous contestant on cycle 20, describes himself as "halfrican-American. Half Black, half White" when speaking to Renee, who responds, "mixed people are the best people because we're everywhere, in everything" (cycle 20, episode 1). Although Corey does not win his cycle, he ends up in third place, and is often lauded throughout his time on the show. Perhaps most tellingly, Corey is asked to appear in two episodes of cycle 21; in one of his appearances, he is featured in a photo shoot as a futuristic postrace robot who is emblematic of a time when, as he notes, "all ethnicities will mesh into one." Corey's relative success on the show, particularly in light of his portrayal of the "perfect blend" of races/ethnicities, suggests that he is able to calibrate his identity "appropriately." Similarly, Banks tells Adam, the third-place finalist of cycle 21, about one of his photographs, "I think it's great. I think your ethnicity shows. Also the future, and reaching more people" (cycle 21, episode 15). Here, Banks highlights the importance of calibrating one's racial/ethnic identity so that one's ethnicity "shows," but implicitly does not overpower, thus avoiding the "lack" attendant to whiteness (Probyn, 2011), while avoiding the threat of "otherness," but only to the extent that "otherness" affords edge rather than full-on danger and/or deviance.

## Steeping Whiteness: Conclusions on Model Hybridity

Within *ANTM*, hybridity is overall articulated as *distillation* in the service of colorblindness. To accomplish this, hybridity is variously articulated on different bodies. That is, models of color are portrayed as in need of *diffusion*, or added whiteness, in order to be a "real" model. Models of color are presented as hypersexualized and angry, and are

encouraged to diffuse their bodies with markers of whiteness. Conversely, White models are apprehended as boring and in need of *infusion.* In order to become less boring, models are encouraged to be sexier, more dangerous, more "other." In so doing, however, whiteness is still centered. Moreover, this infusion is always temporary, in that they can return to their "normal" White selves at any time. The only purpose of infusion, thus, is to serve whiteness, helping it to be more exciting without being excessively dangerous. Finally, *diffusion* and *infusion* are the strategies of calibration, and the ideally calibrated admixture is the distilled version of hybridity. Models that can find that balance fare very well in the competition, suggesting that finding the right mixture of race and ethnicity is crucial to their success. These strategies of distillation are, as aforementioned, undergirded by a colorblind sensibility, in that explicit engagement of race/ethnicity is conspicuously absent from these discussions of diffusion, infusion, and calibration on *ANTM*; however, as demonstrated, critiques and endorsements are clearly patterned and coded in ways that work to reaffirm whiteness and raced/ethnic "otherness" in highly conventional ways.

This analysis brings to light two important implications. First, it suggests that while colorblindness rests on an assumption of fluidity and/or a "melting pot" ethos, as embodied, it is not borne out; it is a very narrowly controlled and contained formula. Within a colorblind society characteristic of contemporary U.S. race relations, race and ethnicity are always drawn against whiteness *in proportion*: that is, a small amount of race/ethnicity is acceptable and can enhance whiteness, but too much has to be diluted or diffused. The traveling borders surrounding "others" within the U.S. are, here, found to be nonexistent, in that race/ethnicity can be easily changeable. As such, the model body,

the body without borders or difference, works to normalize and reify whiteness as central: "Otherness" becomes an interesting aesthetic feature, an accessory, that serves to set off and privilege whiteness.

Second, in regard to hybridity more specifically, this analysis suggests myriad ways by which hybridity can be articulated and understood, particularly in the context of colorblind sensiblities. As noted, hybridity can work to shore up colorblindness, but in fairly precarious ways; that is, hybridity, within the rubric of colorblindness, both suggests that race/ethnicity do not matter, in that they are highly mutable; and gives a lie to that notion precisely by being about race/ethnicity. That is, hybridity in and of itself calls attention to race/ethnicity, yet within a colorblind society, race/ethnicity is also effectively erased via hybridity. Thus, in order to truly "work," colorblindness must reify whiteness, but do so in covert ways, by encouraging the distillation of race/ethnicity into a racially/ethnically ambiguous body. Thus, this analysis provides distinct, concrete ways by which to understand hybridity and its mobilizations within a colorblind sensibility. Again, rather than a straightforward concept, hybridity, as suggested within this chapter, is a concept that means differently based on the bodies and the contexts through which it is mobilized. Across these performances, however, hybridity is imagined here as an eraser of borders, a means of denying racial difference and claiming, "I don't see race" while simultaneously being predicated entirely and thoroughly on race.

**Endnotes**

1. The social media score has only been implemented in the most recent three cycles (19, 20, and 21), which are the cycles I focus on in this chapter. For cycle 19, the judge's panel consisted of: Banks, "PR Maven" Kelly Cutrone, male model Rob Evans, and BryanBoy, the social media correspondent who gave models comments from their fans and also reported their social media scores. For cycle 20, the judge's panel consisted of Banks, Cutrone, Evans, and BryanBoy. For cycle 21, the judge's panel consisted of Banks, Cutrone, and "Miss J" Alexander, returning from a two-season hiatus. Additionally, while in cycles 19 and 20, Johnny Wujek replaced "Mr. J" Manuel as creative director of the photo shoots, in cycle 21, Johnny Wujek was replaced by Yu Tsai. Finally, in cycles 20 and 21, male models were included on the show, whereas earlier cycles had only allowed women to compete.

CHAPTER IV

SWEETENING THE POT: CULINARY

ADVENTURES IN HYBRIDITY

The recent proliferation of transnational flows and diaspora cultures, not to

mention heightened perceptions of the threat of terrorism in general and specifically on

U.S. soil, has fostered new anxieties and tensions surrounding the fear and distrust of

"othered" bodies crossing the border into the U.S. and somehow "contaminating" the

alleged purity of U.S. culture. Similarly, there is an attendant fear of U.S. citizens being

too complacent about the infiltration of "otherness," unwittingly and naively welcoming,

enabling, and encouraging infiltration via the liberal "melting pot" ethos. Contentiousness

around immigration certainly is not new; for instance, as Cho (2014) aptly notes, in 1890,

U.S. troops massacred the Lakota Sioux at the Battled of Wounded Knee, the Page Law

of 1875 restricted the immigration of Chinese women—who were often considered

prostitutes—into the U.S., the landmark Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* legalized

racial segregation in 1896, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was renewed in 1902, and the

Expatriation Act of 1907—which, among other provisions, included the loss of

citizenship for women who married non-U.S. citizens—was legalized. Similarly,

although both Irish and Italian people are currently considered "White" in U.S. terms,

historically they were considered "ethnic," and they faced a number of obstacles when

attempting to immigrate to the U.S., including being placed in separate holding cells on

Ellis Island and being harassed and discriminated against for their supposed status as

uneducated and criminal.

Immigration is again a highly salient and contested issue now, although

manifested in different ways and turning on anxieties unique to this historical moment.

Purity has always been at issue in regard to immigration, and, in fact, always is, with the

spectre of mixing cultures. It remains a primary issue today; for instance, there are

concerns about "others" comprising the majority of the population in a few decades and

that most people will be "mixed" in the future. In this chapter, I am going to focus

specifically on the fear of contamination from, and seduction by, the "othered" body,

which is predicated, in many ways, on the threat of infiltration, as apprehended today in

terms of immigration and as terrorist penetration.

Literal fears of contamination—"others" as dirty and disease-ridden—very much

characterized immigration in the past. Many laws cordoned off people for fears of

infection, and mirrored historical anxieties at the time due to diseases like the 1918

Spanish flu epidemic that the public imaginary associated with immigrants. Some of

these fears still persist; the positioning of immigrants as material contaminants has been

well documented in public discourse. For instance, the 2003 SARS epidemic was

allegedly traced to Chinatown in New York—despite no one in that region testing

positive for SARS, Haitian refugees who tested positive for HIV were contained in

Guantanamo indefinitely and most recently, the Ebola scare has been traced to Africa

(Seay & Dionne, 2014). Indeed, the 2014 alleged Ebola outbreak within the U.S. was

often framed in terms of race, with popular magazines, including *Newsweek*, suggesting

that "primitive" people from Africa were responsible for bringing Ebola into the U.S.

(Seay & Dionne, 2014), and Scott Brown, the former Massachusetts senator who ran—and lost—for Senate in New Hampshire, stating that "we have a border so porous that anyone can walk across it… it's naïve to think that people aren't going to be walking through here who have [Ebola] and/or other types of intent, criminal or terrorist" (Keating, 2014, para. 3). As scholars (e.g., Cisneros, 2008; Nelkin & Michaels, 1998; Ono & Sloop, 2002) argue, immigrants are often rhetorically conceptualized as contaminants or pollutants, bringing disease and disorder into the ostensibly otherwise healthy, controlled U.S.

However, the fear of contamination surrounding immigrants is not always in regard to disease, specifically, but often is centered on fears of immigrants impinging upon a "pure" U.S.—and implicitly, White—culture. This, of course, is also not new; indeed, "Americans have always worried about the strangers who come to our shores, fearing that they would corrupt our society, dilute our culture, debase our values" (Rothenberg, 2007, p. 239). For example, from the 1840s to the 1860s, there was a widespread panic about the "corrupting" Catholic influence of people immigrating into the U.S. from Germany and Ireland who would surely "undermine the Anglo-Protestant core values of America" (Marquardt, Steigenga, Williams, & Vasquez, 2013, p. 50). In 1894, the Immigration Restriction League was founded amongst fears that "others" would corrupt the U.S.; one of the restrictions was that immigrants take a literacy test, salient because "proportionately more northern and western Europeans than southern and eastern Europeans were literate" (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 2013, p. 98). These fears persist today; for instance, a 2014 Reuters poll suggested that 70% of U.S. citizens believe that "illegal immigrants threaten traditional U.S. believes [sic] and customs, as

well as jeopardize the economy" (Miller, 2014, para. 2). To be sure, a salient fear surrounding immigration and terrorism is that "they" will change "us" in important ways, that is, fear of infiltration by the "other" is predicated on a perceived threat to white supremacy.

This threat is contemporarily understood as occurring via the duplicitous powers of the "other." For instance, in February 2015, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte harshly criticized Obama's expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, arguing that it was nothing more than a "sneaky attempt to place potentially hundreds of thousands of unlawful immigrants on a path to citizenship" (May, 2015, para. 6). The fear here is that "others" will sneak into the U.S. and "their" culture will somehow pervert "ours"; indeed, "many Americans, like people everywhere, are more comfortable with the familiar than with change. They fear that newcomers with different languages, religions, and cultures are reluctant to assimilate to American society and to learn English" (Hirschman, 2006, para. 2). This fear of infiltration and perversion is often linked to sexuality, and more particularly female sexuality, per the trope of seduction. As aforementioned, bodies of color are often apprehended as hypersexualized, dangerous, and seductive (Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008; Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; hooks, 1992; Joseph, 2013; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Ramirez-Berg, 2002; Shimizu, 2007; Shugart, 2007; Valdivia, 2005). That is, women of color are often perceived to be "Jezebels" who lure in and seduce unsuspecting men (Collins, 2000; Hall, 2003; hooks, 1992, 2009).

Yet just as people—specifically women—of color, and "otherness" more generally, are feared, they are also desired. As Said (1978) argues, the Western nations,

broadly speaking, have a deep fascination for, and fear of, the "exotic other." The "other" is often apprehended, particularly within the U.S., via a politics of desire, inasmuch as bodies of color are often coveted and fetishized. Indeed, the history of colonialism has been, in many ways, driven by the desire, both sexual and otherwise, for the "other" (Young, 2005). As hooks (2009) notes, the desire for the other is often bound up in discourses of sex and sexuality; that is, the body of the "other" "emerges as a site of contestation where sexuality is the metaphoric Other that threatens to take over, consume, transform *via* the experience of pleasure" (p. 367, emphasis in the original). Moreover,

> when race and ethnicity become commodified as resources for pleasure, the culture of specific groups, as well as the bodies of individuals, can be seen as constituting an alternative playground where members of dominating races, genders, sexual practices affirm their power-over in intimate relations with the Other. (hooks, 2009, p. 367)

The tensions between fear and desire of bodies of color are thus predicated on "other" bodies as capable of intimately changing and altering the White body, as well as the attendant discourses of threat and excitement.

Similar to the anxieties around the threat of immigration is the threat of infiltration due to terrorism; more specifically, that terrorists can easily slip through the "porous" borders of the U.S. and endanger U.S. citizens. A number of conservative politicians, including Arizona Representative Trent Franks, Texas Governor Rick Perry, Pennsylvania Representative Lou Barletta, and Florida Senator Marco Rubio, have alleged that ISIS terrorists are currently located in Mexico, and have easy access to the U.S. through the relatively unguarded U.S./Mexico border (Carroll, 2014). These anxieties are relevant to what is articulated as misguided liberal sensibilities—a perspective that accepts everyone and valorizes "difference" so that people do not or

cannot distinguish threat. This is also a kind of seduction, but predicated on, and exploitative of, ideological commitments.

This threat and desire of "othered" bodies is related to hybridity in two key ways: First, sexual desire for the other is tied to the threat of miscegenation, an obvious instantiation of hybridity. Second, and most salient for this chapter, desire for the "other" enacts a type of hybridity insofar as it is predicated on whiteness unwittingly "taking in" or consuming the seductive "others" (Pitcher, 2014). That is, more germane to this chapter is the ways in which hybridity is articulated rhetorically by and through particular bodies and how hybridity helps to manage and assuage the tensions associated with the threat of, and desire for, the "other." The introduction of racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. is a volatile issue, and investigating how threats to whiteness are managed symbolically and rhetorically gives insight into how tensions surrounding race and ethnicity are managed more broadly throughout the contemporary U.S. In this chapter, I focus specifically on *consumption* of "otherness" as performed and articulated by "othered" bodies. The particular anxiety at play here is twofold: first, accepting and enabling the infiltration of the "othered," hybrid body; and second, facilitating or accomplishing the hybridization of the self, which often reads as adulteration of the "authentic" self, by taking in the "other." Both turn on the motifs of seduction and consumption, handily accomplished through food in this case, the very literal "eating the other" of which hooks (2009) famously speaks.

To further explore the ways that hybridity and fears thereof are rhetorically mobilized relative to consumption in order to manage anxieties surrounding, specifically, seduction by racial and ethnic "others," I conduct an analysis of three female chefs who

represent and/or perform hybridity on the *Food Network*, specifically attending to ways that hybridity is engaged through their food. As a powerful cultural medium, food can be seen as a symbolic manifestation and mobilization of race and ethnicity, thus it is appropriate to examine the ways in which food is mapped onto racially and ethnically marked bodies as well as how it intersects with, exacerbates, and/or mediates anxieties around race/ethnicity. In this essay, I discuss three chefs who are identified, however problematically, by themselves and/or others, as racially or ethnically "other," but in definitively hybridized ways, and examine the distinctive ways in which hybridity is accomplished and navigated in each case to manage the implicit threat posed by the seduction by, and consumption of, "otherness." Prior to doing so, I will trace the ways in which food functions as a key signifier of racial and ethnic identity, followed by a description and analysis of my artifacts.

## Ethnic (as) Cuisine

Food can be conceptualized as a material manifestation of identities, including nationality, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and gender. For instance, food is often associated with national identity and region. Even the way people often discuss and label food (e.g., "Italian food," "French food," and "Chinese food") suggests a strong tie between cuisines and national origin. Jean Brillat Savarin, a 19th-century philosopher and gastronome, is quoted as noting that "the destiny of nations depends on the manner in which they nourish themselves" (cited in Mannur, 2006, p. 2). As Mannur further contends, food is tied to national identity inasmuch as foods such as rice and sushi are typically associated with Asian nations and, at least during their early introduction into the U.S., were unintelligible to people within the U.S. Furthermore, as Pitcher (2014) and

Bestor (2005) claim, even after "ethnic foods"—sushi, for example—become popular in the U.S., their intelligibility as "ethnic" does not diminish, and this food stays attached, in the public imaginary (Anderson, 1983), to the region from which it hails. Similarly, Atkins-Sayre and Stokes (2014) claim that Southern hospitality food (e.g., cornbread, greens, and barbecue) is a rhetorical articulation of the hospitality of the Southern region of the U.S., in that food becomes a metonym for a material, geographic location. Moreover, food can be considered a catalyst for a type of nostalgia, such that people who have immigrated into the U.S. remember their homelands by preparing and partaking in food from their nation of origin (Katrak, 1997; Mannur, 2007).

Food is additionally related to socioeconomic class (Douglas, 2003; Goode, 1992; Levi-Strauss, 1966; Pitcher, 2014; Shugart, 2014). Perhaps most notably, Bourdieu (1984, 1986) argues that food is inextricably related to "taste," insofar as the type of food one eats is a signifier of one's socioeconomic and cultural capital. This is tied, in many ways, to the contemporary rise of "foodie culture" (Shugart, 2014), in which artisanal, hand-crafted food is prized even in the wake of rampant income inequality within the U.S. (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). That is, those with the cultural and financial capital to purchase these specialty food items are valorized, despite the fact that regular consumption of artisanal food is unrealistic for many, if not most. Schlosser (2001) juxtaposes this artisanal food culture with what he refers to as the "fast food nation," by examining the ways in which fast food widens the chasm between wealthy and poor, and arguing that fast food is cuisine most often associated with people of low socioeconomic and cultural capital.

Moreover, food is related to cultural, racial, and ethnic identity. As Lupton (1996)

contends, food and eating are central to the creation of subjectivity, or sense of self, and

Goode, Curtis, and Theophano (2003) argue that food is closely tied to the maintenance

and sustainment of ethnic identity. Spiro asserts that "food is the last aspect of an ethnic

culture to be lost" (cited in Goode, et al., 2003, p. 144). Food provides a way of

structuring and maintaining social order, including social structures of cultural belonging,

and is an important aspect of racial and ethnic identity, as well as a way of maintaining

cultural relationships (Douglas, 2003; Durkheim & Mauss, 1963; Goode, et al., 2003).

Moreover, whiteness is always presumed: Food is only "ethnic" if it is "different"; ethnic

food is configured as exotic, vis-à-vis whiteness. However, as will become relevant later

in this chapter, both Irish, and especially, Italian, food continue to be perceived as

"ethnic," despite the fact that Irish and Italian people are currently considered White

within the U.S. (Douglas, 2003). As such, food, race, and ethnicity are closely tied to

ideas of cultural authenticity (Pitcher, 2014). Although I certainly do not subscribe to the

belief in authentic culture or food, and while there is no one idea about what constitutes

"authentic" ethnic food, authenticity is nonetheless a powerful rhetorical strategy that

marks not only race and ethnicity, but also food, as "real," and therefore of better quality

than inauthentic food.

Food is also associated with gender, specifically with femininity. Inness (2000)

argues that women are typically responsible for grocery shopping and preparing food;

moreover, women are often portrayed as food preparers in popular media. Parkin (2001)

also contends that traditional gender roles have historically been implicated and

supported by food, and Weiss (2001) explains that food is instrumental in domesticating

women. Swenson (2009), however, takes a more hopeful approach towards food and

gender, claiming that television portrayals of both male and female chefs allow for the potential to shift stereotypically gendered relationships with food. Regardless of resistive potentialities, food preparation and serving has historically been the purview of women, and has been often portrayed thusly in the media.

Food can further be seen as one way of encountering the racialized/gendered "other," hence a way of managing tensions surrounding race, ethnicity, and gender; as Bower (2004) states, "the consumption of food can stand for the consumption of *any* aspect of culture—whether cultural traditions, cultural hybridity, the hyperconsumerism of our postmodern Western world, or some aspect of gender conflict or definition" (p. 7, emphasis in the original). For Bower, food is an important signifier of identity, and foodways—the preparation, practice, and consumption of food—cannot be separated from culture, race, ethnicity, and gender. Moreover, as Pitcher (2014) explains, the consumption of "ethnic" food is never based on racial/ethnic equality; rather, "lining up non-white producers to attend to the white consumers, food can be said to describe a commodity and a service, not a relationship among equals" (p. 85). In this sense, (White) people can consume "ethnic" food and simultaneously consume the "other"—literally *eat* the "other" (hooks, 2009). This signifies appropriation and exploitation of the "other," such that those less privileged are eradicated in some ways.

The implications of "eating the other" also has been theorized in terms of the threat posed by consumption—specifically, threat to the integrity or purity of self. As Abrams (2004) notes, "often the consumption of forbidden foods symbolizes rebellion and/or the rejection of traditional ethnic roots" (p. 92). Thus to eat the "other" via consumption of ethnic foods is to enter dangerous, yet exciting terrain; it is to repudiate a

sense of whiteness and instead embrace the exotic flavors of ethnic cuisine—and cultures. However, as aforementioned, to encounter the "othered" body, particularly within the U.S., is often apprehended as encountering danger. Thus, the consumption of "otherness" often has to be mediated in some way; one way this mediation can be accomplished is through hybridity. That is, the preparation and consumption of hybrid foods—foods not easily marked as either ethnic or nonethnic—can serve to transgress fixed notions of race and ethnicity. Rather than being clearly marked, hybrid foods, like hybrid bodies, often are difficult to identify with a particular race, ethnicity, and/or culture, which accomplishes two purposes: First, it confounds notions of essentialized race and ethnicity, thus serving a liberatory purpose. Second, however, hybrid foods conversely present ethnic food as "safe" (i.e., White), thus aligning with an assimilationist impulse and couching the danger of "othered" food—and bodies—within the security of whiteness.

Scholars have investigated the mélange of race, food, and gender within the food film genre, arguing that race/ethnicity and gender are inextricably tied to food, and that through consumption of ethnic food, people can experience the "other" (Balthrope, 2004; Lindenfeld, 2007; Mannur, 2005; Nicholson, 2001; Probyn, 2001; Shugart, 2008). Nicholson (2001), for instance, argues that food is symbolic of power relations, specifically "a means of demarcating the powerful from the less powerful—those who eat from those who are eaten (or provide food)" (p. 280). Similar to hooks' (2009) discussion of "eating the Other," and the desire for consumption of "othered" bodies, Negra (2002) and Probyn (2001) both discuss the fetishization of ethnic food within films, such that the "blandness of whiteness" must be ameliorated through an encounter with, and

consumption of, the "other" through food (p. 82). Here, ethnic food is desirable in that it gives figurative—and often literal—spice to otherwise homogenous whiteness; the consumption of ethnic food and bodies becomes a scene of "spectacular consumption," through which the alleged "authentic other" can lend much-needed excitement to whiteness (Watts & Orbe, 2002).

Yet as Shugart (2008) notes, the consumption of the "other" is not without attendant threats:

> 'Eating the Other' also poses a not insignificant degree of threat, to the extent that both desire for and consumption of the Other qualifies rigid distinctions on which, after all, raced and gendered power and privilege are predicated. Desire itself bespeaks a concession of the self-containment of privilege, and indulgence of that desire—consumption—necessitates absorption and integration of the Other: a dangerous, potentially feminizing practice. (p. 72)

That is, "eating the other" may constitute a significant threat to whiteness, such that the desire for consumption of "othered" foods and bodies triggers attendant tensions and anxieties as relevant to the threat of immigration, terrorism, and the infiltration of "otherness" into a sphere of "pure" whiteness and white supremacy. In this chapter, I want to engage similar tensions and anxieties surrounding the consumption of "otherness," but specifically as relevant to hybridity, including as variously performed by bodies marked as variously hybrid. Specifically, in this chapter I navigate the ways in which food is mobilized as a type of hybridity, and becomes a key site where tensions surrounding the consumption of racial/ethnic/gendered bodies, as relevant to, for instance, immigration and terrorism, become mapped onto food; food becomes a way through which people might work through their anxieties surrounding the racial/ethnic/gendered bodies preparing the food.

**Tenderizing Tensions: Food Network and Hybridity**

Mediated representations of food, including television food programming, have been circulating in the U.S. public for some time (Ketchum, 2005). However, the establishment of television networks exclusively devoted to food is a comparatively new move. The first and still most prominent of these is Food Network. Begun in 1993 as a standard cooking channel offering shows with one chef and one camera, Food Network quickly expanded to include travel programs, competition-style reality shows, and niche programming that features a variety of cuisines (Ketchum, 2005). Currently, Food Network features nearly 24-hour food-related programming that is broadcast widely, and according to Nielson Media reports, has been consistently ranked within the top 20 most-watched networks for the past 5 years ("About FoodNetwork.com," n.d.; Andreeva, 2010; The Deadline Team, 2013). As a network that features chefs and cuisines from diverse ethnic backgrounds, Food Network is situated to disseminate discourses about ethnic foods and cultural hybridity.

However, despite the popularity and broad distribution of the Food Network, it has not been studied extensively. Both Ketchum (2005) and Meister (2001) argue that Food Network engages consumer fantasies of food preparation and consumption, encouraging viewers to identify with the chefs preparing the food and promising satisfaction through the acquisition of premium, artisanal ingredients and the consumption of food. Swenson (2009) claims that the Food Network upholds the idea of cooking as gendered work, but that inclusion of male and female chefs on the network also works, at the same time, to challenge the binary between genders. A very few scholars have taken up the matter of race and/or ethnicity as represented in Food Network

programming: Mannur (2005) asserts that the ways that "model minorities" who prepare

Asian-American fusion cuisine bespeaks a politics wherein fusion cuisine is celebrated

primarily because of the ease with which "ethnic" foods typical of Asian cultures can be

assimilated with stereotypical U.S. food. Finally, Gallagher (2004), in an analysis of the

Food Network program *Iron Chef*, argues that the Western appropriation of a Japanese

television show serves to not only bring knowledge of Japanese culture to Western

audiences, but also to profit off of the exploitation of Japanese culture. While these

studies all contribute to a greater understanding of representations of race, ethnicity, and

even, implicitly, hybridity, specifically around food, and while I find Mannur's

arguments particularly compelling in regard to the ways that fusion cuisine might be seen

as a type of assimilation, in this chapter I want to explore a somewhat different question

in a broader context: hybridity as it is performed by and through bodies via a governing

strategy of consumption.

Specifically, I assess three shows, each of which features a different female chef

explicitly marked as "ethnic," or at least different and thus "other": *Simply Delicioso*,

with Ingrid Hoffmann; *Aarti Party*, with Aarti Sequiera; and *Everyday Italian*, with

Giada de Laurentiis. While I am not suggesting that the raced and gendered body is

exclusively female—male bodies are also raced and gendered—the genre of chefs

specifically marked as hybrid appears to be dominated by women, despite the fact that

the ranks of celebrity chefs are proportionately dominated by men; perhaps this is

because, reflective of long-standing perceptions of the male body of color as threatening

and the attendant implication that the hybrid male body is at least as threatening (hooks,

1992), female hybrid bodies are understood as less so. Moreover, as aforementioned (and

paradoxically), the aspects of seduction that underlie consumption are conventionally more often ascribed to women; for instance, the hypersexual Latina (Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Ramirez-Berg, 2002; Shugart, 2007; Valdivia, 2005), the Black woman as Jezebel (Collins, 2000; Hall, 2003; hooks, 1992, 2009), and the Asian woman as perfectly submissive and pleasing to (White) men (Ciment & Radzilowski, 2015; Shimizu, 2007) are all familiar tropes.

Ingrid Hoffmann, a native Colombian, moved to Miami as an adult and was offered a show on Food Network, *Simply Delicioso with Ingrid Hoffmann* (hereafter, *Simply Delicioso*), which premiered in 2007 ("Simply Delicioso Episode List," n.d.). The show brings "a practical approach to easy, Latin inspired dishes," and features "lively menus, clever tips and time-saving shortcuts to help [viewers] create American favorites with bold and surprising Latin accents" ("Simply Delicioso with Ingrid Hoffmann," n.d.). Aarti Sequiera was born in Bombay, India, and raised in Dubai ("Aarti Sequiera Bio," n.d.). After attending college in the U.S., she competed on, and won, the *Food Network Star*, a reality competition-style cooking show. After her win, Sequiera was offered a cooking show, *Aarti Party*, where "she shares easy and delicious ways to enhance American favorites with simple but unique Indian influences," and "cleverly combines the familiar with the exotic to create mouthwatering menus" ("Aarti Party," n.d.).

Giada de Laurentiis was born in Rome, but moved to the U.S. at a young age. She was offered a show on the Food Network, *Everyday Italian* ("Giada De Laurentiis Bio," n.d.), where she "shares updated versions of the homey recipes she grew up with in her Italian family" ("Everyday Italian," n.d.). Although de Laurentiis currently hosts multiple

shows on the network, many of them involve her traveling and sampling food; *Everyday Italian* is one of her two shows that portray her cooking, and was the first show de Laurentiis was offered. De Laurentiis presents a unique case in this analysis, in that "Italian" is a questionable ethnic category insofar as, currently at least, Italian is often perceived as White within the U.S. However, whether she is "truly" ethnic is not the salient point for the purposes of this study; as noted, race and ethnicity are constructed notions, not material realities, and racial/ethnic authenticity is an even more fraught notion. More important is that de Laurentiis and her food are constructed as ethnic, creating an imaginary of ethnic-ness that positions de Laurentiis in specific ways, on their own terms and in relation to the other two chefs. Moreover, people within the U.S. often still consider Italian cuisine as ethnic (Girardelli, 2004). The inclusion of de Laurentiis in this analysis is important in that how her ethnicity is defined and navigated illuminates complexity and variation with respect to where and how race and/or ethnicity are drawn; how they are drawn against whiteness, in particular, lending definition to the concept; and salient contemporary sites of tension around "otherness." Moreover, de Laurentiis and, by extension, Hoffmann and Sequiera, can throw into relief the ways in which current anxieties are present in and through particular bodies marked as hybrid, and the implications thereof. Furthermore, these three chefs reveal something about how particular races/ethnicities, and the respective threats they pose in regard to seduction and contamination, are imagined. The fact that these three chefs are identified as raced/ethnic establishes the centrality and presumption of whiteness that serve as their backdrop. This does not necessarily mean that producers and creators of these shows—or their audiences, for that matter—are exclusively or predominantly White, but simply that

whiteness is rhetorically centered simply by virtue of "othering" these women and their food.

Although new episodes for these three shows are no longer filmed, they continue to be broadcast in syndication, as well as available online. Given the difficulty of watching every episode of each show when it airs on television, I have analyzed excerpts of each show available on www.foodnetwork.com and www.hulu.com.[1] This selection of texts furnished me with a wide range and variety of data across which I was able to identify and assess themes, patterns, and relative significance of representations.

**Dishing Up Difference: Managing Anxieties Through Hybridity**

Hoffmann, Sequiera, and de Laurentiis are each articulated as hybrid on their respective cooking shows, primarily via the food they prepare. Food becomes a tool by which fears regarding the ostensible contamination from chefs' "othered" bodies, and the seductive threats they pose, can be assuaged. That is, in making "ethnic" cuisine more acceptable and palatable to whiteness, the races and ethnicities of the chefs are made more acceptable and palatable, as is the threat posed by hybridity. The seductive potential of all three chefs is acknowledged, but audiences are still given a choice whether or not to engage with the "other," and on what terms. Essentially, in these cases, "eating the other" is not presented as a threat of contamination so much as it is articulated as "adding flavor"; moreover, no one is being seduced against his/her will: (White) people can determine what, how, and how much to consume. Notably, hybridity is rhetorically articulated through the food and bodies of all three chefs in different ways, which reveals that hybridity is not a homogenous concept, nor is it practically accomplished in consistent ways; these various articulations of hybridity illuminate specific anxieties

around particular races and/or ethnicities and the likewise specific implications of hybridization in each case.

**Ingrid Hoffmann: Taming**

In *Simply Delicioso*, the fear of contamination by "otherness" is managed by an articulation of hybridity that is specifically rendered as *taming* or *tempering*. Implicit in this strategy is the notion that Latinidad is wild and in need of taming, that, in fact, Latinidad can be read as "otherness." The first part of this strategy is performed by Hoffmann herself. For instance, Hoffmann is often portrayed as exotic and sexy through her clothing, which often includes bright, tropical colors, large pieces of jewelry, and, notably, a number of shirts that feature plunging necklines, all key tropes associated with the notion of the hypersexualized Latina (Lichter & Amundson, 1997; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Molina Guzman & Valdivia, 2004; Rivadeneyra, Ward, & Gordon, 2007). This trope is reinforced through Hoffmann's continual references to spice and spiciness; spiciness refers not only to the spiciness of the food that Hoffmann prepares, but also to her own sexual appetite. Although Hoffmann ostensibly only talks about her food, food and sexuality—a specific type of racialized and gendered sexuality—are constructed as analogous; this is underscored, for instance, by Hoffmann's assertion that spicy food will lead to a "spicy" night and an entire episode dedicated to making "romantic" food that will lead to what Hoffmann suggests will be a wild night with her husband. Thus, Hoffmann's food—and by extension, her body—is equated with a particular type of sexuality (spicy, hot, exotic, tropical) often ascribed to Latinas/Hispanic women (Lichter & Amundson, 1997; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Molina Guzman & Valdivia, 2004; Rivadeneyra, Ward, & Gordon, 2007).

Further, Hoffmann lends an air of Latin authenticity through her voice. For instance, she liberally sprinkles her show with "Spanglish" words and phrases. "Spanglish," a popular term for the mixture of Spanish and English words, is typically utilized by people who are non-native English speakers. For instance, the title of the show itself includes the word *delicioso* (delicious), and Hoffmann refers several times to her food "looking and smelling *delicioso*." Further, she refers to her female friends as *chicas*, uses phrases such as *poquita para aqui, poquita para alla* (a little bit here, a little bit there), and employs a Spanish slang word, *amanhate* ("let's eat") throughout various episodes. Moreover, Hoffmann discusses her dishes in ways that bespeak the "ethnic" quality of the food she is preparing. Although there is a more Westernized pronunciation of Latin dishes common within the U.S. (e.g., pronouncing *tortilla* as "tor-tee-ya"), Hoffmann correctly pronounces the names of Latin ingredients, spices, and dishes, thus assuring viewers that she is, indeed, preparing authentically Latin food. Thus, not only Hoffmann's food, but her body itself, is marked as exotically "other," beckoning White consumption.

Throughout the show, then, Hoffmann is portrayed as someone who enjoys wild nights out, drinking, and dancing; but her body is often tamed—just as Hoffmann exemplifies key tropes associated with the threat and hypersexualization of Latinidad, she is also simultaneously imbricated with whiteness that tempers and manages her "otherness." Hoffmann's marking as a hybrid body is perhaps most evident with her name itself, which does not conform to stereotypical notions of Latina/o last names. Indeed, Hoffmann reveals that she has taken her (White) husband's last name, and, despite the well-known stereotype of the wildly promiscuous Latina, Hoffmann often

discusses her monogamous, heterosexual relationship with a White man. Hoffmann's

sexual spiciness is thus tempered by the fact that not only is she married, but even more

significantly, she is married to a White man. Moreover, despite Hoffmann's often tropical

wardrobe, the lightness of her skin tone and the fineness of her features are more aligned

with conventional Western beauty standards typically associated with whiteness within

the U.S. As scholars (e.g., Herring, Keith, & Horton, 2004; Hunter, 2002) have noted,

light-skinned woman of color are often valorized for aligning with ideals of whiteness;

here, Hoffmann's light-skinned and fine-featured appearance suggest a hybrid identity

that is neither completely Latina nor White.

Moreover, although Hoffmann's accent is pronounced and noticeable when

discussing the Latin dishes she prepares, it is markedly not noticeable when speaking in

general. In fact, if not for the Latin words she employs, one would never know that

Hoffmann is bilingual. Additionally, Hoffmann is never shown actually acting in an

outrageous or wild way; she is never depicted partying, drinking, or acting sexually

promiscuous. Rather, Hoffmann often acts in methodical, structured ways—carefully

delineating each step in meal preparation, putting everything in its place, and keeping her

kitchen area meticulously clean. Although she occasionally ends episodes with a

gathering or party, they are never wild or uncontained; rather, Hoffmann's parties

typically include a group of women, of mixed racial and ethnic identities, demurely

sipping drinks and gossiping, or a quiet romantic dinner with Hoffmann and her husband.

Furthermore, Hoffmann's ostensible sexual excess is further tamed through the

domestication associated with the kitchen and preparation of food. Through the hybridity

of her food, and her body, Hoffmann is rhetorically constructed as fun—maybe even

acceptably exciting—but ultimately harmless.

As a hybridized body preparing hybridized food, Hoffmann represents both a dangerous *and/but* safe body. Hoffmann shelters viewers, and by extension, whiteness, from the excesses of the Latina body and disengages the anxieties surrounding the out of control, unruly racialized body. Hoffmann's Latina body is exotic, desirable, and "other," while simultaneously devoid of all the dangerous aspects of an encounter with Latinidad. While ethnicity is presented for consumption, there is no *real* danger of consuming ethnicity in any substantive ways. Hoffmann's rhetoric suggests that Latin bodies *need* to be tamed, controlled, and managed. In this case, while hybridity allows Hoffmann to escape easy categorization, it also suggests that Hoffmann's body, and by extension, other Latin bodies, require mediation in order to be safely approached. Although hybridity allows people to draw closer to "othered" bodies, it necessarily communicates that Latin bodies are dangerous without the influence of whiteness to temper their heat.

The second part of the taming strategy within *Simply Delicioso* is exemplified in the food itself, food that is first articulated as unmistakably Latin. For example, in one episode, Hoffmann announces that she is adding "a little bit of spicy, baby" because "we wanna get things spicy tonight!" Spice is commonly associated with Latin/South American cooking, and so when Hoffmann announces the spiciness of her food, she also communicates that she is preparing what should be seen as "authentic" Latin cuisine. Hoffmann also refers often to "Latin seasoning" to describe her garnishes, and in one instance, states that her tequila cocktail "couldn't be more Mexican." In addition to Hoffmann explicitly stating the "Latin-ness" of her dishes, she also names her food to suggest that it is Latin in origin. For example, she prepares *chimichangas*, *margaritas*,

Mexican corn soup, *pisco* sour, and *mango* and *jicama* salad, to name just a few of her dishes. These are all foods associated with Latin cooking, and throughout her cooking show, Hoffmann continually reminds viewers that they are watching her prepare "authentic" Latin dishes.

In addition to being explicitly identified as Latin/South American cuisine, the food Hoffmann prepares looks the part. For instance, Hoffmann often creates appetizers, entrees, and even cocktails that are brightly colored and appear exotic and tropical, a key trope of Latinidad (Aparicio &Chavez-Silverman, 1997; Lichter & Amundson, 1997; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Molina Guzman & Valdivia, 2004). Hoffmann's salads contain lush greenery with multicolored toppings, her cocktails are jewel toned and rich in color, and her entrees sizzle and pop with vividness. The look of her food, combined with the names Hoffmann endows it with and the way she describes it, suggests that her food is indeed exotic, spicy, rich, and bursting with flavor. Even the actual preparation of food marks it as Latin/South American; Hoffmann's appliances and backdrop are all a bright, tropical green, and she often speaks of preparing food for "girls' night out," huge family get-togethers, parties featuring salsa dancing, and so forth. The food itself is meant for wild, exciting occasions, featuring cocktails, boisterous gatherings, and pulsating salsa music, lending an aura of exuberance to the items that Hoffmann prepares.

However, upon closer examination, Hoffmann's food is not so exotic (or exciting); Hoffmann's food departs significantly from traditional Latin American cuisine to the extent that it is considerably "toned down"—tamed—as relevant to spice and heat. Hoffmann does not often use any extremely hot/spicy seasonings or peppers typically associated with Latin/South American cooking, such as *habaneros*, *jalapenos*, cayenne

pepper, or even the more mild bell peppers. Although some of her dishes are traditional Latin cuisine, such as *tamale* pie, *chorizo*, and rice, the majority of her dishes are fairly bland, including chicken strips (with little seasoning), "spiked" fruit punch, and brownies. Hoffmann's recipes function to eliminate the threat of hot, spicy Latin/South American food *before* she even presents the food. Although the names of her foods, and the ways she speaks of them, imply spiciness, the actual ingredients belie this implication.

Moreover, while all of the dishes Hoffmann prepares are "inspired" by Latin cuisine, they are all "Americanized" to some extent. For instance, during one episode, Hoffmann prepares red pepper mayonnaise, adding chili peppers to mayonnaise to make it a hybrid of traditional Latin/South American food and a U.S. staple condiment. Hoffman not only "tones down" traditional Latin cuisine, but also "tones *up*" what could be considered U.S. culinary classics, thus making them hybrid dishes. For instance, Hoffmann makes apple *chimichangas*, which she refers to as "good ol' Southern comfort with Mexican flavor." Hoffmann also prepares an "exotic mango and jicama salad," which sounds far more exotic than it actually is (greens, mango, jicama, radish, and peanut butter dressing). In fact, the majority of Hoffmann's recipes contain some "authentic" Latin ingredients, but are tamed and diluted in two ways: first through the use of less threatening ingredients (e.g., chili peppers rather than *habaneros*), and second through the fusion of traditional Latin ingredients with U.S. ingredients. These hybridized dishes are thus made more safe and palatable, specifically for White palates.

Although her food carries an underlying threat of danger, excitement, and excess, Hoffmann functions as the protector, specifically as a neutralizer, shielding audiences

from the eminent threat of Latin cuisine by taming the food or hybridizing it with items typical of U.S. dishes. People are able to make contact with exotic, tropical, ethnic, spicy, and exciting cuisine without facing the attendant dangers of contamination associated with those types of food—and bodies; people do not have to worry about being overwhelmed by race/ethnicity and/or bodies of color. Hoffmann acts as the mediator, allowing her viewers to draw near the heat of Latin/South American cooking without getting burned.

This hybridized food functions as a metonym for Latin bodies more broadly; Latin bodies—including Hoffmann's—like Latin food, are presented as tropical, spicy, wild, and seductive, while simultaneously unthreatening. Latin food and bodies merge here to suggest that consumption of tamed food is presented as not a substantial threat to one's own racial and/or ethnic integrity—because it is not "real" otherness that is being consumed; moreover, that taking in the bodies of tamed, hybridized "others" is likewise not a threat, suggesting that immigration, under certain, very specific conditions, is allowable. However, this inevitably turns on the reification of the dangers of immigration and "other" bodies. The particular performances of otherness and of mitigating hybridity suggest a perception of Latina bodies as destructive, uncivil, seductive, and possibly agents of contamination and danger by all those references to heat and wildness (hence their needing taming), reflective of fears of immigration. Moreover, it confirms that Latin bodies more generally are threatening, and that Latina bodies, in particular, are especially suspect in that they potentially could seduce "us" with untamed fare.

**Aarti Sequiera: Demystification**

The fear of "otherness" is also negotiated in Aarti Sequiera's show, *Aarti Party*, but in different ways from *Simply Delicioso*. While "otherness" in *Simply Delicioso* is negotiated through a strategy of *taming*, in *Aarti Party*, the threat of the "other" is managed through the strategies of *demystification*, in that Sequiera often includes U.S. staple ingredients in her dishes, thus making Indian food hybrid, making the consumption of Indian food—and bodies—easy and unthreatening, and lessening the threat of contamination and adulteration that they pose. *Aarti Party* appears to primarily function as a guide to making "Indianness"—which furthermore is commonly conflated in the U.S. imaginary (arguably enhanced in light of Sequiera's Dubai upbringing) with a vague Middle or Near Easternness that encompasses Muslim and/or Arab identities (Joshi, 2006)—more accessible and less intimidating. These particular strategies can be understood as attendant to anxieties that surround hybridity in a broader context of infiltration by threatening Eastern bodies as prompted by contemporary U.S. experiences with terrorism. As aforementioned, terrorism is also, in many ways, facilitated by self-seduction via liberal ideologies that obliterate abilities to distinguish threat; this demystification can be understand as furnishing those distinguishing abilities and providing clarity.

Sequiera's performances and body are key sites through which the demystification of Indianness occur. In order for "otherness" to be managed, it must be established first, and Sequiera does precisely that. For instance, Sequiera often wears jewel-toned colors, which are associated with traditional Indian dyes, and often wears patterns, which, while not explicitly associated with traditional Indian clothing, hearkens

to Indian garb, such as saris. She often wears a bright flower in her hair, which has significant meaning in Indian cultures, serving as an important symbol of love, good luck, happiness, and prosperity (Chowdhury, 2014). In addition to her clothing, Sequiera is visibly marked as a woman of color, with dark, wavy hair and a brown skin tone.

Moreover, throughout her show, Sequiera correctly pronounces the names of Indian food, signifying her fluency in a language other than English. Sequiera also often explicitly identifies with Indian culture as she prepares food, stating that "we love our cilantro," "we use *garam masala*" in almost every dish, and explaining how "we" prepare *chimichurri*. Indeed, Sequiera often refers to the way her family prepared particular dishes at home, and states during the preparation of many of her recipes that the smell of the food makes her miss home; Sequiera identifies Indian food with Indian culture, and equates Indian food and culture with her Indian body. Sequiera clearly performs her identity as an Indian woman, and is thus constructed as "other."

Yet at the same time, like Hoffmann, Sequiera cannot be easily categorized as "other." For instance, while her outfits often resemble traditional Indian garb, Sequiera's wardrobe is also largely Western, including jeans, tie-dye, and t-shirts. Moreover, as noted earlier, her skin color, while brown, is still relatively light, similar to Hoffmann. While Sequiera is visibly marked as "ethnic" (read: not White), she still conforms to stereotypically Western standards of attractiveness: lighter skin, smooth hair, and Western features. Sequiera also often discusses her White husband, thus affiliating Sequiera with whiteness in a way that further manages the potential threat that her Near/Middle Easternness poses. Furthermore, Sequiera's slight British accent gives her more "White credibility," as European whiteness is often viewed as the epitome of

whiteness.

Additionally, Sequiera, who currently resides in Los Angeles, California, often uses U.S. slang, such as when she states that her broccoli raita slaw is "the bomb," and when she makes a beef curry, noting that this is not a wholly traditional dish because "in India, the cow is sacred, so not a lot of people eat beef, but I'm cool with it." This suggests that Sequiera has assimilative inclinations, and, by extension, inclinations to discriminate between "appropriate" and "inappropriate" cultural practices. The association of Sequiera as relatively "All-American" serves to not only demystify the Indian body, but also ameliorate the dark threat of India and the Near/Middle East. Sequiera herself is familiar, happy, and ultimately harmless; even the name of her show—it is a party, after all—suggests fun, excitement, and safety. The conflation and contrast of Indian-inspired clothing with jeans, Sequiera's Indian origins with her White husband, and Indian phrases and ingredients with a slight British accent all suggest that while Sequiera is Indian enough to be interesting and exciting, she has sufficient ties to whiteness and familiar hallmarks of whiteness to assuage the threat her Near/Middle Easternness may pose.

Hybridity is also apparent in the food that Sequiera prepares. For example, Sequiera frequently states the name of the Indian food/ingredient, then explains the English translation; she explains that the mysterious-sounding *garam masala* really just means "hot spice mix." She also alerts viewers to the fact that while curry is often seen as "confusing" or "complicated," it is really just "any sort of gravy with meat or vegetables." In explaining the ingredients of Indian foods that may be unfamiliar, Sequiera demystifies Indian cuisine, making it seem ordinary.

One example of this demystification is Sequiera's consistent characterization of Indian food as simple to prepare. She refers to assembling meat-stuffed pitas as "super simple," Indian snack mix as the "quickest Indian recipe on the planet," and asks "how easy is that?" when preparing chicken curry. While Sequiera often acknowledges that many people think of Indian food as complicated, she also claims that it is easy and simple to make. In fact, one episode of *Aarti Party* focuses solely on Sequiera explaining how common, basic Indian ingredients can be combined in different ways to make a variety of Indian dishes, and another episode is dedicated to demystifying the process of preparing curry.

Sequiera also demystifies Indian food through an explicit acknowledgement of hybridity, using traditional Indian ingredients or recipes and combining them with U.S. touches. For instance, when preparing an Indian snack mix, Sequiera substitutes rice cereal for the traditional rice flakes, and admits that she is "sort of making this up, some of this is traditional, some of it's not." In another episode, Sequiera prepares Indian mango chutney, mixes it with mayonnaise, and then pours it over a plate of French fries, thus mixing well-known Indian and U.S. ingredients. In a similar instance, Sequiera creates a mango barbeque sauce, noting that she is "adding a little Indian flavor to a very familiar thing that you've had probably all your life." By injecting Indian-inspired ingredients into a classic U.S. condiment, Sequiera makes Indian food seem familiar, simple, and manageable.

Moreover, Sequiera encourages viewers to enact hybridity in their own cooking, thus implicitly promoting agency. Unlike Hoffmann, who eliminates potentially threatening ingredients prior to preparing the food on-air, Sequiera often creates

traditionally Indian food, but invites viewers to substitute ingredients in order to make the dishes easier to prepare. For example, while she uses curry leaves to create an Indian snack mix, she states that this ingredient can typically only be found in Indian stores, but a bay leaf makes an easy substitute; alternately, the ingredient can be left out completely without losing the flavor of the original recipe. In another episode, Sequiera makes an Indian *chimichurri*, and adds a bay leaf as it is cooking; after the *chimichurri* is ready, she notes that she is "going to leave [the bay leaf] in because traditionally in India, we do, but you can take it out." In a separate episode, Sequiera states that although "we love our cilantro," anyone preparing her dish at home can use parsley if they prefer. By giving options, Sequiera encourages people to recognize that Indian cooking is easy to create with ingredients with which they are already familiar, and gives permission to experiment; this encourages hybridity and presents it as not only fun, but also rooted in familiarity (read: whiteness) and at the discretion/control of the viewer.

The hybridity of Sequiera's food, and the need for Indian cuisine to be demystified, leads to the implication that by extension, Indian—encompassing, as noted above, associations with Near/Middle Easternness more broadly—bodies are mysterious, complex, and intimidating, underscoring the notion of the Indian body as "other." If something is ordinary, it does not need to be emphasized as ordinary, yet Sequiera's continued insistence that Indian food is accessible and "normal" highlights the fact that it may be seen as unfamiliar and intimidating. Here, Indian food and bodies are implicitly contrasted with "normal" whiteness, suggesting that there is some barometer of normalcy (based on the default of whiteness) that Indian food can reach. India and Indian bodies are often viewed in the U.S. media as backward, mysterious, uncivilized and requiring

explanation, education, and demystification (Ramasubramanian, 2005). More importantly, however, is that many U.S. Americans conflate India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (de Riencourt, 1982; Naber, 2000; Said, 1978). This conflation, especially in light of Sequiera's upbringing in Dubai, suggests that Sequiera has a Near/Middle Eastern association. Contemporary understandings of the Near/Middle East, particularly, not only configure it as mysterious, but also extremely dangerous, both as active war zones of violence and terrorism, and identified regularly as a hotbed of terrorist activity and training in the media. The mapping of the qualities of Indian food onto Indian bodies portrays Indian bodies as essentially unknowable, and Sequiera's job is to make them known and accessible. Indeed, they can be accessed and controlled by the viewer, which provides corporeal security. By demystifying Indian cuisine, and thus, Indian bodies, Sequiera engages in the anxieties surrounding the mysterious, exotic locale of India, as well as the Indian bodies that originate there.

As Sequiera teaches people about Indian food, she invites them to understand that ultimately, her body and her food are safe and free of deception; the seduction accomplished by Sequiera's Eastern body is not happening against anyone's will or without their conscious knowledge and acquiescence. Again, Sequiera further furnishes audiences, per demystification, with clarity and, implicitly, skills to distinguish between "real" and "acceptable" levels of "otherness." The hybridization of Sequiera's food, and body, allows them both to be safely consumed without the attendant threat. The seductive qualities of the "other," and the desire to literally "eat the other," is thus made safe. Moreover, through allowing viewers the agency to experiment with their food in order to (re)discover Indian cuisine, Sequiera implicitly gives people agency to become their own

Homeland Security, assessing and analyzing the threat of contamination—a particularly

insidious outcome of infiltration—and acting at their own discretion to admit, under

certain (familiar) conditions, the "other." Indeed, this trope of the mysterious India/Indian

hearkens back to a history of colonialism, where the White colonizers apprehended India

as a dark, uncivilized geographic location and culture, as well as contemporary concerns

about the dark threat of terrorism and war in the Near/Middle East and, by extension,

India.

**Giada de Laurentiis: Substitution**

De Laurentiis' status as an ethnic "other" is contestable; as aforementioned,

Italian people are popularly perceived as White within the U.S. (Guglielmo, 2003).

Additionally, on the U.S. Census, there is no official demographic category other than

White to which Italians could belong, and in fact, the U.S. Census Bureau states that the

category of "White" encompasses "a person having any origins in any of the original

peoples of Europe" ("About race," 2013). Nonetheless, it is indisputably the case that

both de Laurentiis and her food are articulated as ethnic and "other." Examining how her

ethnicity is engaged in light of, or despite, its distinctive status is thus instructive to

informing contemporary features of "otherness," whiteness, and hybridity. *Everyday*

*Italian* articulates hybridity as a type of *substitution* and/or *interchangeability*. There is

some essential Italian component to her ingredients and food, in that authenticity is

promoted throughout the show, but this essential component can at the same time be

substituted with ease, thus making the consumption of nearly-White Italian food and

bodies an easy, completely accessible process. The degree to which authenticity is

espoused, along with de Laurentiis' carefree attitude towards substitutions, suggests that

ethnicity in *Everyday Italian* is deployed as a useful façade which ultimately reinforces fears and anxieties around relatively greater or "real" threats from "otherness" and hybridity.

De Laurentiis routinely performs her ostensible ethnic identity in a number of ways. Particularly salient are her discussions about her background, family, and upbringing, during which she paints an idyllic picture of growing up in a traditionally Italian family. In fact, de Laurentiis often tells stories of her Italian family members preparing the same food that she cooks on her show, bringing her childhood to life with spirited descriptions of laughter; loud, boisterous conversations; and humorous family anecdotes, all invoking an "old-world" imaginary: the European "old country," implicitly contrasted sharply with contemporary U.S. life. Indeed, when making *pizzettes* (small pizzas), de Laurentiis narrates her experiences making them as a young child with her cousins in her Italian grandfather's kitchen. Throughout her show, de Laurentiis characterizes much of her food and ingredients as distinctly Italian, and as separate from U.S. cuisine; she accomplishes this through closely tying her food to Italian traditions, experiences, and locales, firmly establishing the "otherness" of her recipes.

Furthermore, similar to Hoffmann, de Laurentiis herself functions as insurer of the "authenticity" of her cuisine, in that she carefully pronounces Italian words and foods with a noticeable Italian accent. In fact, de Laurentiis often over-emphasizes pronunciation, obviously switching from her "normal" (i.e., U.S. accent) voice to her "Italian" voice abruptly during the course of each episode, thus underscoring the undeniable "Italian-ness" of the dishes. Of course, it is also important to note that according to de Laurentiis, her first language is actually Italian, and she did not learn

English until she moved to the U.S. when she was 7 years old ("Giada de Laurentiis," n.d.).

Again, though, although de Laurentiis is marked as ethnic in a number of ways, her ethnicity is qualified, for her whiteness is prominent in her performance of hybridity. For instance, de Laurentiis visibly conforms to whiteness, in that she has very light skin and Westernized features. Visually, de Laurentiis conforms precisely to physical markers of whiteness, although her name and accent may mark her as more ethnic than she immediately appears. Additionally, as a long-time resident of Los Angeles, de Laurentiis often speaks with a noticeably California accent, which makes her abrupt Italian pronunciations even more jarring. Finally, her stories about growing up in a traditionally Italian family are contrasted with her current life in the U.S., where she was married to a White, U.S. American man (de Laurentiis and her ex-husband are currently separated, but were married at the time these episodes aired), lives in Los Angeles, and celebrates traditional American holidays, such as Thanksgiving. This suggests a hybrid identity wherein the threat of seduction posed by exotic ethnicity can be thought of as relatively minor, insofar as it provides spice and flavor to an otherwise White identity.

In addition to de Laurentiis herself, her food is also portrayed as uniquely and "authentically" Italian. For example, she repeatedly remarks on the use of her ingredients in traditional Italian cooking. De Laurentiis also explains the origins of many of her ingredients and recipes; in one case she notes that the hazelnuts she is using come from Northern Italy, and in another explains that muffaletta sandwiches come from Italians who had immigrated to New Orleans. The positioning of ingredients and food in specific Italian locations and traditions implies that this food is essentially Italian, as separate

from U.S. food. De Laurentiis also depicts the "Italian-ness" of her food explicitly and discursively; for example, when making Italian *quesadillas*, she notes that the recipe is "all Italian," and the colors of the ingredients also represent the colors of the Italian flag. When making an Easter dinner of lamb chops with mint garnish, de Laurentiis stresses repeatedly that lamb is a traditional Italian Easter dinner, and that her Italian family has enjoyed this very Italian meal on multiple occasions.

However, while de Laurentiis' food is depicted as uniquely Italian, it is also rhetorically constructed as multicultural, fused and blended with U.S. staple ingredients. For example, when making Italian *quesadillas*, de Laurentiis begins by saying, "I love blending Italian ingredients with food from other cultures," explicitly stating her use of hybridity in her mixing of Italian ingredients with the traditionally Latin/Hispanic quesadilla. Similarly, de Laurentiis mixes "old world" Europe with "new world" U.S. ingredients when she makes prosciutto mini pizzas, and rather than make the crust by hand—which would be a traditionally Italian method—she creates the crust using frozen pizza dough and cookie cutters. Additionally, in a special Thanksgiving-themed episode of her show, de Laurentiis uses turkey to make a Bolognese sauce, yet notes that traditionally, Bolognese is only made with beef, but that she is using turkey instead. Perhaps most telling about that episode is her admission that Italians, of course, do not celebrate Thanksgiving, but that after her marriage to an American man, she learned to combine Italian and U.S. traditions, holidays, and cuisine.

Moreover, hybridity is present in *Everyday Italian* not only through de Laurentiis combining ingredients and recipes from different cultures, but more importantly through a strategy of giving agency. Similar to Sequiera, de Laurentiis encourages her viewers to

substitute a variety of ingredients. However, unlike Sequiera, who offers concrete suggestions for substitutions (and does so sparingly), de Laurentiis often explains that almost anything can serve as a substitute for key ingredients, much like unqualified interchangeability. For instance, during her aforementioned Thanksgiving episode, de Laurentiis states that "if you don't like a garlicky flavor, you can leave the cloves whole and pick them out," thus allowing viewers to customize their own dishes. When making stuffed Italian meatloaf, de Laurentiis explains, "traditionally, people make meat loaf and they stuff it with all sorts of different things. My aunt likes to stuff meat loaf with eggs, other people stuff it with cheeses….whatever….I mean, there's different things you can stuff it with." Additionally, when de Laurentiis tells viewers that they can substitute ingredients, she also reassures them that it will not impact the flavor of the dish; when making lamb chops, she states, "I'm using lamb chops, but you can also use a leg of lamb, which is a little bit cheaper and still just as delicious." This interchangeability is driven by individual desire—not just agency, but individualism—which is what distinguishes the type of agency that Sequiera promotes from the one that de Laurentiis does.

De Laurentiis further encourages substitution of the garnishes or flavorings of her recipes. For example, when preparing lamb chops, she garnishes them with a sauce, but notes that "lamb is so flavorful, you can just put salt, pepper, and olive oil on it, and it would be fantastic….or you can do lemon juice and mint, or mint and parsley….there's lots of different combinations," giving multiple options for flavoring and customization. De Laurentiis additionally provides customizable options when making cheesecake, remarking, "you can flavor this with anything, you can add orange zest to it, almond

extract, lots of different flavors." Not only does de Laurentiis encourage experimentation with specific tastes, but she also expresses concern over the convenience of finding the ingredients, mentioning that if fresh herbs are difficult to find, dried herbs can be an easy substitute, and indicating that viewers could substitute thyme with the easier to find oregano or mint. Again, this suggests that viewers have the individual choice to procure whatever ingredients they choose, in whatever manner they choose, bespeaking a conceptualization of hybridity wherein everything is interchangeable and the "consumer" is in full control, at all times, regarding what s/he literally takes in her/his body. In some cases, rather than giving suggestions for substitutions, de Laurentiis encourages viewers to use whatever they want. When making Italian fig appetizers, she notes that any type of apple can be used. Similarly, when making muffaletta sandwiches, she announces that any type of olive will suffice for the dish, and when making linguini, that any garnish could be used, although de Laurentiis does specify that she prefers arugula. Clearly, while de Laurentiis rhetorically constructs her food as uniquely, traditionally Italian, she simultaneously hybridizes it and suggests that there are no limitations or parameters in regard to how whiteness can access and control race/ethnicity; that is, there are no limits to white agency and superiority.

In the process of presenting hybridized food, *Everyday Italian*, much like *Simply Delicioso* and *Aarti Party*, also depicts hybridized bodies. Essentially, de Laurentiis communicates that just as essential Italian ingredients are easily substituted, so too are characteristics of essential Italian culture and bodies. This reinforces the idea of "real otherness" and that it can, and should, be effectively managed and rationed. Italianness is an imaginary that is posited as an ideal hybridity, predicated on, essentially, whiteness

and complete agency of the individualist stripe. Moreover, de Laurentiis calms anxieties about contamination and its insidious accomplishment via seduction, in that de Laurentiis and her food reassure implicitly white audiences that they have full, unfettered agency in determining what (who) they consume, and under what conditions. In this way, de Laurentiis serves as a counterpoint to "real otherness," read alongside the other texts. It also suggests that "Italian" represents an ideal hybridity, much like model hybridity, as discussed in an earlier chapter: it is so white that it is hard to see what makes it hybrid, but it is also just enough of something "other" to allow and accommodate a bit of edge. Here, though, this interchangeability is about individualism, not only self-determined, but self-directed, agency according to one's own tastes and desires.

Given the general perception today in the U.S. of Italian people as White, the performance and construction of Italianness as "other" or "ethnic" basically comprises an implicit benchmark for "otherness" and hybridity that ends up reinforcing fears and anxieties about contamination and seduction surrounding "othered" bodies by implicitly referencing "real" otherness and attendant threats of hybridity. That is, no other race or ethnicity can be easily interchanged with whiteness, certainly not those attributed to Hoffmann or Sequiera, for example, whom de Laurentiis appears alongside on the Food Network. Hybridity, as managed via agency of a particularly individualist bent, underwrites each of the chefs, to varying degrees: in terms of consciousness and options, for Hoffmann; clarity and choice, for Sequiera; and individualism, for de Laurentiis—the latter posits "ideal" hybridity, which underscores the greater "otherness" of Hoffmann and Sequiera and confirms that we need to be vigilant about them, because they are not as navigable as the validated hybridity (Italian).

This is drawn against de Laurentiis, who, despite often wearing low-cut blouses and tight clothing, is constructed as relatively "safe" and lacking seductive intent, insofar as her seductiveness is entirely controlled by the viewer. De Laurentiis confirms white impulses to be "on watch," so to speak, and reinforces "acceptable" hybridity. That is, de Laurentiis becomes the watermark against which the acceptability of Hoffmann's and Sequiera's food, and bodies, are drawn. While Italian people have historically faced a number of discriminations within the U.S., the contemporary moment is marked by an understanding of Italians as White, with an attendant demonizing of "brown" people. de Laurentiis' performance and articulation of ethnicity ends up reinforcing contemporary fears of infiltration and contamination, offering up a caution regarding the seductive powers of "other others," as it were.

**Eating Otherness: Conclusions on Hybridity in Food**

In this chapter, I have taken up *consumption* as a practice and performance of hybridity, as informed by contemporary historical anxieties surrounding the supposed threat of infiltration of "othered" bodies within the U.S. To that end, I explored the ways that hybridized "othered" bodies rhetorically ameliorate the threat to whiteness, and simultaneously recenter and reinforce whiteness as a cultural concept. The significance of hybridity within this context is primarily located in the ways in which threats of "otherness" posed by hybridity can be seen as manageable/navigable. These concerns about the threat of consumption of "otherness" are salient in light of a contemporary national context rife with fears and controversy regarding the possibilities of infiltration and contamination due to immigration and terrorism.

Like other scholars (e.g., Balthrope, 2004; Bower, 2004; Douglas, 2003;

Durkheim & Mauss, 1963; Goode, Curtis, & Theophano, 2003; Lindenfeld, 2007; Mannur, 2005; Nicholson, 2001; Probyn, 2001; Shugart, 2008), I contend that food has important ties to race and ethnicity. Given this contention, my specific interest was in investigating the ways that hybridity and anxieties surrounding the threat of insidious contamination by the "other" are negotiated and engaged through consumption, particularly of food. Ultimately, ethnic food becomes conflated with racial and ethnic bodies, such that food becomes mapped onto "othered" bodies and becomes a key site of negotiation and conflict, where people work through their tensions and anxieties surrounding the seductive powers of "others" and their potential to infiltrate and contaminate a pure whiteness. In this analysis, I have looked at three female chefs on the Food Network: Ingrid Hoffmann, Aarti Sequiera, and Giada de Laurentiis. Hybridity as consumption is articulated in all three shows, through the recipes prepared by the chefs, but is mobilized in different ways.

The threat of contamination by "other" bodies, due to infiltration at the border of immigration and terrorism, is a salient contemporary threat that has been mobilized, as aforementioned, in a variety of policies and discourses that speak to a fear of infiltration by brown bodies. The desire to, and attendant fear of, consuming the "other" is writ large here, with "other" bodies posing seductive threats to the ostensible purity of whiteness. Performance and representations of hybridity in *Simply Delicioso* specifically engage these anxieties; the threat of the Latina/o body is tamable and tamed, thus neutralized, once it crosses the border, which mitigates the seductive power that the Latina body often wields in the popular imaginary. Yet it also puts its faith into the "White Latina/o," which Hoffmann is—in performance, background and name. That is, the "othered" bodies

themselves have to do the neutralizing and taming, and the female Latin body is key here, as the hypersexualized seductress who is also a maternal protector. Simultaneously, "real" Latina/os—not White Latina/os—are reinforced as dangerous, invasive, and threatening.

Sequiera's strategy is one of *demystification*—she acts to educate viewers about Indian food, and, by extension, Indian bodies. Sequiera also furnishes viewers with clarity and skills of discrimination in terms of how to distinguish and defuse or reject particularly Eastern threats—skills ostensibly compromised by liberal politics, per contemporary context/discourse. Distinguishing and demystifying the threat of Easternness is linked to terrorism via the relationship of Indianness with the Near/Middle East, an alleged hotbed for terrorist agitation; Indian and Near/Middle Eastern food is constructed as not only lacking harmful potential, but also as familiar, well known, and transparent—seduction poses no threat here. Sequiera's food preparation thus allows viewers the opportunities to function as the homeland security of bodies—they can analyze and assess the threat—which permits entrée on conditions of familiarity. This assertion of India and the Near/Middle East as safe precisely because of its fusion with whiteness again serves to reinforce the centricity of whiteness and the U.S. Sequiera can ameliorate tensions surrounding the mysterious and dangerous Indian body because she is fun, girlish, and ultimately safe: She is the "girl next door" seductress.

De Laurentiis uses the strategies of *substitution* and *interchangeability*, encouraging viewers to substitute familiar, easy to obtain food for her "authentic" Italian ingredients, thus granting viewers agency. By claiming that Italian is "other" or ethnic, a line is drawn between "real" or "extreme" ethnicities and races and "passable," imaginary

(in the sense of a popular imaginary) ones, such as Italian; de Laurentiis, and Italianness, is representative of an ideal, acceptable hybridity. Hybridity as interchangeability gives agency in a way that we have control over our own seduction because we are not really being seduced, and this agency is individualized—self-determined, entirely, and ultimately, by viewers. It is rather the illusion of seduction that occurs, which points out how manipulative and seductive the "other" chefs actually are, as attendant to standard tropes of women of color as the hypersexual Jezebel. Consciousness is featured across these chefs/consumption of otherness, and agency to varying degrees: less with Hoffmann—she does it for viewers, but in a respectful and deferring (to whiteness) way; Sequiera more so—she gives viewers limited options among which to choose; and de Laurentiis gives viewers complete consciousness and agency.

This analysis has explored the ways that hybridity functions within the frame of whiteness as attendant to anxieties regarding infiltration. More specifically, the threat to whiteness, via contamination, that these chefs, as "othered" bodies, pose is rendered manageable, under certain conditions, establishing agency and control—and confirming that agency, control, and vigilance are warranted, of course. This suggests the complicated and often fraught ways that "others" exist within a dominant frame of whiteness, and the ways in which hybridity might function as a way of navigating and managing the threat of contamination via the seductive power of "others." The ways in which these women present their food are not only nonthreatening, as I have established, but transparent; it is as if these chefs explain their seduction step-by-step, granting audiences the power to say "no" at any point. This elaborates on my findings relative to white agency and choice, in that whiteness is in control at all times; the threat of

seduction, via the consumption of the "other," is always managed. This also suggests an "acceptable" hybridity; unlike acceptable hybridity in modeling, this is not generic, but is rather determined by the individual. It is not aesthetic, like modeling, but cultural: The significance of race/ethnicity is explicitly acknowledged here, whereas it is trivialized—colorblind—in model hybridity, at least ostensibly. Hybridity, variously articulated as taming, demystifying, and interchanging, speaks to the ways that "otherness" needs to be vigilantly monitored and mediated in order to protect whiteness from the looming threat of contamination by dangerous and seductive "others."

# Endnotes

1. There were 19 videos available for "Simply Delicioso," 22 videos for "Aarti Party," and 32 videos for "Everyday Italian" for a total of 73 videos.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have taken up the issue of racial/ethnic hybridity, with the goal of refining hybridity as a theoretical concept and investigating the relationship between hybridity and the body. To that end, I have examined how various contemporary mobilizations of hybridity within the U.S. can shed light on broader cultural tensions, anxieties, and negotiations of race/ethnicity, identity, and the body. This dissertation focused on various articulations and deployments of embodied hybridity in order to further contextualize, refine, and complicate the theoretical understanding, as well as practical accomplishments and implications, of hybridity. More specifically, in order to investigate and refine the concept of hybridity, I took up two particular questions: (a) How is hybridity mobilized in distinctive ways in, through, or by various bodies, particularly as reflective of historical context? (b) How does "the body"—in particular, specific deployments of the body—feature in contemporary articulations of hybridity?

Hybridity is inevitably reflective of the historical, political, and cultural imperatives that contextualize it. Indeed, historically, hybridity has been variously understood in relation to miscegenation, passing, postcolonialism, and transnationalism. Each instantiation of hybridity has been related to salient tensions and anxieties surrounding race/ethnicity in a given historical moment, which is certainly true within the U.S. This current moment within the U.S. is marked by fears and insecurities regarding

race/ethnicity that are prominently surfaced in contentious public discourses and policies around immigration and terrorism, respectively and at their intersections; in both cases, borders play a powerful rhetorical and material role. Racial/ethnic hybridity, by definition, troubles the notion of literal and figurative borders designed precisely to marshal race/ethnicity; thus, assessing how and where borders are figuratively drawn on, by, and through hybrid bodies in this context can illuminate broader cultural sensibilities and practices in general as well as relevant to specific races/ethnicities.

In this dissertation, I conducted a critical analysis of texts that illuminate key nodes and articulations of hybridity: *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing with the Stars*; *America's Next Top Model*; and three Food Network cooking shows: *Simply Delicioso with Ingrid Hoffmann, Aarti Party*, and *Everyday Italian*. Within *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing with the Stars*, hybridity is tied to specific fears about globalization and transnationalism, and is mobilized as *traveling*. More specifically, traveling plays out variously by, through, and in differently marked bodies, in that White men are apprehended as *party tourists*, who easily travel within and through various cultures in a manner which suggests frivolity and play. White women are articulated as *cultural tourists*, who earnestly pass through cultures and attempt to perform them "authentically." Men of color are mobilized as *trespassers*, who do not belong outside of their prescribed culture. Women of color are depicted as *interlopers*, who are so insignificant that they do not pose a threat to whiteness, but are, too, often chastised for not belonging outside of their own cultures.

In *America's Next Top Model*, hybridity is articulated as *distillation,* which is a mobilization of colorblind sensibilities that render race/ethnicity as insignificant,

superficial, and "merely" aesthetic. In particular, race/ethnicity are viewed as something that can be calibrated in order to find the perfect balance of whiteness and "otherness." Thus, while the hybrid body appears to be celebrated, in fact it is highly conditional and consistently deployed in ways that reaffirm and recenter whiteness. Models of color are often articulated as in need of *diffusion*; that is, of needing to "tone down" their "otherness" by conforming to ideals of whiteness. Conversely, White models are portrayed as in need of *infusion*; whiteness on its own is depicted as boring, thus White models need to be infused with a sense of the exotic, or "otherness." In the three Food Network shows, hybridity is mobilized as *consumption*, as predicated on fears and anxieties about infiltration and, more specifically, contamination. For Ingrid Hoffmann and *Simply Delicioso*, Latin foods and Latin bodies are articulated as in need of *taming*, and Hoffmann serves as a protector from danger. For Aarti Sequiera and *Aarti Party*, Indian foods and bodies are mobilized as in need of *demystification*, and Sequiera serves as the guide. For Giada de Laurentiis and *Everyday Italian*, Italian foods and bodies are marked as *substitutable*, which serves as a counterpoint to the other two shows and positions whiteness as a central, organizing force.

As a whole, this analysis has several implications. First, throughout all of the texts, borders do, in fact, remain salient in all of the articulations of hybridity. Indeed, anxieties and tensions surrounding race and/or ethnicity are often centered on the fear of easily ruptured borders and the implications therein. The border is often thought of as a geographic, material location, and it is certainly true that physical borders have, in fact, become increasingly permeable, particularly in light of the global economy and increasing global mobility (Appadurai, 2005, 2011). To be sure, people are able to

physically cross borders in increasingly large numbers, leading to greater diversity throughout the world. This diversity has been a foundation of the U.S. ethos, insofar as the U.S. has often prided itself on being a nation of immigrants that welcomes and embraces diverse cultures, races, and ethnicities.

Nonetheless, what my analysis reveals is abiding and arguably more poignant, deep-seated fears and anxieties surrounding the infiltration of the border by "othered" bodies in contemporary articulations of racial/ethnic hybridity. That is, tensions surrounding immigration, terrorism, both international and domestic, and security—all of which center on the geographic U.S. border—are rampant in this contemporary era, and are all indicative of a fear of infiltration, which signals the lack or weakness of borders. The mobility of bodies and the permeability of borders—and bodies—in this highly specific context of threat and fear that I mentioned above is precisely what makes borders particularly fetishized today in light of noted anxieties; the question remains how to recreate, reassert, and reinforce borders in this era of globalization and all that it implies? While some of the public discourse in the U.S. actually does take this matter up in literal, material ways—such as building walls and fences—much of this border work is being accomplished rhetorically. The symbolic borders function as means of separation and classification, meant to draw symbolic lines around groups of people and keep them easily categorized. Just as the physical border serves to keep some people out and other people in, so too do these symbolic borders work to exclude and include the "appropriate" groups of people and/or negotiate the terms and conditions of their presence.

Ironically, while borders suggest clear delineation, they are inevitably liminal

spaces, and the hybrid body is a literal embodiment of that liminality, continually iterating permeability even as it is drawn against defined borders (e.g., Beltran, 2005; Nishime, 2005; Vande Berg, 1996). Borders, then, are configured as sites of contestation within all of these chapters, battlegrounds upon which complex negotiations of self and identity play out (Anzaldúa, 2012). Symbolic borders are both/and: simultaneously liminal spaces where cultures, races, and ethnicities can collide and fences to keep "others" out. Across all of these analyses, symbolic borders are both implicitly, and powerfully, affirmed *and* explicitly denied. It is inevitable, as borders become prominent and even fetishized in the public imaginary, that the hybrid body become front and center; assessing it, in various incarnations, can illuminate the rhetorical work of managing the threat of hybridity and crafting borders in this historical moment.

Specific to my findings, in various ways, even as hybridity is ostensibly embraced and celebrated in each case that I examined, whiteness is consistently reaffirmed. Insofar as "otherness" is drawn against whiteness, borders recenter and reify whiteness, in that "otherness," within all these analyses, is closely policed and disciplined. While "otherness" is ostensibly celebrated, it is only "acceptable" to the extent that it serves discourses of whiteness. The fear of infiltration, both materially and symbolically, of "otherness" within the U.S. is thus predicated on discourses of white supremacy, inasmuch as "otherness" becomes a threat to the allegedly safe and secure borders of whiteness. The reification of whiteness via the deployment of borders surrounding racial/ethnic "others," however, is contingent on a paradox, in that it is only successful to the extent that the borders surrounding "others" remain invisible and easy to deny. Racial/ethnic borders are easy and acceptable to cross from the perspective of whiteness,

yet largely impenetrable for racial/ethnic others, giving the lie to the ostensible invisibility of the borders.

Second, all three embodied practices—dancing, modeling, and food—as practices that rest upon liberal sensibilities of art and free expression, are ostensibly inclusive and welcoming of diversity, similar to the general ethos of the U.S.; however, this analysis suggests that all three practices serve to entrench whiteness as a dominant frame, essentially strengthening borders that protect whiteness from the "impurity" of "otherness." That is, while racial and ethnic "others" are all featured in these practices, they are depicted in such a way as to suggest the need for containment and rigidity, rather than the relatively fluid and motile practices of hybridity available for White bodies. Cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity, while certainly included in the practices of dancing, modeling, and consumption, are still maligned in favor of whiteness; hybrid bodies engaging in these practices serve to negotiate and mediate the tensions surrounding "otherness" while reifying whiteness.

Dance, modeling, and food are all material embodied practices that feature particular anxieties and propose particular means of both negotiating and assuaging the threat to whiteness that "otherness" poses. Each practice speaks to particular anxieties and tensions surrounding borders: In regard to dance, hybridity is drawn against anxieties surrounding globalization, transnationalism, and the permeability of borders. In a guise of celebrating otherness, it is imagined in relation to spaces and places of whiteness, and placement/belonging of respective bodies: White bodies are free to travel and tour the spaces of "others," but "others" who enter white spaces are policed and disciplined. Modeling is predicated on a desire to deny or repress race/ethnicity; in a guise of

erasing/neutralizing "otherness," it appears to recommend a blending of races/ethnicities, but in fact it is a carefully calibrated admixture that ultimately renders "otherness" an accessory for whiteness, to offset it specifically with "edge"—danger, mystique, animality: all classic tropes of "otherness" and bodies of color. Food, too, based on anxieties around the threat of contamination, shores up whiteness in specific ways: Here, racial/ethnic "otherness" is something that can be taken in, but strictly moderated, controlled, and judiciously consumed—positioned for white enjoyment and pleasure in ways that neutralize the explicitly engaged (if metaphorical) threat.

As is characteristic of hybridity more generally, borders are simultaneously asserted and elided in regard to the material practices of dance, modeling, and food. In these cases, it is similarly reflected in the simultaneous neutralization and valorization of whiteness. Whiteness only succeeds, in all of these practices, if it is both centered and simultaneously ignored. In each case, "otherness" is encouraged in such a way that the practices are viewed as inclusive, and whiteness can be both a sly and nimble concept that can covertly—and sometimes overtly—maintain dominance. For instance, modeling often requires people with unique or interesting appearances that would, at first glance, seem to welcome a variety of races and/or ethnicities, which in many ways asserts racial/ethnic borders. However, simultaneously, whiteness is secured insofar as aspects of race/ethnicity are rendered superficial aesthetic or performative features to be put on or taken off; whiteness remains centered, constant, and stable. The need for models of color to become diffused with whiteness is rarely explicitly mentioned, in that, for instance, a model's skin might be lightened in retouched photographs without any discussion about what that might mean. At the same time, however, models of color who do not calibrate

their races/ethnicities "properly" are often chastised by judges for not doing so.

In regard to consumption, "ethnic" food is often enjoyed and celebrated within the U.S. as "exotic" or "different," and much more exciting, than what might be thought of as "American food." Nonetheless, my analysis suggests that "ethnic" food is not desirable, and is in fact too threatening, unless tempered with whiteness. However, the ingredients of whiteness are simultaneously ignored and denied, in that the food is still presented as "authentically other." Whiteness is shored up by fears of contamination and, attendantly, seduction: specifically, that White people are conscious, monitoring, and in control. Here, the denial of the power of whiteness serves to center whiteness, in that "otherness" is only made acceptable on very particular (assimilative) terms.

Third, racial/ethnic "otherness" is imagined as a material place, resource, or indulgence that is drawn in passive relation to whiteness. The liminal threat posed by hybridity is managed by one-way directionality, such that whiteness can partake in "otherness" in various ways, but racial/ethnic "otherness" is disciplined and contained in terms of its access to whiteness. The embodied nature of hybridity that I examined in this dissertation does much to secure this material conceptualization, in conjunction with the implicitly material motif of "borders." Although the particular mobilizations of hybridity within as well as across dance, modeling, and consumption vary, the ways in which whiteness is constructed in each instance is similar. Whiteness and hybridity are imbricated within a rhetoric of mobility wherein whiteness can fluidity move through and within "otherness," taking up characteristics of "othered" cultures, races, and ethnicities in order to more firmly shore up the dominance of whiteness. As mobilized via hybridity, whiteness is the default identity, which can be imbued with "otherness," as long as the

particular admixture of whiteness and "otherness" privileges the White vector of

hybridity and/or does not adulterate it or compromise its integrity (Joseph, 2013).

For instance, in dance, White bodies are privileged in their ability to easily travel

across borders, particularly as pertains to them taking the role of tourists. The White

dancing body is not only allowed to embody other cultures, races, and ethnicities, but is

explicitly encouraged to do so, with the understanding that this state is temporary and

transient; White bodies are just visiting. The whiteness of hybridity is thus foregrounded,

in that my analysis suggests that White dancing bodies can, and should, be hybrid.

Similarly, the White modeling body is frankly encouraged to "sample" from "otherness,"

or be *infused* with some mysterious exoticness under the auspices of "lacking" some

essential component (Probyn, 2011). This infusion is, in many, ways, material and

aesthetic. In one instance, White models in *ANTM* were made up with copious amounts

of bronzer, which darkened their skin, and White models were often urged to pose in a

"sexier" manner, thus embodying a type of hypersexualization that is, as I argue, tied to

race/ethnicity. While on its own, whiteness may not be appropriate for the modeling

world, whiteness infused with a hint of "otherness" is mysterious, unique, intriguing; it

creates a model that is "ambiguously ethnic": white enough to be nonthreatening, but

"other" enough to be interesting (Beltran, 2005). Moreover, race/ethnicity is reduced to

the performative (in the *mimesis* sense) and aesthetic, rendering it ostensibly insignificant

in accordance with colorblind sensibilities. Similarly, food has a clear material

component, in that, in this dissertation, consumption is often a practice of taking "the

other" into one's body, wherein the materiality of food is modified in order to conscript

the particular variant of hybridity permissible in an effort to reduce the threat of

infiltration and contamination.

Conversely, hybridity is mobilized in different ways as pertains to bodies of color. For example, in regard to dance, bodies of color are discouraged from permeating cultures, races, and ethnicities outside of their own; here, the materiality of the body of color encroaching on/in spaces and places of whiteness is foregrounded. Rather than being able to be tourists, dancing bodies of color are chastised and policed for attempting to embody whiteness, or move their bodies of color into white spaces. Models of color, in similar ways to dancers of color, are often taken to task for being "too other"; however, unlike dancers of color, models of color are encouraged to *diffuse* their "otherness" in material and aesthetic ways, precisely though contact with, and embodiment of, whiteness. That is, while dancers of color may be seen as trespassing into whiteness, models of color are encouraged to strategically articulate themselves as hybrid to reap the benefits that whiteness provides. In terms of cooking, bodies of color are also configured as dangerous, and the material practices of "toning" down threatening "other" cuisines, through literally mixing them with whiteness, make the threat manageable by making the food not only edible but palatable. Despite these differences, however, articulations of hybridity related to "othered" bodies are still marginalized, whereas articulations of hybridity that privilege whiteness are valorized. In these cases, "otherness" is strictly enforced, again as drawn against whiteness, which is explicitly valorized for mobilizing hybridity.

It is important to note that acceptable hybrid *bodies* are permissible, but very tightly conscripted and clearly defined. For instance, in regard to modeling, the proper aesthetic/performative calibration is encouraged, and in regard to food, the proper amount

and kinds of food/ingredients are carefully controlled—with de Laurentiis positioned as the ideal hybrid body. *Spaces and places* of race/ethnicity, however, remain imagined as static and "true," further reinforcing the salience of borders: certainly true of dance (streets of Havana, India/Bollywood, Viennese waltz), but also of modeling (surroundings, like Bali, or "street," certify one's racial/ethnic identity) and of food ("old country," Italy, Mexico, India). Hybridity is drawn in relation to place/space, in all cases, which reaffirms borders in rather literal and explicit ways.

Moreover, there is a clear gendered component to the ways in which particular hybrid bodies are articulated and mobilized variously and distinctively. The intersections of race/ethnicity and gender are particularly salient here, as hybridity is articulated differently by, through, and in the bodies of White men and men of color, as well as the bodies of White women and women of color. White men, in particular, appear to have the most freedom to cross borders and they have the most access to mobility. For example, in regard to dance, White men are allowed and encouraged to sample other cultures, races, and ethnicities through campy, almost parodic performances of "othered" dances, which ensures and underscores their difference and lack of crossover. There is no policing of borders in relation to White men, nor is there any regulation in what their bodies are allowed to do, but (paradoxically) the borders are very clearly delineated, in that White men do not, and perhaps cannot, even try to integrate.

While White women are also able to freely travel and inhabit hybridity, there are conditions that they must meet: They are expected to be earnest and competent in their articulations of hybridity; they must be exceptionally good at performing and embodying hybridity. Moreover, White women's performance of "otherness" is conspicuous

precisely because of their earnestness. For instance, Giada de Laurentiis is allowed a large degree of agency over her cooking, yet it is contingent upon her performing Italian "appropriately": she pronounces her dishes and ingredients with the proper accent and shares stories about her food that are rich with cultural history. Similarly, in regard to dance, White women's mobility and agency are contingent upon conspicuous bravura performances of hybridity. While White men often perform in a "campy" manner, White women are expected to be earnest performers who are well versed in the culture/race/ethnicity which they are dancing.

Men of color have noticeably less access to mobility than do White men or White women. Their movements are incessantly policed, scrutinized, and criticized; the borders separating men of color from whiteness must be maintained at all times. In dance, specifically, men of color who attempted to perform whiteness were harshly critiqued, and their "othered" bodies were affirmed. This suggests that men of color pose threats to the "purity" of whiteness through the enactment of hybridity, meaning that in order for whiteness to be centered, men of color must be kept in their "place." Conversely, male models of color were permitted a bit more latitude, likely to offset anxieties about effeminacy, albeit in ways that reify very well established racial tropes of "otherness" as danger and animality.

Men of color are conceived of as far more *explicitly* dangerous than women of color, in that men of color are often apprehended based on tropes of animality and criminality. Women of color, though, have historically—and as I argue, contemporarily—been understood in terms of being *implicitly* dangerous. That is, while women of color may not pose an outwardly physical threat, insofar as, for instance, they

are rarely apprehended based on tropes of criminality, their bodies are still wild, out of control, and ultimately destructive. The trope of the Jezebel and the legend of La Malinche, for example, both speak to a deep distrust of female bodies, sexuality, and desire, suggesting that the body of the woman of color is always already unruly and threatening; this is certainly the case with models of color who are chastised for being too sexy, and the seductive aspect of female chefs that is neutralized in their performances. The seductive qualities that women of color are purported to have are articulated as wholly inappropriate, and predicated on the threat that they might seduce White men, in particular, to either cross borders or to permit infiltration.

This dissertation suggests that women of color are, in many ways, allowed the least access to borders and mobility, an implicit commentary on the threatening nature of their bodies. This is so perhaps because the threat they post is more insidious, potentially seductive, but not obvious. Female chefs are perhaps given more latitude and freedom not only because we generally associate food/cooking with women, but also because they explicitly concede and legitimize the value of whiteness, indeed, its superiority, in their preparation of foods. This is ironic insofar as the female chefs mediate the form and embodied practice of hybridity that is most sensitive to seduction (food/cooking), yet perhaps they are given this freedom because they call up and deflect these seductive tropes. The only women of color who get a conditional and qualified pass are those who affirm whiteness, or those who never attempt a complete performance of whiteness in the first place. While women of color appear to be constructed as both the most and the least dangerous bodies, it is to the same end: that of the need for containment. Precisely because of the danger that women of color pose, they must be kept away from the border

at all costs, yet if they do somehow reach the border, they must be impotent and incompetent so as not to threaten white supremacy and power.

Fourth, this analysis refines and extends extant literature on hybridity and the body particularly in regard to contemporary instantiations of such. Although hybridity has historically been understood, variously, as stemming from the threat of miscegenation, passing, mestizaje, and postcolonial mimicry, the contemporary representations of hybridity examined in this dissertation have several key characteristics. For instance, one of the threads within the literature about hybridity is the tension between hybridity as liberatory and hybridity as assimilative. For instance, Anzaldúa (2012) argues for the revolutionary potential of hybridity to create a "super race" of enlightened beings; here, hybridity is a productive power, and multiracial people are seen as superior. Similarly, others (e.g., Bhabha, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 2013; Flores & Moon, 2002; Moreman, 2009; Ono, 1998; Valdivia, 2005) recognize that the fluid nature of hybridity allows for moments where white supremacy can be unmasked and interrogated. Conversely, others (e.g., Beltran, 2005; Ono, 1998; Shugart, 2007; Valdivia, 2005) have argued that just as hybridity can uncover discourses of whiteness, it can also work to instantiate whiteness. Certainly, even though Bhabha (1994b) valorizes hybridity as positive, he is also careful to note that in many ways, postcolonial hybridity is a mimicking and privileging of discourses of whiteness.

Similar to those who have warned of the potential for hybridity to be both enabling and constraining, in this dissertation I argue that the contemporary mobilizations of hybridity that I have identified in this dissertation involve a both/and tension. What marks these performances of hybridity as different is that they are all predicated on an

ostensible broad cultural embracing of difference, in general, and hybridity, in particular in a way that reinforces borders rather than imagines them. That is, close assessment suggests that hybridity, as a borderland, is very closely marshalled in these performances and is variably available/appropriate. Moreover, the embodiment of hybridity forces a distinction between the self and identity, which ultimately justifies the discipline of those who breach the border; here, breaches are about inappropriate expression and the violation of form or etiquette, rather than about a politics of identity. In these cases, resistance is far less available, at least for bodies of color, insofar as the act of reimagining borders and embracing free expression is not only highly discouraged, but also carefully disciplined, giving the lie to the liberal sensibilities that allegedly underlie hybridity. In regard to the practices of dancing, modeling, and food, resistance is characterized as ultimately impossible to fully realize.

While scholars such as Anzaldúa (2012) and Bhabha (1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 2013) see hybridity as an unexpected, improvisational space of critique or resistance, in this dissertation I argue that current instantiations of hybridity, in the context of this dissertation, appear to be articulated as—conflated with—individual uniqueness and authenticity, the expression of which is encouraged and celebrated, but only within very specific contexts or confines. These articulations of embodiment force a rupture between the self and identity, in such a way that makes it not about race/ethnicity so much as a sort of personal etiquette. Ultimately, then, via its location in and deployment by particular bodies, hybridity is articulated as a feature and expression of the unique, authentic *self*, as opposed to a politics of identity, in ways that justify discipline of race/ethnicity if and when hybridity "crosses the line."

Another salient thread in literature about hybridity conceives of hybridity as liminal (e.g., Beltran, 2005; Nishime, 2005, 2012; Vande Berg, 1996). This is similar, in many ways, to Bhabha's (1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 2013) idea of hybridity as a "third space," and Anzaldúa's (2012) contention that hybridity is a borderland. Regardless of how it is described, hybridity is widely believed to be a "betwixt and between" space of liminality, wherein race/ethnicity becomes more fluid and difficult to pin down. While I agree that hybridity, within this dissertation, is in fact a liminal space, what is instructive is how this liminality is managed.

As aforementioned, hybridity is also a site of discipline that we perceive corporeally and visually. In this dissertation, there is a marked difference between the free, fluid liminal spaces that some scholars (e.g., Anzaldúa, 2012; Beltran, 2005; Nishime, 2005, 2012; Vande Berg, 1996) associate with hybridity and the texts that I discuss; perhaps a reflection of this historical moment that is characterized by simultaneous global flows and intense fear is that liminality, rather than being unacknowledged or suppressed, is explicitly called out and ostensibly celebrated, maybe because it is funded by a liberal notion of physical and aesthetic expression. That is, hybridity is funded, in many ways, by an imperative to be true to oneself, specifically in regard to the practices of dancing, modeling, and cooking. Participants in these practices are encouraged, via the guise of hybridity, to become their best, most creative selves, yet only insofar as their best selves conform to highly specific standards and regulations. This location of hybridity in the authentic self effectively depoliticizes race/ethnicity, thus permitting its covert discipline; transgression is now an individual breach of aesthetic etiquette or form, so taming is about appropriate expression rather than political

in nature. Thus, hybridity can be dismissed and rejected as unique to a person/idiosyncratic if it crosses the line, but culturally valorized if it stays within bounds.

Hybridity is a highly conditional identity specifically predicated to secure and maintain white privilege, in that liminality is carefully conscripted. Hybridity is acceptable, particularly for bodies marked as "other," only to the extent that these "othered" bodies perform hybridity in carefully delineated ways. Whiteness, however, can mobilize hybridity in any number of ways, with little limitation, in ways that resecure and reinforce the integrity and centrality of whiteness. That is, while hybridity is liminal, that does not mean it is wholly free and fluid; the liminal space is limited in regard to "othered" bodies.

In terms of mediated representations, hybridity is also marked as a site of spectacle, a characteristic of hybridity not present in earlier theorizing, but undergirding contemporary instantiations. That is, race/ethnicity, as manifested by, through, and in various bodies, is apprehended as spectacularized (Hall, 2001); the negotiation of racial/ethnic hybridity writ large on the big screen. This spectacularization of race/ethnicity is, in many ways, relevant to expression in that people on the television shows that I have discussed are continually encouraged to act in an "authentic," yet entertaining, manner, as long as they conform to specific guidelines; accordingly, this obfuscates identity politics and not only justifies but arguably invites discipline. Perhaps paradoxically, hybridity is understood as both "normal" *and* spectacular, insofar as racial/ethnic hybridity is concomitantly seen as a necessary condition arising out of transnationalism and something to be exploited for audience enjoyment and ratings.

As mentioned above, the manifestation and various characterizations of hybridity as everyday, liminal, disciplined and disciplining, tightly conscripted, and spectacularized are closely tied to this contemporary historical moment, suggesting that hybridity can only be understood by attending to sociopolitical context. Most theorizing about hybridity does not attend to cultural contexts, other than general acknowledgements of globalization and transnationalism. In this dissertation, I have attempted to articulate hybridity as understood in light of particular sociocultural and political exigencies, tensions, and anxieties present within the U.S. surrounding race/ethnicity. The simultaneous confirmation and denial of whiteness and "otherness" is characteristic of contemporary U.S. social relations, insofar as race is both a salient and value-laden concept and comparatively ignored in favor of a colorblind approach to race relations. Moreover, tensions surrounding the border, and the infiltration of such, are markedly present in the articulations of hybridity that I have discussed. To be sure, the inclusion of the border here configures hybridity as embroiled within tensions surrounding the "othered" body, pertaining to, for instance, immigration, terrorism, and difference. This dissertation also attempts to investigate the communicative accomplishments of hybridity, specifically the performative and rhetorical dimensions of hybridity.

Finally, this dissertation departs from the extant hybridity literature in considering hybridity as an embodied practice rather than simply a space or terrain, identity, or abstract concept (Anzaldúa, 1999; Beltran, 2005; Beltran & Fojas, 2008; Bhabha, 1994d, 2013; Flores & Moon, 2002; Fojas, 2008; Joseph, 2013, 2009; Kraidy, 2002; Moon & Flores, 2000; Moraga, 2000; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Ono, 1998; Shugart, 2007). While the body is always already marked with certain identities, including, for instance,

race, hybridity literature has not considered the body as a key component of hybridity. My analysis suggests that particular races/ethnicities are marshalled in tailored ways in accomplishments of hybridity. A condition of successful performance of hybridity is to clearly mark race/ethnicity on, through, and by the body—so there is no mystery or unseen threat—in ways that ensure its subordinate status in relation to whiteness. Although not always clearly, hybridity is always written on the body, and mobilized by and through the body, via material and aesthetic bodily practices. Different practices/embodiments surface particular anxieties around hybridity and negotiations thereof; the literature thus far tends to focus on general cultural tensions around race/ethnicity. Moreover, focusing on the body reveals how nuanced and varied actual accomplishments and deployments of hybridity are, and suggests that these different accomplishments of hybridity are concomitantly authorized or delegitimized, even if/when they are governed by a particular, consistent agenda; theorizing to date on hybridity tends to be rather more monolithic. Thus, this dissertation has attempted to parse the ways that hybridity is mobilized and rhetorically articulated by attending to bodily practices.

Ultimately, my analysis suggests that hybridity is a normalized and normalizing concept. While hybridity has variously been theorized as a third space, a site of resistance, and a rupturing, in this dissertation, hybridity bifurcates self/identity in such a way that it is conflated as the expression of one's unique, "authentic" self, which is celebrated insofar as it conforms to rigid conceptualizations of "appropriate" expression. This speaks to the tension between liberal and conservative sensibilities informed by current contestations around race/ethnicity—more specifically, the liberal celebration of

individual self and the conservative containment of race/ethnicity—in ways that satisfy both by ultimately endorsing hybridity (as expression) in tightly conscripted confines. The rules, here, trump expression, although expression is always encouraged, such that the disciplinary impulse of hybridity is never explicitly acknowledged or called out; in these texts, the message is that one simply needs to make one's expression conform to specific contours—those that ultimately align with whiteness. Thus, this project suggests a cooptation of hybridity as a disciplinary tool: Hybridity becomes both idiosyncratic and aligned with a specific moral imperative—hybridity is positive and desirable inasmuch as certain bodies do not attempt to cross the line.

**Limitations**

All research has inherent limitations, and this dissertation is no exception. First, broadly speaking, this dissertation is limited in its choice of texts. It only focuses on a single genre of television, specifically, reality television. Moreover, even within this genre, this dissertation only looks at six series: *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *America's Next Top Model*, *Simply Delicioso with Ingrid Hoffmann*, *Aarti Party*, and *Everyday Italian*. There are, of course, many more reality television series currently being broadcast, although necessarily, this dissertation needs to be somewhat limited in scope. Second, this dissertation is limited in regard to method. Including the reactions and discussions from the audiences of these texts would have added a layer of complexity to the analyses, in that in many cases the audience is specifically interpellated to participate in, for instance, the selection of a winner (in the case of *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and *America's Next Top Model*). However, conducting an audience analysis was outside of the scope of this project, and the media

through which I obtained and viewed the texts did not include audience reactions (for example, Netflix and Hulu+ hosts videos, but does not include audience commentary on their sites). Finally, this dissertation is delimited in that there are myriad other instantiations of hybrid bodies/performances that I have not examined, including, but not limited to, for example, the practices of labor, engagement with nature, social protest, and musical performances.

**Directions for Future Research**

Potential directions for future research that investigates various contemporary articulations of hybridity by, through, and in bodies can attend to salient theoretical concepts other than borders. For instance, a possible theoretical direction might be to further interrogate the ways that hybrid bodies might be mobilized intersectionally. That is, while this dissertation included gender, the focus was necessarily on race/ethnicity; future research might note the ways in which hybrid bodies negotiate, confound, and complicate intersectional identities, including nationality, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and so forth. Another possible area of research might be investigating the ways in which performances of hybridity are communicated, deployed, and negotiated under the auspices of social protest and social change, and attending to the ways in which the hybrid body might disrupt the realm of the intelligible. Another interesting direction is hybridity projects/contexts that further develop/refine distinctions between self/identity. I examined hybridity in RTV contexts, which turn on the notion of "the real" or "authentic," not to mention spectacle/aesthetic, so it could be unique to this particular mediated context; however, it bears examination in other contexts, mediated and otherwise, to see whether the same or similar dynamics play out. My hope is that with

this dissertation, I have contributed to a greater understanding of hybridity, specifically in

terms of contributing to theoretical understandings of it as embodied and performed, in

general, and what those performances signify in and for this particular historical moment.

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