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Paper: Diversity

“African drums become guitars”: Fado and Bachata and the traversal of national boundaries

This paper explores the relationship between the concepts of diaspora and hybrid identity and the complexities that arise as these concepts are challenged by the multiplicity of transnational relations in the 21st century. I examine the fluidity of cultural production and consumption in a transnational context through the genres of the Fado and the Bachata.

The music by the Portuguese fadista Mariza from the album *Transparente*, and by the Dominican artists Juan Luis Guerra from the album *Bachata Rosa* are used to trace the movement of the two genres and the artists. Furthermore, the study foregrounds the diasporic and hybrid identities of both artists and the music that they produce. Stuart Hall’s theory of identity as a “production” and Mary Joseph’s view of identity as a performance of affiliations in a national and international arena, are utilized to examine the work of these two artists.

The concept of Third Space as theorized by Homi K. Bhabha is also used to understand the “space” that is created as a result of multiple traversals of borders, both physical and imaginary by the artists and their music. Thus, this paper highlights the importance of understanding the complexity of relations between diaspora, hybrid identity and cultural production in terms of their transnational location, whereby the music and the artists inhabit and transcend multiple national affiliations and identities despite the rootedness of the musical genres.