

history, media, ethnicity, urbanism, and politics would be equally well-placed to read this book.

IRVING CHAN JOHNSON

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Lucía M. Suarez, Amélia Conrado, and Yvonne Daniel
Dancing Bahia: Essays on Afro-Brazilian Dance, Education, Memory, and Race

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Bringing together key representatives of African-Brazilian dance from across the Americas, *Dancing Bahia* combines the voices of artists, activists, and practitioner-scholars in order to explore the complex, intersectional ways in which African-Brazilian dance forms operate within Brazilian society. It focuses on so-called 'African matrix dances': cultural expressions ranging from religious praise performances to martial art forms, social dances, parading dances, modern concert dance, and touristic performance which have developed in Brazil from the colonial period to the present day and whose roots harken back to West and Central Africa. The volume foregrounds the city of Salvador, historically an epicentre of black Brazilian culture, and a former colonial capital. Nearly 80 per cent of the local population identifies as black or multiracial, and the city is famous across Brazil for its dance traditions.

Dancing Bahia reveals how African matrix dances are a product of continued cultural resistance and affirmation. As co-editor Amélia Conrado asserts, African-Brazilian dance is a 'black epistemology' more than a dance genre. Thus, the book unveils the complex layers of (embodied) knowledge underpinning black Brazilian identity and culture. Whilst the role of Candomblé, the African-Brazilian religion of Bahia based on traditional West and Central African praise-performance practices, is rightly foregrounded, space is also given to contemporary dance artistry in Bahia and beyond, and to other black Brazilian traditions, such as the Black Catholicism underpinning the *marabaixo* dance of the Afro-Amapá culture of Brazil's Amazonian region.

The book's main concern is dance education, which reflects how pedagogical activities have enabled African-Brazilian dance practitioners both

to transform their local communities and earn a steady income. Following the legal consolidation of multiculturalism in Brazil in the Federal Constitution of 1988, a number of historic laws were passed under the left-wing government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in particular Law No. 10.639 of 2003, which requires all schools to teach about African and African-Brazilian culture. In higher education, a system of quotas for Brazilians of African descent was initiated in the 2000s which has transformed access to higher education for black Brazilians. These changes have meant that more professionally trained dance practitioners have been able to work in pedagogic settings and use African matrix dances to challenge the Cartesian biases of colonial and white/modern systems of education, given the focus of African-Brazilian dance on embodied, culturally situated epistemologies. A number of chapters focus on this radical way of rethinking education through the (black Brazilian) body, whilst also weighing up the historically negative ways in which the black body has been essentialized and how this has fed into Salvador's thriving tourist industry, which is also a potential source of income for dancers, thanks to the city's folkloric show circuit.

The transformative potential of these paradigmatic shifts in Brazil's education system is, however, tempered by all of the contributors' accounts of continued systemic racism, which has manifested in a variety of forms, from the postcolonial inequalities of Brazilian society to the historic marginalization of the Brazilian Northeast and the more recent, rapid spread of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity across the country (which rejects African Brazilian praise-practice as ungodly). The impeachment of left-wing President Dilma Rouseff in 2016 and the recent election of a far-right government are also looming spectres that haunt the pages of *Dancing Bahia* and add to the urgency of the dialogues platformed by the book. Thus, whilst this articulate, thought-provoking publication will be an important resource for dance scholars and Latin Americanists, the complexity and richness of the issues tackled mean that *Dancing Bahia* should resonate with anyone interested in the wider diasporic history and culture of the Black Atlantic, in the field of decolonialization, or in the fertile ways in which arts and activism can organically feed into and inform one another.

PATRICK CAMPBELL