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Editor's Note

The essays in this issue of *Dance Research Journal* interrogate the ethics of cultural encounters through dance as a global phenomenon with regional nuance. We start in Cuban salsa classes for tourists in "Cuban-style Salsa: Intersections of Tourism-led Entrepreneurship and Dancing Personal Development" where we ponder questions of responsible Latinx cultural representation. Instructors face a dilemma at this site of economic exchange as they navigate romanticized Cuban racial and gender identities (especially for Black male dancers encountering female tourists). A dance piece that explores the ways in which the US government bars encounters between undocumented migrants and loved ones is the topic of "Choreographing Deportation in David Herrera's *TOUCH*." The choreography highlights the stakes of touch, physical contact, and connection in the broader conversation about immigration injustice. The emotional impact of forced separation rooted in racialized strategies gives deeper meaning to movements like reaching out, especially for those of us who sympathize with the suffering of these migrants. In "Contemporary Dance on Native Land: Indigenous Solidarity in the Choreography of Ananya Dance Theatre," we then examine the complexities of committed solidarity between a dance company and the Native American peoples upon whose land they reside. Environmental justice and cultural resilience rise to the fore in ritual, respect, and meaningful alliances that move beyond performance and towards advancing Native sovereignty. Finally, in "Crossover and Commercial Dance: Race, Class and Capitalism on *The Jacksons Variety Show*," we look at an historical moment of not only encounter but also crossover. By reading dance in a popular television show, we learn how televised dance reflected and shaped societal dynamics from the 1950s to the 1970s.

In "Cuban-style Salsa: Intersections of Tourism-led Entrepreneurship and Dancing Personal Development," Ruxandra Ana explores how salsa schools cater to international tourists seeking transformative experiences through dance. These experiences, marketed as encounters with Cuban authenticity and sensuality, raise ethical questions about cultural representation and gender dynamics. In a case study, Mireya, a resilient entrepreneur who epitomizes this phenomenon, capitalizes on foreigners' fascination with Cuban culture, as her salsa classroom becomes a stage for performing and consuming stereotypes of Cuban happiness, sensuality, and racial dynamics. This spectacularization includes the exoticization of Black male dancers and the romanticization of interactions between Cuban men and foreign women, echoing historical tropes of the seductive, carefree Cuban lifestyle.

Ana's ethnographic approach delves into the complexities dance teachers like Mireya face as they negotiate economic opportunities and cultural responsibilities. The impact of tourism on local dance economies reveals tensions between authenticity and commercialization, as Cuban dance forms like salsa are adapted to meet global dance trends and tourist expectations. This evolution underscores a broader shift in Havana's cultural landscape, where private enterprise fills gaps left by state-controlled cultural institutions. Ana's research paints a nuanced picture of how dance tourism in Havana intertwines cultural exchange with economic survival.

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David Herrera's dance performance *TOUCH* (2015) explores the emotional and physical impacts of deportation, particularly on undocumented and separated families. Visual and movement motifs that evoke barriers illustrate the central theme of separation. For example, dancers often reach for each other through a sheer black curtain symbolizing the border, embodying the pain and longing of deportation.

In his analysis, "Choreographing Deportation in David Herrera's *TOUCH*," Juan Manuel Aldape Muñoz employs Stuart Hall's concept of racialized regimes of representation and embodiment. The staging of *TOUCH* (with Herrera's own family's experiences adding authenticity) invites the audience to experience the emotional ramifications of separation, transitioning from joy to despair, thus mirroring the complexities of crossing borders.

Muñoz argues that *TOUCH* reveals how power shapes bodily interactions and perceptions of touch, emphasizing the limitations imposed on physical contact for undocumented individuals and pointing to broader structures of control within nation-states. The study of these dynamics reveals that dance, despite its potential power as a medium, often operates within and reinforces existing regimes of embodiment and representation. While *TOUCH* effectively conveys the emotional weight of deportation, it also reflects the constraints imposed by both the dance form and the socio-legal context.

Alessandra Lebea Williams discusses the Ananya Dance Theatre (ADT) approach to contemporary dance as a form of Indigenous solidarity under the choreographic vision of Ananya Chatterjea in "Contemporary Dance on Native Land: Indigenous Solidarity in the Choreography of Ananya Dance Theatre." Williams also reflects on her personal journey as a dancer in the Minneapolis-based company, which collaborates with Native American leaders, notably the Dakota and Anishinaabe peoples, to acknowledge their presence on Native land. Williams' reflections underscore the humility required of non-native artists to engage with Native perspectives authentically and respectfully. Through their performances and community engagements, ADT aims to foster meaningful alliances and raise awareness of Indigenous issues.

Based in Minneapolis, the company emphasizes Chatterjea's development of "pranam," a ritual salutation that begins and ends every dance, honoring the land and its people. This practice integrates Indian dance traditions with a commitment to recognizing and supporting Native struggles, such as environmental justice and cultural resilience. Chatterjea also implements a contemporary dance technique, Yorchhā. Unlike traditional dance forms that historically marginalized Indigenous struggles, Yorchhā embodies a "call to action" (daak). This strategy eschews mere representation for active engagement, urging audiences to invest energy in supporting women of color and environmental longevity.

Elizabeth June Bergman's exploration in "Crossover and Commercial Dance: Race, Class and Capitalism on *The Jacksons Variety Show,*" examines how dance on television reflected and shaped societal dynamics from the 1950s to the 1970s. She traces the evolution from racially segregated shows like *American Bandstand* to more integrated programs like *ShinDig!* and *Soul Train*. Bergman highlights how dances originating in Black and working-class communities were commercialized, revealing the imbrication of race, class, and capitalism in shaping popular culture. The Jacksons' contributions to mainstreaming Black dance illustrate broader shifts in media representation and cultural expression during the era.

Bergman analyzes how the Jackson family strategically navigated the landscape of commercial television in the 1970s. The show featured performances of Motown hits, celebrity impersonations, and dance styles ranging from tap to street dance. This blend served not only to entertain but also to strategically appeal to various consumer demographics, and consequently secure advertisers.

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Bergman frames the show within the concept of "crossover," which refers to artists' movement across racial boundaries in music genres to reach broader audiences. This concept elucidates how commercial entertainment in the U.S. has historically navigated racial capitalism, wherein the marketing and commodification of cultural products are deeply entwined with racial classifications.

Together, these articles offer a range of perspectives on dance as a means of encountering—whether it be the ethnic Other, our loved ones, or aesthetic genres. Sometimes generative, sometimes fraught, these encounters show our desire to mobilize the body toward understanding even if these encounters are simultaneously earnest and romanticized, humble and righteous, inviolable and impeded, the commons and commercial. We hope your encounter with this scholarship provides ample grist for your mills.

Moving forward, looking back,

Nadine George-Graves
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