

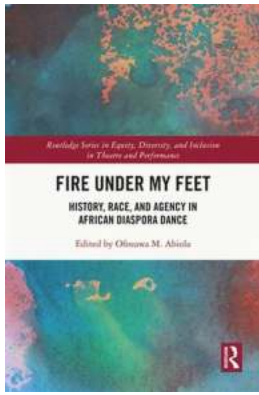
# **Unlocking the History, Race, and Agency in African Diaspora Dance: Exploring the Routledge Inequity and Diversity Perspective**

Throughout history, dance has served as a powerful tool for cultural expression, storytelling, and resistance. Nowhere is this more evident than in the African diaspora, where dance has been used as a means of reclaiming identity, challenging societal norms, and celebrating heritage. In this captivating article, we will delve into the rich history, intricate relationship between race and dance, and the role of agency in African diaspora dance through the lens of Routledge's perspective on equity and diversity.

## **The History of African Diaspora Dance**

The African diaspora refers to the dispersion of people of African descent throughout the world, primarily as a result of the transatlantic slave trade. As these individuals were forcibly taken from their homelands and subjected to lives of slavery and oppression, dance became a vital form of expression and resistance. It served as a way to preserve cultural traditions, maintain a sense of community, and communicate covert messages.

From the rhythmic movements of West African dance to the improvisational styles of Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian dance, the African diaspora has left an indelible mark on the global dance landscape. In their book, "African Diaspora Dance: Transforming Racialized Bodies and Movement in the Americas," Takiyah Nur Amin and Thomas F. DeFrantz shed light on the cultural, social, and political significance of African diaspora dance forms.



## **Fire Under My Feet: History, Race, and Agency in African Diaspora Dance (Routledge Series in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Theatre and Performance)** by Ofosewa M. Abiola (1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 14400 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 178 pages



### **Race and Dance: The Intertwined Narrative**

Race plays a pivotal role in African diaspora dance, influencing both its existence and reception. The racialized bodies of African diaspora dancers have often faced challenges and discrimination within the dance world, both historically and in contemporary settings. Through the concept of equity and diversity, Routledge explores the ways in which race intersects with dance and the agency it provides to individuals to counteract inequities.

One example of this agency can be seen in the evolution of African American dance during the Harlem Renaissance in the early 20th century. Despite facing racial segregation and limited opportunities, African American dancers such as Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus used their artistry to challenge stereotypes, embrace their cultural heritage, and pave the way for future generations.

Routledge's approach to equity and diversity in African diaspora dance sheds light on the importance of representation and the need to create inclusive spaces within the dance community. By recognizing the contributions and struggles of

racially marginalized dancers, we can begin to dismantle systemic barriers and create a more equitable dance landscape.

## **The Agency of African Diaspora Dance**

Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act and make choices that shape their lives and influence their communities. In African diaspora dance, agency is deeply intertwined with issues of race, as dancers and choreographers use their art to reclaim their narratives and challenge oppressive systems.

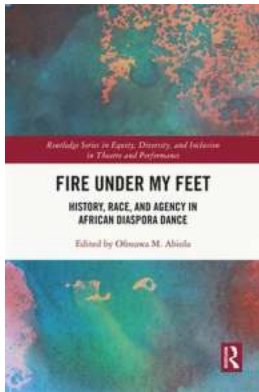
Through their movements, African diaspora dancers assert their agency and reclaim their bodies, challenging prevailing notions of beauty and aesthetic norms. This is exemplified in contemporary dance forms such as Afrobeat and Vogue, where dancers celebrate their cultural heritage and express their authentic selves through dynamic and powerful choreography.

Routledge's perspective on equity and diversity emphasizes the importance of valuing and uplifting diverse voices in the dance world. By providing opportunities and platforms for African diaspora dancers to share their stories and perspectives, we not only honor their agency but also contribute to a more inclusive and vibrant dance community.

## **In**

The history, race, and agency in African diaspora dance are essential components of the art form's rich tapestry. By examining dance through Routledge's lens of equity and diversity, we gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by racially marginalized dancers and the power of agency in reclaiming narratives and transforming the dance landscape.

As we continue to explore the history and impact of African diaspora dance, it is crucial to recognize and celebrate the artistry, resilience, and agency of dancers of African descent. By doing so, we can create a more inclusive and equitable dance community that embraces diversity, challenges systemic inequalities, and amplifies marginalized voices.



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Fire Under My Feet seeks to expose the diverse, significant, and often under-researched historical and developmental phenomena revealed by studies in the dance systems of the African Diaspora.

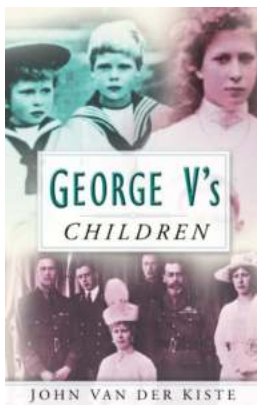
In the book, written documentation and diverse methodologies are buttressed by the experiences of those whose lives are built around the practice of African diaspora dance. Replete with original perspectives, this book makes a significant contribution to dance and African diaspora scholarship simultaneously. Most important, it highlights the work of researchers from Ecuador, India, Puerto Rico, the United States, and the United Kingdom, and it exposes under-researched and omitted voices of the African diaspora dance world of the aforesaid locations and Puerto Rico, Columbia, and Trinidad as well.

This study showcases a blend of scholars, dance practitioners, and interdisciplinarity, and engages the relationship between African diaspora dance and the fields of history, performance studies, critical race theory, religion, identity, and black agency.



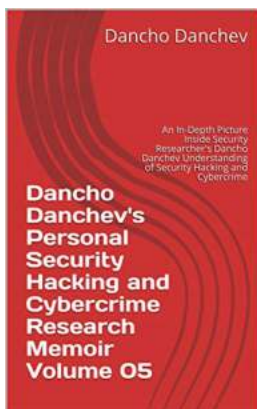
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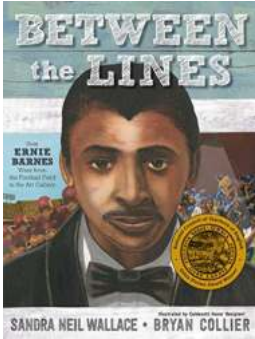
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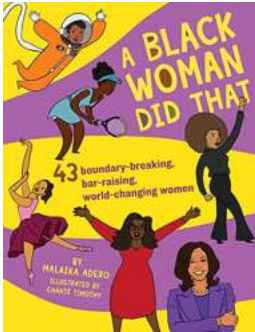
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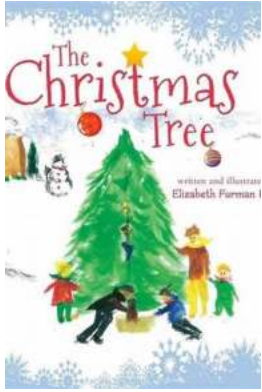
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