

Call for Research Articles

A Special Issue of Dance Chronicle

“Coming in with the Rain”: Celebrating Circum-Caribbean Dance Scholarship

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Deadline for submissions: April 1, 2024

In his 1992 CARIFESTA speech on “The New Aesthetics and the Nature of Culture in the Caribbean” titled, “The Dream of Coming in with the Rain,” the acclaimed Barbadian poet and scholar [Edward] Kamau Brathwaite describes the geological and psychological fracturing of the Caribbean region as a *geo-psychic fragmentation* which must be acknowledged and understood in order to define or appreciate a Caribbean aesthetic.¹ This fragmentation does not always sit comfortably within national artistic projects which tend towards circumscribing cultural boundaries within geo-political spheres. Offering another paradigm, Indian-British scholar Homi Bhabha writes, “I want to take my stand on the shifting margins of cultural displacement - that confounds any profound or ‘authentic’ sense of a ‘national’ cultural or an ‘organic’ intellectual - and ask what the function of a committed theoretical perspective might be, once the cultural and historical hybridity of the post-colonial world is taken as the paradigmatic place of departure.”² Standing on this fragmented, co-created, and shifting ground, we can embrace the vibrational qualities of the emerging creativity that is in relation to land, body and spirit so eloquently expressed by Martinican author Édouard Glissant when he states, “I believe in the spirituality of the sacred. Not of religion, but of the sacred. What is the spirituality of the sacred? It’s the intuition of how we relate to the world. This is what the imaginary is: we feel the rumbling underneath us.”³ If we use the lens of movement to look beneath the rumbling surfaces of the Caribbean, what has emerged in its imaginary?

Brathwaite notes that it is often in art that ulterior histories reveal themselves, offering more accurate and complex narratives than the national discourse allows. As a non-verbal mode of communication, dance has been a crucial nexus for Indigenous,

¹ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, “The Dream of Coming in with the Rain” in *The New Aesthetic and the Meaning of Culture in the Caribbean: Proceedings of the Carifesta V Symposia August 1992*, ed. Pearl Eintou Springer (Port of Spain, Trinidad: National Carnival Commission, 1995).

² Homi Bhabha, “The Commitment to Theory” in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 21.

³ Édouard Glissant, “One World in Relation: Édouard Glissant in Conversation with Manthia Diawara,” *Journal of Contemporary African Art* 28, (2011): 12.

enslaved, indentured, and maroon communities to maintain histories and generate futurities. Brathwaite's essay reminds us of the urgent need to learn one's own landscape in order to know one's self and one's aesthetic or values as an artist. This calls into question how dance communities in the Caribbean navigate Westernization in the midst of a climate catastrophe and within an Information Age that pulls us further and further from the natural environments that have nurtured many Caribbean dance forms. Locating Caribbean identities as multifaceted, tectonically shifting, and experiential, his paradigm makes way for embodied discourses of organic practices that are not easily fixed by the parameters of culture, genetics, or national heritage. This observational, sensorial and curious approach guides the energy with which we launch this call for papers.

This special issue invites scholars from the Circum-Caribbean⁴ to share their research in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch. We encourage articles that consider Brathwaite's geo-fragmentation, Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity, and Édouard Glissant's explication of non-religious spirituality in their approach to a nuanced reading of embodiment. We are particularly interested in research which engages the contemporary moment and emerging phenomena which may necessitate blurring the edges of lineages, traditions and innovations. If *antillanité* is a method, not a state of being, "confirming us in ourselves and joining us to an elsewhere" as Glissant contends, how is it danced?⁵

We ask authors to consider the following questions:

- How have sacred, social, and concert dance genres changed in the generation of post-independence dance-makers?
- How have colonialism, neo-colonialism, the tourist gaze, and the tourist dollar affected the development of dance in the region?
- How have debates within dance studies occluded and/or misrepresented the aesthetics and values of dances of the Caribbean?
- How has sexuality been re-presented in Caribbean dance forms, and is this changing?

⁴ Circum-Caribbean - what has been defined as the Circum or Wider Caribbean, a space which includes the insular Caribbean, together with the northern coastal states of South America, Central America, and the Caribbean coast of Mexico. From Sanz, Ileana "Early Groundings for a Circum-Caribbean Integrationist Thought," *Caribbean Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2009): 1-14.

⁵ Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 196.

- How do dances in the Caribbean challenge, reproduce or operate outside of colonial or national discourses of class, race, gender and sexuality?
- What new themes, forms and genres are emerging from the region?
- How are technology and social media impacting and being impacted by dance from the region?

Submission Instructions: All manuscripts will receive double anonymous peer review. Manuscripts, 6,000–10,000 words in length, may be submitted any time before April 1, 2024.

Dance Chronicle follows the Chicago Manual of Style. Please submit manuscripts through the Taylor & Francis Submission Portal [hyperlink].

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