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Dance And Know You Are A Part: The Instrumentality Of Performative Politics And Dance In The Configuration Of Local Social Memory And Afro-Brazilian Identity And Agency In Pelotas, Rio Grande Do Sul, Brazil

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PERFORMATIVE POLITICS AND DANCE IN THE CONFIGURATION

OF LOCAL SOCIAL MEMORY AND AFRO-BRAZILIAN IDENTITY

AND AGENCY IN PELOTAS, RIO GRANDE DO SUL, BRAZIL

TRISTON R. BROWN

123 Pages

The arts have been a refuge from perpetual repression and omission, and, a platform for social activism for Afro-descendants in the Americas. In Brazil this is very much the case. With performance serving as a social barometer or a looking glass, dance becomes a source of cultural knowledge, acts as preservative, and tool for negotiating collective and individual mobility within a given context. The Afro-Brazilian dance company, Cia de Dança Daniel Amaro in Pelotas, Brazil grants its members the agency to challenge entrenched national narratives and reinterpret local social memory. Most academic writings about dance or performance in Brazil, focus on samba, associated with Carnival, and capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial art form. These styles have been typed as models of inherent "Brazilianness." However, exclusory valuations based in Eurocentric paradigms and perpetuated stereotypes concerning Afro members have precluded the Black Brazilian and African inspired works from canonical review and discussions of Brazilianness. By reviewing the experience of Afro-Brazilians over time and contemporaneously in Pelotas, this thesis questions the lack of Afro-Brazilian representation in the imagining of Brazilian national identity and posits dance as an agent of social transformation. Because most African diasporic literature about Brazil focuses on its Northeastern region, this

thesis will prove a unique case in Afro-dance and performance studies in Brazil. To be discussed in this thesis are the themes of blackness, historical erasure, and the repercussions of time-old, in most cases, divisive narratives and the effects of these on Black identity and social memory.

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PREFACE

Nomenclature
By Triston Brown

Look at me! Ain't I pretty?
Let me guess, almost missed me for the city?

Aren't I part of its history too?
Strides toward modernity, these streets, mobility they never knew.

Cheguei aqui [1]in century seventeen.
Peça apreciada[2], in the hands of those told they were not whole, but a means.

I am here to tell the story Eurus told me, titled:
"Systems Rooted in Historical Fallacy"

Gleaned first, the words "contingencies," "*Axé*[3],"
and "worth"

"Five-finger discount!" they oft replied
Stigmas still in style, what a time to be alive!

Nothing personal, it's just business.
"Empirical studies" is how it's listed.

I was watered by silenced cries,
Freedom found as the body writhed.

See how I keep time and sway with the wind.
I was taught to *ginga*[4], not to break but to bend.

Look at me, I take up space, a gestalt.
Ser negro é bonito! [5]
Orixás, this dance exalts.

Look down the barrel of my pistil, can you see?
The blood of the defiant and indignant, those
named marginally?

Evergreen as the souls they hold,
My petals, their wrinkles, detail a history untold.

Amid the chatter,
Voice *forte* [6]I say: I am here and my name is Matter.

Figure 1 - *H. Rosa Sinensis*
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

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[1] I arrived here
[2] Precious piece
[3] A Yoruba term, in the Candomblé tradition axé means power and is an energy/force that "drives the universe and resides in the natural world in people, animals, trees and earth itself (Shirey 2009, 69)

[4] Ginga is a core concept/movement in capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian martial art form (Taveres 1998, 216)
[5] South African anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko popularized the phrase "Black is beautiful" in the 1960s. The phrase finally reached Brazil in the '70s as Ser negro é bonito (Freelon 2016).
[6] strong

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"If the mood of the times encourages social protest, it also fosters artistic innovation

(Berg 1993, 65)."

In 1993, The Congress on Research in Dance and The Society of Dance History Scholars

hosted a joint conference titled "Of, By, and For the People (Berg 1993, 64)." Scholars, critics,

dancers, and the like were invited to read papers, deliver lectures and perform works. Though

each showcased piece presented a unique perspective of dance history and touched on social,

political, and aesthetic issues bygone and at that time, the prominence of political undertones and

overtones was astounding (Berg 1993, 64). In conference panels, whose topics ranged from

discussions about national identity to conversations about self-perception, politics were always at

the forefront of every argument forged (Berg 1993, 64). Of particular interest for this thesis are

the conclusions of Black dance historian and independent scholar, Dr. John O. Perpener III.

During a panel titled "Political Overview," Dr. Perpener III relayed the steep adversity and

racism Black dancers and choreographers were up against in the 1920's and 30's (Berg 1993,

64). This research and his conclusions presented at the conference became the premise for his

book, *African American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*, published in

2005. In his book, Perpener recounts the history and works of eight Black concert dancers[7]. All

formidable forces and unrelenting activists of their time, Perpener's analysis of Pearl Primus, a

Black female dancer and choreographer was particularly comprehensive. Primus's biography

appealed to me most not only because she was an anthropologist whose research emphasized the

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[7] Hemsley Winfield, Edna Guy, Randolph Sawyer, Ollie Burgoyne, Charles Williams, Asadata Dafora, Katherine Dunham, and Pearl Primus. This group of prolific artists are said by Perpener to have paved the way for contemporary artists like Alvin Ailey to continue the legacy of Black versatility and innovation (Perpener 2005).

interconnected experiences of Blacks in the African diaspora (with special attention paid to the dances within), but also because of the criticisms she and her performances received.

New York dance critic Lois Balcom, commenting on Primus' productions "Strange Fruit," "Hard Time Blues," and "Slave Market," stated that Primus "was playing to the expectations of a particular audience by giving them African, jazz, and Black protest dances (Perpener III 2005, 167)." Primus' protest dances, though of the modern genre, were described as "undisciplined." Balcom even denied Primus her creative liberty and integrity and dismissed her productions with African influence as "inauthentic" and "derivative" in derisive national reviews (Perpener III 2005, 167). It was not uncommon in the U.S. for Black dancers and artists, because of racism and other discriminatory practices, to receive such criticisms. In fact, due to segregation and subversionary tactics, oftentimes they were often ignored, condoned, viewed as incidental, or in Primus' case, reprimanded. Perpener concludes that the overrepresentation of white concert artists as pioneers in the dance canon (due to Eurocentric predispositions), stereotypes/archetypes of and about Black performers, and the degradation of African dance inspired works marked the Black body/African American creatives absent in national and international canons (Perpener III 2005, 177-178) (Thomas 2003, 556). Minimized in the historical catalogs of creative significance, Afro diasporic works and Black innovators never received the recognition they so deserved.

As we will see, unfortunately so, hypercriticality and damaging narratives have transposed to contemporary evaluations of African inspired dances and the Black body. Throughout this thesis I will pull from the conclusions of the 1993 conference presented above and from Perpener's compilation and analysis of Pearl Primus' life to propel my arguments. Though the matters discussed here are geographically distinct and will diverge contextually as

well as vary in emphasis from that which was presented by Perpener and Berg, thematically, this thesis builds off of Perpener's conclusions and identifies, within the context of Brazil, the various effects of socio-political erasure on Afro-Brazilian identity through time.

With this thesis, I argue three things: First, I argue that in the nationalistic pursuit of modernity, performative politics in Brazil, racialized portrayals of the Black body/Black Brazilian, and the country's African heritage have historically and contemporarily marginalized Afro-descendant members and their creative contributions. Because of this, I secondly argue that the body is a site of recovery and protest; and that though external forces described in my first argument threaten to confine and define the Black body, through dance Afro-Brazilians are able to negotiate the terms and conditions of their lived experience. By engaging in performances that challenge and/or contest selective social remembering, Black individuals pronounce their mastery over confinement (Perpener III 2005, 161-162). Building off of this, my last argument is that participation in community (dance) organizations leads to positive identification. I argue that through community engagement Black individuals in Pelotas find solace and become political entities (Berg 1993, 64) that combine to combat damaging, anti- Black narratives and "flawed" systems. Various factors influenced my arguments. After a preliminary literature review in preparation for my Fall 2019 trip to Brazil, I was left with several questions relating to creative expression and agency. For example, I questioned why samba and capoeira were the only dance forms mentioned most often in literature about Brazilian dance when Afro-dance has had equal bearing in the field? I wondered whether the presence of creative outlets, i.e. dance companies, create a sense of community and if so, how? I tried to identify factors that influenced how people of Afro-descent participate and interact in society and in doing so questioned if, participation in a community organization or dance company created and/or encouraged a sense of efficacy,

agency, and/or pride in one's heritage --enough so that adversity is softened to some degree? These wonderings informed the thematic topics and questions that were used during in-country interviews. Upon my return to the U.S., the original questions still appropriate, I began to rethink my approach to the literature and used my experience in-country and the interviewees responses to further question the role of dance in Pelotas, Brazil. By doing so, I formulated three broad questions that informed my approach to this thesis: 1. How did these dance forms, samba and capoeira, become symbols of what it means to be Brazilian; why is Afro-dance excluded from national symbolism? 2. What role did Brazil's Afro population play in the formation of "Brazilian" identity and vis-versa? 3. How does Afro-dance inform and detail the experiences of Black Brazilians in Pelotas? In Chapter Four of this thesis, "Methodology," I talk more about the thematic topics aforementioned in a detailed run-down of my three-week fieldwork experience in Pelotas, RS, Brazil that took place in November of 2019. Here, I recount the manner in which data was collected and the structure of my interviews with male dancer (João), female dancer (Juliana), and joint interview with the director and principle choreographer of the dance company Daniel and Paco, a choreographer from Salvador, Bahia.

Chapter Two, "Historical and Geographic Context," defines the locale in which my fieldwork was conducted and provides a summative look at the emergence of Brazilian nationhood. In Section 2.1, I will explore the origins of racism and racialized stereotypes/archetypes in a historical overview of slavery in Brazil. I say overview because slavery in Brazil is a very involved topic. It is, in and of itself, the topic for another thesis. What I present here is a mere silhouette of the grandiose way in which slavery shaped Brazilian society and governance. I provide important ideological framework and pertinent terminology related to race in the hopes that readers will glean the severity of being Black in a conditional society. In

section 2.2 titled, "Contemporary Social Issues, Regionally Varied: Pelotas," I will look at the implications and repercussions of a nation founded from a slave society. Contemporary racial and economic stratification is discussed here as collateral of slavery and years of Eurocentric, patriarchal social structuring. Lastly Section 2.3, identifies samba and capoeira as of African origin and discusses the politicized manner in which the art form found social grace. Section 3.3 confronts the perils of recontextualizing Black Brazilian art forms/culture as emblematic in the name of "Brazilian" nationalism. This section also defines Afro-Brazilian dance and reinserts the dance form, the Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro and its performances as the basis for this thesis. I found it necessary here to give an account, albeit superficial, of the enduring Afro-Brazilian religious practices of Candomblé and Umbanda. Afro-Dance in Brazil borrows from these religions and combines modern stylistic movements with African inflected movements to create ritualistic dramatizations (Daniel Amaro 2020) that honor the African legacy of Brazil.

In Chapter Three, "Theoretical Framework and Literature Review," I highlight existing research and use theories proposed by Carrie Noland, Judith Hanna, Henri Lefebvre, and Paul Connerton. The work/themes of these authors listed informed and provided the framework for the three sections within chapter four, where I synthesize literature reviewed and offer vignettes that I believe support my arguments. The literature provided here was integral to my understanding of the inner workings of dance canons and the politics of performance in relation to Brazilian sociality. Section 3.1, titled "Brazilianness" and The Exclusivity of National Narratives, I identify the body as a social entity that is informed by and that dialogues with the politics of time. I look at "Brazilianness," and how exclusionary definitions of what it means to be a representative of Brazil as a whole perpetuates problematic, stereotypical narratives and obscures the influence the Black Brazilian has had in the construction of national identity.

Section 3.2, titled Negotiations of Space and Memory, I denote the body as a psycho-social and communicative entity that, as Primus says, "conveys and amplifies major events of the community and minor occurrences of everyday life (Perpener III 2005, 172)." In this section I posit performance as a negotiation of existence and autonomy. In the final section of this chapter, titled *É Possível*: A Look at the Notion of Community Recourse, I confirm the vital role community organizations play in the alleviation of hardships faced by under-resourced communities because of racism and classicism. In this section, I foreground the work of Daniel Amaro, the Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro, and their role in transforming the local chronicles of the city. Perpener argues that a sense of identity can be produced, cultivated and nourished through dance (Berg 1993, 65). In this final section of the literature review, I consider Perpener's argument and frame dance as the antidote to the city's neglect of its Black members in the historical recollection and contemporary functioning.

Chapter Five consists of in-depth renderings of experiences from my fieldwork. Here, I simultaneously survey both the verbal and corporeal. I focus on two performances and one personal vignette and use the notes taken and oral histories collected to relate my observations and analyses to the literature I have presented in the sections prior. In this section I spotlight my thought processes and the concrete details of each of my experiences and allow the reader to engage with concepts and implications presented throughout the thesis. Here, I argue, is where all that I presented thus far, the historical, social and political aspects, will be exemplified.

The Discussion and Conclusion, make up the sixth and final chapter of this thesis. Here, I will briefly review theoretical highpoints relating to social memory, identity, bodily motility, and national narratives. I will highlight outstanding overarching themes and make final deductions. This section will conclude with proposed areas for future research.

In most cases, if not all, the analyses and examples presented throughout this thesis are the effects of colonization, systemic racism, and immurements, spatial and otherwise. Consistent with Afro-diasporic literature on Black realities, we will see this tension of "a part of but only so as apart" tapered yet not eradicated completely through activism. In whatever form, in this case dance, activism is an act of transformation and defiance; though this word has a negative connotation I use defiance here as a beautiful and illustrative titular of Afro-descendants and their persistence through time. Christen A. Smith's in her book, Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil (2016), she evaluates a Black street troupe in Bahia and their performance "Stop to Think." Pertinent to framework of this thesis, Smith, addressing political reality and blackness in Brazil, denotes the over-emphasis of verbal anecdotes in academia. She states that by glossing over the embodied, lived, and visual aspects of interpersonal relations, crucial elements that define and inform "civilities" in society are missed (Smith 2016, 99). Sympathizing with Smith's conclusion that (embodied) performance synthesizes local and national socio-political and historical happenings, I understood dance and the dancing body, as a dually functioning agent (and reagent) of social change. Motivated by this and by centralizing the power of performance, dance and the Black voice, I began to understand my research in Pelotas as an Ariadne's thread in complex and codified Brazilian society. That by using the Afro-dance company Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro as the thread, I would better understand the experience of Afro-Brazilians in the community of Pelotas, Brazil.

This investigative discourse analyzes the consequences of performative politics and prejudicial national perceptions on the local reality in which the Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro finds itself. The company, a form of resistance in itself, uses its embodied performances to reinstate the Black Brazilian as integral to the social memory of the city and combat anti-

Black narrations. Emphatic are my efforts here in describing the integral role the company, its

performances and members, and its director have had in reframing the Afro-Brazilian experience

and redefining the Black body in Pelotas.

CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

With research focused on Latin American experiences continuing to expand, research that centers the Black voice and the experience of Afro-descendants has been intermittent at best. Having only gained momentum in the past two decades, works that centrally position Africans and their descendants in the creation of the Americas and modern worlds is still lacking (Walker 2001, 1). Over time, Africans and their descendants in Brazil have become central to studies by historians and the like, with recent contributions from economists and sociologist (Klein and Luna 2010). Too, anthropologists had and continue to have a large role in shaping conversations on blackness in Brazilian society (Cipolla and Hayes 2015, 190-210). Concerning the role of slavery and social relations, the back-breaking contributions of enslaved Africans, their children, and Afro-Brazilians have been and continue to be perpetually discounted, excluded, and/or rejected all together in stereotypes and stigmas about blackness and one-dimensional portrayals of the Black Brazilian. The sustained trend of disparagement introduced at the onset of slavery and promoted over time through divisive narrations of Black Brazilians and the Black body, unceasing racism, the use of caste systems, and then colorism, has nominated the Black body as ample, yet expendable. These haunting labels that denote Black bodies vestiges of slavery (Walker 2001, 109) and Black life as irrelevant to the "Brazilian" experience, also, decades later, influence how Afro-Brazilians engage in socio-political affairs.

The next sections will provide a brief overview of the role slavery played in the construction of Brazil as a nation and its social structuring. To be discussed here are the implications of slavery as the linchpin of national identity, the enduring nature of fabricated prejudices about Blacks, and divisive national practices. Also, to be discussed here, is the impact of each on contemporary sociality.

African Heritage in Brazil

"...that, along with the briefly enslaved then progressively exterminated Indians, the African was

the first and only worker throughout three and a half centuries, who built the structure of this

country called Brazil...Never in our educational system was there ever taught a discipline

revealing any appreciation or respect for the cultures, arts, languages there is an urgent need of

the Black Brazilian people to win back their memory…"

Abdias do Nascimento (Nascimento 1980, 142; 149)

The introduction of African slave labor, along with pre-existing practices of enslavement

of Brazil's indigenous population, and the rise of plantations were critical in the formation of

Brazilian nationhood. In 1502, the first human cargo disembarked in the Americas (Palmer

2006). Of the 10 to 13 million enslaved Africans transported to the Americas (Palmer 2006,

XVII), it is estimated that about 45 percent of the total number of Africans forcibly relocated

were consigned to Brazil (Andrews and De la Fuente 2018, 37). To put this into context, the

United States received only about 4.5 to 5 percent of Africans brought to the western hemisphere

during the European colonial expansion period (Walker 2001, 119). The first and largest, and, as

we will see, most sustaining, slave society, by the mid-1600s Brazil's population consisted of a

Black majority - enslaved laborers, usually from modern-day Angola and East Africa (namely

Mozambique), the descendants of Africans, and those born into slavery (Andrews and De la

Fuente 2018, 32-35).

Slavery is the infrastructure upon which the political, economic, and social ordering of

Brazilian society was built. Brazil's reliance on slavery has implications beyond "market"

conditions. According to Michel Agier (1995), in order for Brazil to create a Brazilian identity, it

was compulsory to classify its various sociocultural groups within. Within this classification

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system, Blackness was seen as residual and inconsistent with Brazil's vision for a modern social structure. Stereotypes, reminiscent of the "fable of three,"[8] which stated that Black (skin and features) marked social inferiority (Agier 1995, 249), plagued sociality and perpetuated hierarchical valuations that constantly denied Black members full integration and facilitated state and social refusal to acknowledge Afro-Brazilians right to rights (Smith 2016).

Studies of Black experiences in the diaspora are still fairly new (Palmer 2006). Aspects of Brazilian racism make Brazil unique in Latin American studies but its history resonates with global Black diaspora politics (Smith 2016, 110). Given that the country has the largest African diaspora, in the purview of national narratives, the historical consciousness of its members, regarding the role and importance of Africa in Brazilian history is minute. That is to say that social memory, permeable and ever-changing as it may be, is exclusive and consistently jettisons the collective memory of its Black members. I would like to note here that I am in no way saying that the Black Brazilian experience is monolithic as even in the United States, a context that I can best relate to, experiences vary personally and regionally. However, my intention is to show that as countries continued to make globalizing strides, so too had Brazil towards a cosmopolitan lifestyle that excluded its Black members.

This trend of Eurocentric standardization of sociality across the world increased the power divide between Brazil's white population, generally of European appearance/Portuguese origin (Agier 1995, 249), and Brazil's non-white population leaving the Afro-descendant in Brazil to be relegated to the periphery of existence (Walker 2001, 81). The erosion of fundamental rights, lack of resources, and insidious subordination of Afro-Brazilians, even after

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[8] The "Fable of Three" stems from racialist ideology that posits Brazil as originating from three distinct races: European, African, and Native Amerindian (Agier 1995, 249). This false imagining of sociality carried with it stereotypes that associated the category of Native or *Indio* with savagery and marginality; the category of African with social inferiority, dirtiness, ugliness, and the incapacity to reason; and the European category with power and rationality (Agier 1995, 249). According to the literature, the fable concludes that the mixing of these races led to a uniquely "Brazilian" population (Darity Jr. 2008, 282).

the abolition of slavery in 1888 via the succinctly written *Lei Áurea* signed by Princess Isabel of

Bragança (The Brazilian Report 2020) meant that stereotypes and myths about Black physical

and mental characteristics (Walker 2001) persisted in tropes of African primitivism and Afro-

Brazilian deficiency (Andrews and De la Fuente 2018, 147). The socio-cultural consequences of

this functioning, today, are all too similar to that of the "property of the wind" principle Conrad

described in 1983, an unwritten code that stated that based solely on the basis of skin color

"objects" (enslaved, ex-slave, or free) without owners could be claimed and confiscated as

property (Smith 2016, 108).

     In many ways, to me, the like represents how African heritage and the contributions of

Afro-Brazilians have over time been co-opted as political leverage. For example, in the 1930s

and 1940s, Brazil's then president Getúlio Vargas began the assignment of African Brazilian

cultural forms as national symbols (Palmer 2006). As Luis and Oliveira (2009) notes, many

social scientists in Brazil during the 19th and 20th centuries denoted black resistance, highlighted

in Black music, dances, and other art forms, represented a struggle that is "truly Brazilian."

During this time frame, racial democracy became the ideological catch-22 of Brazilian

sovereignty. Infamously italicized by Brazilian scholar and anthropologist Gilberto Freyre, this

ideology became the central framework of racial consciousness in Brazil (Darity Jr. 2008). The

philosophy behind racial democracy was that miscegenation (between Europeans, Africans, and

Indigenous) had created a uniquely ambiguous Brazilian population. His romanticized account of

Brazilian society has been since criticized, rightly so, as masking racism and having been written

in ignorance of the great disparities along racial lines (Darity Jr. 2008, 282).

     At a time when Brazil, having only just gained independence from Portugal in 1822, was

trying to enter nationhood, forged in the name of "modernity" and cosmopolitan lifestyles, it was

almost inevitable that Freyre's inscribed pervasiveness would latch on to an already corrupted

foundation. The late 1800s and early part of the 1900s was a period of grand (here meaning

extensive and bolstering) development (Steiner 1971, 44). The repercussions of slavery as an

economic linchpin in the country begin to manifest in the form of social stratification; expedited

by laws and protections that only applied to certain elements/members of society and reflected

social valuations.

So began the partial and divisive national narratives that rendered the Afro-Brazilian

invisible, and their culture and African heritage as ahistorical, never to be fully assimilated and

contributing only in specific and marginalizing ways (Hertzman 2013). By replacing "race" with

"culture," (Luis and Oliveira 2009, 48) "black" remained socially inferior, only theoretically

tolerable (Agier 1995) and otherwise admonished. In his article, "Racism, Culture, and Black

Identity in Brazil" (1995), anthropologist Michel Agier argues identity to be politically informed,

designed to measure individual consideration as contingent on access to social and political

recognition. Accepting this as an operational tactic of social control in Brazil, Agier (1995)

queries what the "place" of the Black Brazilian is within pervasive social imagery. Brazil, in its

conception of a modern multiethnic utopian society and in the name of nationalism, harnessed

the nation's diverse racial/ethnic heritage and presented it as comprehensive.

Through historical and cultural reinvention (Luis and Oliveira 2009, 53), discounted were

the implications of slavery and the struggles of the Afro-Brazilian. Brazil found a way to project

a unique and authentic identity and maintain its "modern" ventures. By emphasizing black

culture but rejecting black identification and self-worth, social codes registered in colonial racial

ordering maintained the subjugation of the black body (Klein and Luna 2010, 248). Still, within a

narrow, intrinsically racist sociality, Afro-Brazilians were expected to mold themselves as

"upright" citizens (Hertzman 2013, 92), and to do so quietly in acquiescence or else. This placing

of the black body in the category of disputable claims in relation to nationhood has steadied over

time resulting in second-class positioning, limited and disadvantaged life outcomes, and

ostracism of the Afro-Brazilian from social dignities and mobility, economic or otherwise (Klein

and Luna 2010).

Ever-evolving are the repercussions of slavery in Brazil, but its skeleton, a Pandora's box

of sorts, continues to inform a Janus-faced[9] contemporary Brazilian sociality in which the

blackness is counterintuitive, accepted in designated spaces and only in certain ways.

Contemporary Social Issues, Regionally Varied: Pelotas

With a population of 211,715,973 as of July 2020, Brazil is the largest, most populous

country in South America (The World Factbook – CIA 2020). The vast majority of Brazil's

population lives in the southeastern cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Brasilia, Brazil's

capital. Pelotas is the third most populous city[10] in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil's

southernmost province (Encyclopædia Britannica 2020) (SEE Figure 2). Known for its

"European identity" (as a great portion of its population are of French, German or Italian

descent) and as the *Capital Nacional do Doce* for its decadent Portuguese sweet treats, this city

strays none from national tendencies.

Once home to some forty plantations, the city reached great economic acclaim in the beef

jerky and coffee industry. Built between 1807 and 1810 (www.charqueadasaojoao.com.br) the

plantation billeted some 200,000 enslaved Africans during its active period. What is unique

about Pelotas is that most works on the black diaspora in Brazil catalog the contemporary lived

experiences of Afro-Brazilians in Bahia or Pernambuco, especially Recife, and focus on the
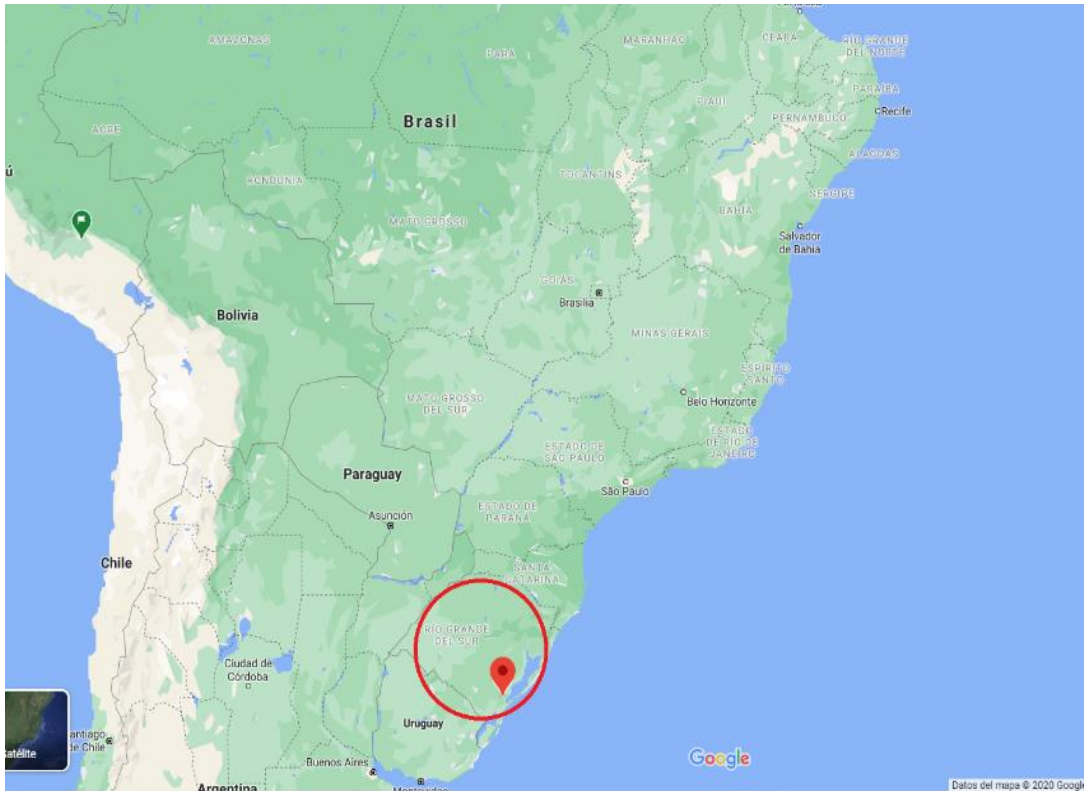
Figure 2 - Map of Pelotas
Personal image

effects of sugar plantations (Klein and Luna 2010, 30-33). The beef jerky industry, specifically,

and the dependence on the products of the plantation as barter denotes the importance enslaved

peoples had in the formation of the city. This carrefour of labor and industry in the city can

account for the majority of the Afro-descendant population of the city. That said, making up a

great proportion of the city's population does not mean that your presence in the city will be

acknowledged. As I write this section, I am reminded of a question I asked Dr. Ferreira walking

to his home one day after working in his lab at UPEL. I asked why I didn't see very many Black

children walking about; why I saw no Black couples (with or without children) walking around

the city as I had seen many times with their white counterparts. I asked this but already knew the

answer. My experience as a Black female who has traveled throughout Europe and lived in

Galicia, Spain for two years tells me that Black people in the city of Pelotas exist, but were to

only be found in certain areas throughout the city. At the time, though I had this general understanding, it did not mitigate the uncomfortable feeling I recognize as isolation or feeling "out of place" that I had experienced boarding the flight from Panama City, Panama to Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil and being the only Black person, that I have always had when traveling internationally and being the one of maybe three or five Black people boarding a flight. Though my anecdote is circumstantial, being a Black female, I have also felt similar within the context of the United States. Navigating the beautifully tragic middle ground between existence, belongingness, and constant adaptation has been a theme in my life and, as we have seen and we will continue to see during the course of this thesis, is a recurrent theme of Afro-Brazilians in Pelotas and throughout Brazil's history.

In Pelotas, as is across Brazil, many, if not the greater majority of the city's Black population, live in what is known as the *periferia*. Translated to mean the "outskirts," these areas are known to be poor, often dangerous, sprawls of neighborhoods that have higher rates of crime, teen pregnancy and explicit drug trafficking (Smith 2016, 89). Along with harmful stereotyping, the lack of governmental assistance and resources, (beyond) substandard housing conditions, and disparities in opportunity these poverty-stricken areas with little educational programing (The World Factbook 2020) (Smith 2016, 89-91) are a direct reflection of the legacy of slavery. These unresolved damages accrued over time inform the relationship between phenotype and position has transposed from national configuration to local social arrangement (Inter-American Foundation 2002, 13). According to the CIA's World Factbook (2020), more than half of Brazil's population makes up the middle class, but due great racial and economic inequality, today Afro-Brazilians are underrepresented in the government, professional positions, and experience little to no social mobility. They have higher rates of unemployment and earn wages

well below those of whites in similar positions. Without access or proper means to gain entry into formal arenas, many Afro-Brazilians in Pelotas, like many members of Afro-descendent populations throughout Brazil and across Latin America, are not able to reap the benefits of "full citizenship" and in fact are subjected to general disenfranchisement (Inter-American Foundation 2002).

This sociocultural window is highlighted in Hordge-Freeman's (2012) article about stigmas within Afro-Brazilian family units and within inter/intrapersonal relations that developed as a result. Her work demarcates stratification based on class and race and spatial apartness as correlates of socio-political, Eurocentric standardization; that beginning as early as childhood social norms imbued with controversial connotations are inscribed on black members of society/the black body. Pelotas is not unique in its deletion of the black experience from conscious social memory, a city in a state of a nation that has unremittingly distorted official histories and, as by-product, generated a hyper-selective national identity (Walker 2001, 2).

Since the 2003 passing of Law 10.639 (UNESCO), a law that advocates teaching of the African-Brazilian historical intersection and relative subjects in classrooms throughout Brazil, on paper, the country has kept up appearances as if it were making efforts to recognize the contributions of Africans and their descendants to the construction of the Brazilian nation. However, in a follow-up evaluation in 2010, UNESCO noted the challenges of implementation, content production and dissemination of materials as icing in an already halted process of rich enculturation. As Juliana mentioned in her interview, her education experience regarding black history consisted of slavery in Brazil and the vague mentioning of the city's slavery period. How ironic. A city that is outstanding today only because of the back-breaking, grueling contributions of Afro-Brazilians, because of an infrastructure informed by colonialism and deeply rooted in the

inhumane treatment of Black/Brown bodies still refuses to acknowledge Afro-Brazilian

experiences when recalling the edification of the city. Programming meant to assist endeavors to

strengthen African identity, memory and culture in the country has seen little reinvention of

national remembering and has yet to permeate local sociality.

Due to incidental legislation created while "thinking of," or not, and "thinking for" rather

than "thinking with" communities (Da Costa 2010, 655) the strides made to diversify and include

in the case of Afro-Brazilians further divides. Throughout this thesis, I will touch on the perils of

multicultural initiatives. I find it necessary here to explain the term and its disregard of the

historical plight of Black Brazilians. Multiculturalism is a blanket term that preserves and

presents a society's diverse cultural identity as mosaic, where differences coexist cohesively and

harmoniously (Darity Jr. 2008, 317). What I found most interesting about this definition is that at

its initial cause the objective of multiculturalism is to acknowledge, accept and promote diversity

and to do so in a way that any one person or group of peoples can live without fear or resentment

that their own cultural identity will not be accepted as normative; that all members within a

multifarious society are warranted full participation in national social processes while being free

to conserve and honor individual/individual group truths (Darity Jr. 2008, 316-318). As

politically correct a term if there ever were one, multiculturalism, a theoretical grand slam, in

reality has led to great apartness. In the 1980s and 1990s, Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, and

Brazil among others added multicultural initiatives to appease their respective nation's

subgroups (Hooker 2008, 280). The specific features of these initiatives varied by country, but

most campaigns included: formal recognition of the existence of ethnic/racial subgroups, the

recognition of indigenous public law, collective property rights (esp. to land), and rights to

redress racial discrimination (Hooker 2008, 281). Because of beliefs that denote Afro-Brazilian

culture and identity as derivative and slavery as inconsequential to contemporary inequities, though Afro-Brazilians would seem to qualify for the listed provisions, they often are not granted state protections (Hooker 2008, 286-287). Often times, social movements that have called for the collective recognition of the rights of Afro-Brazilians were often quelled, their claims contested by political elites and national publics (Hooker 2008, 280). Deviating none from the trend of Afro-descendant throughout the Americas who have been historically subjected to racial discrimination and socio-political marginalization, the experience of Afro-Brazilians today is marked by the continued (daily) effort to reinstate their voice into national narratives. Over the course of this thesis, we will see how years and years of propaganda reminiscent of Freyre's doctrines, over-policing, demonization, and forced relegation to the fringe, places the Afro-Brazilian experience perpendicular to the certainties supposedly granted through multiculturalism.

As noted in the above overview on African heritage in Brazil, slavery was the protagonist in the formation story of Brazil. For this, the country's social structure mimicked caste positionalities established then and, today, the Afro-Brazilian is still deemed a rootless outsider and by-all-means deficient (Klein and Luna 2010, 3). Multicultural practices, though not all bad, in haphazard execution makes for a low ceiling in a room where Black Brazilians were already not "meant" to be. The disconnect created from the assumption of Black culture without acceptance of Black peoples marks the generational struggle of Afro-Brazilians in pursuit of national recognition and respect. Locally, the Afro-dance company central to this research disallows the Black voice/truth to be slighted. In her overview of the Black press scene in São Paulo, Brazil in the 1910s through the mid-1920s, Butler (2006) highlights the impact of Black columnists that sought to counter borderline attributions of Afro-Brazilians to the uplifting and

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empowerment of the Black community. "In Rio Grande do Sul and particularly in cities such as Porto Alegre, Pelotas, and Rio Grande, the development of beneficent and recreational Black societies was important and was maintained during the so-called First Republic (1889-1930) (Gil and Loner 2012, 2)." The various organizations that were created during this time erected in response to unmet needs of urban black communities' courtesy of extreme economic and social stratification. Through these community organizations, directors and affiliates could counter social and educational difficulties caused by local racial and social discrimination and national imperilment of the Black Brazilian (Gil and Loner 2012, 3).

Years later, such organizations and community associations are essential to the fortification and magnification of Afro-Brazilians and the country's African heritage and bridging spatially segregated. So too does this company, Cia de Dança Daniel Amaro, invest in the Black community of Pelotas by remembering, embodying, and chronicling the lineage of the Black Brazilian. "I would like to say that the Company, through art, aims to create the dialogue between popular culture and erudite culture. Getting people from the periphery to know the cultural of the city center (historic downtown) and the center to know the peripheral culture (popular culture) [translated from a conversation with Daniel]." Here, by peeling back the vail on racial and classist societal structuring and by defining Black people as requisite to the core of local, and by extension national, identity, Daniel and the company hold the city accountable. Countering narratives that dispose of the contributions of Afro-Brazilians or note them as anything other than an intrinsic part of Brazil's history, present, and future (Butler 2006, 273) Daniel through his productions revitalizes the city's African heritage and recasts the Black experience as material. In his chapter on Afro-Latin American music, Robin D. Moore, an ethnomusicologist and professor at The University of Texas at Austin, explores the boundaries of

Black expression. He draws the conclusion that throughout history, Black music was only considered to be something notable if it was adopted by white composers who accepted the new sound to then modify it to appeal to white sensibilities (Andrews and De la Fuente 2018, p, 425-426). He terms this, the submission of compositional diversity as a national variation as music nationalism. In national verification, Black artistry is represented only when bound in aesthetics and coded as multicultural (Andrews and De la Fuente 2018, p, 425-426). With this thesis I argue that dance faces the same sticky end in Brazil and in scholarly recall of dance studies about Brazil. The next section will talk more about the fusion of dance and politics.

Afro-Brazilian Dance Forms: Samba, Capoeira, and Afro-dance

"Where do all the Black dancers and choreographers of the past (several decades) fit in to the history of American dance? Where do I fit in?"

John Perpener III (Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive Archives 2020)

Within anthropological literature, there is an overwhelming consensus that dance has had a great deal of influence in the international perception of Brazil. When it comes to commentary on dance as a correlate of Brazilian culture, most research highlights three main avenues of expression: samba, which due to Carnival and other widely publicized festivities has reached great international acclaim; ballet, residual of political efforts to reconcile perceptions of Brazil as a "modern," multi-faceted society; capoeira, a martial art form of African origins that contains elements of music and dance (Reed 1998). Even break dancing, associated with the hip-hop graffiti culture in Brazil, have also been identified as essential in understanding the dance scene in Brazil (Pardue 2007). In De Andrade and Canton's (1996) overview of dance research, samba, frevo, côco and ballet were referred to dance "comrades" when it came to Brazilian dance forms. Throughout the article, there was no denotation of a missing form in the Brazilian canon. Similarly, in Suárez's 2010 article, "Citizenship and Dance in Urban Brazil: Grupo Corpo, a

Case Study" in which she proposes music and dance, namely ballet, capoeira, samba and other Afro-Brazilian forms, as alternative modes of survival, resistance and existence, is the only article surveyed that qualifies another "other" Afro-Brazilian form in the Brazilian repertoire. What does the "other Afro-Brazilian forms" refer to here? I found myself constantly questioning the literature I read. This preliminary critiquing of sources was important when developing my own questions and opinions about dance associated with Afro-Brazilian traditions as I have no formal background in the arena. Upon first glance, the coupling of samba and capoeira as Brazilian cultural phenomenon seemed negligible. However, only when I truly investigated how these forms rose to national acclaim did I understand the socio-historical injury of racialized, uneven power relations in Brazil.

In the advancement of national literacy, sciences, and technology, social consciousness in Brazil, myopically focused on modern endeavors, deemed African traditions amoral and incompatible with the vision of a "civilized," cosmopolitan world player (Lara 2008). In the case of dance, African derived dances were subjected to western sensibilities (Hertzman 2013). By attributing moral valuation to various models of expression within the arts, politics and aesthetics entangled. Because of this, the Black community in Brazil, more often than not, were dispossessed of their title as definers of national mores (Hertzman 2013). In chapter 13 of Jane Desmond's book of compiled research on performative arts, *Meaning in Motion: Cultural Studies of Dance* (1997), she highlights work of Anna Beatrice Scott, a black dancer and performer. Titled, "Spectacle And Dancing Bodies That Matter: Or, If It Don't Fit, Don't Force It," Scott in her discussion of the dancing black body, asks the following question in looking across a white dominated classroom where she is acting as a participant-observer during a rehearsal: "What is it about Afro-Brazilian dance that made these people want to learn it and do

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it with the assumption that they could acquire it without any consideration to training or

technique? (Desmond 1997, 264)" As will be discussed in the section on the narrative of

"Brazilness," what Scott touches on in her questioning details the impact of ideology. The black

body at dance becomes reminiscent of the past, necessary but disadvantageous (Albuquerque and

Sanchez 2015). This othering reminds me of Shelia Walker's (2001) conversation on "market

conditions." The black body was seen as a measure of labor rather than an individual

contributing time and labor. A distinction that further explains the commodification of Afro-

dance forms as an exotic, "authentic" imaginary rather than an essential part of the nation's

fabric (Walker 2001). As is the case in Brazil and many other countries in the Americas

throughout history, Afro-descendants have had a complex relationship with national narratives,

their presentation, or lack thereof, imbued with remnants of colonialism and deeply entrenched

problematic connotations. Unfortunately, dance, too, has been polarized and used on countless

occasions toward some political end.

Through governmental ploys of hybridism and multicultural celebration, these dance

forms were portrayed as a uniquely Brazilian cultural product, erasing the Afro-Brazilian as an

integral and contributing member of creative society (Desmond 1997). The recontextualization,

the assumption of cultural products with no consideration of the ethnic or racial boundaries or

acknowledgement of historical transgressions (Frangella 2013, 8; 14), of African traditions for

the sake of national identity deepens the long-standing struggle of Afro-descendants for national

recognition. In the introduction of her co-edited book *Performing Brazil: Essays on Culture,*

Identity and The Performing Arts, professor Dr. Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez identifies

decontextualization as polarizing; In her chapter titled, "On The (Im)possibility of Performing

Brazil," she furthers this argument and conclude that, in an effort to "project a positive image" of

Brazil, the arts were the fastest and most enigmatic mode of establishing and conveying what it means to be Brazilian (Albuquerque and Sanchez 2015, 15-38). However, Afro-Brazilians were almost always excluded from these definitions, subject to stereotypes past. Like Perpener in the quote above, many Afro-Brazilian artist were left wondering where they fit in, that is, if they got in. Over the course of this thesis and expressly so in the following sections about Afro-Brazilian dance forms, we will see that Afro-Brazilians vying for their rightful authorship over cultural products that contribute to the imagery of the Brazilian nation (Hertzman 2013, 1-4).

In this section, I will focus on the history of samba and capoeira and detail briefly the socio-political implications of their rise to fame. Lastly, in this section, I will define Afro dance and introduce the Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro as an advocate for and practitioner of the dance style.

Samba

During the research process, what I found fascinating is that though samba is mentioned or even highlighted as a popular dance in Brazil, samba actually reached national acclaim as a style of music first. In all of the dance literature surveyed for this thesis, there was no mention of samba as music or the politics that informed its ascension to mainstream culture. Thanks to the research presented in Marc A. Hertzman's book, "Making Samba: A New History of Race and Music in Brazil," I now have a better understanding of the trajectory of samba. Here I recall the history of samba as music and insert commentary of samba as dance.

Samba, referred to as the most famous Brazilian musical form and dance (McGowan 2008 ,690), is said to be an invocation and culmination of African religious and musical traditions (Hertzman 2013). Said to have originated from the local sounds of a little neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro called Cidade Nova (Hertzman 2013), the music consists of a

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mix of drums and percussion, various instruments that is often accompanied by guitar; the dance is a mix of quick-tempoed footwork and corporeal isolations that is thought to be an adaptation of the *umbigada*, a navel touching movement that came to Brazil from Angola (McGowan 2008 ,690). Samba as an art form began to coalesce in the 1900s with the acknowledgement, on a grand scale, of the song "*Pelo Telefone,*" the first song to be labeled "samba" (Sandroni 2006 , 1999) This song, released in 1917 by Donga, an Afro-Brazilian musician noted as one of several principle Afro-Brazilian originators of samba traditions, marked a transition from samba being viewed as a malandro's[11] melody to taking a dominant position in Rio's renowned carnival (Hertzman 2013). Other important Afro-Brazilian originators, Pixinguinha and Tio Faustino also contributed to the early formation of samba style music. The term samba over time has even come to apply to almost any popular or successful Carnival song. With all this fame and success, samba has seen, even today, the recognition of the role of Afro-Brazilians in the creation of the style is hardly spotlighted.

During the late 19th century to mid-20th century, the area of *Cidade Nova* in Rio de Janeiro, was central to Afro-Brazilian artistic innovation (Hertzman 2013). Due, however, to essentialized caricatures of Black Brazilians and society's compartmentalization of blackness and the black body as opportunistically lucrative, Afro-Brazilians were rendered naught or were minimally registered as contributors to an evolving national identity (Hertzman 2013). In fact, at its outset, samba was persecuted and written off as a "black man's hobby" (Hertzman 2013) before transcending these prejudicial narratives to become a signifier of "authentic" Brazilianness (Desmond 1997). What caused this national shift you ask? The answer is

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[11] Malandro is a term that circulated in 20th century that was used to describe Black sambistas. "The malandro was clever, flashily dressed, womanizing, hustler figure… (Hertzman 2013, 34)" *Malandragem*, the art of being a malandro, was life of constant rejection of being "inserted into [a capitalist system of] production" and was the "symbolic antithesis to the well-behaved citizen and disciplined worker (Hertzman 2013, 82)."

nationalistic posturing (a synthesis of the theoretical underpinnings of racial democracy) and the

professionalization of Carnival/samba (Hertzman 2013) (Sandroni 2006, 1998-2003). The

incorporation of samba into Euro-phonic canons and the 1930's proliferation of professional

samba schools that were often exclusive to white patrons, illustrates the intentional efforts to

erase or whiten the image of Brazil. This commercialization of Black productions and

simultaneous marginal relegation has serious implications on Black identity in Brazil. "The

notion that Afro-Brazilian musicians represented a collective "storehouse" of material and the

companion idea that those same musicians were lacking any serious intellectual capacity posed

obvious challenges for sought after discursive recognition (Hertzman 2013, 164-165)." That the

Afro-Brazilian is repeatedly asked to live and participate in a society that values their art and

their background but only conveniently and in specific, limited ways (Hertzman 2013, 30) is a

recurrent theme throughout literature on the Afro-descendant experience in the Americas; we

will see a similar patterning with capoeira as well.

Capoeira

Capoeira is a martial art of African origins (Desch-Obi 2006). In the late 18th century,

capoeira was better known as *capoeiragem* and was viewed as a threat to colonial structuring

(Palmer 2006). In most widely circulated academic writings of the time, the art form was noted

as primarily germane to Rio and Salvador, Bahia (Holloway 2008). Used by enslaved Africans in

Brazil as a form of physical and social resistance (Palmer 2006), the history of capoeira is

complex, a tale of social control, police persecution, racism, and stereotypes (of "habitual

idleness") (Human Rights Watch 1996) (Oliveira and Luiz 2009). Consisting of headbutts,

acrobatics, sweeps and kicks, capoeira is said to have developed from gestural improvisations of

Afro-practitioners during ritual practices and is often read as an intersection of the sociocultural experience of Africans and their descendants in Brazil (Palmer 2006).

Noted as a form of slave resistance (Oliveira and Luiz 2009), it is no wonder governmental leaders made persecution legal. Via vagrancy laws, additions to the Brazilian penal code that targeted those "fit" to work and lacked sufficient means to support themselves (Human Rights Watch 1996), those who practiced the art were often arrested and jailed for extended periods without fair trial (Oliveira and Luiz 2009). This experience is not unique to capoeiristas as we saw similar policing when we reviewed the history of samba. In their 2009 book, *Capoeira, Identidade e Gênero: Ensaios Sobre a História Social da Capoeira*, Oliveira and Luiz discuss how capoeira came to be a national symbol of Brazil, and probe existing dialogue surrounding the art's African heritage. Well into the 1960's, even after capoeira was revived as a form of physical education in the 1930s and 40s (Holloway 2008) it was still viewed as a socially deviant and was largely excluded from canonical (accepted) dance/art forms (Oliveira and Luiz 2009). In a society filled with racial and social stratification in all sectors, practicing capoeira was associated with poverty and lower status; in historiographical works on slavery in Brazil, it has even been implicitly and explicitly recorded as such (capoeira escrava) (Oliveira and Luiz 2009, 29).

So how did capoeira go from a repressed "ethnic" symbol to being favorably addressed and revered in textbooks and other Brazilian works as a national symbol? The answer is through the candy cane striping of whitening practices, known as *embranquecimento* in Brazil, and recontextualization in the construction of Brazilian identity (Bick and Brown 1987). Before moving forward, I would like to define the term "*embranquecimento*" as its comprehension now will supplement the interpretations I supply in a later chapter on national narratives in Brazil.

According to Jennifer Jones in her chapter on Afro-Latinos and geopolitics, the term

blanqueamiento refers to the erasure of slavery, and by extension the black body, from historical

recollections through anti-black narratives, incentivized immigration, marginalization, and

violence throughout Latin America (Andrews and Fuente 2018, 572) By downplaying blackness,

capoeira was slowly assimilated into mainstream cultural practicings. After being modified to

accommodate white sensibilities, integration of the art into organized academies overseen by

grand masters of capoeira, removing the stereotyped "street" label, capoeira was legitimized and

later respected (Holloway 2008). Like samba, carnaval, and *futebol*, capoeira is a contemporary

icon of Brazilian cultural identity (Oliveira and Luiz 2009, 43) In fact, in 2008 it was inscribed in

public records as the embodied "immaterial" culture of Brazil by the National Historic and

Artistic Heritage Institute,[12] an organ of the Ministry of Culture (IPHAN/MinC) (Oliveira and

Luiz 2009, 43). A feat in and of itself when considering the exclusionary national narratives still

present today that are intrinsically informed by insights drawn from principles of racial

democracy. Despite the art's high visibility and global success, capoeira's African legacy still

fails to reach contemporary recreations of the art (Frangella 2013), parallel to actioning of local

and national remembering that confirm divisive societal perceptions and functioning.

Afro-Dance in Brazil

"I see Africa as a continent of strength; it is a place with ancient civilizations, civilizations

wrecked and destroyed by slave seekers. I know an Africa that gave the world iron on which now

it moves, an Africa of nations, cultures, languages, powerful movements, slavery...all that make

life itself. This strength, this past, I try to get into my dances…And when I think of my people

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[12] Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional

here in America too, I see something that they have to see clearer, that whites need to know

about. I see the long rod we have trod, the movements of freedom we have been in…"

<div align="right">Pearl Primus (Perpener 2005, 168)</div>

As we have seen with samba, a dance developed in Afro-Brazilian communities

(Desmond 1997) and with capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial art with a rich and troubling

history, narratives of Brazilianness constantly present these forms dissociated from and with no

consideration of the historical context that surrounds them (Frangella 2013). In Perpener's

account of Primus' travels during her dance career, her trip to the South in 1944 is of particular

importance here. While there she noted that apart from the religious practices of small churches

in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and I would add Louisiana, cultural retention of African

traditions in the United States was weaker than in other parts of the Western Hemisphere

(Perpener 2005, 166). Her objective was to submerge herself in cultures where African roots and

the dances associated were still a living tradition (Perpener 2005, 175). During my research, I

found that in Brazil African legacy is maintained through Afro-Brazilian dance fusions and

religious practices and are, to this day, material to the lived experiences of Black Brazilians. The

intersection of African roots and religiosity that Primus punctuated go hand in hand and is

manifest in the form of Afro-dance. Afro (Brazilian)-dance is an exploration and incorporation of

the spiritual and African-origin ritualistic components of black culture (Lara 2008, 123).

Spiritual Foundations

Under the genre of ethnic dance, Afro-dance has long been subject to discrimination and

simplification in dance canons because of its links to Candomblé and African influences (Suárez

2013). In his article, "Mediated Authenticity: Tradition, Modernity, and Postmodernity in

Brazilian Candomblé" Selka notes Candomblé is the best-known African-derived religion

practiced in Brazil other than Umbanda (Selka 2007, 7). Its origins are traced back to the Yoruba nation in Africa, brought to Brazil by early enslaved Africans who were forced to work sugar plantations (Williams 1979, 47). In Candomblé, it is believed that there is a sacred relation between nature, the elements, and human beings (Yudin 2019). Through special ceremonies laden with ancient ritual practices, sacrifices and dance, followers of the religion are able to connect to the divine force or axé and create community (De Oliveira Pinto 1991, 73; 76) (Shirey 2009, 69). The music and dance are especially important in ceremonies, with specialized, coordinated movements to timed drummed beats serving as an invocation for the deities or orixás to present themselves in human form (via a possession of sorts of the dancers who take on a trance-like state; this is known as *cair no santo* (De Oliveira Pinto 1991, 74). During these rituals individuals pay homage one or more of these twelve deities: *Exu*, the gatekeeper: god of justice and hope; *Ogum*, the warrior: god of metalworking, particularly iron; *Oxóssi*, the hunter and protector: king of the woods and the forests; *Ossaim*, the healer: god of purification and knower the sacred powers of leaves; *Xangô*, the king: god of thunder and fire; *Iansã*, the warrior: goddess of wind and storms; *Oxum*, the beautiful: goddess of freshwaters and fecundity; *Iemanjá*, the mother: queen of the oceans and protector of fishermen; *Oxumaré*, the waterbearer: intermediary between the sky and the earth; *Xapanã* (or *Obaluaê*), the curator: god of sickness (smallpox) and infirmities; *Nanã*, the eldest: goddess of the marshes and mother of death; *Oxalá*, the wise father: god of creation and can appear in two forms (young Oxalá and old Oxalá) (Lara 2008, 64-65; 122) (Yudin 2020).

Very socially charged even to this day (Shirey 2009, 66), the history of candomblé began with early tolerance, its dances and songs thought to maintain and boost morale of the enslaved Africans, and evolved to open opposition and demonization. Candomblé, and other religions

with African origins, have often been rejected and condemned by the large Pentecostal and Catholic bodies that makes up a good majority of Brazil's population (Shirey 2009). The juxtaposition of Catholicism, associated with the white, usually wealthy dominant class and Candomblé, associated with the Black or African members of society, usually of a lower socio-economic status throughout the 19th and 20th centuries Brazil, resulted in fear of the "primitive [13]ritual" resulted in the persecution of practitioners (Shirey 2009, 67-68). Nonetheless, the religion remained and continues to be a beacon of strength and protection for Afro-Brazilians (Yudin 2019).

Umbanda, is another Afro-Brazilian religion. Umbanda, keeping its African roots, has over time integrated more Christian and European belief systems into its folds (Selka 2007, 87). However, even after it had adapted tenants of Catholicism and Pentecostalism, it is still viewed as problematic unless co-opted for lucrative campaigns (Shirey 2009, 17). In spite of frequent raids by police on *terreiros*, temples or ceremonial houses of Candomblé, and the religion has unwarrantedly been incorporated into mainstream Brazilian culture. Dances that are influenced by such practices, therefore, face the same censuring.

As we will see throughout this thesis and as noted by Gill and Loner, prejudicial understandings about blacks are perpetuated timelessly. It is important that I note that though the Afro community has time and again found themselves against the wall, they were able to, and continue to, overcome and persist through the created/chosen community of dance. A look at "Carnaval Clubs for Black People in Pelotas: A Memory Beyond Samba," (2012) an article written by Beatriz Ana Loner and Lorena Almeida Gill, we see the authors discuss the history of the community and detail a great deal regarding the history of black social life in Pelotas, Brazil.

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[13] Pejorative term used to describe African and Indigenous components of sociality. Here the term is used to differentiate African practices as "potentially dangerous and corruptive to dominant culture (Shirey 2009, 68);" in direct opposition to modernity.

The article focuses on the influence dance has on Afro-Brazilian (group) socialization. Through the analysis of clubs, past and presently existing, and the effects on community engagement, Loner and Gill conclude, are large. On more than one occasion in the article, authors Gill and Loner highlight the perpetuation of cultural/artistic values, ethnic understanding, and agency as acquired via socialization within the black community. What is most interesting was a later note about the struggle for identity and the co-option of certain profitable attributes of Afro-Brazilian culture.

Afro-Dance in Pelotas, RS, Brazil

The dance company, Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro, located in Pelotas, Brazil, is the basis of my research and highlights this style of dance. Canonically othered and historically exploited as ethnic, Afro dance has been subsumed and devalued. Its gesticulations and flow are noted as contributing to the national imagining of Brazilian bodily fluidity (Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez 2015 p, 98-120) but because of the association with Afro-Brazilin religiosity and African heritage, the country's estranged relationship with both cause the dance to be viewed as integral to a dancer's repertoire (Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez 2015) too black to be taught in universities. This company celebrates the rich African heritage and incorporates aspects of religious practices of Candomblé (regionally called Batuque) and Umbanda into its choreography. Inducted in 1999, the company has since hosted regular weekly classes and has put on several larger scale productions, attending to the Afro-Brazilian lived experience and the complex history associated with it.

Like Primus in the quote presented at the start of this section, through performances, exhibitions, and activism, Daniel uses dance to rehabilitate black identity in Pelotas to its inter/intrapersonal magnificence and to challenge injurious local anti-black narratives. The

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company's work, Dança dos Orixás, embodies the imagery Primus' words create. The phrase "I know an Africa that gave the world iron on which now it moves..." is especially poignant. As we have just seen, African heritage in Brazil has been historically omitted and minimized on a national level and in Pelotas, the social memory of the city emulates national patterning. Neither the Black history of the city nor of the contemporary consequences of a not so distant slave society are acknowledged. It is this glossing over of the past that this performance seeks to rectify. Just like the iron that moved the world, so too did slavery and the Black body help build Pelotas to be the city it is today. One idea that recurred in multiple papers presented at the 1993 conference proposed theater dance as a social protest (Berg 1993, 65). In fact, Primus' 1944 piece "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" based on the poem written by Langston Hughes, was reviewed and said to have been a response to "the general ignorance of the African American Heritage in America (Berg 1993, 65)." The Dança dos Orixás is a means to the same end. This piece will be analyzed in greater detail in the Section Five of this thesis is a negotiation for autonomous space (Cipolla and Hayes 2015, 192). The next section, Theoretical Framework and Literature Review, how the Black body at dance is always engaged in a duel with bifurcating political narratives. It will posit the body as a communicative entity that, through dance and communion, reasserts blackness as a bona fide part of Brazil's past, present, and future.

CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a long history of noted, widely accepted, and in some cases, perpetuated stereotypes about Afro-descendants across Latin America. Often these perceptions, entrenched in governing structures, are remnants of a complex past that have negatively and unevenly affected non-whites, or those with little to no power, over the years. The performing arts, via one-dimensional caricatures, (Hertz 2013, 9) have all too often exhibited such "genericizations" (Desmond 1997, 42) about the Black body and the Black body at dance. In Brazil, via circumscribed artistic canons that create hierarchical, dichotomous standardization (western/non-western; to which other forms are compared), and non-inclusive performances based on historical reconstructions, the arts mirror this complex pattern of the society. We have seen in the historical context sections prior that Brazil, a noted world player now, launched into nationhood and reached economic competitiveness because of slavery and through the subjugation of elements that did not match the "Brazilian" paradigm. According to Dr. Paul Connerton, a British social anthropologist, these "genericizations" are carbons of the past preserved in memories that inform the social order of the present (Connerton 1989, 3). While accepting that "remembering" is a socio-political action performed by members of society, sometimes unconsciously, he argues that the body, through dance and other commemorative forms, becomes an object of discourse, a bearer of constructed knowledge; that through the body, the socio-political milieu of a place is decoded and emphasized and is challenged (Connerton 1989).

Aligned with Connerton's conclusions, in her 2015 book, professor of French humanities and literature, Dr. Carrie Noland posits that the body is socially ascribed and that it engages with these "set" social conditionings through performance. Her thoughts, congruent with and stemming from late French philosopher Henri Bergson's idea that defines bodily motility as the

single most important filtering device in a subject's negotiation with the external world, Noland argues for the possibility of a body. Providing a unique canvas, cross-hatched with inscriptions and assertions, the body is an important tool that, through performance (dance), both challenges and embodies its context (Noland 2015, 2). Because of this, dance can be understood as a set of organized, purposeful steps executed toward some end. To anthropologist and professor at the University of Maryland, Judith Hanna dance is composed of five major elements (Hanna 1979 p, 3-6). Her definitions of these elements, fairly inclusive and summative, touch on ideas expressed in both Noland's and Connerton's work. She outlines dance as a social behavior, an economic behavior, as psychological, as a political behavior, and as a communicative behavior (Hanna 1979 p, 3-6). As we move throughout this thesis, we will see glimpses of each of these elements expressed in the wager toward recognition and visibility; expressly the appellation of dance as a political behavior. If society has the tendency to eliminate anything from its memory that which would otherwise be contradictory to national representations or jeopardizes the integrity of national/local social structures, to deny the significance and durability of what is incorporated, memories stored in the body, would be irresponsible and deceptive (Connerton 1989, 38; 102). Through dance, in this case, members and affiliates of Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro in Pelotas, Brazil are able to impress themselves into the fold as contributors to contemporary society and vessels of a heritage marginally positioned. Through this membership, with the company and other community organizations for that matter, individuals are able to rediscover, cultivate, and elevate memories (Connerton 1989) rooted in the collective experience of the Black Brazilian, an account that is perpetually excluded from the city's social memory and the nation's official history.

The work of these authors substantiated my reflections and lent structure to my varied, multitudinous reflections. Over the next few sections, I will tacitly capitalize on four of Hanna's conclusions, that dance is a psycho-socio-political and communicative behavior, and will complement Noland's and Connerton's theories on bodily agency and social memory presented here. In the first section, 3.1, I will detail the socio-historical typification Afro-Brazilians and African inspired dance were subject to, and are still subject to today, as Brazil strives to create a homogenous imagery of Brazilianness and its implications. We will see that in Brazil, the Black body and Afro-dance face censures likened to that of Pearl Primus and other Black artists and dancers in the 1920s-1940s, as noted by John Perpener III in the introduction. Unfortunately, due to politicization of the arts, dance has been polarized and used on countless occasions to promote a unified populace. The sustained trend of disparagement introduced at the onset of slavery and promoted over time through alienating narrations of Black Brazilians, unceasing racism, the use of caste systems, and then colorism, has nominated the Black body as ample, yet expendable. These haunting labels not only denoted Black life as irrelevant to the Brazilian experience, decades later, they influence how Afro-Brazilians engage in socio-political affairs. In section 3.2, I will take the narratives explicated previously and argue that the body becomes a mediator; that through the body Black individuals are able to negotiate their experiences and assert themselves as creators of their reality. Also, in this section, I will introduce the work of French philosopher, Henri Lefebvre, and will juxtapose his arguments of space with the experiences of Black members in Brazil and in the context of Pelotas. In the final section, I will recap the topics of sections 3.1 and 3.2 and will stress the importance of "community" and social activism, in this case via dance, in addressing and transforming the meaning of self-efficacy and derailing boring narrations that disrupt and hinder interpersonal concurrence.

"Brazilianness" and The Exclusivity of National Narratives

"I had a (Black) professor for a university course, it was called "Body and Brazilian Identity[14]."

She asked a question that had everyone reflecting...about being Black...How black do you

recognize yourself in society? [translated from 2019 interview with João Cruz]"

As is the case in Brazil, and many other Latin American countries throughout history,

Afro-descendants have had a complex relationship with national narratives, their presentation, or

lack thereof, imbued with remnants of colonialism and deeply entrenched problematic

connotations. Many stereotypes and stigmas about blackness and African ancestry were

constructed during the colonial period in Brazil. In defining a national Brazilian identity, the

(physical) body, especially through dance, has been at the forefront of narrations about the what

it means to be Brazilian (Hanna 1979, 3-6). With the national stereotype that Brazilians love to

dance (De Andrade and Canton 1996, 114), dance over time has become a vehicle of social

control (Hanna 1979, 173). Reed compliments Hanna's view denoting dance as integral to the

civility process (Reed 1998, 509). Bodily discourse, discussions on the body and movement

categorized as dance in this case, provides insight into the complexities of socio-cultural

transmission. By looking at dance, we are able to see how historically specific attitudes towards

the body and towards a specific group's usage of the body have been socially constituted

(Desmond 1997). Here, I focus on the tension between *corpo* and *brasilidade*. I identify

problematic qualifications found in the term "Brazilianness," or also "Brazilness," in the

performing arts (Davida 2012, Suárez 2013). The repercussions of these narratives manifest in

dance canons in the form of hierarchical valuations, harmful stereotypes, and the marginalization

of contributions made by Brazil's African heritage.

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[14] The course in Portuguese is "*Corpo e Brasilidade.*"

As we have seen in the historical and geographical context section of this thesis, maladaptive legislation and performative politics (politics done for show or to bolster national imagery) have further ostracized Black members of Brazil's populace. "Democracy" has excluded the contributions of Black Brazilians and diminished their claim to rights. When considering the space dance occupies in Brazil's identity and imagery, the incorporation of Black culture with little consideration for/of Black Brazilians names the body a ward of the state. The inaction of policies to rectify this interconnection between the Black body and the state (Kuhlke and Pine 2014, viii) restricts Black Brazilians from fully integrating and engaging in civic and cultural society (Smith 2016, 79). In Brazil, in the quest towards modernity, imitation of European dance styles and social mirroring equated status and opportunity of upward mobility to westernized productions and white skin (Reed 1998, 510). This created a hierarchical stratus of dance styles in Brazil with African-inspired dance and the Black body consigned to the lowest ranking. The co-option of samba and capoeira, endorsed the regime of miscegenation, the performative ideal of a mixed populace. Because of this, divisive racialized narratives continue to inform and dictate socio-cultural functioning to the detriment of Black Brazilians.

In the book *Performing Brazil: Essays on Culture, Identity, and the Performing Arts*, Kathyrn Bishop-Sanchez defines "Brazilianness" as a term linked to the cultural representation of the nation. It is any performative re-creation of the broadly construed idea of Brazil (Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez 2015, 17). It supersedes geopolitical and cultural limitations and values "nationness" over nationality. This distinction is important to our discussion on Afro-diasporic works in Brazil as this inexactness allows for the reproduction of African elements but only so removed from historical and social maladies that affect the diary of its Black members. In the literature I reviewed, popular imaginary of Brazil includes samba, sex tourism,

quintessential exoticism, and ecological mecca. The African roots of the nation, historically

disavowed, are absent in terms of national representation (Suárez 2010, 101). Steeped in

stereotyped exoticization, hyper-sensuality, demonization, and "primitivism" (Albuquerque and

Bishop-Sanchez 2015, 104-120), the Brazilian narrative has submitted its Afro-Brazilian

members to the most typed and negative of affiliations. Black members of Brazilian society

exist in a state of duality. The first grey area is that of disenfranchisement and absence, where

their existence and African heritage is discredited, weaponized, and blackness is devalued, much

in the same way we saw in Lois Balcolm's negative criticisms of Primus' Afro themed works;

The second is arena is that of commerciality, where blackness is co-opted and registered as a

cultural reference to be swallowed in the hybridization process of national marketing (Davida

2012; Frangella 2013, 3; Smith 2016). In this transnational survey of literature on sociality and

historical record in Brazil, we see parallel, cyclical operations (to that of the U.S) that aim to

contain and type the Black body at dance. Burgeoning classifications and definitions of art

named the Black body as amoral and the performances that that body produced as

unintelligible/naturally occurring, (Hertzman 2013, 29). Dance and the arts became a surrogate

for irresolute, cyclical historical-political issues, issues that if and/or when faced directly would

be troubling and disruptive to the national imageries (Boyle 1996, 144).

Abdias do Nascimento, a Black Brazilian artist, scholar, and activist (Andrews and De La

Fuente 2018, 265), spoke of his dismay for such happenings in his 1980 address on political

alternatives saying, "Never ever in our educational system was there ever taught a discipline

revealing any appreciation or respect for the cultures or arts of Africa." Nascimento's message is

reflected in the harsh reality that throughout time, African dance has been excluded from

university dance programming (Suárez 2013, 160). To supplement this, Juliana in her interview

mentioned that the only contemporaneous instruction of Afro-dance in academia at the university

level is in Pelotas and in Bahia; at a congress of the arts, everyone was white including the

instructor of the Afro-dance course in Bahia. How sardonic, that the nation that has created

negligible spaces for Blackness and has brutalized the Black body/image as the epitomized

antithesis to progress (Suárez 2013, 10) has had to borrow from Black culture to create

"Brazilianness." Because much of the elite opinion is that that from the "other" is rudimentary

and of low class, Afro-Brazilian culture has come to be synonymous with capoeira, samba, *bloco*

afro (Pardue 2007, 696) and is opportunistically subsumed in multiculturalism initiatives that

present Brazil as a country dedicated to diversity with a common goal of inclusion. The legacy of

Africa in Brazil, is reduced to artefact. With the moniker "traditional," "folkloric" or "authentic,"

Afro-dance forms are "othered" in execution, only acceptable as homage to a distant past against

which the nation has staked its claim of "modernity." This is Brazilness. It is the promotion of

particular forms of blackness as permissible, authentic and desirable (Brown, Kuwabong, and

Olsen 2014; Da Costa 2010) relevant to nation-ness but discounted in the purview of nationality.

In a conditional nation, the Afro-Brazilian/Black body and Black culture is disowned or

remembered appropriately to reinforce stereotypes. The use of Black culture and art removed

from the real-life issues faced by Black Brazilians is representative of the toxic nationalism

discussed here. Neither afforded the same sense of belonging nor civic/legal protections or high

social posturing (Smith 2016) today, the Afro-Brazilian has yet to receive formal recognition for

its contributions and its role in the formation of nationhood. And yet, in the favor of narrative, to

claim distinctiveness is to negate struggle for equality (Hooker 2008, 286). It is this

representational existence, the priming of the Black body and African heritage as unessential,

prized yet forgotten and admired yet undervalued (Davida 2012, 326-327), that has greatly

contributed to the pernicious perception and reception of the Black body/Afro-dance proscenium.

An answer to national motifs and global projections is grassroots mobilization. Through dance, sociocultural change is plausible but requires patience (Suárez 2013, 156). It is the deep doing of Afro-Brazilians, here via performance, to engage and ensure the African contribution to Brazilian European narrative gets recognized and accepted as central to "Brazilian" culture (Brown, Kuwabong, and Olsen 2014, 118). According to Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez (2015), performing Brazil is not only a way for governmental leaders to wash their hands of the state of its discordant definition of diversity as presented above, but it is also a means to challenge, dispute, or defend other conceptions of nationness. João in discussing the ways in which national narratives can be disruptive to the Black Brazilian in society said this: "...art is very important to discuss issues of Black consciousness. In the city of Pelotas, Daniel set a precedent. He brings awareness to the community and through his productions, he creates dialogue about social issues, racism and visibility in the city and (of the Black experience) throughout history." Because political institutions have, over time, shaped the national identity of Brazil to essentially prohibit specific racial group affiliation, counternarratives about the need and basis of Afro-Brazilian acknowledgement[15] and protections are seen as illegitimate and unnecessary by states that say they are not directly responsible for the racial discrimination that exists.

National narratives, in the exposition of social memory, determine what is remembered, what is celebrated and what is forgotten. They decide which cultural expressions will become

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[15]Consistent with other Latin American states, Brazil's "mixed race" national identity classifies its Afro-population as non-distinctive from the larger "Brazilian" identity (Hooker 2008, 284). Because of this and the negative associations that come with being Black in Brazil, there is a "lack of identification by a significant portion of the population of Afro-descendants (Hooker 2008, 289). The term "*pardo,*" is used to describe someone of mixed race in Brazil and is a term that many Afro-descendants use in order to better negotiate their position in Brazilian society (Hordge-Freeman 2012, 199).

popularized and take on significance as bearers of nationness (Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez 2015, 28) and who the ideal candidate is to express them. This is an important aside as in the next chapter we will see how dance can be instrumental to spatial negotiations and nonrepresentational acknowledgement. Operationally striving for increased mobility, with social participation on one end and occupying arenas and opportunity on the other, the degrees of separation between full inclusion and tolerance are felt everyday by Black members of Brazilian society. These national socio-cultural commentaries prescribe sociality at the local level; this entwinement reproduces interpersonal strains and, as we will see in the next chapter, polarizes/privatizes communal space(s).

Negotiations of Space and Memory

"Are there black people in this audience?

Doesn't look like it. Are there black people in Pelotas? [translated]"[16]

In this section, I will identify several components, often detrimental in nature, of Brazilian societal stigmas that dictate the bodily presence of Afro-Brazilians as refuse. It will declare that the social memory of Brazil, and so in Pelotas, is not representative of the collective experience of its Afro-descendant members. The idea of the "in their place," *negro permitido* (Smith 2016, 95), will be processed associatively as it influences how the Black body reconciles this disparity in society through dance and negotiates its rightful significance. Here I will define space as an opportunity to assert or experience one's identity and needs freely; privacy of time devoted to one's self (Merriam-Webster 2020). This definition set not only offers clarity for discussion, but it also highlights the slighting and relegation of Black members of society to the social margins. Depreciation masked as tolerance and cloaked in disregard is an overarching

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[16] "Tem pretos nessa plateia? Parece que não."   "Tem negros em Pelotas?"

theme that hinders the Afro-Brazilian from full integration and mobility. A result of unresolved

and unaddressed historical bias in sociocultural and sociopolitical arenas, memory and access

become a binding social contract of enactment (Smith 2016, 43). The physical body, in a society

that by design has been defined by and partial to white, heteronormative males, becomes the

social body and must continuously enter into negotiations over merit and rightfulness.

To begin, I require two of the various stereotypes discussed in the previous section. The first,

that the Black Brazilian is incompatible with cosmopolitan life and that African inspired works

are unintelligible; the second, that both are antagonistic to Brazilian imagery. I would like to

assert here that, based on the information I have presented thus far, I believe history to be a

mingling of politics and innovation. Holding this belief constant, the stereotypes I have called

forward are particularly curious when juxtaposed with three of French philosopher Henri

Lefebvre personally rearticulated propositions about definitive space.

1. Identity exists in a space between the mental sphere and the physical/social sphere
   (Lefebvre 1991, 6).

2. Every space is already in place before the appearances of "actors," therefore space
   is an obstacle and "actors" must choose agency or subjectivity (Lefebvre 1991,
   51).

3. Representational space, in practice and shaped by ideology, accounts for the
   perpetuation of facetious perspectives that inform entryways, byways, and
   noways (Lefebvre 1991, 47).

As history would have it, an individual is defined by and perceived as an amalgam of

existing systems and/or as a member of some group (Lefebvre 1991, 21). As we saw in the

previous chapter, narratives of Brazilianness do not recognize the Black body/Black Brazilian or

only so in a critical sense. Because scholarly preference insists that the written word and what is seen or known is "law," we find that Lefebvre's three propositions are problematic not only because they show the interconnection between identity and ideology but also because they imply that narratives are near impervious to evolution. When social and political forces long withstanding have tailored definitions of space to exclude Afro-Brazilians and their truths, blackness and the Black experience becomes a negotiation of space, place, power (Smith 2016, 111). However, space is too abstract a concept for any person or persons to claim dominion, right? How is it then that space has been privatized in Brazil and has come to signify "a place for everyone and everyone in their place" (Inter-American Foundation 2002, 13); that that place for the Afro-Brazilian is as a footnote, back matter in the grand Brazilian scheme of things? The short answer is through narratives by those privileged to narrate.

According to Lefebvre, society is an object of systemization that is regulated by codes (Lefebvre 1991, 11). These codes of conduct, if you will, grant "actors" a certain level of fluidity within a set assortment of engaging manners. As I have detailed in the historical and geographical context chapter of this thesis, Brazilian nationhood, per colonialism, was forged at the expense and subjugation of African and Indigenous peoples. The effects of such a foundation were exhibited in a review of contemporary social problems in Pelotas. These codes inform all aspects of Brazilian sociality and contaminate the lived experience of Afro-Brazilians who, according to Hordge-Freeman (2012), are socialized [17]from early childhood to develop a racialized sense of self. The self becomes inextricably linked to the social world and finds itself at an impasse. In this social space, let's say in Pelotas, the very fabric of the city has been

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[17] Racial socialization is defined as "verbal and behavioral messages transmitted to younger generations for the development of values, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs regarding the meaning and the significance of race and racial stratification (Hordge-Freeman 2012, 32). Literature on racial socialization requires an interdisciplinary outlook and approaches race as a sociological, psychological, and developmental study (Hordge-Freeman 2012, 32).

stitched by political powers who codified "proper" etiquette as a mechanism of control. These

forces tacked on harmful stigmas and have consistently promoted hateful stereotypes about the

Black body and so Black Brazilians. So much so that the Afro-Brazilian has been ostracized

from socio-cultural activities both locally and nationally. As I mentioned before, identity relies

on both social meaning and self-esteem. If socially there are barriers to growth and mobility, the

mental space must be fortified and the individual must either recognize themself (in their own

right) or lose themself (Lefebvre 1991, 61). To me, dance is a union of the physical and the

mental. I believe that through bodily negotiation, existence becomes resistance and intentionality

becomes agentic. Between invisibility and causal, opportunistic consideration, dance allows the

individual to claim themself and face head on troubling aspects of local and national memory.

Through self-narration in performances or some other creative expression, Afro-Brazilians are

able to define for themselves what it means to be Black and be Brazilian and by extension what it

means to belong (Kuhlke and Pine 2014, 113-114).

In her book, Noland (2009) discusses the work of Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist,

philosopher and writer from the French colony of Martinique. In a book chapter titled, "The

Lived Experience of the Black Man," Fanon describes the body as a means to reverse functional

subjection and asserts that through the body one can create "body space," to feel the self as

grounded and as moving through time (Noland 2009, 196-203). If we are to keep to the

definitions provided, the latter of the set is foregrounded here. Fanon, by rehabilitating what

Noland (2009) calls "kinesthetic-proprioceptive-tactile self-awareness," accesses a knowledge

(bodily) that allows him to be rooted in himself versus being consumed by an unbecoming

sociality. By reconnecting to the body, an individual is brought a repository of knowledge

(Walker 2001, 353) and is able to insert a version of himself that is not tied to the narrative of

colonization. That said, recall that identity involves both the social and mental space and cannot be unlinked but through a self-reinsertion of personhood, that individual becomes an agent, creating their experience in the world. I argue that this too is the oeuvre of dance. Dance is empowerment. It creates the possibility for the reconfiguration of self (Suárez 2013, 4) and can articulate the complexes of a lived experience where words fail or where voices are silenced. It is a way to access the world, literally, a negotiation in time and through space. If we refer back to the first of the two definitions of space, a reasonable sequitur, having read Dr. Tamara M. Johnson's chapter titled, "Some Dance to Remember," where the author discusses performance as discourse, is that dance is a countermeasure against politico-historical processing that has, in this case, scrubbed the record clean of any trace of African heritage in Brazil; by extension, turned the Black body/experience to myth (Kuhlke and Pine, 75-100). The mystification of Afro-descendants and slavery permits trite imagery of the Black Brazilian suspended in yesteryear. According to Lefebvre (1991) history affects the present and in Brazil, the systems that propelled the nation forward also named and manipulated the Black body beyond recognition. What I found most interesting is that despite the precarious conditions the Afro-Brazilian was and is forced to endure, the right to "protest" such structuring is a right reserved only by elite circles (Lefebvre 1991, 52). Smith speaks on this practice of societal stratification and how it has created physical and social barriers that Black people every day must confront. Social protest as a symptom of social dystrophy and, according to Smith, a sign of a community under duress (Smith 2016, 70). In what she calls a spatial apartheid, the visceral, subtly guileful wall that is both insurmountable and fluid enough to reorganize, restricts black mobility, economic and otherwise (Smith 2016, 79; 106-112).

Now, if we borrow the word "mobility" and apply it to dance movements, the body becomes a force (Brown, Kuwabong, and Olsen 2014), an interface between physical reality and one that is reinvented in likeness and on one's own terms (Davida 2012, 310). Through performance and practice, dance actively recreates spaces of belonging and connects the intellectual with the tangible. For example, according to Pinto (1991), dance and movements acquire important semantic functions. Specifically, in Orixás rituals, the interplay of dance and music via gesticulations, relay explicit messages that are then transmitted to viewers. He goes further and says that dance demands dancers to have a vast vocabulary that must be harnessed to produce the essence of the respective deity (Pinto 1991, 76-87). Brown, Kuwabong, and Olsen's (2014) conclusions on ritualistic performances coincided with Davida's and Pinto's interpretations about the body at dance. In their work they suggest that performance allows dancers to rearticulate space in opposition to the trivialization imposed on them by dominant narratives (Brown, Kuwabong, and Olsen 2014, 108). Recuperation of knowledge within and reconnection to the physical environment, embodied activities (dance), as alluded to by Fanon's work, activates "remembering" and negates routine forgetting as is often seen when recounting the African presence in Brazilian history. The body becomes a "public address system" and, through dance, decodes spaces permeated with politicized narrations of "self." The Black body at dance constructs a spatial code that reassigns significance to the Black experience and through this process of signification proclaims its materiality.

The quote presented at the start of this section was from a performance I saw during my fieldwork. The performance, a combination of interactive theater and dance, was a reaction piece to an incident that occurred just before I arrived in-country. An almost identical pejorative phrase was graffitied on a building exterior opposite of a local theater, *Theatro Guarany*, in the city

center. Thinking back now, to me the performance from which it was taken represents an interrogation, a negotiation of memory and meaning through movement (Kuhlke and Pine 2014, 77), and as I have argued, for space. For the dancers, a Black male and female, to perform this piece, a spatial project, they were able to engage in dialogue with the audience about the social barriers unspoken, hushed, or acknowledged snidely that are very much alive in the memory and diary of Afro-Brazilians. Recognition of the Black experience/body in the city through latent allegorization disrupts the audience members' (majority white) predilection to ignore and authenticates the struggles of the Black members in attendance (Smith 2016, 99). Here, dance synthesizes the sentiment of the lived reality of the Afro-Brazilian and preserves common recollections of past and present (Kuhlke and Pine 2014, 79), a concert of the affect of racial experiences (Smith 2016, 183) in the city. I cannot know for certain what was meant by the graffitied message but what was expressed in the individual's initiative to execute it and what was implied in its question, given the historical background of the city, overwhelmingly confirms all that has been presented here and the previous chapter. Blackness is tolerated only so in spaces marked as acceptable for them to participate. Not only was the phrase debasing, it also marked the (public) space as unattainable/inaccessible to Black Brazilians of the city. The damages of "Brazilianness" narratives and the resulting hostile atmosphere in which Afro-Brazilians must forge their sense of self will be reviewed further in the results section of this thesis.

Research that foregrounds the human form and motility as central to understanding how persons negotiate their existence and challenge the rhetoric, both written and social, of community spaces is so important. However, all too often said research is excluded in socio-cultural discourses and renderings of historical compilations. Abdias do Nascimento in an

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address he gave regarding the Afro-Brazilian experience said, "…We believe in the rearticulation of ourselves and our history. The reinvention of the Afro-Brazilian whose life is founded on our own historical experience rather than that which has been battered by colonialism and racism…To rescue our memory is to rescue ourselves from oblivion… (Nascimento 1980, 20)" Dance and performance offer a means to claim space and reassert the Black voice in the conversation of "Brazilianness." When asked why the work of the company and community organizations is so important, Paco said [all the hours of research, practice, and tribulations are part of the becoming of self.] Hordge-Freeman (2012) notes in her work that connections within a "family" system increase social connectedness, encourage cultural and racial pride, and alleviate stresses caused by extreme social stratification. In the next section, we will take a closer look at how community organizations provide familial ambiance, promote individual well-being and collective growth, and challenge anti-Black narratives by inciting dialogues, through performance, about what "in their place" means in the city of Pelotas.

*É Possível***: A Look at the Notion of Community Recourse**

É possível is translated to mean: It is possible. In a paneled discussion that followed a promotional parade around the downtown area of the city for the Black Afro and Theater Festival, company member "Emilio" repeats this phrase as he discussed his experiences in Brazilian society. On the topic of access, especially to university, he says, "It is possible. Imagine it. It is our right. You have to believe this. It is possible to be/to have Black professors in university. It is possible to have Black doctors, male and female. It is possible to be Black AND to have money. It is possible to be Black in whichever place in this city…[translated]" In talking with Dr. Ferreira about my translation of the phrase "*É possível*," he said that in the context that it was used, a gathering of friends, family, and colleagues united under the common goal of

effecting local change, it was used to galvanize and encourage. When Emilio used the phrase, he was saying, "Yeah! We can do it, we can overcome the limiting, racialized messages in national narratives by engaging in transformative dialogue locally."

In this section I expand on Hanna's (1979) descriptions of dance as a cumulative behavior. It is a political behavior as well as communicative and psycho-social behavior. I argue here that community organizations, like *Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro*, through dance and the creative expression, help combat the discrepancies of the Afro-Brazilian reality of coexisting in "two worlds."[18] I draw on the various ways in which the dance company confronts and recasts the history of the city through performance. Dancers involved cast themselves as sustained, enriched, and political entities that recognize performance as a means of to challenge the status quo. By addressing the intentional socio-historical discontinuation of African heritage and emphasizing the intersectional nature of the Black experience, the company and dancers challenge political matrices through performance in the hope that their efforts break the boundaries of a prejudiced sociality. Before we begin, I would like to recall two of Lefebvre's three propositions of space presented in the previous section. From the first definition that identity is found at the intersection of the mental space and the social space, the social space is defined here as a created community. Secondly, Lefebvre's third definition of space, that it is defined by ideology, is countered here. Because of a consensus belief by those in power that since the end of the military regime in Brazil the nation has become more democratic over time, there is a misguided sense that the existence and prevalence of severe socio-economic disparity is due to individual and group failure to respond effectively to change (Jones and Rogers 2010,

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[18] In discussing his experience in society, Daniel described his reality as lived in two worlds. The first, a citizen of the *periferia* and a member of the poor class in the city of Pelotas; the second as a classical ballet student at an upper-class school in Pelotas. He also, in a discussion about a gallery expo he conducted, framed the production and experience as disconcerting. He described the participants, Black dancers/storytellers detailing the Black experience, and the white consumers and holders of positions such as archeologist and scientists, as two worlds apart.

141). It is through community and the realization of self through others that social inequality and systematic social exclusion are curtailed to a degree. In a society that labels the Black Brazilian as characteristically flawed and whose governing body establishes blanket legislation that on paper looks progressive and considerate but in reality, ignores the socio-historical inequities and political injustices that have accrued, self-expression becomes a necessary means to vocalize concerns, empower oneself and stand up for your rights (Jones and Rogers 2010, 138).

According to Kuhlke and Pine (2014), within created community spaces individuals are able to form a self through reflection and connection. A sense of belonging is created within these spaces and provides it members a safe and positive "inside" that offers protection and escape from the "outside" that is marginality and uncertainty (Kuhlke and Pine 2014, 80). When asked to describe his experience in the Pelotas community, Daniel replied, "My experience as a Black man can be summed in three words: 1. periphery, 2. religion, and 3. political resistance…; later, *Todos os negros na cidade de Pelotas estão na periferia* [19]." At the intersection of these elements and his testimony of city relations is the dance company which he founded in 1999 (SEE Figure 3). Since then, he has labored in the community promoting cultural interchange through creative expression, creating social projects aimed at getting youth involved in activities that keep them from getting caught up in the system and/or becoming a statistic, and orchestrating performances that discuss Black consciousness and expose the incompleteness of the city's memory.

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[19] All the Black people of Pelotas are in the periphery
[translated from 2019 interview]

As mentioned in the historical context and background section of this thesis, life in the *periferia* is anything but ideal. Lack of social services, limited access to education and resources, and incessant over-policing, the disenfranchisement of Brazil's Black population is essentially endorsed by the government (Smith 2016, 89). Yes, the body at dance is a body at play and in this way the company is a source of perspective,

Figure 3 - Venn Diagram of Influence

understanding, and joy (Suárez 2010, 153). But, after having read Smith's book *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil*, I came to the conclusion that this company is also a necessity. Suárez in her article "Citizenship and Dance in Urban Brazil" describes community projects as an active intervention against human and moral ruin (Suárez 2010, 99). She seems to expand on this assertion years later in an article about cultural agency in Bahia, Brazil (Suárez 2013) where she deems community organizations vital in confronting anti-Black narrations and combating isolation. Pillars of hope in the community, these organizations mediate between society's limiting definitions of blackness and inspire beliefs of opportunity and expansion (to professional, economic, educational, and spatial arenas). They inspire people of African ancestry to strive and achieve excellence; not because they are African but because they are citizens and thereby deserve inclusion (Suárez 2013, 155). Emilio's words, relayed at the start of this section, resound with Suárez's conclusions; Both reveal the importance of representation. For centuries, despite the conscious efforts of those in power to minimize and erase their contributions and silence them by relegating them to the margins, Afro-descendants in Brazil have continued to persist and protest, assert and advocate for the rights, protections, and
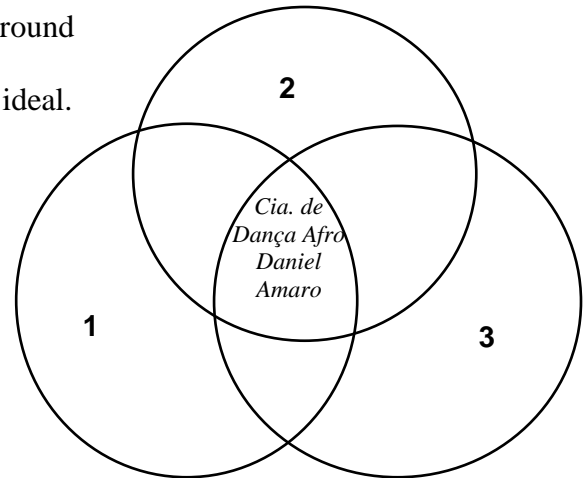
opportunities promised by their country and warranted them by the technical definition of nationality/citizenship. However, as I have argued throughout this thesis, a nation sprung from imperialism/colonialism and maintained by racist/discriminatory ideologies and traditions, is organizationally anti-Black. Race/skin color have become hazardously germane to definitions of "Brazilianness" and yet the significance of colonial superstructures remains largely unacknowledged or is hushed by all means. Today, without active efforts to combat this truth we see in Brazil's populace great disparity and social disarray.

In many ways, community organizations are outlets that give agency back to individuals to form their own complex and multifaceted identity (Kuhlke and Pine 2014, 82). An important note, though the taboo nature of identifying as Black is not developed at depth in this thesis it is an important conditional tangent to understanding the Black identity in Brazil. However, involvement with the Afro-dance company in Pelotas allows for, as Smith (2016) notes in her discussion on becoming a member of social activist theater troupe in Bahia, exposure to a sense of Black identity. This positive identification allows its members to *assumir* [20] being Black in a bold and shameless way. In Pelotas, this is more crucial an endeavor. Lois Jaeck Marias's article "Dance as Protest Literature," (2003) determined that the performative arts were a means of community activism. Consistent with Maria's conclusion, I believe the arts can galvanize political participation and affect social change, which in acknowledgement of Brazil's and the city's formal removal of Blackness and African heritage, means increased visibility of the city's Afro history.

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[20] To acknowledge, accept or to take on – in this case it means to acknowledge unapologetically with pride (Smith 2016 ,105). In Brazil, it is particularly taboo to talk directly about race and even more so to identify as Black (Smith 2016, 105). Unfortunately, because of the anti-Black narratives that have persisted through time, to claim blackness has come to be seen as almost shameful.

"What do they tell people at this point? Do they tell the story of the Black man in the

story of Pelotas and the building and construction of the city? They only tell the Black

man's story because we came here to work as slaves, otherwise we wouldn't know

anything, we wouldn't be anything we are today [translated from 2019 interview with

Daniel]."

Paco echoes Daniel's criticisms when he says, "They call my culture folkloric. It's hard to think

like that." This idea of African/Afro culture and heritage as a past with indeterminate origins and

vestige was discussed at length in the section on Brazilian narratives. The Cia de Dança Afro

Daniel Amaro company, through dance, provides protection and escape from marginal existence

and selective observance. Instead of passively accepting the inequities produced from a

politically implicated history, community organizations like the dance company become an asset

in presenting clearer visions of the pivotal role enslaved Africans played in the construction of

the country (Nascimento 1980, 171). For example, the production *Dança dos Orixás* does just

that. Performed at the aforementioned beef jerky plantation, the company, sparing not the horrors

faced at the site, is able to denote the Black experience in the city and also open channels for

dialogue; by doing so challenge the luxury afforded to those who are not directly affected and

chose to ignore the plight of Black Brazilians. In this performance, through the reconversion of a

public space known for being an economic anchor in the city, dancers communicate their

resistance through remembering. This recapitulation of the Black Brazilian as part of the not so

distant past and of the present fortifies members with a sense of selfhood through the

understanding that they are a part of something greater, socially, spiritually or politically, than

they had previously perceived (Suárez 2013, 154). In this performance, which will be reviewed

further in the results section of this document, dance becomes a way to honor the past, ground in the present, and fight for a better future.

The Cia de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro and other community organizations create spaces of connection, opportunity, and possibility. Because the Brazilian "tradition" requires the suppression of Black affiliation and pride and the underestimation of racial disparity, social injustices, and socio-economic inequities, taking the charge of social reconfiguration requires tireless programming, active patience, and a fortified vision. Considering the body a site for racial resistance and decolonization (Hordge-Freeman 2012, 161), I am certain that to delineate the unique history of the dance company, its director, and the Afro-Brazilian experience from local memory is to understand how resistance and performance congeal under the name agency. Through performance, dancers, choreographers, and all others involved with the company and promotion of Black deference, are all momentarily suspended, imperishable, in the matrix of sociality. Through performance, an act of self-naming (Nascimento 1980, 159), transformation takes place. Be it transformation of self, space, place, perpetual or whimsical conditions, to dance is to redistribute weight in a way that promotes (self) redefinition and offers counter-narratives. A "family" empowers its members through authenticated belongingness (Suárez 2010, 115). What this company, a salutary resource, does for the community is assumed in the closing remarks of Paco Gomes, choreographer: "Here. I exist motherf*cker. I am here, I am alive."

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

"Since beginning her studies of anthropology, she had become familiar with field research techniques, which included the use of still photography, motion pictures, and line sketches. When she was permitted, she took part in the tribal dances and studied with the experts in the countries she visited (Perpener III 2005, 170)"

Ethnography, defined as a written analysis and documentation of an anthropologist's fieldwork experience, is the bread and butter of anthropological methodology (Mannik and McGarry 2017, 235). Because this project required a careful, encompassing protocol, I, like Pearl Primus, as noted in the quote above about her record keeping during her vast and numerous travels to Africa, used ethnographic methods during my 2019 fieldwork in Pelotas, RS, Brazil. Examples of ethnographic methods include surveys, interviews, and participant observation. The premise of this thesis, the evaluation of narratives and recovery of Black history, meant that interviews were an absolute must. I relied heavily on the oral histories of the people who participated in these interviews and also employed a modified version of participant observation.

In 1932, Bronisław Malinowski, known as the father of anthropology, was the first anthropologist to coin, use, and advocate for the inclusion of participant observation in anthropological methods (Mannik and McGarry 2017, 34). Since then, what participant observation entails has been defined vaguely, as any study during official fieldwork travels and broadly, as "an open-ended nonlinear process of education that include everyday encounters and results in unexpected interpersonal engagements and insights (Mannik and McGarry 2017, 4-5). In its original function, however, Malinowski defined participant observation as an intensive, long-term commitment (at minimum of one year) to learning local language, participating in daily tasks, and observing and recording the daily life and practices of one group of people in a

particular location (Mannik and McGarry 2017, 34; 239). Over the course of her lifetime, thanks to dance, Primus was able to travel and learn about the experiences and dance practices of others. Of the several trips to Africa and her single trip to the United States' South, she stayed anywhere from one season (a couple of months) to two years or longer (Perpener III 2005). Due to the time constraints of master's programming, two years for a Master of Science in Anthropology, between initial contact with Dr. Lúcio Ferreira, who happened to be a visiting professor at my first semester at ISU, his return back to Brazil, and a semester course load, trying to nail down travel dates that corresponded to performance dates was quite a task. Nonetheless, thanks to the cooperation and understanding of my professors, the coordination with the department and my thesis advisor, Dr. Kathryn Sampeck, and the constant correspondence via email with Dr. Ferreira, a Brazilian archaeologist, I was able to book a flight to Brazil.

Unlike Primus or the prescription offered by Malinowski, my in-country data collection process lasted for about three weeks. The following subsections will provide more details about what took place just prior and during my fieldwork experience in Brazil.

Fieldwork in Brazil

"Through experience, "vivid, first-hand knowledge began to replace intuitive feelings and information gathered from books (Perpener 2005, 166)."

To complete the fieldwork portion of my research, I travelled to Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. I arrived in Porto Alegre on the 6th of November 2019 and stayed until the 23rd of November. For a period of 17 days, I remained in-community collecting oral histories, learning about the city, and engaging with company members. Prior to my arrival, most recruitment was done via email. Professor Dr. Lúcio Ferreira, who since 2017 has collaborated with Daniel and the company of interest, served as a liaison of sorts and, while in-country, kindly acted as an

interpreter during interviews. His research on slavery in Brazil, antiracist narratives, and his archaeological excavations at the Sao Joao beef jerky plantation led to several expositions and collaborations. For example, *Dança dos Orixás*, to be reviewed in the results section, was an extension of such collaboration; which was foundational for my research. In fact, my exploration of Brazilian sociality is a direct result of the overlap in the research Dr. Sampeck and Dr. Ferreira specialized in. Their contribution to the field archaeology, specifically their collaboration on literature about Afro-Latin American Archaeology helped me realize my desire to work on an Afro-diasporic project. Through Dr. Ferreira's prior and concurrent partnership and collaboration with Daniel Amaro and the Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro, I became an eyewitness. I attended and observed two open-to-the-public performances and participated in two Afro-dance workshops, one of which was hosted at the *Arteria Espaço Arte*, a studio for the arts located "in the heart of Pelotas."[21]

Oral History Interviews

With this project, I wanted to document the voices of those central to the development and maintenance of the Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro, a community-based organization dedicated to the illumination and preservation of the Afro-Brazilian contemporary experience and the African heritage and traditions in Pelotas, Brazil.

According to Martin (1990) the most appropriate manner of inquiry when one seeks to discover the linkages between agency and history as retold through performance is through ethnography. Where most prevalent textual information, especially where dance is concerned, rests upon culturally unattuned depictions and perceptions informed by colonial conventions, ethnography and, by extension, fieldwork is crucial to making sense of the musings of academic

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[21] "No coração de Pelotas."

writings (Martin 1990, 104). With a set of questions formulated based on preliminary findings and outstanding themes repeated in the literature, I began compiling a list of persons of interest. Prior to my arrival, having been in contact with the director of the company via email, I noted his interview as a top priority. Similarly, I had the general idea that it would also be best to interview at least one dancer and an affiliate of the company if possible. These persons were not identified until I was in Pelotas and was able to touch base with and engage more with the company and its director.

On November 9th, after informally interacting with dancers during an Afro-dance workshop held at *Arteria Espaço Arte*, I met up with three dancers who, after introducing myself were promptly asked if they were interested in participating in a research project about dance and their experience as Black members in society in relation to their membership in the dance company. Two of the three dancers agreed and, along with Daniel, I had a sample of three. I conducted a total of three interviews. The session with Daniel Amaro, director of the dance company could be counted as a fourth interview because as timing would have it, it was also the day Paco Gomes, a choreographer from Salvador, Bahia, who has been working with Daniel Amaro on many performances over the past 10 years, was able to meet (SEE Figure 4). In hindsight, it would have been better had they come separately as they both had a story to tell and the regional differences of each's personal history were remarkable. The remaining two interviews were of company dancers Juliana Coelho and João Cruz. Each interview averaged about 1 hour and thirty minutes. In each, I required an interpreter. Kindly so, Dr. Ferreira served in this role. On some occasions, I was able to use Spanish to communicate my point but for consistency and clarity of expression, I relied on the interpretations of the professor.

Figure 4 - Interview
Image taken by Sara Munaretto during 2019 fieldwork

These semi-structured [22]interviews took place in Dr. Ferreira's lab at the Federal

University of Pelotas (UPEL). Each session was recorded. The participants, prior to the start of

the interview process, were required to sign a consent form demarking their compliance to being

recorded. During these sessions, I would ask participants to tell me about themselves. I would

then propose a question from my list and listen to how they each answered. The questions [23]were

an outline, not strict, but ideal to ascertain the info I need to complete my interpretation. That

said, as conversations progressed, I was able to listen and based on their response, jump around

the form or ask spontaneous questions. This proved effective as it allowed for a more fluid

interaction. The conversations were recorded using a phone application called Otter. This

application records audio from conversations and attempts to transcribe data in real-time. This

application proved problematic after all as it did not account for the language and tried to apply

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[22] A semi-structured interview combines the informal, open-ended nature of an unstructured interview with the specific, structured questioning of a structured interview (Mannik and McGarry 2017, 73-74). According to Mannik and McGarry

(2017), the semi-structured model is the most utilized method of data collection (74).
[23] A copy of the questions mentioned here can be found in Appendix A.

English words to a Portuguese audio. For this, most of the transcription notes were gibberish. Several listening sessions, in which I revised my original notes taken in-country and added new notations about the audio clips were necessary.

Interviewee Information

1. Juliana Coelho was born and raised in Pelotas, Brazil. She is a member and dancer in the Cia de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro.

2. João Cruz was born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil. He is currently studying at the local university in the city. He is a member and dancer in the Cia de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro.

3. Paco Gomes was born and raised in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. He is an internationally acclaimed dancer, a director and choreographer.

4. Daniel Amaro was born and raised in Pelotas, Brazil. He is a dancer and the director and principle choreographer of Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro.

Participant Observation

Adrienne Kaeppler, an anthropologist and curator at the Smithsonian Institution in DC, in her write-up for the *Dance Research Journal* titled, "Dance Ethnology and the Anthropology of Dance," says that fieldwork is necessary in the classifying of movement as a cornerstone to understanding a cultural system in totality, especially when it comes to studies that involve dance or some other structured movement system (Kaeppler 2000, 121). The interviews with company members and affiliates covered themes relating to the history of the company and its Afro-Brazilian elements in performances, the climate of the Pelotas community, and personal anecdotes. Participants shared as much or as little as they wished. Their accounts and company performances were essential in the examination of the significance of the Afro-dance company and its impact on Black consciousness in the community.

By going out into the field, contextual stimuli can reveal social, political, cultural, and other nuances obscured in textual and literary briefings. Here, Dr. Arjun Appadurai's research,

specifically his definition of the self-conceived term "ethnoscapes," was particularly germane (Davida 2012, 448). Defined as the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live (Davida 2012, 448), Appadurai's term allowed me to understand the value and necessity of my research. The findings of this research, presented with this thesis would combine ethnography and the happenings of a specific context/landscape to produce a regionally varied analysis. And so, in an effort to provide a most inclusive evaluation of Afro-dance performances, a dance style that has been and is, all too often, folklorized, excluded from dance canonical discourse, and/or demoted, it became a necessity to visit Pelotas, RS, Brazil and engage with the company.

Upon arrival, I was met by Dr. Ferreira. After getting acclimated with the area I would be in for the next couple of weeks, I attended my first public function associated with the company, *VIII Mostra de Teatro e Dança de Origem Africana*, on November 8th, 2019. The first of the three-day exhibition aimed at promoting African culture and Afro-Brazilian matrix in/of the city was a march around the downtown area with live music, capoeira, and singing (Facebook excerpt). The manifestation, lasting about an hour, ended in the historic Mercado Central, with a round-table panel where company members and affiliates discussed the importance of and struggle of Black dance and theater in the city of Pelotas. The following day, the 9th, I attended an open-to-the-public Afro-dance workshop hosted by members of the company. This was an opportunity for me to really invest in getting a well-rounded understanding of the material I would be writing about. The final event of the exhibition was a showcase with performances, dance, spoken word, and other creative mediums, by various community-based organizations. These three days were very impactful. Not only was I able to get a glimpse into the style of performance I would be reviewing but I was also able to participate and feel my way through

some of the foundational movements integral to Afro-dance production. Too, I was invited by Daniel to participate in a closed workshop at the Public Library of Pelotas on the 20th of November. This experience proved invaluable to my research as will be detailed in the results section of this thesis. The last performance that informed this thesis was a piece that originally piqued my interest in Afro-dance in Brazil. It occurred on November 16, 2019 at Charqueada São João, a beef jerky plantation that carries an important history. Titled *Dança dos Orixás*, this performance was crucial to my understanding of dance being an interpreter of the meaning assigned to blackness through time and space in the city. This performance will be reviewed in depth in the results section.

Through the methods listed above, I was able to review dance, and the arts, as an agent of social change in the city of Pelotas. I believe the information presented thus far and the results to be presented in the next chapter detail the great need for "ethnoscapes" in academia, especially those that review and centralize Black experiences as well as dance/performance. This thesis is sure to provide us socio-historical and political synopses that can be used to address current socio-cultural short-comings in academic arenas.

Qualifications and Limitations

Internal and Formal Limitations

There were three main limits to current research and literature regarding dance in Brazil and Afro-Brazilian identity in Brazil. The first is that sociological, historical, and political accounts all largely disqualify the embodied knowledge, dance and performance, in socio-cultural evaluations. The subfield of dance anthropology exists, but human movement studies was and continues to be undervalued and less emphasized in academic contexts (Desmond 1997, 29-31). When dance or performance arts were included in such fields, they were only understood

of as cultural symbolism rather than a real-time presentation of the lived experiences of a

collective. The second limitation I noted was that in literature when Brazilian dance styles were

reviewed, a great majority of reproduced literature emphasized samba and capoeira or even

ballet. John Perpener III, the dance historian mentioned at the outset of this thesis who spoke on

the trials faced by Black dancers in the United States, concluded that marked the Black

body/African American creatives absent in/by all accounts. The censure of Afro-dance and

African inspired works (Perpener III 2005, 177-178) was a consistent trend in Brazil arts and

dance literature as well. Afro-dance was mentioned sparingly and as a piece of a production,

inserted to shock and awe. These additions were often exaggerated or removed from the

historical and political context that came with the dance style. Lastly, research about the

experience of Afro-Brazilians or relating to Brazil's Afro population in any field (politics,

anthropological/sociological studies, even criminology studies) have been conducted in larger

contexts, i.e. Salvador de Bahia, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro, where there are high

concentrations of Afro-Brazilians. There was limited research about the experience Afro-

Brazilian identity in smaller cities with a white identity and a greater number of Black members,

like Pelotas. (Albuquerque and Sanchez 2015; Smith 2016; Suárez 2013). The observations,

reflections, and analyses presented here will be curious and are sure to provide socio-cultural

insights relating to social remembering and communal pride that will facilitate dialogue about

expression and Afro-Brazilian experience/identity in Brazil.

Qualifications and External Limitations

I must confess here that the task of detailing the truths of company members was

daunting. That Portuguese was the dominant language of Brazil made for a demanding, but not

impossible, process. I had previous international experience, having worked and traveled in Latin

America, specifically in Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru as well as in Galicia, Spain for two years which contributed to my comfortability to engage in international affairs. During my time in Spain, the region where I lived spoke a dialect of Spanish, Gallego or Galician, that is reminiscent of old Portuguese; also, during my stay in Spain I traveled to Portugal on occasion as it was only a train ride away. Though I carry my weight when it comes to international travel, my experience with Brazilian Portuguese was limited. I could not communicate with depth which was both frustrating and interesting in that it was fascinating how much non-verbal communication was still possible and, proved, just as equally important. Dr. Ferreira made up for my language deficit and was patient enough to assist throughout the interview/research project while I was visiting. Also, upon my return to the U.S., I had to review my notes and annotate my interviews through a process called transcription[24]. This was mostly done in the following Spring semester and the summer just after. During the spring, I took a Portuguese language class to facilitate this process but as each interview was at least an hour, Daniel and Paco's was two and change, proved to be a rigorous experience. I found myself second guessing if what I was understanding is actually what was meant. That said, my knowledge of Spanish lent me moderate/greater comprehension of the language than I expected and I was able to reach out for translations and interpretation verification.

Another limitation was more personal rather than logistic. In my goal to understand the Black experience in Pelotas, in relation to company productions, conversations had, and observations, my truth as a Black female granted me perceptivity in these endeavors. Being black allowed me to move with a certain level of comfortability in conversations with interviewees about race and their experiences as Black Brazilians. However, due to differing contextual

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[24] Transcription is the process through which commentary, spoken, sung, or dictated, is turned into writing (Mannik and McGarry 2017, 243).

socializations, I was constantly forced to expand my understanding of race, ancestral linkage, and mobility. Some situations and observations during my fieldwork experience predicated on my relinquishment conceptions about racial categorization. For example, throughout the thesis, you will see the term "*preto*" and "*negro*." Both are used to refer to Black people in Brazil. However, understanding what Black meant in Brazil was very confusing for me. According to Telles, in his book, Racism in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil (2004), Brazilians phenotypically code the skin color in the way someone would understand a color wheel in art class (Telles 2004, 218). On a continuum that has *branco* or white (lightest, most European-looking) on one end and *preto* or Black (darkest, most African-looking) on the other (Telles 2004, 87), *preto* and *negro* are both terms used to a person with seemingly African features. There are gender and situational/context related stipulations, i.e. the race of the person using the term, how the term is used (many derogatory comments use "*negro*[25]"), academic writings, etc., to the use of each term that are not discussed at depth with this thesis, but that affected my grasp of concepts and conversations. When either of the terms are used in this thesis, it is used in a direct quote from an interview or in a referenced literature. The picture I have included in this here gets at, not only the conversation about race that I just mentioned, but also an avenue of research that I do not address with this thesis. This graffiti is representative of the ongoing debate of color-blindness ideology likened to the racial democratic ideology of Gilberto Freyre (to be presented in more detail in the Historical Context section) present in the United States and Brazil and throughout the Americas (SEE Figure 5). It is a phrase that is nulled by the

[25] Similar to Black populations in the United States with the N-word, the term *negro* in Brazil, but has been re-appropriated by members of the Black movement (members) as a political term that includes Brazilians who refer to themselves as Browns and Blacks (Hordge-Freeman 2012, 199).

Brazil's Black Movement (MNU), since its inauguration in 1978, has been fighting to improve the condition of Black Brazilians across the country (Andrews and De la Fuente 2018, 233). Its mission is to build a unified and collective identity among Black Brazilians, particularly Black youth, and to denounce everyday and structural racism (Andrews and De la Fuente 2018, 234).

Figure 5 - Street Graffiti, "*Ñ Existe Cor Pra Pele*!" – "There's no such thing as skin color!" Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

obstacles to access and authorship faced by early Afro-Brazilian samba artists. Their mobility

and visibility within the music industry already scant, artists' success hinged on skin color

(Hertzman 2013, 77). The implications of denied access to "public" spaces because of race due

to "intellectual property systems designed by elites" for elites (Boyle 1996, 157) was discussed

throughout this thesis, explicitly so in chapter three; I discussed the history of Black artists and

samba in chapter two.

I note here that my understanding of race is a limitation, but I'll also argue that being a

Black female was my greatest strength throughout this process. I am reminded now of a

conversation I had with anthropologist Dr. Jason de León whose groundbreaking ethnographic

and forensic archaeological work on political violence against and inhumane treatment of

migrant workers via United States border enforcement was informed by him being of Mexican and Filipino descent (SEE Figure 6). It was my first semester at ISU and my initial proposition for research hinged on the theme of generational knowledge. Having just returned from working a summer in the Chimborazo region of Ecuador, my interest in the country's Afro population, specifically the experience of Afro-Ecuadorian women and children, was a follow-up from the time I spent with two Afro-Ecuadorian woman who owned a local restaurant in Riobamba. From this interest, I thought it opportune to ask Dr. de León a question that weighed heavily in the back of my mind. I asked him how he was able to tackle such big social issues pertinent to a specific community or specific communities (Mexican, Mexican-Americans, Central and South Americans) and negotiate his position as a representative minority, an insider, and an academic in his research. He responded, with a certain assuredness, that whether due to race, ethnicity or experiences, it is a strength to have a connection or some understanding to what you want to

Figure 6 - Class Visit, Dr. Jason de León
Taken by Dr. Kathryn Sampeck in her ANT 383: Introduction to Afro-Latin American Studies course, February 2019. Left: Dr. Jason de León; Right: Me

study. Familiarity positions grants you invaluable perspective that can be used to aptly identify and interrogate the interconnections of your research and inform your work on a grand scale. I am paraphrasing his response from notes I took on my phone from that day. His words stuck with me and even though I ended up pursuing research in Brazil rather than in Ecuador, Dr. Leon's reflections were just as pertinent to building rapport [26]with interviewees and organizing my efforts during the fieldwork process and my thoughts in writing this thesis.

The last limitation I will note is a logistical inevitability - duration. Unlike Primus who seemed to have a whimsical academic career, in order to finish my degree within two years, I had smaller windows to conduct fieldwork. Performance dates, semester coursework, and cost among others, were factors that contributed to my three-week stay. I do think my time in Pelotas was well spent and provided me with enough multibranched data to leave my head spinning. This project has so much potential for analysis but to address each and every thematic element that came up during my fieldwork, though I would love to, is not possible. For this, I will discuss some thematic elements and other areas for future research in the Discussion and Conclusion section. In the next chapter, I will provide information about the context in which the methods above were applied. In the following sections, I will identify historical and geographical trends that inform contemporary social patterning and provide background information regarding these factors and discourse on Afro-Brazilian dances in Brazil.

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[26] Rapport is defined as the feeling of connectedness and trust needed to conduct good interviews or other forms of ethnographic research; Rapport rests on the researcher's ability to create an atmosphere of positivity, trust, and respect during ethnographic proceedings (Mannik and McGarry 2017, 240). I remember something Dr. Ferreira said at the conclusion of an interview with Paco and Daniel. He remarked that in the years that he has worked with Daniel, he had never before heard some of what was discussed. I take great pride in Dr. Ferreira's admission; that, despite language barriers, in that space in time I was able to affect, facilitate, and honor their vulnerability.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

My fieldwork in Brazil was exponentially more rewarding than envisioned. Not only was I able to witness the embodiment of a history that I, as a Black female from the United States, have been slighted of, I was also allowed to partake in the testimonies of Pelotas' own. My original hypothesis outlined in the introduction, that dance acts as both an agent and reagent, was confirmed in each of the vignettes provided below. The performances and experiences to be reviewed endore my assertion that dance is inextricably linked to politics in Brazil. The dancing body, acted upon by external forces i.e. social cues, polities, racism, sexism, etc., became a mediator through performance transformed these forces into movement. Through performance, imbued with political resonance (Berg 1993, 65), mediation became activism and dance became a powerful means of affecting and transforming intra/interpersonal relations in the city. The visual data gathered, notes from interviews and my own revelations after having participated in Afro-dance workshops hosted by the company, were congruent with this line of thought as well. My arguments were made sound in performances reviewed and interviews conducted. Outstanding aspects of my fieldwork experience will be presented and explicated in depth in the section following.

Performance Reviews

"The People of This Land, When They Sing, They Sing of Pain (Todo povo dessa terra, quando pode cantar, canta de dor)"

This performance was the fourth of five artistic presentations in the 5th Annual Black-Dance and Theater Festival (*VIII Mostra de Dança e Teatro de Origem Africana*), organized by Daniel Amaro. The finale of the three-day festival that kicked off with a parade around downtown Pelotas, the exhibition began at 8pm on the night of November 10th at the Public Library of Pelotas. I would like to add that the parade was equally inspired and germane to this

thesis. The parade began at Coronel Pedro Osório Square next to the Secretary of Culture

building and concluded in the inner courtyard of the restaurant *Sal, Sabor, e Brasa* in the Central

Market of downtown Pelotas (SEE Figure 7). I was invited to attend but a requisite of

participation in the procession was wearing white. I did not pack any white items and had to go

to a local store to buy the proper garments. When I asked Daniel why he asked participants to

wear white he said it was to symbolize peace and to honor Batuque traditions (regional name for

Candomblé practices). Of the 40 or so people, I would say that the crowd, made up of

capoeiristas[27], community members, Company affiliates, and local Afro Jam musicians consisted

of primarily Black participants. As we were making our rounds, en route to the Central Market,

we would pause occasionally allowing the music to fill the space and letting our presence be

Figure 7 - Procession (Holding the banner: Left- Me, Right- Paco Gomes)
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

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[27] Practictioners of capoeira

known; members of the community would join in the procession or stop to take pictures as we went along. There was an older Black woman who especially outstanding among the rest. As we entered the market and made our way to the courtyard, she traveled right alongside us clapping her hands and dancing samba as if in each toe tap and hip swivel, she read a chapter from her life story. Because the building is an enclosed space, the percussion, the music, the energy reverberated inside the courtyard creating a sort of dizzying, encompassing effect. As Daniel and Paco and others began to set up and begin the transition into the discussion portion of the evening, the music still played and the woman, still, with her eyes closed, danced samba.

Back to the performance in review, interestingly, this piece was most complementary to what I envisioned dance as, being an intersection of vision and movement, would be (Davida 2012). Here the body was an agent of discourse, detailing of the lived experiences by keeping time and bodying space. In many ways this piece represented what I hypothesized as the social indiscretions caused by historical convenience. Created in response to a recent affront towards the Afro community of Pelotas, this piece, danced by public performers Emanuel Brizolara and Naiane Ribeiro Rosa, was particularly difficult to process. The other works from the night include: fragments from a theatrical piece titled "*Ogum*" that was choreographed by Daniel and Paco and was inspired by the archaeological work of Dr. Ferreira and colleagues at the local beef jerky plantation Sao Joao; a samba performance by the General Telles School of Samba (Escola de Samba General Telles), choreographed and danced by Raissa Gadêa and Wesley Oliveira and directed by Daniel Amaro; a spoken word piece performed by Ingrid Duarte titled, "Bedtime Stories For Black Girls (*Historias para ninar meninas negras*)" that emphasizes the routines of four black women affirming their experience through songs/prayers and reminds them that in action they embody the deity *Exu*; and fragments of a tributary samba piece titled "Commotion

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(*Fuzuê*)" also choreographed and directed by Daniel Amaro. The night was a celebration of

Black culture and highlighted the diversity and interdisciplinary nature of expressive arts. With it

being a celebration of the African heritage of Pelotas and, by extension, Brazil, the vast majority

of attendees were white. I counted at least twelve seemingly Black members of a crowd of no

more than a hundred. To the front of the grand room on the second floor of the library, was the

stage at center, lights and technology to the left, and a section for musicians (one of which I

learned was from Mozambique) for pieces that required live musical accompaniment. The

seating was arranged into three sections, I sat stage left. To the back of the auditorium, there

were merchants selling artisanal/handmade creations - from tapestries and painting to little dolls

and necklaces - and also printed and painted representations of various deities (*Orixás*). On a

leaflet was handed out prior, on it a brief statement about the piece. It reads:

> "(it) is a work that portrays and presents perspective on the black body in Pelotas. Even though it is a city was a black majority, it still presents black as secondary from its origin to present day. Let's look to the Black body, let's look to the Black people, let's look at ourselves…Let's look at all we have built, because we are the rulers of our memory only. [translated]" [28]

This performance began with dancers Emanuel Brizolara and Naiane Ribeiro Rosa walking

through the aisle on either side of the central row of chairs (SEE Figure 8). They slowly and in

apparent wonder walked towards the stage humming and looking gazing across the auditorium.

As they entered center stage, they present the audience with a series of rhetorical questions that

begin with the initial questions, "Are there black people in this audience? Doesn't look like it.

Are there black people in Pelotas? (*Tem pretos nessa plateia? Parece que não. Tem negros em*

Pelotas?)" The performers engaged in brash, scattered yet grandiose gesticulations as if to

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[28] "...de dor é um trabalho que retrata e apresenta um olhar sobre o corpo negro na cidade de Pelotas, que apesar de ser um município com uma grande maioria negra, ainda apresenta o negro como secundário, desde sua origem até os atuais dias. Olhemos para o corpo negro, olhemos para o negro, olhemos para si...Olhemos para tudo construímos, pois somos senhores apenas de nossa memória."

Figure 8 - Emanuel Brizolara and Naiane Ribeiro Rosa in "*Todo povo dessa terra, quando pode cantar, canta de dor*"
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

portray the disturbed nature of the discussion they have been asked to retell and their opposition

to the spatial limitations placed on the Black body by such questioning. The initial questions,

which were quoted at the start of the second section of chapter three, the discussion of space, are

highlighted here as an initiatory appeal to the audience to critically engage with the content

presented before them. That the dancers looked out into the crowd, pointed and asked repeatedly

if there were Black people in Pelotas in an almost dead silent auditorium served as an eerie

juxtaposition of real versus ideal. In a satirical manner, the dancers would also laugh

incredulously after a question. The laughter after the repeated question asking if there were any

Black people (*Tem?*) was particularly unsettling to me as the answer was obviously yes, though social recollections and spatial quartering would say otherwise. As I mentioned, the crowd was predominantly white attendees who have likely not, if ever, dealt with such direct commentary about race. I remember at one point during the production Emanuel and Naiane left the stage and wandered out into the audience. Emanuel happened to approach my area and asked an audience member just to my right, "Your hair, can I touch it? (*Eso pelo teu, posso tocar?*);" Naiane did the like on the right side of the auditorium in a more general way to the entire audience. If there was a unitary response, it was inaudible from where I was sitting. The member's response to Emanuel was almost harder to witness than was the performance. The member, a white female, answered yes and grabbed her hair and moved slightly forward so that he could, indeed, touch her hair; more than missing the point that the question was rhetorical and a play on a microaggression often heard by Black people from their white counterparts in discussions about Black people's hair texture. This piece reminded me that even with a piece as powerful as this one, people can only meet you at their level of understanding. This does not negate from the social activistic ambit of the performance, but it definitely proves that dance can be cathartic, a way to engage with the truths of the present provided by historical dysfunction and release the toxic in hopes that it will return as peace (Brown, Kuwabong, and Olsen 2014, 357).

Continuing, a monologue by the female dancer, Naiane, also confronted societal perceptions of the Black body. In her diatribe against the contemporary narrations of the Black body, she exclaimed - *"A carne mais barata do mercado? É a minha carne…É a carne negra.[29]"* The message here really underlined dance as a reflection and discourse of status and power, a conclusion of the presented works at "Of, By, and For the People" (Berg 1993, 65). The

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[29] "The cheapest meat/flesh in the markets? It is my flesh/body…It is (the) black/dark flesh/meat/body."

commentary highlights the damages of the perception of the Black Brazilian as a second-class citizen. This collocation of citizenship and the Black body is further exemplified throughout the near ten-minute piece. This piece touches on Smith's (2016) chapter titled, "The Paradox of Black Citizenship" where she expands upon what it means to be Black and a citizen in Brazil. She pronounces the Black body as "pressed against the margins," discounted from national belonging, qualified only by their adherence to laws of the land (paying taxes, identity cards, voting) (Smith 2016, 79). The suffering that comes with this dualistic self-ordering is discussed with this piece. The repetition of the words "*existência*[30]," "*corpo*[31]," "and the phrase "*ser negro*" throughout seemed to stem from an original question aimed at prescribed "Brazilness" - "*Por que para ser brasileiro, eu preciso ser o outro*[32]?*" The woes of categorization are noted in this performance as locally felt by its Black members. At the conclusion of the performance, the dancers stand side by side and stare off into the distance as the lights dim. I was, along with other attendees, left to tussle with the personified collateral of a conditional society.

Afro-Dance Workshop

The second experience I would like to highlight as integral to my understanding of the vision Daniel had for his city and the community is a personal anecdote. Multifarious is the reach of this dance company and its director. This experience, my participation in a closed workshop that took place on November 20th, 2019 in the Public Library of Pelotas, was unique in many ways. I was invited by Daniel to attend and was one of twelve participants. Of the twelve, only two were males; they were white presenting. Of the women, including myself, seven were Black and the remaining three were white presenting. I use "white presenting" here and "seemingly black" in the previous review because they fit my understanding of white having grown up in the

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[30] "Existence"
[31] "Body"

[32] "Why is it that in order to be Brazilian, I need to be other?"

United States, specifically in Tennessee and California. However, as I mentioned in the

methodology chapter, race in Brazil is a very confusing concept. Due to the invention of early

caste systems established during the country's period of whitening[33], from about 1872-1940

(Telles 2004, 29), and livened by the ideals of racial democracy, immoderate colorism resonant

with these pillars of racial ideology (Telles 2004, 45) is still rampant Brazilian society today.

Continuing, during this workshop, I had the opportunity to engage with Daniel's wife, also Afro-

Brazilian, and a beautiful dancer. The workshop began with grounding and breathing exercises. I

would like to insert here that, though I danced when I was younger, I do not claim to be a dancer

by profession; my delves into the world of dance have been purely recreational up until now. It is

for this that I was quite humbled by Daniel's invitation. After the grounding work and light

stretching, we began to go through footwork and movements associated with Orixás and samba,

along with body isolations. Just after this, Daniel divided the group into three sections: those

who would embody the movements of *Iansã*, of *Oxum*, and *Oxumaré*. I remember what it felt

like to take on the movements of the deity *Iansã* (SEE Figure 9). Of the three gods assigned

randomly to workshop attendees, her movements were the most feverish but also filled with such

vibrancy as a Black female being able to connect with the energy of her movements in tandem

with the movements of the others in a politicized space on such an important day...much more

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[33] Incentivized by the Brazilian government, there was great influxes of European immigrants to Brazil to "whiten the Black of Brazil's population (Telles 2004, 29)." Intermarriage was inevitable, but the implementation of caste systems, as a means of social control, and the idea of "status exchange," a theory that implies that members of a subordinate racial group can marry up (Telles 2004, 189), made for a very problematic social ordering that continues to influence sociality in Brazil to this day.

critical was my mission to dive into Afro-dance and trace the hand the company has had in

destabilizing and challenging the authority of the written word (Albuquerque and Sanchez 2015,

Figure 9 - Afro-Dance Workshop at the Public Library of Pelotas
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

19) and preferential recollections of the city of Pelotas.

In reference to the section on negotiations of space and memory, if the physical body is a

living archive of dance and movement (Davida 2012, 119-143) and if it is through dance that

many African principles and moral values continue to vibrate (Walker 2001, 352) then the

physical body becomes a social means of negotiation. What better place to talk about archives of

representative knowledges and "official histories" than a library? To start, I want to talk a little

about this date, November 20th. In Brazil, this date is known as Black Consciousness Day (D*ia*

*Nacional da Consci*ência *Negra*). Commemorated annually, it marks the death of the great

quilombola leader Zumbi dos Palmares, an Afro-Brazilian hero. As history will tell it, Domingo

Jorge Velho, commander of the Portuguese colonial army who led the massive assault and defeated the rebellious "malefactor" Palmares is written as a hero, defender of nationhood (Walker 2001 p, 292-294). Scribed in the name of patriotism, it is no wonder this day where social memory recorded an act of egotistical social control has become a contemporary symbol of resistance.

Now, let's talk about Pelotas Public Library. When you Google the word "public," the first definition that comes up says: "of or concerning the people as a whole." A second definition reads: "ordinary people in general; the community" followed by the example sentence - the library is open to the public. In Smith's work (2016), she talks about the privatization of public space. This library is a perfect example of such. Not only is the library too far from those who live in the periphery (members of the community), but, as it serves as a museum as well, to use the amenities and access the resources there, you need a membership card. The card is presented only after a monetary exchange or contribution, thereby making it exclusive. As mentioned, Afro-descendants are more likely (than their European descendant counterparts) to live in poverty (Hooker 2008, 281). In a city known for its European identity and a segregated cityscape, access to this public domain becomes a civic and legal declaration of where Black people are not welcomed (Smith 2016, 93).

What I have presented here, this interplay of truths, is reflected in Daniel's response to my questions regarding the importance of workshop that day: "...the BPP (*Bibliotheca Pública Pelotense*) workshop meant to me, first of all, as a way to reinforce the resistance of the Black people in Brazil, honoring a great quilombola leader Zumbi dos Palmares [34]and also the reframing of that place. Since 2017, the company has been exploring Pelotas' historic buildings,

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[34]*Quilombo do Palmares* was a large maroon community established by fugitive slaves in Northeastern Brazil that was built on the elements of Central Africa societies (Andrews and De la Fuente 2018, 39). In its prime, it is said to have been home to some 11,000 to 20,000 people of varied races (Andrews and De la Fuente 2018, 491-492)

occupying them with immaterial heritage of Afro-Brazilian culture." [translated from a

conversation I had with Daniel]. I will speak more on "reincorporation" of space with the

immaterial knowledge in the next performance review.

Dança dos Orixás

The last piece I will discuss here was the most encompassing of all components argued in

this thesis. The performance, titled *Dança dos Orixás* and its locale, Charqueada São João

entwined to portray the lived experience or collective memory of Afro-Brazilians in Pelotas

(SEE Figure 10). A microcosm of Brazil, Pelotas has an African legacy that is given a cursory

glance at most. The project, *Dança dos Orixás*, was created to celebrate and value African

heritage and to reframe blackness and merge the Black history of the municipality with that of

Figure 10 - The Essence of a Moment
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

the widely accepted biased sense of nostalgia (Ferreira 2019).

On November 16th, I arrived at the beef jerky plantation about an hour before 7pm, when the production was set to start, to help Dr. Ferreira set up posterboards detailing the archaeological excavations completed by his team at the plantation. Once these items were fixed to the walls of the gazebo-like structure, I took a walk around the plantation. It was an eerie and heavy experiences to walk the grounds. As I continued on my survey of the land, I saw the dancers with Daniel doing a run-through of production choreography and I saw people starting to trickle in and talk among themselves. As the hour of commencement drew closer, it was almost as if the sun knew too that a great many dark truths, only visible by firelight, were to be illuminated. Nothing could have prepared me for the inspiring yet truly difficult piece the night would bring. This performance highlighted seven Orixás, or deities, associated with Umbanda and Candomblé practices. In approximate order of animation: *Bara* (also known as *Exú*), *Oxum*, *Iansã*, *Ogum*, *Iemanjá*, *Xangô*, and *Oxalá*. The dancers, João Cruz, Juliana Coelho, Kamany Soares, Érick Dias, Daniele Rosa, Lindysem Santos. and Débora Mendes, were dressed in white, accented with colored cloths that are associated with the respective deity, as is ceremonial in Batuque rituals. The performance opened with *Exú*, the owner of the roads and doors in this world, the gatekeeper, as is tradition. He is always called before any of the other orixás as only he has the power to open the portals between the worlds (Lara 2008 p, 65-66, 122). A note this piece was quite elaborate. Each deity was positioned on the plantation grounds nearby what they were a god of or at least a close representative of. The audience actively participated, following an actress, Larissa Duarte, on a set course through the plantation (SEE Figure 11). Serving as

griot[35], if you will, she led attendees on journey through time and across the spans of with the plantation. At each location, she bowed respectfully to each god as embodied by the dancers and, after naming them, details how each deity is commemorated (representative colors, associated days of the week, etc.). Along with

Figure 11 - The Griot, Larissa Duarte
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

this, at each station, she recounted the history of the *charqueada* – the perils, the pain, and the grueling conditions faced by the enslaved Africans at the hands of the São João plantation owners. After she visited with the embodied gods, they left their initial position and reconvened in front of what once were slave quarters; this space served as a stage for the remainder of the

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[35] In the ancient kingdoms of West Africa, histories and genealogies of a villages were passed down orally. The term griot was reserved for those individuals tasked with collecting and disseminating said knowledge. They served as oral historians, storytellers, poets, dancers, musicians, and actors; using these roles, they taught their clan its history and told the memories of their people. (Mvuyekure 2004, 133)

Figure 12 – Stage
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

performance. After each dancer made their way to the "stage," (SEE Figure 12) so began the

dance aspect of the performance. The dancers remained stationary in a circular formation while

Larissa marked the ground. Also, before the dancers, on the ground just in front of where they

were to dance, there were renditions of the sacred object of each deity (SEE Figure 13).

Figure 13 - Sacred Objects
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

In the performance, *Bara*'s object was the first from the left. It is a key and also a sickle; The object of *Iansã* was, what appeared to me, a duster (SEE Figure 14); *Oxum*'s object is not featured in the picture, but was a mirror wrapped in yellow-gold translucent cloth; The first object from the right, is the object of *Iemanjá*. Like *Oxum*'s her object was a mirror. However, rather than the yellow-gold cloth, it was wrapped in blue translucent cloth; *Oxalá*'s object is the fourth from the left and is a wooden cane; *Xangô* used two double bit axes, pictured second from the right; and lastly, third from the left is a sword, the object of *Ogum*. Summoned by a certain drummed rhythm and ceremonial greeting, each dancer would come forward grab hold of their

Figure 14 - Juliana Coelho as Iansã
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

object bow in reverence and then greet the band. The band was made up of two percussionists,

both males. I do not have the religious or technical vocabulary to describe the procedural

logistics of the performance but the structure of the performance was much like that of a song.

The song pattern was as follows: **intro** – all the dancers danced similar movements in time to an

unvaried rhythm; **verse** – a specific dancer was summoned by a unique ceremonial greeting and

specific drummed rhythm. When summoned, the dancer would come forward procure the sacred

object and dance with the object(s) in hand. Along with a specific object(s), each deity has

distinctive movements or gestures [36]grounded in what they have dominion over; **chorus** – the

singled-out dancer would rejoin the group but continue the gestures of their deity (similar to the

intro). The verse-chorus patterning continued until each performer had payed homage to the

deity they represented, at which point the outro occurs. In the final portion of the performance,

Larissa walked solemnly in between the dancers with a basket in hand. She bowed to each

dancer (deity) and one at a time they bowed back and placed their sacred object in the basket

then exited stage left or right. Once all the objects had been collected, she (Larissa) walked

towards the band and saluted them, basket raised overhead. The music which has since softened

continued as she completed a final circle around the perimeter of the stage. Before the band once

again, kneeling and bowing, she placed the basket of objects at their feet (SEE Figure 15); she

turned around to face the audience. As she somberly walked to center of the stage, the music

died down then ceased. She stood in the center, waiting, until she was joined by the other

performers, percussionists included. Hand in hand they stood. The audience erupted. The

production was finished.

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[36] SEE Appendix B

Figure 15 - The Final Bow
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

When all was said and done, I sobbed profusely. To be transparent, this performance

moved me beyond my own understanding. Brown, Kuwabong, and Olsen (2014) in their book

Myth Performance in African Diaspora, say the drums transport performers and the audience

into a world of convergence, a place where possibility and hope counter against historical,

socioeconomic, and political contradictions (Brown, Kuwabong, and Olsen 2014, 110). I truly

have no words to express what it felt to be consumed with memories recollected and interpreted.

As the shadows danced against the walls, I couldn't help but wonder if these shadows weren't

actually the spirits of ancestors enlivened by remembrance and reverence. In her chapter on post-

periphery performance, Dr. Simone Osthoff, a Brazilian-born artist and scholar and professor at

Pennsylvania State University, discusses the hazards of binary models of art and history

(Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez 2015, 250-268). Divided into that which is central and that

which is marginal. Critical performances, like *Dança dos Orixás,* through movement of the body, negotiate boundaries and question modern life, artistic canons and linear histories (Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez 2015) (Kuhlke and Pine 2014). Here, through movements and gesturing, the dancers were able to generate and transmit knowledge and educate their viewers while reconfiguring the meaning assigned to that space.

The strength required to dance in a place that in the not so distant past was a site of great pain and suffering and where the Black body was disrespected and subjected to inhumane treatment, that these dancers, all Black, were able to define that space on their own terms was truly something to witness. According to Davida (2012) our life experiences (collective memory) are immediately accessible in a way that no one else are (Davida 2012, 150); for this, our bodies, how we move in the world, serve as a nexus of living literature that enables us to engage with socio-cultural constructs of power and negotiate a future (SEE Figures 16-20).

Gilberto R. N. Leal, coordinator of a leading political and cultural organization in Bahia said this in his chapter on Black resistance and achievement in Brazil:

> "It is essential for present (and future) generations of Afro-Brazilians to understand our ancestors' heroic trajectory, for the sake of identity...the foundation of Brazilian society was created by Black people (Walker 2001, 299-300)."

Transcending time and space, this performance positioned the Black body central, redefined the Black Brazilian as integral, and proclaimed the Black history of Pelotas as treasured, personified, and contemporaneous.

Figure 16 - United Front
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

Figure 17 - Ogum, danced by Érick Dias
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

Figure 18 - Oxum, danced by Lindysem Santos
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

Figure 19 - Exú and Ogum, danced by João Cruz and Érick Dias (respectively)
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

Figure 20 - A Picture Worth a Thousand Words
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

On the matter of community-born outlets offering opportunity to its members and facilitating and fostering self-esteem and ancestral pride, the accounts of choreographer and director da Cia., Daniel Amaro, and choreographer Paco Gomes highlighted the ways in which the company benefits the community it serves. The impact and mission of the dance company in Pelotas, and other organizations they had a hand in creating, each shed light on how crucial the dance company was to embracing African heritage and creating a bridge between *periferia* and the greater Pelotas community. The social issues the company sought to alleviate locally were not uncommon to those understood as symptoms nationally, varying in degree based on regionality. Much of what each performance identified were the damages resultant of a conditional society and the circumscription of the Black Brazilian, and by extension the country's African heritage, in narratives of *Brasilidade*. In Jane Desmond's *Meaning in Motion* (1997), Black dancer and performer, and (then) graduate student at Northwestern University, Anna Beatrice Scott details her ethnographic work in San Francisco with a *bloco Afro* group (Desmond 1997 p, 259-268). In her reflections of her experience at a rehearsal, she concludes that the dancing Black body (her body) is tangled in preconceived notions of existence; that she acts as "spectacle, spector, and specter." I found this multiplicitous description of being black both troubling and beautiful. This theme of a split mind is a recognized theme that implicitly manifests in multiple performances and within conversations had with participants. Other recurring themes throughout the reviewed pieces were invisibility/marginality, redefinition of (local and personal) space, and a reconnection to ancestrality.

Final Reflections from Interviews

To round out my results section, I thought it important to include little vignettes about each of the interviewees. These are overviews from transcriptions of their interviews. Their

commentary was used quoted at various times throughout this thesis. That said, there was not enough time to include all the ins and outs each interview. That said, in all of the interviews, there were recurring themes of activism, education, and opportunity. My interpretations of the literature and the conclusions that I will note in the final chapter were informed by my conversations and interactions with Daniel, João, Juliana, and Paco.

João

João's interview lasted one hour and twenty-seven minutes. In talking with João, I saw how regionality impacted his understanding of race. Growing up in Sao Paulo, where racial divides are very evident, racism is very strong. He mentioned, however, that having strong mother shielded him from much of the pain that racism causes. Despite having faced some grievances for his hair, he said it wasn't until he arrived in Pelotas in 2013, after receiving a scholarship to the local university, and partnered with Daniel that he really become more aware and more active in the expressing blackness. For him, artistic expression has always been a form of protest, a means to discuss issues of Black consciousness, and a conversation starter about taboo topics like the politics of race. Prior to his partnership with the Cia da Dança Afro Daniel Amaro, he had partnered with other dance companies in Sao Paulo and in Pelotas. Reflecting on his experiences in the companies, he found that most, if not all, members of those companies were white. He said that because of this, and the fact that Afro-history is silenced in university conversations, dance allowed him to construct his identity and connect to the past presently. Through his own research on dance in Brazil, he found that in some way or another, all other dance styles are rooted in diasporic dance styles and that because of multicultural initiatives, African inspired dances are only mentioned in relation to folk dance and receive little academic acknowledgement. Believing that performance can be didactic and used to educate and fight

institutional constructions, João hopes to teach Afro dance in the future in an effort to re-establish African heritage of Brazil in schools. His participation in the Dança dos Orixás production was the culminations of his pursuit for knowledge, passion for dance, and his desire to talk about the Black experience in Pelotas.

Juliana

Juliana's interview lasted for about an hour and five minutes. I do not have a more accurate time for her interview because my phone crashed and the Otter audio file was damaged and in the process of transferring my data to a new phone was deleted. Luckily, I took notes during her interview session and had transcribed quite a bit of her interview before this happened. Juliana was born and raised in Pelotas. She was introduced very early on to dance through a Black carnival club in the city that, at the time, were segregated from white carnival clubs. Since then, she has trained in rhythmic gymnastics, Afro-dance, and, as is common with all four interviewees, jazz and ballet. Her interview was unique in that she was the only female perspective I heard during my fieldwork, other than Daniel's wife, who I unfortunately did not have the opportunity to talk to in depth. In Juliana's reflections, she too talked about the dissociation from the country's African legacy in history curriculums taught in schools. She mentioned that in her time at university, she began to see education as political. In her experience, she found that professors would mention blackness discreetly and only in the context of slavery.

For this, through dance and her role as a teacher (of Dance and Physical Education), she seeks to counter racist narratives that "whiten" the country's African roots. She also made a critical reflection about the impact consumerism and the commodification of Afro-dances has had on her understanding of the role she plays in performing Afro-dance pieces. Not only is the

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university in Pelotas only the second university to teach Afro-dance (other than a university in Salvador), but it she also found that in a congress of the arts she attended, all the university professors were white. Her partnership with Daniel and the dance company, her work as a teacher, and her activism in the city center around Black empowerment and pride. Her efforts, through dance, like her performance in Dança dos Orixás, are to challenge stereotypes and provoke the people of the city to engage in serious dialogue about spatial politics and racism.

Daniel and Paco

In the methods section of my thesis, I stated that in hindsight it perhaps would have been better to have interviewed Daniel and Paco separately. I still stand by this but I also this believe that the way the two fed off of each other made for a truly enriching and beautiful interview experience. To me the collaborative nature of their interview was summative of how social activism really is the work of the community. It also helped that Paco, who has danced internationally and has a dance company in San Francisco (Paco Gomes and Dancers) speaks both Portuguese and English. In some instances, Paco and Daniel so in-sync that Paco would finish a thought Daniel started and relate it to his life experience. It was like watching uncles/brothers reminisce. Their interview was the longest of the three at two hours and four minutes. In many ways, their commentary was most precious to me while writing this thesis and they are both foregrounded in many ways throughout this thesis. What I found most interesting and valuable about them was the wealth of knowledge about the history of the African diaspora and the legacy of Africa in Brazil. They both noted the Brazilian educational system as very prejudiced and spoke of dance and community engagement as a means to break down (social/mental) barriers and open doors (opportunity). Paco specifically talked about how he suffered to think and to be placed in a box. What was interesting about his phrasing is that I had

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heard a similar expression while watching the film *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019),

just prior to my trip to Pelotas. Directed by Joe Talbot, the film tackles homelessness and the

cost and legacy Black disenfranchisement. One of the main characters, Montgomery Allen, a

Black playwright, honors the tragic, untimely passing of a community member (a Black male)

through a theatre production. In one of the scenes of the play he exclaims and pleas with the

audience, "The world put him in a box! And he never pushed beyond it. Let us break the boxes!

Let us give each other the courage to see beyond the stories we are born in to! (The Last Man in

San Francisco 2019)."

Despite the hardships that they have each personally faced (i.e. Paco mentioned that he

was called a derogatory name several times over the course of his life due to the color of his

skin) or witnessed, both Paco and Daniel actively strive to break through the structural obstacles

(i.e. racism, Black shame, colorism, classism, dance cannons and norms), empower the Black

community, and promote Black auto(bio)graphy though creative expression. Daniel especially

says that his work is has been to show the transition of the Black man from Africa to Brazil and

to synchronize history with contemporary Black experiences. The greatest comment that Paco

made, I believe, is that "…anthropologists and archaeologists (and the like) are just now

discovering what (my) peoples already have known and continue to know in and out of time and

through the body..." Just as Paco talked about the journey of *Ogum*, the theme of transformation

in the deity's saga, so too have Paco and Daniel, through performance and civic engagement,

aided in the transforming the dialogue about what it means to be Brazilian and Black.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

"If silence is a symptom of colonial trauma then performance restores speech through bodily

dialogue (Smith 2016, 200)."

With this thesis, I sought to delineate the experience of Black Brazilians in Pelotas, Brazil

from literature's dangerous broad-stroked explications of the lived experiences of Black citizens

in Brazil. By exploring Afro-Brazilian dance and working with the dance company, I was able to

get a snapshot of the consequences of a repressed African legacy and its impact on the Black

body over time. I believe that each of the performances and experiences reviewed, to varying

degrees corroborated my arguments and complimented what I sought at the outset of this

journey. As we have seen, the perverse incorporation of Black identity into mainstream Brazilian

culture via dance or other expressive art forms is not a new discussion or practice (Selka 2007,

6), however, most literature concerning Black culture and contemporary social implications in

Brazil focuses on Bahia (Smith 2016, 13). Therefore, the results and information presented here

serve as a congruent yet varied perspective on research about the lived realities and experience of

Black Brazilians in society.

As evidenced by the research presented here, Brazil's relationship with its Afro

population and affiliated cultural practices is complicated at best. When it comes to dance, much

of the literature reflects this struggle, in defining what the term "dance" encompasses and as

argued, in defining what it means to be Brazilian. Throughout my review of the literature on

dance and Brazilian niceties, politics proved to be the linchpin of many societal inconsistencies

and, often, was the elephant in the room when discussing Afro-Brazilian visibility, stereotypes

and representation. When I set out on this journey, I had no idea that this thesis would evolve into an exploration of political rhetoric. The initial rationale for conducting fieldwork in Pelotas, Brazil, and collaborating with Daniel, the Cia. de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro, and affiliates was to explore generational conceptions of what it meant to be Black in Brazilian society as defined through performance. Though I questioned the acceptance of samba and capoeira as Brazilian symbols, I did not fully grasp the socio-historical implications that would result from this qualification. As we saw, legislation, like Law 10.639/03 or even in the passing of the *Lei Aurea*, without national backing or inclusion, becomes an amalgamation of passive statements that have little to no effect in the lived realities of Afro-Brazilians. National narratives in Brazil have neglected, ejected, and devalued the Black body and its contribution to national imaginings. British social anthropologist Paul Connerton, at the onset of his book, *How Societies Remember*, conceptualizes ignorance of the past as a transgression to the present. He says that if "past injustice has shaped the structure of society's arrangements for founding its sovereignty, the question arises, what, if anything, ought to be done to rectify these injustices (Connerton 1989, 9)?" I have not an answer to Connerton's question but what I do know is that acknowledgement, recognition, intentional actioning, and access are good places to start.

After conducting my fieldwork, completing a comprehensive literature review and writing this thesis, the results confirmed, in varying degrees, the arguments I posed at the beginning of this thesis. That performative politics, politics done for show or to bolster national imagery, inform divisive racialized narratives that dictate socio-cultural functioning. Due to the incautious disregard of the country's African heritage and the continual presentation of Black as always lacking and/or outcast, its Black members have been made to suffer a sort of identity fragmentation (Hordge-Freeman 2012, 129) - of being a citizen yet not reaping the benefits of

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citizenship, My first argument, that the nationalistic pursuit of modernity, performative politics

in Brazil, and the racialized portrayal of the Black body/Black Brazilian and the country's

African heritage have contemporarily marginalized Afro-descendant members of society, was

magnified in the performance "*Todo povo dessa terra, quando pode cantar, canta de dor*. This

performance also fulfilled my second argument that the body is a site of recovery and protest

through which individuals are able to pronounce their mastery over confinement. The *Dança dos

Orixás* performance was in full accordance with my argument that the Black body, through

dance is able to negotiate the terms and conditions of their lived experience; that through the

engagement in performances that challenge and/or contest selective social remembering. Also, as

I mentioned in my methods section, the research Dr. Ferreira had conducted at the plantation was

foundational to my understanding of the importance of the productions of the company. His

argument was that at the juncture of slavery, liberalism, and capitalism (the trifecta of

modernity), we also find acts "everyday resistance" (Ferreira 2019). Through the recovery,

identification, and cataloging of artefacts, Dr. Ferreira and his team were able to show the active

covert and overt opposition of enslaved Africans to conditions forced upon them (via the

maintenance and practice of religious traditions and rituals). This performance complemented

Dr. Ferreira's findings and dance anthropologist and associate professor Yvonne Daniel's

conclusions that Oricha (Afro-Caribbean orthography) dance movements and performances are

tales of human resistance and persistence, and teach humanity and strength (Walker 2001, 357).

Lastly, what I found in my personal experience in the Afro-dance workshop, as well as in

each of the other reviewed productions, is that they illustrate the distinctiveness and solidarity of

music and dance known as choreographic apartness. Choreographic apartness is a common

aesthetic principle of dances in the African diaspora (Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez 2015,

92). It is the negotiation of difference (Albuquerque and Bishop-Sanchez 2015, 92), which is pertinent to our conversation on mind-body alignment/mental-physical definitions of identity. Each show that the body enables us to dialogue with and challenge socio-cultural constructs of power and space to negotiate the future. Dance and community activists, like Paco and Daniel, serve as educators and mediators. According to Pardue (2007) in his article on dance in São Paulo, how you learn affects self-image, and informs your perspective of society and the world. His whole article rests upon the question, "How can one learn what is not taught in school (Pardue 2007, 687)?" The dance company examined is both a family and a school. It is a place where dancers gather necessary non-verbal tools, that once encoded into the body's repertoire of movements, manifest and inform other social actualities of a lived experience (Walker 2001, 357). The Cia de Dança Daniel Amaro is more than a place for recreation, it provides its members a space of safe exploration of the self as a present embodiment of the past that, through performance, validates and valorizes Black identity. The company through performance creates a purposeful, strategic and vivid exposé of the lived reality of the city's Black members. This conclusion resounds with my third argument that participation in community (dance) organizations leads to positive identification; that through community engagement Black individuals find solace and become political entities (SEE Figure 21). Dale, Hollerman, and Hyatt (2007) in their article on dance and neuroscience stated that in the context of an individual's identity, dancing is an integral part of social life in a community (Dale et al pg. 93). It is for this that the Cia de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro members and associates were fore-fronted in this thesis, to expand the conversation on what it means to be Brazilian and to showcase the collateral of stereotypes rooted in colonial appraisements.

If narratives demonstrate the way people see themselves in the fast-evolving yet ever so stagnant world (Kuhlke and Pine 2014, 98), then the who gets what, when, and where (Hanna 1979) is not only tied to sociality, it's a political endgame. The city of Pelotas, conforming to national patterns, minimizes and conceals the integral

Figure 21 – Community
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

role slavery has played in the industrialization of the city. The social memory of the city

imagines a city pulled up by its bootstraps by hard-working men. That plantations exist in the

city with little discussion or recognition of their implications on contemporary sociality

dematerializes the Black body and its contribution to modern assets. João in discussing the ways

in which national narratives can be disruptive to the Black Brazilian in society said this: "...art is

very important to discuss issues of Black consciousness. In the city of Pelotas, Daniel set a

precedent. He brings awareness to the community and through his productions, he creates

dialogue about social issues, racism and visibility in the city and (of the Black experience)

throughout history [translated from 2019 interview with João Cruz]." The efforts of Daniel and Co. to reframe blackness and Black history in the municipality counter national and local disjointedness.

With this thesis, I sought to delineate the experience of Black Brazilians in Pelotas, Brazil from literature's dangerous broad-stroked explications of the lived experiences of Black citizens in Brazil. By exploring Afro-Brazilian dance and working with the dance company, I was able to get a snapshot of the consequences of a repressed African legacy and its impact on the Black body over time. As we have seen, the perverse incorporation of Black identity into mainstream Brazilian culture via dance or other expressive art forms is not a new discussion or practice (Selka 2007, 6), however, most literature concerning Black culture and contemporary social implications in Brazil focuses mostly in the state of Bahia (Smith 2016, 13). Therefore, the results and information presented here serve as a congruent yet varied perspective on research about the lived realities and experience of Black Brazilians in society. I believe that each of the performances and experiences reviewed, to varying degrees corroborated my arguments and complimented what I sought at the outset of this journey. Through dance Daniel and Company members/affiliates are able to combat the dissolution of the Black body, past and presently, and reinsert the collective experience of its Black members into social recollections.

Conclusion

"A society is not merely a particular configuration of people and productive resources within a geographical boundary; it is a set of stories -moral, political, religious, and economic - about why the existing order is desirable or inevitable, or neutral, (or more confusingly, all the above) (Boyle 1996 p, 187-188)."

For centuries, despite the conscious efforts of those in power to minimize and erase their contributions and silence them by relegating them to the margins, Afro-descendants have continued to persist and protest, assert and advocate for the rights, protections, and opportunities promised by their country and warranted them by the technical definition of nationality/citizenship. Between the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the passing of Civil Rights Activist John Lewis, and the Trump Administration's recent ban and condemnation of critical race theory and diversity training in the armed forces, deeming them "un-American," to write this thesis has been none other than difficult on a good day and inspiring yet draining on a bad day. As I mentioned at the start of this thesis, research about Afro-descendants and contributions to the field of Afro-Latin American studies over the years has been few and far between. Having only gained momentum in the past two decades, works that centrally position Africans and their descendants in the creation of the Americas and modern worlds is still lacking (Walker 2001, 1). Trump's actions display why this is the case in academia. His actions affect not only United States citizens, especially Black and Brown members, but they also impact international affairs on topics like human rights. The effects of increasing globalization/modernization on identity and valuations of personhood is made plain in this thesis.

In many ways Trump's argument that courses and research about race and diversity are un-American, as detrimental and ill-fated as it is, is valid. Why bother to teach antiracist courses or engage in discourse when the very fabric of the nation was stitched from the unacknowledged back-breaking efforts of enslaved peoples and is saturated with racist narratives? The same can be said of Brazil's current administration and president Jair Bolsonaro. Having made openly homophobic, racist, and misogynist (divisive) statements (Human Rights Watch 2019),

Bolsonaro, not unlike other elected officials in Brazil's history, hums the tune of a tired song whose lyrics detail of discrimination, corruption, elitism, patriarchy, human disregard and "nationalism" to a fault (Human Rights Watch 2019; Ellicott 2015, 336). I am reminded now of a quote by African American historian John Henrik Clarke: "You cannot subjugate a man and recognize his humanity, his history and his personality (Walker 2001, 39). Of the expansive, non-exhaustive literature review completed throughout this process, this quote was especially unsettling to read. To me, it concisely articulates the root of the plight of Black and Brown peoples globally, particularly so in the Americas and expressly so in Brazil. Here we are two decades later and Clarke's words still ring true. Yet, as detailed with this thesis, their significance remains largely unacknowledged or is hushed by all means. Brazil, a nation sprung from imperialism/colonialism and maintained by racist/discriminatory ideologies and traditions, today, see in its populace great disparity and social unrest. The instances from my fieldwork in Brazil recalled here, and their parallel to the experience of Black artists in the United States as detailed by Dr. John Perpener III decades later, indicate just how important works about the Black experience are. Whether danced, scribed, or verbalized, the truths of marginalized groups, deserve recognition and inclusion in national and local discourse. By focusing on the Daniel Amaro Afro-Dance Company in Pelotas and its efforts to reinsert and centralize Afro-Brazilian experiences in contemporary chronicles of the city, it is my hope that this thesis will further the efforts of those past who endeavored for the inclusion of Black experiences in international/national/local discourse and academic literature.

James Boyle, a law professor at American University, either had great intuition or spoke of his wildest dreams when, in his book, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens: Law and the Construction of the Information Society,* he posited information as one of the most important

resources known to humankind (Boyle 1996, 174). Reflecting back on all that I read, recorded, witnessed, and experienced during this thesis writing process and, in my fieldwork, I couldn't agree more with Boyle's conclusion that information is a different kind of resource (Boyle 1996, 174). Through this research process I have concluded that social memory and historical reconstructions are complementary and, all the while, nonidentical to the collective memory of the powerless (meaning those not in power; in a duel in the realm of power, historical patterning would render these individuals or groups as not representative of the majority). Historians are responsible for recounting the story of the world's origins and detailing the events that led us to where we are today. There is hardly ever much contemplation over ideas and statements claimed true by historians. The propensity of societies' view of historians as infallible has proven problematic; based on their assumptions, valuations, and biases, over time, they have been able to reject and substitute evidence, or their own interpretation, as they see fit or in favor of political enterprises (Connerton 1989, 13). So too, have the social sciences, in their nascence, been complicit in similar practices, as we have seen in the case of Gilberto Freyre in the Brazilian context. In the case of Black members in the city of Pelotas, access to and the information provided about the city's African heritage becomes a bargaining chip, it permits a sort of freedom, a freedom to self-define and to reimagine and actively shape society (Boyle 1996, 174).

Future Research

In her chapter, "*The "Why Dance" Project: Choreographing the Text and Dancing the Data,"* educator, choreographer, and dancer Michèle Moss asks the question, "Can dance be an important representation of history and culture? (Davida 2012 p, 67-83; 458)" This thesis is a capital "y," "e," "s" (SEE Figure 22). Agreeing with the conclusion that dance needs to be included more in analyses of socio-cultural trends (Kraut 2003, 188), my hope is that this thesis

will further the efforts of those past to bring dance and performance to the forefront of sociological and political evaluations. Not only does dance inflect history through diachronic storytelling, it is an archive of

Figure 22 - "*A arte vai salver o mundo*!!" – "Art will save the world!!" Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

wisdom and knowledge that has been passed down through movements, song, and sodality. I

think Pardue (2007) said it best in his discussion of the obstacles of dance within marginalized

communities: "The world is not just dance; you have to understand how to deal with all social

forces; understand how to claim your rights and not be manipulated by the system (Pardue 2007,

702)." At the outset of this section, I stated that my original reasoning for going to Brazil to

conduct fieldwork was to explore the impacts of generational understanding on Black identity.

When I asked Paco, whose current research, titled "GriotLab," and didactic framework identifies

the body at dance as a culmination of science, dance, and ancestry, why he thought it was

important to study interdisciplinary literature regarding the African diaspora, the various lineages of the *Orixás*, and the African legacy in Brazil, he said: "I do this for my son, I do this for him." One of my favorite quotes is by Black scholar and abolitionist, Frederick Douglass. "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." Paco's response reminded me of this quote. Though this theme was not acknowledged explicitly in this thesis, I think in many ways the literature, commentary, examples, and historical framework presented here imply the Black identity as being interrupted by political dogma. The generational impact dance can have on youth in development is also an area for future research that I would have loved to have explored here if there was more time. I love working with kids and would love to pursue this line of thought in a follow up with my project in Brazil, in the United States, or another locale with Afro-descendant populations. This past summer, the opportunity arose for me to journey to Accra, Ghana. For financial reasons and due to COVID-19, I was unable to go. However, like Primus through dance traversed the roads less traveled (at the time) (Perpener III 2005, 175), I do hope that my research will foster another opportunity to explore the country on theme of Black identity, dance, music, youth in development, and/or some combination of the presented.

Which brings me to my next area for future research. In its inaugural year with the International Programs, I took a trip to Barbados. Co-hosted by Dr. Tina Thompson who led business management and quantitative methods course that comparatively discussed workplace diversity and equity in the U.S and in Barbados, and Dr. Keith Pluymers who led a historical humanities course about the environmental history of Barbados. I have had my fair share of international experience but this trip was special in that it was an opportunity for me to learn and experience what it was like to be included in a representative majority. Pearl Primus, who declared her career a "quest...a search for roots (Perpener III 2005, 175)," said that at the

intersection of her life as a dancer and anthropologist was enrichment and nourishment found in her deep engagement with many peoples in various countries (Perpener III 2005, 175).

While there, I explored Barbados via educational excursions to local museums, famous food spots, and the historic downtown. I, to the point of this interjection, even had the opportunity to review two dance performances. The first, an impromptu performance that would be classified as social dancing as it was in an unstructured setting (observed at a local fish fry), and the second, an organized production put on for tourists in a "dinner-and-a-show" format. When there was free time, I, along with other students on the trip, would walk around the city and engage with Bajan culture and peoples. On a walk around Saint Michael Parish, one of eleven parishes on the island, en route to downtown Bridgetown, I saw this sign (SEE Figure 23). I read it and, though, we had learned a great deal about the island and the extensive colonial history of British and Dutch dominion over the Caribbean island, I was shocked. In a place where about 95 percent of the population is of Afro descent, the islanders, too, were on a quest for identity vested in the knowledge and recognition of the African legacy of the island. What are the implications of such a finding, what does this mean for Brazil's Afro population and other Afro-descendants who, due to historical and political endeavoring, are restricted to the shadows? The interrelationship between dance, the idea of knowing where you come from as a grounding affirmation (Brown, Kuwabong and Olsen 2014, 99), and youth in development is grounds for future research in Brazil.

Figure 23 - Legacy of Africa in Barbados
Personal image, taken during 2019 fieldwork

Final Remarks

This thesis waters a small plot at the corner of Identity Ave. and Agency Way. It

elevates Black voices and Black communicated experiences. In analyzing the ins and outs of

Brazilian society, as explicated in the orations (verbal and embodied) of Daniel, Paco, Juliana,

Joao, and Co., we see the aftereffects of the enshrined colonial caricatures. In Sheila Walker's

African Roots/American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas Brenda Dixon

Gottschild in her chapter, "Stripping the Emperor: The Africanist Presence in American Concert

Dance," she catechizes accepted truths, canon standards, and modern configurations: "...what is

spoken or silenced depends on who is speaking. Who is doing the documenting? From whose

perspective? By whose criteria? And what is being recorded? If language is the exercise of

power, and the act of naming is an assertion of power, then that which is unnamed or misnamed

remains mute, inconsequential, and insignificant (Walker 2001, 89)." Based on Gottschild's assertions, I can only conclude that, in the case of the Cia de Dança Afro Daniel Amaro dance company to dance is to refute nonexistence. To perform is to claim blackness as present, beautiful, intellectual, and central. Referring to the statements quoted above, I agree with Boyle that a society is not defined as globally positioned peoples that it is indeed made up of the stories. I disagree, however, that these stories only refer to existing social arrangement as desirable or serendipitous, or neutral. Perhaps this is true of the stories that are recorded, promoted, and retold, but as we have seen throughout this thesis with the consistent, perpetual efforts to mute Black voices, not every story is included in the recollection of a society. I would hope that after reading this thesis, readers will see the Black experience in Pelotas as a story of why the existing order is insufficient, unacceptable, and passive; that active reconfiguration through dance and dialogue is necessary and representation matters.

This thesis does not and did not intend to cover all factors that influence its Black members and in no way presents an exhaustive literature review. In conducting this research, I gained a greater understanding of the extent to which socio-political, historical, and religious factors that influence determine identity and, to a degree, govern how Afro-Brazilian members make decisions and organize themselves in the context of an abstruse society. In an effort to collect my thoughts, and verbalize my reflections, the poem listed in the preface was written to process all that I had learned up until about mid-February 2020. I knew by immersing myself deeply into the literature that I would be confronted with difficult aspects of my own identity as a Black female researching about Black experiences in the African diaspora. That said, I could not have known just how much its message would resemble that of concurrently transpired/transpiring events. In many ways, I believe this thesis demonstrates the work that is

still to be done regarding inter and intrapersonal relationships in Brazil and that much more research that identifies dance as a turnstile for socio-cultural evaluations of Afro-Brazilian collective memory and its function in general sociality. It was a challenge to address all the in-and-outs of the data collected during the three weeks I interacted with the Pelotas community. That said, I believe the insight gained and written here will provide greater understanding of the experience of Afro-Brazilians in Pelotas.

My hope is that this work will contribute and expand literature on the performance arts, dance anthropology, biopolitics, and the Afro-Brazilian experience. The performances reviewed and information provided display the importance of "good trouble." The phrase "good trouble" became emblematic for the fight for equity, representation and recognition of Black people in the United States. To quote the late John Lewis, a long-time Civil Rights Activist and Congressman, from his tweet on June 27, 2018: "Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble." What I have shown here, with this research, is that the fight for visibility in a country whose history is mired with systemic racism transcends geographical borders and can be applied to the work of those in the African diaspora. Lewis followed up the next day with a tweet that read, "There is no sound more powerful than the marching feet of a determined people." In line with this thesis, I would insert the adjective "dancing" so that the phrase reads: "There is no sound more powerful than the dancing feet of a determined people."

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW THEMES

Themes

The focus of the interviews will be specific to dance performances, community/company knowledge, and life experience(s) of the participant. The first prompt will be: "Tell me about yourself." From there, questions will likely vary based on conversational flow. That said, these are general themes that will be covered.

1. The background and role of the dance company

2. How the person became involved with the dance company, group performance arts

3. Title/role at the company

4. Connection to Afro-Brazilian art forms - historic preservation

5. Other types of projects/organizations the person is involved with in Pelotas

6. The interviewee's perception of the city's situation and challenges growing up and at the time of this interview

7. Details and background on specific performance in which the interviewee played a role

8. The interviewee's understanding of the benefit of participating or being associated with the dance company

9. What practical and political circumstances shaped the formation, handling, and outcome of different projects the interviewee has had a documented role in

10. What in your view were the most significant accomplishments in which you were involved? Why?

11. Were you born/raised in Pelotas?

12. Understanding of the way system, how it works/description of Brazil as a child/young adult/now

13. Afro-Brazilian culture/African heritage
    a. What does being Afro-descendant mean to you?
    b. Did you learn about African influences in Brazil in school?
    c. Was a sense of pride about your instilled in you from an early age?
    d. Are you proud of your heritage now?
    e. Was there a time when you weren't proud of your heritage? Why or Why not?
    f. Perceived obstacles the Afro population of Brazil (in Pelotas)
    g. Dreams as a child/currently
    h. Influence of perceived opportunities/obstacles on the desire to dance

14. Importance of expression/the arts
    a. What brought you to dance?
    b. What does dance mean to you?

15. Community benefits
    a. What does it mean to have the dance company here in Pelotas?
    b. Do you think it essential to the Pelotas community? In what way?

16. Generational understanding
    a. Age requirements to participate in productions and projects

17. Why does this company focus on the particular style of dance that it does rather than, let's say, samba or capoeira?
    a. Is this distinction important? Why or why not?
    b. Do many who are involved in the company actively practice the religion associated with the performance pieces?

18. Pillars of the company
    a. What are they?
    b. How do you go about maintaining these principles?

19. Company maintenance
    a. How often do you all train?
    b. How do you get the word out about your company?
    c. Do you recruit dancers?

20. What do the dance performances mean to you?
    a. What are you hoping is accomplished with your work?

APPENDIX B: *ORIXÁS'* MOVEMENTS

Dance/Movement Characteristics

Orixá	Characteristic Movement
Ogum	Ogum is a warrior and therefore his gestures in the performance simulated combat and represented great strength (Lara 2008, 122).
Xangô	Xangô's movements were very quick and frantic. During the performance, the dancer also hit the double-bit axes together and wielded them overhead (Lara 2008, 122).
Iansã	Iansã is the deity of the winds and therefore her gestures simulated the slow or untimely and sometimes force of the wind. The dancer moved her arms and made little jumps/skips throughout her performance (Lara 2008, 122).
Iemanjá	Iemanjá's movements were graceful and synchronized. During her part, she used her arms and legs seemed to emulate the sea and waves passing (Lara 2008, 122).
Oxum	Oxum is the deity of rivers and waterfalls. Her movements, too, imitated the motion of water. She danced with a mirror and throughout the performance she would look at herself in the mirror and "comb" her hair (Lara 2008, 122).
*Oxalá (*velho*)*	As mentioned previously, Oxalá can appear in two forms. In the performance, the dancer acted as the elder version. Her movements were low and slow. Throughout her performance, she was bent excessively and was supported by a wooden staff (Lara 2008, 122).