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Review of *Indigenous Dance and Dancing Indian: Contested Representation in the Global Era* by Matthew Krystal

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sections on Indigenous dance and “playing Indian” in the Midwest are from fieldwork he has undertaken, postdissertation, while teaching at North Central College in Illinois. Krystal brings these diverse performance practices into dialogue with each other by looking at them all through anthropological discourse around ritual and the enactment of identity, as well as through insightful considerations of how these practices relate to discussions of such topics as “authenticity” and “tradition.”

The strength of this project lies not so much in its research—much of what is presented here is, as Krystal notes, drawn from others’ published work on these topics—although Krystal does warmly narrate his own personal engagements as a witness-participant at these various performance events, with his young family in tow. Rather, it lies in Krystal’s clear and helpful summary-analyses of the shared issues raised by these different performance situations, each involving Indigenous dance and identity in some way. I have earmarked several sections of the book to share with students, including his analysis of recent thinking on “authenticity,” “folklore,” and “tradition,” and discussions of the problems and controversies of “representation.”

Krystal’s discussion of the Chief Illiniwek controversy is particularly helpful in laying out so clearly multiple political histories at play, as well as the force—and serious limits—that the stereotypical dancing “Chief” itself enacts as ritual. He argues compellingly for the way the Chief’s performance manifests a profound misunderstanding of context and enacts an idea of political power “that diverges from Native American political practice”—even as he remarks how the passion the mascot’s dancing has evoked testifies to “the power of representational dance to instill and perpetuate compelling notions of identity.”

The book is accessibly written and makes complex ideas in cultural anthropology and cultural studies clear. Its analysis is incisive—and often quite pointed—yet its tone remains open and generous. Krystal’s analysis of the actual dancing he discusses is somewhat thin,

Indigenous Dance and Dancing Indian: Contested Representation in the Global Era. By Matthew Krystal. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2012. xxii + 315 pp. Photographs, notes, tables, references, index. \$70.00.

This is a thoughtful, helpful, somewhat unusually focused book that looks at K’iche Maya Traditional Dance in Guatemala, Native American Powwow (particularly in the Upper Midwest), Folkloric dance in the Chicago area, and at the University of Illinois’s “Chief Illiniwek” dancing mascot from an anthropologically informed ethnographic perspective. The section on Maya dance comes from the author’s dissertation research, while the

however; in ways, his approach (i.e., “how images of Indians are used to create a sense of authenticity and become vehicles for indoctrination”), while politically astute and compelling, also reinscribes familiar anthropological approaches that look at dance predominantly through the lens of representation. It seems a missed opportunity for a book entitled *Indigenous Dance* not to attend more fully to actual dance movement and embodiment in enactments of Indigenous cultural and political identities, as so much recent scholarship in the field of dance studies (including Indigenous dance studies) has done. Yet all in all, while perhaps not particularly groundbreaking, the book brings diverse dance practices into dialogue with one another in a thoughtful and interesting way, and presents clear and compelling syntheses of important issues involving a multiplicity of contemporary Indigenous dance practices.

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