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## Dancing the New World: Aztecs, Spaniards, and the Choreography of Conquest by Paul A. Scolieri (review)

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In her final chapter, Kuenzli turns to today's Inca performances in Caracollo in the broader context of the Oruro carnival and folkloric festivals in general, and the politics of ethnic identity since the 1970s, which have given rise to a distinct Indian discourse centered on resistance to state oppression. This chapter constitutes an ethnography of contemporary ethnic politics from the local perspective of Caracollo. It is based on interviews with the actors and the fieldwork carried out in Caracollo, Oruro, and La Paz.

Kuenzli affirms, despite the many changes in the play since its inception in the aftermath of the 1899 Civil War, that the play continues to stress the central issue of literacy and to serve for those associated with it as a means to acquire social prestige as local intellectuals. She stresses the difference between the appropriations of indigenous past made by contemporary ethnic organizations—as in the casting of the figure of the Inca king as an anticolonial symbol of resistance—and the Caracollo rendition of the history of conquest. Instead of treating the Inca king as an anticolonial figure, the Caracollo Inca actors locate their story within the global narrative of conquest, side by side with the Moors and Christopher Columbus, and not as an autonomous resistance to colonialism. Kuenzli concludes by noting that constructions of “preferred” Indian identities that emerged in the 1900s continue to be central in Bolivia's contemporary political and cultural life.

Kuenzli's is an important book that will spark debate and inspire further research and reflection on the issues of performance and politics.

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*Dancing the New World: Aztecs, Spaniards, and the Choreography of Conquest.* By Paul A. Scolieri. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013. Pp. xii, 205. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$55.00 hardcover.  
doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.11](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.11)

Scolieri has provided a brilliantly detailed analysis of historical dance practices in Mesoamerica during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He uses archival documents to engage with narrating the conquest of the Americas through the unexpected lens of dance. Performance is considered in its broadest sense, as encompassing of festival performance, religious procession, dialogic performance, and hierarchical spectacle. The volume is carefully researched and utilizes interdisciplinary methodologies of text analysis, translation, and historical ethnography. Both the writing and the images focus on historical moments of conquest and colonization in New Spain. The book includes 42 maps and illustrations along with ten appendices comprised of archival text translations.

Scolieri begins by identifying a set of key sources that inform the inquiry; these include codices, journals, and travel writings. The introduction defines key terms and concepts; it also delineates paradigms for discourse about the “Aztec” empire, describes Moorish influences on Spanish performance, and distinguishes among dance descriptions in colonial writings by providing contexts for *baile*, *danza*, *areíto*, and *mitote* styles. The broad definitions lay the groundwork for Scolieri to discuss dance as a cultural encounter of divergent ideologies.

The first chapter focuses on the *areíto*, a Taíno term that describes sung dances or poem-songs. The author argues that “early chroniclers invented the term *areíto* to represent an evolving modern concept of performance as an embodied way of knowing and transmitting knowledge that is distinct from writing” (p. 28). Study of this form legitimized dance as a way of investigating difference and justifying conquest. Chapter 2 builds on this premise by focusing on the writings of Friar Toribio de Benavente “Motolinía,” a Franciscan missionary who, with Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, documented Aztec dance and ceremonial practices in great detail. Motolinía hoped to bridge the old and new worlds through his descriptive analysis of dance, but instead reified a “linear narrative of Christian conquest” (p. 47). Thus, the first two chapters of Scolieri’s book document early writings about dance through the ideological lens of the Spanish religious chroniclers.

In Chapter 3, Scolieri discusses ceremonial dance and the meanings of sacrifice in Aztec public rituals. An insightful look at the Florentine Codex forms the backbone of this section. The author analyzes the political, social, and sacred meanings of the sacrificial rituals as he describes the choreographies that surround them. He begins by investigating how time and space are configured in the codex and then carefully explains how Aztec hierarchies and social orders are represented in the ceremonies. This contextual analysis is one of the great strengths of the book because of the way in which it integrates discussion across disciplinary boundaries.

Chapter 4 analyzes a broad range of images, reports, and histories that circumscribe the 1520 festival of *Toxcatl* that led to the overthrow of the Aztec empire. While many scholars have noted the devastating and enduring consequences of this event, Scolieri uniquely focuses on conflicting narratives and the role that dance played in the massacre. Of particular note is his reading of the visual engravings that accompany Bartolomé de Las Casas’s account of the conquest. The last chapter of the book chronicles the use of dance by the colonial authorities in the formation of New Spain. Conquest dances, *moros y cristianos* displays and *entradas* occupied a contested space in colonial society because they both Christianized indigenous populations and provided opportunities for the persistence of ancient idolatries.

The author concludes by identifying dance as a diplomatic weapon and a sacred practice that illuminates cultural encounters in the discovery and colonization of the Americas. His detailed analysis of moments of ideological disjuncture supports this argument. This is a comprehensive and impressive volume that utilizes meticulous

archival research to demonstrate how performance analysis can contribute to historical methodologies.

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*Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America.* By Edward Telles. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. Pp. 320. Figures. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$29.95 paper.  
doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.12](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.12)

Edward Telles and a team of researchers offer a bold exploration of two hotly debated questions in the new book *Pigmentocracies*: What is the effect of the ideology of *mestizaje* on public opinion in Latin America? What is the comparative value of skin color and ethno-racial category measures for inequality studies in Latin America? To respond, the book uses original 2010 survey data on Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru from Princeton's Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (henceforward, PERLA). Four country-level chapters form the book's body, each authored by a set of PERLA researchers according to country of expertise. Telles, PERLA's principal investigator, co-authors broad introductory and concluding chapters.

Why are PERLA data important? These surveys, in tandem with those of the Latin American Public Opinion Project at Vanderbilt University, are the first to use comparative interviewer-rated skin color measures (via a skin color palette) in representative samples across Latin America. In addition, only in Brazil have there previously been robust, large-sample surveys exploring public opinion on racial issues. Thus, PERLA's data offer first-ever glances into Peru, Colombia, and Mexico, while providing points of comparison on earlier survey research in Brazil.

In regard to ways in which ideologies of *mestizaje* affect public opinion, results in Peru, Colombia, and Mexico provide surprising answers. Whereas most scholarship characterizes generalized racial attitudes in those countries as imbued with denials of racism, results reveal that the opposite is actually the case for overwhelming majorities in all three countries—and for all skin colors and ethno-racial categories. Contemporary scholarship has described a general opposition to anti-racism mobilization and public policy redress of minority structural disadvantage in Colombia, Peru, and Mexico; nonetheless, *Pigmentocracies* survey results reveal majority support for these approaches in all three countries. These findings hold true in regard to Brazilians' racial attitudes as well, confirming earlier research.

In regard to the relative value of color and ethno-racial category for capturing inequality in core measures of socioeconomic status (SES), *Pigmentocracies* results throw a curve