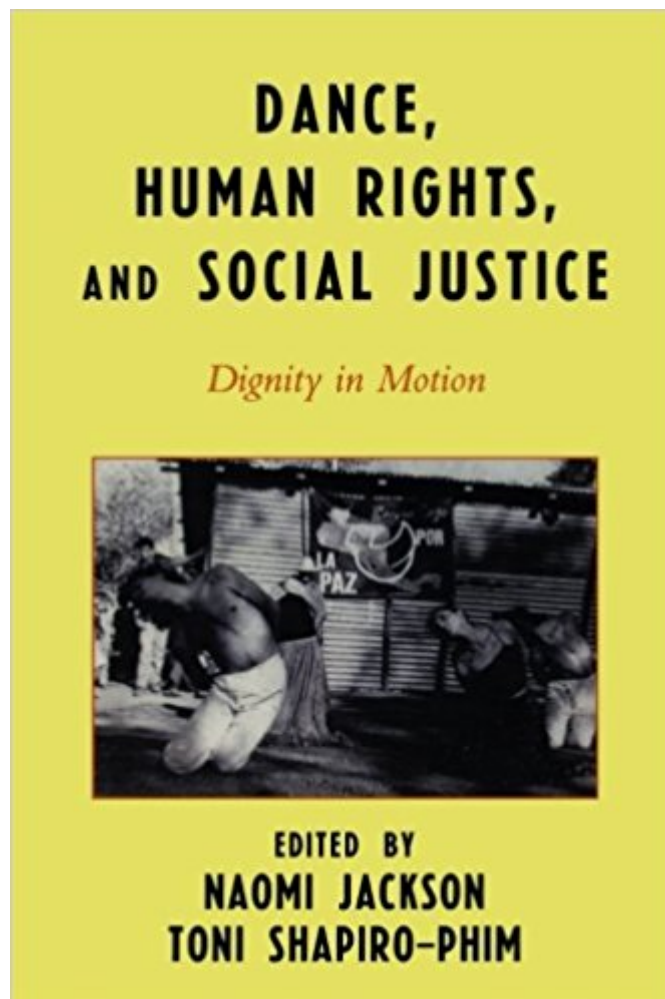




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# Dance, Human Rights, And Social Justice: Dignity In Motion



## Synopsis

Dance, Human Rights, and Social Justice: Dignity in Motion presents a wide-ranging compilation of essays, spanning more than 15 countries. Organized in four parts, the articles examine the regulation and exploitation of dancers and dance activity by government and authoritative groups, including abusive treatment of dancers within the dance profession; choreography involving human rights as a central theme; the engagement of dance as a means of healing victims of human rights abuses; and national and local social/political movements in which dance plays a powerful role in helping people fight oppression. These groundbreaking papersâ•both detailed scholarship and riveting personal accountsâ•encompass a broad spectrum of issues, from slavery and the Holocaust to the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; from First Amendment cases and the AIDS epidemic to discrimination resulting from age, gender, race, and disability. A range of academics, choreographers, dancers, and dance/movement therapists draw connections between refugee camp, courtroom, theater, rehearsal studio, and university classroom.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jackson and Shapiro-Phim are the first to focus an investigation so cohesively on the political implications of movement. The result is a ground-breaking anthology that repositions understandings of the fundamental ways in which the dancer's body serves a range of human rights agendas from the oppressive to the corporate-controlled, nationalist, and liberatory. Dance, Human Rights, and Social Justice asks readers to re-evaluate the power of dance as a staged form of resistance. In the process, contributors reveal in more subtle ways the complexity of defining human

rights. This book is of interest to an audience much broader than just those interested in the performing arts. (Southwest Journal Of Cultures, Summer Post 2, July 2009)A provocative collection of essays....The editors have brought together a diverse collection of essays that, when read together, situate dance centrally within ideological discussions of what constitutes notions of freedom and social justice. More importantly, the essays will also spark discussion on who gets to define such concepts. Dance, Human Rights, and Social Justice is an ambitious and inclusive anthology that marks an important resource for anyone interested in dance, politics, and social activism. (Dance Research Journal)

Naomi Jackson, Ph.D. in performance studies, is associate professor in the Department of Dance at Arizona State University. She is the author of *Converging Movements: Modern Dance and Jewish Culture at the 92nd Street Y* (2002). Toni Shapiro-Phim, Ph.D. in cultural anthropology, is director of research and archiving at the Khmer Arts Academy in Takhmao, Cambodia. She is the co-author of *Dance in Cambodia* (1999).

This is an expensive but well worth the price book designed for a scholarly audience. An amazing collection about the social uses and expressions of dance, organized exceptionally well into themes of regulation, choreography and human rights, healing, and challenging power structures. A powerful statement from the intro that challenges us to look forward to future directions in dance studies: "How can socially committed artists impact their communities, yet avoid becoming dogmatic, programmatic, or self-righteous? How can an artist really know whether the rights and freedoms he or she fights for will in fact result in positive benefits...how can choreography be aesthetically engaging AND an effective means of political, social and economic change?" and on. One major criticism: There is no chapter devoted to hip-hop, a GLARING omission considering the subject of this book. And, no mention of Michael Jackson...perhaps this would be different had the book not been published before his death. Both of these subjects should have been included in a collection edited by a scholar working in the United States and another who is working in war-torn regions, especially Cambodian dance. Because both are central to understanding the experience of African-Americans, human rights, and social justice in the United States. Structural violence is still mass political violence, and understanding Black experience in the U.S. should be a central topic for scholarship. Even so, this book earns 5 stars for its opening of an extremely important topic: the role of dance and other expressive arts in social justice, human rights, and our broader understanding of the human condition.

This book provides a unique and illuminating perspective that conveys a deep sense and global understanding of the complex relationship between dance and human rights. While most people do not ordinarily connect the field and culture of dance to human rights, this book explains the interrelatedness of dance, cultural expression, government support and oppression, and individuality. Focusing on twentieth and twenty-first century experiences (through the lens of dance and beyond), this book is a must-read for anyone trying to find a fresh look at domestic and international issues.

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