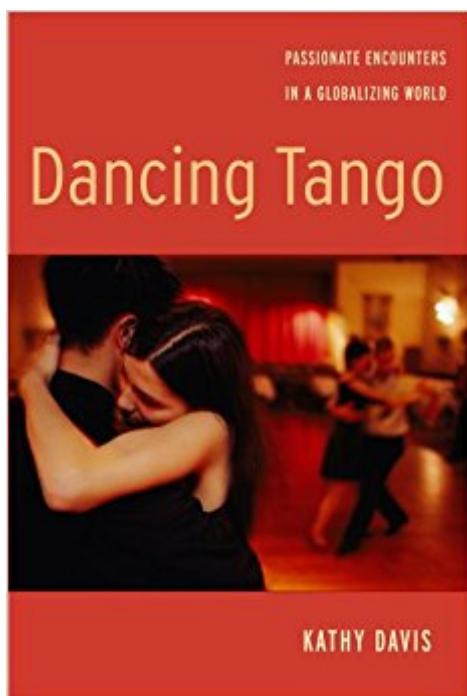


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Dancing Tango: Passionate Encounters In A Globalizing World



Synopsis

Argentinean tango is a global phenomenon. Since its origin among immigrants from the slums of Buenos Aires and Montevideo, it has crossed and re-crossed many borders. Yet, never before has tango been danced by so many people and in so many different places as today. Argentinean tango is more than a specific music and style of dancing. It is also a cultural imaginary which embodies intense passion, hyper-heterosexuality, and dangerous exoticism. In the wake of its latest revival, tango has become both a cultural symbol of Argentinean national identity and a transnational cultural space in which a modest, yet growing number of dancers from different parts of the globe meet on the dance floor. Through interviews and ethnographical research in Amsterdam and Buenos Aires, Kathy Davis shows why a dance from another era and another place appeals to men and women from different parts of the world and what happens to them as they become caught up in the tango salon culture. She shows how they negotiate the ambivalences, contradictions, and hierarchies of gender, sexuality, and global relations of power between North and South in which Argentinean tango is "and has always been" embroiled. Davis also explores her uneasiness about her own passion for a dance which "when seen through the lens of contemporary critical feminist and postcolonial theories" seems, at best, odd, and, at worst, disreputable and even a bit shameful. She uses the disjuncture between the incorrect pleasures and complicated politics of dancing tango as a resource for exploring the workings of passion as experience, as performance, and as cultural discourse. She concludes that dancing tango should be viewed less as a love/hate embrace with colonial overtones than a passionate encounter across many different borders between dancers who share a desire for difference and a taste of the "elsewhere."™ Dancing Tango is a vivid, intriguing account of an important global cultural phenomenon.

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Customer Reviews

"Hopefully this wonderful and creative book will get many more people on to the dance floor. And not just hopping about any old how in lonely (but usually crowded) isolation, but engaging in learning the rules of dancing with a partner. No need to stand on your toes, or anyone else's; it is about extending the possibilities of what your mind and your body can do." -Times Literary Supplement

"A thoughtful and enjoyable study of tango in Argentina and Amsterdam goes beyond the history of the dance to explore the possibilities and perils of bodies, passion, gender, and identity in the modern transnational world." -Anthropology Review Database

Davis's participant-informant status serves her well as she describes the subtle communication that goes on chest to chest as the dancers' use of wordless cues to make adjustments and improvise, and the engrossing safety of their embrace." -Women's Review of Books

"[P]assionately written." -Dance Research Journal

"Kathy Davis is an expert and engaging feminist tour guide to the passionate and paradoxical global practice of contemporary Argentine tango. Through its astute ethnographic comparison of tango cultures in Buenos Aires and Amsterdam, Dancing Tango offers a laudable contribution to literature on tango, gender, and contemporary global cultural developments." -Judith Stacey, tango dancer and author of Unhitched

"Davis has written a superb, complex, and stimulating book. She obliges all of us to think." -The Queer Tango Book Project

"Providing us with a sensual, groundbreaking and highly accessible account of how the global phenomenon of Argentinean tango is implicated in a desire for a liminal experience of embodied connectivity in music, Kathy Davis places her global ethnography in a context that explores the intersections between the politics of passion, performance, gender, and transnational connections, power-relations and imaginaries. This compelling study will be an invaluable resource for scholars and students interested in feminist sociology, ethnography, sexuality, embodiment and globalization." -Chris Shilling, author of The Body and Social Theory

"Dancing Tango is an engaging book where tango is quite rightly taken seriously as a social and cultural phenomenon. This book displays a thoroughly readable style, which is at times playful and humorous. Davis does not shy away from potentially difficult, personal, intimate, or emotional topics, and this keeps the reader engaged." -American Journal of Sociology

Kathy Davis is Senior Research Fellow in the Sociology Department of the VU University in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. She is the author of numerous books, including *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders*.

Different aspects of the Tango passion are well unraveled. Great combination of scientific and participating research.

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