

BRYCE HENSON. *Emergent Quilombos: Black Life and Hip-Hop in Brazil*. University of Texas Press, 2023.

Bryce Henson has given the field of Brazilian Studies a trailblazing piece of scholarship on hip-hop culture in Brazil, especially in Bahia. Transcending what Derek Pardue (*Ideologies of Marginality in Brazilian Hip Hop*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) theorized as “politics of marginality” in the context of hip-hop in São Paulo, Henson frames his book in terms of how the concept of the *quilombo*, the seventeenth-century maroon settlement, serves as a powerful tool for grasping both change and continuities. He argues that “the Bahian hip-hop movement nourishes, maintains, and retools the *quilombo* (maroon community) blueprint to assert Black life and diasporic cultures in and against contemporary Brazil” (p. 3). Henson advances four major arguments: (1) contemporary Black life is linked to the *quilombo* through alternative spaces such as Candomblé (Afro-Brazilian religion), Black parties, samba schools, and other cultural centers; (2) The notion of “emergent quilombo” is a Black radical positioning against enslavement and coloniality; (3) Like the fugitives fleeing enslavement, *quilombolas* (fugitives) not only refused to be oppressed, but also chose to create a more humane, just, and dignified society after their flight; (4) Through the Bahian hip-hop movement, conscious participants forge empowering communities that protect Black people. The author’s note on method, racialization, and positionality is striking: a ten-year research journey that culminates in recognizing the shifting identities in Brazil even for the researcher as he moves from being “brown” or “mixed” to “Black” in the eyes of his interlocutors. Henson acknowledges that the issue of racialization is “messy and complicated” (p. 23). In unpacking the complexity, Henson engages many scholars to support his well-articulated position: Beatriz Nascimento, Abdias Nascimento, Stuart Hall, Patricia Pinho, Oyeronke Oyewumi, Christen Smith, Edward Telles, Michael Hanchard, and several others. Beyond the Brazilian “racial democracy” myth that comes up in any discussion of Blackness in Brazil, Henson locates his own argument in the persistence of Blackness and its contradictions, coupled with the dynamic quest for social activism that demands political participation and power: “Blackness is complex in Brazil because people perceive it as a matter of color, and thus discrimination is a matter of colorism, not race and racism. The two are not equivalent, but they are certainly linked” (p. 140). From this context, Henson makes his case on the persistence of the *quilombo* in Black Brazilian life.

Henson’s timely scholarly intervention has all the elements of a broader framework of Black social activism. By deploying “hip-hop in Brazil” as enmeshed in the *quilombo* paradigm that comes up juxtapositionally in this

book, the author craftily elaborates on central issues confronting Afro-Brazilian communities such as socio-economic deprivation, poverty, racism, anti-racism, political and economic marginalization, and social inequalities that propel the dispossessed towards violence and criminality. Chapter 1 discusses how Bahian hip-hop performers negotiate power dynamics as they use an alternative paradigm to counter their imposed state of racialized exclusion from political visibility and participation. Chapter 2 showcases how hip-hop performers challenge the status quo in which Afro-Brazilians are victims of not only poverty but also of the foundational racialization that places the whites over both the mixed-race and Black Brazilians. Chapter 3 illustrates how hip-hop artists are empowered by inventing their own *quilombo* spaces, where they no longer are compelled to be “escaping” permanently but are still agitating for a new politics of affirmative citizenship. Chapter 4 presents the complicated issue of heteronormative relations and how Black men are aspiring to alternative sexualities (queerness) as a framework to be more inclusive in the construction of Blackness. Chapter 5 deploys “artifice” as the anchor through which Blacks challenge unilateral forms of beauty and identity by being more inclusive through the appropriation of their bodies, manners, fashions, and way of life into the mainstream culture. Chapter 6 expresses solidarity with Blacks in the periphery beyond the urban center by including them in the politics of resistance against social death. Through the veneration of the murals representing African divinities such as Iemanjá, poor Black mothers are invoked as a reminder of the vitality of Black women globally and their implied right to be included as potential matriarchs of transnational significance. Drawing from the classic work of Jorge Amado (*Mar Morto* [Sea of Death]) for example, Henson cogently argues: “Reading Iemanjá as a Black woman who functions politically as a lover and mother illuminates the mural as a visual representation of an emergent quilombo that refuses acceptable Blackness in Bahian society, like those dancing under the sun who takes flight to commune with the Black underclass in safeguarding one another’s lives” (p. 202). While Henson radically proposes tearing down violence to build love in his conclusion, it may just be one of the first steps towards harmonization in a situation where most Blacks are barely educated and must survive through hook or crook daily. A socially disadvantaged individual will not hesitate to be violent in the absence of necessities of life.

What, then, is the way forward? Henson’s proposal, which echoes bell hooks’s call for love (p. 222) as the way out of the quagmire Black Brazilians find themselves post-abolition, calls for a critical self-reflection. Henson has no doubt given us a template for the understanding of fugitivity as a larger sacrifice for Black people who refused to be enslaved. Henson sums it up as a matter of “life and death” which meant love for the future of Black people:

“I am constantly inspired by *quilombos* past and present. In the sociopolitical context of colonial slave society, the risk that Black people took when they said enough is enough is a radical politics of Black sociality, which is to say, of Black love” (p. 221). Simply stated, as far as Henson is concerned, hip-hop movement is about creating a contemporary *quilombo* that harnesses and respects Black worthiness. In other words, this book is not a quest for romantic love that waves a magic wand and replaces social inequalities with equalities. Rather, it is a process of negotiating with the current capitalist and patriarchal system for improved political relations between the oppressed and the oppressor. *Emergent Quilombos* is just a beginning; it is a wake-up call towards many possibilities of redemption, regeneration, and Black love. Given its interdisciplinary approaches, the book is highly recommended for courses in Anthropology, Sociology, Ethnomusicology, Latin American Studies, and Black Studies.

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A la memoria de la Dra. Ronit Tal Sultan

RONIT TAL SULTAN. *Pinceles a la sombra de los generales. Arte de protesta en Argentina 1976–1983*. Universidad Ben Gurion del Negev, 2024.

La Dra. Ronit Tal Sultan no alcanzó a ver el libro de su autoría publicado por la Universidad Ben Gurion del Negev. Este volumen, publicado en noviembre de 2024, consta de 216 páginas y es una traducción al castellano del original en hebreo, de 195 páginas, con el mismo título. El 7 de octubre de 2023, Ronit fue asesinada junto a su marido Roland Sultan en el kibutz *Jolit*, durante la masacre perpetrada por el movimiento palestino Hamas en las localidades israelíes lindantes con la Franja de Gaza.

Ronit Tal Sultan y su marido Roland Sultan (el último, de origen tunecino y de nacionalidad francesa) fueron dos de las 15 víctimas del pequeño kibutz. Otra víctima de la masacre en este poblado comunitario fue el sociólogo Dr. Jaim Katzman, militante contra la ocupación de los territorios palestinos, y uno de los fundadores de la organización Academia por la Igualdad, que agrupa a más de 800 docentes universitarios judíos y árabes de Israel.