

to the dance historical topic, which she explains in its broader, society-wide context, thus moving away from merely reporting on historical events. This becomes apparent already through the titles of the chapters, wherein a strict adherence to historical chronology gives way to a thematic organization. These titles not only serve as identifiers of particular historical epochs but also foreshadow the thematic trajectories the author intends to explore: Chapter 1: *La danza en el mundo antiguo entre lo cívico y lo ritual/ Dance in the Ancient World between the Civic and the Ritual*, Chapter 2: *De lo proscrito a lo codiciado: bailar en la sociedad medieval/ From the Proscribed to the Coveted: Dancing in Medieval Society*, Chapter 3: *Asombroso y espectáculo: la danza cortesana del Renacimiento al Barroco/ Astonishing and Spectacle: Court Dance from the Renaissance to the Baroque etc.* It is this approach that delineates a notable departure from other publications within the same genre. Each chapter encompasses the complexity of the historical period under examination, employing a nuanced analytical framework that oscillates between microcosmic factual detail and macrocosmic contextual interpretation, supplementing them with broader contexts that add plasticity to the overall picture.

Idoia Murga Castro's work brings an important contribution to dance, cultural and cross-cultural studies, and marks an important moment for the dance scholarship published in other languages than English. The book is for those with a keen interest in these fields, or it could serve as a signpost for professionals and active dancers who want a monographic publication in their libraries. After all, the author herself substantiated these aims by saying: "We hope that this proposal can function as an introductory map, to discover keys, contexts, relationships and contributions of each period of the history of western dance" (12-13, author's translation.) I wish a similar book will be published in the Czech language one day.

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## Works Cited

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## Young, Hirshini Bhana. FALLING, FLOATING, FLICKERING: DISABILITY AND DIFFERENTIAL MOVEMENT IN DIASPORIC PERFORMANCE.

NYU Press. January 2023. 320 pages. 17 b/w illustrations. \$32 paperback/\$89 hard cover/epub. doi:10.1017/S014976772400010X

In *Falling, Floating, Flickering: Disability and Differential Movement in Diasporic Performance*, Hirshini Bhana Young develops a theorization of differential movement and a politics of conjoinment, proposing that "something more than either one of us emerges from the multiplicity of our sense-apprehensions and from our difference that forms the basis of our accountability for one another" (28). Utilizing the core thematics of falling, floating and flickering, Young gestures towards an important and generous shift in the field of dance studies, prompting the reader to consider who is dancing, and what a people-oriented study of movement can do. Differential movement, in this way, becomes an analytic for the active dance scholar to pause, consider the incessant drive towards verticality in what is perceived as dance, and move in 'Other' ways – what does it mean to move horizontally, to fall, to float, to flicker? Young describes the book's investment in dance studies as a "linger[ing] in the wings of dance studies to catch a glimpse of what differential movement might look like" (2). This 'backstage' work in dance studies, the 'lingering in the wings', offers an important opportunity to (re)consider who and what is 'center stage' in studies of 'dance,' gesturing towards a de-centering in the way we see who is dancing, and what movement can be dance. This monograph addresses and extends the collective work in black performance theory, "as a way to counter the abstraction that results from imperial violence and to remap the body as a messy, transgressive organization of parts unmoored from the typical" (1). In this way, Young does not present a "typical" study of 'dance' that disciplinary jettisoning may seek to ostracize. Instead, the text curates an urgent dialogue between black performance theorists and disability studies, not to correct 'omissions' from the field of dance studies (or their forementioned fields), but to reveal

what possibilities lie in the interactions made when moving differently.<sup>1</sup>

Through the Introduction, Young sets up the reader to take in a dense, wide-reaching analysis of a “haptic undercommons” (1) that spans across Black, African, diasporic, queer, disability, performance and dance studies. The haptic undercommons is advanced towards a theorization of “intersensorial spillings” (74), which posits an alternate form of Black sociality against the mathematics of dead bodies so often used to account for the loss of Black life, especially those bloated corpses in the Mediterranean, floating from Africa to European shores, which insist that differential movement rests on the entanglement of the living and dead (Chapter 2). Beginning with *intabi* (“may God take everything ill in you and bring it on to me instead” (2)), Young moves to theorize “a politics of conjoinment” (7). In a series of deft moves to understand and reorient how differential movement may serve as an alternate mode of being, Young invites us to view “postural sway” as “another way of moving through the world that defies expectations” (13). Young advances this conception of differential movement to assess how stutters, muscle spasms, tremors, may function as markers of Michell Wright’s “epiphenomenal time” (17), or crip time, or black queer time (Chapter 4).

Throughout the monograph, Young engages in an archive of Black sociality that might be described as “excessive” – Young moves quickly from mediated performance, live performance, (imagined?) ethnographic encounter, literature and auto-biographical fabulation. The term “excessive” is used here deliberately though cautiously – perhaps instead it is a methodological engagement with Édouard Glissant’s conception of the “Baroque as a World Philosophy” (1987), which affirms that knowledge is never fully acquired, instead championing breadth for its increasing being in the world. Young presents an intricate web of intellectual capacity, autobiographical elements, ethnographic encounters, popular culture, scientific and sociological discourses. This is of course not inherently excessive, but rather a distinctly necessary breadth of analysis to even attempt to capture the intricacies of a differentially abled, queer, Black sociality. It is in the space between these readings that I

consider Young’s perceived “excessiveness” as an act of caretaking to the multi-knowing movers and thinkers that she writes about and for. By including such a wide range and definition of archive for the communities in question, Young provides a generous number of openings for readers to engage with, to connect to, and to be seen through. This sense of care can be pinpointed more precisely in the introduction’s “Note on Disciplinarity: Melting” (21), where Young notes the vexed politics of dialoging African terminology and concepts with Western theories and existences.

“Chapter 1: Falling and Crawling” proposes the possibility of viewing horizontal movement as a productive counter-epistemology to the Western drive for verticality. Using case studies of Boris Gerret’s film *Shado’Man* (2013), a quasi-ethnographic thick description/ study of a polio-squat and “collective performance of begging” (43) in Sierra Leone, Waru-Natasha Ogunji’s *Will I still carry water when I am a dead woman?* (2011), and the work of William Pope.L, among other horizontal Black bodies, Young assesses how horizontal movement provides a productive (though contested) site for differential movement. For Young, crawling and falling institute a differential relationship with time and space, which “reclaims the horizontal for black sociality, insisting not only on another way of being (free) but also on *another way of dying*” (73).

“Chapter 2: Floating” utilizes the work of Fred Moten, Christina Sharpe, and Katherine McKittrick to underscore the intersensorial, haptic entanglements of Black life across the life/death divide. Young analyzes the short film *Unburied* (2019), Eurostar (European external border surveillance), Spain’s SIVE (integrated system for external surveillance), Berni Searle’s *Home and Way* (2003), Juan Medina’s *Cruel Sea* (2006), and the medical concept of “floaters” in visual assessments. These objects for analysis reveal how Black bodies have historically and contemporarily resisted reduction to “no bodies” (106), and the haptic layering of such an endeavor of floating. “Chapter 3: Flickering” moves towards posthumanism, utilizing Lauren Beukes’s *Zoo City* (2010), PETA’s *Animal Captivity is Slavery* (2015), Mntambo’s *Ukungenisa* (2009), Wura-Natasha Ogunji and Mary Okon Ononokpono’s *And*

*Fight* (2015), and Ruby Amanze's "That low hanging kind of sun..." (2015) to rechart and reclaim Black life, "not as anchored in claims of humanity or animality but rather as embedded in notions of embodied relationality that encompass true difference" (107).

"Chapter 4: Spasming and Passing Out" looks at Spoek Mathambo's video "Control," and Die Antwoord's "Umshini Wam" to "parse out the differences between often static reinscriptions of ableism and moments of differential movement as insurgent practice" (148). With supplemental analysis of Pieter Hugo's *Pieter and Maryna Vermeulen with Timana Phosiwa* (2006) and the viral imitations of Winnie Harlow, Young advances Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman and C. Riley Snorton's conceptions of fungibility to consider how differential embodiment has been rearranged into a market commodity, differentiating Mathambo's use of the spasm as a gesture to "the possibilities of spiritual practice and spiritual elsewhere where differential embodiment and movement are not obstacles to overcome but instead a conjoined way of being in the world" (163). "Chapter 5: Shaking the World" utilizes Chris Abani's *Song for the Night*, and the Angolan dance form, kuduro, to "explore the thickets of our imaginative excess that use the lurch, the raised shoulder, the severed vocal chord, and the limp" to defamiliarize scripted conceptions of Black sociality and instead say something more (188). "Chapter 6: Unhinging" takes an autoethnographic turn, writing from Young's perspective "failing" at co-authoring this chapter as a marker of multiple Black feminist crispistemologies. From an analysis of ants and reductive scientific discourse about their sociality, Young metaphorically arrives at a theorization that "crispistemology, with its embodied cognition that can seem errant, illegible, and seemingly meaningless, offers us radical possibilities for new types of conjoined cognition and movement" (237). Then, in a dense reading of Rivers Solomon's *An Unkindness of Ghosts*, Young posits that "it is neurocacophony, the unhinging din of a noise riot... that allows for multiple cognitive pathways that are not always productive but that are essential to black sociality" (244).

*Falling, Floating, Flickering* is dense, thorough, and incontestably specific. Taking

inspiration from Young's adept citational politics, the reader might be left wondering what might be at stake in advancing these theories beyond the scope of this book. For example, is the theory of "neurocacophony" available for exportation – or is its specificity to the neurodivergent, queer, Black subject imperative to its existence? The specificity with which Young brings together so many diverse materials, all rooted in Black and African philosophy, begs the reader to consider their own citational politics, and the fungibility of Black sociality not just in the quotidian, but in academic spheres as well. This monograph pushes the conception of "dance" and "corporeality" to its limits, as we (necessarily) question who can be seen as dancing, and who is available to script/be scripted by moving realities. In this way, *Falling, Floating, Flickering* adds an important voice in present conversations on the notion of contemporary dance, pushing the edges of who is seen as a (dancing) body, and where/when performance may be an insightful tool into our lived realities.

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## Notes

1. This formulation is revealed in the "Introduction" to *Black Performance Theory* (DeFrantz and Gonzalez, 2014). Scholars in the collective pursuit of Black performance theory, with a deep interest in dance include (but is not limited to) Thomas F. DeFrantz, Anita Gonzalez, Nadine George-Graves and Melissa Blanco Borelli. Scholars of dance disability include (but is not limited to) Petra Kuppers, Margaret Ames and Moya Bailey.

## Works Cited

- DeFrantz, Thomas F. and Anita Gonzalez. 2014. *Black Performance Theory*. Duke University Press.
- Glissant, Édouard. 1987. "Baroque as a World Philosophy." *The UNESCO Courier* 40 (9): 18-19.