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## BOOK REVIEW

### **ABRIENDO FRONTERAS: ENFOQUES INTERDISCIPLINARES DE LA COREOLOGÍA, CECILIA NOCILLI AND ANA MARÍA DÍAZ OLAYA (EDS) (2018)**

Malaga Libargo, 214 pp.,  
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*Reviewed by Rosemary 'Rosa' Cisneros, Coventry University*

*Abriendo Fronteras* (2018) is opening up lines of inquiry that are new for the dance reader who has an interest in Spanish dance and theatre studies in Spain. While any dance historian or performance study scholar might find the work interesting, the authors have backgrounds in the arts and humanities ranging from literature and music to dance, theatre and archives. The eleven chapters explore specific live performances or recorded materials and analyse the work from different disciplines and perspectives. There is a clear balance between the historical and modern frameworks being used by the authors to question and reflect on the works. For instance, some authors revisit old dance performances from the 1970s but analyse them with a deconstructive interdisciplinary lens while referencing significant political realities that provide new contextualization. Each chapter offers a unique performance, literary, musical or theatrical example, and these micro case studies open broader questions around interdisciplinary works and the role technology plays within them. After reading several chapters one might feel drawn to re-watch some of the older works or seek out the new works discussed by the authors.

The book is divided into three sections: Unit one – New Methodological Approaches in Flamenco and Spanish Dance; Unit two – Creation and Interdisciplinarity and Unit three – The Multidisciplinary Reinterpretation of Sources: Case Studies. The introduction identifies gaps in the literature within Spanish dance studies. Nocilli notes that an interdisciplinary lens is needed to reflect on the past and analyse related works from various fields, suggesting the term *Coreología*. However, I understand that the term was proposed in 1955 by Rudolf Benesh who defined *Coreología* as an aesthetic and scientific analysis and kinetographic record (specialized notation) of the movement of the body in space and time (8). Nocilli has in essence curated a volume that is underpinned by this line of thinking but goes beyond and reflects more on the definition, highlighting how it is evolving given the contexts and the manner other authors are interpreting and employing the principles.

Chapter 1, by Cristina Cruces Roldán, looks at flamenco within the twenty-first century in order to explore and redefine authenticity in the form. Roldán questions what tradition means, how traditions are interpreted and performed and the manner that flamenco dancing can be independent from the music and rhythmic structures. This chapter situates its line of inquiry in *Nuevo Flamenco* and discusses this new style next to the canon of flamenco performances.

Chapter 2 continues with a focus on flamenco, and author, Fernando López Rodríguez, describes the marriage between music and dance and disrupts this matrimony. The author goes into great detail about the flamenco art form and outlines a very clear structure of analysis, which includes a range of topics such as planes, gestures, spinal alignment among other categories. López Rodríguez states that when looking at flamenco, compartmentalizing flamenco's elements will help reflect on the interdisciplinary components of the art form, suggesting that there is a distinction between interpreters of flamenco and choreographers.

Chapter 3 offers a panoramic sociocultural, sociopolitical and socio-economic perspective of non-dancers writing about dance in Spain during the early twentieth century. María Ángeles Díaz Tapia situates the reader in a literary context using philosophers, writers, intellectuals and musicians from the *Generaciones del 98 y 27* to postulate how flamenco has been written about by these thinkers. *Generación del 98* is the name traditionally given to a group of Spanish writers, essayists and poets who were deeply affected by the moral, political and social crisis unleashed in Spain by the military defeat in the Spanish-American War and the consequent loss of Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines in 1898. *Generación del 27* is a culturally influential group of Spanish poets formed in tribute to the passing of esteemed poet, Luis de Góngora circa 1927. Díaz Tapia links flamenco with *Generaciones del 98 y 27* and touches on the paradox that follows the art form in existing literature, highlighting that the flamenco dancer is either exoticized or defined as an 'other'. The writer expands on the historical moment of the *Cafés Cantantes*, and how dance and literature were intertwined for the writers of these generations.

Chapter 4, written by Ana Rodrigo de la Casa, focuses on the famous dancer, Antonio Gades and the role the theatre played within his choreographic practice. The author suggests that theatre, music, literature and dance all contributed in equal measure to the *arte total* ('total art form') of Gades who trained at the Martha Graham School and later incorporated those techniques and qualities into his work. The chapter takes an interesting position via documenting the North American modern dance pioneers such as Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham, as well as Russian icons like Sergei Diaghalev and the Stanislavsky Theatre. This historical foregrounding situates the testimonials of the artists that collaborated with Gades. de la Casa makes Gades' work accessible from several entry points, presenting a rounded perspective on the layered and interdisciplinary approach in Gades' choreographic decisions.

Chapter 5 is the last chapter in Unit one and has a dance on-screen focus. The author, María Jesús Barrios Peralbo highlights the political realities of the arts under the Francisco Franco regime and how *Danza Española* was influenced by the industrial revolution and the cinematic world. The chapter is a critical investigation of key Spanish dance artists, such as Gades, Rafael de Cordova and Antonio 'el bailarín', among others. In varying degrees, these artists from *Danza Española* all used the silver screen to share their art form, and it forced meaningful changes in their choreographic investigations, which the author details. This chapter in particular, presents more questions than answers and makes a clear case for revisiting historic works using an interdisciplinary lens.

Unit two begins with Chapter 6 that is written by Ana Sedeño-Valdellos. This article expands on screendance, and the author proposes that there are three major modalities involved, including the dance, the projections of the dance and the actual screendance film that is produced. Sedeño-Valdellos offers a brief overview of the historical progression of videodance and describes cinematic experiences and the manner in which they influenced *video danza*. Sedeño-Valdellos acknowledges that the debate remains open around the role of the choreographer within screendance realm.

In Chapter 7, Pedro Ordóñez Eslava leans into discussing ballet dance, contemporary music and composers in Spain. He outlines four case studies and observes the qualities of music in relation to the dancing. For example, Ordóñez Eslava references a work by José Antonio Orts and Zuriñe Gerenabarrena, who choreographed a performance piece, which includes digital technology tools that make the musical score reliant on the decisions and interpretations of the dancers. The author notes that performances like this open up questions of authorship. Ordóñez Eslava ends the chapter positing that interdisciplinary co-creation does not place autonomy at risk but rather augments the creative process as it allows endless intermedial possibilities.

The central theme of the final unit is music, and it begins with a phenomenological approach to Spanish dance and music within Susanne Langer's books. Author Magda Polo Pujadas focuses on the role of music and dance within three of Langer's articles. For Langer, artistic symbols produce a form of synthesis of the world in relation to the spirit. Such a reading of Langer's work is helpful in

understanding how primitive and artistic symbols are defined by the essayist. Chapter 9 is authored by Cecilia Nocilli, a musicologist who focuses on the relationship between musical texts and theatre and how this exists onstage, and expands on the *habitual praxis* within two works, one Italian and one Spanish. Nocilli states that her point of departure is to respect the various lines of inquiry and reconsider how representation of the works occurs. Chapter 10 offers a sharp focus on ballets created by Valencian composer Vicente Martín y Soler. Author Vera Fouter Fouter claims that the ballets were well received by Russian audiences because of its dramatic and emotional content and the intermixing of musical, literary and dramaturgy ideas in the various performances. Fouter Fouter uses archives to tilt the conversation towards the relationship between the libretto and the choreographic ideas within Martín y Soler ballets, and highlights the important role music played. The book ends with Chapter 11 written by Guadalupe Mera Felipe who draws on the chronotope, a configuration of time and space in literary theory and philosophy, and connects this to dance and music. Music is less present in this chapter but when referenced, it stands out. Mera Felipe reflects on dances present within Spanish society in the nineteenth century and expands on the importance of time and space within literary constructions of fiction in relation to these dances. This chapter suggests that the dance and choreographic narrative of the period demonstrates how certain dances during the Elizabethan period were considered to be for the middle class and elites.

*Abriendo Fronteras* is an important contribution to dance and performance studies if interested in Spanish dances and Spanish dance history. There are a variety of Spanish choreographers, artists and Spanish dance works referenced, and if new to Spanish dance canons, the volume and depth of the material within this book might be a bit overwhelming. However, for the reader with keen eyes for detail and the ability to follow the multiple strands of inquiry, *Abriendo Fronteras* is a fascinating read reflecting on narratives and interdisciplinary perspectives that are tied to Spanish dance history. Although the term *Coreología* is not directly referenced in each chapter, the units are linked together via overarching themes. Indeed, the editors are perhaps assuming that the reader will have a basic understanding of some key concepts or historical moments referenced in the book, and this might exclude readers less familiar with the history and form.

### Contributor details

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8169-0642>