

# Abriendo Fronteras: Enfoques Interdisciplinarios de la Coreología, Cecilia Nocilli and Ana María Díaz Olaya (eds) (2018)

Cisneros, R. K.

Author post-print (accepted) deposited by Coventry University's Repository

## Original citation & hyperlink:

Cisneros, RK 2020, 'Abriendo Fronteras: Enfoques Interdisciplinarios de la Coreología, Cecilia Nocilli and Ana María Díaz Olaya (eds) (2018)', *Choreographic Practices*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 299–302. [https://doi.org/10.1386/chor\\_00024\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1386/chor_00024_5)

DOI 10.1386/chor\_00024\_5

ISSN 2040-5669

Publisher: Intellect

**Copyright © and Moral Rights are retained by the author(s) and/ or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This item cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder(s). The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.**

**This document is the author's post-print version, incorporating any revisions agreed during the peer-review process. Some differences between the published version and this version may remain and you are advised to consult the published version if you wish to cite from it.**

Book review

By: Rosa Cisneros (Coventry University, Centre for Dance Research)

***Abriendo fronteras: enfoques interdisciplinarios de la Coreología*, Celia Nocilli and Ana Maria Diaz Olaya (eds) (2018) Spain: Libargo, 214pp.,**

**ISBN: 978-84-944433-9-8, p/bk, €17.95**

### **Abriendo fronteras: enfoques interdisciplinarios de la Coreología**

*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 with a focus on Spanish dance history. Each of the eleven chapters explores specific live performances or recorded materials and analyses the work from different disciplines and perspectives. There is a nice 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. Political realities are mentioned and referenced to help present the artistic work being analysed. Each chapter offers a unique performance, literary, musical or theatrical example and these micro case studies serve to open up broader questions around interdisciplinary works and the role technology plays within them. After reading several chapters one might feel drawn to rewatch 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; Unit three- The Multidisciplinary reinterpretation of sources: case studies. The introduction identifies the gaps in literature within Spanish dance studies. Nocilli suggests that such an interdisciplinary lens is needed to reflect on the past and analyse the works from various fields, suggesting the term Coreologia. I gather that the discipline was proposed in 1955 by Rudolf Benesh and he defined Coreologia as an analysis, both aesthetic and scientific study, and the kinetographic record (specialized notation) of the possibilities of movement of the body in space and time. Nocilli has in essence curated a volume that exemplifies this line of thinking, but the term is not referenced throughout the book and leaves the reader to deduce its meaning in some instances.

Chapter 1, by Cristina Cruces Roldán looks at flamenco within the twenty-first century and the author is exploring and redefining authenticity in relation to flamenco. 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 says that when looking at flamenco, compartmentalising 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 socio-cultural, political and 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 such groups of thinkers. The Generation of '98 is the name that has 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. The Generation 27 is a group of Spanish poets of the twentieth century who became known in the cultural scene around the year 1927, who played tribute to author Luis de Góngora. Díaz Tapia links flamenco with the Generation 98 and 27 and touches on the paradox that follows the art form in existing literature, highlighting that the flamenco dancer is either exoticised or defined as an "other." The writer expands on the historical moment of the *Cafés Cantantes* and how dance and literature were intertwined, referencing the poets and writers from the Generation 98 and 27.

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 decisions. 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 references that such technique and qualities were incorporated into his works. 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 and gave me a rounded perspective on the layered and interdisciplinary approach that Gades had with his 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 has a critical investigation of key Spanish dance artists, such as Gades, Rafael de Cordova, and Antonio "el bailarín," among others. In varying degrees the key dance companies from the Danza Española all used the silver screen in some capacity to share their art form. This approach to dancing on screen forced a change in the choreographic investigations of Gades, Rafael de Cordova, and Antonio "el bailarín," among others. This chapter in particular, presents more questions than answers and makes a clear case for revisiting historic works using an interdisciplinary lens.

Chapter 6 begins unit two and is written by Ana Sedeño-Valdellos. This essay expands on different modalities in relation to screen dance and musical parameters and describes the sequential order of frames and its impact on the final choreography. The author proposes that

there are three major modalities which include 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, referencing work from Jose Antonio Orts and Zuriñe Gerenabarrena, the artists choreograph a performance piece which includes digital technology tools and the musical score is reliant on the decisions and interpretations of the dancers. The author sees such a performance as an example that opens up questions of authorship. Ordóñez Eslava claims that interdisciplinary work and the various artistic examples mentioned are opening up more questions and lines of debate rather than narrowing down the focus. He 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.

Music is a central theme for the final unit which begins with a phenomenological approach to Spanish dance and music within Susanne Langer's books. Author Magda Polo Pujadas focuses on the role of the artistic music and dance symbols within three of Langer's essays. 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 nine is authored by Cecilia Nocilli, a musicologist who focuses on the relationship between musical texts and theatre and how this work exists on stage, 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 ten 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 a Russian audience because of its dramatic and emotional content and the intermixing of musical, literary and dramaturgy ideas in the various performance work. Fouter Fouter uses archives to tilt the conversation towards the relationship between the libretto and the choreographic ideas within Martín y Soler ballets, which highlights the important role music played. The book ends with chapter eleven written by Guadalupe Mera Felipe's 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's reflects on dances situated 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 demonstrate how certain dances during the Elizabethan period were considered to be for the middle class and elites.

In summary, *Abriendo Fronteras* is an important contribution 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 Coreologia is not directly referenced in each chapter, the units are nicely 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 a few readers.