

Hershini Bhana Young. 2023. *Falling, Floating, Flickering: Disability and Differential Movement in African Diasporic Performance*. New York: NYU Press. 320 pp.

Hershini Bhana Young's *Falling, Floating, Flickering: Disability and Differential Movement in African Diasporic Performance* is a groundbreaking supplement to *Crip: New Directions in Disability Studies* series. This scholarly work intricately evaluates the interconnection of disability, performance, and African diasporic identity, spearheading notions of embodiment and movement that counter normative standards and expectations. Young applies a multi-layered lens, deriving from performance studies, disability studies, and African diaspora scholarship. Every page galvanizes readers to revisit their understanding of the body as it traverses the terrain of race, gender, and fixed notions of ability. Young's prose is enormous—she calls us into a world where resistance features based on black performance arts against the historical and current abstraction wrought by imperial violence. Striking imagery flows through the text, juxtaposing the visceral with the theoretical. In doing so, she describes how the bodies of black performers—whether they are floating in the Mediterranean Sea, crawling across a stage, or spasming in ecstatic dance—serve as potent mediums for questioning societal constructs surrounding ability and disability.

There are thematic chapters, with each engaging with distinct forms of performance and at the same time addressing themes of embodiment, loss, and resilience. The first chapter, "Falling and Crawling," juxtaposes visual narratives from disability performances by Wura-Natasha Ogunji with narratives of survival among polio-affected individuals in Sierra Leone. Young uses the contrasting movements of falling and crawling as metaphors for both the limits imposed by the dominant social order and the agency rooted within disabled bodies. The second chapter, "Floating," checks the precarious nature of black diasporic bodies in the Mediterranean through Berni Searle's poignant performance. As bodies float, Young evaluate despair and resilience concepts, arguing that the act of floating, goes beyond the conventional idea of death to the active presence of life carved by historical absences and losses. Next, "Flickering," focuses on the oscillations between human and animal bodies, using performances by Nandipha Mntambo to question how racial and species hierarchies blurring impact social dynamics. By checking narratives from Lauren Beukes' "Zoo City," Young delineates the dynamics of identity construction in a posthuman context.

Chapter four, "Spasming and Passing Out," addresses disability representation in the videos of Spoek Mathambo and Die Antwoord, dissecting topics of survival, perception in the society, and the commodification of the disabled body. The spasms far from being symbols of limitation, instead serve as markers of creative embodiment and the capacity for resilience). Focusing on Chris Abani's "Song for Night," "Shaking the World" examines the liminality of child soldiers and their reclamation of identity through performance. Young interrogates the dualities of life and death inherent in war, suggesting that the vibrancy of black sociality pulsates through their collective experiences. The final chapter, "Unhinging: Experimenting in Black Feminist Cripistemologies at the Edge of the World," presents a radical engagement with epistemological boundaries through the lens of 'cripistemology.' Young champions a collective emergence of enunciative practices for bodies defined by their differences, advocating for liminal spaces where disability, race, and gender converge dynamically.

At its core, *Falling, Floating, Flickering* provides a strict reimagining of the body that confronts influential paradigms. Young's engagements with disability as a site of both cultural expression and identity formation from a critical perspective underscore the potential for radical help within African diasporic performance. The book's strength lies in its interconnected approach—the fluidity with which it wields different methodologies that builds a robust and complex understanding of black performance. The visceral narratives woven throughout the text lend a poignant voice to embodied experiences usually made invisible in mainstream discourse. Chapters 1 and 4 are novel, stressing individuals with disabilities non-normative movements in contrasting international contexts—Sierra Leone's polio survivors and South Africa's *kuduristas*. By juxtaposing these distinct cultures of coping and creating, Young gives way for a wider discourse on precarious existence and at the same time calling the resilience imbued within black bodies. These chapters should merit particular attention in scholarly circles as they champion differentiated methods of movement as embodiments of cultural memory and history.

Nevertheless, *Falling, Floating, Flickering* is not without its weaknesses. Despite the presence of a substantial theoretical framework, it sometimes comes at the detriment of providing reliable solutions for the lived realities of disability in the African diaspora. Even though dense academic language is necessary for rigor, it can as well alienate readers not versed with the terminology of disability studies. Additionally, Young's critique of institutions, especially how they enact social exclusion, is salient, but a more comprehending navigation of grassroots movements and activist strategies determined to redefine disability from within could benefit the text. Future research could embark more profoundly into the role of technology in contemporary African diasporic performance, assessing how digital platforms mediate representations of disability. Moreover, it would be significant to investigate how transdisciplinary methodologies can be employed to foster collaborative healing practices within communities affected by disability. Scholars are encouraged to engage in empirical research with the individual performer narratives and the agencies they cultivate against systemic oppression.

In summary, Hershini Bhana Young's *Falling, Floating, Flickering* is a valuable text in contemporary disability studies. It boldly charts new territories in understanding how notions of embodiment, identity, and agency are reconfigured by black diasporic performance. The book calls all readers to revisit conventional hierarchies of ability, accept the dynamics of the human experience, and engage with the black life corporal dimension. Young's work reclaims the politics of visibility and representation through the lens of performance, making each stage an open field for exploring the myriad possibilities of being in the world.

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