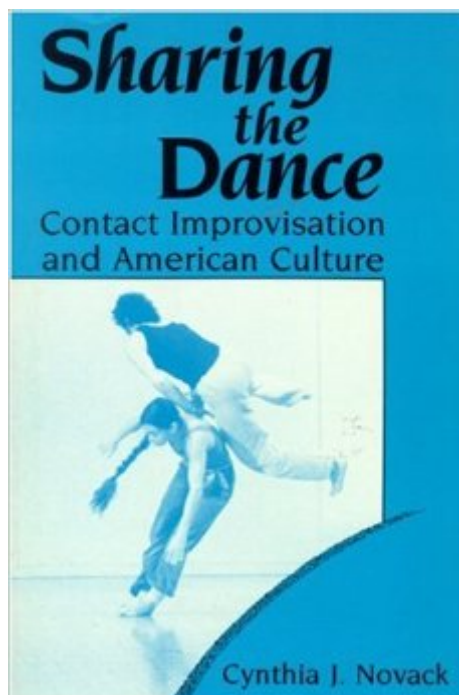


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# Sharing The Dance: Contact Improvisation And American Culture (New Directions In Anthropological Writing)



## Synopsis

In *Sharing the Dance*, Cynthia Novack considers the development of contact improvisation within its web of historical, social, and cultural contexts. This book examines the ways contact improvisers (and their surrounding communities) encode sexuality, spontaneity, and gender roles, as well as concepts of the self and society in their dancing. While focusing on the changing practice of contact improvisation through two decades of social transformation, Novack's work incorporates the history of rock dancing and disco, the modern and experimental dance movements of Merce Cunningham, Anna Halprin, and Judson Church, among others, and a variety of other physical activities, such as martial arts, aerobics, and wrestling.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm about to finish this book but I'll read it again. The layers of meaning have not really settled on my mind. There are many issues being dealt with here, and they are not clearly split. Like a CI performance, it is a big jumble of meaning happening at once. There are other 2 books about CI available, and having just practiced the form for about a month I skipped them in favour of this one, because it does not seem to teach almost anything about the technique itself, instead focusing in CI as a social process. Novack states that "In the course of talking to many people, seeing performances, and participating in classes presented by dancers from all over the country, I realized that the contact improvisers constituted a clear social and artistic group, distinct from all the other improvisers at the conference. I began to perceive that contact improvisation formed a discrete, self-defined unit that could be studied by itself and that to do so would not be inventing an artificial

category." And then, like your proverbial ethnographer, she goes living with the indians and comes back and tells the story. More precisely, this is a study of the people, of the dancers, and of their culture. It is not about Contact Improvisation, it is about culture. Of course, if this means there is almost no "know-how" in this book, the approach also allows her to deal with many abstract, ambiguous issues. How much culture there is in a body? What are the ideas of "Nature" and "Movement" that shape our daily lives? How do our values and pulls permeate from the very direct --- our sense of motion and weight and touch --- to the very abstract --- our organization into groups or "forms"?

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