

# **CONTACT IMPROVISATION, A DANCE TECHNIQUE AS A REPRESENTATIVE ART FORM OF THE SEVENTIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE**

*Viktoria Tafferner-Gulyas*

(MA in American Studies/Cultural Studies from University of South Florida,  
Tampa USA)

Obuda University, Hungary  
University of Bristol, UK

---

## **Abstract**

My research paper intends to examine a dance technique – Contact Improvisation - founded by Steve Paxton in the early-seventies as an art event that was supposed to display the body's natural ability to respond physically to the effects of its environment. I would like to explore to what extent Contact Improvisation as an art form is a good representation of the phenomena of the 1970s in American Society. I will look at this dance technique from multiple different aspects, those that could be considered as characteristics of the seventies.

These are some of the ideas I elaborate in my conference paper:

- i. I will research whether the broad, almost nationwide interest in the experience of spiritual rebirth and transcendentalism can be experienced behind the ideas that Contact Improvisation represents.
- ii. I will try to reveal how this technique worked against the general alienated feeling of the 'Me Decade' because we know that Steve Paxton – initiator of this technique - insisted on Contact Improvisation as a group work, creating deep bonds.
- iii. The seventies were famous for their solid base for consciousness raising movements. Freeing the body and its sexuality from the earlier social control opened the door to body expressions that had previously repressed. I will argue that Contact Improvisation works as a tool of exploring the natural capabilities and possibilities of the human body as a new frontier and let participants feel equal in the interaction.

- iv. I would like to discuss the connection between Contact Improvisation and the decline of American institutions in the seventies as Contact Improvisation is emphasized to be non-hierarchical and egalitarian.

---

**Keywords:** Contact Improvisation, seventies' society in America, awareness raising movements, body response

## Introduction

My paper intends to examine a dance technique – Contact Improvisation - founded by Steve Paxton in the early-seventies as an art event that was supposed to display the body's natural ability to respond physically to the effects of its environment. I would like to explore to what extent Contact Improvisation as an art form is a good representation of the phenomena of the 1970s in American Society. I will look at this dance technique from multiple aspects, those that could be considered as characteristics of the seventies.

First I will research whether the broad, almost nationwide interest in the experience of spiritual rebirth<sup>72</sup> and transcendentalism can be experienced behind the ideas that Contact Improvisation represents.

Secondly I will reveal how this technique worked against the general alienated feeling of the 'Me Decade' because we know that Steve Paxton – initiator of this technique - insisted on Contact Improvisation as a group work, creating deep bonds.

The seventies were famous for their solid base for consciousness raising movements. Contact Improvisation that was first recognized as a dance technique in this decade could contribute to women's comfortation by stripping the dancers of the traditional gender roles and giving women the chance to demonstrate even their physical power too in the duet by taking the male participant's weight, this way making them equal in the interaction. Freeing the body and its sexuality from the earlier social control opened the door to these kinds of expression that had previously repressed. The sudden appearance of private parts in public places reflected a new openness to thinking about the body, exploring it, expressing it and enjoying it.<sup>73</sup> So thirdly I will argue that Contact Improvisation works as a tool of exploring the natural capabilities and possibilities of the human body as a new frontier and let participants feel equal in the interaction.

Lastly I would like to discuss the connection between Contact Improvisation and the decline of American institutions in the seventies as

---

<sup>72</sup> Shulmann, Bruce J. 2001. *The seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society and Politics*. New York: The Free Press. xiii.

<sup>73</sup> Hine, Thomas. 2007. *The Great Funk: Falling apart and coming together (on a shag rug) in the seventies*. New York: Sarah Crichton Books. 98-99.

Contact Improvisation is emphasized to be non-hierarchical and egalitarian. Before going into discussion about those aspects of Contact Improvisation that show the phenomena of the seventies I would like to shortly introduce Steve Paxton's dance technique.

## **I:**

### **What is Contact Improvisation?**

Contact improvisation – which hovers somewhere between gymnastics, wrestling, capoeira and improvisatory dance - was developed by Steve Paxton. „Contact improvisation is unchoreographed, growing in the moment... from a point of physical contact between two dancers. They work with mass, momentum, gravity; with themselves, each other and the floor. They explore balances, finding new ways to support each other, to free each other to fly. The ideal contacter can walk on hands as well as feet.”<sup>74</sup> This technique is a social form of the post-modern era that people could learn and practice without performance aspirations, it is also a technique whereby a new kind of performance became possible, that glorified the kinetic possibilities of movement and made no assumptions about gender roles and abilities. Not only was Paxton a revolutionary to the changing world of dance around him but his experimentation with movement and the structure of the human body crafted a different version of what it was to be a dancer.

### **Modern Dance in American Society**

Contact Improvisation was developed in the post-modern era and to be able to see how post-modern dance came into life we need to examine its roots in modern dance in the twentieth century, because structural similarities between the early formation of modern dance the experimental dance waves of the 60s and 70s show a repeating pattern. Dancers in both periods held ideologies of social consciousness and radicalism, often intentionally establishing connections between movement ideas and social concepts. Both early modern dance and contact improvisation were experimental movements, consisting largely of a set of principles and ideas about moving which people explored.

Closely related to the development of American music in the early 20th century was the emergence of a new, and distinctively American, art form, that is modern dance. Among the early innovators was Isadora Duncan, who stressed pure, unstructured movement among the positions of classical ballet. Duncan said "from early childhood I have considered the

---

1 <sup>74</sup>*Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. 2001. Ed.: Dils, Ann; Cooper Albright, Ann. Wesleyan University Press. 414

freedom of my body essential to rhythm of movement".<sup>75</sup> Her emphasis on the natural world and body in the context of concert dance – that is also characteristic feature of Steve Paxton's Contact Improvisation and of many post-modern dancers' repertoire - influenced the ideals of the modern dancers who succeeded her in America. A significant contributing factor to the development and spread of modern dance in the United States in the 20th century was the establishment of Bennington College's Summer School of Dance. The program was established in 1934 and led by dancer/educator Martha Hill.<sup>76</sup> Students attended classes in dance techniques, dance composition, music for dance, teaching methods, production, dance history and critical theory.<sup>77</sup> The school's faculty included established dancers and choreographers such as Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, Charles Weidman and Doris Humphrey,<sup>78</sup> many of whom had received their training from European Modern and Expressionist dancers. The Bennington School let American Modern dancers assemble to develop a dance genre of their own identity, while at the same time established a model for University-level education programs in dance in the United States.<sup>79</sup> With clear pioneers, pupils and principles, Modern Dance began to emerge as a distinctly American art form to be taught and developed throughout the country and continent.

Later choreographers searched for new methods of dance composition. Merce Cunningham introduced chance procedures – that Paxton learned in Cunningham's company and that served as basis to the emergence of Contact Improvisation - and composition by field. Alvin Ailey incorporated African dance elements and black music into his works, such choreographers as Mark Morris and Liz Lerman have defied the convention that dancers must be thin and young. Their belief, put into action in their hiring practices and performances, is that graceful, exciting movement is not restricted by age or body type, which is also held by Steve Paxton.

### **Post-modern Dance in American Society**

Without these great innovators in dancing, post-modern dancers would not have been able to start experimenting with natural, everyday movements and emotions in dance. The choreographers and dancers of the sixties– including Trisha Brown, Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer and Steve

---

<sup>75</sup>"The California Girl Who Made Athens Gasp Wearing Classic Grecian Costumes in the Streets and to the Theatres," San Francisco Chronicle, November 22. 1903, 8.

<sup>76</sup>Soares, Janet Mansfield. "Grassroots Modern" Humanities. 31, 5. (2010): 38-42. 1 Feb. 2011.

<sup>77</sup>Soares, Janet Mansfield. "Grassroots Modern" Humanities. 31, 5. (2010): 38-42. 1 Feb. 2011.

<sup>78</sup> Soares p. 39.

<sup>79</sup> Soares p. 40.

Paxton - created experimental dance workshops and together they explored kinesthetic awareness, they talked of the intelligence of bodies and of movement. In summer 1962, a group of dancers including the above mentioned young artists presented a concert of twenty-three works at the Judson Memorial Church on Washington Square, and the Judson Dance Theater was born, which could be considered a pivotal event of post-modern dance, that was an American dance movement during the 1960s and 1970s<sup>80</sup>. Like other cultural phenomenon of the time, it was a rebellion against traditional ideas and assumptions. Postmodernists questioned the established parameters of dance and pushed dance and art to new levels. They experimented with treating the body as a neutral enactor of movement rather than as an expressive, gendered personality. Choreographers and dancers also started to experiment with the body as the carrier of spirit, research the physical and mental healing effects of movement and the body as a tool of spiritual expression.

### **Orientalism and spirituality in Contact Improvisation**

The seventies were called the „The Third Great Awakening” by Tom Wolfe<sup>81</sup>. It was claimed that millions of Americans had tried transcendental meditation, practiced yoga and tried one variant or another of Oriental religions, from Orthodox Buddhism to the cults of Hare Krishna and the Bhagwan guru.<sup>82</sup> This phenomenon could be experienced in dancing too. The appreciation of non-Western dance led to an interest in the spiritual, religious, healing and social functions of dancing in other cultures. The disciplines of oriental martial arts led to new metaphysical attitudes. Experiences of communal living gave rise to dance forms that expressed or even caused social bonds. Dance became a vehicle for spiritual expression. For instance Deborah Hay’s solos of the seventies included cosmic images that were similar to Hindu temple dances and Barbara Dilley’s *Wonder Dances* used meditative movement explorations and moments of ecstatic outpourings showing the choreographer’s interest in Tibetan Buddhism. Dance also became a vehicle for expressions of community with spiritual overtones, as in Meredith Monk’s theatrical, mythic works such as *Education*

---

<sup>80</sup> Goldberg, Roselee. *Performance: live art since the 60s*. New York: Hudson and Thames. 1998. 146.

<sup>81</sup> American author and journalist, best known for his association and influence over the New Journalism literary movement in which literary techniques are used in objective, even-handed journalism. Beginning his career as a reporter he soon became one of the most culturally significant figures of the sixties after the publication of books such as *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

<sup>82</sup> Frum, David. *How We Got Here: The 70’s: The decade that brought you modern life (for better or worse)*. New York: Basis Books. 2000. 144.

*of the Girlchild*, a portrait of a tribe or family of heroic women. These dances often use ordinary movements and objects; they propose new relationships between performer and spectator; articulate new experiences of space, time and the body.<sup>83</sup>

Similar to the dances above Contact Improvisation soon after its emergence was characterized as a therapy – fitting into dancing’s healing effect on both body and mind – developing the individual’s personal power and strength of presence. The sensation of movement is highly appreciated in Contact Improvisation as it is in most oriental martial art techniques especially in Tai Chi and Aikido - that are practiced to achieve physical health and fitness, as well as mental, physical, and spiritual development -, as opposed to Western movement – both in sports and dance – in which choreographed and controlled form of movement is prioritized lacking the sensitization of the body. Contact Improvisation on the other hand uses mostly spontaneous movements like leaning and rolling, letting dancers experience the feeling of the action itself and not of its product. Paxton was in Japan with Merce Cunningham and there, as well as in New York, was exposed to Eastern practices. This was all coming into his dancing and dancemaking. During the early seventies Paxton studied the Japanese martial art form Aikido and began to experiment with the rolling, falling and partnering skills of that movement technique. The Aikido roll for example requires attention to sensation on the back and neck for its proper execution and it could be broken into parts so as it allows one to feel its sensations. This breaking down into parts or slowing down of movements is crucial if we want to achieve free, spontaneous movements instead of habitual movement so dancers must develop a habit of awareness in relation to the reflexive reactions of the body, which is a basic requirement of most of the oriental martial art techniques (especially Tai Chi) and of Indian Bharatanatyam dance<sup>84</sup>.

To achieve confidence and easy flow in motion contact improvisers should train their bodies and mind via other techniques, such as hatha yoga that emphasizing awareness of the reflex activities involved in breathing and posture. Yoga also became very popular in seventies as a form of exercise to develop and maintain mental and physical health, purification of the body

---

2 <sup>83</sup> Banes, Sally. *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance*. Wesleyan University Press. 1987. 98.

<sup>84</sup>Bharatnatyam is considered to be a fire-dance — the mystic manifestation of the metaphysical element of fire in the human body. Bharatnatyam is the manifestation of the ancient idea of the celebration of the eternal universe through the celebration of the beauty of the material body. It consists of elaborate gestures (Mridu Angaharas, movements of limbs), sentiments (Rasas), and emotional states (Bhavas).

and meditation, it is overall a very good stress-reducing technique. Yoga participants experience better sleep, increased energy levels and muscle tone, relief from muscle pain and stiffness, improved circulation and overall better general health. The breathing aspect of yoga can benefit heart rate and blood pressure and was started to use in the Western world in the sixties and seventies as a natural cure to relieve symptoms of anxiety, Contact Improvisation could also make very good use of not only its techniques but also its positive effects on body and mind.

### **Contact Improvisation and the awareness raising movements of the seventies**

The project of exploring, celebration and also alternatively healing the body is part of the broad phenomenon of the awareness raising movements of the seventies – including awareness of the human body, new sexual awareness and openness on sex, women's and homosexual egalitarian movements and new religious-spiritual awareness - to which Contact Improvisation contributed in multiple ways. Through giving and taking our and our partner's weight in the moves we gradually learn about the capacities and the boundaries of the human body that could provide a new ground for moving. With specifically designed exercises we can become and remain aware the body's systems reflexively interacting with „weight, momentum, friction, the touch of the partner, the sensation of the floor under our body and our peripheral vision of the space”.<sup>85</sup> Contact improvisers see the body as a sensuous, intelligent, natural part of each person, requiring acknowledgement and promising insight also believe that any body could be viewed in some way as an aesthetic conveyor as opposed to earlier dance forms where the notion of physical beauty was very narrow. As the jumping and falling show the influence of Aikido skills, the lighter touching gives evidence of the body awareness work of the „small dance”<sup>86</sup>. Being aware of what and how our bodies are capable to do and endure without pain is extremely important in Contact Improvisation as dancers lean and balance on each other in a sustained, suspended manner, fall off and jump back onto each other, and trade the role of supporting or being supported several times in the course of a duet encounter. Dancers often use the body in a whole piece, but sometimes parts of the body are articulated through successive movements – one body part moving after another – particularly in the rolling actions. His first piece called „Magnesium”<sup>87</sup> performed in a gymnasium on

---

<sup>85</sup> Novack, Cynthia J. *Sharing The Dance: Contact Improvisation and American culture*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1990. 64.

<sup>86</sup> Some of the original explorations that are actually not done in contact and are solo explorations of body-use, the small reflexive movements that happen while standing still.

<sup>87</sup> performed in Oberlin College, Ohio in January, 1972.

the mat the dancers, all men, began by standing still and then started to fall off balance—falling through the space, spilling onto the mat, rolling, getting up, with little soft collisions, slides and falls, is a perfect representation of body awareness. Not only was Paxton a revolutionary to the changing world of dance around him but his experimentation with movement and the structure of the human body crafted a different version of what it was to be a dancer.

Paxton also challenged the concept of sex, sexuality and the philosophies of socio-sexual equality in dance. Comparisons have often been made between sex and contact dance. This is because contact improvisation demands the de-particularisation of parts of the body. Dancers, even beginners, must be responsive to the entire body; avoiding socially-taboo genitals. Within the form there is an emphasis on equality between people and letting go of traditional role expectations. It is important that people take responsibility for themselves and only do fifty per cent of the work. „Contact makes an important statement about relationships – about what is my responsibility, my territory, my decision making power, and what is yours.”<sup>88</sup> This form offers the possibility for dancers to be seen as human beings not as idealized images, thus offering great potential for women working. In addition women develop strength in their arms, learn how to use their weights so that small women could lift large men, creating reversed roles that questioned the norm. This work was in contrast to work of the 1950’s in which it was rare for women to touch each other or for men to touch each other. The Women’s Movement and the Gay Movement broke down barriers which made it easier for casual physical contact and these were evident in the dance work of the 1960’s and 1970’s.<sup>89</sup> Cynthia Novack<sup>90</sup> also underpins this idea when she says that contact dancers who she made interviews with from the beginning level to the most experienced ones discussed the implications of touching and weight-bearing that are inherent in contact improvisation. They often related touching to a freedom from the restrictions for gender roles and from accompanying expectations about what kind of movement suits men and women and what parts of the body can and cannot be touched. Dancers felt that Contact Improvisation allows for partners to engage in close physical contact without necessarily experiencing sexual feelings and to engage in movement uncharacteristic of gender roles.

„Contact Improvisation has redefined a woman’s strength capacities and possibilities and a man’s sensitivity,”<sup>91</sup> said Silvy Panet-Raymond, a Canadian contact improviser. Many women say they believe Contact

---

<sup>88</sup> Adair, p. 148.

<sup>89</sup> Adair, p. 149.

<sup>90</sup> Novack, p. 168

<sup>91</sup> Novack, p. 168.



Improvisation has enabled them to experience physical trust from men. I propose that Contact Improvisation can help women discover their own strength and power in their bodies, as well as help them develop understanding, healthy relationships with men - when a woman can partner with a man who is larger than her, yet she can "lift" him, carry his weight, or redirect his energy and movement with her own body, it is an empowering and cathartic experience. Contact improvisation is uniquely suited for use as a political tool for feminist practice, because of the egalitarian, nontraditional, reflective elements that it advocates and which are necessary for its success. Here I mean feminism as the belief that males and females are inherently equal, though different and the practice of males and females learning about and exploring these differences to better trust, understand, and respect one another. Contact improvisation could be an effective tool in a feminist workshop setting, used with non-dancers as a way to discover their own bodies' strength and versatility. They could also work on developing trust between the sexes, as each person is so focused and interdependent on their partner or group. This dance technique is one way that people can strive to develop the trust and understanding.

### **Contact Improvisation as a fight against the alienation of the 'Me decade'**

According to Daniel Lepkoff, a dancer of Paxton's Contact Improvisation „only looks like a duet when viewed from the outside, but for the person inside of the dance, it is a solo.”<sup>92</sup> This idea reflects the general feeling of the 'Me Decade', however Contact Improvisation is more frequently understood as a discovery of the pleasant and stimulating interaction with others, other bodily movements in order to reduce the fear of proximity. Paxton consciously constructed their performances to be tremendously accessible to the audience and he would call them a „kind of grass roots community work”<sup>93</sup>. He also insisted on Contact Improvisation as a group work, creating deep bonds. The basic form of contact improvisation outside the classroom and off-stage is the contact jam, an open event to which people come, warm up and dance immersed in a casual social ambience, where they form community, a community of experience, deriving from sharing a common dance form. Contact Improvisation creates community between dancers and audience. In some performances, according to Lisa Nelson a dancer, audience members would actually dance themselves

---

<sup>92</sup> Lepkoff, Daniel. *Contact Improvisation: A Question*. Contact Quarterly. Annual 2011. 38.

<sup>93</sup> Paxton, Steve. „*Jumping Paradigms*.” In Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook, eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith, 167. Northampton: Contact Editions. 1997.

– „jumping all over one another”, and remaining long after the end of the performance, often initiating interactions with the performers:

„They would really want to start rolling and jump on you; they would embrace you after the performance to congratulate you, but they’d hang on you, lean on you. I think that seeing how long it was possible to touch somebody and not come away was very infectious. There was something that really unified everybody.”<sup>94</sup>

There is an even stronger feeling of community between the dancers themselves as they heavily rely on each other in the duet encounters in which one or both partners jump and fall, using the body of the other person as leverage to direct the fall. Sometimes, one person climbs on another or gently guide a partner’s movement by lightly touching him or her. This form of movement would not be possible without such acknowledgement of the other, trust and confidence.

### **Hierarchy and egalitarianism in Contact Improvisation**

Paxton believed that this trust and the equality of the participants are tremendously important to achieve the dance’s liberating effect and if the hierarchical organization of power through the technical and organizational rules governing both dance and society were the problem, then perhaps by removing these restrictions one could find a freer type of movement and contact.<sup>95</sup> Due to President Nixon’s abuse of power and financial wrongdoings Americans came to think that presidents had become too strong and had acquired too much autonomy and authority. Watergate added fuel to cynicism about politicians and politics and the government as an instrument of collective good, which led to a growing distrust of American institutions and leaders.<sup>96</sup> Cynthia Novack argues in *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture* that contact improvisers, especially in the 1970’s viewed the form as an egalitarian communal activity, which rejected the idea of one leader and firm frames. According to Steve Paxton, working with the Judson Church group in the early 60s was his first experience in trying to create a dance situation which was „relatively nonhierarchical”<sup>97</sup>. In general Paxton observed, dance companies, whether they were classical, modern or post-modern, had practiced the same disciplinary techniques and reinforced the same hierarchical power relations as in society generally. „In ballet, the traditional courtly hierarchy continued. In modern dance (Graham, Limón) the same social form was used except

---

<sup>94</sup> Novack 73.

<sup>95</sup> Turner, Robert. *Steve Paxton’s „Interior Techniques”: Contact Improvisation and Political Power*. *The Drama Review* 54:3. Fall 2010.

<sup>96</sup> Shulman 48.

<sup>97</sup> Novack 207.

magicians rather than monarchs held sway. Postmodern dancers (Cunningham, Marsicano) maintained alchemical dictatorships, turning ordinary materials into gold, but continuing to draw from classical and modern-classical sources of dance company organization.”<sup>98</sup>

Paxton believes that some people have special skills which might be called upon, but no one holds permanent control as a result of those skills. He desired unique and personalized forms of dance practice. His dissatisfaction with those hierarchical power relations above, in which directors and dancers reproduced impersonal dance practices motivated his experiments in contact, during his time at the Grand Union and after.

However Contact Improvisation has embraced values of individualism, equality and antihierarchical relationship, according to the theory of the anthropologist Louis Dumont<sup>99</sup> contradictions appeared between these values and the differences which developed as a result of social roles and social actions as well as in small communities and in society in big. The ideal of equality is unattainable, even if people think it superior. So the ideology of egalitarianism and spontaneity was challenged by the appearance of implicit hierarchy and overt planning. For those people who eventually became involved with Contact Improvisation on a professional basis, who taught or performed the dance as a means of living, a great deal was at stake in the organizational dynamics of the contact movement. The state of local group organization which occurred from 1977 to 1979, as well as the increase in touring by individuals and by ad hoc groups, had the effect of promoting role distinctions within the movement.

What is particularly notable about the Contact Improvisation community during the late seventies is not that hierarchies and differences existed but that many participants were so conscious of them and disturbed by them. For example at the 1980 American Dance Guild conference, a discussion „Politics and Contact Improvisation”, focused on the problem of „elitism” and people felt strongly that the egalitarian aspects of the movement should be emphasized.<sup>100</sup>

## Conclusion

Most of the scholars who research the seventies believe that this was the era of malaise in American history and culture, a completely outrageous period, the decade in which the United States didn't seem to do anything right. According to David Frum „they were strange feverish years, the 1970's. They were a time of unease and despair, punctuated by disaster”.<sup>101</sup> I

<sup>98</sup> Paxton, Steve. 1972. „The Grand Union.” TDR 16,3 (T55):128-134. 131.

<sup>99</sup> Dumont, Louis. 1966. *Homo Hierarchicus*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 20.

<sup>100</sup> Novack 208-209.

<sup>101</sup> Frum xxiii.

would not argue that this was a decade of immoral politics, bad economics and strange taste, however I believe and in this agree with Thomas Hine and his argument in *The Great Funk* that this was undoubtedly the period that served as foundation for many of the attitudes and values that define our society today. I also see the 1970's as the decade of experimentation – the years when ethnic minorities, women and homosexuals consciously take new identities -, bigger individuality – the 'Me Decade' and recovery beside the dark, depressing side and the confusion. I chose Contact Improvisation as the topic of my research because I truly think it is a perfect representation of the ambivalence of the seventies, a highly valuable product of the dark decade, a light at the end of the tunnel, a dance technique that could bring people together mentally and physically in the midst of alienation.

### References:

- Adair, Christy. *Women and Dance: Sylphs and Sirens*. New York: New York University Press. 1992.
- Banes, Sally. *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance*. Wesleyan University Press. 1987. 98.
- Dumont, Louis. *Homo Hierarchicus*. 1966. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frum, David. *How We Got Here: The 70's: The decade that brought you modern life (for better or worse)*. New York: Basis Books. 2000.
- Goldberg, Roselee. *Performance: live art since the 60s*. New York: Hudson and Thames. 1998.
- Hine, Thomas. *The Great Funk: Falling apart and coming together (on a shag rug) in the seventies*. 2007. New York: Sarah Crichton Books.
- Lepkoff, Daniel. *Contact Improvisation: A Question*. Contact Quarterly. Annual 2011.
- Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. 2001. Eds: Dils, Ann; Cooper Albright, Ann. Wesleyan University Press.
- Novack, Cynthia J. *Sharing The Dance: Contact Improvisation and American culture*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1990.
- Paxton, Steve. „Jumping Paradigms.” In Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook, eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith, 167. Northampton: Contact Editions. 1997.
- Paxton, Steve. 1972. „The Grand Union.” TDR 16,3 (T55):128-134.
- Shulmann, Bruce J. *The seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society and Politics*. 2001. New York: The Free Press.
- Soares, Janet Mansfield. "Grassroots Modern" Humanities Vol. 31 issue 5. (2010): 38-42. 1 Feb. 2011.

"The California Girl Who Made Athens Gasp Wearing Classic Grecian Costumes in the Streets and to the Theatres," San Francisco Chronicle, November 22. 1903, 8.

Turner, Robert. *Steve Paxton's „Interior Techniques“: Contact Improvisation and Political Power*. The Drama Review 54:3. Fall 2010.