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Anarchist Movement: Power, Dissent, and the Possibility of an Autonomous Dance

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Anarchist Movement

Power, Dissent, and the Possibility of an Autonomous Dance

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Abstract

Through an investigation of the ideas and practices of anarchism, emphasizing what that often overlooked tradition may offer as a theoretical basis, the study proposes a potential ground on which to reconsider some essential dynamics in the creation, presentation, and practice of dance. Certain robust sites of convergence between dance and anarchism are identified upon which choreography and performance might begin to realize a more critically effective role in exposing and challenging hierarchical structures of power, and supporting the agency and autonomy of the individual. These include the relationship of each practice to notions of participation, disruption, space, authority, play, violence, and the body. The presentation of these shared imperatives is central to the thesis; it also notes and tracks the persistence of a heretofore unremarked crypto-anarchism that suffuses dance—latent in the work of theorists such André Lepecki and Bojana Kunst, movements such as the Judson Dance Theater, and present throughout its 20th century history. The choreographer Nora Chipaumire is considered in this context, as well. Foundational ideas of anarchism, and the nature of its endemic suppression, are also addressed. A conclusion is reached that this venerable strain of political thought, and its contemporary practice, may offer a great deal to dance if it should choose to seek a more potent role in liberatory struggle and dissent.

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All we must do is alight the faint but powerful memory that we are autonomous, pleasure seeking creatures who can never be tamed. Our renewed wildness grows the clearest path to liberation.

— Communiqué, the student occupiers of the University of Pittsburgh, 11.15.17

Introduction

On February 2, 2017, a recently created news aggregation site, *What The Fuck Just Happened Today?*, listed the events of "Day 14"—the fourteenth day of the Trump administration¹. Item one: *Trump badgered, bragged, and abruptly ended phone call with Australian leader*. Item two: *Trump tells Israel to hold off on building new settlements*. Item three: *Tehran shrugs off pressure from "inexperienced" U.S. president*. Item four: *House rolls back rule restricting gun sales to severely mentally ill*. Item five: *Scott Pruitt, Trump's EPA pick, is approved by Senate Committee*. Item six: *Democrats plot protest for Trump's speech to Congress*. Item seven: *Trump vows to "totally destroy" the law restricting political speech by tax-exempt churches*.

WTFJHT?, as it became known to its rapidly growing readership in center-left "resistance" circles, was launched by Matt Kiser, an amateur newshound, on Inauguration Day. The purpose of the project, made tacit by its name, was to instrumentalize the advice of antiauthoritarian scholars and journalists—such as Masha Gessen, Sarah Kendzior and others—who, since the first days after the election the previous November, had been urging Americans to closely observe and document the changes that would soon take place in their politics and daily life.² In this way Kiser's blog, email newsletter, podcast, and the entire online community of mutual support that would form around it, was

¹ Matt Kiser, *What the Fuck Just Happened Today?* (blog), last modified April 30, 2018, <https://whatthefuckjusthappenedtoday.com/2017/02/02/Day-14>.

² Masha Gessen, "Autocracy: Rules for Survival," *The New York Review of Books*, November 10, 2016, <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/11/10/trump-election-autocracy-rules-for-survival/>; Sarah Kendzior, "We're heading into dark times. This is how to be your own light in the Age of Trump," *thecorrespondent.com*, November 18, 2017, <https://thecorrespondent.com/5696/were-heading-into-dark-times-this-is-how-to-be-your-own-light-in-the-age-of-trump/1611114266432-e23ea1a6>.

contributing to a broader, citizen-led project to resist the new government's tactic of saturating the American people, and overwhelming the mainstream media, with rapid and disorienting change—what Steven Bannon, the president's former chief strategist, adopting language used by Donald Rumsfeld in the build-up to the second Iraq war, referred to as "shock and awe."³

The parallels to Naomi Klein's analysis of the tactics of pro-corporate governance are direct and were quite clear at the time; nearly a decade earlier in *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, she detailed, using the Bush Administration's response to Hurricane Katrina as a primary example, the strategy of governments to systematically exploit collective disorientation to advance policies of privatization and disenfranchisement that would otherwise, in more settled times, face enormous pushback.⁴ Reflecting on the first weeks of the Trump presidency, Klein wrote that, although an extreme exemplar, "his shock tactics do follow a script, one familiar from other countries that have had rapid changes imposed under the cover of crisis."⁵ The *WTFJHT?* list of news stories for "Day 14"—as for all the rapidly-changing, crisis-rich days before and since—was just that: a read-back of a kleptocratic, would-be authoritarian script.

On the evening of that same "Day 14," the Israeli Batsheva Dance Company presented *Last Work* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Founded in 1964 by Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild and Martha Graham, Batsheva had since the 1990's, under the direction of Ohad Naharin, grown its acclaim, becoming Israel's foremost contribution to the international dance scene. It did not, however, necessarily have a reputation for addressing political subjects through its dance. Two weeks after the mass-mobilizations of the Women's March on Washington, DC, however, five days after the surprise implementation of Trump's ban on muslim travelers, everything was political. Indeed, in the Opera House as the lights came down, one could feel an added tension, even anxiety, in the air, beyond the normal anticipation of a large crowd seeking diversion from well-regarded international dance stars. On that

³ Joshua Green, "Bannon's Path from Trusted Attack Dog to Toxic Liability," *Bloomberg*, August 18, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-08-18/bannon-s-path-from-trusted-attack-dog-to-toxic-liability>.

⁴ See Naomi Klein's discussion in, Naomi Klein. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York : Picador, 2008). This idea is also considered in Giorgio Agamben's, *State of Exception* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

⁵ Naomi Klein. *No is Not Enough* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), 2.

night, in those early days, there was such a high degree of ambient political conflict present that one could even be forgiven for overlooking the activists from the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement who had stationed themselves outside of the theater, protesting what they saw as Batsheva's complicity in the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Last Work begins with a repetitive, machine-like sound. As the stage lights come up, a woman in a blue dress (on alternate nights played by a man in beige pants and blue shirt) is seen up-stage left running on what appears to be a treadmill embedded in the floor. We cannot see the apparatus, but are left to imagine the elaborate design and diligent labor involved in creating such a dazzling illusion. The impact of this highly physical yet almost meditative activity—the running persists unchanged for the duration of the work—momentarily disrupts the expectations of the particular mode one has come to expect from this choreographer's work. Naharin is also the creator of "Gaga," a movement technique that, he explains, is concerned with making discoveries, in his own words, "something that helps the dancers to go beyond their familiar limit in a daily basis."⁶ The technique is taught as two forms—Gaga/dancers and Gaga/people—both based in guided improvisation. Gaga/people invites non-dancers to participate, often in large events with a touch of charismatic spectacle; Gaga/dancers layers that same energy on top of codified dance techniques familiar to other practices. While Naharin proposes his approach as a way to access undiscovered movement potential with the goal of expanding a dancer's personal vocabulary, the result seems to be more of a homogenization, a virtuosic distortion of traditional and classical forms. And so the focused, everyday activity on the treadmill came as a not-unpleasant surprise.

Soon, though, *Last Work* reverts to no-surprises: extreme contortionist movement, an overt representational vocabulary, and the indulgence of hyper-emotive dramatization. On top of this, uncharacteristically, is an ambitious layering of political narrative. After an hour, the Marianne-like figure is still running.⁷ The sound of machine guns carries through the house, there's a rave-like moment where the company dances the *horah*, and rainbow confetti explodes into the air, falling on the performers and

⁶ Brooklyn Academy of Music, "Ohad Naharin on the language of gaga," BAM. February 1, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bje66VbeJGM>.

⁷ Marianne is a symbol of freedom and democracy conjured after the French Revolution as a symbol of the triumph of The Republic. Her image is displayed throughout France. See Anne M. Wagner. *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

the stage. Images of war, surrender (our runner, at the end of the piece, is holding a large white flag) and hedonistic celebration find a convergence in this one big fiasco of entertainment. Naharin doesn't shy from overt representation; these gestures of presentation and dramatization are his most reliable tool. The piece enacts, and even goes as far as to exploit, through gesture, costume, and sound score, the intimate conflicts endemic to a culture and country whose ongoing relationship to war is complex. *Last Work* is seeking a catharsis, and the very act of performing this work at that moment was further convoluted by its context—at this particular institution (the main stage at BAM is an emblem of well-established hierarchies that exist in the urbane, liberal consumption of culture) and in its contemporary political setting (both in the United States and Israel). Naharin is attempting to perform the political, but, while his runner runs in place, the static, premeditated choreography, registering the time of its creation, is outstripped by an urgent present. It begs the question: can dance ever keep pace? Can the performance of movement act as a viable agent in political and social change?

Leaving the theater that night, I recall my alienation from the crowd of Brooklyn dance patrons. Most, it seemed, had found the catharsis they had come for, spilling out into the street, into the still-unresolved crises of Day 14 and the hundreds that would follow. The crowd scattered home with a leisurely business-as-usual, happy, these residents of the place that had become a metonym for the recent Democratic campaign, their collective hopes for the first female presidency shattered. Pundits had called it a sure thing, after all. But the same mechanism that had led so many to believe those authoritative voices—a habit of engaging with politics at a distance, more generally of tolerating falsity, of failing to be skeptical of received narratives—also perhaps allowed this crowd to find solace in Batsheva's representational manipulations. I was left with a feeling that dance could do more. And so, over the following days and weeks, some generative questions began to emerge. How can dance be relevant now—in the current political climate of the United States? How can dance not just perform but, crucially, *embody* dissent? How can dance act as the catalyst for the disruption, perhaps even transcendence, of the status quo?

With the emergence of proto-authoritarian, even proto-fascist, governance, a new paradigm has established itself regarding political action; a surge of often first-time activists has coalesced to counter, through direct action or other forms of coordinated protest, each new perceived

assault on American norms. These newcomers join established resisters. While affected communities and seasoned activists point out, stridently and correctly, that post-Trump politics are merely an exaggeration of a landscape of injustice that has characterized American history since before the founding of the country itself, the past year has seen a dramatic broadening of protest energy that creates both the necessity and, potentially, the space for novel modes of dissent to flourish. That space of possibility amplifies dance-makers' detachment from what resisters of the latter type would refer to as "struggle," as the connection between our practice and political change—between performance and the street—is complex, contested, unresolved.

As *What The Fuck Just Happened Today?* continued to recount each day's compounding cultural disruptions and official violence, one group of more seasoned radicals was achieving a new prominence, even notoriety. From the #DisruptJ20 protests claiming the streets of the capital during the inauguration ceremonies, to the antifascist collectives protecting campuses such as the University of California, Berkeley, to the battles in Charlottesville defending the city against the Unite the Right rally on August 12, 2017, cadres of anarchists were newly and highly visible. With this visibility came familiar false impressions—exacerbated by the mainstream American media's limited capability for analysis, but also echoing targeted mischaracterizations of anarchism that go back a century and more. Often portrayed merely as agents of disorder and destruction—if not outright bomb-throwing violence—the liberatory condition these activists seek is beyond state control, and so perceived, from the perspective of state subjects, as a terrifying lawlessness. An understanding of this venerable strain of Western political thought can be found by putting anarchism in its place on the traditional political spectrum merely as the furthest left of the socialisms, finding there a more libertarian space where government itself is rejected. Anarchism, in fact, opposes all systems of hierarchy—at all scales from the political to the interpersonal—and instead promotes the idea that individuals have the capacity for, and the inalienable right to, self-determination. Anarchism, in short, if one were to define it in the negative, is in direct and diametric opposition to everything Americans were witnessing from their government and the reemergent far right in the new era.

Looking out at these developments from the world of dance, I was struck initially by the anarchists' physicality. Individually and collectively, they deployed their bodies (often in dramatic black

bloc) and fearlessly projected them forward into direct confrontation with physical manifestations of forces of oppression (most often the police) in an effort to disrupt a political moment, structure, or space.⁸ These acts are informed by longstanding principles, of collectivism (mutual aid), the unbound desire for liberty (autonomy), traditions of non-hierarchical organization (horizontality), and, critically, the pursuit of pleasure (versus mere happiness) that defines anarchist thought and action. It's a joyous tradition, and intensely physical. Indeed, resonances with anarchism may lay a foundation for a way forward to exploring questions of the efficacy of dance as a political practice—discovering new power, meaning, and a tactical mode for increasing its relevance in the world.

The dynamic between dance and politics has long been addressed by scholars, a shifting series of critiques that has focused, for instance, on communitarianism, identity, and modes of pedagogy. Stacey Prickett, in "Constrained Bodies: Dance, Social Justice, and Choreographic Agency," uses as a tool Randy Martin's decades of interrogating relationships between artistic practice and culture within the context of capitalism.⁹ Prickett investigates there dance's potential to be a vehicle for social mobilization and agency. André Lepecki discusses this same idea in "Choreopolice or Choreopolitics—or the task of the dancer." In a response to Hannah Arendt's observations that "[...] we have arrived in a situation where we do not know—at least not yet—how to move politically," Lepecki suggests that, through the choreographic process, the dancer, in a kind of "devotion" that drives practice forward, is thus an agent of freedom.¹⁰ In 2003, Susan Leigh Foster analyzed various historical acts of protest and social justice movements from a choreographic and kinesthetic perspective—writing about each as if critiquing a site-specific dance work. How can dance, she asks, with the body as its medium, as an occupier of space and time, act in protest? Philosopher and performance-art theorist Bojana Kunst makes a much broader investigation, recalling Lepecki's argument for a "slower ontology," into the state of dance and movement

⁸ A *black bloc* is the name given to a tactical approach by anarchist protestors to mask their identities and amplify their presence. They typically wear black clothing and face-coverings in an effort to merge into an undifferentiated mass that appears as a single organism in motion. The tactic was first developed by members of German autonomist groups in the 1980s and has since been adopted internationally, making its first large-scale American debut at the antiglobalization protests in Seattle in 1999. See "Blochs, Black and Otherwise," CrimethInc, last modified February 28, 2018, <https://crimethinc.com/>.

⁹ Stacey Prickett, "Constrained Bodies: Dance, Social Justice, and Choreographic Agency" *Dance Research Journal* 48 (2016).

¹⁰ Andre Lepecki, "Choreopolice or Choreopolitics - or the task of the dancer" *The Drama Review* 57 (2013).

itself, assessing it within the context of what she terms a post-Fordist capitalist society.¹¹ Also of note is Sally Banes' *Democracy's Body*, in which she closely investigates the politics and radical shifts in thinking about movement and choreography surrounding the Judson Dance Theater.¹² It is interesting to note that in no cases do these theorists and historians reference the actions or ideological foundations of anarchism, but—dramatically with some, including Lepecki and Kunst—they approach closely those notions, often in a way that suggests that their inclusion might strengthen an argument or complete an idea. It is as if an entire political philosophy has been expunged from contemporary critical thought. My attempt, in relation to these authors, and in the broader scope of this investigation, is to provide an alternate and perhaps more purposeful perspective on the potential for dance to act as a sociopolitical agent by looking critically, but also generously, at what we might learn from anarchism.

In the relationships that are at the center of dance—between dancers, dancers and choreographer, and between the work and the spectator—we see modeled many of the same structures that preoccupy anarchist thought. What follows is an attempt to manipulate and synthesize some specific anarchist modes, to develop some tools that may be useful to the critique and practice of dance and anarchism, honoring both traditions in such a way that they might perhaps begin to form a system of mutual aid. Anarchists have developed a coherent body of thought, and indeed a culture, that interrogates the role of governance, the possibility of self-determination, the legitimacy of authority, the application of power, and movement's role in achieving empowerment, freedom, and joy. It is in the central importance of physicality that anarchism finds the greatest consonance with dance, and through which, in time, dance may find a new political potency.

¹¹ Kunst, Bojana. 2013. "Working Out Contemporaneity. Dance and Post-Fordism." in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Art*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Srefan Hölscher (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013); Andre Lepecki. *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005).

¹² Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962-1964* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1980).

Politics, Dance, and the Anarchist Example

Dance in the 20th century saw a robust engagement with the political. While this dynamic can be traced back much earlier—performances by King Louis XIV in the character of the Sun King, for instance, had the primary purpose of enacting the politics of monarchy and class hierarchy—the 20th century provides the most relevant ground to examine dance as a means of political dissent. At the turn of the century, modern dance was emerging as a rejection of classical ballet, its edicts as well as its aesthetics, taking in a sense that entire tradition as a stand-in for an old order that was itself being challenged. One pioneer in particular, Isadora Duncan, found her artistic voice in conjunction with the momentum of the Suffragette movement, and with radical left politics more broadly. Decades before what has been called the period of "revolutionary dance" in the 1930s, Duncan was engaging in a radical, highly-politicized project, dissenting from traditional dance practices and repressive gender constructs.¹³ She refused the confines of the corset, for instance, and explored alternate modes of presentation, sometimes favoring intimate salons over bourgeois proscenium venues.¹⁴ Rather than the flawless and unattainable ethereality of the ballerina, Isadora Duncan sought inspiration closer to the roots of a raw femininity; sharing a fascination with iconography typical of her neoclassical moment, her performances often evoked, through voluptuous movements and flowing robes, the goddesses of ancient Greece. Duncan's dance embodied and sought to preserve idyllic connections between nature, body, and soul—ones that were increasingly under threat and becoming distant as Fordist socioeconomic relationships took hold at the dawning of the era of mass industrialization and commodification.¹⁵

By the 1930s, dance as a mode of protest was centrally located within the radical left movements. In the context of a critique of industrialized labor, dance was used broadly—and quite literally—as a means to achieve a momentary liberation from the static assembly-line passivity of the

¹³ Mark Franko, *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 25.

¹⁴ When Isadora Duncan did present her work in traditional venues, she was for the most part alone on stage and barefoot—a highly radical and controversial cultural image. She often travelled with a carpet (often described as emerald green), to perhaps emulate the experience of dancing outdoors and her feet touching the grass. See Deborah Jowitt, "Images of Isadora: The Search for Motion." *Dance Research Journal* 17/18 (1985): 21-29.

¹⁵ Deborah Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 70.

workplace. The term "modern dance," and dancer-organized free spaces used for public gathering and movement, became closely associated with communist party politics in the United States. Dancers in this milieu tended to foreground emotion, and even pleasure—a direct rebellion against dance's authoritarian mainstream, as expressed in ballet, as well as the alternative modernist abstraction trending then as well in other arts. Although Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey leveraged that same emotive urge, radical left publications of the time often referred to both as "decadent" and "bourgeois," proposing that by participating in normative cultural contexts, they succeeded merely in substantiating capitalism, making dance that entertained but had no value in the pursuit of liberatory justice.¹⁶ In the radical publication *New Theater*, writer Nell Anyon criticized the works of such artists for their lack of relevance to the laborer's life, thus limiting their dance to serve only as commodified artifice. Instead, he declared, dance will only be relevant if it can "look to the future, to the eventual destruction of capitalism" and act "with all the surging emotions of an awakened social consciousness, with the call for revolutionary action."¹⁷ Organizations like the Workers Dance League sought to instrumentalize dance for social action, enlisting its members both as audience and participants. Outside of specifically political formations, groups of dancers at the time frequently joined forces with unions to perform in solidarity with various labor actions.¹⁸

In the McCarthyist reaction that followed, many American dancers paid a personal and professional price for that participation in socialist struggle in the preceding decades. Anna Sokolow, for instance, was subjected to discrimination and persecution by anti-communist forces, and was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Nonetheless, she continued to make highly politicized work that reflected social struggles taking place in the aftermath of World War II.¹⁹ In sympathy with the rising tide of the civil rights movement, artists such as Pearl Primus were prominent in framing a revised persona for black dancers, one in which it was possible for them to embody dissent

¹⁶ Emanuel Eisenberg, "Ladies of the Revolutionary Dance." in *New Theater* (February 1935):10.

¹⁷ Mark Franko, *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 114.

¹⁸ Stacey Prickett. "From Workers' Dance to New Dance." in *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 7, no. 1 (1989): 48.

¹⁹ Rebekah J Kowel, *How to Do Things with Dance: Performing Change in Postwar America* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2010), 116.

against segregation and persecution. In that era, as it may remain today, a black woman performing alone on stage was itself a strike against the ever-present culture of racism in America. Primus heightened the potential for conflict by incorporating African cultural influences in her choreography.

These historical vignettes of political engagement are representative of a truly avant-garde position relative to social struggle that dance occupied through much of the 20th century. Paradoxically, by the 1960s, when we see the rise of broader-based political movements centered in direct action, dance seems to have lost its way, eclipsed by new paradigms of activist organizing. In the 1960s, the political in dance was expressed primarily in opposition to the war in Vietnam, as well as in a less self-conscious antiestablishment strain. Much as Isadora Duncan chose to do relative to the normative dance culture of her time, many of the choreographers who were developing their process during this politicized period made more covertly political but equally radical choices—about how the body was being presented, where their work would be seen, and what physicality or movement could ultimately push the boundaries of the by-then traditional modern dance vocabulary. As hippies dissented by getting naked, dance culture—the practice of dance as a creative art—would also explore that same readily-accessible form of shock. In Anna Halprin's *Parades and Changes* (1965), for instance, the dancers were given various tasks that allowed them and their bodies to simply be witnessed—the politicization of naked bodies, as was somewhat later associated with anti-war and anti-establishment movements, was both presaged and echoed by that use of nudity as a signifier of "protest" in dance.²⁰ The task of Halprin's dancers was to take their clothes off and put them back on, over and over again; the simple yet socially charged act of public nudity becoming performative. Halprin also experimented as early as the 1950s with site-specific work in public spaces, anticipating the moment a decade later when it would become common for choreographers to take to the streets—empowering dance through dislocation, an operation similar to that pursued by the Workers Dance League in the 1930s.²¹

²⁰ Ninotchka Bennaum, Wendy Perron, and Bruce Robertson, *Radical Bodies* (Santa Barbara, CA: Art, Design, and Architecture Museum, 2017), 79-83. See also: Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A*, performed naked except for American flags wrapped around the dancing bodies.

²¹ See Anna Halprin's *Hangar* (1957). See too, for instance: Yvonne Rainer's *Street Action (M-Walk)* (1970) and Trisha Brown's *Man Walking Down the Side of the Building* (1970) and *Roof Piece* (1971).

In writing about the emergence of the Judson Dance Theater, Sally Banes illustrates ways in which various methods and principles central to the group's work brought about a democratization of the body.²² Made up of dancers, musicians, visual artists and poets, Judson was concerned with questions surrounding spectatorship, individualism, communitarianism, and presentation of the body in its most neutral form—although this claim may be open to critical contestation. The Judson artists sought to explore how the body was viewed, desiring an objectivity free from the imposition of will typically associated with performance. This brought with it an implicit critique of hierarchy, and authority—in keeping with the mood of the times—and was made momentarily explicit, among other places, in Yvonne Rainer's now infamous *No Manifesto* (1965), which decried hierarchical impositions of taste, technique, and virtuosity that might impinge on the potential for a pure art.

The intersection of dance and politics in the 20th century takes on a different character when one examines it through an anarchist lens. The opportunity to do so, however, is now, and was at the time, curtailed by those same politics. Even communism, a near-neighbor to anarchism on the political spectrum, has most often been antagonistic to anarchism's anti-statist objectives. Expelled by Marx, murdered by Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, jailed by Castro—to say nothing of the anarchist's pariah status among liberals and conservatives—this most left form of socialism has been so thoroughly suppressed that history and politics has in a sense moved forward without access to or knowledge of it as a crucial root. And so in dance, as in the broader course of history and politics, anarchism goes unnamed.

In 1968, the social critic and anarchist philosopher Paul Goodman noted this amnesiac phenomenon and sought to mitigate it. In an essay published in *The New York Times*, he examined the student uprisings then in progress around the world, making explicit the strong ties to anarchism that had gone unremarked even by the organizers. "Officials of the capitalist countries say that the agitators are Communists, and Communists say they are bourgeois revisionists," he wrote.²³ "In my opinion, there is a

²² The Judson Dance Theater was working among a particular milieu of politics by choosing the West Village's Judson Memorial Church, already active in reform politics, as its home base. See Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962-1964* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1980), xi.

²³ Paul Goodman, "The Black Flag of Anarchism". *The New York Times Magazine*, July 14, 1968. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-goodman-the-black-flag-of-anarchism>.

totally different political philosophy underlying—it is Anarchism."²⁴ To support that contention, Goodman focused on the methods of the protestors—the increasing use of leaderless organizing in direct, collective actions, for instance—and argued for naming and acknowledging the tendency as advantageous to regenerating the viability of dissent. Goodman described the student occupation of Columbia University, which had taken place several months earlier, a protest targeting the presence of military research on campus and the university's plan to build a new gymnasium in a nearby public park. Those demands, centered in an anti-military position and in defense of the local Harlem community—as well as the simultaneous creation within the occupation itself of an experimental and, as Goodman described it, "pastoral" environment for shared learning—should, he wrote, be seen as intrinsically grounded in both anarchism's core antipathy to authority, as well as in a specifically anarchist mode of utopianism, one that is immediate in its goals rather than futuristically distant. Ultimately, Goodman argued, the student activists were doing a disservice to themselves and their movements by not, as he wrote, "remember[ing] the correct name for what they in fact do."²⁵

Anarchism can best be seen as a social movement in defense of the natural laws of human beings, and our ability to self-actualize and collectively organize, free from external regulation and constraint; it is, according to political theorist and historian Daniel Guérin, a "visceral revolt."²⁶ Anarchism is driven by the essential *right* to liberty—not as a theoretical or utopian ideal but as an immediate, organic necessity. Though often referred to as a political movement, in fact anarchism's very rejection of authority and the apparatus of the state marks it, despite its contentious engagement with politics, as inherently apolitical. Anarchy, as the word is commonly used, denotes a state of disruption. Its proper roots, however, are as a Greek compound meaning *the absence of authority or government*. Due, perhaps, to the difficulty of state subjects in imagining a stateless existence—and the fact that anarchist attempts to achieve a post-statist world, particularly in the 19th century, were often rooted in violence (so-called "propaganda by the deed")—the word *anarchy*, and by extension anarchism, is most often viewed

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Daniel Guérin, *Anarchism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 11.

as synonymous with *chaos* or *disorder*.²⁷ The political philosophy of anarchism, however, describes a world, a way of living, that, while deliberately "lawless," is anything but chaotic. While rejecting all forms of authority, all rule, anarchists do in fact work to establish dynamic yet stable autonomous cooperative formations—whether as small "affinity groups," or larger, leaderless collectives—always driven by a pursuit for living a more just, more free, and more beautiful life. This *right* to pleasure is indivisible from the larger anarchist project; Emma Goldman, perhaps the most celebrated American anarchist, evoked this drive in her autobiography, declaring, "I want freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody's right to beautiful, radiant things."²⁸

The French philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon is credited with beginning to codify the principles of anarchism in the mid-19th century, inspiring an unbroken line of theorists and practitioners that have kept the tendency at the front lines of resistance and revolution. According to Proudhon, it was the ordinary people, the masses of the oppressed, who would drive a "revolution from below."²⁹ His ideas would find a direct application when, in 1871, a popular uprising resulted in the declaration, and momentary establishment, of an autonomous Paris. Before it was brutally suppressed with a death toll in the tens of thousands, the Paris Commune succeeded for a brief time in creating a free space built on a foundation of anarchist ideas.³⁰ Mikhail Bakunin, a Russian disciple of Proudhon, suggested at the time that the Commune was a prime example of how anarchist ideas might be propagated, beginning with the liberation of a major city before spreading throughout the world.³¹ American anarchists had their heyday in the 19th century as well; figures such as Goldman and Voltairine de Cleyre became popular and notorious public speakers, anarchists were central in direct anti-slavery actions (even precipitating a wave of slave rebellions), and anarchist organizers operating with and within the labor movement helped to

²⁷ See more about "propaganda by the deed" in Dan Colson "Propaganda and the Deed: Anarchism, Violence, and the Representational Impulse." *American Studies* 56, no.1 (2017) 163-186. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed April 27, 2018).

²⁸ Emma Goldman, *Living my Life* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970).

²⁹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. *What Is Property?: An Inquiry Into the Principle of Right and of Government*. (Auckland: Floating Press, 1840).

³⁰ Iain McKay, *An Anarchist FAQ*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, Scotland and Oakland, California: AK Press, 2008), 94-116.

³¹ *ibid.*

secure, among other things, the eight-hour work day. This era of successful mobilization, marked as well by pan-left cooperation, came to an end with the incident known as the Haymarket Riots. After Chicago police opened fire on local strikers at a machine shop on May 3, 1886, killing one, anarchists called for a mass protest on the following day. As that gathering was breaking up, a bomb was thrown, the provenance of which was never determined, resulting directly in the death of one officer, with several more killed by friendly fire as others shot to disperse the crowd. Chicago police took this as license to stage a mass roundup of anarchists in the city; the eventual trial of eight of those arrested became a referendum on anarchism itself, with little effort made to tie the men to the bombing itself. When four were eventually executed (with a fifth committing suicide just prior), protests for the Haymarket martyrs erupted around the world, leading in time to the establishment of May Day as a worker's holiday around the world. Though it cemented American anarchists in the lore of international anarchism, the Haymarket Riots marked the onset of a period of intense repression of anarchism in the United States, one from which it may only be beginning to recover today. The center of gravity moved instead back to Europe, where, at the turn of the 20th century, anarcho-syndicalism was born as a more Marxian expression of anarchist ideals, set firmly within the context of labor struggles. The successful mobilization of labor under anarchist principles in the decades preceding the Spanish Civil War is credited with preparing Catalans to form what remains the longest-lived example of anarchist self-governance.

Anarchist mobilizations typically peak in response to a rise in the public expression of fascism, and physicality is forefronted in those struggles. The body in antifascist practice—finding a strong resonance in dance—is the assertive agent of generation and evolution. Founded in a resolve to attain freedom, personal and collective, anarchists at all times seek to reclaim a sovereignty over the desires, instincts, and innate conditions of the body. Therefore, in contests against the state, a kinesthetic prerogative is always present at the front lines; bodies must take the streets. The realization of a fully human existence from birth to death—the anarchist ideal of liberty—is suppressed by any pyramidal system of power, one where only those at an artificial "top" are given an opportunity to develop their full potential. Fascism is only the ultimate, unmasked expression of this congenital habit of the state; its principal site is the disempowered and shackled body of its subjects. Here, we can begin to see how

dance, with humans in motion its generative instrument, may begin to intersect with an anarchist path to emancipation.

The objectives of antifascist organizing include building solidarity, defending vulnerable communities, and resisting—face to face, body to body—authoritarian violence; above all, the goal is to deny a platform for fascist speech (itself considered a form of violence), which often requires physical intervention. The venerable anarchist collective Crimethinc, which has been newly active and relevant in recent antifascist struggles, evoked an earlier resurgence in a 2004 essay, "Join the Resistance, Fall in Love." Of note, too, is how the centering of the body and human experience gives even love a role in dissent: "Where [the lover] once was complacent, she now is excited and compelled to self-asserting action."³² Beyond actions explicitly identified as anarchist, in common acts of resistance and protest, the body is often presented as the focus of resistance—hunger strikes, lockdowns, tree-sits, occupations, even self-immolation. In this way, all such embodied protest may be seen to draw from an anarchist root.

The antiwar and other resistance movements of the 1960s, for instance, implemented some of these same tactics—putting bodies into the streets, occupying institutions, demanding an immediate destruction of old systems and a rebuilding of horizontal, people-powered societies—without, as Paul Goodman noted, explicitly crediting their sources in anarchism. In the decades that followed, one can see similar ways in which dissent was recentered around the use of bodies. Faced with the AIDS crisis, and the Reagan administration's denial of the epidemic, a kind of "restlessness and momentum" arose, according to grassroots organizer and protest historian L.A. Kauffman, manifesting in a new style of protest—though still overtly anarchic—pioneered by ACT-UP.³³ Resistance as reimaged by ACT-UP deployed a diversity of tactics, including disruptions and blockades, die-ins, open-coffin funeral parades, as well as traditional protest marches—a specific merging of radical, rage filled, militant activism not seen before.³⁴ These were for the most part choreographed events—hundreds of bodies literally laying down in the middle of a city street—that were strategically presented to expose the devastating impact of

³² CrimethInc Workers' Collective, "Join the Resistance, Fall in Love" CrimethInc, last modified May 1, 2018, <https://crimethinc.com>.

³³ L.A. Kaufman. *Direct Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism* (New York: Verso, 2017) 119.

³⁴ James Wentzy, "Fight Back, Fight Aids: 15 Years of ACT UP," ACT UP New York, 2002, <http://www.actupny.org/video/index.html>.

the AIDS crisis. As the new virus and government inaction joined to attack the body, these were direct actions in defense of the body. The eventual success of ACT-UP cemented these embodied tactics, jubilant and defiant, and are credited by Kaufman with reinvigorating American protest culture after a period of dormancy in the late 1970s. Subsequent movements embraced the specific tenor and acceptance of a diversity of tactics found in ACT-UP's breakthrough formula; echoes can be seen in the successful shutdown of the World Trade Organization talks in Seattle in 1999, in Occupy, and more recently in environmental actions such as Standing Rock or the 2017 blockade of fracking trains at the Port of Olympia. With the current efforts of antifascists, centered explicitly within anarchism, all of these contemporary protest movements can be seen as sharing equally in that venerable tradition of dissent.

As might be expected from a philosophy and social theory that places individual freedom at the forefront, anarchism is marked by constantly shifting schools of thought and exists within a dynamic and ever-changing milieu of social and political desires and demands.³⁵ While all anarchists emphasize the sovereignty of the self, the main distinction historically has been whether the approach is from an *individualist* or a *social* position. The contention between a personal versus a communal imperative has given rise to a richness of tendencies—from worker-centered *anarcho-syndicalism*; to "green" or eco-anarchism, as exemplified by the militant environmentalists of *Earth First*; to *anarcho-feminism*, a strain that hearkens back to Emma Goldman, who was an early advocate for birth control and a critic of traditional marriage. A distinction is also sometimes made between *political* and *cultural* anarchism, with the latter applying anarchism more broadly, beyond politics, to find applications in the arts, literature, education, the domestic sphere, and all aspects of everyday life. In a sense all anarchists are *cultural anarchists*, as it is the culture, and the underlying consciousness of humans surviving within an authoritarian society—the acquiescence of whom allows the system to remain in place—that must ultimately be revolutionized. According to Iain McKay, author of the monumental two-volume *An Anarchist FAQ*, habits of submission and consent must be disrupted in the arena of the everyday as a precondition to raising consciousness before imagining, sharing, and implementing an alternate path. John

³⁵ See Iain McKay's discussion of the different types of anarchism in *An Anarchist FAQ*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, Scotland and Oakland, California: AK Press, 2008). 58-82.

Clark, a professor and veteran activist in radical ecological and communitarian anarchist movements, identifies a means for this consciousness-raising in those cultural forms that passionately and vigorously "expose various aspects of the system of domination and contrast them with a system of values based on freedom and community."³⁶ That joint framing highlights the great potential for an anarchist critique in dance—embodied, empowering, and capable of presenting, even if fleeting, alternate conditions of existence—to serve as a means of dissent, distinct from the other arts, and perhaps more pronounced.

The longstanding suppression of anarchism has led to a situation where, although its theories and practices are ubiquitous, it is, as noted above, rarely identified. This holds true as well for dance. It is clear, for instance, that the efforts of the Workers Dance League in the 1930's—to use modern dance as an instrument to unite the people against increasing industrialization and capitalistic policies—might be better understood if seen as an expression of *anarcho-syndicalism*, a tendency that was ubiquitous in labor circles at the time. In her discussion of the Workers Dance League, Stacey Prickett places it appropriately in its Marxist context, but, with the group's emphasis on collective joy, centering dissent in movement, it exhibits an innate affinity with the coincident imperatives of anarchism.³⁷ One might also apply an anarchist reading to Isadora Duncan; her name evokes freedom, and an ecstasy in freedom, in a constellation of thought and image that would be familiar to contemporaneous anarchist philosophers, even as her dances—sybaritic solos, a body on stage—explored the power of an individual in motion. As Duncan was experimenting with a newfound feminist agency, Emma Goldman was speaking out against the endemic patriarchy's control over women's work and bodies. Maintaining a distance from the Suffragette movement—as an anarchist, she sought other remedies than the ballot—Goldman developed her own theory of women's emancipation. "Women need to have control over their bodies," she wrote in *The Masses* in 1913, and "must be freed from the controlling hands of men and live by their own choices."³⁸ Here we see a contemporaneous critical ground on which an explicitly anarchist study of Isadora Duncan might be based.

³⁶ Quoted in Iain McKay, *An Anarchist FAQ*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, Scotland and Oakland, California: AK Press, 2008). 73.

³⁷ Stacey Prickett, "The Worker's Dance League", *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism* (2016).

³⁸ Emma Goldman, "The Free Woman," *The Masses*, November 2013. <https://themassonline.wordpress.com/emma-goldman-speaks/>.

The Judson Dance Theater is potentially another rich locus to examine from a perspective informed by an awareness of anarchism. The Judson artists, beginning in the Robert Dunn workshops, were expressly concerned with breaking down the performer/spectator boundary—itsself an implicit hierarchy—and in undermining the historical power structures in both ballet and modern dance; taken as a whole, the Judson project was striving for, it may be argued, an essentially anarchic dance. Seeing Judson in this way is clarifying; reacting both to trends in politics and modern dance at the time, the group sought an alternative, a way in which it could dismantle the choreographic and performative systems then at work. The Judson artists sought to work and live in the now—rarely documenting processes or performance—and embraced a spontaneous reaction to their environment and a reliance on everyday creative stimuli. In a discussion of the idea of spontaneity, Murray Bookchin, among the most prominent American anarchist theorists of the late-20th century, argues that it does not imply erraticism or carelessness. Rather, it describes "behavior, feeling and thought that is free of external constraint, of imposed restriction," allowing the individual to self-mediate.³⁹ By centering spontaneity in an internal desire for action or reaction—an anarchist place—Bookchin's notion may open our understanding of the extemporaneous in Judson, as the group worked to resist and break down established modes of dance. Sally Banes identifies another strain that may contribute to an anarchist reading; the Judson artists attempted a structure of working that was defiantly horizontal, both in terms of movement and the roles of participants in the dancer/choreographer pair. This call for an anti-hierarchical way of working strongly resonates with anarchism; it is of special interest here that Banes, in *Democracy's Body*, employs and returns to a certain family of terms: *cooperative*, *community*, *willing participation*, *freedom*, *individualism*, and *collective* to describe the manner in which the Judson artists sought to squelch any instantiation of hierarchy in the construction of a larger humanist project.⁴⁰ It begs the question—why did Banes not entitle her book *Anarchism's Body*? According to Banes, "the Judson aesthetic was never

³⁹ Murray Bookchin, *On Spontaneity and Organization*, Solidarity Pamphlet v49, (London: Solidarity, 1975).

⁴⁰ It is important to note that, in general, the Judson artists did not consider their work to be political. Retrospectively, however, historians and theorists have reached a consensus that, in the context of the political and social climate in which Judson emerged, the group had a decidedly political relevance in and on the counterculture of the 1960s.

monolithic"; the goal was to act collectively in the decision-making process, to advocate for a diversity of ideas, and for freedom.⁴¹

Most commonly seen as the birth of the postmodern in dance, Judson had, and continues to have, a critical impact on the evolution and trajectory of the form. Still, if we are to tease out of the conventional humanist readings a more essentially anarchist critique, certain embedded paradoxes regarding Judson, or as dance historian Ramsay Burt calls them, "blind spots," become visible in the group's process and presentation.⁴² Deborah Jowitt picks up on a potential inconsistency of this nature when she argues that, while concerned with presenting dance based in task-like movement, pedestrian and unaffected vocabulary, Judson's suppression of expression and subjectivity is at its core unnatural and inhuman. Looking at Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A*, Jowitt suggests that in the avoidance of a personal and subjective presence, the natural instincts of expression and reaction run the risk of being censored and repressed.

If Jowitt is suggesting a kind deprivation of pleasure, as well as a suppression of "natural" human complexity, then perhaps one can assert that anarchism's elevation of the pursuit of pleasure, and consideration of one's *humanness* as an inalienable right, might also provide a foundation for her argument. In the introduction to his influential eco-anarchist manifesto, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, Bookchin discusses a vital and often misunderstood distinction between *pleasure* and mere *happiness*. Typically used interchangeably, Bookchin presents a critical distinction between the two terms; happiness, as he defines it, results from the satisfaction of basic needs—food, shelter, clothing, material security. Pleasure, on the other hand, per Bookchin's anarchist reading, "is the satisfaction of our *desires*, of our intellectual, esthetic, sensuous, and playful 'daydreams'"—all of which are systematically repressed, demonized, and even criminalized in contemporary society.⁴³

Judson players certainly embraced elements of play and this form of *raw* pleasure, piling on mattresses, balancing like children on the end of a board, and dancing with one foot strapped to a roller

⁴¹ Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962-1964* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1980), xvii.

⁴² Ramsay Burt, *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 119.

⁴³ Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Palo Alto: Cheshire Books, 1982), 74.

skate; it was an experiment, after all—taking risks, relying on chance, and embracing a kind of unbound creative freedom. Nevertheless, the relationship to this pursuit of play can be seen as in some ways troubled. Tensions within the group were prevalent (power struggles continuously arose despite the call for a disbandment of hierarchies) with a schism developing between those who embraced a stripped-down ordinariness, and those who explored artifice and fantasy—seeking that essential satisfaction of *desires*. Perhaps these methodological contradictions can be better understood by acknowledging the way in which Judson Dance Theater was very much a reaction and delayed response to the advent of modernism in the early 20th century in other cultural arenas such as the visual arts and architecture. These forms tended to a stark aesthetic, revealing the simple materiality and structure of the work, but also, perhaps inadvertently, reenacting in their abstraction the cold dehumanization of industrial progress. This strain of modernist production—centered for example in the Bauhaus—is closely allied with Marxism, evolving from a political context and considered a form of revolutionary art at its instantiation. In their embrace of a modernist aesthetic, Judson artists seem to have incorporated as well a specifically Marxian mode of making and presenting work—centered in a dancer-as-proletarian reaction to the extractive oppressions of their own industry. What if, in place of that adopted severity, Judson had found its way to a more overt anchoring in the complex of anarchist practices and philosophies that it already so closely approached? In what way might the work have differed? How might the conversation around this pivotal group of artists have changed? An embrace of philosophical anarchism, an awareness at the time of making, the development of Judson's work in that light, might have provided a stronger base from which these artists could extend their critique, their choices based on a more solid foundation than "the task."

Looking at the political efficacy of dance, at dance's history of crypto-anarchism, Judson is the missed opportunity. Often seen as elitist, a privileged avant-garde scene, it is plausible that by identifying and embracing its own latent anarchism, the Judson Dance Theater might have set in motion a way forward for a truly democratic dance—one that might form the basis today for the effective dance-as-dissent we still lack. As suggested by philosopher Simon Critchley, in his writing about the consciousness shift in the arts before and after 1968, it was only after that period that artists understood that art does not intrinsically and passively possess the representation of a utopian alternative, but instead must take a more

active role in order to "face critically the experience of injustice and domination."⁴⁴ Similarly, art historian Thomas Crow suggests that artists during this period tended to labor under the misconception that they could "provide magical forms of political resistance" through their work, which had the effect of reducing their interest in direct political action in the streets. It is interesting to note, too, in light of the alternative history in which Judson becomes self-aware as an anarchist project, that Ramsay Burt critiques the ways in which the experiment fell short of fully enacting many of its goals and, over the course of his *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces*, his own language, and the concepts he employs, also creeps toward a resonance with anarchism.⁴⁵

For decades, theorists have sought to understand the location in which dance finds itself within social and political structures—many arguing for a shift in methods of practice and critique. At the same time, interest in anarchism has remained dormant. Dance and anarchism run in parallel, entangled, two rich and fundamentally embodied practices, and dance discourse, in particular, suffers a loss in its failure to recognize this condition. For example, in her essay "Heteropolitics of Contemporary Dance: Xavier Le Roy's *Le Sacre du Printemps*," Gabrielle Brandstetter unpacks the question of politics in dance—in its relationships, its presentation, and in the act of movement in space. She discusses autonomy and ideas of collective participation as ways to begin to answer some of these questions. As a foundation of her explorations, she relies on Adorno's theories of politics and aesthetics, for instance that art can only truly act as a critical political agent when it maintains an aesthetic of otherness—"constituting itself solely in accordance with its own laws"—and is able to self-regulate, or in anarchic terms, is autonomous.⁴⁶ In this position of sovereignty, Adorno asserts, art can be in opposition to a context of commodification, "something completely useless is produced."⁴⁷ Brandstetter also looks to ways in which the movement of bodies and performance, like politics, occupies spaces, specifically the public sphere, disrupting and transforming its nature. The inherent agency in an autonomous, self-regulating system is fundamental to

⁴⁴ Simon Critchley, *Very Little...Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 2.

⁴⁵ Ramsay Burt, *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁴⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, "On Lyric Poetry and Society", *Notes to Literature I*, Vol. 1, ed Rolf Tiedemann, transl. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 40.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

what the architect and anarchist philosopher Colin Ward suggests is "the freedom to shape one's own environment."⁴⁸ Likewise, in choreographer Martin Spänberg's essay "Overwhelming, The doing of research," he suggests that art must find an autonomous mobility in order to resist and dissent from institutionalization and commodification.⁴⁹ Like Banes, Spänberg and Brandstetter, in their search for a meaningful and potent position of dance within a social and political performative landscape, make use of and often rely on ideas central to anarchism. They do not stand alone in this overt flirtation; both André Lepecki and Bojana Kunst, as detailed in the section that follows, seem to have built an entire superstructure of dance criticism on the basis of an instrumentalized anarchism that, as seems forever to be the case, goes unmentioned.

Case Studies in Crypto-anarchism: Lepecki and Kunst

The bright and modern spaciousness of the gallery is absorbed by the monolithic figures of the horses, each saddling a policeman, towering over the museum visitors, comfortable and empowered by the aerial vantage this dominant position has afforded. The horses are real. The policemen are not actors; they are comfortable here, doing their job as usual. The visitors are shuffled and directed through the gallery. The mounted men, the horses as their proxies, carefully and methodically gain control over the movements of the gallery visitors. Monotone, polite, and repetitive directions—stand aside, move to one side or another, step back from the horses' path—are paired with regulated, normative police gestures in order to dominate the kinesthetic pathways and experience of the bodies on the floor. There is no signage to prepare the visitors for Tania Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5* (2008) at the Tate Modern. According to Bruguera, this work presents a momentary experience of power and oppression, an historical image of policing. The riot police, high on their horses, are depicting a familiar and, as

⁴⁸ Colin Ward. *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1982) 89.

⁴⁹ Mårten Spänberg, "Overwhelming, The Doing of Research," *The Making of, The Making of*, by Mette Ingvarsen (published in conjunction with a 3 month residency at NADINE, Brussels in 2006) 29-40.

Bruguera suggests, "recurrent image of power," albeit in the prescribed, secure space of the museum.⁵⁰ The reaction of the crowd to the horses' movements and the policemen's directions is one of choreographed obedience, quietly acquiescing and forfeiting their freedom to move throughout the space. The one exception is a man in a wheelchair; he at first refuses to cooperate, but eventually joins the others in being maneuvered by these avatars of power.

Tatlin's Whisper #5 is one of three works that André Lepecki discusses in his essay "Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: or, task of the dancer." In this short but decisive account of the intersection of dance and politics, Lepecki lays out the efficacy of dance in shifting and resisting systemic enactments of power, its ultimate embodiment in policing. Lepecki suggests that dance can reactivate the freedom of action, habitually and systematically repressed by police and their tactics of controlling spaces and the movements within. Colin Ward, drawing again on his background as an architect, argues that, in fact, it is capitalism's drive for urban planning—in the hands of either private, profit-driven entrepreneurs or government—that preemptively subjugates human mobility; we are told where to walk, where to stand, and where to live. Ward also considers the way in which the highly controlled plans of urban infrastructure determine a finite possibility of movement, thus effecting the ways in which we encounter and interact with each other. Ward, like Lepecki, in a true anarchist spirit, proposes that it is our bodies in spaces (moving or still), only in direct action, that may lead to emancipation.⁵¹

In both the act of choreography and the dancer dancing—re-envisioning a dependency on an authoritarian dynamic—Lepecki finds a mode of understanding dance's role in this crucial "call to action."⁵² This search for a way to move again is derived from his interest in Hannah Arendt's classic observation, referenced earlier, that "[...] we do not know—at least not yet—how to move politically."⁵³ And through a series of explorations and experiments of alternate translations and interpretations that might benefit a discussion of the political in dance, Lepecki proposes an epistemology for Arendt's

⁵⁰ Tate Modern, "Tania Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5*, Tate Modern, February 1, 2008, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/tania-bruguera>.

⁵¹ Colin Ward. *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1982).

⁵² André Lepecki, "Choreopolice or Choreopolitics - or the task of the dancer" *The Drama Review* 57 (2013) 15.

⁵³ *ibid*, 13.

political that is synonymous with *freedom*. According to Lepecki (and therefore, if accepted, Arendt) this movement of *freedom* is not physiological, not a human given—it must be sought, practiced, examined, and constantly negotiated. It is important to note that Lepecki's attraction to Arendt's observation here is perhaps not a coincidence, and that her own latent anarchist affinities may have provided a necessary foundational impetus for his *choreopolitical* construction. Throughout this work, Lepecki seems positioned just at the edge of proclaiming an anarchist dance—perhaps a directed push could land him solidly in that world, further strengthening (as for Jowitt and others discussed above) the potency of his argument.

In his essay, as in Tania Bruguera's performance actions which she refers to as "aesthetics," Lepecki instrumentalizes the police and policing (choreographing our movements to such perfection that there is no space for the *other*) as a platform from which to activate dance's potential to initiate a path of diversion, and ultimately dissent.⁵⁴ He asks us to consider a critical question: how can *choreopolitics* (which we may now read as *choreofreedom*) resist the actions of *choreopolicing*? Bruguera refers to her work as *arte de conducta* (behavioral art). But what behavior is it shaping, or allowing to manifest? According to Lepecki, while subjecting visitors to a particular behavior of power, the institutional gallery space has in a sense provided a buffer. If Bruguera has willingly constructed this protected space then it can be suggested that she, too, has asserted a control over the reaction and actions of her subjects—the mounted riot police and the visitors alike. The police, conscious of their role in the art, have a level of unrealistic constraint, a performative politesse. Likewise, Lepecki observes, the gallery dictates the reaction of these dislocated subjects of control, averting what otherwise might be a more contentious and unpredictable response to a highly policed space. The subjects are cooperative, and, more importantly, consenting. This observation leads Lepecki to assert that, in fact, though Bruguera's piece represents the political (a notion she denies), the complicity of the visitors in enacting the scene renders it ineffective as a critique. Lepecki's reasoning here is in alignment with certain core anarchist beliefs regarding the inability of those subject to structures of power to change those structures through a

⁵⁴ Tania Bruguera discusses her work in conversation with Claire Bishop at an CUNY Graduate Center event. In her presentation Bruguera defines three terms that she has constructed in order to speak about and describe the specific work that she creates. These terms are *art útil* (art as a tool), *aest-ethics* (art with consequence), and *political-timing specific* (based on political conditions). See *The Graduate Center, CUNY*, April 6, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4raYhes7Owl>.

structures' own mechanisms; this is at the heart of anarchist calls for autonomy, as well as, for instance, why many tendencies eschew participation in electoral politics. It follows that in order to reclaim space, and "move" again in an Arendtian sense, we would have to actively resist in a manner that never adopts the tropes of the power being resisted. In anarchism, efficacy is activated outside the institution (in public spaces), through direct action (with participation and practice), setting into motion disruption and resulting in the construction of new pathways for movement. Lepecki, in his critique of consent in Bruguera's work, seems to concur.

How does Lepecki resolve this need for a reimplementing of kinetic autonomy? As a path forward from Arendt's observation of the "not yet," he looks to a 2009 video from Oakland-based Yak Films. The ensemble Turf Feinz dance in the rain on an Oakland corner while cars pass by; police in a patrol car are seen confronting the dancers. The dancers do not always stay on the controlled pedestrian construction of the sidewalk. They transgress the prescribed circulatory pathways and enter into the streets, reclaiming them. In this interaction with police, circumvention of sidewalk norms, and disciplined movement versus autonomously activated ambulation, Lepecki sees a possible way forward for his *choreopolitics*. Movement, choreography in particular, has enacted dissensus. What is crucial here is the film's reliance on a carefully choreographed experience, thus providing an opportunity for spontaneous and unanticipated reactions. It is precisely this kind of choreographic instinct that anarchists rely on in organizing direct action. Through what anarchists refer to as affinity groups—small cadres of practiced activists who share a political critique and become accustomed to moving together on the fractured terrains of confrontation—protest is enabled through a form of choreographic score. This structure enables horizontal organizing, which may then proceed as an efficient, collaborative enterprise that makes room as well for the spontaneous. The anonymous authors of *Recipes for Disaster: an anarchist cookbook*, a CrimethInc publication, invoke this sense of mobilization when they write of a participant in direct action, "The morning she arises to put a plan into motion, she awakens under a different sun."⁵⁵

We can find other examples of choreography reclaiming autonomy within public, policed spaces. For instance, Yvonne Rainer's *Street Action (M-Walk)* (1970), was staged as an anti-war protest,

⁵⁵ CrimethInc Workers' Collective. *Recipes for Disaster: an anarchist cookbook, a moveable feast* (Olympia: CrimethInc. ex-Workers' Collective, 2004) 12.

but in the gathering of a mass of slowly walking bodies in the middle of a Soho street, the choreography, and its practiced, idiosyncratic movements served dually as a transgression of governed urban space. In 2005, on a Manhattan block not far from the scene of *Street Action*, filmmaker Adam Levite shot a dance-based music video for multidisciplinary artist and musician Yoshi Sodeoka's sound score "Ping Retina."⁵⁶ Four dancers throw themselves on to the littered ground and into the Canal Street crowds; dancers flirt with and sometimes enter the street, just missing a passing car. The dancers are followed by the camera as they transgress the norms of the cityscape (at one moment they are dancing in unison under a scaffold as construction workers voyeuristically stand by); through its location, the gathering of scattered papers that evoke those found throughout the area after September 11, and a recurrent vocabulary of falling and collapse, the video evokes that trauma in the collective consciousness of New Yorkers.

In each of these instances, the performative embodiment and amplification of a felt experience—in some ways a caricature—in public spaces might suggest another mode of activation and dissensus via contention with habitual and controlled patterns of behavior. More recently, in 2011, artist Zefrey Throwell, staged "Ocularpation: Wall Street," an art piece/protest action on the streets of the Financial District, in which performers pre-positioned throughout the area posed as participants in various local business pursuits, first in costume then undressed. Intended as a focused protest against the global structure of finance, the choreographic method of placing performers unannounced on city streets had the important secondary effect of disrupting business as usual in some of the most highly controlled spaces of capitalism. Melena Ryzik, reviewing for *The New York Times*, and focusing on the nudity, described the project as "Wall Street exposed."⁵⁷ According to Throwell, the police were predictably "excitable," and many of the artists were arrested.⁵⁸ In this instance the bodies, operating well outside of a traditional vocabulary of dance, or even of movement, and asking for and receiving no consent from onlookers or

⁵⁶ Yoshi Sodeoka, *Ping Retina*, directed by Adam Levite, choreography by Nathalie Jonas (New York City, NY, 2005). <https://vimeo.com/59233713>.

⁵⁷ Melena Ryzik, "A Bare Market Lasts One Morning," *The New York Times*, August 1, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/>.

⁵⁸ Gabe Johnson, "Exposing Wall Street," August 1, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/video/arts/10000000976700/exposing-wall-street.html?action=click>ype=vhs&version=vhs-heading&module=vhs®ion=title-area>.

institutions of control, do succeed in performing the political, transgressing and interrupting, or, as Lepecki has noted, "short-circuiting policed systems of obedience and command."⁵⁹

It is important here to have an understanding of what Lepecki considers as movement or dance. In his *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement*, Lepecki defines his aforementioned ideas regarding "slower ontology"—in essence, a defense of kinesthetic activation in the non-moving body.⁶⁰ If we use Lepecki's view as a foundation, it might then be understood that it is within the dancer's purview to claim "void" spaces in order to present the potential for mobilization, even in the act of stillness. In the act of policing, which is to say behavioral and spatial control, Lepecki proposes there is an elimination of this perceived void, resulting in a closure of space to experimentation and discovery. Much anarchist energy, of course, is put to combatting this appropriation: rejecting the colonization of the commons by the apparatus of the state. According to Colin Ward, in a discussion of an anarchist critique of urbanization, engrained habits surrounding the production, use, and control of space under capitalism preempt even the existence of spaces that are unoccupied; this results in a synthetic and sterile spatial playground, one with no room for imagination or play.⁶¹ It is in the disappearance of the void that the space for movement ceases; Lepecki suggests that dance, and more importantly the dancer, in her ability to practice, possesses the tools to reopen that void. The dancer—as, for an anarchist organizer, the autonomous activists comprising an affinity group—may thus reclaim a space for mobilization. Both parties, too, Lepecki and the anarchists he seems to approach so closely, see winning that contested space as both the arena and the purpose of dissent. Nevertheless, Lepecki's conclusions—that devotion, methodical repetition, and persistent movement can alone enact the political—err on the side of quixotic; they may even recall Thomas Crow's "magical forms of political resistance."

In a physically rigorous and incessantly repetitive solo performed in Sarah Michelson's *Devotion Study #1-The American Dancer*, Lepecki acknowledges the potential for a metaphorical and representational reading of dance's affiliation with "command and obedience." But he proposes, with a

⁵⁹ André Lepecki, "Choreopolice or Choreopolitics - or the task of the dancer" *The Drama Review* 57 (2013) 22.

⁶⁰ André Lepecki. "Choreography's 'slower ontology': Jerome Bel's critique of representation" in *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* ((London and New York: Routledge, 2005) 45-64.

⁶¹ See Colin Ward's discussion of urban development and playgrounds in *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1982) ch.VI and X.

cue from the title, that the devotion of the dancer, her "enduring movement of obstinate joy," enables her to resist and, in a sense, overcome this domination.⁶² The expressly anarchist tendency mirrored here, what Paul Goodman calls "a continuous series of existential constitutional acts," is what Lepecki has identified in his *choreopolitics* as choreography's greatest efficacy.⁶³ His argument is compelling, but not without inconsistencies and a troubled cohesion of thought in regard to the ramifications of the particular spaces in which choreography occurs. While he acknowledges the effect of, alternately, an institutional or extra-institutional setting on Bruguera's work and the turf dancing captured by Yak Films, when he makes the jump to Michelson's piece, which was performed at The Whitney Museum of American Art in 2012, he fails to address the nature of the space in which the act takes place—the potentially profound impact institutional spaces, whether accepted or coopted, may have on the perception of dance. In his analysis of *Devotion Study #1-The American Dancer*, Lepecki likens police to the choreographer and the codified rules of policing to the choreographic score. And so now it is the dancer who transgresses? Lepecki appears to have taken a wrong turn here; what is critical to his argument is not the choreographer or the score, and the dancer's resistance to them, but the setting: the very institution in which her "activation of freedom" takes place. Lepecki risks a fall into a utopian rabbit hole in his idealized conclusion: that the dancer alone, and through her movements, can emancipate space. His critique has been weakened by a failure to carry a very potent and compelling analysis of policing into the private spaces of institutions in which we also act and move subject to control. Is there an opportunity here for anarchism's fundamental critique of power—which draws no distinction between spaces controlled by the state (the street) and spaces controlled by the private hierarchies of capitalism (the stage)—to repair this rupture?

In "Working Out Contemporaneity: Dance and Post-Fordism," performance theorist Bojana Kunst navigates a complex and potentially very potent argument concerning the role and utility of movement in a post-Fordist capitalist society—a society in which the centers of production have moved away from the factory to permeate everyday life, eroding the traditional divisions between work and non-

⁶² André Lepecki, "Choreopolice or Choreopolitics - or the task of the dancer" *The Drama Review* 57 (2013) 26.

⁶³ Colin Ward. *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1982) 83.

work. By specifically investigating movement in this context, Kunst attempts to establish parameters for dance to be pursued as a critical practice within contemporary political economies. Kunst's argument in this essay is compelling and enlightening, but, as we identified with Lepecki, it seems also to fall short, and in a way that highlights the role of a crypto-anarchism present in her argumentation.

Kunst begins with a personal anecdote and a critique of some activities she witnesses in her daily life. She describes at length the views from a window in each of her two homes—one of elderly residents at a long-term-care facility, taking their daily walks, and the other directly into a studio specializing in swing dance instruction. In describing the respective regimens of movement she sees, Kunst determines that each is not only a means of traversing from one point to another, but is a far more complex negotiation of space and time in dynamic counterpoint to other actions and objects in the environment. As the elderly subjects, for instance, walk at a dramatically slow pace, their kinesthetic experience is founded on the objects that surround them and the speed and trajectories of others passing by. Their movement is attentive and complex—attentive to not falling down or disrupting their fragile trajectory through space. She refers to this contingent mode of movement as "relational."⁶⁴

The pace of activity seen through Kunst's other window is more urgent and directed. The swing dance students, repetition after repetition, are driving their bodies to a given goal of refinement, striving for a particular virtuosity and ideal form of each movement, all while navigating the space and the bodies around them. Kunst notes the potential here for drudgery, frustration in a deadening repetition, but also that, despite the proximity to labor in this approach to dance, the students' are given purpose by their "enjoyment"—both in the moment, and in that future enjoyment they know they will experience when the moves are fully internalized. From these observations, drawn from the movement of the walkers and the swing dancers, Kunst, without any intermediate steps, begins a political critique. Learning and subjecting oneself to a particular disciplinary technique, she argues, is a means to conform with a historical "interiorization of movement" in what she calls "Western modernity."⁶⁵ This is a preoccupation,

⁶⁴ Kunst, Bojana. 2013. "Working Out Contemporaneity Dance and Post-Fordism" in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Arts*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013),60.

⁶⁵ *ibid*, 61.

native to cultures shaped by capitalist production, of training humans to move in homogeneity, with machine efficiency, that she associates with Fordism.

Kunst describes a process of coming to understand the movement of the swing dancers as something complex, and perhaps paradoxical: both the effect of an oppressive possession and a path to "enjoyment." Though Kunst's use of that word is critical to her argument—it repeats throughout the essay, perhaps a dozen times and without recourse to synonyms—she never pauses to interrogate or even define the term, circumnavigating *enjoyment* without examination. What references she may consciously or unconsciously be making with that term in the context of her argument are never shared. Kunst comes in time to propose the term "subversive enjoyment"—a state of being that finds itself in a realm of satisfying, deep-seated desires of the body—ones that are perhaps beyond the scope of a capitalist hierarchy possessing, dominating, and manipulating.⁶⁶ Kunst writes that the enjoyment of the swing dancers, for instance, drives them forward through their difficult training and holds the potential to subvert the rigor of their practice. It seems a mild term for an essential energy she so compellingly describes and empowers at the center of her argument. Is the word that Kunst is seeking *pleasure*?

She promotes the autonomy of movement and decries the potential for movement to be dominated. She describes the learning and desire to achieve an efficiency of skills in the swing lesson as disciplinary, seeming to project on it an anarchist critique of authority—the power that hierarchies grant. When she describes the movement of bodies in the world as a relational experience, "belonging to other people's movement, things, objects, worlds, as much as to the consciousness of the one who moves"—she exhibits an uncanny analog to the anarchist understanding of the self and the practice of mutual aid as promoted in anarchist collectivism.⁶⁷ She speaks of the "segmenting and enumerating" of movement to produce an efficient and governable subject.⁶⁸ She speaks of movement, action, as a force of change. She speaks of structures of dominance expelling enjoyment from the body. But she never speaks of anarchism.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 61.

⁶⁷ Kunst, 62.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 62. "Become Ungovernable" is a common appeal among contemporary anarchists, seen frequently on banners and in other public communications.

Kunst's analyses and arguments become more complex, and perhaps more in need of a foundation in anarchism, as she discusses the imbricated roles of movement, enjoyment, power, labor, and authority in technology-driven late-capitalism, the context she prefers to refer to as post-Fordism. In a post-Fordist economy, our "information economy," there is a redirecting of emphasis from specialized, practiced, and perfected interiorized movement to a now exteriorized movement she describes as mobility. Capitalist production in a post-Fordist mode relies on, and becomes intrinsic to, the "generic habits of the human animal: language, thought, self-reflection, and the ability to learn."⁶⁹ To this litany, defined previously by Paolo Virno, whom she cites at length, Kunst wishes to add the central human trait of movement.⁷⁰ While the movement of industrial workers was exploited through the internalization of habitual rules—standing at a machine, the repetition of one task to produce one component of one product—in our post-Fordist moment, our fluid everyday movements are exploited as a context for the extraction of value, constantly, seemingly at random, in a direct affront to the autonomy of our roaming bodies. There is no longer a distinction between the body at work and the body at rest or at play. For an art that takes as its site and center of action the movement of the body itself, this pervasive political-economic condition presents a particular crisis—and, perhaps, a unique opportunity to become a mechanism for disruption.

That is where Kunst arrives at the very end of her essay. Our bodies are colonized, our every movement contributing incrementally to a system that consumes and exploits us. Still, she sees in dance a way out. Her answer, offered in conclusion, and somewhat unsatisfactorily, is resolved through the quality she has identified as enjoyment. "Enjoyment," she writes in the final paragraph, "can be radically disruptive"—her answer to how dance can empower itself to become an agent of change in a post-Fordist context in which, she deftly describes, all movement has become, in a sense, complicit. "Subversive enjoyment comes from the distance that the dancing body has towards the institutional mechanisms of the exteriorization of movement, exactly because, in the end, it can dance."⁷¹ Her recourse

⁶⁹ Ibid, 63.

⁷⁰ Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude* (Los Angeles, New York: Semiotext(e), 2004)

⁷¹ Bojana Kunst, "Working Out Contemporaneity Dance and Post-Fordism" in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Arts*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013), 61.

to tautology is perhaps a signal that her notion of enjoyment does not, on its own, suffice. Enjoyment seems a too-weak emotion here, little more intense than the mere happiness that Murray Bookchin has identified as an insufficient goal to inspire everyday human action—let alone a catalyst, as Kunst suggests it can become, for transformative action. Pleasure, on the other hand, raw and ungovernable, linked as it is to desire, may provide Kunst, and indeed, perhaps, dance, with a more suitable motive force.

Toward an Autonomous Dance

Having identified the challenges to dance in developing a robust, native mode in which to critique and effect dissent relative to contemporary political discourse, and having considered how some theorists—approaching but not fully embracing the potential benefits of a formal acknowledgment of anarchism in their work—have attempted to close to that gap, what follows is an initial offering of some points of engagement, promising sites at which the resonance between dance and anarchism may perhaps be explored. By identifying these specific locations, these sites of convergence, we might begin to develop a foundation upon which a future dance culture—and perhaps a transformation of the critical dynamics identified—may occur.

Participation

Petra Sabisch, in an essay entitled "Choreographing Participatory Relations: Contamination and Articulation," suggests that "in the representative democracy in which I am living, my participation in politics consists basically in one gesture (I lift my arm as in a vote)...."⁷² In opposition to this singular gesture, she makes a case for the ways in which dance, in its practice of making gestures, has

⁷² Petra Sabisch, "Choreographing Participatory Relations: Contamination and Articulation" in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Arts*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013), 109.

the potential to demand a more pluralized and effective participation—one that can engender infinite modes of assertion and legitimization. Sabisch also uses the phrase *the power to assemble*, referring to the kind of relations that are at stake in the transference of performance. Anarchism's implementation of direct action relies on this same mode of performative coalescence—ideas and bodies in a shared experience. Colin Ward suggests that anarchism can be defined as a theory of the practice of human organization. In anarchist thought, as we have discussed, the means by which humans are capable of organizing themselves is reliant on a horizontally distributed network of autonomous agents. It is through these networks of collective coordination that all participating individuals are able to find commonalities, shared goals, and pathways to maximal states of fulfillment. Likewise, in the act of performance, neither the doer nor the watcher is passive. The dancer practices and performs repetition—the same defiantly, devoted participation addressed by Lepecki—while the audience is an active witness to the choreographic unfolding in front of them. This participation, in both dance and in anarchism, provides a platform for activating a multiplicity of relations. In both dance and in anarchism, it is an act of empowerment.

Sabisch's *power to assemble* also has the potential to be enacted upon entering the practice space. In the act of gathering there is a shared desire to work, to move. The goal is generation, bringing into being, exploring a rich possibility of what may be shared in the choreographic process. During a rehearsal that was part of a two-week residency at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn-based and Zimbabwe-born choreographer Nora Chipaumire conjures a diverse journey of making and participation. Chipaumire is an artist who straddles the borders between a diversity of genres. She calls what she does "live art."⁷³ Through a fusion of western, urban contemporary practices, and her native African tradition, Chipaumire makes work that is raw, contentious, and inciting. In witnessing her rehearsal process, there are persistent acts of invitation to not only observe but to also actively participate. In the rehearsal process, through text, costume, and gesture, Chipaumire is able to inspire a participation that asks of the spectator engagement in the burden of expression and narrative. She does this by setting

⁷³ On several occasions I arranged to observe and speak with Nora Chipaumire in order to understand the ways in which her work might illuminate this study. These meetings took place at Sarah Lawrence College (September-October 2017), the Brooklyn Academy of Music (March 2018), and the studios of Gibney Dance (April 2018). See also: Nora Chipaumire, "Q&A on 100% POP" (presented by Gibney as part of their Open Studios sessions, New York City, April 23, 2018).

up a three hundred and sixty degree viewing experience, making piercing eye contact as she yells and sings into the microphone, and invites a moment of participation of what she calls "freestyle." And in the process of building a place of collective experience, there is likewise a feeling of common necessity in the task of investigation and creation. Anarchists pursue a practice of participatory organization that engenders this same goal of commonality and empathy.⁷⁴

Dance has the potential to be a crucial agent in instrumentalizing that particular mode of human organization. Its reliance on bringing individuals in active participation with one another in space, to perform a task, express a thought or emotion, or create a disruption, is the ultimate anarchic act; there can be no armchair anarchists. But, outside of spaces that are protected, nurtured for the purpose, this potential to instigate anarchism's call for direct, active participation is precisely that: a latent, unrealized, and often dormant possibility. Dance, too, must work to constantly ask the questions, experiment with, and practice its activating, involving function. Like Arendt's suggestion that freedom, or in her words the "political," is not a given, this responsibility demands, as Lepecki describes it, "a difficult, ever-evolving commitment" that must be attended to and repeatedly reactivated.⁷⁵ Chipaumire's work in this regard, her demand for engagement, may serve as a model to begin to transgress the complacency of dance-making.

Violence

In Pina Bausch's *Bluebeard* (1977) a man forcefully pushes a woman's head down into his crotch. He repeatedly grabs and throws her around. She repeatedly throws herself at the man, vulnerable, as he rejects her. This abusive depiction is indicative of the violent embodied imagery in Bausch's work. Often found at the center of controversy surrounding the place of violence in art, her dances serve to elicit deeply repressed conditions. Does dance have the potential, as Bausch insists on proving, to expose the unseen, reveal the unspoken, and invite the viewer to respond? By making images

⁷⁴ Colin Ward. *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1982) 36.

⁷⁵ André Lepecki, "Choreopolice or Choreopolitics - or the task of the dancer" *The Drama Review* 57 (2013).

of violence integral to her work, Bausch takes the subject matter out of the shadows and into a performative space—a public space—where it cannot be suppressed or ignored.

It is precisely the practice of suppression that anarchists seek to make visible through their interventions. Violence, as a societal phenomenon implemented as a means of social control by the state, is manifest through overt actions such as war, policing, border control, and the prison-industrial complex, but also through more subtle acts of institutional or interpersonal domination. These more discreet acts of violence, from intrusive advertising, to gentrification, to statist propaganda in public schools, are seen by anarchists as no less important to identify and defeat; they are symptoms of a system of governance—ours—where a powerful minority controls the lives of a majority by force. For anarchists, the goal is to expose systems of concealed violence that, through human habit and a collective acquiescence, have been fostered, tolerated, and allowed to persist to such a degree that they are rendered nearly invisible, not seen as subject to change. Errico Malatesta, writing in defense of himself and other anarchists in his pre-war Italian antifascist milieu, claimed, "we cannot and we do not desire to employ violence, except in the defense of ourselves and others against oppression."⁷⁶ While anarchists today are fundamentally anti-violent—seeking in fact to build a world in which violence, very broadly interpreted from domestic abuse to war, would have no place—contemporary tactics, as exposed particularly in the media during anticapitalist and antifascist actions, are often portrayed in that manner. These actions (considered by their practitioners to be individual and community self-defense) primarily take three forms: polemical destruction of corporate properties, purposeful antagonization of police, and the physical de-platforming of fascists. All of these tactics are focused on generating a single result: exposure of the subject as the aggressor.

The act of *exposing* is a critical role that art, and more crucially performance, plays in a cultural and political context. Performance *is* exposure. Dance, through its physicality in space, has the potential to (and often does) find a path of agency in performing violence in what Giorgio Agamben refers to as a "state of exception."⁷⁷ While Agamben uses this term to identify ways in which violence, at

⁷⁶ Errico Malatesta, "Anarchy and Violence," *The Anarchist Library*, April 13, 2018, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/>.

⁷⁷ Giorgio Agamben. *State of Exception*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

times, may act outside the regular state of laws, perhaps dance, too, following the manner in which it is deployed by anarchists, may claim a license to suggest the unsanctioned, the unimaginable, to re-sensitize participants to those same systematic acts of violence. The raw physicality of dance—in its potential to invoke what critic John Martin referred to as "metakinesis," representations of violence, though they can evoke experiences of discomfort or even repulsion (reactions brought about through the natural process of embodied empathy)—may provide an available tactic for dismantling habits of apathy.⁷⁸ In performing violence, especially manifestations of abusive disempowerment, dance has the opportunity to invite a response. It can bring about the "visceral revolt," reactivate a sense of innate moral grounding, and set into action an amplified resistance to modes of oppression.

Pina Bausch's carefully constructed, perhaps even tactical (inviting a response), presentation of gendered violence finds a parallel in some of the ways that Nora Chipaumire, too, addresses female/male gender roles in her work. In *Portrait of Myself as My Father*, she investigates manifestations of male power and rivalry. Reimagining herself in the persona of her estranged father, in his role as a professional boxer, Chipaumire finds a way to embody his maleness, the violence found in a highly physical, competitive spectacle. Chipaumire is costumed in football shoulder pads. An adornment of ropes and straps wraps her waist, attached to a matrix of additional straps that are connected to the boxing ring. Her movements sometimes mimic boxing moves; at other times they are more primal. As a female performing acts of male aggression, she is able to assert herself into the violent force of patriarchal domination. There, she exposes the "macho" and mocks its outrageous, brutal oppressions. In both Chipaumire and Bausch, we see echoed the nature of some anarchist modes of dissent. As the smashed window of a Starbucks is intended to expose the extents of capitalism, as the taunting of a police line is a means to draw out and expose a mechanism of state-mandated oppression, so anarchists can be seen to perform violence, exposing in the performance the far greater latent violence all around.

⁷⁸ John Martin, "Metakinesis" *The Modern Dance* (Berkeley: Dance Horizons, 1933).

Space

Anarchists find an imperative in the utilization and activation of public spaces. As the commons become increasingly privatized, commodified, and regulated, direct action initiatives center on the agency of an individual to freely inhabit, choreograph, and self-regulate in such spaces. In occupying buildings, parks, industrial sites, and streets—bodies are always present and active—anarchists resist the relentless drive of powerful individuals and institutions to consolidate control of our shared world.

Serbian writer and professor Ana Vujanović, in her essay "Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance," suggests that both dance and politics need a publicly organized space in order to perform, but, as Kunst also understands, they have both reached a place of "self-exhaustion in public."⁷⁹ Vujanović sees this as a product and validation of capitalism's domination of the social sphere—blurring lines between property and spatial notions of private/public and collective/individual.⁸⁰ Looking critically at the present state of dance, where it finds its modes of praxis and presentation, one can easily posit a moment of crisis. Where is it that dance can now most deliberately and effectively execute the necessary task of exposure?

The limitations to exposure within the current array of performance venues work against dance's efficacy in initiating a potent and valid discourse of dissent. Traditional proscenium presentations serve to locate dance in a particular mode of entertainment—a necessary cultural function, perhaps, but one that presents significant barriers to repurposing as a site to challenge the status quo. Although entertainment and polemical utility have, at times, found a mutual intersection in performance, at present this duality finds itself in dysfunctional opposition. Large, well-funded, mainstream, popular institutions such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music find themselves so deeply enmeshed in a system of capitalist

⁷⁹ Ana Vujanovic, "Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance" in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Arts*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013), 191.

⁸⁰ Vujanović, like Kunst, cites Paolo Virno's *A Grammar of Multitude* here to substantiate her discussion of what she terms "poiesis, praxis, and art" in relation to the state of politics in a capitalistic society. See Ana Vujanovic, "Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance" in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Arts*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013), 183-184.

exploitation and cultural appropriation that any effort at dissent set there—as can be observed in the performance of Batsheva's *Last Work*—only results in a greater substantiation.

In previous eras—certainly by the 1960's and perhaps earlier with Alan Kaprow's "Happenings"—more intimate, alternative, and DIY spaces (lofts, churches, storefronts, community centers, streets, abandoned buildings) became widely used for performance, and were seen as more effective, supportive, and authentic venues for experimentation and creation outside of an establishment context. Such spaces, from the Workers Dance League to the Judson Church to the streets of Soho, served to integrate dance into society, intersecting it with the cultural, the urban, and the accessibly political. While alternative spaces and events persist—Movement Research in New York City maintains its longstanding residency at Judson—some, perhaps inevitably so, have undergone their own institutional transformations and cooptations.

Public performances, however—in city streets, in parks, in abandoned urban infrastructure, in the form of flash mobs—continue to be effective as spatial acts of disruption and exposure. Performing beyond the stage provides dance the opportunity to choose the terms of its confrontation with the status quo, and to present an alternate path forward. It is only the public, the "masses," the ostensibly free agents that make up a society, who can ultimately reclaim their shared spaces as sites for a rejuvenation of spontaneity and moments of autonomous living. As with anarchism's position of engaging outside of politics, in a social and cultural realm, if dance is to be able to perform activism, it too must dislocate itself from the institutional structures of neoliberal capitalism and an all-too-complicit art world.

Disruption

The primary objective of a flash mob is to momentarily upend the habitual patterns of activity in a particular environment. In this disruption, however frivolous it may sometimes appear, something new is generated, something important: even if only for a brief moment, the possibility of an alternative mode of occupation and being is presented. Many of these spontaneous assemblies appear

bereft of political or ideological objectives; often the purpose is merely to delight. While the very act of reclaiming and reimagining spaces is a highly charged sociopolitical statement in itself, there are flash mobs that do have a clear political motive, that seek to target and disrupt a particular structure. The *dabke*, for instance, a traditional dance in many Arab cultures, has been performed as a flash mob protest by Palestinians throughout the world. By interrupting the routine at universities, shopping malls, airports, and town squares through *dabke*, these activists are calling attention to their cause, exposing a repressed awareness and making a space for their voices and bodies. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher, the editors of *Dance, Politics, and Co-Immunity*, note that successful political dance always bears those characteristics: it is "goal oriented and tactical; it is communal, antagonistic, and blocks the ordinary flow of events."⁸¹

Taking the body as its medium, dance has the potential to also instigate a disruption of perception; to see and understand the human structure in perhaps more vulnerable states of possibility. The particular intimacy of our body-centered art form introduces an intentional manipulation to something so familiar, exposing our kinesthetic estrangement and extremes of suppression. Dance thus may be able to shape opportunities for construction—inviting an intimacy through new ways of moving, relating, and ordering. Dance, privileged in this regard among the arts, can suggest new ways of organizing and reorganizing ourselves. Choreography gives agency to an autonomous exploration of the distribution of bodies in space and in the invention of new vocabularies of movement and gesture. Thus, according to Siegmund and Hölscher, "allowing for interventions into hegemonic discourses, traditional distributions and fixed framings."⁸² The political in choreography exists in its ability to interrupt the normative and interject expansions of possibility for kinesthetic and relational experience.

The medium of dance performance offers alternatives for how we understand societal signifiers, dismantling our accepted systems of representation. A particular presentation of the body, in relation to other bodies, in relation to space and time, may offer alternate possibilities for accepted habits

⁸¹ Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher, ed., *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Art* (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013), 14.

⁸² *ibid*, 14.

of "perception and reception."⁸³ Ana Vujanović argues, further, that dance (in performance specifically) possesses an inherent politicality through its disruption of the way we understand and see the body, movement, space, and time. The manipulation of normative systems of representation is also a central concern of anarchism. In the common anarchist conception, the condition of political representation strips the organic agency and freedom from individuals. Representation, seen as an illegitimate transfer of agency, also has the effect of diluting possibilities of spontaneous creation and organizing—it suppresses the desire to imagine another world, the same that anarchists frequently remind each other of, as in a mantra popularized during Occupy: "another world is possible." As words are merely prescribed signifiers of feelings and thoughts, so anarchists believe that electoral representation in politics dilutes the possibility for expressions of desires and a realization of our full human potential.

The dynamic between disruption, construction, and destruction—essentially relational notions of time—is particularly potent in anarchist thought and may provide an additional understanding of how these specific concepts may most powerfully play out in dance. Daniel Guérin describes this transformation, and the duality between chaos and order, as a call for a "complete disorganization of society and, beyond this gigantic revolutionary change, the construction of a new, stable, and rational order based on freedom and solidarity."⁸⁴ How does dance, and how can it, act as a disruptor of time? As a temporal art, dance has a unique relationship to the linearity of time and the uninterrupted forward motion of societal progression. Choreographic tools such as repetition and stillness serve to disrupt our common notions of sequence, providing alternate temporal experiences. In her 2012 solo work, *rite -r-i-o-t-*, Nora Chipaumire, in addition to questioning femininity, the body, race, and post-colonialism, utilizes speed and stillness as a way of engaging with the manipulation of time. Isolated in a partially enclosed plexiglass box, elevated on a platform, and surrounded by the audience, Chipaumire slowly undresses to her bra and underwear, proceeding to move attentively and meticulously as she presents her body in various poses. Her movements are steady and meditative, never breaking from a controlled presentation. At times she is standing still; at others, only moving one shoulder or an isolated angle of the hips. She has choreographed

⁸³ Ana Vujanovic, "Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance," *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Art*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013), 188.

⁸⁴ Daniel Guérin, *Anarchism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 12.

herself into a kind of performative voyeurism, "she is both trapped and on display," in the words of one critic—the audience is asked to take in her image through a prolonged gaze.⁸⁵ Nora presents this fetishized act in an expanded and temporally shifted moment. Not only are we invited to freely look, but we can look for a while—a disruption of the anticipated time frame for such a fraught act.

Ralph Lemon's *How Can You stay In The House All Day And Not Go Anywhere?* (2010) can also be seen as a representation of the mutability of time. There, Lemon manipulates and interrupts a normative chronology as a means to shape memory and the act of witnessing. The transposition of images through live and recorded narrative, film, and live dance invites the viewer into a refracted time. Lemon layers particular moments in his narrative, or excerpts of his former work, in a way that acts to redirect our notion of time—lived memory, artistic retrospective, and ultimately social history. *How Can You Stay* exists at once in multiple periods of history and in no historical place at all. Here a connection to anarchism acts along an axis of empathy; the tradition as it exists, the practices and movements and all of the associated tendencies and sub-tendencies, are forever suspended in a disrupted time between a glorious past—the Haymarket martyrs, Emma Goldman, fallen antifascists in the 1930s—and the utopia that they themselves see as unattainable, if for no other reason than the enduring insistence that it be achieved in a troubled now.

Play

"There is an order imposed by terror, there is an order enforced by bureaucracy (with the policeman in the corridor) and there is an order which evolves spontaneously from the fact that we are gregarious animals capable of shaping our own destiny," Noam Chomsky writes. "When the first two are absent, the third, an infinitely more human and humane form of order has an opportunity to emerge.⁸⁶ The path to establishing the organic, human-driven order Chomsky identifies is a process that, according to anarchists, requires patience, forbearance, and an empathetic consistency. Anarchists also recognize the

⁸⁵ Gia Kourlas, "The Lure of the 'Savage,' Deconstructed and Reassembled: Nora Chipaumire at the Crossing the Line Festival," *The New York Times*, October 4, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/>.

⁸⁶ Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon Press, 1969).

necessity for, and inevitability of, a phase of precarious disorder preceding, and indeed making possible, the reordering that they seek. In a moment of broken obedience, an uprising, say, or a collapse, when artificial systems of order and control (the state and the police) are challenged, then broken, violent chaos may occur as a precondition for a new order, a new mutually beneficial construction, to arise. In this precarious state, there is liberty; space is opened up for improvisation, spontaneous experimentation, for play.

In discussing anarchism's approach to childhood development and education, Colin Ward examines the phenomenon of *junk playgrounds*. He makes a case for giving children the opportunity to investigate freely, to find their own limits and agency, to engage in "discovery and invention," in relation to the unmediated world around them.⁸⁷ In contemporary habits of child-rearing and education, of course, children are given fewer and fewer opportunities for self-guided education and forms of play that, purposefully in the case of junk playgrounds, can be open-ended, precarious, or even dangerous. Adults today, too, exhibit less capacity for, or tolerance of, such truly playful activities and unknown modes of experimentation—the unknown has lost its connection, via curiosity, to possibility.

A learned and habitual fear of the unknown—maintained by a highly controlled and curated political order—suggests that dance, as a cultural solution, may provide a location for the reimagination and embrace of a spontaneous and experimental approach to learning and discovery. In fact, the choreographic process finds its greatest potency in *rigorous play*. Here, approaching composition and creation with an intention that is both focused and fluid, allowing for moments of confusion, even failure, dance carries out acts of anarchism. This engagement and negotiation with destabilized conditions opens a Lepeckian void; it provides an opportunity for unexpected and revolutionary outcomes in the process of creation. This embrace of play is acutely present in improvisational methods, most notably Contact Improvisation. In this spontaneous, very physical, and mutually-attentive form of partnered experimentation, movement and relationships between bodies brings about a freedom of shared emotion and, accompanying it, a heightened empathetic response. The founder of Contact Improvisation, Steve

⁸⁷ Colin Ward discusses educator and superintendent Homer Lane's approach to running his Little Commonwealth school in the early 1900's in England. Lane uses the term "discovery and invention" to describe the educational philosophy of the school. See Colin Ward. *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1982) 42.

Paxton, suggests that the surprises and satisfactions generated through this form arise from "just human play, human exchange—animal play."⁸⁸

Nora Chipaumire's most recent work, *100% POP*, is the second part of a triptych in which she continues her investigation into finding emancipation and self-determination through the body—integrating sonic, visual, and kinesthetic choreographic experiences. The complete work is entitled *#PUNK 100% POP *NIGGA* (verbalized as *hashtag punk, one hundred percent pop, and star nigga*) and is intended to pay homage to three iconic women: Patti Smith, Grace Jones, and Rit Nzele. Through what Chipaumire describes as, a "bastardization" of Grace Jones' "One Man Show," *100% POP* activates her femininity, her playful childhood, and Zimbabwe's turbulent history. In *100% POP*, Chipaumire composes her provocation through a collision of sound and music (inspired by Jamaican *sound clash* competitions), as well as an obstacle course of pop references such as skateboards, hopscotch, and caricatured popular dance forms.⁸⁹ The work is rigorous and profound but, as the title suggests, is powered by a carnival of playful pandemonium—bordering, in its deafening volume, on becoming a violation of one's personal space. Chipaumire is acting out here, disobedient, waging a battle against accepted ways of experiencing performance. *100% POP* suggests a manner in which dance, while mobilizing the body in space and time, is also able to embrace attitudes of risk, play, and to welcome a condition of chaos.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Sally Banes, "Spontaneous Combustion: Notes on Dance Improvisation from the sixties to the Nineties," in *Taken by Surprise*, ed. Ann Cooper Albright and David Gere (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 78-79.

⁸⁹ Nora Chipaumire describes these musical contests as the "science of black noise", one that provokes tension and agitation. See Nora Chipaumire, "Q&A on 100% POP" (presented by Gibney as part of their Open Studios sessions, New York City, April 23, 2018).

⁹⁰ André Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating: Leadingfollowing as Dance's (a-personal) Political Singularity," in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity. 1, Thinking Resistances. Current Perspectives in Politics and Communities in the Art*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2013), 32.

Authority

Asked why she chooses to develop and present her work in traditional performance institutions, Nora Chipaumire answered, "Power, I am interested in being where power is negotiated."⁹¹ As a black African female artist, Chipaumire is interested in infiltrating the spaces that have a particular history to them—where she can contest power and agitate against it. By inserting herself into that milieu, she is creating a precondition that allows for concrete actions of transformation.

Anarchists, of course, also put their bodies where the power is—both to contest it, and to possess it. This is succinctly expressed in a motto popularized by CrimethInc: "We love power and hate authority."⁹² Through this distinction, we can begin to understand the dynamic of individual agency in relationship to an imperative for organizational horizontality. Power, when demonstrated from a position of dominance and exploitation—an authoritarian position—is inherently repressive. But power, whether asserted by an individual or collectively for a common good, when it is shared, facilitates desires: for liberty, pleasure, and ultimately, the empathy and respect upon which rests the foundations of anarchism's ever-elusive utopias. As a subject of strategies of domination and appropriation, as a subject of empire, Chipaumire has witnessed the legacy of an erosion of individual or collective will through force. With her choreographic process, she works to reclaim and re-appropriate a freedom of mobility and an empowerment of her cultural identity. She notes, "For me and others born without property, name, or class, the human body poses a possible salvation."⁹³

One approach that Chipaumire implements in order to disquiet hierarchical conceptions of culture and art is her implicit rejection of the separation of artistic practices and ideas. Her work operates across genres and inhabits diverse sites of cultural resonance—pop music, contemporary dance, and various forms of traditional African dance. She dances, she sings, she speaks, she shouts, she acts, she growls. Chipaumire believes that the separation between genres, the labeling of high art, low art, pop art,

⁹¹ Nora Chipaumire, "Q&A on 100% POP" (presented by Gibney as part of their Open Studios sessions, New York City, April 23, 2018).

⁹² CrimethInc, last modified May 3, 2018. <https://crimethinc.com/stickers/we-love-power-and-hate-authority>.

⁹³ Company Chipaumire, last modified 2018, <https://www.companychipaumire.com/currentwork>.

etc, is false. The arbitrary valuing or devaluing of these forms is merely a convenient and necessary byproduct of a capitalist system based in consumption and discipline. Her tendency to create spaces that allow for audience mobility, often involving taunts to force engagement, is another provocation, an intentional manipulation of the restrictive and what she calls "aristocratic" encounter between the seer and the doer.⁹⁴

Returning to Chipaumire's suggestion of the body as a "possible salvation"—dance has a unique utility as a mode for presenting alternatives to how we typically organize, relate, and inhabit as humans. Her work is indicative of a choreographic paradigm in which a particular group of artists are working today: pushing against hierarchies endemic to dance, as well as reimagining dance's position within a broader political context. But the adversary here—persistent within dance as a hierarchical ballet-dominant culture, the valuing of virtuosic technique over other forms of movement practice, and a complicity in maintaining the authority of institutions—is far from being dismantled. Batsheva's *Last Work*, for instance, in its aestheticization of conflict, its uncritical reliance on representation, can serve only to exacerbate a pervasive attitude of compliance. (Compare, for a moment, that spectacle to the sidewalk *dabke* danced by those protesting Batsheva one night of its Brooklyn run). It is perhaps in the ultra-refinement of form, the reliance on institutional standards of creative commodification—establishing an inherently capital-compliant order of valuation for the art—that renders these particular works so complicit, relative to more radical dance, in more radical venues, or in the street. The violence inherent in that institutional complicity with authority leads as well to a troubled dynamic among dance participants—from the dancer to the donor. Questions are raised at this troubled nexus, centering on authorship, collaboration, identity, and agency; between the maker and the doer. Problematic relations can arise between the diktats of the donor and the creative will of the artist. The acceptance, internalization, and reproduction of hierarchy serves to render dance nearly barren in its potential as a radical site for

⁹⁴ Roger Copeland speaks about this particular kind of attentiveness to audience viewing in his discussion of Merce Cunningham and John Cage, which resonates closely with anarchism. He writes that, "the decentralizing of stage space, the physical obstacles that sometimes impede or obscure one's view of the dancers—serve the ultimate goal of *increasing the spectator's perceptual freedom....*" See Roger Copeland, "Merce Cunningham and the Politics of Perception" *What is dance?: readings in theory and criticism*, ed. Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

dissent. If dance is to become effectively political, it must first recognize and act to dismantle its own sites of repression, dominance, and un-negotiated power.

Bodies

The body defies representation. For anarchists, this is a critical virtue. Anarchism's rejection of representation as a political tactic extends to a rejection of representational political symbols; the black flag of anarchism is an anti-flag, the color being flown is no color at all. Ideally, every anarchist would fly her own flag, just as she would be free to pursue all the fruits of an unthreatened liberty. However, under capitalism, inevitably, all emblems of individual or collective agency enter into the cycle of reappropriation, are exploited and expropriated. They are seized and commodified. While we often find our bodies, too, in a precarious state of commodification—more, now, with the proliferation of image-intensive platforms for communication—there is a visceral certainty in each of us remaining in unilateral possession of the unique and independent physical structures we inhabit. No matter how much agency we lose, we remain the agents. If this is true of our bodies, that we have in them an exceptional possession of innately resistant power, then the dancer, the dance maker, must act imperatively—honoring the fundamental autonomy of the body—to initiate movements of moral justification. So dance has a responsibility to transcend the business of distraction. And despite the particular barriers to its reception, its cultural biases, dance must search beyond its challenges of alienation, its imperial roots, to inspire collective desires and aid in mutual growth.

Conclusions: a utopia of pleasure

On Day 15 of the Trump administration, the political violence of the previous twenty-four hours was posted on *WTFJHT?* under the heading "The Massacre." This alluded to one of the items on Matt Kiser's list: *Kellyanne Conway cites non-existent "massacre" defending ban*—a reference to a hoax terrorist attack, the Bowling Green Massacre, that the White House deployed as a means to substantiate its recent immigration order circumscribing the freedom of movement for citizens of select muslim countries. On that same day, Kiser included a tweet with an image of the cover of the February 13 issue of *The New Yorker*. It depicted the Statue of Liberty's torch, its fire extinguished. The tweet read, "Liberty's Flameout."⁹⁵

Freedom and liberty are at the essence of anarchism—and it is important to distinguish between the two. Freedom is the state of not being imprisoned, enslaved, or oppressed. Liberty implies the will, once free, to think and act according to an individual's own desires. This encompasses the will to *move* freely through the world. As the collective, global consciousness is subject to an increasingly invasive manipulation of private and personal agency—as we become less free—seeking potent means of resistance, while also pursuing positive initiatives of construction, is imperative. Anarchists are intensely aware of this imperiling condition and see in it a call to direct action. The continuous discovery and employment of kinesthetic potential—movement, movements—will continue to be essential in any response. Cessation, and the erosion of human instincts for cultivation, represent the ultimate victory of the oppressor—the tragic demise of individual freedom and a chance at liberty. And so we must move and continue to move.

Dance has the unique burden of existing embodied in a finite temporal space. In this inevitability—the ephemerality of movement in and out of spaces—there is an immediacy and fragility of creation and implementation that exists at the foundation of dance's presence and possibility for exposure. Engaging via the *body*, in *space*, in *disruption*, through *participation*, at *play*—contesting

⁹⁵Matt Kiser, *What the Fuck Just Happened Today?* (blog), last modified April 30, 2018, <https://whatthefuckjusthappenedtoday.com/2017/02/03/Day-15>.

authority, instrumentalizing *violence*—allows for performance to be intrinsically potent and confrontational. If performance is exposure, then dance must consistently and tirelessly work to defend the initiation of a desire for critical exploration—baring the unseen, recalling the suppressed—and practice repetitive acts of imagining the utopian. And while, as anarchists respectfully and openly accept, this idealized place of perfection is unattainable in the future, we must act as if it is attainable to us now.

An insistence on the urgency of *now*, in anarchism, is the essential tool of resistance and construction. It is *now* when we must assert our essential right to thrive and to experience our most willful desires—imagining and demanding this immediate utopia of pleasure. Historically, as we have seen, and periodically, dance does make a place for the expression of a liberatory instinct—the need to exist in an empathetic, joyful, and dynamic society of choice. But these attempts appear to be insufficient; from our studios, theaters, auditoriums, and writing desks; as performers, choreographers, theorists, and presenters—in our apathy—we are complicit. We must move on.

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