"It caught me"

Dance, Possession, and Revolt

Konstantina Georgelou

In the 1970s in Malaysia there were hundreds of reports of incidents of possession.[1] One such incident involved 15 women working in an American microelectronics factory, who were reported to be acting erratically and violently at work. Their voices were transformed and they suddenly displayed great physical strength. Machines were broken. Their male supervisors were unable to stop them, and the factory had to close. Mary Keller begins her well-known exploration of spirit possession with descriptions of these events. She explains that they were regarded as cases of possession by *hantu* and *datuk* spirits and, how, in response, factories provided rooms for prayer and for exorcism carried out by men (2002:2). In the discussion that follows her presentation of this case, Keller describes female bodies in possession as radically open, fragile, and receptive, showing, with each subsequent case study in her book, how possession is gendered, and therefore requires a feminist reading.

The spirit possession of the women in the Malaysian factory expresses a conflicted and rebellious attitude towards their workplace. In their apparent transgression of their own sense of self-control they were in fact turning against conditions of labor created by an industrial discipline new to Malaysia. Events such as these also show how (female) subjects who are alleged to have lost control over their bodies are thus caught by (male) narratives that conceal the political significance of their actions. Their actions are stripped of political will and intention, as their affective corporeality is classified as merely transgressive and is then regulated by religious, governmental, or medical authorities.

Bodies in possession and bodies in revolt are often framed as being "caught" by some other entity—a spirit, a force, or a memory. Signs of this capture are manifested through the nervous and muscular systems in gestures and movements that make the bodies appear out of balance or rhythm and lacking coordination: convulsions, contractions, stiffness, screaming, muttering. Such movements are of course not in themselves uncommon. When small, localized, and brief, they can be easily dismissed, illegible in relation to the still dominant idea of a subject in control of its movements. In cases of possession and revolt, however, they are amplified and can even become viral; as seems to be the case, for instance, in situations of group possession like that of the Malaysian factory or in the "dancing manias" reported in the European Middle Ages and again at the end

1. A comprehensive study of these cases can be found in Aihwa Ong's *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (2010).

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of the 19th century. The overlap of possession with revolt or rebellion can be found by paying attention to the movements, gestures, and affective registers that are manifested in and reported of bodies involved in such actions. There is political significance in the illegibility of such movements, before they are consigned to taxonomies and diagnoses that render them pathological, criminal, or demonic.

André Lepecki offers the concept of "choreopolitics" as a way to think about such movement. Motivated by Hannah Arendt's posthumously published fragment ([1950] 2005) that says: "we have arrived in a situation where we do not know—at least not yet—how to move politically" (in Lepecki 2013:13), Lepecki identifies a need to gain "*kinetic* knowledge" in order to move politically in space and with an orientation towards freedom. He therefore focuses on bodies moving in the context of choreographies that resist conformity with movement that "veers away from freedom" (20). To choreographies that call bodies into such conformity, he gives the term "choreopolice" to name the way the movement of bodies in space is limited. Against such policing movement, Lepecki argues that choreography can move towards freedom, "as a planned, dissensual and nonpoliced disposition of motions and bodies becomes the condition of possibility for the political to emerge" (22). His conception of planning here follows Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's, in which planning is not administrative but rather emergent, creative, and collective (Harney and Moten 2013).

Lepecki's approach to choreopolitics relates dance and the political (moving with an orientation towards freedom) by looking at the kinetics of bodies in space. This involves an emphasis on the political potential of emergent properties of dance movement. The three examples discussed by Lepecki are performance and video artworks (Tania Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5* [2008]; Yak Films' *Dancing in the Rain in Oakland Street* [2009]; and Sarah Michelson's *Devotion Study # 1—The American Dancer* [2012]). Even if planning here is understood as emergent in terms of how dance is performed, the process of creating and presenting these works involves modes of producing and editing in which planning itself does not have such emergent qualities.

My own analysis places a similar emphasis on political potential as I consider the entanglement of possession with the impulse to revolt. In the examples I discuss here, subjects report themselves, or are reported by others, as being caught by the dance. This means that there is a choreopolitics to these examples where performance is emergent in that they involve a loss of intentionality of movement incompatible with the idea of a subject who wills, plans, and decides in the way that a dancer does in performance.

What is happening when bodies are possessed in revolt, as in the possession incidents in the Malaysian factory? These are bodies whose movement is reported as being disorderly and that also generate disorder; bodies that call into question the idea of a subject's political willpower, and with it, Lepecki's account of choreopolitics. If political movement depends on processes of deliberation, volition, and decision, how can one's own obscured sense of presence be made to matter politically, to count, that is, as "a move towards freedom"? And by extension, how can scholars who attend to movement write in ways that also attend to this faded sense of self-presence and refrain from a colonial project of classification?

It is to address these questions that I examine the choreopolitics of some other events in which possession, revolt, and dancing are entangled, and in which human subjects are allegedly "caught" by another entity. One such case is the standing man (*duran adam*) in Istanbul 2013, a dancer who described his celebrated contribution to the Gezi Park protests as a moment in which, rather than acting deliberately, he found himself "caught" in space and time (Gündüz 2024). Leaping back in time, there are reports and analyses of dancing manias in Europe. The project of a self-possessed subject is in all these instances briefly suspended, revealing how bodies can be disrupted and disruptive at the same time. My interest in such cases signals also an interest in suspending a performance-oriented approach to the study of dance, with its attendant investments in bounded subjectivity, in order to think instead about dancing as an outcome of somatic experiences and forces.

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The Standing Man

When I realized that I could no longer enter Gezi Park because it was blocked by the police, I stopped and thought, what should I do? There was neither a step forward nor a step back, I was just stuck in time. There were many reasons for my stance facing Atatürk Cultural Center. It created light in my mind. A hope. It caught me. And by standing there, I hoped others would understand that hope.

—Erdem Gündüz (2024)[2]

Erdem Gündüz, a dancer and choreographer from Turkey, now also known as *duran adam* ("the standing man"), describes his eight-hour-long standing protest as an involuntary act that feels like getting "caught" in time and space, possessed by the sight of Atatürk Cultural Center. Gündüz's action has been framed by most writers as a clear case of direct action in which the dancer is understood as a fully conscious and individual agent of his own action.[3] Such accounts obscure the absence of political will in the moment of the action's inception. Gündüz chooses to use the phrase "it caught me" instead of arguing for a political rationale or strategy behind his standing still. As he also explains in an interview with Erin B. Mee, his act was neither random nor preplanned. Instead, it should be perceived as an outcome of a dancer's training, through which one learns to have a receptive and open body.

> In the same way as dancing, if you are stuck in a place, your body-mind starts to work, and it easily comes up with a solution. That's how it happened. The body has another way of thinking [...] I was walking and suddenly I stopped. (in Mee 2014:77)

This aspect of dance cannot be confined to the dancer's ability to quickly decide how they will, or will not, move next. Rather, dance emerges from unpredictable affective and sensory experiences that make bodies move. The nature of such experiences is of course also dependent on what kinds of dance training precedes them and on what histories of relation to structures of power these bodies carry within them.

A full sense of the meaning of walking, stopping, and standing in this case requires a brief reminder of the content and context of the Istanbul protest movement in which Gündüz participated. The 2013 protests were triggered by the Turkish government's decision to destroy Gezi Park, one of the few green public spaces in the city that was not profit-oriented, to facilitate an urban development plan for the area.[4] Protesters peacefully assembled in the park, putting up tents, creating libraries, food stalls, and art projects. Police then entered and cleared the park, making numerous arrests. This sparked nationwide demonstrations in support of the right to assemble and against the Turkish government's suppression of freedom of speech. In this struggle, several young people were violently assaulted, and some killed by police. Three years after the Arab Spring protests and two years after the Occupy Movement in the US and the anti-austerity protests in Southern Europe, Gezi Park marked an additional instance when public protests were met with severe police violence.

Gündüz's act of standing, however, troubled the police by disturbing the familiar logic of interaction between policing and movement. It was not clear whether he should be arrested or not

2. A first version of this contribution was presented at the conference Post-Dance-Ing (2019) in Stockholm. Erdem Gündüz and I were assigned as partners for this conference, and our talks were prepared as responses to each other.
3. For instance, it has been described as a protest and performance (Derman 2019), as a nonviolent act of resistance (Ertem 2017), as a silent protest (Kazim 2013), and as a passive resistance (Seymour 2013).
4. Gezi Park is located in Taksim Square and next to Atatürk Cultural Center, marking it as a site of great historical significance to modern secularist Turkish identity, which was also being attacked by the government—and another reason for the protest.

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since a single person peacefully standing still does not legally count as a threat.[5] His backpack was checked and when nothing suspicious was found, he was left alone. Gündüz continued standing where he was. Gradually other people gathered around him, creating an action that was soon livestreamed on social media. Only once the solitary act of standing became a legible gathering could the police move in and make arrests.

This act of standing still in public space began as something undetermined. Without any prior notice, a human body remained stationary and quiet in the kinetic field of a public demonstration. In a climate of intense police violence, the act of standing still interfered with the current politics of motion and briefly halted the violence with a glimpse of a possible reconfiguration of the dynamics of the protest, which usually would end in violence. This temporary zone of indeterminacy occurred because such persistent stillness was neither illegal nor in tune with or legible in the context of its surroundings. Something about this indeterminacy seemed to resonate. Gündüz's action triggered hundreds of replications across the country, including the standing woman in Ankara, a collective standing in Hatay, and a man who stood next to empty pairs of shoes in Istanbul.[6] Despite its viral consequences, there was no prior intention for this action to either replicate or be replicated. It occurred as an outcome of Gündüz's own training to be open and receptive as a dancer, which allowed him to be "caught" by the sight of the Atatürk Cultural Center. There is also a temporal disruption at work here. Gündüz describes himself "stuck in time": not just still amid movement, but caught as he was



Figure 1. Erdem Gündüz performing his Standing Man protest, Gezi Park, Turkey, 18 June 2013. (Photo by Jwslubbock; CC BY-SA 3.0)

5. Peter Verstraete refers in his article to a statement from then Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç confirming it was not illegal, and ironically adding that "eight hours is too long and may harm their health. Let's shorten it to, say, eight minutes so that we can appreciate it" (in Verstraete 2013:13).
6. Verstraete refers to other iterations of this action, many of which commemorated the murder of young people by police during the Gezi protests (2013).

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by an image of Atatürk, locked into a connection with a past whose progressive potential the current conservative government of Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) had foreclosed.

Why is Gündüz's standing action not described as a spontaneous act, let alone as a kind of possession, despite the language he used himself to describe it? Such an analysis never arises for the simple reason that, as an able-bodied cis male, Gündüz can easily be read as a self-possessed subject who was in control of his actions. His movements are not seen as fierce or erratic as were the women in the Malaysian factory. As his name has circulated in international media, he was hyper-individualized as an activist and became an icon. In media reports he was frequently compared to the heroic—and also now iconic—male figure who stood in front of a line of tanks at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Though anonymous, he was received in a similar way. Gündüz's own descriptions of the experience as well as the images of his contemplative gaze and seemingly relaxed body standing quietly for eight hours might otherwise have invited a different reading: that of a subject both mentally and physically absent from the present moment, as if he had indeed been caught by something. If we were to try to think of the standing man as a case of possession, we might find a way to discuss the politics of movement (a choreopolitics) outside ideological structures of subjectivity associated with an individual's control over their body and actions. As Keller puts it, "possession is any complete but temporary domination of a person's body and the blotting of the person's consciousness, by a distinct alien power of known or unknown origin" (2002:4). To think of it this way would be to see this political event not as the assertion of a determinate political will, but as something made possible by the body's affective porosity and its availability to sense *otherwise*. In such an affective and indeterminate responsiveness, there lies also a potential for evading what James Scott calls "statecraft" (or, for Lepecki, "police") whose efficacy depends upon the legibility of subjects and actions (see Scott 1999:80). Actions that cannot be properly assigned to subjects function as faulty data from the perspective of a state or police system, momentarily suspending the politics of motion assumed to be in play.

The Dancing Manias

There have been many cases in which affective corporeality of this kind has been framed in terms of possession because it has either been illegible, or seen as too volatile, troubling, or even threatening. Keller has studied the dynamics of such cases in which it seems that women were, like the ancient Greek maenads, free to move in public space only because they were thought to be possessed by a divine agency (2002:vii). In discussing this paradox, Keller offers a feminist reading of bodies in possession that accounts for the complex network of spiritual, social, and political powers with which they negotiate. Possessed bodies are not bereft of agency, Keller shows, and they are also not autonomous. Seized by external forces such as ancestors, spirits, and deities, women in possession become instruments of the overpowering will of those forces, and thus powerful in and of themselves.

One notable example from the history of unruly movement in public space includes "dancing manias" or "choreomanias." Accounts of choreomanias report experiences of people's total loss of bodily control, leading to actions that confused those who sought to explain, contain, or regulate them. Reports date from medieval Europe right through to the 20th century, and tend to involve descriptions of crowds suffering from involuntary gestures that appear to imitate spasmodic and restless movements of past times.[7] Dancing manias were sometimes explained as a call for ancestors

7. Kélina Gotman has explained how the energetic dance of the dancing manias in the 19th century was regarded as "involuntary gesture imitating other gestures, including those representing specific activities of past times [...] Patients were thus first and foremost interpreters, mimes; they did not initiate, but reproduced what was suggested to them" (2018:159). And as she has further written, the dancing manias also served as an embodied archive, a "mnemonic reserve" (163) that gave access to the corporeal past.

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(for instance in Madagascar, in 1863). These people sought to be possessed by the willpower of their ancestors, which marked a way to anticolonial resistance and to repairing the social body and feeling of community. To do that, they would draw from archives of gestures, images, descriptions and imaginations of popular dances, revolutions, and other manifestations of community. Although such episodes of manic dancing are evidently different in gesturality, kinetic pace, and rhythm from Gündüz's stillness, they also revolt against a set kinetic order by making a strong connection to the past. They temporarily disrupt the kinetic milieux in which they occur without articulating a directly legible political intention.



Figure 2. The dancing mania. Dancing mania on a pilgrimage to the church at *Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, a 1642 engraving by Hendrick Hondius after a 1564 drawing by Pieter Brueghel the Elder. Wellcome Library, London, M0014846. (CC BY 4.0)*

Narratives about dancing, mania, and contagious possession by dance are by no means foreign to dance history. There are ample references to witches' dances, tarantellas, zikr ceremonies, the Ghost Dance of the Native Americans, along with many other war and carnival dances (Gotman 2018; Öztürkmen and Vitz 2014; FLEE 2019). In different historical, cultural, and geographical contexts, from fantasies about ancient Bacchic deliria to the more recent banning of dance in public space in Iran, dancing has been associated with possession, trance, eroticism, contagiousness, manic feelings, and spiritual insight. Dancing is often thought of as mysterious and occult because of the physical, sensorial, and energetic virality that it can exert. It has been considered threatening not because it is actually harmful to others, but because it possesses these viral and erotic forces. Dance is regarded as capable of spreading desire and disorder and cannot be easily rationalized, controlled, and managed.

In various episodes of choreomania, bodily intensities could not be fully contained or adequately explained by governmental, religious, or medical authorities of the time of their occurrence. Unlike more explicit acts of disobedience, such as protests and revolutions, the women assembled in a dancing crowd were not regarded as political subjects in protest but simply as subjects who had lost control over their own bodies and actions. Keller writes that the subjectivity of the possessed woman is "valenced negatively as psychologically fragile, permeable, 'less than' a Western rational agent. The power of her possessed body is reduced to 'hysteria' at worst and creative therapy at best" (2002:3). In episodes of choreomania, those possessed in dancing have been seen in this

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way, and their dancing feared as though it were a contagious disease. It was simply not possible to identify within this agentic tangle of spirits, deities, and human bodies, gathered and moving unpredictably in public space, anything resembling a political subject.[8]

In *The Dancing Plague*, historian John Waller narrates an account of Frau Troffea who in the summer of 1518 went out into the streets of Strasbourg and began to dance without any reasonable explanation. She was joined in turn by around 400 other people, who would stay in the streets for nine or ten days without eating or resting (2009:4). Waller's account of this dancing plague clearly points both to dance's alleged contagious or viral quality and to its potential illegibility. Waller gives descriptions of a dancing that possessed people—initially from the working class and mostly women—in ways that inspired fear and awe (75). It was described as frenzy dancing, involving much hopping and leaping, and was variously said to be god- or devil-sent and described as a demonic possession attributed to St. Vitus or St. John, who were considered responsible for both the curse and the cure for the disease. This was by no means a singular event. Similar episodes were reported in chronicles earlier in Aachen, Utrecht, and Flanders between 1374 and 1376, and also in Zürich in 1428 (6).[9]

The choreomanias were handled as epidemics that demanded the intervention of the authorities, which led to the prevention of dancing in public, and to exorcisms and incarceration. In the more recent dancing manias of the 19th and 20th centuries, religious interventions would give way to medical, and especially psychiatric treatment. In her striking research into this phenomenon, Kélina Gotman (2018) traces how corporeal and discursive formations of choreomania have been grouped together in light of modern rational thought. She looks into different cases such as the tarantellas, the ecstatic anticolonial dances in Madagascar and Brazil, the Native American Ghost Dance, and the more recent dance marathons of the early 20th century. Unruly bodily movement has continued to be regarded as lacking a capacity for political expression by supposedly rational processes that pathologize its subjects, just as they were once demonized. Thus are such subjects denied political agency.

The history of choreomanias suggests that dance, as a distinct field of practice and knowledge, has been constructed, at least in part, through the imaginaries of psychiatry, medicine, and the church, which define it (if only by omission) in ways that exclude certain kinds of bodies moving collectively in public sight, by rendering them illegible. And, as Gotman argues, the scientific documentation of these phenomena is itself unordered and chaotic. She explains that uniting these different expressions of movement, forms "a discursive genealogy that linked modern notions of energetic efficiency and somatic normativity with social movements erupting worldwide" (2018:300). In other words, the several discursive approaches to manic dancing during the 19th and 20th centuries, which is the period that Gotman discusses, show how movement was being in fact policed at the same time that modernity and capitalism intensified a focus on motion towards values of efficiency and normativity. The practice of dance was thus required to exclude and repress the kind of movements found in choreomanias in favor of efficient, well-controlled, and organized physical movement.

According to cultural historian Hillel Schwartz, the backdrop of kinetic order against which these phenomena are described as pathological comprises movements that are socially legible

8. In a similar vein, club dancing, and raves in particular, when not extracting and capitalizing, on the surface do not appear as political but can be seen as counterproductive to socially prescribed order. McKenzie Wark's *Raving* is relevant to that respect, discussing today's underground queer and trans rave scenes that, as she writes, "cannot prefigure futures when there may not be any. The constructed situation of the rave may well be all some of us have—even if the revolution comes" (2023:10).

9. These are two periods—the 14th and early 16th centuries, and then later again in the 19th and early 20th centuries—during which such phenomena have been documented and sought to be interpreted. The timing seems to relate to experiences of famine, of plagues (like the "black death"), of colonial wars, etc.

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because they involve "clean, fluid, curvilinear gestures moving from the center of the body outward through uninterrupted but muscularly well-controlled rhythmic impulses" (Schwartz 1992:91). This type of corporeality is centered, rhythmic, and controlled, and was consolidated, Schwartz claims, in Western modernity between 1840 and 1940. At odds with this normative corporeality, choreomanias manifested both body tremors and petrification, which came to be explained as "an epidemic of tics, choreas, convulsions, aphasias and strangely impermanent but recurring paralyses that left so many women of all classes invalids" (92). The abstraction of these bodies into medical terminology is part of the complex macrochoreography that Gotman makes visible in her study, where she shows how medical literature and science sought to classify in this way any crowds that did not demonstrate a clear and immediate political intention. Considering such movements in terms of disease excluded them from the category of dance as it also sought to encompass (or explain away) a wide range of otherwise inexplicable neurological and muscular disorders that did not otherwise conform to existing taxonomies of hysterical and other psychogenic illnesses.

Against the backdrop of the normative clear and fluid movement associated with the modern individual subject, the apparently chaotic grammar of the motion registered in choreomanias evades or resists the status quo of corporeality or, to use Lepecki's term, the choreopolicing of movement. The choreomanias point towards another kind of dance history, one that offers the potential for framing the standing action of Gündüz in 2013 differently, as a form of dance that draws its political force from something other than recognizable subjectivity and intention. Such dancing never normally counts as political enough. At the same time, however, it reveals that there is something illegible and nonassimilable in dancing that might detach it from fictions of the self-possessed individual, with which dance, as a modern discipline, remains indissolubly linked.

Dance, Dancer, Dancing

This is why I would like to detach the idea of choreopolitics from the presentation of dance in theatrical performance. Choreographer Mårten Spångberg's writings on "post-dance" are helpful here. He encourages a critical consideration of dance's relation to choreography, in light of the latter's achievement in modernity of a high level of control and rationality (2017). Spångberg's proposal is that dance could be something that might take over the dancer and acquire a kind of ominous or threatening dimension (2017:370). Like the disruptive cases of possession and revolt, such a trajectory for dance offers an alternative to its current disciplinary operation.

Dance is not only an idea, an imagination, or a training. It is also a profession that in today's neoliberal Western contexts entails precarious labor and entrepreneurial subjectivity, in which the typically young and flexible subject is mystified or romanticized as a nonconforming and risk-taking individual. Annelies Van Assche and Kareth Schaffer (2023) propose the term "hyperindividualism" to describe European dancers' "flexible performativity." They refer here to

> an ability to navigate between different performative registers, to create complicity with the audience, and in general to adapt one's performance to the specific audience, location, and situation, although this does not preclude the development of an often highly charismatic onstage presence. (2023:207)

In their discussion of the complex fixation on bodies held to be individual yet also ordinary (according to the logics of much postmodern dance), the authors explain how dancers acquire the performative skill of playing with their biographies, personal affect, and the transformation of "the self."[10]

10. The authors argue that the socioeconomic challenges of dancers have rendered them as entrepreneurs, who are, because of their training in somatics and postmodern dance practices, able to switch between several fields of bodywork and different disciplines under the umbrella of "neoliberal ideals of lifelong learning and self-development" (2023:206). This volatility of the body as well as of the dancer's labor thus adheres to the volatility of neoliberal market practices.

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Van Assche and Schaffer allude here, also, to a performance of ambiguity in which there is a conflict between onstage and offstage selves, in which their hyperindividual subject "acknowledges that the fragmented subjectivities onstage are constructed, are performed," and can thus perform with ease such moves as "falling out of 'character,' acknowledging subtext, and continuously utilizing self-referentiality" (2023:210). The Western professional dance field has internalized undisciplining aspects of dance. The dancers' labor often depends on expressing the intense ambiguity of their artform through performing a subjectivity that is not dissimilar to what is evoked in the cases of possession and revolt: they are encouraged to present themselves as fragmented, edgy, obscure, conflicted, highly receptive, and porous.

To return to Spångberg, it is worth noting that he wishes to oppose this latest expression of neoliberal subjectivity as performed by dancers with something that seeks to elude or reject subjectivity altogether. More specifically, he advocates for dance as an expanded nonorganized practice that cannot be rendered reliable, controlled, and predictable through choreography. Dance is

> not a matter of subjectivity. Dance is a subject performing form. It is subjects or identities performing but their responsibility is not to issue subjectivity but instead to, so to say, become vehicles for the dance, to become anonymous. (2017:375)

Spångberg does not refer to possession whatsoever, but his descriptions allude to it since he claims that dancers are, in a sense, *inhabited by* the dance. This attribution of agency to dance itself is very clear:

> [D]ance carries the opportunity to pass agency from the subject to dance itself. To dance in this respect implies the possibility to learn from the dance, instead of learning how to dance or how to be one's self. (375)

However, even if dancing means escaping structures of subjectivity, as Spångberg claims it can, it does not always manage to do so in advanced capitalism, where producing subjectivity is so crucial to neoliberal structures of organization and affect. Under which conditions one dances and who does the dancing are crucial questions that must be asked in order for such a post-dance choreopolitics—wherein the dance transcends control and rationality to take over the dancer—to become possible beyond aesthetic forms and professional contexts.

Focusing on these aspects or potentialities of dancing does not have to equal total abstraction and the eradication or suppression of subjectivity, as this risks depoliticizing dance. Instead, an opaque and counterproductive approach to subjectivity might be possible. Experiences of possession might offer clues as to how such an approach might be made. Instead of moving between the polar alternatives of anonymization (as in the cases of choreomania) or hyperindividualization (as in the reception of Gündüz's standing), specific dancing bodies, in their conflicted but porous relationship to reality, might make a political virtue of a kind of opacity, generating a force that poses a tangible alternative to capitalist myths of self-possession. However, we need to be cautious of how quickly such political forces get caught by pathological and demonic taxonomies.

In "The Case of Blackness" (2008) Fred Moten discusses the discursive proximity between psychopathology, criminality, and the resistance of colonized bodies. He draws on Frantz Fanon's engagement with the pathologization and criminalization of Algerians before and during the Algerian Revolution (1954–1962). The reported muscular contraction and stiffness of colonized bodies in Algeria, explained pathologically by medicine, are explained, instead, by Fanon, as a form of resistance to the colonizers ([1961] 1968:217). Moten complicates Fanon's approach:

> [M]uscular contraction is not just a sign of external conflict but an expression of internal conflict as well. Perhaps such gesture, such dance, is the body's resistance to the psyche and to itself the thing's immanent transcendence, the fissured singularity of a political scene. (2008:208)

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In this case, resistance, crime, and pathology are so deeply bound up with one another that they become tautological. As Moten shows, the imagination of disordered dance as simultaneously psychopathology, crime, and resistance is the affirmation of a discourse that takes the risk of keeping those domains attached to each other, rather than insisting upon their hygienic separation.

Coda

While the choreopolitics of the dancer in Lepecki's examples from professional artistic practice entail an emergent plan to move against the norm, the examples offered here engage instead with this ambivalent space where will, intention, and action are rendered valuably opaque at the very same moment that so-called bodily disorders are named and categorized. This is apparent in these episodes of possession and revolt that take the form of dancing. But such potential may perhaps always be there, present but disregarded, operating in a minor key through which they escape major habits of perception.

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