

Exhausting Dance

Performance and the politics of movement

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1 Introduction

The political ontology of movement

One must introduce in the diagnostic of our times, a kinetic and kinesthetic dimension because, without such a dimension, all discourse about modernity will completely bypass that which in modernity is most real.

(Sloterdijk 2000b: 27)

On 31 December 2000, the *New York Times* published an article by Senior Dance Editor Anna Kisselgoff titled “Partial to Balanchine, and a Lot of Built-In Down Time,” a review of the New York dance scene for the year that had just ended. At a certain point in her text Kisselgoff writes: “Stop and Go. Call it a trend or a tic, the increasing frequency of hiccupping sequences in choreography is impossible to ignore. Viewers interested in flow or a continuum of movement have been finding slim pickings in many premieres.” After listing some “hiccupping” choreographers, which ranged from New York-based David Dorfman to (then) Frankfurt-based William Forsythe, Kisselgoff concludes: “It is all very ‘today.’ What about tomorrow?” (Kisselgoff 2000: 6).

Perception of a hiccupping in choreographed movement produces critical anxiety; it is dance’s very future that appears menaced by the eruption of kinesthetic stuttering. Before a purposeful choreographic interruption of “flow or a continuum of movement,” the critic offers two possible readings: either those strategies can be dismissed as a “trend” – thus cast as a limited epiphenomenon, an annoying “tic” that does not deserve a too serious critical consideration; or they can be denounced, more seriously, as a threat – a threat to dance’s “tomorrow,” to dance’s capacity to smoothly reproduce itself into the future within its familiar parameters. This last perception – that the intrusion of stilling hiccups in contemporary choreography threatens dance’s own futurity – is of relevance to a discussion of some recent choreographic strategies where dance’s relation to movement is being exhausted. I suggest the perception of the stilling of movement as a threat to dance’s tomorrow indicates that any disrupting of dance’s flow – any choreographic questioning of dance’s identity as a *being-in-flow* – represents not just a localized disturbance of a critic’s capacity to enjoy dance, but, more relevantly, it performs a critical act of deep ontological impact. No wonder some perceive such an ontological convulsion as a betrayal: the betrayal of dance’s very essence and nature, of its signature, of its privileged domain. That is: the betrayal of the bind between dance and movement.

Any accusation of betrayal necessarily implies the reification and reaffirmation of certainties in regard to what constitutes the rules of the game, the right path, the correct posture, or the appropriate form of action. That is, any accusation of betrayal implies an ontological certainty charged with

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choreographic characteristics. In the case of contemporary dance's putative betrayal, the accusation describes, reifies, and reproduces a whole ontology of dance that can be summarized as follows: dance ontologically imbricates itself with, is isomorphic to, movement. Only after accepting such grounding of dance on movement can one accuse certain contemporary choreographic practices of betraying dance.

It should be noted that such accusations of betrayal (and their implicit ontological reifications) are not confined to the realm of North American dance reviews. They emerge also in European courtrooms. On 7 July 2004 the Circuit Court of Dublin heard a civil case against the International Dance Festival of Ireland (IDF). The Festival was being accused of display of nudity and alleged performance of lewd acts in a dance piece titled *Jérôme Bel* (1995) by contemporary French choreographer Jérôme Bel.¹ The piece had been presented by IDF in its 2002 edition. Due to technicalities, the presiding judge eventually dismissed the case. Apparently, the complaining party, Mr. Raymond Whitehead, had based his suit on a faulty mix of obscenity laws and false-advertisement laws seeking "damages for breach of contract and negligence" (Falvey 2004: 5). What is interesting in this case is that Mr. Whitehead supported his obscenity and false-advertisement case by claiming that *Jérôme Bel* could not be properly classified as a dance performance. In a statement to the *Irish Times* of 8 July 2004, Mr. Whitehead articulated a clear ontology of dance that was not at all dissimilar to Kisselgoff's. According to the *Irish Times*: "There was nothing in the performance [he] would describe as dance, which he defined as 'people moving rhythmically, jumping up and down, usually to music but not always' and conveying some emotion. He was refused a refund" (Holland 2004: 4).

Set side by side, these two discursive moments demand consideration. They reflect the fact that in the past decade some contemporary North American and European choreography has indeed engaged in dismantling a certain notion of dance – the notion that ontologically associates dance with "flow and a continuum of movement" and with "people jumping up and down" (with or without music . . .). But they also reflect a widespread inability, or even unwillingness, to critically account for recent choreographic practices as valid artistic experiments. Thus, the deflation of movement in recent experimental choreography is depicted only as a symptom of a general "down-time" in dance. But perhaps it is the depiction itself that should be seen as symptomatic of a "down-time" in dance's critical discourse, indicating a deep disjuncture between current choreographic practices and a mode of writing still very much attached to ideals of dancing as constant agitation and continuous mobility. It should be remembered that the operation of inextricably aligning dance's being with movement – as commonsensical as such an operation may sound today – is a fairly recent historical development. Dance historian Mark Franko showed how, in the Renaissance, choreography defined itself only secondarily in relationship to movement:

the dancing body as such is barely a subject of treatises. As the dance scholar Rodocanachi put it, ' . . . quant aux mouvements, c'est la danse en elle-même dont la

connaissance semble avoir été la moindre des occupations du danseur [. . . as for the movements, it is the dance itself that seems to have been the least of the dancer's concern].

(Franko 1986: 9)

Ann Kisselgoff's predecessor, *New York Times*'s first full-time dance critic John Martin, would have agreed with Franko. In 1933, he affirmed: "When we first find dancing assuming something of a theatrical form – that is, after the antique days – we find it concerned little if at all with the movement of the body" (Martin 1972: 13). Why, then, this obsessive concern with the display of moving bodies, this demand that dance be in a constant state of agitation? And why see in choreographic practices that refuse that display and agitation a threat to dance's being? These questions reflect how the development of dance as an autonomous art form in the West, from the Renaissance on, increasingly aligns itself with an ideal of ongoing motility. Dance's drive towards a spectacular display of movement becomes its modernity, in the sense Peter Sloterdijk in the epigraph to this chapter defines it: as an epoch and a mode of being where the kinetic corresponds to "that which in modernity is most real" (2000b: 27, emphasis added). As the kinetic project of modernity becomes modernity's ontology (its inescapable reality, its foundational truth), so the project of Western dance becomes more and more aligned with the production and display of a body and a subjectivity fit to perform this unstoppable motility.

Thus, by the time when the Romantic *ballet d'action* is fully in place, we find dance clearly performing itself as a spectacle of flowing mobility. As dance scholars Susan Foster (1996), Lynn Garafola (1997), and Deborah Jowitt (1988) have argued, the premise of Romantic ballet was to present dance as continuous motion, a motion preferably aiming upwards, animating a body thriving lightly in the air. Such an ideology shaped styles, prescribed techniques, and configured bodies – just as much as it shaped critical standards for evaluating a dance's esthetic value. Even though the first Romantic ballet is considered to be Filippo Taglioni's 1832 production of *La Sylphide*, premiered at the Paris Opera, it is in an 1810 text that we can find one of the earliest and certainly most densely articulated theorizations of dance as clearly linked to a performance of uninterrupted flow of movement. Heinrich von Kleist's classic parable "*Über das Marionettentheater*" praises the superiority of the puppet over the human dancer because the puppet need not stop its motions in order to regain momentum:

Puppets, like elves, need the ground only so that they can touch it lightly and renew the momentum of their limbs through this momentary delay. We [humans] need it to rest on, to recover from the exertions of dance, a moment which is clearly not part of the dance.²

(in Copeland and Cohen 1983: 179)

However, it is only in the 1930s that the strict ontological identification between uninterrupted movement and dance's being was clearly articulated as an

inescapable demand for any choreographic project. John Martin, in his famous lectures at the New School in New York City in 1933, proposed that only with the advent of modern dance did dance finally find its true, ontologically grounded, beginning: "this beginning was the discovery of the actual substance of the dance, which it found to be movement" (Martin 1972: 6). For Martin, the choreographic explorations of Romantic and Classic ballet, and even the antiballetic freeing of the body's expressivity spearheaded by Isadora Duncan, had all missed dance's true being. None had understood that dance was to be founded on movement alone. For Martin, ballet was dramaturgically too tied up with narrative and choreographically too invested in the striking pose, while Duncan's dance was too subservient to music. According to Martin, it was not until Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey in the USA, and Mary Wigman and Rudolph von Laban in Europe, that modern dance discovered movement as its essence, and "became for the first time an independent art" (1972: 6).

The strict alignment of dance with movement that John Martin announced and celebrated is but the logical outcome of his modernist ideology, of his desire to theoretically secure for dance an autonomy that would make it an equal to other high art forms. Martin's modernism is a construct, a project that, as dance historian Mark Franko has shown, took place not only in his writings and reviews, but also in the contested space between the choreographic and the theoretical, the corporeal and the ideological, the kinetic and the political (Franko 1995). Dance scholar Randy Martin notes how the project of grounding the ontology of dance in pure movement leads to "a presumed autonomy for the aesthetic in the realm of theory, which is [. . .] what grounds, without needing to name or situate, the authority of the theorist or critic" (Martin 1998: 186). This struggle for critical and theoretical authority defines the discursive dynamics informing the production, circulation, and critical reception of dance; it defines how in journalistic dance reviews, in programming decisions, and in legal suits some dances are considered proper while others are dismissed as acts of ontological betrayal. To acknowledge that dance happens in this contested space clarifies how recent accusations of betrayal ventriloquize an ideological program of defining, fixing, and reproducing what should be valued as dance and what should be excluded from its realm as futureless, insignificant, or obscene.

Meanwhile, dance's ontological question remains open.

It is this open question, in its esthetic, political, economic, theoretical, kinetic, and performative implications that *Exhausting Dance* addresses. I dedicate each chapter of this book to a close reading of a few selected pieces by European and North American contemporary choreographers, visual artists, and performance artists whose work (regardless of whether that work properly falls into the category of theatrical dance) proposes, with particular intensity, a critique of some constitutive elements of Western theatrical dance. The critical elements that I highlight are, in order of appearance: solipsism, stillness, the linguistic materiality of the body, the toppling of the vertical plane of representation, the stumble on the racist terrain, the proposition of a politics of the ground, and the critique of the melancholic drive at the heart of choreography. The artists whose

work sets in motion these critical elements are (also in order of appearance) Bruce Nauman, Juan Dominguez, Xavier Le Roy, Jérôme Bel, Trisha Brown, Ribot, William Pope.L, and Vera Mantero.

The fact that two of these artists are not "properly" dancers, and describe themselves as choreographers, but have nevertheless experimented with choreographic exercises (Bruce Nauman) or expressed the politics of motility in contemporaneity (William Pope.L) is methodologically important for my argument. Their work allows for refracting choreography outside artificially self-contained disciplinary boundaries, a identifying the political ontology of modernity's investment on its odd hyperbeing. To address the choreographic outside the proper limits of dance proper for dance studies the expansion of its privileged object of analysis; it asks studies to step into other artistic fields and to create new possibilities for the relationships between bodies, subjectivities, politics, and movement.

One of the relationships this book privileges is that between dance, studies, and philosophy. This theoretical dialogue departs from the observation that the recent difficulties of critically assessing dances that refuse to be co-opted to a constant "flow or continuum of movement" indicate a reconfiguring of dance's relationship to its coming into presence. Now "presence" is not only referring to the dancer's negotiation between technical and artistic proficiency in the performance of choreography. It is also a fundamental philosophical concept, one of the main objects of Heidegger's *destruktion* of metaphysics and of Deleuze's *deconstruction*.³ Thus, any dance that probes and complicates how it comes into presence, and where it establishes its ground of being, suggests for critical studies the need to establish a renewed dialogue with contemporary philosophy. I am thinking in particular of those authors that follow Nietzsche's *destruction* of traditional philosophy through the proposition of a critique of the will to power. This project informs the philosophical and political work of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari; works and authors I invoke frequently throughout this book. For theirs is not only a philosophy of the body but a philosophy that creates concepts that allow for a political reframing of the body. Theirs is a philosophy that understands the body not as a self-contained and closed entity but as an open and dynamic system of exchange, constantly producing modes of subjection and control, as well as of resistance and becoming.⁴ As feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz explains, after

Nietzsche [. . .] the body is the site for the emanation of the will to power (or several wills), an intensely energetic locus for all cultural production. This concept I believe may be more useful in rethinking the subject in terms of the body.

(Grosz 1994)

Rethinking the subject in terms of the body is precisely the task of choreography, a task that may not be always subservient to the imperative of the kinetic, a task that is always already in dialogue with critical theory

philosophy. Fredric Jameson, in a recent book, sees the return to philosophy in recent critical studies as a dangerous return to modernist and conservative ideals and ideologies (Jameson 2002: 1–5). I don't think one immediately follows the other. I see Jameson's position as a perfect example of Homi Bhabha's powerful opening words in his essay "The Commitment to Theory": "There is a damaging and self-defeating assumption that theory is necessarily the elite language of the socially and culturally privileged" (Bhabha 1994: 19). Bhabha reminds us that there is "a distinction to be made between the institutional history of critical theory and its conceptual potential for change and innovation" (1994: 31). This is precisely Deleuze's position in distinguishing the institutional history of philosophy and the political power of philosophy (Deleuze 1995: 135–55). If there is one contribution I would like to propose to dance studies it is to consider in which ways choreography and philosophy share that same fundamental political, ontological, physiological, and ethical question that Deleuze recuperates from Spinoza and from Nietzsche: what can a body do?

The work of the philosophers and ~~critical theorists~~ I engage with deploys this politically progressive power founded in this fundamental question; in the necessary dialogue this question proposes between critical theory, philosophy and all modes of performance, including dance. Thus, I invoke throughout the book Roland Barthes's and Michel Foucault's critique of the authority of the author, Jacques Derrida's critique of representation and general economy, Avery Gordon's notion of the sociological force of the spectral, Anne Anlin Cheng's reframing of the Freudian notion of melancholia, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of body without organs, Peter Sloterdijk's unveiling of a kinetic ontology of modernity, Frantz Fanon's critique of ontology in the colonial condition, and Judith Butler's recasting of the Austinian performative – in order to understand the choreographic deployments of these crucial concepts. Moreover, the dialogue with philosophy is one in which the artists I discuss are explicitly engaged. Indeed, it can be said that without their explicit commitment to philosophy and critical theory there would not be their artistic work. As I will show, Vera Mantero dialogues directly with Deleuze's notion of immanence, William Pope.L "talks" with Heidegger and Frantz Fanon, Jérôme Bel quotes the importance of Deleuze's notions of repetition and difference for his work, Bruce Nauman invokes Wittgenstein, while Xavier Le Roy explicitly acknowledges Elizabeth Grosz. Even when this dialogue is not directly made apparent, it is clear how Trisha Brown's converses with architectural theory and La Ribot is right in the midst of a debate with Heidegger's notion of *Verfallen*. Throughout this book, I do little more than to listen to each choreographer's proposals and then foreground the philosophy they deploy. And, in each chapter, I reiterate Bhabha's question: "In what hybrid forms, then, may a politics of the theoretical statement emerge?" (1994: 22).

Much of my argument in this book turns around the formation of choreography as a peculiar invention of early modernity, as a technology that creates a body disciplined to move according to the commands of writing. The first version of the word "choreography" was coined in 1589, and titles one of

the most famous dance manuals of that period: *Orchesographie* by Jesuit F. Thoynot Arbeau (literally, the writing, *graphie*, of the dance, *orchesis*).⁵ Comprised into one word, morphed into one another, dance and writing produced qualitatively unsuspected and charged relationalities between the subject who moves and the subject who writes. With Arbeau, these two subjects became and the same. And through this not too obvious assimilation, the modern I revealed itself fully as a linguistic entity.

It is not by chance that the invention of this new art of codifying and displaying disciplined movement is historically coincidental with the unfolding and consolidation of the project of modernity. From the Renaissance onward, dance pursues its own autonomy as an art form, it does so in tandem with the consolidation of that major project of the West known as modernity. Dance and modernity intertwine in a kinetic mode of being-in-the-world. Cultural historian Harvie Ferguson writes, "the only changeless element in Modernity is its propensity to movement, which becomes, so to speak, its permanent emblem" (Ferguson 2000: 11). Thus, dance increasingly turns towards movement to reveal for its essence. German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk proposed that the modern project is fundamentally kinetic: "ontologically, modernity is a pure being-toward-movement" (Sloterdijk 2000b: 36). Dance accesses modernity by increasing ontological alignment with movement as the spectacle of modern being. Writing on Baroque dance, particularly as performed by the body of Sun King, Louis XIV, Mark Franko notes how the performance of choreography is first of all a performance centered on the display of a disciplined I performing the spectacle of its own capacity to be set into motion:

Anyone who has studied baroque dance in the studio under the teacher's watchful eye can testify that it allows little or no place for spontaneity. In royal body dancing was made to represent itself as if remachined in the service of an exacting coordination between upper and lower limbs dictated by a musical frame. It was an early modern techno-body.

(Franko 2000: 36, emphasis added)

If choreography emerges in early modernity to remachine the body so it can "represent itself" as a total "being-toward-movement," perhaps the re-exhaustion of the notion of dance as a pure display of uninterrupted movement participates of a general critique of this mode of disciplining subjectivity and constituting being. If we agree with Ferguson's insight that movement is modernity's "permanent emblem," then this theoretical point of departure can allow for discursively reframing the current exhaustion of dance. If modernity's "only changeless element" (Ferguson 2000: 11) is, paradoxically, movement, then it could very well be that by disrupting the alliance between dance and movement, by critiquing the possibility of sustaining a mode of moving in a "discrete and continuum of movement," some recent dance may be actually proposing political and theoretical challenges to the old alliance between the simultaneous invention of choreography and modernity as a "being-toward-movement":

the political ontology of movement in modernity. In that sense, to exhaust dance is to exhaust modernity's permanent emblem. It is to push modernity's mode of creating and privileging a kinetic subjectivity to its critical limit. It is to exhaust modernity, to use Teresa Brennan's powerful expression – an expression that could be read as synonymous to the title of this book (Brennan 1998).

Since “modernity” and “subjectivity” are two central terms in the following chapters, they deserve some immediate clarification. My use of “subjectivity” does not index a return to or a reappropriation of the notion of the “subject.” The latter is usually associated with the reification of subjectivity in the legal figure of the person, with the assertion of the person as a self-enclosed, autonomous individual bound to a fixed identity, and with the identification of a full presence at the center of discourse (Dupré 1993: 13–17, Ferguson 2000: 38–44).⁶ Throughout this book, subjectivity is not to be confounded with this conception of a fixed subject. Rather, it is to be understood as a dynamic concept, indexing modes of agency (political ones, desiring ones, affective ones, choreographic ones) that reveal “a process of subjectification, that is, the production of a way of existing [that] can't be equated with a subject” (Deleuze 1995: 98, emphasis added). Subjectivity is to be understood as a performative power, as the possibility for life to be constantly invented and reinvented, as “a mode of intensity, not a personal subject” (1995: 99). Deleuze's understanding of subjectivity is close to Foucault's “technologies of the self,” which he defines as operations. Technologies of the self,

permit individuals to effect by their own means [. . .] a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness.

(Foucault 1997: 225)

Thus, for Foucault as for Deleuze, subjectivities are always processes of subjectification, active becoming, the unleashing of potencies and forces in order to create for oneself the possibility of “existing as a work of art” (Deleuze 1995: 95).

In this dynamic, one cannot neglect the destructive effect of hegemonic forces that constantly try to dominate and prevent the creation of subjectivities by binding individuals into reproductive mechanisms of subjection, abjection, and domination. To account for this hegemonic effect, I would like to supplement Deleuze's and Foucault's notions of subjectivity by invoking a model of subjectification they explicitly rejected, but that I nevertheless believe is of use to critically account for the multiple forces at play in the constitution of subjectivities. This model is described by Louis Althusser in his essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (1994). Althusser proposed that hegemonic forces are permanently “interpellating individuals as subjects in the name of a Unique and Absolute Subject” (1994: 135). There is something uncannily choreographic in the way Althusser describes this mechanism:

The individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall sue freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e., in order that he shall (fr accept his subjection, i.e., in order that he shall make the gestures actions of his subjection “all by himself.” There are no subjects except and for their subjection. That is why they “work all by themselves”.

(1994:

We can see why Deleuze and Foucault would critique this mechanism, w there seems to be no place for agency and where reification is crucial. However relevance of Althusser's model for dance studies was highlighted recently by Franko. Despite critiquing Althusser's location of centers of ideological power specific institutions (Church, Police, State), Franko writes how “interpell implies visceral address,” and therefore remains a very useful notion for dance performance studies, one that proposes that dance and “performance could ‘call’ audiences to subject positions” (Franko 2002: 60). I agree with Franko's proposal that Althusser's model of how individuals are “recruited” into norm subjectivity is particularly useful to understand how choreography creates process of subjectification. Choreography demands a yielding to commanding voices of masters (living and dead), it demands submitting body and desiring disciplining regimes (anatomical, dietary, gender, racial), all for the performance fulfillment of a transcendental and preordained set of steps, postures, and gestures that nevertheless must appear “spontaneous”. When Althusser writes that individual “shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e., in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection, i.e., in order that he shall make gestures and actions of his subjection ‘all by himself’” (1994: 136), this sounds like the fundamental mechanism choreography sets in place for its representational and reproductive success.

But there is another aspect of Althusser's model that is of critical importance in my analysis. Judith Butler, in *Excitable Speech*, recuperates Althusser's notion of interpellation in order to demonstrate how subjectivity is constantly interpellated by a dialectics of resistance and subjection that is nothing more “a mechanism of discourses whose efficacy is irreducible to their moment of enunciation” (Butler 1997b: 32). The notions of hailing and interpellating discursive mechanisms will be particularly useful in Chapter 5, when I discuss William Pope.L's kinetic strategies of moving on the treacherous racist neoimperial terrain of contemporaneity – a terrain informed by injurious utterances taking down bodies and shaping motions, gestures, postures.

I would like to turn now to the question of modernity. Harvie Ferguson writes “modernity is a new form of subjectivity” (Ferguson 2000: 5). Given that, as I saw, Ferguson also affirms that modernity's permanent emblem is movement follows that modernity hails its subjects to constitute them as emblematic discursive of its being: mobility. Modernity's subjectivity is its movement and mode subjectivizes by interpellating bodies to a constant display of motion, its ontological agitation Peter Sloterdijk identifies as modernity's kinetic expression (2000b: 29). It is within this overwhelming and ontopolitical imperative to

that subjectivities create their escape routes (their becomings) and negotiate their self-imprisonment (their subjection).

If modernity is a new form of subjectivity, what might be its historical scope? Can we use the term "modernity" to address contemporaneity? Here, consensus is hard to find. Recently, Fredric Jameson wrote on the "political dynamics of the word 'modernity,' which has been revived all over the world," and associated its dynamics and its recent revival with the (for him disturbing) demise of "post-modernity" (Jameson 2002: 10). Jameson sees all kinds of regressions taking place with the resurgence of the word "modernity." For Jameson, the demise of postmodernity and the return of modernity as concept indicate an undesirable return of philosophy, of esthetics, and of the "phallogentrism" of modernism in critical discourse (2002: 9-11).⁷ As for identifying modernity's epoch, Jameson affirms, "the only satisfactory semantic meaning of modernity lies in its association with capitalism" (2002: 11). Thus, according to Jameson, one can talk of "modernity" only after two conditions are met: the emergence of Kant's critique of Enlightenment and the establishment of the modes of production of industrial capitalism (2002: 99). Jameson's views are close to Foucault's and Habermas's who tend to identify the formation of the political, epistemic, and affective conditions prevalent in contemporaneity in the eighteenth century, particularly with Kant's philosophy.

However, another mode of temporalizing modernity would be to follow Ferguson's formula and consider that modernity is indeed "a form of subjectivity." Thus, modernity's periodization would be predicated on identifying not a particular period, nor a particular geography, but processes of subjectification that produce and reproduce this particular form. Cultural historian Louis Dupré identifies a modern form of subjectivity clearly in place by the seventeenth century and extending to our moment (Dupré 1993: 3, 7). The epochal understanding of modernity I deploy in this book aligns with Dupré's and also with those outlined by Francis Barker (1995), Teresa Brennan (2000), Gerard Delanty (2000), Harvie Ferguson (2000), and Peter Sloterdijk (2000b). These authors identify the establishment of modernity with the subjectification set in place by the Cartesian division between *res cogita* and *res extensa*. Even Jameson, in his harsh critique of the revival of the word modernity states, "it is only by way of this newly achieved certainty [exposed by Descartes's method] that a new conception of truth as correctness can emerge historically; or in other words, that something like 'modernity' can make its appearance" (Jameson 2002: 47). Here, Jameson is explaining Heidegger's critique of representation (*Vorstellung*) in relation to the philosophy of Descartes and argues that Heidegger's critique is one that illustrates modernity as a mode of "subjectification" (2002: 47). Jameson concedes that such an understanding of modernity as subjectification "may well be preferred to any number of vapid humanist just-so stories" (2002: 49).

What characterizes this mode or form of subjectification? First and foremost, it locks subjectivity within an experience of being severed from the world. In modernity, subjectivity is trapped within a solipsistic experience of the "ego as

the ultimate subject for and of representation" (Courtine 1991: 79) that views the "body as independently existing and governed by immanent laws" (Ferguson 2000: 7). Brennan is particularly insistent on the centrality of this subject experiencing his or her being as fully independent and ontologically severed from the world as constitutive of the modern process of subjectification. She identifies in the self-sufficient monadic subject the psychic work of a particularly alienating "foundational fantasy" (Brennan 2000: 36).⁸ This fantasy must reproduce itself at all costs in order to keep in place the ecological and affective plundering that characterizes the modes of production unleashed by early capitalism and exacerbated to their paroxysm in our neoimperial contemporaneity. She writes:

one can debate whether the birth of the interior consciousness marks modernity, a hard case to sustain because of the evident exceptions to it. I would submit that a better measure would be the uniform denial, in the West, of the transmission of affect that we find in effect from the seventeenth century onwards.

(Brennan 2000: 10)

For modern subjectivity, the ethical, affective, and political challenges are of finding sustained modes of relationality. How can a putatively independent being establish a relation with things, world, or others while remaining at the same time a good representative of modernity's "emblem": movement? The inclusion of the kinetic into this political-ethical question of modern subjectivity brings us back to the problem of how to dance against the hegemonic fantasies of modernity, once those fantasies are linked to the imperative to constantly display mobility.

This is where analyses of choreographies and performances that directly address the impossibility of sustaining "flow or continuum movement" are of theoretical and political import. If the formation of what Randy Martin calls "critical dance studies" is to be taken seriously, then his proposition, developed in *Critical Moves*, for reexamining the notion of mobilization, understood "as mediating concept between dance and politics," seems particularly relevant for this discussion (Martin 1998: 14). Indeed, for Martin, mobilization is a key concept dance studies must probe in order to step out of its dubious political paralysis.⁹ The formation of a political theory and a political practice based on the primacy of movement must depart from Martin's suggestion that "the relation of dance to political theory cannot usefully be taken as merely analogical or metaphorical" (1998: 6). Thus, considering literal or metonymical (as opposed to analogical and metaphorical) relations between dance and politics becomes a fundamental step for political and critical theory to address the choreographic dynamics of social movements and social change – regardless if those movements and changes manifest themselves on the stage or in the streets. Martin points out how

theories of politics are full of ideas, but they have been less successful in articulating how the concrete labor of participation necessary to execute

those ideas is gathered through the movement of bodies in social time and space. Politics goes nowhere without movement.

(Martin 1998: 3)

Martin's project could be read not only as a critical-kinetic updating and rephrasing of Marx's famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach,¹⁰ but also as a challenging articulation that the perception and practice of dances through the viewpoint of political thought could indeed open up the possibility to mobilize not only theories but also otherwise politically passive bodies. The word "participation" in Martin's theory is important, since it contains a critique of representation. For Martin, mobilization is already participation, it is a moving-toward-the-world – in the sense that methexis proposes a participatory encountering that challenges the distancing forces of mimesis. Indeed, Martin's argument is predicated upon a progressive politics as "those forces mobilizing against the fixity of what is dominant in the social order" (1998: 10).

Martin's observation repeats a usually uncontested notion that associates the force of movement with a politically positive dynamics. Think for instance of Gilles Deleuze, when he defined two basic political positions: "embracing movement, or blocking it" (Deleuze 1995: 127). Deleuze associated the latter with a reactionary force. Think also of Deleuze and Guattari's notions of becoming, as forces and powers coalescing on a plane of consistency defined as a plane of immanence where intensities circulate unblocked, and of the body without organs (remember how, for Deleuze and Guattari, the body without organs can be successful or unsuccessful, the latter being defined always by a blocking of intensities).

In Randy Martin, in Deleuze, and in Guattari movement seems to be associated positively as that which will always apply its force towards a politics of progress, or at least towards a critical formation that could be considered progressive. We can think of many other examples of this association. But given that I have just posited that the condition of modernity is that of an emblematic motility, the question becomes of finding out where "the fixity of what is dominant" might be. The question is to know if and how the dominant moves. And to know when, what, and who is it that the dominant requires to be moving.

This is where the "critique of political kinetics" proposed by Peter Sloterdijk in his book *Eurotaoismos* becomes particularly relevant. Sloterdijk writes that the only way of fully assessing the political ontology of modernity is by critically addressing what he calls "the kinetic impulse of modernity" (Sloterdijk 2000b: 35).¹¹ Sloterdijk posits that "ontologically, modernity is a pure being-toward-movement" (2000b: 36). Therefore, "a philosophical discourse of modernity is not possible except as a critical theory of mobilization" (2000b: 126). Here, we could almost read in Sloterdijk's proposition Randy Martin's words in *Critical Moves*, since for both it is modernity's kinetic being that has been profoundly neglected by critical theory. But Sloterdijk's ideas could also be read as a cautionary argument that both disagrees with and at the same time supports and supplements Martin's insights. As opposed to Martin, Sloterdijk argues that

critical theory and progressive politics must take into account the fact that *there is nothing fixed* in the dominant, or hegemonic, order. Rather, for Sloterdijk, it is precisely the *kinetic impulse* of modernity articulated as mobilization that displays the process of subjectification in contemporaneity as that of an idiotic militarization of subjectivity associated to widespread kinetic performances of tayloristic efficacy, efficiency, and effectiveness (to use Jon Mackenzie's terms [2000]). For Sloterdijk, the lack of a critical theory of the kinetic impulse of modernity is a fundamental flaw in Marxist theory, that theoretically neglected to engage in a critique of the kinetic due to its enthusiastic embrace of full industrialization. Although Randy Martin's proposals seem to have been articulated unaware of the political philosophy of Sloterdijk, and despite the fact that on occasion they may even be in direct disagreement with some of Sloterdijk's readings of Marx, the German philosopher's critique of modernity as "kinetic excess" supplements Martin's notions of the different uses of mobilization in political processes and in political thought. If Sloterdijk is much more critical of Marxist theory than Martin would probably allow, both are nevertheless attempting to articulate "if it's possible to imagine politics from within mobilization" (Martin 1998: 12). Sloterdijk, just as Martin, also looks for possibilities of countering hegemonic policies by thinking from within mobilization, if only to point out the conflicting problems such a term entails. Indeed, I believe Martin would agree with Sloterdijk when he writes:

[U]p to the present, the two known versions of a critical theory (I am thinking mainly of the Marxist school and of the Frankfurt schools) have remained without an object, either because they cannot seize their object – *the kinetic reality of modernity as mobilization* – or because they cannot show a critical difference in relation to mobilization.

(Sloterdijk 2000b: 26–7, emphasis in the original)

Sloterdijk's philosophy outlines a critique of mobilization by addressing modernity's "kinesthetic politics" as an exhausting and exhausted ontopolitical project of "being-toward-movement" (2000: 36). What Sloterdijk's and Martin's works show is that we have arrived at a moment in critical theory and in critical dance studies where the political problem of contemporary modernity, capitalism, and action have been theoretically cast as essentially belonging to the realm of the choreographic ontology of modernity. This is a fundamental development not only for critical theory, but also for the possible theoretical interventions critical dance studies may attempt in its analysis of subjectivities.

In short, modernity is understood throughout this book as a long durational project, metaphysically and historically producing and reproducing a "psycho-philosophical frame" (Phelan 1993: 5) where the privileged subject of discourse is always gendered as the heteronormative male, raced as white, and experiencing his truth as (and within) a ceaseless drive for autonomous, self-motivated, endless, spectacular movement. But how could a body move about so spectacularly, so

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effectively, and so self-sufficiently? What is the ground this kinetic subject moves about apparently without effort, apparently always energized, and never stumbling? This is where the inescapable topography fantasy of modernity informs its choreopolitical formation: for modernity imagines its topography as already abstracted from its grounding on a land previously occupied by other human bodies, other life forms, filled with other dynamics, gestures, steps, and temporalities. As Bhabha explains, “for the emergence of modernity – as an ideology of beginning, modernity as the new – the template of this ‘non-place’ becomes the colonial place” (1994: 246). Fundamental for the argument of this book is the fact that the ground of modernity is the colonized, flattened, bulldozed terrain where the fantasy of endless and self-sufficient motility takes place. Since there is no such thing as a self-sufficient living system, all mobilization, all subjectivity that finds itself as a total “being-toward-movement” must draw its energy from some source. The fantasy of the modern kinetic subject is that the spectacle of modernity as movement happens in innocence. The kinetic spectacle of modernity erases from the picture of movement all the ecological catastrophes, personal tragedies, and communal disruptions brought about by the colonial plundering of resources, bodies, and subjectivities that are needed in order to keep modernity’s “most real” reality in place: its kinetic being. Given that all social and political creation today takes place within the frame of colonialism and its current metamorphoses, I foreground postcolonial theory and critical race theory as fundamental partners to critically assess how some contemporary dance and kinetic performance challenges colonialism and its new guises. I explore the colonialist force of modernity and its impact on contemporary choreographic practices in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 when I discuss works by Trisha Brown, La Ribot, William Pope.L and Vera Mantero, and invoke the critical theories of Homi Bhabha, Henri Lefebvre, Frantz Fanon, Paul Carter, Anne Anlin Cheng, José Muñoz, and Avery Gordon.

A final epistemological remark brought by Bhabha’s identification of the colonialist condition as the condition of modernity is that the colonial project not only introduces a spatial blindness (of perceiving all space as an “empty space”) but it introduces as well a fantastical temporality of which the concept “postmodern” participates. My hesitancy throughout the book in using this central term in dance studies derives not only from the inconclusive debate in the late 1980s on the pages of *The Drama Review* between Susan Manning and Sally Banes on what constitutes “postmodern dance,”¹² but also from the profound insight by Bhabha when he writes that “the project of modernity is itself rendered so contradictory and unresolved through the insertion of the ‘time-lag’ in which colonial and postcolonial moments emerge as sign and history, that I am skeptical of those transitions to postmodernity” that “Western academic writing” theorizes (Bhabha 1994: 238). Throughout this book, my use of the word “modernity” is a result of this same skepticism, opened up by postcolonial theory and reinforced by the recent hypervisibility of the same old colonialist and imperialist brutality proficiently deploying bodies and mobilizing death. Bhabha’s insight reframes Habermas’s depiction of modernity as an “incomplete

project” (Habermas 1998) – as long as the colonial condition exists (no matter in what guise) there will be no closure of modernity.

During the time frame that Sloterdijk (in 1989) and Martin (in 1998) were independently attempting to call critical theory’s attention towards the kinetic-political formations of contemporary modernity, some experimental dancers and choreographers in Europe and in the USA were refashioning dance’s relationship to its own politics and its own ethics of movement. Thus, dancers were challenging dance’s own political ontology by the enactments of stillness, by the practice of what Gaston Bachelard calls a “slower ontology” (Bachelard 1994: 215). As it will become clear in all the works discussed in this book, the insertion of stillness in dance, the deployment of different ways of slowing down movement and time, are particularly powerful propositions for other modes of rethinking action and mobility through the performance of still-acts, rather than continuous movement.¹³

The “still-act” is a concept proposed by anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis to describe moments when a subject interrupts historical flow and *practices* historical interrogation. Thus, while the still-act does not entail rigidity or morbidity it requires a performance of suspension, a corporeally based interruption of modes of imposing flow. The still *acts* because it interrogates economics of time, because it reveals the possibility of one’s agency within controlling regimes of capital, subjectivity, labor, and mobility. “Against the flow of the present,” Seremetakis writes,

[T]here is a stillness in the material culture of historicity; those things, spaces, gestures, and tales that signify the perceptual capacity for elemental historical creation. Stillness is the moment when the buried, the discarded, and the forgotten escape to the social surface of awareness like life-supporting oxygen. It is the moment of exit from historical dust.

(1994: 12)

To exit from historical dust is to refuse the sedimentation of history into neat layers. The still-act shows how the dust of history, in modernity, may be agitated in order to blur artificial divisions between the sensorial and the social, the somatic and the mnemonic, the linguistic and corporeal, the mobile and immobile. Historical dust is not simple metaphor. When taken literally, it reveals how historical forces penetrate deep into the inner layers of the body: dust sedimenting the body, operating to rigidify the smooth rotation of joints and articulations, fixing the subject within overly prescribed pathways and steps, fixating movement within a certain politics of time and of place. It is experimental choreography, through the paradoxical still-act, that charts the tensions in the subject, the tensions in subjectivity under the force of history’s dusty sedimentation of the body. Against the brutality of historical dust literally falling onto bodies, the still-act reshapes the subject’s stance regarding movement and the passing of time. As Homi Bhabha remarks, “it is the function of the *lag* to slow down the linear, progressive time of modernity to reveal its ‘gesture,’ its

tempi, ‘the pauses and stresses of the whole performance’” (1994: 253). My first encounter with dance’s kinetic depletion as still-act, as a suspensive response to pressing political events, happened during the fall of 1992, when a series of still-acts were presented by a (very) diverse group of choreographers, musicians, critics, and artists gathered at Cité Universitaire in Paris, for a month-long choreographic laboratory titled SKITE curated by French dance critic and programmer Jean-Marc Adolphe. The insertion of the still-act had all to do with violent performances of colonialism and its racisms. This was the fall after the first Gulf War. The civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was raging. The Los Angeles uprisings had just happened. In SKITE, Portuguese choreographer Vera Mantero and Spanish choreographer Santiago Sempere both stated that the political events in the world were such that they could not dance. North American choreographer Meg Stuart choreographed a still dance for a man lying on the ground, reaching out carefully for his past memories;¹⁴ Australian choreographer Paul Gazzola lay quietly in the night, naked in an improbable shelter, by a highway. I see this moment in SKITE as one where the sedimentary forces of historical dust were unveiled by choreographers through their rearrangements of the very notion of dance: not only of the position of dance in relation to politics, but of the ontological and political role of movement in the formation of those disturbing events. And the choreographic unveiling happened by the means of the still-act. At the time, I felt the pieces had a spontaneous quality – there had been no discussions to create work based on dramaturgies of stillness. But the series of still-acts performed then suggested a sudden crisis of the image of the dancer’s presence (on the stage as well as in the world) as being one always serving movement. The still-act, dance’s exhaustion, opens up the possibility of thinking contemporary experimental dance’s self-critique as an ontological critique, moreover as a critique of dance’s political ontology. The undoing of the unquestioned alignment of dance with movement initiated by the still-act refigures the dancer’s participation in mobility – it initiates a performative critique of his or her participation in the general economy of mobility that informs, supports, and reproduces the ideological formations of late capitalist modernity.

The following chapters can be read in any order but I should outline their major thematic progression. Each chapter addresses a particular element that I believe is crucial for a critique of choreography’s participation in the political ontology of modernity.

In the next chapter, I discuss some nonkinetic elements and forces that are intrinsic to choreography and that have haunted its conditions of possibility at least as powerfully as the desire to move. Those elements and forces are: the dead master’s voice, the relation between choreography and what Jacques Derrida called the “illocutionary or perlocutionary force” at the core of law (Derrida 1990: 929), the solipsistic nature of the dance studio, and the masculine homosocial desire at the core of the choreographic. I identify those forces in a series of films created by visual artist Bruce Nauman in the late 1960s, where he appears alone in his empty studio performing rigorously predefined steps. My

readings of these films account for the hauntological force of the choreographic, a force that disrupts linear time and that erupts whenever certain conditions of subjectification are met. I then analyze two recent pieces by contemporary European choreographers Juan Dominguez and Xavier Le Roy where solipsism and masculinity are deployed in a critique of the choreographic to reimage the male dancer’s body in its relation to language (Juan Dominguez) and in its investment on becomings (Le Roy).

Chapter 3 expands some of the notions explored in Chapter 2 by analyzing several pieces by French choreographer Jérôme Bel in regard to his uses of repetition, stillness, and language. I propose that the linguistic materiality of the body proposed by Bel, when associated with the deflation of movement that also typifies his work, allows for the identification of paronomastic effects that recast choreography’s relation to temporality, while approximating Bel’s work to Derrida’s and Heidegger’s philosophy. I also propose that Bel’s work operates temporally along the lines of what Gaston Bachelard defined as a “slower ontology” – one that distrusts the stability of forms, that refuses the esthetics of geometry, and instead privileges addressing phenomena as fields of forces and as systems of intensities.

My reading of Bel’s work introduces the framework for the critique of representation that I pursue in Chapter 4 when I focus on two recent pieces by two very different choreographers, the North American Trisha Brown and the Spanish La Ribot. Here, I am interested in investigating how each choreographer engages in a direct dialogue with visual arts, in order to refigure what constitutes dance’s ground. Brown’s *It’s a Draw/Live Feed* is read through its critique of verticality as a critique of the masculinist drive in Pollock’s drip paints. I invoke Rosalind Krauss’s readings of Georges Bataille’s notion of formless, and I use Henri Lefebvre’s disclosing of the “erectility” embedded in the architectural formation of “abstract spaces” in order to consider how Brown makes space by confounding normative and disciplinary relations between dancing and drawing. My reading of La Ribot’s long duration performance *Panoramix* introduces a discussion of the oblique as a space of dismorphic challenges to the architectural privileging of the vertical. La Ribot’s work, however, adds the phenomenological question of the weight of the gaze, which supplements Brown’s attachment to the perspectival in her performance of *It’s a Draw/Live Feed*.

Since modern subjectivity proposes a “being-toward-movement” roaming about on colonized and racialized fields, any critique of dance’s political ontology inevitably implicates a critique of how to move on a ground ravaged by racist injuries and colonialist plundering. In Chapter 5, I locate how the stumble is a term mediating politics and kinetics by offering a choreopolitical reading of Frantz Fanon’s “The Fact of Blackness” (1967) in relation to the parachoreographic practices of performance artist William Pope.L. I propose that Pope.L’s crawls reveal their full choreopolitical force once read in relation to what Paul Carter called “a politics of the ground” (Carter 1996). And I advance that such a politics of the ground refigures Fanon’s critique of ontology in “The Fact of Blackness”. I propose the effort on the sagittal plane as performed by

Pope.L as a slowing down of the kinetic that answers directly and interpellates profoundly the neocolonial surrounding and traversing us.

Attending to the ways colonialism and choreography, as facets of the modern kinetic being-toward-movement, are predicated on a politics of the ground reveals those movements initiated by “improperly buried bodies of history” – those bodies Avery Gordon sees as haunting epistemology, as powerful ethical and critical forces (Gordon 1997). In Chapter 6, I read Vera Mantero’s solo *uma misteriosa Coisa disse e.e. cummings* in order to rethink postcolonial melancholia. I pay particular attention to the ethics of remembering and of forgetting as it relates to recent critical race studies (particularly with José Muñoz) and to the ontological project of choreography. By focusing on the particularities of a solo piece created in the last European openly Imperial nation, Portugal, I attempt to show the centrality of the racialized Other as energetic source for choreographic mobility in general. The book ends with a short concluding note, where I address the “project of melancholia” in modernity (Agamben 1993) in order to map the impact of such a project in recent ontological framings of choreography by dance and performance studies, and where I propose an alternative modality of time and a different kind of affect for those two disciplines.

2 Masculinity, solipsism, choreography

Bruce Nauman, Juan Dominguez,
Xavier Le Roy

If we wish to understand and describe correctly this performance, and its temporality in particular, we need to put aside altogether the terminology of causation, memory and expectation, and representation.

(Carr 1986: 36)

The site of dance circulates through Time, it haunts both the real and the imaginary.

(Louppe 1994: 13)

To be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects.

(Gordon 1997: 190)

Haunting the temporally circulatory site of dance, defying logics of causation and representation, there moves a particular subjectivity, ontohistorically foundational to Western choreography: the solitary male dancer. This chapter crisscrosses dance’s historical time to examine contemporary echoes of the coming into being of Western choreography – in Thoinot Arbeau’s dance manual *Orchesographie* (1589) – as an early modern subjectivity-machine in which masculine solipsism is an essential element. Thus, the pieces analyzed in this chapter all feature men moving alone in explicitly enclosed and empty spaces – empty chambers, empty studios, empty rooms, somber voids where haunted solitude, concentration of will, and precision in execution all fuse to create what can only be described as a solipsistic excess. Such is the case with Bruce Nauman’s parachoreographic experiments of the late 1960s, particularly *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–8),¹ *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–8),² and the beautifully silly antigravitational exercise *Revolving Upside Down* (1969).³ Such is the case with Juan Dominguez’s overwhelmingly self-centered textual *AGSAMA* (2003), or with Xavier Le Roy’s playful *Self Unfinished* (1999). My readings of these works make a case for how choreography’s ontological, social, and historical effects haunt (and are haunted by) solipsistic masculinity.

Solipsism in choreography reflects its dubious status in philosophy. I will discuss solipsism’s philosophical ambiguity by focusing particularly on Ludwig Wittgenstein’s brief comments on solipsism in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (propositions 5.6 to 5.6331, Wittgenstein 1961), when the Austrian philosopher finds solipsism at the core of the metaphysical subject’s relation to experience, thus surprisingly opening solipsism up to the world. Wittgenstein’s propositions in the *Tractatus* allow us to think that it is precisely at the critical point where

Notes

1 Introduction: the political ontology of movement

- 1 I discuss Jérôme Bel's work in detail in Chapter 3.
- 2 One of the other reasons for the superiority of the puppet is its lack of inner psychological life, which prevents it to displace the "natural centers of gravity" to other parts of the body, thus guaranteeing full expression of graceful moves. Kleist's text is the subject of numerous readings and critical analysis. The most influential is undoubtedly Paul de Man's in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1984). Briefly, de Man understands Kleist's text as a parable on the act of reading, where reading is cast as an unfinishable test to a reader who will always miss the marks of writing. Without precluding such a reading, I would argue that "On the Puppet Theatre" demands an expansion of its interpretation as being only a commentary on reading due to the three ontokinetic-theological arguments it proposes between human movement, animal movement, and puppet movement in their relations to expressivity, truth, God, and being. It should also be mentioned that Kleist's evocation of "elves" in the passage quoted is historically telling, and that his description of dancing puppets resisting gravity could very well fit the performances staged by Charles Didelot's "flying techniques" – theatrical machines that could create, at the end of the eighteenth century, the illusion of flight on stage.
- 3 For Derrida, the entire history of Western metaphysics (which he identified with the "history of the West") revolved around a fixed center: that of "Being as presence in all senses of the word" (Derrida 1978: 279). For Derrida, it is only with Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger that presence as Truth, presence as Subject, and presence as Being, respectively, are fundamentally decentered (1978: 279).
- 4 Derrida remains a philosopher of the body in the sense he radically reframes the question of language as the question of a grammatology, as he carefully attends to the practice of writing and to the haunting effects of writing. The fact that the body, for Derrida, is already linguistic, already within a writing machine, in the sense Kafka understands the body, does not mean it is less corporeal. See also Derrida's concern with actual performances and with the centrality of performatives in some of his most cherished themes: the force of law, giving, ethics, dying, listening to the other, theology.
- 5 Thoinot Arbeau coins "*orchésographie*" – a writing ("*graphie*") of the dance ("*orchésis*") in 1589. The synonym currently used, "choreography," was introduced in 1700 by Raoul-Auger Feuillet in his eponymous classic treatise. Interestingly, in 1706 John Weaver published *An Exact and Just Translation from the French of Monsieur Feuillet* where he translates Feuillet's original title *Chorégraphie* as "orchésographie" thus indicating the currency of the older version in the eighteenth century. In either configuration of the word, the fusing of dance with writing names a practice whose programmatic, technical, discursive, economic, ideological, and symbolic forces remain active today.

- 6 "The distinctive feature of modern embodiment lies in the process of individuation, in the identification of the body with the person as a unique individual and, therefore, as the bearer of values and legally enforceable rights" (Ferguson 2000: 38).
- 7 Jameson pushes his argument a bit when he identifies in Deleuze "a quintessential modernist" (2002: 4).

8

It is a fantasy which accords certain attributes to the subject, and dispossesses the other of them as and by the process that makes the other into an object, a surrounds (as Heidegger might say), an absent background against which it is present. It is a fantasy that relies on a divorce between mental design and bodily action to sustain its omnipotent denial. In this fantasy, the subject must also deny its history, in so far as that history reveals its dependence on a maternal origin.
(Brennan 2000: 36)

- 9 "Much contemporary dance criticism and scholarship is still inflected with the assumptions [...] that looking at dance politically might somehow interfere with its efficacy" (Martin 1998: 14).
- 10 "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change it*" (Marx and Engels 1969: 15).
- 11 Throughout this book, all quotes from Sloterdijk's different works are my translations from the French editions.
- 12 See Banes 1989, Manning 1988. See also Siegel 1992.
- 13 I discuss Bachelard's "slower ontology" in Chapter 3.
- 14 The man in question is French critic and programmer Jean-Marc Adolphe.

2 Masculinity, solipsism, choreography: Bruce Nauman, Juan Dominguez, Xavier Le Roy

- 1 Film, 16 mm, black and white, silent, 400 feet, approximately 10 minutes.
- 2 Film, 16 mm, black and white, sound, 400 feet, approximately 10 minutes.
- 3 Videotape, black and white, silent, 8 minutes.
- 4 I thank Ramsay Burt for directing me to this interview.
- 5 Members of the Judson Dance Theater and artists that were close to Judson and who took Halprin's workshop in San Francisco included Yvonne Rainer, Ruth Emerson, Simone Forti, Robert Morris, Trisha Brown, and La Monte Young. Later, Meredith Monk also took classes with Halprin (see Banes 1993: 141–2; Banes 1995: *passim*). Janice Ross writes: "For Halprin it was modern dance establishments and all its rules of representation, theatricality, and illusion" that she wanted to escape (in Banes and Baryshnikov 2003: 29). Halprin's refusal of theatricality and stifling rules of representation anticipates Rainer's later alignment with minimalism and explicit refusal of illusion and representation as famously stated in her "NO Manifesto."
- 6 My thanks to Jenn Joy for her diligent research on this matter.
- 7 In 1969, Nauman performed a trio version of his studio film *Bouncing in the Corner, No. 1* (1968) with Meredith Monk and with his wife at the time, Judy Nauman, at the *Anti-Illusions: Procedures/Materials* (1969) exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
- 8 The dating of Nauman's films and tapes is sometimes contradictory and varies somewhat depending on the sources consulted. I am following Nauman's "Videography" listed in Robert C. Morgan's *Bruce Nauman* (Morgan 2002).
- 9 For a critique of the notion of movement as "language" in dance see José Gil's notion of "infra-language" in *Metamorphoses of the Body* (Gil 1998).
- 10 Mark Franko notes that although as early as the sixteenth century "the dance is often called a language, the effects of steps and movements in the communication of a