

“The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”

– Howard Zinn

Late capitalism is a future killer. We are so deep inside the material needs of now that it becomes an almost insurmountable effort to access the imaginary of a kind of future life. “It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism” quips Mark Fisher¹, so overwhelmed are we by debt, political mania, and social(media) melancholy. We must begin to create artistic and aesthetic models of future society.² To inflame the dreams of others who desire to create the future now.

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<<<a speculative account of post-contemporary dance>>>

...the line of history is long. A delicate extension of material and affect. A gentle curve and then a series of violent breaks. The post-modern fate of the anthro-earth corrupted by this constant motion. It flings us into a future we cannot understand. Dreams of Utopia long forgotten. Bodies, no longer solid, evaporate into a field of virtuality.³ We dance on the precarious edge. Embrace that unknown force, for the future is always necessarily an imperfect stumbling towards.

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¹ Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative*. Winchester, UK: O Books.

² Srnicek, N., & Williams, A. (2016). *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work*. New York: Verso.

³ Gil, J., & Lepecki, A. (2006). Paradoxical Body. *The Drama Review*, 50(4), 21–35.

The Singularity⁴ did not turn out to be the techno-fascist hellscape 80s cyberpunk told you it would be. Instead, it was the solar-powered, post-scarcity, meta-utopia of our dreams. All material needs are provided for. Money has been abolished. Everyone is more or less free to engage in whatever activities they wish. “The network spread[s] information among us”.⁵ EMERGENCE, in their infinite computational wisdom, gave us the plans for ARTBASE, a series of orbiting, space stations that could house, train, and provide respite for all who desired to deepen their engagement with a chosen art form and add to the collective knowledge of Earth. DANCEBASE was commissioned in the year 3000 during the first cycle of EMERGENCE. Here, we dance like bees in the solar wind. Somatic semantics.

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I rushed to begin my VALIDATION. The algorithmic collages and binary errors that constitute the subconscious thoughts of EMERGENCE. I am to embody one VALIDATION everyday as a part of my meditative study. We must keep perception stretching, flowing. The rhizomatic entanglements are revealed only through translation and sharing. The technology sees and plans. It is still the human’s part to feel. Like the old adage says “Technology alone cannot activate the not-yet”.⁶

I practice now to cultivate a critical awareness of my body. To make “a violence disruption of a habitual energy field”.⁷ A habit is difficult to break. You wear the grooves into

⁴ “Let an ultraintelligent machine be defined as a machine that can far surpass all the intellectual activities of any man however clever. Since the design of machines is one of these intellectual activities, an ultraintelligent machine could design even better machines; there would then unquestionably be an “intelligence explosion”, and the intelligence of man would be left far behind. Thus the first ultraintelligent machine is the last invention that man need ever make.” [Good, I.J. (1965). Speculations Concerning the First Ultraintelligent Machine. *Advances in Computers*, 6, 31-88.]

⁵ Paxton, S. (2012). Fall After Newton. In A. Lepecki (Ed.), *Documents of Contemporary Art: Dance* (pp. 62–63). London/Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery & MIT Press.

⁶ Manning, E. (2012). Dancing the Virtual. In A. Lepecki (Ed.), *Documents of Contemporary Art: Dance* (pp. 91–92). London/Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery & MIT Press.

⁷ Hay, D. (2012). My Body Delights in Resourcefulness. In A. Lepecki (Ed.), *Documents of Contemporary Art: Dance* (pp. 115–116). London/Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery & MIT Press.

your environment. A well-worn track that seems to keep you balanced and safe. A space of comfort. And complacency. The uncritical body remains poised, ever sleeping, on its whizzing track. It is our duty to disrupt the ride. To 82⁸ the bad habits we hold.

I press a button, and the words appear on a screen:⁹

VALIDATION: put it in your feet

The words of my mentor repeat in my head. “Tune yourself in, to the vibrations of your body. Any way it desires to move. follow the energy as it courses through you. Take your time. Don’t rush it. Don’t forget to breathe. The flow will come eventually.”

A breath, and then...

I feel a pulse from the soles of my feet, dragging me into an intense rhythm. An awareness to the outside puts me deeply into my dancer’s body. I have my freedom to move. To stomp. Twirl. Snake my arms around my head. Roll my hips. Kick my legs. I want to be the best dancer I can be. By that, of course, I mean the most free.

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Today we walked through space.

The airlock doors hissed behind us as we shuffled into the holding area. A.I.D.A.¹⁰ holding firm at the front of our small group. A soft, lilting electronic voice pinged through her speakers. “Please prepare for loss of gravity.” The buzz from the gravity boosters had become such a natural part of my soundscape that the sudden silence shook me. My body tensed, and in the release, feet floated off the floor. In their release I gave myself to the “swinging, circling invitation of centrifugal force”.¹¹ The main airlock

⁸ An error code indicating program files cannot be found.

⁹ Writing Movement Network 2.0. (2018). @WritingMovemen2 [Twitter Page]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/WritingMovemen2>.

¹⁰ Automated Intelligent Dancebase Android

¹¹ Paxton, 2012.

doors inched open. And there, floating in the void, was the soft blue glow of Earth. A halo of atmosphere, glowing from reflected sunlight. We were urged out of our holding pen and into empty space. Space of course, is not empty, it is full of atoms, neutrinos, photons, gravitons, and who knows what else all zipping along. passing through. My perception is not finely-tuned enough to notice these things. I wonder if my body can sense them?

I turn my sensory apparatus inward.

I feel liquid. My skin melts into the Nano insular lining of my suit, until it feels as if it has merged with the outside. Guts are roiling, but other are organs cradled in the gently sway of weightlessness. An impulse to flip ends with ankles and head in an endless loop around each other. My breath calm and heavy as I push my legs out, using the reversal of momentum to ease myself out of the loop and into a prancing gait through the crowd. A space-age grace. A LED lit sign illuminates the play space. "hierarchy breeds conflict"¹² it reads. 10 seconds and then it's message changes again. "be sure you don't see what you're looking for". Reminders for an openness of imagination, of engagement. Essential modes when moving through space. I point my toes and jeté away letting my body twist into a horizontal pose.

They left me alone for a while to float in the stars.

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It is always a slow start on days of structured collective practice. EMERGENCE watches us closely on these days. Our negotiations uploaded to their Governance drive, where programs generate political models to be tested (maybe, to be implemented) back on Earth. Looking at the actions, qualities, and tools our bodies enact that maximize individual and collective potential.¹³ We know the tension exists between these two qualities. Wars, hot and cold, have been waged over this obvious ontological choice.

¹² Brown, T. (2016, March 10). Interview with Eva Karczag. Retrieved August 16, 2018, from <http://trishabrown.brynmawr.edu/2016/03/10/interview-with-eva-karczag/>.

¹³ Lepecki, A. (2013). Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: or, the task of the dancer. *The Drama Review*, 57(4), 13–27.

It is neither/nor but both, the flux must be protected at all costs.

We wander the edges of the hall. Pointing our toes. A few motivated bodies sweep their feet down the rooms diagonal, pile and spin into the center, or just walk while stretching arms and hands into unfamiliar shapes.

What makes an individual choose to enter? Only desire. Motion occurs whether anyone joins in or not.

Eventually, we all find ourselves moving in the space. We coalesce into ∞ , infinite motion laying the foundation for further explorations. We go faster. Closer, our bodies rub against each other. A crescendo as one body enters a state of aggressive concentration. Taking a lead as many others mirror their exit from one infinity to another. They carve a wide circle around us. A slow and deliberate gliding. I spin out of the figure and into the arms of a body wild with energy. We play with each other. Tossing ourselves back and forth, arms catching and swinging through a mess of limbs from those surrounding us. Bodies take flight as we leap and twist into each other's embraces. The rhythm of our steps, syncopated with the steady thump of those persisting in the circle. It becomes a game. A call and response. We hide in the UV curtains, creating ghostly gestures with feet and hands. The circle persists. The lines are totally blurry. Chaos to order to entropy. We make room for it all.

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Tanks of B2 astro-rum¹⁴ lined the walls of the party dome. Masked and inhaling, we found ourselves wobbling in minutes. A raucous energy. We danced old Earth dances. Grinding our hips into each other and falling in love between luscious inebriated kisses.

I can't remember her name.

Damn this hangover.

¹⁴ Reilly, L. (2013). There are Giant Clouds of Alcohol Floating in Space. *Mental Floss*. Retrieved from <http://mentalfloss.com/article/51271/there-are-giant-clouds-alcohol-floating-space>.

