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Choreographing American Citizenship
in the Age of the Improvised Explosive Device

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Culture and Performance

by

Sara McDonald Wolf

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Choreographing American Citizenship
in the Age of the Improvised Explosive Device

by

Sara McDonald Wolf

Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Susan Leigh Foster, Chair

This dissertation investigates contemporary citizenship through an investigation of intermedia choreography and performance during the first decade of the twenty-first century. I theorize the present era as the age of the improvised explosive device (IED) to argue that citizenship has been fundamentally redefined within instable, unpredictable political and social conditions best encapsulated by the signification of the IED. The IED represents one of two twenty-first century phenomena affecting how citizenship is conceptualized, practiced and experienced in which I situate my investigation. The second is the rapid rise of the U.S. surveillance assemblage as part of the post-September 11 U.S. security state, which has similarly transformed the constitutional rights, liberties and protections of citizens around the world as well as the meaning of human presence and embodiment.

Though the dissertation is interdisciplinary in nature, pulling from scholarship across the humanities, it is directly in conversation with citizenship and critical dance studies. Recent theorizations in each highlight such characteristics as embodiment, agency, relationality and collectivity. Close choreographic analysis is the primary methodology; choreography is also a rubric for conceptualizing citizenship as a physically enacted, dynamic relationship between the individual citizen subject, the body politic and the nation-state.

Over the course of the dissertation I theorize seven different models of citizenship. I begin by delineating a new normal habitus of citizenship in the twenty-first century, then propose citizenship as dissonant through an analysis of dances by HIJACK and the William Forsythe Company. Central chapters address citizenship as it references the singular political actor and “the people” of American democracy. I first analyze dances by twentieth-century choreographers Isadora Duncan and Yvonne Rainer, which, I argue, choreograph citizenship, respectively, as incorporative and intersectional. These models provide a foundation for comparing the radical changes discussed in ensuing chapters on British South Asian live artist Rajni Shah, French Algerian choreographer Rachid Ouramdane and African American conceptual artist damali ayo [*sic*]. I argue that work by these artists proposes citizenship as contaminative, projective and improvisational. The final chapter asks what kind of political association and agency might be imagined by theorizing the political potential of conviviality in relation to participatory projects by Shah and Headlong Dance Theater.

The dissertation of Sara Wolf is approved.

Sue-Ellen Case

David Gere

Victoria Marks

Susan Leigh Foster, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

For Laurel,
who makes everything possible

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VITA

Education

- 2004 M.A. in Dance, University of California, Los Angeles
- 1988 B.A. in Theater Arts, University of California, Santa Cruz

Fellowships and Awards

- 2007-12 Research and Travel Grants
Dept. of World Arts & Cultures/Dance, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2007 Travel Grant
Center for the Study of Women, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2005-11 Jacob K. Javitz Graduate Fellowship
U.S. Department of Education
- 2005 Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship
Graduate Division, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2005 Affiliates Award
School of Arts & Architecture, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2004-12 Graduate Research Assistant
Dept. of World Arts & Cultures/Dance, University of California, Los Angeles

Select Publications and Presentations

- 2014 “Flagging the Body, Dancing the Nation: Isadora Duncan and Yvonne Rainer’s Bodies Politic,” forthcoming chapter in *Dance in American Culture*
- 2012 “National Drag: Desire and Exposure in Rajni Shah’s *Dinner With America*”
Performance as/is Civic Engagement, Association for Theatre in Higher Education conference, Washington D.C.

- 2012 “In the Home and on the Street: the Convivial Citizenship of Headlong Dance Theater and Rajni Shah,” *Dance and the Social City*, Society of Dance History Scholars conference, Philadelphia.
- 2010 “At Home in the World? Mobilizing Inbetweenness in *Choreographing Identities*,” *Theater Research International* 35.2: 172-77.
- 2008 Book review: *A Field Guide for Female Interrogators* by Coco Fusco *e-misférica* 5.2.
- 2007 “Renegade Gender: Theorizing the Female Body in Extreme Motion,” Proceedings from *Rethinking Theory and Practice, 30th Annual Society of Dance History Scholars and Congress on Research in Dance Conference*, Centre National de la Danse, Paris, 2007: 54-58.
- 2006 “Reproducing Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Technological Imaginary of Osseus Labyrinth’s *Modern Prometheus LLC*,” *Extensions: The Online Journal for Embodiment and Technology*, vol. 2.
- 2004 Book review: *Writing in the Dark, Dancing in the New Yorker* by Arlene Croce; *Critical Gestures: Writing About Dance and Culture* by Ann Daly *Dance Research Journal* 36.2: 171-174.

Teaching Experience

- 2008-12 Teaching Fellow
Dept. of World Arts & Cultures/Dance, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2011 Instructor
Art as Civic Action: Performing Citizenship in the Twenty-first Century
Dept. of World Arts & Culture/Dance, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2008 Instructor, *Dance Literacy*
Dept. of World Arts & Cultures/Dance, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2005-07 Teaching Associate
Dept. of World Arts & Cultures/Dance, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2005 Instructor, *Everybody is a Critic: Writing About the Arts in the Real World*
Dept. of World Arts & Cultures/Dance, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2004 Instructor, *Dance History (1700s-Present)*
Chapman University, Orange, California

Introduction: Citizen Choreographers, Choreographing Citizenship

The seeds of this dissertation project began to germinate in 2006, when I noticed a distinct shift in the manner in which dance and performance artists were conceiving of their work, and themselves, in relation to the political exigencies of the moment. In conversation with choreographers and performance artists in my role as a dance critic for the major daily newspaper in my city as well as through my duties as a teaching associate in my department, I found that, frequently, the question driving artists was what it meant to be an American citizen in this particular historical moment. At the 2006 London premiere of the overtly anti-war dance *Three Atmospheric Studies*, choreographer William Forsythe explained his impetus for creating it to *The Guardian* by stating, “I’m a citizen, and I have the opportunity to speak in public and many people don’t.... I feel obligated to use [dance] to make a comment.”¹ A year later, prior to the dance’s United States premiere, Forsythe reiterated this sentiment by telling *The New York Times* that choreographing the piece was “an act of citizenship.”² Forsythe is a U.S. citizen; he was born and raised in America, but he has been working in Germany for more than twenty-five years. He is renowned for his work with Ballett Frankfurt and his bold renovation of ballet technique, not for choreographing political work such as *Three Atmospheric Studies*. So why did Forsythe use the language of citizenship rather than politics to explain the piece?

In 2006 as well, choreographer Bill T. Jones stated in a speech that what has and continues to compel him to choreograph is his desire “to hold up my end of the social contract—to be an effective citizen.”³ Jones has long been a public voice for the arts, a

role that became inevitable when dance critic Arlene Croce attacked his work in the pages of *The New Yorker* magazine in 1994. Much of his prior work, however, has either been highly formalist or addressed race and sexuality, issues pertaining to his identity. In the fall of 2006, Jones premiered *Blind Date*, a major evening-length work that questioned the blurring distinction between the soldier and the civilian, unexamined patriotism and the role of the arts in the production of the latter. The title of the piece, Jones has said, refers to the sense that the American people were on a blind date with a destiny in the hands of a presidential administration bent on using U.S. military power to assert the nation's dominance as a global power, no matter what the human or political cost. The dance is anchored by three narrative solos performed by company dancers from Turkey, Taiwan and the U.S. that detail the entanglement of art, militarism and nation building in developing young citizens. Love of country, along with desire *for* a home nation (as Taiwanese dancer Wen-Chung Lin expressed) and the measure of duty owed to one, inflected the recorded autobiographical narration that accompanied each solo, reminding the audience that a citizen is made, not born.⁴

A year later, yet another example of what seemed to be a growing trend could be found in a program note for *Not About Iraq* (2007).⁵ In it, choreographer Victoria Marks shared that the dance was evidence of her struggle to understand her role as a citizen and an artist as much as it was the product of her inquiry into how dance could speak to the contemporary moment. For Marks, this moment was one in which the American people continued with their everyday lives in a state of willful denial of the wars the U.S. was waging in Afghanistan and Iraq in their name.⁶ For each of these artists, identifying as an

American citizen was an important distinction to make in public, to reporters and in speeches or concert programs.

Around the same time, I also noticed choreography and performance events distinctly marked by an inability to articulate a response to the political present. The video project *THRASH: Responses to the Bush Administration* (2005-07) provides one example. Included in a concert by Headlong Dance Theater (HDT) suggestively titled *Mix Tape for a Bad Year*, *THRASH* comprises a series of clips showing dancers and average people, young and old, moving around an empty dance studio alone. Sometimes the person wildly gesticulates at the camera, as if trying to make the viewer understand their gestures, in other instances—as the title of the final cut indicates—rolling, falling, throwing themselves against a wall or uncontrollably shaking.

According to HDT co-founder and co-director Andrew Simonet, *THRASH* began as a studio exercise with the troupe in which each dancer improvised alone with the camera for four minutes after listening to a recording of a speech by then-President George H. W. Bush.⁷ HDT opened the project to the public after a showing of initial footage in Philadelphia (where the company is based), generated the interest of the audience. Sensing a larger need, HDT posted flyers on bulletin boards around the city. Admittedly, the resulting video is an edited document. Nevertheless, the project demonstrates that not only artists, but also the public at large wanted to express what they felt they could not articulate otherwise. Simonet has stated, “There is, I have come to believe, a seething ball of rage and alienation inside many people who are disgusted with the Bush agenda and by the broader culture [*sic*] consensus that surrounds it.”⁸

Contrary to Forsythe, Jones and Marks, neither Simonet nor HDT discuss *THRASH* in the language of citizenship. Yet the project shares certain features with the mid-2000 work of these choreographers. Like the dances cited above, the project inculcates the individual subject in the actions and policies of the federal government made on behalf of and in the name of the U.S. people during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Moreover, like Marks' *Not About Iraq*, *THRASH* responds to the tenor of the times, what can be called the social atmosphere of the historical moment. Whereas the former foregrounds a sustaining yet debilitating state of denial, however, the latter indicates that a sense of alienation and repressed anger were also prevalent among the American body politic. In 2005 *New York Times* theater critic Ben Brantley articulated the widespread disillusionment with foreign and domestic policies that had created such an affective: "For many Americans, the course of current events, at home and abroad, has engendered an attitude that has progressed beyond cynicism into a wondering disgust and on into a blazing anger in search of an outlet. Unleashed anger has been known to turn simply being mad into madness."⁹

As is clear from the examples I have provided, by mid-decade denial, alienation and disillusionment began to resolve into action as artists registered their dissent in openly political work. They did so by identifying as citizens of the U.S. nation-state and, as I argue in this text, by interrogating the political and social construction of the individual subject as a national citizen. To claim the status of citizen is a double gesture of positioning one's subjectivity both inside and outside the nation-state. It establishes an artists' right of critique within a language of political legitimation. As political science

scholar Linda Bosniak writes: “To characterize practices or institutions or experiences in the language of citizenship is to afford them substantial political recognition and social value.”¹⁰ Yet to make such a claim also implicates an individual in the decisions and actions of the nation-state. Whether by questioning a citizen’s responsibility to the common good of the nation, such as Jones does in *Blind Date*, or attending to the affective fallout of decisions made on behalf of a citizenry, as Forsythe, Marks and Simonet do, these choreographers ask pressing questions about the political conditions of possibility and constraint for the citizen subject in the contemporary moment. Viewed together, they evidence an artistic zeitgeist that demanded further consideration.

The question that Simonet sought to answer when he brought recordings of Bush speeches to the studio that first day was: what could the body contribute to a discussion of the political moment? This question has driven the artists I examine in this dissertation and that I have asked in my analyses of their work. Another question that has driven my research is: what phenomena during the first decade of the twenty-first century motivated artists to interrogate the relationship between citizens, citizenry and nation-state? To answer this question, I focus on two fundamental features of this decade: the advent of new forms, agents, spaces and technologies of war and the rapid rise of the U.S. surveillance assemblage, a key feature of the post-September 11 security state. Each of these has substantially transformed the constitutional rights, liberties and protections of American citizens as well as their enactment of citizenship in the everyday lived experience of the social. Moreover, new forms of war and the U.S. surveillance assemblage have altered the meaning of human presence and embodiment even as they

demonstrate the centrality of the material body to the construction of the political and social subject.

As a scholar of dance and performance, I am interested in the citizen as an embodied subject as well as the nominative political and social subject of the nation-state. Thus, the previous question can be restated as: what phenomena affected the status of the body during the first decade of the twenty-first century? In the chapters that follow, I formulate an answer by conducting close choreographic readings of an archive comprising a range of performance modalities, including staged concert dance productions, performance installation, guerrilla street action and participatory interventions in public space. Many of the artists whose work I discuss identify as choreographers, while others self-identify as practitioners of performance/live art or as conceptual artists. Some enjoy independent solo careers while others helm regional troupes or elite, internationally touring dance companies. Most are American though I examine performances by British South Asian live artist Rajni Shah and French Algerian choreographer Rachid Ouramdane that emphasize the global effects of the U.S. surveillance assemblage. The work, even that defined as dance, frequently falls into the interstices of disciplinary fields, employing multiple forms of media in a single work or as part of an eclectic practice. Some of the artists I discuss enjoy independent solo careers while others have regional troupes or elite, internationally touring dance companies. Common to all of the artists about whom I write are the significance of bodies and/or movement and their focus on the shifting conditions of citizenship during the first decade of the twenty-first century (the approximate parameters of the dissertation.)

Though I find citizenship to be an important analytic by which to investigate the formation of the contemporary social and political subject given the substantive renovation it has undergone over the past decade, I also recognize that it is a highly problematic concept. In the following section I address this with a review of recent theorizations that have expanded traditional definitions. I next outline the theoretical foundation of the dissertation by examining its key terms of corporeality and choreography. I conclude by outlining the structure of the dissertation.

Reconceptualizing Citizenship

The citizen is traditionally conceived as the abstract subject of democratic egalitarianism and an ontopolitical subjectivity constituted by law. At its most basic, to borrow Hannah Arendt's concise, elegant definition, citizenship is the right to have rights.¹¹ In the present global interstate system, basic rights, liberties and protections are awarded through membership in the political structure of the spatially bounded sovereign nation-state.¹² As such, citizenship indicates a formal, juridico-legal status that endows political enfranchisement with all its attendant rights and responsibilities. In this regard citizenship entails a relationship between individuals and the state according to the rule of law, in which individuals recognize the right of the state to rule and are imbricated into a set of laws. Yet citizenship also constructs the political and social subject through psychic identification with the nation-state, or more accurately, through emotional attachment to a concept of nation that interpellates the individual as a subject of the state. Citizenship thus inspires a constellation of affects (pride, shame, love) and effects, such as a sense of

solidarity, belonging and identity. For the subject, citizenship is more than a legal status; it is a way of operating through which not only political, but also social agency and belonging are recognized and enacted.

As Bosniak writes, citizenship refers to a “set of institutions, practices and identities in the world.”¹³ Historically, citizenship has been used to claim a position of social privilege; its institutions, practices and identities benefitting a select group of individuals. In the U.S. this group comprised white, propertied, middle class men. Within its traditional fields of study, political science and sociology, conventional liberal-communitarian debates citizenship emphasize either the individual rights of the citizen of western liberal democracy or a republican focus on the duties and responsibilities of the citizen to the common political life of the nation. Over the past twenty years, however, scholarly interest in citizenship has exploded. The concept has been assessed, interrogated and reconfigured in American, transnational, cultural and literary studies and by postcolonial, feminist, queer and performance theorists. At issue is whether the historical exclusivity of citizenship is immanent to the concept.

In the introduction to a special issue on citizenship in *Cultural Studies* published in 2000, editors Cindy Patton and Robert L. Caserio explained the need to surpass traditional ideas about citizenship and its practice due to an impasse based on an “inevitable exclusiveness” that delineates according to axes of identity formations based on class, gender, race and sexuality. Summarizing the deleterious consequences of this division, they continue, “The opposition between citizen and non-citizen, in an ever-ramifying process, confirms or produces invidious distinctions between propertied and

non-propertied classes, between employed and unemployed persons, between genders, between ethnicities, and between nationalities.”¹⁴ Patton and Caserio’s assessment underlines the diverse ways that an individual’s legal status structures the social.

One result of scholarly attention to the concept of citizenship across disciplines has been a proliferation of theories that articulate new ways of being, becoming or operating as a citizen. Whereas the citizen has been traditionally linked to the nation-state, the subject position more recently has been posited in relation to supranational and subnational structures. The citizen is no longer the universal subject of western thought but is marked by alignments to particular identity formations, constituencies, communities of interest or ethical obligations. Citizenship can be trans- post- or denational; diasporic, global or post-colonial; dual, partial or informal; participatory, inclusive or agonistic; cultural, neoliberal, flexible, sexual, ecological, aboriginal or cosmopolitan; Internet, consumption or market based. Another is the establishment of citizenship studies as an interdisciplinary field, employing a range of research methods.¹⁵

Among the most productive advancements in critical studies of citizenship over the last two decades has been to acknowledge that citizenship consists of more than an individual’s legal or *formal* status; it is produced by the manifold, *substantive* ways in which citizenship is lived, enacted and practiced. This emphasis on the lived experience of citizenship has been investigated in relation to the spaces and places in which it is practiced, how these practices are passed on and how they shape social structures and interaction.

Citizenship theorist Engin F. Isin uses the phrase “the normative habitus of citizenship” to differentiate substantive from formal citizenship. The concept of the habitus, as theorized by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is the structured and structuring dispositions, expectations and values that “generate and organize practices and representations.”¹⁶ For Bourdieu, the habitus is durable, in that dispositions develop over an agent’s lifetime to become second nature, and transposable, in that they can engender practices in multiple contexts. Isin invokes Bourdieu’s term in order to encompass the banal habits, cultural rituals and informal ways in which citizenship is conceived, practiced, taught and passed on that constitute its lived experience. In other words, the protocols, pedagogies and conduct that contribute to a citizen subject’s understanding of themselves as a rights bearing member of a national polity.

More recently, Isin has theorized citizenship as produced by acts rather than experiences or practices. Acts, as Isin and Greg M. Nielsen write in their introduction to the volume *Acts of Citizenship*, can be individual or collective, everyday as well as creative, ethical, cultural, sexual or social. What distinguishes an act of citizenship is its capacity to disrupt socio-historical patterns in order to constitute political subjects. Isin positions acts against practices structured by repetition and what he views as the passive reception of ways of living and practicing citizenship. Instead, acts creatively intervene in situations marked by “the failure of our habits and recognition to act as usual.” Spontaneous or planned, acts mediate conditions of politicality to performatively constitute citizenship through unprecedented moments of rupture that “create a sense of the possible and of a citizenship yet to come.”¹⁷ Acts, then, imagine new forms of

citizenship than what exists in the present even as they respond to and manifest in the present. In this regard, Isin and Nielsen's proposal shares with dance and performance creative capacities.

The kind of citizenship the authors theorize is produced through a convergence of the political, the aesthetic or creative and the ethical. Isin and Nielsen reformulate the *quid pro quo* relationship between the state and the citizen by reducing it to the basic principle of affiliation based on mutual obligation and responsibility. Acts of citizenship reimagine this model of affiliation through two-way answerability. In "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship," Isin explains his proposal in greater detail by explicating a distinction between acts and actions. Acts comprise a class of deeds, whereas action refers to specific, temporally and spatially situated behavior. By focusing on acts, Isin is interested in theorizing, "an assemblage of acts, actions and actors in a historically and geographically concrete situation, creating a scene or state of affairs."¹⁸

To build his argument for two-way answerability, Isin turns to early twentieth-century phenomenologist Adolf Reinach's theory of social acts. Reinach theorized the act as prior to actor and action and thus accorded it ontological status. He defined the social act as an expression of the need to be heard. Investigating linguistic speech such as willing, promising, commanding, Reinach formulated the act according to two essential components: "the turning to another subject and the need of being heard."¹⁹ Reinach's theory of a social act is thus dialogic; it compels a response through the form of address. Isin's use of Reinach's conceptualization of social acts clarifies acts as a class of phenomena that manifests in actions and performances but also in virtual or linguistic

acts, such as the act of forgiveness. Considering citizenship according to acts focuses on a range of interaction between individuals, groups and social structure that elucidates the need for change while also imagining new forms and definitions of citizenship.

Choreographing Citizenship

Akin to recent theorizations of citizenship as constituted through practices, lived experience or acts, I theorize citizenship in the dissertation as more than an indication of legal status or political membership in a territorially bounded sovereign state. Isin's concept of a normative habitus of citizenship and his emphasis on the performativity of citizenship, as that which is produced by a political actor through acts that simultaneously produce the actor, have been important to the development of this text. My research also has been influenced by the work of critical dance scholars who theorize an embodied subject within the structural contexts and conditions of its historical moment.

Corporeality, as it has been theorized in dance studies, foregrounds the relation of bodies in motion to the use to which bodies have been discursively put. Choreography, as a mode of organizing embodied ways of operating individually and with other bodies, provides a particularly appropriate analytic to conceptualize citizenship according to relationality and collectivity. It further offers a methodology for analyzing the interconnectivity of individual and collective acts not as momentary ruptures but within a social and political matrix of legislation and policies—the traditional form of relationality between the citizen and the nation-state. Relationality emphasizes the non-static negotiation of agency without denying the shifting networks of force in which the citizen

subject operates. This is key to understanding what embodied practices, acts or actions—whether dancing, enduring, improvising, marching or occupying—can accomplish.

Within this theoretical framework, citizenship is a physically enacted, dynamic relationship between the single citizen subject, the body politic and the nation-state. This, in turn, evinces more complex imbrications of power and agency. The application of theories of corporeality and choreography thus broadens conceptions of citizenship as it has been theorized in other fields.

The work of Michel Foucault is foundational to theories of corporeality and thus to my project. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault traces a genealogy of the governance of the body politic from the perspective of bodily subjection. That is, according to technologies of power exercised on bodies to construct, or subject, the citizen. Foucault argues that political and economic investment in the body intensified in the formation of the capitalist nation-state as the foremost form of governance in Europe, in turn producing a panoply of techniques and procedures constituting nothing less than the coercion of individual bodies in order to shape the collective social body.²⁰ Such coercion arises from knowledge of and mastery over the body to enable a political technology of the body that is diffuse, multiform, non-systematic and non-localizable in any one institution or state apparatus. This political technology exerts force through the spatial and temporal regulation of citizen bodies.

Within a Foucaultian framework, there is no pre-existing subject of the state knowable outside the forces of governance. The body of the citizen, as the object of governance, exists at the nexus of the biological and political, what Foucault refers to as

the biopolitical. A Foucaultian reading of contemporary citizen subjection therefore discerns the biopolitical administration and regulation of the body politic.²¹ For my dissertation research, this translates into acknowledging the disciplinary technologies shaping citizen behavior, comportment, and acts at this particular econo-political²² conjuncture of expanding, globalized markets and media on the one hand, and, on the other, a virulently nativist, xenophobic brand of nationalism. Moreover, citizenship itself can be considered a disciplinary technology that acts on an individual and a body politic via government policies and legislation; the discursive normativization and regulation of legal and illegal bodies; and an increasingly extensive surveillance assemblage—what Foucault refers to as “the closer penal mapping of the social body.”²³

Feminist transnationalism scholar Inderpal Grewal points to the global scale of these technologies in *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*, arguing that “America” has become a polyvalent signifier that produces subjects, types of agency, practices, imaginaries within transnational networks of knowledge and power. Grewal notes that since 9/11 these transnationally circulating subjects and imaginaries have been heavily influenced by U.S. investment in defining proper forms of national governance according to American ideologies. (This is a point I return to in my analysis of Shah’s *Dinner with America*.) Thus, contemporary technologies of citizenship configure legible citizen bodies according to globally circulating norms as well as through the promotion and dissemination of ideologies of democratic nation building.

In the U.S., post-9/11 patriotic fervor became a political technology regulating the proper conduct, speech and affect of citizens. Within such a climate, live performance

provides an avenue to foreground, critique and disrupt the signification of technologies of citizenship through the hypervisibility of the staged body. As Ananya Chatterjea argues, the hypervisibility of the dancing body in all of its multilayered materiality disrupts syntaxes of perception: “Since the founding paradigms for ‘seeing’ are mediated through pre-existing grammars, organized hierarchically, live performance calls for acknowledgement of performing bodies and their symbolic valence in those very terms.”²⁴ Chatterjea avers that dancing bodies rupture established norms and invert meaning precisely because the body is always already implicated in systems of signification. What enables resistance from within dominant systems of representation is the body’s polyvalence as both producer and product of signification. Randy Martin similarly conceives of the body as existing at the intersection of the lived and the represented. He theorizes the body as unstable and composite, “mediated across a conflicted space of the imaginary and the performative,” wherein its figuration the representational domain is negotiated by the facticity of its materiality.²⁵

In addition to foregrounding bodies within their discursive construction, Foucault’s vision of a political anatomy enacted through “dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, functionings; ... *the network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity,*” suggests that power is always already in motion (my emphasis).²⁶ If, as Foucault attests, a social body is obtained through the temporal and spatial regulation of individual bodies and populations, then a conscious intervention into this regulation holds the potential to renegotiate relations of power. As Foucault’s formulation of disciplinary power indicates, such a renegotiation occurs by manipulating active networks of force

within axes of time and space—a definition synonymous with that of choreography. By taking charge of these elements, the choreographer produces negotiates or imagines anew concepts of corporeality, collectivity and agency within a spatio-temporal nexus of power. The choreographer, as scholar Susan Leigh Foster writes, “engages the body’s semiotic field”—its referentiality and capacity for signification—in order to “fashion a repertoire of bodily actions that may confirm and elaborate on conventional expectations..., or [she] may contrive a repertoire that dramatically contravenes such expectations.”²⁷ Through the active interplay of bodies in motion, the choreographer furthermore theorizes “relationships between body and self, gender, desire, individuality, community, and nationality.”²⁸ Choreography, expansively defined as the creative exploitation of conventions, codes, and protocols of bodily acts, thus foregrounds the kinetics through which national identifications are set in motion and the agency of the embodied, motional citizen in relation to the nation-state.

Foster’s theorizations of choreography as an explanatory rubric for non-dancing actions and relationships have been critiqued as a potentially universalizing analytic. This, in turn, has led her to problematize its discursive development.²⁹ For this project, however, choreography provides a conceptual framework for examining the relationship of the citizen subject to the nation-state in which the citizen is not solely constituted according to oppositional binaries of obeisance and resistance. Rather, by considering the relationality of the citizen or the body politic to national imaginaries and state apparatuses as choreography, the citizen subject is positioned within shifting fields of force, configurations of materiality and discursivity, entanglements of power and

complicity and a confluence of identifications. Instead of an abstraction, the citizen subject is that which is choreographed and choreographs in relation to specific political and social, temporal and spatial circumstances. Choreography offers a perspective through which the citizen can be understood as a subject position that is not only inscribed but which inscribes its relationality to other citizens and/or the nation-state by devising new tactics or inserting bodies into traditional strategies that might be preset but can adapt to the moment depending on who is “dancing,” which bodies carrying which legacies, narratives or discursive freight.

The Chapters

The dissertation is divided into three sections within which each chapter is dedicated to a close reading of a few select pieces. In the opening section, I define the first decade of the twenty-first century as the age of the improvised explosive device (IED). By all measures, citizenship was under duress during inaugural decade of the twenty-first century. The inauguration of military action against Afghanistan and Iraq, along with rapid development of the U.S. security apparatus in the wake of the events of September 11 (hereafter referred to as 9/11) rent, and continues to rend, permanent tears in the rule of law, to effectively redefine the citizen as a rights bearing subject and the experience of American citizenship. This period has been referred to under various rubrics. It has been called the September 11 decade as well as the post-9/11 era. Indeed, the events of that day have defined the ensuing decade in a manner that belies getting over or beyond it, leading scholars to interrogate the event as a singularity.

The decade has also been referred to as the Bush era, given the multiple phenomena (two wars abroad, the surveillance state at home, illegal detention, torture, the militarization of borders and the increased power of the executive branch) were instigated during the Bush presidency. Framing the events according to the parameters of Bush's term in office is somewhat misleading, however. The military action initiated by the U.S.—in Afghanistan in October 2001 and against Iraq in March 2003—in the early years of his presidency, like the collapse of the U.S. financial sector in the latter part, may have commenced during the Bush era, but the effects of these continue to redound. Likewise, legislation that passed, policies enacted and technologies of security and warfare that were developed during this time did not suddenly evaporate after Bush stepped down.

Rather than trace causality, British South Asian performance artist Rajni Shah, who I discuss in two chapters, looks to the structure of feeling of the first decade of the new millennium by calling it simply “a very dark time,” an accurate summation for what others have termed an age of terror. Marks' similarly references the spirit of the times by titling *Not About Iraq* after Neil Greenberg's *Not About AIDS Dance* (1994). Like Greenberg's dance, created during a year in which he lost his brother and nine other friends to the AIDS pandemic, *Not About Iraq* asserts that artistic production cannot be detached from the political exigencies and (ir)rationalities of the moment in which it is made. American performance artist Susanna Cook provides a different perspective in her one-woman show, *Unpatriotic*, by defining this period as the midlife crisis of American empire.³⁰

I argue that the fundamental changes in the relationship between the nation-state and its citizenry, in the rights and liberties of this body politic and in the creation of infra-citizen subjectivities such as the terrorist manifested in an instable, unpredictable social atmosphere that was initiated by, and best encapsulated in, the IED, its signification as a threat to the nation as well as its modus operandi. After delineating the conditions of what Vice President Richard Bruce “Dick” Cheney called “the new normal,” I present my argument for defining the period under consideration as the age of the IED. I then analyze two dance productions, HIJACK’s *Fetish* (2003-04) and William Forsythe’s *Three Atmospheric Studies* (2006). Each of these thematically addresses the new normal through their attention to the multiple signification of the IED. Moreover, as I argue, each choreographically reproduces the effects of an IED explosion. I end by proposing that contemporary citizenship is based in dissonance in the age of the IED.

The center section, *Choreographing Americans*, comprises five chapters, each of which is dedicated to a specific work by an intermedia movement artist. I theorize these performances as examples of choreographing the conditions of possibility and constraint for the political and social subject. Here I address citizenship as it references both the singular political actor and the body politic. My analysis yields five different models of citizenship: incorporative, intersectional, contaminative, projective and improvisational. During the period in which I conducted research for the dissertation, I noticed that artists were using the U.S. flag as the point of interceding into normative conceptions of the American body politic. The performances I examine intervene into the technologies that regulate citizen conduct through a tactic I refer to as “flagging the body.”³¹ By

choreographing intimate conjunctions or awkward disjunctions of flags and bodies artists and audiences alike are inserted into the potent, if polyvalent, symbolic economy of nation. A dense signifier of the sovereign state as well as its people, flagged bodies (or what I call flag bodies) enact a vivid metonym for the relationship of citizens to the nation-state. I consider flagging the body a choreographic tactic to argue that each of the five works I examine choreographs a different model of citizenship.

Following the events of 9/11 the U.S. flag, already a feature of quotidian and political life, became omnipresent. Oversized flags draped office buildings and homes, were laminated onto shop windows and taxicabs, and adorned the lapels of newscasters and presidents. The semaphoric potency of the American flag also could be seen around the globe, where it was raised in a gesture of alliance with a nation under duress. Likewise, remnants of flags recovered from the rubble of the World Trade Towers gained the significance of religious relics, touring the nation as part of the Smithsonian's exhibition, *September 11: Bearing Witness to History*.³² The flag draped over the Pentagon's damaged west wall between September 12 and October 11, 2001, remains on view in the Flag Hall of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History (NMAH).³³

An overdetermined object of interpellation and identification, the American flag is lightning rod for an array of affective and cognitive responses based on the idea that, as art historian Albert Boime has noted, "all Americans can find themselves within its folds."³⁴ Boime's turn of phrase at once evokes the intimate embrace of the nation-state. Like a mother's apron behind which a small child might hide, the flag represents a

capacious and elastic space of safety, security and welcome. Yet Boime's turn of phrase also gestures toward the interpellation of citizens to *want* to see themselves within the nation-as-flag; to recognize and be recognized within the community of nation. "Rallied 'round the flag," the nation becomes a shared psychic space wherein an individual may find her or himself among the horizontal comradeship of fellow citizens. As such, the U.S. flag provides the semantic thread that stitches diverse citizen-subjects into the seamless whole cloth of a body politic. Within its folds, private bodies are ushered into public, political signification as "we, the people."³⁵ As the mirror upon which the polity looks for its reflection, the U.S. flag is an important point of intervention for artists to affirm, critique or propose alternative models of relationality and collectivity.

I begin by analyzing dances by two important twentieth-century choreographers, Isadora Duncan and Yvonne Rainer. These chapters provide an alternative perspective to the foundational relationship of the nation to U.S. modern concert dance. Each also provides insight into the ensuing chapters in several ways. Analogous to the twenty-first century work I examine, which was produced during the development of the U.S. security state, Duncan's *La Marseillaise* (1917) was performed in the U.S. at the same time that the twentieth century state was inaugurated. Parallel to the contemporary era, revisions in the manner in which the individual subject enacted citizenship and how the body politic saw itself as national were underway. Concomitantly, new federal structures of surveillance and immigration were instantiated during this time. Within this social atmosphere, Duncan reified the American nation-state by choreographing citizenship as an incorporative state.

Rainer's *Trio A with Flags* (1970) was similarly created during an acute historical moment in which national identity was negotiated in relation to war and a particularly strident, divisive atmosphere of national patriotism. Yet Rainer choreographs citizenship as an intersectional activity of material bodies moving in contiguous time and space. Nevertheless, Rainer, like Duncan theorizes a body politic in a manner that the three twenty-first century artists I proceed to discuss—Shah, Ouramdane and damali ayo [sic]³⁶—do not, given the particular exigencies of the age of the IED. For the latter, embodiment, the time and place of the nation and “the people” are not presumed to be stable.

In chapters three through five, I pick up the concept of the threat established in the opening section. These chapters detail various embodiments of the threat as it is posed by the U.S. nation-state. In chapter three, I examine Shah's solo performance installation *Dinner with America* (2008) in relation to the U.S. surveillance assemblage and the use of Remote Piloted Aircraft or drones in order to argue that the piece choreographs global bodies as contaminative. In chapter four, I examine Ouramdane's *Exposition Universelle* (2009) within the surveillance modality called dataveillance. I posit my analysis within colonial scopic regimes of containment to demonstrate that the technological determinism of dataveillance has a history. Conceding to the contemporary mediation of the citizen by informational and telecommunication digital technologies, I argue that Ouramdane choreographs contemporary citizenship as projective. I then question the possibility for agency within this model. I have chosen these specific aspects of the U.S. security state for three reasons. First, military personnel have identified drones and biometric security

techniques (a form of dataveillance) as tactical “game-changers” against IEDs.³⁷

Secondly, both forms of surveillance are global phenomena that currently are, or may soon become, aspects of everyday life for the national citizen. Third, the U.S. surveillance assemblage is based on a philosophy of preemption that has fundamentally altered the conceptualization, experience and practice of citizenship in the twenty-first century.

In the last chapter of this section I examine ayo’s street action *Living Flag: Panhandling for Reparations* (2003). Ayo’s panhandling for reparations for the chattel enslavement of Africans presents a different kind of threat, that of the panhandler on urban streets who is antithetical to the contemporary neoliberal citizen. My reading of the piece also contextualizes it within the racialization of citizenship in the U.S. and the ongoing economic and political disenfranchisement of African Americans citizens. I argue that ayo choreographs a body politic as that which is only possible to realize in fleeting, happenstance encounters among strangers. Citizenship, as a duty of care to other citizens, is thus enacted within the social improvisationally.

The issues addressed and the model of citizenship proposed in the chapter on ayo’s *Living Flag* creates a bridge to the final section, wherein I ask what types of engagement between citizens might be imagined as alternatives to the six I have theorized thus far. To this end I discuss two participatory projects, HDT’s *This Town Is a Mystery* (2012) and Shah’s *give what you can, take what you need [sic]* (2008). Each of these projects fosters convivial spheres of interaction among strangers that, similar to Isin’s acts, offered opportunities to imagine a citizenship yet to come. The forms of

exchange and sociality produced by conviviality, I argue, rehearse new possibilities for politicality. I then consider the political potential of conviviality as it has been theorized by Paul Gilroy and enacted in the Occupy movement.

From dissonance to conviviality, over the arc of the dissertation I propose seven types of citizenship exemplified in the work under discussion. By conceptualizing the artists and their work as “choreographing citizenship,” I do not mean to imply that they can affect the material or legal conditions of citizenship. Instead, the work offers models of citizenship that conceive of the citizen as an embodied subject and address the contemporary conditions affecting the everyday, lived experience of citizenship. These models reify or revise, critique or imagine anew the relationality of the individual citizen subject, the body politic and the U.S. nation-state in the age of the IED. By using choreography as methodology and an analytic for reconceptualizing citizenship, my hope is that my research will contribute to the field of citizenship studies. By addressing the production of the citizen subject, this project contributes to dance studies in several ways. It provides a different perspective from which to consider the nationalist project of early modern dance of the twentieth century. It eschews the binary reduction of aesthetics and politics in dance studies. And, lastly, it contributes to the ongoing development of choreography as an analytical, if perhaps not entirely explanatory, rubric.

1. Choreographing the Bomb: Corporeal Dissonance in the Age of the IED

This chapter examines two dance productions that contend with contemporary conditions of embodiment in an era in which the definition, conduct and technologies of war in the twenty first century have permanently altered the normative habitus of American citizenship. The work under discussion includes *Fetish* (2004), a duet by the Minneapolis, Minnesota, based group HIJACK, and *Three Atmospheric Studies*, choreographed by internationally renowned William Forsythe for his Frankfurt, Germany, based troupe, the Forsythe Company. Each of these dances was created in response to the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. Both, I argue, articulate “the new normal” habitus of twenty-first century citizenship as the age of the improvised explosive device (IED).¹

I use Isin’s definition of normative habitus as a starting point to theorize a decisive break in the way citizenship has been lived and understood in the twenty-first century. I begin by examining “the new normal,” a phrase introduced into public consciousness by Vice President Dick Cheney. Revisiting 9/11 and its effects, I propose a different perspective by considering the four airplanes that were used in the attacks that day as IEDs. Upon discussing the IED and its effects in greater detail, I then examine HIJACK’s *Fetish*, which evinces the heightened paranoia of the early 2000s, a time in which the ongoing threat of terrorist attacks by anyone, anywhere, conditioned citizen conduct. Within this context, the IED is present in the dance as threat, prop and, as I stress in my analysis, in choreography that replicates its logics of disruption. Whereas *Fetish* choreographs a state of ongoing, amorphous threat of a bomb attack, William

Forsythe choreographs the moments following the detonation of an IED in *Three Atmospheric Studies*. Though the piece can be analyzed according to its narrative arc about the consequences of the bombing, I consider its choreography in relation to the physics of bomb technology. I conclude the chapter by arguing that the post-millennial conditions for how citizenship is understood and lived is shaped by cognitive and corporeal dissonance.

The New Normal

The first decade of the twenty-first century was infamously defined as “the new normalcy” by Vice President Dick Cheney on October 25, 2001. In a speech to the Republican Governors Association, Cheney used the term to describe the dramatic change in national security policies and protocols that lay ahead. He stated unequivocally, “Many of the steps we have now been forced to take will become permanent in American life. They represent an understanding of the world as it is, and dangers we must guard against perhaps for decades to come.”² Cheney’s comments presented an assured administration making the necessary decisions and actions to safeguard the nation and its people. His flair for the dramatic articulated the extent of these—the lengths to which the Bush administration was willing to go—as altering the very concept of normal American life. Cheney’s phrase, shortened to “the new normal,” quickly spread, becoming an oft-used headline and catchphrase in the media to describe a wide swath of phenomena during the decade that ensued, from post-attack political realities and features of the new

American security state to mundane realities of everyday life for American citizens, even the loss of irony, perspective and humor.

Cheney's new normal also described changes in how formal citizenship is understood and enacted. In a 2003 report titled "Assessing the New Normal," the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights defined the new normal according to the loss of rights, an increasingly opaque state, and the treatment of citizens under the rule of law; "changes," the report states, "that have meant the loss of particular freedoms for some, and worse, a detachment from the rule of law as a whole."³ Unbound from the commitment of the rule of law, the government, under the umbrella of national security, has fundamentally altered the conception of the citizen subject by both distinguishing and dissolving the difference of formal status between citizen and "alien." As in states of crisis, the alien has become an internal enemy or contaminant of which the nation must rid itself, as mass deportations and restrictions on entry into the country attest. Yet formal citizenship status does not secure one's protection from the state, just as it did not prevent the detainment of thousands of Arab American male citizens in the months and years following 9/11. The xenophobic culture of fear that has developed continues to target, anyone whose name, ethnic heritage, religion or appearance (skin color, facial hair, mode of dress) deviated from the default idea of the American citizen as being of European descent.

The defining moment that inaugurated such fundamental changes in the conception and experience of citizenship remains 9/11 for scholars such as Mark Selden, who considers the Twin Towers in flames as "the iconic image of our times in American

consciousness... [and] for U.S. war making.” Moreover, Selden contends that the event of the attacks is “the primal scene that drives American fears of the future.”⁴ As Selden suggests, the events that launched the new normal not only altered the relationship between the nation-state and the demos but also shifted the public’s trust in the nation-state. The hegemony that the U.S. exerts as the reigning superpower had not immunized it from the violence of nineteen non-state actors, nor had its extensive, sophisticated military. In an essay about the preeminence of American military airpower since World War II, historian Michael S. Sherry notes this shift of the body politic. He writes that after 9/11, “Americans could not so easily imagine a future in which their airpower would be in control. It was one thing to imagine America’s destruction when it had never happened.... It was much scarier to imagine America’s destruction after it had occurred.... Once the future had had to be imagined in terms of American suffering, it was perhaps better not to imagine it at all” (emphasis in text).⁵ Sherry’s stress on the historical supremacy of U.S. airpower for more than fifty years underscores the position of the U.S. as a military power. It also points to an end to what James C. Scott calls “the romance of the airplane, its place as an emblem of speed, power, distance and modernity itself.”⁶

In the aftermath of 9/11, the Bush administration swiftly shifted public discourse away from the widely broadcasted image of America as victim to one in which the nation inhabited the role of the almighty hand of justice, ready to dispense retribution. Yet the realization that the nation had been vulnerable and could be a target again remained, engendering a culture of fear and pervasive atmosphere of suspicion. Fueled by the

government, this culture fostered compliancy and hypernationalist fervor. 9/11 remained in other ways, serving as a rationale to justify the quashing of dissent, the revocation of civil rights, an unprecedented national security assemblage and two costly, ill-conceived wars. Moreover, the very tenets of what constituted war as well as how it was to be conducted were permanently redefined. Though there is evidence that this redefinition was already underway during the 1990s, the events of 9/11 precipitated a thorough overhaul of such basic attributes of war as the time and space of its occurrence as well as the assumption that it is a contest of violence between territorial and symmetrical sovereign states.

On September 20, 2001, just nine days after the attacks, Bush announced a global war on terror, in a speech to the joint houses of Congress. This war would be like no other. First, in identifying Al Qaeda as the responsible party for 9/11, the U.S. would seek out and combat an enemy that was not a nation-state but an unknown and invisible, displaced consortium of individuals. Secondly, Bush avowed that the U.S. would wage war anywhere and for as long as it took to eradicate the nation's opponents, which were not only al-Qaeda. This war would be a crusade to wipeout all terrorist networks. Freed from the constraints of location and periodicity, a state of perpetual war became a form of ongoing statecraft that determined both foreign and domestic policy.

Without discounting the trauma or iconicity of 9/11, I want to shift the angle of view to consider the four airplanes that were used as weapons that day as IEDs. The term "improvised explosive device" encompasses a spectrum of decidedly low-tech apparatuses such as pipe and car bombs, booby traps or suicide vests. The defining

feature these share is that they have been fabricated out of cheap, easy to find, off-the-shelf or found and repurposed components, including unexploded military ordnance, cell phones, discarded batteries, stereo wire, nails, glass, fertilizer and other common items found in a home or at a hardware store.⁷ Like all bombs, the IED consists of a few basic components: a container (package, vehicle or body), explosive packing material, a detonator and triggering mechanisms that can be activated remotely or by a release mechanism. Examples of the latter include spring-loaded or trip wire IEDs that are hidden amidst rubble, beneath highway pavement or in an animal carcass and activated by pressure from a footfall or vehicle tire. According to a 2007 National Research Council report, the term “improvised” has been used to reference the use of IEDs by “irregular forces” as well as its repurposed materials or handmade construction.⁸ The term thus references the non-state actors who use them and their grass-roots ingenuity, suturing the method to the agent.

The deployment of IEDs on the part of anti-American forces has been a salient characteristic of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. It became a significant tactic against American forces in Iraq in the summer of 2003, in what seemed to be a direct response to a speech given by Bush on May 1, 2003. Standing aboard the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln naval aircraft carrier in front of a large banner that read MISSION ACCOMPLISHED just six weeks after the initial “shock-and-awe” maneuver phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom had begun, Bush announced that the U.S. had, for all intents and purposes, won “the battle of Iraq.” After praising the servicemen aboard the carrier for taking part in an assault that “the enemy did not expect and the world had not seen

before” —one that launched 2,000 missiles and bombs on the nation in four days⁹ — Bush took note of Iraqis now celebrating their liberation. He then assured the world that the tide had turned in the war on terrorism. “No act of the terrorists will change our purpose, or weaken our resolve, or alter their fate. Their cause is lost; free nations will press on to victory.”¹⁰ Citizens within Iraq who had been subjected to the continuous bombardment of the Rapid Dominance (shock and awe) strategy, and who viewed the presence of American troops as an occupying rather than liberating force, however, challenged Bush’s quick dispatch of the nation.¹¹

Two months after Bush’s assertion of victory, he added fuel to the fire, so to speak, when he was asked to respond to the rising rate of casualties and death of U.S. military by hostile forces in Iraq that had taken place since his May 1 speech. Bush told White House reporters, “there are some who feel like that [*sic*] conditions are such that they can attack us there. My answer is, bring ‘em on.”¹² In the ensuing months, these words would haunt the administration as the death toll continued to rise during the second half of 2003. In August and September, IEDs caused more U.S. combat fatalities than the combined total of traditional methods, and the count continued to rise. By late 2003, monthly fatalities by IEDs were double those resulting from direct and indirect fire weaponry.¹³ According to two 2012 government reports, the IED continues to be the enemy’s weapon of choice in Afghanistan,¹⁴ and a significant cause of death to U.S. forces.¹⁵ In May 2013, Army Lieutenant Michael D. Barbero, the director of the Department of Defense Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, acknowledged in an editorial for The Washington Post that IEDs have been responsible

for more than sixty percent of all U.S. combat casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001.¹⁶

Much as the B52 bomber airplane is associated with World War II and the nuclear bomb is linked to the Cold War, the IED and its effects are indelibly sutured to 9/11, when four commercial jets were repurposed, in the national imaginary. It is not a new technology, having long been used by revolutionaries and terrorist to fight a colonial or state power. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, the IED functions as a signifier for a complex set of tensions, affects and identities. It has become a stand in for an invisible enemy. Like the terrorist, it could be anywhere. It represents the threat of another attack on U.S. soil, with the attendant affects that come with this potentiality. For those in areas in which the IED is commonly used, it represents chaos, destruction and the ever-present possibility of injury or death. For the Bush administration and U.S. military, the IED became a graphic gesture that belied American rhetoric about Operation Iraqi Freedom and demonstrated the hubris of its mission and the inadequacy of its disproportionately superior military force. As an emblem of the unknown and unknowable, the IED disrupts the “toxic certainty” of American hegemony.¹⁷

The efficacy of the IED is based in its invisibility and its ability to thwart the success of an enemy through their own labors. Because it is set in motion by the movement of the enemy it seeks to eradicate, the IED disrupts the efforts of the U.S. forces to advance, whether via the motion of a soldier’s footfall or rolling tank. Likewise, these devices prevent troops from securing an area once they have occupied it.

Additionally, car bombs continue to erase the distinction between the safety of “green zones” and the red zones of active warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. The message is that nowhere is secure; the very ground beneath one’s feet is unstable. Thus, the IED has become iconic as a stand-in not only for the absent body of the terrorist or the spectral threat of future attacks, but also for corporeal and cognitive instability. Instability is an apt trope for a decade in which the nation experienced its first major attack in sixty years, a deadly hurricane (Katrina) and to which the nation contributed by instigating a worldwide crusade against terrorism, two public territorial wars and a now-global financial collapse.

Tactics of Disruption in HIJACK’s Fetish

Kristen Van Loon and Arwen Wilder are the two choreographers who collaborate and perform under the aegis HIJACK. The duo has taught and performed in such places as Japan, Russia and throughout Canada, the U.S. and Central America and topped “best of” year in review lists by dance critics. Yet the profile they maintain is resolutely experimental and adventurous; more renegade than familiar to dance audiences. In their hometown they have performed at the esteemed Walker Art Center as well as such alternative venues as Bryant Lake Bowl (a former bowling alley turned performance space), Patrick’s Cabaret, Rogue Buddha Gallery and Northwest Casket. In New York City they have performed at Dance Theater Workshop and P.S. 122; across the U.S. they follow the alternative dance and performance circuit and frequently appear in various regional, thematic or college dance festivals.

Based in Minneapolis since 1993, they have developed a reputation for work that is as boldly provocative as their name, which speaks to Van Loon and Wilder's desire to sabotage expectations. To that end, their adventurous work—predominantly duets though they have also created spectacles the size of a football field involving upward of fifty performers—trades in absurdity, a result of juxtaposing a wealth of disparate cultural references. Sometimes this source material serves as inspiration or manifests in structural decisions and visual tropes, other times it remains obscure. Their dances display equal measures of improvisation and rigorous, some have said obsessive, if arcane choreographic logic. The latter are developed out of their long-term practice of Contact Improvisation, which Val Loon refers to as their primary research arena. "It's where the best lessons are learned about... the real and present moment, and in negotiating your partner and your context."¹⁸ The physical trust and disposition toward risk the two have developed over twenty years has led to increasing the stakes in their partnering gambits, from which they develop set choreography that is seamlessly integrated with improvisatory decisions in performance. The combination of scored improvisation and controlled structure inflect one another to lend an air of inevitability to the results, which Claudia La Rocco of *The New York Times* described as the interplay of "cool formalism and hot insanity."¹⁹

The work Van Loon and Wilder develop together provides lively commentary on the national imaginary as it manifests in popular culture (in dances such as *Cellulite/Angelina Jolie* (2007)), and political culture, as can be seen in *Mr. Khrushchev* (2002), an early work about mutually assured nuclear destruction that the duo resurrected

after 9/11; their critique of presidential election politics, *Eulogy for John Kerry* (2005) and *Fetish*. Van Loon and Wilder call *Fetish* a wartime dance, which in one respect references its genesis in April 2003, in the weeks following the onset of the shock and awe campaign.²⁰ Though the dance did not premiere until a year later, an excerpt was shown that July, making *Fetish* among the first dance productions to respond to the invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces.²¹

At first blush “wartime dance” would seem to be an abstruse description of a dance that rigorously adheres to the musical structures of Franz Schubert and Frédéric Chopin. When the two women enter at the start of *Fetish*, dressed in billowing shirts and what look to be rolled up bloomers, all in dirty white, with black thigh-high stockings and lace-up knee high boots, they scrupulously reiterate Schubert’s Piano Sonata in G with a movement phrase that develops via an alternating game of follow the leader. The phrase begins with the two walking in profile, lifting their downstage knee up and out to the side, turning with the leg gesture to rotate, kneel, sit down and roll up again. The follower echoes the phrase in canon then catches up, overtakes and replaces the leader. Each time this happens, they repeat its opening movements before advancing the phrase in new directions. At times their movement choices are humorous, as when they sit down with legs spread wide and proceed to lick up one leg and down the other (boots and all), yet even this obeys the musical structure. The center of the stage is illuminated while the edges remain in black, with several objects that will come into play at different points in the duet suspended overhead. A hamburger hovers from a thin wire downstage while upstage and to one side a small handheld tape recorder, a circa 1980s portable tape deck

(boom box) with a metronome on top of it, a black nylon backpack and an unidentifiable rectangular object, roughly the size and shape of a household toaster, similarly hang from wires.

Fetish consists of a series of vignettes in which Van Loon and Wilder take turns performing solos for one another and issuing what seem to be dares, as when Van Loon speaks into the tape recorder “Arwen is Imelda Marcos and she hits the wall over and over” and Wilder does as she says. They also engage in actions that have no obvious purpose such as when they set the hamburger spinning and swinging above their heads and hence must duck and dodge it. These scenes are colored by the sense that Van Loon and Wilder are isolated from the everyday world. Where they may be sequestered (in a bunker? An A-bomb shelter?), or why (is it part of their survival rations or just a stale leftover strung up out of boredom?) remains a mystery. What is clear is that the women are in a world in which they bide their time by amusing one another. An almost visceral feeling of containment and claustrophobia haunts the dance.

By the time the two face offstage shouting “NOW! COME NOW!” into the dark, the suspicion that the two have been waiting for something to happen or someone to release them appears to be confirmed. What they have been waiting for turns out to be a music cue, which arrives suddenly, loudly blasting a distorted, scratchy version of pop singer Barry Manilow singing *Could It Be Magic*. But then the music just as abruptly cuts out, leaving the two women to stumble out of the sweeping, space engulfing turn-hop phrase into which they had launched themselves. Van Loon and Wilder dutifully return to the upstage corner to again wait; the music snaps on and then just as quickly shuts off. Their

efforts are repeatedly thwarted and progressively their commitment to the scale and exuberant athleticism of the phrase wanes. When the music cue at last does not flick on again, the two shrug and move onto something else.

Toward the end of the half-hour piece, HIJACK's designation of *Fetish* as a wartime dance becomes clear when Van Loon and Wilder methodically complete a series of tasks as they stand side-by-side, facing the audience. Reaching up and pulling down the black bag that has been hanging upstage throughout the piece, Van Loon pulls out wires, wire cutters, duct tape, a box of nails and a six-inch length of capped pipe. Unscrewing one end of the pipe, she pours in nails and what appears to be gunpowder, and then attaches a kitchen timer with tape and wires.²² While Van Loon quietly goes about constructing a pipe bomb, Wilder has brought down the rectangular object, the characteristics of which she announces to the audience:

Multipurpose Tool safety feature number 1: flashlight
Multipurpose Tool safety feature number 2: thermometer
Multipurpose Tool safety feature number 3: radio
Multipurpose Tool safety feature number 4: compass
Multipurpose Tool safety feature number 5: lantern
Multipurpose Tool safety feature number 6: siren
Multipurpose Tool safety feature number 7: straps!
Multipurpose Tool safety feature number 8: television.

The audience listens to Wilder point out each aspect of the all-in-one security device, which has been jerry rigged from various components strapped together with an abundant amount of silver duct tape. They watch as she tests each feature, turning on the flashlight, radio, and very loud siren in turn; reading the temperature of the theater; and announcing which are broken (the compass and lantern). After turning on the television,

she sits down to watch a video of the dance they are still in the midst of dancing on the four- or five-inch screen while Van Loon, after placing the pipe bomb and her materials back in the bag, clutches it tightly to her belly while furtively looking around, then runs into the theater and places it under an empty seat. Wilder and Van Loon's actions, though played for comedic effect, at once invoke the possibility of violence and an effort to be spared from it.



Fig. 1.1 Kristin Van Look and Arwen Wilder in *Fetish* at Performance Space 122, 2006. Photograph by Rachel Roberts.

Van Loon and Wilder's simultaneous demonstrations firmly situate *Fetish* within the age of the IED. Van Loon's do-it-yourself pipe bomb references the IED and, by extension, the figure of the terrorist; each of which is shrouded in the ambiguity of the

anonymous, ongoing threat to evince the ubiquitous suspicion that anyone, whether citizen or not, presents a potential threat. Alternately, Wilder's "multipurpose tool" references some of the more comical attributes of the national security state. Among these is the Homeland Security Advisory System. Established in March 2002, it was designed to notify the public of daily terrorist threat levels according to color-coded alerts (green for low, blue for guarded, yellow for elevated, orange for high and red for severe). When the Department of Homeland Security raised the alert to orange on February 7, 2003, the federal government offered such practical measures for ensuring one's safety as covering doors and windows with plastic and duct tape to protect against the threat of airborne biological or chemical weapons.²³

Whereas any discussion of security suggests its opposite, the threat, interdisciplinary scholar Bregje van Eekelen notes that the system of alerts developed by DHS only fostered fear, despite such helpful tips, especially compared to Civil Defense measures of the 1950s.²⁴ Then, the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) issued advice on how to survive an atomic bomb through television ads and self-help manuals on building a family shelter, stockpiling supplies and food rationing. While based on the specious logic that a nuclear attack was survivable, the FCDA nevertheless mobilized citizens to take action and inspired hope through participating in their own protection. Querying how few suggestions were provided with the color-coded alerts, van Eekelen argues that the DHS had become "an instrument to endorse public fear."²⁵ In *Fetish*, though the section is played for laughs, it baldly presents the inadequacy of DHS safety measures against the threat of a bomb attack.

The questionable efficacy of Van Loon and Wilder's home-made devices during this segment—a pipe bomb that may or may not go off in the theater, a security device that doubtfully will be of assistance if it does—points to other activities throughout *Fetish* in which the Van Loon and Wilder's endeavors that are thwarted, as seen in the endless false starts of the Manilow music cue. The sections in which Van Loon and Wilder commit to partnering gambits and intricately constructed sequences mirror the contained feeling of the *mise en scène* and the lack of profit or progress of their task-based efforts. Van Loon and Wilder assiduously perform phrases that nestle within one another like Russian nesting dolls, building on the detailed motifs of theme and variation of the music only to abruptly stop and move on to another task. In this regard, *Fetish* is fashioned like an IED: compiled from various scraps of phrases, tasks and partnering, the duet replicates the IED's use of found materials put to new uses.

Similarly, the choreographic tactic of continuous disruption follows the IED's *modus operandi* of disrupting progress or completion through one's own labor. Nothing that Van Loon and Wilder engage in, neither task, formal choreography, performing for one another or telling a joke is sustained or carried through to satisfying conclusion. Indeed, the tactics of disruption—the false starts and abrupt cessation of movement phrases, phrases that peter out or lead nowhere—are less an interruption of the dance than its driving logic. That is, until its denouement when Van Loon and Wilder revisit the movement phrase they previously attempted to perform to Manilow's *Could It Be Magic*. Having stripped down to red satin undergarments (camisole and tap shorts for Van Loon, a slip for Wilder), they finally perform it in full. This provides little satisfaction for the

spectator, or for them it appears, since they proceed to dance in a perfunctory manner while lugubriously reciting the Manilow song.

The repeated refrain of the song's chorus, "could it be magic?" begs the question: What is the fetish of *Fetish*? Historically, the fetish is a concept that arose from the colonial encounter within central Africa. In "The Problem of the Fetish I," William Pietz argues that the fetish is not as a singular idea, but is that which occurs at a confluence of discourses disseminated in European nations and across disciplines from the late middle Ages through the beginning of the twentieth century. Acknowledging that it is not a discursive formation because the fetish is always connected to materiality, Pietz outlines four basic attributes to the fetish that appear throughout the discourses to which it has been applied by Enlightenment intellectuals, Marx, Freud and modern art aesthetics. These include its irreducible, untranscendable status as a material object; its power to repeat an originary event or first encounter; its association with social value; and its connection to the materiality of the individual subject. The power of the fetish to enact an originary event refers to the moment in which an object is imbued with the power to synthesize heterogeneous elements and enact an ordering of relationships—that is, the moment when an object becomes a fetish. In terms of the latter, Pietz writes, "the material fetish [is] an object established in an intense relation to and with power over desires, actions, health, and self-identity of individuals whose personhood is conceived as inseparable from their bodies."²⁶

Like the fetish, the IED enacts relationships of materiality, ordering, value and desire. The originary moment in which it became imbued with power was September 11.

On that day four commercial jets repurposed as massive IEDs synthesized nineteen non-state actors, a president reading a book aloud to school children, 2,996 people in the jets or at their targets, tens of thousands more who knew them and the millions watching around the world. The result of its power as fetish has affected relationships between the U.S. government and its citizenry; the U.S. and other nation-states, those in the “coalition of the willing” or those belonging to the “axis of evil”; and of the non-state actor to the world media stage and to the U.S. These relationships have competing desires (to disrupt, to be safe) and, as in all matters of war, rely on the relative valuation of embodied populations to establish a new ordering of geopolitical relations. Following Bush’s speech aboard the S.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, the IED was imbued with new powers. For the U.S. the IED reified the new subject position of the insurgent, at once a viable threat with unknown (magical) reach and a euphemism for civilians caught in the crossfire of the conflict (since anyone could potentially be an insurgent). Conversely, the IED has provided an effective means for individual agents and small groups to establish some measure of parity against the significantly superior American war machine while also giving lie to the nation’s neoimperial overreach.

In *Fetish*, Van Loon and Wilder entwine the IED and the U.S. security state to demonstrate how, within the American culture of fear and paranoia during the early part of the decade, each became obsessions in their own right but also were inextricably linked in a circular pattern of cause and effect. The new normative habitus of citizenship to which *Fetish* gives shape, is, like a house of cards, fragile. The illusion of national stability and safety from territorial attack that Americans had long enjoyed was usurped

by fear and doubt. Like Van Loon and Wilder's labors, daily life became riddled with continuous disruptions by the specter of the threat—anonymous, amorphous, ever-present. The threat, citizens were repeatedly told, could be anywhere or anyone, a formulation that conflates the IED with the terrorist and effectively reorients an individual's perspective of people and objects encountered in the public sphere. Though the two women approach some of the outcomes of this new orientation with humor and wit in *Fetish*, they also evince how maneuvering through one's day had become saturated with uncertainty and suspicion.

Corporeal Dissonance in William Forsythe's Three Atmospheric Studies

Like *Fetish*, Forsythe's *Three Atmospheric Studies* foregrounds the IED as a signifier of instability with one important distinction. Whereas the former choreographs the pervasive social climate that defined American citizenship in the early 2000s, the latter is firmly situated within the Iraq theater of war. The intermedia dance transforms the singular instance of an IED explosion into a network of unpredictable potentialities and indeterminate effects that speaks to larger questions concerning perspective and communication. As its title suggests, the piece is a triptych that progresses from an opening movement section for the entire ensemble to a theatrical scene featuring three characters in dialogue. Titled *Clouds After Cranach*, these comprise the first half of the evening-length dance. The final section, Study III, incorporates ensemble movement and verbal monologue, aspects seen in the prior two sections, but prioritizes a deafening sonic environment in which movement and language devolve into stasis.

Three Atmospheric Studies underwent several incarnations before premiering in full, as a three-act ballet, in Berlin in early 2006. A year earlier, it was presented in two acts (the current parts one and three) at the Bockenheimer Depot in Frankfurt; in November 2005 *Clouds After Cranach* (parts one and two) premiered.²⁷ The April 2005 premiere was a highly anticipated event, given that it was the first production Forsythe had choreographed for his new troupe, the Forsythe Company. The company was founded in January of that year, following the dissolution of Ballett Frankfurt the previous summer, which Forsythe had led for two decades.²⁸ Forsythe has enjoyed a highly successful, prolific career as a contemporary ballet choreographer who is known for his keen intelligence and movement invention. His experimental predilections include deconstructing classical ballet technique with improvisational technologies that expand where movement is generated in the body and how the body extends into space in order to develop new movement possibilities. During his tenure, the cultural cache of Ballett Frankfurt rose from a provincial municipal troupe to a world renowned, internationally touring company. Likewise, the dances Forsythe choreographed over the course of his tenure there have been adopted into the repertory of most, if not all, major ballet companies. With an ensemble less than half the size of that at his former institutional home (and consisting of many of the younger dancers from there), Forsythe launched a troupe that could expand or contract according to its artistic director's needs.²⁹ The flexible organizational structure, he stated, would support "a shift in my perception of the field in which I am operating."³⁰

This shift was underway before Forsythe's departure from Ballett Frankfurt, but the new company provides the artistic freedom for Forsythe to expand his inquiry into the conceptual parameters of dance. What constitutes a dance, where and how it is experienced are key points of his investigation. Much like a scientist devising an appropriate research modality to test out his hypothesis, Forsythe frequently seeks out "premises" for developing work that "instigate motion" and "induces or suggests motion."³¹ Foremost among the results of this inquiry have been Forsythe's intermedia projects, which relocate the dance event into interactive environments and frequently require the participation of the public. This can be seen in *Human Writes* (a collaboration with Kendall Thomas, 2005), in which the audience manipulates the bodies of dancers who have sticks of charcoal attached to different body parts. Using the dancers as tools of inscription, participants scrawl portions of the Declaration of Human Rights on large pieces of butcher paper—in this manner reinforcing the rights, now writ large.

In visual arts settings and site-specific projects, Forsythe designs motional environments that alter visitors' movements. This can be seen in *White Bouncy Castle* (a collaboration with Dana Caspersen and Joel Ryan, 1997), which, as its title suggests, playfully destabilized the kinetics of those who enter. Conversely, Forsythe constructs dynamic environments in which the movement of visitors alters its various materials. In the installation *Scattered Crowds* (2002), for example, a thousand white balloons within a gallery responded to the motion of those who walked through it. Each of these engages the body as a moving, perceiving, sensing force. For the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009, Forsythe similarly translated the choreographic notion of repetition in an installation

consisting of 200 hanging gymnastic rings. After an opening performance by the Forsythe Company, the installation offered a kinetic environment for viewers to negotiate either by walking through the forest of rings or using them to swing across the gallery. The presence of Biennale visitors set the objects into motion, transforming the scene into a situation and a viewing public into active participants in a motional playground.³²

These projects can fall under rubrics such as performance installation or immersive installation, interactive environments. Forsythe variously calls them choreographic installations and choreographic objects. In the 2008 essay “Choreographic Objects,” Forsythe asks, “is it possible for choreography to generate autonomous expressions of its principals, a choreographic object, with the body?”³³ Forsythe articulates his desire to expand the concept of choreography by segregating the presumed correspondence between process and product. He defines the former as “choreographic thinking,” a mode of artistic inquiry distinct from its outcomes. A concert dance performance thus becomes just one of several possible results. Forsythe’s distinction positions choreography as “a model of potential transition from one state to another in any space imaginable.”

By way of example, he uses the musical score, wherein bodies (of musicians and vocalists) must translate the visual (score) into the aural (performance). This example indicates that the transitions that intrigue Forsythe are those that move from one sensory register to another. This is a movement of which bodies are readily capable Forsythe avers, because, as he writes, “the body is wholly designed to persistently read every signal from its environment.”³⁴ What happens, however, when bodies must read an

environment wracked by ongoing IED explosions? How do bodies in motion interpret a bomb blast? Such questions as these propel Forsythe's investigation in *Three Atmospheric Studies*.

The piece opens with the company, dressed in everyday street clothes (multi-colored pants, tee shirts or cotton shirts), filing on to the stage to form a row along the rear wall of the theater in the shadows behind a brightly lit rectangular area. In a prelude to the ensemble's entry into this demarcated arena, a woman and man detach from the line-up and walk downstage toward the audience. The man (Ander Zabala) stops suddenly in mid-step as if struck, his forward progress halted. The momentum of his stride continues up his spine, rotating his torso and resolving in a slightly crumpled stance in which his arms are thrown upward and across his face, as if he is shielding himself from an unseen force. The woman (Jone San Martin) stops a few paces downstage of the man, closer to the audience, gestures back to the male figure and announces, "composition one: in which my son was arrested." Save for this comment, the opening section is performed in silence, magnifying the oscillating rhythms of the dancers' audible breathing and the sound of colliding, falling bodies.

San Martin's statement refers to the dramaturgical bend of the scene as well as its choreographic logic, which plays off the word "arrest." Scattered about the rectangular arena of action, the ensemble begins to take hesitant steps in various directions then freezes mid-stride. Like a hiccup, the pause is only momentary before the dancers resume walking, but the interruptions continue as company members move erratically around the space. At times one or two dancers will continue walking while the rest of the group

abruptly stops; in another instance only one dancer might pause while the rest remain in motion. As the piece progresses, the movement of the ensemble ebbs and flows with the perpetual disruption of their momentum.

The dancers begin to race haphazardly across the stage, veering to avoid a collision at the last moment, at times catching someone as he or she falls backward or, alternately, shoving someone out of the way, even forcefully down to the ground. Without breaking stride one dancer might grab another around the waist to hoist up overhead or link elbows to swing around. The scene initially appears to have no apparent order or logic driving it; it is a visual mess with individuals running helter-skelter. Fear is translated into random spatial patterns. Uncertain who is friend or foe, from which direction danger may come or safety lies, the dancers sketch out the immediacy of the scene of disaster, in which individuals react instinctively.

As the section progresses, the dancers appear less as individuals than as parts of a whole, ricocheting off one another yet tied magnetically in the same kinetic field of interaction. Indeterminate spatial patterns combine with an increasingly frantic pace and a repertoire of actions: lurching forward, pushing, pulling, falling, sliding, rolling, catching (or purposely not catching), grabbing, wresting apart, lifting into the air, helping up from the stage, spiraling down, whipping around. Ephemeral scenarios coalesce when bodies aggregate in various conjunctions of limbs, then evaporate in the continuous interplay of running, sudden stops and happenstance interaction with one another. Through the exponential variants that result from these elements, signification shifts and agency fluctuates between individuals, from dominant to passive, from assisting to resisting one

another. One conjunction of bodies repeats throughout the scene, however: two men run close by Zabala (the son, easily identifiable in a red tee-shirt), grab him by each elbow and drag him backward without the slightest adjustment in their speed. Forsythe accentuates this recombinant field by disassembling phrases and bodily conjunctions: a crooked elbow that once arced around another shoulder or was used to lift and swing a dancer around now hangs empty, marking the absence of bodies in the negative space of a frozen pose. A collision of multiple dancers might resolve with some remaining entwined while others extricate themselves from the cluster as if playing an elaborate game of odd-man out. In this manner the dancers outline the contours of absent bodies.



Fig. 1.2 *Part I, Three Atmospheric Studies* at Brooklyn Academy of Music, 2007. Photograph (c) Julieta Cervantes.

At one point the entire ensemble freezes midstride, backs up a few steps and stops, as if rewinding an audio or videotape. They start up again, with a few uncertain, halting steps then launch into the scene at the frantic pace where they had left off. This moment of rewind produces a scene that seems to repeat with varying outcomes, but that is continuously evolving. Though connotations may seem to accrue through the overlap and replay of movement, motifs and bodily assemblages, these also make obvious the illusory effects of a visual chain of signification. These cycles of doing and undoing only to redo forward a choreographic logic that works against the linear progression of time-based performance, allowing Forsythe to investigate how scrambling bodies in search of safety might arrange and rearrange according to chance and chaos.

Suddenly, without warning, the ensemble abruptly stops, with the son held on either side by the two men who have repeatedly been seen grabbing him. As the lights dim, the dancers exit one after another, leaving only this trio. Forsythe withholds the satisfaction of a conclusion that might provide insight into what the audience has just witnessed. Instead, he asks the audience to unravel the scene of confusion as it unfolds, just as the dancers must. The trio dissolves as one, then the other man exit and the section ends as it had begun, with the singular figure arrested in a contorted position.

In Part II Forsythe pursues the story of the missing son while focusing on the difficulties of translation across languages and from the language of description to that of official reportage; from a language of doubt to certainty; from an array of possibilities that occur in the moment to a precise retrospective narrative. This is played out as a

verbal exchange between the mother and an anonymous governmental representative seated behind a table piled high with files and papers (Amancio Gonzalez). As an interpreter, his job is to translate the mother's account into Arabic as he records it. At first he is perspicacious. As their dialogue continues, however, he repeatedly mistranslates the mother's account, misinterpreting relevant information and distorting her meaning.

Seated facing one another on opposite sides of the stage, the dialogue between the mother and interpreter constitutes one of two discrete axes of communication that will increasingly intersect over the ensuing scene. Perpendicular to the pair, an anonymous interlocutor (David Kern) directs his comments to the audience along an upstage-downstage axis. Located behind the mother and interpreter, the interlocutor initially speaks so softly that he cannot be heard, though his arm gestures seem to indicate that he is lecturing about lines of perspective in visual art. When he does become audible, words burst forth loudly, at a volume that overrides the other conversation. Throughout the section, the animated interlocutor speaks and moves rapidly and continuously while verbally and physically describing a series of images that he refers to as compositions one through five. The audience never sees these; like the mother's narrative, what is known is that which has been put into language.

Composition two, it becomes clear, is a description of a photograph taken in the immediate aftermath of an explosion (one that served as inspiration for *Three Atmospheric Studies*³⁵). The interlocutor details the billowing smoke in the photograph to the dark storm clouds gathering in the distance behind the figure of Christ in Lucas

Cranach the Elder's *Lamentation Beneath the Cross* (1503).³⁶ Yet, discerning one from the other becomes difficult as he moves back and forth between the two:

Mother: "Are those clouds?"

Interpreter: "No, it is smoke."

Both pause to watch and listen to the interlocutor describe the shifting colors from the heart of the explosion to the smoke moving upward and outward. As he talks, he inscribes the air with long fluid arm gestures that gently curve and arc around billowing clouds of smoke. In this instance, as throughout the section, the interlocutor remains focused, unaffected by the presence or dialogue of the mother and interpreter. They, on the other hand, are momentarily distracted, mesmerized by the interlocutor. The interpreter repeats the word "smoke" in a matter of fact tone and translates it into Arabic as he busily writes it down. The mother responds, "There was so much smoke. My eyes were watering."

The reference to Cranach's *Lamentation* aligns the mother's loss of her son to Mary's loss in the Christian story of the crucifixion of Christ. The referent serves another purpose as well, for the painting represents a key moment of perspectival shift in the history of western art. Cranach flips the frontal perspective of the crucifixion painting tradition a full ninety degrees. Instead of the canonical placement of Christ in the center of the trio of crucified men, Cranach paints him on the right side of the picture frame. The three crosses encircle the central figures of Mary and John in the middle of the canvas. Seen from an oblique angle, the Christ figure is relegated to being just one among several bodies, a demotion that emphasizes the physicality of their "broken, tortured and

ugly” bodies.³⁷ *Lamentation* is antithetical to depictions of the body in the tradition of classical Renaissance portraiture, in which the body is represented as an inviolate, whole container of the self. Describing Cranach’s novel attention to realistic details of penal punishment, Mitchell B. Merback writes: “Cranach paints the racked limbs of the three prisoners, the fractures and distensions of the Thieves’ shins, the engorged puncture wounds in Christ’s feet, the welts around his eyes, the crimson streams of blood that run alongside blackened veins erupting beneath the skin—all of this done with a seeming wealth of experience that is as much the executioner’s as the anatomist’s.”³⁸ Bringing viewers into an “almost unbearable proximity” with the bodies of the prisoners, Cranach implicates them in the scene of suffering. Cranach’s inclusion of such graphic corporeal details might be seen as a way to reinforce the sorrow of the two women on which the painting focuses. Another interpretation of his motive, however, alters the message of the painting from the promise of redemption and salvation embodied by Christ’s suffering to the effects of corporal punishment by the state.

As the lines of communication between San Martin, Gonzales and Kern further ensnare, the mother’s efforts to tell her story grow more desperate. Her conversation with the interpreter degenerates; she cannot make him understand. Likewise, she becomes increasingly confused as the interlocutor’s interjections become part of the narrative the interpreter writes down. The mother begins to enunciate each word in an exaggerated fashion. Rising from the chair in which she has been seated, the sound of her voice becomes electronically distorted, garbling her meaning further. Every syllable she attempts to enunciate is an effort that causes her body to contort, as if the very act of

speaking is painful. She folds and bends various limbs in a disjointed, inorganic manner, as if her body parts are moving independent of her will. She does not cohere as a body. The scene, like the first, is one of confusion. Key details emerge: the mother insists “a foreigner” was in the neighborhood before the blast; an incoming missile rather than an IED may have caused it; two men carried off a corpse that possibly may be her son. Rather than provide clarity, these only add to its lack.³⁹

The final section does not conclude *Three Atmospheric Studies* so much as fragment it further. In *Study III*, the explosion has receded beyond perspectival or lexical confusion. The event and its story, the moment and its remembrance, has been territorialized by the official. Dana Caspersen embodies the domain of the official. Caspersen has been wired with a microphone that electronically mutates her voice into a lower, male register to which she adds a Texan twang in order to vocally impersonate a U.S. military officer. Caspersen swaggers around the stage, adamantly adhering to the official story that upholds the arrest of the son in patronizing bureaucratic doublespeak. The non-stop, antic interlocutor from Part II continues to address the audience. At first he busily chatters on like a Weather Channel meteorologist describing the relationship of cumulus cloud formations that can be seen in a photo tacked onto a plywood wall that cuts diagonally across the stage. Without missing a beat, he seamlessly segues downstage into the foreground of the scene to provide an up-close delineation of the scene of the explosion: here is the twisted metal and broken glass, there the charred bits and pieces of household objects, over there the childhood toys and body parts.

The section simultaneously emphasizes sonic extremes as well as the absence of sound. Zabala (the son) screams into a microphone, vocalizing the sound of bombs exploding in a sonic rage. The dancers take turns hurling themselves against the wall, which has been wired for sound amplification. The crashing impact of each body registers acutely, one after another redounding at an ear-piercing pitch. The stage darkens; between Zabala's howling vocal weaponry, the ballistic bodies and composer Thom Willems live contributions of "staticky interpolations," the scene sonically replicates the opening.⁴⁰ Now, however, the ensemble is atomized. Running, sliding, crumbling, whipping about by unseen forces, ducking for cover, they improvise breathlessly and in isolation.

Conversely, the mother sits slumped over in a chair; her gaze blank and comportment unresponsive as she is lectured by Caspersen to stay calm, remain composed. She remains kinetically mute when ambulated downstage by Gonzalez, who manipulates her limbs as if she were a rag doll. Meanwhile the ensemble slows; after having been so viscerally reactive to the prior acoustic assault, they continue to resonate like a bell after it has been rung. One dancer jerks and flinches, unable to move away from one spot or to connect one action to another, while another has knotted and folded herself into a contorted ball that is carried around the stage. The dancers onstage are beyond expression, reaction, response, action or interaction.

The bodies Forsythe choreographs in *Three Atmospheric Studies* deteriorate, degrade, devolve over the course of the piece, as does the capacity to make sense of the

unfolding action on stage. Forsythe challenges the audience to decipher what is happening throughout the piece, from visual clues in the opening section, in which multiple possible stories play out; and verbally, retrospectively in the second. By the last section the incident is beyond disagreement or difference of perspective; beyond physical as well as verbal articulation. The dancers are no longer thinking, feeling subjects but have been rendered voluble, containers to be filled by the official story or sonic vibrations. Like the scene that the interlocutor describes, they do not cohere; they have been blasted apart. What the audience sees on stage are the bodily remains found alongside the detritus he details.

Forsythe's use of sound, or more accurately, noise, provides an effective means to proliferate the chaos of a bomb explosion by registering disarray on an auditory as well as visual sensory register. *Three Atmospheric Studies* becomes increasingly louder as it develops; from the quiet sounds of breathing, moving bodies in the opening section to the near-deafening pitch of the final section, accentuated by the electronic amplification of the bodies and voices of the ensemble. The purpose of amplification, to increase the volume of sound, is usually to increase the clarity of its content. The volume and distortion of *Study III*, however, impede comprehension. This has a double effect. It brings an audience into unbearable proximity to the scene of suffering by enveloping it and the dancers in a shared sonic field. Yet the auditory bombardment also produces distance by interfering with an audience's understanding of the scene.

Discussing the phenomenology of sound, rhetorician and media theorist Walter Ong details the manner in which sound immerses individuals in an experience. He writes:

Sight isolates, sound incorporates. Whereas sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance, sound pours into the hearer. Vision dissects, as Merleau-Ponty has observed (1961). Vision comes to a human being from one direction at a time: to look at a room or a landscape, I must move my eyes around from one part to another. When I hear, however, I gather sound simultaneously from every direction at once; I am at the center of my auditory world, which envelopes me, establishing me at a kind of core of sensation and existence... You can immerse yourself in hearing, in sound. There is no way to immerse yourself similarly in sight.⁴¹

Ong argues that the multi-directionality of sonic information, especially compared to the unidirectionality of sight, creates an auditory experience that incorporates the listener into the sound. For Ong, the experience of aural immersion is situational rather than abstract, empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced. It is unifying, cohering, additive compared to visual discernment. “A typical visual ideal is clarity and distinctness, a taking apart,” he writes, “The auditory ideal, by contrast, is harmony, a putting together.”⁴² Forsythe’s aural intermodality, however, is a jarring, discordant assault on the senses. It immerses the performers and audience alike in a grating, nerve-jangling soundscape in which the instinct to flee predominates (at least this was my experience of *Study III*).

Sound and bombs share the same physics; both are based in changes in air pressure, both literally move the atmosphere. The shock waves created by the explosion of a bomb, like sound waves, are comprised of compression-rarefaction cycles.⁴³ As shock waves of a bomb blast dissipate over time and distance, they degenerate into sound waves. The titular atmospheric conditions of the piece thus not only refer to the three “compositions” of clouds the interlocutor describes to the audience—the billowing smoke of the photograph, the gathering storm clouds of Cranach’s *Lamentation* and the final,

seemingly innocuous image of fluffy white clouds floating in a blue sky—but also to the physics of air shared by bombs and sound.

Analogous to *Fetish*, *Three Atmospheric Studies* employs the tactics of disruption of the IED. In the opening, the source of the explosion has not been ascertained yet its effects result in uncertainty as the dancers take hesitant steps, backtrack, slam into one another, crumple and fall. In the second scene, entangled lines of dialogue disrupt narrative and, ultimately, the mother's capacity to speak. In the concluding section the ensemble, like the mother, are unable to communicate verbally or kinetically: no longer are they able to move in relation to one another, or move much at all beyond a range of tics, twitches and spasms. Yet, contrary to Van Loon and Wilder, Forsythe choreographs a bomb explosion and its aftermath by replicating its physics of dispersion in the structure of the piece. Similar to the radiating pattern of a bomb's effects, the capacity to communicate or comprehend dissipates as the dance moves away from the initial impact of the event. Comparable to the expanding degeneration of shock waves into sound waves, Forsythe queries the fragmentation of meaning the further one is removed from a war zone.

Three Atmospheric Studies can be seen to increase the blast radius, so to speak, beyond the local effects of the ongoing conflict in Iraq to its intensive visual imaging and verbal translation in an all-access, 24-hour global media sphere.⁴⁴ This can be seen within the world of the piece in the manner that different modes of communication—language, photography, painting, official reports and statistics—fail. Outside the piece, Forsythe continuously defies the audience's ability to come to easy conclusions, through

the unpredictability of the opening improvisation to the miasmic loggia of the second and the cacophonous soundscape of the third. However, though Forsythe takes aim at the ability to adequately translate the lived experience of war in all of its messiness, confusion and sensory overload, he is not interested in offering a less censored or more authentic version of a war zone. Neither does Forsythe proffer dancing bodies as an alternative form of communication; he refutes the de facto expressive capacity of contemporary bodies to speak. Rather, he shatters the idea that sense can be made at all. The culmination of the dance in the complete and utter failure of the ensemble to absorb and interpret sensory data indicates that there is no singular impression or image to be sutured from disparate shards, no common sense around which meaning can cohere.

Conclusion

In *Three Atmospheric Studies*, warfare not only destroys bodies and buildings, but also shatters sensibilities. As I have argued, this extends beyond the immediate scene of disaster as armed conflicts are broadcast around the world. Lacking perspective or insight, the onslaught of images and information becomes noise, an immersive medium of amplified distortion. In this manner Forsythe's formulates dissonance as a generalized condition of corporeality in the age of the IED. By redefining bodiliness as constructed through aural and kinetic dissonance, Forsythe emphasizes the disintegration of common sense in the contemporary moment.

In HIJACK's *Fetish*, the dominant social atmosphere of the early 2000s produced by the threat, in which anyone could potentially be a terrorist and any box, bag or shoe

might contain a bomb, creates a state of affective dissonance that is comparable to the dissonance of *Three Atmospheric Studies*. Following the logic of an IED, which destabilizes the very ground beneath one's feet by using the victim's movement to activate it, Van Loon and Wilder's dancing is thwarted by their own labor throughout the piece. When at last they perform the final duet to the Manilow song in full, they are numb and disaffected, beyond caring whether their efforts will be successful or not. Sequestered in a space of limbo, Van Loon are alienated from the larger world. The perfunctory manner in which they proceed to ploddingly mark out the movement additionally reveals their alienation from their own bodies and actions.

Twenty-first century citizenship has been shaped by a barrage of noise: too much, not enough and mis- information; media sound bites, presidential lies, military jargon and nationalist jingoism. *Fetish* and *Three Atmospheric Studies* evince the embodied effects of this social condition. Set side by side, the two dances sketch out the multivalent features that shape the new normal habitus in which citizenship is experienced and enacted. In addition to structural changes instantiated by national security measures, these include a social climate of alienation, instability and uncertainty as well as what I am calling corporeal dissonance. Defining dissonance as a corporeal state recognizes an epistemic shift in relations of knowledge. In the new normal of twenty-first century citizenship, nothing is to be trusted, not people, objects, the government, the media or even one's own labors or body. This has resulted in the embodiment of the discordance, distortion, cognitive incongruities and lack of perspective that inhere to the age of the IED.

I pick up threads of the argument established here in the following section, *Choreographing Americans*. The destabilization of the age of the IED is evident in the work of the three contemporary artists discussed—Rajni Shah, Rachid Ouramdane and damali ayo—in three ways. By the conditions of the new normal in which I situate their work; in the manner in which, as I argue, their work articulates the relationship of the U.S. state to the citizen; and in their vision of national collectivity. Before discussing these artists, I first examine the work of two seminal choreographers of the twentieth century, Isadora Duncan and Yvonne Rainer.

2. Incorporative Citizenship: Nation as Spectacle in Isadora Duncan's *La Marseillaise*

Two months after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, longtime Duncan dancer Valerie Durham presented Isadora Duncan's *La Marseillaise* at a private benefit concert in upstate New York. Created by Duncan in homage to the struggle of her adopted homeland of France after it was invaded by Germany in August 1914, *La Marseillaise* is one of Duncan's "lost" choreographies, in that she never passed it on to any of her students. Durham chose to reconstruct the solo, she writes, because it was an appropriate "tribute to freedom and individual liberty."¹ As when Duncan danced it during World War I, the solo provided a gestural vocabulary for a sovereign nation under threat from an external enemy. Similarly, the dance's portrayal of a citizenry rising up to defend a nation articulated in kinetic language President Bush's characterization of the American people as united in "a steadfast resolve to prevail against our enemies."²

Durham's reconstruction was a success that evening in 2001, so much so that she went on to feature *La Marseillaise* in an evening-length tribute to Duncan.³ Yet it is doubtful the applause Durham received could match the audience response Duncan received on March 6, 1917. On that particular spring evening at the Metropolitan Opera, Duncan appended a sensational finale onto the dance's already triumphant ending by ripping off her blood-red tunic to reveal the United States flag clinging to the curves of her apparently naked body.⁴ Upon this revelation the orchestra struck up the "Star-Spangled Banner" and those not yet on their feet arose amidst a din of applause and cries of delight.⁵ The scene, described by one newspaper reviewer, was "the height of pandemonium."⁶ It is unclear from extant documentation whether, amidst recurrent calls

for an encore, Duncan proceeded to dance the entire *Marseillaise* to the de facto American anthem or whether she repeated select gestures.⁷ What is evident, however, is the univocality of more than three thousand U.S. citizens joining together to sing along to the dancer's patriotic spectacle.

This chapter examines Duncan's performance of *La Marseillaise* that night, as a seminal instance in the dance historical canon when a choreographer ushered her audience into the imaginary community of nation through the provocative conjunction of the American flag and her flesh. Through a close reading of Duncan's *La Marseillaise*, I argue that the dance choreographs national citizenship as an *incorporative* state that idealizes political membership as the complete assimilation of individual citizen subjects into a phantasm of the nation-state.⁸ I begin by locating the dance within the choreographers' oeuvre and shifting style, then situate Duncan's flagging of her body within the tectonic shifts occurring in the relationship of the U.S. state to its citizens during the World War I era. I conclude by comparing the reception of Duncan's United States tour during the war to her final U.S. tour in 1922 in order to accentuate the manner in which the American flag recuperated Duncan's specific, gendered body by transforming it into the one true body of the nation.

Within Her Folds

Duncan would later write in her autobiography that she first improvised the *Marseillaise* solo during a sojourn in the United States after fleeing war-torn France in 1914.⁹ Effectively a refugee from the strife, Duncan arrived in New York after donating

her new school at Bellevue, and her home at Neuilly-sur-Seine for field hospitals.¹⁰

Shocked by the indifference to the calamity in Europe she perceived in the general mien of U.S. street life, she writes that she added the solo to her concert repertoire in the hope of rousing support for her adopted homeland and as a call to arms to America, which had yet to join the fight. From then on, she avers, she determined to conclude every concert she gave during the war with it.¹¹ Outside of her autobiography, however, little is known about *La Marseillaise* prior to April 1916, when Duncan included it on the program of two fundraising concerts for the war relief effort at the Place du Trocadéro in Paris.¹² The solo immediately became popular, depicting as it did a triumphant vision of a people overthrowing tyranny to a French audience in the midst of such a battle. Duncan then featured the solo in Geneva, Switzerland, and in her South American tour repertory that summer, where she danced it in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; and in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.¹³ Speaking to the mood of a world quickly dividing along alliance lines, the *Marseillaise* became a rallying cry for young men wanting to join the fight on behalf of the Allied nations (France, Britain and Russia).

The program's centerpiece was Peter I. Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 6, *Pathétique*, to which Duncan danced a multipartite allegory of war. Presented as "the story of the present world struggle," Duncan followed the tenor of the symphonic movements, dancing the innocence of youth and springtime in the first movement to the fury and confusion of battle and, in the final *adagio* and *lamentoso*, a mournful ode to the fallen.¹⁴ As she explained to the *New York Tribune*, her Parisian audience had included hundreds of members of the country's armed forces and their families, alongside

dignitaries and the French war minister. “Before me were wounded soldiers—men with bandaged heads, with no arms, no legs, maybe a few men home from the trenches on leave, and women—women in black, mothers, widows.”¹⁵ Ending the *Pathétique* on the ground, her face hidden in her arms, Duncan expressed what many in her audience had already experienced: the utter futility of war.

La Marseillaise, which immediately followed, proceeded from this position of despair to foster a climactic note on which to conclude the program. Considered one of the greatest war hymns of all time, the French anthem’s rousing 2/2 march rhythm and insistent downbeat ring out with a clear sense of purpose; its blaring horns and repeated chorus—*Aux armes, citoyens!* (to arms, citizens!) —send an uplifting clarion call to rebel against oppression, as when it was sung by a volunteer corps of revolutionaries marching from Marseilles to Paris to join the uprising at King Louis XVI’s Tuileries in 1792.¹⁶ As Deborah Cowen and Emily Gilbert note in their introduction to *War, Citizenship, Territory*, in France the figure of the *citoyen* is inextricably bound to the concept of *fraternité* or solidarity.¹⁷ Borne from populist roots, the eponymous national anthem perpetuates the foundational image of the French republic as a product of the people’s will.

Much like the anthem, Duncan’s dance had the capacity to incite audiences—in any nation—in particular through her gestural depiction of citizens banding together in shared purpose. Dancing to the music of the anthem, Duncan advanced a corporeal allegory by embodying a leader instigating unseen others to rise up and take arms at first, then the mob of citizens itself. Noting this progression, one review outlined Duncan’s

transition from the leader's "martial mien" in the first stanza to the "proud and triumphant fashion" of the second, then onto "the third as tho [*sic*] it were a prophecy of approaching glory amid the anguish of struggle, and the last with the hot intoxication of mob enthusiasm."¹⁸ Next to mentioning the impressive effect Duncan's flagging had on the audience, newspaper reviews of the concert provide few details about the encore. A fair picture of *La Marseillaise* emerges, however, from critic Carl Van Vechten's recollection of the dance:

In a robe the color of blood she stands enfolded; she sees the enemy advance; she feels the enemy as it grasps her by the throat; she kisses her flag; she tastes blood; she is all but crushed under the weight of the attack; and then she rises, triumphant, with the terrible cry, *Aux armes, citoyens!* Part of her effect is gained by gesture, part by the massing of her body but the greater part by facial expression. In the anguished appeal she does not make a sound, beyond that made by the orchestra, but the hideous din of a hundred raucous voices seems to ring in our ears.¹⁹

In the extended article from which this vivid portrait is excerpted, Van Vechten acknowledges a significant shift in the artist's choreographic style from her prior tours. Other reviewers also recognized this change, though for some the new style offered little of interest beyond an overwrought pathos expressed through dramatic posing and pantomime. Acknowledging the solo's "pantomimic representation" of "concrete images," Van Vechten nevertheless emphasizes the efficacy of this turn. He considers Duncan's increased use of dramatic gestures, figurative poses ("the massing of her body") and facial expression as evidence of a new addition to her work: strength. At the age of forty, wizened by the loss of her children, Duncan now eschewed the barefoot sprites of her youth in favor of more dramatic personae. Yet her primary investigation

into the kinetic and affective effects of the body's gravity remained. Whereas the artist may have previously used the weight, force and gravity of her body to evoke the ebb and flow of natural elements or a lyrical waltz, in *Marseillaise* Duncan advanced this exploration through tensile relationships between opposing directions and dynamics that metaphorically represented the perseverance of a body politic under duress. Succumbing to the downward pull of gravity or resisting it, Duncan repeatedly fell to her knees and rose again in order to portray the defeat of battle and the spirit of a people determined to prevail. This enhanced use of her body's vertical axis and more intimate relationship with the stage floor added to downstage approaches and upstage retreats that drew audiences into the unfolding drama on stage.

Arnold Genthe's studio portrait of Duncan in *La Marseillaise*, perhaps the best-known image of the dance, offers some indication of the new strength that Van Vechten detected. With her feet planted firmly, she seems rooted to the ground while her arms, flung above her head, articulate defiance. Even as the folds of her gown merge with the shadowy backdrop, Duncan's thickening shape can be detected, articulating an unmovable presence through the opposing directionality of forces between her upper and lower extremities. Her left foot forward extends from beneath the gown yet her body and head rear back into the curtains behind her. The pose echoes photographs of Duncan taken by Genthe or Edward Steichen in which the tension between her arms reaching skyward and her grounded stance creates a conduit between heaven and earth. In images such as Genthe's studio portrait of *Ave Maria*, Duncan's hands appear lifted, though with effort, as if in resignation, from a chest hollowed out by grief. In Steichen's photographs

of Duncan in Greece, the artist's palms are open, her head thrown back in abandon, her face lifted in joy.²⁰ In Genthe's photograph of *La Marseillaise*, however, Duncan's fingers arc forward in a grasping gesture. Instead of a benign smile, alarm, fear and wariness register on Duncan's face as she stares directly into the lens of the camera.



Fig. 2.1 Isadora Duncan in *La Marseillaise*, c. 1917, by Arnold Genthe.

The polyvalence of Duncan's expression in the photograph references the implacable determination of the people she embodied in *La Marseillaise*. It also reminds the viewer of the artist's magnetic stage presence. Yet Genthe's photograph, like Van Vechten's description, hardly explains the effect the dance had on Duncan's audiences, or on Van Vechten, who wrote to Gertrude Stein, "people—this includes me—get on their chairs and yell. It is very exciting to see American patriotism thoroughly awakened—I tell you she drives 'em mad; the recruiting stations are full of her converts."²¹ Where is the "magnificent fling and abandonment of head and arms and breast," described by the *New York Herald*? In a profile for *The New Yorker*, Janet Flanners confirms the effect of Duncan's *motion* while dancing: "when she moved across the stage, *head reared, eyes mad, scarlet kirtle flying* to the music of the 'Marseillaise,' she lifted from their seats people who had never left theatre seats before except to get up and go home" (emphasis added).²²

Line drawings by José Clará and Van Deering Perrine provide further evidence of the dramatic force Duncan created through the momentum of her actions. In Clará's illustration, Duncan lunges forward onto her left leg, her left arm raised high to signal the charge, her right arm bent at shoulder height, as if in defense. The drawing captures the unbroken diagonal line Duncan's body creates from her raised left arm to planted rear foot. Duncan's body is propelled onward from this line, while her head twists around to look behind her. A few briefly sketched lines describe an open mouth, as if she is calling to an unseen crowd to join her in moving forward.



Fig. 2.2 Illustrations of Isadora Duncan in *La Marseillaise* by José Clará (left) and Van Deering Perrine (right), c. 1917.

Perrine's sketch, drawn for a review by Boston dance critic H. T. Parker, delineates torqued lines of energy along Duncan's vertical axis. Perrine catches Duncan with her right leg raised to the front in mid step or hop, her muscular rear leg planted firmly. As her legs impel her body forward, both arms are tossed over her right shoulder, following the arc etched by a shawl hoisted high like a battalion's banner. Duncan's face is again turned away, this time in the opposite direction from her arms and shawl, as if she is looking back toward "the dogs of war" she has set loose through the dance.²³ Both artists illustrate the dynamism of the solo, capturing Duncan's ability to populate the stage with a network of forces that drove her movement and gave proof to the narrative she sought to embody.

Incorporative Citizenship

If Duncan was initially dismayed by the indifference of the American people to the situation in France at the start of the war, she could only have been heartened by the sea change in attitude when she returned to the U.S. in the fall of 1916. Years of virulent debate over America's entry into the war had, as historian Christopher Capozzola notes, "thoroughly politicized civil society."²⁴ By the time Duncan opened at the Met in March 1917, a majority in Congress was ready to provide President Woodrow Wilson with the requisite legislation to lead the nation into the fight raging in Europe. Less than a month later, Wilson officially declared war on Germany. Following the president's public announcement, a body politic that had been deeply divided seemed to readily accept the administration's decision. The appearance of a united citizenry was, however, the result of a widespread propaganda campaign and, as Capozzola details in his book *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, a government that censored the press and detained anyone suspected of being "un-American."

In the weeks following Wilson's declaration that the nation was at war, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) was established to promulgate the vision of a unified polity that the government sought to promote. Under the aegis of the CPI, the Division of Pictorial Publicity enrolled illustrators and artists to design posters for a massive home-front campaign with one goal: to sell the war to the American people. The image of the Statue of Liberty was prominently featured in this campaign as part of an effort to mediate the authority of the state with more human figures. A female embodiment of America, Lady Liberty was "the people's" beloved statue: the first

national monument to have been financed by public contributions, she belonged to the American people and symbolized their national ideals. In her reading of the Statue of Liberty, American Studies scholar Lauren Berlant adds that, as the first object discernable on the horizon by approaching boats, the statue demarked a symbolic, if not territorial, border of the nation for arriving immigrants.²⁵

During World War I, Liberty appeared in hundreds of recruitment posters alongside her male counterpart, the stern but paternalistic Uncle Sam, or on the battlefield, watching over U.S. troops. Alternately, she was portrayed as the exemplary home-front woman who planted victory gardens and donated blood. But her most important and successful role was to compel Americans to purchase Liberty bonds in support of the war effort. Draped in the U.S. flag, Duncan set the CPL's iconic images into motion as Lady Liberty herself, a beacon of liberty sprung into action to defend the world. The artist's flagged coda could not have better exemplified the government's vision of America. In his argument for joining the Allied fight, Wilson proclaimed the nation's role in the conflict as nothing less than saving the world for democracy. By referencing the Statue of Liberty in her performance to the "Star-Spangled Banner," Duncan embodied the nation at its most phantasmic. She danced as a living bastion of the individual freedom promised to citizens at a time when national borders in Europe were being rewritten based on what Secretary of State Henry Lansing positioned as a choice "for democracy and against absolutism."²⁶ Offering a human avatar of the nation, the maternal Miss Liberty generated unity among the polity while gloving the state's hand as it reached into the affairs of its citizens.²⁷

Dancing as a univocal citizenry, Duncan fashioned her self as a figure able to resolve the debate over pending U.S. military action by incorporating the audience into her comforting embrace and, by extension, into the all-encompassing arms of the nation. By inserting her body into the symbolic economy of the American flag, Duncan created a chain of equivalencies that extended the *Marseillaise*'s choreographic allegory of citizens taking action to defend a nation to the image of a nation providing protective cover for its people. Through this signficatory enchainment, Duncan's body transformed into that of a heroic leader, then enlarged into a collective or meta-self to encompass the action of a mob. Finally, in the flag-wrapped coda, Duncan alchemized herself into an embodiment of a singular nation, which, like the "filmy silk" hugging the contours of her flesh, dissolved difference to incorporate the many comprising America's diverse populace into one nation over all.²⁸

Not everyone was included within Lady Liberty's folds, however. Major changes were underway that would dramatically shift the relationship of citizens to the state, the civil liberties they enjoyed and, ultimately, the demographic makeup of the nation. Who comprised the American people had been a hotly debated topic since the mid nineteenth century.²⁹ Nativist and hereditary organizations founded by social elites propelled a vision of the American body politic as initially constituted by, and thus delimited to, the religious and ethnic makeup of the land's English settler communities. Many of these organizations were also part of a flag protection movement that sought to regulate proper display and use of the American flag. During the final years of the nineteenth century, the movement's platform aligned the flag with a vision of an exclusionary and racialized

white body politic. In inflammatory speeches, flag associations concocted an epidemic of flag abuse by the new immigrant labor force arriving from southern and eastern Europe.

The First World War only exacerbated anti-immigrant sentiment with heightened fears that equated national difference with disloyalty. As John Higham writes, the immigrant *qua* immigrant no longer existed. Instead he or she was replaced with the foreign alien who could potentially be an agent of a home nation. The rhetoric of “100-percent Americanism” contested the allegiance of immigrants who, in retaining the language or cultural traditions of their nation of origin, were deemed “hyphenated Americans,” with divided loyalties. Under the slogan “America for Americans” hundred percenters linked American character to conformity and allegiance by demanding total identification with the nation-state.³⁰

As part of this racialized, protectionist fervor, Congress passed immigration legislation in Feb 1917 that sought to limit the influx of new Americans by requiring literacy testing at borders and ports of entry. The Immigration Act of 1917 accomplished several objectives. The literacy requirement, combined with doubling the head tax (price of entering the country), specifically targeted immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, most of who came from impoverished circumstances where they had been denied education. It also addressed wartime fears by adding antiradical and anti-anarchist provisos. The Immigration Act of 1917 accomplished several additional objectives as well. The act consolidated prior anti-Asian immigration legislation (such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907–08) within the Asia-Pacific Triangle, a barred zone that extended the list of excluded territories to India,

Persia (now Iran), Arabia (what is now the Arabian Peninsula), Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Asia-Pacific Islands, Russia and parts of the Ottoman Empire.³¹

The literacy test, though it was proposed as a minor policy shift, altered the course of immigration reform. Following the passage of the legislation, anti-immigrant advocate Henry P. Fairchild stated that the literacy test, “while ostensibly a selective measure, putting the finishing touches on our classification of undesirables, will affect so large a proportion of the ordinary immigration stream as to be really restrictive. In effect, therefore, it introduces a new principle.”³² The new act also signified a fundamental modification of immigration law by replacing standards for the evaluation of suitability based on individual competence with standards that discriminated against groups. The first overhaul of immigration policy, which expanded—immigrants and geographical areas—of exclusion and altered criteria for evaluation, laid the foundation for future legislation based on national quotas that would stay in effect throughout the twentieth century.³³

The war also provided a rationale for arresting and detaining immigrants *qua* aliens. During the war, Ellis Island was converted from a point of arrival for the world’s “wretched refuse” and “huddled masses yearning to breathe free”³⁴ into a detention center. There, officials regulated newly sanctioned categories of citizenship such as the “enemy alien,” the “pro-German” and the “un-American.”³⁵ The enemy alien comprised citizens of nations belonging to the Central Powers alliance, in particular all male German citizens fourteen years or older, who were required to register with the state within days following Wilson’s declaration of war. Under the rhetoric of national

security, however, all immigrants became suspect regardless of origin, as did anarchists, labor organizers and pacifists.

By the end of the war, the anatomy of the twentieth-century state had substantively changed with the adoption of new government structures—passport agencies, immigration offices and the Justice Department’s Bureau of Investigation (eventually known as the Federal Bureau of Investigation)—entities that regulated these classifications of citizenship via formal practices of internment, denaturalization and deportation.³⁶ Duncan must have been aware of these transformations, for thirteen of her students had been detained at Ellis Island upon their arrival in the fall of 1914. According to *The New York Times*, the reason stated was the need for guardianship of the girls. A more likely factor may have been that the girls were traveling under German passports.³⁷

In addition to the development of such regulatory bureaucracies, the U.S. government mobilized citizens to participate in a growing apparatus of state surveillance and intimidation as part of the home-front war effort. Characterizing the World War I era as a period in which a culture of obligation flourished, Capozzola documents what he terms *vigilant citizenship*. This was a form of bottom-up state making that relied on increasingly dispersed micro-networks of power to insinuate the nation-state into the everyday life of its citizenry. Using existing volunteer networks and established community venues such as rural meeting halls, urban settlement houses, civic and women’s volunteer associations, and patriotic societies as local conduits, the government extended the reach of federal law and expanded the state’s legitimate use of force. Spurred to actively participate in patrolling the homeland, local communities did their

part by remaining ever alert for the slightest hint of disloyalty. The combination of unprecedented powers of the state and the government's extended reach into small towns across the country bridged regional perceptions of civic responsibility with the abstract notion of a national body politic.

Within the culture of vigilant citizenship that Capozzola outlines, public displays of loyalty, both voluntary and compelled, proliferated. Among the latter was the practice of "flag wrapping," which, as Capozzola states, was so prevalent as to be "thoroughly unexceptional." An example of this practice—and the culture of obligation from which it arose—occurred in Canton, Ohio, where "twenty shop girls wrapped a coworker in the American flag, dragged her through the streets to the local bank, and forced her to purchase a fifty-dollar [Liberty] bond."³⁸ This citizen intervention demonstrates the power of the body politic over the individual citizen subject. It further indicates the capacity of the flag to performatively construct the proper wartime citizen at a time when American citizens readily policed, and accepted being policed by, one another.

Noting the repetition of such necessarily public displays of loyalty "thousands of times across the country" over the course of U.S. involvement in the war,³⁹ Capozzola also cites several incidents in which individuals prophylactically flagged their bodies, such as when Reverend Clarence Waldron turned to the national flag and anthem on October 21, 1917. Treasury Secretary William McAdoo had designated the date "Liberty Loan Sunday," but the small-town pastor had refused to exhort his Windsor, Vermont, congregation to purchase Liberty Loans in support of the war effort during his morning sermon. Later that evening Waldron faced down an angry mob gathered outside his

rectory—and saved his own life by wrapping himself in the U.S. flag and singing the “Star-Spangled Banner.”⁴⁰

The arts were not immune to the vigilance of the period, as the following account of Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) conductor Karl Muck demonstrates:

Already under suspicion for his love of German composers and his German birth (his formal citizenship status was unclear), the fifty-eight-year-old Muck crossed the line in Providence, Rhode Island, on October 30, 1917, when he refused a request to conduct “The Star-Spangled Banner.” “Art is a thing by itself, and not related to any particular nation or group,” he insisted. The Rhode Island Council of Defense’s resolution against his “deliberately insulting attitude,” issued the next day, was only the beginning. The *Providence Journal* demanded his internment as an enemy alien. Across the country, his appearance prompted violent protests: BSO concerts were canceled in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Detroit, and Chicago.... Despite his performance of the anthem on a symphony hall stage that was ostentatiously draped with a massive American flag, Muck’s days were numbered.⁴¹

As this narrative makes clear, artists were under the surveillance of their audiences as well as by the government, and the stakes were high. The “Star-Spangled Banner” was inviolable, and infractions by artists would not be tolerated or easily forgotten. Muck’s attempt to ameliorate tensions by draping the stage with the flag proved to be too little, too late. Arrested by federal agents and the Boston police, Muck spent the remainder of the war interned on Ellis Island.⁴²

Among the most prominent and tragic examples of the disciplinary power of the flag during the war years was the case of Robert Prager, a German-born coal miner suspected of spying on behalf of Germany by fellow miners. While awaiting charges in Collinsville, Illinois, Prager was grabbed by an angry crowd from the town jail in the middle of the night; they stripped him naked, wrapped him in the American flag and

dragged him up and down the streets of town. When, near dawn, the mob at last strung Prager up on a tree to lynch him, he was dropped three times: “one for the red, one for the white, and one for the blue.”⁴³ The story does not end here, however. Before he died Prager asked only for one thing: that he be wrapped in the American flag when they buried his body.⁴⁴ Prager’s lynching, like Reverend Waldron’s brush with death and Muck’s internment, elucidates the symbolic freight of the American flag, invested with the fervor of a “100% American” body politic that developed in tandem with the inauguration of the twentieth-century state. These incidents index the ongoing formulation of a national imaginary predicated on vehemently performed ideals of citizenship. They suggest a kind of incorporative citizenship in which few distinctions exist between individual citizens, the polity and the nation-state—a form of belonging underscored by Duncan’s dance on March 6, 1917.

The Skin of the Nation

Duncan’s 1917 season at the Metropolitan Opera House continued through April with the spectacle of her opening night encore setting the tone for the rest of the run. Duncan went on to tour the program, titled *The Spirit of a Nation Drawn into War*, throughout the United States until the end of the year. By all accounts it was her most successful and popular tour, revitalizing her career at a moment when critics questioned her ongoing relevancy. As early as 1915 newspapers questioned whether the artist had lost touch with the times.⁴⁵ Two years later, many critics remained ambivalent. The reviewer for *The New York Tribune* bemoaned Duncan’s loss of originality, stating,

“today she dances no more; she is a mime,” before raising a nose to the finale. The reader can almost smell the acrid stench of disdain when the writer describes how Duncan “rolled about the stage and finally arose draped in the Stars and Stripes.”⁴⁶

Margaret Anderson, editor of the *Little Review*, considered Duncan’s program as bombastic in its nationalistic fervor as it was naïvely sentimental. In her review, Anderson implied that Duncan was a relic from an earlier era, avowing, “you must not insist to us that Isadora Duncan is an artist. This generation can’t be fed on any such stuff.”⁴⁷ Despite a mixed response by the press, the wartime repertory had broad popular appeal and helped rehabilitate Duncan’s relationship with the American public. Whereas audiences frequently had been disaffected by her propensity for post-performance moral tirades from the stage, they now found Duncan more accessible. Indeed, *The New York Times* focused its brief mention of the Met concert solely on the transition in the artist’s attitude from her prior visit, when she had berated the audience for not supporting her efforts to establish a school in America. This time Duncan presented herself as a humble artist, doing what she could for the war effort. Still draped in the U.S. flag, she urged the American people to likewise contribute to the war effort, a request that only alienated Duncan’s intellectual and artistic allies on the political left who were shocked by her pro-war stance.

Duncan would not return to the U.S. again until the fall of 1922 for what would turn out to be her final, and most disastrous, American tour. Trouble began before she arrived. Prior to the tour Duncan had lived in post-revolution Russia, where her technique had been embraced and where she had married the poet Serge Esenin. Upon her arrival,

Duncan's U.S. passport was seized by authorities and subsequently lost. Departing for France, the couple found it difficult to travel with only Russian documents, since few European nations recognized the validity of the new communist state. When Duncan sought to replace her passport, she was informed that she was now ineligible to receive one. According to immigration legislation passed by Congress in 1907, any American woman married to a foreigner automatically became a citizen of their husband's home nation.⁴⁸ Since Soviet laws gave foreign wives the right to retain their own nationality, Duncan had elected to remain an American citizen when she married Esenin. Denied the same right under U.S. law, she was now stateless.

Duncan may have assumed that her reputation would resolve the matter once she arrived in the U.S., but found that she was considered as foreign as her young husband by American officials, press and public alike. Upon docking in New York, she and Esenin were detained overnight on board their ship. The next day Duncan was taken to Ellis Island where she was questioned about her political proclivities by a special board of inquiry while the couple's luggage was ransacked for any proof that they were acting under orders of the Bolsheviks. Though authorities satisfied themselves that the artist posed no immediate threat to the nation and released her, the press and audiences were less certain. Outside of New York, where she was warmly received and reviewed, audiences walked out in droves or alternately lined up in anticipation of Duncan's allegedly revealing costumes and adamantly pro-Russian post-performance speeches.

A costume mishap in which her breasts were exposed during a performance in Boston stitched Duncan's body and Soviet sympathies together for the rest of the tour.

Accounts of when and how this transgression of public decency occurred disagree about whether it happened while Duncan was in the midst of dancing, during an encore or while gesturing toward the conductor. Likewise, the extent to which the incident was truly accidental on Duncan's part is disputed. The results, however, were the same. The mayor of Boston publicly denounced Duncan and banned her from dancing in the city.⁴⁹ Tour stops were cancelled; newspaper headlines proclaimed the public's revulsion. In Indianapolis, as in Cleveland, policemen stood at the ready while the chief of police, according to Flanners, "watched for sedition in the movement of Isadora's knees."⁵⁰

A review of the Boston performances provides a notable example of the general tone of newspaper coverage of the tour, which entwined Duncan's dancing with her gendered body and her un-American politics.

In concluding one of the most amazing performances ever witnessed in Boston, Isadora Duncan, modern originator of the classical dance, waved a red scarf and shouted: 'This is red! That is what I am!!' ...

The remarks from the stage followed a dance program that shocked and disgusted the vast audience... to such an extent that three-quarters of them left the hall....

Her costume was exceedingly scant... and the upper part persisted in slipping down.

Later as the contortions and writhings of the dancer became even wilder, it slipped down only to stay. The crowd held their breath for it seemed the dancer would leave behind what little she had left on her body.⁵¹

Little mention is made of Duncan's dancing in the above excerpt, save to describe it as "contortions and writhings," that escalated to the brink of lacking control. In other words, Duncan's style of dancing now posed an immediate danger to an audience by threatening to strip her bare. Despite Duncan's claims that her allusions did not specify

her political leanings, the “little red dress” at fault became a symbol of communist revolt. One would hardly guess from the furor it caused that it was the same blood-red tunic she wore to dance her *Marseillaise*.⁵² In 1917, Duncan embodied America. Now, in the eyes of the public, her body stood as a menace to the nation.

The conflation of dancing and politics facilitated by Duncan’s now “foreign alien” body is all the more evident when compared to coverage of her opening night performance in 1917. Several reviews mention the revelation of a breast, shoulder or entire leg while she danced *La Marseillaise* or during her flag-draped finale. Yet these are reported as a matter of fact, in a calm and discerning manner, rather than as salacious details that would scandalize and inflame readers. During both tours, Duncan’s body and dancing became the site for the adjudication of her status as an American. Nevertheless, Duncan’s body that night in 1917 signaled an indissoluble national totality; it transcoded the sovereignty, security and utopian promise of the nation onto a figure that incorporated the audience into the folds of her flag-body. The extent to which her flag-body absolved the transgressions of her gendered flesh is startling. Five years later, though Duncan danced many of the same solos wearing the same costume, society’s obsession with moral rectitude conspired with the Red Scare sweeping the nation to reduce her to no more than a “Bolshevik hussy.”⁵³

Duncan did not return to the U.S. after her departure in February 1923, nor did she regain her U.S. citizenship. Under the Cable Women’s Separate Citizenship act, which permitted women to maintain their American citizenship regardless of their marital status, Duncan could apply to become an American again through the naturalization

process.⁵⁴ At the time that she left, however, little love was lost between Duncan and her homeland. Before her ship sailed Duncan, interviewed by *The New York Times*, disparaged America's inability to appreciate her art and decried the treatment she received upon her arrival. "You people don't want art. When I came to give you real art ... I got sent to Ellis Island as a dangerous revolutionary."⁵⁵

Less than two weeks later, the *Times* reported that Duncan's parting remarks led Secretary Davis of the Department of Labor (DOL) to investigate legally and permanently divesting Duncan of her citizenship. The DOL, which oversaw immigration, was satisfied that the naturalization process was rigorous enough. In the *Times* Davis explained that Duncan would need to proceed "in the manner provided for any other alien" by demonstrating her loyalty and moral character. "Unless she can measure up to this standard requirement," Davis continued, "it will be impossible under existing law for her ever to become an American citizen."⁵⁶ Davis's remarks not only publicly stripped Duncan of her legal status but also of her right to claim she was an American. She was officially like "any other alien" who wanted to become a citizen. Petitioning for naturalization would be the only avenue to regaining her lost status, and of proving that she was worthy of being called an American.

Upon the Department of Labor's ruling, the Soviet Minister of Education and Art offered Duncan safe haven in Moscow, where she could obtain Russian citizenship.⁵⁷ Though Duncan returned to Russia to establish a school of her technique, she did not apply for citizenship and left in 1924. Having been allowed to return to France, she remained there until her death in 1927. Though Duncan chose not to officially petition for

U.S. naturalization, she made one last attempt to prove herself American in “I See America Dancing,” a section of her autobiography reprinted posthumously. In this manifesto, she expresses a philosophy that prioritizes the citizen body in motion as evidence of national allegiance, envisioning all young Americans doing their patriotic duty by dancing. While the essay presupposes the citizen body to be white and espouses a racialized and classed nativist logic that pits the spiritual uplift of her work against contemporary bodies moving to the beat of jazz and social dancing, it is worthwhile to note the manner in which Duncan fashions herself. She writes, “I see America dancing, standing with one foot poised on the highest point of the Rockies, her two hands stretched out from the Atlantic to the Pacific, her fine head tossed to the sky, her forehead shining with a Crown of a million stars.”⁵⁸ In this passage Duncan sees herself not merely as American, but as America. In turn, America takes shape in the image of Duncan. She is immense, a titan striding across the country, enabling citizens to rise up and dance wherever her foot falls. Though Duncan died stateless, in her writing she remained, as she had been on March 6, 1917, the one true body of the nation.

Conclusion

“Flagging” suggests an outward mode of communication toward others that hails audiences as citizens to shape a body politic. Alchemized into the one true body of the nation beneath the flag, Duncan offered an unprecedented display of allegiance that night in 1917, a notable shift in the expatriate’s complex, ambivalent relationship to the country of her birth. To this end, as dance scholar Ann Daly notes, the moment

constituted “what was perhaps the grandest gesture of her American career”—a career in which Duncan had lived, toured and traveled peripatetically throughout Europe, Russia and Greece as a cosmopolitan American if not expat since she had left the U.S. in 1899.⁵⁹

In donning the flag, the nation cloaked Duncan’s body yet its power was not diminished. Instead, Duncan’s body metaphorically enlarged to the scale—in size and importance—of the nation. Yet Duncan’s self-flagging was also an intimate act of merging flag and flesh that covered over the artist’s gendered body to form an indisputably “American” second skin. Situating the artist’s flag-wrapped finale within the social and political imbrications of the era engenders a more complex reading of the presumptive agency of the act, making it possible to read it as contingent and polysemous. Duncan’s conjunction of flag and flesh was at once an indication of the efficacy of citizen surveillance and a seemingly unproblematic embodiment of nation, a bold advertisement of her allegiance to her natal land as well as a prophylaxis that provided protection by subsuming her citizen body within a virulently nationalist public sphere. As America, whether by flagging her body that night on March 6, 1917 or through her prose a decade later, Duncan achieved the monumental stature she had sought throughout her career.

3. Intersectional Citizenship: Choreographing the Gaps in Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A with Flags*

Half a century after Duncan's March 1917 performance, choreographer Yvonne Rainer similarly embodied the nation and its citizenry via the metonymic motion of flags and flesh. On November 9, 1970, she and an ensemble of five dancers performed her masterpiece, *Trio A*, draped in American flags—and nothing else. The occasion was the opening of the People's Flag Show, an exhibition at Judson Memorial Church mounted to protest the prosecution of artists for purported flag desecration. Once again the national flag had become central to a contentious debate grounded in U.S. involvement in a war on foreign soil but that quickly spread to also encompassing a broader referendum on the proper conduct of citizens. By whom and how the American flag could be displayed in public and for what purpose—political, artistic or even quotidian—were questions central to this debate.

Like Duncan's *La Marseillaise*, *Trio A with Flags* signaled the choreographer's entanglement with a national zeitgeist featuring the American flag. Rainer's performance complicates Duncan's flagging in fundamental ways; however, in order to foreground a radically different vision of the American people during an era as riven with divisiveness as it was ripe for change.¹ Eschewing Duncan's utopian spectacle of a univocal citizenry, Rainer instead choreographed the shifting semiosis of a continuously moving multiplicity of bodies and flags. In what follows, I argue that *Trio A with Flags* challenges the presumption of consensus evident in Duncan's incorporative body politic with a model of citizenship that theorizes political agency as an *intersectional* transaction between embodied individuals. This mode of intersectionality accounted for the widening gap

between the U.S. nation and its citizens as well as that within a polity that was internally fracturing over U.S. military action in Vietnam and the struggle for recognition and equal rights for African Americans, women and lesbian and gay constituencies. I begin discussing Rainer's choreographic project with *Trio A*, then situate the dance within the local context of the People's Flag Show and the wider context of the latter half of the 1960s. I then conduct a close reading of *Trio A with Flags* using archival film and photographs to theorize it as a model of intersectional citizenship.²

The People's Dance

Trio A is both a signature work of Rainer's minimalist mid-1960s choreography and a landmark in the annals of dance history. Rainer initially conceived the dance as one section of an evening-length ensemble piece for six dancers she began developing in 1965. The trio was thus titled *The Mind is a Muscle, Part I* when it premiered at Judson Church on January 10, 1966. There, Rainer performed it simultaneously alongside David Gordon and Steve Paxton, but not in unison with them. Sound accompaniment consisted of the sharp thwack of three-foot wooden slats (one hundred in all) being dropped by Alex Hay onto the floor from the church choir loft at regular intervals. An approximately four-and-a-half-minute concatenation of balances, extensions, jumps and spins, *Trio A* was unprecedented in its lack of thematic, symbolic, dramatic or musical phrasing. The dance consists of a sequence of discrete actions performed without transitions, pause, accent or affect. Dislodging expectations of expressivity, Rainer choreographed the head so that the dancers look in every direction but at spectators. The unnerving refusal of the

performers to address the audience, combined with the continuous unfolding of unpeated motions and changing facings, directions and levels, creates a dense viewing experience. *Trio A* lasts for the amount of time it takes each dancer to repeat the sequence twice at their own pace which, in turn, is determined by the unhurried execution of each action without character, attitude, sentiment or theatricality. Emphasizing a type of neutral doing, each movement consists of a set of instructions to be performed in “a context of a continuum of energy,” as the program notes for *The Mind is a Muscle* stated.³

Trio A proved remarkably adaptable to various performance settings and configurations of performers as a stand-alone dance. Between its 1966 premiere and the version with flags in November 1970, the dance was staged as a trio, duet, solo and ensemble of fifty, as in *Connecticut Composite* (1969). It was performed by a highly trained ballet dancer, students, non-dancers and by Rainer—shortly after she underwent major surgery on one occasion and wearing tap shoes on another.⁴ It was presented in the New York Library of the Performing Arts, on the street, as part of Angry Arts Week in 1967 and, finally, in two of the six sections of *The Mind is a Muscle* when it premiered at Brandeis University in January 1968.⁵ By then, audience members had become enthusiastic fans of the piece, a far cry from its premiere two years earlier, at which one spectator picked up one of the wood slats, tied a white handkerchief to one end and waved it overhead in mock surrender.⁶ In a letter sent to Rainer a few days after the premiere, New York gallery director John Bernard Myers congratulated her for taking risks. “Whatever ‘difficulties’ there may be in your work for audiences, feel certain that

no other young choreographer (that I know of) is going as *far* or as seriously into the unknown as you are.” Describing the piece as “the most extreme Realism I had ever seen in dance,” Myers conveyed the message the piece itself delivered: ““This is what the body is about.’ The body is cool, or it sweats; it cannot ignore gravity, best give into it. The body leaps; it falls down. We can balance ourselves, but only for a moment or two. The body gets tired. It gets dirty. It gets short of breath . . .”⁷ The body *moved* rather than danced, without disguising the labor entailed in doing so.

When *The Mind is a Muscle* was presented at the Anderson Theater in April 1968, among those present in the audience was dance artist Pat Catterson, who recalls that *Trio A* was electrifying, so much so that following the curtain call those seated in the front rows of the theater climbed on stage to replicate what they could remember of it.⁸ *Trio A* spoke to its audience not only of a new paradigm for dance, but to the concerns of the generation. In a 2009 reflection, Catterson writes that the dance “felt so right for the egalitarian impulse of the times” that she dubbed it “the people’s dance.”⁹ Catterson’s response provides an interesting counterpoint to the artist statement in the program, in which Rainer averred that “just as ideological issues have no bearing on the nature of the work, neither does the tenor of current political and social conditions have any bearing on its execution.”¹⁰ Rainer’s refusal to frame *The Mind is a Muscle* as a political work belies her increasing involvement in antiwar activism during the late 1960s. Attempting to explain her feelings on the distance between her work and “political and social conditions,” Rainer continued in the program note,

The world disintegrates around me. My connection to the world-in-crisis remains tenuous and remote. I can foresee a time when this remoteness

must necessarily end, though I cannot foresee exactly when or how the relationship will change, or what circumstances will incite me to a different kind of action. . . . This statement is not an apology. It is a reflection of a state of mind that reacts with horror and disbelief upon seeing a Vietnamese shot dead on TV—not at the sight of death, however, but at the fact that the TV can be shut off afterwards as after a bad Western.¹¹

Rainer's comments express a dilemma facing many artists at the time who, though wanting to contribute to the political discussion, sensed that art was an inadequate means to effect change in the face of the deadly realities of the Vietnam War. Her horror at the images of these realities, flooding into homes via the televised evening news paled, however, to her disgust at a body politic desensitized to such images. In a review of Angry Arts Week, a weeklong antiwar action that included 500 participating artists, *The Nation* visual art critic Max Kozloff framed the predicament facing artists as peculiar to an American cultural imaginary that separated art and politics in the public sphere. Kozloff further noted that the American people, in addition to having grown apathetic to the war, thought of the artistic avant-garde only as a source of amusement."¹² Kozloff's comments situate artists' participation in the politics of the time through their art within the context of a body politic that scoffed at and ridiculed their efforts.

Rainer's desire to act outweighed her misgivings and by 1970 her choreographic practice was firmly entwined with her activism and teaching. In May, in response to invasion of Cambodia and killings on U.S. campuses, she choreographed *M-Walk*, a silent, swaying funereal march in which forty people in black armbands snaked through the streets of lower Manhattan.¹³ That summer, while teaching at George Washington University in Washington, DC, Rainer demanded that a huge banner reading "Why are

we in Vietnam?” be hung in the gymnasium where she was developing material with students for her large-scale, sprawling antiwar improvisation, *WAR*. These activities evidence not only Rainer’s politicization, but also the increasing convergence of protest and performance taking place within the New York art world.

Burning the Nation

Rainer had been invited to participate in the People’s Flag Show (PFS) by Jon Hendricks, who had organized the exhibition with Jean Toche, his partner in the art activist collective Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG), and visual artist Faith Ringgold. In an egalitarian display of participatory democracy, Hendricks, Toche and Ringgold accepted artwork from professional artists and non-artists alike. By the exhibition opening, nearly two hundred paintings, sculptures and intermedia works filled the church sanctuary. The purpose of the exhibition was twofold. In general, it was intended to promote First Amendment rights of artists to use the American flag or its design without threat of arrest. Specifically, the goal was to raise funds for the legal defense of gallerist Stephen Radich, who had been convicted of “casting contempt” on the flag.

Radich’s legal woes began in 1966 (the same year that Rainer premiered *Trio A*) when he displayed a sculpture titled *The United States Flag in a Yellow Noose* in the second-story window of his uptown Manhattan gallery to advertise an exhibition by artist and former Marine Marc Morrel. Morrel’s solo show consisted of thirteen constructions, biomorphic shapes formed out of knotted and stuffed U.S. flags that the artist then proceeded to encase in chains, crucify or lynch. Though abstracted, the soft sculptures

and Morrel's treatment of them resembled human bodies, producing a statement that spoke to the sacrifice of national ideals as well as human lives that the Vietnam War had wrought. A soundtrack of antiwar songs reinforced the protest message.¹⁴ The window display caught the attention of a beat cop on the street below, however, and within two weeks of the exhibition's opening, the gallerist was arrested and convicted under the New York State penal code. (Morrel fled the country before he could be arrested.) Igniting a national controversy on the issue of free speech, the case against Radich was the first flag desecration trial pertaining to its use for artistic purposes. The assistant district attorney prosecuting Radich's case argued that Morrel's flag desecration would incite people to "riot and strike" due to the three-dimensionality of his sculptures, which made them more "real." And since viewers might want to touch the sculptures, Morrel's work was especially "more likely to arouse public wrath."¹⁵ This argument compelled the court to find Radich guilty and sentence him to sixty days in jail or the payment of a \$500 fine.¹⁶

Morrel's violent manipulation of the flag bodies and the resulting legal case against his gallerist was indicative of the American flag's primacy as a powerful yet contested symbol during the 1960s. A prevalent motif in antiwar posters and graphics, the flag also was an essential aspect of work by artists addressing civil rights. PFS organizer Faith Ringgold, who used the flag motif to critique racial inequity in the United States, averred that the flag was "the only truly subversive and revolutionary abstraction one can paint."¹⁷ After the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Act in 1964 and 1965, however, the civil rights movement underwent an internal schism as the Black Power movement gained traction.¹⁸ The mid-1960s civil rights legislation also had a direct

impact on immigration reform by prohibiting discrimination based on national origin or race. Public opinion supported eradicating the last vestiges of racial discrimination that the national origins quota system, in place since 1924, represented. The Immigration Act of 1965 diversified the American polity by expanding total legal immigration figures and, in particular, increasing the percentage of immigrants arriving from Latin America, West Indies, Asia and Africa. The cumulative effect of new immigration policies was that the U.S., as historian Aristide Zolberg writes, became “the first nation to mirror humanity.”¹⁹ Parallel to the shifting demographic make up of the American people, various political constituencies aligned against the Vietnam War as part of a broad, worldwide resistance to militarism, colonialism and nuclear technologies during the late 1960s. In “Soldier-Citizen,” Deborah E. Cowen argues that these alliances made a direct connection between the cost of war abroad and social rights at home. Characterizing these social movements as comprised of “the very groups cast as dependents and outside of normative citizenship,” Cowen clarifies that antiwar, feminist and civil rights activists mobilized en masse to “demilitarize” citizenship and redistribute citizenship rights and entitlements.²⁰

In turn, the U.S. flag came to represent a nation that had lost its moral compass. Summarizing the attitude of a war-weary generation, Catterson recollects that the American flag had become nothing more than “a garish symbol of violence and all that was wrong with this country and government.”²¹ Todd Gitlin, sociologist and political historian of the era, reiterated this sentiment in a 2005 essay.

The war went on so long and so destructively, it felt like more than the consequence of a wrongheaded policy. My country must have been revealing some deep core of wrongness by going on, and on, with an

indefensible horror. I was implicated because the terrible war was wrapped in my flag—or what had been my flag.²²

Gitlin had been on the frontlines of the 1960s free speech and antiwar protest movements. As president of the Students for Democratic Society (SDS), one of the leading organizations of the New Left, he helped organize the first major antiwar demonstration after the bombing of North Vietnam and President Lyndon B. Johnson's commitment of more U.S. military ground forces in 1965. Yet the personal sense of betrayal he articulates was shared by a broad spectrum of Americans who had become disillusioned with the nation's role in Vietnam. By 1968, the bloodiest year of the war, national polls indicated that seventy-five percent of the population considered military involvement in Vietnam to be not merely wrong but unjust and deeply immoral.²³

Unlike the quashing of dissent during World War I, the government could not deter the antiwar movement, even as President Nixon reached out to a “silent majority” of Americans he believed supported the war. The movement spread across a range of constituencies: college students, civil rights leaders, members of labor unions and middle-class suburbanites. As the movement gained momentum in the late 1960s, trampling upon, mutilating and especially burning the flag became prevalent tactics to register dissent. According to federal law, the proper treatment of a flag that has become old, tattered and unacceptable for hoisting is to burn it.²⁴ Flag burning inverted this etiquette as a statement on exactly how unacceptable the nation for which the flag stood had become. Art historian Alfred Boime ties the rise in flag burning to the government-sanctioned use of napalm, an incendiary defoliant, in Vietnam and the indiscriminate

killing of Vietnamese people that resulted from its use. To protest the burning of people in the name of the nation, then, the nation was symbolically burned.²⁵

Vernacular performances of patriotism and dissent flourished as well, as both hawks and doves adorned clothing with flag patches to assert their position. Veteran and civic associations, banks, gas stations and businesses distributed flag decals with the admonishment to “fly it proudly”; cities across the nation required law enforcement officers to put the American flag on uniforms and cars alike.²⁶ Those who did not support the war signaled a silent protest by wearing flag patches on the back pocket of their jeans or upside down as an indication that the nation was in distress. In response, authorities across the U.S. instigated a crackdown on acts of purported defilement of the flag, defining these so broadly that even a seemingly minor infraction such as wearing a flag patch on a pair of jeans could land someone in jail. Conservative groups such as the Flag Foundation decried the use of the flag for dissent, stating, “the American flag is so high above everything—it’s on a pedestal—that nothing can touch it.”²⁷ The proliferating use of the flag as a sign of protest rather than pride compelled Congress to pass the first federal law to prohibit abuse of the national flag in 1968.²⁸ Protestors, however, contended that the American flag, like the democratic nation for which it stood, belonged to all of its people; if it could be used to demonstrate support for the war, then it also should be permissible to deploy the flag to protest the war. Otherwise, as flyers for the People’s Flag Show stated, “a flag that does not belong to the people to do as they see fit should be burned and forgotten.”²⁹ This line of argumentation indicates that the battle

over the flag was as much about who constituted “the people”—and thus who could use the flag—as it was about the war.

By 1970 the media lamented the culture war over the American flag, which had become a tragic icon, a widespread emblem of disunity and a tool of violence among the American people.³⁰ That year, *New York State v. Stephen Radich* reached the Supreme Court of the United States and was a cause célèbre in the art world.³¹ Five years after Johnson’s commitment to the war and five years before the fall of Saigon, 1970 was also a climactic year for the fight to end the war.³² The largest student strike the nation had yet seen took place in cities across the nation in response to President Nixon’s announcement of U.S. troops entering Cambodia on April 30. The shooting of student demonstrators at Kent State University by the National Guard on May 4 further inflamed activists, whose mistrust of their government seemed increasingly warranted.³³ That summer, Museum of Modern Art curator Kynaston L. McShine framed these suspicions in a catalogue essay for the exhibition *Information* by comparing the social and political situation in democratic America to that of repressive states in Latin America. “If you are an artist in Brazil, you know of at least one friend who is being tortured; if you are one in Argentina, you probably have had a neighbor who has been in jail. . . ; and if you are living in the United States, you may fear that you will be shot at, either in the universities, in your bed, or more formally in Indochina.”³⁴ Folding together the deaths at Kent State and the assassination of Fred Hampton, Illinois chairman of the Black Panther Party, with the “more formally” state-sanctioned killing of service men in Vietnam, McShine acknowledged that the politicality of the moment was unavoidable for American artists.

Intersectional Citizenship

The opening of the People's Flag Show was expected to be, as one participating artist recalls, "one of the most important antiwar art events in history."³⁵ The festivities began at five p.m. with a flag-burning ceremony in the church courtyard³⁶ and concluded with the Symposium on Repression, which featured speakers from the Black Panther Party, the Gay Liberation Front and Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman, wearing a flag-design shirt similar to the one for which he had been convicted of flag desecration in 1968.³⁷ At six-thirty p.m., Rainer and the ensemble—Barbara (Lloyd) Dilley, David Gordon, Nancy Green, Steve Paxton and Lincoln Scott—entered a cleared space amidst the paintings and sculptures that littered the church's main sanctuary. Neither separated by a proscenium arch nor the illusion-producing distance of a large theatrical hall, such as the Met stage provided Duncan, the dancers performed on the same level as, and in close proximity to, the crowd in attendance. In turn, spectators were provided with a 360-degree view of the field of bodies and flags in motion, as well as one another. As a primary symbol of the national collective, a flag is raised up high on flagpoles in order to be visible by all. Investigating the totemic magic of the American flag, Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingleargue for the cosmological significance of its elevation. Raised high into the sky, the flag forms "a border, the point of crossover from human to divine, from profane to sacred, from center to periphery."³⁸ Whereas the raised stage of the Met maintained this hierarchy by positioning Duncan's flag-body above and at a remove from her audience, the informality of the in-the-round performance at Judson Church consigned the American flag to the same plane as the people it claims to represent. By bringing the flag

down from its revered, elevated status, it became a quotidian object in service to the people.

After dispersing to different locations at the edge of the loosely demarcated performance space, each dancer tied a three- by five-foot flag around their neck like a lobster bib, undressed, and began to dance *Trio A*.³⁹ In contrast to the metrically regimented French and American anthems to which Duncan danced, Rainer choreographed “the people” as a silent moving mass of individuals, who, even when stripped bare and covered in identical U.S. flags, proceeded to follow distinctly individual paths. Extant film of the performance shows almost a blur of intersecting angles of limbs and bodily positions as each of the six dancers map out separate spatial trajectories. At times, the dancers peregrinations converge or diverge without apparent directional adjustments. Similarly, the dancers fall in and out of synchronicity with one another in an unexpected, happenstance manner as they proceed according to their own tempo. Distinct movements echo across the space, from one body to the next; flashes of unison appear suddenly but evaporate just as quickly. The vision of order these chance temporal and spatial alignments provide within an otherwise unruly, decentralized performance is fleeting, a spectral memory of the possibility of order rather than its instantiation.

As a dance of the actual, *Trio A* insists upon the physical presence of the bodies that dance it as well as its specific performance context. Notably, the stiff, heavy flags perform as well, as they move with or against the dancers’ bodies according to the swings and lunges of the choreography—waving to and fro to reveal or alternately hide their

nudity like the curtain at a peep show. In Rainer's body politic, however, citizen bodies appear defenseless, differentiated by particularities that extend beyond gender or race. Instead of Duncan's allegorical singularity of the nation embodied as a heroic white woman, Rainer's dance feature a heterogeneous group of obviously gendered, racialized bodies: male and female, tall and short, black, white, smooth and hairy. The dancers' bodies are seen in all their exposed particularity. Archival photographs of the performance capture the material peculiarities of each. In one, the flag's swaying motion reveals a lengthy surgical scar running vertically down Rainer's abdomen. Another photo catches the contrast between the taut skin stretching over Steve Paxton's gaunt ribcage and his hirsute underarms as he arcs his arms above his head. The ensemble's nudity graphically foregrounds the plurality of bodies comprising the American body politic. Contrary to its connotation of invincibility, the flag's independent motion provides insufficient coverage for each dancer, further demonstrating the administration's inadequacies at protecting its citizenry.

The continuous baring and concealing of private parts and corporeal secrets of these flag-waving bodies speaks of a citizenry acutely aware of its vulnerability to a government that had opened fire on its citizens. Further, the dance's enchainment of continuously shifting movements enacts a form of erratic flag-waving that provides a compelling metaphor for citizen activism. Instead of flags fluttering gently against stationary flagpoles, the bodies in motion impel the flags to wave in a striking reminder that the nation for which the flag stands depends on the actions of its citizens, even—or especially—their mundane everyday motions. These flags are tied on over the dancers'

clothing, rather than revealed as a second, national skin beneath a costume, as with Duncan's flag. The dancers temporarily adopt the flag's power even as they infer that they could just as easily remove the flags. The continual motion of bodies and flags echo the volatile relationship of the people to the government while acknowledging that the people could still be implicated in its power. As the flags continue to move independently of the ensemble's naked bodies, sometimes going with and sometimes in opposition to their movement, the dance demonstrates a changing body politic as well as the nation-state's inability to cover and protect it.

Fig. 3.1 *Trio A People's Flag Show*, group shot with Yvonne Rainer and David Gordon in foreground, 1970. Photograph © Estate of Peter Moore / VAGA, New York. Available for viewing at The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2006.M.24).

Trio A's unfolding sequence of uninflected movement inscribes an alternative vision of collectivity grounded in the materiality of citizen bodies intersecting in real time and space. In contrast to the fantasy of incorporation into the nation promulgated in Duncan's *Marseillaise*, the body politic of *Trio A with Flags* is produced by the contiguous relationality of individuals. Yet the dance is more than a set of simultaneously performed solos. The veneer of visual chaos belies the subtle kinetic accommodations of the six dancers, who never bump into one another, regardless of their frequent proximity. Remaining acutely sensitive to each other's presence, they make incremental adjustments to directional orientations, movement patterns and timing to adapt to the flux and flow of the group. This would have been particularly challenging for the performance context of the exhibition opening. For example, each performer must begin *Trio A* by facing to the

side, in profile to the audience, then finish facing upstage, away from the audience. During the eight to nine minutes in between, dancers remain in continuous motion without the benefit of a common horizon by which to orient themselves in relation to the audience or one another.

Fig. 3.2 *Trio A People's Flag Show*, Lincoln Scott and Barbara Dilley, 1970. Photograph © Estate of Peter Moore / VAGA, New York. Available for viewing at The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2006.M.24).

The transecting flag-bodies of *Trio A with Flags* offered an alternative model to the either/or polarities of a body politic divided not only by their position on the war but by the dismantling of prior sociocultural norms and the ongoing struggle for equal rights for all American citizens. An indication of this can be seen in a photograph that captures the productive intersectionality when flagged bodies crossed paths. Barbara Dilley, a petite, white woman stands with her arms raised and spread wide out to each side, her head turned so that she is seen in profile. Dilley occupies the right foreground of the picture while Lincoln Scott, a much taller, African American man, can be seen behind and to the left of Dilley. Scott is just beginning to lift his arms up and out; his head is turned in profile, toward Dilley. In the configuration captured by the photographer, Dilley appears to be reaching expansively toward Scott across the distance that separates them. Together, the dancers' bodies create one the flag, with Dilley's white stars on blue cohering with Scott's red and white stripes, but only for a moment before their paths diverge again. The fleeting exchange between Dilley and Scott indicates that intersecting bodies can at least temporarily achieve alliance, if not consensus.

Ten days after the Judson Flag Show opening, Rainer included *Trio A with Flags* in a concert presented by Yvonne Rainer and Group at the Smithsonian Museum of History and Technology in Washington, DC. There, however, museum officials excised the dance from the program after seeing Paxton rehearsing it in the buff. In Rainer's 2006 autobiography, *Feelings are Facts*, Paxton recalled the incident was less a result of "righteous censorship" as it was due to what he termed "wobbly just-in-case censorship." For Paxton, who was scheduled to perform *Trio A with Flags* as a solo in an area of the museum beneath the torn and tattered Flag of 1812, the latter was by far more insidious, because it was preemptive, "only occurring to erase possible ambiguity."⁴⁰ Whether or not Paxton's nudity might be interpreted as an act of flag desecration, the Smithsonian argued that its actions were necessary due to its status as a publicly funded institution. In the end a compromise was reached in which Paxton danced *Trio A* while flagged and clothed. In turn, the dancers were allowed to hold a post-performance discussion with the audience to explain how Rainer had intended for the dance to be seen.

A few weeks afterward, Jean Battey Lewis, who had reviewed the concert for *The Washington Post*, revisited the matter. After summarizing both sides of the controversy for her readership, Lewis disputed Rainer's remarks during the discussion that her goal was to defuse the stigma of the naked body. The reporter concluded that, given the museum's location in the seat of the nation's government and the specific choice to perform the solo directly in front of the historic nineteenth-century flag—the very one that inspired Francis Scott Key to compose the *Star Spangled Banner*⁴¹—Rainer intended Paxton's performance of *Trio A with Flags* to be a symbolic attack on the status quo of

national culture.⁴² During November and December, Rainer included *Trio A with Flags* in her epic *WAR*, in which the American flag was used as an object of desire in an elaborate, improvised game of capture the flag among thirty people. In January 1971, she inserted it into her ongoing improvisation project, *Continuous Performance-Altered Daily (CP-AD)* for a fundraising concert to benefit the Black Panther Party's legal defense fund.⁴³ Since then, the nude version of *Trio A* has been staged only once, at a fundraiser for Judson Church in 1999 in which the dancers were willing to strip down only as far as their underwear.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Rainer's vision of a social and political structure in which individual bodies intersect while engaged in simultaneous and contiguous labor provided a template for the improvisation-based collective Grand Union. Comprised of like-minded choreographers and performers with whom Rainer had been working on *Continuous Project-Altered Daily (CP-AD)* throughout 1969, the group began presenting events under the aegis of Grand Union in the fall of 1970. In addition to the sextet who performed at the People's Flag Show—Dilley, Gordon, Green, Paxton, Rainer and Scott—members of Grand Union included Becky Arnold, Trisha Brown and Douglas Dunn.

CP-AD had been a performance frame in which set choreography by Rainer, including *Trio A*, mingled freely with an array of tasks designed to encourage improvisational interactions between the performers. Rainer provided options and rules but allowed the performers to decide when components occurred during the event. The

piece also blurred distinctions between rehearsal and performance with segments that involved Rainer teaching new movement sections during performances. An outcome of her interest in developing opportunities for spontaneous behavior in performance without sacrificing choreographic intentions, *CP-AD* evolved in a manner that required Rainer to increasingly relinquish control to other performers. The results, as she wrote to the other members of the group in late 1969, were worth it. Characterizing her experience of a concert she stated, “I got a glimpse of human behavior that my dreams for a better life are based on—real, complex, constantly in flux, rich, concrete, funny, focused, immediate, specific, intense, serious at times to the point of religiosity, light, diaphanous, silly, and many leveled at any particular moment.”⁴⁵ Many of these words and phrases—real, complex, constantly in flux, concrete, immediate, specific, many leveled at any particular moment—aptly describe *Trio A with Flags*. Though Rainer worked with Grand Union for only two years, the group fostered a collaborative ethos to create improvisation-based works that prized the potential of what might happen when everyday citizens intersect in shared time and space, an ethos that lasted until it disbanded in 1976.

In this chapter, I have argued that Rainer’s *Trio A with Flags* proposes a model of citizenship that is intersectional: the contiguity of materially specific bodies provides a model of political agency and belonging based on intersecting temporal and spatial axes. Collectivity is obtained chronotopically, through the communicative exchanges that occur between bodies coinciding within a co-created field of action. Foregrounding the material and specific through the juxtaposition of flags and flesh, the dance particularized the abstract, idealized citizen subject with an ensemble of dancers who offer a vision of a

pluralistic body politic comprised of individuated embodied citizens differentiated not only by racialization and gender but also by age, experience, tempo and spatial routes. In bringing the flag down to the same level as the dancers and audience, *Trio A with Flags* insisted on a nation-state that was equal to its citizens, rather than a superior entity into which they were incorporated.

In addition to eschewing the model of incorporation Duncan danced in March 1917, Rainer's *Trio A with Flags* demonstrated that the nation was not only a site of legitimation, as it had been for prior generations of modern dancers, but a site of critique. Whereas Duncan staked a claim to political and social legitimacy by donning the flag, Rainer challenged the nation's capacity to censor and repress the people by choreographing a nonhierarchical relationship between flags and bodies. The continuous revelation of bodies by the flags' independent motion challenged Duncan's representation of herself/her body as a living symbol while also critiquing the government's ability to protect its citizens. The performance of *Flag/Trio A* in November 1970 also eschewed the means Duncan used to express her vision: the metaphorical correspondence between the lyrics of the French national anthem and the narrative of the solo; a charismatic performing personae, climactic phrasing and, with her flagging, turning to nationalist theatrical spectacle. Instead Rainer's *Trio A with Flags* emphasized the materiality of actual bodies moving in a manner that abjured spectacle. In the following chapters, I turn to the twenty-first century to investigate three different performance modalities—performance installation, intermedia choreography and guerrilla street action—by artists

who propose radically different models of citizenship and present distinct critiques of the American nation-state.

4. Contaminative Citizenship: Surveilling Global Bodies in Rajni Shah's *Dinner with America*

Jamaican-born artist Nari Ward's large-scale sculpture *Glory* (2004) is designed to make an impression. Occupying a place of prominence in the 2006 Whitney Biennial, the oversized assemblage, like Ward's oeuvre in general, makes use of found objects and the detritus of daily life. For *Glory* Ward combined three battered oil barrels, laid end to end and split in half lengthwise; ultraviolet and fluorescent lighting tubes; and Plexiglas plates etched with a stars and stripes motif to create a fully functioning tanning bed that would imprint the American flag onto the user's skin. Gallery viewers who approached the assemblage could hear the faint sounds of an English-language training program for parrots emanating from its interior. Within the terms of the sculpture, the United States operates as an apparatus of affective identification and proper citizen embodiment. Advertising the next level of patriotic display, beyond pinning, draping, raising or pasting the U.S. flag on clothing, homes, office buildings and various modes of transportation, *Glory* functions as a satirical take on the overflow of hypernationalist fervor that dominated the public sphere in the aftermath of 9/11. Even if, as Ward implies, the use of his tanning bed amounts to little more than the "parroting" of learnt behavior, its effects, inscribed on the skin, broadcast one's allegiance by transforming the user into a mobile, human American flag.

Ward's piece also can be read as a playful yet trenchant inversion of a popular image that circulated on the Internet in the months prior to the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, a photograph in which a blonde and buxom "all-American" woman, clad in a stars-and-stripes patterned bikini and matching high heels, posed provocatively

atop a huge, four-wheel-drive truck. The message splashed across the top of the photograph read, “WE *Totally* NEED THEIR OIL.” By transforming actual oil barrels into a tanning bed, Ward calls out rampant U.S. oil consumption both by individuals and by the state. He also formulates a critique of the United States’ neoimperial presence in the Middle East with an object lesson on how America’s energy consumption has led to the branding of its ideologies into the flesh of citizens around the world. For nations deemed as failing or illegitimate regimes by the Bush administration, such as Iraq, the healthy glow of U.S.-style democracy was just the cure. Like an actual tanning bed, however, *Glory* infers a darker side of the panacea promulgated by U.S. foreign policy in the twenty-first century, evident in the pathogenic marks left on a body as a result of exposure. Ward’s invented technology to brand the body with the U.S. flag is analogous to the outline of a “three-piece suit” (a restraint consisting of a body belt with hand-shackles and an attached chain connected to leg irons) imprinted on the skin of detainees at Guantanamo Bay’s Camp Delta; piece takes note of the indelible inscription of the United States on citizens around the world.¹

Ward’s *Glory* provides an apt introduction to Rajni Shah and the other twenty-first century artists to whom I now turn. This chapter examines Shah’s performance installation *Dinner with America* (2008), a durational work in which Shah contends with the fact that to be a citizen anywhere in the contemporary moment is to be subject to the surveillant assemblage of the U.S. security state. Thus far, I have argued that Duncan and Rainer’s choreographies propose two very different concepts of citizenship. I began by theorizing Duncan’s laudatory assessment of the U.S. in the performance of her *La*

Marseillaise solo and flag-wrapped encore on March 6, 1917, as an example of incorporative citizenship; arguing that Duncan's symbolic integration of the audience proposes a model of political membership made possible only by the complete assimilation of individual citizen subjects into the seamless totality of the nation-state. Rainer's 1970 ensemble dance *Trio A with Flags* problematized Duncan's idealized allegory with choreography that models relationality and collectivity as intersectional. The contiguity of specific and different bodies provides an alternative model of political agency and belonging based within co-incidental temporal and spatial axes.

In the twenty-first century, Shah and the artists I examine in ensuing chapters contend with a radically different understanding of the social and political subject within conditions of possibility that are substantively different from Duncan and Rainer's. For example, whereas Duncan's incorporative model of citizenship was of a piece with the conditions of possibility and constraint in an era defined by a war that came to be called the Great War; so, too, did Rainer's intersectional citizenship respond to the reviled moral and political failure of the Vietnam War. Yet, as previously discussed, warfare in the age of the IED is neither a temporally or spatially framed event, but an ongoing, amorphous state of mutable goals and shifting borders.

This chapter addresses a key component of the present era by situating an analysis of Shah's *Dinner with America* within the scopic regime of the U.S. security state's comprehensive surveillant assemblage. This assemblage has been designed and developed in order to identify potential threats to the U.S. preemptively. Guided by a confidence in technology to locate anybody anywhere, it seeks to eradicate anxieties

provoked by any specular ambiguity of citizen corporeality. It divides the world not simply into “us” versus “them,” but into the U.S., proto- or simulated U.S. and a capacious, elastic category that includes anyone deemed “foreign” by American military, intelligence or security forces. I argue that Shah positions herself as an object of the U.S. surveillant gaze in *Dinner with America*. I read the piece for the manner in which Shah interrogates America as an unappeasable desire, an ideological demand and a global prosthetic eye that tracks citizen bodies around the world (what I refer to as global bodies) to contend that her work provides a model of the twenty-first century citizen as always already constructed as a foreign body, *contaminative* to the security of the U.S.

The National Body of Marilyn Monroe

Contrary to its title, *Dinner with America* does not feature food, at least not until dessert is served in a communal feast following the performance. Instead, Shah focuses on hunger of a different sort in this three-part, color-coded work. In the first section Shah animates America as an object of unattainable desire in the figure of a glamorous platinum blonde—America, it appears, is Marilyn Monroe. Over the course of the following two hours Shah complicates and contests this image as she sheds layers of clothing in a striptease that ultimately will leave the artist standing naked before the audience. In contrast to the flag bodies discussed thus far, Shah does not use an actual American flag, as Duncan and Rainer’s troupe had done. Branded as American like the spectral body that haunts *Glory*, Shah’s conjunction of flag and flesh elides even the motif of stars and stripes used in Ward’s sculpture. Indeed, the U.S. flag does not appear

as a flag. Instead, Shah disassembles the flag as object and icon into its component colors. Located amidst a continuously rearranged *mise en scène*, Shah stands beneath an overhead light that saturates her skin alternately in the red, white and blue of the United States flag.² Neither waved nor waving, unfurled or furled; the American flag is fractured as sign and object. This deconstruction of the flag ruptures its symbolic force as a stand-in for “the people” or territorially bound nation-state. As the piece progresses, however, it becomes clear that the seemingly innocuous, ambient light that illuminates the artist also fixes her within its high beam as an object of surveillance. The flag-body she inhabits in *Dinner with America* thus positions America as an inescapable force of subjection not only on those within its borders, but also on those who live beyond.

Shah’s art practice has been described as “fluidly various” and “fugitive” in its disciplinary catholicism for the manner in which it stitches together various media.³ Though her career has been one of a solo live-art practitioner, the majority of Shah’s work has been created in collaboration with other live and/or visual, theater, dance, film or music artists. *Dinner with America* is the central section of a trilogy Shah has produced with filmmaker Lucy Cash and visual artist Lucille Acevedo-Jones that began in 2005 with the acclaimed and widely seen *Mr. Quiver* and concluded with *Glorious* (2011), which the group completed touring in 2012. In each of these interdisciplinary works, Shah employs visual spectacle to investigate the anxieties and exigencies of geopolitical structures in the twenty-first century and the subjects that inhabit them. In *Mr. Quiver* Shah embodied British and South Asian stereotypes such as Queen Elizabeth on the one hand, and a Hindu bride on the other, to interrogate gender, power and the cultural

bifocality of diasporic citizenship for the postcolonial subject.⁴ *Glorious*, a three-act musical, contemplates questions of place and collective identification beyond the national form. The musical provides the scaffolding for interaction with local musicians and community participants who work with Shah and her collaborators to fashion it anew by “dismantling, reinventing and re-assembling the raw material of the show,” as Shah has written, in a matter of just a few weeks.⁵ The outcome of this process is a production that belongs to its locale, speaking not only to, but of and about each town or village and its residents.

Wedged between Shah’s autobiographically inflected retrospection on Britain’s colonial project in *Mr. Quiver* and the communitarian localism of *Glorious*, *Dinner with America* offers a meditation on the United States as a transnationally circulating cultural, econo-political, military force that surveils citizen subjectivity around the world. As the center of the trilogy, the piece brings together key strategies from the other pieces. Like *Mr. Quiver*, it combines a visually striking *mise en scène* with an incisive critique of imperial ambition. Yet, akin to *Glorious*, the piece sets up conditions for audience interaction in its scenic environment to emphasize America as a shared fantasy. Between its inception in 2006 and when Shah stopped touring the piece in 2009, *Dinner with America* was performed in-progress and in final form at more than ten locations in Britain and Spain and took shape in various other media: as a limited edition series of photographs of red-white-and-blue light sculptures by Acevedo-Jones; a series of short films by Cash; Shah’s performance-for-camera collaborations with photographer Manuel Vason and Cash; a book comprising Vason’s photographs, excerpts from Shah’s project

diary and commentary by various arts writers; and a series of interviews Shah conducted with thirty-two artists and activists during a residency in Atlanta, Georgia, that subsequently developed into the soundscape for the piece.⁶ Throughout its development and touring, *Dinner with America* was predominantly performed in black box theaters stripped bare of scrims, curtains and lighting equipment. In November 2008 the version of *Dinner with America* that Shah considers definitive premiered at the Laban Centre in London at the start of a national tour.⁷

In order to get to the performance installation at the Laban Centre, audiences entered the theater but passed through its rows of seating and into a backstage hallway where circular arrangements of red, white and blue fluorescent lights fanned out on the floor like exploding fireworks in a fourth of July night sky. There they were stopped at a backstage entrance by a woman who stapled a small round Buttermint Cream candy enfolded in red-white-and-blue cellophane to the person's clothing, a tiny reminder of America's promise of sweetness that, much like a sticky sweet forgotten in a purse or pocket, is carried everywhere and difficult to remove. Since one had to be tagged to enter the performance space, this opening gesture indicates that identification with America may not be mandatory but is often unavoidable. An ambient recording fills the air with the sound of voices offering various definitions of America, a term that proves vexing and hopeful, embarrassing or inspiring. The clipped precision of adult voices as well as the musical, digressive rambling of children can be heard respectively in resonant bass tones and higher tonal registers. Taken together, the anonymous voices reveal a spectrum of affective investment in America as a place, a concept and world superpower. A

stentorian voice inflected with the lyrical accent of a native Spanish speaker declares that America is “a fiction invented by the Europeans . . . a misspelled Italian word . . . an attempt to unify a hybrid and complex entity.” Another voice admits to being ashamed of America and its contemporary global military footprint. A child hems and haws pensively, considering what he thinks about his country before triumphantly declaring, “Freedom!” And then, “corn dogs!”⁸ Over the course of the performance, additional voices chime in with various definitions of, doubts about, nostalgia for what America once was or hope for what it might be until this *vox populi* merges into a cacophonous wall of sound.⁹

Onstage, spectators must negotiate a maze of bark-chip mulch and unlit fluorescent light tubes stretching across the expansive space. Wending through its rows in the semi-darkened space to stand against a far wall or sit between the furrows, the audience is immediately implicated in the terrain of the piece. The maze yokes the United States as territory to America as an ideology of illuminating democracy for the world. Foreshadowing the prevailing logic of the piece, in which each audience member must devise her or his own way through the layers of imagery that ensue, the dirt and lighting tubes also present a synecdoche of the nation-state according to binaries of light and dark, illumination and shadow, goodness and evil. At the far side of the space a motionless figure stands, shrouded in a semi-transparent sheath resembling a plastic garment bag. The only light in the performance space is a bright light positioned directly above this figure. Though only partially visible beneath the pearly translucence of her zippered veil, the silhouette of a womanly figure can be seen in a full-length white ball gown that spills

out into the maze in voluminous swirls. Rising up out of eddies of white fabric she resembles a gift waiting to be unwrapped from the tissue recesses of its box. Positioned as if on display in a shop window, seemingly motionless, she stands with one hand resting delicately atop a hip, her head tilted down and obliquely to the right.

Incrementally, the form comes to life, unfolds her crooked elbow and peels down the zipper. She emerges from her cocoon at a glacial pace while humming *sotte voce* (more to herself than those around her), letting it fall around her ankles while she resumes her pose. She stares off aloofly, her eyes unfocused, but welcomes the gaze of the audience. While continuing to hum under her breath, Shah keeps one hand on her hip she twists around to look at the audience over her shoulder, shifting languidly moving from one fashion model pose to another as if in a slow-motion photo shoot while maintaining an aloof but alluring countenance. To these she occasionally adds an arm gesture redolent with associations. A straight arm repeatedly raised high is suggestive of the Statue of Liberty. Then Shah clenches her hand into a fist and, lowering her head, the gesture resolves into the memorable image of Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos raising a Black Power salute at the 1968 Summer Olympics. Despite the iconographic turbulence created by some conjunctions of poses and gestures, Shaw assiduously articulates each as she moves gracefully from one to the next, all the while maintaining the impassive face and averted gaze of a woman accustomed to being gazed upon.

It is at this point that the full impact of Shah's dazzling whiteness is unleashed. The form-fitting dress, cinched at the waist with a matching belt, is paired with snowy white mid-length gloves; platinum blonde hair spills down around her shoulders; and her

pale skin appears all the more startling beneath the stark white illumination. Shah's face is as alabaster smooth and as drained of color as a marble statue. As a flag body, she is unremittingly white with inflections of the flag's blue and red colors only visible in the blue contacts and cherry red lipstick she wears. This citizen subject appears overexposed beneath the overhead light, disappearing in a phantasm of feminine beauty *qua* whiteness. To consider her as Marilyn Monroe is not altogether accurate. Less of a replica than an approximation of the blond bombshell, Shah is Marilyn, yet not. She is at once an iconic body available for the audience's scopophilic pleasure as well as an amalgamation of normative gender associations—naïve ingénue, virgin bride, fashion model, Barbie, Madonna—in an immaculate vision of all-American, middle-class, blonde femininity.

Monroe remains an apposite connotation, however. Known for her sexual appeal, voluptuous figure and extravagant “presence,” Monroe remains within the American imaginary as a cultural phenomenon and, as Anne Cheng writes, “the very prototype of the idea of beauty.”¹⁰ Like Monroe, who was nicknamed “the Body” by the press, Shah offers a female figure whose most prominent feature is her willingness to avail her body to the audience's gaze. In *The Explicit Body of Performance*, feminist performance scholar Rebecca Schneider argues that the body gendered as female is always already structured as a “site and sign of insatiable desire” within the culture of U.S. commodity capitalism.¹¹ Film and cultural studies theorist Richard Dyer offers a different perspective by noting that film stars are self-made commodities, simultaneously the labor that produces the image and the image itself.¹² For Dyer, this labor of self-construction sutures female gender norms to the equally culturally constructed category of race. The

imbrication of racializing and gendering regimes has been a rich site of theoretical excavation for scholars of performance, literary and cultural studies. I turn to Dyer in particular for his work on Monroe in relation to the interconstitution of gender and racial formations.



Fig. 4.1 Rajni Shah in *Dinner with America*, 2008. Photograph by Manuel Vason.

In his seminal 1988 article “White,” Dyer theorizes whiteness as simultaneously everything and yet not any one specific thing due to its capacity to colonize normativity

yet remain unmarked behind or subsumed within definitions of other norms such as class, gender, sexuality and nationality. After foregrounding the logic of whiteness in three disparate film genres, Dyer closes the article by considering how the image Monroe parlayed both on and off screen was not only the epitome of feminine desirability but also an indelibly white one in a racial system of representation in which white women “are constructed as the apotheosis of desirability, all that a man could want, yet nothing that can be had, nor anything that a woman can be.”¹³ In this quote, Dyer applies his definition of racial whiteness as everything-and-nothing to female gendering to conclude that the combination creates an ideal that, like desire itself, is beyond having or being. Dyer elaborates on the production of racial whiteness instantiated by the conventions of mid-century Hollywood film lighting, which were developed on and for white women, in order to endow them with a heavenly aura. More than with other women stars, Dyer writes, Monroe was made to disappear “as flesh and blood” in the everything-and-nothing of the standard “high key” lighting of film.¹⁴ In *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, Dyer further theorizes Monroe’s wide and lasting popular appeal in the U.S. according to the equation of her very name with sexuality during the 1950s. Examining her image as it was forwarded in film, the media, in her early work as a pin-up model and, notably, as the centerfold in the first issue of *Playboy* magazine (published in 1953), Dyer argues that Monroe corporealized a particular type of sexuality that was all-American, wholesome, even innocent.¹⁵ By referencing Monroe in this initial flagging, then, Shah embodies the nation as woman trope as a vision of whiteness: simultaneously

that which is an apotheosis of desirability, is everything yet nothing, and uses innocence as cover and alibi.

In the shadowy nimbus outside of the illuminated square that Shah occupies, two women circulate. Dressed in simple knee-length white frocks, the two (Shah's collaborators, Cash and Acevedo-Jones) methodically rearrange the precisely delineated angles of the maze with push brooms and oversized squeegees. As the piece progresses the handmaidens continue to reconfigure the performance environment by shifting the very ground beneath Shah and the audience. While spectators are free to come and go and move around the space during the performance, the actions of the two women repeatedly prod the audience to relocate, inhibiting their ability to settle in one particular place. Described by one critic as "caught between building and erasing," the designs the women create continuously dissolve and resolve like a child's Etch-a-Sketch.¹⁶

At one point, however, a distinct emblem does emerge around the artist, when the women reposition the light tubes into a large rectangle and rake the mulch into long rows within the shape. Once the tubes are lit, the semblance of an oversized American flag consumes the entire stage. America takes center stage, impressing its sense of importance by pushing spectators to the outermost peripheries of the stage. For a brief moment, the two women stop and silently acknowledge the fruit of their labor by standing "at attention" in silent salute. In this reconfiguration, Shah stands in the flag's upper-left quadrant, with the square of overhead light illuminating her. The smaller box in which she stands is similarly outlined in white fluorescence tubes but also cast in a rich blue hue from above. Rising up out of the now-blue cloth, Shah is materially is one with the flag,

embodying America as the singular star of Hollywood celebrity: a fantasy of elegance, beauty, fame. This play on “star power” conflates the constituent geographical and political elements comprising the U.S. nation-state, its fifty states and the body politic that shape them, into a singular simulacrum of individual power.

Another interpretation of this conflation of figure and ground might invoke the traditional use of stars to navigate by or divine one’s destiny. In the context of the performance, America then becomes the brightly shining light by which to chart a path, regardless of location. In both readings Shah represents America as a superstar, whether located in the night sky, on the silver screen or on the grid of the international interstate system. Shah’s mid-twentieth century enfiguration of the woman-as-nation trope echoes that which Duncan sought to embody by flagging her body. Duncan, however, was an active force in near-continuous, whole body motion. Contrarily, Shah remains in place, an object to be gazed upon. Nor does Shah avert her gaze as Rainer did, continually rebuffing viewers’ efforts to examine her face. Rather she accepts that she is the center of attention, even if (unlike Duncan) Shah inhabits this ideality uneasily. She does not enlarge into a meta-presence in order to incorporate the audience within her nation-body, but instead stands overexposed beneath the brilliant white light that blinds spectators as much as the performer.¹⁷

The Salvation of Surveillance

As guardians of the territory, the two handmaidens police the boundaries of their designs, herding spectators into increasingly smaller landscapes that draw them close to

Shah. Fixed beneath the glow of the overhead beam, she becomes a point of convergence for phantasms of American ideality as well as an object of desire and scrutiny. The hue cast by the overhead fixture deepens to match the blue once separated by the lit borders of the square in which she still stands. Writing in 1890, John S. Farmer noted that the word “blue” is perhaps the most variable in its colloquial connotations. In his dictionary of slang, Farmer appended a note to the definition of the color: “Expressive alike of the utmost contempt, as of all that men hold dearest and love best, its manifold combinations, in ever varying shades of meaning, greet the philologist at every turn.”¹⁸ Accordingly, the Oxford English Dictionary lists twenty-six primary definitions and countless more subdefinitions, special uses and colloquialisms. On the one hand, the color blue has represented constancy and fidelity, as expressed in the phrase “true blue.” Conversely, blue is an “off-color” that implies libidinous—sexual or pornographic—content, as in a film, joke, anecdote or expression using obscene, offensive language.¹⁹ Against the prior whitewash of light, the twilight blue now enveloping Shah provides an apt synonym for the difference against which whiteness assumes its unmarked status. As the section progresses, her performance will become increasingly explicit, “dirtier.”

Shah’s humming grows louder, the melody line of the familiar Christian hymn *Amazing Grace* becoming recognizable. Penned during the late eighteenth century by English clergyman John Newton, a slave trader turned parish pastor and abolitionist, *Amazing Grace* has deep roots in American culture. Disseminated in shape-note songbooks in the antebellum South of the early nineteenth century as well as through the oral tradition of spirituals from which the tradition of African American gospel music

arose, the hymn became a secular phenomenon in 1970 when Judy Collins released an *a cappella* version that, contemporary to Rainer's *Trio A with Flags*, voiced the concerns of a generation unmoored by war and social unrest. In *Amazing Grace, the Story of America's Most Beloved Song*, music historian Steve Turner argues that the Christian standard has attained the status of popular cultural icon. He supports this contention by cataloguing the hymn's appearance in media, popular culture and politics, noting in particular the frequency with which legislators in the U.S. Congress quoted it to support or argue against legislation under consideration (an average of fourteen times a year between 1994 and 2002). Shah's use of the song, however, references its current-day valences. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, singing *Amazing Grace* became a global phenomenon as citizens around the world raised their voices in support of America.²⁰

Gently tugging at the fingertips of her gloves, she slowly peels off the right, then the left one. Each action, however slight and restrained, is decorously articulated in smooth circular motions. Once the gloves have been removed, chunky silver sequin bracelets can be seen adorning a margin of brown, bared forearms incongruent with the incessant whiteness of her face, platinum blonde hair and outfit. Shah begins to sing out the first verse to the popular spiritual in a mellifluous church-choir soprano while continuing to disrobe. "*Amazing Grace! (how sweet the sound) / That saved a wretch like me!*" Unzipping her long white dress and carefully stepping out of it, Shah stands before the audience in a silver sequin mini-dress and a pair of patriotic red-white-and-blue lace-up platform boots. Like the shift from white to blue lighting, the brownness of Shah's now bare arms and legs provides a sharp contrast to her still pale white face and blonde

hair. A hollow artificiality to her seemingly ageless face becomes apparent. Her eyes sink deeply into the surrounding flesh of her cheeks, conveying a sense of shopworn fatigue that the bejeweled false eyelashes she wears cannot disguise. Deprived of her previous, totalizing whiteness and its allusions to purity and virginal innocence, Shah's body metaphorically soils the prior vision of America to which the audience cathected as an embodiment of desire. From the radiating star of celebrity to the reflective shine of Shah's spangled dress, from the distance of the cinematic screen to the fleshy proximity of a strip club catwalk, Shah offers a pastiche of sexualized and racialized femininity through the miscegenation of the real and imagined, of flesh and mimesis.

In the previous section, Shah's gestural sequences wound and unwound around the stable vertical axis of her spine and legs. In this section she becomes more active as she traffics in seductive, almost pornographic, movement. Instead of only arm gestures, the audience's attention is drawn to the articulation of bent limbs. The sexual body she presents is a collection of discrete parts fixed with the isolation of the light cast from above. Shah assertively seeks out the audience's gaze as she labors to be what ever they desire. She is bold and bawdy, almost taunting onlookers. Again and again she throws her head back and her arms out wide as she defiantly emphasizes the first two words of the song, "*Amazing grace!*" Poses are reiterated with a different tone to the audience or interrupted with a salacious hip grind. An elbow cocked against her pelvic bone is now paired with an aggressive lean forward and defiant glare at audience members. In other instances Shah poses in classic pin-up and centerfold style, at one point raising a hand to cradle her head, which is thrown back behind her. At another, Shah interrupts her lateral

shifting from one hip to the other with a wide stance, arms akimbo and fists resting atop each before descending into a squat in which her dress rides up over her legs and hips. She spreads her legs open with long gentle strokes of her fingers along her inner thighs and the suggestion of an invitation in her smile, then resumes her descent to the floor where she unfolds her legs and props herself up on one elbow, relishing being seen.



Fig. 4.2 Rajni Shah in *Dinner with America*, 2008. Photograph by Manuel Vason.

As this choreography of enticement continues, Shah becomes increasingly desperate. Combined with her aggressive sexual provocations, Shah's belabored *cappella* vocal delivery cycles through an affective spectrum, her intonation ranging from quavering to hearty vibrato, from a smoky, whiskey-drenched growl to a triumphant crow assured of the song's promised redemption. New actions are added that disrupt her halting attempts to complete the first verse: "*I once was lost, but now am found, / Was*

blind, but now I see.” With her head lowered, she braces stiff arms and clenched fists tightly against her sides, then raises one arm to stuff a fist into her mouth as far as it will go, her eyes squeezed tight against the pain. Contending with the rising volume and density of the soundtrack, Shah raises her voice as she incessantly repeats the lyrics, which now pose the question: who is saving whom?

In the previous section I analyzed Shah’s embodiment of America as a phantasm of implacable desire to which the audience is inexorably drawn (not always by choice). Her white flag body, redolent with the iconicity and wholesome sexuality of Marilyn Monroe, further revealed this fantasy as a technology of citizen subjection according to racializing and female gendering norms. In the blue-lit section of *Dinner with America* Shah complicates this by choreographing the demands America places on global bodies. I now examine Shah’s labors in relation to entanglements of the U.S. surveillant assemblage, the ideology of American exceptionalism and the Christian concept of salvation. Shah’s singing of *Amazing Grace* invokes a deeply anchored ideology of the divine providence of the U.S. nation that envisions America as the *alpha* and the *omega* of nations. Since the early nineteenth century, the U.S. has endowed itself with a political mission built upon ideating the nation as a land of opportunity and plenitude guided by divine right as “one nation under God.” As theater scholar David Savran has written, this “most American of ideologies” is a fantasy of the territorial U.S. nation as the geographical instantiation of a millennial vision of utopia—simultaneously a garden of Eden from which man springs and the heaven that awaits his end.²¹ According to American studies scholar Lauren Berlant, the project of suturing political purpose to

divine right—what she refers to as the nation’s “providential ideality”—resolves “the contradiction between the ‘nowhere’ of utopia and the ‘everywhere’ of the nation.”²²

Stitching utopic promise to the territorial nation-state thus relies on viewing the nation as both a point of arrival (the promised land) and of departure, as a land of infinite possibility. This ideology reconciled the lack of shared ethnic or cultural heritage, language and history by providing an image of the nation that dissolved the diverse backgrounds of citizens into a shared past and futurity resting upon America’s political ideality.

The mythos of American exceptionalism therefore narrates the nation as the vehicle of the promised salvation, also sung about in “Amazing Grace.” As the *alpha* and *omega* of nations, the U.S. positions itself not merely as a successful model or even the exemplar *nonpareil* of the democratic nation-state, but the *ür* mold of democratic governance from which other nations should be pressed. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* Benedict Anderson argues that nations have their own style of being. Despite this actuality, nations are subject to external pressures to conform to a specific style of being, according to transnationalism and globalization scholar Craig Calhoun. He writes, “Nationalism is an internationally reproduced discursive formation full of pressures to make each country into an isomorphic token of a global type.”²³ Thus, nationalism is in itself connected to normativity, but states are also expected to follow an externally prescribed pattern of normative nationalism.

As discussed in relation to Duncan, this national imago of the United States gained traction during World War I through propaganda that positioned America as the saving grace of democracy for the rest of the world. As if in temporal echo, a century later U.S. neo-imperialist foreign policy in the early twenty-first century again asserted the nation's dominance as the template for this global type and thus also heightened the pressures placed on nations around the world to be "styled" like America. Moreover, in the IED era, the U.S. has declared itself to be not only the gold standard to which other nations should aspire but also the arbiter of whether they have succeeded to do so. Surfeit in the Bush administration's rhetoric was a lexicon of terms such as "failing", "failed," "fragile," "illegitimate" or "rogue" states and "regime change," with the U.S. determining the need for the latter according to its assessment of the former.

Concomitantly, the U.S. has devoted untold billions over the past decade to build an extensive surveillance assemblage to pursue non-state actors and "agents of terror." Here I follow foundational surveillance studies scholars Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson's use of the concept of an assemblage as theorized by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to indicate the complexity of contemporary surveillance. According to Deleuze and Guattari, an assemblage is a form of unity comprising a heterogeneous multiplicity of phenomena that create a functioning entity through their ability to work well together. Deleuze and Guattari further theorize the assemblage as an aspect of the state form, which seeks to striate its sovereign territory by introducing breaks and divisions within otherwise free-flowing phenomena. Haggerty and Ericson apply the term to emphasize the unstable characteristic of surveillance, which resides, they write, at the

intersection of various media, technologies and practices that adapt and recombine for varying purposes.²⁴ Though Haggerty and Ericson's application of the Deleuzian assemblage to surveillance practices and policies predates 9/11, the model encapsulates key recommendations of *The 9/11 Commission Report*, in which the commission concluded that the events of that day were due to a failure of adequate information as well as interagency communication between intelligence bureaus.

The rapid expansion and scope of the U.S. surveillant assemblage began on October 4, 2001, three weeks after 9/11, when President Bush granted the National Security Administration (NSA) the authority to design and implement electronic surveillance capabilities that bypassed requisite federal warrants in the interest of national security. Against the specter of imminent threat by anonymous actors, the NSA could now access all international telecommunication records of anyone it suspected of terrorism, of associating with terrorists or of supporting a terrorist organization. Three weeks later, Congress passed into law the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (US PATRIOT ACT), which similarly gave intelligence agencies an unprecedented range of powers to spy on anyone living in the U.S. The global-scale surveillant assemblage that has since developed spreads across a host of private security firms; corporate intelligence and security; local, state and federal law enforcement; top-secret counterterrorism and intelligence agencies; the executive and military branches of government; Internet and telecommunication service providers; banks and credit card companies; and social media. The profusion of components surveys bodies near and far through an array of

technologies of observation that includes full-body scanners, closed caption television (CCTV), a digital surveillance network that tracks telecommunications and Internet usage, facial and gait recognition software,²⁵ and Remotely Piloted Aircrafts (RPAs), or as they are more commonly known, drones.²⁶ Though some of these technologies were in development in the late twentieth century, the early twenty-first century witnessed the rapid intensification and expanded scope of surveillance technologies.

The U.S. surveillant assemblage casts a virtual net across the globe with the goal of ascertaining “all that is known or knowable,” a conviction encapsulated in the title of one aggregation and cross-agency integration software program: Total Information Awareness (TIA). Tellingly, the logo of the Information Awareness Office (IAO), the now-defunct agency that developed TIA, was a vertical arrangement of three symbols: an eye, pyramid and globe. Beneath the all-seeing eye was the Latin phrase, *scientia est potentia*: knowledge is power.²⁷ With light rays shining down from the eye onto the image of the globe, the logo encapsulates not only the objectives of U.S. surveillance, but, moreover, the hubristic assurance that these are attainable. Whereas former political rhetoric may have likened America to the world’s policeman, a more apt analogy for the contemporary historical moment is the all-seeing eye.

American citizens have not only become willing objects of surveillance, but have learned to police one another, as a series of highly effective bus and subway billboard campaigns by the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) demonstrate. The MTA’s initial campaign, launched in March 2003, urged citizens to remain vigilant: “If you see something, say something.” This slogan proved so effective that it soon was

adopted by cities across the nation. A subsequent campaign expanded upon the first by uniting vigilant citizens into a synoptic body politic that was always watching. To wit, it broadcast the warning to potential terrorists that “There are 16 million eyes in the city. We’re counting on all of them.”²⁸ Such a body politic is united in shared purpose, akin to the vigilante citizenship of World War I and the ideal that Duncan choreographed in 1917, but is atomized into dutiful citizens spying on their compatriots.

Shah’s use of lighting as an apparatus of constraint and control emulates the sentiment of these campaigns as well as the task of observation technologies such as CCTV and live video monitoring. Yet the overhead perspective of the surveillant searchlight in *Dinner with America* most closely reproduces the prosthetic gaze of drone surveillance. As with other components of the U.S. surveillant assemblage, drone use by the U.S. Air Force and CIA is based on the contention that it is possible to detect and preempt future terrorist attacks by closely monitoring the actions of citizens around the world. Drones are aero-mobile “robots” that come in a range of sizes and are equipped with visual sensors, infrared cameras and Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) navigational systems. They have proven to be highly effectual because of their mobility, portability and visual superiority—that is, their improved ability to see while simultaneously evading detection. Initially developed for military and intelligence reconnaissance, Predator drones were first armed with Hellfire missiles just six months before the shock and awe assault on Afghanistan in October 2001.²⁹ Since then, drones have become a significant aspect of the conduct of U.S. foreign policy in both its public and secret wars. Because of a remote pilot’s ability to track and surveil a target for days, the foreshortened

“kill chain” (the number of steps and people involved from decision to action) and purportedly surgical precision of a strike, RPAs are presently deployed for an ongoing, extrajudicial targeted assassination program.

Drones substantively alter the spatiality, temporality and corporeality of warfare. Able to cross sovereign national borders without detection, they denationalize war by eliminating discrete theaters of war. They erase distance and alter corporeality by beaming images around the world to U.S.-based computer monitors where the human eye behind the drone’s camera eye retains a spectral, cyborgian presence. This can be seen in the manner in which drone pilots discuss their work. When interviewed, they neither acknowledge the distance that separates them from surveillance targets, nor conceptually separate themselves from the machines they operate. To wit, they refer to directing a mission as if on the ground: “We were in Kandahar . . .”³⁰ Drones alter the corporeality of their targets as well. Drones transform bodies into prey, tracked and captured by unseen mobile cameras—some attached to microdrones the size of a hummingbird or insect, assembled moment by moment by a real-time live feed.³¹ Viewed from above, they are rendered into abstracted shapes, sometimes only detectable as outlines or heat signatures. Evacuated of history and stripped of context or detail, subjects of surveillance become two-dimensional motional surfaces.

Drone technology sutures state airpower to visual culture of the god’s eye view or “Apollonian gaze.” Succinctly encapsulating this tradition of visual representation, feminist cultural studies scholar Caren Kaplan writes that this point of view unites sight with knowledge to represent state power as omnipotent and divinely awarded mastery.³²

In “‘A Rare and Chilling View’: Aerial Photography as Biopower in the Visual Culture of ‘9/11,’” Kaplan connects the aerial view of to a history of Christian iconography, official state documents and emblems to aerial photography and the biopolitical regulation of populations by military airpower. Much like the rays of light in the IAO logo, the light continuously shining down on Shah’s body functions as America’s cyborg eye to link American surveillance to American ideologies of salvation. The lyrics of *Amazing Grace* correlate redemption to sight, to being able to truly see. Like the divine grace of song and America’s surveillant assemblage, the light is everywhere and nowhere, an unseen yet insidious omnipresence.

Shah’s seductive choreography in the blue-lit section of *Dinner with America* thus confronts the U.S. surveillant assemblage as an apparatus of desire. Developed in order to satisfy the nation’s desire for complete security, it is driven by the desire to see and know all. Like other global citizens, Shah is compelled to perform for the relentless prosthetic gaze of the U.S. in order to sate these desires. Her performance reveals the seductive pleasure that comes with the power of having visual access to anyone (and thus, potentially everyone). Shah’s movement repertoire, however, explicates that she stuck in a loop of reaction-seeking activity. Like the silver paillettes of her dress, she has become a reflective surface for America’s high beam of surveillance.

Dirty Americans: Contaminative Citizens

As the section draws to an end, the women wipe the stage clean, piling the fluorescent light tubes to one side and sweeping away the mulch. While any traces of

actual dirt have been wiped away, the metaphoric dirt of the section still clings to Shah. Anthropologist Mary Douglas defines dirt as “matter out of place” in her groundbreaking work *Purity and Danger*. “Dirt” is a relative term, a valuation of matter defined as a contravention against a system of order. Ideas of what constitutes pollution contribute to society by delimiting what constitutes an ideal order and thus what or who transgresses it. In examining the symbolic freight of pollution and hygiene beliefs in (putatively) “primitive” religions, Douglas assesses the means to which these are used to legislate and enforce group morality, political loyalty and proper citizenship.³³ In the second (blue) section, then, Shah’s dirtiness *qua* sexualized impropriety marks her pathogenicity, as an element that does not belong to the idealized America she enacted in the first section of the piece. Following this, the overhead light that delimits the parameters of her mobility, separating her from the audience can be seen as quarantining her and protecting spectators from contamination. The light fixes Shah in place as that which must be fixed.

Douglas’s theorization takes shape in U.S. citizenship policy and practices through narratives of contamination and contagion, which align specific bodies, communities or targeted populations with pollution and disease. Scholars such as Nayan Shah, Cathy Hannabach, Amy Fairchild, Eithne Luibhéid and Martha Gardner have researched the various forms these narratives have taken since the late nineteenth century and their confluence with immigration, asylum and naturalization policies. These extend from the period of the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, during which time Nayan Shah identifies the xenophobic anxieties that linked a series of smallpox outbreaks in San Francisco to anti-Chinese bias, to the early 1990’s in Hannabach’s investigation of the mandatory HIV

testing and forced sterilization of Haitian asylum-seekers at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base immigration processing center.³⁴ Fairchild traces bodily surveillance at U.S. territorial borders to 1891, when the U.S. Public Health Service began examining and testing immigrants for disease or defect.³⁵ Biomedical inspection at national borders, as Luibhéid and Gardner write, adjudicated not only physical but also moral fitness for entry, but also contributed to the establishment of norms of race, gender and sexuality.³⁶ In *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative*, Priscilla Ward expands the reach of the discourse of contagion to the fear of social contamination by the poor and working class residents of urban tenements at a time when bacteriological discoveries provided evidence of the communicability of disease.³⁷ This body of research demonstrates that public health concerns, social reform and biomedical research have a history of shaping citizenship policies and practices in order to protect the hygiene of a specifically classed, raced, gendered and heterosexual American body politic.

This admittedly brief historical overview of the imbrications of the policies and practices of citizenship and biomedical surveillance also reveals that the attentions and effects of the U.S. surveillant assemblage are unevenly distributed. Currently, the discourse of epidemiology interfaces with national security concerns; these two areas share a philosophy of preemption, the task of risk assessment, and the anxiety of invasion. In a 2009 *Newsweek* article titled “Disease and Terrorism,” for example, the author accounts for the similarities between swine flu and biological terrorism under the rubric of the invisible threat of contagion.³⁸ Present distinctions by which to identify

pathogenic agents prioritize binaries of religion (Muslim/Christian) and legal status (citizen/noncitizen).

Contemporary hierarchies and exclusions recycle seemingly evergreen racializing antagonisms that have historically shaped U.S. nation building, thus the specific bodies that are particularly targeted are Muslim Arab males, regardless of citizenship status. The desire to pierce the unknowable has also given rise to additional categories of citizen subjectivity. Two that have been theorized by feminist and queer studies scholar Jasbir Puar in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* are the potential terrorist and the terrorist look-alike. While the latter depends on racial profiling and visual surveillance technologies, the former is based on predicting intentionality. Consequently the American surveillant assemblage employs a global dragnet approach to select criteria that identifies patterns of associations and transactions as well as visible corporeal indicators to predict an individual's potential for future behavior. This approach is necessarily broad, sweeping up terrorist look-alikes in prior modeling and risk assessment aggregations that use racial and religious markers. Puar theorizes the terrorist look-alike by analyzing what she calls "the turbaned body." Despite regional culture or other reasons for wearing a turban between South Asian, Middle Eastern and North African men, the turban has broadly become a sign of the terrorist through its association with a turbaned Osama bin Laden. She writes, "The turbaned man . . . now inhabits the space and history of monstrosity, of that which never can become civilized. The turban is not only imbued with the nationalist, religious, and cultural symbolics of the Other; it both reveals and hides the terrorist, a constant sliding between that which can be

disciplined and that which must be outlawed.”³⁹ Noting the disproportionate statistical rise in hate crimes suffered by turban wearing Sikh men after 9/11 and again around the start of the Iraq war in 2003, Puar underscores the fact that any signifier that might be associated with the terrorist body must be avoided.⁴⁰ As current surveillance policy makes clear, the distinction can be as broad as reasonable suspicion of being foreign or of appearing as such.⁴¹

This is why *Dinner with America* concludes—must conclude—with a final stripping away of Shah’s guise. In the early twenty-first century, citizen bodies across the globe are—and must be—subject to the gaze of the U.S. surveillance matrix. While the women complete their duties, Shah continues her protracted burlesque. As the light scheme has transformed from the innocence of white to an overtly sexualized blue, the ostensible next step would be for lights to turn red. Instead, the down spot returns to white and once again rises to a blinding intensity. In tandem with the lighting, the aural soundscape reaches a feverish crescendo, then both light and sound abruptly shut off. In the sudden darkness, Shah can be heard gasping for air. When the lights rise again they remain a pale white, within which Shah silently strips. There is no grace or enticement to her movements this time. She is frankly functional as she subtracts false eyelashes, high-heeled boots, blonde wig; dress, fake breasts, underwear. Finally, she peels off the final element of her guise, the white latex mask that has been sculpted to conform to the contours of her face like a second skin. Unmasked from her prosthetic whiteness, Shah stands naked before the audience amidst the detritus of her costume, significantly shorter, her head shaved bald.

If America had been figured as a hunger that cannot be slaked, and later as that which can be had but for a price, then in what economy of desire or demand does this body figure? Does this signal a complete capitulation, one in which the blood and bone of Shah's actual body stands in for not only the red of the flag but for her alchemical transformation into a red-blooded American? Or does Shah stand outside the flag as its antithesis, the unincorporated contaminated citizen? Or is this the "real" body behind the curtain of America—"unadorned and vulnerable, but freed from the burden of artifice and expectation," as one reviewer has written?⁴² Critics have described this moment as "humbling and raw"⁴³; rife with a "fragile, powerful honesty."⁴⁴ Comments such as these interpret Shah's final stripping as a revelation of the visible facts of her body—what is known or knowable: her gender/sex, her brown skin. Reviewers of *Dinner with America* want to recognize the body before the audience as an independent self/body, the agentic body of the artist that lurks beneath the illusions they have witnessed, whether the moneyed glamour of properly raced, classed and gendered American citizenship that Shah's blonde figure embodies or as a representation of the "dirty" bodies who labor to replicate that fantasy, as her second enfiguration evokes. It is precisely this desire to locate an "authentic" body that drives the continuing development of information and communication electronic surveillance technologies and the refinement of god's eye aero-mobile surveillance drones. Yet the chimeric play between layers of dissimulation compromise the possibility of an "authentic" body independent from the ideals and fantasies Shah has labored to sustain. In the absence of any reliable facts of the body that

has been presented to the audience, what remains is the assurance that no “real” is possible.

Conclusion

In the final moments of *Dinner with America*, the beam of light quarantining Shah blinks rapidly from white to blue to red to white to blue to red while Shah executes one centerfold pose after another in quick succession. The strobe lighting effect accentuates the sense that the audience is watching a series of photographs flit by, rather than a live performance. Or an Air Force analyst reviewing image files captured by drones. The light effect also signals manic urgency that speaks to a national anxiety about the enigma of global bodies. The body before the audience has been fully penetrated by the light *qua* America’s surveillance matrix, which has stripped her bare in its attempts to apprehend her. The image with which the audience is left, of Shah standing naked and out of breath, vulnerable within the pale white light, evinces the challenges of contemporary citizenship in a surveilled world where there is no place outside or beyond the all-seeing cyborg eye of the U.S. Able to hide in plain sight, microdrones immunize the nation against contamination.

Considered *en toto*, the parallel lines of development of the soundtrack, physical environment and Shah’s enfigurations in *Dinner with America* create a tension between accumulation and evacuation of meaning to fracture signification: while the voices on the soundtrack, the patterns of mulch and light, and various embodiments of America aggregate, Shah sheds her various guises and the handmaidens strip away layers of dirt

and light. Ultimately, Shah's body is the contaminative citizen, a placeholder for the fictions and fantasies of America that does not register as American—of the correct race, class or sexuality—and thus poses a threat to the nation-state's security. Contaminative citizens take shape as potential terrorists and terrorist look-alikes, though any “foreign body”—U.S. citizen or not—presents a potential risk. Thus all global bodies must be fixed within the radius of the prosthetic eye of the U.S. Foreign bodies may attempt to perform according to specifically gendered, racialized and heterosexist imperatives within the codes of beauty and whiteness as idealized by mid twentieth century Hollywood films, yet they remain fixed as an object of the surveillant gaze. Living under this gaze is one of the consequences of living in the age of the IED. Security surveillance technologies are not infallible, however. In the following chapter I question the limits of these and expose the colonial roots of the preventive scopic regime in relation to Rachid Ouramdane's *Exposition Universelle*.

5. Projective Citizenship: Data Citizens in Rachid Ouramdane's *Exposition Universelle*

In the previous chapter I argued that contemporary global surveillance by the U.S. has substantively altered conditions of appearance for the social and political subject. Shah's *Dinner with America* choreographs the global surveillance grid developed in the name of U.S. national security as an inescapable element of the lived experience of the citizen subject, regardless of nationality, juridicolegal status or geographical location. Captured within the prosthetic eye of mobile surveillance modes such as drones, Shah embodied the "Americanization" of the contaminative global citizen (the foreigner) as a state of quarantine that is all-encompassing and totalizing. In this chapter, I argue that if there is no outside to surveillant citizen subjection, then there is also no inside. Subject to the power of digital surveillance, the contemporary citizen is evacuated of interiority.

Phantasms of interiority are foundational to the concept of citizenship within liberal democracy, just as they are to the expressive hypothesis of modern dance. In liberal democracy, the embodied citizen is the unit by which the promise of individual freedom and the fundamental right to privacy are ascertained, protected and upheld. In expressive choreographic modes, movement becomes the means to release, translate and communicate the inner workings of consciousness, the depths of the soul. Expressivity as a choreographic mode is trans-temporal. By using the term expressive hypothesis, I mean to situate expressivity as a historical development and as an explanatory rubric for modern dance in its infancy in the twentieth century. At the present moment, however, technologies of surveillance translate the citizen body into the binary language of data that is projected on to a digital monitor as a two-dimensional projection of facts and

statistics for analysis. Substantively altering the relationship of the citizen to the nation-state, citizenship is rendered as a *projective* state. The term projective also implies prospective, a perspective that is future-oriented. My use of it thus situates dataveillance within the pre-emptive logic of national security discussed in the previous chapter.

To make this argument, I examine Rachid Ouramdane's evening-length solo dance *Exposition Universelle (World Fair, 2009)* in relation to dataveillance, a second critical component of the present U.S. surveillant assemblage.¹ Analogous to Shah's *Dinner with America*, Ouramdane foregrounds scopic regimes of power in *Exposition Universelle*. Unlike Shah, however, he situates contemporary regimes of surveillance within a genealogy of precedents. Additionally, whereas Shah subtracted layers of clothing while accumulating layers of referentiality to ultimately evacuate signification, Ouramdane multiplies his physical presence with photographic portraits.² Digitally encoded and compressed into JPEG-format image files, the portraits are projected on plasma screens and various surfaces around the stage throughout the piece.³ The image that resolves on the plasma screens uses a technology that generates and transmits light and color through a medium comprised of millions of tiny compartments of charged particles suspended in a magnetic field. In this manner, each of the photographs that Ouramdane projects during the dance has been splintered and coded into bits of data, then reconstructed into a singular totality in itself consisting of countless bytes of information.⁴ The doubling and dividing of his dancing body in the projections bring to the fore issues of materiality and political agency. Analyzing Ouramdane's

Exposition Universelle in the context of the technological mediation of embodiment by dataveillance, I theorize that the dance choreographs citizenship as *projective*.

The flickering signification of the aggregation, distribution and dispersion of millions of data bytes shapes what N. Katherine Hayles has named the informatic body, the parallel, virtual shadow of the embodied citizen constructed out of the cumulative information about its living correlative.⁵ Dataveillance is a mode of surveillance that takes advantage of the contemporary state of global connectivity via network technologies (such as the Internet, intranets, mobile phones) to search out, accumulate, aggregate and analyze the electronic footprint of citizen subjects. Encoded into the binary language of zeros and ones, the end product of this informationalization is a data body—the digital double of the rights-bearing body of historical circumstance and lived experience. Though dataveillance refers specifically to this process, my use of the term “data body” also encompasses the ephemeral motions of bodies that have been captured by drones, CCTV, or facial recognition and gait analysis since these, too, are subsequently transmuted into electronic form for analysis and archiving purposes.

To call data bodies immaterial is not altogether accurate. Virtuality is a state of time/space compression produced by digital machinery; networks depend on hardware (computer terminals, digital media equipment, wires) to uplink or download; accrete, collate, sort, disseminate or store the body of data. Nevertheless, digitality has substantively altered conceptions of identity and embodiment. As new media theorist Mark Poster, among others, writes, digital conditions of culture elide physically determined characteristics of identity—such as disability, race, gender, class, ethnic

origins and nationality.⁶ Yet data bodies rely on and assess such characteristics in order to preemptively locate the potential terrorist or the terrorist look-alike through “prior modeling” (more commonly referred to as profiling).⁷

For the surveillance and security industries tasked with aggregating the information to manufacture each data body (as well as with amassing as many data bodies as possible), the individual citizen is valued as a raw resource to be “mined,” “processed” and “warehoused.” The data citizen is also discursively constructed in the language of contamination and contagion. In *Virality: Contagion Theory in the Age of Networks*, British scholar Tony D. Sampson argues that global connectivity, while heralded as a tool for decentralized global interaction and social activism, has led to a digital variant of the threat of foreign bodies discussed in the prior chapter. Analogous to insecurities surrounding national borders and ports—points of entry into the territorial body of the nation—fears of digital invasion (by hacking, cyberattacks, net wars) are expressed in the language of disease. Designed for speed and clarity of communication, the Internet’s nonhierarchical democracy of use, combined with the porosity and anonymity of the format, avails it for good as well as evil. Investigating the culture of fear from which immunological analogies proliferate, Sampson applies an epidemiological model to investigate contemporary networked society.⁸ Alexander Galloway, a leading scholar of media theory, echoes Sampson’s immunological analogy by describing the proliferation of networks over the last decade as being of epidemic intensity.⁹

Whereas the previous chapter examined Shah's work in relation to the discursive construction of biological bodies as pathogenic, my analysis of *Exposition Universelle* focuses on the doubling, dividing and projecting of the data citizen in relation to the material rights-bearing body of the citizen. I argue that Ouramdane formulates a cogent critique of the twinning and bifurcating reiteration of the biological citizen in metadata in two respects. The first is by historicizing digitized surveillance power within scopic regimes of visual capture and containment that have shaped postcolonial modernity. Arguing that the data citizen is a palimpsest, I foreground the manner in which Ouramdane presents the global gaze of U.S. surveillance as the most recent articulation of a lineage that extends back to Europe's colonial project during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Secondly, Ouramdane establishes an evolving set of relationships between himself and the technologies he uses over the three sections of the dance—in particular that of his projected bodies/selves and his dancing body. I read these relationalities as an interrogation of the data citizen that exposes a possible point of agency at the point of its projection.

Exposition Universelle unfolds as a series of actions and movement phrases over three sections distinguished by the abrupt cessation of light, sound and/or action, marked by the stage exit of Ouramdane and composer-pianist Jean-Baptiste Julien, who performs on a range of acoustic and electronic instruments and digital equipment throughout the dance. The dance lends itself to a reading that stresses a historical arc, which develops from inferences to European colonialism and the rise of authoritarianism in Europe in the early twentieth century, in the first section, to situating the U.S. as the next act of political

and cultural inscription in the twentieth century in the second. The third and final segment brings the dance into the twenty-first century to question technologically mediated citizenship. While this arc structures the chapter, my analysis prioritizes the relationship between the performing Ouramdane and his projected data body in *Exposition Universelle*. As in the previous chapters, I also attend to the manner in which Ouramdane flags his body, which, contrary to Shah or Rainer, only occurs at the conclusion of the dance. Unlike Duncan's flagged coda and encore to her *Marseillaise*, however, Ouramdane flags his body in a manner that is far from triumphal, even as the act generates a space of potential agency within America's global surveillance matrix.

The Palimpsestic Body of the Citizen

The son of first generation immigrant parents from Algeria, Ouramdane began dancing in his youth by learning street dances in the *banlieu* where he was raised. *Banlieues* are large housing projects located on the outskirts of French cities that continue to house generations of working class immigrants while also marginalizing them from French society.¹⁰ The ambiguities and complexities of his cultural identity contribute to his work, as does his participation, along with a generation of French choreographers, in dismantling conventional expectations of a dance event. After a series of collaborations with other choreographers and artists throughout the 1990s, Ouramdane came to the attention of international audiences in 2004 with *Les Morts Pudiques (Discreet Deaths)*. Admittedly semi-autobiographical, the solo became a signature work that toured widely. Inspired by the Roland Petit and Jean Cocteau ballet *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* (1946),

Ouramdane conducted Internet searches based on the words “youth” “death” and “suicide” in order to reconceptualize the dance for the twenty-first century. Instead of a romantic figure of death that lures the young male protagonist to take his life, as in the Petit-Cocteau collaboration, Ouramdane referenced topics ranging from the aesthetics of goth to the U.S. death penalty for minors, the Algerian-French war and Jihadist suicide martyrs. John Rockwell, the dance critic for *The New York Times* at the time *Les Morts Pudiques* premiered in the U.S. in 2006, hailed the solo generated by this process as a disquieting mosaic of death imagery.¹¹

Set within what appeared to be a boxing ring constructed out of medical tubing, the piece ended with the unsettling image of Ouramdane wearing a necklace fashioned out of numerous vials of blood-red liquid that covered his chest in a manner that reminded many observers of a suicide bomber’s vest of explosives. Whereas *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* embodied death in a female figure, Ouramdane contextualized the seductive force of death within a global culture of violence discernable in youth culture, the rule of law, and religious or national devotion. Some critics (such as Rockwell) interpreted the violence of *Les Morts Pudiques* in the context of the French *banlieu* riots of 2005, given that Ouramdane had been raised in one and was coincidentally touring the solo through Europe at the time.¹² The dance further addressed the historical moment in which it was made by using computer technology as a model for the structure of the solo. Like a rewritable CD, Ouramdane continuously made, unmade and remade himself throughout the dance using shifting movement inflections and facial masks.

Key features of *Les Morts Pudiques* have become signature aspects of Ouramdane's subsequent work. These include challenging official histories and established canons, whether those of the nation-state or those pertaining to the field of dance; incorporating digital technologies and forms of new media into the process of making a dance or in the final production; and, as the final image of *Les Morts Pudiques* indicates, Ouramdane's attention to bodies shaped by violence. Though the solo that introduced American dance audiences to Ouramdane involved volitional forms of violence, what predominates in his work is types of violence that are mobilized by, or produced as an effect of, the state. One way the corporeal residue of such violence appears in Ouramdane's choreography is the manner in which he frequently challenges himself and the highly trained dancers in his company, L'A. to execute demanding feats of stamina and hyperarticulation—feats that are achievable because of the dancers' technical capabilities, even as they disarticulate the idealized physical form and line with which their training has endowed them. This could be seen in *Des Témoins Ordinaires* (*Ordinary Witnesses*, 2009), which Ouramdane toured in the U.S. with *Exposition Universelle* in the fall of 2011.¹³ The ensemble work coupled movement phrases of deformed, grotesque and what appears to be painful arrangements of limbs and bodies with interviews conducted with survivors of state torture. The series of frictions—between sound and visual elements and choreography; the highly trained body of the dancer and the mutilating experience of pain—incisively expose the disparity between the official and lived experience of history that is a central point of investigation in Ouramdane's work.¹⁴

In his solo work, Ouramdane's movement pulls from his street dance origins, with idiosyncratic inflections of popping and locking interrupting sinuous phrases. Not all of the artist's work is autobiographical, but his perspective as simultaneously an insider and outsider—a French citizen of Arab descent—informs much of it.¹⁵ Ouramdane's perspective on the French republic provides a stark contrast to Duncan's view of her adopted homeland and the image of the U.S. she danced at the Met in 1917. Rather than promulgate a fantasy of an avuncular nation-state welcoming all citizens into the refuge of its embrace, Ouramdane choreographs the nation-state as an engine of torture and trauma that deforms citizen corporealities. Similarly, Duncan choreographed a vision of citizens rising up to protect the nation from hostile external forces in her *Marseillaise* and Rainer imagined an alternative, intersectional American body politic that avowed the rights of citizens to make claims on the nation-state. For Ouramdane, however, it is the nation itself that poses the threat to its citizens, foreclosing the possibility of making any claim to belonging.

As in *Les Morts Pudiques*, the social and political subject Ouramdane choreographs in *Exposition Universelle* is continuously made, unmade and remade, though this metamorphosis occurs equally in the material form of his live body and the data body of his virtual, screen image. Accordingly, the body of the citizen appears as a palimpsest, a rewritable and encodable surface upon which the nation-state repeatedly inscribes its symbolic universe. By definition, the palimpsest is not an original; traces of the past remain, contaminating its legibility.¹⁶ In retaining these former imprints, the palimpsestic citizen that Ouramdane choreographs disrupts the linearity of

chronological/calendric time and exposes the fissures, cracks and gaps in progressivist historical narratives. One such narrative in *Exposition Universelle* concerns the vestiges of Europe's unsettled colonial history. In its very title, the dance gestures toward the afterlife of European colonialism on several registers. It references the historical fact of world fairs and colonial expos, which reached a height of popularity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹⁷ Yet the grammatical construction of the title, eliding temporal or spatial details as it does, also registers the racial discursivity instantiated by the ideological residue to which the historical phenomena of world fairs speak, in which the fair hair and light skin of a Northern European complexion provides the standard of corporeality for the presumptive citizen of the western nation. World fairs and expositions were large-scale public spectacles that served a two-fold function as a vehicle for the production of intra-national cohesion and the display of a country's imperial and capitalist achievements on an international stage. A growing body of scholarship illuminates that these provided a platform for imperial powers such as the United States, Britain and France to stage their technological prowess and scientific superiority to other nations while also advertising the promise of modernity to their own citizens.

Whereas world fairs subscribed to the pan-western belief in salvation through technological advancement, the concomitant phenomena of colonial expositions, which were mounted as stand-alone events or as part of a world fair, celebrated imperial expansion and the moral project of civilizing racially inferior colonized populations.¹⁸ For France, emerging theories of racial superiority augmented its colonial project with a

sense of national manifest destiny.¹⁹ As stages of empire, colonial expos reiterated the politics of imperialism by locating “reservations” of indigenous people in spatially distinct areas within an expo park or adjacent to it, yet always separated from the world fair’s center.²⁰ In a 2010 article, Danika Medak-Saltzman noted that the layout of fairgrounds reiterated the distinction between metropole and empire not only as a geographical but also temporal distance. Situating “native” groups apart from the central midway, where halls of nations, technology and fine arts were located, encouraged visitors to imagine they were traveling back in time, to a different stage of civilization, as well as venturing to a far-off land.²¹ When visitors arrived at their destination, they enjoyed ethnological displays of colonial subjects going about their daily lives in recreations of tribal villages or city marketplaces. As Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett writes, *in situ* displays such as those used in colonial expositions positioned the observed human within a panoptic gaze that provided an opportunity for spectators “to see without being seen, to penetrate interior recesses, to violate intimacy.”²² The panoptic gaze reified the uncivilized “savage” within the Orientalist knowledge-power nexus by which the Occidental world came to define itself.²³ Through *in situ* displays and the spatial arrangement of fairgrounds, then, colonial expos and world fairs underscored an absolute distinction between Europeans and those they ruled that was central to the administration of the colonial state.²⁴ In addition, the colonial state further inscribed its taxonomies of difference by instantiating a scopic regime based on the display of indigenous people as objects of scrutiny.

The two aspects of the *exposition universelle*, as demonstration of technological prestige and colonial largesse, are inextricably bound up with one another in the compelling opening to the piece. As the audience enters the theater, Ouramdane stands atop a low, revolving dais. Resembling an old-fashioned wind-up record player, it is a low-tech contraption that connects the squat stool he stands upon to a small wooden box outfitted with two small megaphones whirring twice as fast as Ouramdane. Iterating the spatial and visual segregation of world fairs, Ouramdane avails himself to the spectatorial scopophilia of onlookers with a three hundred and sixty-degree view as he slowly turns. He is at once a life-size model of the citizen of the future promoted by the technological wonders showcased in world fairs and a one-man living diorama of the racialized colonial subject. Though in both senses he is a trophy of the imperial nation; the *frisson* between the citizen of the modern political state and the colonial other will continue to shape the first section of the piece.

As the house lights dim and wink out, the audience's attention is drawn to Ouramdane, whose eyes are now open in a disconcerting stare that contributes to the sense that the male figure represents a model or prototype. He is the generic body of the citizen. The dais slows to a halt, Ouramdane steps off and removes his shirt. Ouramdane is lean with muscle, with dark eyes and hair that is shaved close to his head. As Julien places a metronome in front of a microphone downstage center and sets it ticking, Ouramdane begins a gestural arm phrase facing the audience. He raises an arm out from one side and then the other, as if to mark out the limits of his reach, with utilitarian deliberateness. Ouramdane raises and lowers each arm in turn a second and third time,

each time in a different direction: straight in front and up to a high diagonal, then toward the rear of the stage. Performed with martial precision, the phrase advances through repetition and addition to incorporate salutes and abrupt, sharp-edged semaphoric signals. The pace picks up and the rhythm of Ouramdane's gestures becomes contrapuntal to the metronome. In response, the repertoire of arm gestures increasingly necessitates the recruitment of Ouramdane's torso, legs, and, finally, his feet. With the involvement of whole body movement and oblique angles and spirals, the gestures shape a more cohesive and fluid phrase.

A plasma video screen hanging high against the rear wall of the theater flickers on. From the stationary position facing the audience, Ouramdane turns and begins performing toward the image that resolves on the screen. It is a portrait of the artist wearing a dark shirt buttoned tightly around his neck, with a thickly painted black cross covering his face. With lifted chin and far-off gaze, his face is angled toward the upper corner of the frame, toward the unseen horizon of the future. The pose resembles heroic portraiture of political leaders, yet the rectilinear symbol, which tattoos a mask across his eyes, signals tribal, gang or military insignia. The content of the image, combined with the height differential between its location and Ouramdane below, reinforces the performance as that of the citizen subject as loyal and obedient follower. With his head tilted up, the artist marches in place, and then repeats the gestural phrase.

Yet the image also exudes a clear sense of power. The dark shirt worn by the figure resembles that worn by the Italian *Camicie Nere* (Blackshirts), an armed fascist group under Benito Mussolini. *Squadristi d'Azione* (Action Squads) of the *Camicie Nere*

assisted Mussolini's rise to power by providing the force to deter or eliminate oppositional groups such as socialists, communists and republicans during the interwar period between World War I and II. After securing Mussolini's leadership via their famous march on Rome, the group was formalized as the Voluntary Fascist Militia for National Security.²⁵ The aggressivity projecting from the screen image is matched by Ouramdane's physicality. As if he, too, is compelled to act, Ouramdane sets off in long, determined strides in large circles around the stage, then returns to dance beneath the image. Throughout the rest of this segment of the dance, he remains in constant motion, either striding around the circumference of light with his arms gesturing, or dancing in place, toward and for the image. It was not only those belonging to the action squads who wore black shirts during Mussolini's reign over Italy. The general citizenry also wore them as a visual display of support for the fascist party. The obeisance Ouramdane displays in facing the image above is thus not merely that of a militant follower, but also that of the loyal member of any group, whether a national citizenry or a paramilitary gang. Yet the choreographer, doubled on the screen, also enfigures the leader to whom deference is paid. Putting aside the section's representational inferences for a moment to examine the vertical spatial relationship between Ouramdane's performing body and the screen image, the opening section can be read as a statement on the relative value of the material body. The unequal arrangement establishes the data citizen as above and therefore of greater importance than the biological citizen.

Screen Capture

Technology is ever-present on stage. To one side a baby grand piano, electric guitar, computer and mixing board create a node for a dispersed network of electronic sound equipment—turntables, cords, microphones and amplifiers—strewn across the stage. Dominating this *mise en scène* is an arced metal rod that hovers above the center of the stage. At least ten- to twelve-feet long, the rod is suspended by a precariously thin cord. A small metal theatrical (spot)light dangles from one end; on the other are counterbalancing free weights that set the rod to bobbing gently while orbiting in a wide arc around the stage.²⁶ The contraption explicates the faith in technology promoted at world fairs—the promise of individual freedom, social advancement and national superiority—while also evincing technology as a mechanism of capture and control by the state. Over the course of the nearly hour-long solo this device alternately enables and circumscribes Ouramdane's actions as a source of illumination as well as an apparatus of surveillance.

In the first section, Julien manipulates the apparatus to revolve overhead such that it casts a clearly demarked circle of light; as the spotlight orbits, it acts as a source of power that Ouramdane keeps apace with in brisk strides. As with his obeisance to the image projected on the plasma screen, he is not simply illuminated by the central device but dances beneath it and for it. In one instance he interrupts his gestural phrase arms to slowly unfurl the increasingly mangled/contorted knots of his arms to spread them low and wide. With palms raised toward the contraption along with his now calm face, the

golden light becomes a source of beneficence, perhaps even grace. The moment is brief; it passes and Ouramdane resumes his propulsive gestural phrase.



Fig. 5.1 Rachid Ouramdane in *Exposition Universelle*, 2009. Photograph by Jacques Hoepffner.

At the start of the second segment of *Exposition Universelle*, the central apparatus provides the only source of light. Ouramdane follows the rotating rod, tracing the outer circumference of the circle of light it casts then moves into the center. Instead of following the path of light, as in the previous section, he is contained within its sphere. Contrary to the confident, determined pace of his prior circumambulations, he walks slowly, in a belabored manner in which each footfall is emphasized through the exaggerated motion of rolling through the foot from heel to relevé. This is accomplished, however, with a certain levity that contrasts with the sluggish pace of his meticulous over-articulation. Whereas in the previous section his movement vocabulary stressed an

angularity elaborated with knife-edge precision, he now walks as if he is almost lighter than air. If he reaches the outer edge of the circle of light, he stops abruptly (as if running into an invisible wall) and waves languidly at the audience.

The purpose of his precarious motion remains ambiguous. Occasionally he falls to the floor with the same seemingly effortless resistance to gravity as his perambulations. He carefully articulates each fall; collapsing and rising up again in a manner that suggests a film projected in extreme slow motion. The audience does not witness an initiating event, just the effects as they redound through Ouramdane's body: his chest caves in as he steps backward before falling, in another instance, his spine arches as he falls forward, as if he had been struck. His body folds and crumbles, to resolve into contorted, awkward positions across the stage. To continue the analogy, if this is a film, it appears to be documenting disasters.

The screen hanging on the back wall of the theater (like in Shah's work, the stage here is stripped of scrims, wings and curtains) projects a portrait of Ouramdane with his entire head covered in a tightly woven grey mesh material that erases his facial features. The figure in this portrait has been rendered anonymous. Akin to the aimless texture of his promenade, the figure is rendered useless. Later in the section, Ouramdane again appears unable to escape the area demarked by the pale illumination cast by the device. Fatigued by the effort to do so, he collapses at the edge of darkness outside its purview. A projection from a micro-camera hidden on the end of the orbiting apparatus reveals Ouramdane's body located at the outer limit of the light it etches on the stage. Lying in a

supine position, arms and legs outstretched, he passively accepts the surveillant gaze of the camera.

The remainder of the section is devoted to a series of brief actions that expose a split between Ouramdane's projected data citizen and his motional, corporeal version. These include a brief tap dance and enacting a series of classical athletic poses on the dais. But first Ouramdane moves out of the circle of light to pull down the screen projecting the anonymous grey-masked man, lay it flat and then raise it up again to reveal a new headshot of the artist, this time with black grease paint covering his entire head and neck, his mouth open wide in a silent scream. A second projection appears on a tall amplifier to one side of the stage, with a different image of the same man yelling angrily. Ouramdane crouches down next to the blackface image on the large amplifier to don a pair of tap shoes and apply white greasepaint to his face. In *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, José Estaban Muñoz theorizes the use of whiteface by drag artist Vaginal Crème Davis as a means to enact cultural anxieties surrounding miscegenation while wresting symbolic control of racial discursivity.²⁷ In *Exposition Universelle*, the proximity of Ouramdane's black face alongside his white face adds another element to Muñoz's formulation, by creating a vivid racialized dichotomy between his bio- and data bodies. Yet the arrangement of projection to performer is equitable in comparison to the relationality established in the first section.

The dancer proceeds to walk noisily over to a small square of wood placed at the rear of the stage and, facing upstage, reiterate the marching in place that occurred in the first segment. In time with the even tempo of the beat-heavy piano music, his footfalls

become increasingly heavier and louder, until he is stomping along with Julien's pounding of the keyboard. Ouramdane begins to dance, emulating some semblance of a tap routine but without attention to technique or showmanship. Lacking finesse, he spins haphazardly with his arms flinging about. In the context of my prior assessment of colonial expositions, Ouramdane's poorly executed tap dance is a refusal of the trained skill of the professional dancer, of dance technique itself. Likewise, his stage position and obdurate stance facing away from the audience is a refusal to fulfill their expectations. These choices refute the spatial politics of at world fairs and colonial expositions, in which colonized peoples were displayed as inferior racial specimens.

The idiom of tap dancing, in tandem with the blackface of the projected images, also references another popular cultural trace, the unambiguously American art form of minstrelsy. Blackface minstrelsy is a performance of racialized blackness by white men that rose in popularity predominantly in the southern U.S. prior to the Civil War. The complex cross-racial desire and fear imbedded in the genre lends itself to a critique of the politics of performing as a postcolonial immigrant citizen, though the addition of white face subverts his reiteration of the form. Ouramdane indexes a second distinctly American popular cultural form when he steps onto the slowly rotating dais. The only light onstage is that cast by the central assemblage, which oscillates in the opposite direction of the dais. Ouramdane, who becomes visible only when the two arcs intersect, strikes a litany of recognizable poses that bring to mind iconic, classical imagery of the male form: Olympiad, warrior, Greek god. One set of poses, however, references the visual archive of American baseball trading cards. He rests an invisible bat against his

shoulder and turns to face the camera of the audience; he torques his torso as he swings the bat, then kneels on one leg with his hands resting atop the bat end. Here the choreographer not only cites the quintessential American pastime, but the system of visual representation that markets the players as heroic male figures.

Admittedly, my analysis springs from my spectatorial perspective as an American, viewing the dance in an American theater. Following after the tap dance, however, the series of poses place his minstrel act in a lineage of all-American entertainment. The series ends with Ouramdane crouching like a sprinter ready to start a race, both arms planted firmly on the dais in fists. As the stage brightens, the plate on which he kneels speeds up. Whirring with an audible mechanical sound, the dais spins faster and faster, as if in an effort to wipe clean the palimpsest of Ouramdane's body.

Distinct from the opening segment of *Exposition Universelle*, the affect displayed by Ouramdane throughout the second section is differentiated from that of his virtual simulacrum. The seething aggression of his previous performance has now been transmitted to the screen image. As I have suggested, the unrestrained expression of anger in the blackface-projected images is productively read in concert with Ouramdane's tap dance in whiteface. Yet the very act of the transfer of anger to the screen imbues the data double with the conspicuously human characteristic of affect. In tandem, the transference of racial attributes to the screen challenges the materiality to which racial discursivity is sutured. The data body, akin to the palimpsest, is a multifaceted record retaining traces of sedimented layers as it is updated with new information. But it

is not a coherent, sensate body. It comprises the conversion of the embodied citizen into an archive of transactional metadata, statistics and calculations.

The range of sources from which the digital citizen is informationalized includes everyday communications (e-mails, phone calls, text messaging, social media interactions) and electronic transactions (travel itineraries, web-based purchasing, grocery shopping, gaming, online reading or business affairs) plus all digital records of an individual's life (medical, educational, transportation, banking, credit card, library and housing records). In addition to communication, transactional and archival information, demographic and psychographic information from marketing databases is incorporated, as is biometrical data *about* the biological body—fingerprints, DNA, MRI, retinal scans, DNA, hand geometry and gait recognition, security checkpoint full body scans)—or that which has been triggered *by* the body, such as logging in or on with identification “swipe” cards, keypads or passwords. Though the term dataveillance refers specifically to this process, digital doubles also encompass visual data of bodies captured by drones, CCTV, facial recognition and gait analysis since these, too, are subsequently transmitted into electronic digitality for analysis and archiving purposes. As the Critical Art Ensemble points out, “With its immense storage capacity and its mechanisms for quickly ordering and retrieving information, no detail of social life is too insignificant to record and scrutinize.”²⁸ Haystacks are built from individual twigs of hay and the system depends on building as large a haystack as possible in order to locate any needles hiding therein.

The normativization of this process has been exponential over the past decade. Though a list of phenomena that trains citizens into obediently participating in America's comprehensive surveillant assemblage can be itemized—from reality television to airport security procedures—I want to focus on a few network technologies that now structure the architecture of daily life. More people use new media and information technology more frequently and for an ever-expanding array of tasks and services. The transition to mobile computing and communication platforms and multipurpose devices (e.g. smart phones, laptops and tablets) allow users to plug into the Internet when and wherever they happen to be. Mobile platforms provide twenty-four hour connectivity to networks that use GPS technology, mapping software and dynamic, locality and context aware services able to identify and respond to a specific user's needs, the wired citizen freely concedes present locations and future destinations, moment by moment.

Additionally, the widespread engagement with online social media and the advent of “cloud computing,” (in which music, films, personal records and documents are archived by and accessed through Internet service providers) provide information formerly considered personal (and thus private) about individuals as well as the families, friends and associates to which they are connected. Autonomy in public spheres has been conceded. Saturated with traffic, street and store surveillance technologies able to reconstruct the ephemeral passing of bodies with biometric analysis, the public is now accepted as a surveilled spheres. Networked technologies and what David J. Phillips refers to as ubiquitous computing environments, however, further erase distinctions

between what constitutes private or public and enlist the body politic into participating in their own state-sponsored surveillance.²⁹

The Sublimity of Data Bodies

The seductive lure of the latest technological wonders reiterates the technical determinism espoused at world fairs. Like the wondrous inventions displayed at these sites, new media and digital devices rely on the myth of social and national progress and the promise of personal improvement through technology. This is evident in the proliferation of television news segments on the beneficial applications of technologies developed by U.S. defense. Drones are now for search and rescue missions as well as for targeted assassinations; satellites designed for surveillance are being adapted by the European Space Agency as part of their project of mapping the world's forests.³⁰ Vincent Mosco has extended what other scholars have theorized as the technological sublime to account for new media and information technologies, naming it the digital sublime. As Richard Maxwell relays in his reading of Mosco, "the sublime response relies on and resides in the publicity of the technology's grandeur" as well as its centrality to society.³¹ This grandeur impresses and overwhelms, leading some to view the data body as superseding the material, sensate body.³²

At issue is that the data double can, as Poster has written, "be acted upon to the detriment of the 'real' self without that 'real' self ever being aware of what is happening."³³ Information is gathered without consent and individuals are added to lists or assessed as threats without the knowledge of the citizen subject. Though the data body

of the citizen comprises its electronic traces, it increasingly precedes its material twin. For example, corporeal citizens are permitted access to physical spaces—cars, buildings, airplanes—only upon data body verification of identity.³⁴ On the national scale, U.S. visa applications must now submit to being fingerprinted and allowing these to be stored for verification upon departure from their point of origin.³⁵ Similarly U.S. embodied citizens are profiled and rated for mobility risk for ICE and TSA prescreening and virtual border programs. However, though the data body is undeniably central to the citizen in the age of the IED, the digital sublime inflates the power accorded to digital modes of surveillance and overestimates its capacities to fulfill the preemptive mandate of U.S. national security.

This becomes evident in the final section of *Exposition Universelle*, wherein the question of the “real” returns. In the middle section of the piece the transfer of affect and race to Ouramdane’s projected twin begged the question of whether his physical presence was evacuated of these and thus rendered more abstract than his data double. In this section, the division between the screen and body grows wider as Ouramdane turns to the citizen of the twenty-first century. The section opens with Ouramdane again facing upstage. Turned away from the audience and slightly hunched over, with his hands on his face, it is unclear what he may be doing. The screen flickers on to project a video image that freezes on a close-up shot of one eye as the artist inserts a blue contact lens. A second close-up image appears on the screen, of a cut tongue spurting blood, at which point Ouramdane turns toward the audience and spits blood onto the stage. Like Shah, Ouramdane flags his body with blue eyes and red mouth, though here the audience

watches as he takes in the colors to his body; his body is (painfully) invaded by the American flag. (Admittedly, these are also the colors of the French national flag, but given the arc of the second section, with its references to American forms of popular culture—and black/white racial binary—it is difficult to read these colors as anything but those of the U.S. flag.) Each image is saturated with the specific color of the blue contact and red tongue, while the rest of the face is drained of color, like in a black and white photograph. The act of inserting and cutting (whether “actually” performed or devised through theatrical sleight of hand) is the corporeal correlate: similar to the effacement of the rest of his features in the projections, flagging his body takes precedence over the pain of the act of doing so.

Once flagged, Ouramdane raises one arm high above his head. Will it be to salute, as the disciplined body of the patriot had done in the opening segment, or to greet the audience, as in the second section? A wave begins in his hand and ripples through his body, initiating a dance in which movement swells and overflows, cascading from his head, torso and arms into his hips, legs and feet. Arm gestures frequently initiate movement, as in the first section, but with substantive differences. Instead of displaying the restraint, military precision and physical authority seen in the opening section’s abrupt, angular arm gestures, or the flail and fold passivity and incapacity of the second, he allows movement to pour forth unhampered and resolve in unexpected directions and space engulfing patterns. Ouramdane’s head, torso and limbs move independently of one another but harmoniously, synchronously. In contrast to the kinetic and spatial restrictions of the opening solo, the quality of his dancing appears spontaneous,

improvisational, as Ouramdane responds to kinetic impulses. Like in the middle section of the dance, he falls and rises; yet his performance now carries an ease and confident sense of purpose that had been lacking.

For these reasons, the final solo has the sense of being the least representational, even (dare I say) the most “authentically” personal, as if the artist is outside the representational systems he had reiterated. Yet, like Shah’s final section of *Dinner with America*, the final segment of *Exposition Universelle* presents a paradox. On one hand, the choreography is more individuated than that in either of the preceding sections. Nevertheless, if Ouramdane’s intent is to demonstrate an outside to political inscription, then he fails, for he presents a projection of a citizen subject that has capitulated to the national completely.

In this portrait, Ouramdane gazes off to a distant horizon just left of center front; again he is covered in grease paint. This time, though, the colors of the U.S. flag splinter Ouramdane’s face in an array of abutting and overlapping jigsaw puzzle-pieces of red, white and blue that extend down his neck and dribble onto his white tee shirt. At first he appears clownish, with his left ear painted blue, a triangle of red paint over his nose matching the messy red enlargement of his mouth. The lid, lashes and brow to one of Ouramdane’s eyes is painted in greasy white, lending a naïve and vulnerable aspect to his visage. Ouramdane takes hold of the central apparatus that has been variously confining or permitting, illuminating and surveilling his actions now aims it at the screen image and begins to whisper into its hollow rod. In response, the image of the head jerks toward him. Ouramdane stands and continues to whisper into the rod while gazing at the image

as he follows the circular path of the apparatus. Distinct from the second section, he is no longer trapped within its lighted center nor fallen at its outer circumference. Now he controls its motion, uses it for his own purposes. The image follows Ouramdane's motion as he walks; each adjustment of his head stutters in mechanical jerks, as if the refresh rate of the digital image is lagging.



Fig. 5.2 Rachid Ouramdane in *Exposition Universelle*, 2009.
Video still by Jacques Hoepffner.

Ouramdane stops talking to the image but continues to hold onto the contraption as he walks around the circumference of the light it casts. The score Julien plays on the grand piano is delicate, melodic, almost melancholic and tender. Not knowing where to look, the projective citizen lurches awkwardly between the prior photographic tropes of heroic imagery: the noble up left, the contemplative low right, the bold profile. Cycling through the various poses seen over the course of the piece, it can find no right position to assume, no direction on which to settle its gaze. At times, the image moves in herky-jerky

advances, in other instances it judders with subtle vibrations. The tempo between each distinct resolution increases to a frenzied pace that could only be accomplished by a digital body caught in fast-forward. Nevertheless, the projection repeatedly freezes, as if a glitch in the program has occurred, before resuming its frantic endeavor. Ouramdane sets the central apparatus to spinning and exits the stage. The projected flag body continues to flit and freeze as the lights dim; *Exposition Universelle* draws to a conclusion with the projection caught mid-motion in a blur of red, white and blue.

Conclusion

With only the projection remaining as the central figure of spectators' attentions, Ouramdane appears to accept that the data citizen has supplanted the embodied citizen as the visible subject of regimes of power. At the very least his exit accedes to the rupture between physical and data bodies, allotting national affiliation to the latter. Such a reading restates the power relations of dataveillance, in which citizen data bodies belong to the state, with the fruits of surveillance stored in large-scale server farms. And certainly the data citizen looks trapped within the frame of its projection in the final moments of the piece. Yet, the repeated stutter of the image resolution and the blurred image with which the solo ends indicate an alternative conclusion: that the technology pervading the piece has failed to accurately project the data body. What emerges is a citizen subject that is only made possible through digital technology yet ultimately does not register through and on it.

This second reading accounts for an aporia in dataveillance that the digital sublime overshadows: that accumulated data must be projected for analysis. Though computer algorithms keyed to specific criteria have magnified the speed at which various data can be aggregated and dispersed to security and law enforcement agencies, at its final destination it is projected onto a computer screen to be reviewed by a human analyst. The amount of data that is being accumulated on an ongoing basis makes this an impossible task. Writing in *The New Yorker*, Hendrik Hertzberg describes the current haystacks of data that have been amassed by the U.S. surveillant assemblage as being of Himalayan proportions. By way of example, Hertzberg cites a rough estimate of the amount of telecommunications metadata to be reviewed by two hundred analysts at a new NSA data farm near Bluffdale, Utah, is 500 billion terabytes of information annually—a quantity equivalent to viewing twenty-three million years' worth of Blu Ray DVDs.³⁶ This is just one facility, belonging to one agency. Multiplied by the array of government agencies and private firms involved in processing digital surveillance data, the result is unquantifiable.³⁷

Allowing for failures in surveillance technology and the errant logic of collecting more data than is possible to analyze does not diminish the state's appetite for these technologies or the drive to accrue more data. If anything, it underscores the extent to which the digital doppelganger of the embodied citizen has become the primary subject of the nation-state. As *Exposition Universelle* clarifies, America's global surveillance matrix is the current iteration of methods of visual capture and containment by state power that shape citizen subjectivities according to different models of ideality: the

citizen of the future, the racial superior, the obedient subject of the state, the entertainer, the athlete. Situated within this historical context, the data body becomes just one more projection of citizen ideality by the nation-state. Evacuated of content, the projective citizen lacks both the passionate allegiance of Duncan's incorporated body politic and the material particularity of Rainer's transverse mode of intersectional citizenship. Bodies become two-dimensional surfaces, belying phantasms of interiority. If projective citizenship indicates that social and political legibility is now technologically mediated, then it also suggests that the presumed individuality and bodily integrity of liberal subject is just a projection. Citizenship has been reduced to as thin as a projected image on a computer monitor.

Over the course of *Exposition Universelle*, Ouramdane challenges the conceptual divide between material and data bodies by transferring such attributes as race, affect and politicality to his digital double. By the end of the piece, Ouramdane's projected flag body is a citizen subject splintered into a puzzle of national colors and trapped within the frame of a plasma screen. A clear inference is that contemporary surveillance technologies produce conditions of subjection that fractures individual identity. Accordingly, the final image, distorted in a smear of red, white and blue, can be read as a capitulation to the apparatus of U.S. datasurveillant technologies. Contrary to the contaminative citizen in Shah's *Dinner with America*, who is constructed as an invasive threat the U.S., Ouramdane's physical body has been invaded, as was seen when he flagged his body at the beginning of the third section. This suggests that ceding his data

double and walking away may not provide relief from or remedy for the preemptive technologies of surveillance of the U.S. security state.

Though I have situated the dance within the dissolution of embodied presence and politicality of dataveillance, *Exposition Universelle* speaks to the widespread dominance of visuality in the present moment. In this regard it aligns with Shah's *Dinner with America*. Set side by side, the two dances detail the delimited conditions of politicality for citizen subjects in the age of the IED. As I previously mentioned, drones and digital forms of tracking and monitoring bodies are the leading fronts for combating the anonymity of the terrorist or insurgent. According to the philosophy of preemption on which the U.S. surveillant assemblage is founded, everything must be known. This necessitates the surveillance of whole populations. Algorithmic criteria might delimit according to location, geopolitical exigencies, religion, ethnicity, nationality and racial discursivity, yet the current application of dataveillance demonstrates that the government also surveils those within its states and territories.³⁸ Recent admissions by the NSA as to the extent of its digital surveillance have revealed its global reach, which other nations such as China have taken as a form of electronic invasion. Thus, *Dinner with America* and *Exposition Universelle* indicate that the historical subject of the twenty-first century constituted within the imaginary of the U.S. surveillance assemblage is not a subject but an object that must be pierced, invaded, known. The good citizen is one who willingly avails his/her self and body to the state's demand for absolute transparency.

As I have suggested, however, the final moments of the dance offer another conclusion that gives lie to the omniscience of dataveillance technologies and gestures to

a possible outside to the doubling and dividing of data subjection. Preemptive surveillance relies on computer algorithms to differentiate signals (information) from the overall “noise” of the data stream. The wavering and faltering of the digital transmission at the end of *Exposition Universelle* suggest a failure of distinguishing signal from noise at the point of projection. If embodiment in the age of the IED is a state of corporeal dissonance generated by noise, as I theorized in the opening chapter of the dissertation, then perhaps agency might be found within the noise of the data stream. In the chapter that follows, I set aside the surveillance assemblage I have discussed in relation to the work of Shah and Ouramdane and return to embodied subjectivity in my analysis of damali ayo’s *Living Flag; Panhandling for Reparations*.

**6. Improvisational Citizenship:
Strange Encounters in damali ayo's *Living Flag: Panhandling for Reparations***

In the previous chapters I focused on the manner in which Shah and Ouramdane's bodies serves as synecdoches for bodies that are presently assembled as foreign and thus contaminated or de- and re-assembled into data by the surveillant gaze of U.S. security measures. This chapter shifts perspective from the abstracting view of aerial surveillance and the two-dimensionality of projected data citizens to the street level interaction of African American conceptual artist damali ayo's *Living Flag: Panhandling for Reparations*. Over the course of a four-month period during 2003, ayo sat on sidewalks on busy city streets across America to enact the eponymous action of panhandling for financial compensation for the descendants of enslaved Africans. The titular flag was present in every performance: a two- by three-inch translucent American flag decal that has been laminated onto ayo's forehead, or, in some instances, taped over her mouth.

Living Flag registers on multiple levels. It is at once a durational solo, street action and assortment of impromptu conversations among strangers. Considering the piece as a durational solo acknowledges the demanding labor ayo undertakes by sitting for hours on cold and unforgiving cement surfaces in the four cities where she panhandled—Chicago; New York City; Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Portland, Oregon. Indeed, the inhospitable conditions and grueling labor of the performance highlight the fact that panhandling is as much a physical as an economic position of last resort. To regard the piece as a street action recognizes ayo's solicitation as a call to action that requires a response. Yet, when asked whether she is staging some sort of

protest, ayo usually replies, “Just getting the job done.” To frame it as a conversation, however, values the potential of each interaction, brief though it may be.

Parlaying the visibility of heavily traversed streets, the itinerant performance lacked both an enclosed, discrete site and a delimited, self-selecting audience such as Duncan and Rainer’s performances privileged. And, though the locations ayo poached on street corners, planters and curbs provided ample opportunities for chronotopic intersections with passersby, the expansive parameters of the performance did not, could not, secure the involvement of the anonymous public that crossed by ayo. What then followed within the brief measure of time and proximity that the artist shared with those who responded to her hailing could not be predicted, thus exceeding Rainer’s mode of intersectional citizenship. Instead, *Living Flag* provided the conditions of possibility for chance verbal and kinetic exchanges to occur that, in turn, opened up the potential for a range of outcomes. In this manner the performance recruited unwitting urban pedestrians for an informal referendum on the issue of slavery reparations.

The artist does not evade the exigencies of the age of the IED that I have discussed thus far. By siting the action within the publicity of city streets, she might even be seen to avail herself to the surveillant gaze of traffic and CCTV cameras outside of stores and malls. Yet the terms of engagement that *Living Flag* enacts redefine the citizen subject in a manner that counters the underlying philosophy of total knowledge that subtends the U.S. surveillant assemblage. Further, by contending with the origins of African American political disenfranchisement, *Living Flag* interrogates the concept of a body politic, asking whom exactly qualifies as the “we” of the people.

For Michel de Certeau, the celestial voyeur-god point of view previously discussed in relation to aerial surveillance constructs a fiction of knowledge. Writing about the perspective provided from atop the World Trade Center in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau argues that the height provides an expansive, panoramic view of New York City that satisfies the lust to see all while making the “all” easier to comprehend. This topographical perspective streamlines the unpredictable character of urban life into manageable, readable text; an atopia-utopia comprised of stable, isolatable components. The all-seeing prosthetic eye of U.S. surveillance similarly constructs a fiction of knowledge in which the messy complexity and contradictions of an individual life are rendered into readable shapes, outlines, heat signatures or algorithmic calculations of digital zeros and ones. Certeau argues for a different perspective, one written by the “chorus of idle footsteps” of “ordinary practitioners” who daily map and remap a city by traversing its network of streets and intersections. He writes, “they are myriad, but do not compose a series. They cannot be counted because each unit [footfall] has a qualitative character: a style of tactical apprehension and kinesthetic singularities. Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities.”¹ Recognizing these singularities, ayo’s *Living Flag* proposes a model of citizenship that eschews conceptions of an always already *apriori* polity, even that wrought by intersecting bodies in shared temporal-spatial relationality such as Rainer’s *Trio A With Flags* proffers.

I argue that the performance produces citizenship through multiple, aleatory encounters between embodied citizens on city streets. These ephemeral encounters disrupt tacit assumptions of a common national historicity to choreograph citizenship as a

state of relationality not only between the U.S. state and its citizenry, but between the past and the present and between individual citizens, one to another. I therefore theorize the piece as an improvisation during which stranger-citizens labor together to produce political agency and what measure of collectivity can be had in the moment. In what follows, I perform a close choreographic reading of *Living Flag*, then theorize the manner in which it proposes an alternative mode of enacting citizenship, and by extension, a body politic, through improvisational relationality.²

The Time of Slavery

Living Flag is part of a vital archive of public performances of race by African American conceptual artists that intervene in the daily life of the city alongside such aesthetic antecedents as Adrian Piper's street action *Mythic Being* and William Pope L.'s ongoing performance practice of street crawls.³ It is also one of several projects ayo has initiated over the past decade that enlist the participation of the public, often unknowingly. For *flesh tones*, ayo asked paint store employees to match the color of different parts of her body. At the exhibition ayo's body was splayed across the walls, objectified into small canvases titled with the body part and location where she acquired the paint. Secretly taping her conversations with the paint mixers, she created a sound score for *skinned*, in which she painted the walls and ceiling of a small, enclosed room in the gallery the color of her right forearm. Enveloped in the deep brown of ayo's arm, gallery viewers needed to negotiate gazing at ayo's skin color while metaphorically inhabiting her body. Ayo advanced her investigation of racialized embodiment in *How-*

to-Rent-a-Negro®, a website (and now book and iPhone app) that spoofs racial tokenism. With slogans such as “why buy when you can rent?” the website quickly gained notoriety. Launched the same year as *Living Flag*, the satire in *How-to-Rent-a-Negro* relies on understanding of the constitution of the slave as property, a point missed by conservative commentators and white supremacists alike.⁴

Reparations can be an explosive issue, representing as it does an unrecognized, legal wrong initiated by the nation-state that affects a distinct constituency of the polity. For thirty-five million African American descendants remediation represents a longstanding unfulfilled dream that would entails a formal apology from the federal government acknowledging the injustice of the initial harm as well as financial remuneration. Reparations would thus cede the physical and psychic injury of slavery—its terrors, tortures; the loss of life and liberty—and the debt owed for the theft of labor upon which the nation was built. Lacking this reckoning, not only does the nation’s past remain unresolved for many of its citizens, but conditions in the present. Theorizing the relationship between slavery and contemporary conditions of possibility and constraint has been a project of African diasporic philosophers and critical theorists such as Saidiya Hartmann, who conceptualizes the time of slavery, what she calls the “disparate temporalities of unfreedom,” as the two hundred years during which slavery was a state-supported institution as well as the continuing social, political and economic disenfranchisement that structures the lived experience of many African American citizens in the United States.⁵ Hartman’s chronology stands in stark contrast to progressivist historical narratives of the U.S. that bracket slavery within a specific (dark)

period that tarnishes the nation's timeline but which the nation has overcome through its foundational belief in universal egalitarianism.⁶

The movement to secure compensation for the enslavement of Africans and African Americans has a long history, extending back to the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1865. Special Field Order #15, the famous "forty acres and a mule" plan promoted by General William Tecumseh Sherman, attempted to redistribute land ownership by dividing plantations into forty acre parcels for 40,000 freedmen, but was rescinded by Andrew Johnson after he assumed the presidency following Abraham Lincoln's assassination.⁷ Since then, multiple plans for reparations have been forwarded, from Thaddeus Steven's 1867 bill to redistribute land to African Americans (H.R. 29) to the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act (H.R. 40), which has been introduced into Congress by Representative John Conyers, Jr., every year since 1989.⁸ Notably, proposals for instituting some form of compensation following the emancipation of slaves were primarily promoted to ensure that emancipated workers could support themselves and would not become a burden on the state at any point in the future, rather than an admission of or accounting for the wrongs of slavery. Conyers' bill is an effort to at least begin a conversation about reparations by establishing a process similar to that developed to address the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. That commission study led to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which granted an official apology and pecuniary compensation to those who had been interned in the amount of \$20,000 per citizen.⁹ H.R. 40, however, has never made it out of subcommittee.

By 2003 slavery reparations was becoming contentious on Capitol Hill and in the media. Several factors contributed to the renewed debate in the early twenty-first century, including key legal cases that sought compensation from corporate entities that have benefited from slave labor and the 2001 declaration by the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance stating that “slavery and the transatlantic slave trade are a crime against humanity.”¹⁰ Conversely, the aughts were defined by a negation of need, an anti-reparations movement and a cultural discourse that defined the new century as post-racial.¹¹ At the same time, Ayo had been researching a new performance work that articulated panhandling as labor. The project did not materialize, but the desire to investigate racialized discrepancies in the accumulation of wealth stayed with Ayo. Listening to media coverage, she recalls being struck by the parallels between the congressional hearings and panhandling. *Living Flag* was borne from the realization that the quest for reparations had become a form of distinctly racialized panhandling, in which African Americans were made to beg for political recognition of the economic repercussions of institutionalized slavery.

Debates about slavery reparations among pundits and politicians tend to position the topic as highly divisive; engendering only conflict between the haves and the have-nots, Americans of European descent and Americans of African heritage. Indeed, commentators opposed to slavery reparations have speculated that the interracial friction the issue might incite among Americans outstrips the value that pecuniary compensation may provide in redressing the grievances of African American citizens. Ayo does not shy away from the purportedly inherent racial volatility of reparations. Instead, she underlines

class and racial distinctions in the very structure of *Living Flag*. Upon situating herself in a visible location on a well-traveled sidewalk, ayo petitions only white passersby for reparation payments. If her efforts prove successful and she wins over a white pedestrian, she then redistributes whatever amount she has accumulated to the next black American to pass by her.¹² Stated slightly differently, if ayo is able to turn a white pedestrian away from their intended destination (and toward her tin can), she then returns the money to black pedestrian. Relocating the debate from the domain of policy-making and the media, *Living Flag* provided a forum for a cross-section of “ordinary” or “average” American citizens (euphemistic designations in themselves), and thus can productively be read for the manner in which it animates the democratic process within the quotidian context of city streets. By perpetuating the same color-based logic upon which the institution of slavery was based, the selective criteria by which ayo solicits and redistributes funds evinces the racializing terms that subtend citizenship in the U.S. The racializing dynamic of the piece not only echoes that of slavery, but also comments on contemporary race politics. Support for slavery reparations divides along racial lines, with the overwhelming majority of white U.S. citizens readily admitting that they oppose recompense. According to a 2003 study by Harvard University and University of Chicago researchers, only four percent of white Americans supported financial compensation for slavery by the federal government.¹³

Divert, Delay, Detour, Detain

Extant documentation of *Living Flag* consists of a small photographic archive and two time-based visual documents. These include a four-and-a-half-minute flash story that interleaves performance stills with on-screen textual commentary by ayo and a sound collage of her exchanges with passersby. A second, longer video (approximately eight-and-a-half-minute) speaks for itself by capturing telling exchanges between ayo and passersby as these occur *in situ*.¹⁴ Admittedly, these eponymously titled documents are highly mediated, with each offering a different perspective on the piece. One fundamental distinction between the two is the degree of racial tension they evince. The flash story highlights a greater amount than the video by including an assortment of adverse interactions and opinions about ayo's action. These are heightened by the disjuncture between the static images and disembodied aural overlay of the flash story form. In contrast to video footage that highlights ayo's equanimity in the face of repeated rebuffs to her solicitations, to take one example, the flash story includes an exchange in which one young male voice asks, "What is slavery?" Frustration and incredulity can be heard in the tone of the artist's response as she battles to remain non-confrontational, "Do I really have to explain slavery to you?"

The longer video, used in the following analysis, provides a more comprehensive overview of the experience of the performance. Combining footage from multiple encounters and locations, it enacts the performance recursively through a succession of scenes that introduce each phase of the performance. Rather than present the viewer with a singular narrative arc, the video sequences the different components of the piece as a set

of decisions that can be taken or not. The logic of its editing shapes the relative value of each option the video presents: to be in discussion with others is more productive than not; a willingness to engage with ayo opens up an encounter in interesting and unexpected ways; and positive debate about financial recompense for slavery illuminates a more hopeful vision for race relations in the U.S. Yet the range of responses included in the video makes clear the labor of each decision. In this regard the video foregrounds a body politic defined more by disagreement than consensus over its shared history and the direction of its future by bringing both into the present. Avery Gordon theorizes history as a structuring element of the social that is haunted by spectral subjects absented from official and canonical versions. In *Ghostly Matters* she argues that the ghostly past demanding recognition is nevertheless “pregnant with unfulfilled possibility, with the something to be done that the present is demanding.” This utopian dimension of haunting, she continues, “is not a demand to return to the past but a reckoning with its repression in the present.”¹⁵ The message of the video is clear: in order to move forward, America must reckon with its history of state-sanctioned slavery.

The video opens with a series of brief scenes showing ayo in the variety of public sites she occupied and the shifting seasons over which she panhandled: seated directly on the cold pavement of highly trafficked city sidewalks, curbside at busy intersections, on the steps of public buildings, on a leafy street in a downtown shopping district, at a subway entrance. In footage from ayo’s New York City performance, during which she took up residence in front of four museums over the course of a day, the viewer can make out signage for the Guggenheim Museum behind the tree planter on which she balances;

another clip reveals that she is on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Sitting calmly in a cross-legged position, sometimes leaning against the exterior wall of an edifice but more frequently not, ayo's demeanor is unassuming. She does not pretend to be anyone other than who she is; though engaging in the act of begging, there is no ruse, no pretense of either being or playing the part of an indigent or homeless person. She is dressed neatly and unassumingly in everyday street clothes. Even seated ayo appears tall, angular, though over the course of the performance her upright posture will sag until she must support the weight of her torso by propping her elbows atop her knees. The arrangement of her limbs is relaxed; her arms hang against her sides, her hands almost protectively cup around the can that serves as the receptacle for reparation payments. Her lack of bodily tension proffers an invitation to stop and engage with her, along with an implicit question: Where will you stand on this issue?

In addition to the clear plastic U.S. flag adhering to ayo's forehead or mouth, another, equally small American flag decorates the coffee can for contributions. A torn piece of cardboard hanging around her neck reads, "200+ years of slavery in the united states [*sic*]." By her side, a handwritten sign pasted on another scrap of torn cardboard reiterates the message on the can: "reparations accepted here." The flag decal ayo uses to flag her body stands in sharp contrast to the flags donned by the preceding choreographers I have discussed. It is not an actual flag like Duncan's filmy silk and Rainer's weighty curtains; nor is it akin to the saturating effects of Shah's red, white and blue lighting or the fragmentation of Ouramdane's face paint. It is a graphic

representation, a logo; its diminutive size (approximately two-by-three inches in size) is scaled to her facial dimensions.

The public street, as the crucible for the stranger sociability that *Living Flag* attempts to foster, is one element in the larger circulatory system of the city, a node in an interconnecting urban network of exchange in which bodies, capital and commodities circulate and where multiple, sometimes competing, needs and demands converge. Crossing paths with a panhandler resting against a subway entrance on the way to catch a morning commute or stumbling upon one at the entrance of a storefront is not an uncommon occurrence for urban dwellers. Nevertheless, the presence of a homeless or indigent person creates a request that may be considered an unwelcome imposition or as a threat to personal safety, as can be seen in the frequency with which “accosting” is associated with panhandling. As sociologist and political theorist Nikolais Rose points out, the indigent and homeless are liminal to the political as well as the social. They form a non-constituency, unable to vote and uncountable in the ritual of national identity formation that is the national census.¹⁶ As such the panhandler exists outside of “the people,” a domestic version of un-incorporable contaminant to the body politic comparable to Shah’s foreign body. Within the neoliberalist forms of governance that have predominated in western capitalist nations since the 1980s, poverty and homelessness have been considered an individual character flaw, the result of personal failure and character deficiencies, rather than a direct outcome of shrinking state services or of economic policies or conditions. Unlike the panhandler, the neoliberal citizen is a

productive, self-managing *homo economicus* that contributes capital (and thus has value) to the nation-state.¹⁷



Fig. 6.1 damali ayo in *Living Flag*, 2003. Photograph used with permission of artist.

An African diasporic body on the street can be a destabilizing experience, especially when compounded by class.¹⁸ Writing about the affective politics of fear, cultural theorist Sara Ahmed argues that fear is central to the perception of blackness. To make this argument, Ahmed analyzes the fear of the white child who, in Frantz Fanon's narrative in "The Fact of Blackness," recolors his body as black.¹⁹ She writes, "fear opens up past histories of association..., which allows the white body to be constructed as apart from the black body in the present." Establishing racial difference is a spatial effort as well, Ahmed continues, "[fear] re-establishes distance between bodies whose

difference is read off the surface, as a reading which produces the surface.”²⁰ As an African American who is panhandling, ayo might doubly register as a threat, instigating choreographies of avoidance. Still, a neatly dressed woman who amicably calls out, “Would you like to make a reparation payment today?” may readily catch the ear, and pique the interest, of pedestrians. While some pedestrians may have ascertained that ayo’s panhandling was an intervention of some sort, either as political protest or artistic performance, both video and flash story indicate that a fair amount of white pedestrians took her panhandling at face value.²¹

Ayo’s sustained presence on the street is a still point amidst a field of motion, acting as a locus of attraction or avoidance. The lively pace of the foot traffic maneuvering around her accentuates the artist’s composed yet compelling stillness. By disrupting the productive mobility of the cityscape, she presents a counter-model to the hypermobility of capital, the efficiency of the neoliberal citizen. Ayo’s stillness is not a measure of passivity, however, but of the force that seemingly inactive bodies can exert on other bodies. Susan Leigh Foster’s analysis of a February 1960 sit-in at the whites-only lunch counter, which became one of the most galvanizing actions of the Civil Rights Movement, is helpful in understanding the activity of ayo’s apparent immobility. In “Choreographies of Protest,” Foster assays the physicality that was required of the four young African American men who conducted the sit-in at a Greensboro, North Carolina, Woolworth’s department store. The prior training the protesters had received in nonviolent response techniques enabled them to retain their composure in the face of the verbal and physical assaults they endured throughout their action. The equanimity of the

men, in turn, choreographed the actions—the motional decisions—of those around them. The protestors’ ability to retain calm facial and physical demeanors in spite of the insults, threats and objects that were hurled at them initiated a chaotic kinetic corona: a waitress repeatedly stumbled and clumsily dropped dishes; a policeman paced behind their backs, rhythmically beating a nightstick against his leg; and crowds of onlookers jostled one another in order to catch a better glimpse of the protest. Analogously, ayo’s very presence on the street alters the distribution, cadence and routes of peregrinating city dwellers.

In footage in which the American flag is plastered onto ayo’s forehead, she actively solicits the attention of the public with a verbal call. Scanning the area, her head rotates gently side-to-side as she traces the pathways etched in the sidewalk by pedestrians. Her face remains tilted up as she gazes at the people who walk past; she remains affable as she calls out to those who stride by, neither dissuaded nor visibly put off by those who refuse to acknowledge her presence. She directs a continuous patter toward the foot traffic circulating around her—“Hello! Care to pay some reparations? Do you want to pay some reparations today? Pay some reparations?” In scenes in which the flag is pasted over her mouth, the artist maintains a mute vigil, hands calmly folded in her lap. Alternately, she can be seen beseeching the faces of those who walk by with a piercing gaze as she jiggles the coffee can, the metallic clatter of a few loose coins the only audible call. Even when ayo sits silently, her presence hails passersby and arouses a range of reactions: curiosity, confusion, annoyance, outright anger. Occasionally ayo alters the inflection of her address to emphasize the public service she offers: “Hey, folks, it’s time to pay some reparations. You can pay right here. It’s very convenient.” The shift

highlights the satire of *Living Flag*. On the one hand, the appeal proposes a utopic vision of interracial harmony with its tacit assumption that redressing the ills of slavery and anti-black racism is an activity in which the general white populace would gladly, readily partake, if only it were easier to do so. That ayo is, literally, begging to make this happen gives lie to this vision.



Fig. 6.2 damali ayo in *Living Flag*, 2003. Photograph used with permission of artist.

Ayo's call—either her unspoken plea or hearty verbal hailing—entreats the curious to alter their pace, hopefully by slowing down or, as more frequently occurs, by hastening their tempo. These kinetic responses begin with the turn of a pedestrian's head towards the sound of ayo's voice; the searching gaze that falls upon her, and the first of a series of decisions: whether to proceed along an intended path and acknowledge ayo or scurry by with averted eyes, pretending not to notice her. In choosing to answer the

artist's call, a passerby has decided to momentarily delay a schedule, diverge from their intended trajectory and detour approach to her. Some pause to bend over or squat down to drop a few coins into her can then continue on their way, while others stop to ask questions. Whichever option is chosen in response to either the implicit request of ayo's mute vigil or her explicit solicitation disrupts the normative quotidian choreographies of daily life, requiring people to amend their routinized tempos and spatial flows, patterns and pathways. In other words the refusal to pause and engage with ayo on the issue of reparations and potentially provide or receive a reparation payment remains a relation to participation in the scene of ayo's address.

The verb "to panhandle" comprises two prominent aspects of the performance, the call ayo sends out to people and the response of receiving monies. This exchange is not only an economic transaction, however. It involves a matrix of affective responses within a scene of recognition. Panhandling as a public act entwines passersby in an unspoken bond, effected by the act of panhandling itself: an economic position of last resort and a public position of abasement and humiliation. Wayne Koestenbaum theorizes the difference between shame and humiliation as a matter of location: shame is endured privately, whereas humiliation presupposes the provocation of the emotion in the presence of others. Koestenbaum's differentiation between the two affects constitutes humiliation as inherently performative. Humiliation choreographs the person experiencing it and the audience member, the known or anonymous she or he who has become an unwitting accomplice in a scene in which the emotion rebounds onto the spectator, entwining the two in an affective intimacy.

Over a series of clips in which brief exchanges give way to longer encounters, it becomes evident that ayo remains seated throughout each encounter. Her position reiterates the political and economic inequities to which the action of panhandling speaks. Retaining the height differential between others and herself throughout an ensuing exchange puts people in the position of having to literally look down on her. This positional inequity ensures that each white passerby-now-participant must gaze down at ayo, seated beneath them, throughout a verbal exchange that may begin with inquiries about what she is doing but from there can veer into the fraught subject of slavery and its ongoing legacy in this country. In this manner *Living Flag* corporealizes the power relations of the racial and class hierarchies generated by the institution of slavery while providing a physical analogy for the inability to see eye-to-eye.

Improvising a Body Politic

After approximately three minutes, the video footage shifts from the first part of *Living Flag*'s central economic transaction to the second, the paying of reparations to African American passersby. The payout consists of giving whatever amount is in her can at the time. Ayo reiterates that this is not a handout but a debt owed, by stating, "Here is your first reparation payment." Ayo's insistence that the amount is the *first* payment might gesture toward the possibility that more might follow, but it also points out that African American citizens have yet to receive any reparations. For her part, ayo must repeatedly explain the terms of the transaction. Once the artist manages to convince someone to accept a payment, the posture and bodily tension of the person visibly relax.

A common sequence of reaction among the recipients begins with incredulity, followed by elation. Recipients can be seen breaking out in a smile or, like one elderly man, into ebullient laughter. In one clip, an African American teenager's initial excitement over receiving cash from ayo becomes muted by the reaction of white friends who appear to be upset by his acceptance of the money from ayo. In another segment, a middle-age woman suspiciously asks, "What's the catch? There is always a catch. Nobody gives money away for nothing." More astounding is that the money they are being handed have come from white Americans. One young woman asks in disbelief, "White people just *gave* you money? Why?" Ayo offers tax-deductible receipts to both contributors (payers) and recipients (payees). Those that she provides to the former thank the individual for acknowledging her or his debt. The receipt she offers when paying out a payment reads, "Apologies from a citizen, on behalf of the nation." In most, if not all of these scenes, African American citizens concur that they believe reparations are due even though they stopped believing they would see one in their lifetime.

Ayo also remains seated while distributing reparation payments. In these exchanges, however, the directional reversal of ayo's arm gesture and thus the flow of money alter its meaning. Still below the person standing in front of her, she extends her arm up to proffer a payment to an African American citizen; and, in doing so, elides implications of individual or racial inadequacy that a charitable handout might infer. Instead, the upward motion of the gesture indicates respect. As this kinetic resignification indicates, the semiotics of ayo's body shifts in relation to the circulation of the funds. Ayo's flagged body is thus the point of exchange in the collection and redistribution of

personal wealth. Passed through ayo-as-nation, individual contributions are cleansed of personal guilt and transformed into reparation payments from the nation, in recognition of a debt that is due. As the point of monetary, affective and symbolic exchange, ayo embodies both the nation's promise of freedom and liberty for all and, through the circulation of reparation payments, the authority to realize the state's duty of care towards all of its citizens.

Ayo has stated that she considers attaching the American flag to her body as a performative act through which she becomes “a living flag, staking my claim to this country.”²² To make such a claim is to assert one's status as a fully enfranchised citizen, a position that was denied to the African slave—the non- or anti-citizen against which American citizenship was constituted²³—and a position perpetually in need of defense, as the disenfranchisement of African American voters in the 2000 presidential election made evident.²⁴ Though the act of attaching the flag directly onto her skin can be seen to reference the branding of African and African American bodies as the chattel of white owners, the transparency of the flag decal accentuates ayo's claim by integrating her flesh tone as the stripes of the flag. In addition to re-colorizing the American flag, Ayo further transforms into a living flag through her street wear. Invariably she dresses in blue jeans and a red top and red or black outerwear (mittens, sweaters, an over- or raincoat, depending on the season). Appearing as a red, black and blue flag, ayo inverts the racial dominance of whiteness and imagines an alternative nation that prioritizes its African American citizens. Ayo's tactical use of what she refers to as “subjective objectification”—a term reminiscent of Gayatri Spivak's “critical essentialism”—inverts

the jubilant heroisms and spectacular metaphorical enlargement of Isadora Duncan even as ayo dons the flag—by handling tasks she believes is the responsibility of the United States nation-state. Challenging corporeal ideals of the American citizen, ayo tenders the body of the nation as an African American woman panhandler. Though the physical arrangement of her body is in a subservient position, ayo assumes the centrality and power of the nation-state, transforming her body into a nation, a space of legitimation, and assuming the duty of care of the state.

The time that ayo spends with pedestrians is a matter of mere minutes. Yet the kinetic and verbal interactivity that transpires within this short period opens the door to a range of possible outcomes: engaging or shunning, giving or receiving monies, pleasure or outrage. I want to highlight this exchange as a spatiotemporal instance in which expectations are momentarily suspended. Within this momentary rupture of expectations lies the potential for disrupting the elisions and aporia of official national narratives and shifting opinions on racialized disparities in the distribution of wealth in America. Within the intimate surround of ayo's kinosphere, amidst the everyday traffic of bodies circulating on the street, political positions can potentially be upset, realigned. I am less interested in assessing the success of *Living Flag* as a vehicle of social healing, than in foregrounding how it facilitates a sphere of improvisatory interaction wherein an exchange of views can unfold, even as the work's framing structure is in itself a critique of the lack of public debate.

Improvisation within movement contexts emphasizes the willingness of participants to forgo expectations and enter into an analogous sphere of exchange of

information and point of view. Whether used as a compositional tool or as a mode of performance, improvisation upsets bodily predispositions and conceptual preconceptions, the ingrained daily habits of moving and thinking, allowing participants to embrace the unknown, invite the unexpected, imagine the impossible. Because improvisation forgoes logical or linear progression such as theme and variation, physical exchanges stutter to a halt, double back, explore alternate routes and responses. However, as Susan Leigh Foster writes, what transpires between bodies laboring together in an improvisational movement context is less of a thorough abeyance of the known and exploration of uncharted kinetic relationality than a continuous oscillation between the known and the unknown.²⁵ Participants tact between the embodied information they bring to an improvisational exchange—individual histories of training, variations of technique and experience—and the information they receive from one another in the moment in order to craft new movement possibilities: unexpected conjunctions of limbs and weight, alternative rhythms and emphases/accentuations, textures and frictions that only were possible because of the differences each participant brought to the transaction. What is required is the willingness to let go of any attachment to one’s particular embodied perspective or to the outcome of the exchange and simply share time to labor together. Despite the individual, embodied histories that participants bring to the exchange, Foster continues, improvisation eludes a shared history or predetermined future in favor of investigating what is possible in the present. The exchanges instigated by ayo’s panhandling in *Living Flag* provide an alternative theory of agency that relies on the immediacy of interaction and the willing suspension of predetermined positions and/or

outcomes. In the suspension of past and future, in the continuous, open-ended now of improvisation, power circulates continually between participants through the back and forth of an exchange in which positions are in flux, amendable, unfixed, and thus unfinished.

Conclusion

Living Flag's improvisatory encounters might be seen as reparative in that they offer the possibility of establishing new relations of recognition and reciprocity between racialized bodies, and, at times, momentary consensus on a collective social past. At the risk of overstating the political potential of the piece, however, it is worth noting that these improvisations provide an intrinsic caveat by circumscribing agency within the fleeting, ephemeral temporality of the exchange. Given the brevity of the improvisations that comprise *Living Flag*, it can be argued that the performance, more than critiquing an idealization of an American body politic discredits the concept itself. Whatever collectivity can be had, ayo seems to be saying, is only that which might emerge unexpectedly between strangers within the daily happenchance of urban life.

Each of the twenty-first century artists I have discussed in this section confronts conditions of politicality in the contemporary moment. What they share in common, however, is a jaundiced perspective on the idea of a body politic. In Shah's *Dinner with America*, local and national affiliations are evacuated and replaced with a phantasmic image of America that inculcates an insatiable hunger. Transnationally circulating American ideologies of democratic statecraft and ideals of status and beauty interpellate

political subjects around the world yet do not provide entry into its national body politic. Within present conditions of U.S. security, these global bodies are classified as a threat; foreign contaminants that cannot be incorporated and thus objects of the U.S. surveillant gaze. Situating this gaze within the scopic regime of European colonialism, Ouramdane's *Exposition Universelle* also sets up conditions of citizen ideality based on American norms, here on such all-American forms of popular entertainment as tap dancing, minstrelsy and baseball. The emphasis of the piece, however, is the dematerialization of individual and group identities through the digitalization and dataveillance of contemporary subjects.

Conversely, ayo addresses citizenship as inherently embodied, freighted with histories that contest official mythologies. Yet the atomization of the body politic becomes a condition of possibility in *Living Flag*. Exchanging “the people,” and national consensus with it, for people encountered on the street, the action indicates that the only form of a national body politic that is possible in the present moment is that which is improvised in random interactions between individual citizens. The forms of citizenship I have proposed in relation to each work under discussion—contaminative, projective and improvisatory—underscore the fragmentation of the citizen subject position, now isolated, disembodied and liminal, and thus the impossibility of national cohesion in the age of the IED. In the final chapter, I consider the political possibilities of temporary collectivity that *Living Flag* gestures toward by examining two participatory projects that choreograph citizenship as a mode of convivial exchange between strangers.

7. Choreographing Convivial Citizenship

In this dissertation I have sought to theorize citizenship as a way of operating or doing that shares with dance such characteristics as embodiment, motion, agency, relationality and collectivity. Using choreography as methodology and rubric by which to understand citizenship, I have framed the first decade of the twenty-first century as one in which artists negotiated the substantive changes in the rights accorded, legal definition of and affective identification of national citizenship in relation to U.S. hegemony. Over the course of the dissertation thus far I have proposed six different models of citizenship that speak to the political and social conditions in which it is presently conceptualized, experienced and enacted.

I began with the assertion that the twenty-first century inaugurated a shift that rendered the U.S. nation-state unstable and unreliable and produces a social atmosphere based on fear, alienation and suspicion. As a result, citizenship has become dissonant. I then examined a series of performances that use the American flag to investigate the foundational “we, the people” on which ideologies and shared fictions of American democracy have been built and sustained. These fictions were reified in Isadora Duncan’s model of citizenship as an incorporative state and contested in Yvonne Rainer’s intersectional citizenship. Marking a radical shift, my analyses of the work of Shah, Ouramdane and ayo twenty-first century artists focused on the constitution of the contemporary citizen subject as a threat and object of surveillance, and the impossibility of identifying as a body politic. Whereas American citizenship in the twentieth century was conceptualized as incorporative or intersectional, in the twenty-first century it is

dissonant, contaminative, projective, improvisational.

The question that arises is what, then, is next? What new kinds of investments and identifications might be possible? What forms, scales or scapes of relationality, agency and collectivity might be generated? A resurgence of interest in cosmopolitanism,¹ global citizenship and civic transnationalism over the past decade provide one avenue of response to such questions.² Another is the move toward localist communitarianism that can be seen in recent social and political activism and, more broadly, in do-it-yourself culture. A third, as proposed in relation to damali ayo's *Living Flag* in the previous chapter, is to consider citizenship as a mode of improvisatory exchange between individuals. The first two emphasize scale, with cosmopolitanism stressing a trans-, supra- or post-national ethic of care that turns on principles of interdependence and equality and localism prioritizing the necessity of proximity. *Living Flag* encouraged qualities from both cosmopolitanism (equality) and localism (proximity) but prioritized improvisational encounter and exchange.

In concluding this project, I want to continue the line of inquiry into exchange that I began in my analysis of *Living Flag* by examining two participatory performance projects—Headlong Dance Theater's *This Town is a Mystery* (2012) and Rajni Shah's *give what you can, take what you need [sic]* (2008). I argue that each of these emphasizes the political potential of embodied co-presence by cultivating spheres of convivial exchange among strangers.³ For *This Town is a Mystery*, Headlong Dance Theater collaborated with members of four Philadelphia households to choreograph dance-theater pieces performed by them in their homes. In addition to purchasing a ticket,

audience members were asked to bring a dish to share in the potluck meal with which the performance culminated. Shah's *give what you can, take what you need* also gathered strangers around a dining table but inverts Headlong's model; instead of inviting the public into the privacy of a home, *give what you can* brought the congeniality of a dinner party into public spaces. The distinction between public and private space has been under duress, as the previous chapters on drones and dataveillance make clear. Additionally, I argue, these projects cultivated a form of social interaction wherein strangers could gather and enjoy each other's company apart from respective political, ethnic, religious, class, diasporic or national affiliations and allegiances. I begin with a detailed explication of each project, focusing on the structure by which sociality is produced.⁴ I then turn to postcolonial and anti-racist scholar Paul Gilroy's theorization of conviviality to consider the political possibilities engendered by *This Town* and *give what you can*.

A House is a Home is a Theater: Headlong Dance Theater's This Town is a Mystery

Headlong Dance Theater has been a fixture in Philadelphia since choreographers David Brick, Andrew Simonet and Amy Smith relocated there in 1993 to continue their collaborative choreographic efforts, first initiated as undergraduate dance majors at Wesleyan College. Over the past two decades, the Headlong has choreographed more than forty dances and developed a reputation for choreography that is rigorously structured but does not rely on an insider's knowledge of dance to enjoy. They are known for using unconventional venues for performances (a hotel pool, the planetarium) and involving audiences in shaping the experience of the performance. The three directors do

not consider themselves choreographers but cultural researchers. As such, a question or concern pressing on one or the other of the three sparks an investigation that determines the process of developing each dance and its final form. For *Thrash*, which was discussed in the introduction, the question of what the body could contribute to the national political discussion animated the resulting process and video. The question that initiated *This Town* was simple: who lives in Philadelphia? The answer is more difficult. Philadelphia is a city of approximately one-and-a-half million residents that are predominantly African American and white.⁵ It is also a warren of abutting neighborhoods—175 in all spread across eighty-seven zip codes. Extended families settle within in the same neighborhood. Likewise, generations of families may remain living in it. Creating performances in four neighborhoods is one way to permeate the metropolis's multiple boundaries.

This Town may very well be Headlong's most ambitious project to date. This says a lot for a group that prides itself on offering dance experiences in novel ways. *Cell* (2006), for example, provided 200 individuals in each location the opportunity to be guided on a fifty-minute journey through a warren of small streets and alleyways via verbal instructions provided by a voice on the other end of a cell phone. Riding the edge between surveillance and caretaking, an anonymous dispatcher led each audience of one on a sensorial adventure, at one point directing them to sit on a park bench for three minutes with their eyes closed and absorb the sounds and smells of the city around them. At another juncture the tour guide advised each traveler to take note of two men passing by on the street, who then seemingly spontaneously erupted into a duet. The adventure

culminated with a set of directions that steered the person through a warehouse, past a dance rehearsal underway and into “the hive,” a large empty room where three HDT dancers waited. Without exchanging any verbal information, the dancers began to reflect and embellish every movement, action, gesture of the “audience” in a game of follow the leader that developed into an intricate, idiosyncratic quartet that made use of the troupe’s refined improvisational techniques. The heightened sensitivity that Brick, Simonet and Smith have instilled in their dancers is based on a range of improvisational forms, including Contact Improvisation. This kinetic awareness enabled the dancers to capitalize on the audience-*cum*-leaders’ embodied hints, habits and proclivities. Each improvisation created a quartet dance that was unique to each participant.

Another antecedent to *This Town is Pusher*, a guerrilla event the company conducted during, but not as part of, the 2000 and 2001 Philadelphia Fringe Festivals.⁶ *Pusher* was neither advertised nor ticketed; the only way to see the dance was if, perchance, you happened to be surreptitiously approached on the street by a stranger asking if you wanted to buy a dance. As its title implies, the ensuing business transaction was conducted like a drug deal. After responding yes, a person was handed a card with a pager number and the instructions to “ask about the lawn furniture”; told where to leave the money (in a bag under a newspaper stand); then provided with directions to where they would pick up “the goods.” Once an individual found the dark, empty field to which they had been directed and sat down in the sole chair provided, the surrounding trees lit up and ten dancers appeared to dance around the buyer. Like its analogy, the resulting experience could be euphoric.

Pusher and *Cell* reconfigure dance presentation not just by encouraging, but *requiring* audience involvement. They reimagine the dance transaction itself by delivering a dance performance as an illegal drug deal and neighborhood tour. The sites are more than site-specific locations; they are destinations that require curiosity, a sense of adventure and an investment of labor to find. Participation likewise extends from testing the lengths people will go to watch a dance, as in the case of *Pusher*, to putting participants in the position of leading an ensemble dance improvisation, as in *Cell*. In *This Town*, the format is a potluck dinner at the home of a stranger that includes a twenty-to thirty-minute performance. Participation was maximized on several fronts: by drafting members of the public, which the company refers to as “citizen dancers,” as creative collaborators and performers; by incorporating a shared meal into the frame of the performance; and asking the audience to bring a dish to contribute to this meal. The journey to arrive at each performance was multilayered. The project had received local and national media attention in the weeks leading up to performances that introduced the families to the public. Yet ticket buyers were not able to choose which household they wanted to attend, only which night and whether A, B, C or D. Only after purchasing a ticket were the location and directions provided. They then traveled into an area of the city with which they may or may not have been familiar, to enter the world of the home and, finally, the world of the dance.

Home and the family are culturally and historically overdetermined concepts that intertwine with state sanctioned gender behavior and heteronormativity.⁷ For Simonet, the project lead, homes are also “so thick with information they feel like nations unto

themselves.”⁸ He conceived of *This Town* during the global financial crisis that began in 2007, when unprecedented numbers of Americans—approximately three-and-a-half million—lost their homes due to the specious Wall Street practice of bundling home mortgages as securities to be traded on the stock market.⁹ With *This Town*, Simonet was not only interested in cracking Philadelphia open like a cabinet of wonders but in also asking what comprises a house? Its market value or what is exchanged between those who live there?

Central to the conception of *This Town* was that would-be participants could not be familiar with the company, i.e. as friends or former audiences. Secondly, they had to volunteer; Headlong could not enlist applicants. To encourage a diversity of candidates for the project from the Philadelphia’s proliferation of cultures and neighborhoods, a household was loosely defined as anyone who ate together and slept under the same roof. Headlong circulated flyers and placed advertisements neighborhood papers and in the *Metro*, a free daily newspaper that distributes 100,000 copies in grocery stores and subway stations across the metropolis. To participate, candidates submitted an application consisting of a few, select questions about the household: who lives there? What is a typical day like? Why are you interested in the project? The only prerequisite was that all of those living together, whether roommates or family members, had to commit to working with Headlong to develop and perform in the resulting dance. One of the many goals Headlong had for *This Town* included offering a professional experience of creating and rehearsing a dance piece to the participating households. To that end, participants signed contracts committing to a weekly rehearsal schedule and to performing the

resulting piece ten times over the course of the three-week festival. In turn, they were paid on a regular basis, just as Headlong would pay its troupe.

Headlong received forty applications, twenty of which Simonet, Smith and audiovisual artist Rucyl Mill (who collaborated on sound and video design) interviewed in their homes. The four selected households were: the McQueens, parents Kendra and Calvin, daughter Kenya and son Kassean; the Bosticks, Lea, her two grown children, Adam and Princess, and Princess's baby son, Preston; Tobie Hoffman; and the Aryadarei family, parents Shannon and Zahed, sons Sulaimon and Shaheen plus daughter Sydney.¹⁰ The company initially had sought a demographic and geographic range as well as different kinds of households. Two of the households are African American and blended or multigenerational, one is Iranian-Philadelphian and one comprised of a single woman: Tobie Hoffman, an independent middle-aged Jewish woman. In the end, three of the four households created an expansive triangle across the city, extending from Tobie Hoffman's home in the middle class, integrated neighborhood of Mt. Airy in the north-west across to the north-east where the McQueens lived in Wissinoming and the Bosticks in Tacony, converging at the Aryadarei's, located in deep South Philly.

The final selections were more idiosyncratic than representative, however. It isn't clear, to take one example, whether the Bostick family was chosen because they are African American Buddhists raised by single mother Lea (racial diversity: check; religious diversity: check; alternative family structure: check), or because Headlong found something remarkable in the story of grandmother Lea and daughter Princess chanting everyday in the neonatal intensive care unit for Princess's son Preston. Preston

had been born premature with necrotizing enterocolitis, a life-threatening disease described by his attending pediatric surgeon Grier Arthur as “almost medieval, like the bubonic plague.”¹¹ In similar fashion, when Simonet discusses each family, he is more apt to describe individual characteristics or interpersonal dynamics, such as the physical ease the Bostick’s share among one another or father Zahed Aryadarei’s commanding presence, as movement qualities. “We train for years to have that kind of presence on stage,” Simonet said during one rehearsal with Zahed, a note of awe in his voice. That mother Shannon is a native of the south Philly area where the family lives and Zahed emigrated from Iran are certainly of interest, given the thick accents each has retained. Yet what built the final dance was the kinetic information passed between bodies that have histories of being “at home” with one another; the details of how bodies living together speak to one another; and how individual corporeal histories are, or are not, passed on from one generation to the next.

The final performances were presented as part of the 2012 Philadelphia Live Art Festival, during which each household performed ten times over a two-week period. The four row houses had been turned into miniature proscenium theaters, with living rooms or kitchens used as stages and couches, benches or chairs lined up against one wall providing seating for fourteen. (Only ten tickets were sold each night; extra space was provided so that the households could invite friends and neighbors as well as attend one another’s performances.) Strings of bulbs crisscrossed the low ceiling of the Aryadarei house; at Tobie Hoffman’s home small footlights cupped in gold shells demarked the front edge of the stage. Though the goal was to provide a professional theatrical

experience (complete with lights and sound operator and site/stage manager), for the audience and performers alike, Simonet admits that the transformation of the homes felt “like a violence.” The scale of the performance—the intimacy of its setting and the limited size of the audience—fostered a lively comradery among those in attendance. At one performance I attended, two strangers seated next to each other began discussing what they brought for the potluck while waiting for it to begin. Soon two more chimed in, then a young woman apologized for her contribution, purchased at a delicatessen due to the time constraints of public transportation. The conversation switched to questions about her route, debates about the quickest way to come, what time she might leave at and culminated with two strangers arranging to leave together to catch the same bus.

The program began with the dances, small gems crafted so that each carefully selected facet shone. Photos were shared, stories slipped easily in and out of everyday actions, gestural phrases and movement metaphors such as duets in which partners supported one another’s weight or fell into each other’s arms. At the Aryadarei’s house, the chaos of the three children was channeled into a relay race up and down the two staircases and having them display their karate, breakdancing and karaoke singing skills. The McQueen’s set design consisted of only cardboard boxes; these were piled and replied during ensuing conversations between the family members. Kendra, Calvin and son Kassean were about to move to Florida, a point of contention between father Calvin and Kenya, his eighteen-year-old daughter from a previous marriage.



Fig. 7.1 Potluck at the Aryadarei home, *This Town is a Mystery*, 2012. Photograph by Marci Chamberlain.

As the applause died down at the conclusion of the performance, site managers announced the dinner as the second act to the audience, who pitched in to rearrange seating along long tables set on end. Food was placed down the center like a holiday feast to be passed around family style or arranged on a nearby table. The meal shared in *This Town* was central to the vision of the piece. While the dance-theater performance sought to answer the first question posed in the project’s publicity materials—“who lives in Philadelphia?” — the quality of engagement that it hoped to develop while breaking bread

is where a second question—“what conversations might happen if we open our doors a little?” took shape, as audience and performers continued the implicit conversation of the dance in a context that erased the spectatorial contract of the performance.

Audience members-now-dinner guests roamed around the room, meeting one another before sitting down or switched seats in fluid, organic manner of a dinner party. Small cards with a picture of the family and ideas for starting a conversation listed inside were placed on the tables. These had been culled from the rehearsal process and included the request “tell me a story about a time when you were lost.” Another suggestion was to “look someone in the eye and sing a song simply and directly without breaking eye contact.” No one did so, though one dinner featured a fair amount of collective singing in response to the request posed to the entire group to select a theme song that encapsulated one’s home. As people volunteered a song, those who knew it joined in.

During the meal at the Bostick’s, I asked Leah about inviting the public into the privacy of her home. Three months earlier she had said that this was the one part of the project she dreaded. She responded, “you know I am antisocial—selective—so I was worried, but it been a blessing meeting all these people.” At the Aryadarei home, Shannon said that at the dinner the night before, they discovered that a mother and daughter the same age as Sydney lived around the corner. Earlier in the day, Sydney had attended her new friend’s birthday party. A young man who had moved to Philadelphia just two months before spoke up to thank Shannon for her generosity in inviting people into her home. She responded, “That’s what a home is all about.” Exchanges such as these give evidence to one of the fundamental principles of *This Town*: that, given the

opportunity, people will step up and invest something of themselves.

Inside Out: Rajni Shah's give what you can, take what you need

Similarly bridging definitions of public and private arenas of action, Shah's *give what you want, take what you need* created oases of respite amidst the foot traffic of busy communal spaces where Shah set up a large dinner table. In addition to her ongoing performance practice, discussed in relation to *Dinner with America* in a prior chapter, Shah has engaged in an ongoing research project that uses gift giving as an alternative monetary and affective economy. *Give what you can* is one of several performative events in the series, titled *Small Gifts*. Between 2006 and 2009 Shah served tea, scattered one hundred small gifts around cities to be discovered in her absence, wrote letters to strangers, left empty gift boxes with a note to encourage a future gift and constructed small altars in unexpected places. Explaining the impetus for the series, Shah writes, "I was curious. What stops me from talking to strangers? What draws me to trust one person, to invite one person into my family and not the other? How can we re-find a way to talk? What would you say to a stranger?"¹²

As with the other acts of the *Small Gifts* series, *give what you can* used gift-giving as an intervention into public space that shifts the perception of its purpose and the kind of social interaction that can manifest in it. Distinct from her previous interventions, the goal was to encourage others to participate in the giving and receiving of gifts. Using the familiar, familial micro-locality of a large dining table set up in highly trafficked urban spaces, the project encouraged passersby to assemble and converse at the table in an

atmosphere of generosity they produced through gifting. *Give what you can* was produced in three British cities—Manchester, Newcastle and Lancaster—during Shah’s 2008-2009 national tour of *Dinner in America*. In each city, Shah searched for a central location that was familiar to and used by a broad range of area residents. Most importantly, the site needed to provide a high amount of footfall from people passing through as well as converging in it.

Unlike *This Town*, wherein each home was a destination, locations were not just public spaces, but places of arrival and departure, connecting to neighborhoods within walking distance and larger surrounding areas via onsite bus, train and subway stations. In Manchester, for example, the table was set up outside in Piccadilly Gardens, a green space in the city center ringed by retail shops and thoroughfares. In Newcastle, Shah situated the table in Eldon Square, a massive indoor shopping mall that links to different neighborhoods via numerous entrances and exits. In Lancaster, which is more of a town than Manchester or Newcastle, the table was located within St. Nicholas Arcades, a modest inside shopping arcade consisting of one covered passageway. It is worth noting that all three sites chosen for the project were within or nearby to shopping centers. Though this is due, in part, to producing contingencies, it also registers shifting conceptions of public space in the twenty-first century. Within the context of these sites of transit and commerce, *give what you can* offered temporary reprieve, “a type of pause, a point of familiarity in a place of journeys,” as Shah states.¹³

The piece begins by arranging the dining table in a chosen site, wiping it clean but leaving it bare save for a pile of conversation starters, small manila cards imprinted with

suggested questions to help break the ice among those seated at it. Some of these drew attention to the moment at hand, locating the person within the city and the specific location of the table by asking how they had come to arrive at that particular spot. Other questions addressed the conceptual frame of the project: had they, like the table itself, been at a crossroads in their life? Had the person ever given a gift to a stranger? When was the last time they had engaged in a conversation with a stranger? Shah, working with two other artists (either local artists or from her team of collaborators on *Dinner with America*), offer passersby tiny envelopes containing a British pound (the equivalent of approximately two U.S. dollars at the time) and an invitation to use the gold coin to purchase something to contribute to the table and join her at it.

Here *give what you can* diverges from *This Town*, in which the households and audiences self-selected. Though at times someone might walk up to ask what was happening, Shah stresses that the active solicitation of strangers was a necessary part of the piece. In order to challenge preconceptions of who would participate, she and her team approached everyone, estimating that the team passed out ten envelopes for each person who eventually returned. Despite being continually rebuffed, Shah discovered that she loved this aspect of *give what you can* since it allowed her to meet and converse with a wide range of people. In Lancaster, a smaller, tight-knit community, Shah found it was more challenging to convince people to join her at the table. Yet, though the number who gathered was smaller and the atmosphere at the table quieter, those who did sit down together had a much easier time initiating a conversation. On the second day the size of the group increased due to word of mouth spread person to person.



Fig. 7.2 *give what you can, take what you need* at Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, 2008.
Photograph by Rajni Shah.

Like a pot of stone soup the table slowly accrues an assortment of objects over the course of the afternoon: biscuits, flowers, candy, chips, a jar of jam, bottles of water and juice. Some people accepted the packet and never returned; others returned the pound coin to the table along with a more expensive item. One man spontaneously donated the

belt he was wearing because it seemed like the sort of item someone else might need. Some passed along the invitation. One young boy joined the table after receiving the envelope containing the pound note from a man in a distant area from where the table was located. The project takes place over two weekend days to allow people the opportunity to take an envelope without having to immediately respond to its invitation. One each day the table is set up for three to four hours. Many people returned later the same day and/or on the following afternoon. In Lancaster, one woman popped off home to brew a pot of tea. Food was the most common gift to be offered but in photographic documentation of the project, articles of play begin to appear on the table: bottles of bubbles, modeling clay. At Piccadilly Gardens, two men brought a net, paddles and Ping-Pong balls and a spontaneous tabletop tennis tournament ensued. Those assembled at the table relocated to a picnic blanket on the grass but remained to continue their conversation.

Over the course of an afternoon, the number of people who gather around the table waxes and wanes. Rajni has likened the project to a “really long dinner party” though in this case nobody knows anyone else, even the host.¹⁴ Shah provided small cards with suggested conversation starters, but found that these were not needed. The items one brought became a point of introduction to the others already gathered at the table. Newcomers were invited to stay as for as long or short as they would like and to take part not only by contributing but accepting a gift from the table. A photographer leaves some postcards of his artwork; later on a woman on her way to purchase a birthday gift takes one to send instead. One woman arrives with expensive cream and offers hand

messages. When it began to rain during one installation, everyone pitched in to carry the table under a nearby bus shelter. Once the downpour ended, they moved it out into the again. Shah reflects, “we enjoyed being practical together.”

Rehearsing Citizenship, Choreographing Conviviality

Analogous to ayo’s *Living Flag*, *This Town* and *give what you can* construct conditions for encounter and exchange among strangers. Like that project, the two projects arrange correspondingly improvisational encounters and exchanges among strangers. More than *Living Flag*, however, the physical conditions for these emphasized equitable exchanges, whereas ayo intentionally remained seated below passersby. Though all three generated unpredictable outcomes, *Living Flag* is a statement on lack and insufficiency—of the panhandler compared to the neoliberal citizen; of the distribution of rights and wealth for African Americans; of remediation for slavery; of the government’s ability to take care of its citizens. Conversely, *This Town* and *give what you can* catalyze a spirit of conviviality and generosity. Before pursuing the political possibilities of this model of exchange further, it is important to note that all three projects are structured by a common belief in the abundance of “enough.” However much one could contribute—to ayo’s can, to the potlucks of *This Town*, to the table during *give what you can* installations—or receive from each of these was inherently enough. Reciprocity, like participation, is not mandatory.

In everyday speech, conviviality connotes a state of amity, agreeability, joviality or festivity. Etymologically, the word combines the Latin *con-* (“with” or “together”) and

the verb *vivere* (“to live”). In curating a mode of sociality that generated attributes of conviviality, then, *This Town* and *give what you can* provide a model for living together. Postcolonial and anti-racism scholar Paul Gilroy proposes conviviality as an example of on-the-ground multiculturalism. In a 2006 lecture at the London School of Economics titled “Multiculture in Times of War,” Gilroy defines conviviality as a mode of social interaction that can be seen in cosmopolitan cities with diverse populations. There, he writes, “different metropolitan groups dwell in close proximity but their racial, linguistic and religious particularities do not—...—add up to discontinuities of experience or insuperable problems of communication.”¹⁵ This example of co-existence acknowledges multiple, overlapping affinities, allegiances, locations and needs that intercut categorical taxonomies. Furthermore, it is always in process, under revision. Gilroy compares conviviality to Open Source software: an ongoing, user-directed co-production of the social in real time. As such, it recognizes the unruly and complex multicultures that comprise urban metropolises and the informal, daily choreographies of urban denizens that render cultural differences ordinary.

In theorizing conviviality, Gilroy looks to already existing forms of urban sociality that provides an alternative to the hypernationalist racism that swept his native Britain in the aftermath of 9/11. Analogous to the social atmosphere in the U.S., this has been characterized by an allegiance to the nation-state shaped by the threat of difference; nostalgia for a fictionalized monocultural past; and the belief that resurrecting the latter can assuage the former.¹⁶ He is quick to point out that convivial multiculturalism cannot eradicate conflict or dissuade the potential for conflict. Yet Gilroy’s proposal holds

potential for national policy based on successful negotiations of difference and ways of coexisting among urban dwellers. It offers a model of statecraft that does not demonize the foreigner, whether the immigrant, asylum seeker or refugee, as an enemy or contaminant of the nation. Furthermore, Gilroy's conviviality provides an alternative to the objectification of all citizens by surveillance technologies.

Providing a frame for convivial exchange, Headlong Dance Theater and Rajni Shah alter the terms of social interaction. They accomplish this by blurring distinctions between public and private and, moreover, by eradicating the distinction between insider and outsider. An invitation into a home or to a table creates a chronotopia in which all are welcomed inside without fear or suspicion. Throughout my analyses I have used the word stranger to indicate the participants of both HDT and Shah's projects. The term is not altogether accurate, in that the stranger, as Sara Ahmed argues, is always already prefigured as such.¹⁷ Getting to know one another in any deep or lasting manner such as the word "friend" suggests, or mobilizing as fellow constituents such as "community" implies is not an intended outcome of either project. But no participant is prefigured. Eschewing distinctions between outside and inside, stranger and guest, *This Town* and *give what you can* create a crucible in which alternative forms of relationality and collectivity can be rehearsed beyond, or at least apart from citizenship. The ensuing conversations provide a pause, a temporary sojourn in which to imagine alternative political geographies beyond the nation-state.

Conclusion

Suggesting conviviality as a social atmosphere with political potential may sound undoubtedly utopian. However, my argument is grounded in the fact that the political—the rule of law, policies and structures determined by the nation-state—is choreographed through the social. By way of concluding this chapter and the dissertation, I want to briefly sketch out the contours of the Occupy movement as an example of the political expediency of conviviality. A grassroots, leaderless movement, it began as Occupy Wall Street (OWS) when hundreds gathered in downtown Manhattan’s financial district in September 2011. The call to protest had been inspired by what is known as the Arab Spring, when, during the spring of 2011, large gatherings in Tunisia and Egypt occupied public squares and successfully overturned non-democratic governments. Though the long-term outcomes of the Arab Spring are still in flux, it offered a template of occupying public space to demonstrate against the ill treatment of citizens by their governments. Touching a nerve among a broad range of people in the U.S. and around the world that had been adversely affected by the U.S.-initiated, now-global financial collapse, the model quickly spread to more than 900 cities and communities in eighty-two countries around the world.¹⁸ And while the peaceful protests were initiated by the inadequate response of national governments to the devastating effects of the economic crisis, many of which prioritized the needs of bankers and corporations over those of their citizenries, in structure and execution Occupy responded to a more general condition. Rather than gather *en masse* in order to represent the demands of a singular constituency or to accomplish one specific goal, the demonstrations, like those of the Arab Spring, offered

an outlet for a widespread sense of frustration, impatience and anger.

Those who came together in public spaces established a social atmosphere that stands in sharp relief to the early part of the decade, when a state of ongoing fear and suspicion atomized bodies politic and bred political disaffection. Analogous to the two types of surveillance investigated in this project, drones and dataveillance, which act on bodies at a distance, this state separated and created distance between citizens. Contrarily, within the large umbrella of Occupy, individuals from a variety of constituencies and political causes—identifying as “the 99%” but remaining heterogeneous and non-affiliated—came together and, more importantly, *stayed* together. Conviviality inflected the invitation to join, in which all were welcome, and was central to the manner in which encampments of twenty-four hour protesters operated over two months. Though Occupy has been roundly criticized for not having clearly stated goals to be resolved, it demonstrates the political value of shared presence in an age of digitally mediated citizenship.¹⁹ Further, it proffered an opportunity for a body politic to validate an alternative form of political participation based on an embodied, temporary and *ad hoc* constitution of “the people.”

Like the Occupy movement, *This Town* and *give what you can* provided the scaffolding for participants to co-create a structure of feeling in sharp contrast to that of the age of the IED; replacing alienation, uncertainty, doubt, fear and suspicion with conviviality, generosity and reciprocity. Yet the two projects also can be seen as outcomes of the destabilization and distrust that has defined the era. This has produced a desire for participation and embodied co-presence away from the surveillant gaze of

public space, as in *This Town*, or in defiance of it, as in *give what you can*. The temporary collectivities that manifested in these projects were temporary, small scale, without past or future. In other words, each performance project provided the opportunity to participate without allegiance (i.e. to a past or a community, group or nation) or commitment (to a shared future). Perhaps this is all that is possible right now. Perhaps this is enough.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹ John O'Mahony, "Baghdad Ballet," *The Guardian*, Sept. 28, 2006.

² Diana Solway, "Is it Dance? Maybe. Political? Sure." *The New York Times*, February 18, 2007.

³ Bill T. Jones, "Some Words: Desire, Will, Courage, Service," keynote speech delivered at the Momentum 2006 conference hosted by the Tides Foundation, San Francisco. April 28, 2006. Reprinted on his blog on Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company web site; accessed June 7, 2008. No longer active.

⁴ Turkish dancer Asli Bulbul and African American dancer Donald C. Shorter performed the other two solos. *Blind Date* program, Lincoln Center, July 18-20, 2006. My reading of the piece is based on attending performances on July 18 and 19, 2006 in New York and at UCLA's Royce Hall on October 13, 2007.

⁵ Victoria Marks premiered a duet under the same title in 2004; this date refers to the premiere of the full-length dance. E-mail to the author, September 4, 2013.

⁶ Marks, *Not About Iraq* performance program, October 5-6, 2007 at Glorlya Kaufman Dance Theater, UCLA.

⁷ Simonet offered participants a choice of two speeches: "On Iraq," in which Bush discusses the lies used to justify invading Iraq (February 6, 2006); and the "Mission Accomplished" speech in which Bush prematurely announced the end of major combat operations in Iraq (May 1, 2003). In a 2007 online article about *THRASH*, Simonet posted links to audio files of the speeches and offered suggestions on how readers could participate. Simonet and Headlong Dance Theater, "Thrash: Physical Responses to the Bush Administration," *Extensions: The Online Journal of Embodiment and Technology* 3. <http://www.extensionsjournal.org/the-journal/3>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ben Brantley, "Grand Guignol, Spare and Stark," *The New York Times*, November 4, 2005; cited by Simonet, *ibid*.

¹⁰ Linda Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press), 12.

¹¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), 296. It should be noted that Arendt's statement is made in relation to her critique of the nation-state. In the section "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Men," (267-302) Arendt argues that the assignation of rights to the citizen sutured the rights-bearing modern subject to the nation-state. Conversely, the elision of the human (man) from the general will of the nation created categories of statelessness. Furthermore, this division usurped a moment of liberatory potential following the French Revolution, particularly as the citizen, and thus the rights endowed to the citizen became linked to the nation-state. See also Peg Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt & Human Rights: The Predicament of Common Responsibility*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 43-44.

¹² As Craig Calhoun, among others, has noted, the nation is a historicized and naturalized concept; the hyphen in *nation-state* ties the polity to the governing unit of the state to this concept and that of a people as similarly historical and natural. "Nationalism and Cultures of Democracy," *Public Culture* 19.1: 151.

¹³ Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien*, 13.

¹⁴ Cindy Patton and Robert L. Caserio, "Introduction Citizenship 2000," *Cultural Studies* 14.1 (2000): 1.

¹⁵ For more on the field of citizenship studies see: Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner: "Investigating Citizenship: An Agenda for Citizenship Studies," *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 1 (2007): 5-17; Isin and Turner, *Handbook of Citizenship Studies* (London/Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).

¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 53.

¹⁷ Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen, "Introduction: Acts of Citizenship," *Acts of Citizenship* (London/New York: Zed Books Ltd.; Palgrave Macmillan: 2008) 4.

¹⁸ Isin, "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship," *Acts of Citizenship*, 24.

¹⁹ Adolf Reinach, "The Apriori Foundations of Civil Law," *Aletheia*, 20; quoted by Isin, *ibid.*

²⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 169.

²¹ Foucault discusses biopower and biopolitics in his lecture of March 17, 1976 in

“*Society Must Be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*, translated by David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 239-63.

²² In using this term I am following political anthropologist Aihwa Ong, who asserts that the economic cannot be separated from the political within contemporary conditions of globalization and neoliberalism. Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

²³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 78.

²⁴ Ananya Chatterjea, *Butting Out: Reading Resistive Choreographies Through Works by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Chandralekha* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 26-27.

²⁵ Randy Martin, *Critical Moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 109.

²⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Power*, 26.

²⁷ Susan Leigh Foster, “Choreographies of Gender,” *Signs* 24.1: 7.

²⁸ Foster, *Corporealities: Dancing, Knowledge, Culture and Power* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), xiii.

²⁹ Foster, *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* (London/New York: Routledge, 2011) 5 and 219n10.

³⁰ Susanna Cook, *The unPatriotic Act: Homeland Insecurities/Inseguridades de la Seguridad Nacional*, unpublished script, 2007.

³¹ In the final stages of completing this dissertation, I was alerted to Michael Billig’s use of this term in *Banal Nationalism* (London/Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995). Writing against theories heralding the demise of the nation-state within globalization, Billig contends that within established Western nations, those that “have confidence in their own continuity,” citizens are continually reminded of, or “flagged” by, their nationhood in ways that are ever present within the banality of daily life. Nationhood thus “provides a continual background for their political discourses, for cultural products,... However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building,” 8.

³² Opening on the one-year anniversary of 9/11 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History (NMAH), the exhibition featured fifty objects gathered from the three sites of terrorist attacks (the World Trade Towers, the Pentagon and the Flight 93 crash site outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania). *September 11: Bearing Witness to History*, Smithsonian Institute web site, <http://www.si.edu/Exhibitions/Details/September-11-Bearing-Witness-to-History-2746>.

After running for ten months in Washington, D.C., during which time it was seen by more than one million visitors from around the world, *Bearing Witness to History* toured to seven Smithsonian affiliate museums between 2003 and 2006, including the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, from July 1 to August 15, 2004. (<http://www.janm.org/exhibits/september11/>)

To date the Smithsonian has mounted three exhibitions commemorating the events of 9/11 (the most recent of which was on the tenth anniversary in 2011) and four to its ongoing collection of objects from these sites; produced a four-channel video, *9/11: Stories in Fragments*; and maintains an ongoing digital archive of stories of that day contributed by individuals at its various exhibitions. For more information, see: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/september11/tellyourstory/index.asp>.

³³ *September 11: Bearing Witness to History*, Smithsonian Institute web site, <http://www.si.edu/Exhibitions/Details/September-11-Bearing-Witness-to-History-2746>.

³⁴ Alfred Boime, "Waving the Red Flag and Reconstituting Old Glory," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* (spring 1990): 5.

³⁵ A country's flag is foundational to American studies scholar Lauren Berlant's concept of the National Symbolic. According to Berlant, the National Symbolic is an extensive and intricate semiotic field that sutures individual feeling into collective affect within the larger political economy of nation. Put slightly differently, the affective belonging or "horizontal comradeship" of the imagined community of nation that Benedict Anderson theorizes begins in this dense nexus, in which the political space of nation and the panoply of psychical and experiential understandings of individual citizenship converge. Berlant's National Symbolic articulates citizenship in relation to both individual and collective subjection by invoking Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theorizations, which reorganizes Sigmund Freud's tripartite schema of the psyche—the id, ego and superego—as, respectively, the Real, Imaginary and Symbolic. According to Lacan's schema of the psyche, the Symbolic is the internalized legal and linguistic logos of the social 'we' into which normative subjectification ushers an individual.³⁵ Manifest in the monuments, myths and metaphors that pervade the public sphere, but by no means limited to these, the National Symbolic is a supple apparatus of social meaning-making that invigorates the proliferation of visual, linguistic and material symbols and master tropes. Among the most prevalent and polyvalent of these is the national flag. Berlant's concept is useful precisely for the manner in which it accounts for the nation form as imaginary without assigning authority or agency solely to the state. I turn to Berlant's

National Symbolic in order to stress that the lived experience of the individual American citizen subject is thoroughly saturated, if not constituted, by fantasies of the nation that take shape in the National Symbolic. *The Anatomy of a National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia and Everyday Life*, 20-22.

³⁶ The artist does not capitalize her name. I thus only capitalize it at the beginning of sentences.

³⁷ Michael D. Barbero, "Improvised Explosive Devices Are Here to Stay," *The Washington Post*, May 17, 2013.

CHAPTER ONE

¹ My analysis of HIJACK's *Fetish* is based on multiple viewings of the piece on DVD, media coverage and e-mail correspondence with choreographers Kristin Van Loon and Arwen Wilder. My reading of William Forsythe's *Three Atmospheric Studies* is based on attending its U.S. premiere at University of California Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall, February 22, 2007, plus subsequent viewings of its April 2007 performance at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, archived at the Jerome Robbins Dance Collection, New York Public Library of the Performing Arts.

² "Vice President Cheney Delivers Remarks to the Republican Governors Association," Washington D.C., October 25, 2001, (copy of speech). <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20011025.html>.

³ Eleanor Acer *et al.*, "Introduction," *Assessing the New Normal: Liberty and Security for the Post-September 11 United States* (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 2003), ii.

⁴ Mark Selden, "A Forgotten Holocaust: U.S. Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities, and the American Way of War from the Pacific War to Iraq," *Bombing Civilians: A Twentieth-Century History*, Yuki Tanaka and Marilyn B. Young, eds. (New York: The New Press, 2009), 95.

⁵ Michael Sherry, "The United States and Strategic Bombing: From Prophecy to Memory," *Bombing Civilians: A Twentieth-Century History*, Yuki Tanaka and Marilyn B. Young, eds. (New York: The New Press, 2009), 189.

⁶ James C. Scott, "Streamline," *Shock and Awe: War on Words*, Bregje van Eekelen *et al.*, eds. (Santa Cruz, CA: New Pacific Press, 2004), 147.

⁷ While recent U.S. military action has provided a ready source of unexploded missiles and cluster bombs, Iraq already provided its own ordnance resources. It is considered to

be one of the most heavily mined nations in the world, with an estimate of ten million land mines in its territory before the U.S. invasion. The planting of anti-personnel and antitank mines goes back to the 1960s and 1970s when the Iraqi government used mine warfare to quell Kurdish demands for autonomy in its northern regions. Subsequent mines were planted to protect its borders during the Iraq-Iran War between 1980-88 and again during the Gulf War in 1990-91. “Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)/Booby Traps,” [globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/ied.htm). <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/ied.htm>; “Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) – Iraq,” <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/ied-iraq.htm>.

⁸ Committee on Defeating Improvised Explosive Devices: Basic Research to Interrupt the IED Delivery Chain, National Research Council, “Summary,” *Countering the Threat of Improvised Explosive Devices: Basic Research Opportunities*, abbreviated version, (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2007), 1–2.

⁹ Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007), 419. Klein also notes that during the initial major combat phase (March 20–May 2, 2003) 30,000 bombs were dropped and 20,000 precision-guided missiles launched on Iraq, sixty-seven percent of the total amount of bombs and missiles manufactured to date.

¹⁰ “Bush Makes Historic Speech Aboard Warship,” CNN.com, May 1, 2003; accessed August 19, 2013. <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/05/01/bush.transcript>.

¹¹ This military doctrine was first set forth in the 1996 report *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*. For more about it, see Klein, *The Shock Doctrine* (416-17) and John T. Correll, “What Happened to Shock and Awe?,” *AIR FORCE Magazine* 86.11 (2003): 3, [airforce-magazine.com](http://www.airforce-magazine.com); accessed August 17, 2009. [http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2003/November 2003/1103shock.aspx](http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2003/November%202003/1103shock.aspx).

¹² Sean Loughlin, “Bush warns militants who attack U.S. troops in Iraq,” CNN.com, July 3, 2003; accessed August 20, 2013. <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/07/02/sprj.mitop.bush>.

¹³ Andrew Smith, *The Letort Papers: Improvised Explosive Devices in Iraq, 2003-09: A Case of Operational Surprise and Institutional Response*, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, nd), 10. www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil.

¹⁴ Acting Director Cary B. Russell, Defense Capabilities and Management, U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices: Multiple DOD Organizations are Developing Numerous Initiatives”; Document GAO-12-861R: Letter to The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives, and The Honorable Roscoe G. Bartlett, Chairman, and The

Honorable Silvestre Reyes, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, August 1, 2012.

Electronic resource; accessed via UCLA library database, January 4, 2013.

¹⁵ U. S. Government Accountability Office, *Combating Terrorism: State Should Enhance Its Performance Measures for Assessing Efforts in Pakistan to Counter Improvised Explosive Devices: Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate* (2012), 5.

Electronic resource; accessed via UCLA library database, January 4, 2013.

¹⁶ This percentage accounts for 3,200 deaths and 33,100 wounded by IEDs. Barbero, “Improvised Explosive Devices Are Here to Stay.”

¹⁷ Choreographer Bill T. Jones frequently used this term to describe the Bush administration after Bush was re-elected in 2004 in press and programs surrounding *Blind Date*.

¹⁸ Camille LeFevre, “Hijack Aims Challenge at Stage, not Airport; Dance Company Grapples with New Work—and Homeland Security,” *Star Tribune*, September 3, 2006.

¹⁹ Claudia La Rocco, “Defying Language but Eager to Converse,” *The New York Times*, December 16, 2006.

²⁰ The complete project description reads: “*Fetish* is clad in some fantastic boots. *Fetish* is a dance about the 2002 World Taxidermy Championships. *Fetish* is horrified by decorative killing. *Fetish* is getting dirty. *Fetish* builds a pipe bomb. *Fetish* is a wartime piece. We are slaves to the music of Schubert, Chopin, Ligetti, Ravel and Manilow. Sometimes, Kristin is Eva Peron, Eva Hesse, Eva Braun; sometimes Arwen is Imelda Marcos.” Repertory page, artist web site, www.hijack.org, subsequently taken down; first accessed summer 2006; full text received via e-mail correspondence with Arwen Wilder, July 14, 2009.

²¹ The excerpt was performed under the same title beneath an overpass as part of a site-specific performance tour, the Red Curtain Cabaret, in July 2003. *Fetish* premiered in its final form in May 2004 at the Bryant Lake Bowl in Minneapolis as part of a shared program with Scott Heron titled “3 Minutes of Pork and Shoving.” HIJACK went on to tour the dance as part of this program through 2006.

²² Except for using poppy seeds instead of gunpowder, Van Loon uses all of the elements of a pipe bomb but does not attach the detonator (kitchen timer) to it. The reality quotient of the props was such that airport security stopped Van Loon and Wilder at the Philadelphia airport on June 26, 2006. After evacuating the terminal, exploding the fake bomb and holding the two women for four hours, they were cleared and allowed to return home to Minneapolis. That the name of their dance company is HIJACK added to the

initial confusion. The incident was featured on Philadelphia radio and television news and included in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) daily briefing. DHS launched an investigation to assess whether Van Loon and Wilder had intentionally planted a fake bomb, but eventually cleared them. E-mail correspondence with the author, July 14, 2009 and January 8, 2013; “Dance Company Causes Scare At Airport,” CBS-3 June 27, 2006, (11pm). http://cbs3.com/local/local_story_176103253.html; Kim Glovas, “Theatrical Prop Caused Sunday’s PHL Airport Evacuation”; KYW Newsradio 1060AM, June 27, 2006. <http://www.kyw1060.com/pages/50391.php>.

²³ “Chronology of Changes to the Homeland Security Advisory System,” Department of Homeland Security; accessed August 25, 2013. <http://www.dhs.gov/homeland-security-advisory-system>; Jessica Reaves, “Living With Terrorism: A How-to Guide,” TIME.com, February 12, 2003; accessed August 25, 2013. <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,422141,00.html>; Jeanne Meserve, “Duct Tape Sales Rise Amid Terror Fears,” CNN.com, February 11, 2003; accessed August 25, 2013. <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/02/11/emergency.supplies>.

²⁴ The system was eliminated in 2011, though few Americans paid attention to it by then. Between 2002-11, the threat level was raised to orange five times and to red only once, in August 2006, though only for commercial jets flying between the United Kingdom and the U.S. CNN Wire Staff, “Color-Coded Threat System to be Replaced in April,” CNN.com, January 26, 2011; accessed August 25, 2013. <http://www.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/01/26/threat.level.system.change/index.html#>.

²⁵ Bregje van Eekelen, “Nuclear (family),” *Shock and Awe: War on Words*, 110. Van Eekelen is not the only one to make this assertion. In 2011, CNN quoted Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Mississippi), a ranking member of the House of Representatives Homeland Security Commission as stating, “The old color coded system taught Americans to be scared, not prepared. Each and every time the threat level was raised, very rarely did the public know the reason, how to proceed, or for how long to be on alert. I have raised concerns for years about the effectiveness of the system and have cited the need for improvements and transparency. Many in Congress felt the system was being used as a political scare tactic—raising and lowering the threat levels when it best suited the Bush administration.” Ibid.

²⁶ William Pietz, “The Problem of the Fetish, I,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 9 (spring 1985): 10.

²⁷ *Three Atmospheric Studies*, a full-length ballet in two acts (original version), premiered on April 21, 2005, Bockenheimer Depot, Frankfurt. *Clouds After Cranach*, a full-length ballet in two acts, premiered November 26, 2005, Bockenheimer Depot, Frankfurt. *Three Atmospheric Studies*, a full-length ballet in three acts (parts 1 and 2: *Clouds after Cranach*; part 3: *Three Atmospheric Studies* original version part 2),

premiered February 2, 2006, spielzeiteuropa, Haus der Berliner Festspiele, Berlin. Freya Vass Rhee, e-mail to author, August 26, 2013.

²⁸ Forsythe's problems with Ballett Frankfurt began in May 2002, when he learned that the city did not intend to renew his contract upon its expiration in 2004. After an international outcry in which city offices were inundated with a flood of telephone calls, faxes and e-mails in protest, Frankfurt mayor Petra Roth dismissed the allegation. A negotiation between Forsythe and the city over budget cuts for the upcoming 2002-03 season stalled during the summer, however, and Forsythe resigned in August 2002. Alan Riding, "Frankfurt Ballet Director Says He'll Leave in 2004" *New York Times*, August 29, 2002.

Following the company's final performance under Forsythe in late June/early July 2004, Ballett Frankfurt ceased to exist, with the city opting to present only touring ballet companies instead. By the time of the premiere of *Clouds After Cranach* in April 2005, Forsythe admitted that the new working arrangement was "an enormous psychological relief" despite the reduction in funding. "The city was unreliable, not especially friendly, the atmosphere was bad. That's all over now—the tension, the polemics." Sylvia Staude, "I Can Dance Again," Originally published in German in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, April 16, 2005; accessed October 11, 2006. Signandsight.com, www.signandsight.com/features/119.html.

²⁹ The Forsythe Company is approximately half the size of Ballett Frankfurt, which began with 42 dancers in 1984 and maintained an average of 36 dancers until shortly before closing. The current company has seventeen dancers. Alan Riding, "Curtain Calls and Tears as a Troupe Bows Farewell," *The New York Times*, July 5, 2004. At the time *Three Atmospheric Studies* toured the U.S. in 2007 the ensemble consisted of sixteen dancers, seven of whom had been with Ballet Frankfurt for five years or less.

³⁰ Alan Riding, "The New Season/Dance: Wanted: Suitable Post for European Superstar" *New York Times*, September 7, 2003.

³¹ Gabriella De Ferrari, "William Forsythe," *Bomb* issue 96, summer 2006, np; accessed online March 2, 2009. www.bombsite.com/issues/96/articles/2839. Discussing his working process, Forsythe stated, "a piece of music, a philosophical theory, language, whatever, has to contain a metaphor that will produce new procedures that will eventually become methodologies. You look at things that are rich in metaphorical possibilities. Which is why I have been concerned with a certain branch of conceptual mathematics called set mapping or identity mapping. It's [*sic*] a form of algorithm but it has to do with translation. Because what we do is translate." Ibid.

³² Michael Kimmelman, "Small World Crammed on Biennale's Grand Stage," *The New York Times*, June 10, 2009. For more about *Human Writes*, *White Bouncy Castle*,

Scattered Crowds and similar projects, see Forsythe Company web site, www.williamforsythe.de.

³³ William Forsythe, "Choreographic Objects," (excerpt) in *William Forsythe Suspense*, Markus Weisbeck, ed. (Zurich: Ursula Blickle Stiftung and JRP/Ringier, 2008), 5.

³⁴ Forsythe, "Choreographic Objects," posted on Wexner Art Center website in conjunction with the Forsythe exhibition *Transfigurations*, April 2-July 26, 2009; accessed March 21, 2009. <http://www.wexarts.org/ex/forsythe>. Available on artist's website, www.forsythecompany.de.

³⁵ Athan Hussein, Reuters, November 2006.

³⁶ Large reproductions of the photograph and painting were displayed in theater lobbies during the U.S. tour in 2007 and reprinted in concert programs. In a program note, Peter Michalzik writes that composition one through three refer to the three sections of the dance, composition four refers to the Cranach painting and number five refers to the Reuters photograph. In my analysis of the recording at the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts, Kerns also refers to an image of a man mounted on horseback and one of a citadel seen in the distance. Michalzik, "*Desastres de la Guerra*: How William Forsythe's *Three Atmospheric Studies* Turns Dance into Political *Tanztheater*," CAL Performances program, February 22, 2007, 18–21.

³⁷ Jonathan Jones, "1000 Artworks to See before You Die: Guardian Writers Pick the World's Essential Artworks," *The Guardian*, October 27, 2008; accessed July 9, 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/oct/27/1000-artworks-to-see-before-you-die-art>.

³⁸ Mitchell M. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 257.

³⁹ Here I disagree with Darrell Wilkins' review of the 2006 Berlin premiere of *Three Atmospheric Studies*, in which he reads its tripartite structure as an unfolding process of discovering the piece's meaning, thus commenting that Part II "helps the audience fill Part I with more meaning." Wilkins, "Trio in Berlin," *Ballet Review* 34.3: 77.

⁴⁰ Willems follows the scene and interjects electronic noises live. Sound engineer Niels Lanz augments these by quickly shifting the score back and forth through various speakers located around the theatrical space. Freya Vass-Rhee, "Dancing Music: The Intermodality of The Forsythe Company," *William Forsythe*, 86-87. Vass-Rhee has written extensively on Forsythe's "auditory turn." See also "Auditory Turn: William Forsythe's Vocal Choreography," *Dance Chronicle* 33.3: 388-413.

⁴¹ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London/New York, 2012), 71.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Contrary to compression, which increases the density of of a medium, rarefaction refers to the reduction of density. “Rarefaction,” *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rarefaction>; accessed March 10, 2009.

⁴⁴ In “The Dialectics of Disaster,” written in the months following 9/11, Frederic Jameson takes a different perspective on the effects of mainstream corporate media coverage of disasters and war. He disparages the media as a technology of orchestration and amplification that uses collective spectacle and a discourse of national collectivity to incorporate individual emotion into the production of national affect. Jameson argues, “once a nameless and spontaneous reaction has been named and classified, and named over and over again so insistently by all the actors of the public sphere, backed up by thinly veiled threats and intimidation, the name interposes a stereotype between our thoughts and feelings;... what we feel are no longer our own feelings anymore but someone else’s and indeed, if we are to believe the media, everybody else’s.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:2 (spring 2002), 299.

CHAPTER TWO

¹ Valerie Durham, artistic director of the Washington, D.C. based Duncan Dancers, e-mail to the author, June 14, 2010.

² President George W. Bush, Memorial Service Remarks, National Cathedral, Washington, D.C., September 14, 2001; accessed August 17, 2012. http://www.usa-patriotism.com/speeches/gwbush_911.htm.

³ Durham toured *Revolutionary!*, an evening-length dramatic production based on Duncan’s work and life, between 2008 and 2010. Durham, “Reconstructing Isadora Duncan’s *Marseillaise*,” *Bourgeon*, bourgeononline.com, September 6, 2008; accessed May 4, 2010. <http://bourgeononline.com/2008/09/reconstructing-isadora-duncan-s-marseillaise-by-valerie-durham/>.

⁴ Though reviewers of the Met concert mention the revelation of various naked body parts, Ann Daly asserts that Duncan never performed nude but instead wore a “leotard-style undergarment made out of silk jersey” and pancake make-up in order to give the appearance of being naked. According to Daly’s research, Duncan’s *chiton* costume was always “properly anchored” to her body with elastic bands. Ann Daly, *Done into Dance:*

Isadora Duncan in America (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 109.

⁵ “War Depicted in Series of Dances,” *The Morning Telegraph*, March 7, 1917; “Isadora Duncan Dances. Greeted By Big Audience at Metropolitan, She Talks Patriotism.” *The New York Times*, March 7, 1917.

⁶ “Music and Musicians: Isadora Duncan Dances World Struggle with ‘Star Spangled Banner’ Climax,” *New York Sun*, March 7, 1917.

⁷ In 1916 President Wilson declared the “Star-Spangled Banner” the official song of the nation, to be played at military and official events and other occasions of state. It was not declared the national anthem, however, until 1931. Smithsonian Institute Museum of American History web site; accessed June 24, 2010. <http://americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/national-anthem.aspx>.

⁸ My reading of Duncan’s *La Marseillaise* is based such primary sources as photographs, illustrations, performance reviews and interviews with Duncan in 1917; secondary sources; viewing performances by Duncan dancer Annabelle Gamson as well as conducting a telephone interview with Ms. Gamson.

⁹ The premiere of *La Marseillaise* has been variously dated as occurring in 1914 or 1915. In her autobiography, Duncan describes improvising the solo at the end of a performance at the Met in the fall of 1914, after arriving from war-torn France without mention of specific dates. She further contends that she returned to Europe in May 1915 because she had “been forbidden any further manifestations of the ‘Marseillaise’ in New York” (319). Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (New York: Liveright Publishing Company, 1927), 316–17. Valerie Durham dates the premiere as occurring in 1915 in the article cited in note three. Durham states that this date is “based in conversations with Duncan Dancers like Lori Belilove, Jeanne Bresciani, Barbara Kane and Roberta Hoffman, who also share the 1915 premiere year from oral traditions within the Duncan community,” e-mail to the author, June 14, 2010. Following the archival documentation, I focus on Duncan’s *La Marseillaise* following its April 1916 premiere.

¹⁰ Frederick W. Crone, “Does the Spirit of France Mean Anything to America?” *New York Tribune*, March 4, 1917.

¹¹ Duncan, *My Life*, 316.

¹² Duncan’s concerts were produced by the French Ministry of Fine Arts to benefit/raise funds for Armoire Lorraine. Peter Kurth, *Isadora, A Sensational Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 2001), 343.

¹³ See Maurice Dumesnil, *The Amazing Journey: Isadora Duncan in South America* (New York: I. Washburn, 1932).

¹⁴ Irma Duncan papers, cited by Kurth, *Isadora*, 344 and 603n18. The *New York Herald* uses the same phrase to describe Duncan's *La Marseillaise* in its review, "Isadora Duncan Dances World Struggle with 'Star Spangled Banner' Climax."

¹⁵ Crone, "Does the Spirit of France Mean Anything to America?" Peter Kurth calculates, perhaps hyperbolically, the number of soldiers was in the thousands. *Isadora*, 344.

¹⁶ Duncan danced to the first four of the *Marseillaise* six stanzas. Initially, Duncan arranged for someone to recite the lyrics for her New York premiere, but ultimately decided to use just the music. "Isadora Duncan Dances the Marseillaise," *Current Opinion*, 62.1 (Jan. 1917), 31. *La Marseillaise* was penned by Claude-Joseph Rouget de Lisle in 1792. It was declared a "national song" in 1795, then banned under the Empire and Restoration. After it was reinstated by the July Revolution of 1830, it was institutionalized as the national anthem under the Third Republic in 1879. Office of the French Presidency, <http://www.elysee.fr/la-presidence/la-marseillaise-de-rouget-de-lisle/>; Iain Patterson, marseillaise.org.

¹⁷ Deborah Cowen and Emily Gilbert, "The Politics of War, Citizenship, Territory," in *War, Citizenship, Territory*, Cowen and Gilbert, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 12.

¹⁸ "Isadora Duncan Dances the Marseillaise," *Current Opinion*, 62.1 (Jan. 1917), 31. This article cites extensively from a *Boston Transcript* review of Duncan's concert when it was given as a private fundraising event for families of French artists, organized by Duncan's lover, Paris Singer, on November 21, 1916. Kurth, *Isadora*, 357 and 604n2 and n3. Following the tradition of the day, the initial reviewer is not credited, though it was most likely H. T. Parker, the primary dance critic for the *Transcript*.

¹⁹ Carl Van Vechten, "The New Isadora, 1917," *The Dance Writings of Carl Van Vechten*, edited by Paul Padgett (New York: Dance Horizons, 1974), 25.

²⁰ See, for example, Steichen's photograph of Duncan at the Parthenon.

²¹ Carl Van Vechten, *The Letters of Carl Van Vechten*, edited by Bruce Kellner (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 22–23.

²² Janet Flanners (Hippolyta), "Isadora." *The New Yorker*, January 1, 1927, 17.

²³ "Isadora Duncan Dances the Marseillaise," *Current Opinion*.

²⁴ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 183.

²⁵ Berlant, *The Anatomy of a National Fantasy*, 22–28.

²⁶ Henry Lansing quoted by Kurth, *Isadora*, 361; no further citation.

²⁷ Capozzola makes an analogous point in reference to illustrator James Montgomery Flagg's depiction of Uncle Sam in the famous "I WANT YOU" recruitment poster, of which four million were printed. Capozzola argues that "by turning the vast machinery of war mobilization into a family relation, [Uncle Sam] gave political power a personal face and made sense of the government's presence in everyday life." *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 4.

²⁸ "Isadora Duncan Reveals a Change in Dance Style," *New York Tribune*, March 7, 1917, 9.

²⁹ John Higham and Ian Haney-López, among other scholars, have argued that the roots of nativist xenophobia extend back to America's colonial heritage. According to Higham, the mid nineteenth century marked a critical point in the resurgence of nativist sentiments. Following Higham, Ali Behdad specifically interrogates nativism when it gained political traction in the ideology of the Know-Nothing movement in the 1850s. The successes of this movement, Behdad argues, helped engender a belief in the viability of nativism as a political solution to immigration reform. Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1955/1973) 3–11; Haney-López, *White by Law: the Legal Construction of Race*, (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 1; Behdad, *A Forgetful Nation: on Immigration and Cultural Identity in the United States*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 116–129.

³⁰ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 204–05.

³¹ Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*, (New York and Cambridge, MA: Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University Press, 2006), 236–242; Desmond S. King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 78–79; Howard Bromberg, "Immigration Act of 1917," *Encyclopedia of Immigration*. Published February 14, 2012; accessed June 20, 2013. <http://immigration-online.org/588-immigration-act-of-1917.html>.

³² Zolberg, *A Nation by Design*, 241–42.

³³ R.A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924–1952* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 5; cited by Desmond King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy*, 79 and 318n124.

³⁴ Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus” (1883), inscribed at the statue’s base, cited by Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy*, 26 and 227n24.

³⁵ Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 174.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 176–78. According to Capozzola, despite being described by the U.S. press as German prisoners of war, none of the inmates at Ellis Island were captured on European battlefields. Half were German sailors or merchant marines; the remainder were U.S. citizens (173).

³⁷ “Get Three Deer in Water... More Duncan Pupils Here. Thirteen Alien Youngsters Taken to Ellis Island,” *The New York Times*, September 14, 1914, 6. According to the brief announcement, immigration law prohibited the entry of minors under the age of sixteen unaccompanied by parents or guardians. That they were German nationals did not help and suspicions that the students were spies plagued the school Duncan established in Croton, New York, throughout the war, which was put under federal surveillance. According to Kurth, Duncan authorized her elder students to take her last name for professional purposes, though she did not officially adopt them. Kurth, *Isadora*, 364–65.

³⁸ Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 10.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴¹ Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 184 and 272n26.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Carl Weinberg, “The Tug of War: Labor, Loyalty, and Rebellion in the Southwestern Illinois Coalfields, 1914–1920, 484” (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1995); cited by Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You* on 117 and 249n1, who provides a brief annotated bibliography for the case of Robert Prager.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Henrietta Rodham, undated 1915 *New York Tribune* article; cited by Kurth, *Isadora*, 330 and 601n31.

⁴⁶ “Isadora Duncan Reveals a Change in Dance Style,” *New York Tribune*.

- ⁴⁷ Margaret Anderson, "Isadora Duncan's Misfortune," *Little Review* (April 1917): 7, cited by Elizabeth Francis, *The Secret Treachery of Words: Feminism and Modernism in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 35 and 177n95.
- ⁴⁸ Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009) 14; Linda Upham-Bornstein, "Immigration Act of 1907," *Encyclopedia of Immigration*. Published February 14, 2012; accessed June 20, 2013. <http://immigration-online.org/587-immigration-act-of-1907.html>.
- ⁴⁹ "Bars Isadora Duncan from Boston stage. Mayor Curley Moved by Protests—Dancer Denounces 'Puritan Vulgarity,'" *The New York Times*, October 24, 1922; "Isadora Duncan Barred. Boston Mayor Refuses to Permit a Return Engagement," *The New York Times*, November 18, 1922.
- ⁵⁰ Flanners, *Isadora*, 19.
- ⁵¹ Kurth erroneously cites the provenance of this review as from the *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1922 in *Isadora*, 462. H. T. Parker was more circumspect in his assessment, noting that the stage's bright lighting produced "a bodily revelation unbecoming to a middle-aged woman too obviously high in flesh." Parker and O. Holmes, "Isadora Incontinent," *Motion Arrested: Dance Reviews of H. T. Parker* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 72.
- ⁵² "Miss Duncan's Farewell Speech." *The New York Times*, November 15, 1922.
- ⁵³ Evangelist Billy Sunday, as quoted by Daly, *Done into Dance*, 201.
- ⁵⁴ Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen*, 14; Haney-López, *White by Law*, 11 and 187n32; Donald A. Watt, "Cable Act of 1922," *Encyclopedia of Immigration*. Published August 24, 2011; accessed June 20, 2013. <http://immigration-online.org/397-cable-act-of-1922.html>.
- ⁵⁵ "Isadora Duncan Off Will Never Return," *The New York Times*, February 4, 1923, 15.
- ⁵⁶ "Holds Isadora Duncan Lost her Citizenship," *The New York Times*, March 10, 1923, 14.
- ⁵⁷ "Soviet Offers Haven to Isadora Duncan," *The New York Times*, March 29, 1923, 4.
- ⁵⁸ Duncan, *My Life*, 342.
- ⁵⁹ Daly, *Done into Dance*, 187.

CHAPTER THREE

¹ In the schedule of events for the People's Flag Show (PFS) opening, the dance is listed as "the Grand Union's Flag Dance" (Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche, Section 12, *GAAG, the Guerrilla Art Action Group 1969–1976, A Selection* (New York, Printed Matter, 1978), n.p). Rainer does not title the dance in *Work: 1961–73* (Halifax, NS: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design/New York: New York University Press, 1974), 171–72, but in her autobiography, *Feelings Are Facts: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), she refers to it as *Trio A with Flags* (343–). I follow her lead in using this title.

² These include photographs and film footage by Peter Moore shot at the opening of the People's Flag Show, November 9, 1971. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute Special Collections.

³ Yvonne Rainer, "Statement." *The Mind is a Muscle* program note, April 11, 14, 15, 1968. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute Special Collections.

⁴ Rainer performed *Trio A* under the title *Convalescent Dance* in Dance Protest for Vietnam, a two-night group show that was part of Angry Arts: Against the War in Vietnam on February 2, 1967. Event poster, Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute Special Collections. See also, Clive Barnes, "Dance: 'Angry Arts' at Hunter College," *The New York Times*, February 3, 1967, 34. She danced it in tap shoes at the conclusion of the final section of *The Mind is a Muscle* during its April run at the Anderson Theater. Rainer, "The Mind is a Muscle," *A Woman Who--: Essays, Interviews, Scripts* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 28.

⁵ The two best sources for a genealogy of *Trio A* are: Rainer, "The Mind is a Muscle," *ibid.* and "Trio A: Genealogy, Documentation, Notation." *Dance Research Journal* 41.2 (winter 2009): 12–18.

⁶ Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 269 and 271.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 302–303.

⁸ Pat Catterson, "I Promised Myself I Would Never Let It Leave My Body's Memory." *Dance Research Journal* 41.2 (winter 2009): 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Yvonne Rainer, "Statement."

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Max Kozloff, “... A Collage of Indignation,” *The Nation* February 20, 1967, 248–51; cited by Francis Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America*, (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 113 and 151n25.

¹³ Rainer, “Judson Flag Show,” *Work*, 171. Contrary to the title *M-Walk* that she used in *Work*, Rainer refers to the dance in *Feelings Are Facts* as *Street Action* (343).

¹⁴ Steven C. Dubin, *Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions*, (New York/London: Routledge, 1992), 107; Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent*, 121; Boime, “Waving the Red Flag,” 10–11; Robert Justin Goldstein, *Saving Old Glory”: The History of the American Flag Desecration Controversy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 113; Lucy R. Lippard, *A Different War: Vietnam in Art* (Bellingham/Seattle WA: Whatcom Museum of History and Art/Real Comet Press, 1990), 26–27.

¹⁵ Lippard, *A Different War*, 27.

¹⁶ Goldstein provides the most thorough synopsis and analysis of the Radich case. *Saving “Old Glory,”* 112–116.

¹⁷ Elsa Honig Fine, *The Afro-American Artist: A Search for Identity* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973), 209; cited by Boime, 18–19. Well-known works by Ringgold featuring the American flag include *The Flag is Bleeding* (1967) and *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger* (1969).

¹⁸ Jenel Virden, *Americans and the Wars of the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 137–38.

¹⁹ Zolberg, *Nation by Design*, 337.

²⁰ Deborah E. Cowen, “The Soldier-Citizen,” *Recasting the Social in Citizenship*, edited by Engin F. Isin (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 201.

²¹ Catterson, “I Promised Myself,” 6.

²² Todd Gitlin, *The Intellectuals and the Flag* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 133.

²³ Virden, *Americans and the Wars*, 125–126.

²⁴ U.S. Code, title 4, chapter 1, section 8, item (k) states, “the flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.” U.S. House of Representatives Office of Law

Revision Council; accessed July 27, 2013. <http://uscode.house.gov/uscode-cgi/fastweb.exe?getdoc+uscprelimview+uscprelim+1467+31++%28>.

²⁵ Boime, “Waving the Red Flag,” 8.

²⁶ According to Marc Leepson, *Reader’s Digest* distributed eighteen million flag decals in its February 1969 issue. *Flag: An American Biography* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2006), 129–130.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁸ Goldstein provides a thorough reading of the major 1967 flag-burning in Central Park that led to the 1968 passage of the Federal Flag Desecration Law in *Saving “Old Glory,”* 118–137; he also includes the text of the law on 252.

²⁹ Bradford D. Martin, *The Theater Is in the Street: Politics and Performance in Sixties America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 151.

³⁰ *Village Voice*, June 11, 1970; *The Nation*, June 29, 1970; *Time*, July 6, 1970; cited by Goldstein, *Saving “Old Glory,”* 158–59.

³¹ In 1971 the Supreme Court’s ruling was tied, with Justice William O. Douglas abstaining. The Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the tied vote allowed for the case to be appealed again. The case continued to work its way through the American justice system until 1974, when a federal judge finally overturned Radich’s conviction. Goldstein, *“Old Glory,”* 158–59.

³² In his global analysis of the New Left that arose in the late 1960s, social movements historian George Katsiaficas notes that while 1968 marked a highpoint in a global student movement, with widespread protests occurring in Paris, Mexico, Japan, Sri Lanka, Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia and other nations, a corollary, in terms of size or force, did not occur in the U.S. until 1970. *The Imagination of the New Left: a Global Analysis of 1968*, (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 117–74.

³³ Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. (Toronto/New York: Bantam Books, 1987), 409–11; Katsiaficas, *Imagination of the New Left*, 120–21. Katsiaficas states that during May 1970, over 100 people were killed or wounded; like Gitlin he draws attention to the May 14 police shooting into a women’s dorm at Jackson State College, Mississippi, which killed two students and injured twelve more, as part of the fuel igniting protestors’ anger (120). Virden argues that the February 1970 bombing of Laos also provided an impetus for the widespread demonstrations (126); Barringer asserts that revelations about the American conduct of war emerging in the My Lai massacre trials were a factor; and Katsiaficas further contends that the repression of the Black Panther

Party was also key element to violent protests at universities across the U.S. (3). Mark D. Barringer, "Antiwar Movement, U.S." in Spencer Tucker, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Viet Nam War* (Denver: ABC Clio, 1998), 53-55. Reprinted as "The Anti-War Movement in the United States" on www.english.illinois.edu; accessed August 25, 2012. <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/vietnam/antiwar.html>.

³⁴ Kynaston L. McShine, *Information* (New York: MoMA, 1970), 138; cited by Francina, *Art, Politics and Dissent*, 111 and 151n16.

³⁵ Larry Litt, "Abbie Hoffman: Needed Again," *The Blame Show* (blog), www.blameshow.com, December 29, 2009; accessed June 26, 2011. URL inactive; article available as "My Youth Envy," *New York Theater Wire*; accessed February 13, 2013. <http://www.nytheatre-wire.com/1108048t.htm>.

³⁶ Hendricks and Toche's public action of burning the flag was under the aegis of GAAG and the Belgian Government in Exile, which read its "Declaration of War" during the ceremony. The burnt flag was subsequently added to the exhibition. *GAAG 12*; Dubin, *Arresting Images*, 106 and 332n6. Additionally, the Reverend Howard Moody had offered a sermon titled "Symbols and Fetishes: A Left-handed Salute to the Flag" the previous morning (Sunday, November 8) before the show was installed in the main sanctuary. Lippard, *A Different War*, 26.

³⁷ Hoffman had been arrested while waiting to appear before the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives, purportedly for displaying contempt by wiping his nose on his shirtsleeve. Paul Krassner, "The Trial of Abbie Hoffman's Shirt" *Huffington Post*, June 8, 2005; accessed August 25, 2012. [_http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-krassner/the-trial-of-abbie-hoffma_b_2334.html?view=print_](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-krassner/the-trial-of-abbie-hoffma_b_2334.html?view=print)

³⁸ Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 69.

³⁹ Both NBC and Global Village filmed and broadcast the performance. Yvonne Rainer, *Work*, 172.

⁴⁰ Rainer, *Feeling Are Facts*, 348.

⁴¹ "Symbols of a New Nation," Smithsonian Institute: National Museum of American History web site; accessed May 20, 2010. <http://americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/symbols-of-a-new-nation.aspx>.

⁴² Jean Battey Lewis, "Nudity, Reality and Dance," *The Washington Post*, December 6, 1970, 106.

⁴³ Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 350; event Poster, Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Special Collections.

⁴⁴ The performance took place on April 22–23, 1999 as part of No Limits: A Celebration of Freedom and Art to Benefit Judson Memorial Church, April 19–24, 1999. Carrie Lambert Beatty, *Being Watched* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 210 and 333n36; According to Rainer’s 2009 account, six dancers performed *Trio A with Flags* nude on each night (“*Trio A: Genealogy*,” 14). However, in a subsequent conversation with the author, she recalled that they refused to remove their underwear.

⁴⁵ Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 325–26.

CHAPTER FOUR

¹ David Rose, “Inside Guantanamo,” *The Observer*, March 13, 2004. Accessed online on June 13, 2013 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2004/mar/14/terrorism.afghanistan>

² Lighting concept and design by Cis O’Boyle. While in-progress versions of the piece used theatrical lighting, in its final form an overhead projector cast a film of the solid colors, timed to shift over the course of the performance.

³ Chris Goode, “Interview with Rajni Shah,” *Thompson’s Bank of Communicable Desire*, July 20, 2008; accessed October 18, 2011. beescope@blogspot.com.

⁴ Shah toured *Mr. Quiver* between 2005 and 2008. For more about the piece, visit the artist’s website: <http://www.rajnishah.com/mr-quiver>.

⁵ *Glorious* refers to both the performance and a project that includes events designed to cultivate greater awareness of each place as well as greater interaction between residents, such as writing letters to strangers. For more about the piece, visit the artist’s website: <http://www.rajnishah.com/glorious>.

⁶ Shah began conceptual work on the piece in 2006; rehearsals began in 2007. Interview with the artist, June 5, 2012.

⁷ My analysis is based on an eponymous twenty-minute film by Becky Edmunds (2010) of the November 2008 performance at the Laban Centre, London; supplemented by viewing: *Voices In Transit: Amazing Grace*, a film by Cash and Shah based on performance footage of a work-in-progress showing of *Dinner with America* in Hastings, England, September 2007; an untitled, eleven-minute film documenting a second work-in-progress performance in Chichester, December 2007; *Uncertain Landmarks*, a five-minute film by Cash subtitled “A remix of scenes from the making of *Dinner with*

America.” My analysis has additionally been aided by reviews of the piece and interviews with Shah in the British press plus telephone interviews and e-mail exchanges with the artist.

⁸ In *Voices in Transit*, Shah can be heard asking, “Do you think of yourself as an American and, if you do, what does that feel like?”

⁹ As research for the piece, Shah conducted interviews with artists and activists during a residency in Atlanta, Georgia, then continued these when she returned to London. Regardless of location, all thirty-two interviewees, who are listed by name in performance program notes and film credits, are U.S. citizens, possessing “real American voices,” as Chris Goode. Goode, “Interview with Rajni Shah.” Shah has stated that it was important for the piece that she not use her own voice, as she had done in *Mr. Quiver*, and that the piece feature a multitude of different voices and perspectives. (Of note, Shah not only did not use her own voice in *Glorious* but considered the score an “open-source” text to be revised by the local community musicians and performers with whom she worked in the various cities the project toured.)

¹⁰ Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation and Hidden Grief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 54.

¹¹ Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (London/New York, Routledge, 1997), 8.

¹² Richard Dyer, “Introduction,” *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1986), 5.

¹³ Dyer, “White,” *Screen* 29.4 (1988): 64.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 63.

¹⁵ Richard Dyer, “Monroe and Sexuality,” *Heavenly Bodies*, 17-63.

¹⁶ David Berridge, “A Moveable Feast,” *Spill: Overspill*; accessed October 22, 2009. <http://spilloverspill.blogspot.com/2009/04/moveable-feast-by-david-berridge.html>.

¹⁷ Fluorescent light tubes, not yet visible to spectators, fan out beneath the swirls of white fabric in which Shah stands to assist in creating the intensity of white light.

¹⁸ John S. Farmer, *Slang and Its Analogues Past and Present*, London, 1890. Cited by Douglas Harper, *Online Etymology Dictionary* (c) 2001-13. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=blue>

- ¹⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, Third Edition, March 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/20577?rskey=lkudPH&result=2#eid17810686>.
- ²⁰ Steve Turner, *Amazing Grace: the Story of America's Most Beloved Song* (New York, HarperCollins, 2002), xxvii.
- ²¹ David Savran, "Ambivalence, Utopia, and a Queer Sort of Materialism: How *Angels in America* Reconstructs the Nation," *A Queer Sort of Materialism: Recontextualizing American Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2003), 107-219.
- ²² Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy*, 31.
- ²³ Craig Calhoun, "Nationalism and Cultures of Democracy," 161.
- ²⁴ Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson, "The Surveillant Assemblage," *British Journal of Sociology* 1.51 (2000): 605-22.
- ²⁵ This is a necessarily partial list due to the evolving nature the surveillant assemblage, in which I prioritize visual and digital observation tools and technologies. In turn, the surveillant assemblage comprises just one aspect of national security, counter- and antiterrorism efforts, which similarly spread across intelligence, security and law enforcement entities.
- ²⁶ Drones have been categorized under several acronyms, including RPA, RPU (Remote Piloted Vehicle), UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) and UAS (Unmanned Aerial System).
- ²⁷ Shane Harris, *The Watchers: The Rise of America's Surveillance State* (New York: Penguin, 2010), 196.
- ²⁸ New York Metropolitan Transit Authority, "MTA Rolls Out 'The Eyes of New York' Ad Campaign," MTA press release; accessed May 7, 2013. <http://httqa.mta.info/mta/news/newsroom/eyesecurity.htm>.
- ²⁹ Predator drones were deployed by the U.S. Air Force in Kosovo for surveillance purposes under the conventional rules of war, but were armed with Hellfire missile when deployed in Afghanistan. Dana Priest and William M. Arkin among others assert that Afghanistan was the first war in which drones were a primary strategy. *Top Secret America: The Rise of the New American Security State* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2011), 15.
- ³⁰ David Greene and Kelly McEvers, "Former Air Force Pilot Has Cautionary Tales About Drones," *National Public Radio*, May 10, 2013.

³¹ Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker, “War Evolves With Drones, Some Tiny as Bugs,” *The New York Times*, (online) June 19, 2011; accessed June 22, 2013. Print version, June 20, 2011, page A1. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/20/world/20drones.html?pagewanted=all>. See also: Zygmunt Bauman, “On Never Being Alone Again,” *Social Europe Journal*, June 28, 2011; accessed May 15, 2013. <http://www.social-europe.eu/2011/06/on-never-being-alone-again/>.

³² Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo’s Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); cited by Caren Kaplan, “‘A Rare and Chilling View’: Aerial Photography as Biopower in the Visual Culture of ‘9/11’,” *Reconstruction* 11.2 (2011) http://reconstruction.eserver.org/112/Kaplan_Caren.shtml.

³³ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 3.

³⁴ Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Cathy Hannabach, Technologies of Blood: Asylum, Medicine, and Biopolitics. *Cultural Politics* 9.1 (2013): 22-41.

³⁵ Amy L. Fairchild, *Science at the Borders: Immigrant Medical Inspection and the Shaping of the Modern Industrial Labor Force*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 4.

³⁶ Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

³⁷ Priscilla Ward, *Communicable Americanism: Social Contagion and Urban Spaces, Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

³⁸ Cited by Brian Massumi in “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Power,” *Beyond Biopolitics: Essays on the Governance of Life and Death*. Patricia Ticineto Clough and Craig Willse, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 23.

³⁹ Jaspir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 175.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁴¹ Here I am referring to the 2007 Protect America Act, amended in 2008 and renewed until 2017, which does not require confirmation of foreign agent status but instead defines a surveillance target as “persons reasonably believed to be located outside the U.S. The bill also does not require confirmation of action(s) or “character judgment” to monitor a suspect. Protect America Act of 2007, *Wikipedia*; accessed June 11, 2013. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protect_America_Act_of_2007#Foreign_Agent_Declaration_Not_Required.

⁴² Mary Kate Connolly, “Summoned to Table: Rajni Shah’s Dinner with America,” *Spill: Overspill*; accessed October 22, 2009. <http://spilloverspill.blogspot.com/2009/04/summoned-to-table-rajni-shahs-dinner.html>.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Eleanor Hadley Kershaw, “The Audience Made Complicit,” *RealTime Arts Magazine* 91; accessed October 18, 2011. <http://www.realttimearts.net/article/91/9445>.

CHAPTER FIVE

¹ My analysis of *Exposition Universelle* is based on attending a performance at New York Live Arts on October 14, 2011, and subsequent viewings of the piece on DVD.

² Video portraits by Jaques Hoepffner. Performance program, *Exposition Universelle*.

³ JPEG is an acronym that stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group, the entity that developed the compressed image file format. <http://www.techterms.com/definition/jpeg>.

⁴ “Bit” refers to the smallest binary unit of computer data, expressed as a single binary digit, zero or one. “Byte” is the measurement of an image file size. Here I am applying bit to refer to the transformation of image into data and byte to refer to each field or plasma compartment. www.techterms.com/definition/bit.

⁵ N. Katherine Hayles, “Virtual Bodies and Flickering Signifiers,” *October* 66 (Autumn 1993): 69-91.

⁶ Poster writes that digitality revises assumptions about human/machine and subject/object binaries. The disruption of a clear divide between the organic and machinic, and consequently the concept of the subject, was first theorized by Donna Haraway in “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in The Late Twentieth Century.” Instead of Haraway’s cyborg, which combines the biological and technological, Poster nominates “digital network information humachines.” The phrase extends Poster’s concept of the *humachine*, the “combined interface between humans and

machines,” to theorize the extent to which this intertwining dissolves distinctions between subject and object. Mark Poster, “Hardt and Negri’s Information Empire: A Critical Response,” *Cultural Politics* 1.1:103. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in The Late Twentieth Century,” *Simians, Cyborgs And Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149-181.

⁷ David Lyon and Kevin D. Haggerty, “The Surveillance Legacies of 9/11: Recalling, Reflecting on, and Rethinking Surveillance in the Security Era,” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 27.3 (2012): 296.

⁸ Tony D. Sampson, “Introduction,” *Virality: Contagion Theory in the Age of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). The *Newsweek* article titled “Disease and Terrorism” introduced in the prior chapter supports Sampson’s thesis (see note 218). In it, the author writes that “the central driver” of both biological warfare and swine flu, “is the increasingly interconnected world we live in.”

⁹ Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 25.

¹⁰ *Banlieues* are the equivalent of inner-city housing projects in the U.S., despite their location in the suburbs of French cities. Whereas American housing projects were built at a time when cities were in decline, French cities have maintained their vitality.

¹¹ John Rockwell, “Europe’s Elitist Dance, Flirting Everywhere,” *The New York Times*, April 21, 2005.

¹² Ibid. On October 27, 2005, the *banlieu* in the Parisian suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois erupted in civil unrest after the accidental death of two youths of Malian and Tunisian descent—Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré—during a police investigation of a break-in. Ultimately, violence spread to 274 towns across the nation and lasted nearly three weeks. As Peter Sahlins notes on the homepage of the website Riots in France, the rioters were predominantly unemployed youths from the destitute housing projects. The situated nature of the uprising has led scholars to investigate the spatial politics of immigrant segregation in France. Susan Haedicke traces a genealogy of the 2005 uprising to anti-immigrant policies initiated in the 1970s in “The ‘Outsider’ Outside: Performing Immigration in French Street Theater,” *Violence performed: local roots and global routes of conflict* (Basingstoke, England/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 34-37.

Riots in France, a project of the Social Science Research Council, was initiated in early November as a web-based forum of French and American scholars responding to the conflict while it was developing. See in particular: Stéphane Dufoix, “More Than Riots: A Question of Spheres” *Riots in France*. Social Science Research Council. Published Dec 2, 2005; accessed February 25, 2013. riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Dufoix/; Paul A. Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault, “Postcolonial Urban Apartheid” *Riots in France*. Social

Science Research Council. Published June 11, 2006; accessed February 25, 2013. riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Silverstein_Tetreault/.

¹³ *Exposition Universelle* premiered at Bonlieu-Scène Nationale d'Annecy on May 12-14, 2011. It premiered in the U.S. at the TBA Festival in Portland, Oregon in September 2011, and was subsequently presented with *Des Témoins Ordinaires* under the English translations of their titles at New York Live Arts on October 11-12 and 14-15, 2011, as part of the 2011 Crossing the Line Festival and at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio. U.S. tour information available on company L'A./Rachid Ouramdane web site: <http://www.rachidouramdane.com/index.php?id=788&step=0#>.

¹⁴ *Des Témoins Ordinaires* was not the first dance in which Ouramdane addressed state torture. For his 2008 solo *Loin... (Far...)* he incorporated a recording detailing his father's torture by the French military during the Algerian war of liberation. Post-performance discussion with Ouramdane, Julien and Carla Peterson at New York Live Arts, October 14, 2011.

¹⁵ "Artistic Project," company L'A./Rachid Ouramdane web site. <http://www.rachidouramdane.com/index.php?id=2&step=0>.

¹⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary*, Third Edition, March 2013. Oxford University Press. http://oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/palimpsest?q=palimpsest.

¹⁷ French historian Pascal Blanchard estimates that one-and-a-half billion people visited world fairs and colonial expos between 1870 and 1930. Clea Caulcutt, "Paris's Forgotten Human Zoo," *RFI*, February 16, 2011; updated March 2, 2011; accessed February 28, 2012. <http://www.english.rfi.fr/france/20110216-paris-s-forgotten-human-zoo-shows-crude-workings-colonial-propaganda>.

¹⁸ Zeynep Çelik states that the idea to display indigenous people from French colonies to French citizens was initially forwarded by Joseph Marie de Gérando, an eighteenth-century researcher, who sought to affirm the racial superiority of Europeans by bringing living, "pure" specimens of colonial others for scientific observation. Zeynep Çelik, "Muslim Visitors to World's Fairs," *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 17.

¹⁹ Emily Apter, *Continental Drift: From National Characters to Virtual Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 15.

²⁰ Danika Medak-Saltzman cites the use of this terminology in a marketing brochure for the 1904 St. Louis Expo. Medak-Saltzman, "Transnational Indigenous Exchange:

Rethinking Global Interaction of Indigenous Peoples at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition.” *American Quarterly* 62.3 (September 2010): 609.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press), 55.

²³ In his foundational work, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), Edward elucidates the dynamic by which the Middle East or “Orient” has been systematically distorted as a conceptual, rather than geographic, space in Western literary and scientific discourses.

²⁴ Jonathan Wyrzten interrogates what postcolonial scholar Partha Chatterjee has referred to as “the fundamental rule of colonial difference” in relation to the taxonomical classification of native populations under French colonial rule. Noting that the colonial state’s monopolization and exercise of this function was key to the power it wielded, Wyrzten writes that the nominative capacity made and unmade groups by constructing only specific forms of social legibility. Jonathan Wyrzten, “Seeing (and Being Seen) Like a Colonial State: Legibility and Legitimacy in French North Africa” (working paper, 2011), 10.

²⁵ For more on the Blackshirts see: R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini’s Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (Penguin Books, 2005); Pier Paolo Battistelli and Piero Crociani, *Italian Blackshirts, 1935-45* (Osprey Publishing, 2010).

²⁶ Concept by Rachid Ouramdane, construction by Sylvain Giraudeau. Performance program, *Exposition Universelle*.

²⁷ José Estaban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999), 109.

²⁸ Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), “Appendix: Utopian Promises—Net Realities,” *Flesh Machine: Cyborgs, Designer Babies, Eugenic Consciousness* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1998), 145.

²⁹ David J. Phillips, “From Privacy to Visibility: Context, Identity, and Power in Ubiquitous Computing Environments.” *Social Text* 83 (2005): 95-108.

³⁰ “Single Vehicle Rollover—Saskatoon RCMP Search for Injured Driver with Unmanned Aerial Vehicle,” Royal Canadian Mounted Police web site, May 9, 2013. <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/sk/news-nouvelle/video-gallery/video-pages/search-rescue-eng.htm>; Jon Amos, “European Space Agency Announces Biomass Satellite to Monitor Forests,” *Marketplace Tech*, Tuesday, May 14, 2013. <http://www.marketplace.org/topics>

/tech/european-space-agency-announces-biomass-satellite-monitor-forests; “Earth’s Northern Biomass Mapped and Measured,” European Space Agency web site, June 26, 2013. http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Observing_the_Earth/Earth_s_northern_biomass_mapped_and_measured.

³¹ Richard Maxwell, “Surveillance: Work, Myth, and Policy,” *Social Text* 83 (2005): 9.

³² CAE make this point, as does Maxwell, though specifically in relation to arguments made by Left and Right political factions. Maxwell, “Surveillance: Work, Myth, and Policy”: 3 and 18 n9, n10.

³³ Mark Poster, *The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 97-98; cited by Diana Saco in *Cybering Democracy: Public Space and the Internet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 114.

³⁴ Jaspir Puar makes this point using Felix Stalder’s observations on the “informational doppelganger,” *Terrorist Assemblages*, 155 and 269 n117.

³⁵ Ibid. See also Giorgio Agamben, “No to Bio-Political Tattooing,” *Le Monde*, January 10, 2004, posted on news.infoshop.org on January 17, 2004; accessed May 8, 2013. <http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=04/01/17/2017978>.

³⁶ Hendrik Hertzberg, “Comment: Preventive Measures,” *The New Yorker*, May 20, 2013, 36.

³⁷ Commentators and scholars have investigated the overinflated promises of other aspects of dataveillance such as biometrical identity recognition technologies as well. See, for example, Kelly Gates, “Biometrics and Post-9/11 Technostalgia,” *Social Text* 83 (2005): 35-53.

³⁸ One might also include the hundreds of military bases and green zones located around the globe.

CHAPTER SIX

¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Living* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 97.

² My reading of *Living Flag* is based on multiple viewings of extant audiovisual documentation (listed in note #13), materials from damali ayo and reparationsday.com,

media coverage of a restaging of the piece as National Day for Panhandling for Reparations (2007-09), plus e-mail correspondence and an interview with the artist.

³ For more about the street performances of Adrian Piper and William Pope.L see: John Parish Bowles, *Adrian Piper: Race, Gender, and Embodiment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Stephen Zepke, "Becoming Citizen of the World: Deleuze between Alan Kaprow and Adrian Piper," *Deleuze and Performance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), edited by Laura Cull, 109-25; Mark H. C. Bessire, ed. *William Pope. L: The Friendliest Black Artist in America* (Cambridge, MA: Institute of Contemporary Art at Maine College of Art/MIT Press, 2002); Darby English, "Aesthetics of Dispossession: William Pope.L's Performance Interventions," *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 255-312; André Lepecki, "Stumbling Dance: William Pope.L's Crawls," *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (New York/London: Routledge, 2006) 87-105.

⁴ Ayo has taken down the original performance web site, though an explanation about the project is still available at www.rent-a-negro.com. Book and CD versions are also available: *How to Rent a Negro* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2005); *damali ayo LIVE: How to Rent a Negro*, © damali ayo. See also: Brandi Wilkins Catanese, "'How Do I Rent a Negro?': Racialized Subjectivity and Digital Performance Art." *Theatre Journal* 57.4 (2005): 699-714; Lisa Katayama, "How To Sell a Stereotype," *Bitch Magazine*, December 21, 2005; reprinted on www.alternet.org. http://www.alternet.org/story/29900/how_to_sell_a_stereotype. For more about ayo's visual and performance work, visit the artist's web site: www.damaliayo.com/pages/look.html.

⁵ Saidiya Hartman, "The Time of Slavery," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:4 (Fall 2002): 763. In this essay, Hartman questions whether the act of remembering the horrors that comprised slavery and the transatlantic slave trade has become "the only conceivable or viable form of political agency," 774.

⁶ In *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), David Kazanjian interrogates progressivist histories of the U.S. that position universal egalitarianism as more modern than racism and nationalism. Rather than viewing the continued application of egalitarianism, by which all citizen subjects are formally and abstractly equal under the law, as a resolution to the particularism of racism and nationalism (despite temporary setbacks), Kazanjian argues that the nation form is always already a racial formation, 4.

⁷ See Ronald P. Salzberger and Mary C. Turck, editors, *Reparations for Slavery: A Reader*, (Oxford, UK and Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004); the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (www.ncobra.org); and the Slavery Reparations Information Center, a project of the National Leadership Network of Black Conservatives (www.nationalcenter.org/Reparations).

⁸ Salzberger and Turck, *Reparations for Slavery*, 63-67 (H.R. 29) and 91-95 (H.R. 40). The last time Conyers introduced H.R. 40 was on January 3, 2013. Two weeks later it was referred to the subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Liberties. beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/40.

⁹ For more on the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-838), see the *Densho Encyclopedia*, which is dedicated to the experience of Japanese Americans during World War II. http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Civil_Liberties_Act_of_1988/.

¹⁰ Martha Biondi, "The Rise of the Reparations Movement," *Radical History Review* 87 (Fall 2003): 5-18. Biondi provides a thorough overview of recent national and international reparation efforts.

¹¹ For an example of the anti-reparation backlash, see David Horowitz, "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Blacks is a Bad Idea for Blacks—and Racist Too," in Salzberger and Turck, *Reparations for Slavery*, 127-39. Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of the Studio Museum, coined the term "post-black" in the catalogue for the 2001 Freestyle exhibition. Golden's catalogue essay is quoted in Michael H. Miller, "After Post-Black: Rashid Johnson's Baadasssss Song," *New York Observer*, August 26, 2011 (accessed August 5, 2013). <http://observer.com/2011/07/after-post-black/>.

¹² My color-coding of Americans as either "white" or "black" reiterates the terms ayo uses to describe *Living Flag* in interviews and artist statements. When addressing citizenship rights and abuses or a specifically U.S. context, I use the term African American. More generally, I apply African diasporic.

¹³ Alfred L. Brophy, *Reparations Pro and Con* (Oxford et al.:Oxford University Press, 2006), 4.

¹⁴ Ayo uploaded the flash story and longer video to YouTube on April 1, 2006, where they continue to circulate in the global media sphere. To date the two have been viewed by approximately 18,000 people. In this regard the documents can be thought of as forming a virtual public sphere in which to continue to discuss the issue of reparations for slavery. *Living Flag: Panhandling for Reparations, flashstory [sic]*, produced by Sam Roberts and Dmae Roberts, story1st.org: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_9Nldw2RVM&list=PL65DA3A015CDBB780&index=4; *Living Flag: Panhandling for Reparations*, edited by damali ayo: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XnVwS6XgE4&feature=autoplay&list=PL65DA3A015CDBB780&index=6&playnext=2>.

¹⁵ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997),183.

¹⁶ Nikolais S. Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge, UK/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30.

¹⁷ In *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), Aihwa Ong argues that within late capitalism, the state values citizen-subjects according to their capacity to accrue capital for the state. For more on neoliberalism as a form of biopolitical governance and the neoliberal citizen, see Randy Martin, *An Empire of Indifference: American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007) and Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

¹⁸ For more on “the black body,” as a racializing concept and scopic regime, see: Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Harvey Young, *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).; Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008).

¹⁹ Frantz Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness,” *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 109-40.

²⁰ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 63.

²¹ Ayo estimates that at least a third of the people who stopped and engaged with her at various sites over the course of the months-long performance ascertained that it was either a protest or performance. That *Living Flag* was a performance was made clear to New York City passersby-participants during periods when ayo’s agent chose to stand next to her and hand out flyers for a reception following ayo’s marathon stint in front of the Museum of Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum on October 23, 2003. Interview with the artist, March 12, 2012.

²² “Panhandling for Reparations,” *Studio 360* radio program, October 9, 2009. Archived at: <http://www.studio360.org/people/damali-ayo/>.

²³ See for example, Jared Sexton, “Race, Nation, and Empire in a Blackened World,” *Radical History Review* 95 (spring 2006): 250-61. Scholars theorizing the inextricable relationship between slavery and contemporary anti-black racism include a group informally referred to as the Afro-Pessimists that includes Sexton, Saidiya Hartman, David Marriott, Hortense Spillar and Frank Wilderson. These scholars theorize the violence of slavery as the ontological genesis for African American embodied subjectivity. The term “Afro-Pessimist” references their rejection of emancipatory resolutions and contention that anti-black racism is a structuring antagonism of

modernity. In a parallel development, philosophers Lewis R. Gordon and George Yancy have been instrumental in developing a black existential phenomenologist approach to theorizing black embodiment and the experience of African diasporic people. Noting the importance of slavery, Gordon writes, “Implicit in the existential demand for recognizing the situation or lived-context of African people’s being-in-the-world is the question of value raised by people who live that situation. A slave’s situation can only be understood, for instance, through recognizing the fact that a slave experiences it. It is to regard the slave as a value-laden perspective in the world.” *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy* (London/New York: Routledge, 1997), 3-4.

²⁴ Voting rights are one measure of the ongoing political disenfranchisement of African Americans, but, as it is a foundational citizen right, provides an important gauge. The exact number of disenfranchised Florida voters during the 2000 presidential election is not known. According to various sources, 36,000 newly registered voters were turned away at the polls because they had not been added to the state’s central voting file by were then-Secretary of State Katherine Harris and voters were mistakenly purged from the voting file after an error-riddled list of 82,389 purportedly convicted felons was compiled by a private company hired by Harris. According to a 2001 report issued by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, African Americans cast fifty-four percent of the 180,000 “spoiled” ballots that were discarded—97,200—. Voter suppression has increased in recent years, with the widespread passage of “voter fraud” legislation in states with a Republican governor and the disproportionate incarceration of African Americans. In Florida, inaccurate purging of purported felons continues. “Executive Summary,” *Voting Irregularities in Florida During the 2000 Presidential Election*, a report published by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001; accessed August 5, 2013. <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/vote2000/report/exesum.htm>. Gregory Palast, “Florida’s Flawed ‘Voter-cleansing’ Program,” *Salon*, December 4, 2000; ; accessed August 5, 2013. http://www.salon.com/2000/12/04/voter_file; Michael Parenti, “The Stolen Presidential Elections” (updated version), May 2007; accessed August 5, 2013. <http://michaelparenti.org/stolenelections.html#notes>.

²⁵ Susan Leigh Foster, “Taken By Surprise: Improvisation in Dance and Mind,” *Taken By Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader*, edited by Ann Cooper Albright and David Gere (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 3-4.

CHAPTER SEVEN

¹ My understanding of cosmopolitanism has been informed by the work of Craig Calhoun, among others. See by Calhoun: “The Elusive Cosmopolitan Ideal,” *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 47 (2003): 3-26; “ ‘Belonging’ in the Cosmopolitan Imaginary,” *Ethnicities* 3.4 (2003): 531-53; *Nations Matter: Culture, History and the Cosmopolitan Dream* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007); “Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Social

Imaginary.” *Daedalus* 137.3 (2008): 105-14; “The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Toward a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.4 (2002): 869-97.

² Though at times converging or overlapping with that of cosmopolitanism, the literature on global citizenship has exploded over the past decade. It encompasses a range of issues, from supra-national ethical obligations, human rights, environmental justice and interdependency to global competencies in the marketplace. See: Luis Cabrera, *The Practice of Global Citizenship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); April Carter, *The Political Theory of Global Citizenship* (London/New York: Routledge, 2001); Arthur Clark, *The ABCs of Human Survival: A Paradigm for Global Citizenship* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2010); Gerard Delanty, *Citizenship in a Global Age: Society, Culture, Politics* (Buckingham, England/Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000); Nigel Dower, *An Introduction to Global Citizenship* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003); Dower and John Williams, eds. *Global Citizenship: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2002); John Eade and Darren J. O’Byrne, eds. *Global Ethics and Civil Society* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Randall D. Germain and Michael Kenny, eds. *The Idea of Global Civil Society: Politics and Ethics in a Globalizing Era* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005); Anne K. Haugestad and J. D. Wulfhorst, eds. *Future as Fairness: Ecological Justice and Global Citizenship* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2004); Wayne Hudson and Steven Slaughter, eds. *Globalisation and Citizenship: The Transnational Challenge* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007); Darren J. O’Byrne, *The Dimensions of Global Citizenship: Political Identity Beyond the Nation-State* (London/Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003); Hans Schattle, *The Practices of Global Citizenship* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008); Tony Shallcross and John Robinson, eds. *Global Citizenship and Environmental Justice* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2006).

The concept of global citizenship has particularly gained traction in higher education, in relation to the university’s obligations to communities, the need for civic engagement and service learning. Much of this literature, like that of global citizenship in general, aligns if not conflates western democratic governance, participatory ideals of the citizen subject and global ethical awareness. See, for example: Ali A. Abdi and Lynette Shultz, eds. *Educating for Human Rights and Global Citizenship* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2008); Jeffrey S. Dill, *The Longings and Limits of Global Citizenship Education: The Moral Pedagogy of Schooling in a Cosmopolitan Age* (New York/London: Routledge, 2013); Robert A. Rhoads and Katalin Szelényi, eds. *Global Citizenship and the University: Advancing Social Life and Relations in an Interdependent World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); Lynette Shultz, Ali A. Abdi and George H. Richardson, eds. *Global Citizenship Education in Post-Secondary Institutions: Theories, Practices, Policies* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011); Peter N. Stearns, *Educating Global Citizens in Colleges and Universities: Challenges and Opportunities* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Cameron White and Roger Openshaw, eds. *Democracy at the Crossroads: International Perspectives on Critical Global Citizenship Education*

(Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).

³ I hesitate to use the adjective “participatory.” While an accurate descriptor, *participation* invokes a range of discourses. It has been touted as an important value by communitarians and civic republicans alike; in theories of democracy and calls for civic pedagogy; and as a distinct, if multi-titled aesthetic in the arts. See Claire Bishop, *Participation* (London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/MIT Press, 2006); Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2002); Ted Purves, *What We Want Is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

⁴ My analysis of *This Town* is based on my attendance at each of the four household concerts, September 8-11, 2012; interviews with Andrew Simonet and Amy Smith; and a roundtable discussion about the project at *Dance and the Social City*, Society for Dance History Scholars conference, Philadelphia, June 15, 2012. My reading of *give what you can* is based on e-mail correspondence and an interview with Rajni Shah plus an archive of more than twenty photographs from the performance/intervention at Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, May 2-3, 2008.

⁵ According to the 2010 national census, Philadelphia was forty-five percent African American and forty-three percent white, with Latinos, Asians and other racial/ethnic categories comprising the remaining percentage. United States Census Bureau web site: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

⁶ The Philadelphia Fringe Festival is now known as the Philadelphia Live Art Festival. My use of both reflects the festival’s name at the time of the project under discussion.

⁷ The heterosexual family unit as a standard for normativity is, of course, a concept that has been well theorized by feminist and queer theory scholars as well as legally contested for several decades. The bourgeois family unit is also central to Jürgen Habermas’s theory of the public sphere in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 43-51. Regarding the U.S. state’s promulgation and regulation of sexuality in terms of private/public spheres, I have found the work of Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner to be foundational. See Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, “Sex in Public,” *Publics and Counterpublics* (Cambridge, MA/New York: Zone Books, 2002), 187-208; Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997). For an overview of federal regulation of sexual norms in relation to immigration, welfare and the military, see Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁸ Andrew Simonet, roundtable discussion, *Dance and the Social City*, Society for Dance History Scholars conference, Philadelphia, June 15, 2012.

⁹ Housing economist Tom Lawler, “How Many Folks Have ‘Lost Their Homes’ to Foreclosure/Short Sales/DILs?” *Calculated Risk: Finance and Economics* (blog), February 2, 2011; accessed August 11, 2013. <http://www.calculatedriskblog.com/2011/02/lawler-how-many-folks-have-lost-their.html>.

¹⁰ As a complement to the performances, HDT published *This Town Is a Mystery: A Performance Workbook* and offered a series of DIY workshops in the hope of encouraging more city residents to open their doors and invite people inside.

¹¹ Monica Yant Kinney, “‘Miracle Baby’ Overcomes Tough Beginning.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sunday June 10, 2012.

¹² List of questions, forty-three in all, courtesy of the artist.

¹³ Shah, *Small Gifts* program note, National Review of Live Art, Glasgow, Scotland, February 2007.

¹⁴ Interview with the artist, June 5, 2012.

¹⁵ Paul Gilroy, “Multiculture in Times of War: An Inaugural Lecture Given at the London School of Economics.” *Critical Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (2006): 27-45.

¹⁶ Gilroy provides a more detailed, extensive inquiry into new racisms and their relation to the rise of the post-9/11 security state in “The Negative Dialectics of Conviviality,” *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 121-51.

¹⁷ Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 4.

¹⁸ Joanna Walters, “Occupy America: Protests Against Wall Street and Inequality Hit 70 cities,” *The Observer*, October 8, 2011; Karla Adam, “Occupy Wall Street Protests Go Global,” *The Washington Post*, October 15, 2011. Four-hundred-and-three Occupy sites were established in all fifty U.S. states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. Worldwide 951 demonstrations were held in eighty-two countries, on every continent but Antarctica. See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Occupy_movement_protest_locations; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Occupy_movement_protest_locations_in_the_United_States; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Occupy_movement_protest_locations_in_California.

¹⁹ For more about the Occupy movement, see: Writers for the 99%, ed., *Occupying Wall Street: The inside Story of an Action That Changed America* (Chicago: Haymarket Books/The Center for Economic Research and Social Change at the Left Forum, 2012);

Janet Byrne and Robin Wells, eds., *The Occupy Handbook* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2012); Noam Chomsky, *Occupy* (London/New York: Penguin, 2012); Todd Gitlin, *Occupy Nation: The Roots, the Spirit, and the Promise of Occupy Wall Street* (New York: itbooks, 2012).

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