

*personal physical movement as it affects political action*

The question of what I am doing when I am dancing is one that has often come over my mind as I have only just begun the span of hours and years of my life that on this path that I will spend in the practice, research, study, and teaching of dance. More often than thinking gravely on the impact or consequence that these hours I spend dancing has, I have thought about/am thinking about, the *absence* of consequence. In the terms of this paper perhaps lack of consequence should be a good thing but it is something that has frustrated me again and again. Dancing is like labor because it is laborious, it is work. However unlike other known forms of labor it is difficult for me to measure its effects. When I am in field or on trail I can observe the consequences of my physical labours; *i use the saw and my body to cut the tree twain and use my strength and will to throw it off of the road.* But when I am dancing on the stage or off of the stage I can only measure my effectiveness in the consequences within my body and feedback from witnesses after the fact. I am frustrated at the lack of substantiation and verification. The unprovability of my actions and passions.

The firmness of our human civilization relies on observable or provable fact. How then could I possibly throw my life and time after something so fleeting and intangible as dancing? With effects and consequences varying member by member in the audience and in the performers, without any truly reliable and accurate mode of documentation for the after the (f)act? I am not saying that dancing does not have consequence or that it is inconsequential, I am saying that the consequences of the work of it are immeasurable and unprovable, and that there are also the consequences in the world of the lack of that same work-energy spent in other places. In an economic frame this

same apparent inaction or lack of effect could be of political use. In the context of capitalism, in which production of capital and efficacy are valued over all, an activity of inaction, or work which does not produce something easily commodifiable, holds a political power. This power is potential. This potential likewise has the power to cause consequences through *anti-work*. However this anti-work has effects which cannot be commodified or measured. Anti-work is less visible in the eyes of our society.

This is why I often feel myself veering towards existentialism. The cost of my life and livelihood are great; I am a consumptive member of the capitalist system, I am heavily reliant and my living is costly on the world. I want to help things, I want to do something good, but it's hard to know if one is doing anything good without being able to measure the consequence.

I have also pondered at the immeasurable thing; the power and potential in performative action. I think that performance is necessary because I believe there is more than the provable labor of moving things from one place to another. That is not to say that I am abandoning other ways of working, working that I think is good like gathering and growing food, collecting water etc. But these are things that effect in a highly local scale; *myself, my family, perhaps reaching to friends and neighbors but only via communication or example*. Negotiating a sense of scale is necessary when thinking about global circumstance, crisis, and effect. Though yes my work action might have more visible effect somewhere else, that visible effect might be less transportable than an artistic work action. I do not know how to measure this, except by feeling that idea work is easier to spread, and therefore has broader effect than visible work. When I am working trail and field I do not know if I would do it or enjoy if I did not meet it in the

mindset of dancing. Dancing makes me feel a live-ness. If I did not feel alive in this way I am unsure if I would get out of bed, or, I would at least get out of bed differently and perhaps worse. If I laid in bed all day the consequences of my inactions would be even greater than they are when I am dancing. So I think to dance, to keep thinking dancing, believing.

Much of the world is factored on systems of belief. Fact, history, and law are legitimized based on the belief in the logic of them rather than a separate and universal truth. That is not to say that there is not truth in them, but it also points at belief as a power. Could I apply this same belief to the pursuit of dance? No? Yes? Partially? I am reluctant. There must be a reason that some things are trusted more than others. Time factors in, and procedure. These hold weight, have value.

That's when I think of legitimacy, what gives some things legitimacy and others not? Is it time? Work put in? Position? Palatability? Power? And I wonder why art-work is not usually viewed or valued as a site of knowledge. Yes beauty maybe, provocation, imagination, creativity, and innovation, power, but knowledge? If there is power in art and knowledge is power, then reason stands that art is a place of knowledge.

But alas, I have lost the thread of "effect" and "consequence" by muddling about in the murky waters of the way that art is viewed in society. I suppose it's because I have nothing left to say today. *Art has consequences good and bad* is something I feel but can't prove. As I, my body, exist as a part of and not separate from nature, the care and expansion of the faculties of this body into the realms of immeasurability, imagination, and action encompassed in dance is something that I believe is necessary. I think that the practice of performance has the power to produce good consequences in

the broad world. If nothing else, I have measured the effects of this practice in the place which I can prove to myself, the place that is my body. If nothing else I know how, and that, I can produce good effects here. I will hold onto these facts and continue my work.