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NUOVA SERIE

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PLACING PROTEST AND CORPOREALITY IN THE 1960S

KATJA CENTONZE

ABSTRACT · The political discourse underpinning Japan's countercultural production in the field of visual and performing arts throughout the 1960s was intimately bound to corporeality, and more specifically, to the corporeality of the carnal body, the *nikutai*. Art practices unfolded in their transversal and intermedial facets and were configured as acts (*kōi*), while being more or less concentric to political actions of remonstrance. In such a context, where art, dissent and corporeality interlace, a prevailing trope is that of place (*basho*). A reflection on protest defined in respect to corporeality and place, this article focuses on Hijikata Tatsumi's *butō* within the performance practices that developed as a response to the socio-political crisis established by the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. In particular, in this study reference will be made to the still-unexplored debate articulated during the symposium *Geijutsu no jōkyō* (Situation of the arts) convened in November 1960. This is to highlight the alternative thinking offered by Hijikata and the incisive role played by the art of dance in framing the perception of corporeality, place and protest in such a revolutionary context.

KEYWORDS · Hijikata Tatsumi, *butō*, Terayama Shūji, Place and Protest, Dance and Politics, Art and Action, Corporeality in the 1960s.

THE political discourse underpinning Japan's countercultural production in the field of visual and performing arts throughout the 1960s was intimately bound to corporeality, and more specifically, to the corporeality of the carnal body, the *nikutai*. Art practices unfolded in their transversal and intermedial facets and were configured as acts (*kōi*), while being more or less concentric to political actions of remonstrance. In such a context, where art, dissent and corporeality interlace, a prevailing trope is that of place (*basho*).

A reflection on the political significance of protest defined in respect to corporeality and place, this article focuses on Hijikata Tatsumi's dance within the performance practices that developed as a response to the status quo in the art world and to the socio-political crisis established by the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (Anpo). This crisis was channelled through social movements that reacted against the rapid economic growth epitomised by two main mass events: the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the Expo '70 or Ōsaka banpaku.¹ The programming of both events entailed extensive and invasive urban redevelopment and brought about a radical transformation of cityscapes and infrastructure.

In particular, in this study reference will be made to the still-unexplored debate articulated during the symposium *Geijutsu no jōkyō* (Situation of the arts) convened in November 1960 and published in January 1961 in the influential literary magazine *Mita bungaku*. This is to highlight the alternative thinking offered by Hijikata and the incisive role played by the art of dance in experimenting with and framing the perception of corporeality,

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¹ The Nihon bankoku hakurankai-Japan World Exposition Ōsaka 1970.

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place and protest in such a revolutionary context. Indeed, we may say that in respect to other forms of expression, dance, i.e. the art of the body, necessarily had to face and cope with its primary matter, and hence to delve into alternative ways to conceive it.

PERFORMANCE, OCCUPATION AND PROTEST

One of the distinctive traits displayed by postwar avant-garde theatre, known as *angura* ('underground') or *shōgekijō undō* ('little theatre movement'), is that it takes place in alternative spaces thereby debunking the power of permanent mainstream theatre houses. Thus, performance is taken outside conventional buildings and into the streets, open-air sites, cafés or atypical locations and venues, while occupying public spaces. Jōkyō gekijō ('Situation theatre'), led by Kara Jūrō, pitched its red tent (*akatento*) for the first time in 1967 within the area of the Hanazono jinja (Hanazono Shrine) in Shinjuku that constituted a mobile and temporary theatre place. This staging strategy is also readable as an explicit sign of socio-political mobilisation and social mobility.

In comparison to the newborn protest movements and rallies following the triple Tōhoku disaster of 11 March 2011, widely enhanced by media-activism, and therefore partly experienced on a virtual platform, the 1960s social upheavals displayed forms of radical activism that were intrinsically bound to the practice of physically occupying public spaces thus implying direct contact between bodies and places of protest.

These spaces of occupation, called *kaihōku* ('liberated zones'),² are defined as "metatheatres" by Peter Eckersall (2013: 103-105), who underscores the disruption of the everyday use of city spaces in his analysis of Ōuchida Keiya's documentary *Chika hiroba* (Underground Plaza, 1969), in which folk guerrilla and student protestors are inalienably connected with the occupied hypogean area of Shinjuku Station West Exit Underground Plaza. Widely referring to the 1960s counterculture, such as the street ceremonies enacted by the nude bodies of Zero jigen ('Zero dimension') group, Eckersall (2013) reads in his seminal study the dramaturgy of acts and events staged in urban sites widening the perspective of aesthetic and corporeal experiences in processes of cultural production and the manifestation of the political. Eckersall (2013: 3) investigates "the multiple ways that the active manifestations of events embody ideas and values and exist as avenues of performative discourse", and explores hybrid arts practices that strive "to reorient people's daily awareness and experience of the city".

In regard to the lack of a squatting culture³ in contemporary Japan, an eloquent comment was given by Antonio Negri (Ichida *et al.* 2013) during the final discussion of the symposium *Maruchichūdo to kenryoku: 3.11 ikō no sekai* (*Multitude and Power: The World after 3.11*) hosted by the Science Council of Japan in 2013. Negri evidenced the crucial importance played by place and space in relation to protest. While underlining the absence of squatted social centres, he remarked the difficulty in gaining autonomy by the Japanese anti-nuclear movements. He connected this to the necessity to occupy and create new spaces for protest and movement, where it is possible to resist falsification of knowledge, as in Italy with its social centres and occupied theatres.

² Area occupied by revolutionary forces where the control of power is elided.

³ Squatting is a movement to occupy empty buildings and convert them to living spaces, social centres, galleries, theatres and bars. It was most active in the 1970s and 1980s in Europe and saw its renaissance in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

The concept of *kaihōku* is also strongly associated with barricaded universities (see Oguma 2015), and one of the first universities was Waseda University in 1966 where the entry of the riot police was prevented by erecting obstacles. This student uprising was extensively discussed in terms of performance, festivalisation and the city during the event *Shinjuku 1968-69 dokyumentarī/hapuningū/jazu* (Shinjuku 1968-69 documentary/happening/jazz, 2016).⁴ The documentary film *Barikēdo no naka no jazu: geba gakusei tai mōretsu pianisuto* (Jazz inside the Barricades: Extremist Students vs. Fierce Pianist, 1969), a record of the historical live concert of the Yamashita Yōsuke Trio, was screened.⁵ Shot by Tahara Sōichirō,⁶ who also organised the concert that was later released as the album *Dancing Kojiki* (1969), it shows when the piano located at Ōkuma kōdō was transported for Yamashita by the militant students into the main complex of Waseda Campus right in the midst of the occupation transforming the politicised area into a creative festival.⁷ A further screening was that of the media event *Kijima Norio hapuningushō* (Kijima Norio Happening Show, 1968) that took place in the square in front of Shinjuku Koma gekijō 新宿コマ劇場 (Shinjuku Koma Theatre). Nippon Television Network publicised a live broadcast in which the announcer Kijima would report what was going on in Shinjuku by entering in dialogue with the alternative youngsters, but the people congregated exceeded in number any expectation and gave birth to an explosive mass festival in Kabukichō causing trouble for Kijima.

Shinjuku 1968-69 dokyumentarī/hapuningū/jazu was an event related to the exhibition *Aa Shinjuku: supekutakuru toshite no toshi* (Ah, Shinjuku! The City as a Spectacle, 2016)⁸ that highlighted Shinjuku, a main stage for anti-establishment forces, alternative art and youth culture in the '60s, as a media-related urban theatre displaying festival-like happenings. It explored the venues, underground theatres and public squares, where counter-culture and political activism were produced. This exhibition principally focused on the protagonists from the *angura* and music scene, street performance and television culture, photography, magazines, posters and films, such as Ōshima Nagisa's *Shinjuku dorobō nikki* (Diary of a Shinjuku Thief, 1969).

Although Hijikata's name appeared first on the list of the exhibition's synopsis, unfortunately, apart from two photos by Hosoe Eikō, among which "Kanze Hideo to Hijikata Tatsumi" (Kanze Hideo and Hijikata Tatsumi, 1970) depicting the two performers in front of the theatre Shinjuku Āto birejji 新宿アートビレッジ (Shinjuku Art Village), little evidence has been shown of the historical position the *butō* dancer occupied in shaping the sense of the experimental *nikutai*.

This confirms how often dance "escapes visibility" in historical readings, as Mark Franko (2017: 172) expresses it, when discussing its character of temporariness and disappearance. In his transhistorical examination of the complex and delicate relation

⁴ Organised by the Engeki hakubutsukan (Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University) and held at the Tudor Gothic auditorium Ōkuma kōdō, its participants were journalist Tahara Sōichirō, pianist Yamashita Yōsuke, producer Goka Kimitaka, playwright Miyazawa Akio, and scholars Matsui Shigeru and Okamuro Minako.

⁵ The trio was compound by Yamashita, Moriyama Takeo and Nakamura Seiichi.

⁶ Tahara, who conceives all documentaries as something directed and prearranged (Okamuro 2016), was working as a director at TV Tokyo in those years and is still today an important and rare figure stimulating political discussions of criticism in television programmes.

⁷ After the screenings and talk Yamashita gave a concert re-encountering the piano of Ōkuma kōdō.

⁸ The exhibition was co-curated by Miyazawa and held at the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, 28 May - 7 August 2016.

between Western theatre dance and the political, Franko (2017) associates the corporeal articulation carried out in dance with the political theory of articulation discussed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and collocates the rapport between dance and the political within the domain of the conjunctural. Franko (2017: 171) underlines that both dance and the political address the particular body, the contingent, and the radical sense of constitutive indeterminacy. In an earlier study (Franko 2006), where he carefully preferred to argue that dance is ideological rather than being strictly speaking political,⁹ Franko observed that:

On a micro-historical level, dance may perform protest, a direct and local way of upsetting a power balance. What the body itself, when given pride of place, can be thought to oppose also lends definition to how dance makes the political flare up. [...] Resistance is a trope within which movement and representation are ambiguously articulated. This is because dance can absorb and retain the effects of political power as well as resist the very effects it appears to incorporate within the same gesture. This is what makes dance a potent political form of expression: it can encode norms as well as deviation from the norms in structures of parody, irony, and pastiche that appear and disappear quickly, *often leaving no trace*. (Franko 2006: 6. Emphases added)

ART AS ACT AND THE SYMPOSIUM *SITUATION OF THE ARTS*

In connection to the issues raised so far and the idea of “performing revolution” (Eckersall 2013: 81-105), the discussions offered by the symposium *Geijutsu no jōkyō*¹⁰ organised in 1960 seem more than relevant. The participants, Terayama Shūji, Hijikata Tatsumi, Ōshima Nagisa, Matsumoto Toshio, Shiose Hiroshi, and Manabe Hiroshi,¹¹ were assembled for an interdisciplinary inquiry into the state of the contemporary artistic practices.¹² The issues they dealt with would be at the centre of discussion throughout the whole decade: corporeality; art as act/action (*kōi*); the connection between art, politics and power; art as resistance; communication; political demonstration as a performative act; anti-art; autonomy (*shutai*) of the artist and method; alienation, object and anti-humanism; the image and matter of cruelty; art within everydayness; the medium within art; the author’s interior (*naibu*) and exterior (*gaibu*). Divergent perspectives emerged and the confrontation was sometimes confusing, since often the discussants declare to not have understood their colleagues’ words. Nevertheless, this debate that took place at a critical juncture in Japan’s history provides important insights into the discourses and the perceptions of art, protest, place and corporeality. It casts light on a range of further issues such as Jimintō’s (Liberal Democratic Party) policies, fascism and nihilism. Also considered were political events such as the anti-Security Treaty mass demonstration held on 15 June 1960, and the *Asanuma jiken* (Asanuma incident) – the assassination of the Japan Socialist Party’s leader Asanuma Inejirō by the ultranationalist Yamaguchi Otoyō on 12 October 1960 during a televised political debate.

⁹ When arguing that “dance is not strictly speaking political”, Franko (2017:178) means that “dance need not be imagined to emanate directly from a statecraft to be politically engaged, engaging, or relevant”.

¹⁰ Although it is not specified, the title recalls similarities to *Kindai geijutsu no jōkyō* (Situation of the modern art, 1956), the Japanese translation by Takiguchi Shūzō and Ōkubo Kazuo of Jean Cassou’s *Situation de l’art moderne* (1950), published by Jinbun shoin.

¹¹ They represented respectively the area of poetry and playwriting (Terayama), dance (Hijikata), film directing (Ōshima), documentary filmmaking (Matsumoto), theatre directing (Shiose), manga and graphic design (Manabe).

¹² The field of music was supposed to be represented by jazz pianist and composer Yagi Masao, who had to cancel his attendance to the symposium (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 10).

Since it is very explicative to what I would like to show, I will principally focus on the initial part of the symposium: a long exchange of perspectives between Terayama and Hijikata, who both also contributed the most to the entire symposium discussions.

As the person in charge (*shinkōgakari*) for expediting the proceedings, Terayama proposes the content and way of discussion, while often taking as a point of reference Hijikata's dance practice and dance theory, the "*ankoku buyōron*" (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 13), as the *tanka* poet names it.¹³ Terayama (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 10) invites his roundtable fellows to engage in an "active",¹⁴ creative and "enterprising" (*sekkyokutekina*) debate, with the expectation that their talk itself would unfold as an "act of 'confrontation'" ("*hanashiau*" to *iu kōi*), even if based on trivial arguments, in order to avoid dogmatic notions and provoke spontaneous dynamics that generate the possibility of a revolutionary change in their ideas. According to Terayama, the artistic act (*geijutsu kōi*) has been passive (*passhibuna*) until that historical moment, and thus, subject to forms of control. In contrast, contemporary avant-garde art evolved as an active expression that he expects to be endowed with artistic criticism (*geijutsu no kuritikku*). From his opening remarks an emphatic and frequent use of the term "*kōi*" emerges, including the employment and creation of compound nouns such as *dentatsu kōi* (act of transmission) or *kagyaku kōi* (sadistic act).

As a paradigm of the "act of 'confrontation'" and starting point for the discussion the playwright proposes concepts taken from a conversation held with Hijikata that triggered in him a series of reflections:

To bring up the beginning of our talk, just recently, I heard from Hijikata Tatsumi that he will choreograph the sports festival (*undōkai*) for Sōka gakkai.¹⁵ I was very intrigued, when I heard this. To put it shortly, he conceives Sōka gakkai's sports festival as an outdoor dance (*yagai no buyō*). This means that he envisages it as a dance (*dansu*) [performed] by two thousand or four thousand elderly women, don't you think? While we were discussing (*hanashiai nagara*) the essence of dance (*buyō*) grasped in this form, I [started to] arbitrarily develop several thoughts. (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 10-11)¹⁶

Terayama (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 11) starts to expound a set of corollaries inferred from his interpretation of the dancer's words: that Hijikata brought dance into the daily dimension, while violating the tableaux of the theatre stages; that his art, posited as the gait of a convict on death row, encompasses the "primitive prototype" (*purimitibuna genkei* プリミティブな原形) of dance; that the artistic act, conventionally bound to a set up and fixed/definite place (*basho*), is questioned; that he brings the gesture to a large scale dance and transforms the nature of rituals (*祭儀性 saigisei*).

¹³ Here it should be noted that in 1960 the definition *ankoku butō* was still not yet in use and that Hijikata never defined his thought as "theory".

¹⁴ Probably for a misprint, the phonetic transcription in katakana of the adjective "active" is written in two ways: *akuchivu(na)* アクチーフ(な) and *akuchibuna* アクチブ(な) (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 10).

¹⁵ Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any historical account of whether Hijikata engaged in this choreographic work. It is important here to comment, though, that Hijikata's work for the religious group should not be interpreted as a religious engagement. As underscored elsewhere (Centonze 2017: 221), his dance is detached from religion and even from philosophical methodologies (cf. the trope of religion and philosophy as delineated differently by Murobushi Kō in Centonze 2018a). Hijikata himself stressed this aspect in many occasions and also during this symposium, when in regard to the issue of alienation he replies to Shiose: "I am not pursuing religion. I am not pursuing faith" (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 22).

I would like to add that this is a rare case when during an artistic debate, the most influential new religious movement – which established its political party Kōmeitō in 1964 – is called into question.

¹⁶ All the translations from the Japanese are by the author.

Terayama then calls into question whether this mass choreography should be considered as a form of art, which actually controls people and where the choreographer has power over thousands of performers.¹⁷ He subsequently adds that: “If we proceed with this idea, art itself becomes act and the artist an actor/actionist (*kōisha* 行爲者)”.

Terayama’s concern can be related to Franko’s observation on the choreographer’s power exercised over the dancer. Franko (2006: 8) points to the choreographer-dancer relationship in terms of “political relation” and recognises it as a case when politics is inherent to dance. He connects his discourse to William Forsyth who views ballet as an “art of command” and who considers the choreographer as a “curator of the dancer’s autonomy” (Franko 2006: 8).

Proceeding with his speculation, Terayama (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 11) shifts the attention to the anti-Security Treaty mass demonstration enacted on 15 June that year, and makes the suggestion that the rally may be considered in some way as an “artistic act”.¹⁸ As already observed, recent performance and dance studies insist on such a perspective aligning demonstration and rallies with performance (Eckersall 2013) or strictly speaking with choreography (Lepecki 2015).

It is important to note, that Terayama’s argument is based on the assumption that the protest movement was without any purpose and lacked a “vision of reform” and an “image of revolution”. This implies, as he puts it, a “pure process” that cannot be dominated by a sense of purposiveness (*mokuteki ishshiki*) – or, as I prefer to translate it, ‘telic consciousness’ – and therefore, the political rally manifests a similarity to art.

I would like to emphasise here that pureness and art are aesthetic principles defined in respect to the absence of an aim that emerges also as a key element in Hijikata’s avant-garde dance.¹⁹ This aspect is closely connected to the outstanding analysis on the avant-garde offered in Mishima Yukio’s essays (see Centonze 2012; 2016), including “Jun-sui to wa” (What is pureness?, 1960) written for the programme notes of the inter-media project *Dainikai 6nin no abangyarudo* (Second encounter of the avant-garde by 6 artists, 2 October 1960) directed among others by Terayama and Hijikata.²⁰ The novelist often underlined the absence of a telic consciousness (*mokuteki ishshiki*) in Hijikata’s dance-making and connected this to its exceptional kinetic process of the unexpected. Indeed, deeply inspired by Hijikata’s words and art/body of crisis, Mishima declared to be enraptured by the dancer’s corporeal experimentation that he defined as “pure expression of the *nikutai*” (Centonze 2016: 453).²¹ It goes without saying that this should

¹⁷ In a following section dedicated to “control and resistance” Terayama (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 13-14) insists on this aspect of control exerted by Hijikata over his dancers, which is a rather justified point of view.

¹⁸ In a subsequent debate on cruelty, its image and matter (*shitsu*), Matsumoto (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 24) returns to the hypothesis made by Terayama, arguing that he views the clashes and fight of the protestors as strictly political and definitely decoupled from art. In response, Terayama underlines that he did not say that demonstration is art, but that it may be a possible reading of it, and, thus, an attempt to enlarge the scope of art.

¹⁹ Cfr. Franko’s (2017: 173) discussion on “pure movement” in relation to modernist aesthetics, minimum gesture, labour and abstraction.

²⁰ This project held at Daiichi Seimei Hall under the umbrella title 650 EXPERIENCE no kai (Encounters of 650 EXPERIENCES) was directed by Hijikata, Terayama, Mayuzumi Toshirō, Tōmatsu Shōmei, Kanamori Kaoru, Miho Keitarō. The dance section was performed by Hijikata and Ōno Yoshito and in its title *Seikōshaku [ankoku buyō]* (Saint Marquise [*ankoku buyō*]) appeared for the first time the designation “*ankoku buyō*” to describe this dance form, later called *ankoku butō*. Other texts included in its programme notes were Shibusawa Tatsuhiko’s “Zen’ei to sukyandaru” (Avant-garde and scandal, 1960) and Takiguchi Shūzō’s “Tachiainin no kotoba” (Words of a witness, 1960).

²¹ It is my contention that Mishima’s fascination with the ‘actual *nikutai*’ in Hijikata’s iconoclastic art was based on and corroborated his awareness of the fictional and narrative character of the *nikutai* in literature (Centonze 2016: 232-235).

not be read in terms of nationalism and ambition for superiority or power. On the contrary, Mishima arguably detects in Hijikata's anti-aesthetic art a counter discourse to teleological theories.

As illustrated in more detail later, Hijikata himself designates the body employed in his dance as "*mumokutekina nikutai*", the 'atelic *nikutai*'. The 'atelic *nikutai*' operates in contrast to the capitalistic system and the society of productivity, and in his essay "Keimusho e" (To prison, 1961: 46) – published in the same number of *Mita bungaku* that includes the symposium – this concept is clearly shaped. As a consequence, Hijikata boycotts and beheads consumer society not through a choreographic content or an ideological concept, but through the *mumokutekina nikutai* (Centonze 2016: 445). This corporeality emerges as the core of Hijikata's terroristic attack on human-centred dance and theatricality (Centonze 2018a: 29-32).

What has been illustrated so far shows in part that since the beginning of his choreutical experimentation, Hijikata's thought and dance stand out as a catalyst for new reflections concerning performativity and corporeality.

HIIKATA PLACING CORPOREALITY AND THE POLITICAL

Returning to the symposium, in closing his introductory discourse, Terayama (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 11-12) addresses "action" (*akushon*) and its character of process as the *only way* of disrupting conventional artistic communication. He argues that he senses this same idea when conversing with Hijikata, while supposing that many artists from the avant-garde also share this thought. Subsequently he invites the performer to express his conception of his dance.

The following argumentations given by Hijikata, which I have attempted to translate below, shows his radical and cutting edge approach to action, dance, protest, place and corporeality, and his radical rethinking of dance / art in terms of the political. To investigate the subtle nuances of Hijikata's thought and practice, it is relevant to detect the way he replies to Terayama's proposed issues, and how the dancer connects (political) action to place, while disrupting each of these notions and their common perceptions.

Our living, well, our staying alive, is like a festival, isn't it?

Also standing, sitting and demonstrating (*demoru* デモる), all [these acts] are festivals. Well, in the theatre, what happens in our case is that the audience's unstably moving reaction, that is to say, such agent, continues to shape our persistent movement, in an instant. What we call theatre, being it just a matter of place (*basho*), in brief, this kind of place is nothing more than an apparatus assembling a set to watch a skeletonised routine dance.

Gathering people and making them sit in the dark. For both those who enjoy watching and those who dance, there is a certain tacit agreement, and probably it goes like this, but this kind of place, being it nothing more than *some kind of disposition* (*aru shu no kokorogamae* 或種の心構え), whether it's a hospital or the square in front of the Diet, as for this "place" created by one's readiness, there is a varied profusion.

If living is a festival, then there is no need to stare at something in a theatre.

From the very beginning dance domesticated on the floor makes us forget the origin of the feet. To stand (*tatsu koto*), to be made to stand (*tatasareru koto*), just this is already an arduous dance [in itself].

I sensed something fraudulent about the fact itself to [badly] perform festivals in a theatre. So I go and communicate with the feet of a traveling salesman equipped with [portable] "acts". This is because I discovered that this practical method contains distinctive characteristics of dance. Walking with your feet and trying to touch with your hand the audience's body. I wanted to be rubbed

and licked firsthand, too. I do no longer regret that much things like the *corpse of acts* (*kōi no shigai* 行爲の死骸) that becomes established as a work of art. Sōka gakkai, for example, has three million devotees. It smoothly disseminates [its truth] only with the [phrase] *namu myōhō renga kyō*. It is a very unsophisticated soil, so whatever you throw on it, you get a huge feedback.

There is also a *purely technical* matter: rather than [thinking of] a mass dance [performed] by four thousand elderly women, I would like to try to fiddle with the rusty articulations of elderly women in their everydayness.

Well, I also thought that we also can shoot down the knowledge about the *nikutai* of elderly women, either in case of eminent senior women or eminent senior men, without missing the target. In order to do so, as long as you do not stare into things while lowering your position to the dimension of the old ladies in an extremely tricky way, you will always end up with settling the problem by perfunctorily concluding that venturesome youngsters are cute.

This is because running while pursuing value in respect to the external is in any case the dimension of the prodigal son. Since the discourse on the condemned criminal was mentioned, let me say that that (*are*) is something like a specimen completely plundered of its speech, a human specimen whose *nikutai* is tampered with like a guinea pig. Moreover, during the lifetime of a single death row convict, capital punishment is inflicted several times. I consider that there is no one who possesses such a pure act (*junsuina kōi*) that cannot be clouded by the telic consciousness as they do. For example, there are so many gestures that are repetition of acts in them, but these are not even acts anymore, not even repetition. Well, how shall I put it, they are made to live (*ikasarete*), they are made to stand (*tatasarete*), they are made to walk (*arukasarete iru*).

In that sense, they are not so different from us, but they have been thoroughly robbed of the festivity [necessary] for staying alive. Anyway, it is not them walking, it is the *articulations* that walk. Well, leaving aside that one might see the archetype (*genkei* 原型) of dance in the deambulation of the condemned prisoners under sentence of death, the significance of the operation of having to fiddle with the *nikutai* in a closed room/cell (*misshitsu*) remains preponderant. For example, I am concerned that not a single terrorist will emerge from the recent terrorist expectation theory, but, anyway, this is because those bad seeds are growing silently in the shade.

[...] in any case, we have to critically scrutinise with care and then deeply assimilate scepticism towards the *mechanical* youth that is constantly deceived by the destructive act (*hakaikōi* 破壊行爲) [...]. (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 12. Emphasis added)

(DIS)PLACING THE BODY FOR PROTEST

Hijikata re-directs the issues raised by Terayama and creates a particular texture woven around the agency of “place” (*basho*), positing it as a central preoccupation for politics and performance.

By intertwining different strands in one fabric, the dancer affiliates a series of acts, or what we commonly consider as (vital) “acts” or actions, that is to say, living – which he immediately upturns into surviving –, standing, sitting and walking/marching in protest (*demoru*), and he identifies these with festivals (*matsuri*), crucibles of performativity, playfulness and carnivalesque moment of anti-establishment forces.²² Standing, sitting and walking are fundamental positions, postures and moves in our daily life. At the same time, the movements or states of the body enucleated by Hijikata are kinetics through which protest is expressed and are essential constituents in composing the choreography of political demonstration. An example is the staging of a sit-in, when demonstrators occupy an area for a protest and refuse to move.²³

²² Shrine festivals are also highly ruled and are forms of social control and economic profit.

²³ For Sakurai Keisuke’s political reading of Hijikata’s seated dance see Centonze (2018b: 20).

The same elements, including festivals, are at the basis of Hijikata's dance that is marked by unsteadiness and imbalance focusing the attention on the process instead of the outcome, and that incorporates the readiness for protest and resistance. His discourse then slides from outdoor events of popular festivals and demonstration into theatre buildings, where his work is attained through interaction with the audience. He then shifts to a critique against playhouses and highlights that these are only a question of place, defining these places as a mere function that standardises a "routine dance", a "procedure dance" or a "dance of formalities" (*tetsuzuki buyō*) that has become an empty shell and that disciplines the body, while making us forget the origin or the soles of our feet. In contrast to the theatre-place, he puts in evidence that a "place" may be something disposed by a certain kind of readiness and preparedness (*aru shu no kokorogamae*). Hence, in case of a "place" created by this certain kind of disposition, there is no difference if it is a site hosting ailing bodies or the agora in front of the Diet. It follows that dance and revolution may be performed and placed anywhere.

To be more specific, *kokorogamae* is the readiness prior to action, and, in this context, it is the preparedness for artistic/political revolt *physically innervating the performer's body*.

Hijikata confronts us with two equipollent equations: one is the assumption that 'performing in a theatre is dance', the other that 'standing/sitting/marching in front of the Diet is demonstration'. The *butō* founder debunks these criteria and implicitly suggests the consequent and inherent correlation between the political and dance in relation to place: just as protest is not necessarily achieved only by standing, sitting and marching in front of the Diet, the symbolically and logically designated place for remonstration, civil disobedience and opposition to power, so dance is not necessarily achieved in a theatre building or in an "apparatus" designated institutionally for hosting performances.

We may deduce that the pivotal role played by the processes of placing protest and placing performance is addressed, and for Hijikata both are accomplished by the specific corporeality of the unstable, vacillating, precarious *nikutai* that does not give answers, but raises new questions, while preserving and generating paradox. Indeed, as he underlines, for a dancer and his/her performance of resistance, just standing and being made to stand is already an arduous and challenging enterprise.

It follows that, to protest it is important to create the place for protest, as Negri advocates, and this implies in Hijikata's radical practice not only to resist *falsification* of knowledge, but also to resist *systems* of knowledge (Centonze 2018b).

What is at stake here is his idea that what should directly engage with protest is the *nikutai* and its disposition. This is confirmed by the title of his solo performance *Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin: nikutai no hanran* (Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: The Rebellion of the *nikutai*, 1968). Rebellion is strictly associated with the corporality of the *nikutai* in respect to other forms of corporeality. The explicit denouncement against the establishment is organically englobed within Hijikata's corporeal experimentations and experience, unfolding as a complex operation on the body in text and performance, which stands out as the very response to political power exerted over our bodies/life/death.

A further aspect that connects corporeality to space and place in *butō* that I would like to draw attention to is the corporeal and spatial experience of and the condition for which the body creates the performative space. As discussed elsewhere (Centonze 2011), this operation, known as *kūkan o tsukuru* (to produce space), is important also in tradi-

tional techniques of Japanese performing arts,²⁴ and finds its extension in *butō*, where the body, besides generating a spatial dimension, may also create and transform into an independent landscape (*fūkei*). Hence, to say that the body becomes landscape does not mean that it blends in with the environment in a mimetic process, but that it creates a landscape of its own. This confirms that the dancer's body in *butō* is the source of performance and place and is artistically autarchic (Centonze 2018a: 24).

Connecting this to Hijikata's discourse on *basho*, we may infer that also a place can be created, and therefore, describe this phenomenon with the expression "*basho o tsukuru*". As a consequence, the performer's body disposes place and space transforming into the platform and site for protest itself. This place and space is not only created by the performer, but co-created by the audience and their corporeality.²⁵

Nevertheless, in *butō* praxis "to place" means also "to displace", and accordingly, the process of placing implies concurrently dislocation and displacement. For instance, in his discourse, Hijikata displaces the site designated for protest. He also displaces the body, because the *nikutai* is displacing and displaced. Here I refer to the deep concern manifested by Hijikata, who locates his dance within the scope of terrorism, with the *hagurete iru nikutai* (the deviating, straying, lost and estranged *nikutai*) that is closely linked to the 'atelic *nikutai*' and makes choreutic methodologies and the systemic organisation of choreography explode from within (Centonze 2018a: 31).

A further characteristic in Hijikata's dance is that of *Verfremdung* and the rapport of 'tension' between the body and the place, since *butō* is an art based on creating spaces that can also enter in conflict with the surroundings (Centonze 2018a: 77-84).

It is my contention that Hijikata conceives and engages with a corporeal place. Since his concepts are principally bound by a thread to corporeality, they may be defined as 'corporeal'. Given this, he does not consider the carnal body as 'primitive and integral' or as a unity, but as a mutant agency that surfaces in its metamorphic, polymorphic, stratified, marginalised and discriminated, pluralistic, caducous, decayable, corrupted and corruptible, unchoreographable and ungovernable aspects.

PURE ACTS

I would like to stress in regard to Hijikata's spoken words the cautious employment of the term "*kōi*". The dancer rather uses the nominalised form of verbs, or subjectless verbs in *jishokei* (dictionary form that may correspond to the infinitive), and therefore denotes "acts", "actions", "actualisation" or "enactments" without combining them with the substantive "*kōi*", as Terayama does in his introduction. The first usage by Hijikata of the term in this context appears in relation to the "portable acts" of a traveling salesman, where "act" is enclosed in brackets. The concept of "act" may be usually associated with 'movement', and 'movement' is commonly considered the principal constituent of dance, whereas Hijikata's *butō* is rather characterised by what I call the 'sabotage of movement' (Centonze 2017).

Hence, by undermining the common sense reasoning process, Hijikata alludes to what we normally consider as acts, for example, (the act of) living/staying alive, but does not designate these explicitly as such. In doing this, he delves into the thorny question

²⁴ It should be borne in mind, though, that by disrupting corporeality and (national) identity, Hijikata disrupts and displaces also concepts of traditional theatre practices.

²⁵ At the same time, *butō* may be also performed without an audience.

that emerges in dance practice concerning the swaying between being active and passive, and disinters the passivity in action or active character in being passive. As a consequence, he preserves the paradox and the continuous oscillation between action/activity and passivity without formulating a dichotomy nor definitively negating acts. In other words, action produced by a disciplined and domesticated dancing body is often nothing but a passive and automatic response to introjected inputs and rules, like when power is imposed on our bodies in a capitalistic system. Therefore, his corporeal experimentations, his dance-making arising from an in-depth investigation and experience of the body, as well as from a critical attitude towards human practices, caustically question corporeality in relation to power, governance, surveillance and social control, while elevating dance as a strategy and act of criticism in itself. In connection to this it should be taken into account that the *counteract* executed in *butō* praxis englobes and explores the condition of being made to act, or being acted, of dancing and being danced, of experimenting and experiencing (Centonze 2017: 217; 2016: 452).

In this regard, the causative passive form of verbs frequently displayed in Hijikata's phrasing, such as the condition of being forced to walk (*arukasareru*) or to stand (*tatasareru*), plays a fundamental role and denotes his concrete engagement in the formulation of a bodily thought, while, at the same time, he disarrays, dismantles and dislocates language and dance-making.

The walking of a prisoner condemned to death who "acts" subject to the juridical system, while being surveilled and commanded by police officers, stands out as the original form of his dance. Those criminals are stripped of the act itself of walking and of standing; both elementary conditions and moves in human dynamics. Representing the human specimen for Hijikata, they are compared to guinea pigs, domesticated laboratory animals widely employed in scientific experimentation, and a metaphor for indicating a person used for testing something as happens in consumer society. There is no intention and purpose in the inmates' actions, thus, their acts are the purest. Hijikata then adds, that in such a situation the meaning of "act" is completely erased, and also the gestures they continuously reiterate cannot be categorised as repetition. Being right in the middle between life and death, it is not them acting. They are acted. Indeed, they are made to live (*ikasarete iru*), while facing death.

By talking about death row convicts, the *butō* practitioner does not offer a metaphor for rhetorical effect, and the criminals are not something to be reproduced through mimesis in performance. Moreover, death row is the *place* where living, surviving and dying are implemented, and that is addressed by Hijikata (1961: 47) as the stage of tragedy and drama, where "the naked bodies and the death penalty are indivisibly united". It should be underlined that the death penalty is still an underdiscussed issue in present-day Japanese democratic society and relegated to 'invisibility'.²⁶

As Hijikata declares, he works in closed rooms (*misshitsu*). A *misshitsu* may be also intended as a cell where somebody has been locked in, or confined. It also may be a "secret room" locked from the inside that cannot be entered (as for example, by spectators). In regard to "acts" he also refers to the "corpse of the act" that emerges in case of art conceived as an "established work of art". He concludes his discourse warning about the "mechanical youth" that is constantly fooled by vandalism (*hakaikōi*), that is to say, acts that are perfunctorily destructive and subversive.

²⁶ For further details on Hijikata's investigation on the criminal body, such as Abe Sada's, see Centonze 2017: 222.

ARTICULATIONS AND THEIR DYSFUNCTIONS

A noteworthy point arising from their confrontation during the debate that displays how Hijikata readjusts the coordinates given by Terayama, when he interprets Hijikata's dance and words, is that in reference to the mass choreography for Sōka gakkai's *undōkai*.

Terayama's concern is directed to the political issue related to the number and coordination of participants in the mass choreography for the religious group.²⁷ Conversely, Hijikata's preoccupation addresses the political-corporeal dimension by shifting the attention to the "purely technical matter" (*junsuina gijutsujō no koto*), that is to say, the operation of fiddling with the "rusty articulations" of elderly women, thereby, exploring dynamics linked to the ageing body. Here I would like to add that what also governs us are these rusty articulations that we all, sooner or later, have to deal with and become aware of, if we advance in age. Nevertheless, Hijikata raises the possibility to play or fiddle with them in a provocative way.²⁸ As he writes in "Keimusho e", for him dance is provocation (*chōhatsu*, Hijikata 1961: 48-49), connecting it to the concept of provocation discussed by Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization* (1955).

What is at stake here are the articulations and their dysfunctions that lead us to the anti-dance stance and praxis in early *butō* that implies the following questions: what if articulations do not function as expected, as happens in an ailing, disabled or ageing body? What happens to dance, if articulations do not articulate? Hijikata's response to these questions is quite relevant and this point should open further reflections on the possible "imbrication of dance and the political" (Franko 2017: 176). As Hijikata (Terayama *et al.* 1961: 13) remarks during the symposium, in his dance the "articulations are changed into bars" (*kansetsu o bōjō ni suru*). He also expounds in his earlier text "Kinjiki" (1959) that he opposes the bending of domesticated joints (Centonze 2018b: 16). To further extend this concept, the average use of the body in Western theatre dance is prevalently based on a corporeality seen in its structural, mechanical, anatomical connections / disconnections and joints, even when these are disarticulated. In early *butō* the body is not only disarticulated and disfigured, but its articulations are counteracted. This means that, while making the body rust, degenerate, and corrode, Hijikata works against the mechanical and domesticated joints by investigating the dance of defective articulations. In brief, he disempowers articulations and their pre-eminence in dance-making, and affects the healthy rapport between dance and articulation.

Here I would like to return to the choreo-political theory of articulation proposed by Franko (2017: 174), who considers both dance and articulation to "enter into the political action itself".

Paradoxically, I see in these rusty articulations of the *nikutai* what makes 1960s *butō* intrinsically political. Hijikata intervenes on the meaning and functioning of articulation

²⁷ Besides the fact that mass choreography is a powerful instrument for social control in a nationalistic and fascist system, as Terayama implicitly suggests, a further perspective is offered by Franko (2017: 174), who observes mass dance as an "articulatory project" in relation to 1930s modern dance, class struggle and communist culture. Franko highlights how the choreographic coordination and organisation of the individual with the group provided a training of the body favouring the development of "readiness required in the moment of revolutionary action".

²⁸ Since the beginning of his avant-garde dance Hijikata, born in 1928, deeply considered and investigated mechanisms and aesthetics of the ageing body. He was inspired by the corporeal aesthetics of the 22 year older Ōno Kazuo, who started exhibiting his dance at the age of 47 and continued dancing in his wheelchair shortly before dying in 2010. For a study on the ageing body in performance see Gough and Nakajima (2019).

itself, and his verbal operation is reflected, of course, in the particular economy of movement and stillness of *butō*. These insights demonstrate how his assumptions and practice are interrelated. The ageing body, the disabled body, the ailing and declining body, the corpse, etc., all these corporealities, neglected by society and converging in Hijikata's artistic practice and thought, contribute to the political sphere in his dance-making. From his bottom-up perspective he senses and detects invisible nerves running through the everyday world and its hypodermis, exploring the subcutaneous tissue of language and corporeality.

Just as he disestablishes the common sense reasoning process, Hijikata disentangles the articulation of word association and sentence-making. Reading Hijikata's words, either uttered or written, it is evident that he does not use language to create a thought, but rather to create a body by penetrating surgically into the texture of corporeality, dance, theatricality, society and politics. Without exhibiting it, he carefully and hyper-critically chooses the terms he employs, though never falling into intellectualism or being rigidly conceptualistic and theoretical. He avoids rhetorical exercise, while fusing corporeal technique with intellectual speculation. The creation of alternative sense (physical and semantic), the morphology of his pungent language, characterised by ellipses and semantic holes, appears at a first glance illogical. Nevertheless, by paying attention, one can note that his verbal pointing and wording are extremely 'vigil' and specific. For instance, if compared to Terayama's parlance, that is complex and articulated, but still logical and readable and therefore 'more translatable', the verbal phrasing achieved by Hijikata aims at fluid notions and criteria that are ignored or neglected by general cultural readings, and this is one of his modes of discussing minority.

In regard to this operation of divergence, Mishima centred the corporeal-verbal problem precisely: he correlated Hijikata's practice of deviating the gesture of "*greifen*" (to grasp), something usually oriented directly towards the object in everyday life, but definitely misfiring in *butō* practice, to the dancer's operation of deviating the intellectual articulation of *begreifen* (to grasp a concept, comprehend), that presupposes a world made of terms and concepts, i.e. "*Begriff[e]*" (Centonze 2016: 140-141; 2018b: 19).

POLITICALLY ALTERNATIVE PLACES AND VISIBILITY

In 1975, a *The Drama Review* issue edited by Michael Kirby and entitled "New Performance and Manifestos" published Terayama's manifesto in English, corroborating the theatremaker's and film director's international image and influence, when *butō* was still prevalently confined within its national borders. Point 3 of this manifesto is dedicated to the topic "Theatre" and the initial words can seem to almost echo what Hijikata debated during the 1960 symposium:

Theatre ... The theatre is neither a set of facilities nor a building. It is the "ideology" of a place where dramatic encounters are created. Any place can become a theatrical space. At the same time, if no drama develops there, a theatre may simply become a part of the landscape of daily life. (Terayama 1975: 84-86)

Here Terayama confers a precise and intelligible dimension to the theatre-place, which is "ideology", in other words, the mental horizon sustaining the body, theatre and place. We may argue, that Terayama's conception of theatre is close to Franko's abovementioned assessment, that dance is ideological rather than strictly speaking political. In

contrast, Hijikata points to a 'corporeal place' *disposed* by the *nikutai*. Moreover, as discussed elsewhere (Centonze 2017), he kills ideology in his iconoclastic dance. As a consequence, by contravening ideology he challenges the distance between the discourse on the body and the body itself (cfr. Centonze 2018a: 32-35).

Notwithstanding the radical rethinking of theatricality achieved by Hijikata and the influence he exerted on the body-centred theatre of the 1960s, the political quality intrinsic to corporeality in his art seems to remain entrapped within the domain of cultural invisibility, as happened, for example, during the 2016 exhibition *Aa Shinjuku*.

This is undoubtedly in part enhanced by the fact that Hijikata did not join any political movement nor did he take part in demonstrations. In addition, Hijikata explicitly conceives dance as an art in reference to the invisible and disrupts the visual rapport in performance (Centonze 2018b: 18; 2018c). Indeed, he disables the rapport between showing and seeing; both these actions are the principal constituents of the art of "theatre". In theoretical terms, the very word "theatre" is derived from the Greek verb *theásthai*, to behold, and the noun *théatron* means the "place for viewing".

Conversely, *angura* theatre has manifested since its emergence an explicit political engagement, while being connected to the New Left and in opposition to the Emperor system/imperialism (Goodman 2011: 6), and gained more cultural and historical visibility. I am referring here to Kara's *akatento* productions, or to the politicised theatre of Satō Makoto's "*samayou kokushokutento*" (roaming black tent) (Satō 1979: 140-143). Both theatre-makers, who have been influenced by Hijikata,²⁹ display the political through their staging strategy symbolised by the mobile and temporary tent, through their words for the dramaturgical stage, and through their particular conception of the actor's body.

Compared to *angura*, early *butō* does not rely on a place delineated by a tent or on alternative locations, but on the roaming body equipped with "portable acts", to recall Hijikata's words.³⁰ Indeed, although nowadays *butō* is performed in any kind of place, Hijikata's works have been mainly enacted in indoor structures. This may be in part connected to the preponderant significance Hijikata attributed to the operation behind closed doors (*misshitsu*), where fiction and reality can be better tuned: a silent process that requires time, comparable to the growing of the figure of a terrorist. Working in a *misshitsu* that is not accessible to the public/audience, as he especially did when choreographing Ashikawa Yōko enhances the invisibility of dance, and amplifies its character as a concealed art that is out of sight, indiscernible and clandestine.

At the same time, outdoor happenings have been achieved and reproduced through photography and film in fruitful collaborations that Hijikata embarked on with artists such as Hosoe Eikō, William Klein, Ōuchida Keiya and Ogawa Shinsuke. These works display the contrastive interaction and tensions between the dancer's denouncing corporeality and place. They clearly show that the body is not fused with the city or the landscape, but that it stands out as an extraneous element, an alien object that paradoxically highlights the place/location itself.

A further aspect concerning place and provocation to be considered is Hijikata's strategy to make the system, fascism, national narratives and fiction explode from within, and to debunk the *kokutai*, the Emperor-centred national body, with the own *nikutai*. I

²⁹ Kara (2006: 235) defined Hijikata as "the beginning of his Fūshikaden".

³⁰ Cfr. also the nomadic body in Murobushi Kō in Centonze (2018a).

am referring here to his choice to stage his signature of rebellion *Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin: nikutai no hanran* at Nippon seinenkan. This facility was opened in 1925 and became the headquarters for Japanese youth organisations fundamental to social education policies of the militarist era, which also included the organisation of sports festivals (*undōkai*).³¹

The issues raised here should help us consider the paradoxes emerging from an art radically based on the body and the ensued problem of invisibility in historical readings.

Hijikata's *butō* presents a wide range of these paradoxes: it stimulates alternative readings necessary to approach a dance that carries out actions of disturbance without intervening directly through (political) activism into the social texture. It shows the risks and consequences encountered, when the straying (*hagurete iru*) *nikutai* itself becomes the place of riot, the mobile or petrified platform of protest, rallies and counterculture struggle.

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