

Grand Union's Politics of Body

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|--|--------------------------|
| I. Introduction | IV. Conclusion |
| II. The 1968 Revolution and Political
Revolutions | Bibliography
Abstract |
| III. Grand Union's Political Movement | |

I. Introduction

Postmodern dance was a revolution of sorts. It was an incident and defiance that shattered the identity of dance. A rigid ideology of dance disintegrated, and the perception of modern dance as the product of women's intelligence became an object of debate. Formal movements from the second generation of dancers which had previously been accepted uncritically were no longer thoughtlessly imitated and became an object of serious criticism. Dance did not express inner consciousness with movement anymore; it became the reason itself.

A dance group representing postmodern dance is the Judson Dance Theater. The group's first performance in 1963 was interspersed with shock and reform. Their performances continued in the 1970s under the group name, the "Grand Union." Grand Union's choreographers shed light on politics and reality in an original way and produced many works that reflected the distinct characteristics of the U.S. At the time, modern dance was an object of discussion. Reason, or intellectual legacy, was reconsidered, used as subject material in movement. As a necessity of art at the time, subjectivity and a critical mind were portrayed in dance, leading to a new political direction.

Postmodern dance shares the emotions of the May 1968 student demonstrations. The 1968 movement was a socio-cultural revolution that was not confined to France. It spread through the world at large and reverberated through many systems and public orders. Young people displayed their passion and rejection with slogans demanding liberation from any form of prohibition, suppression, or marginalization. Ended in less than a month, the protests were considered a political failure; nevertheless,

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it has deeply affected our society, culture, and art, especially enforcing a political influence on dance.

With the 1968 movement in perspective, this study encompasses the political meaning of Grand Union's activities and works. A political analysis on the various experimental attempts and changes in dance and their significance offers an important basis of interpretation. The student movement fundamentally changed the new intellectual and cultural flow in Europe, and the changes in the way of thinking and lifestyle radically influenced art. Beneath all the influence, however, lies the mode of postmodern art. Dance and revolution decorated history, leaving extensive traces in each other. That is why this study connects Grand Union's works with events that occurred at the time with a focus on sociopolitical context. Political implications will also be focused on because although postmodern dance is of the past, it still has significance to the present.

The radical experimental works of the Grand Union started in 1970. Following the Judson Dance Theater, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, and Trisha Brown continued their works until 1976. This study mainly discusses the works and significance of these three dancers. Although it is a microscopic approach, it provides a bird's eye view of the political character of each work. The works are considered with three categories: political activism, everyday liberalism, and performative democracy. A recollection of their dance and art is meaningful because we can approach the cultural influences of their works as well as political implications. At the same time, as Grand Union has not previously been studied extensively, this study can be a starting point for follow-up studies.

A limit in this study may be that it does not cover the works of all of the artists that were part of the Grand Union. Works of the Grand Union which are referred to as postmodern are examined, but it is limited to the several choreographers who have had many appraisals and reviews. Choreographers who were members of the Grand Union but do not appear in this study could be taken into account in further studies.

The purpose of this study is the politics of body; in other words, exploring the political aspects of the change in dance. It examines new norms and values that organize the identity and connection between action, people, and things. Foucault has mentioned that to be subjective also means to be submissive; this study focuses on the meaning and awareness of the subjectivity of dance. Sally Banes said that the avant-garde art form of the time should be seen as political, as political radicalism and artistic vanguardism in America appeared at the same time.¹⁾ This study aims to describe the various forms of power in dance.

1) Sally Banes(1993), *Greenwich Village 1963*. (Dunham and London: Duke University Press), p.7.

II. The 1968 Revolution and Political Revolutions

1. The Influence and Effects of the 1968 Revolution

On March 21, 1968, a mob of high school and university students in France occupied the American Express office, which resembled “American imperialism that attacked Vietnam.” On the next day, March 22, there was a student demonstration at the University of Nanterre. The demonstration was an example of the strife and conflict between students and governmental power that developed into a large scale protest. It was the starting signal of the situation in May; as governmental authority’s suppression followed, a barricade, the symbolic structure of revolution, appeared in Paris.²⁾ The slogans that students used during these movements were progressive and resistant.³⁾

To briefly summarize the social situation of the time, after the Second World War had ended, the Eichmann trial had revealed the atrocity of humans and the banality of evil. The reports of slaughter and torture along with their cover-up from the genocide of the Nazis and the Algerian War (1954 - 1962) and the Auschwitz trials held in Frankfurt (1964 - 1968) were enough to arouse doubt and skepticism on the modern concept of the rational man. As Adorno mentioned, praise for human beings was no longer possible after Auschwitz.⁴⁾ Therefore, denial and criticism of the time on the modern rationalism of Descartes developed into criticism of the modern rational power. In the 1960s, this led to analyses on modern democracy and its problems. There were doubts on the role of individuals as main agents of modern politics, and a dismantlement standpoint of democracy came to the fore. Dismantlement included both philosophical discourse and political power. During this process, human beings, once thought of as subjects, were dismantled into structures.

To take a look at the political situation, there were roughly two movements: the far-left and the extremist. First, the far-left movement revolted against authoritarian or bureaucratic forms or tendencies such as Maoism and Trotskyism and started a new style of revolution and politics. Far leftists emphasized resisting against the existing leftist’s authority and especially having contact with the general public. They proposed a direct democracy based on worker’s councils as the ideal of Utopia. This kind of resistance started from the public. The second movement was in line with libertarianism. It denied all forms of avant-gardism and considered labor unions as enemies within the working class. The people supporting this movement acted for the liberation of women, gay rights, and community movements while seeking the liberation of desire and resisting norms. They intended

2) Moon Young Yim(2001), Cultural aspect of the France May 1968 revolution. *Collection of Treatises on International Studies*, 6. p.146.

3) “Fuck the board of directors of hierarchy, authority, and cold elitism logic. Ask for the impossible. We ban banning. Get rid of the police in my mind. Freely enjoy all authority with imagination.”(Young Hyun An(2004), France 1968 movement and the change in film art: the rise of resistance films. *Studies on France Culture and Art 10*, pp 1-22.

4) Theodor Adorno(1966), *Negative Dialectics*, Seung Yong Hong, Trans., (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1999), p 470.

to maximize individual freedom by doing so. Hippie and rock became the fashion, moral standards were thrown away, and the subjectivity of the individual and free expression of desire was thought of as weapons that could overturn the existing social order. The slogan, “Let’s change life (chang la vie)!” sums up their thought.⁵⁾

The reformation of social authority and structure led to post-structuralism. Structuralism was a creative art revolution that blossomed from an aesthetic self-awareness; post-structuralism after the 1968 revolt was a receptive public culture revolution. Standing against conventions, structuralism experimented with new forms, but its various avant-garde actions and radical aesthetic formalism read as authority that transcended the public. Therefore, the idea of 1968 was to rebel against any form of authority, and post-structuralism sought to overcome the dilemma of structuralism, disconnection with the public, through the logic of accepting.⁶⁾ Discussions on post-structuralism served as the theory behind post-modernism, a practical phenomenon that was based on public consumption, transcendence of genre, and sensual visual media. The 1968 revolution is closely tied to post-structuralism which realizes resistance, liberation, and autonomy through the dismantlement of structure and surfacing of the subject. This, in turn, was a cultural revolution that overturned daily life and conventions.

2. Political Situation in the United States

France was not the only place that the resistance of young people began. In 1964 and 1965, there already were movements at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Berlin, rendering these places strongholds of young people in action.⁷⁾ Triggered by police arrests within campus grounds in 1964 of a student who was a member of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Free Speech Movement (FSM) in Berkeley basically demanded political freedom in universities.⁸⁾ The widespread authoritarianism in universities was a great problem and students started protesting

5) Tae Young Hong(2008), Cause of the France 1968 revolution and 2008 of Korea, *Economy and Society* 80, pp.118-139.

6) In order to satisfy these demands, Saussure’s linguistics and Levi-Strauss’ anthropology formed structuralism. Arguing that language existed before human beings, Saussure dismantled the modern subject. Such dismantlement of the subject on structuralism focused on the relationships surrounding the discussions and their history when it got to Foucault. Power is reinforced instead of owned; it is not a privilege that the ruling class obtains, but the overall effect of the position that the ruling class occupies. (Tae Young Hong(2008). Politics of Cultural Space. *Korean Political Science Review* 42(1), pp.33-35.

7) Universities were able to become the stronghold of resistance movements owing to the quantitative expansion of universities. In the U.S., the college entrance rate doubled from 1945 to 1965, and in the 1960s, the number of college students was higher than farmers or coal miners. This was also the case in Japan or the U.K. As for France, the number of college students which was only 200 thousand grew to 587 thousand in the late 1960s. (Chung Ki Song(2007). Feature article on the June 1987 resistance: a revolution of culture and everyday life, 1968 movement and its history, *Historical Review, Spring*, p.56)

8) Ibid., p.56.

about the circumstance.

The movement and criticism spread from these universities to larger systems such as family, the educational system, political parties, and the state. For example, the familial system was thought of as a social form that forced as its greatest value sexual abstinence, material possessions, and future social success. University systems were built on authoritarian education which bans criticism, a closed administration system, and competitive testing. Culture and art was criticized for elitism which was making it difficult for the public to access. All of these existing structures fostered discrimination and exclusion instead of equal human relationships, and contributed to the indoctrination and propagation of the nation's governing ideology which was based on hierarchy, authority, binding power, and bureaucracy. The 1968 revolution aimed for a world that was free from any kind of political, social, or sexual taboo, suppression, or alienation. A life system composed of boundless imagination, freedom, and play could make such a world possible. The world would be the present, not the future, life here and now, a realization in daily life.⁹⁾ The new alternative order that they sought was liberation from suppression, the establishment of a critical public atmosphere, the settlement of a culture in which people could debate and freely communicate, and a social system that could help realize liberal personal development.

At the time, the Soviet Union and the cold war played an important background for the U.S. in actively supporting the economic recovery of the west and Japan, but it resulted in a difficult problem for the U.S to solve. As the economy of European countries such as Germany, France, and the UK along with Japan from Asia grew, the monopolistic economic dominance of the U.S. began to crumble.¹⁰⁾ The fact that the 1968 revolution took place at such a time demonstrates that the U.S. hegemony that had been stable until then had begun to rupture and the possibility of resistance had emerged.

The U.S. had been enjoying material wealth as a social welfare state with the restoration after the cold war thanks to the Marshall Plan and Keynesianism, but this wealth and the consumerism that it encouraged, along with the liberalistic social system that was the cause of all of this, became a target of criticism to the young generation.

Subsequent to the 1968 revolution, American society lost its sense of cultural helplessness as can be seen in the anti-Vietnam war, black power, feminism, and counterculture movements. When Jean-Francois Lyotard's book, *The Postmodern Condition*, was translated into English, Marxism, liberalism, and Christianity, which required general and uniform thought and action was criticized, and various concepts and political actions based on cultural distinction and pluralism appeared. This

9) Young Hyun An(2004), p.225.

10) Nae Hee Kang(2011), Challenge of the 1968 revolution against the modern world system and its present significance. *Culture and Science* 67, p.58.

greatly influenced the art and culture world. The aim was to get rid of the boundaries between what is work and what is not, what is continual or accidental, what is payable and what is not.¹¹⁾ The target of transformation was not only limited to politic; it also applied to various subordinate systems including culture and art.

Along with the fundamental reformation of dance, art, film, theater, and music, there was a reformation of art institutions which led to the establishment of the revolutionary art group.

The 1968 spirit of resistance, liberation, and autonomy was closely linked to the post-structuralism thought of structural dismantlement and appearance of the subject; it brought about the dismantlement of form and the audience as the subject, while discussing communication - language, dance, and text - at a fundamental level. This expanded the realm of dance. In other words, post-structuralism dismantled and diversified form and had the choreographer share his or her creative form - his or her unique choreography - with the audience, stripping dance of its elite power. At the same time, a new receptive aesthetic became the principal, strengthening the communication of dance and destroying existing false myths.

III. Grand Union's Political Movement

1. Grand Union's Dance

Before the Grand Union which is a dance group representing the post-modern era there was the Judson Dance Theater. Looking into Judson Dance Theater's works will provide an understanding into the situation following the revolution. To elaborate on the Judson Dance Theater, they inherited the assertion of Merce Cunningham who spoke for the 1950s avant-gardism that "dance is simply moving in time and space... It doesn't need to express or represent anything."¹²⁾ The group first performed on July 6th, 1962 at Judson Memorial Church situated in Greenwich Village after a dance workshop taught by Robert Dunn. Later, they moved into the church and held regular performances.¹³⁾ Dancers who were a part of this group are Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Judith Dunn, David Gordon, Ruth Emerson, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Robert Morris, Robert Wilson, Robert Rauschenberg, and Nelson Goodman. These dancers put on the brakes to the codification and conventionalization of dance and were willing to try extreme forms of avant-garde projects and

11) Ibid., p.71.

12) Malborg Kim(2003), *Understanding Dance*(Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press), p.378.

13) Modern dancers had difficulties due to renting once a year; church was considered a positive alternative. There Yvonne Rainer and members could produce works more often, unofficially, and at low cost. Most importantly, they were able to perform collaborative works. Sally Banes(1987), *Postmodern Dance*, Park, Mung Sook. trans., (Seoul: Samsin-gak. 1991), p.28.

experiments. These choreographers got together and organized the group, Grand Union. Choreographers in the Grand Union had together been members of the Judson Dance Group and already had known each other for nearly ten years.¹⁴⁾ They traveled around America, Italia, and Japan, conveying with their new form the demands for change of the new era.¹⁵⁾ The performances of the Grand Union took a step further than the Judson Dance Group, enumerating situations and philosophy to the extreme. Rather than Duncan's style of natural movement or Merce Cunningham's non-expressive gestures, the group circled around to works that had political color. Their ordinary gesture deviated from Duncan's movements for dramatic effect, and their new interpretation of dance diverged from Cunningham's perception of dance as non-dance or movement itself. Grand Union's gestures included an interpretation of the era and naturally developed into a political statement. Their stages were political, embodying individual thoughts of the society the dancers were a part of.

The Grand Union's dances were highly intellectual. It was similar to conceptual art in that it no longer insisted an emotional form of art from the past. The definition of art, which had been perceived ever since Aristotle emphasized that the task of the tragedy is to arouse pity and fear in the audience, went through a drastic change. Dance was no longer a means for stirring emotion but consisted of action, concept, and theme. Their dances were democratic and experimental, and untrained movements of the body were conducted with intention.

First, their name "Grand Union" indicates the nature of the group. By using the choreographer's name such as the Martha Graham Dance Company or the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, the group could advocate its style and character while also providing an understanding of the dancer's characteristic. However, the name "Grand Union" emphasizes a sense of community rather than implying that the group follows a particular individual and his or her style. Priority was not given to the choreographer's name and this means several things. First, in the past, by stressing an individual choreographer's name when naming a dance group, art had not have been able to break away from an authoritarian form. The Grand Union's attempt shows us their will to abrogate the pyramid structure that enforces the choreographer's thought.

Second, the name Grand Union was used to emphasize a sense of community and the equality of each and every member. It should also be noted that the name was selected through a democratic procedure. Members of the Grand Union emphasized evenness in the way they worked by deciding together what they worked on. Members recollect that dancers helped each other find out what they really wanted to work on, and each concert was different in style.¹⁶⁾

14) Yvonne Rainer, David Gordon, Steve Paxton, Barbara Dilley, Nancy Lewis, Lincoln Scott, Becky Arnold, Douglas Dunn worked together. There was not much of a change in the members, but they had seen each other's works, participated in them, and some of them had experience as a dancer in the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. (Sally Banes(1991), p.313.)

15) Young Il Heo(1989), Development of the Postmodern Dance. *Foreign Culture and Art* (November and December).

When the Judson Dance Theater switched over to the Grand Union, Gordon recollects that Yvonne did not wish to be a leader and sought a new way of working, a collective choreography.¹⁷⁾

Helping passive dancers become active and have criticism on choreography was a way of transforming and revolutionizing dance. A social change in the power structures of oppression and obedience and the provocation of revolutionary minds in the public through dance was what the group opted for.

The next chapter interprets the political meaning of Grand Union's works and activities. First, performative democracy accomplished democratic equality with movement using works that portrayed social participation. Second, everyday liberalism was a declaration of freedom of dance through the expansion of everyday movements. Third, political open-door policy was movements and activities that reflected political views.

2. Politics of Body in Grand Union's Works

The concept of politics should first be checked. What was political in U.S. society during the 1960s was different from before that time. In the 1960s, feminists emphasized that "the personal is political." This was contrary to the past concept of directly resisting and revolting against Macro Politics, that is, the ruling ideology and its institutionalization. It was a microscopic, every day, and secular idea of politics.¹⁸⁾ As the belief that politics was manifested through social symbols that stayed with the daily life of the individual became more and more dominant, attention was focused on the individual and community's body, the place of the subject's action. With the reconceptualization of politics during this period, dance became the medium for rebellion and fight against the oppressive reality of the times, and the works of choreographers started to emphasize performative movements. Agreeing with the comment of Theodor Heuss, the first President of West Germany that said, "With politics you can make no culture; Perhaps you can make politics with culture,"¹⁹⁾ trying to understand art, an understanding of human beings, with the concept of politics in mind will be important.

To briefly summarize the characteristic of the Grand Union, it applied the political nature of participatory democracy which was deemed important in the 1960s. The significance of this is first, the human experience and art are not separate, and second, as a member of society, the artist's symbol, a matter of choice, can be created into a work harboring political language. Each movement becomes a political statement and daily life becomes art.

16) Sally Banes(1991), pp.356 - 357.

17) Ibid., p.341.

18) Soo Jin Jo(2010). Politics of Body of the Neo-avant-garde Art of the U.S., *Study of History of Modern Art* 27, p.56.

19) Do Youn Song(2005), <<http://www.seoul.co.kr>, 2015. 1.23>.

a. Performative Democracy

We will take a look at Grand Union's works as art that participates in democracy. Steve Paxton said in an interview that the methodology of movement naturally contains political layers. A choreographer has always had a dominant position in the hierarchy. A single person orders many to do something; it is called, "a dictatorship of form." Steve Paxton thought that refusing this and collaborating was a democratic way of working and that it was an experience of true democracy, something to be proud of. This methodology of dance breaks out of a hierarchy and represents true democracy.²⁰⁾ This proves the premise of Habermas that humans are rational beings that can separate truth and deception with dialogue and democratic debate, deciding on what is the truth. This also brings into discussion the subject which is merely the effect of political technology that Foucault mentioned.²¹⁾

By examining Yvonne Rainer, a member of the Judson Dance Group and performer of many works in the Grand Union, the political tendency of the Grand Union's works can be analyzed. Rainer was a leader of post-modern dance and an iconoclast.²²⁾ Her work *Trio A* was first performed on the balcony of Judson Memorial Church in 1966, but was also performed various times during the Grand Union period.²³⁾ It was performed again in May of the same year at the same place, and in 1968 it was performed at the Anderson Theater as a trio by three male dancers. In 1967, it was performed during Angry Art Weeks with the title, *Convalescent Dance*. In April of 1968, it was performed as *The Mind is a Muscle*, and in September of the same year, several transformed versions of *Trio A* were performed by the name, *Performance Demonstration No. 1*.²⁴⁾ In February, 1969, many performances of *Trio A* were danced to Wilson Pickett's *In the Midnight Hour* at the Billy Rose Theater as *Rose Fraction*. In 1970, *Trio A* reappeared once again in a different version; six dancers performed the movements twice with the American flag hanging around their necks. This was called the *Judson Flag Show*. It was performed in the nude.²⁵⁾ Actually, this piece was a protest for the people who had been arrested for insulting the American flag. The performance was unconventional because previously, art was confined to creative performance, but now it included political color. The work was a signpost in that it repeated action using the movement phrase of a single work in other works with different names. Also, it transformed the subject to pure movement with formal gesture. However, its greatest significance lies in the social resistance it carried. Yvonne Rainer's later works, which are different

20) Andre Amore(2007), p.203.

21) <<http://tip.daum.net/openknow/3729221?q=%ED%91%B8%EC%BD%94%20%EC%A0%95%EC%B9%98>, 2014.12.12>.

22) Malborg Kim(2003), p.402.

23) Ji Won Lee(2005), A Study on the Feministic Perspective Attested in *Trio A*, *The Korean Journal of Dance Studies* 16, p.137.

24) Sally Banes(1991), p.88.

25) <<http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/dancing-yvonne-rainer/#sthash.Pb1FGHR9.dpuf>, 2014.12.13>.

from her earlier works, carry a distinct theme and meaning of social resistance. As a member of society, each dancer proclaims their own political color as well as speaks out their political view with their movement.

Artistically, their intention was to destroy the perception of dance that it could only be done with special training. Banning trained dancers was part of the criticism and action against the perception and boundary that dancing belonged to a bourgeois or elite culture. They resisted this notion because their judgment was that the suppressing power of the ruling class who were dance majors were given privileges as an artist. Also, their actions connoted iconoclastic aggressiveness against institutional art. What advanced from Merce Cunningham's pioneering attempt of post-modernism was the issue of the selection of dancers. Merce Cunningham's movements were comprehensive and included all movements, but his insistence on trained dancers remained unchanged. However, the next generation of dancers saw this as an artistic model and instead of repeating it, destroyed it. This shows that the resistance against the institutionalization of high art at last acquired political meaning in America's cultural situation of the time.²⁶⁾ It was truly a post-modern interpretation which made happenings, street performances, and exhibitions of non-majors and majors alike possible. Fundamentally, this denies the hierarchical concept of human culture which has pure art at the top.

The works of the Grand Union were collaborative, self-managed, and self-supplied. This meant that the dance group aimed to actualize the autonomy of the community, to not be under the rule of a bureaucrat, and to put into practice 1968's slogan that bans all banning of things under censorship. All members of the dance group were representatives and each individual had their own voice which was equal to any other; this advocated the egalitarian principles of democracy. Starting with dance, they intended to break away from the indoctrination of ideology.

b. Everyday Liberalism

The Grand Union proclaimed freedom in dance by expanding the use of everyday movement. They used a strategy that conveyed a sense of revolution while they fought for the freedom of dance and spread movements reflecting the mind of resistance. They were reporting that the theme "art for art," an engrossment in aesthetic value, was a form of elite intellectualism that made it difficult for the general public to approach art. Tearing down the boundaries of dance with movements anyone could do was a move toward a dance for the public and an eye-opening experience on the conventions that made it difficult for non-majors to approach dance. Not obsessing on technique was a demythicization of dance and an addition of natural movements. Normal everyday movements and gestures made the material for dance infinite, got rid of distortion, and was a realization of naturalness.²⁷⁾ Walking,

26) Young Il Heo(1989), Development of the Postmodern Dance. *Foreign Culture and Art* (November and December).

27) In *Satisfyin' Lover* (1967), Steve Paxton used dancers who had no training and had them wear casual

moving, and sitting gestures were not bodies of exaggerated expression of the past that was completed with the manipulation of time but the bodies and gestures of everyday people. Hoping for a stage of true communication, they tore down the exclusiveness and isolation of movement so that dance was not only for the enjoyment of the elite but an object of consumption for the public.

This was a manifestation of the idea that dance could be replaced with philosophy instead of movement. Previously, Yvonne Rainer danced with will, conviction, and philosophy. Differentiating from the past, the attempt was for the individual to understand the great realm of history and reality with intellectual sensitivity, to have a firm self-awareness in order to leave his or her personality behind, perceive this, and approach the epistemic issue intellectually. As an example, in *No Manifesto*, 1965, the ideological understanding of language was added.²⁸⁾ A similar work was performed on October 9th, 1973. It was *Talking Dance*, recited by Douglas Dunn at the New School.²⁹⁾ Reverting dance to language was a reflection of reality and a realization of the changeable spectrum of dance. Not only was it a challenge and experiment on movement, but it also was a symbol of a specific understanding of the abstract. Language is the realization and symbol of human consciousness. Therefore, this work shows that dance could be converted to language and that it does not have to remain as movement; it could be substituted by readability. It overturned values by provoking the concept of dance and manifested the thought that liberation from bans and suppressions was possible. It experimented freedom and exposed oppression.

Steve Paxton emphasized stripping away authority and hierarchy with the body. He used “pedestrian movements” as material for dance. Pedestrian movements were public gestures that were non-dance and non-hierarchical. Walking was something everyone did and what dancers did whether or not they were dancing. Therefore, walking was a common experience that could create a bond between performers and the audience while recreating various experiences.³⁰⁾ His work, *Satisfyin’ Lover*, which was planned for collaboration with New York University in 1970, included such pedestrian movements. People walked from the right to the left side of the stage, and there were many different forms of walking. The significance of *Satisfyin’ Lover* lies in the borrowing of movement.

Paxton also criticized the generalization and authoritarianism in the U.S.; he produced works that induced the rethinking of the dignity of human beings and the freedom of expression. *Satisfyin’ Lover*

clothing and walk arbitrarily. In Yvonne Rainer’s *Room Service*, performers moved furniture.

28) “A denial of the spectacle, a denial of technique, a denial of transformation, novelty, and deceit, a denial of the ecstasy and transcendence of the star image, a denial of heroism, a denial of anti-heroism, a denial of the junk image, a denial of the immersion of the performer or the audience, a denial of style, a denial of exaggerated gestures, a denial of the performer’s tricks to dazzle the audience, a denial of strange actions, a denial of impressing or being impressed.”

29) Talking is talking Dancing is dancing / Not talking is not talking Not dancing is not dancing (omitted) Not dancing is not dancing Not talking is not talking / Dancing is dancing Talking is talking (Sally Banes(1991), p. 310)

30) Ibid., p.102

had been canceled by the authority right before its performance due to the appearance of a nude body - Paxton instead prepared a work with a different name, *Intravenous Lecture*.³¹⁾ When he had realized that his performance had been canceled at the government level because it contained political meaning, he added a satirical touch to the composition. This straightforwardly exposed the works of the authority, and by expanding the theme, he reflected thought in art. If a work was interpreted as political, then he wanted to stand up against it with political meaning. In this way, Steve Paxton put on stage the story of oppression and ban on art and added new meaning to dance by raising political questions. It was a biting attack on the concealment and restriction of taboos.

Lucinda Childs' work *Street Dance* (1964) can be seen in a similar regard. It was performed on a sidewalk between 11th Avenue and 12th Avenue across from a street south of Broadway.³²⁾ *Street Dance* lasted about six minutes. Spectators could see words written on buildings, stairs, fixed locks, white signs, ads, and parking lots while they passed by. Dancers separated the street as a stage, used language, and utilized buildings as the stage while they pointed at the surroundings.³³⁾ It made the point that dance was not something done on a stage that is cut off from the outside world, but a story of us all that could be performed in an open stage with real communication. As women during the 1968 revolution marched on the streets shouting for political freedom and equality, this work clearly states that politics and art are not separate entities, that dance reflects reality, and that the recollection of dance cannot be separated from life. Homi Jehangir Bhabha, an advocate of post-colonialism, proposed the concept of a cultural location which was not singular or historical but open and reciprocal. These locations, previously essential places for everyday life, are transformed into a political arena. Changing location is a rebellious cultural practice, and a new location is where freedom and novelty is possible. In this sense, the street is a chained loop where the culture of the past and the new culture both exist while at the same time clash with each other, creating a revolution. This carries the postmodern criticism that modernity lacks self-identity. By doing this, Childs was searching for the possibility of a common consensus of dance and thinking about the boundaries of the fixed space.

c. Political Activism

Different from the Judson Dance Theater, the Grand Union displayed a clear political color. This includes movements that reflect their political beliefs. First, the Grand Union performed to contribute to an organization with political color. The improvisation dance of 1971 which was performed at

31) *State* of 1968 was also a work with pedestrian movement. What he intended to say with his works was that simple movements which were not rhythmically transformed could have aesthetic meaning in its own way. (Ibid., p. 104)

32) Ibid., p.225.

33) Lucinda Childs(1975), Notes: 64-74, *The Drama Review*19(1), p.34.

NYU's Loeb Student Center was a benefit performance for the Black Panthers. A group of people participated in the dance - various props such as balls, pillows, ropes, chairs, and fabric were used, tangled together with the people. The dancers wore comfortable clothing such as t-shirts, pants, and sneakers, and the audience watched their improvisational performance sitting on chairs or on the floor. The Black Panthers, also called the "Black Panther Party,"³⁴⁾ was an armed black organization which argued that the "black panther was the most adequate animal to express the toughness and dignity of the black people." At the time, many black people were being kicked out of restaurants, facing bus terrorisms, or even killed by the indiscriminate attacks of white supremacists. For this reason, dancers of the Grand Union openly supported the Black Panther Party, bringing attention to the human rights of the black people. The benefit performances for the party were held more than once - it was held three times.³⁵⁾ For the Grand Union, a social aspect added to theater and dance meant that a social mind, as well as an aesthetic mind, also came onto stage.³⁶⁾

Political content and movement that the Judson Dance Group did not cover later appeared as material used by the Grand Union. One example of this is illustrated by Yvonne Rainer, who clearly made the case for feminism by focusing on the life of women.³⁷⁾ With *Lives of Performers* (1972), Rainer questioned the concept of dance and portrayed women as the subject of dance with movements that had an obscure boundary of dancer and non-dancer.³⁸⁾ The *Judson Flag Show* which was mentioned earlier also pointed out and criticized the fictitiousness of the American flag which symbolizes the values of freedom and equality. Rainer articulated an opinion on woman's rights which was that American women have never been absolutely "free," and that freedom merely sought the rights and benefits of men by suppressing women. For example, it was not until 1969 that women were allowed to enter mainstream educational institutions in American society, starting at Yale University, and it was after the 1970s that women noticeably entered politics. Yvonne Rainer's other works are similar.

34) The Black Panther Party was an armed black organization which argued that the "black panther was the most adequate animal to express the toughness and dignity of the black people." They supported black power while advocating for the self-protection of black people. As far-leftists, they were active from the mid-1960s to the early-1980s, and became well-known for their black power movement and participation in U.S. politics. The founders of the Black Panther Party were Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, who founded the party on October 15th, 1966 in Oakland, California to protect African-Americans from police violence. There were many people in the leadership of the party who were for socialism and communism, but the actual ideological composition was diverse. By 1968, it had spread to New York, Chicago, Detroit, Newark, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Seattle.
<<http://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/%ED%9D%91%ED%91%9C%EB%8B%B9>, 2014.11.18>.

35) Sally Banes (1991), p.321.

36) Ibid., p.322.

37) Ji Won Lee(2011), *Dance and Body's Politics*(Seoul: Dusol), p.210.

38) Movement is not the subject; subtitles in images, letters, and sounds are included. Actors, dancers, and ordinary people got together to create gestures. (Jonathan Walley(2001), *From Dance to Film*, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dissertation, p. 35).

Opposition against the Vietnam War shows a political openness instead of ethnocentrism or chauvinism. Thus, it is closely related to criticism of the U.S. The American government was able to initiate the war in Vietnam because the U.S. congress passed a resolution in August, 1964 that delegated President Johnson the power to start the war. The work was a political resistance that reported that the Vietnam War was a tragedy that sprang from the political power struggle between the country's two systems, the congress and the government. It was a democratic move of America's conscious artists. Even without the fact that the Vietnam War was evaluated historically as the first unsuccessful war,³⁹⁾ it actually was a fact of life and to make sure that it did not happen again, it was important to feel responsibility for it and remember it. *War*, a performance about the Vietnam War shows that dance was longer merely a subject of appreciation but a means of political communication. *War* especially demonstrates that the title, without movement, can be art. As can be seen, the title already reflects political color. The work depicts how American soldiers, along with the millions of Cambodians killed in Cambodia by U.S. bombings, were sacrificed due to air raids that tried to impede the transportation of military supplies for the Vietnam War. *Street Action* of May, 1970 was against the Cambodian bombings; Yvonne Rainer, Douglas Dunn, and Sarah Rudner stood at the front. Beginning with simple movements that resemble walking, jumping, grabbing, turning, and lying down, maneuvers subsequently follow. During the march, dancers put both hands on the shoulders of the person in front and looked downwards.⁴⁰⁾ At times, they divided into two groups, chasing, following, and separating from the other group. It also included the gestures of grabbing a flag, holding waists, and pulling in a long formation. The gestures of an individual and a group, a group and a group happened subsequently with a different composition. The Vietnam syndrome was the most important emotional background in understanding America at the time. Many people found it difficult to accept this emotional factor, but already the repository of memories existed in the heart and not in the head.

IV. Conclusion

The Grand Union was an experimental group which was active in the 1970s which was a time of rapid political change. The group is an extension of the avant-garde and progressive tendency of the Judson Dance Theater; the group shattered the concept of dance and encouraged pluralism. Behind

39) A negative memory of Vietnam was formed in 1975 with the fall of Saigon. For the people who watched on TV the wretched scene of people hanging, struggling, and falling off from a rope hanging from the last helicopter departing from the rooftop of the U.S. embassy in Saigon and the people swimming to get on the last ship leaving the harbor but one by one disappearing into the water, Vietnam was remembered for sure as a failure of the U.S. (Bong Jung. Kim(2011), p.224.)

40) <<https://video.search.yahoo.com/video/play?p=yvonne+rainer+war>, 2015.1.1.>

their actions were the 1968 revolution in France and the turbulent political situation in the U.S. According to the Grand Union, art until then had indirectly supported the ruling class whose only interest was to maintain their vested rights and therefore the group overtly demonstrated a political color that denied this phenomenon. The authentic role of art was to participate in eradicating contradictions by standing up to society's exploitations; the group did this with movement. The Grand Union persistently questioned authority, tradition, and ideas. Through this they arrived at the conclusion that dance is a conceptual action that triggers thought, breaking out of what modern dance of the past emphasized - the reproduction of the inner self. Their dance clearly included social content and was a story about the fight of humankind in the world and a report of the rampant irrationalities of society. Dancers expanded their movement to social people and content and volunteered to be a spokesperson of a depressing political voice. Politics with a capital "P" disappeared and they showed people that there was a real politics that they could participate in and realized a great liberation through their bodies that others continuing to exist could devise a new form of politics.

As one of the important things in the study of dance is scientific investigation, it can be stressed that a discussion on political structure, social conditions, and consciousness plays an important part in explaining art. George Maciunas once wrote, "If we stray from social and political issues because we do art, what we do will lose meaning. We must each be a new wave by acting together with this society." Also, Rachid Ouramdane, a choreographer, emphasized, "Dance is not just a movement of the body. Dance can be extremely political and should be able to get involved in social aspects. It has to be able to talk about complicated social phenomenon."⁴¹) Postmodern choreographers did not simply submit to the interpretation of dance that came from structuralism; exhibiting difference, they brought forth their different attitudes and validity with the body. Interacting with society, they proved the legitimacy of their movement and art. Therefore, the individual body was not a political construct that followed specific movement techniques of authority but a body that resisted standardization, and a body that disclosed subordinate submission. "Presuming that the purpose of art is to enrich people's lives, politics also cannot be separated from human life." This study will work as a stepping stone to the political interpretation of new works of other choreographers of the Grand Union that this study was not able to cover.

41) Ouramdane is one of the leading artists of French modern dance after the 2000s that created the French new dance. After graduating from Angers Centre national de danse contemporaine, he established a dance company in 1996 and has mostly been working on documentary-dance works that are based on true stories. Although it is the sadness and inner confessions of his father who fought in the Vietnam War that is portrayed in his works, his dance has social functions. The understanding and interpretation of dance in society is different, but when dance contains the gesture of an individual, the social thesis of the time cannot be excluded. (Ji Soo Han(2013), Dance can Talk about Politics, *Herald Media*(2013.10.14.) <<http://m.heraldbiz.com/view.php?ud=20131014000165&ntn=0> 2015.2.13>).

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Grand Union's Politics of Body

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Focusing on the student demonstrations of 1968 in U.S., this study investigates the political meaning of Grand Union's activities and works. A political analysis on the various experimental attempts and changes in dance and their significance offers an important basis of interpretation. That is why this study connects Grand Union's works with events with a focus on sociopolitical context. Political implications will also be focused on, because although postmodern dance is of the past, it still has significance to the present.

Keywords: Yvonne Rainer(이본느 레이너), Steve Paxton(스티브 팩스턴), Grand Union(그랜드 유니온), Judson Dance Group(저드슨 댄스 그룹), Politics of Body(몸의 정치)