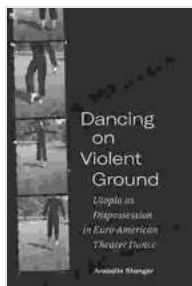


# Utopia As Dispossession In Euro American Theater Dance Performance Works

The concept of utopia has long been a source of inspiration for artists. In the realm of Euro American theater dance, utopia has often been depicted as a place of perfect harmony and beauty, a place where the body and the spirit are in perfect union.

However, in recent years, a growing number of choreographers have begun to explore the darker side of utopia. They have questioned the assumption that utopia is always a positive force, and they have begun to examine the ways in which utopia can be used to justify oppression and dispossession.



## Dancing on Violent Ground: Utopia as Dispossession in Euro-American Theater Dance (Performance Works)

by Arabella Stanger

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 245 pages

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In her book *Utopia as Dispossession in Euro American Theater Dance Performance Works*, scholar Sarah Michelson argues that the utopian ideal

has been used to justify the colonization of the Americas and the enslavement of African people. She shows how the idea of a perfect society has been used to justify the dispossession of indigenous peoples and the exploitation of workers.

Michelson's book is a timely and important contribution to the field of dance studies. It challenges the traditional understanding of utopia and opens up new ways of thinking about the role of dance in society.

## **The Utopian Ideal**

The utopian ideal is a vision of a perfect society. It is a place where there is no poverty, no crime, and no war. Utopia is a place where everyone is happy and healthy, and where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The utopian ideal has been a source of inspiration for artists for centuries. In the realm of Euro American theater dance, utopia has often been depicted as a place of perfect harmony and beauty, a place where the body and the spirit are in perfect union.

Some of the most famous examples of utopian dance works include:

- *Les Ballets Russes' The Rite of Spring* (1913)
- *Martha Graham's Appalachian Spring* (1944)
- *Merce Cunningham's Suite for Five* (1958)

These works all depict utopia as a place of beauty and harmony. They celebrate the human body and the power of dance to express the human spirit.

## **The Dark Side of Utopia**

However, in recent years, a growing number of choreographers have begun to explore the darker side of utopia. They have questioned the assumption that utopia is always a positive force, and they have begun to examine the ways in which utopia can be used to justify oppression and dispossession.

One of the most famous examples of a dystopian dance work is William Forsythe's *In the Middle Somewhat Elevated* (1987). This work depicts a group of dancers who are trapped in a sterile, white void. They are constantly moving, but they never seem to get anywhere. The work is a powerful critique of the utopian ideal, and it shows how utopia can be used to create a society that is both oppressive and alienating.

Other examples of dystopian dance works include:

- *Akram Khan's Desh* (2011)
- *Hofesh Shechter's Political Mother* (2014)
- *Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker's Rosas danst Rosas* (1983)

These works all depict utopia as a place of darkness and despair. They show how utopia can be used to justify violence, oppression, and war.

## **The Role of Dance in Utopia**

Dance has a powerful role to play in utopia. It can be used to create a sense of community, to celebrate the human body, and to express the human spirit.

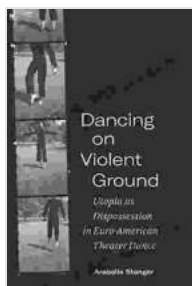
However, dance can also be used to critique and reimagine utopia. It can be used to show the dark side of utopia, and to challenge the assumptions that we make about it.

The choreographers whose work is discussed in this article are using dance to do just that. They are using dance to critique the utopian ideal and to reimagine the possibilities for a just and equitable society.

The concept of utopia is a complex and multifaceted one. It can be a source of inspiration and hope, but it can also be a source of oppression and dispossession.

The choreographers whose work is discussed in this article are using dance to explore the dark side of utopia. They are using dance to critique the utopian ideal and to reimagine the possibilities for a just and equitable society.

Their work is a timely and important contribution to the field of dance studies. It challenges the traditional understanding of utopia and opens up new ways of thinking about the role of dance in society.



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