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Intimate Freedom:
Queering Anarchism in Leesong Hee-il's Films

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Abstract

The characters in Leesong Hee-il's films dream of and desire a queer utopia and a completely new world. Awakened to their own singularity through gay shame, they are compelled to reconsider the norms and expectations of the established gay community, which they see as trying to assimilate them into the supra-communal state. Through this gay shame, they come to stand as singular beings in the face of an absurd society. They then rise in revolt against the identity that the gay community imposes on them, while expressing their dis-satisfaction with restricted freedoms provided by the state. Ultimately, they end up as queer anarchists in pursuit of social freedom through the ethics of personal relationships. Their gestures to escape regulations and control push them forward with affective resistance in their relations with others, which is the only future left for them after all else is lost. Finding themselves alone and at an impasse, they encounter their own utopian bodies. In a desperate queer dance, they lose themselves and transform their bodies to establish a utopia of the here and now.

Keywords: Korean gay film, queer utopia, queer anarchism, social freedom, relational anarchism, affective resistance, utopian body, queer dance

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Introduction

Nowadays, gays are encouraged to come out of the closet and be proud of their identities to become "good citizens." In order to have pride, they must overcome gay shame as an element of negative affect. In the past, gay communities have tried to remove gay shame and end social stigma by producing positive self-images. Coming out of the closet is synonymous with being free of gay shame. Dustin Bradley Goltz wittingly notes this condition while observing the variation of media representations of gay men over time. According to the logic of the closet, gays "have moved past shame and the claustrophobia of *Giovanni's Room* (1956), marched through the streets of *Philadelphia* (1993), and emerged (buff and tanned) on the dance floor of "Queer as Folk" (2000–2005). The closet, as he writes, "places shame and victimization in the past, creating a distance between where we were and where we currently are, the relationship of past and present removed through linear time and physical space" (Goltz 2010, 20). Shame has become a negative affect that should never be faced again in the homonormative progressive narrative, which is based on a past of being the closet and a present of coming out.

In South Korea (hereafter, Korea), Kimjo Gwang-su, a film producer and director, is an important homosexual figure who emphasizes the need for gay pride and a gay rights movement. As a member of the Korean Gay Men's Human Rights Group, Chingusai (Between Friends), he has expressed assimilationist desires in a liberal and strategic fashion. In pursuit of this goal, Kimjo has striven to expand the scope of gay visibility by engaging with the progressive narrative, directing queer films and becoming involved in the movement to legalize same-sex marriage in Korea. Although he has met obstinate resistance from Korean society, he has managed to produce meaningful outcomes. Starting with *Sonyeon*, *sonyeon-eul mannada* (Boy Meets Boy, 2008), an autobiographical short film on a gay teen's first love, he has produced a series of queer films, including *Chingu sai*? (Just Friends?, 2009) featuring a gay couple in their twenties, *Sarang-eun 100°C* (Love, 100°C, 2010), a short film on a hearing-impaired boy's first love, *Dubeon-ui gyeolhonsik-gwa hanbeon-ui jangnyesik* (Two Weddings and a Funeral,

2012), his first feature-length debut film that reflects the worries of gay people in their thirties when they are of a marriageable age, and *Harut bam* (One Night, 2014), about a group of gays from provincial cities on a trip to Itaewon, a district in Seoul known for its gay nightlife. Financed in part with donations from supporting viewers, these movies have created a positive image of gays. *When Just Friends?* was initially given an R rating by the Korean Media Rating Board because of a homosexual love-making scene (regardless of the degree of nudity), Kimjo filed a lawsuit and the film was later rated for 15 years and older. Together with his lover Kim Seung-hwan, Kimjo also founded Rainbow Factory, which specializes in the production and import of queer films, and they hold the annual Seoul Pride Film Festival that showcases domestic and foreign queer films.[1]

Kimjo and Kim held Korea's first public gay wedding in 2013. This event was made into a documentary, *Mai peeo weding* (My Fair Wedding, 2015), directed by Jang Hee-seon. After authorities rejected their petition for a marriage license, they asked reporters to acknowledge their tearful expression of disappointment. Given Korea's situation, however, the press conference after the rejection of their marriage license—which was well timed in the wake of the successful passage of same-sex marriage legislation in Western countries—appears to have reflected the narcissism of these gay men who lack an awareness of reality, rather than a determined political voice. The current chasm between reality and ideal may, in practice, undermine support for the legalization of same-sex marriage in Korea.

Nevertheless, their excessive demand is perhaps an expression of their strong will to stimulate and discipline homosexuals who are insensitive to the progressive narrative and lack support for same-sex marriage. In other words, the real target of Kimjo's gestures is not an implacable heterosexual society but the many gays who fail to build a community based on shared goals. Perhaps, for the same reason, *Two Weddings and a Funeral*, which was released before their wedding, sends a message of enlightenment to homosexuals and

1. While the film festival is themed on sexual minorities, Kimjo uses the term, "pride," instead of "queer" or "LGBT," in its title. This shows the significance of *gay pride* in the homosexual human rights movement he is involved in.

heterosexuals alike. The film emphasizes the role of the gay community, which raises its self-esteem to become "good citizens" and to integrate themselves into the state as a supra-community. In *Two Weddings and a Funeral*, the main character, a gay man in his thirties, plans to flee to France in fear of social exclusion but recovers gay pride with his gay community's help and finally arrives at the happy ending of gay marriage. The wedding ceremony at the end of the film goes far beyond the realistic narrative that the film has developed hitherto and is only accomplished by imagining this conclusion as the ultimate goal of the gay rights movement. This narrative explicitly shows the gay community's liberal and fairy-tale desires.

On the other hand, Leesong Hee-il, another Korean queer film director, shows a skeptical attitude toward the gay community's role in his films. In particular, in *Baekya* (White Night, 2012), he distrusts the gay community and questions the idealized bonds of gay pride. The anger of Won-gyu (Won Tae-hee), who was subjected to a homophobic attack near a gay bar in Jongno, extends to the perpetrators as well as gay onlookers who do not respond and help. The moment a member of the community faces a crisis, his colleagues scatter, never revealing their true faces. Simply identifying as gay and sharing a subculture in the same space cannot bind them together into a community. In the end, as a victim of hate crimes, Won-gyu leaves Korea with shame in his heart and settles in Germany, but his anger does not easily abate. After a two-year absence, he returns to Korea to find and avenge his assailants, who have been released from jail after serving their sentences.

Some critics may blame gay people who, lacking a sense of solidarity, neglect their fellows in danger. Or, before that, one could shift the blame to the gay community for having failed to properly educate themselves about pride and their expected role as community members. However, Leesong does offer scenes to judge the community or its members for being right or wrong, nor does he stress the role of the community. Furthermore, he does not concur with Leo Bersani's argument which fundamentally denies the agency of the gay community. Leo Bersani (1996, 75) maintains that "because much of lesbian and gay history has to do with noncommunity, and because dispersal rather than localization continues to be definitive of queer self-understanding, this concept of community is problematic."

What Leesong fundamentally doubts is not the necessity of the gay community per se, but that community's desire to integrate into the supra-communal state. He believes there is a problem with the country to which they want to assimilate rather than with the gay community. Without contemplating the fundamental motivation behind gays' communalist desire, the gay community will only repeat the irrationalities of the society in which it is rooted. For this reason, Leesong cannot consent to a gay community that is willing to obey homonormative demands and be absorbed into civil society.

In order to fundamentally rethink the existing gay community, Leesong reminds the characters of *singularity*. To stir up their sense of singularity, he awakens their gay shame as the impetus that had gradually receded with the advent of gay pride. They embrace gay shame to stand up to an irrational world and become *queer anarchists*. They oppose the uniformity demanded by the gay community, express discontent with freedoms fettered by the state, and finally pursue social freedoms for one another. The struggle releases freedoms from all norms and controls and develops the power of *affective resistance* within their relationships. The only thing left after they lose everything is their personal relationships, their more intimate relationship. Relationships are the long-sought future of queers. They take care of their mutual scars and, together, dream of the possibility of *queer utopia*.

Gay Shame

In Leesong's first feature film, *Huhoe-hajiana* (No Regret, 2006), Jae-min (Kim Nam-gil), a corporate executive's son, makes persistent attempts to court Su-min (Yi Young-hoon), who grew up in an orphanage in a local city and now works as a prostitute at a gay host bar. Su-min says to Jae-min, "Every night I suck a bunch of cocks. What makes you think yours is so special?" This question probes the origin of his love, rather than the difference between their respective views of love. Jae-min replies, "Because mine is one and only, and so is yours," reminding him that they face one another as singular beings. This is a challenge to remove their class barriers and begin a relationship

from complete otherness. As Jean-Luc Nancy (1991, 6-7) writes, "Singularity never has the nature or the structure of individuality. Singularity never takes place at the level of atoms, those identifiable if not identical identities; rather it takes place at the level of the *clinamen*, which is unidentifiable." To form a community, he continues, "the interruption of singularities, or the suspension of singular beings" is necessary, and a community is "not the work of singular beings, nor an operation of singular beings" (31). Therefore, the gay community, which encourages the formation of identity, ironically obstructs the accomplishment of singularity. Jae-min and Su-min jump off the island of similarity and homogeneity in order to part with *us*. Floundering in the ocean of diversity and distinction, they grope for the island of singularity to look deeply into the inner worlds of one another.

Shame occurs when one realizes that one does not exist in the way that others wish one to exist. It leads to an ontological reflection between self and other. According to Im Hong-bin (2013, 244–245), "When a decent human being defies the authority of political rulers or refuses to conform to the conventional order, his/her self-pride plays out, inevitably, as a factor which generates shame." That is, shame arises when a proud individual shows a nonconformist attitude toward the dominant system. Therefore, if homosexuals are aiming for a "more radical goal than trying to persuade straight society that gay people can be good parents, good soldiers, good priests" (i.e., a nonconformist, non-normative goal), what is needed is "a gay pride that does not forget its origins in shame, [one] that is still powered by the transformative energies that spring from experiences of shame" (Halperin 2010, 44). Now while gay pride could no longer be a basic purpose of the community, gay shame is vindicated from negative affect which should sink into oblivion. Pride and shame are not simply conflicting affects; they keep controling each other dynamically and support the development of subjects. Pride is the origin of shame, and shame is the source of pride. Gay people are transformed into political subjects through a constant tension between pride and shame.

Further, Joan Copjec posits that shame is an emotional response that occurs when the subject recognizes an imperfection in the Other and claims that, at that moment, the subject gains an independent perspective.

> [Shame is] awakened not when one looks at oneself, or those whom one cherishes, through another's eyes, but when one suddenly perceives a lack in the Other. At this moment the subject no longer experiences herself as the fulfillment of the Other's desire, as the center of the world, which now shifts away from her slightly, causing a distance to open within the subject herself. This distance is not that "superegoic" one which produces a feeling of guilt and burdens one with an uncancelable debt to the Other, but is, on the contrary, that which wipes out the debt. In shame, unlike guilt, one experiences one's visibility, but there is no external Other who sees, since shame is proof that the Other does not exist. (Copjec 2004, 128)

Shame occurs as the subject realizes that, in the process of identifying oneself with the Other to gain self-esteem, the gap between them cannot be narrowed. Their irreconcilable difference creates doubt about the completeness of the Other and makes the subject hesitant to conform easily.

The subject no longer feels a necessity to desire what the Other desires. The political capacity of homosexuals does not originate from pride fostered by identity politics, but from an acute tension of shame which conflicts with pride. Shame evokes the incompleteness of the existing system that produced pride, makes homosexuals doubt the desires of dominant ideology, and allows them to view with their own unique perspectives to contradictions of the power structure.

In *White Night*, Won-gyu's rage makes him focus on himself as a singular being before the abyss of absolute loneliness and leaves him with ineluctable shame. Even if he flees to Germany, he cannot escape from shame constantly making itself felt. Even a country that is supposedly more gay friendly than Korea does not offer him pride. Shame is, by nature, affect to be handled solely by the individual, not something to be dissolved by the community's organizational efforts to boost pride. Pride only temporarily veils shame within the boundaries of the gay community. Instead of trying to overcome his shame, Won-gyu visits Korea for a short period to find answers to existential questions engendered by that shame. These are fundamental questions to which the community can provide no answer but must be addressed by individual subjects, who existed before the formation of a

community. Won-gyu decides to forsake his obligatory pride and confront his long-suppressed sense of shame.

He purposefully attempts to have sex in a public place, which gay men perceive as a messy part of their subculture and needs to be eradicated. He also shows an immature attitude by taking personal revenge on the homophobic assailants who have already been punished by state authority.

Performing sexual acts with Tae-jun (Lee Yi-kyeong), a delivery man whom he meets for a one-night stand, Won-gyu re-awakens Tae-jun to the gay shame that he had forgotten. Tae-jun partakes in Won-gyu's revenge on his former attackers, not because he is faithful to the obligation of solidarity demanded by community members, but because he has been assimilated into Won-gyu's deep-seated shame.

Absolute Freedom or the State of Exception

The subversive desire of gays who stand upright as singular beings goes beyond the gay community and proceeds to the neoliberal state upon which the community is grounded. This process is a precondition for the reconstruction of a community based on a new social dimension. To this end, they reject the hierarchical social structure that enacts violence against minorities and harbor hostility to disciplinary institutions that empower the state, such as the military and schools. The process of disclosing the limitations of organizations institutionalized by the state is propelled by socialist and even anarchist aspirations. It is a reflection of a radical aspiration to build a queer utopia, deviating from all rules of the supra-communal state.

Of Leesong's films, *Talju* (Break Away, 2010) most clearly presents the anarchist practice of rejecting the military, which constrains the bodies of its members who yearn for emancipation from the state.[2] The film's characters, who are performing mandatory military service, attribute their

2. In fact, none of the characters in *Break Away* are explicitly gay; they just cannot bring themselves to adapt to the heteronormative masculinity. If their anti-heteronormative masculinity is taken into account, without attending solely to the presence of homosexual elements, they can in this sense be regarded as *queer* male subjects.

misfortunes in life to the military draft and, therefore, desert their unit with their weapons. Jae-hun (Lee Young-hun), a private, is unable to look after his cancer-stricken mother due to his military service, nor can he visit her on her death bed. He serves in the military to protect his family from an enemy invasion, but ironically, he cannot support his mother when she needs him the most. Corporal Min-jae (Jin Yi-han) thinks he missed the opportunity to earn a technician's certificate due to the military draft. Moreover, he is constantly sexually harassed by his commanding officer, a captain. Private Dong-min (Son Cheol-min), a new arrival to the unit, is on the list of soldiers-of-concern for making two desertion attempts at previous posts and is subjected to the abusive behavior of fellow soldiers. All of them decide to desert the army, each for their own reason.

For these soldiers, the idea instilled through discipline, that is, fulfilling one's military duty as a proper way of defending one's own family, is too simplistic. On the contrary, with their bodies restrained by the military, they cannot help the people they love when they are most in need. The army functions as an institution wherein the state strips the individual of freedom in the name of security. The state reinforces vigilance to eliminate elements that threaten the security of its members, which ultimately undermines their *freedom*. Zygmunt Bauman describes the history of the state as oscillating, like the swing of a pendulum, between the two values of freedom and security.

> . . . freedom and security, both equally pressing and indispensable, happen to be hard to reconcile without friction—and considerable friction most of the time. These two qualities are, simultaneously, complementary and incompatible; the likelihood of their falling into conflict has always been and will forever be as high as the need for their reconciliation. . . . Promoting security always calls for the sacrifice of freedom, while freedom can only be expanded at the expense of security. But security without freedom equals slavery . . . while freedom without security equals being abandoned and lost. (Bauman 2001, 19–20)

The state must inevitably maintain the precarious balance of security and freedom, keeping each in check as demanded by the times and by its

citizenry. Particularly in Korea, whose history is overdetermined by national division, the duty of military service is an exemplary case of restricting freedom in the name of security.

The military is not only an institution that suppresses freedom, but also a mechanism that tames its members into becoming conforming subjects. It suspends individual self-realization, regarding individual beliefs and aspirations as secondary to the safety of the nation. Within the boundaries of the military, even intimate homosexual acts are altered as a means to ensure and reinforce hierarchy. This reality is even harsher for those who have no money and no influence.

James C. Scott notes the negative influences that organizations institutionalized by the state exert on the formation of one's personal character. He argues,

> . . . under the most severe forms of "institutionalization" . . . such as prisons, asylums for the mentally ill, orphanages, workhouses for the poor, concentration camps, and old-age homes, there arises a personality disorder sometimes called "institutional neurosis." It is a direct result of long-term institutionalization itself. . . . [Because] they are cooperative and give no trouble, such institutional subjects may be seen by those in charge in a favorable light, as they adapt well to institutional routines. In the severest cases they may become *childish* and affect a characteristic posture and gait . . . and become withdrawn and inaccessible. These are institutional effects produced by the loss of contact with the outside world, the loss of friends and possessions, and the nature of the staff's power over them. (Scott 2014, 79; emphasis added)

In this sense, the military was not designed to defend and protect the people; instead, it keeps them ignorant and puerile in order to facilitate control and management of them. In *Break Away*, the military and the police, who are pursuing the deserters in a stand-off but do so as if coaxing and consoling children, ultimately persuade them to surrender. As Scott states, "the cumulative effects of life within the patriarchal family, the state and other hierarchical institutions produce a more passive subject who lacks the *spontaneous capacity for mutuality* so praised by both anarchist

and liberal democratic theorists" (Scott 2014, 80; emphasis added). Caught in the hierarchical order and closed off from the outside, the deserters are unable to engage in intimate human relations and became trapped inside themselves.

The arguments offered by the deserters to justify their actions actually seem unclear in terms of causation, and to some, their actions may be viewed as the result of a lack of civic awareness, wherein their personal desires take precedence over the public cause of the military. Others may argue that the deserters are too impatient, attributing the cause of their problems to their own personalities. In this view, their violation of state law and order is akin to the behavior of unruly children who act irrationally to satiate their own needs, despite reasonable and legitimate options for resolving their troubles within the bounds of regulations. In the film, Jae-hun has already filed a petition for hardship discharge, lacking a family member to care for his widowed and ailing mother. He only needs to wait for the bureaucratic procedures to take their course. Corporeal confinement is accompanied by temporal constraint. Yet, because his bond with his mother is so strong, he is too anxious to wait things out.

Min-jae could have reported his experience of sexual harassment to the authorities or asked for help, but his pride does not allow it. What he most fears is that his fellow soldiers will discover what happened. Therefore, when the fact is made known through media reports, he erupts in fury. Even if the captain were to be severely punished under military law, it is Min-jae who must deal with shame.

Shame is the affect which unveils the limits of the military system. Therefore, he must endure shame as unsatisfactory affects in the state's pursuit of security over freedom. Shame and other twisted and stagnated affects, the product of slavery that fails to provide autonomous, mutual relations, are the limits of institutions and which cannot be overcome by justifications of discipline.

In the end, they take the risk of being delinquent children who escape from the hierarchical system and wander the streets instead of remaining as meek and mild children who are cared for in exchange for compliance to the system. They want to cut the link between security and freedom and

thereby attain absolute freedom. It is not a planned choice with a future in mind, but an impulsive one made by those pushed to their limits. As they cannot be content with a mere improvement to an irrational system, desertion is their only inevitable choice. "Improvements" only create more regulations and obfuscates fundamental problems. Their breakaway is not a call to improve the system but a political strategy squarely opposing it. Thus, becoming delinquent children is an intentional reversion to immaturity and the illogical is a project aimed at confronting the adult world and an effort to invent another language of resistance.

Fleeing from their armed pursuers, the deserters escape to the mountains. There, hiding under bushes, Dong-min hears the voices of his father and younger brother broadcasted from the loudspeaker of the hovering helicopter which tries to persuade him to return to the barracks. His father also says that, if he turns himself in, the officers will pardon him, and he also promises not to reprimand him. Jae-hun urges Dong-min, who has injured his leg, to go back, reminding him of the presence of his family. Dong-min is shaken for a short while, but soon declines, rejecting even his family. Thinking of his father who served in the Marine Corps and who is taller than him, he says, "It is hell whether I am here or there." To him, the family, controlled by the authoritarian patriarch, is governed by the same logic as the army. Both senior military officers and his father only inflict pain, demanding a normative masculinity to which he cannot adapt. According to Scott (2014, 79), "The authoritarian and hierarchical characteristics of most contemporary lifeworld institutions—the family, the school, the factory, the office, the worksites" are, to reiterate a point mentioned above, prone to the danger of producing "a mild form of institutional neurosis." While these institutions have a relatively open public sphere, they produce "a quotidian institutional experience that is largely at cross purposes with the implicit assumptions behind this public sphere and encouraging and often rewarding caution, deference, servility, and conformity" (2014, 80). Dong-min has no place to rest because his family does not provide him with emotional intimacy and comfort. At dawn, Jae-hun and Min-jae descend the mountain, leaving Dong-min behind. In the end, Dong-min commits suicide by shooting himself on the mountain.

In *Break Away*, to refuse mandatory military duty is to negate the state. Desertion goes beyond the negation of the military institution and constitutes a metonomic gesture to become unfettered from state control. Because the military is a microcosm of the state, desertion is a rehearsal for the negation of the state. In his anger Min-jae says, "I want to set fire to this fucking country!" To be free from the state is equivalent to breaking bonds with all the institutional forms that it defines. Absolute freedom, which is attained by forsaking a safe life, is the cognitive starting point for creating a new form of community. As Bloch (1996, 16) points out, "Hope is the opposite of security. It is the opposite of naive optimism. The category of danger is always within it." They hope to overthrow all institutionalized organizations that converge in the supra-communal state and to build an entirely new community, a practice beginning with precarious freedom that accepts risk.

The deserters became unlawful bandits as soon as they leave the barracks armed. Those who were once contributing to the goal of national security now become a threat to that very security. The moment they cross the threshold of the barracks without permission, their trained bodies become targets of elimination to protect the nation. Other soldiers who were comrades a short while ago now fire at them without warning. Armed deserters are left in a *state of exception*, wherein they may be killed if necessary because they make innocent citizens shudder with anxiety. According to Giorgio Agamben (1998, 9), "At once excluding bare life from and capturing it within the political order, the state of exception actually constituted, in its very separateness, the hidden foundation on which the entire political system rested." Bare life is, he continues, "the life of *homo sacer* (sacred man), who may be killed and yet not sacrificed" (8). He "belongs to God in the form of unsacrifice ability and is included in the community in the form of being able to be killed" (82). Double exclusion from both human and divine law "opens a sphere of human action that is neither the sphere of *sacrum facere* nor of profane action" (82–83).

In fact, the deserters are in a temporary state of exception after the unvoluntarily joining the army and, in doing so, entrusted their lives to the state. This is because the Korean War has never formally ended, and is only currently subject to a ceasefire. On the pretext of protecting the nation, they

are constantly exposed to the possibility of being killed by the enemy. In other words, their inclusion in the supra-communal state is granted only if they accept that they are likely to die during military service for the nation; they are, in essence, bare life. Therefore, Korean adult males, all of whom must perform military service under a national draft system are potentially *homo sacer*. Because Korea is technically in a state of war, no one takes legal responsibility for soldiers; death in fighting the enemy. Of course, the deceased are mourned and honored for their noble sacrifice through state funerals. However, state funerals are secular rituals to confirm that they are homo sacer and only included in the supra-communal state if they are willing to sacrifice their lives for the nation.

Moreover, Korea does not recognize conscientious objection to military service. According to South Korea's Military Service Law, those who refuse to serve face imprisonment. Furthermore, the army defines homosexual acts as unlawful. Soldiers who engage in anal sex or other sexual misconduct may be imprisoned for up to two years in accordance with Article 92 of the Military Service Law. Even consensual homosexual acts between soldiers are punished under this law, which is a clear violation of human rights. In this fashion, the nearly invisible oppression of homosexuals in Korean society becomes more visible in the military. The army bares the real face of the state, which simultaneously excludes and includes those who demand religious and sexual freedom. The state ideology of framing military service duty as something sacred makes no sense. Therefore, in *Breakaway*, desertion transforms the soldiers into national security threats, while actively exposing their state of exception as a hidden basis of the national community.

Bare life struggles for recognition and to be included. In response to such demands, modern democracy has expanded freedoms and rights of bare life via positive biopolitics. As Agamben (1998, 121) suggests, "[T]he spaces, the liberties, and the rights won by individuals in their conflicts with central powers always simultaneously prepared a tacit but increasing inscription of individuals' lives within the state order, thus offering a new and more dreadful foundation for the very sovereign power from which they wanted to liberate themselves." In biopolitics, "the only real question to be decided was which form of organization would be best suited to the

task of assuring care, control, and use of bare life" (Agamben 1998, 122). The state's sweet gestures of hospitality to bare life discipline individuals to overlook the totalitarian elements of state power, which bound them to the state of exception in the first place and from which they desire to be freed. Even more covertly, it might be that their state of exception is still in progress under the care and control of biopolitics.

In *Break Away*, desertion is a kind of warning action. The deserters show no interest in improving the conditions of military service or the military system itself; instead, they express the state of exception through their entire bodies. However, such an active visualization of their state of exception increases the probability of being removed by state authority. Just at that moment, the biopolitics of the state is transformed into thanatopolitics. All threats shadowing the deserters are inevitable risks they must take to pursue absolute freedom.

Social Freedom for Each Other

The ultimate goal of anarchists is not to escape the control of the state as much as they can as a way of increasing the sheer amount of freedom; instead, their goal is to free themselves from fake freedom which is marred by lies and deceit. According to Bauman (2010, 72), anarchist theorists assume that "the 'tough' kernel of reality which keeps the masses at bay and prevents their creative self-realization is the political violence of the state." These theorists hold an idealistic belief that, if one were to remove the state, "The long-contained energy of the people will explode, shaping freely the contours of the new, unfettered, and just society." Anarchism receives nourishment from the socialist ideal, which "considered the establishment of political equality as a means and a first step to the incorporation of the totality of individual life into a community of equal men," and "aimed at the reconstruction of a community-type integration on the societal level" (Bauman 2010, 43). Socialist thought concurs with the anarchist current of "generating justice and equality 'from the bottom up,' through the spontaneous, elementary activity of individuals freed from all shackles of

dependency and submission" (55). It highlights "the belief in the natural modesty of human needs, the priority given to intimate, face-to-face relations, abhorrence of supra-community government, and emphasis on freedom in the liberty-equality dyad" (55). We should enter into affective relations freely to release pent-up energies contained within individuals, which is a prerequisite to create a free and fair society. Their trust in primal encounters must be recovered in order to realize this ideal freedom.

New freedom begins with the ethical recovery of personal relationships. This is the concrete anarchist destination that Leesong's films pursue. They strike a chord with *queer anarchism*, which strives to overcome the impasse of existing anarchism. According to Farhang Rouhani, queer anarchism was created through "a radical confluence with queer politics in their critique of identity politics, concern for ethics of relationships, and advocacy of practicing utopia through experimentation" (2013, 80). While "much of anarchist politics does focus very much on the 'public' sphere, targeting capitalism and the State," queer anarchism as ethics of relationships "encourages a more explicit turn to queer and feminist politics and to issues of the 'private' sphere, including 'personal' relationships, sexuality and emotions" (Heckert 2005, 247–248).[3]

An ethical approach to relationality in queer anarchism leads to new ideas about freedom. The liberal concept of freedom defined by modern democracy, in which individual freedom is guaranteed as long as it does not harm others, is limited under the legal regulation of the state. Axel Honneth

3. In addition, discourse on queer anarchism can be expanded via post-anarchism, which keeps its distance from the ontological and humanistic basis of classic anarchism. Post-anarchism denotes "a move beyond the ontological terrain of classical anarchism, particularly, its organicist vision of social life and its essentialist conception of the human subject" (Newman 2011, 48). This is for "an overarching ethical injunction against the ideological fantasies of representation inherent to anarchist discourses that have been imagined as positive ontological foundations or systems. . . . If anarchist social philosophy is to remain relevant today, anarchists will need to embrace that which has historically distinguished their tradition from other social and political traditions—anarchism has always been distinguished from other political traditions, especially Marxist and Liberal, on the basis of its commitment to an anti-authoritarian ethos—in a word, anarchists will need to reconstitute anarchism as an ethical discourse relevant for the contemporary world" (Rousselle 2012, 239).

elucidates the problems of this liberal model of freedom in the following

> . . . Subjects are free to pursue their aims without any hindrance. This freedom is limited, in the first place, only by the condition that the consequences of our actions must not impinge on the freedom of others. Therefore, liberalism places the general guarantee of individual freedom in the context of a legal order ensuring that individuals can act without interference as long as they do not interfere with the equal claim of others to enjoy this same freedom. (Honneth 2017, 21)

Even under the neoliberal economic system, that freedom has become the freedom of consumption based on the exploitation of others.

We should reconsider freedom in relationships to save freedom, which has lost its validity. Furthermore, we should also reconsider relationships in freedom. In other words, if we need a community which is supposed to replace the state, we must aim for a freedom that enhances the relational capacity of the community. *Social freedom*, which Honneth advocates as a reinvention of socialism opposed to the liberal concept of freedom, provides an important guide to freedom and relationships. In social freedom,

> Freedom—the free realization of one's own intentions and aims cannot be realized by individuals at all, but only by a collective of the kind. . . . The collective only becomes a bearer of individual freedom if the community manages to instill certain modes of behavior in its members, thus institutionalizing that behavior. First and foremost, this includes *mutual sympathy, such that each person is concerned about the self-realization of the others* for non-instrumental reasons. . . . If subjects practice mutual sympathy, they will necessarily treat each other as equals and thus refrain from exploiting or instrumentalizing each other in any way. (Honneth 2017, 24; emphasis added)

This idea suggests rethinking "freedom in the liberty-equality dyad," as Bauman emphasizes above—that is, freedom in equal collective relations.

In this conception of social freedom, "Human beings cannot realize

their individual freedom in the matters most important to them on their own. The satisfaction of generally shared needs depends on intersubjective relationships that are only 'free' under certain normative conditions." Therefore, "The members of society must not merely act 'with each other' but '*for each other*,' for this is the only way they can satisfy their shared needs freely" (Honneth 2017, 27–28; emphasis added). In realizing shared aims, one can overcome the togetherness compelled by the state; and in social freedom for each other, one can create a free community that is also a *social community*.

Honneth (2017, 28–29) explains that "individual subjects can realize their capacity for freedom as members of a free social community, i.e. a community in which reciprocal fulfillment of generally shared intentions is without compulsion and thus takes place in an atmosphere of mutual sympathy." This statement offers an epistemic turn wherein individual subjects can attain real freedom only if they act for others who used to be viewed as hampering their own freedom. In social freedom, interactions with others move beyond the limited and formal relations of proprieties and solicitude on the premise that the freedom of others is not infringed upon; it also transcends the competitive relations of materialized freedom distributed differentially depending on economic capability. In other words, interactions come into play as opportunities to become deeply involved in the life of one another, all in the context of equal self-realization.

As such, social freedom provides a way toward absolute freedom, which the deserters in *Break Away* pursue at the risk of their lives. After arriving in Seoul, Jae-hun parts with Min-jae and goes to meet So-yeong (So Yoo-jin), a female friend who worked with him at a supermarket before being drafted. She decides to join Jae-hun in his flight, as does Min-jae. Escaping the high-alert pursuit of soldiers and police officers, they flee as far as they can. One consolation to the hardship of their flight is that they are no longer emotionally isolated from each other. It is, indeed, their shared longing for unfettered relationships that allows them to endure intense suffering. Transcending the restricted human relations of the military, they finally experience autonomous, mutual relations and view each other as part of a social community. Instead of the government and its rules, they have

one another and mutual sympathy for their scars. In their relationships, they encounter freedom for each other as social freedom which, albeit immanently precarious, replaces freedoms granted as a reward only after the fulfillment of a state-enforced duty.

Relational Freedom and Affective Anarchism

The deserters signify the recovery of autonomous control over their own bodies which had been subordinated by the state. Needless to say, this autonomy has to embrace the fear of death that invariably follows the deserter. In the sense of voluntarily choosing the dangerous state of exception, the body of deserters shares something with homosexuals.

> According to Foucault, the body of gay is constantly, even in an infinitesimal degree, in the "state of exception." Leaving the body in the state of exception against governmentalization and, under its strategy, both normativization and normalization fixed in the body; it is not based on desire which is inseparably related with normalization but on pleasure which never draws the shape of subject, and then desubjectifies it to the extent possible. (Sakai 2011, 370)

In order to continue to remain in a state of exception should, with strong will, "dedicate all their efforts to be gay." To be gay is to incessantly resist the desire of normalization, including the heteronormativity of government, while breaking away from the fixation of subjectivity with all one's might.

As Judith Butler (2011, 98) asserts, "When law becomes an instrument of state violence . . . then one has to engage forms of 'disobedience' in order to call for another order of law. In this way, one has to become what Althusser called a 'bad subject' or a 'provisional anarchist,' in order to unbind the law from the process of subjectivation." Becoming a bad subject, therefore, means desubjectification. The main characters in Leesong's films become provisional anarchists to negate the government's violent law and order, using it to formulate new subjects.

Queer anarchism, which prioritizes the private realm, is no different from relational anarchism, which galvanizes free affective relations. Subjects who oppose the institutionalization of the state find a political destination in intimate relations. Relational anarchism means to liberate the intimate sphere from any type of compulsion. For Honneth, this freedom constitutes a condition for the emergence of another world, or the formation of a community of solidarity. As he writes, "For the sphere of love, marriage, and the family, the realization of social freedom means realizing new forms of relationships in which the mutual care promised by these relations is only possible if the members involved can freely articulate their actual needs and interests with the aid of the others" (Honneth 2017, 89). Therefore, "only if all members of society can satisfy the needs they share with all others—physical and emotional intimacy, economic independence, and political self-determination—by relying on the sympathy and support of their partners in interaction will our society have become social in the full sense of the term" (107–108). To dismantle the community normalized by the supra-communal state and build an alternative community from the bottom up, we should achieve mutuality in the intimate sphere on the level of *what is social*.

Stevphen Shukaitis finds the political capacity of relational anarchism in affective anarchism. He claims:

> Affective resistance starts from the realization that one can ultimately never separate questions of the *effectiveness* of political organizing from concerns without its *affectiveness*. They are inherently and inevitably intertwined. The social relations we create every day prefigure the world to come, not just in a metaphorical sense, but also quite literally: they truly are the emergence of that other world embodied in the constant motion and interaction of bodies—the becoming-tomorrow of the already-here and now. (Shukaitis 2011, 46–47)

In *Break Away*, the desertion is sublimated as an affective act of resistance by bare life in order to have one's political voice be heard. This voice becomes a collective action driven not by individual madness but by intimate relations based on mutual sympathy for one another's sufferings. The characters in Leesong's other films become provisional queer anarchists like theose in

Break Away who stand up together—not individually—against unjust state oppression. Sharing the same yearnings, they *break away* from all forms of institutionalization. State-led institutions undermine the affective resistance inherent in intimate relationships they have or need to build. They defend the intimate realm against the control of the state.

In *White Night*, Won-gyu"s personal revenge is not based on disappointment or distrust of the judiciary, which sentenced the assailants to light punishments; instead, it emerges as a result of the realization that the exercise of public authority cannot be a fundamental solution to eradicate homophobia. This predicament is borne out by the fact that the offenders still swagger around brazenly in Jongno. Harsh punishment as a strategy for preventing hate crimes, such as longer prison terms, only unnecessarily increases state violence and physical control over people's bodies.[4] As David Graeber (2004, 72–73) writes, "(T)he sure-fire way to simplify social arrangements, to ignore the incredibly complex play of perspectives passions, insights, desires, and mutual understandings that human life is really made of, is to make a rule and threaten to attack anyone who breaks it," and this violence is the "basis of the state." When considered in the context of *White Night*, resolving the problem by relying on government authority contradicts Won-gyu's anarchist desire to be freed from state surveillance.

Won-gyu asks Tae-jun to stay with him overnight so that Tae-jun can prevent him from putting his thoughts of revenge into action. Won-gyu's vengeance is not an individual decision, but one entrusted to the empathy of Tae-jun. Unable to overcome his vindictiveness, however, Won-gyu eventually pursues the assailants. When he encounters them, he resorts to

4. In the United States, LGBT groups have raised their voices for the need to reinforce punishment in the wake of a series of hate crimes. They have established a foundation, garnered a sizable amount of funding, and succeeded in having the related bill passed. However, some have expressed a negative view as follows: "(w)hat hate crime laws do is expand and increase the power of the same unjust and corrupt criminal punishment system. Evidence demonstrates that hate crime legislation, like other criminal punishment legislation, is used unequally and improperly against communities that are already marginalized in our society. These laws increase the already staggering incarceration rates of people of color, poor people, queer people and transgender people based on a system that is inherently and deeply corrupt." (Sylvia Rivera Law Project 2014, 182)

violence almost by accident, compelled by overpowering emotions. Trying to help him, Tae-jun partakes in Won-gyu's revenge before he knows what he is doing, hitting those whom he has never met and for whom he has no reason to feel vengeful. But this outburst of violence is not an eye-for-an-eye, a tooth-for-a tooth type of action; it is not meant to inflict fatal physical injury or psychological trauma. Nor is it the fulfillment of a duty to serve a just cause of the gay community, such as the eradication of hate crimes. Moreover, it transgresses the rule of law prescribed by the government and could be labeled as an irrational hate crime perpetrated against hate-crime offenders. Therefore, to Tae-jun, the violence is not a punitive act against homophobes; rather it is intended to protect Won-gyu and done out of sympathy for Won-gyu's scars.

The consequence of hate crimes against homosexuals is neither intensified state surveillance and punishment, nor increased solidarity and political capacity of the gay community to emphasize *togetherness*. Rather, it draws homosexuals into an intimate sphere, where they ethically cope with homophobia freed from all forms of coercion. Violence originating in the intimate sphere has the meaning of affective resistance. Won-gyu is not free even in Germany, a place supposedly free of hate crimes. This is because true freedom is not secured by one's country of residence. With the appearance of a fellow with whom he can share intimate exchanges, Won-gyu finds that social freedom is possible only when people are dedicated to one another.

Meanwhile, *No Regret* takes marriage as an arena of forced intimacy. Jae-min tries to break up with his fiancée Hyeon-u (Kim Jeong-hwa) due to his love for Su-min. But Jae-min's mother pushes him, saying, "I'm not so ignorant as to know nothing about sexuality. I don't care if you sleep with men. But you still have to marry her." This exchange implicitly reveals that marriage is intended not for interpersonal love but for the economic interests of the two families concerned. While Jae-min wants to be honest with his desire as a gay man, Hyeon-u berates him, saying, "Don't be so selfish." In a capitalist society, giving up marriage may be seen as a selfish act in the sense that it means neglecting one's duty as a member of society who devotes oneself to the efficient expansion of capital and the ascension of one's rank up the social ladder. Eventually, Jae-min decides to part with Su-min and

go forward with his marriage. Love is set aside as a secondary matter in a marriage of convenience. Perhaps, he can be accused of marrying a woman even though he is gay for money, not for love. We are tied to the moral idea that marriage is a divine union between men and women who are supposed to be heterosexual and that the driving force behind it is love.

Regardless of what kind of marriage it is, from an anarchist praxis, marriage itself is rejected for two reasons. What is at issue is not a loveless marriage, but the institution of marriage itself. Firstly, marriage brings the state into personal relations. There is no need to resort to a feminist argument (i.e., the history of marriage as an institution that harms women in coalition with patriarchy and capitalism) to reject it; marriage is unacceptable because it collaborates with government to reproduce corrupt social structures.[5] Second, marriage, above all, violates the infinite capacity of love that it presupposes. Early on, Bertrand Russell (1970, 128) conveyed that "love is an anarchist force which, if it is left free, will not remain within the bounds set by law or custom." Expressing pity for love trapped in the institution of marriage, the anarchist Emma Goldman (2013, 128–129) stated, "Love, the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful moulder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with that poor little State and Church-begotten weed, marriage?" She continues, "whether love lasts but one brief span of time or for eternity, it is the only creative, inspiring, elevating basis for a new race, new world" (130). As shown here, love and marriage are, by their very nature, incompatible. Hence, Leesong does not express regret that love takes a backseat in the marriage of Jae-min and Hyeon-u. To a gay anarchist, marriage, at any rate, cannot be the destination of love.

A married gay has no right to love in an anarchist world because a subject subordinated to institutionalized marriage eats away at love's capacity for affective resistance. In *No Regret*, Jae-min knows this axiom well, but

5. As Jack Halberstam argues (2012, 102), "... [n]ot content to slip smoothly into already existing corrupt and bankrupt institutions, radical queers still hold on to the idea that something lies 'beyond marriage' ... and, moreover, that human difference should flourish not in the rounding out of existing structures but in the creative invention of new ones."

cannot persuade Su-min to understand his unavoidable situation and to allow him to keep loving him even after his marriage. Though Su-min quits working at the gay host bar out of love for Jae-min, he cannot beg him to stay, saying, "I'm not so naïve as not to understand how important marriage is to you because you come from a rich family. Even so, I don't want you to leave me." Jae-min's marriage for money is, in fact, on par with Su-min's work as a prostitute. The reason why prostitution is criticized is not because it commodifies sex and undermines human moral values, but because the hierarchical physical relationship imposed by capital blocks the political organization from an affective dimension. Prostitution is no different from marriage in terms of being dominated by a similar economic logic.

Queer Dance for the Utopian Body

Unfortunately, Gi-tae (Kim Jae-heung), a soldier in *Namjjok-euro ganda* (Going South, 2012), has no one to join him in his flight from the military, unlike the characters in *Break Away*. Gi-tae and his senior soldier and lover in the military, Jun-yeong (Chun Shin-hwan), had made a mutual promise to travel somewhere in the south after completing their military service. But Jun-yeong, who was discharged ahead of Gi-tae, suddenly stops contacting him, and Gi-tae desperately visits him during his final army furlough and before his own discharge. Upon meeting, Jun-yeong insists their relationship must end and begins to drive Gi-tae back to his barracks. While the army was a horrible place to Jun-yeong, he finds civilian society even worse. He considers it nothing but a battlefield where people must struggle ferociously to find work and make a living. Already having a girlfriend and trying hard to land a stable job, he has been tamed as an ordinary member of heteronormative society.

While in the military, Jun-yeong was faithful to the tinge of homosexual desire within him, but now he denies Gi-tae's assertion that their relationship was based on love. In protest, he responds that their relationship developed out of loneliness and was nothing more than "rolling in a brothel." In fact, his sexual identity is not important in the film. If he is straight, the army—

a closed group of men—is a sexually deviant place where he can protect his narcissistic self, even after making love with men. If this is the case, Gi-tae misunderstood Jun-yeong and had the wrong idea about their relationship. Accordingly, he refuses to return to the barracks because, to him, it is now a place filled with faked intimacy, meant only to console loneliness. On the other hand, if Jun-yeong is gay, it means that the world beyond the military is so oppressive for gays that one is pressured to act and mimic heterosexual life with one's true desires suppressed. Therefore, Gi-tae also refuses to return to an everyday life because it would mean becoming just like Jun-yeong. Gi-tae has nowhere to return.

Gi-tae secretly feeds Jun-yeong some sleeping pills. As Jun-yeong falls asleep, Gi-tae takes over driving the car and proceeds in the opposite direction of his barracks. He applies red lipstick to the lips of a sleeping Jun-yeong and takes pictures of him. In the film, lipstick signifies gay shame inscribed on the body of Jun-yeong who has been completely assimilated into heteronormative society. It is an exaggerated and externalized image of femininity, or a stereotypical expression of *gayness* which Jun-yeong desires to escape. When Jun-yeong wakes up, Gi-tae proposes they go to southward together, but Jun-yeong flatly rejects this proposal. Then Gi-tae asks him to copulate one last time, and they proceed to engage in anal sex in the car. Jun-yeong, who had denied his love until this point, feels Gi-tae's penis in his anus and moans in extasy.

Agamben (2005, 110) notes that shame is the "most proper emotive tonality of subjectivity." He writes, "For there is certainly nothing shameful in a human being who suffers on account of sexual violence; but if he takes pleasure in his suffering violence, if he is moved by his passivity—if, that is, auto-affection is produced—only then can one speak of shame." That is, shame derives only from the masochist, noncomforming attitude of not viewing violence as suffering or discipline but as pleasure. The Greeks "clearly separated, in the homosexual relation, the active subject (the *erastes*) and the passive subject (the *eromenos*) and, for the sake of the ethics of the relation, demanded that the eromenos not experience pleasure" (110–111). This is because for the eromenos who is penetrated, shame accompanies any pleasure derived from sexual experience. Here lies the presumption that the

anus is not an organ for sexual pleasure. But anal sex reminds Jun-yeong that the anus was and still could be such an organ, which incites shame by desubjectifying him.

Gi-tae clandestinely takes out a camera and takes a photo of Jun-yeong while he experiences an orgasm. A series of photos taken of his face—from the one in which he has thick lipstick to this one—are images of gay shame that he had forgotten. Jun-yeong chases Gi-tae to snatch the camera while Gi-tae flees desperately to keep it, and they tussle over the camera in the mud. When finally Jun-yeong takes the camera, Gi-tae bursts out crying. In a last-ditch effort, he shouts at Jun-yeong, "You had a hardon! You coward!" in an attempt to awaken him to his vestigial shame.

But Jun-yeong still adamantly refuses to go with Gi-tae. Losing the momentum of affective resistance, Gi-tae decides to go southward alone, but the car is running out of gas. At an impasse, Gi-tae suddenly blurts out, "I'm gonna live a life of fun by dancing." He exits the car and turns up the volume on the radio. After saluting Jun-yeong who walks away in the distance, Gi-tae starts dancing like a possessed man, drinking from a bottle of beer. A similar scene appears in *Break Away*. Feeling sorry for Min-jae, who seems to have no alternative but to flee the police and soldiers pursuing him, So-yeong asks him, "Are you going to continue this running away?" All he can do under the circumstances is to continue his flight from the restraints and control of the state. With a half-empty *soju* bottle in hand, he stands up, proceeds to the stolen truck, and turns on the music. The speakers blast Epaksa (also Yi Baksa, which means Dr. Lee in Korean)'s exciting techno trot medley songs. Min-jae dances freestyle to the music, gyrating his whole body randomly under the illumination of the car's headlights. The dance movements are not very beautiful. He dances away, "not because the whole images he creates with body movements are beautiful," but "simply because it [the dance] satisfies the impulsive gestures of the body" (Baek 2015, 89). These moves are the floundering gestures of one trying to stay afloat as he sinks into the abyss of the world.

When it is impossible to go forward, backward, and even to stay where they are, they flee to the primitive *utopian body*. According to Foucault (2006, 233), the body is a utopia in nature. The body, "the zero point of the

world . . . is at the heart of the world, this small utopian kernel from which I dream, I speak, I proceed, I imagine, I perceive things in their place, and I negate them also by the indefinite power of utopias I imagine." Foucault (2006, 232) states, "the body of the dancer," which is "dilated along an entire space that is both exterior and interior to it," plays "its own utopian power against itself, allowing all the space of religious and sacred, all the space of the other world, all the space of the counter world, to enter into the space that is reserved for it." Dancing freely, they focus on the utopian power of the body. Through the power of their gestures, the utopia they crave has arrived in the here and now.

This random dance is different from the group dance in the same-sex wedding scenes at the end of Kimjo's *Two Weddings and a Funeral*, in which the characters dance as a choreographed group. The group dance represents a nostalgic yearning for communal integration. It is also different from the type of dance easily spotted in Itaewon gay clubs, where muscled gay men dance in groups, their upper bodies bare, as shown in Kimjo's short film, *One Night*. Their dance is composed of nothing but narcissistic gestures meant to flaunt their masculine allure. According to José Esteban Muñoz (2009, 79), such dancers "become their own fetish of masculinity in that they hide the conditions of possibility that lead to their becoming butch."

By contrast, *queer dance*, in which the dancer "performs the powerful interface between femininity and masculinity," works as "a counterfetish, elucidating the real material conditions of our gender and desire" (Muñoz 2009, 79). That is one of the resisting functions of queer dance. It does not, upon representation, scatter aimlessly into the air. It flows on ephemerally, but nonetheless, it makes delicate cracks in the heteronormative world.

> Queer dance is hard to catch, and it is meant to be hard to catch—it is supposed to slip through the fingers and comprehension of those who would use knowledge against us. But it matters and takes on a vast material weight for those of us who perform or draw important sustenance from performance. Rather than dematerialize, dance rematerializes. Dance, like energy, never disappears; it is simply transformed. Queer dance, after the live act, does not just expire. The ephemeral does not equal unmateriality. It is more nearly about another understanding of what matters. It matters

> to get lost in dance or to use dance to get lost: lost from the evidentiary logic of heterosexuality. (Muñoz 2009, 81)

In short, queer dance dislocates itself from all formalized dances and, unlike other dances, it does not readily disappear. The counter-world that the utopian body dreams through dance takes on a political concreteness of an anti-heteronormative world.

Queer dance is the only outlet left for Gi-tae, who has lost his capacity for relation-based affective resistance, which is necessary to unfetter oneself from state control. Luckily, he has his body, the center of the world, which he can move freely. Returning to the utopian body, he shakes it, trying to break free from the existing order. Losing himself in dance or dancing to lose himself, he no longer feels familiar with the here and now. The ephemeral free-floating dance leaves the audience with a chilling and odd feeling. This uncanny unfamiliarity is an affective starting point for the advent of a new world. In a long shot, a body silhouette of Gi-tae is seen as he dances alone in the tunnel. The film ends with the camera slowly tracking out, blurring the border between Gi-tae's body and the backdrop. Like the film, the world thus sinks into a utopian body.

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