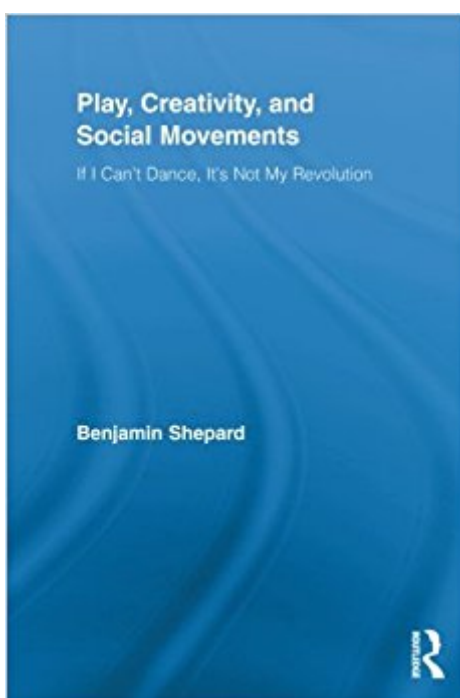


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Play, Creativity, And Social Movements: If I Can't Dance, Itâ€™s Not My Revolution (Routledge Advances In Sociology)



Synopsis

As we play, we step away from stark reality to conjure up new possibilities for the present and our common future. Today, a new cohort of social activists are using it to create social change and reinvent democratic social relations. In contrast to work or routine, play must be free. To the extent that it is, it infuses a high-octane burst of innovation into any number of organizational practices and contexts, and invites social actors to participate in a low-threshold, highly democratic process of collaboration, based on pleasure and convivial social relations. Despite the contention that such activities are counterproductive, movements continue to put the right to party on the table as a part of a larger process of social change, as humor and pleasure disrupt monotony, while disarming systems of power. Through this book, Shepard explores notions of play as a social movement activity, considering some of the meanings, applications and history of the concept in relation to social movement groups ranging from Dada and Surrealism to Situationism, the Yippies to the Young Lords, ACT UP to the Global Justice, anti-gentrification, community and anti-war movements of recent years.

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"No longer the province of party hacks and budding politicians, social movements are today joyful and erotic eruptions. While Americans may be aware of explosive convulsions abroad, domestic histories of self-directed opposition are often hidden suppressed. Benjamin Shepard gives flesh to

the zeitgeist of joyful opposition in the US, recounting playful episodes of autonomously organized resistance to the forces of seriousness and domination." - George Katsiaficas, activist and author of *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* "Play, Creativity, and Social Movements is entertaining and inspiring. The book is a glimpse into the funny antics of the past, and the continuing possibilities of playful social protest. Shepard has spent his life as a tireless activist and prolific scholar; his fifth book offers a history of the role of play in social movements rich with all of the passion, dedication and sense of humor of those who play for social justice. Shepard's book is a must read for those who know that 'there is joy in changing the world' (33)."- Carmen L. McClish , University of the West Indies, St. Augustine "A historically and theoretically sophisticated study of play and humor in the service of political goals... Believing that politics is too funny to be left to the politicians and comedy too serious to be left to the professional funny-men, Benjamin Shepard takes us on a hilarious tour of the streets and parks of America to show us what a little imagination and a outsized sense of fun, mixed in with just enough courage, can do in the struggle for a more human world. Highly recommended!"

Benjamin Shepard, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Human Service at the New York School of Technology/City University of New York.

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