

narratives, and social and literal death—the structural violence of Whiteness is often apparent and felt. Yet, such oppressive conditions are rarely investigated as they manifest and transmute in space through the lens of Euro-American theater dance. This is why Stanger’s book is vital—it unsettles the ways that many people think, write, teach, and even create Euro-American theater dance. It unsettles the very understandings on which the Euro-American world exists, as humans know it, move through it, dance within it and attempt to move beyond it.

“Dances Done on Bones”

Tria Blu Wakpa

University of California, Los Angeles

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FUNDING BODIES: FIVE DECADES OF DANCE MAKING AT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

by Sarah Wilbur. 2021. Middletown: CT: Wesleyan University Press. 296 pp., 18 photos. \$26.95 paper. ISBN: 9780819580528. \$95.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780819580511. doi:10.1017/S0149767722000377

Do National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) procedures impact choreographic trends in the United States and how might an embodied, even choreographic, analysis of public policy help shift stagnant power dynamics? Dance studies scholars continue to expand the definition of choreography past its utilitarian origins, and Sarah Wilbur is no exception. Wilbur’s

2021 powerful book, *Funding Bodies: Five Decades of Dance Making at the National Endowment for the Arts*, is a timely release in the aftermath of the Trump administration’s plan to eviscerate the NEA. But, as Wilbur skillfully reveals through exceptional detail, the attempts to manipulate the federal agency and its relatively marginal appropriations are in fact the core choreographies that form the institution’s identity and influence “dance making” in the United States (3).

Funding Bodies deftly tackles fifty years of the agency’s activities in three fifteen-year sections from 1965 to 2016, filling a scholarly gap in dance history and arts policy research, as the first monograph about the NEA Dance Program. The publication adds to a series of recent, discipline-specific investigations into the NEA, including Michael Sy Uy’s *Ask the Experts: How Ford, Rockefeller, and the NEA Changed American Music* (2020), and Donna M. Binkiewicz’s, *Federalizing the Muse: United States Arts Policy and the National Endowment for the Arts, 1965-1980* (2004). Wilbur supports her readers through the administrative history of the NEA by deploying the three “hegemonic ‘verbs’ of dance authorization:” leveraging, touring, and incorporating (23). It allows her to frame and analyze each period from a theoretical perspective, but at the same time to build upon previous scholarship on the relationships between the body, dance, and politics, such as Randy Martin’s seminal text from 2003, *Critical Moves* (23). Wilbur’s book also aligns with and credits Edgar Villanueva’s work (2018) on decolonizing philanthropy that scrutinizes and intervenes in philanthropy’s historic enforcement of eurocentric aesthetics and imbalance of financial equity. Undoubtedly, *Funding Bodies’* presence in the dance history and theory canon will impact young dance makers’ understanding and interaction with the nonprofit dance ecology by providing insight into the political moves that continue to shape careers, a goal supported by the book’s availability for free via the Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem program and the Creative Commons.

The book’s focus on the NEA’s structural shifts is scaffolded by an empathetic, materialistic engagement with archival evidence and frank testimony from interlocutors; the author’s dynamic and embodied descriptions offer a fast-paced, sensorial, and humanist approach to her

research and writing. For instance, Wilbur tells the story of a staff member who “escaped under her desk” in an effort to resist data collection in the 1980s (96), and describes panel proceedings as “verbal struggles, accented by the subtle swishing sounds of thumbs rifling through pages” (143). Through Wilbur’s text we see the late ‘Baba’ Chuck Davis, a renowned figure in the African dance diaspora, lead panelists “dancing down the halls of the Nancy Hanks Center” in his endeavor to re-choreograph the perceived fundability of African and African American diaspora dance companies (144). Notable is Wilbur’s commitment to view individuals and entities as equal contributors to the dance ecosystem, naming them “dance makers,” or the ‘bodies’ that “[endow] political legibility to artists and to the armies of people who mobilize on dance’s behalf” (3). Through this move, her research generously names and involves a diverse readership, thus increasing the book’s appeal past academic circles. As *Funding Bodies* clarifies that a performance analysis of the NEA Dance Program was overdue, Wilbur’s lively summary culminates in a succinct, actionable question for her readership: does the NEA need saving?

In the first chapter spanning from 1965 to 1980, Wilbur documents how pre-and early NEA funding activities reinforced entrenched cultural, regional, and classed assumptions about grant-worthy dance activities. By documenting the origins of the NEA and its attempts to mirror existing philanthropic endeavors at the time, Wilbur raised crucial questions about the NEA’s assumed norms for grantees. The first dance makers with authorial power for the NEA were sourced from already dominant portions of the dance field, ballet, concert dance, and coastal elites. The infrastructural and funding result? A “boom” of nonprofits maintained by a group of cultural leaders that privileged specific geographies (23), and increased funding for already established artists such as “Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, José Limón, Alwin Nikolais, Anna Sokolow, Paul Taylor, and Antony Tudor” through the predecessor of the Individual Artist Fellowship (34). This critique of both infrastructural and artistic forms remains ever-green as equitable funding practices are at the forefront of twenty-first-century philanthropy.

In the second chapter, Wilbur dives beneath the culture wars and public commentary that

dominated the period from 1981 to 1996, bringing to light the micropolitical moves of NEA’s administrators, panelists, and “citizen advisors” (91). *Funding Bodies* celebrates the assumed unspectacular nature of administrative paper pushing. With her embodied language and intimate access to interlocutors, Wilbur breathes life into otherwise mundane processes. The chapter made clear the impact of Reagan-era economic strategies as the agency instigated top-down data-driven efficacy investigations and slowed the previously growing annual appropriations, thus destabilizing and decentering the NEA within the federal government (95). Despite internal resistance, arts-illiterate lawyers made decisions, staff adopted governmental dress, and several landmark studies reached publication. These micropolitical choreographies were performed in the name of increased legibility, data-driven decisions, and state-sponsored surveillance. Internal concerns about grantees’ racial diversity and external pressures to respond to the emerging AIDS crisis surfaced in this chapter. Wilbur credits the Diversity Task Force members of that era with laying the “blueprints for philanthropic change” (157). However, I question whether the actions Wilbur recounts accelerated institutional change at an adequate pace, or managed to achieve long-term sustainability, considering the current ongoing push for financial equity.

In Wilbur’s final chapter, she addressed the entanglement of the NEA with presidential and congressional-level dance makers from 1997 to 2016, thus from the turn of the millennia to the Trump administration, which was a fifteen-year period driven by neoliberal policies. Wilbur argues that the most contemporary version of the NEA is one of economic worthiness. Her assessment that dance makers are increasingly considered entrepreneurs who perform their creative flexibility in an attempt to beautify widespread government disinvestment in infrastructure falls in line with other scholars’ conclusions, such as Paul Bonin-Rodriguez (2015) and Anusha Kedhar (2020). Three examples Wilbur cites are ArtsREACH, a collaboration with the Department of Education, the National College Choreography Institute, which incidentally entrenched previous NEA Fellows into academia, and Operation Defense, which was co-sponsored by the Department of Defense, Veteran Affairs, and Boeing Corporation. As

Wilbur's book proves, the "agency's turn toward art as a tool to grow the Gross Domestic Product" was driven by populism and results in the rise of creative placemaking, a practice now widely supported by both public and private philanthropic efforts (165). As a cultural producer-turned-researcher-organizer myself, the evidence Wilbur presents supports my own inevitable performance of a multi-hyphenate artist-producer-researcher, constantly reconfiguring my career to balance personal artistic interests and income.

Wilbur acknowledges the monograph inherently prioritizes dance makers and the work that succeeds under the NEA's constantly rearranging agenda. Thus, the book showcases predominantly white, eurocentric accounts, but Wilbur counteracts this perspective, explaining the agency's role as a shaper of cultural norms, and offers suggestions for change that center on relationships, mutualism, and a redistribution of wealth. This commendable vocalization of inequity devalues results-based policy and refocuses the NEA's core themes away from economic value, or financial legibility as defined by congressional dance makers. I wonder if the book would have benefited from additional insight into the interpersonal relationships with legislators built through advocacy efforts by individuals and organizations. How does the congressional appropriations process impact overall funding of the NEA and therefore the artists the agency engages? I also desire more historical insight into the how the congressional appropriations process for the NEA and the tax code intersect. If the Internal Revenue Service could be considered a partner "funding body," as it provides nonprofits ample, passive financial support through tax breaks, how might a reconfiguration of the NEA change economic patterns in the arts? However, as a historical book focused on a specific time period and interlocutors, *Funding Bodies* could not address all the policy mechanisms at play in the nonprofit dance field, but Wilbur generously sets up the field for future research opportunities in this area.

Funding Bodies is a call to action. Wilbur's detailing of the artistic and administrative "leveraging, touring, and incorporating" maneuvers that created the current iteration of the National Endowment for the Arts' Dance Program hopes to inspire her fellow dance makers to contribute to shifting arts policy (23). I

respond to the call to action in the ways that I can as a citizen, advocate, and artist-producer, but I maintain a level of caution regarding how much a United States government entity can do for its people. Throughout the book, Wilbur employs terms like surveillance, policing, and censorship to describe the relationships between the NEA, its panelists, and other government entities. If we consider cultural policy as a version of policing culture, Wilbur provides substantial evidence to map the unstable relationships between not only politics and art, but also among dance makers at large (McGuigan 23). Keeping this in mind, I ultimately agree with Wilbur that all dance endowments, private or public, need saving, not just the NEA. But, in what form? As Wilbur writes, waiting for institutional bodies, or "philanthropic corporealities," to change their internal choreographies quickly enough to perform tangible, reparative care may be a long process (17). So, as a dance maker, I build upon Wilbur's central, illuminating question, and ask what other funding bodies can the field motivate to reach a state of care, relinquish their gatekeeping structures, and form ethical funding practices?

Rebecca Fitton

University of Texas at Austin

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The Body in Crisis: New Pathways and Short Circuits in Representation

by Christine Greiner. 2021. Translation by Christopher Larkosh and Grace Holleran. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 140 pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 0472038664, ISBN-10: 978-0472038664. doi: [10.3998/mpub.11883180](https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11883180). doi:10.1017/S0149767722000389

More than ten years have passed since the Portuguese-language publication of *The Body in Crisis: New Pathways and Short Circuits in Representation*, written by the Brazilian scholar Christine Greiner. Nevertheless, the book is still relevant to contemporary issues, since themes such as sovereign power, cognitive violence, symbolic cooption, and cultural translations remain at stake. *The Body in Crisis* is not a book about dance, but rather a guide that analyses distinct bodily processes in which dance can be understood as a specific way of embodying knowledge. Furthermore, thanks to the new English translation, there is the opportunity to engage readers from all over the world. Christopher Larkosh and Grace Holleran, both of whom coherently present the discussions developed in the chapter on translation (Chapter 1), committed themselves to a translation that went beyond one intended solely to cross linguistic boundaries. Following the transcreation proposal of the poet Haroldo de Campos, the translators' gesture was driven by an "embodied translation" (Larkosh and Holleran 2021, xviii) that resulted in "a political act that calls those very boundaries into crisis" (xx).

The Body in Crisis is not only a book that analyzes or describes an object of study that is separate from the researcher, but is also a work created in several crossings. Greiner not only engages with an immense cartography of bibliographies that discuss the body but also

inspires a performative reading since the book choreographs and unsettles flows of thoughts. For this reason, the book must be read as a sort of guide for those who, in the dance and performance field, want to reconsider their usual understandings of movement. Greiner does not mention dance with any consistency, nor does she use this field alone to explain the body. Rather, she considers political philosophy and cognitive sciences as important interlocutors to rethink dance and movement.

Greiner continues the line of questioning initiated in *O Corpo: pistas para estudos indisciplinados (The Body: Pathways for Undisciplinary Studies)* (2005), which provides an epistemological review of body studies and leads the reader through a vast number of references. *The Body in Crisis* experiments with other concerns but still does so by engaging with authors from different fields, such as political philosophy, communication, arts, and cognitive sciences. In an attempt to give visibility to radical experiences that question the limits of the body, one of the central issues is the following: how are we supposed to pass through abysses that are not yet named, which sometimes are even unremarkable? An ordinary abyss is, for instance, the separation between body and mind, or body and environment. However, there are many other dualistic apparatuses that contaminate our way of thinking and acting. Greiner points out that it is urgent to acknowledge new forms of life, which destabilize dualisms. For this reason, the book focuses on poorly illuminated or voiceless experiences such as queer subjectivities, Black resistances, and precarious artistic processes.

Cristina Rosa's Foreword in the English edition highlights the importance of the book in a moment in which dance, theater, and the performing arts have been intensifying and questioning colonialist and imperialist issues. All these processes are usually invisible, and what Greiner's book contributes the most is calling our attention to unnoticed gestures. In the Preface to the English edition, Greiner reviews the theme of crisis, which is even stronger now due to conservative, moralistic and neoliberal waves across the globe. *A priori* models and identity politics seem to undermine the possibilities of dealing with Otherness.

The Preface, which considers one of the author's most recent research, points out that