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Dance and Dialectics:

Historical Materialist Studies of Modern/Postmodern Dance in San Francisco, 1935-1985

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Culture and Performance

by

Katharine Olive Mckeon

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dance and Dialectics:

Historical Materialist Studies of Modern/Postmodern Dance in San Francisco, 1935-1985

by

Katharine Olive Mckeon

Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Susan Leigh Foster, Co-Chair

Professor Joshua Clover, Co-Chair

This study of twentieth-century modern/postmodern dance in the San Francisco Bay Area investigates the relationship of concert dance to its political economic context through an examination of three dances: Carol Beals' *Waterfront - 1934* (1936-1937), Anna Halprin's *Parades and Changes* (1965-1967), and the Wallflower Order's *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* (1982-1983). Expanding beyond the current interpretive methods within dance history, I offer a Marxist interpretative framework that foregrounds the material relations that condition and enable works of concert dance. Inspired by what dance scholar and sociologist Randy Martin refers to as *overreading* dance, I argue that the contradictions and antagonisms of capitalism appear immanently within these three works. The dialectical forces of economic history are also operative within concert dance. Rethinking the purview of what counts as 'context' within dance history, I employ a four part analysis for a political economic interpretation of these dances,

which considers a) the choreography, b) the process of making the piece, c) the material conditions that enabled the choreographer to create the work, and d) its political economic period. The case studies of the dissertation allow me to map concert dance onto shifts within capitalism over the course of the twentieth-century, from the Great Depression of the 1930s to the Fordist post-war boom to the aftermath of the 1973 economic crisis. In developing a mode of interpretation adequate to each period, the chapters focus on a single political economic category and the contradictions dwelling within it: capital during the 1930s, labor during the 1960s, and social reproduction during the 1980s. The dissertation contributes to the historiography of modern dance in California by rethinking a canonical figure (Anna Halprin) and offering accounts of choreographers who have not received significant dance historical attention (Carol Beals and the Wallflower Order). Together, the studies of Beals, Halprin, and the Wallflower Order chart the relationship of their dances to the economic contradictions of their period. Political economic methods can rethink the study of dance beyond discrete stage performances by entangling works of concert dance with their economic context.

The dissertation of Olive Mckeon is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2017

In memory of Randy Martin (1957-2015),
whose wily mind never let me rest.

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To everyone who has managed to stay in the Bay Area despite increasingly bleak material circumstances, everyone in the streets, everyone on the strike committees of yesteryear and present: you have taught me so much.

Biographical Sketch

Olive Mckeon is a dancer and researcher born in San Francisco. She received a BA in dance and philosophy from Hampshire College in 2008 and an MA in Arts Politics from New York University in 2009. Her writing has been published in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, *Pavilion Magazine: a journal of the Bucharest Biennial*, *Activate Journal*, and *Fuse Magazine*. Her poetry chapbook, *Communism is up there and we are down here but it is happening now* was published by Timeless Infinite Light (2014). She is a member of a curatorial collective called SALTA that puts together a monthly series of experimental dance in Oakland. She has danced with the choreographers Abby Crain, Sophia Wang, Jmy James Kidd, Nick Duran, Laurel Tentindo as well as in her own work. She currently teaches in the Critical Studies department at the California College of the Arts.

Introduction

Perched on chairs in the theater, we await the premiere of a new dance. The lights dim, and the dancers emerge on stage. This is it: the dance begins! But if we pause this moment and look more expansively around us, we might perceive several other dances occurring in our midst. In addition to the dance unfolding before us on the stage, we can detect another set of movements: the circulation of money through the theater, the ticket sales, the rental fees for the theater, the wages paid to staff, the day jobs performed elsewhere, the accumulated capital that now takes the form of dance patronage, the workers (waged and unwaged) whose labor generated those profits. The movements of money and struggle surround the dance we came here to see.

The process of creating and presenting works of concert dance involves a set of material conditions specific to their economic context. Examining the concrete relations involved in creating performances can illuminate how the movements of capital, labor, and history intertwine with the dancers' movements on stage. With a central focus on questions of methodology for dance history, my dissertation is an inquiry into the economic conditions that surround the production of concert dance through a study of three works of twentieth-century modern/postmodern dance created in the San Francisco Bay Area: Carol Beals' *Waterfront - 1934* (1936-1937), Anna Halprin's *Parades and Changes* (1965-1967), and the Wallflower Order's *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* (1982-1983). I argue for a historical materialist interpretative framework that foregrounds the material relations that condition and enable

choreographic works.¹

Expanding beyond the current interpretive methods within dance history, a historical materialist methodology allows us to see how the contradictions and antagonisms within an economic period also emerge within dance pieces. Since the historical rise of the capitalist mode of production, works of concert dance have a specific and necessary relation to capitalist accumulation, and this relation constitutes an important dimension for conceptualizing the politics of concert dance. Expanding what counts as ‘context’ within dance history, historical materialism brings to light the economic relations outside of artistic production and how they affect the creation of concert dance.

As an investigation of what a political economic analysis of dance can yield, I offer case studies of three modern/postmodern dance pieces created in the San Francisco Bay Area during different moments during the twentieth-century. Active in the 1930s, Carol Beals was a leftist

¹ It is by no means obvious what a historical materialist methodology entails, especially for research on dance or cultural production more broadly. Not appearing itself in Marx's work, *historical materialism* has, following the introduction of the term by Engels, designated a method for the analysis of history grounded in the tendencies, antagonisms, and contradictions within the economic mode of production. A materialist conception of history views events not as arbitrary or random but as part of the processes and relations set in motion by the organization of labor. Marx developed a set of political economic categories to understand social life in capitalism. Unlike previous modes of production, capitalism introduced value, a social form that measures objects, activities, and people in units of time. In using durations of abstract labor time to generate a standard of equivalence to measure incommensurate articles and render them commodities, it initiated waged labor, an unprecedented organization of social life in which workers sell their bodies and faculties by the hour. The capitalist mode of production generates a set of tendencies: the class struggle over the length of the working day, the struggle amongst capitalists to develop the most efficient method of production, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, the hyper-exploitation of women and people of color, the drive of capital towards boundless accumulation, the necessity of crises within capitalism, and so forth. Historical materialism interprets events in relation to these broader tendencies and antagonisms, which constitute what Marxists call material conditions. For discussions of historical materialism as a method, see Blackledge 2006, Wood and Foster 1997.

Historical materialists think about social life dialectically, meaning they view both epochs and concepts as ripe with contradictions that render them unstable. Every society has a historically specific mode of production that constitutes the economic base or infrastructure of that society. The mode of production contains within it a set of contradictions that point towards its instability, dynamism, and eventual dissolution. These contradictions can function as motors or engines for historical shifts. A dialectic within economic structures keeps social relations constantly in motion and drives long term historical change. While Marxist theorists have proliferated interpretations of Marx's concepts and categories, these are the primary themes that drive a historical materialist interpretative framework. For discussion of dialectical analysis, see Lukács 1971, Ollman 2003.

modern dancer who studied at Martha Graham's studio in New York City before returning to the west coast to found the San Francisco Dance Council, which she chaired from 1935 to 1939. In 1936, she created *Waterfront - 1934*, a dance that commemorated the West Coast Waterfront Strike that escalated into a four-day general strike shutting down San Francisco in July 1934. Jumping forward to 1960s, the second case study takes up a dance by Anna Halprin, a choreographer based in Kentfield, California who has been a critical influence on the emergence of postmodern dance. I focus on her most well-known or signature work, *Parades and Changes*, that she made for the San Francisco Dancers Workshop, a company that she directed from 1955 to 1969. Finally, I examine a performance titled *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* created in the early 1980s by the Wallflower Order Dance Collective, a group founded in 1975 that emerged from the feminist movements of the period. The Wallflower Order is a unique case within American modern/postmodern dance history as they were an openly lesbian group, and their project was an experiment in collective decision-making in all aspects — logistics, aesthetics, and politics. Inspired by what dance scholar and sociologist Randy Martin refers to as *overreading* dance, I employ a four-part analysis for a political economic interpretation of these dances. I describe a) the choreographic and aesthetic choices within the dance, b) the activities and creative processes involved in making the piece, c) the material conditions that enabled the choreographer to create the work, and d) the political economic context concurrent with the dance. In developing a mode of interpretation adequate to each period, the chapters focus on a single political economic category and the contradictions dwelling within it: capital during the 1930s, labor during the 1960s, and social reproduction during the 1980s. Reading each dance as opening out to a larger set of determinations and contradictions, I use the studies to illustrate an interpretative practice that foregrounds the material conditions of concert dance.

The dissertation contributes to the historiography of modern dance in the San Francisco Bay Area by conducting primary research on artists that have not previously received scholarly attention as well as critically re-examining a canonical figure. In addition to illuminating significant moments within San Francisco dance history, the dissertation rethinks the questions and categories that organize dance historical inquiry. Expanding the analysis beyond what happens on stage during a performance, political economic methods entangle works of concert dance with their broader urban and economic context. This methodology foregrounds the saturation of dance practices by economic forces, offering a new way to conceptualize the politics of concert dance. Finally, the project puts forward a dialectical conception of dance history that locates the contradictions and antagonisms of capitalism immanently within concert dance. Broadening beyond textual or semiotic analysis, I argue for an interpretation of concert dance that attends to its material conditions of possibility and political economic context.

Review of the Literature

While primarily a dance history dissertation, this interdisciplinary investigation into the relation of concert dance to political economic conditions draws from work in performance studies, cultural studies, and Marxist theory. The project engages with three conversations in dance studies: the historiography of modern dance in San Francisco, methods in dance history, and the economic analysis of concert dance. I offer a contrasting or alternative approach to the some of the current tendencies within literature on the economics of dance. Informed by scholarship in other fields that dissects the material relations involved in cultural production, I extend these Marxian approaches to the analysis of dance. Key influences within the Marxist tradition — Marxist-feminism, left communist thought, and value theory — shape both the approach and political framework of the dissertation.

Modern Dance in San Francisco

The dissertation centers on modern dance history in San Francisco, which has received relatively sparse scholarly attention in comparison to research on dance in New York City. Two dance historical texts have indexed and contextualized modern/postmodern choreographers in the Bay Area: Prickett (2007) provides an overview of the key figures and influences that have shaped San Francisco modern dance from the 1930s to present, and Harris (2009) includes a number of short profiles of dancers and choreographers active in the Bay Area over the fifty year period from 1915 to 1965. While dance scholars have examined individual choreographers (such as the San Francisco-born Isadora Duncan) and local dance critics have documented decades of modern dance in journalistic writing, few dance historians have organized their research around choreographers located in the San Francisco Bay Area. Of the three figures I investigate in the dissertation, a number of scholarly accounts have considered the life and work of Anna Halprin (Halprin 1995; Ross 2003, 2007; Schorn, Land, and Wittmann 2014; Worth and Poynor 2004), while Carol Beals and the Wallflower Order remain largely out of the purview of current dance historical writing. The dissertation expands the historiography of modern/postmodern dance in San Francisco, rethinks the politics of Anna Halprin's work, and conducts primary research on Beals and the Wallflower Order.

Methods in Dance History

Of writing specifically on dance historical methodologies, I draw from scholars who consider multiple registers of what constitutes a work's *context* and those who are attentive to gender, race, and class. June Layson provides a three-part model for dance historical research, organized by chronology, type of dance, and selection of context (aesthetic, anthropological, geographic, and so forth) (Layson 1994: 3–17). She notes the prioritization of specific contexts

over others and the sparse attention paid in historical analyses to the economics of dance practices. Carol Brown and Jane C. Desmond have developed feminist research methodologies for dance history, a framework which influences the formation of questions, the modes of interpretation, and the selection of what counts as data (Brown 1994, Desmond 1998). Additionally, dance historian John O. Perpener III has written about the relation between race and dance historiography, calling for “a methodology in which the historian’s selective process includes a concerted effort to analyze the effects that factors such as racism have had upon the creation of art in American society” (1998: 345). My project attempts to heed his call to take “an unflinching look at these underlying — and politically loaded — historical factors as they relate to the creation of dance,” and to demystify the history of European-North American forms such as modern dance (Perpener 1998: 341).² I am indebted to the work of Linda Tomko, who has foregrounded the question of class in modern dance through her use of social history methods (1999). Tomko argues for a contextual approach to dance history that incorporates “the complex of social, political, and economic struggles to make meaning and wield power at particular historical moments” (Tomko 1999: xv). These methodological moves — to contextualize dance practices and their conditions of possibility within historical struggles over gender, race, and class — inform my project and approach to dance historiography.

Theater studies has a more extensive literature on historiography and historical methods,

² “One will be hard-pressed to find studies of ballet that examine the early development of the art form and its symbolism in relationship to the centuries-long imperial expansionism and colonial domination that characterized European contacts with non-Western people. These less salutary aspects of European history are part of the same cultural/political/economic complex that inspired, financed, and in other ways enabled the development of European imperial art. Deeper examinations of these contexts could reveal interesting and important details concerning the relationships between dance and cultural imperialism. [...] By taking an unflinching look at these underlying - and politically loaded - historical factors as they relate to the creation of dance, one can begin to demystify the aura of innate superiority that surrounds European high art forms and forms such as modern dance that have been derived from them; and one can begin to correct the misconception that this art is, for the most part, detached from social and political concerns” (Perpener 1998: 340-1).

which queries the status of performance documentation and the act of historical interpretation (Pollock 1998, Postlewait and McConachie 1989, Postlewait 2009). Theater historian Thomas Postlewait identifies ten forms of political contextualization for theatrical events, which includes the economic organization of the theater and socio-political structures of the social world external to the theatrical production (2007: 212-213). Kirk W. Fuoss frames “performance as a site of struggle” and defines at least three spheres of contestation - textual, spatial, and conceptual - which connects performance events to broader social and spatial antagonisms (Fuoss 1998: 104-105). My approach to performance history expands upon these investigations of political context, focusing more squarely on the political economic relations within and surrounding performance works.

Economic Analyses of Dance and Performance

While primarily describing the problems raised for dance historians by poststructuralist theory, Alexandra Carter concludes her introduction to *Rethinking Dance History* with a discussion of the lack of research about the economics of dance: “... the whole notion that dance performance is a job is still under explored. The glamour of the ballerina is fascinating, but so too is the question ‘how much did she get paid?’ (2013: 10). While these economic questions have not been central to dance and performance studies, several scholars have taken up political economic themes in their work. I identify here three current tendencies within performance scholarship that engages economic questions: the metaphorical use of political economic categories, the reliance on an immaterial labor framework, and a sociological framing of patronage. Distinguishing these approaches from my own method clarifies the type of analysis I employ, namely a historical materialist framework.

Several dance scholars employ economic terminology as metaphor or invoke a general

homology between dance and economic production. Marta Savigliano's *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (1995), uses economic terms to allude to the discursive construction of identity within tango and the form's relationship to processes of colonialism. With respect to her use of political economy, she adopts a Bourdieuan framework that renders dance practices into a form of capital and uses the metaphor of natural resource extraction to describe the transnational circulation of tango. Lynn Garafola's *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (1989) offers an account of the financial arrangements that supported the company and how Diaghilev fashioned the Ballets Russes in light of economic concerns for sustaining the enterprise. While conducting archival research into the company's finances, she refers to the economics of dance also in metaphorical terms. For example, she frames Diaghilev's ability to attract Russian industrialist patrons as a form of Fordism that created an assembly line for the production of famous ballet dancers, equating patronage with commodity production. Priya Srinivasan's *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor in the U.S* (2011) intertwines histories of immigration and dance, charting the arrival of immigrant workers coming from India alongside the appearance of classical Indian dance practices in the United States. Srinivasan, along with several other recent articles (Essin 2015, Franko 2017, Jankowski 2016, MacNeill 2009), writes of the content and quality of dancers' efforts without conceiving of labor as a political economic category that refers not to toil in general but to the production of surplus value.³ While Savigliano, Garafola, and Srinivasan make a contribution to the study of the transnational circulation of tango, avant-garde ballet, and classical Indian dance respectively, they tend to borrow concepts from political

³ "Dance is also unique in that labor is equivalent to the product in dance: the dancing body's very 'liveness' and the display of its labor in performance produces a dance product. Therefore, the dancing body as a laboring body disrupts traditional Marxist understandings of the act of labor, the means of production, and the product" (Srinivasan 2011: 11-12). Srinivasan conceives of labor as a physiological category rather than one that exists in relation to capitalist value production, which constitutes the Marxian view. If a dancer is not hired by a capitalist to generate surplus value, her labor is distinct from what defines labor-power as a commodity.

economic analysis while ultimately pursuing a research agenda other than analyzing the economics of dance. The danger with metaphorical illusions to economic categories in dance scholarship is the loss of precision regarding their conceptual content. These metaphorical moves can collapse important distinctions between artistic activity and value production, which are crucial for engaging what a political economic analysis can illuminate about concert dance.

The second tendency I observe within performance studies is the invocation of claims made by male autonomist theorists such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004), Maurizio Lazzarato (Cvejić et al. 2010), and Paolo Virno (2004). These theorists have argued that the emergence of Post-Fordism has drastically reconfigured what constitutes value, and the immaterial production of knowledge, information, and affects has overtaken the material production of commodities. For them, production, labor, and value take on a biopolitical dimension, resulting in an in-distinction between living and producing. This theoretical orientation allows performance scholars to equate performance with a generalized sense of production that now includes communication, relationships, and forms of life. The invocation of immaterial labor and the accompanying generalization of work into all aspects of life have been espoused in recent issues of the performance studies journals, *Performance Research* and *TDR: the Drama Review* (see Klein and Kunst 2012, Lesage 2012, Schneider 2012). As an example of how this line of thinking becomes mobilized in performance scholarship, Bojana Kunst (2015) considers what characterizes subjectivity in the Post-Fordist period and analyzes how dance pieces internalize flexibility and precarity or respond to these prevalent forms of subjectivity.

In distinction to this affirmation of recent writing by Hardt, Negri, Lazzarato, and Virno, a number of scholars in art history, literary studies, and performance studies have critiqued the use of later autonomist Marxist thought as a means to understand the contemporary relationship

between culture and capitalism (Boyle 2017, Brouillette 2014, Jackson 2012, Roberts 2015). I am in accord with Shane Boyle's observation that "the recent workerist turn in performance scholarship - which also frequently quotes Marx - tends to pivot on a theoretical approach that all but dismisses the cornerstone of Marx's theory: value" (2017: 5). Rather than taking up the immaterial labor hypothesis that makes labor-power indistinct from life in general, I focus instead on understanding the relation of concert dance to surplus value production.

Finally, several dance scholars have incorporated questions of dance patronage and funding into their work. Garafola's research has considered how dance is financed and how patronage plays a role in shaping what dance companies are able to do. Her engagement with patrons is largely celebratory and untroubled by the broader conditions of capitalist accumulation.⁴ Linda Tomko has also attended to patronage as a condition of possibility for dance: her careful mapping of the relationships between early modern dance soloists and their sponsors clarifies the financial arrangements that supported these dancers as well as the class position and social location of their patrons (2013). Her account, however, does not engage critically with the economic relations involved in white women's patronage. What distinguishes Marxian methods from more generally sociological approaches is a foundational critique of capitalism and processes of capitalist accumulation. While concerned with questions of patronage and funding, the type of analysis I pursue here foregrounds a critique of the economic relations in which dance is ensconced.

In distinction to these three tendencies, my approach to the economic analysis of dance adheres to a historical materialist orientation. Approaching political economic categories not as

⁴ An example: "Founded in 1913 with an endowment of \$182 million, the Rockefeller Foundation was among the country's outstanding philanthropic institutions, closely identified with medical research and with education" (Garafola 2005: 306).

metaphors but as designating specific material relations helps to clarify how concert dance functions economically, in addition to its role as an aesthetic, cultural, or representational practice. In drawing from the Marxist tradition, I am informed by other tendencies and theorizations of capitalism rather than the contemporary writing of male autonomists. Hardt, Negri, and others make significant departures from the premises of Marxist analysis, suggesting more theoretical resonance with poststructuralism than historical materialism as they abandon both dialectical thought and value as a framework to understand capitalist production. My approach to the economic analysis of dance is distinct from the autonomist gesture of equating performance and service industry work as forms of immaterial labor, as well as from a sociological analysis unmoored from a critique of capitalism. In distinction to these currents, my dissertation expands upon Randy Martin's approach, which uses the occasion of a dance to reflect on the material conditions of arts funding and shifts in labor markets as a whole. Martin's writing suggests that a work of dance has the capacity to bear [*träger*] a whole context of determination. His method of *overreading*, or making more of a single work of dance than it could claim for itself, constitutes the methodological impetus of the dissertation. Additionally, Shane Boyle's recent work (2016, 2017) offers a rigorous engagement with the question of how performance relates to the capitalist value form. Boyle distinguishes the content of theatrical labor from the social form that it takes, clarifying the conditions under which theater could produce value. The studies within the dissertation take up this grounding of performance scholarship within political economic categories.

Political Economy of Culture

Of the scholarship that positions culture within the capitalist mode of production, I draw from research that investigates the immediate economic conditions surrounding cultural

production, or what I refer to as the political economy of culture. This scholarship thinks economically about art and attends to questions of who created it, by what means, and for whom. This approach to historical materialist research on culture is concerned with, in the words of Bill Ryan, “the conditions of cultural production and the mediation of creativity by the structures in which artists are ensconced” (1992: 265). It dissects the material conditions that enable the existence of art within a wider context of value extraction and capital accumulation. Rather than assuming that culture functions as ideology, these theorists raise the question of what economic categories can best suit the structural positions occupied by art and artists within capitalism, thinking through the relation of culture to labor-power, value, and the commodity-form. Emerging from a range of fields including art history, media studies, and the sociology of culture, I am informed by the work of Dave Beech (2015), Nicholas Garnham (1990), Peter Golding and Graham Murduck (1997), Vincent Mosco (1996), John Roberts (2007), Bill Ryan (1992), Marina Vishmidt (2015; Iles and Vishmidt 2012), and Janet Wolff (1981), as well as a host of workers’ inquiry groups that have emerged within the cultural sector (Precarious Workers Brigade 2017).⁵ Fredric Jameson has gestured to the importance of political economic analysis, especially within the context of literary and cultural studies scholarship that has centralized semiotic readings of aesthetic works:

Such a regrounding of the work of art in the world of commodities would first be understood in as literal a fashion as possible. For it is a sobering and salutary experience for professional intellectuals to be reminded that the objects of their study and manipulation have a whole material infrastructure as well, which has traditionally been the realm of the sociology of literature (1974: 393).

In an effort to expand beyond interpretative methods focused on representation and meaning-

⁵ Examples include the work of W.A.G.E. (Working Artists in the Greater Economy, New York), the Carrotworkers’ Collective (London), Workers’ Inquiry Group (Madrid), and Radical Education Collective (Ljubljana), all of which provide on the ground research into the conditions faced by those employed within contemporary cultural institutions.

making, political economic studies consider the material conditions and forces that shape cultural production. This line of inquiry helps to clarify the contradictions within art works as well as the ways in which capital utilizes art beyond direct commoditization.

This research into culture moves beyond the base and the superstructure as a presiding metaphor. The overall utility of the base/superstructure formulation has been called into question, as E.P. Thompson describes: “In fact no such basis and superstructure ever existed; it is a metaphor to help us to understand what does exist – men [*sic*], who act, experience, think and act again. It turns out that it is a bad and dangerous model” (1957: 113). Scholars such as Ellen Wood have also challenged the centrality that the metaphor has assumed, as she states: “Although Marx himself used it very rarely and only in the most aphoristic and allusive formulations, it has been made to bear a theoretical weight far beyond its limited capacities” (1990: 126). The use of the base / superstructure formulation has resulted in a focus on the semiotic content of cultural texts while de-centering the analysis of the immediate relations involved in the production of culture. As the model assumes the existence of discrete levels within social life, it can render the study of the superstructural phenomena oddly abstracted from the material relations involved in their production. For this reason, I am informed by criticism that focuses on the relation of culture to political economic categories, rather than to the base and superstructure metaphor.

This emphasis on the economics of culture takes up a less prominent tendency within cultural studies, that of media scholars who questioned the prevalence of textual analysis and ideology critique. Responding to the charges of reductionism and economism leveled at Marxian analysis, Nicholas Garnham argues that many cultural studies theorists ascribe to a strong form of cultural determinism in lieu of considering political economic constraints on culture (1995).

Sarah Brouillette has contextualized the emphasis on consumption and circulation within cultural studies within the widespread effects of Post-Fordism.⁶ Expanding beyond the focus on the use-value of culture to a consumer, a political economy of culture includes the processes of production and the economic conditions that precede and enable the moment of consumption. Interrogations of consumption and the ideological underpinnings of culture are, of course, relevant angles of analysis, yet the attention paid to them has tended to eclipse the economic forces that shape the production of culture.

Orientation within the Marxist Tradition

Beyond cultural analysis, several tendencies within the Marxist tradition inform the dissertation's orientation to the broader theoretical questions of how to interpret Marxian categories and historical materialism as a method. Specifically, I draw from Marxist-feminism, left communist thought, and value theory. Each of these currents helps to define the approach to Marxism that shapes the dissertation.

Following the Wages for Housework movement of the 1970s and the subsequent domestic labor debates, feminists argued that reproduction is indispensable to the capitalist mode of production, presenting a challenge to previous Marxist conceptions of value and labor. The work of Maria Dalla Costa and Selma James (1975), Angela Davis (1983), Christine Delphy (1977), Silvia Federici (2004), Shulamith Firestone (1970), Leopoldina Fortunati (1995), Maria Mies (2003), and Kathi Weeks (2011) converges in their shared drive to write within and against the Marxist tradition, finding the political resources of Marxism for feminist analysis and offering a

⁶ “It is hard not to read the shift in cultural production scholarship away from a sense of the economy’s determining force and toward an emphasis on culture’s mediating power as a response to these large-scale changes. What came to dominate—though not without challenge, of course—was a new focus on the politics of consumption, and a tendency to treat the aesthetic not as the space in which artists yearn for freedom from economic rationalities but, instead, as the process of stylizing one’s life in a way that intervenes in and engages with the dominant order” (Brouillette 2013).

new interpretation of Marx by explicating the gendered relations of social reproduction. In claiming domestic labor as essential to the production of surplus value, James, Dalla Costa, Fortunati, and Federici draw a parallel to Marx's notion of a commodity fetish that renders labor-time invisible and mystifies value as the property of an object. They situate reproductive work as value productive, a performative argument that denaturalizes the gendered exploitation of housework and makes visible the antagonisms within the domestic sphere. While several theoretical problems arise in equating social reproduction with value production (the lack of temporal measurement for housework and accounting for the duration that women spend reproducing themselves), the thrust of their arguments is to demand recognition for and struggle against the housewifization of women. The theoretical work and political organizing of the 1970s as well as subsequent Marxist-feminist analysis remains a resource for expanding what counts as value and class struggle by opening up reproduction as a site of antagonism.

Additionally, I am informed by the left communist strains within the Marxist tradition, which maintain a critique of the state, the vanguard party, and the continuation of waged labor (Dauvé 2015, Noys 2012). Observing the historical trajectory of the Soviet Union and the fate of other state socialist experiments, these currents sought to deepen the logic of Marx's work by developing a strategic orientation that could bypass a turn towards totalitarianism, rather than arguing for Marxism's historical obsolescence. Left communists have maintained a skepticism towards the necessity for anti-capitalist movements to claim state power and a critique of a central party apparatus as a means of revolutionary organizing. Early autonomist Marxists such as Mario Tronti (1972) and Raniero Panzieri (1976) articulated an anti-work position that advocated abolishing work rather than elevating or dignifying it. Anti-work Marxists seek an emancipation from productive labor and the dissolution of the abstract socialization of labor.

From a perspective critical of waged work, the task of a revolutionary movement is not to return to workers what is theirs, but to free social life from the capitalist organization of labor.

This critique of work corresponds to a re-conceptualization of the value-form, as that which both characterizes capitalism and must be overcome (Larsen, Nilges, Robinson, and Brown 2014).⁷ Marxist historian Moishe Postone elaborates a position that frames Marxian political economy as a critique of value productive labor rather than from the standpoint of labor (Postone 1995). Postone's critical re-framing of value breaks with orthodox interpretations of Marxist thought, as exemplified by communist parties focused on claiming state power to institute centrally planned economic production. For Postone, the production of value through abstract labor constitutes the engine of capitalist domination. The rethinking of capitalism and value by Marxist feminist, left communist, and value theorists informs how I analyze cultural production and its economic context.

Beyond these theoretical influences, my approach to historical materialism bears the imprint of a Western Marxist legacy and my position as a graduate student in a humanities department at an American university.⁸ As intellectual historians Perry Anderson and Martin Jay have argued, theorists associated with the development of Western Marxism moved away from the central questions of political economy (e.g. understanding the dynamics of capital accumulation, crisis, struggle, and strategy) and towards the analysis of ideology, culture, and aesthetics (Jay 1984). In Anderson's characterization, Western Marxists also took up themes of epistemology and method to an extent unprecedented within the Marxist tradition or in Marx's

⁷ 'Value theory' refers to a strain of Marxian analysis concerned with the critique of the value-form, a mode of inquiry (known as *Wertkritik*) developed by a group of German theorists beginning in the 1970s and 1980s.

⁸ For a consideration of the debates surrounding the utility and contours of the term *Western Marxism*, see Anderson 1976.

own work. They moved the site of political theorization from the union, the party, and organizing cell to the university. A number of prominent Western Marxists - Lukács, Gramsci, Adorno, and others - lived in exile and isolation during periods of political defeat and were to a large extent detached from mass social movements, initiating Marxist historical interpretation as an academic endeavor (Anderson 1976: 42-43). While anti-communist pressures in the United States largely pushed Marxists out of economics and history departments, the de-fanged Marxism of cultural criticism got a pass. This context both frames and limits the particular version of historical materialism that I engage with here, one that emphasizes questions of method and cultural criticism. These structural and intellectual influences shape the dissertation and the fields it engages with, namely dance and cultural studies.

Methodology

The dissertation centers questions of methodology and how to interpret the relation of dance to capitalism. I introduce here a series of methodological themes and concerns that inform the type of analysis I undertake in the subsequent studies, namely the construction of spatial scale, the contextualization of a work in relation to a social totality, the political economic analysis of concert dance, and the question of medium specificity. This methodological reflection dissects the structure and rationale of the following dance historical studies, which synthesize readings of dances with their material conditions of possibility and their political economic period.

Politics of Scale

Writing about dance in relation to social history raises the question of scale: at what scale does one study a dance? The scale of analysis determines how researchers carve the boundaries of the social context around a dance practice. The act of contextualizing a dance implies a certain

scalar frame of analysis: Do scholars read the dance in relation to those on stage? To the audience in the room? To a community that the dance emerges from? To a social movement? To a nation? To a class formation? To the arch of a choreographer's work? The history of a genre? A historical epoch? These broadening and overlapping circles of analysis shape the kinds of claims researchers can make about a dance practice and how they characterize its social and political stakes. The choice and construction of a scale to study dance reflects a researcher's political priorities, as it determines what falls into and out of the spatial/social contextualization of dance.

The field of Marxist geography has probed both the politics and historicity of scale (Brenner 2000, Marston 2000). Geographer Neil Smith coined the phrase 'politics of scale' to challenge the trivialization of geographical scale as merely a question of a researcher's convenience or preference.⁹ Smith's writing on scale draws from contributions made in the 1970s to the theorization of social space by French theorist Henri Lefebvre and Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells. Lefebvre turned his attention to what he called the social production of space; that space is not a natural or given container for social life but is produced through historical, material, and economic relations (1991). Lefebvre also articulates a "principle of superimposition and interpenetration of social spaces," which describes how layers of spatial organization are not autonomous from each other, but are intertwined levels of a spatial totality (1991: 88). Castells, in his book *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*, frames scale as a question of social function, arguing that the urban scale is a spatial expression of the capitalist mode of production (1977). Following Lefebvre and Castells, subsequent geographers such as

⁹ "Geographical scale is political precisely because it is the technology according to which events and people are, quite literally, 'contained in space.' Alternatively, scale demarcates the space or spaces people 'take up' or make for themselves. In scale, therefore, are distilled the oppressive and emancipatory possibilities of space, its deadness, but also its life" (Smith 1990: 173).

Smith expanded upon the social production of scale and how geographical analysis might integrate multiple scalar frames.

In his theoretical work on scale, Smith introduces the concept of 'jumping scales' to refer to the refusal of conventional spatial partitions that confine the analysis of particular social phenomena. Jumping scales involves an interrogation of the epistemic and spatial frameworks that organize social inquiry, heeding the "social and political connectedness of apparently different scales, their deliberate confusion and abrogation" (Smith 1992: 66). Smith argues for a type of analysis that challenges entrenched assumptions about what kinds of scales are appropriate to particular social practices, especially those generated through capital-centered conceptions of space. By examining social processes at scales other than the way they are usually bounded in space, scale jumping can dissolve the boundaries between different kinds of space, making evident the nesting or inter-relation of scales. Moving analytically to narrower or wider geographical scopes can reveal the ways in which different spatial registers impinge upon each other, or as Sallie Marston writes, their "embeddedness in processes occurring at higher and lower levels of abstraction and reality" (2000: 226).

With respect to dance analysis, scalarity provides a language to consider the spatialization of dance and how scholarly accounts may contain or expand this space. Dance research necessarily involves the construction of a particular scale, or in other words, a level of spatial representation and resolution. In these historical studies, I move through and across different scales to show how a single dance performance is historically interlinked with patterns of urbanization and processes of capital accumulation. In describing the space of a dance at varying levels of abstraction, I move from the individual work of choreography out to a socio-spatial

totality, attending to the details of a dance at close range and from afar.¹⁰ This allows the analysis to intertwine choreographic works with other registers of history. Of the many dilations of scope that are possible, I have selected specific scalar jumps that allow the analysis of a work to grasp its material relations and conditions. Moving from the choreography presented on stage to the rehearsal process, the economic factors that entered into creating the work, and the period in economic history unveils the production process behind the dance and connects the work to the contradictions that characterize capitalism as a whole. Not a simple dilation of cartographic scale (as for example when zooming from a neighborhood to a city, region, and country), the scalar movement of the analysis involves an expanding set of spatial spheres that are not purely geophysical, but rather compare different genres of things. Dance historical scale, in this sense, refers to the generation of social, temporal, and spatial boundaries for a dance analysis.

I draw from investigations of scale within the field of critical geography to: a) decenter nationality, nationalism, and national identity as a frame for engaging with the politics of dance, and b) create an alternative to a surface / depth model of cultural analysis, which renders cultural production as the appearance above the economic essence below. The gesture of jumping scales reflects a commitment to dialectical thought: to see the big in the small, the abstract in the concrete. Scale is one way to conceptualize the question of mediation, or how political economic processes relate to individual works of art, which in this analysis is through the material conditions of possibility for dance. To jump scales - to look at a dance from allegedly too wide a scale - is to fuse dance and economic history, or as Smith describes, “a politics of scale can also

¹⁰ In *The Social Production of Art*, Janet Wolff writes: “The analysis should be able to incorporate all the ‘levels’ and factors which have contributed to the production of works. An initial focus on the micro-level of the work itself will broaden out to encompass producer, aesthetic code, political and social context; an adequate study which begins from a general characterization of the social structure of a particular period will eventually trace through the workings of ideas and politics in particular texts or paintings” (1981: 140).

become a weapon of expansion and inclusion, a means of enlarging identities” (1992: 78).

Before moving from this discussion of scale, I wish to pause on the word *jumping*, as it designates simultaneously a methodological move, a dance step, and a structuring trope of the dissertation. The studies that follow jump both temporally and spatially - from the 1930s, to the 1960s, to the 1980s; from the performance to the rehearsal process to the day jobs of the dancers to the capitalist mode of production at large. As a choreographic device, this jumping allows the analysis to expand beyond the stage to the hidden abode of production, the back stage, the off stage, the non-stage of material existence. It also describes my own jumps: from the spaces and scenes of concert dance to those of Marxist thought and practice.¹¹ The dissertation is a meditation on the jump and what jumping makes possible.¹² In the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx quotes the Latin maxim *Hic Rhodus, hic Salta!* which originates from the

¹¹ In considering questions of corporeality and movement in Marx’s thought, David Riff argues that it was pacing, rather than jumping, that informed Marx’s embodied relationship to his intellectual life: “In fact, Karl Marx spent much of his life walking. There are stories of the strolls he took with his betrothed and with her father and brother, with Engels, and with other friends. When he was ill, he took a holiday of hikes in the North of England and said he’d turned into a walking stick. Then, of course, there were Sunday rambles with his daughters during which he told them tall tales of a magic shop with wares that always return to their shelves sooner or later. Witnesses describe his angry pacing after arguments. Even when he was home, he would pace up and down. A worn piece of parquet, a mark from Marx’s pacing, inevitably appeared any place he lived.

Marx paced up and down in his apartment because there were times when he couldn’t sit still for long. Aside from arthritis and gout, he suffered from boils. ‘The bourgeoisie will never forget my carbuncles,’ he wrote to Engels in 1867. One hundred and forty years later, a team of medical experts analyzed his letters and concluded that it was joint pain, indigestion, and blood poisoning that made his writing so violent and convulsive. Why else hate capitalism so? One answer to such pathologizations of Marx’s ‘overly negative’ attitude toward the age of capitalist production is that it was the rhythm of pacing and sitting in pain that gave Marx’s writing not only its verve, but also its structure. Hence the montage aspect of texts like *Capital*, quite radical for a nineteenth century obsessed with continuity. Marx switches back and forth from economic formulas to passionate, violently poetic literary writing, and we can imagine the interruptions as periods of evermore agitated pacing. The movement of pacing leaves its traces on texts just like it leaves its traces on the floor, we could say. But is that really the boldest way of answering the bourgeois medical commission?” (Riff 2015).

¹² Anna Kornbluh has written of the figure of the leap in Marx’s analysis of capitalism as well as in the narrative structure of *Capital*, Volume I: “Thus when the mystery of the commodity form is found to inhere in a leap, for which the text uses the striking image of ‘salto mortale,’ the finding is most effectively disclosed by the recurrence of the same leap within the narrative structure itself. The salto mortale happens twice, on the part of the commodity, and on the part of the narrative: ‘Capital must have its origin both in circulation and not in circulation. We therefore have a double result. These are the conditions of the problem: hic rhodus, hic salta!’ A challenge to leap in the here and now, Marx’s evocation of Aesop recalls Hegel’s prescription for philosophy in the here and now” (2010: 30)

punch line of Aesop's fable 'The Boasting Traveler' (Marx 1994: 19). In the story, a man claims that when in Rhodes, he performed a stupendous jump, and witnesses could affirm his act. A bystander remarks, "Let's just imagine this is Rhodes for a minute; and now - jump!" (Aesop 2011: 62). For Marx, the phrase *Hic Rhodus, hic Salta!* is a metaphor for the revolutionary act, which does not simply theorize about insurrection but seizes opportunity to jump onto the historical stage. The call to jump, in this context, is a call for praxis, an embodied form of doing and acting. The dissertation grasps at the relationship between different scales of jumping: a grand jeté of a dancer on stage and a general strike descending onto a city.

Reading / Overreading

I model my approach to cultural analysis on Randy Martin's method of *overreading*, or using the occasion of a dance to arrive at a broader social context (1998: 55-106). Martin distinguishes his method from *underreading*, or interpreting a dance as a purely aesthetic event isolated and detached from its context. In contrast, *overreading* uses the dance as a means to consider the contours of its political context. Martin describes two features of *overreading*: a) "a commitment to read through and past the dance to the point where it meets its own exterior" and b) "temporal condensation," which refers to connecting differential developments in dance or cultural history to that of political economic periodization (1998: 62). For Martin, the practice of *overreading* helps to retain a sense of totality as that which mediates and sustains disparate elements of social life. Integrating the concrete and abstract, *overreading* uses dance as a prism in which to find a larger set of determinations, contradictions, and possibilities that exceed any specific work.

Martin's *overreading* performs Smith's analytic process of 'jumping scales' in several senses. In his chapter "Overreading *The Promised Land*: Towards a Narrative of Context in

Dance,” Martin weaves multiple scales of analysis into his reading of a dance by Bill T. Jones, moving between the aesthetic choices within the piece, national cultural policy, and the uneven development of capitalism. Partnering the dance and the activity of social analysis, Martin uses the sequence of Jones’ dance as a structure for his argument, pairing the work’s four acts with both a level of analysis and a thematic concern. He mobilizes the composition of the dance in order to develop a conceptual ordering of the social world around it. The term *overreading* anticipates and responds to critics that would accuse Martin of reading too much into a dance, as his analysis jumps between the trajectory of Jones’ career, the aesthetics of postmodern dance, prevailing tendencies within dance criticism, modern dance historiography, the history of US state sponsorship of the arts, African-American history, theories of history, and political economic shifts concurrent with Jones’ work. The gesture of *overreading* inhabits this alleged overthinking and deliberately jumps the scale of what is included in an essay about dance, or in Martin’s words, “making more of each instance of dance (or any other activity) than it could possibly claim for itself” (1998: 106). *Overreading* works against a politics of containment that keeps cultural forms separated from and unencumbered by politics and history.

The method that I develop in the three subsequent studies is in the spirit and mode of Martin’s *overreading*, finding within dance its own outside. Inspired by Martin’s claim that dance has the “capacity to make momentarily present the whole context of determination itself,” the case studies of the dissertation use the political economic conditions of dance-making to draw connections to the wider historical conjuncture (1998: 105). In developing my iteration of *overreading* as a method, I retain Martin’s quadripartite structure but select different analytic levels. While Martin briefly discusses the sources of financial sponsorship for Bill T. Jones’ piece, I focus more closely on the material conditions of possibility for specific dance works.

Materialist Analysis of Dance

Of the many possible ways to use materialist analysis for dance research, I understand this method as the investigation of the economic relations involved in the production of dance: the funding sources, forms of patronage, and economic conditions of possibility. Dissecting the economic arrangements that enabled each choreographic work could take up any number of relevant questions: What is the relation of this dance to value production? Do the dancers perform socially necessary abstract labor time? Do the dancers perform reproductive or non-productive labor? If the dance is not value productive, what forces or interests condition its existence? Does it receive financial subsidy? Does the financial support come from a public fund, a corporation, an educational institution, a marital or sexual partner, a union, or a social movement? What interest do these patrons have in removing some of their capital from circulation and funding the dance? What organizational forms (dance companies, non-profit corporations, freelance projects, etc.) support the creation of this dance? This list is by no means exhaustive as a researcher could examine other material dimensions, including the size of a cast and the duration of a dance in relation to economic constraints, the determination of ticket prices and distribution of revenue, intellectual property regimes (who owns the dance, who profits, and how), the material interests of institutions that present dance, and so forth. Dance researchers can ask why concert dance has assumed various presentational conventions in relation to material determinations and constraints. This attention to political economic factors does not reduce the interpretation of dance to vulgar causal analysis, but illuminates how material conditions constitute a key aspect of what concert dance is and does.

In the method that I develop here, the analysis of process and production connect a work of dance to its historical period. In the final pages of *Capital's* section on the transformation of

money into capital, Marx famously calls for a movement from the noisy market place to the hidden abode of production.¹³ This analytic shift away from the circulation of commodities and towards the site of the labor process constitutes a key move within Marx's project. While previous political economists concerned themselves with analyzing price and exchange, Marx de-naturalized the process of economic production and sought to explain who produced commodities, by what means, and for whom. In using historical materialism as a methodology for dance research, my dissertation makes the same move towards the economic relations that surround and enable dance practices. As Marx's writing weaves together both theory and history, I model my study upon this yoking of the concrete and the abstract, or the singular work of dance and the broader determinations of the capitalist mode of production.

Text / Context / Totality

The task of charting connections between a text and its political economic context, through both material relations and aesthetic resonance, raises the question of why one would make such an analytic move. What does a broad and expansive sense of social contextualization illuminate about particular works of dance? What can mapping the historical context tell us about a dance or about dance history? What do global economic changes and the history of the San Francisco Bay Area have to do with dance per se? A political economic contextualization can demonstrate the inability to clearly bracket politics from aesthetics, urban space from art works, capitalism from dance. It can challenge the purview of dance history, or the indistinct line that can separate the work of dance scholars from that of historians more broadly. Historical materialist research

¹³ "Let us therefore, in the company with the owner of money and the owner of labour-power, leave the noisy sphere, where everything takes place on the surface and in full view of everyone, and follow them into the hidden abode of production, on whose threshold there hangs the notice 'No admittance except on business.' Here we shall see, not only how capital produces, but how capital is itself produced. The secret of profit making must at last be laid bare" (Marx 1977: 279-280).

methodologies can illuminate how wider social processes saturate aspects of concert dance. They can draw into view a set of conditions, contradictions, and antagonisms that structure social processes. From a Marxist vantage point, dance and history do not develop according to pure contingency but are constrained by social relations and material determinations. Locating a text within its historical context can disclose or map the material meditations between dance and its world. Rendering how the contradictions and antagonisms of economic relations intersect a work of dance unifies aspects of the same social totality. Integrating artistic and economic history, viewing them as aspects of a whole, is the task of a dialectical method.¹⁴

Historical materialist dance scholarship dissects the relation of choreographies to the histories of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. I understand this analytic project as continuing in the tradition of critical theory espoused by the Frankfurt school, which pursued interdisciplinary inquiry committed to a critical stance towards social processes and to forms of political praxis.¹⁵ One cannot sever cultural history from the scandals of wage labor, private property, and dispossession, which necessarily mediate artistic production. Walter Benjamin's 1937 claim continues to vertebrate: "there is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (1975: 35). Benjamin challenges cultural historians to see within art the savage social processes that enable and cut through them. For historical materialists, the

¹⁴ "The order of inquiry, in other words, is system before history, so that history is never the development of one or two isolated elements with its suggestion, explicit or implicit, that change results from causes located inside that particular sphere (histories of religion or of culture or even of economics alone are decidedly undialectical). In Marx's study of any specific event or institutional form, these two types of inquiry are always interwoven" (Ollman 2003: 15).

¹⁵ In *Critical Theory*, Max Horkheimer writes: "The isolated consideration of particular activities and branches of activity, along with their contents and objects, requires for its validity an accompanying concrete awareness of its own limitations. A conception is needed which overcomes the one-sidedness that necessarily arises when limited intellectual processes are detached from their matrix in the total activity of society. In the idea of theory which the scholar inevitably reaches when working purely within his own discipline, the relation between fact and conceptual ordering of fact offers a point of departure for such a corrective conception" (2002: 199).

task is not to bracket dance from the rest of the world, but to read dances as mediated by the noise of social life.¹⁶

The integration of dance with social and economic history responds to claims within performance scholarship that loosely equate various genres of performance with ‘resistance.’ Performance scholar Della Pollack notes how “performance is increasingly understood as an important site of — even a paradigmatic trope for — cultural resistance” (1998: 26). I do not view dance as having a necessary or ontological relation to social movements.¹⁷ In some cases, dance practices are unrelated, even unhelpful, to struggles on the ground. Cultural production can certainly function as a dimension of political organizing, but I consider it necessary to position analyses of cultural politics within a broader framework of social struggle.¹⁸ Scholarly accounts can valorize certain aesthetic gestures as radical, resistant, or transgressive while such works smoothly play an institutional and economic function for the capitalist class.¹⁹ Thinking through

¹⁶ “Or, when we listen to music, we must refuse the idea that music happens only when the musician enters and picks up an instrument; music is also the anticipation of the performance and the noises of appreciation it generates and the speaking that happens through and around it, making it and loving it, being in it while listening. And so, when we refuse the call to order – the teacher picking up the book, the conductor raising his baton, the speaker asking for silence, the torturer tightening the noose – we refuse order as the distinction between noise and music, chatter and knowledge, pain and truth” (Halberstam 2013: 9).

¹⁷ André Lepecki, for example, centralizes the dancer as the figure who propels social movements: “The choreopolitical task of the dancer simultaneously answers Hannah Arendt’s call for claiming kinetic knowledge on how to move towards freedom, but also demonstrates, perhaps against Arendt, that somehow, somewhere, someone always finds a way to move politically” (2013: 20).

¹⁸ While she does not discuss the relation of tango history to concurrent social movements, Marta Savigliano has used *resistance* to frame the practice of dancing the tango: “My first tango steps taught me about both overwhelming domination and stubborn resistance” (1995: 16). She describes her scholarly methodology has analogous to that of Che Guevara, omitting any discussion of participating in political struggles in Argentina: “Che used an analogy to dance (the minuet) to explain his decolonizing strategy, and I am borrowing some tactics from his Guerrilla Warfare to explain my tangos” (18).

¹⁹ “For what I hope to have shown, by invoking the concept of monopoly rent within the logic of capital accumulation, is that capital has ways to appropriate and extract surpluses from local differences, local cultural variations and aesthetic meanings of no matter what origin. It is, for example, one thing to be transgressive about sexuality, religion, social mores and artistic conventions, but quite another to be transgressive in relation to the institutions and practices of capitalist domination” (Harvey 2009: 108).

the relation of dance to its social and economic context requires a sober analysis of how performance intersects with social movements as well as circuits of capitalist accumulation.

Medium Specificity

Engaging the relation of text to context opens the question of medium specificity, or what dance does as a medium. Some dance scholars have considered what the medium illuminates and how dance serves to rethink questions of theory and method in other fields. One could certainly generate other possible medium specific claims about dance. Dance may have particular insights on issues of corporeality, sensuousness, and materialism. Dance may provide a good way of thinking about motion and movement, what creates and sustains it on corporeal, social, and historical levels. As a medium, it could help us to attend to the comings and goings of bodies and the significance of these movements. It could aid in countering attempts to render social life as merely the play of discourse and serve as a critical reminder of the definite material relations that constitute the social world. Dance could prompt us to see the social world as continuously moving; that the structures we live within are never fixed or final.

This, however, is not the direction I wish to go in. I agree with aesthetic theorist Noël Carroll's critique of medium specificity and his rejection of media foundationalism. For Carroll, an art medium is never singular and fundamentally changes with historical and technological shifts. For this reason, a particular medium does not necessarily have an exclusive foundation and cannot hold claim to a set of subjects or materials.²⁰ From this vantage point, dance does not

²⁰ "Obviously what is meant by the phrase 'artistic medium' is very vague, referring sometimes to the physical materials out of which artworks are constructed, sometimes to the implements that are used to do the constructing, and sometimes to formal elements of design that are available to artists in a given practice. This ambiguity alone might discourage us from relying on the notion of the medium as a theoretically useful concept. ... it should be clear that most artforms cannot be identified on the basis of a single distinctive medium, since most artforms correlate with more than one medium" (Carroll 2003: 6). "In short, the purposes of a given art - indeed, of a given style, movement, or genre - will determine what aspects of a physical medium are important. The physical medium does not select a unique purpose, or even a delimited range of purposes, for an art form" (Carroll 1996: 28).

have an essence that can be extrapolated or used as justification of special access to certain aesthetic, social, or political concerns.

Rather than make a claim about what dance in particular can illuminate about social life, I wish to leave open the question of what dance is and does. Writing about dance necessarily is an interdisciplinary endeavor, as it is impossible to tease out the essence of dance from its accompaniment by other artistic media. To write about dance is already to write about theater, music, film, photography, costume design, scenography, and politics. Rather than a transhistorical or ontological conception of dance, I take up the dialectical view that non-dance dwells within the center of dance. The term *dance* is a moving target, and I aim to look narrowly at the material relations that surround three dance works, rather than make claims about what dance can do as a medium.

In distinction to Randy Martin's work which has focused on how dance might provide a way out of various impasses in political thought, I investigate what historical materialism can offer dance studies. This does not, however, render dance as a static subject matter to which theories are applied. The force of historical materialism is its avoidance of treating concepts or historical phenomena as inert objects. One can understand what dance is and does only in relation to external social relations and material forces. From a historical materialist perspective, dance does not have an essential role or function. Conceiving of dance as necessarily one thing or another works against a dialectical view, which characterizes concepts as necessarily contradictory and in motion. The transhistorical idealization of dance effectively depoliticizes it. In distinction to ontologies of dance, a political economic study helps to specify the varying functions of dance within capitalism.

While attentive to the limitations of a medium specific argument, I take up a dance history

project not simply because I have studied dance, but also because the inclusion of dance has broader implications for social and cultural history. Marxists writing about culture can sometimes overlook dance. For instance, key works on the relation of cultural production and capitalism such as Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* (1997), Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), and Jameson's *Postmodernism* (1991) engage with a wide spectrum of artistic media including painting, photography, music, architecture, literature, poetry, theater, and film, without a single mention of dance. I hope to counteract this omission by inserting dance into conversations about Marxism and culture. The field of concert dance has primarily been the domain of women and queer people, and including it within cultural analysis more broadly may help to de-center historical accounts that privilege masculinist and heterosexist vantage points.²¹

Structure of the Studies

I have structured each case study around a four-tiered analysis that includes: *a*) a description of the dance, *b*) an examination of the artistic process that went into its creation, *c*) an analysis of the piece's material conditions of possibility, and *d*) the relationship of the piece to its broader economic and historical context. In the initial layer, I look at the aesthetic choices and choreographic strategies at play within the pieces, extracting the principles and ideas that animate the work. The second level of analysis examines what constituted the creative process for making the work: the activities and relationships that brought the dance into existence. I can infer what it meant to *work* on the dance by considering the procedures involved in creating the piece as well as how issues of authorship and collaboration entered into the process. In the third dimension of the analysis, I investigate the economic arrangements that enabled each work:

²¹ "... the predominance of women - numerically as choreographers, teachers, and performers, and substantively as shapers of the content and choreographic practices of modern dance - has gone unchanged into the 1990s" (Tomko 1999: *xii*).

funding sources, access to venues, day jobs, and so forth. Parsing out the economic relations involved in the process of creating dance moves the analysis from the stage to the rehearsal space and into the whole of the dancers' lives. Finally, I place the dance in relation to economic history and the contradictions that characterize the concurrent period. The account fans out to the San Francisco Bay Area, the social movements and economic transformations that traverse the region. This final layer of the analysis allows me to contextualize these dances within a broader set of economic crises and struggles.

The project demands a varied set of research methods in order to grasp the aesthetic and economic aspects of the dances. I make use of video documentation, concert ephemera, dance criticism, and archival material to describe the works and their choreographic strategies. I collect information about the artistic processes and economic conditions of creation through interviews with choreographers and dancers, oral histories, the artists' own writing, as well as archival documentation from the presenting organizations and funders. As I use archival research as the primary form of evidence, I am reliant on what documents have been saved and made accessible to researchers. Uneven access to archival documentation plays a role in shaping the kind of readings that appear in the following studies.

Significance of the Study

As a contribution to dance studies, my dissertation mobilizes historical materialism as a research methodology. Combining choreographic analysis with political economic inquiry enables an argument that moves beyond the symptomatic or ideological reading of cultural texts. The dissertation makes four key contributions to the field of dance studies: a) it contributes to the historiography on modern dance in the San Francisco Bay Area; b) it expands the approaches available for conceptualizing the politics of concert dance; c) it foregrounds the material

conditions surrounding dance production; and d) it offers a dialectical conception of dance history.

The case studies in my dissertation add to the historiography of twentieth century modern/postmodern dance in the San Francisco Bay Area. Modern dance historians have often centered their studies in New York City, which can result in provincializing dance in other parts of the country and rendering them belated or after the fact. I have focused my dissertation on modern dance in the Bay Area, which brings Californian choreographers to the fore and de-centers New York City as the primary site for modern dance history. My studies of Carol Beals and the Wallflower Order conduct primary research on leftist dance in the Bay Area in both the 1930s and 1980s, a history that other dance scholars have not yet explored thoroughly. I have also selected Anna Halprin as a well-known and oft-written about figure in order to show what an economic analysis can yield that other historical methodologies might leave out, namely a consideration of the material relations that support dance.

Through its engagement with Marxist thought, my dissertation expands the type of political analyses undertaken by dance scholars. Dance studies formed as a discipline in the 1980s and 1990s, a period marked by the influence of continental philosophy and poststructuralist tendencies within humanities departments in American universities. In this context, the primary political agenda of dance studies has consisted of a focus on disciplinary power and subversion, cultural resistance to hegemonic norms, the staging of identity within dance, and the relation to dance practices to nationalism, leaving questions of political economy to the wayside as Marxism fell out of intellectual fashion. Articulating historical materialist methods for dance research offers an alternative to the rise of discourse theory and, in David McNally's words, "respond[s] to the new idealism which dissolves all of social life into language and discourse"

(1993). Historical materialism can function as an antidote to modes of cultural determinism that have gained intellectual traction in humanities departments over recent decades, which can be as reductionist as economism.²² By using Marxism as an interpretative framework, I examine the relation of dance practices to their capitalist context, bringing material conditions into view and expanding approaches to the political analysis of dance. Jumping scales enables a re-evaluation of how dance scholars have traditionally understood the boundaries and scope of dance research. By jumping between a dance, its rehearsal process, structures of support, and political economic moment, my analysis circumvents and challenges entrenched scales for conceptualizing the social context that surrounds dance practices. This scale jumping integrates artistic and economic history to show their relationship to a social totality.

My study investigates an aspect of concert dance that few dance scholars have taken up, specifically its conditions and relations of production. The focus on semiotic analyses of choreographic works has enabled researchers to characterize dance as a meaning-making practice, a necessary move when scholars had to argue for the validity of dance as a subject of study. The emphasis on discourse analysis and reading dances as texts has encouraged performance scholars to take what appears on stage as the object of their analysis. Privileging the presentation of choreography has led to a lack of attention to what is not immediately visible to the spectator: the green room, the rehearsal room, and all the accompanying economic processes. While positioning dance as a form of discourse has highlighted certain aspects of the political context, it has tended to obscure other dimensions, particularly the material conditions that

²² David Harvey notes how other theoretical tendencies can inhabit a deterministic mode: “The danger for social theory is to see one of the elements as determinant of all the others. Technological determinism is as wrongheaded as environmental determinism (nature dictates), class-struggle determinism, idealism (mental conceptions are in the vanguard), labor-process determinism or determinism arising out of (cultural) shifts in everyday life... (2010: 196).

surround the production of dance. Dance scholarship has, to a certain extent, become alienated from the production process by reifying the staged performance of a piece. Rather than solely focusing on the realm of representation and meaning making, I endeavor to study the economic relations that enable choreographers to create their work. Materialist analysis expands beyond the politics of representation and includes the relation of dance to capital and the value-form. Modern dance cannot be separated from modern dance *under capitalism*. My project combines both a sober understanding of how material determinants shape dance under capitalism with a buoyant denaturalization of the capitalist mode of production as necessary, unavoidable, and unchanging.

Lastly, my dissertation offers a dialectical conception of dance history, which contextualizes dance within the dynamics of capitalism. *Overreading* dance locates the contradictions and antagonisms of economic relations within the history of choreographic works. Mobilizing the strengths and possibilities of historical materialism, the project espouses a dialectical understanding of dance as simultaneously containing social cooperation and barbarism. In response to characterizations of Marxism as reductionistic, vulgar, or outdated, the dissertation attests to the continuing relevance of the Marxist tradition for dance research and political thought in general. By locating dance within unstable and dynamic economic processes, I hold onto the possibility of a future qualitatively different from the present.

Chapter Outline

The chapters of the dissertation examine individual dance pieces, which one could regard as ‘case studies.’ As a form, the case study opens up the particularity of a single object as a means to shed light on a larger class of cases. The methodological status of the case study remains fraught in the uncertain relation of the part to the whole, or the extent to which one

examines a *mere* case and the extent to which the individual dance can reveal something the whole (modern dance or concert dance in general). The frame of the case study could be replaced by what Lenin refers to as the “concrete analysis of a concrete situation” (cited in Anderson 1976: 14).²³ The studies excavate the economic conditions of possibility for specific works of dance through historical research rather than speculation or assumption. Examining the social circumstances of choreographers at close range is not to foreground the choices of individuals but to view them as indexes of larger processes. Rather than passing judgment on individuals, the task is to develop a structural analysis of dance and its economic conditions.

What I have selected as the subject matter, dances made by white women in the Bay Area, brings up questions regarding whom the dissertation renders visible and invisible. As the work of cis-gendered white women has received extensive attention within modern/postmodern dance history, the gesture of selecting these choreographers may continue this centralization of white women. While one can certainly fault the dissertation for this, I attempt here a project of immanent critique: to take dances by white women and examine the gendered, raced, and classed mechanisms that fostered their work. Moving away from a white feminism that might categorically frame modern dance as a space of corporeal freedom for women, I contextualize the stakes of these choreographers’ work within the social antagonisms of their period. Developing a race critical analysis of how white women have come to the foreground perhaps runs alongside efforts to de-centralize whiteness within dance history.

Three studies comprise the dissertation, each taking up a modern/postmodern ensemble dance created in the San Francisco Bay Area: *Waterfront - 1934* (1936-1937) by Carol Beals,

²³ “Questions about the actual relationship of the economic and the ideological, or about the degree of autonomy of art or ideology, or about the transformative potential of a particular style of work, are always empirical questions, whose answer requires the historical analysis of a concrete situation” (Wolff 1981: 139-140).

Parades and Changes (1965-1967) by Anna Halprin, and *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* (1982-1983) by the Wallflower Order. The project is largely a methodological investigation of what a historical materialist approach can yield. To demonstrate the validity and applicability of a method, it should apply to multiple historical periods. To make the methodological gesture legible, I use the same analytic structure for dances from three periods during the twentieth-century. I narrow the focus to the Bay Area and to modern dance as a means to have continuity, or dependent variables, between the studies. In selecting these specific dances by Beals, Halprin, and the Wallflower Order, I make use of temporal rather than geographic variation.

These three dances allow me to map concert dance onto shifts within capitalism over the course of the twentieth-century, from the Great Depression of the 1930s to the Fordist post-war boom to the aftermath of the 1973 economic crisis. In the 1930s, the contradictions of capital came to a head as excess capacity and inadequate demand led to the self-undermining of capitalist accumulation and the economic disasters of the interwar years. The contradictions within labor unfolded during the 1960s, as workers both cooperated with capitalist interests and resisted the post-war contract between capital and labor, which excluded many from the promise of a rise in real wages. Following the economic crisis of the early 1970s and the unfurling of neoliberal policies, the contradictions of social reproduction characterize the 1980s, as capital undermined the reproduction of the workers it needed to sustain the circuits of accumulation. While there are certainly other characterizations of twentieth-century economic history, I use this framework to locate the dances within the relevant economic dynamics of their period and highlight capital's continuous crises and efforts at restructuring. The chapters, in their succession, give the reader a sense of how the economic contradictions within capital, labor, and social reproduction also appear within concert dance. Through an *overreading* of works by

Beals, Halprin, and the Wallflower Order, my dissertation interprets their dances as vectors for charting the contradictions within capitalism at large.

The first study commences in the 1930s, when the Great Depression devastated the United States following the stock market crash of 1929 and working class movements responded to these economic circumstances with a surge in union organizing and wildcat strikes. Carol Beals, a modern dance choreographer allied with the labor movement, created *Waterfront — 1934*, as a danced representation of the west coast-wide Maritime Strike and San Francisco General Strike. Beals has yet to receive dance historical attention, which is true of most 1930s-era leftist choreographers based outside of New York. As capital faces internal contradictions (namely the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, the simultaneity of cooperation and domination, and the position of labor movements both within and against capital), I argue that the dual self-propelling and self-deteriorating tendencies within capital also dwell within Beals' work. I read *Waterfront — 1934* as instantiating both the proximity and distance between modern dance and labor struggles.

The second case study locates Halprin's *Parades and Changes* within the history of San Francisco during the mid-1960s and the structural antagonisms that characterize the period. I argue that the contradictions within the Fordist organization of labor also emerged within the creation and performance of *Parades and Changes*. Fordism boosted effective demand by coupling real wages with gains in productivity for a certain stratum of workers. Yet, large segments of the workforce remained excluded from the bounty of the post-war period, setting the stage for mass social movements against these conditions. While Halprin's work has been characterized as the cultural ethos of new left politics, I read the work as more aptly aligned with the race and class interests of urban renewal and suburbanization, processes that helped to

stabilize the Fordist regime of accumulation. I argue that access to inherited wealth and the material resources made available through a “possessive investment in whiteness” enabled Halprin to create the dance (Lipsitz 1995). Contextualizing *Parades and Changes* in relation to political economic developments during the 1960s suggests the work’s contradictory affiliation with both utopian counter-cultures and the economic interests that propelled Fordist accumulation.

Moving forward to the 1980s, the final study takes up the Wallflower Order’s *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* (1982-1983), an evening composed of dance, song, and theatrical vignettes that explicitly addressed the dancers’ political commitments. Examining the herstory of the Wallflower Order in relation to the post-1973 economic period, I argue that *Journeys* embodies the contradictions within social reproduction, the category’s simultaneously nourishing and antagonistic dimensions. Indicative of the shifting conditions of and tensions within social reproduction, *Journeys* contains alienation and care, sustenance and exploitation. Their work illustrates the doubleness of social reproduction as that which sustains capitalist production and the social movements that aim to move beyond it.

The final chapter weaves the three studies together, reflecting on the different frameworks for dance-making within the work of Beals, Halprin, and the Wallflower Order. Considering what political economic methods offer dance research, the scalar movement of the dissertation allows the studies to simultaneously grasp the aesthetics of a piece, the conditions of its production, and its intimate relation to broader economic processes. The dissertation enables a new way of approaching the relation of concert dance to capital, the function of dance writing, and what it means for dancers to be on the left.

Carol Beals' *Waterfront* — 1934: Leftist modern dance, economic crisis, and labor struggles within Depression-era San Francisco

Introduction

The city became a camp, a battlefield, the screams of ambulances sent the day reeling, class lines fell sharply—everywhere, on streetcars, on corners, in stores, people talked, cursing, stirred with something strange in their breasts, incomprehensible, shaken with fury at the police, the papers, the shipowners . . . going down to the waterfront, not curious spectators, but to stand there, watching, silent, trying to read the lesson the moving bodies underneath were writing, trying to grope to the meaning of it all, police "protecting lives" smashing clubs and gas bombs into masses of men like themselves, papers screaming lies. — Tillie Lerner (1934: 5)

Tillie Lerner Olsen, a communist, union organizer, and writer, describes here the San Francisco General Strike of 1934, as she grappled with how to understand the movement and violence that swept through the streets. As the Great Depression devastated the United States following the stock market crash of 1929, working class movements responded to these economic circumstances with a surge in union organizing and wildcat strikes. In San Francisco, rank and file members of the longshoremen's union initiated a three-month long port blockade, escalating into a general strike that shut down the city for four days in July 1934 (Larrowe 1972, Quin 1949, Selvin 1996). In the Bay Area and nationally, artists of the period responded to these changing material conditions and forms of class composition. In nearly every medium, artists influenced by communist politics began to organize unions, salons, discussion groups, publications, performances, and exhibitions dedicated to the labor movement (Denning 1998).¹

¹ Beginning in the fall of 1929, writers sympathetic to communist politics organized themselves into John Reed Clubs, named after the American journalist who witnessed the Russian Revolution and participated in the Second World Congress of the Communist International in 1920. By 1934, there were branches in thirty cities across the

Dancers too took part in this cultural movement. In the early 1930s, a leftist dance milieu emerged as dancers participated in political demonstrations, made work driven by working class themes, and taught dance to groups of unionized workers. Dance scholars have contributed a number of historical studies that examine this contingent of radical dancers within the context of New York City (Franko 2002, Garafola 1994, Graff 1997, Newhall 2002, Prickett 1989, 1990). This dancerly engagement with leftist politics took place not only in New York, but also in other cities across the US. In this chapter, I consider a dance created by Carol Beals (1909-2004), a choreographer making work in the 1930s dedicated to the labor movement and to organizing dancers in the San Francisco Bay Area. Yet to receive dance historical attention, Beals remains a relatively unknown figure, which is true of most 1930s-era leftist choreographers based outside of New York. In addition to addressing a gap in the scholarly literature, I use a different methodological approach, a historical materialist framework that integrates dance history with broader historical and economic conditions.

Of Beals' choreographic work during the 1930s, I offer here a study of a piece titled *Waterfront — 1934*, a danced commemoration of the Maritime Strike in San Francisco performed by her dance group during 1936 and 1937. Performed by thirteen dancers, the work consisted of three sections: “Speed-Up,” “Strike,” and “Bloody Thursday” (Dance Council of

United States, which met in the first American Writers Congress in 1935. The John Reed Clubs played a key role in the proletarian literature movement, or the production of literary works written from working class perspectives. A number of communist affiliated theater groups sprung up, such as the Workers Laboratory Theater, Theater Union, and the Group Theater, as well as leftist associations for visual artists including the Artists Union and the American Artists Congress. Unions organized their own recreational cultural groups, including workers' choirs, bands, and theaters. With New Deal funding from the Works Progress Administration (1935), a number of radical artists made work under the umbrella of the Federal Project Number One, which contained the Art, Music, Theater, and Writers Projects. Supporting these developments was a number of leftist publications, such as *The New Masses*, *Left Front*, and *Partisan Review*, that covered and debated the aesthetics and politics of artists engaged with the social struggles of their period. Leftist artists and critics launched debates that reexamined modernist aesthetic criteria, as they reframed questions of taste through the lens of class, affiliation, and solidarity (Hemingway 2002: 2). All these endeavors — the leftist press, communist affiliated groups of artists, and cultural projects funded through the WPA — attempted to support labor struggles and bridge divisions within the working class.

Northern California 1936). As capital faces internal contradictions (namely the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, the simultaneity of cooperation and domination, and the position of labor movements both within and against capital), I argue that the dual self-propelling and self-deteriorating tendencies within capital also dwell within Beals' work. Through an analysis of Beals' choreography, her creative process, the material means for creating the dance, and the political economic history of the period, I read *Waterfront — 1934* as instantiating both the proximity and distance between modern dance and labor struggles.

The chapter commences with a discussion of scholarly literature on 1930s-era leftist dance, engaging the debates that have emerged concerning the relation of dance to work and the politics of the genre. Turning to Beals' choreography and creative process, I examine how *Waterfront — 1934* functioned as a practice of political reflection and historical distillation, noting the tensions between the dance and its subject matter. I then turn to the material conditions for the dance: the social reproduction of the performers, the organizational structures facilitating the presentation of the dance, and the specific locations where *Waterfront — 1934* appeared. Finally, the chapter opens out to the contradictions characterizing capital as a social form. The dialectical forces evident within the Great Depression also cut through San Francisco's labor movements and Beals' representation of its struggles within dance. In light of this wider contextualization, I highlight three key tensions between dance / labor, dance / capital, and dance / struggle. Informed by a materialist methodology that connects dance practices to a wider social totality, Beals' work provides an important case study for thinking about the political possibilities and limits of concert dance.

Review of the Literature

The historiography of radical modern dance during the 1930s has analyzed the genre's aesthetic, thematic, and institutional connections to leftist politics in New York City. Stacey Prickett contributed two early articles on the workers dance movement in New York that charted the forms of organization, institutional affiliations with unions, thematic shifts over the course of the 1930s, emergent debates in the publications of the period, and the genre's lasting influence on modern dance in the US (1989, 1990). Continuing the research initiated by Prickett, Lynn Garafola edited the collection of essays, *Of, By, and for the People: Dancing on the Left in the 1930s*, in which scholars took up African American dance in Harlem during the 1930s, dance within communist party pageants, and the work of leftist dance critic Edna Ocko (1994). Lynne Conner detailed the influence of the leftist dance milieu and the Popular Front on the work of Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey (1996). Subsequent scholarship has delved deeper into questions of identity and representation within New York City's radical modern dance. Ellen Graff excavates the social location of the leftist dancers, arguing that the working class, immigrant backgrounds of the revolutionary dancers, many of whom were Jewish, influenced their turn towards radical politics (1997). Parsing out various aspects of the movement — dancing about working, workers dancing, and dancers working — she recovers the revolutionary precedents within the history of early modern dance. In his study of Depression-era dance, Mark Franko contends that chorus girls, ballet dancers, and modern dancers embodied larger social tensions (Franko 2002). His cross-genre comparison frames radical modern dance as using emotion to express solidarity among workers across racial lines. Through the historicization of genre formation in dance, he connects the social class of the dancers to the classing of genres, viewing particular dance idioms as representing classed interests. Mary Anne Santos Newhall provides an intellectual history of mass workers dance, finding its roots within the choric

principle from German modern dance (Newhall 2002). She charts the transmission of mass dance to the New York context during the 1930s, analyzing the resonances of mass unison movement with both leftist politics and rising fascist threats. Victoria Phillips Geduld examines leftist modern dance in relation to the historiography of the American Communist Party, connecting state funding for modern dance within the U.S. and Russia with the ironies of Cold War narratives about the uses of culture as propaganda (2008). Finally, Hannah Kosstrin argues that New York choreographer Anna Sokolow's communist influences played a key role in her success in simultaneously straddling audiences sympathetic to modernist aesthetics and to radical politics (2013). This scholarship considers how leftist dance negotiates questions of politics and identity through the choreographic work of the period. Collectively, the literature on leftist dance makes a powerful case for not assimilating 1930s modern dance simply to the emergence of the Bennington's big four: Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, and Charles Weidman.

In situating my research on Beals within the related literature, I provide new evidence (writing on a figure absent from other accounts of 1930s leftist dance) and use a new methodological approach (a historical materialist reading). In taking up a San Francisco-based choreographer, this chapter addresses a gap in previous literature, namely the consideration of Depression-era leftist dance outside of New York City. Although brief references to her work appear in Harris (2009), Newhall (2000), and Prickett (2007), Carol Beals has yet to receive any sustained attention within dance historical writing. Additionally, the chapter incorporates another body of research, specifically political economic history, which provides new insights about modern dance from the 1930s. I engage with Beals' work as a social process encompassing the rehearsal period, performance venues, economic means for creating the work, and broader economic conditions. The methodology focuses on the materiality of the dance partly out of

necessity. The primary documentation related to *Waterfront — 1934* consists of the 1936 festival program containing one photograph and a note by Beals about the dance. Beyond this image and brief description, we have little window into the work's content. As the dance remains largely opaque, I read Beals' work through the social and economic circumstances connecting the dance to its context.

In building upon the existing scholarship, I engage two emergent questions within dance historical literature: how to understand the dancers' relationship to work and how to analyze the politics of leftist modern dance. While historians of this genre have analyzed how dancers represented labor within their choreography as well as how dancers performed cultural work, my inquiry delves into the concrete conditions of production and how these conditions relate to the category of value productive labor. Previous methodological approaches frame representation in dance as a form of work, relying on a metaphorical logic that connects the physical exertion in dance with waged labor. The literature about this period leaves unexplored the economic conditions of the dances themselves, or by what material means the dancers created their pieces (what jobs they worked, how they had access to studio spaces, how they reproduced their daily existence, etc.). I pursue a more materialist framework to understand the relation between dance and labor, adhering to a conception of value as political economic as opposed to aesthetic, cultural, or semiotic. Rather than thinking about labor, class, and struggle as metaphors, my methodology foregrounds a non-analogical approach to dance and work. I approach Marxist-inflected dance on its own terms, rather than through more post-structuralist frameworks that equate dance and labor as forms of discourse. Beals' activity as a choreographer only becomes legible through its relation to the social conditions of labor in Depression-era San Francisco.

Secondly, in distinction to some of the historiography on the workers dance movement, I offer a contrasting or alternative view of how to interpret the politics of leftist modern dance. In articulating the central argument of his book, Mark Franko has framed leftist dance as directly participating in labor movements, stating:

The circumstances immediately joining dance to the labor force in the 1930s constitute, therefore, a historically unique moment in which dance contributed to political struggle. ...[T]he bodies of chorus girls, modern dancers, and ballet dancers were protagonists of class struggle (2002: 2 and 7).

In distinction to Franko's argument which sees concert dance as consonant with class struggle, I place Beals' dance in relation to forms of labor organizing during the period. The gesture of reading leftist modern dance in relation to the concurrent labor movements is not to frame one as more effective than the other; rather this jump of scale allows us to view dance dialectically as both participating and not participating in labor solidarity. Attending to the distinctions or gaps between aesthetic gestures and forms of struggle, incorporating labor movements into the analysis of a modern dance can illuminate to what extent dancers both acted and did not act as protagonists in broader social struggles. Writing about the 1930s involves taking a political position on how to render a moment in US history when communists, socialists, and fellow travelers amounted to a vibrant force, as working class struggle reached a period of insurgency. In reflecting on the 1930s, I offer the perspective that, in their wish to overthrow capitalism, the radical dance milieu possessed a political astuteness, rather than foolishness or naiveté. I move now to the case of Beals' *Waterfront — 1934*, examining the dance, its process, material conditions of possibility, and political economic context in turn.

Beals' Choreography

Beals' choreography helped to make sense of recent struggles in San Francisco and develop a political position in solidarity with the labor movement. In using cultural production as

a way to digest the social struggles occurring in her midst, Beals' dance drew from the documentary aesthetics common to leftist cultural milieus during the Depression.² Emulating the direct precedent of the radical modern dancers she encountered in New York, her work synthesized the aesthetic impulses of socialist realism with modernism in dance.³ In her program note, Beals outlines the content of the dance and what she intended to represent:

² Many social realist works of the 1930s had a documentary impulse that sought to chronicle recent events, as evidenced by the genre of living newspapers created within the Federal Theater Project that took newspaper articles as the source material for theatrical episodes. The composer for *Waterfront — 1934*, Lou Harrison describes Beals' dance as part and parcel of these documentary aesthetics: "This was a typical thirties thing. If there was a political development, you did a dance about it. There was Strike, and the Spanish war, and so on" (Miller 1993). Beals absorbed social realism and documentary aesthetics through her contact with leftist artists including the radical dance groups in New York who used of modernist dance to take up political and economic themes.

³ Beginning in the early 1920s, New York choreographer Edith Segal contributed movement to Communist Party rallies and labor pageants, eventually founding a group called the Red Dancers in 1928 (Prickett 1989: 47–48). Following Segal's precedent, modern dancers created both the New Dance Group and the Workers Dance League in 1932. Students who studied with Holm at the Wigman school in New York formed the New Dance Group, a guild of dancers committed to leftist politics and solidarity with labor struggles. The first event the group attended together was a memorial march on February 17 for Harry Simms, a 20 year old labor organizer and member of the Young Communist League who was shot by a sheriff's deputy while working with the National Miners Union in Harlan County, Kentucky (Foulkes 2002: 107). His death punctuated the Harlan County War, a decade long struggle of the miners for union recognition that escalated to include strikes, executions, and bombings. As workers sympathetic to the labor movement watched the events unfold in Kentucky, dancers in New York sought to lend their skills to the mobilizations and marches in honor of Simms, adapting *Ausdruckstanz* for revolutionary purposes (Newhall 2002: 41–42). The New Dance Group made its debut performance at a May Day celebration that year sponsored by the *Daily Worker*, the newspaper of the Communist Party, at the Bronx Coliseum (Perelman 2008: 164). Described by dance historian Ellen Graff as modeled after a communist cell, the NDG coordinated performances, discussions, and dance classes for working people (Graff 1994: 2). Later that year in November, members of the NDG reached out to other groups of radical dancers to form the Workers Dance League as an umbrella organization composed of representatives from eleven leftist dance groups to coordinate and promote dance allied with the labor movement (Foulkes 2002: 107). In March 1933, the NDG held their first annual recital, whose program declared "the dance is a weapon in the class struggle" (Prickett 1989: 47). Two years later, the NDG presented "An evening of Revolutionary Dance" at the Bennington College summer program (McPherson 2013: 65). While the influence of the Comintern's third period policy is evident within the work of the NDG (member Nadia Chikovsky declared, "We believe capitalism is tottering, and we are helping to overthrow it with dance"), historian Stacey Prickett notes that few leftist dancers were actually members of the Communist Party (Prickett 1994: 14). Not unique to dancers, many artists and intellectuals of the period who were sympathetic to the Party's politics opted out of membership to avoid the tedium of CP meetings and being subject to party discipline (Hemingway 2002: 8).

The aesthetics and politics of the New York leftist dancers were an instrumental influence on Beals' *Waterfront — 1934*. Both Jane Dudley and Anna Sokolow were members of Martha Graham's company and of the NDG, who Beals would have met during her year of study at the Graham studio. A column of John Martin's that indexes weekly dance concerts lists a studio performance by Beals alongside a concert of the Workers Dance League (Martin 1934a). In 1933, Edith Segal had created a work titled *Practice for the Picket Line* inspired by strike actions, and Jane Dudley choreographed a dance titled *Strike* that featured "three groups divided as picketers, militia, and workers" (Foulkes 2002: 110). As many of the dancers who participated in the NDG studied either

“Waterfront — 1934,” danced by the Carol Beals Dance Group, was chosen as the most significant of many important events occurring in San Francisco. The dance does not attempt realism. There is no intention to represent any particular machine in the swaying movement. “Speed up” in the handling of cargo, a contributing factor leading to organization for protest, was selected by the group to begin the dance movement. The second part — Conflict between two groups — follows logically and reaches a climax in the killing of a member of the protesting group. All waterfront unions and friends join in a silent funeral march — a reminder that he must not have died in vain (Dance Council of Northern California 1936).

While the precise contours of the dance remain unknown, we do know that Beals employed symbolism to stage the mechanization, dehumanization, alienation, and unity experienced by San Francisco’s working class during the strikes of 1934.⁴

Waterfront — 1934 operated as a form of public history, as the work thought or danced through the circumstances of the city where the performers lived. The Carol Beals Dance Group performed the piece at the Second Annual Dance Festival of the Dance Council of Northern California, which took as its theme the ‘Growth and Development of San Francisco.’ Each dance depicted scenes from San Francisco history, ranging from dance specific references to the social history of the city from the 1850s up until their 1930s moment.⁵ The Council’s festival attempted to make sense of the participants’ history as San Francisco dancers, and Beals’ *Waterfront — 1934* offered a dancerly tribute to San Francisco’s labor movements.

Graham or Holm, they mobilized these modern dance vocabularies and aesthetics towards less abstract content, establishing a precedent that Beals took up.

⁴ Soviet social realism served as a critical precedent for American artists, who took up the task of making frank, accessible work that dealt with the pressing social and political concerns of their period, or what Michael Denning calls “revolutionary symbolism” (Denning 1998: 118).

⁵ A dancer named Elva Dimpfel performed *Prologue - Dancers of Early San Francisco* as a homage to Lola Montez, a dancer and entertainer from mid-nineteenth century San Francisco. The George Pring Mimic Dancers presented a work titled *Scandal - 1890*, which portrayed the Barbary Coast of the late 1890s, an area known for its dance halls, jazz clubs, brothels, and general lawlessness. In *The Ballet Rehearsal*, the Iris de Luce Group represented the operas and ballets of the early 1900s and their common use of butterflies as a motif. Henrietta Greenwood (later known as Eve Gentry) created a dance called *Small Fry - Backyard Plotting - Telegraph Hill* which was Greenwood’s choreographic sketch of the 1930s-era gangs in the Latin Quarter under Coit Tower (Newhall 2000: 71).

Beals dance appears to oscillate between a mimetic and an anti-mimetic mode of symbolization. The dance works directly with its historical referents: the longshoreman's struggle with waterfront shipping companies, the Maritime Strike beginning in May 1934, and the San Francisco General Strike of July 1934. Beals' describes the dancers as playing the striking workers and their allies in a mimetic fashion. Simultaneously, she asserts that the dancerly vocabulary is not realist, suggesting that her choreography functioned as an allegory to the lives of longshoremen at work, in struggle, and in mourning. As a process of historical reflection, the work distilled the labor struggles on San Francisco's waterfront into a dance, marked by the implicit tension between what mode of symbolization was appropriate to the task, mimesis or allegory. The ambiguity as to whether the dancers depicted striking workers or used abstraction to capture their struggle suggests a failure to resolve the problem of how to represent the events that unfolded two years prior. This lack of resolution perhaps emerges from the political ambiguity of these struggles; the working class itself did not know how to make sense of these events. Tillie Olsen's description of San Francisco's workers during the strike "trying to read the lesson the moving bodies underneath were writing, trying to grope to the meaning of it all" also resonates for understanding the approach of Beals' dance (Olsen 1934: 5). *Waterfront — 1934* used choreography as a way of grasping, however inconclusively, the political lesson San Francisco's working class learned through the labor insurgency of this period.

Beals orchestrated her dancers into unison sections that staged the conflict between capital and labor, performing the intellectual work of historical distillation. As Alberto Toscano argues, "the impasses of class consciousness and revolutionary action are aesthetic problems, specific to capitalism's regime of (in)visibility" (Toscano 2015: 109). *Waterfront — 1934* followed an aesthetic impulse to make visible the material contradictions that drive historical movement

within capitalism. The narrative movement between the sections of the dance — “Speed-Up,” “Strike,” and “Bloody Thursday” — refers to the increased exploitation of labor-power, the organized resistance of workers, and the ambivalent results of this process. “Bloody Thursday” could mourn the deaths of strikers at the hands of police or celebrate the widespread solidarity that spurred the San Francisco General Strike. The potential doubleness of the final section — working class struggle as a story of repression and/or as a story of victorious mobilization — indicates the tensions of this moment within San Francisco’s labor movements.

In looking specifically at the movement, Beals’ *Waterfront — 1934* used modern dance as a way to stage contradictions at the level of individual dancers’ body.⁶ While no records remain that document the movement vocabulary, Beals does describe a specific movement in her program note, a swaying to connote the activity of moving cargo or the movement of industrial

⁶ Carol Beals had studied dance as a child at the Peters Wright School in San Francisco, and by the early 1930s, she taught ballet and modern dance classes there. Anita Peters and Dexter Wright started the Peters Wright School of Dancing in 1912 in the basement of their house on Pine Street in San Francisco (Job 2000: 1). Anita Peters formed a troupe called the California Dancing Girls, who performed and traveled on the vaudeville circuit. Taking occasional classes from vaudeville performers who visited San Francisco, Peters drew from eclectic sources, performing Greek inspired dances, orientalist exotica, and Follies-derived shows. Her work at the time was emblematic of the cultural appropriation common to vaudeville and minstrelsy: Wright’s troupe performed ‘slave dances,’ ‘hindu-style Nautch dances,’ ‘the Black Bottom,’ ‘redskin’ numbers, and so forth (Beals and Langley 2007). Anita and Dexter Wright were acquainted with Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, who would occasionally rehearse at the Peters Wright Studio when visiting San Francisco. In a production of Gluck’s *Orpheus* at the Greek Theater in Berkeley in 1918, St. Denis performed as a soloist with Wright’s dancers as the *corps de ballet* (Job 1984: 56). According to her sister Lenore Peters Job (1890-1984), Anita did not have any formal training but picked up whatever movement she saw in performances that traveled through San Francisco. In 1929, Anita and Dexter decided to stay in New York and start a dance school there, leaving her sister Lenore as director of the San Francisco school.

Under Lenore’s directorship, the school embraced modernist influences and took up what was called *new dance* (Job 2000: 3). Peters Wright Creative Dance had classes for children as well as adults, adapting Duncan, Delsarte, and various other modern dance techniques (Harris 2009: 32). Lenore did not have a background in any particular dance technique but borrowed and gleaned from a range of sources.

In a brochure for the school from the 1930s, Peters Wright announces classes “for the professional dancer” including modern technique, ballet technique, composition, and opportunity for group work as well as classes “for the layman” in creative dance as recreation and cultural development. Ballet was taught by Iris de Luce who had danced with the Paris Opera Ballet, and the studio also had Spanish dance classes with Guillermo del Oro (Dunning 1986: 289). A woman named Beryl Johnson who had studied at Dalcroze Studio in Geneva, Switzerland taught Eurhythmics at the school (Rudsten 2007: 11). The school was also the site of the first Graham technique classes in the Bay Area, which were taught by Genevieve De Vall who returned in 1929 after a year of study with Graham.

machinery more generally. This swaying plays a symbolic role in the dance, but could also embody an oscillation between two poles, or movement pulled by contradictory forces.

This movement also suggests the incorporation of Graham technique, which Beals had studied immediately preceding the creation of *Waterfront — 1934*.⁷ In the codified vocabulary that Graham developed, she centralized the use of a contraction through the torso. The pulling back and curving of the torso in the contraction creates negative space in front of the dancer. The contraction generates a sense of external forces that pull the body backwards, as if manipulated by unseen constraints. Informed by psychoanalysis, Graham conceived of dance as revealing the inner life of the human psyche, the unconscious drives that spur human emotion, as Graham writes: “It [dance] comes from the depths of man’s inner nature, the unconscious, where memory dwells... Art is the evocation of man’s inner nature” (Graham 1980: 50). Her movement dramatized the internal conflicts of the subject, as the body moved between the poles of desire and aversion, sorrow and exultation. Radical modern dancers who studied with Graham could appropriate her movement vocabulary for different ends while still invoking the conception of dance as revealing the unseen. Sharing with Graham the desire to make visible a latent structure, leftist choreographers sought to reveal not psychoanalytic but political economic relations. Graham technique offered radical modern dancers a way of moving that presented the body in conflict, as though pulled in opposite directions at once. While the swaying motion that Beals’ describes is distinct from a contraction, her movement channels the dualism that drives from Graham’s sequencing of steps driven by the oscillation between contraction and release. Beals

⁷ Graham began as a dancer with Ruth St. Denis’ company and eventually left to start her own company in the mid-1920s. Her work drew from the orientalist exoticism of Denishawn, the interest in Greek myth and iconography, and the cultural appropriation characteristic of modernism in the 1920s and 1930s. Beals studied at the Graham studio in New York for about a year during 1933 and 1934. Upon returning the San Francisco, she taught Graham technique at the Peters Wright School (Prickett 2007: 238).

and other radical modern dancers could use Graham's approach to movement to represent external forces upon workers, strained by the economic conditions of capitalism. In addition to embodying their historical circumstances, Graff has argued that Graham's technique engendered an embodied sense of power, which leftist dancers directed towards their efforts to mobilize political power (1997: 21-25).

In her dancerly depiction of labor struggles in San Francisco, Beals incorporated movement not only from Martha Graham but also Mary Wigman, as she politicized their approaches to dance technique. Sharing with Graham an expressionistic approach to dance, Wigman's movement aesthetics offered radical modern dancers a way of dancing that they could use to for their own ends.⁸ As an aesthetic hallmark, Wigman built movement through the relationship between tension (*Spannung*) and release (*Entspannung*) (Newhall 2008: 82). The oscillation between tension and release propelled Wigman's dancing from one movement to the next, and this embodied dynamism could lend itself to the ends of radical modern dancers as they represented the movement of Depression-era class struggles. Through her conscious attention to

⁸ Wigman, a student of Dalcroze and Laban, was a key figure in the development of *Ausdruckstanz*, a form grounded in strong expressive movement and influenced by expressionism in art and literature. Wigman also channeled 'primitive' aesthetics that gestured towards the immediacy and sensuality that European artists ascribed to the ritual practices of indigenous cultures (Newhall 2008: 77).

Beals was first exposed to Wigman's choreography through her touring during the 1930s. In 1932, Mary Wigman was on her second solo tour in the United States and performed in San Francisco for the first time at the Tivoli Theatre, Columbia Theatre, and Oakland Auditorium Theatre. Wigman performed a large portion of her solo repertory during these concerts (Newhall 2000: 35). In recalling her experience of seeing Wigman's work, Lenore Peters Job declared: "The Mary Wigman! What a shock that was. She wasn't pretty, she didn't dance as I knew dance, but she created new and significant movements that stunned me. [...] This concert so excited me that I was ill after dinner, and fell and dislocated my jaw!" (Job 1984: 65).

Beals returned to the east coast in 1937 to study Mary Wigman's work through a teacher named Hanya Holm who had started a Wigman school in New York. She attended the summer school at Bennington College, performing in Holm's dance *Trend* (McPherson 2013: 116-7). Mary Jo Shelley, the administrative director of Bennington, described Holm's dance, a work that choreographed a large cast, as a "commentary on human trial and triumph," relevant to Beals own choreographic interests (McPherson 2013: 99). Susan Manning notes how Popular Front politics influenced Holm's choreography: "Many critics consider *Trend* Holm's artistic masterpiece. Interestingly, despite Holm's denial of explicit political interests decades later, the choreography of her 1937 work reveals an embodied politics that aligns with the Popular Front, the attempt by the US Communist Party to make common cause with socialists and liberals in the mid-1930s. Like dances by the 'New Dance Group,' *Trend* pointed toward the ills of a capitalist society - mechanized labor, a decadent leisure class, the addiction to money" (2016: 50).

space as a factor in composition, Wigman also created movement specifically in relation and response to the space around the dancer. Beals and other leftist choreographers took up this attention to site, dilating the sense of space around the dancer to include the city where they danced. Carol Beals cites the influence of German dance in the announcement for her final concert in San Francisco before departing for New York in 1933: “Miss Beals is primarily an exponent of the modern style in dancing which draws upon the German technique making characterizations and picturing abstractions” (Beals 1933). This description gives a sense of how Beals’ understood the task of choreography and the prominence of German dance aesthetics in her thinking. Beals translated Wigman’s expressionist mode for more politically driven themes, making abstractions of labor struggles and economic conditions.

Additionally, Beals incorporated Wigman’s composition of groups in choric dances, a form that leftist choreographers could use for working class lay dancers. While early modern dancers performed primarily as soloists — Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, or Maude Allen for example — Wigman worked in three choreographic categories: solo, group, and choric dances. She developed her choreographic skills in using groups of dancers, sometimes in quite large numbers. When Judy Job, the daughter of Beals’ colleague Lenore Peters Job, recollected seeing Wigman’s work in the 1930s, she remembers in particular the almost orchestral use of groups:

[...] we knew that Mary Wigman was new. I just remember these marvelous movements; movements of groups, for instance. She wasn't alone, she had a group with her. There was a circle of people that just writhed, and the configuration of the group was an entity. It wasn't a lot of people dancing, but you got the sense of a piece of sculpture, with peaks and valleys and pits; it all moved together; that's the impression that I had (Dunning 1986: 196).

Wigman's use of groups stems from developments in German *Ausdruckstanz* that explored the composition of choric or mass dance.⁹ The choric principle appealed to American dancers interested in using modernist dance vocabulary for political ends apart from the exploration of psychological, religious, or mystical themes.¹⁰

The composition of *Waterfront* — 1934 derives elements from Wigman's approach to choreographing groups on stage, although driven by the aims of working class affiliation. The sole photograph documenting the work shows two groups of dancers, all wearing white short sleeved shirts and long skirts of several colors: a) five dancers on the left in a lunge with their upstage forearm raised and eyes cast downward, and b) three dancers face them in a kneeling lunge with one arm extended horizontally and paralleled by a jutting elbow (See Appendix A). The photograph captures a moment likely from the second section of the dance, or the conflict between two groups. In her recollection of the work, Judy Job remembers this moment as a dance between the workers and the bosses, in which the boss' group moved vertically whereas the workers danced lower to the ground with more horizontal movements (Job 2016). From this photograph, we can discern that the dance depicted class conflict through the spatial organization of bodies. This spatial splitting points to the influence of Wigman's group compositions as well as how Beals mobilized a group of amateur dancers to capture the tensions within their city.

⁹ While in residency at the Swiss cooperative colony Monte Verità, Rudolph van Laban began working with movement choirs, or simple movement done by a group en masse. Channeling ritual and festival dance, the mass dances could be performed by dancers without formal training, deriving its power not through the skills of an individual performer but through the composition of the group as a whole. Wigman's tours as well as the teaching efforts of Holm at Bennington and in New York brought movement ideas from Germany leading to the Americanization of German dance aesthetics, including the explorations of large group works or mass dance (Newhall 2002: 27).

¹⁰ "The choric dance appears as an exceptional manifestation of the 1930s, not unique to Germany. The mid-1930s in the United States also saw experiments in choric or mass dance, carried westward by students who had studied the form in Europe and saw it as appropriate to American populist dance movements" (Newhall 2008: 101).

By channeling the techniques of Graham and Wigman, Beals' *Waterfront — 1934* presents the individual dancer's body and the group of dancers on stage as pulled by contradictory forces. The tension between the mimetic and allegorical approaches to representation within the dance alludes to Beals' simultaneous affiliation with the aesthetics of proletarian culture and with the modernist impulses evident in *new dance*. Beals' work straddles two types of audiences, those sympathetic to the labor movement and those affiliated with an emerging dance genre. Beals found ways to incorporate and politicize modern dance techniques, using them to stage historical tensions at the level of the body and the ensemble. Beals' work internalized broader tensions between politics and aesthetics, or how to reconcile affinity with those who responded to the conditions of the 1930s by surging through the streets and those who leapt within the walls of the dance studio.

Beals' Creative Process

The creation of *Waterfront — 1934* drew people together in a shared embodied activity. Beals collaborated with composer Lou Harrison and worked with a cast of dancers that she refers to as the Carol Beals Dance Group.¹¹ Most of the cast members have proved difficult to track down, and the circumstances of their existence in the mid-1930s remain opaque.¹² I have managed to research a handful of the performers — Lou Harrison, John Dobson, Ruth Zakheim,

¹¹ The program for the Second Annual Dance Festival performance identifies the dancers as Cecilia Bartholomew, Carol Beals, Charles Blanford, John Dobson, Rose Gisnet, Marie Levitt, Jean Lewis, Marion Mann, Mathilda Misrack, Anita Skinner, Sally Trauner, Ethel Turner, and Ruth Zakheim. The program for the SFMA performance in 1937 does not include a cast list, so it is not possible to determine how many of these dancers participated in other showings of the dance. When asked by Lieberman about the composition of the company, Beals remarked that although they had a feeling for what they were doing, "they were not very good dancers. They had not had very much training" (Miller and Lieberman 1996). A handful of dancers worked with Beals over several years during the 1930s, such as Rose Gisnet, Anita Skinner, and Marion Mann, but most appeared only in single pieces. For this reason, Carol Beals Dance Group was presumably less a cohesive unit and more a collection of dancers that shifted as Beals created new dances.

¹² I have been unable to locate biographical information about Cecilia Bartholomew, Charles Blanford, Rose Gisnet, Jean Lewis, Marion Mann, Mathilda Misrack, Anita Skinner, and Sally Trauner. Judy Job recognized Mathilda Misrack as a student at the Peters Wright studio, but I have been unable to find any information about her.

Ethel Duffy Turner, and Marie Levitt — whose lives intersected with a varied set of artistic circles and social movements. Far from homogenous, Beals’ collaborators ranged in age from 14 to 51. The group pulled together an assortment of characters: an aspiring undergraduate experimental music composer; a chemistry student; an adolescent child of a Marxist muralist; a middle-aged mother, novelist, and comrade of Mexican revolutionaries; and a young unionized office worker.¹³ Judging from this sample of the cast, no one had professional dance training or aspired to establish themselves as a performer; they did not approach dance as a job. Given the type of dancers Beals worked with and skill level they possessed, we can infer that Beals likely tailored the movement in the piece for dancers with less training. Aligning with what might be now called ‘community-based performance,’ her dance generated an accessible practice that

¹³ Beals’ composer Lou Harrison (1917-2003) had recently graduated from Burlingame High School in December 1934 (Miller and Lieberman 2006: 12). Following his graduation, the Harrison family moved to Buena Vista Avenue in San Francisco. Harrison attended San Francisco State College for three semesters, from January 1935 until May 1936. Through the University of California extension program, he took a course with the New Music composer Henry Cowell called “Music of the Peoples of the World” in the spring semester of 1935 (Miller 2000: 217). He began taking private lessons with Cowell in September 1935. Beals met Harrison through the recommendation from a fellow composer named Harold Bellach, who Beals had originally asked to collaborate but was unavailable (Miller and Lieberman 1996).

John Dobson (1915-2014) was born in Beijing, and his parents left China for San Francisco in 1927 due to political unrest. Dobson attended the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied chemistry. During his college years, he moved into a house with Lou Harrison, a situation that Miller and Lieberman refer to as a “commune-type arrangement” (Miller and Lieberman 1998: 8). During his years as an undergraduate, Dobson was a member of the Carol Beals Dance Group. In recalling his experience working on *Waterfront — 1934*, Dobson stated, “I was all muscles back then. I had this long hair, and, well, you might understand that I would look a little funny to the dock workers” (Regas 2014).

Ruth Zakheim, born in San Francisco in 1922, was the daughter of Bernard Zakheim (1896-1985), an artist and muralist who was a key figure within the leftist artistic milieu in San Francisco in the 1930s. While her father was immersed in murals projects and leftist politics, Ruth was coming of age. Her parents were acquainted with Lenore Peters Job as they circulated within the same left wing circles (Gottstein 2016). They encouraged her to study dance at the Peters Wright School, where Ruth likely took class from Carol Beals.

Ethel Turner (1885-1969) was a journalist, and along with her husband John Kenneth Turner, became immersed in Mexican politics. John Turner traveled extensively in Mexico and wrote *Barbarous Mexico*, a book that exposed the political realities of Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship and conditions of slave labor in turn of the century Mexico. Turner, with her husband and comrades, organized the Mexican Revolutionists Defense League and provided direct support to those that overthrew the Díaz regime. In the 1930s, she hosted literary salons, wrote stories and poetry, and in 1934 published her novel *One-Way Ticket*, a romance set in San Quentin. She was 51 at the time of the performance (Teiser 1966).

Marie Levitt was acquainted with the same artistic circles that Turner and Beals were familiar with. In the early 1930s, Levitt met Frank Pollock, a student at Columbia University and the brother of abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock (Pollock 2011: 23). They are wed in early 1935 and by 1936, they moved to San Francisco, residing at 2955 Clay Street, three blocks down the street from Carol Beals’ dance studio.

allowed people to gather, think through, and dance about their immediate political context.

Judging by their political affiliations, the cast felt swayed by the economic concerns that beset the working class and the rising fascist threats of the 1930s, with varying levels of engagement with leftist organizing of the time. Given the amateur status of the performers, the dance emerged from the desire to develop forms of artistic association supportive of the labor movement.

In terms of its genre, *Waterfront — 1934* negotiates two aesthetic impulses: on one hand, technically trained modern dance, and on the other, mass dance. An artistic influence on Beals, the 1930s phenomenon of mass dance channeled both the choric principle in German *Ausdruckstanz* as well as pageantry, a cultural form that flourished within the American context during the Progressive Era, 1905-1925 (Prevots 1990). In its heyday, pageantry consisted of large scale, outdoor theatrical events that organized amateur performers into a series of episodes usually exploring historical or folkloric themes. During the 1930s, both unions and the Communist Party used pageantry, including mass dance, theater, cabaret, and music in their marches (Stratyner 1994). The aesthetic impulse of pageantry appears within *Waterfront — 1934*: it chronicled San Francisco labor politics through choreographed episodes for amateur dancers assembled in groups. As pageants function as a means for a community to tell its own narratives through performance, Beals' dance had a similar role as a participatory chronicling of San Francisco's labor movement. The work sits between two distinct frameworks for dance: a specialized, professionalized activity that requires training, and a ritual practice for a community to narrate its own history.

As a work performed by lay dancers outside the context of a paid job, the dance offered an experience of a non-alienated relation to one's body. While the realm of waged labor mandates

that the worker's body move within a tightly choreographed sequence driven by the imperative to produce as efficiently as possible, dancing during one's non-work hours offers an experience of moving as one wishes, of freedom from the corporeal necessities of surplus value extraction. Framed by the Taylorization of wider production processes, modern dance provided an antidote, or an exercise of embodied freedom. Beals used the domain of dance, or movement outside of the demands of waged labor, to represent the experiences of workers undergoing speed-ups. In distinction to a figure like Isadora Duncan whose free flowing movement contrasted repetitious mechanization, Beals' portrayal of labor within dance took on some of the qualities of its opposite. *Waterfront — 1934* exhibits a dialectical relation between dance and work: the performance allowed the dancers a sensuous experience of dancing unhinged from workplace alienation, and they mobilized this context to symbolize the exploitation of workers' bodies.

In addition to the disjunction between dance and work, another lack of correspondence emerged around the gender of the cast and the workers they symbolized. Examining the gendered relation of the dance to its content, a cast composed largely of women and queers chronicled a labor struggle led by the overwhelmingly male workforce on the waterfront.¹⁴ Beals used a feminized practice outside of waged labor to illuminate a contrasting circumstance, the working conditions and forms of struggle of a male-led labor movement.

Beyond the contrasts between dance and work, between women dancing and men working, I can identify a further tension within the work's process, that of a work led by a single choreographer and a labor movement generated through rank and file organizing. Both the Maritime and General Strikes in San Francisco were wildcat strikes, in which the union members organized outside their official leadership. In contrast, Beals led her group in a set work of

¹⁴ At the time he performed in *Waterfront — 1934*, John Dobson was a friend and lover of Lou Harrison.

choreography of which she was the sole author.¹⁵ Beals formed the Carol Beals Dance Group in September 1934, which she describes “as a leisure-time activity for amateurs definitely dedicated to achieving professional standards and cultural development” (Dance Council of Northern California 1935). As the leader of the group, she used a hierarchical creative structure to chronicle wildcat striking by the rank and file union members. In recounting what happened in the rehearsal process, Beals notes that while she played a directorial role, her performers contributed to shaping the dance:

It was my dance. I made it. I got my group interested in performing it. After we did perform it, we were asked to perform it at other places. [...] there was not great discussion. But there was a give and take all the way down. It wasn't just somebody saying, “All right this is what we're going to do.” It didn't work that way. It was something that sort of kept evolving (Miller and Lieberman 1996).

She also describes the process of collaborating with Lou Harrison as one of give and take: “We sort of collaborated back and forth. We always seemed to understand each other very well and think and write ways together so that we never had any particular problems” (Miller and Lieberman 1996). While Harrison and the performers had a collaborative role within the rehearsal process, Beals remained the instigator as the work emerged from her sympathy with the strike, fondness for rank-and-file strike leader Harry Bridges, and commitment to use dance as a medium for her politics.¹⁶ The work's creative process reflects the structural tension between movement determined from outside and movement generated from within, between direction from the top and a surging from below, between authorial leadership and collective

¹⁵ The process of making *Waterfront — 1934* likely took place over a five month period from January - May 1936. Miller has discerned that Beals reached out to Harrison to compose the music for her piece in late 1935 or early 1936 (Miller 2000: 220). When Judy Job discussed her mother's creative process in the 1930s, she described a four month rehearsal period as typical: “If the performance was in April, you'd begin in January - although she'd been thinking about it as soon as she knew about it” (Rudsten 2007: 27).

¹⁶ Carol Beals stated in an interview: “It was later that I was teaching Bridges' daughter. He's the one who finally produced a May pole for us to do a May pole dance in someone's back yard” (Miller and Lieberman 1996).

collaboration. The frictions that had emerged within the labor movement around questions of leadership, as workers both yielded to and opposed union officials, also likely appeared within Beals' creative process as the dancers navigated their relationship to the choreographer. When interviewing the only living cast member about her experiences working with Beals, Ruth Zakheim could not remember the type or quality of the rehearsals (Gottstein 2016). As the rest of the cast is no longer living, their experiences during the creative process are irrecoverable. Both ensemble modern dance pieces and labor movements involve group decision-making about where and how to move, and Beals' process likely navigated the similar tensions that pervaded the labor movement.

Beals' creative process negotiated a series of polar oppositions between dance as a specialized activity requiring training and as a participatory ritual open to all, between work and leisure, between a cast of women and queers and a male-led labor movement, and between leadership and the rank-and-file. Beals' *Waterfront — 1934* provided a space of political reflection, drawing the cast together to think through recent struggles within their urban context. In this sense, the process of making this work resonated with the type of organizing taking place within the labor movement. Yet, the creative practice was also distanced from political organizing, as the cast was not united by a shared enemy nor engaged in a material struggle. Both proximate to and detached from the labor movement, Beals' creative process enabled a form of public history, while also coming up against points of friction between the dance and its subject matter. Following this discussion of the creative process, I examine the material conditions that enabled the creation of *Waterfront — 1934*, as factors that mediated the dance's relationship to its context.

Material Conditions of Possibility

In parsing the economic conditions and material relations that made *Waterfront — 1934* possible, I consider four contributing elements: the social reproduction of the performers during the mid-1930s; the institution that trained Beals; the organizational structure that produced the dance; and the performance venues. The material conditions that shaped *Waterfront — 1934* point towards a set of contradictory processes animating the dance: the work's parallel relationship to the cultural initiatives of wealthy San Francisco patrons and to the networks of working class affiliation. The dance displays a self-organizing ethos, maneuvering both within and against its capitalist context.

Prior to examining the specific conditions underpinning the performances of *Waterfront — 1934*, I begin with Carol Beals' class background and her access to modern dance as a practice. Beals studied dance as a child in San Francisco, and the employment of her father, Roger Beals, as a mining engineer made dance lessons affordable. Roger Beals traveled frequently to work at gold mining sites in Northern California, Arizona, and Mexico, following the forms of resource extraction that fueled economic growth in the Western region of the country. As the family moved between mining sites, their life in the camps was not luxurious. Her mother Katherine Beals eventually became a school teacher at Frederick Burke Elementary, a demonstration school attached to the San Francisco State Teachers College.¹⁷ Beals' nephew, Don Langley reports that the family experienced tough times periodically, especially in the circumstances when Roger Beals' occasional personal investment in mining projects did not end well (Langley 2016). The reproduction of the Beals' household weathered the boom and bust cycles of gold mining, in effect, making it possible for Carol Beals to dance. In addition to her mother's

¹⁷ Judy Job reports: "I think I went to kindergarten at Frederick Burke because of Carol Beals' mother, who was a school teacher. She told us about this wonderful demonstration school - that's what it was then - belonging to SF State" (Rudsten 2007: 5).

reproductive labor, the movement of Beals' father from mining project to mining project in the pursuit of precious metals gave Beals the opportunity to hone her own ability to move within the walls of the dance studio. The free movement of capital helped to generate the free movement of modern dance.

As a key logistical support for Beals' emergence as a dancer, the Peters Wright School of Dancing fostered Beals as a teacher and choreographer. Training Beals in dance from a young age, the school invited her to become an assistant teacher at age 17.¹⁸ As the school played a crucial role for Beals' work leading up to the 1930s, I examine here how the dance studio reproduced itself economically. The Peters Wright studio shifted functions over the course of the 1920s and 1930s from being a feeder school within the vaudeville circuit and into becoming modern dance school. The history of the Peters Wright School points to three economic roles that dance can play within a capitalist context: impresarios can use dance to generate a profit, the capitalist class can invest unproductive revenue to preserve its sense of interiority and prestige, and dance can contribute to the social reproduction of working class families.

The Peters Wright School initially functioned as a pedagogical organ for vaudeville theaters in San Francisco, specifically the companies of the Alcazar and the Orpheum (Rudsten 2007: xix). Owned by Belasco, Mayer & Co. (the theater impresarios Frederic Belasco and M.E. Mayer), the Alcazar Theater at 260 O'Farrell Street ran weekly vaudeville productions. The Alcazar also contained the Butler-Nelke Academy of Dramatic Art, founded in 1908, which furnished performers for the theater's shows. The Alcazar offered Anita Peters Wright, founder of the Peters Wright School, a role parallel to that of the Butler Nelke Academy, supplying the movement for the weekly performances at the theater (Job 1984: 56). The function of the Peters-

¹⁸ “[Carol] was beginning to help teach in the dance school as well as study. She was only 17 years old.” (Beals and Langley 2007: 49).

Wright school as a feeder to the Alcazar eventually lost its viability as the vaudeville theater circuit had faded by the 1930s. Both the Great Depression and the advent of the sound film undercut the economic base that sustained local and touring vaudeville productions. Owner of the Orpheum, Alexander Pantages saw his vast Pantages Theatre Circuit implode. Lenore Peters Job, Anita's sister who took over the school in 1929, may have possessed aesthetic proclivities towards modernist or *new* dance, but she also had to reinvent the school in the twilight of vaudeville.

In the wake of the school's relationship to vaudeville productions, the Peters Wright School drew its student population in part from wealthy families in Pacific Heights. The school often taught the daughters of elite San Francisco families. Lenore Peters Job remembers Mrs. Helen Perkins Witter, the wife of investment banker Dean Witter who ran the largest investment firm on the West Coast, as one of their strong supporters (Bonn and Selix 2005: 107). Through these Pacific Heights social connections, the Peters Wright dancers frequently received invitations to perform at events for upper-class social clubs. Judy Job remembers performing engagements at the Century Club, the Commonwealth Club, the Western Women's Club, and the Daughters of the Nile (a women's auxiliary associated with the Masonic group, the Shriner's) (Rudsten 2007: 17 and 24). This association with wealthy San Franciscans suggests that the aesthetics of the Peters Wright studio appealed to upper-class women, interested in having forms of highbrow entertainment such as *new dance* to lend cultural cachet to their social events.¹⁹

As an additional dimension, the Peters Wright School harnessed domestic space and familial relations to support its economic viability. The Peters family had their studio on the

¹⁹ When the San Francisco Ballet was founded in 1933, many of these students abandoned modern dance in favor of tulle and toe shoes, as their mothers soon became the patronesses of the newly formed organization, which Job describes: "We'd have all the elite from Pacific Heights, and then the San Francisco Ballet came in and cut that out, all those people" (Bonn and Selix 2005: 107).

ground floor of their home, freeing them of the need to rent studio space elsewhere. The rent for their house on Sacramento Street containing two studios and two floors of living space was \$69/month (Job 1984: 55). Many family members taught at the studio, such as Lenore Peters Job's assistant and niece Francisca Avila. Additionally, because the school provided children's classes, Job could simultaneously play the roles of caregiver and dance teacher.²⁰ Within the Peters Job household, running a business overlapped with the family's domestic sphere. Over the course of its history, the Peters Wright School negotiated how to make space for dance, looking to vaudeville impresarios, Pacific Heights clientele, and to the reproduction of their family as a means to foster dance.

Moving from the institutions that trained Beals to her own means of social reproduction during the Great Depression, Beals' primary employment as a dance teacher indicates the complex alliances formed to make concert dance possible. During the 1930s, Beals taught mostly children's classes, including ballet, character, tap, and modern dance (Harris 2009: 31). By 1936, she opened her own studio, first at 3261 Clay Street and moving the following year to 1290 Sutter Street in San Francisco (Miller and Lieberman 1996). In 1935, the Social Security Act instituted a federal unemployment insurance system, and the state of California created a Department of Employment the same year. When it first formed, this department hired Beals' husband Mervin Levy, who worked for sixty years in the unemployment compensation section. Beals and Levy made it through the Depression by teaching dance and working for the California Department of Employment, respectively. Beals could make dances in solidarity with the labor movement by simultaneously teaching dance classes to wealthy patrons. Her work emerges from

²⁰ "I was not alone in this struggle to change dance and the world around me. I was surrounded by family. Dance and the family grew side by side, each one nourishing the other. The whole house was turned over to dance and later to politics" (Job 1984: *i*).

the contradiction between foregrounding working class politics while relying on bourgeois women's interest in modern dance.

We can place the economics of Beals' work in relation to the wider field of concert dance in 1930s San Francisco, and the kinds of economic arrangements that dancers moved within. Amalia Iriazarri, Beals' colleague and fellow member of Dance Council of Northern California, also danced in the nightclub circuit.²¹ She distinguished between these dancing engagements and her modern dance performances: "Oh, in the nightclubs, that was terrific because I was dancing and I was getting paid for it" (Dunning 1986: 378). Iriazarri observed a difference between what she saw as professional and concert dance:

With the concert dancer, you launch yourself, you put yourself on. Nobody backs you up. You're not employed; you are self-employed. For instance, say, you want to give a reading, you have to hire your own theater, do everything yourself. Maybe if you're lucky you might get an agent to help you, but you launch yourself; you pay for everything yourself. All the initiative and expenses (378).

Iriazarri's statement clarifies the material circumstances of the concerts that she and her modern dance colleagues produced. It also suggests two economic functions for dance performances. One could either dance as a means to increase the appeal of hotels and bars that sold not dancing but accommodations and libations. Or one could dance as a means of social reproduction: not to make money for an employer, but to perform as a self-sustaining practice. In her oral history, Iriazarri also notes one other possibility: an impresario or benefactor might pick up a choreographer.²² For example, the Russian-born impresario Sol Hurok, who made a business out of producing performance, brought Mary Wigman on tour to the San Francisco Bay Area and

²¹ "Iriazarri: I danced in nightclubs and club dates at the hotels. I worked at the Fairmont and the Palace and the St. Francis, regular club dates" (Dunning 1986: 385). "My specialty was I was a dancer. I did Oriental, and I did jungle work. I did the hula, the Mexican hat dance and I did the rumba. The only thing I never did, I never stripped, and I was never a semi-nude dancer, and I never tapped" (377).

²² "Iriazarri: Unless you're with, a company, but the head of that company, like say you are with Martha Graham or Ruth St. Denis" (Dunning 1986: 361).

backed Hanya Holm to start a Wigman school in New York (Newhall 2000: 143). Additionally, Baroness Bethsabée de Rothschild, heiress of the Rothschild banking family and a long time financial supporter of Martha Graham's company, underwrote many of Graham's tours. Patrons and showmen instrumentalized these choreographers, who received in exchange financial support and legitimation within the field. Situating Beals' work within this terrain, she neither received philanthropic funding nor payment from a venue. Beals and her performers did not perform waged work; rather the creation of *Waterfront — 1934* falls more aptly into the category of social reproduction. Beals presented choreography as a self-produced and self-sustained endeavor.

Examining the lives of Beals' cast and collaborators during the 1930s also clarifies that dancing in *Waterfront — 1934* took place outside of waged labor. Marie Levitt became a member in 1937 of the Bank, Insurance Clerks and General Office Workers Union, suggesting that she worked a clerical job at the time of the rehearsals for Beals' work (Pollock 2011: 125). Ethel Turner (1885-1969), age 51 at the time of the performance, worked as a dictaphone operator for General Electric during the 1930s (Teiser 1966: 39). Residing on the Monkey block of Montgomery Street where many artists, writers, and intellectuals lived, Turner describes this period for herself and her artistic colleagues as one of poverty: "We were all poor as church mice" (Teiser 1966: 43). Both John Dobson and Lou Harrison were college students. During the mid-1930s, Harrison worked as a florist and a waiter (Preston 2014: 18). Composer Henry Cowell helped him get work as an accompanist at the Mills College dance department in 1937 (Miller 2002: 12). At the time she performed with Beals, Ruth Zakheim was 14 years old. Through the Depression, her mother Eda opened an interior design firm, and her father ran a wholesale furniture manufacturing business in the Mission. In examining the economic

circumstances of their lives during the 1930s, the performers rehearsed and performed *Waterfront — 1934* during non-work hours.

Instead of relying on patronage, Beals helped to generate organizational forms that could self-produce concert dance. In 1934, Beals founded the Dance Council of Northern California, the organization that supported the presentation of *Waterfront — 1934*. Following her return from New York and her exposure to the New Dance League, Beals had the impulse to start the group as a way to address the lack of performing opportunities in the Bay Area as well as to encourage cooperation between dancers:

We came back to San Francisco brimful of the fact that San Francisco's dance was down in the dregs with no performing places. The city said, "You can't perform and you can't perform there. It's not safe." You had to get an organization together to see what we could do about dance in San Francisco. That's what we did (Miller and Lieberman 1996).

Inspired by the "socialist ideas of collective work," Beals wished to bring dancers together in a gesture of solidarity and mutual aid (Job 2000: 5). The founding of the Council initiated a process of self-organization amongst San Francisco dancers. By 1936, the Council had over one hundred members and coordinated over twenty Bay Area dance groups (Dance Council of Northern California 1936). It helped to collectively address dancers' needs, generating the conditions that make concert dance possible.²³

Active primarily between the years 1934 through 1937, the Council negotiated a complex identification with work, framing dance as a supplement to work and as a profession. In the program of their first annual festival, the Council enumerates their objectives: "to raise the cultural level of the dance, to present the dance to mass audiences, and to provide opportunities

²³ Dance Council's projects and structure followed two precedents that sought to support the emergence of modern dance, the German Dance Congresses of the late 1920s and the emergence of leftist dance leagues in New York in the 1930s.

for participating in the dance as a leisure-time activity” (Dance Council of Northern California 1935). The orientation towards performances for mass audiences and dance opportunities during non-work hours suggests that they geared the Council’s performances towards working class audiences and participants, in distinction to the patronesses who might see modern dance performances in private homes or social clubs. The Council desired to make dance accessible to laypersons working other kinds of jobs during the day. Simultaneously, it sought to bolster concert dance as a field and the specialized activity of dancers. The Council served as a production sponsor, pedagogical arm, and political advocate for dancers invested in concert dance as an aesthetic field.²⁴ The Council approached dance both as a professionalized activity and as open to everyone, while distancing itself from the commercial utilization of dance. As an exponent of modern dance informed by German and New York precedents, the Council stood in a separate tradition to the more commercially-oriented Dance Masters Association, active locally and nationally during the 1930s.²⁵ The Council’s foregrounding of modern dance as a genre distinguishes it from the network of dance teachers that used dance commercially for films and theater productions. Beals and her colleagues within the Council positioned dance both as distinct from work (choreography freed from commercial aims, dance during leisure-time) and as a form of work (for instance, in their project to conduct an unemployment survey for dancers).

They grappled with the contradiction that attends dance as an aesthetic practice within a

²⁴ The Council produced three annual festivals, published a monthly newsletter titled the Dance Council Bulletin, held ten lecture-demonstrations on “Dance as an Art-Form,” hosted a fall concert series that featured the work of Bay Area choreographers, organized informal work-in-progress showings, offered a teacher training course, conducted a survey to ascertain the extent of unemployment with the dance community, and coordinated the hiring of unemployed dancers on a public works project through SERA (State Emergency Relief Administration) (Dance Council of Northern California 1936).

²⁵ “Well, we had what they call a Dance Council of California, and it was made up of concert dancers. Now the theatrical dancers, or as they call them the professional dancers, belonged to what is called the California State Dancing Teachers Masters Association. They had their own group, and so all of us modern dancers formed our own group. You know, it was one of those cliques!” (Dunning 1986: 256).

capitalist context: that dance both is and is not work. Modern dancers did not receive the wages of commercial dancers yet also distinguished themselves from informal social dance practices.

The Council's focus on self-production and collaboration indicates a self-propelling and self-limiting logic. After encountering the Council on a visit to California, *New York Times* dance critic John Martin lauds the dancers' efforts and the principle of self-organization that animates them. He sees in their cooperative plan a broader political horizon for dance: "It happens to be a socially revolutionary motive, which contains elements both of idealism and of self-preservation" (Martin 1934b). In a period when institutional patronage for modern dance had yet to mature, the collectivism of Dance Council held for Martin a possibility that modern dance, a form he desired to support, might survive through the self-organization of dancers. While building bonds of support between dancers, the Council also kept its activity politically circumscribed. In distinction to the outspoken political alliance of the Workers Dance League and New Dance Group with New York's radical left of the period, the Dance Council of Northern California opted for a less explicitly radical position, embracing the more modest agenda of political advocacy for dance and employment in the arts.²⁶ The political perspectives of the Council's members ranged from liberal to radical.²⁷ From Lou Harrison's perspective, the

²⁶ "In this era of extensive unemployment, dancers found even fewer opportunities than musicians. The Dance Council espoused three overriding principles: "unity in defense of culture..., the rights of artists to be paid for the work they do, [and]... a national arts program" (Miller 2012: 198).

"The Northern California Dance Council although not as radical in its politics, modeled its activities, lectures, and festivals after the Workers Dance League and the New York Dance Council" (Newhall 2000: 62).

²⁷ Representing the liberal tendencies, James Mundstock was a pacifist and a member of the World Federalist Association, a political organization that formed after World War I to advocate for a global system of governance and the promotion of peace between nations (Dunning 1986: 291). Lenore Peters Job represented radical leanings within the group. Job was a free thinker, atheist, and socialist who connected changes within dance to political revolutions. Writing her memoir in 1984, Job explicitly states her embrace of socialist and communist politics: "I write in my 91st year living in the midst of communists, earnest students of Marxist-Leninist and Maoist thought. My political growth and development has not stood still. [...] Socialism was an ever-present ideal in the background of my life" (Job 1984: 105).

Dance Council milieu was a part of the radical left: “They were very radical, politically. Both Lenore and her daughter, too. In fact, I was in the hot bed of radicalism in the 30s” (Miller 1993). While Beals and Job harbored leftist sympathies, the Dance Council as an organization was not outspoken about the labor movement or socialist politics. The Council lasted three years, suggestive of the logistical and political difficulties that accompany keeping an alliance of dancers together and forging communal organizations within the desperate and competitive times of economic crisis. As a self-organized project possessing both nourishing and draining qualities, it also contained a degree of self-exploitation. The contradictory movement between collective mobilization and individual exhaustion animated the work of the Council, and by extension, Beals’ efforts within *Waterfront — 1934*.

From the organizational structures that facilitated the dance, I move now to the four Bay Area venues where the Carol Beals Dance Group performed: the Veteran’s Auditorium, San Francisco Museum of Art, the Longshoreman’s Union Hall, and the Nature Friends Hall. Beyond providing the physical presentation space for *Waterfront — 1934*, these venues represent two poles of affiliation: the spaces generated by the capitalist class and those by the labor movement. Locating the work within these specific sites traces the connections between the dance and struggles over class formation in mid-1930s San Francisco.

Representing spaces generated by capitalist interests, Beals performed in an auditorium within the Veterans Hall, part of the War Memorial Complex adjacent to City Hall that comprises San Francisco’s Civic Center. Opened on September 9, 1932, the complex resulted

Figures in the Dance Council were also more racially inclusive than other white dance teachers of their period, who often did not admit dancers of color. The Puerto Rican dancer Amalia Iriazarri performed with the Peters-Wright Group and was active within the Council. Additionally, the Peters Wright School was the only studio in the city to accept a young Mexican-American dancer named Maclovía Ruiz as a pupil. While a primarily white group, the Council did integrate dancers of color.

from the integration of two civic initiatives: a) members of the San Francisco elite pushing for a cultural center composed of an opera house, symphony hall, and art museum in 1918, and b) a campaign by veterans for a war memorial in 1919. An organization called the Musical Association proposed the cultural complex, and the MA's board members included William Crocker (president of Crocker National Bank and son of the railroad baron Charles Crocker), Michael Henry de Young (editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*), Herbert Fleishhacker (president of the London and Paris National Bank), among others (Miller 2012:151). These two constituencies — veterans and wealthy San Franciscans interested in fostering cultural institutions — joined to assist each other in fundraising efforts. Following voter approval of a public bond to raise the remaining funds and further negotiations over building plans and board representation, the complex opened in 1932.²⁸

Also within the War Memorial complex, the Carol Beals Dance Group performed in the San Francisco Museum of Art (later to become the Museum of Modern Art) located on the fourth floor of the Veteran's Hall. Many of the same figures behind the Musical Association — including William and Charles Crocker as well as Fleishhacker — also participated in the board of the San Francisco Art Association (SFAA), formed in 1916 to create a museum (Lee 1999: 30). In its formation, the SFAA had close ties to the Bohemia Club, the private, gentlemen's only club composed of socially elite members. Using their accumulated capital to collect art, these wealthy San Franciscans sought municipal cultural institutions where they could display their collections and contribute to their own prestige. The Veterans Hall, housing both the art museum and the auditorium, designates a space made available through alliances within the capitalist class.

²⁸ Leta Miller details the political and logistical intricacies of the decision-making process surrounding the War Memorial complex in her chapter, "Opera: The People's Music or a Diversion for the Rich?" (Miller 2012: 131-64).

In contrast to the Civic Center complex, Carol Beals coordinated showings in two locations created by and for working class communities. Beals premiered *Waterfront — 1934* in a boxing ring at the International Longshoremen's Association Union headquarters.²⁹ The ILA Hall on Steuart Street served as the heart of the Maritime and General Strikes in 1934. On July 5th, a day known as “Bloody Thursday,” police shot two strikers within a block of the hall. Strikers kept the bodies of those slain, Sperry and Bordoise, at the ILA hall. On July 9th, a funeral procession attended by approximately 40,000 people began at the Steuart Street location and proceeded down Market Street. The performers danced their version of Bloody Thursday precisely in the heart of where these deaths took place.³⁰

Lastly, the Carol Beals Dance Group performed at the Nature Friends Hall, a lodge nestled in the woods of Mount Tamalpais in Marin County. The hall represents a space generated by organizing amongst working class immigrant communities. While ostensibly promoting nature appreciation and apolitical recreational activities, the *Naturfreunde* at its inception was a working class organization dedicated to socialist politics.³¹ In 1912, Germanic immigrants to San Francisco founded a California branch of the *Naturfreunde*, which they called the Tourist Club.

²⁹ While both Beals and Harrison describe this site, it remains unclear what was the exact location of this performance. Beginning in 1933, the ILA Local 38-79 Hall was located at 113-115 Steuart Street, moving in 1935 to 27 Clay Street. While the ILA moved to Clay St in 1935, other maritime unions moved into the Steuart Street hall. As Beals starting performing the dance in 1936, it would appear that the Clay Street location would be correct. However, Harrison describes the boxing ring as located on the second floor. The ILA only had the first floor of the Clay Street building and only the second floor of the Steuart Street address, which calls into question the accuracy of the location. While there is not sufficient documentation of the performance to determine in which hall Beals performed, what does become clear is that *Waterfront — 1934* inhabited the site of the events that it depicted.

³⁰ Ironically, 113-115 Steuart Street was purchased in 2013 by the Commonwealth Club, founded at the outset of the 20th century by members of the San Francisco business elite. Following an investigation into the building’s history that concluded no one of significance was associated with the site, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved the Commonwealth’s Club proposal to gut the building (Wildermuth 2013).

³¹ Founded in Vienna, Austria in the late 19th century for the purpose of challenging private landowners’ dominion over the Alps, the organization spread to Switzerland and Germany. Prior to World War I, they had successfully opened a large percentage Alpine hiking areas to the public (Killion and Gary Snyder 2009: 90). Chapters also built a network of rural retreat houses where workers could stay while on hiking trips, and by the end of the 1920s, the Nature Friends had built over two hundred of these centers.

Five early members of the group pooled their money to buy a hillside parcel on Mount Tamalpais for \$200, building on the site a three story Swiss style chalet near Muir Woods (Solnit 2001: 157). They completed the Nature Friends Hall in August 1917, serving a base for recreational activities as well as a gathering place for working class people influenced by communist politics. The recreational activities of the *Naturfreunde* overlapped with labor unions and political parties on the left, as members would distribute leaflets and encourage participants to support left social movements (Markham 2013: 69). The organization sought to give working class people access to the outdoors as well as social spaces to support each other in cooperative activities. During the 1920s and 30s, they often held “communal work parties, camp-craft jamborees, and community dances,” suggesting that they incorporated dancing into the group’s social life (Killion and Snyder 2009: 90). Members of the Nature Friends milieu likely invited Beals to present *Waterfront — 1934*, as they sympathized if not participated in the strikes of 1934.

This discussion of venues for Beals’ dance points to the dual and divergent contexts that the work inhabited: on one hand, the networks of affinity and immigrant organizing that supported the labor movement, and on the other, the institutions generated by San Francisco’s capitalist class. Beals negotiated the dual desires for professional recognition from cultural institutions and for solidarity with the labor movement. I read the performance of *Waterfront — 1934* as an aesthetic gesture within and against the Veterans Hall and the War Memorial Complex. Beals commemorated all those who participated in the strikes inside a space made possible through the state management of grief and its official memorials that designate how the public will mourn in its civic spaces. The dance enacted a working class form of mourning within a site created for the social interests of wealthy San Franciscans. Locating *Waterfront —*

1934 within the venues for presentation traces the dance's connections to antithetical networks of class affiliation.

Waterfront — 1934's existence depended on set of material and institutional conditions including performance venues, organizational structures, pedagogical spaces, and forms of social reproduction. Not simply factors that shaped the social life of the work, these elements connect the dance to a broader a set of contradictions operative within the historical context. Other forms of work made possible the creation of *Waterfront — 1934*, not a form of value productive labor itself. Patrons funded cultural institutions and dance schools with the nonproductive expenditure of revenue generated through capital accumulation. Beals' dance rails against the capitalist class while relying on access to training, employment, and performance space made available by and through this circuit of accumulation and expenditure. The dance remains lodged between these two forms of class composition by espousing a connection to working class organizing and finding itself bound in processes that legitimate capital accumulation. Parallel to fledging forms of working class solidarity, Beals' efforts to organize dancers into a collective body suggest both a self-generating and self-exploiting logic. The Dance Council lasted only three years (1934-1937), indicating an overworked exhaustion amongst organizers. As capital enables a large degree of social cooperation while simultaneously extending forms of domination, concert dance bears the traces of these broader social forces. Charting the material conditions for *Waterfront — 1934* complicates the work's aesthetics and politics, as the work remained reliant on that which the dance critiqued.

On May 10, 1935, Beals gave a lecture titled "Relation of the Dance to Society" as part of a speaker series hosted by the Dance Council (*San Francisco Chronicle* 1935). While we do not know the content, Beals' lecture took up precisely the question of how to understand concert

dance in relation to the broader social world. I turn now to the Bay Area context — the Great Depression, the Maritime Strike, and the General Strike — to chart how Beals’ representation of these events within *Waterfront — 1934* mapped onto the events themselves.

Political Economic Conditions of mid-1930s San Francisco

For Marxist economic historians, the Great Depression was not an aberration to an otherwise prosperous economic system but an intrinsic feature of capitalism. In their contribution to Marxian economics, Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy argue in *Monopoly Capital* that even during the relatively optimistic 1920s, “the seeds of disaster were busily germinating” (1966: 235). For Baran and Sweezy, capitalist enterprises, especially in industries controlled through monopoly, generate more surplus than they can absorb, resulting in excess capacity. By the end of the 1920s, productive capacity and rates of capital investment had reached unsustainable high levels, resulting in the stagnation that birthed the Great Depression (237). Economist Maurice Dobb also cites the “mounting and universal excess capacity” generated during the eight year boom of the 1920s as a factor leading to the Depression (Dobb 1947: 321). The growth in productive forces almost doubled that of production for direct consumption. Dobb notes several other features of the economic situation that led to the onset of crisis: price rigidities within large industries, the preservation of previous profit rates, the contraction of production, and outright destruction of excess capacity (321). Additionally, global financial markets shifted in the late 1920s when patterns in lending changed course, causing stagnation in world trade. American enterprises had invested capital abroad at unprecedented rates following World War I, rapidly changing the status of the United States from a debtor to creditor nation (332). As Giovanni Arrighi notes, Wall Street began to curb foreign lending in favor of short term domestic speculation towards the end of 1928, resulting in plunging the net export of US capital (Arrighi 1994: 274). The

contraction of lending and ensuing slump in the world economy signals the crisis at the heart of the capitalist mode of production.

From a Marxian perspective, capital contains within its movement a set of contradictions that cyclically bring the capitalist mode of production into crisis. I highlight three contradictions within capital as a social form: capital's ever-expanding and ever-faltering movement; its orchestration of both cooperation and domination; and the position of workers as both antagonistic to and a part of capital. While capital certainly contains other contradictions, I see these three as relevant to the circumstances of San Francisco in the mid-1930s.

First, capital generates a circuit of accumulation (M - C - M') that knows no limits.³² Yet capital faces a central contradiction: developments in machinery and technology make production processes more efficient, replacing variable capital with constant capital. Commodities subsequently contain a decreasing amount of labor time, and therefore have less value. Marxist economists refer to this contradiction as the *tendency of the rate of profit to fall*, indicating how the extraction of relative surplus value through increased efficiency can undermine profitability.

Secondly, capital creates a vast system of social integration, in which most of the world adheres to value as a standard of equivalence and exchange. Yet a logic of dispossession, exploitation, and violence accompanies this globalized system of coordination. We can see within capital both the possibility of widespread cooperation and the reality of domination.

Finally, capital contains two parts, constant capital (machinery, infrastructure, etc.) and variable capital (labor-power). Workers occupy a position intrinsic and antagonistic to capital. Working class struggle exists within this contradiction: labor movements push back against

³² Money - Commodity - Money' is Marx's formula for capital: money is traded for a commodity that is sold at a higher price.

forms of exploitation while the circuits of capitalist production simultaneously incorporate these efforts. As workers advocate for demands such as better wages, they yield to the organization of social life by the value-form and waged labor (Postone: 1978: 743-744). A concrete gain within a particular bargaining negotiation can constitute a loss by making the conditions of exploitation more tolerable. While militant and committed, labor movements can counterintuitively extend the logic of capital, rather than resist it.

These contradictions — the self-undermining logic of capital accumulation, the coexistence of cooperation and domination, and workers as within and against capital — characterize the Great Depression within the United States as an instantiation of capitalism's cyclical crises. In the autumn of 1929, the stock market began to sink. On October 29, stock prices sharply fell, plunging the United States and the world economy into a depression that lasted nearly a decade. By 1933, 13 million workers faced unemployed in the US (Dobb 1947: 327). Nearly, one-third of Americans lost their jobs. In March of 1933, the federal government instituted a four-day bank holiday, closing the Federal Reserve and freezing all bank assets in an effort to halt the national snowballing of bank failures. These political economic developments significantly impacted the economic situation in California. Agriculture, along with most California industries, entered a period of retrenchment as three hundred thousand dust bowl migrants came to California looking for work, and wages dropped below subsistence levels (Daniel 1982: 68). These economic conditions exacerbated divisions within the working class and intensified racist nativism (Starr 1997: 225).

Growing in extremity, the ramifications of the economic crisis provoked a set of responses from both the state and the working class. The federal government unrolled a sweeping set of measures known as the New Deal to stabilize the economic system, provide relief to the

unemployed, and curb social unrest. The New Deal financed a plentiful amount of infrastructure projects and provided much needed relief to the unemployed.³³ While many of these measures eased the poverty and desperation of the 1930s, the deficit spending did not successfully draw the US out of the Depression. Between 1937 and 1938, a second sharp economic downturn caused production to decline and unemployment rates to rise. Many on the left regarded the New Deal with ambivalence. Its measures did provide relief from poverty, but for those equipped with a more thoroughgoing critique of the economic system that produced the Great Depression, the New Deal undercut and co-opted the radical left.

While the state and federal government responded to the dire material conditions with legislation, another set of responses unfolded from unemployed workers, union organizers, and disgruntled radicals, who had an agenda broader than simply stabilizing a volatile economic system. Labor organizing gained momentum as the economic crisis worsened, and a surge in both the frequency and militancy of strikes characterized the 1930s. While the working class underwent a significant process of class composition, a set of internal divisions cut through the labor movement: conflicts between advocates for industrial unions (the Congress of Industrial Organizations) and for trade unionism (the American Federation of Labor); between those who preferred to confine decision-making to elected union officials, and rank and file members who sought more participation; and between those who saw workplace organizing as a step within a

³³ Elected president in 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated in March of 1933. Moving at a fast clip, Roosevelt pushed through a number of measures including the creation of the Civil Conservation Corps (March 1933 until 1942), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (May 1933 to the end of 1935), the Civil Works Administration (December 1933–March 1934), Works Progress Administration (May 1935 - 1943), and the Social Security system (1935). The Agricultural Adjustment Administration (1933) introduced farm subsidies, and the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938) established the 40 hour work week and a national minimum wage. In the Californian context, the State Emergency Relief Administration (1933-1935) was responsible for managing federal funds dedicated to unemployment relief.

larger anti-capitalist movement, and those who adhered to a narrowly economic agenda.³⁴

Within the context of San Francisco, these internal fissures within the labor movement contributed to both the strength and the limits of working class solidarity during the Maritime and General Strikes of 1934.

The rising class consciousness on the part of Bay Area workers as well as a fomenting affinity for communist politics ignited around the struggle of San Francisco's longshoremen. As capital contains a set of contradictions that generate crisis, the labor movement too encounters mobilizing and de-mobilizing forces. During this period, internal tensions both drove and hindered San Francisco's working class struggles, as conflicts played out between vying forms of leadership from conservative and radical tendencies, in addition to the racialized and gendered divisions that stratify workers.

What escalated into a citywide shut down began with a window of possibility opened up by Roosevelt's New Deal for independent union organizing. International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) had come into existence towards the end of the 19th century but the efforts of employers to strangle organizing had incapacitated the union. In the early 1930s, shipping bosses forced longshoremen to join a blue book union, or company union that controlled the hiring halls. The employers subjected men looking for work to a brutal shape up process, where

³⁴ During 1933, the biggest wave of agricultural strikes swept through California, largely due to the organizing efforts of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union. The CAWIU demonstrates the influence of the Communist Party, who sent their most dedicated members to mobilize agricultural workers in the central valley. Led by district organizer Sam Darcy, the Communist Party in California participated in labor organizing, working class pedagogy, and journalism as well as running electoral campaigns as a third party. The party was headquartered at 121 Haight Street, a building known as Ruthenberg House that lodged the Workers' Cultural Center, the San Francisco Workers' School, the Workers' Library and Bookstore, the Workers' Theater, International Labor Defense, the Workers' Sports Club, the San Francisco Film and Photo League, and a kitchen that prepared food for striking workers. Between 1932 and 1937, the CP also published the *Western Worker*, which covered labor and working class news on the west coast. In addition to the CP, a diverse array of radical left parties were active including the Socialist Party of America, American Workers Party, Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Labor Party, and American Labor Party, each with their specific orientation to strategy and tactics.

workers waited for hours at the waterfront at dawn and eventually had to fight amongst each other for jobs unloading cargo. The bosses would blacklist and deny employment to workers who attempted to join an independent, non-company controlled union. In June of 1933, the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) provided federal protection for independent unions as employee representatives, and only then could unionization efforts by San Francisco longshoremen gain any momentum (Carlsson 1998: 69). The reformism of the New Deal laid the groundwork for the struggle of San Francisco's longshoremen against the conditions of their exploitation. In this case, the state response to the crisis emboldened forms of collective action by workers.

Following the initial step of unionization, workers then faced the internal struggle over decision-making within their organization. As the longshoremen deserted the blue book union to join the ILA, they came under the leadership of national president Joseph Ryan and west coast president William Lewis. Ryan and Lewis ran the ILA as a top down organization, often going into back room negotiations with employers or taking pay offs that ultimately sold out the interests of the rank and file. Harry Bridges, an Australian seaman and young Wobbler who had arrived in the United States in 1922, emerged as an internal dissident within the ILA, gaining the respect of a large portion of rank and file longshoremen. During the summer of 1933, Bridges, along with Communist Party district organizer Sam Darcy, formed an organizing contingent that brought together members of the ILA and the Communist Party known as the Albion Hall group (named after the hall located in the Mission district where they met). Bridges' militant faction coordinated a ten-day convention in San Francisco in February of 1934 for longshoremen in all west coast port cities (Carlsson 1998: 69). Out of these discussions, rank and file members established a waterfront federation composed of representatives from many locals throughout the

west coast. Together, they arrived at a list of demands including a union-run hiring hall and safer working conditions. When the shipping bosses dismissed their demands, the longshoremen already had in place a network of solidarity to launch the west coast Maritime Strike on May 9, 1934. By May 11, over 12,000 workers had blocked ports up and down the west coast, paralyzing the shipping industry. The Maritime Strike was a wildcat strike: rank and file workers acted independently of union leadership and the institutionalized channels for labor unrest.

The movement from the Maritime Strike to the General Strike evinces the dialectical relation between repression and escalation. On July 5th, a day known as “Bloody Thursday,” San Francisco police killed two men, following the waterfront employers attempt to forcibly move cargo through the port using strike breakers, police, and vigilante goon squads. That evening, Governor of California Frank Merriam called in two thousand National Guardsmen who occupied the Embarcadero and set up machine gun nests along the waterfront. The Guardsmen and the San Francisco police along with gangs hired by business leaders raided union and Communist Party offices, harassing and arresting strike leaders. Bloody Thursday became a pivotal moment within the longshoremen’s struggle, as it brought public attention and provoked the wider solidarity of San Francisco’s working class. On July 7th, a meeting attended by delegates from most unions in San Francisco unanimously called for a general strike, which spontaneously gained momentum over the next several days. The Teamsters union initiated a sympathy strike, and every other union in the city soon followed suit. By July 16, 127,000 workers stayed at home in a general strike that shut down the city for four days. The ruthless efforts of employers and city officials to break the strike ironically became the mechanism that expanded its scale.

Within the General Strike committee that had formed to coordinate the citywide shut down, tensions played out between left-leaning militants and conservative trade unionists who sought to deescalate the strike. As conservatives from the American Federation of Labor outnumbered those who wanted to see the strike through, the committee voted to end the General Strike on July 19, although both the longshoremen and seamen continued with the work stoppage until the end of the month. The alliance formed within the Albion Hall group between longshoremen and Communist Party members began to break down, as union radicals faced redbaiting tactics. At the threat of deportation, Bridges denied any links to the Communist Party (Lee 1999: 174). Conservative and radical tendencies divided the labor movement, as factions pursued different aims for strike activity, as either a mechanism to narrowly pursue economic gain or as a lever to contest capitalism more broadly.

In addition to political splits over strategy and tactics, the differential experiences of workers according to race and gender also divided the labor movement. Often hired only for the least desirable jobs, recent immigrants as well as workers from Asian-American, Mexican-American, and African-American communities faced a disparity in wages and job opportunities. Employers paid wages to Mexican workers often 20 to 50 percent lower than Anglos working the same job (Ruíz 1987: 7). As the effects of the Depression sank in, white workers began to lay claim to jobs taken previously by only black workers. Pushed out of employment, both black men and women experienced higher rates of unemployment (Sundstrom 1992). Workers of color experienced the hostility of both their employers and white unionists. Unions within the American Federation of Labor actively excluded black and Chinese workers. Observing this, employers would hire workers of color as strikebreakers, effectively dividing the working class.

As race organized employment in San Francisco, gender too contributed to stratified labor markets.³⁵ Women made up approximately a quarter of San Francisco's workforce. While Depression-era poverty caused many white women to seek employment, black women's participation in waged labor decreased, as white workers pushed them out of previous positions (Helmbold 1987: 636). Union organizing by women was not as widespread as amongst the male workforce. Historian Sharon Hartman Strom cites a number of variables in understanding this gendered discrepancy in union membership including the inherent sexism within New Deal relief efforts, paternalist attitudes amongst male unionists, and a de-prioritization of feminist politics by political parties on the left (Strom 1983: 360).³⁶ Women played key roles within the labor movement, not only as they organized their own workplace actions but also by forming women's auxiliaries that served as crucial structures of support for striking workers (Strom 1983: 366).³⁷ In Barbara Foley's analysis, the workerist orientation amongst radicals during the period accounts for the absence of a committed stance on gender politics, rather than an inherent sexism within Marxism:

[...] the left's sexism cannot be separated from its more general failure to frame its goal as the abolition of the wage relation and the establishment of egalitarian social relations, instead of the harnessing of productive forces that, once in the hands of the workers, would provide the abundance that would, in turn, enable massive superstructural changes to take place. [...] The inadequacies of the 1930s left in treating gender issues can be traced to its insufficient grounding of male supremacy

³⁵ For more detailed studies of economic conditions for women, see Cobble 2005; Kessler-Harris 1981, 2003; Reagan 2016.

³⁶ New Deal legislation such as the National Industrial Recovery Act (1933) permitted lower wages for women and excluded provisions for workers in domestic and agricultural jobs, sectors that dominated by female workers (Strom 1983: 361).

³⁷ Billie Roberts Hendricks describes her experience belonging to the warehouse union in San Francisco: "My first union meeting must have been about 1936. The women would just come and listen back then. We did think our organizers - Gene Paton, who became a wonderful local 6 president in 1937, Lou Goldblatt, the Heide brothers, Bob Robertson - were 'it.' and Lou knew how to get things rolling. He started our steward system. But we didn't have much of a voice. The men would make all the rules. There was nothing we could do but be a rubber stamp for them. Between 1937 and 1942, the women had their own separate meetings" (Schwartz 2009: 189).

in social relations of production, a grounding that would have more firmly connected women's emancipation to the abolition of classes. The problem is neither Marxism nor even Stalinism, but the primacy placed on productive forces over productive relations (a stress certainly discoverable in the Marxist text but by no means all that Marx had to say about how history is made) that in fact characterizes all forms of 1930s Marxist theory and practice, Stalinist and otherwise (1990: 156-7).

Foley here argues that rather than challenging the wage relation all together, the narrow focus of 1930s-era communists and union organizers on struggles over workplace conditions ultimately limited their analysis of gender.

While racism and sexism pervaded labor movement politics, the San Francisco General Strike proved to be an example of the power of interracial solidarity amongst workers within a racially segmented employment structure. Harry Bridges' ability to forge interracial solidarity on the docks played an instrumental role in the success of the 1934 strike. Influenced by the Communist Party's anti-racist and anti-colonialist stance, Bridges reached out to black longshoremen, offering them membership in the ILA if they did not take work as scabs (Nelson 2001: 96). Following the end of the strike in July 1934, the ILA admitted both black and Chinese workers to its ranks, breaking with the history of racial segregation by waterfront unions. The waterfront organizing in mid-1930s was unprecedented in its militancy and reach, yet the long-term effects on San Francisco's working class — both for whites and workers of color — remain ambivalent.

The longshoremen's strike was partially victorious in the sense that the ILA won recognition for collective bargaining, de facto control over the hiring hall, a six-hour work day, but did not receive the full wage increase demanded. The strikes led to a surge in union membership and working class solidarity. Hundreds of other wildcat strikes unfolded in San Francisco over the course of the 1930s (Carlsson 1998: 73). Yet New Deal legislation, employer

concessions, and the political repression of radicals within the labor movement all contributed to taming the insurgency of the 1934 strikers. In reflecting on this period of organized unrest, labor historian David Milton argues that capital and labor arrived at a deal over the course of the 1930s: the working class gained the right to collectively bargain through independent unions by “abandoning the historic and working-class objective of control over the factories and system of production” (1982: 9-10). In Milton’s analysis, the working class won economic gains by relinquishing any political agenda dedicated to more thoroughgoing changes to the economic system. The strikes demonstrated the possibility of widespread solidarity amongst San Francisco’s workers, but their legacy had inconclusive, circumscribed historical effects.

A number of factors led to the deceleration of the insurgent labor movement and the redirection of the left’s priorities. The New Deal initiatives sapped some of the popularity and momentum of radical politics, as the working class appreciated immediate relief coming from the federal government. In response to the growing ferocity of fascist parties in Europe, the Communist International changed its strategy. At the World Congress of 1935, the Comintern initiated a shift in its policy from the Third Period (1928-1935) to the Popular Front (1935-1939). While during the Third Period the Comintern held a militant anti-reformist line that sought to create separate, explicitly sectarian unions and parties, the Popular Front pursued a nonsectarian strategy to build coalition with liberal social democrats to forge unity against fascist parties. The Popular Front policy de-emphasized explicitly revolutionary goals, and a swath of would be fellow travelers settled for social democratic politics. The question of how to respond to Stalinism also proved difficult for American communists. While the CP officially supported Stalin, many radicals charted an ambivalence regarding the extent to which they wished to maintain support for the Soviet experiment and the extent to which they railed against the

betrayal of communist politics under Stalin. McCarthyism's anti-communist red-baiting bred fear, paranoia, as well as direct political repression of groups on the radical left. The fervent years of the 1930s soon gave way to wartime economic restructuring with the onset of World War II.

Political economic contradictions cut through the period during which Beals created *Waterfront — 1934*. The Great Depression was a consequence of capital's self-expanding and self-undermining movement, or what Marxist economists refer to as *the tendency for the rate of profit to fall*. The working class response to the crisis confronted both internal divisions and external limits. Within unions, the differing agendas of conservative and radical tendencies struggled with each other. The case of union organizing and infighting within mid-1930s San Francisco evinces capital's social logic: through the socialization of labor, capital creates the conditions for social cooperation as well as for division and domination. Despite these tensions, the vitality of left-wing radicalism became the defining intellectual thrust of Depression Era California as well as a distinct influence on Beals' choreography. Rather than a plumbing of interiority, *Waterfront — 1934* turned outward to the wider context around the dancers in an attempt to make history legible through dance. As contradictions within capital characterize the political economic period, Beals' work also bears the traces of these wider mobilizing and decelerating forces.

Conclusion

Several cast members of *Waterfront — 1934* experienced firsthand the San Francisco General Strike of July 1934. Recently returned from New York, Beals and her husband Mervin Levy were staying at her uncle's house in Woodside. They hitchhiked up to the outskirts of San Francisco and arrived while the General Strike swept the city. Beals recalls: "We walked from

there all the way across town. It was a dead city. It was weird. It was the same feeling we had when we walked through ... the dark that night after Pearl Harbor” (Miller and Lieberman 1996).

Harrison also recollects his encounter with the General Strike, which took place while he still lived with his parents in Burlingame:

My dad would drive me up with his commute route to San Francisco and I would go to the University and then come back and drive back. But at one point I very distinctly remember the barricades to San Francisco, because it was general strike and you had to explain your business as you went through the barricades in San Francisco. It was quite exciting (Miller 1993).

The exciting, surreal, and out of joint quality that the San Francisco General Strike possessed also struck Ruth Zakheim, who lit up when talking about her memories of the strike when I interviewed her. Her father Bernard Zakheim, who she described as enormously intuitive about what was important, took her on a long walk from their home in the hills above the Haight Ashbury at 1541 Shrader Street all the way to 3rd and Market Streets in downtown San Francisco. He told her, “You have to see what the city looks like under a general strike.” Describing the streets as deserted and ghostly, Ruth remembers walking past closed grocery stores and empty, motionless streetcars. When they arrived at the waterfront, she recollects seeing the open truck beds filled with national guardsmen. She recounts how active the left was at the time and how powerful the Longshoremen’s Union was, referring to it as the life blood of the city (Gottstein 2016). For the cast members who had observed the force of the strike, *Waterfront — 1934* attempted to capture the sensory qualities evoked by a labor movement shutting down a city.

At first blush, *Waterfront — 1934* is a dance of solidarity, of documentation and witness, and of working class mourning. In relation to other modern dance idioms of the 1930s, Beals

embodied the more politicized, leftist elements of the dance community.³⁸ She represents a role for dance that prioritizes affinity with the left. Yet this framing of Beals' work as using modern dance to support the labor movement is incomplete: it illuminates a certain kind of politics, while masking another set of relations and questions. Not simply a representation of labor solidarity, *Waterfront — 1934* encompasses tensions between a) dance / labor, b) dance / capital, and c) dance / struggle. The work both engages with and distances itself from the heteronomous forces of waged labor, capital accumulation, and class struggle.

In considering what kind of economic category describes the dance, I understand the creation and performance of *Waterfront — 1934* as forms of social reproduction. As a capitalist did not hire workers and impose a specific production process in order to generate profit, the dance was not a form of waged work. While a strict physical regimentation and instrumentalism characterize labor-power as a commodity, Beals and her dancers shared a social context in which they could generate their own way of moving. In a non-Taylorized mode of embodiment, they

³⁸ The wider dance community in the Bay Area included independent dance teachers as well as undergraduate departments. During the 1930s, German émigré Ann Mundstock ran a studio within the Rudolph Schaeffer School of Design in San Francisco where she taught movement classes based in Laban, bringing developments in German dance to the Bay Area. The oral history account of Marcelle Chessé Arian suggests that there was some animosity between Beals and Mundstock: “Anna was very worthwhile. Carol Beals mentioned that she couldn't see what Anna Mundstock contributed to the dance. Well, I mean not dance per se, that way. I think she had a lot to offer to persons interested in the dance. But it's the same darn thing, you know, there's a certain amount of animosity. I don't know why because how anyone can make statements against a person that they don't know” (Dunning 1986: 41). One of the original members of the Denishawn Company and wife of Louis Horst (musician and founder of the publication *Dance Observer*), Betty Horst established her own studio offering modern classes and oversaw the dance performances programmed for the Bohemian Club (O'Donnell and Horosko 2003: 202-3). One other woman directed an independent studio for modern dance, Estelle Reed, who had studied with the vaudeville performer Madame Morosini (Dunning 1986: 255).

Following the creation of the first dance major by Margaret H'Doubler at the University of Wisconsin in 1926, dance departments began to spring up at Bay Area institutions. The undergraduate dance department at San Francisco State College was founded by Bernice Van Gelder in 1933 (Harris 2009: 26). The head of the physical education department at Mills College, Rosalind Cassidy, attended the Bennington summer school in 1934, which inspired her to want to build a dance department at Mills. To teach dance at Mills, she appointed Tina Flade, a German dancer who had performed in Mary Wigman's company. The dance department separated from the physical education department in 1938 and came under the direction of Marion Van Tuyl (Harris 2008: 80–88). Ballet institutions also formed in the mid-1930s: Adolph Bolm founded the San Francisco Opera Ballet in 1933, which later became the San Francisco Ballet under the direction of the Christensen brothers.

had control of their kinesthetic experience and could use the time spent dancing to explore any number of physical qualities. In relation to the unfreedom of work, Beals' choreography was unleashed from the corporeal impositions of waged labor. Within *Waterfront — 1934*, the freedom or non-work of dance became a vehicle to illuminate its opposite. While one could view this inversion as the emancipatory potential of dance, it also points to the co-constitutive unfreedom of all who must sell their bodies as labor-power.³⁹ Modern dance may provide access to non-routinized movement, but the continuation of waged labor in other domains generates this freedom to move. Rather than reading *Waterfront — 1934* as instantiating a shared identity between modern dancers and longshoremen as workers, Beals' dance indicates the distance between unpaid concert dance and waged labor on the docks.

Examining Beals' class background, her material circumstances in the mid-1930s, and what sustained her collaborators through the Great Depression clarifies the relationship of the dance to a support system generated through capital accumulation. Beals' dance is embedded within performance venues funded by San Francisco's bourgeois class, in part relying on that which it critiques. As a means to rationalize the exploitation of waged labor, capitalists generate cultural institutions that humanize these circumstances, of which modern dance classes and programming at the San Francisco Museum of Art are instances. The venues for Beals' dance symbolize her contradictory affiliations with working class forms of affinity and with the cultural patronage of San Francisco's economic elite. The position of artists in some ways parallels the contradictory position of workers as included within yet against economic production. Workers comprise the 'variable capital' component of the production process, and they also function as an

³⁹ I am responding here to Bojana Kunst's view that modern dance presents a moving alternative to work: "In this sense, the political and aesthetic potentiality of twentieth century dance was strongly intertwined with the exit from the factory" (Kunst 2015: 106).

antagonistic force against capital. Capitalism necessitates a process that Marx terms the socialization of labor, which holds forth the possibility that a logic of the commons or of communism could emerge from capital's extensive coordination (Martin 2002: 52). Capital — as a social form of mutual association and domination— both encumbered and made possible Beals' dance.

We can place Beals' ensemble choreography in relation to another group mobilization: the swarming, struggling, and fighting that unfolded on the waterfront during the strikes. How do we understand the relationship between the strikes and Beals' choreography? Beals represents the leftist, politicized tendencies within San Francisco's network of dancers active during the 1930s. In distinction to choreographers who took up more psychological, ethereal, or mystical themes, Beals used modern dance to engage the political struggles emerging within her immediate context. Beals' dance summons the relationship between praxis and reflection, between on the ground social movements and the attempt to understand them through distillation. The dance straddled working class spaces and venues funded by San Francisco's bourgeoisie, which brought her work into proximity with audiences allied with labor and capital. Beals established a position in solidarity with the San Francisco General Strike through choreography, which did not necessarily amount to direct participation within the labor struggles of the period. What distinguishes class struggle from the representation of striking within *Waterfront — 1934* is that labor movements slow down, halt, or sabotage a labor process that capital uses to generate surplus value. As Beals and her dancers did not arrest the value productive or reproductive labor that capital needs to sustain itself, their dancerly performance of striking remains an aesthetic, rather than material, gesture. *Waterfront — 1934* both engages with working class struggle in San Francisco while being simultaneously separate from the militancy in the streets.

We can contrast Beals with a figure like Elaine Black Yoneda, the president of the ladies' auxiliary of the ILA and the sole woman on the General Strike Committee of 1934 (Raineri 1991). Yoneda actively coordinated the bodies of the strikers shutting down the city, and Beals generated an aesthetic representation of these movements two years later. This contrast suggests the differing stakes of Yoneda's immersion in the struggles on the waterfront and Beals' creation of *Waterfront — 1934*, distanced spatially and temporally from the bodies surging through the streets. *Waterfront — 1934* has an investment in working class organizing, yet the artistic gesture may not translate into involvement in the strikes themselves.

In reflecting on the San Francisco leftist cultural milieu more broadly, a divide emerges between the social movements of the period and the artistic work generated in response. In his account of Coit Tower mural projects during the 1930s, art historian Anthony Lee observes a disjunction between San Francisco's leftist artists and the city's union organizers. While leftist painters adorned Coit Tower with murals sympathetic to communist and labor politics at exactly the same time as the Maritime Strike, Lee notes that he could not find a single article about the murals in leftist press or any evidence of labor groups responding to the work (Lee 1999: 160). In Lee's analysis, the mural project ran parallel to rather than directly intersected or supported the labor movement. He argues that one could find radicalism in the streets, the murals playing a subsidiary role in relation to the physicality and weight of the strikes (161). I scoured labor and communist papers from the mid-1930s, unable to find any mention of Beals' dance. This can inform us concerning the connection or non-connection between dancers and the labor movement, the extent to which San Francisco's workers engaged with modern dance

representations of their struggles.⁴⁰ In an interview, Beals recounts that the audience at the ILA Hall was not supportive of the work:

Beals: All I remember was that we were happy that it was finished. I felt I wasn't really getting much support from the audience.

Lieberman: Who were the audience? Were they longshoremen or was it...

Beals: Longshoremen or anyone who happened to be around I guess (Miller and Lieberman 1996).

Beals and her dancers represented the experiences of longshoremen back to themselves, who apparently had a discouraging reaction to this dancerly portrayal. Following Lee, a potential gap may have separated the danced representation of the General Strike from the labor movement itself.

Ruth Zakheim could recount her experience of the General Strike in detail, yet when asked directly about dancing with Beals, she could remember little (Gottstein 2016). She stated that she had no interest in dance and took classes briefly at her parents' suggestion. Perhaps this indicates one woman's non-enthusiasm for modern dance; or perhaps it suggests the effects of living through a general strike. A performance of concert dance might fade from memory after watching capitalism grind to a halt, the working class take over a city, the dance that unfolded in the streets. Beals' choreography emerged two years after dusk had fallen on San Francisco's Maritime and General Strikes.

My analysis of Carol Beals' *Waterfront — 1934* has unfolded the artistic, social, and economic ties that connect the dance to its period within San Francisco history. The dance provides a case in which to study the proximity and distance between dance / labor, dance / capital, and dance / struggle. Beals' dance drew people together to experience a non-alienated relation to their bodies, and she mobilized this corporeal freedom to represent the unfreedom of

⁴⁰ Kosstrin documents how leftist press in New York published reviews of Anna Sokolow's work, suggesting that communist-affiliated publications on the east coast were more involved in covering dance performances (2013).

work. Lodged between two forms of class composition, the work relied on cultural patronage from the capitalist class and maintained an affiliation with the labor movement. Beals made a work that took recent labor struggles as its subject, a gesture both engaging and disengaging from the strikes themselves. The tensions with Beals' dance indicate the internalization of broader contradictions generated by the Depression and accompanying forms of class struggle. The movement within *Waterfront — 1934* staged a body pulled between poles, an embodiment of contradictory forces.

Beals' work in the 1930s represents an alternative trajectory for modern dance, one that prioritizes forging alliances with social movements on the left.⁴¹ In response to the foregrounding of abstraction in modern art historiography, Andrew Hemingway advocates for a critical appraisal of the artistic standards operative during the 1930s and espouses “a radical skepticism towards the category of taste necessary to a truly dialectical history” (Hemingway 2002: 2). He suggests that the legitimated aesthetic standards of taste within modern art have much to do with the class interests that orient the field. Characterizing the social realist aesthetics that influenced Beals as didactic, simplistic, or devoid of abstraction obfuscates the significance of her working class alliances. While those memorialized as the field's ‘greats’ or ‘pioneers’ often aligned themselves with patrons from the economic elite (e.g. Martha Graham's long term relationship with banking heiress Baroness Bethsabée de Rothschild), the case of Beals casts these class affiliations in a new light.⁴² I view Beals and the Depression-era leftist dance movement as an

⁴¹ “... The Popular Front, the age of the CIO, stands, not as another epoch but as the promise of a different road beyond modernism, a road not taken, a vanishing mediator” (Denning 1998: 27).

⁴² “The Big Four [Graham, Humphrey, Weidman, and Holm] represented the most aesthetically minded dancers and choreographers and the least politically involved part of the movement” (Foulkes 2002: 127).

undercurrent within modern dance history that evinces, not without complication, concert dancers' affinity for the labor movement and revolutionary politics.⁴³

⁴³ "I assume that the art with which I am concerned is part of a legacy of a century of socialist and Communist experiment, which the left, as it enters a new millennium, must confront, both as a burden and as a potential resource" (Hemingway 2002: 3).

Re-reading Anna Halprin's *Parades and Changes*: Postmodern dance, Racialized Urban Restructuring, and mid-1960s San Francisco

Introduction

Anna Halprin (b. 1920), a choreographer based in Kentfield, California, has been a critical influence on American postmodern dance. Spanning seven decades, Halprin's life as a dancer has had many iterations: Humphrey-derived modern dance, performances in Broadway shows, the creation of happenings and encounters, ritual practices, community-based dance, and healing arts. Her work intimately bears the mark of her collaborations with her husband, the landscape architect Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009), as well as the new music composers, experimental theater practitioners, and therapists with whom she was in dialogue. As Halprin is now 97 years old, recent retrospective performances and exhibitions have presented Halprin's body of work, inviting a re-examination of her contribution to avant-garde dance and performance.¹

Returning to the work she was doing fifty years ago during the mid-1960s, Halprin directed a company called the San Francisco Dancers Workshop from 1955 to 1969. Within this

¹ The Pompidou Center in Paris brought Halprin to re-stage *Parades and Changes* in 2004. French choreographer Anne Collod has toured her reconstruction of the piece, *parades & changes, replays*, from 2008 to present, winning a Bessie award for the work in 2010. The California Historical Society presented the exhibit "Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966–1971" from January 22 to July 3, 2016. The 2017 exhibit, "Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955–1972," has been shown at Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UC Santa Barbara and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. In conjunction with the exhibit, Halprin staged a 50th anniversary performance of the paper dance section of *Parades and Changes* at Hunter College's Kaye Playhouse on May 31, 2017.

context, she created a dance titled *Parades and Changes*, her most well-known and, in many ways, her signature work.² The SFDW performed *Parades and Changes* between 1965 and 1967, and it has been subsequently reconstructed by Halprin and other choreographers. I view Halprin's piece not simply in aesthetic terms as a work that participated in the emergence of postmodernism in dance, but as a piece characterized by the structural antagonisms of the post-war Californian context.

This study of Halprin's *Parades and Changes* locates the dance within the history of San Francisco during the 1960s and the struggles over labor and land that define the period. Through an analysis of Halprin's aesthetics, her creative process, the material relations enabling her work, and the broader political economic context, I argue that *Parades and Changes* embodies the contradictions that emerged within the Fordist organization of labor. Fordism boosted effective demand by coupling real wages with gains in productivity for a certain stratum of workers. Yet, large segments of the workforce remained excluded from the bounty of the post-war period, setting the stage for mass social movements against these conditions. While Halprin's work has been characterized as the cultural ethos of new left politics (Ross 2003), I read the work as more aptly aligned with the race and class interests of urban renewal and suburbanization, processes that helped to stabilize the Fordist regime of accumulation. I argue that access to inherited wealth and the material resources made available through a "possessive investment in whiteness" enabled Halprin to create the dance.³ Contextualizing *Parades and Changes* in relation to

² Janice Ross describes the piece in the following terms: "The 1965 *Parades and Changes*, the dance that would become Halprin's signature piece and solidify her reputation as a pathbreaker in the American dance avant-garde..." (Bernstein 2008: 226).

³ The phrase "possessive investment in whiteness" is a formulation of George Lipsitz, which he uses to designate the deliberate institutionalization of racialized group identities and the systematic dispossession of non-white communities (Lipsitz 1995).

political economic developments during the 1960s suggests the work's contradictory affiliation with both utopian counter-cultures and the economic interests that propelled Fordist accumulation.

My research builds upon the historiography of Halprin's work and readings of *Parades and Changes* in particular, which have provided insight into the aesthetics, influences, and social circumstances of the dance. Janice Ross' biography offers a meticulously researched and thorough account of Halprin's life and work, which forms the ground for any further scholarship on Halprin (2007). In relation to the existing literature on *Parades and Changes*, I take up three questions: how to interpret Halprin's contribution to avant-garde concert dance, her creative process working with groups, and the politics of her work. Within dance historical writing, *Parades and Changes* is beloved and framed by many as a seminal work that pushed beyond the codes and conventions of modern dance.⁴ Gabriele Wittmann describes the work as a pivotal piece for concert dance in general: "*Parades and Changes* can be taken not just as the core of Anna Halprin's work, but as the core of dance history in the twentieth century" (Schorn, Land, and Wittmann 2014: 32). While scholars and choreographers alike commend the work, I hope to complicate our understanding of what was happening within *Parades and Changes* and what else might be going on beside an innovative expansion of avant-garde dance.

⁴ In her introduction to a collection of Halprin's writings, Sally Banes writes: "...Halprin has been an unsung pacesetter...It [the collection] shows a lifetime of intelligent analysis, courageous innovation, unwavering commitment, and above all, a passion for dance, art, and life" (Banes 1995: 4). "In the 1960s Halprin pioneered what was to be known as 'postmodern dance.' Her work was a key that unlocked the door leading to all kinds of experimentation in theater, music, Happenings, and performance art" (Schechner 2007: ix). "Halprin's use of the nude body was one of the earliest, most deliberate and prolonged examples. That said, the lack of clothing was only one of the conventions that *Parades & Changes* was pushing up against. Perhaps more importantly was her testing the conventions of sexuality, authorship, and even the definition of dance" (Schechner 2010: 13). "A mound of constantly moving paper erupts at the centre of the stage creating its own soundscape with limbs and heads appearing and disappearing beneath its mass. The sheer beauty and joyousness of the event is hard to describe" (Worth 2005: 445).

Secondly, previous scholars have described Halprin's ensemble work as developing a lateral and collective way of creating choreography.⁵ Ross describes *Parades and Changes* as using a "collective structure of group problem solving and collaboration" that produced "a mini-democracy-in-action" (Ross 2017: 140). Re-examining the details reveals a creative process possibly far less egalitarian and communal than has been previously suggested. In this chapter, I expand upon a footnote that Peter Merriman includes toward the end of his article on the Halprins: "Of course, Anna and Lawrence's promotion of collective creativity, collaboration, and their challenging of these binaries was not always successful, and both continued to occupy what were, essentially, positions of privilege and choreographic authority" (2010: 449).

Finally, I offer a rethinking of Anna Halprin's political affiliations in the mid-1960s. In contextualizing Halprin in relation to social movements of the period, Ross and other scholars see an affinity between the New Left and the aesthetics of Halprin's work.⁶ While noting that Halprin "didn't actively participate in many 1960s political demonstrations," Ross claims a shared project between Halprin and the dedicated radicals of the 1960s (Ross 2003: 46). It is

⁵ "Almost intuitively Halprin had began working in the same arenas that not just political activists but particularly West Coast personal growth therapists were exploring... One of the single biggest ideas to emerge from this whole era for Halprin was that of collective creativity" (Ross 1995: 74).

"One of the differences between Halprin's events and Happenings is Halprin's growing emphasis on collective creativity and the autonomy of participants and the interaction between them, resulting in a sense of community and group ownership of the event. Increasingly Halprin was concerned with creating events that were meaningful for the individuals participating and served the needs of the community" (Worth and Poynor 2004: 23).

"Halprin emphasized a collective creativity while recognizing the potential power of the audience in the theatre dances such as *Five-Legged Stool* (1962) and *Parades and Changes* (1965)" (Prickett 2007: 243). "Out of Halprin's radical innovations, others continued to work in collectives while forging different theatrical paths..." (244)

⁶ "Halprin and California in the 1960s were cultural models for what many in the political New Left were both applauding and seeking" (Ross 2003: 27). "Like the New Left activities in the streets, Halprin's work depended on an inherent faith in less governance, whether in life or in art. This period was an instance of one of those felicitous correspondences between a moment in society and the arrival of an artist who speaks directly through her work to the social, political, and aesthetic concerns of the time" (43). "Halprin's statement echoes concerns identical to those of the political activists of the time who were also seeking to build a sense of community and encourage egalitarian values in the disenfranchised" (46).

"The social and cultural movements of the era were crucial influences on both the form of Halprin's work and the values implicit within it" (Worth and Poynor 2004: 23).

perhaps this slippage - between white avant-garde dance and new left social movements - that needs to be rethought. While touted as a liberatory work that opened up new aesthetic freedoms within concert dance, *Parades and Changes* also emerged from another set of political tendencies in the 1960s, namely the interests spearheading urban renewal.

In distinction to previous research on Halprin, I employ a political economic analysis that focuses on the material conditions for *Parades and Changes*. Investigating how Halprin created the dance and through what circumstances allows us to locate the work within its urban and economic context. The conditions and relations of production constitute a crucial dimension for understanding the politics of Halprin's work. Examining *Parades and Changes* from a political economic perspective clarifies aspects of the work that do not appear in photographs yet critically reframe interpretations of the dance and Halprin's legacy more broadly.

This chapter proceeds through a four part study of *Parades and Changes* that explores the history of the work through distinct analytic scales, tracing an arc that moves from the dance to its broader historical and economic context. I begin with a discussion of the choreographic structure and aesthetic dispositions within Halprin's dance, including a movement analysis of the two existing video documents. The second section delves into the process of making the piece, engaging questions concerning authorship, decision-making, and interpersonal dynamics that underpinned the work. I argue that the creative process for *Parades and Changes* involved a blurring of dance pedagogy and composition, a single author standing in for a group collaboration, and a repositioning of skill in avant-garde dance. In the third section, I investigate the dance's material conditions of possibility: the sources of funding, presentation contexts, and social reproduction of Halprin and her collaborators. Examining these economic means elucidates the piece's politics of production, or the material relations that entered into the process

of making and showing the dance. The final section of the chapter connects the dance to the contradictions within the Fordist regime of accumulation and the social struggles within the Bay Area in the mid-1960s.

Parades and Changes: Choreographic Structure, Aesthetics, Movement Analysis

A work without a fixed or final form, Halprin and her collaborators composed *Parades and Changes* as a set of performance scores that they could rearrange for each performance. Halprin created the piece in collaboration with Morton Subotnik and Folke Rabe (music), Patric Hickey (lighting), Charles Ross (sculpture), Jo Landor (costumes), and several casts of dancers.⁷ Halprin conceived of *Parades and Changes* not as a repeatable, repertory work but as “a culminating point for us in developing a system of collaboration we started five years ago” (Halprin 1995: 96). Subotnik, Halprin’s composer and in some respects co-choreographer, designed this ‘cell block’ structure, which gave each of the artists working on the piece a set of cards that identified their individual scores (Bernstein 2008: 234).⁸ Each cell could last between five or twenty-five minutes, giving the piece a widely variable length. Performers could switch between categories of cell blocks: dancers could perform in the musical or lighting blocks and vice versa. The title describes the structure of the piece: the ‘parade’ refers to the sequence of actions that the performers move through, and the ‘changes’ suggests the re-organization of those sections for

⁷ The performance chronology of the dance as a work of the San Francisco Dancers Workshop spans the years 1965 through 1967 (See Appendix B). If one includes several other performances not formally titled as *Parades and Changes* but consisting of material and scores from the piece, the run of the work would expand to 1964 through 1970 to include the ‘Procession’ piece performed at University of California, Los Angeles in late 1964 and the ‘Paper Dance Invocation’ performed at the opening of the UC Berkeley Art Museum in November 1970. I have decided to focus on the performances explicitly titled *Parades and Changes* and contain my analysis to the years 1965 through 1967.

⁸ For example, Lawrence Halprin describes Subotnik’s cell blocks as including the following four elements in addition to other sources of sound: “1. might represent ‘live music’ on a horn - single sustained sound, 2. electronic sound, 3. percussion rhythmic pattern, 4. Bach’s *Brandenburg Concerto*” (Halprin 1969: 36).

each performance.⁹ As the work emerged from a score with “complete and total flexibility,” each performance became a different dance, often not recognizable as the same work (Halprin 1995: 95).

The dance sections included in *Parades and Changes* shifted with each performance of the piece, some used in only one iteration and others included in every version.¹⁰ Halprin introduced the most iconic sections of *Parades and Changes*, the dress/undress score and the paper dance, at the Stockholm performances that took place on September 5th through 7th, 1965. While these two blocks have remained in most subsequent performances of the work, other sections have appeared only in single versions. For instance, the showing at the Hunter College Playhouse on April 21st and 22nd, 1967 included a live goat eating carrots on stage and a pseudo-tap dance solo for Halprin “wearing yellow dungarees and an English policeman’s helmet” accompanied by a one man jug band (Barnes 1967). The goat, the dance solo, and the jug band did not appear in any other versions of *Parades and Changes*. The variation between performances generates a large degree of ambiguity about the specifics of the piece. Janice Ross notes that, “everyone who was in the September 1965 premiere of *Parades and Changes* remembers a different dance and no one can say with certainty, least of all Ann, what opening night or the two subsequent evenings actually looked like” (Ross 2007: 183). Because of the necessary instability of the work and the gaps within archival documentation, *Parades and Changes* must be thought of as a

⁹ The title connotes Halprin’s interest during the 1960s in processions, parades, ceremonies, and rituals. She titled a 1964 piece *Procession* and a 1969 work *Ceremony of Us*, which included a section called ‘Procession.’ One of the experimental music composers that Halprin associated with, Ramon Sender, made a piece called *Parade* in 1962 that used the faint sounds of a parade (Bernstein 2008: 57).

¹⁰ The scores used to generate the movement within the piece remain in Halprin’s archives as notecards, graphic representations, and type written pages, while some have surfaced in publications and interviews about the work (See Appendix C).

process that unfolded over several years, rather than a coherent and repeatable work of choreography.

The variation between performances of *Parades and Changes* reflects Halprin's aesthetic privileging of non sequitur, juxtaposing sections that do not logically follow or lead to the next. The score isolated the different theatrical elements and helped to generate arbitrary relationships between them. The sectional disjunction within *Parades and Changes* gives the work an episodic, discontinuous structure. In numerous interviews, Halprin described her process as an attempt "to discard cause and effect" (Bernstein 2008: 232):

Halprin: We began to explore systems that would knock out cause and effect.

Rainer: You mean between people?

Halprin: Between everything. Anything that had to do with cause and effect got you back into your own habits again. I wanted to find things I'd never thought of, that would never come out of my personal responses (Halprin 1995: 79).

The unrelated-ness of the sections allowed her to move beyond her compositional proclivities and make uncustomary choices. Her 'knocking cause and effect' formulation also suggests a non-narrative and non-representational orientation to dance. Halprin did not want her dances to tell a story or to symbolize a particular theme: "I didn't want anything to look as if it had meaning, or continuity" (Halprin 1995: 85). Instead, Halprin thought of her work as offering a kinesthetic, sensory experience that audience members did not need to interpret intellectually.

Rather than using choreographed sequences, Halprin approached generating movement for *Parades and Changes* through the use of scores. She created parameters and instructions for dancers to move within. Scoring permitted individual performers to make decisions about the specifics of their actions during the performance. Halprin understood her scores as providing constraints that could harness the energy of improvisation. Rather than showcasing a polished display, the scores created group experiences that connected the performers to each other.

Halprin used scores for what they generated internally for the performer and how they could build relationships between performers and audience members.

The scores of *Parades and Changes* consisted of tasks that the performers would carry out. As Subotnik, Hickey, and Ross created actions to generate musical, lighting, and sculptural effects, the dance sections were often inseparable from the non-dance cell blocks, giving the movement an unembellished, task-driven quality. Halprin used these task explorations to find a movement vocabulary that did not conform to an exterior style. Task drew forth an unselfconscious quality, which Halprin thought could generate un-stylized, ‘natural’ movement.¹¹ In distinction to movement stemming from artificial, conformist forms, she encouraged dancers to find their ‘natural’ responses to physical forces (Ross 2007: 149). By drawing movement from the everyday, pedestrian world, Halprin understood the piece as offering an experience that did not require interpretation: “There is no need to translate movement; there is no symbology. It is what it is” (Halprin 1965b). She thought that movement derived from task offered an immediacy to the viewer.

With *Parades and Changes*, Halprin sought to stage authentic encounters between performers. She desired unmediated relationships in performance, in which the dancers were themselves rather than playing a character or interpreting a theme. In a program note for *Parades and Changes*, she described the piece as offering a temporal condensation that made experiences within the dance more real than life outside of it. The piece staged “events of life compressed into a short space” and provided “access to events and relationships that could otherwise take

¹¹ Janice Ross describes Halprin as driven to find the ‘natural’ in dance, derived in part from the influence of Halprin’s teacher Margaret H’Doubler: “so systematically did H’Doubler stress the rediscovery of natural movement patterns” (2007: 30).

years to observe and experience” (Halprin 1965b). Dispelling theatrical illusion and simulation, Halprin pursued an aesthetic of physical and psychological candor in dance.

The nudity in the undressing section provides an example of this drive towards the ‘natural’ and ‘real’ in performance. As Janice Ross describes, the dancers “undress in a smooth, slow, uninflected, de-eroticized manner while maintaining eye contact” (Bernstein 2008: 226). Halprin wanted to show bodies unadorned, mirroring the nakedness of animals and trees: “Trees, sky, earth, water, and animal: to be naked is a symbolic gesture to be in unity with nature and thus tap into your own essential nature” (Halprin 1983). She distinguished her presentation of bodies in their ‘natural’ state from the aims of sexual or pornographic display. The nudity created “a ceremony of trust” amongst the performers and spectators that she thought would break down social barriers between people (Halprin 1995: 6). Halprin considered the gesture a challenge to the repressive conservatism of ‘the establishment’ (Bernstein 2008: 237). Nudity held the promise of transcending the social conventions and artifice that occluded earnest encounters between people.¹² Undressing mapped onto the process of therapy, stripping down to latent feelings in a literalization of metaphors from Gestalt psychotherapy.

¹² The San Francisco Dancers’ Workshop was certainly not the only performance group to use disrobing. There were, of course, many other dance, theater, and performance artists of Halprin’s period experimenting with nudity. The actors from the San Francisco Mime Troupe were regularly arrested for nudity during street performances in 1965 (Cavallo 1999: 113). The undressing within *Parades and Changes* falls into what theater historian Karl Toepfer terms “mythic nudity” in which nakedness in performance “signified a release or ‘freedom’ of the body from ‘oppressive’ constraints imposed on it by texts, language, communication codes which ‘clothe’ the disclosure of an ‘authentic’ level of being or reality” (Toepfer 1996: 78). Toepfer considers the concurrent work of the Living Theater and Carolee Schneeman to exemplify this mode of deploying nudity. Changing social mores around public sexuality also help to contextualize the nudity that appeared within *Parades and Changes*. While Halprin used undressing as an aesthetic act, in other parts of town sex workers used nudity as a form of labor, and hippies explored nakedness to foster forms of erotic communalism. In 1964, the Condor Club opened in North Beach, which was one of the first public strip clubs within the neighborhood. The dancer Carol Doda performed topless on June 19, 1964, becoming one of the first nightclub dancers in the post-war US to not wear pasties (Bronstein 2011: 64). The success of Doda’s act at the Condor led to an explosion of strip clubs and sex-related businesses in North Beach and the Tenderloin over the next few years (Sides 2006: 356). Over on Haight Street, the hippie counter-culture also experimented with public sexuality, especially during the Human Be-In in Golden Gate Park in January of 1967 followed by the Summer of Love that blossomed later that year (Cavallo 1999: 116-118). Contrasting the undressing

At the heart of Halprin's aesthetics lies a primitivism, a harkening to a primordial experience of movement. Halprin's piece staged basic kinesthetic responses to tasks which Halprin considered the "ancient root of dance" (Halprin 1995: 185). Rather than produce dances as spectacles to entertain or amuse an audience, she understood her work as playing a function akin to ritual dance practices in indigenous cultures (Schechner and Halprin 1989: 67).¹³ Her new approach to modern dance channeled what Halprin imagined as traditional dance, or what she called the "ritualistic beginnings of art as an expression of life" (Halprin 1995: 101). In the Halprins' thinking of the 1960s, they sought to mirror the integration of art and life that they found in "primitive" cultures.¹⁴

This turn towards 'primitive' performance reveals both universalizing and appropriative impulses. In *The RSVP Cycles*, Lawrence Halprin equates Navajo sand paintings with the work of his wife and Allan Kaprow (an artist who developed 'happenings' in the early 1960s), in what he describes as "the inevitable relation between these sings [Navajo singing and dancing rituals] and modern theater" (Halprin 1969: 28-29). Lawrence Halprin codified a scoring practice called *RSVP*, which he uses to equate cultural practices from disparate epochs and cultures. Reflective of an appropriative gesture, Anna Halprin understood herself as participating in the dance

in *Parades and Changes* with the public nudity that took place in other contexts, neighborhoods, and venues helps to show the varied stakes of who takes their clothes off and why, be it the source of one's income, or the unseating of repressive sexual mores, or the performance of political street theater.

¹³ Lawrence Halprin's program note for Anna Halprin's 1962 work *Five-Legged Stool* affirms this ritualistic aspiration: "Today's art theater wants profoundly to be a partnership which will involve audience as much as performers. To do this it as had to go back to some of the fundamental principles of its art - back to its most basic ritualistic beginning when men were simpler and art was only a sharpened experience of Life. It was then, as it is attempting to become again, an event of supreme importance; involving people in its space and the very imagery of the performance itself" (Halprin 1962).

¹⁴ In 1969, Lawrence Halprin published a book on the scoring practices used in Anna's and his own work titled *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment*, which juxtaposes documentation of *Parades and Changes* alongside "primitive," indigenous, or non-white performance practices [sic] (Halprin 1969: 6).

practices of indigenous cultures, which she refers to when writing about using nudity in dance: “True, European, white culture does not have a tradition of nude dancing other than sexual. However, primal and non-European cultures have a great tradition of the naked body” (Halprin 1983). The approach of the Halprins evinces the tendency of white avant-garde artists to turn to non-western cultures as sources for inspiration, thereby erasing forms of social difference in the name of a universal human experience. Not taking the steps of a particular dance or dressing up as a member of an indigenous group, Halprin’s form of appropriation involves an imagination and emulation of cultural others.

I read Anna Halprin’s approach to choreography as an aesthetic response to the Fordist system of production that was reaching its apogee around her. The flexibility built into the cell block structure offers a counterpoint to the conformity and predictability of a fixed repertory work. Halprin rejected a set structure for *Parades and Changes* as this rigidity would mirror the depersonalized bureaucratic rationality of the wider production system. Halprin viewed modern dance training as the creation of look-alike dancers in the choreographer’s image, which she saw as an affront to the individuality of the dancer: “Imitating someone else’s personal style produces an army of clones. This offends me - it offends my fierce loyalty to the uniqueness of the individual” (Halprin 1995: 248). She sought access to authentic, embodied expression that would counteract what David Harvey characterizes as “the blandness of the quality of life under a regime of standardized mass consumption” (1989: 139). For the undressing section, she had the performers remove business attire, a response to the conventionality and conformity that she perceived within the workplace, as Worth and Poynor describe: “there is an anti-establishment agenda inherent in the work...” (2004: 78-79). Halprin’s turn toward what she saw as ‘natural’ or primitive dance reflects an ambivalence concerning the cultural logic ushered in by white

flight and suburbanization. Scores, tasks, and rituals were a means to reanimate the cultural sterility and lifelessness that accompanied Fordist production.

In order to examine the specifics of *Parades and Changes* alongside Halprin's self-conception and priorities, I turn now to the video documents that remain of the piece. While the piece has been reconstructed numerous times by Halprin and the French choreographer Anne Collod in the 1990s and 2000s, only two video documents remain of the piece as performed in the mid-1960s: the film version created in 1965 for Swedish television and a film by Laurie Grunberg that splices together clips from *Parades and Changes* as performed at San Francisco State College also in 1965.¹⁵ The piece is not reducible to any particular performance of it, but these documents constitute a glimpse into the world of *Parades and Changes*.¹⁶

The Swedish television film begins with a shot of the cast quickly going up and down a set of stairs in a single file line in the corner of the space, the women in white leotards and the men in black leggings. They all hold a large piece of plastic above their heads, which they carry up and down the stairs in a loop. Electronic, stuttering music overlays the shot. Titles appear that name the film as an adaptation by Charles Ross and Jo Landor performed by Ann Halprin, A.A. Leath, John Graham, Yani Novak, Kim Hahn, Daria Halprin, and Rana Halprin. The film cuts to a shot of the group now in the center of the space, holding the plastic sheet horizontally and spinning it in a circle. They shake the plastic as if it was a parachute or a picnic blanket. The shaking subsides, and they lay the plastic down to the floor smoothly. The dancers step back and

¹⁵ Both are held at the San Francisco Museum of Performance and Design. Including several sections of the piece, two other video documents serve to give a sense of what some of the material from *Parades and Changes* might have looked like: a 1964 film called *Procession* created at UCLA and the 'Paper Dance Invocation' at the opening of the Berkeley Art Museum in 1970. There is unfortunately no footage within Halprin's archives of the live versions of the piece from Stockholm or New York.

¹⁶ The version made for television is without a live audience, which certainly colors and informs how the dancers perform the work, and Laurie Grunberg's film utilizes jump cuts that obscures the transitions between sections.

watch the plastic slowly undulate and settle downward. Surrounding the edges of the plastic sheet, they ruffle and agitate the material, soon pushing it into a tight ball, making a huddle around the crumpled plastic. All draw back swiftly, revealing the soft, abrupt movements of the plastic sheet un-crumpling itself. The dancers move back into the huddle, picking up the plastic and holding it over head in a clump, returning to the opening image of the film on the stairs. The camera pans to Charles Ross who orally inflates a large weather balloon. The dancers move over to a large metal scaffolding structure lying on its side. They quickly climb up and over the scaffolding as if it were a jungle gym or obstacle course. They work together to stand the scaffolding upright, which reaches three levels high. The dancers then ascend up the structure, gently lifting, hoisting, holding, pulling, and pushing each other. Ross begins to volley the weather balloon to Rana Halprin, who plays a game of toss with the enormous clear balloon while others remain on the scaffolding. The scaffolding rotates and spins, creating geometric shadows against the back wall of the space. The dancers take on an acrobatic vocabulary as they ascend and descend the structure primarily without using the ladders within the scaffolding. They wind around each other and the metal bars with a somber, serious, internal focus. A metallic accordion tube descends into the middle of the space between the scaffolding and the weather balloon toss, and the shot cuts to black.

In the second section of the film, the scaffolding has been removed, and the dancers appear scattered around the open space in black pants and white button downs. They stomp and shout abruptly, moving between stillness and quick movements with their feet, knees, and elbows. They each seem to groove to an absent music, swinging their arms at the elbows and borrowing quick gestures from social dances of the period such as the pony and the frug. They are accompanied by a radio mash up that oscillates rapidly between Beatles songs, advertising

announcers, weather reports, and radio static. The music settles on the Petula Clark song “Downtown,” and the dancers cease moving and open their mouths wide to shout and vocalize, inaudible over the song. Scattered throughout the space and facing in different directions, the dancers start to take off their clothing at a slow, sustained pace. Some shift towards the floor to remove garments, while others remain standing. As each dancer becomes fully naked, they walk or crawl slowly over to large rolls of white paper that Ross has unfurled out around the space. Without musical accompaniment, the dancers make sounds by moving, crumpling, and tearing the paper. They gradually move from the floor to a standing position and move inwards towards each other. Continuously tearing the paper, they make a huddle, as Ross unfurls rolls of paper around them. The dancers stand and lift the paper higher off the floor. Individual bodies disappear and become engulfed in a moving assemblage of paper, sound, and flesh. The dancers keep their eyes downward, not looking at or acknowledging each other, although working together in close proximity to create this collective, mobile shape. All move in towards a central point, elevate the paper above their heads, and then begin to collect the paper into bundles around their bodies. The dancers gather all scraps of paper and exit one by one into a rectangular hole in the floor of the stage, with the Beach Boys song “The Warmth of the Sun” as accompaniment for their exit. After all bodies and paper funnel into the hole, a man enters the frame with a wood plank and covers the passage way that they descended into, ending the piece.

Contrasted with this Swedish version performed specifically for a camera, Laurie Grunberg’s video rendition of *Parades and Changes* at San Francisco State College is a visual collage of various moments from the live performance, leaving a number of ambiguities with respect to duration and transition. The film has no sound, which eliminates understanding how the piece coordinated its sonic layer with the choreographic and scenographic components. The

video opens with Morton Subotnik conducting the parade of dialogue, gesturing to performers who spew speech from their mouths with an animated, forceful delivery. Wearing white button downs and black trousers, the dancers vocalize in the middle of the auditorium, elevated above the audience by standing atop chairs or arm rests. The dancers next appear on the stage in the stomp section, performed as a vibrant pseudo-tap dance with hip swivels and shoulder shimmies. The quality is jovial and abrupt, as they quickly transition in and out of social dance steps. The shot cuts to the embrace section, during which the dancers hold and hug each other, in twos, threes and fours. The embraces linger, oscillating qualitatively between tension and tenderness. The dancers next appear against a back wall for the undressing section. They slowly disrobe down to their undergarments: women wearing white leotards (or bras and underwear) and the men in white leggings or underwear. From the back wall, they transition into a parade of costumes: they approach rows of clothing, fabrics, and props at a slow, sustained speed. As they move across the stage, they add articles of clothing to their bodies and pick up objects. Many of the props and costumes are suggestive of character and setting: a Spanish bull riding costume, a parasol, band conductor outfit, an oversized lantern, flags on long poles, Hawaiian print fabrics, and so forth. The section creates absurd juxtapositions as the dancers become assemblages of objects, goofily arranged together. At a certain moment, all the dancers put on white lab coats and white, paper mache masks with bulging black eyes sockets. While wearing the masks, they face the audience form an abstracted tableau vivant directly towards the viewers. The last shot of the video is of the dancers removing the lab coats and re-entering the costume parade. It is unclear how the performance actually concluded as the video cuts out abruptly.

In considering these two instantiations of *Parades and Changes*, I observe the movement as having an extra-daily quality that exceeds the realm of straightforward task. While the

movement vocabulary is task-oriented, the dancers depart from the simplest, easiest, or most efficient way to complete the movement scores. They clearly embellish the movement beyond the constraints and rules of the score. For example, the score of the scaffolding section asks them to “build a scaffold and when you’ve built it, go up to the top” (Halprin 1995: 8). The dancers execute this score by using complicated, acrobatic pathways up and down the scaffolding, avoiding the obvious choice of simply walking up the ladders to the top of the structure. Additionally, the stomp section is notated as purely a sound score that designates the number and duration of sounds that the dancers are to make with their feet. In both the San Francisco State and Swedish television versions, the dancers pepper hip swivels, shoulder shimmies, and elbow grooves atop the simple action of making stomping sounds. Describing the piece as ‘task-based’ has more to do with what is not present in the piece, effortful or technically skilled dancing. The body in *Parades and Changes* is a body at ease. The viewer does not see tiring, muscular effort. The level of physical exertion remains moderate throughout the work. The different sections draw out movement contrasts — slow, sustained, continuous and quick, abrupt, staccato — while the piece itself stays within a loose, non-virtuosic range.

The performance quality and interpersonal tone differs between the San Francisco and Stockholm casts. Within the Swedish television version, the countenance of the dancers appears flat, even somber. The dress/undress section had a cool, distant, removed tone, as the cast took off their shirts and trousers only once without making eye contact with each other or the camera. Despite undertaking collective tasks, the dancers seem to be in their own worlds. Some viewers of the performances in Stockholm did not read the nudity as offering a life-affirming exploration of the unrestrained body. One Swedish critic described the nudity as “indifferent and impotent, lacking all eroticism. These scenes were characterized by a total sexual chilliness. Sterility and

death were horribly present” (Fleisher 1965).¹⁷ The muted sexuality and deadpan removal of the clothes read, in this case, as rule-following obedience. The San Francisco State cast was much more alive to each other throughout the work and especially in the embrace section. They encountered each other’s gaze and bodies with fervent attention, as opposed to a flat, almost lifeless affect of the Swedish version. This difference could also be attributed to the social relations that organized each group: a peer group of SF State college students all undergoing an experiment together versus a group of adult performers, adolescents, and parental figures who have implicit power differentials. Working with her children and other performers under the age of eighteen may well have constrained the realness and candor that Halprin sought in performance. The work remains unstable, at times intimate and psychologically penetrating, and at others, repressive and methodical.

Objects play a central role in the composition of *Parades and Changes*. As opposed to other choreographers that might make a dance and then find costumes or props to complement it, *Parades and Changes* begins with the props and costumes and then finds a dance to do with them. The textures on stage — the heaviness of the scaffolding and the lightness of the plastic sheet, the rolls of paper, and the weather balloon — guide the movement qualities within the piece. Several of the sections involve a hyperbolic use of objects, using too many or unwieldy assemblages of paper, lights, and clothes. The paper dance, for example, relies on visual hyperbole, connoting a sense of abundance or wastefulness. The piece oscillates between stripping down and piling too much, generating a minimalism through tasks that either add or subtract objects.

¹⁷ The response from this critic could also be informed by the cultural attitudes towards nudity and the body specific to the Swedish context.

Similar to use of object assemblages, the sound score for *Parades and Changes* has a collage aesthetic that incorporates high and low musical genres. While opening with austere, synthesized beeps and arrhythmic tones, Folke Rabe chose to swing fully into popular culture by including the Beatles, The Beach Boys, and Petula Clark, whose song “Downtown” was number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in 1965. The sound pivots between minimalist, new music and the melodious, evocative lyrics of pop songs, which contrasts with the aesthetics of the dance. Staying within the realm of deadpan task, the movement within the Swedish version does not enter the register of popular or commercial dance. The contrasts built into the music have an ironic or distancing effect, in the sense that the rapid sonic oscillation prevents an immersion into any particular moment or atmosphere. The sentimentality of the songs and the radio announcer’s voice rub against the straightforward movement assignments and their aim to engender veritable experiences in time and space. The pairing of movement sections with the variety of sound sources creates an ambiguity about the sincerity or irony of any particular element within the piece.

These observations about the composition and performance of *Parades and Changes* indicates a set of aesthetic tensions within the work: the movement is task-based, yet its extra daily quality exceeds a straightforward execution; the scores can be interpersonally penetrating, yet also can have a removed, circumscribed, and distant tone; the dance is minimal and stripped down, yet adorned by a slew of props and costumes; the dancers perform their ‘authentic’ selves, yet the mid-1960s pop music ironizes their performance. I see in Halprin’s work two opposing inclinations: on one hand, a celebration of the ephemeral, discontinuous, and disjointed, and on the other hand, a search for secure, timeless forms of meaning and identity. Her use of non-sequitur displays what Fredric Jameson identifies as “schizophrenic fragmentation” that he

frames as characteristic of postmodern aesthetics (1991: 27). In Halprin's non-thematic, non-narrative approach to dance-making, she stages "a series of pure and unrelated presents in time," which Jameson connects to a flattening of history and praxis: "the breakdown of temporality suddenly releases this present of time from all the activities and intentionalities that might focus it and make it a space of praxis" (1991: 27). In the scores and tasks that transpire in *Parades and Changes*, Halprin disassociates movement from meaning and cause from effect, generating an ephemeral world of unrelated, fleeting events. Simultaneously, she seeks to integrate the performers and audience into a ritual of authenticity. The composition of *Parades and Changes* charts dual and contradictory impulses: a) a staging of aestheticized actions without narrative or thematic purpose, and b) a dancerly primitivism that yearns for the functionality of ritual perceived in cultural others. It gestures towards both an embrace of a social logic of fragmentation and an underlying discontent with post-war social life.

Creative Process

I turn now to Halprin's process for creating *Parades and Changes*, and what *working* on the dance entailed. In a narrow sense, the rehearsal period roughly began in early 1965 and continued through the performances of 1967, during which Halprin held rehearsals at her dance deck in Kentfield and at her studio at 321 Divisadero Street in San Francisco. Although, one cannot easily delimit the process as it was largely continuous with her previous work.¹⁸ The piece synthesized a number of choreographic investigations that Halprin explored from the late

¹⁸ Some elements that comprise *Parades and Changes* came from Halprin's previous pieces. Her task performance work started in the late 1950s, in which several pieces involved the encumbrances of props and non-sequitur relationships between theatrical elements, especially *Three Legged Stool* (1960-1), *Four Legged Stool* (1961), and *Five Legged Stool* (1962). Halprin's dance for *Esposizione* (1963) was object driven and involved loading the performers with more objects than they could carry: "we took a single task: burdening ourselves with enormous amounts of luggage. The whole group had this one task, to be burdened with things" (Halprin 1995: 87). Her 1964 piece *Procession* included a parade of costumes, in which performers took on and off costume elements as they walked slowly and steadily across the space.

1950s into the 1960s. As curator Dena Beard describes, “*Parades and Changes*, first performed in 1965, was the culmination of hundreds of workshop experimentations” (2013). Her process bears the influence of artists proximate to Halprin undertaking similar compositional methods during the 1960s (See Appendix D on the dance’s influences).¹⁹ I can also single out the influence of her husband Lawrence Halprin and the German psychotherapist Fritz Perls, who Halprin worked with during the 1960s.²⁰

¹⁹ A similar set of aesthetic dispositions motivated artists working in music, theater, and visual art. These include visual artists associated with Fluxus, the Judson Church choreographic experiments in New York (many of whom had attended Halprin’s summer workshops in the early 1960s), and the Cage-influenced experimental music composers of the San Francisco Tape Music Center. Halprin notes that during the 1960s she felt artistic affinity with experimental theater practitioners developing environmental and immersive performances more than other dancers and choreographers, naming specifically the work of “Jerzy Grotowski, Lee Breuer and Ruth Maleczech, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, Richard Schechner, San Francisco Actors’ Workshop, and the San Francisco Playhouse on Hyde Street” (Halprin 1995: 227). Halprin adopted the organizational forms (e.g. the structure of the San Francisco Actors Workshop) and the ways of working (i.e. the impulse towards accessing feelings and avoiding simulation) from acting training. She embraced the exploration of authenticity in interpersonal relationships characteristic of these theater artists. Halprin and Polish theater director Jerzy Grotowski followed the nearly parallel artistic trajectories that explored performance as a form of ritual and the search for authentic experience. Richard Schechner charts a parallel relationship between Grotowski’s work and that of Halprin’s: “Halprin was moving away from ‘art dance’ to events very close to what Grotowski would research during his Paratheatre, Theatre of Sources, Objective Drama, and Art as vehicle periods” (Schechner and Wolford 1997: 487). Several intellectual currents formed the backdrop for many of the artists, particularly the influence of existentialism in the 1950s and 1960s through the work of Jean-Paul Sartre as well as an interest in Zen Buddhism. Halprin soaked in the prominent artistic and theoretical tendencies of her period which helped to form the shape that *Parades and Changes* took. Janice Ross’ biographical work on Halprin does a thorough job of charting Halprin’s intellectual and artistic influences over the course of her life (2007).

²⁰ *Parades and Changes* staged a partnering with the environment and spatial setting that mirrored Anna’s partnership with Lawrence, as her process involved performers in and with their environment. Her husband’s work in landscape architecture influenced Halprin’s continued engagement with space and site within her choreographic process. Halprin understood movement largely as a response to the spatial and physical environment surrounding the dancer. Rather than viewing the theater as a neutral, given, or unacknowledged container, Halprin made interacting with the architecture of the room one of the structuring devices for generating the content of *Parades and Changes*.

Perls developed Gestalt Therapy and was an important influence on the formation of West Coast personal growth therapy. A figure on the fringe of the Bauhaus who moved to California in 1960, Perls worked with Halprin’s Dancers Workshop for eight years, beginning in 1962. Her exposure to Gestalt therapy and the human potential movement critically shaped Halprin’s choreographic interests and approach. In working with dance improvisations and scores, she explored movements that brought out emotional content. Halprin’s primary interest was encouraging a dancer to come out of emotional and physical patterns (Halprin 1995: 192). The influence of Perls guided Halprin towards a process-oriented, experiential doing, less concerned with specific results and more focused experiencing in the here and now.

Halprin made dances largely through facilitating group experiences and drawing from the material that emerged from the dancers she worked with. Dancer Lucy Lewis recalls that Halprin would set up improvisational exercises and explorations that the dancers would spontaneously respond to (Lewis 2015). After observing a group exploring a certain movement idea, she would mine what she found interesting in the results. Norma Leistiko recollects that Halprin used the form of a game, in which she would try out different instructions to keep the dancers engaged with a task (Leistiko 2015). After generating movement material, Halprin then formally shaped it, making choices to draw out contrasts and dynamic juxtapositions within the overall structure of the work. Her mode of working was roundabout and exploratory, more than direct and efficient, as Halprin states: “[Our work] was very improvisational, and consequently, we wasted a lot of time. I [remember] we would be up until four in the morning trying to figure out what we’re going to do in this theater that’s different than what we did in that theater” (Bernstein 2008: 235). She understood the role of the choreographer as that of the leader, catalyst, or facilitator, rather than the inventor or author of movement.

Halprin’s work as a choreographer remained inseparable from her life as a dance educator, as her teaching often overlapped within Halprin’s choreographic process.²¹ Her conception of a choreographer fused with that of a teacher. Indicative of this view, Lawrence Halprin writes in the *RSVP Cycles* that the role of the artist is “to guide, inspire, drive toward peak experience, evoke creativity” (Halprin 1969: 185). Halprin understood pedagogy not as presenting a pre-determined body of knowledge or providing training in technical skills but in posing questions

²¹ Janice Ross draws out the influences over the course of Anna Halprin’s life that shaped her pedagogical approach to composition: the progressive and experience-based primary and high school education she received in Winnetka, Illinois designed by educator Carlton Washburne and her undergraduate studies in dance at the University of Wisconsin with Margaret H’Doubler, a student of John Dewey, who approached dance as a mode of self-discovery (Ross 2007: 11 and 32).

for exploration. Her dance classes for children and her summer workshops for adults functioned as key sites for her to explore compositional ideas and approaches (Ross 2007: 65).

The casts of *Parades and Changes* varied widely in age and experience, differences that likely influenced how dancers' participated in the process. As opposed to Halprin's summer workshops that drew a range of adult artists, those performing in *Parades and Changes* included a number of adolescents (her daughters Daria and Rana, Kim Hahn, Goldsmith boys) and college students (the casts of the 1967 shows). Halprin worked in an intimate collaboration with older male performers John Graham and A.A. Leath, but for the younger cast members, she stood more in the position of being a teacher or maternal figure (Ross 2007: 183). While the performers in *Parades and Changes* may have felt gratitude or resentment towards Halprin's leadership, there remained a power dynamic that underlay the 'collective' creativity of the rehearsal process.

The process of making *Parades and Changes* was socially volatile, and several of Halprin's collaborative relationships did not survive the work. Lucy Lewis remembers that Halprin dominated the process, and that her dancers felt stifled and desired more creative freedom (Lewis 2015). Lewis described Halprin as setting the agenda and not being open to collaborating or exploring others' ideas outside of the parameters that she set. The long term working relationship between Halprin, A.A. Leath, and John Graham ended after the European tour of *Parades and Changes* in 1965. A letter to John Graham from Mozart Kaufman, who was then the Vice President of the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop on February 23rd, 1966 formally marks the split between Halprin, Leath, and Graham:²²

²² Kaufman was a neighbor of the Halprins and owner of Kaufman's department stores in Marin County.

Neither you nor A.A. Leath is a director or officer of the corporation or entitled to exercise the powers of the Dancers' Workshop Company as a director or officer [...] Insofar as the artistic direction of the Company is concerned, it is clear from your letter that you have a materially divergent view and propose a change which the Board does not find acceptable. [...] The name should not be used by you or A.A. Leath in connection with productions or activities (Kaufman 1966).

This letter indicates that Graham and Leath sought to have more input in the activity and direction of the SF Dancers' Workshop, which Halprin clearly resisted. That this letter did not come from Halprin herself but from someone in an administrative role peripheral to the intimate creative process that they shared suggests that Halprin buffered her control over the group through organizational mechanisms. *Parades and Changes* did result in several interpersonal casualties along the way, including Halprin's longest standing collaborative relationships. Placing Halprin's self-conception of her process in relation to the experience of her performers complicates the sense of creative freedom that she attributed to her rehearsal process.²³

Questions regarding direction, decision-making, and authorship also emerged within Halprin's relationships to the collaborating artists working on *Parades and Changes*. The cell block structure introduced a system for coordinating the different elements of work, but it left open how to make decisions about sequence and duration. Unpublished process notes identify a loose structure for making compositional choices: "The directorship of the work may shift from a representative of one element to another depending on which element is most dominant, unless the Co. has a correlating director. If the correlating director is on hand, all direction is funneled through this person" (Halprin 1965a). Halprin, Ross, Landor, Hickey, Subotnik, and Rabe clearly

²³ Urban historian Alison Hirsch describes a similar dynamic in Lawrence Halprin's architecture practice: "As the firm grew throughout the 1960s, Halprin became less directly involved in design development and took on the role of more of a 'conceptualizer,' yet he continued to have final say in decisions. This tense arrangement serves as a critical example of Larry Halprin's inability to relinquish control, despite his proclaimed commitment to facilitating the creativity of others" (2014: 58).

had decision-making power over their contributions to the work, but the process notes do not clarify how they would determine the sequence. The ambiguity about compositional decisions became rife with tension in the case of preparing for the premiere in Stockholm, as Janice Ross describes: “Before opening night, Ann and her collaborators had engaged in intense debates as they struggled with how to produce aesthetically an alternative social space... Their discussions often turned into heated shouting matches...” (Ross 2007: 186). The composition of *Parades and Changes* relied on the coordination of many compositional elements, and the absence of a decision-making process generated creative and interpersonal strain.

Halprin’s collaborators came up with many of the key elements within *Parades and Changes*. Subotnik devised the cell block structure. In a letter to Halprin from April 30, 1964, Charles Ross introduced the idea of the scaffolding and utilizing large plastic sheets to create a sculpture that changes in texture over the course of the work (Ross 1964). Norma Leistiko remembers that Jo Landor and Patric Hickey, who she describes as having a strong eye for materials and visual composition, suggested using large pieces of brown wrapping paper, and the dancers themselves came up with the stomping section as a way to break the mood of the previous section they had been rehearsing (Leistiko 2015). In an interview, Jo Landor describes Halprin as grabbing at the ideas of others: “It wasn’t so much that Anna was an innovator. It’s [that] whatever was innovative Anna would grab” (Ross 2007: 119). Halprin’s collaborating artists devised many sections of the work, with the dancers inhabiting ideas that initially emerged as musical or set design ideas.

The development of the dress/undress section has a more layered story. Halprin narrates the task as coming from an experience she had in a Gestalt workshop when she angrily disrobed in front of a conventionally dressed man who represented to her the forces of conformity and

conservatism (Halprin 1995: 111-112). She describes the dress/undress task as an attempt to return to this moment of undressing but find a way to perform the disrobing out of generosity more than anger. Lucy Lewis, however, connects the introduction of nudity to a moment within Halprin's previous piece, *Procession*, which they traveled to perform in December of 1964 at the University of California, Los Angeles (Lewis 2015). The dancers wore white leotards upon which they added and subtracted other costume elements. At the end of their performance at UCLA, Lewis felt inclined to remove the white leotard as well, recounting that Halprin was furious with her for becoming completely nude. While the tension with Halprin caused Lewis to part ways with her after this performance, the nudity then surfaced the following year in the September 1965 version of *Parades and Changes*. The dress/undress section could derive from Lewis' spontaneous performance choice that Halprin later incorporated, the disrobing with the gestalt workshop, or some combination of the two.

Halprin's practice of drawing from material generated by her dancers and collaborators raises critical questions about authorship, decision-making, and the social dynamics that underpinned the piece. While Halprin used her performers and collaborators to generate material, *Parades and Changes* remained a work by Anna Halprin.²⁴ While not determining the content of the piece, Halprin set the agenda and the questions to be investigated. In her own view, she describes the piece as a horizontal collaboration: "We had to re-examine the relationship with all the other artists so that they weren't subservient to a choreographer, but we were cooperative, and we could interact with each other, and that we were equals developing something collaboratively" (Halprin n.d.-a). At stake with *Parades and Changes* is the status of authorship after modern dance choreographers cease to develop signature movement styles. She shifted the

²⁴ For the east coast performances in Hartford and New York City, the programs do credit Jo Landor as co-director.

choreographer-performer dynamic from mimicking the singular style of the choreographer (as in Martha Graham's or Merce Cunningham's work, for example) to using dancers' movements, uncredited. Halprin was by no means unique in sourcing movement material by watching her dancers improvise, as other choreographers of her period moved away from teaching their performers to mimic a stylistic vocabulary. Halprin is, in many ways, consonant with what art historian John Roberts refers to as "the post-Warholian artist as editor/appropriationist/ideas-manager" who mediates forms of collaborative authorship (Roberts 2004: 558).²⁵

As Halprin made use of the ideas, skills, and disciplinary training that her collaborators brought to *Parades and Changes*, the piece expanded the activity of the dancer into other fields. Halprin's long term collaboration with John Graham played a pivotal role, as she drew from his background as an actor and incorporated the theater exercises he brought to the process. Halprin had her dancers change roles and take on the tasks of musicians, lighting designers, scenographers, and so forth. She understood this as contesting the limits placed on dance: "Who said we couldn't speak, sing, build environments?" (Halprin 1995: 6). She used the interchangeability of roles — dancers performing as musicians and vice versa — to make dance from or through other artistic disciplines (Halprin 1995: 96). As opposed to an earlier generation of 'new' or modern dance choreographers whose primary aesthetic strategy was to perform cultural otherness (as in the case of Ruth St. Denis for example), Halprin pursued innovation in dance by shifting discipline, borrowing from experimental theater, new music, architecture, and therapy.

²⁵ Roberts also contextualizes the notion of "the 'laboratory' artist, in which the production of the art object is subject to group research" as a critical aspect of the Bauhaus, which was influential precedent for both the Halprin as Lawrence studied under Walter Gropius at the Harvard School of Design (Roberts 2007: 123).

The interdisciplinary character of her creative process raises the question of medium: in what respect is *Parades and Changes* a work of theater and/or of dance? Halprin's training, history, and reception locate her within dance history, but her process depended on a pivot into theater, music, and scenography. In an interview with Yvonne Rainer in 1965, Halprin stated, "I don't even identify with dance" and that her work could be "dance as much as anything else" (Halprin 1995: 100). This claim contrasts with a statement she made in a 1963 interview in which she frames herself and what she does necessarily as dance: "I am a dancer because my response to life is kinesthetic. The dance is whatever I do, what I make, what I must make, simply because I am a dancer" (Renouf 1963: 348). Halprin inhabits both a dance and an anti-dance position, oscillating between opening up and abandoning dance as a specific frame.

Halprin's work is lodged within ongoing challenges to the dancer as a historical category and its relationship to training and expertise. What constitutes skill in dance certainly changes, as successive generations of artists re-imagine what constitutes the field. Aesthetic gestures within *Parades and Changes* — the use of pedestrian movement, the choice of scored actions as opposed to exacting sequences of technical dance steps, the distance from both narrative and unifying thematic content, the prioritization of sensation over achieved visual effect, and the attempt to capture presence as opposed to simulating another context — all point towards the reformulation of dance-making and dancerly skill. Rather than demonstrating the mastery of specific movement vocabularies, *Parades and Changes* made use of other forms of competence or investigation, outside of technical skill in dance, narrowly defined. The work emerged at a

moment when dance, in the Euro-North American modernist tradition, expanded its aesthetic scope and parameters.²⁶

Rather than asking dancers to bring to the process a set of technical skills specific to dance training, the composition of *Parades and Changes* made use of a deskilling or re-skilling in dance.²⁷ In political economy, the term *deskilling* is shorthand for an argument made by Harry Braverman that capital's drive to produce more efficiently by introducing managerial and technological innovation has historically stripped away skill and expertise within working class jobs (1998). In art history, several scholars have used this term to draw a parallel or homology between Braverman's deskilling thesis and trends in visual art that abandon the use of technical skills in painting and sculpture in favor of appropriating found objects or employing authorial surrogacy.²⁸ John Roberts argues that artists have the ability to re-skill in a way that is fundamentally denied within working class employment (2007: 82-88).²⁹ Halprin's *Parades and*

²⁶ Halprin's challenges made to the association of the category 'dancer' with technical skill can also be intelligible as an expression of her concrete circumstances trying to make performances on her deck in Kentfield which lacked an abundance of trained modern dancers. The closure of her former studio in 1955 on Union Street in San Francisco where she and Welland Lathrop taught modern dance technique classes and moving her dance practice to her deck at home distanced Halprin from established hubs of dance training. The geographic and economic circumstances - what they made possible and what they precluded - could have played a role in shaping Halprin's aesthetic choices and sensibilities.

²⁷ The terms 'deskilling' and 'reskilling' have come into circulation following the publication of Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (1998), which describes the technical and managerial transformation of manufacturing processes. While Braverman himself does not use these terms, John Bellamy Foster's "Introduction to the New Edition" uses "deskilling" and "reskilling" as shorthand for Braverman's overarching thesis (Braverman 1998: ix - xxi).

²⁸ Art historians have taken up *deskilling* as an interpretative framework through which to understand twentieth century avant-garde practices which have embraced readymade, minimalist, and conceptual strategies (Roberts 2007, Burn 1999, Buchloh 2003). Roberts contextualizes these aesthetic strategies in relation to wider economic patterns: "The rise of the post-artisanal labourer, through workshop, automated factory and office, parallels the decline of artisanal skill in artistic production" (Roberts 2010: 86).

²⁹ While the pressures of value production exert a necessary tendency towards deskilling in the realm of commodity production as labor-power undergoes the process of real subsumption, this is not the case with the aesthetic work. In Roberts' analysis, artists, in distinction to waged workers who undergo a generalized process of deskilling, can move away from the artisanal skills of craft production and reskill through performing intellectual and cognitive

Changes instantiates this dialectical relationship with respect to skill, as her work incorporated activities derived from body work, healing practices, martial arts, theater, music, and therapy. The descriptors ‘pedestrian’ and ‘task-based’ are often associated with Halprin’s work and that of the Judson Church choreographers. One could also describe these movement aesthetics as ‘actorly,’ as the movement often mirrors the physicality and lack of abstraction characteristic of acting. The deskilling and reskilling evident in creating *Parades and Changes* suggests a reformulation of what constitutes dancerly skill within avant-garde dance.

Halprin’s push toward the total work of art, or the non-differentiation of discipline or role, suggests a desire for her process to contrast the generalized conditions of Fordist production. Pervasive by the mid-1960s, Fordism, along with the widespread application of Frederick Winslow Taylor’s scientific management, fragmented the labor process and imposed a social and technical division of labor. The choice to have artists take on different roles and not adhere to a strict separation of activities opposed the rigid specialization demanded of workers within economic production. As much as it differed from heteronomous forms of labor, Halprin’s process also incorporated aspects of a Fordist mode, which Harvey describes as “the separation between management, conception, control, and execution (and all that this meant in terms of hierarchal social relations and de-skilling within the labor process)” (1989: 125). While *Parades and Changes* involved a non-division of labor between dancers, actors, musicians, and scenographers, Halprin remained in a managerial role with control over the direction of the work. *Parades and Changes* harnessed concert dance to access that which is denied in capitalist

activities. Rather than facing a horizon of degradation, artistic practices shift between deskilling and reskilling, which Roberts attributes to their autonomy from the law of value (2010: 92).

production, namely the wholeness of activity, while also embodying aspects of a hierarchical production process.

This discussion of Halprin's creative process indicates a tension within *Parades and Changes* between opening up the experience of dancers within a rehearsal process and a single author standing in for a group collaboration. Halprin's process involved two things at once: an unleashing of collective creativity and an appropriation of others' ideas and skills. The piece emerged at a moment when the act of making a modern dance underwent a re-formulation. One can certainly read the de- and re-skilling demonstrated in Halprin's movement aesthetics as experimentation that expanded the contours of avant-garde dance. The repositioning of skills from other fields within *Parades and Changes* also suggests an appropriative logic that pulls ideas from others. These two interpretations gesture towards an implicit tension within deskilling: in the context of concert dance, deskilling represents artistic innovation, while within economic production, it constitutes a violent, dehumanizing process. The process of creating *Parades and Changes* bears traces of both the innovations and exploitations within the wider Fordist context.

Material Conditions of Possibility

A set of material circumstances — access to funding, rehearsal spaces, and performance venues — made *Parades and Changes* possible. In broad strokes, Halprin created the dance through support from her familial structure and her husband's class alliances. The piece itself did not cover its own expenses or serve to garner income for Halprin or her performers. The SFDW's financial records indicate a net loss during 1965-1966 (\$44,600 in income and \$46,910 in expenses) and again in 1966-1967 (\$36,198.58 in income and \$37,824.25 in expenses) (Dancers Workshop Company 1966 and 1967). As her company operated at a loss, Halprin relied

on external support for the work, which connects the dance to other institutional structures and forms of capital accumulation. Halprin's pursuit of candor and authenticity in performance involved economic conditions and material relations that remained opaque to viewers.

As Anna Halprin's choreographic work did not sustain her economically, she relied on other financial resources for her material needs. She taught children's classes through the Marin County Dance Cooperatives, which she founded in 1947, and organized her own workshops for adult students. In addition to her teaching practice, I can identify two other means by which Halprin had access to an income: inherited resources and support from Lawrence Halprin's architecture firm.

Both Anna and Lawrence Halprin came from significantly privileged class backgrounds. Anna's family, the Schumans, lived in the wealthy Chicago suburb of Wilmette where they had a full time nanny, a maid, a chauffeur, and a gardener (Ross 2007: 7). Anna's father Isadore Schuman was a successful Chicago businessman running a cloak and suit manufacturing business, eventually shifting into suburban real estate. Her mother, Ida Schuman, worked as a housewife, and her suppressed dreams of becoming a dancer prompted her to enroll Ann in dance classes as a child. Lawrence's family shared a similar class experience. Based in New York, Halprin's father Samuel had a wholesale women's clothing business and retired at 35 as a millionaire (Ross 2007: 38). He later became president of Landseas, a scientific instruments firm that exported only to Israel. Lawrence's mother, Rose Halprin, was deeply involved in American Zionist groups and served as the president of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. Both families achieved considerable financial success and offered their children many of the advantages that wealth and class status provide.

While enjoying significant support from their families, the Halprins added to their financial resources through Lawrence's architectural commissions. After briefly joining the landscape architecture firm of Thomas Church, Lawrence opened his own office in San Francisco in 1949. Some of his primary projects during the mid-1960s include the Bank of America plaza at its San Francisco headquarters, the refashioning of Ghirardelli Square from a nineteenth-century chocolate factory into a shopping center, the Ida Crown Plaza at the Israel National Museum, the Sea Ranch housing development in Sonoma County, California, and the Northpark Shopping Center in Dallas, which at the time was the largest climate-controlled, indoor building in the world. Halprin also undertook a number of urban re-development projects in the Bay Area, such as the Lake Merritt Channel Park in Oakland and several prominent plazas along Market Street in San Francisco: the Embarcadero plaza, the United Nations plaza, and the Hallidie plaza at Powell Street. In 1961, Halprin along with the architects Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons bought 1620 Montgomery Street, a building in downtown San Francisco to house their architecture offices (San Francisco Examiner 1961), indicating that the Halprins had a financial stake in the redevelopment of San Francisco. In addition to these design projects, Halprin also worked as a consultant for transit infrastructure. He was appointed as an Urban Design Consultant to the Bay Area Rapid Transit system and worked on a report for the US Department of Transportation titled *The Freeway in the City* (Urban Advisors to the Federal Highway Administrator 1968). These design projects and transit consulting were a part of the racialized process urban restructuring known as urban renewal. The success of Lawrence Halprin's firm provided Anna with resources and time to devote to her dance endeavors.

This familial access to financial support helped to secure space for Halprin to work on her dance projects. She held rehearsals at two sites: the dance deck adjacent to their home located on

the five acres she shared with her husband in Kentfield and a building at 321 Divisadero Street where the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop had studio space. The deck could be read as a metaphor for the Halprins' arrangement: Lawrence Halprin built Anna a literal deck, in the same way that he financially supported their household. Lawrence Halprin also gave direct financial support to his wife's endeavors.³⁰ Halprin's work as a choreographer fused with her domestic life. She put her children in her rehearsals and performances, combining time spent providing childcare with artistic research. As Halprin attempted to liberate modern dance from the previous conventions, her white, bourgeois social location facilitated an immense amount of flexibility to pursue her aesthetic vision.

Halprin shared the space at 321 Divisadero St. with the San Francisco Tape Music Center and the KPFA radio station. The SFTMC existed for five years as an unaffiliated studio and venue for experimental composers between 1961 and 1966, coming to an end when Subotnik moved the center to Mills College. After a fire at their first location on Jones Street, the SFTMC found their second home on Divisadero, signing a three year lease on the space in March of 1963 (Bernstein 2008: 49).³¹ To cover the \$175 rent for the space, they sublet one of the auditoriums to Halprin for \$75/month and invited Will Ogden, the music director at KPFA to sublet the other for \$100/month. This arrangement effectively gave the Tape Music Center free rent for their electronic music studio on the third floor (Bernstein 2008: 129). This proximity to the Tape

³⁰ In a letter to Jerome Cohn on 24 December 1968, Halprin writes: "Enclosed is my personal contribution to Dancer's Workshop Co. of California. This sum is intended to help them acquire the services of a business manager and is only to be used for that purpose" (Halprin 1968).

³¹ The building had formerly been a Masonic Temple and then later the California Labor School. At the time of the tenure of the Tape Music Center, a landlord named Mr. Ayres owned the building, who lived around the corner on Page Street but never met any of his tenants (Bernstein 2008: 183).

Music Center served Halprin's work, as she collaborated with many of the composers affiliated with the center, such as Subotnik.

With respect to the economic circumstances of her collaborators, each either taught at a college or had another type of professional appointment.³² While each of her collaborators had employment elsewhere, Halprin did offer Hickey and Ross some financial compensation for working on *Parades and Changes*. Notes from a board meeting of the Dancers' Workshop Company on April 1, 1966 indicate that a donated sum was for "the compensation of Patric Hickey and Charles Ross for their services to the company" (Goldsmith 1966). It is unclear why Halprin chose to pay Hickey and Ross and not any of the other collaborators and performers.

Jo Landor, who designed the costumes and served as co-artistic director with Halprin for the east coast performances and the Swedish television taping, was the wife of Walter Landor, the founder of the promotional emblem design company Landor & Associates. With Jo as his first 'associate,' his firm designed the logos for General Electric, Shell Oil, British Airways, Dole, Phillip Morris, and General Motors' Saturn Corp. The iconic script on Coca Cola bottles and the rooster on Kellogg's Corn Flakes were Landor's creations. During the mid-1960s, Jo taught pottery as well as pre-school art and dance classes in Marin. Anna Halprin and Jo Landor shared a similar social position as the wives of male designers whose commercial success allowed them to take on non-lucrative artistic projects. Halprin held a screening of the Swedish

³² Morton Subotnik taught in the music department at Mills College and ran the San Francisco Tape Music Center on the side. Having completed a fine arts Masters degree at UC Berkeley, Charles Ross taught sculpture at San Francisco State College. Patric Hickey served as the scenic and lighting designer for the San Francisco Playhouse from 1950 until 1967 and for the San Francisco Players Guild, a touring children's theater company. He also had been hired to design outdoor lighting in downtown Kansas City. Folke Rabe, following the completion of his studies at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm in 1964, received a Swedish State Travel Grant that funded trips for music composers to connect with international colleagues. In the spring of 1965, Rabe came to California to work with the composers of the San Francisco Tape Music Center, met Halprin through Terry Riley, and began to collaborate with her.

televised version of *Parades and Changes* on Walter Landor's office boat, The Klamath, in April 1966 for potential sponsors. She had access to both of the husbands' business connections in seeking support for her work. These families were involved not only socially but also financially. According to archival documents, Anna Halprin's father Isadore Schumann sold a property near Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco to Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, who in turn sold it to Walter and Josephine Landor (Emmons 1952; Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons 1956). Halprin and Landor shared both a similar class position as evidenced through these real estate exchanges. Additionally, the economic position of women during the post-war economic boom enabled the artistic work of Halprin and Landor, as salaries for white male employees were high enough to reproduce a family without pushing women into the workforce as occurred on a widespread scale after the economic crisis of the early 1970s. This context frames in part how and why Halprin and Landor could devote their time to *Parades and Changes*.

In considering Halprin's relation to her performers, she did not financially compensate the dancers. Halprin states explicitly in her European tour report back of 1965 that she does not pay the dancers who all occupy other jobs to support themselves, referring to the piece as "a labor of love" (Halprin 1965c).³³ Halprin worked with several casts over the course of performing *Parades and Changes* from 1965 through 1967, each with their own set of social circumstances. Of the group that traveled to Stockholm, five of the cast members were adolescents: Halprin's two children Rana and Daria, her neighbor Carolyn Goldsmith's sons Paul and Larry, and Kim

³³ In a letter to supporters and friends, she asks for financial contributions and explains how none of her dancers receive compensation for dancing in Halprin's work: "We cannot take on the responsibility of touring widely, plus giving an extensive 6 to 8 week season locally when none of our dancers are being paid, when they have to occupy other jobs in order to support themselves... We all must work hard to do a performance and no one gets a salary. Everyone teaches 8 to 10 hours a day, always at different times so that it is difficult to rehearse a work" (Halprin 1965c).

Hahn. Halprin used a cast of undergraduate students from San Francisco State all between the ages of 19 and 25, who she later took on tour to New York in 1967.³⁴ With the exception of one dancer who studied ballet in her youth, the rest of the group had little background in dance. Of the adult performers, A.A. Leath taught dance classes to children and adults. John Graham had a Masters degree in theater from San Francisco State College where he continued as a teacher in the drama department. A cast member from the Wheeler Hall performance at UC Berkeley, Consuelo Sandoval was also a lecturer in drama at San Francisco State College. Norma Leistiko, who performed in the UC Berkeley, San Francisco State, and Fresno versions, recalls that most of Halprin's performers were scraping by financially (Leistiko 2015). During the period of rehearsing and performing *Parades and Changes*, she worked a series of odd jobs: teaching ballet class at the YWCA in downtown San Francisco, performing for the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and art modeling, all of which paid around 50 cents per hour. She remembers that they would frequently hitch hike from San Francisco to Halprin's studio in the exclusive Kentfield neighborhood, or catch a ride with A.A. Leath who had an old broken down car. Halprin's performers consisted of family members, adolescents, college students, teachers in independent and public educational institutions, rather than any proverbial *professional dancers*.

The San Francisco Dancers' Workshop had an implicit ambiguity as to whether it was a company or a school. Dance organizations usually separate coordinating a performance ensemble and running a school into two distinct organizations. The former may offer financial remuneration to the dancers, while the latter involves the students paying fees to take class. The Dancers' Workshop played both functions in its capacity as a *workshop*, casting participants as

³⁴ This group included Karen Ahlberg, Todd Bryant, Laurie Grunberg, Michael Katz, Jani Novak, Kathy Peterson, Nancy Peterson, Jim Theile, Peter Weiss, and Jim Yensen.

both students who pay and performers who might be paid. In a document titled “Score for the Re-design of the Dancers’ Workshop Organization,” Halprin’s hand-written notes ask the questions: “Are we a business or a socialistic community? Are we primarily a training center or a performing group?” (Halprin n.d.-c). This suggests that Halprin herself did not have a clear differentiation of roles within her group. This overlaying of the presentational and pedagogical aspects of dance created an in-distinction between students and performers, positioning her dancers in both economic positions at once.

As the dancers were not receiving financial compensation, they did not interact with Halprin’s process as a job. The pedagogical and therapeutic dimensions of Halprin’s rehearsals allowed her performers to use the rehearsal process for embodied and interpersonal growth.³⁵ Whether guided by aesthetic preference, material circumstances, or some combination of the two, Halprin’s choice to emphasize pedagogy and personal transformation in some respects served to make up for the lack of compensation.³⁶ Halprin’s dancers could understand themselves not as ‘working’ but instead as receiving the equivalent of free dance workshops and

³⁵ In *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello describe how the values of creativity, freedom and authenticity (or what they term the ‘artistic critique of capitalism’) became incorporated into a new logic of management in advanced capitalist countries following the social upheavals of 1968 (2005). Jasper Bernes has carried this analysis forward in his book *The Work of Art in the Age of Deindustrialization*: “These new workplace regimes respond to the critiques of the period by instituting new forms of autonomy and self-management that are really regimes of self-harrying, self-intensification, and interworked competition disguised as attempts to humanize the workplace and allow for freedom and self-expression in work” (2017: 10).

³⁶ We can understand aspects of Halprin’s aesthetic choices, such as the use of performers without technical training in dance, through a number of factors including the influence of the artistic milieu around her as well as her own aesthetic vision. The conditions she worked within may have also been an additional factor as they exerted a set of limits on what was possible. Halprin’s scores required far less rehearsal time than a work of set choreography for instance, as the scores were more forgiving and flexible as structures for determining the content of the piece. By composing through task and everyday, non-technical movement, the choreography did not require dance training, which widened the pool of possible performers. With the exception of A. A. Leath who had studied with Margaret D’Houbler at the University of Wisconsin, most of the adults Halprin worked with did not have dance background, as Halprin stated, “Lynne Palmer and John Graham were, like so many other dancers I used, essentially trained as actors” (Bernstein 2008: 227). Without an extensive budget to pay dancers, the logistics of making the piece may have been a factor in her choice of performers and movement vocabulary.

therapy. Leistiko, who had studied theater as an undergraduate and aspired to be an actress, never considered herself to be a dancer but was intrigued and committed to Halprin's process, as she thought it helped her develop as a performer (Leistiko 2015). As Janice Ross has noted, dancers of the period understood rehearsing and performing as their own recompense: "For them, neither salary nor glory was the payoff; personal satisfaction was the biggest reward as a dancer in San Francisco in the 1960s could hope for, and Halprin's work addressed this readily" (1995: 72). As Halprin's process provided access to sensuous, creative movement, it may have functioned as a reprieve from the alienation experienced within the dancers' day jobs.

Turning to the funding for the work, Halprin received several allotments during the two years that her company created and performed *Parades and Changes*. Filing for non-profit status on July 9, 1964, Halprin received these sources of funding through the financial structure of a non-profit corporation.³⁷ As Bill Ryan has argued, the structure of a non-profit has historically been used to rationalize revenue expenditure on creativity within the arts (1992). While Halprin pursued an approach to dance stripped of narrative and theme, a corporate organizational container established a rationale for the use of financial resources for non-instrumental task. Halprin received a \$6000 Swedish commission: \$3000 from the Swedish national television and the other half from the Stockholm Contemporary Music Festival in 1965.³⁸ For the 1967 performances, a \$7200 grant from Helen Potter Russell, support from the Hotel City Tax

³⁷ Board meeting notes indicate Halprin's reliance on her performers to play indispensable organization roles beyond their capacity as performers: "The group has heretofore been extremely understaffed, meaning that everyone has had to double up to perform other tasks" (Halprin 1966c). In a letter to Thomas Mellon, the Chief Administrative Officer of San Francisco, Halprin indicates the extent of the time donated by her performers and collaborators: "May I point out that our 1966 fiscal year budget, although accurate, is not able to account for the thousands upon thousand of dollars worth of donated services" (Halprin 1966d). Halprin did pay Jerry Mander, then a recent graduate of Columbia who Halprin had hired as her publicist and manager in the early 1960s (Mander 2006).

³⁸ Adjusted for inflation, this is equivalent to \$47,025 in 2017 US dollars.

allocations, and private donations made the Hunter College production possible (Halprin 1966a).³⁹ Understanding how the four identifiable patronage sources - the Swedish national television, Stockholm Contemporary Music Festival, Helen Potter Russell, and the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund - had access to disposable capital can lead us to the forms of capital accumulation that *Parades and Changes* drew from.

Organized by Fylkingen (a society for experimental music and arts founded in Stockholm in 1933), the Stockholm Contemporary Music Festival received royal patronage from Gustaf VI Adolf, the King of Sweden who reigned from 1950 until his death in 1973.⁴⁰ The \$6000 allotment from the festival and national television reflects two aspects of cultural policy in the Swedish context: the founding of major cultural institutions during the 18th century by the Swedish monarchy to serve the taste of the nobility and the adoption beginning in the 1930s of a social welfare approach to arts funding that provided support for large institutions as well as amateur cultural groups (Toepler and Zimmer 1999: 39-40). Sveriges Television is a national

³⁹ Adjusted for inflation, this is equivalent to \$55,364 in 2017 US dollars.

An income statement that covers the period November 1, 1965 through October 31st, 1966 identifies several sources of income: \$7350 of "Individual donations," \$9100.55 from the training program, \$1586.17 from "San Francisco Productions," \$58.59 of "Benefits," \$85 of "Other," and \$460 for "Performances" (Halprin 1966b). While I am able to decipher the sources of several of these sums (the \$7200 from Russell's donation, for example), other categories of income are more opaque. From the remaining records, it is not possible to deduce who contributed privately or how much they donated. In an October 1966 letter to her parents, Halprin mentions that the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund allotted the company a small sum towards publicity (Halprin 1966e). A "Report to the sponsors and friends following the 1965 summer tour of Europe" refers to a Sponsoring committee, chaired by heiress and philanthropist Madeline Haas Russell, which mentions twenty eight people of San Francisco's elite including Mr. Paul Bissinger (the president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce) and his wife Asian arts patron Marjorie W. Bissinger, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Haas (the president of Levi Strauss & Co.), and shipping executive and San Francisco developer William Matson Roth (Halprin 1965c). Some of these name were business contacts of Lawrence Halprin, such as the Bissingers who had hired him as a landscape architect for their home in Kentfield (Bissinger and Glaser 1999). Halprin may have included these names on the sponsoring committee in the hope that they would support her creative work, or because they had donated to her in some capacity. In either case, the list shows at minimum who Halprin made funding appeals to.

⁴⁰ They presented a number of international artists including the German playwright Peter Weiss and the American artists Yvonne Rainer and Robert Morris in addition to Halprin. I have not been able to locate the total budget for the festival or any documents that detail how curatorial or funding decisions were made.

public broadcaster, owned by an independent foundation, with a budget generated by a fee collected from all TV owners in Sweden. SVT maintained a monopoly in domestic broadcasting from its start in 1956 until 1992. The budget for hosting the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop in Sweden came, in broad strokes, from the coffers of cultural funding derived through state concentration of economic power within former monarchies.⁴¹

Halprin's local funding drew from both private and public sources. Helen Potter Russell was a California art patron who held a significant amount of inherited wealth. She was the heiress daughter of William Henry Crocker (1861–1937), President of the Crocker Bank, once the fourteenth largest bank in the United States. Her grandfather Charles Crocker (1822-1888) was a railroad executive and founder of the Central Pacific Railroad, a company responsible for the construction of the westernmost portion of the first transcontinental railroad. Russell occupies a position within the capitalist class which has access to disposable revenue through the capital accumulation derived from massive infrastructure and financing endeavors.

The fourth source comes not from private funding but from public allocation through cultural policy. Through a combination of city and state legislation, San Francisco established the Hotel Tax Fund in 1961 as a means to provide funding for local arts organizations. Economic investment in the arts serves the interests of hotels in the sense that cultural programming and publicity helps enlarge the number of visitors to the city and thus increases business for hospitality and tourism sectors. Over the course of 1945 to 1965, tourism ascended as San Francisco's primary economic motor: "Some large U.S. cities are dependent on tourism: it is

⁴¹ "In Sweden, as in France, the history of patronage in early modern times coincides with the largesse of the reigning monarchs... the sluices only became wide open a decade after World War II, once the social democratic governments had met the most pressing social welfare needs of the nation: the arts were now ready for the benefactions that government officials, intent on recreating the brilliant patronage of the enlightened monarchy of the eighteenth century, could lavish on them" (DiMaggio 1987: 292).

number one in San Francisco...” as geographers Logan and Molotch write of the political economic base of the Bay Area (1987: 209). Expenditure of Hotel Tax funds upon publicity for *Parades and Changes* in part aids the marketing of San Francisco as a center of art and culture, useful to hotels, real estate, and service industries.

With respect to the performances of *Parades and Changes*, Anna Halprin coordinated eight presentations of the work between 1965 and 1967. The Dancers Workshop performed the work within five types of venues: institutions of higher education (San Francisco State College, UC Berkeley, Hunter College), European music festivals that included other performing arts besides music (Stockholm Contemporary Music Festival, Warsaw Contemporary Music Festival), one television station (Swedish national television), one museum (Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut), and one arts festival planned to invigorate a newly built shopping mall (Fresno Five Arts Festival at the Mariposa Mall).⁴² These performing opportunities gave Halprin an audience and exposure, yet it is unlikely that Halprin made much from box office revenue. For example, tickets for the Wheeler Hall performance at UC Berkeley on April 24, 1965 cost \$2.50 for general admission and \$1.50 for students. It is doubtful that these institutions presented *Parades and Changes* as a means to generate revenue or even cover their own expenses.

⁴² Halprin’s connection to these performing opportunities often came through her collaborators. Performer John Graham taught at San Francisco State College, and Swedish music composer Folke Rabe had connected Halprin to Stockholm festival producers. Karl-Birger Blomdahl, the music director of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, was the former composition teacher of Rabe and had asked Rabe for recommendations of artists he had met in the United States that Blomdahl could include in Swedish programming (Rabe 1997). With respect to the east coast performances, arts administrator Norman Singer became director of programs at the Hunter College Concert Bureau in 1962 and extended an invitation to Halprin to perform the work in New York. Samuel Wagstaff served as curator of contemporary art at the Wadsworth Atheneum from 1961 to 1968 and was responsible for bringing Halprin’s piece to Hartford, Connecticut. Although not a presentation of *Parades and Changes*, Halprin incorporated two sections of the piece, including the Dress/Undress and Paper Dance sections, with a new cast of the Dancers’ Workshop Co. at the opening of the Berkeley Art Museum on September 29th, 1970 at the request of UC Berkeley art museum director Peter Selz. Many of the curators and presenters for the piece, such as Blomdahl, Wagstaff, and Selz, were primarily involved in music, theater, or visual arts rather than dance specifically. This suggests that not only was Halprin drawing from other artistic fields within her process but she found presentation contexts for the piece largely through channels outside of the dance field.

These performance contexts are all institutions whose primary function is not presenting dance concerts. Rather, they are able to present dance with the use of extraneous facilities and resources made available indirectly through other political economic processes. Public institutions of higher education - such as San Francisco State College, UC Berkeley, and Hunter College - received extensive public funding in the 1960s to serve several purposes: providing research and development for emerging sectors of the economy, playing a crucial role in training and regulating labor-power, among other functions.⁴³ While capitalist interests utilized public higher education for a host of operations, universities became indirect patrons for dance and cultural production more broadly. Arts programming contributed to the notoriety of universities, which helped spur corporate and alumni investment.⁴⁴ The United States has historically deprioritized public expenditure on cultural institutions, largely leaving private donors to foster patronage for the arts.⁴⁵ Privately funded museums such as the Wadsworth Atheneum in

⁴³ “The major financial story for higher education began during World War II, which added massive and permanent federal government patronage to existing sources in private firms and foundations. By the 1950s the research university had become a major partner of what Dwight D. Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex... Federal research money in 1960 ‘accounted for 75 percent of all university expenditures on research and 15 percent of total university budgets’ (Newfield 2003: 115).

“In the 1950s, it would have been completely uncontroversial to credit the university with playing a critical role in building California into the Golden State: the UC was where nuclear energy and weapons were first invented and developed, where the foundations of California’s aerospace industry were laid, where the Cold War was being won (and where federal research grants were being soaked up and spent). Research done in its labs would make it possible for California wine to compete on the global market and to develop the Central Valley into a regional breadbasket. It was where the establishment sent its children out of choice, and where the rising middle class sent its children to be educated for free” (Bady and Konczal 2012).

⁴⁴ “Art in universities is often what business calls a “loss-leader,” that is, something put on sale at a non-profit-making price in order to attract buyers of other articles, or in this case, other programs. A college or university can advertise its dance or theater or musical groups, or its art classes and art gallery, with handsome photos on the Web site and in the brochure, while at the same time reserving the major fund-raising efforts and major donors for science laboratories, international affairs, or engineering” (Garber 2008: 178).

⁴⁵ “The lack of a tradition of princely patronage, lingering puritanical attitudes, the dominance of a mercantile spirit, a widespread ideology of self-reliance, the generosity and enterprise of wealthy patrons cooperating to found ‘societies’ to supply the cultural activities they desired, all help to explain the distinct American pattern of development” (DiMaggio 1987: 295-296).

Hartford, Connecticut became repositories for accumulated capital, as well as institutions able to be tactically mobilized by the bourgeois interests that buttress them. Both public and private institutions - universities, museums, music festivals, and television stations - all present dance in the context of a broader set of economic processes, cut through by struggles for capital as well as power and prestige.

Before moving on from the discussion of venues, I wish to highlight on the circumstances of Halprin's performance in Fresno, as it links *Parades and Changes* to processes of urban redevelopment during the mid-1960s. Halprin performed in the context of a cultural programming initiative, the Fresno Five Arts Festival, a festival that offered two hundred and fifty performances intended to draw people to the Mariposa Mall which opened in downtown Fresno on September 1st, 1964.⁴⁶ As part of urban redevelopment efforts happening in many US cities, Fresno transformed Fulton Street into a pedestrian mall, designed by Austrian architect Victor Gruen and American landscape architect Garrett Eckbo. Victor Gruen is best known as a pioneer of American shopping mall design, whose ideas have been influential in shaping American suburban development in the post-war period.⁴⁷ The 'Gruen Effect' or the 'Gruen Transfer' — the claim that a controlled purchasing environment will lure customers to unconsciously spend more money — has been the primary conceptual framework driving the rise of the American mall (Hardwick 2004: 223). Arts events became a means to encourage

⁴⁶ Promotors promised audiences that, "a festival ticket will give you two mall tram passes free" (Pollard 1965).

⁴⁷ Gruen's biographer M. Jeffrey Hardwick describes his vision of the Fresno mall: "He wanted to bring people together in his Fresno project. With art, fountains, jungle gyms, puppet theater, kiosks, and bandstands, Gruen and Eckbo tried to bring life back to Main Street" (Hardwick 2004: 212). He conceived of the project as combining the functions of increasing business for retailers with revitalizing urban life and 'community.' With Gruen at its center, the invention of the mall has had an enormous impact on the contours American urban and suburban space.

consumers to spend money at this new retail corridor and embrace the accompanying re-organization of urban/suburban space.

The Fresno case, along with the other venues and funding sources, clarifies the material circumstances that enabled the performance of *Parades and Changes*. As Halprin and her dancers engaged in disrobing business attire to display their authentic selves, my analysis here pursues another mode of unveiling, namely examining the political and economic processes that underpinned Halprin's access to space and funding. While the performers bared much of themselves on stage, what remained out of the audience's view were the concrete circumstances enabling the work: Anna Halprin's class background, Lawrence Halprin's concurrent architectural projects, the financial relation of Halprin to her performers and collaborators, the forms of capital accumulation that the funding drew from, and so forth. We can place Halprin's expressed interest in candor, openness, and authenticity in relation to what was both shown and not shown within *Parades and Changes*. According to Worth and Poynor, the dance was an underlying challenge to corporate values that Halprin describes as "breaking all the rules of corporate America" (2004: 78). Examining the off-stage connections that the dance had to wider capitalist processes along with the corporate structure that Halprin used as an organizational container complicates this characterization of *Parades and Changes*. While Halprin expressed frustration with aesthetic conservatism, conventionality and homogeneity, her work was entangled within economic processes fueled by corporate interests.

Political Economic Moment

Forming the historical backdrop for *Parades and Changes*, the Fordist regime of accumulation was at its peak and consequently, the start of its decline in the mid-1960s. The capitalist mode of production sat at a tipping point between a long wave of expansion and a

subsequent wave of stagnation. In Robert Brenner's periodization, the world economy went through a long boom from 1950-1965, a turn from boom to crisis between 1965-1973, followed by a long downturn from 1973-present (2006: 8-9). The Fordist system of production coupled with Keynesian economic policy used in the post-war period could not successfully mitigate capital's difficulty with maintaining profitability. According to Harvey, capital encountered problems of rigidity in labor markets and long-term investments, a slackening of effective demand, and a decline in corporate profits (1989: 141-142). The contradictions within post-war Fordism — economic growth increased competition which drove down demand — began to unfold into a long downturn spurred by a crisis of overaccumulation.⁴⁸ Halprin's *Parades and Changes* emerged at a moment defined by capital's attempts to stave off crisis and the new left's revolt against a Fordist system.

As Fordism expanded and restructured production during the post-war period, divisions and tensions emerged amongst workers. Following World War II, capital struck a compromise with labor in which gains in productivity mirrored an increase in wages, or as Ernest Mandel describes, the period was marked by the pairing of “a long-term increase in the rate of surplus-value with a simultaneous rise in real wages” (1975: 170-171). While remaining in a position of exploitation, a certain sector of workers saw their wages and quality of life increase in proportion to the gains in production as a whole. This process engendered a rift between workers who shared in capital's productivity, and those who remained excluded from stable and relatively well-paying jobs. The post-war contract between capital and labor began to shift in the years

⁴⁸ “Reduced manufacturing profitability was itself largely the result of the intensification of international competition, which led to the rise of over-capacity and over-production. The attempts made both by firms and states to reduce costs and improve competitiveness combined to produce the opposite effect, tending to exacerbate redundant production and to reduce the growth of aggregate demand. Profitability thus stayed down, and economic stagnation continued” (Brenner 2000: 8)

1965-1967, when wages started to decouple from gains in productivity, and the rate of surplus-value production leveled out.

As manufacturing sectors suffered from a decline in the rate of return, the employment structure began to shift in the US and other industrialized economies. As stipulated by Braverman, capitalism contains a necessary tendency towards reducing the labor process to simple labor, divorcing the worker from specialized knowledge and training (1998: 82). This process accelerated in the 1950s and 1960s with the introduction of numerical control systems in machinery, which significantly decreased the number of workers required for industrial manufacturing (Braverman 1998: 198). Workers previously engaged in manufacturing and agricultural sectors shifted into “branches of *nonproduction*,” or service occupations (Braverman 1998: 255). This set the stage for the rise of the service sector and the subsequent deindustrialization of the US economy. While some segments of the labor force benefitted from these changes, others faced a horizon of subcontracted, deskilled jobs and a flattening of real wages.

These systemic dynamics shaped regional political economic developments in the Bay Area. During World War II, federal spending on war industries flooded San Francisco’s economy, bringing an influx of African American workers from the south eastern part of the United States. With the cessation of war spending, urban planners sought to regionalize the bay area’s economy, “moving shipping to Oakland, heavy industry to the north and East Bay, while high-tech industries grew around university enclaves and military bases” (Carlsson 1998: 76). As jobs in manufacturing and wholesale trade left the city, Hartman observes a shift in the overall employment structure within San Francisco, in which jobs in real estate, insurance, retail, office, and financial sectors replaced the declining industrial sector (2002: 3). Growth in suburban areas

outpaced that in the urban center, and San Francisco saw its population and land values diminish between 1945 and 1960 (Mollenkopf 1983: 142). In the context of post-war deindustrialization, urban planners envisioned San Francisco's role as the corporate headquarters and overseer of the region as an economic hub (Carlsson 1998: 76). This left workers who had previously found employment in shipping or manufacturing with few options.

The re-organization of urban space was a crucial component of how Fordism achieved and attempted to maintain profitability. Through the processes of suburbanization and urban renewal, re-development schemes reshaped the contours of the San Francisco Bay Area during the late 1950s through the 1960s. Critical race scholars have argued that the dynamics of racialized urban re-structuring played an important role in the ongoing history of housing disparities in the US. In the compelling account that George Lipsitz offers of this history, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), created in 1934, systematically channeled housing loans after World War II towards white home buyers moving into the suburbs and away from inner-city neighborhoods composed of communities of color, a phenomenon now known as 'white flight.'⁴⁹ By gatekeeping access to mortgage loans, private and federal lenders contributed to the increased racial segregation of residential housing. Lipsitz connects this expansion of white populations in the suburbs to publicly funded urban redevelopment projects that shaped urban centers in the interests of white suburban commuters, much to the detriment of inner-city communities: "At the same time that FHA loans and federal highway building projects subsidized the growth of segregated suburbs, urban renewal programs in cities throughout the country devastated minority

⁴⁹ "...the most damaging long-term effects may well have come from the impact of the racial discrimination codified by the policies of the FHA. By channeling loans away from older inner-city neighborhoods and toward white home buyers moving into segregated suburbs, the FHA and private lenders after World War II aided and abetted the growth and development of increased segregation in U.S. residential neighborhoods" (Lipsitz 1995: 372-373).

neighborhoods” (Lipsitz 1995: 373). These redevelopment projects functioned to displace poorer residents and consolidate whiteness as a racial category, by decreasing the number of available lower-income housing units and destroying ethnically specific European neighborhoods to create a homogenous identification with whiteness. The reshaping of downtown neighborhoods as shopping, office, and cultural centers prioritized attracting corporate investment over the interests of working class communities of color who resided there. In the name of revitalization, urban renewal projects cleared and repurposed urban space, resulting in the disinvestment in and ravaging of allegedly ‘blighted’ neighborhoods.

As a response to the internal crises of Fordism, urban renewal aimed to reinvigorate inner city land values. It simultaneously managed working class and minority resistance to these processes, as Manuel Castells succinctly formulates it, “American urban renewal was a means of political struggle against black militants” (1977: 322).⁵⁰ Carlsson argues that urban renewal sought to destroy working class neighborhoods, which functioned as hubs for organizing and resistance by the city’s workers (1998: 82). Castells’ analysis resonates with this assessment, especially in his chilling description of the class and race interests backing these projects: “[the elite attached to a city centre] are concerned only to erect protective barriers against the black, moving waters that surround them” (1977: 299). Suburbanization and urban renewal provided the resources to redefine postindustrial downtowns and keep at bay workers no longer integral to production.

⁵⁰ “Urban renewal is, in fact, the mechanism of adjustment intended to make possible in a social manner the passage between two urban forms, the large industrial city and the megalopolis. What must be adjusted? It is a question, basically, of two sets of problems: handling the tensions produced by the accentuation of the process of segregation and the consolidation of vast slums; saving the remnants of ‘urban civilization’...” (Castells 1977: 298).

In the mid-1960s, Lawrence Halprin designed some key spaces involved in the redevelopment of downtown San Francisco in the interests of private capitalists and a possessive investment in whiteness. Halprin was a landscape architect for private development projects such as Ghirardelli Square, which opened in 1964. William Matson Roth (heir to the Matson shipping lines) purchased Ghirardelli Square and decided to refashion the nineteenth-century vacant factory buildings into a plaza and shopping center, participating in the post-industrial redefinition of San Francisco as a tourism hub. Ghirardelli Square is also an example of harnessing of monopoly rent through the creation of a site's uniqueness and particularity, which served the interests of Roth and became a model for future redevelopment projects of its kind (Logan and Molotch 1987: 239).

Halprin's three plazas along Market Street contributed to the renovation of the street in the shape of a Grand Boulevard in the European tradition.⁵¹ An organization called the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (known as SPUR) sponsored the redevelopment of the street beginning in the late-1950s. Corporate leaders created SPUR to function as their public advocacy arm, "devised to openly generate more 'citizen' (meaning business) support for urban renewal in San Francisco," as Hartman describes (2002: 11).⁵² SPUR worked with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) to conduct plans and reports for the 'beautification' of the street. Halprin's Market Street plazas encourage leisurely shopping and strolling along Market Street, furthering the interests of SPUR and the SFRA to develop the

⁵¹ Following the construction of the Bay Bridge in the 1930s, Market Street no longer functioned as a highly traveled thoroughfare to the ferry building as traffic patterns through downtown changed significantly.

⁵² SPUR came out of two committees composed of regional corporate interests: the Bay Area Council (founded in 1944, funded with allotments from Bank of America, American Trust Company, Standard Oil of California, Pacific Gas and Electric, U.S. Steel, and the Bechtel Corporation) and the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee (formed in 1956 by Hewlett-Packard director Charles Blythe and paper magnate J. D. Zellerbach) (Hartman 2002: 6-11).

‘blighted’ sections of the street. Lawrence Halprin also consulted on the development of highway and rapid transit systems designed to accommodate suburban communities coming into their downtown places of employment, an essential aspect of encouraging white populations to live outside of the city.⁵³ Halprin and Associates functioned at times as a design arm of SPUR, transforming urban space in the interests of white, corporate elites.

Struggles over the class and racial composition of San Francisco neighborhoods raged downtown, as well as in the Western Addition where Anna Halprin had her studio space at 321 Divisadero Street.⁵⁴ The studio sat at the edge of the Lower Haight and the Western Addition, an area (also referred to as the Fillmore) that was an epicenter for black San Franciscans who had migrated for employment in the war industries during World War II. The City Planning Commission designated the neighborhood as a blighted slum and wrote reports detailing the need for redevelopment as early as the late 1940s (Miller 2010: 107). Under the leadership of Justin Herman who was appointed to head the SFRA in 1959, the Agency implemented a re-development plan of the Western Addition to expand Geary Boulevard that had a disastrous impact on the communities residing in the area, as geographer Richard Walker describes: “Four thousand people were rousted out in the late 1950s and over 13,000 in the 1960s. Over 1,000 Victorian houses were clear cut, eliminating ten percent of the city’s total stock” (Walker 1998:

4). The SFRA replaced the decimated housing with apartment buildings designed for middle

⁵³ “[the BART system in the San Francisco Bay Area] has been more effective in serving the suburban residents (and particularly those of higher socio-economic status) going to work in the central business district than they have been in over-coming the increasing isolation of inner-city residents or even in serving the mass of workers commuting from the working-class suburbs to the more dispersed industrial job opportunities” (Castells 1977: 411-412).

⁵⁴ “The class and race hatred behind the Downtown master vision should not be underestimated. The ruling elites sought to level the waterfront haunts of longshoremen who had brought the city to its knees in 1934, to drive blacks out of the Fillmore, to sweep aside the aging and discarded workers from their last redoubts south of Market Street, and to be rid of eyesores such as Manilatown” (Walker 1998: 5).

income residents, eliminating the ability for previous inhabitants to return to the neighborhood (Hartman 2002: 25). As Hartman clarifies, Justin Herman's federally funded urban renewal efforts served a racist agenda by enabling city planners to use eminent domain to gain control of centrally located land from African American residents: "It was from Western Addition A-1 and projects like it around the country that redevelopment and urban renewal became known as 'Negro removal'" (2002: 64).

This process was not without opposition. In January 1967, seven Western Addition groups formed the Western Addition Community Organization (WACO) to halt the destruction of the neighborhood by phase A-2 of Justin Herman's plan (Miller 2010: 121). They held meetings, organized pickets, attended public meetings, and put their bodies directly in front of bulldozers, which slowed but did not ultimately interrupt the leveling of the neighborhood.

Halprin's studio was five blocks from Western Addition A-2 redevelopment area. While she conducted her dance workshops and the San Francisco Tape Music Center composers who shared the building developed their avant-garde scoring practices, white urban planners systematically destroyed the most vibrant black neighborhood of San Francisco a mere few blocks away. When asked directly about the Halprins' relation to Justin Herman, Anna Halprin stated: "Oh yes, Larry and Justin Herman knew each other well. He [Larry] spoke highly of him" (Halprin 2016).⁵⁵ As urban historian Alison Hirsch clarifies, "Halprin worked within the official structure of urban renewal and public city planning agencies" (Hirsch 2014: 192). Lawrence Halprin's design work actively participated in these racialized development projects, which

⁵⁵ Halprin was commissioned in the early 1960s to design a plaza at the Embarcadero in downtown San Francisco. Herman died in 1971, and the Embarcadero plaza became the Justin Herman Plaza, which opened the following year.

functioned as a means that afforded Anna Halprin the space and time to focus on dance making.⁵⁶

As Halprin's studio was in spatial proximity to the political struggles of the period, so too were her performance venues. The San Francisco Dancers' Workshop performed *Parades and Changes* at UC Berkeley and San Francisco State College in 1965, as tensions flared within these two institutions. While university administrations developed public-private partnerships between the defense department and rode out increased public subsidy for higher education during the post-war period, student movements ignited on the campuses of UC Berkeley and San Francisco State. At UC Berkeley, the Free Speech Movement erupted in the fall of 1964 and expanded into a significant mobilization against the Vietnam War in 1965.⁵⁷ At San Francisco State College, a

⁵⁶ Simultaneous to the dispossession and disenfranchisement of black residents of the Fillmore neighborhood near to Anna Halprin's studio, the Halprin family also had a connection to struggles over land abroad, specifically the Israeli capture of territory during the Six Day War waged from June 5 to 10th 1967, which resulted in the permanent seizure of the the Gaza Strip (from Egypt) and the West Bank (from Jordan). Lawrence's mother, Rose Halprin was a major player in the Zionist politics, twice holding a position as president of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. During the mid-1960s at the request of Israeli Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan, she oversaw an international fundraising effort to help settle Jewish immigrants entering the country (Goldstein 2009). In addition to his mother's efforts to fundraise for Jewish immigrants to move onto the newly claimed lands, Lawrence Halprin contributed his landscape architecture expertise to the redesign of Jerusalem. Following the annexation of East Jerusalem which had been under Jordanian control, Jerusalem's Mayor Teddy Kollek invited Lawrence Halprin to be on the committee of architects and planners that developed a Master Plan for the city. The Jerusalem Committee drafted plans to redesign urban space, affirming and implementing Israel's control over the disputed territory. While Anna Halprin's position may have differed from that of her husband and her mother in law who contributed financial, organizational, and design acumen to the Zionist settler colonial project, her subsequent visits and teaching engagements in the country draw her into affiliation with Israel and its territorial interests of the region.

⁵⁷ Students protested university regulations that forbid students from engaging in acts of civil disobedience on and off campus as well as handing out political literature or flyers. These measures implicitly targeted students who had an been active in the Civil Rights movement and had set up tables with political literature to at the corner of Bancroft and Telegraph, which were banned at the start of the fall 1964 semester. On December 2nd, 1965, students held a sit-in of the administration building, resulting in 800 arrests (Cavallo 1999: 107). By January, the administration began making concessions to the students' demands and opened up Sproul Plaza (an outdoor public space on campus designed by Lawrence Halprin in 1962) for political discussion and tabling. In May of 1965, Berkeley students held Vietnam Day, a two day anti-war protest that kicked off student mobilization against the war. Over the next several years, large demonstrations against the Vietnam war continued on campus as well as venturing into Oakland when Cal organizers began to target military trains and recruiting stations and collaborate with the Black Panther Party in 1966.

parallel set of struggles culminated in a student strike lead by the Third World Liberation Front.⁵⁸ Similar protests — against the Vietnam War, against the draft, for civil rights, for the establishment of ethnic studies programs, and against capitalism more broadly — occurred on university campuses, as student organizing flourished during this period.

While corporate interests and urban planners united to redevelop a postindustrial San Francisco in the mid-1960s, social movements emerged from groups in the Bay Area who remained excluded from the post-war bounty. Organizing in the African American community against the discriminatory hiring policies of a number of San Francisco businesses took the form of pickets, civil disobedience, and direct action, as black workers fought to gain access to employment opportunities open only to white workers. San Francisco's black residents also resisted forms of police violence and brutality directed towards them.⁵⁹ With respect to indigenous peoples, Alcatraz, an island located in the San Francisco Bay, became the focal point for mobilization and reclamation.⁶⁰ Forms of labor organizing expanded to include workers

⁵⁸ In 1965 and 1966, students from the BSU helped to support organizing in the Western Addition against the plans of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (Mollenkopf 1983: 186-187). Later forming the Third World Liberation Front, a coalition of the Black Students Union, the Latin American Students Organization, the Filipino-American Students Organization, and El Renacimiento (a Mexican American student organization) struggled against the draft and the forms of racial exclusion on campus. In May 1967, students held a sit-in of college president John Summerskill's office in protest of the College handing student records to the Selective Service Office. Summerskill resigned mid-1968 over racial tensions on campus. In the fall of 1968, students initiated a strike that lasted for five months and ended with the creation of the first black studies department at an American university. For archival material related to the strike, see "SF State College Strike Collection." University Archives & Historic Collections. J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco State University. <http://library.sfsu.edu/sf-state-strike-collection>.

⁵⁹ Following the murder of Mathew Johnson, a 16-year old black youth, by a white police officer named Alvin Johnson on September 27th, 1966, riots broke out in the black neighborhood Hunters Point and spread up to the Fillmore, lasting five days. San Francisco Mayor John Shelley deployed police, the highway patrol, and the national guard to suppress riots, which resulted in 146 arrests (Miller 2010: 90-91). In the context of these events, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton founded the Black Panther Party in Oakland in late 1966, which ushered in more militant forms of black organizing in the Bay Area.

⁶⁰ On March 8th, 1964, forty native Americans took a boat to Alcatraz and read a statement reclaiming the territory under the Fort Laramie 1868 Sioux Treaty (Smith and Warrior 1996: 10-11). Following the founding of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in 1968, this action became the seed for the 19-month indigenous occupation of Alcatraz that began five years later on November 20, 1969.

previously outside of unions, such as California's farm workers.⁶¹ The political currents that would become the women's and gay liberation movements in the Bay Area were also planted in the mid-1960s.⁶² These events, along with many other organizing efforts, comprise the currents of social struggle that coursed through the Bay Area.

Within the national context, the two years between 1965 and 1967 are marked by capitalist initiatives to maintain profitability and "strong counter-movements of discontent with the supposed benefits of Fordism" (Harvey 1989: 139). Beginning in March of 1965, the US escalated its military presence in Vietnam, commencing a bombing campaign known as Operation Rolling Thunder and sending the first American combat troops to launch the ground war. The anti-war movement reached its apex two years later with the March on the Pentagon, drawing approximately 70,000 protesters to Washington on October 21, 1967. In the south, Martin Luther King helped organize a civil rights march in March of 1965 from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. One month prior, Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965. The 1965 Watts riots in Los Angeles, followed by the riots of Detroit, Newark, and Cleveland in 1967, demonstrated the rage that people of color experienced towards the structural discrimination, segregation, and violence that they have historically faced. This context set the

⁶¹ In the fall of 1965, the United Farm Workers launched their Grape strike in the central valley town of Delano, California, which lasted five years. They reached out to Oakland longshoremen who agreed not to unload the shipments of grapes that came through the port. The United Farm Workers became a critical influence on labor organizing in California following this successful strike and boycott.

⁶² In San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood, the Compton's Cafeteria riot broke out in August 1966 as transgender people and sex workers who frequented a late-night diner fought back against police harassment. This confrontation with the police is a critical precedent for trans- and sex worker organizing in the US (Chateauvert 2013: 8-9). Additionally, women who had met during the civil rights and anti-war movements would go on to found a network of women's liberation groups in 1968, of which there were approximately 64 active groups in the Bay Area by 1970 (Dyl 2017).

stage for the explosion of social protest and revolutionary possibility that occurred in many countries in 1968.

Forming the historical context for *Parades and Changes*, the mid-1960s was a moment when political and economic antagonisms — between those who benefited from Fordism and those cast outside of its social contract — came to a head. Anna Halprin was able to dedicate herself to her creative process through Lawrence Halprin's financial support of their household. His concurrent projects provided design components for post-white flight redevelopment of downtown spaces in the interests of commuting white professionals and real estate investors; projects intimately tied to the racial tensions of the period and the changing structure of the Bay Area's economy. Halprin's work bears a contradictory affinity with both the critics of Fordism and with the economic forces that spurred urban renewal and the re-development of San Francisco in the interests of capital accumulation. While Halprin espoused 'collective creativity' and releasing the individual from social conventions, she remained distanced and insulated from the vitality of the social movements surging through the streets during these years.

Conclusion

At least three showings of *Parades and Changes* elicited vocal opposition from the audience, responses that gesture toward the implicit tensions within the dance. The day after the filmed version of *Parades and Changes* aired on Swedish television, a newspaper article published in the *New York Post* reported that the dance "drew a storm of telephoned protests" (New York Post 1965). A switchboard operator said: "There were simply hundreds of calls - and we didn't even get to see the program." Following the performance at the Hunter College Playhouse in 1967, police filed misdemeanor charges for indecent exposure: "a summons has

been obtained but not served for Ann Halprin's Dancers' Workshop" (New York Times 1967).⁶³ These responses indicate a conservative reading of the work that viewed the dance's unconventional content as inappropriate and too proximate to sex work.

In an interview with Nancy Stark Smith, Halprin narrated an instance of audience disruption that occurred during SFDW's performance at San Francisco State College in 1965, suggestive of a radical rather than socially conservative response: "Another incident at San Francisco State College touched off a near riot as Black students hostility was stimulated by our encouragement of free expression" (Halprin n.d.-b).⁶⁴ It is unclear from Halprin's statement what exactly occurred in the auditorium, whether students yelled, protested, or disrupted the performance. One could read Halprin's description as encouraging students to speak up and participate in the work. Or, it could also be interpreted as students protesting the politics of her dance and its white aesthetics, which I think is a more likely characterization given the political climate on the campus. San Francisco State College would soon erupt into massive protests and strikes, as students, especially those involved in the Black Student Union, responded to the racism of the institution and demanded the creation of the first Black Studies department. Juxtaposing conservative audience members who feared the naked body on stage alongside the frustration of an increasingly radicalized student movement perhaps captures the racial and economic tensions at play across campuses and cities during the mid-1960s.

In reflecting on how to hold *Parades and Changes* in relation to its period - the slow unbuttoning of white shirts and the invigorating sound of endless rolls of paper torn by a mass of

⁶³ Policemen appeared backstage at the theater, but Halprin ultimately did not face legal repercussions for the nudity as the company left town soon after their performance.

⁶⁴ This sentence was edited out of the published version of the interview in Halprin 1995.

nude bodies as well as the racist urban renewal schemes and rising militancy of students and workers - we can see the dance as part of a dialectical totality. In his assessment of the divergent threads of the decade, Fredric Jameson characterizes the 1960s as possessing a doubleness, “in global economy and in consciousness and culture, a properly *dialectical* process, in which ‘liberation’ and domination are inextricably combined” (1984: 207). *Parades and Changes* represents both the poles of liberation (the freeing of modern dance from its previous aesthetic conventions) and of domination (the consolidation of property and power within a white economic elite). The years 1965-1967 contained moments of revolt as well as the entrenchment of capital and forms of social dispossession.

Parades and Changes contains an opposing set of impulses. On one hand, one could interpret the work as an aesthetic response to the economic conditions it evolved within, reacting to the bureaucratic rationality of the 1950s and its Fordist organization of production. Halprin’s drive towards authentic, individual expression within dance invokes a critique of the conventionality and homogenization of the post-war period. David Harvey connects the counter-cultural expressions of the 1960s with the socio-economic conditions they emerged from:

Antagonistic to the oppressive qualities of scientifically grounded technical-bureaucratic rationality as purveyed through monolithic corporate, state, and other forms of institutionalized power (including that of bureaucratized political parties and trade unions), the counter-cultures explored the realms of individualized self-realization through a distinctive ‘new left’ politics, through the embrace of anti-authoritarian gestures, iconoclastic habits (in music, dress, language, and life-style), and the critique of everyday life (1989: 38).

In this light, *Parades and Changes* embodies an aesthetic critique of Fordism, a grasping for individual authenticity in a world of standardized, mass consumption. Halprin’s work reads as emblematic of what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello refer to as the ‘artistic critique of capitalism,’ which espouses the values of creativity and freedom against the homogenous and

conformist conditions of Fordist-Taylorist workplaces (2005). While it is possible to read the dance as a response to economic and cultural rigidities and an embrace of counter-cultural currents, one can also see in the work a political obliviousness on the part of white artists and the unspoken control over a collaborative process by a single director.⁶⁵ Halprin's dance registers the divisions within the post-war period between the utopian desire for a different type of social world and the economic interests consolidating wealth and power.

The historiography of Anna Halprin's work primarily frames her as an under-recognized postmodern innovator. The curators to the 2017 exhibit, "Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955–1972," at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts state that Halprin, along with Forti and Rainer "opened the way to a radicalized, communitarian vision for performance that continues to influence choreographers and visual artists around the world to the present day" (Lincoln Center 2017).⁶⁶ In addition to the characterization as a postmodern maverick, Halprin can be cast as a proto-feminist figure who managed to have children and a vibrant artistic life, redefining roles for women in the post-war period. Lawrence Halprin's work also has been memorialized as a contribution to an ecological approach to architectural design. While these characterizations may be germane, what other interpretations are possible? What else may be dwelling between or behind the sensuous moments of encounter, wonder, and play within *Parades and Changes*?

⁶⁵ In recollecting her experiences with Anna Halprin, Judy Job (a dancer native to San Francisco whose family founded Peters Wright Creative Dance, a school in continuous operation from 1912 until 2012) casts Halprin as embodying a logic of conquest: "I think I told you about the funny thing about Anna Halprin. She was another one that came from somewhere else, to kind of bring the dance to San Francisco. [laughing] And here we were, you know. True, Anna Halprin had much to offer, but there was that kind of conquering hero sort of thing, instead of coming and investigating first" (Dunning 1986: 306).

⁶⁶ Curator Wendy Perron states: "Here in New York, Halprin is often not fully recognized for her role in the development of postmodern dance. The "Radical Bodies" exhibit seeks to rebalance that perception" (Perron 2017).

The upheavals of the mid-1960s form the material conditions of possibility for the work and the ground upon which to reflect on *Parades and Changes*. How can we interpret the politics of Halprin's work, an artist who explored unconventional compositional strategies while five blocks away, bulldozers destroy massive amounts of housing, displacing poor and largely black residents from the neighborhood? Does this constitute a shared project with the struggle for black liberation? While Ross characterizes Halprin as a cultural manifestation of New Left politics, *Parades and Changes* embodies an opposing set of forces, namely a Bay Area elite interested in maintaining social and political control over urban space. The equation of Halprin's work with the social movements of the period can collapse the cultural initiatives of wealthy, white, avant-garde artists with the struggles for the liberation of marginalized peoples.

Placing the dance in relation to the struggles occurring in the neighborhood surrounding 321 Divisadero Street, and within the region as a whole, throws into relief the social and political stakes of the dance. One cannot separate who someone is as an artist from who they are as a person in the world, including their social location, alignments, affiliations, and networks of support. Through both inherited resources and her husband's firm, Anna Halprin had the time to create dances as well as free studio space on the deck built by Lawrence on their acreage in wealthy Marin County. Tracing the economic circumstances by which Anna Halprin developed and performed *Parades and Changes* connects the dance to a set of economic policies and urban initiatives in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Halprin's social and economic ties to urban renewal and their distance from liberation movements constitute a crucial aspect of understanding the politics of *Parades and Changes*.

Parades and Changes was necessarily a part of broader historical dynamics that resonate both intimately and faintly in the dance itself. The hinge between the dance's aesthetics and its

historical context lies perhaps in Halprin's aspiration towards the 'primitive' in dance. The dance explores a white imaginary of ritual practice, while concurrently indigenous people and other people of color struggled for recognition of their claims to Bay Area soil. While Halprin and her collaborators tapped into an experience of personal exploration and transformation through dance, the ritualistic aesthetic in *Parades and Changes* is not the same as supporting the struggles of communities facing dispossession.

I foreground a materialist analysis of Halprin's piece, in order to show the tensions or contradictions between aesthetic aspirations of the work and the behind the scenes, off-stage social relations that it relied upon. While the dancers disrobed on stage, other aspects of the work remained cloaked, namely the social dynamics within the creative process, the financial relation of Halprin to the performers, the sources of funding, and so forth. Halprin's piece internalized a critique of Fordism as well as capital's attempts at stabilize circuits of accumulation. Literary scholar Sarah Brouillette astutely describes how the counter-cultural critiques of Fordism and the turn towards self-improvement and therapy ending up paving the way for neoliberal labor markets:

During the New Labour years in particular, policymakers, social scientists, and management theorists routinely enjoined people to look within, beyond materialistic concerns, as a way to uncover an authentic expressive self to participate in market activity... Embrace of the primacy of the therapeutic self, motivated by nonmaterial or post material goals and committed to constant indeterminacy and self-evolution, converges with the neoliberal image of the flexible creative worker whose career is her primary site of self-discovery (2014: 13-14).

In light of Brouillette's observations, Halprin's investment in individual creativity and authenticity soon became the emergent logic behind the Post-Fordist recasting of work as a path to self-discovery. The artistic innovations of *Parades and Changes* coincided with another process of ingenuity, namely capital's incorporation of aesthetic critiques into a new regime of

accumulation, suggesting a more complicated rendering of Halprin's legacy. A materialist analysis helps to see within the dance the forms of contradiction and struggle that characterize the social world at large. The critical reception of *Parades and Changes* will remain impoverished if it overlooks the conditions of production as well as the concurrent social movements.

Wallflower Order's *Journeys*: Feminist Collectivity, Social Reproduction, and the Post-1973 Global Economic Downturn

Introduction

*We're the dancers, we're the writers
We're the ones who book the tour
Make the costumes, print the pictures, organize the new brochure
Check out feelings, clear up concepts
Criticism / self-criticism until we're dead
And when we are done, we've got no time, we've got no bread*

These lines form the chorus to the *Collectives Song* as performed by the Wallflower Order Dance Collective.¹ The lyrics self-reflexively capture the breadth of tasks taken on by the collective's members - from creative to administrative work, from interpersonal to political deliberation - and the ensuing exhaustion of the project. The song indicates how the Wallflowers' collective work knit these dancers together as well as depleted their time and resources.

Emerging out of feminist movements of the 1970s, a group of four dancers in Eugene, Oregon founded the Wallflower Order Dance Collective in 1975 —Alex Dunnette, Krissy Keefer, Laurel Near, and Linda (Schur) Rose—who soon invited Lyn Neeley to join as a fifth member.² The Wallflower Order was one of the first explicitly feminist dance groups in the

¹ See Appendix F for the lyrics to the full song.

² These dancers initially met in the context of the University of Oregon dance department. Wallflower emerged out of the Eugene Dance Collective, a group composed of about thirty to forty dancers (a combination of those with and without formal training in dance) who would put on community dance concerts in Eugene. In 1975, when most members took a break from the Eugene Dance Collective over the summer, Dunnette, Keefer, Near, and Rose

United States. Their name refers to the group's desire "to no longer wait to be asked to dance, but to assume (their) power" (Hickey 1984).³ Together, they created dance-theater works driven by their sensibilities as feminists, touring nationally and internationally. They collaborated with Grupo Raíz, a group of exiled Chilean musicians who were part of the *Nuevo Cancion* (New Song) movement within Latin America. Politics were central to the Wallflower Order: the feminism they charted together encompassed anti-war organizing, ecological movements, socialism, anti-imperialism, and queer liberation. Over the course of their existence, members of the original collective left, and new dancers took their places including Nina Fichter, Pamela Gray, Suchi Branfman, and Marel Malaret. After nine years and moves to Boston and Berkeley, the collective went through an interpersonal and political split in 1984 resulting in the emergence of two separate companies, Dance Brigade and Crowsfeet. The Wallflower Order is a unique case within American modern/postmodern dance history as they were an openly lesbian group, and their project was an experiment in collective decision-making in all aspects — logistics, aesthetics, and politics. This chapter takes up the final performance that the collective created, *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* (1982-1983), an evening composed of dance, song, and theatrical vignettes.

I use the category of social reproduction as an entry point into the analysis of the Wallflower Order as well as the post-1973 economic period. For Marx, social reproduction does not apply only to capitalism. Every mode of production develops a way of reproducing itself (Marx 1977: 711-724). Within a capitalist context, social reproduction refers to the bundle of

decided to spend two months to create a new performance, which became the first program put on by the Wallflower Order.

³ The "Wallflower Order" also appears within Ishmael Reed's novel *Mumbo Jumbo* (1996), which Keefer had read and brought to the group's attention.

activities that allow the laborer to continue to work for a capitalist.⁴ During the 1970s and 1980s, feminists introduced new accounts of how to theorize the relation of capital to social reproduction. Resisting the attribution of care work to the supposedly essential qualities of femininity, feminists asserted that reproductive labor forms the basis for waged work.⁵ Building upon the feminist inquiries of the period, this study of the Wallflower Order's *Journeys* attends to the unwaged sphere of social reproduction.⁶

I examine Wallflower's work in the early 1980s through three contradictions within the category of social reproduction. First, reproductive labor encompasses the activities that allow the worker to return to the workplace as well as the efforts that sustain forms of political organizing. Silvia Federici describes the contradiction between these two dimensions of social reproduction:

'[R]eproduction' has two sides, in contradiction with each other. On the one hand

⁴ "It [social reproduction] is the production and reproduction of the capitalist's most indispensable means of production: the worker. The individual consumption of the worker, whether it occurs inside or outside the workshop, inside or outside the labour process, remains an aspect of the production and reproduction of capital" (Marx 1977: 718).

⁵ See discussion of Marxist feminism in the introduction to the dissertation.

⁶ In recent scholarship, art historians have investigated the implications of Marxist-feminism for artistic production (Dimitrakaki 2013, Horne 2016, Lloyd and Dimitrakaki 2015, Stakemeier and Vishmidt 2016, Wilson 2014). Art theorist and historian Marina Vishmidt has posed the question of how artistic activity may run parallel to the unwaged labor of social reproduction. She notes an analogy between the domestic-, care-, and affective labor performed in the home and the activity of artists, as both forms of work take place outside the wage relation (Vishmidt 2015: 30). They exist as a supplement to waged work, whether by actively reproducing the worker so that she may continue to sell herself as labor-power or by generating a cultural sphere that helps to fill in the space evacuated by state services in the era of austerity. Both women and artists can assume the role of "the 'under labourer' who is the condition of possibility of the system's ability to reproduce itself as a whole, the 'work' that must disappear in order for 'the work' to appear, whether that work is the waged worker or the art installation" (Vishmidt 2015: 31). Despite the identification with value production, Vishmidt notes that both domestic work and artistic production do not undergo the real subsumption of the labor process, introducing the term 'imaginary subsumption' to characterize artistic activity (2012a: 134). For Vishmidt, the identification of artists with waged workers becomes a strategic move that can prompt a critical interrogation of "the absurdity of a class of workers in capitalism who are paid in recognition rather than money; freedom from work paradoxically resulting in absolute dependency on the charity of patrons, institutions, and yes, successful speculators" (2012b: 17). In her analysis, artistic labor and care work parallel each other, in their supplementary relation to waged work and their ability to politicize what capital takes for granted as labors of love.

it reproduces us as people, and on the other it reproduces us as exploitable workers. The question we posed is how to turn reproductive work into a reproduction of our struggle” (Federici and Sitrin 2016).

Social reproduction has a doubleness in the sense that it sustains capitalist production as well as the social movements that aim to move beyond it. A second contradiction dwells within social reproduction: capital undermines the reproduction of the workers it needs to employ to continue the circuits of capital accumulation. Capital both depends on workers yet makes their day-to-day existence increasingly difficult to reproduce, indicative of capital’s self-undermining tendencies. The third contradiction emerges from the re-organization of social reproduction in the 1970s that globalized and commercialized domestic labor. The work that previously done by housewives in advanced capitalist countries largely became foisted on women of color and immigrant women, who performed both waged and unwaged reproductive labor.⁷ These dynamics produced material divides amongst women, which became a central problem for feminist organizing. Reproductive work was both what united and divided feminist movements. Encompassing structural, historical, and political dimensions, these contradictions within social reproduction frame the Wallflower Order’s period and choreography.

I examine *Journeys* and the herstory of the Wallflower Order in relation to the contradictions within social reproduction in the post-1973 period. I argue that the contradictions of reproduction surfaced within the collective’s artistic work, creative process, material

⁷ In her critique of the Wages for Housework movement, Angela Davis writes: “The experiences of yet another group of women reveal the problematic nature of the ‘wages for housework’ strategy. Cleaning women, domestic workers, maids — these are the women who know better than anyone else what it means to receive wages for housework. [...] In the United States, women of color — and especially Black women — have been receiving wages for housework for untold decades” (1983: 237). “Because of the added intrusion of racism, vast number of Black women have had to do their own housekeeping and other women’s home chores as well. And frequently, the demands of the job in a white woman’s home have forced the domestic worker to neglect her own home and even her own children. As paid housekeepers, they have been called upon to be surrogate wives and mothers in millions of white homes” (238).

circumstances, and political economic period. The Wallflower Order's work and process embody the simultaneously nourishing and antagonistic dimensions of social reproduction. Indicative of the shifting conditions of and tensions within social reproduction, *Journeys* contains alienation and care, sustenance and exploitation. Expanding what counts as the 'work' of the collective to include their off-stage labor and activism provides a new perspective on the Wallflower Order's politics.

As the work of the Wallflower Order has received little dance historical attention, the chapter fills in a gap with respect to the history of the collective.⁸ I respond to the critical reception of the Wallflower Order, providing a contrasting interpretation of the collective and their work *Journeys: Undoing the Distances*. Dance critics of the 1980s generally appreciated the Wallflower dancers' technical skills yet dismissed their politics as simplistic, naïve, and propagandistic.⁹ In *Dance Magazine*, Janice Ross frames the dancers' competence within *Journeys* as rescuing the work from its political content: "Its heavy-handed political and social didacticism is so tempered by technical proficiency and choreographic wit that the barrage of spoken and mimed homilies about injustice, oppression, and revolution seem innocent and fresh" (1983: 157). Deborah Jowitt's review in the *Village Voice* echoes this affirmation of the dancers' abilities despite their avowed politics: "I embrace their message - railing often at their oversimplification of certain issues for the purposes of propaganda - but what I really relish is

⁸ Brief references to the Wallflower Order appear in Adair 1992 (158-9), Lengel 2005 (21) and Prickett 2007 (274).

⁹ In the *Soho Weekly News*, Marcia Siegel framed Wallflower's work as "a deliberately naïve effort to appeal to naïve audiences" and "a confused and possibly irrelevant political pitch" (1991: 131). In the *New York Times*, Anna Kisselgoff describes Wallflower as tending "to sport a confusion of the issues" (1982). Cathy Curtis of the *Berkeley Gazette* considered *Journeys* shallow: "Frankly I find their politics irritatingly simplistic at times" (Curtis 1983). Reviewing the Wallflower Order/Grupo Raíz's performance *Vamos A Andar* for *Women & Performance*, Susan Shepard frames their work as too obvious: "Wallflower wants 'to create a strong emotional impact,' and to that end, they occasionally fall prey to overkill. [...] Wallflower rarely allows the audience the freedom to come to their own conclusion without spelling it out" (1984: 153-154).

their performing” (1982). In response to the characterization of the Wallflower Order as devoid of complex political analysis, my interpretation widens the frame from their performance work to the politics that the collective charted in the whole of their lives. In his brief article on the history of the Wallflower Order and Dance Brigade, Keith Hennessy describes the importance of feminist communities to the collective and their prioritization of participation in social movements (2011b). I build upon this connection to their off-stage work and investigate how the Wallflower Order negotiated some of the central problems and contradictions for leftist organizing in the 1980s. To date, only one scholarly account has taken up the work of the Wallflower Order: Sima Belmar devoted a chapter of her dissertation to a discussion of the collective’s use of American Sign Language in their dance *Defiance* (2015). Belmar considers the relation between text and movement within the dance and the politics of hearing dancers using the work of a Deaf poet as source material. Informed by Belmar’s analysis dissecting Wallflower’s politics of representation, I expand beyond their concert performances to the politics that the collective pursued off-stage.

In using the Wallflower Order as a case study, the chapter examines how histories of concert dance and feminist movements intersect. This research helps to uncover the leftist undercurrents within American modern/postmodern dance history. Additionally, the story of the Wallflower Order provides the context for the emergence of the Dance Brigade, founded by Keefer and Fichter in 1984, which remains one of San Francisco’s longest running feminist dance companies. In 1998, Dance Brigade opened Dance Mission Theater at 24th and Mission Streets, a fixture within the San Francisco dance community that provides performance and rehearsal space alongside dance classes for youth and adults. With their origins in the Wallflower Order, both Dance Brigade and Dance Mission Theater have had a significant influence on dance

in San Francisco. The case of the Wallflower Order is relevant not only to Bay Area dance history but also to the historiography of feminist collectives of the 1970s and 1980s and how feminists negotiated collectivity, leadership, difference, material conditions, and connections to other social movements (Enke 2007, Hayes 2010, Hogan 2016).¹⁰ This literature deepens and complicates what constituted ‘second wave’ feminism: its strengths, breadth, and shortcomings.

The chapter proceeds through a four-part analysis of *Journeys: Undoing the Distances*, encompassing the collective’s choreography, creative process, material circumstances, and the wider political economic conditions of the 1980s. Moving beyond Wallflower’s performances on stage, I consider the means that enabled the Wallflower members to reproduce their material existence and how their lives as dancers intersected with and diverged from waged work. Through archival research and interviews with former members, I have pieced together the content of their performances as well as the social circumstances of their creation. The Wallflower Order provides a case in which to chart how the contradictions within social reproduction shape both concert dance and feminist movements.

Journeys: Undoing the Distances

The Wallflower Order premiered their program *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* on September 23-26, 1982 at the Dance Theater Workshop in New York City. Presented as part of a series called “Manifesto! New Investigations in Political Performance,” the evening consisted of a sequence of short pieces: *Trail of Tears*, *Immigration*, *New World*, *Mothers*, *Tower*, *American Myth*, *Resolution for Africa*, *Presente*, *Hay Canto*, and *Mariposa*. The following year, the Wallflower Order performed the evening in the Bay Area, both in San Francisco (on February 9, 1983 at the Victoria Theater) and Berkeley (on February 12, 1983 at the Florence Schwimley

¹⁰ For accounts of race and racism within feminist movements in the 1970s, see Breines 2006 and Roth 2003.

Theatre) (Wallflower Order 1982). In the fall of 1983, the collective went on a tour from September to early November traveling from the west to the east coasts, performing in twenty-three cities along the way. Lyn Neeley, Pamela Gray, Suchi Branfman, Nina Fichter, and Krissy Keefer formed the cast for the premiere of *Journeys*, although Neeley left the collective in the fall of 1982. Marel Malaret took the place of Neeley during the 1983 performances. *Journeys* embodies the tensions between aesthetics / politics, radicalism / conventionality, and solidarity / appropriation within Wallflower's choreography and collective project.

The Wallflower Order did not make evening-length work, but instead composed varied programs of shorter pieces. *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* was less a fixed work than an evolving collection of dances, songs, and vignettes that could be changed or swapped out. For instance, the Bay Area performances of *Journeys* included two other works, *A Dream Deferred* and *Defiance*. The collective circulated their repertory through different sequences and structures. When the Wallflower Order and Grupo Raíz performed in October 1983 in New York City, they used the title of a show they had toured in 1981 — *Vamos A Andar* (Let's Get Going) — but included five dances that premiered in the *Journeys* program (Shepard 1984). As *Journeys* was not consistent and frequently changed with the circumstances of each showing, I engage the work more as a process than a fixed sequence.

The Wallflower Order began each of their performances by introducing themselves, dedicating the evening to a particular social movement, and inviting the audience to talk with them afterwards. At the premiere of *Journeys* in New York, Branfman dedicated the work “to the people of El Salvador and the Palestinians, standing up against domination and oppression” (Kisselgoff 1982). The performance in Berkeley began with an address by a leader from the African People's Socialist Party, a pan-African liberation party based in Oakland which had

launched a reparations campaign for African-Americans the previous year (Curtis 1983). Keefer recalls that the dancers would warm up on stage before the performance as the audience entered, giving the evening an informal air (Near 2009). In her review of the San Francisco performance of *Journeys*, Ross describes “the deliberately unglamorous look of the dancers, their costumes, and the sets,” an aesthetic that jettisoned a strict separation of viewers from the dancers (Ross 1983). Through these gestures, the Wallflower Order hoped to integrate the audience and performers into a shared experience and engagement with the political concerns of their period.

The works presented within *Journeys* took up subject matter that stemmed from the collective’s political commitments as well as the process of wrestling with their own social positions. A solo performed by Pamela Gray, *Trail of Tears* was a danced lament for the Cherokee Indians who died during the forced removal of the 1830s. Performed to speeches of Native American chiefs, Gray used modern dance vocabulary along with sign language to commemorate those lost.¹¹ *Immigration* depicted the experiences of working class Jewish women who immigrated to the United States at the turn of the century. In using repeated movement phrases, the dancers portrayed women doing domestic and factory labor, concluding with a strike that halts the unabated movement between the two. During the piece, Branfman reads letters addressed to a mother in Russia, describing the working conditions facing non-unionized immigrant women: “I saw myself knee-deep in sweat for the rest of my life so that

¹¹ “*Journeys* opens with Pamela Gray’s solo lament for Native Americans, *Trail of Tears*. Gray moves with economy and concision, translating into dance the accompanying tape of speeches by three Native American chiefs. She slides slowly across the stage in a mournful and deep second position pile, her fingers tracing the paths of imaginary tears that run down her cheeks like ‘snow before a summer sun’” (Ross 1983). “Pamela Gray opens the show with her solo, “Trail of Tears,” a powerful sign language, spoken word and movement piece about the disastrous forced march of the Cherokee. The use of literal gestures in the signing — fingers tracing rain from the sky and tears down a face — is one of Wallflower’s strengths. The determination and resistance Gray exhibits as she walks on her knees” (Shepard 1984: 153).

(the boss' friends) could play croquet” (Shepard 1984: 154).¹² *New World* provided a satire of bourgeois, white women from the South that the Wallflower dancers presented at a garden party costumed in white lace, pointe shoes, and parasols. The ladies chat condescendingly about Marcus Garvey's 'Back-to-Africa' movement, and the piece escalates into a cat fight wherein the genteel women hiss and scratch each other. In *Mothers*, the Wallflower dancers perform as their own mothers, representing the enduring connections between mothers and daughters as well as how they miss or fail each other. *Tower* mined the Wallflowers' own experiences coming of age as women in the United States, presenting portraits of women who struggle to find their own voices amongst the patriarchal models surrounding them. *American Myth* is a song satirizing cold war narratives about the United States as country of freedom, peace, and equality in relation to murderous and repressive state socialist countries. *Resolution for Africa* begins with a monologue by Keefer sitting in a chair describing her experiences as a white American dancer coming to terms with learning African-diasporic movement yet being disconnected from the history and experiences of black Americans. After questioning her position “as a white who tries to dance *like* blacks but not *about* blacks,” Keefer and the Wallflowers then perform an African-influenced dance that Jowitt describes as “a dance that isn't authentically African, but shows a wonderful understanding of the solidity of weight, the bounce in the knees, the slap of the feet that African dances have” (1982). The piece concludes with the cast joining in a song about Stephen Biko, a South-African socialist who was involved in the anti-apartheid struggle and died

¹² “The mimed sequences of five women in peasant skirts and babushkas who embark on a sea voyage works beautifully. We see the boat's sickening lurch in the rocking of the women's knees as they huddle near their baggage. The joyful folk dance uses the wide leaps, open turns, high leg extensions and the solid sense of strength and weight that is a hallmark of the Wallflower style. The dance culminates in a masterful canon of the work cycle: The women tread their sewing machines, collapse in exhaustion, and begin again in an escalating crescendo. The canon winds down into a glorious work stoppage and “The Union Maid” song replays” (Shepard 1984: 154).

in prison in 1977 (Shepard 1984: 155). *Presente*, a solo danced by Fichter, presents a portrait of a Nicaraguan woman involved in the Sandinista revolution who mourned her children by participating in armed struggle. The following work, *Hay Canto*, begins with the dancers singing a song by Víctor Jara (the Chilean song-writer and activist who was tortured and murdered following Pinochet's coup in 1973) after which the dancers perform together a robust rhythmic dance: "With fists raised, knees bent, feet kicking accompanied by strong Latin Rhythms, the dancers appear to move with the power and control of martial artists" (Hickey 1984).¹³ The program concludes with *Mariposa*, a Loie Fuller-esque dance involving large silk scarves inspired by the Aztec legend that fallen women warriors return to the world as butterflies.

Journeys emerged from the political dilemmas that the Wallflower Order wrestled with over the course of its existence, particularly around the intersection of feminism with anti-racist and anti-imperialist politics. Each of the pieces within *Journeys* represents an attempt by the Wallflowers to see the complexity of their subject positions. The dances examined the gendered experiences of the Wallflower members (as in *Mothers* and *Tower*) as well as social groups who faced oppression at the hands of white Americans. Pamela Gray was a white woman from Kentucky, a state traversed by the Cherokee during their forced march in 1835. *Trail of Tears* functioned as a means to reflect on white settler colonialism, commemorating the lives of displaced peoples so that whites could possess land and resources. Branfman was a Jewish red diaper baby from Los Angeles, whose parents and grandparents were members of the Communist Party (2016). *Immigration* reversed cold war, anti-communist narratives about the

¹³ "A five-women procession advances across the stage, singing in Spanish. One slowly beats a drum. As they move to the front of the stage, two women holding sticks pantomime the act of shoveling dirt. A third steps between them, gently placing an invisible infant into the grave. The 'baby' she once cradled on her shoulder then becomes a rifle as these women burst into a stomping, clapping dance" (Hickey 1984).

United States being a beacon of safety and prosperity for Jewish immigrants. Born in 1953, Keefer had spent her childhood in Florida and South Carolina, during which she witnessed the extremity of structural racism: “As a white person growing up in the American south at a time when African Americans were still segregated, I witnessed apartheid right here in the United States” (Keefer 2004: 177). *New World* and *Resolution for Africa* show Keefer grappling with these conditions and what it means to support the liberation movements of black Americans. Fichter’s solo *Presente* stemmed from her experiences on a tour to Nicaragua, as she reconciled her former pacifism with her solidarity with the Sandinistas’ struggle. The individual pieces in *Journeys* were documents of the collective’s consciousness-raising process with respect to gender, race, and class.

Writing from a contemporary perspective informed by decades of cultural studies analysis examining the politics of representation, one could easily dismiss the Wallflower Order’s work as white women appropriating the movement and narratives of women of color. White women dancing about the experiences of indigenous people or of Nicaraguan women involved in a revolution might appear today as an inappropriate and misguided attempt at solidarity. In the context of the early 1980s, the Wallflowers made these pieces as a means to grapple with questions of race and colonialism. In the collective’s first five years, they made work primarily about their experiences as white women. As they became increasingly politicized, the Wallflower dancers felt frustrated with a white feminism that centralized white women and sidelined questions of race, class, and imperialism. The dances within *Journeys* took on a wide range of subjects as a means to move beyond the experiences of North American white women and address social groups who faced other forms of oppression. While fraught and insufficient, the Wallflowers took a stab at acknowledging their complicity as white Americans and

foregrounding anti-imperialist struggles. Performance became a vehicle for the Wallflower Order to think through the questions that emerged within feminist organizing.

In *Journeys*, the collective synthesized dance, martial arts, gymnastics, theater, comedy, poetry, and music into what they considered to be a new genre of interdisciplinary performance. Keefer describes their aesthetic as “ballet mixed with lesbian poetry mixed with theater and martial arts” (Hennessy 2011a). The Wallflower Order made content-driven dance theater that privileged clarity and accessibility over abstraction and ambiguity, as Fichter said in a 1983 interview: “The content is what is important. That’s primary” (Shepard 1984: 156). They sought to make work that would be approachable for an audience who may not know the codes and conventions of modern dance and for women who might identify with a shared experience, which Keefer describes: “We wanted the audience to get in a groove with us; to go on a journey and at one point at least say, yeah, that represents me, my intention, my life” (Near 2009). For the Wallflower Order, formalist abstraction in dance corresponded with an avoidance of taking a political position within the choreography. Aligned more with folk art traditions than with avant-garde aesthetics, Wallflower sought to participate in leftist social movements as dancers. Approaching dance as a medium of communication with an audience, they deliberated about what exactly they sought to convey, which led to changes in the content and selection of their pieces. Improvisation as a performance practice did not interest members of Wallflower, who viewed it as wasting an audience’s time (Braumuller 1981: 17). The Wallflower dancers considered entertainment as an effective way to reach audiences politically, which Branfman affirms: “entertainment is what gets in there and does something to people’s spirit” (Vigier 1994: 223). Drawn to poetry and theater, the Wallflower members thought using spoken text within dance would help drive home their political intent. Embracing queer spectacle and camp

aesthetics, their choreography often possessed directness, as they explicitly and without subtlety communicated their politics.

In distinction to minimalist, postmodern dance that stripped down movement and used stillness, the women of Wallflower unabashedly liked to move. They were pro-dance steps and pro-unison, as Jowitt describes, "...they often favor fairly conventional turns, big leaps, or thrusts of one leg high in the air" (1982). Critic Cathy Curtis echoes this description of Wallflower's movement vocabulary: "The dancing itself is full of big leaps, whiplash turns and stamped rhythms, alternating solo work with closely blended unison effects" (1983). The collective utilized movement approachable for lay audiences, including folk dance forms and the turns, extensions, and jumps of modern and ballet techniques. Marcia Siegel emphasized the Wallflower dancers' physicality, unapologetic dexterity, and trust in their bodies:

What I found so moving about the group was its commitment. Not the political commitment but the commitment to movement. These women move with knowledge and mastery of their own bodies. They use the full potential of their weight and momentum... They trust each other, but more, they trust their own activity and responsiveness. This is truly rare for American women (1991: 133).

While dismissive of Wallflower's politics, Siegel valued how the dancers inhabited their bodies and demonstrated a command of themselves as women. Siegel separated the collective's aesthetics from their politics, which the Wallflower dancers viewed as braided together. Keefer later stated of their work: "our unison movement was our political statement" (Hennessy 2011a). The bold, declarative movement within the Wallflower Order's choreography brought the dancers together into a shared practice and purpose.

In addition to legacies of trailblazing female dancers such as Isadora Duncan and Anna Pavlova, the Wallflower Order channeled artistic and political influences specific to their period. A number of performance groups active in the 1970s influenced the aesthetics of Wallflower's

work including Tumbleweed (a women's contact improvisation group from the Bay Area), the Living Theater (an Artaudian anarchist theater group), and San Francisco Mime Troupe (political street theater).¹⁴ Keefer refers to many artists affiliated with the women's music and literary scenes as key influences such as Holly Near (Laurel Near's sister), Sweet Honey in the Rock, and the poet Judy Grahn (Hennessy 2011a). Choreography from the Chinese Cultural Revolution inspired the Wallflower Order, particularly the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women* (1964) that depicted Maoist peasant women with rifles rising up against a tyrant landlord. Neeley cites the political climate of the period as a distinct influence on the direction of their work: "It was a bubbling, very political time: the taste of tear gas at demonstrations and things like that. Krissy and I particularly took that seriously. Our dances began to reflect that" (Neeley and Rose 2017). The political urgency the Wallflower dancers felt widened the scope and direction of their work.

The members of Wallflower drew from their dance training in ballet and modern as well as a myriad of movement practices that they brought to the group.¹⁵ While in the collective, most members took ballet classes. The Wallflower members saw ballet as a dance practice that

¹⁴ Collective creation was common within New Left political theater of the 1960s and 1970s (Syssoyeva and Proudfit 2016: 3-4). Other examples of women's performance collectives of the period include Lilith a Woman's Company, At the Foot of the Mountain, Theatre Experimental des Femmes, Nightwood Theatre, Women's Theatre Group, and Monstrous Regiment (16).

¹⁵ Krissy Keefer started studying ballet at age 6, which she studied seriously until age 14. She spent a summer working with the Living Theater in the early 1970s, which continued to be a key aesthetic and political influence for her. Having met Keefer at age 12 in ballet class, Nina Fichter went on to study at the School of American Ballet and attended Bennington and Bard Colleges. Lyn Neeley had no dance experience before college, although she had been involved in track, swimming, and gymnastics as a high school student. Prior to joining the collective, Neeley studied with Kelly Holt, who previously taught at Eric Hawkins' studio. After seeing Wallflower Order perform while on tour in New England, Pamela Gray approached the group about joining. She had been dancing for about three and a half years prior to joining the collective. Branfman had trained with Bella Lewitsky, a family friend connected to Branfman's parents through leftist circles in Los Angeles. A dancer with Lester Horton, Lewitsky went on to start a company and develop a her own modern technique. Branfman eventually moved to New York, dancing with Gus Soloman and Harry Streep. Growing up in San Juan, Puerto Rico and studying dance in her youth, Marel Malaret moved to New York in 1976 to study dance at Barnard College and New York University, with an emphasis on modern, jazz and the Dunham technique (Vigier 1994: 219).

embodied strength and discipline, rather than as a representation of aristocratic power or feminine delicacy that the genre can also connote.¹⁶ They began training in Kung Fu at a martial arts studio run collectively by women in Eugene called Amazon Kung Fu. They understood martial arts training as a means to ready themselves for the defense of feminist spaces and movements, as Keefer states: “in Eugene there’s a real conscientious effort of women getting strong in preparation for an eventual war that will come down in our won communities” (Braumuller 1981: 17). The Wallflower Order also worked with theater director Timothy Near (Laurel Near’s oldest sister) who served as a theatrical advisor and introduced sign language to the collective after working with the Theater of the Deaf in New York. Branfman remembers that the collective’s interest in ASL stemmed from its use within the women’s song movement, which incorporated sign language as a way of making music events accessible to a larger range of women (2016). The Wallflower Order brought together these multifarious practices into the group’s choreography, unbridled by being far from a large modern dance community with set traditions, rules, or camps. Wallflower worked outside the trees of artistic influence characteristic of the company model, and the horizontal, collective structure of the group encouraged the dancers to pull from eclectic sources, rather than adhere to a strict aesthetic lineage.

Marion Barling, a filmmaker and founder of Women in Focus (Vancouver’s first feminist media center, distributor, and gallery which she ran from 1974-1984), created a documentary

¹⁶ Keefer narrates Wallflower’s approach to the genre: “Ballet has taken the image of woman and made her a very delicate, fairy-like creature. Ballerinas are really the strongest of any dancers. Their legs, their feet, their muscles are so strong” (Crafts n.d.).

about the Wallflower Order in 1982.¹⁷ The video includes interviews and excerpts of choreography that the Wallflower toured in 1980, which provide a window into the collective's work in the early 1980s. The documentary demonstrates that the Wallflowers were not simply dancers; their work drew extensively from theater and music, as they took on characters, recited monologues, played instruments, and sang in harmony. Their pieces channeled the communal ethos of new left political theater troupes. Their movement synthesized ballet and modern techniques, performing lateral curves through the torso and floor work sequences alongside *grand battements* and *pas de chat*. Compositionally, they built dances through combining unison and counterpoint, repeating sequences together and in individual parts. Their movement often filled in the negative space around each other's bodies or established lateral connections between the dancers, as in holding hands or creating horizontal symmetries. Several pieces in the documentary do veer towards abstraction: the relation between the spoken text and the danced sequences departs from the literal or pantomimic. When interviewed in the documentary, Fichter describes their intention to stage gravity as well as hope: "We don't want to put across this negative image of what a bad situation the world is because people are constantly feeling that. Within the system, people feel powerless. We connect with one another and try to show collective force, strength, and an unyielding-ness" (Barling 1982). Wallflower used the dance sequences to embody a sense of strength and resilience as women.

The Wallflower Order's work bears the traces of their efforts to reconcile their dual

¹⁷ The documentary was included in the exhibition "Second Link: Viewpoints on Video in the Eighties," which toured to the following institutions: Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, AB; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands; A Space, Toronto, ON; Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA; Institute of Contemporary Art, London, UK; Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan; Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan; Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art, Hokkaido, Japan; Education and Cultural City of Sapporo, Sapporo, Japan; Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe, Japan; The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Japan (Falk 1983).

political and artistic aims. The collective struggled to legitimate themselves as dancers. Within the modern/postmodern tradition, dancers usually emerge as choreographers after performing in an established company or working with a well-known choreographer. This was not the case with the Wallflower dancers; the collective was an exercise in self-authorization as dancers and choreographers. They strove for legitimacy in two senses, both political and artistic. They wanted to be accepted by those involved in leftist social movements; to appear relevant and radical to the feminist communities around them. Simultaneously, Wallflower desired to have legitimacy within the dance field, to be recognized as an established company of skillful dancers. The collective's artistic work juggled these two sets of criteria and two audiences: those who would evaluate the work politically in relation to leftist movements, and those immersed within dance communities. Their *mélange* of artistic tendencies emerged from the internal tension about what was important to Wallflower: participating in social movements or achieving notoriety and success as artists, ends that both synced with and diverged from each other. For example, dance critics found themselves at odds with the collective's foregrounding of a clear political agenda: Ross describes "the stark legibility of the performance" in which "there is nothing obscure or subtle" (Ross 1983). Their clarity was a means to distance themselves from apolitical dance companies and to be legible to those involved in leftist organizing. Wallflower channeled the movement vocabulary of established dance techniques to demonstrate their training and competency as dancers, balancing their divergent aims.

The Wallflower Order's negotiation of the relation between dance and politics resulted in a blend of radicalism and conventionality within their pieces. Their artistic works indicate an identification with the conventions of modern and ballet training (what contemporary dancers might now refer to as *dance-y dance*) along with a revolutionary politics that embraced feminist,

socialist, and anti-imperialist movements. With a range of body types, unshaven legs, and openly lesbian subject matter, they performed the leaps, turns, and *battements* of modern and ballet vocabulary. The Maoist ballets of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, to which the Wallflower dancers looked for inspiration, embody this fusion of political radicalism with a traditional ballet vocabulary. This is not to say that Wallflower's work was derivative: the collective created an unprecedented amalgam of movement practices and performance forms. They incorporated diverse vocabularies, including kung fu and sign language, generating idiosyncratic aesthetic that pushed the boundaries of modern dance as a genre. Yet distancing themselves from obscurantist avant-garde aesthetics, the Wallflower Order prioritized movement that was clear and inclusive of working class audiences. Not afraid of spectacle or movement performed in unison directly toward the audience, they embraced the use of character, costume, setting, and narrative characteristic of ballet. While their choreography was formally innovative in certain respects, they drew from the conventions of ballet and modern genres to make legible their critique of the patriarchal, imperialist, capitalist world around them. This negotiation of aesthetics and politics resulted in an approach to dance that channeled both tradition and radicalism.

In their dual affiliation with ballet and modern, the Wallflower integrated semiotic struggles over which dance genre stood in for capitalism and/or socialism. In the argument outlined by dance historian Victoria Geduld (2008), ballet and modern had shifting political connotations over the course of the twentieth century. Isadora Duncan's bare-foot and free-flowing modernism was associated with her embrace of the Russian revolution and opposition to ballet as a practice symbolizing European imperialism.¹⁸ In the 1930s, Russian communist

¹⁸ "The post-revolutionary Russian state, however, saw Duncan as a cultural messenger whose form could be adopted for political purposes. The tenets of her expressive, free style that condemned old European ballet fitted the canon of the new Soviet state. Lenin himself applauded Duncan when she performed in Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre

officials rejected American modern dance in favor of ballet, which they re-imagined as a representation of party discipline and strength.¹⁹ During the cold war, the United States espoused modernism in dance as a symbol for the freedom of the individual in a capitalist context.²⁰ The Wallflower Order juggled the political affiliations of modern and ballet as well as which genre stood in for the liberation or oppression of women.

Within *Journeys*, the Wallflower Order synthesized western concert dance forms alongside the stories, songs, and movements from women in the global south, a gesture that inhabited both solidarity and appropriation. They sought to find their strength as women yet also avoid the confines of white feminism and the centralization of whiteness within feminist movements. The aesthetics of their work registered the internationalism of their politics, as they incorporated practices that came from different communities. Wallflower's effort to be in alliance with

to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the October Revolution. After she returned to the USA, the Soviets sent her a telegram: 'The Russian government can alone understand you. Come to us; we will make you a school.' When Duncan arrived in Russia, the Moscow and Petrograd newspapers were not permitted to publish anything but enthusiastic notices of her performances. In Russia, Duncan's dance became a symbol of emancipation from the monarchy, which was associated with ballet" (Geduld 2008: 44).

¹⁹ "Yet in 1934, the Soviets began to shut down modernism. With Sokolow they 'sniffed' at modernist 'dilettantism,' and retorted, 'Unheard of dancing! No acrobatic pirouettes!' The Soviets tried to use modern dance, but the form demanded individual expression as the core of its language, conflicting with the collectivist tenets of the state. The Stalinists installed socialist realism, and in 1936 attacked modernists with a Pravda diatribe against Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Indeed, in dance the reversal was even more significant than the expulsion of modernism. The state promoted a return to the nationalist traditions of 19th-century ballet. Stalin loved 'toe dancing,' and the return to classical forms mirrored Stalin's political strategy. He purposely used dance to create the illusion of stability during his mass upheaval... The Soviet appropriation of American dance technology ended as the state banished modernism and returned to imperial ballet forms" (Geduld 2008: 55).

²⁰ "Imitating the Soviets, during the 1950s the American government institutionalized its decision to use dance as nationalist propaganda with state-funded programs. After 1954, the State Department deployed specially chosen modern dance companies to hotly contested international areas. The NDG hosted choreographers Mary Anthony and Donald McKayle, who presented anti-Un-American dances. Limon and Graham were hired by the State Department. It also dispatched Graham to Japan, Indochina, and the Middle East with *Appalachian Spring*, which was pure Americana theatre, set on the American "frontier," in the Frederick Jackson Turner sense of the word, and replete with husbandman and his wife, a pioneer woman, a preacher, and followers (Aaron Copland had received the Pulitzer Prize in Music for the score). Isamu Noguchi's abstracted set included a log cabin home, a pulpit, and a fence. The work embodied the American dream in the readable language of modern theatrical dance" (Geduld 2008: 64). "The irony was that this suppression of expressive freedom was executed in the name of freedom" (65).

women across forms of social difference was both a widening of their political framework as well as an appropriation of the narratives of disabled women and women of color. These gestures risked glossing over important differences amongst women and aestheticizing forms of struggle, as in the case of performing Chinese martial arts as dance vocabulary. The Wallflower dancers wrestled with how to understand themselves as the oppressor and the oppressed and how they could meaningfully show solidarity. The collective negotiated the relationship between the internal and external; between examining the politics of their own lives and a concern for people and social movements outside of themselves.

Journeys stages the tension between political and artistic criteria; between radicalism and conventionality; between ballet and modern; and between solidarity and appropriation. The Wallflower Order had a contradictory relationship to dance: it was both what buoyed them as well as what took them away from political struggle. Wallflower faced the ongoing question as to what their collective efforts helped to reproduce: social movements, concert dance, and/or themselves as workers.

Wallflower Order's Creative Process

The Wallflower Order's process of making dances integrated material from both inside and outside the dance studio. They experimented with ways of developing material, choreographing pieces both individually and collectively. Dances would often begin with a poem or a piece of music as source material, which would orient the structure and organization of the choreography. Neeley describes much of the movement material as stemming from time spent together as friends: "After we would go to a concert, we would go to the bar. We'd start dashing across the floor with each other and skipping. A lot of our movements came from dancing together" (Neeley and Rose 2017). Rose also remembers that they arrived at movement through play and

improvising together: “So much creativity came out of [our collective process]. We played together. We improvised together. People had varying levels of comfort with that but we did it. We liked going to the river to dance outside sometimes” (Neeley and Rose 2017). Working with the Near sisters - Holly and Timothy Near - helped the Wallflower dancers strengthen the musical and theatrical components of their performances. They often re-worked their dances into new versions, selecting a particular section and expanding it into a separate piece. This was the case with the dance *Defiance*, which was originally a part of *Windowpane*, one of the first pieces Wallflower choreographed. The Wallflower dancers would develop and make changes to their pieces based on the reaction of the audience. In describing their process with *New World*, Fichter recounts: “The first time, we didn’t have the cat nastiness come out. We changed the piece a lot after the first performance. We didn’t trust our audience’s reaction. We had to make it more negative, clearer” (Shepard 1984: 154). The process of making *Journeys* was particularly challenging for Wallflower as the collective negotiated their divergent political views.

Wallflower’s creative process allowed its members to develop their strength and voice as feminists and dancers. The horizontal decision-making structure gave them an artistic and political framework to work together as women: “Emphasizing their non-hierarchical nature - no one person directs the others as subordinates - Wallflower Order sees this procedure as a way for women today to overcome their traditional isolation and to take decision-making into their own hands” (Wallflower Order 1980: 243). They encouraged each other to take responsibility for themselves and the collective, learning how to negotiate their intersecting and diverging ideas. Paul Parish describes this process as far from a tranquil undertaking: “The Wallflower creative process was heated, angry, intense; they were all strong-minded” (Parish 2004). These determined, passionate women had cultivated amongst each other the ability to vehemently

speaking their minds. The collective negotiated interpersonally complex tensions, as Keefer stated in a group interview: "...we try to stay principled in the kind of stuff that we dish out at each other. Sometimes, it's bullshit; there is a lot of bullshit that goes down between us" (Braumuller 1981: 16). Questions of creativity, ego, charisma, competition, recognition, and credit often cut through their internal process, as members negotiated how to make artistic decisions together. Pressurized by the stress of frequent touring engagements, the collective struggled over the exercise of power and authority in the group.

Their interpersonal relationships layered Wallflower's decision-making process. Linda Rose recounts that while they started the collective as straight women, the Wallflower dancers embraced lesbian politics and identifications (Neeley and Rose 2017). Rose soon ended her marriage to her husband. Branfman remembers that a complex set of relationships wove through the group, women sleeping with men and women sleeping with women (Branfman 2016). In a 1981 interview, Neeley discussed how the collective's interpersonal negotiations overlaid their artistic process:

Our process of making decisions has suffered because we are a family, more of a family than a business. We don't have procedures that we follow. We tend to fall back on our friendships. We went to radical therapy, and they gave us a decision-making process; we developed on with them for ourselves [*sic*]. We find that if we have feelings meetings and business meetings, we can get along better than if we let things slide (Braumuller 1981: 16).

Spending large amounts of time together as collaborators and friends brought out care as well as strife between collective members.

The motivating ideas for Wallflower's pieces often came from the dancers' relationships, life experiences, and growing political consciousness. The project of making dances functioned for the collective as a means to examine gendered experiences in the politics of their personal lives. When interviewed within Barling's documentary, Laurel Near self-reflexively describes

her nerves about speaking in front of the camera:

Especially women, I think, repress and try to be nice and smile it all off instead of saying what they really think and being able to speak. Right before these interviews, a lot of us got terrified of having to speak about what we felt and what our lives are like. That feels like a real woman thing, for a whole lot of women, not to be able to express themselves through words (Barling 1982).

The process of creating and presenting work allowed the Wallflower dancers to reflect on their gendered experiences. Wallflower members could metabolize political questions through dance and develop their positions in dialogue with each other.

The Wallflower Order maintained an ongoing dialogue with their feminist audiences, which grounded the aesthetics, politics, and ethos of the group. The audience debated the choreography as well as broader questions about women's self-representation and the direction of feminist movements. Keefer recalls that this active dialogue with the audience nurtured the work but also brought up tensions and unease: *Were the lesbian separatists mad at us? Were we insulting from a class point of view? Could this action or image or gesture be read as sexist, racist, classist?* (Hennessy 2011a). The Wallflower Order clarified their values through the emergent conversations with their audiences. Not simply a collective dedicated to dance making, the group also learned together how to live in sync with their politics. Wallflower prioritized being accountable to their audiences and the larger project of building feminist movements.

The Wallflower Order emerged in the context of Eugene's lesbian feminist community. Demographically, Eugene was predominantly a white town in the 1970s, as was its feminist community. Informed by and interrogating this context, the Wallflower Order continually asked itself how to be in solidarity with women from marginalized social positions.

Increasingly focused on international solidarity, the Wallflower Order developed connections to the anti-imperialist struggles in other parts of the world. Beginning in 1981, they

collaborated with Grupo Raíz, a musical group of Chilean exiles who faced political repression when Pinochet staged a military coup in 1973. For several members of Grupo Raíz, their imprisonment following the coup gave them a context to read political texts with other dissidents. Eventually escaping Chile and landing in Berkeley, California, Quique Cruz, Rafael Manriquez, Héctor Salgado, Fernando Feña Torres, Lichi Fuentes and Ellen Moore formed Grupo Raíz. Developing a show titled *Vamos a Andar!* (“Let's Get Going!” 1981), Wallflower Order and Grupo Raíz toured together internationally between 1981 and 1983. While on tour in Nicaragua, the Wallflower dancers met with Sandinista women who participated in the armed uprising, a set of encounters that helped re-orient the politics of the group. Neeley describes visiting the homes of women involved in the revolution:

There were pictures of their sons, the martyrs, up on the wall. You saw how revolution was not going to be a peaceful transition. The whole pacifist thing was shed at that point. Plus some other lessons too... The whole country felt red and black. That was a big step in our development (Neeley and Rose 2017).

Wallflower’s connections to liberation movements in Nicaragua, Chile, and other countries re-directed the dancers’ politics.

The Wallflower Order’s process expanded beyond dance into reading political texts together, which shaped their performance work. Neeley describes the integration of political study into their process: “Krissy and I were the most overtly political. We did study together. We studied Mao. We studied Marx” (Neeley and Rose 2017). Prior to joining the Wallflower Order, Branfman was a member of the Ladies Home Sewing Circle and Terrorist Society, a feminist reading and study group. She recounts that while on the road with Wallflower and Grupo Raíz, they maintained ongoing study groups, with the Wallflower dancers reading about Latin American political history and the Chilean musicians reading feminist literature.

Over the course of Wallflower’s existence, the collective dealt with friction around the

direction of their work, which led to changes in the composition of the group. Rifts emerged between members who explicitly espoused radical politics and those who were more drawn to personal and spiritual exploration. Tensions between abstraction / clarity and personal / political themes arose in their collaborative process. Rose recounts a shift in the direction of their work that was one of the factors leading to her departure from the group:

For me, the change that happened in Wallflower Order that led me to leave had to do with the change of the politics coming from the inside and our lives to more of an external idea of what we were going to be doing pieces about. I didn't relate or connect as much... I loved the early stuff because it was personal and the creative process came from the inside, our inside together, our collective process (Neeley and Rose 2017).

Rose, along with others, left the collective, and by 1983, Keefer was the only original Wallflower remaining in the group. While performing in the premiere of *Journeys*, Neeley left the collective in 1982, desiring to commit herself more fully to her political work with the Workers World Party. By their own account, Rose and Neeley represent the differing poles within the group: those who conceived of dance as a path of spiritual and psychological exploration, and those for whom concert dance was not enough of a political engagement.²¹

In addition to debating the thematic direction of their work, Wallflower faced a central question regarding race and racism. As a collective founded by a group of white women, Wallflower wrestled with the question of what approach they should take to anti-racist politics: should they racially integrate the group, or should they stay a white group who does solidarity work for organizations run by people of color? Some members of Wallflower felt it would be unfair to bring a woman of color into the group, as Keefer states: "But what is one black woman, or one third world woman in a group of five white women? Where's the power? On whose terms

²¹ As Linda Rose stated, "We are probably the furthest apart ideologically, yet we are the closest of friends. It doesn't seem to get in the way" (Neeley and Linda Rose 2017).

is it?” (Braummuller 1981: 17). Others in the group supported integrating members of different racial backgrounds. Living in New York prior to joining Wallflower, Branfman had organized with the War Resisters League, Madre, nuclear disarmament groups, and Latin American solidarity efforts. After her experiences working with diverse groups, dancing in an all white collective did not interest Branfman, as she stated: “Why would you want to dance with a bunch of white people?” (2016). Following the departure of Neeley, Marel Malaret, a Puerto Rican dancer involved in national liberation struggles in Puerto Rico and the romantic partner of Salgado from Grupo Raíz, joined the collective in 1983 (Vigier 1994: 219).

The tensions that the Wallflower Order encountered within their creative process — how to negotiate social difference within a collective, how a group addresses power and authority within decision-making processes, who claims ownership over a shared endeavor — also played out in other feminist projects of the period. Many of the feminist groups blossoming in the early 1970s had withered by the mid-1980s, either through internal conflict or direct state repression. In 1976, Jo Freedman, an organizer within women’s liberation movements, penned an article for *Ms. Magazine* titled “Trashing: The Dark Side of Sisterhood” describing heart-breaking forms of infighting that pervaded feminist groups in the 1970s (Freeman 1976). Feminists struggled to reproduce their movements without turning against each other and imploding the groups they had created.

The Wallflower Order’s creative process encompassed not simply making dances, but negotiating many aspects of their work and lives together, which both nourished and drained the collective’s members. They contended with the relation between artistic collaboration and interpersonal dynamics, between the internal and external, between the personal and political. The Wallflower Order’s group dynamic was far from polite, agreeable, or repressed, which

unleashed both joy and antagonism in the collective. Linda Rose recounts how the group brought out a raucous playfulness in each other: “We were actually thrown out of bars in Buffalo because we were taking up too much space. We weren’t doing the correct kind of dance in the bar. We were totally all over the place. We were wild. We were women that were trying to find our power, basically” (Neeley and Rose 2017). The collective functioned in part as a consciousness-raising group, in which members supported each other’s development as dancers and feminists. These experiences were coupled with bitter fighting that eventually ended the project. The Wallflower Order’s process contained both support and antagonism as they struggled to reproduce performance projects and feminist movements.

Wallflower’s Material Conditions

The Wallflower Order reproduced their collective existence through day jobs, creating their dances outside of waged work. Thanks to a low cost of living and no dependents, they had time to spend on creative endeavors. In the early 1980s, members of the collective reported working part time jobs in Eugene: Gray and Fichter as waitresses, Near at an acupuncturist’s office (Braumuller 1981: 17). Rose affirmed that they worked part-time odd jobs that they would leave to go on tour: “We were waitressing, bus-driving, making bread. We did whatever we could do” (Neeley and Rose 2017). Many of the Wallflower Order dancers grew up in working class families, and Keefer recounts that they relied on forms of social assistance: “We were all on food stamps and got free rehearsal space at the university” (Keefer 2004: 178). Often working catering gigs and waiting tables, Branfman recalls that they had little money and is surprised that they were able to pay rent (2016). When interviewed in 1983, Branfman described the collective as keeping their living expenses minimal so that they could dedicate themselves to performing: “The Wallflower Order in Suchi’s words, ‘lives like little bugs’: touring half the year by van;

catching ballet, modern and Afro-Caribbean classes where they can; not having homes and family life” (Shepard 1984: 156). Rose left the collective, among other reasons, because she felt worn down by their economic circumstances: “I was really tired of living hand to mouth” (Neeley and Rose 2017). In their hours outside waged work, they poured their labor into sustaining their collective dance practice.

The feminist community in Eugene provided both an organizational model and support for the Wallflower Order early in the group’s history. Eugene in the mid-1970s was a lesbian feminist mecca, and a network of women’s collectives created a far-reaching system of mutual aid. Referring to Eugene as “the wild west of the women’s movement,” Keefer estimates that about a thirty-five feminist collectives offered many kinds of services, amounting to almost a dual power structure in the town (Near 2009). These included Starflower Natural Foods & Botanicals (a feminist cooperative grocery store), Mother Kali’s Books (feminist book store), Gertrude’s Silver Eighth Note Cafe (a feminist cafe), Hoedads Cooperative (a worker-owned forestry cooperative), Amazon Kung Fu (feminist martial arts training), Jackrabbit Press (a women-run press), among others.²² Not simply small businesses run cooperatively, these

²² “Starflower [Eugene, Oregon]: There are 13 women and 2 men, and they relate to themselves as a feminist collective. They, perhaps, do the best job of meeting the needs of their workers of any of the collectives. They have always paid themselves \$140 per month, and have free medical and dental privileges. A great deal of thought has gone into their internal structure so as to be fair to everyone over an expanded period of time... They are, however, actively engaged in struggling with the same inequalities that the rest of us are, and are committed to significant social change” (Curl 2012: 387-8). “Starflower was involved in the formation of a west coast wide people’s food system in the mid-1970s that brought together collectives and co-operatives committed to the framework of ‘food for people, not for profit.’ It is the beginning of a West Coast cooperative food network with collective strength to unify our struggle to provide food for people” (395-6).

“In the fall of 1975, a group of women opened Gertrude’s Silver Eighth Note Cafe in Eugene, OR, with the idea of supporting a women’s center. The restaurant functioned as a collective and food was priced inexpensively. Gertrude’s Cafe often offered activities in the visual and performing arts, including music performances, poetry readings, and displays of painting and photography. In 1976, a radical left group was invited to buy the building where Gertrude’s rented space, but the two groups never reached a lease agreement and the cafe was evicted” (McHugh, Johnson-Grau, and Sher 2016: 87).

collectives emanated from broader political movements for social, economic, and environmental justice. A feminist political framework ran through these collectives, as Eugene's well-organized lesbian community generated a support system for feminists to build political power. Branfman recounts that when women from the Wallflower Order would grocery shop at Starflower, the cashier would wave them through the checkout with a *thank you, have a nice day* (2016). She described these experiences as a form of self-recognition from women in other collectives, a sense that *you are us*. From Neeley's perspective, Wallflower's collective model came from this Eugene context: "Our collective process was deep and rich and a product of Eugene. Eugene made us that" (Neeley and Rose 2017). Wallflower emerged out of this flourishing of women's community, which found ways to support each other's collectives.

Wallflower's connections to women's production networks and women's studies departments facilitated the collective's ability to tour. Holly Near (sister of collective member Laurel Near) was a well-known singer-songwriter within the women's music movement who founded a record label, Redwood Records, in 1972. She ran a production company called Roadwork, which booked Wallflower's first national tour in 1976. In almost every city that Wallflower visited, Keefer describes encountering a women-run production company that supported feminist culture (Near 2009). Their connection to Holly Near enabled the collective to utilize a set of connections specific to women's music venues and festivals. Additionally, women's studies departments frequently hosted the collective at universities. Branfman recalls

In writing on the history and operations of the Hoedads Cooperative, economist Christopher Gunn notes the specifically activist orientation of the collective: "Another characteristic of Hoedads that sets it apart from many historical examples of worker cooperatives is more elusive and more difficult to label clearly. It involves the fact that energy and resources flow out of the co-op in support of cooperative political, social, and economic causes in the Northwest. Hoedads is an activist co-op. [...] Rather than being content with an organization that provides the work setting they want, its members are willing to fight the battles that will help define a special place for worker cooperatives in the economic and social fabric of the Northwest" (Gunn 1984: 167).

that the 1983 tour of *Journeys* was primarily produced by feminist organizations, women's bookstores, and women's studies departments (2016). They relied on forms of hospitality and resource-sharing that sustained feminism as a social movement as well as their work as dancers.

While a source of support for the collective, the Wallflower Order also experienced friction with these feminist networks. The Wallflower dancers negotiated the broader tensions within leftist movements during the late 1970s and early 1980s. As social movement historian Robin D.G. Kelley has quipped, "the '80s were a hot time" characterized by anti-imperialist movements and solidarity organizing with third world leftist struggles (2002: 51). Following the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979, the Sandinista government founded a Ministry of Culture, which formally sponsored the Wallflower Order and Grupo Raíz to tour in September of 1981. As Latin American liberation struggles opened Wallflower's politics up to American imperialism, they came up against forms of feminist organizing that held a narrower view of women's spaces and concerns. Malaret describes separatist organizations taking issue with Wallflower's decision to collaborate with male musicians:

[...] when we were touring with Grupo Raíz, we found ourselves in places where women's production companies did not want to produce us because we were performing with men. When we discussed it with the producers we found that they themselves were divided. A majority had voted to produce only Wallflower Order but it had created a dialogue among them about producing women artists who also work with men (Vigier 1994: 226).

Rifts between differing feminist tendencies fractured simplistic understandings of sisterhood within dance contexts and women-run spaces.

With respect to funding, the Wallflower Order brought in some income through touring and teaching. They often had paid gigs to perform while on tour. In July 1982, the Wallflower Order moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts to be in closer proximity to paid performance opportunities often at colleges and universities on the east coast, as Neeley describes:

It's been hard. For five years we've had to have part-time jobs. We're trying now to get to a point where we don't have to do that; where we can do this full time. In order to do that we're going to move east so we can tour more, because we have to tour in order to make money (Braumuller 1981: 17).

This hope for bringing in more income through touring gigs did not pan out, and the collective soon shifted gears and moved to the Bay Area. As a supplement to performing, the Wallflower dancers taught classes and workshops, including an aerobics class in Berkeley called "Putting the Movement Back in the Movement" (Berkun 1983). In January 1984, the group received a \$5000 Choreography Fellowship grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, which provided financial resources and institutional recognition for their work (Dellums 1984). While receiving money from occasional grants and touring engagements, Wallflower was without a stable income as a group. Yet they faced the regular costs of rehearsing and creating work, a dilemma that Holly Near narrates: "Wallflower Order was always talking about when they weren't performing or working there wasn't money coming in, yet they still needed to rent a space to work in and the space they could afford usually had splinters on the floor and was cold" (Clark and Near 1981: 26). They made up for the deficit in their artistic budget with their own reproductive labor and efforts at self-production, which both sustained and depleted the collective.²³

The Wallflower Order negotiated an implicit tension within their collective between fundraising for leftist social movements and functioning as a dance company. Within decision-making about their finances, they juggled the desire to sustain themselves as dancers as well as the social movements they cared about. Wallflower and Grupo Raíz presented most of their

²³ An informational packet for members of a proposed advisory board prepared in 1984 indicate that the Wallflower Order hired Pati McDermott in 1981 as a manager to handle booking, finances and publicity (Wallflower Order 1984). It is unclear what exactly the financial arrangement was between the collective and McDermott.

concerts as benefits to raise money for political movements in Latin American countries, particularly Chile, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. The benefit performances often generated the collective's largest audiences, bringing together communities doing solidarity work with those interested in feminist performance. In 1984, the collective estimated that about seventy percent of their performances were benefits for political groups (Hickey 1984). While the collective often performed to fundraise for other groups, the Wallflower dancers struggled to reproduce their own lives, as Branfman describes: "For years now we have been working constantly to keep the group alive and sometimes we haven't been able to pay ourselves. Whenever we have, the pay has been minimal and there are no benefits" (Vigier 1994: 228). The collective's operational budget from 1982-1983 indicates that during 1982, the Wallflower Order ran at a deficit (Wallflower Order 1984). While beginning 1984 with \$15,084.92, an asterisk next to this number notes that "approximately \$5300 will be donated to New El Salvador Today, as part of our Fall Fundraising Tour for El Salvador." Their financial decisions evince the tension within the group's work between their political commitments, their desire to obtain funding and recognition as artists (often from sources they found themselves at odds with politically), and their efforts to reproduce their own lives.

In addition to the tension between artistic and political aims, members of Wallflower Order began to work with groups on the radical left that had diverging strategic frameworks. Lyn Neeley became a dedicated member of the Workers World Party, a Marxist-Leninist party that formed after splitting from the Socialist Workers Party in 1959. Krissy Keefer joined the Oakland-based Uhuru House Solidarity Committee for the Reparations Campaign for Black People in the United States. The African People's Socialist Party, a revolutionary group in support of pan-African liberation, led the Uhuru Movement, which held the position that white

people should organize in separate groups to do solidarity work for black organizations. Taking a more internationalist stance, Workers World had a differing position from the Uhuru movement on organizing strategies for racial justice. Other members of the collective had a range of political perspectives divergent from both the Workers World and the Uhuru House lines. Malaret describes the crux of the conflict: “as WODC developed politically and people joined political parties we had to deal with the fact that not everybody supports the same political lines. How do you go on working as a collective, integrate the group, and deal with political differences?” (Vigier 1994: 220). The women of Wallflower started to grow apart politically, resulting in differing views about where the collective should direct its support.

The following year, the Wallflower Order began to fracture, a split that escalated into a bitter conflict dissolving the collective. As the only member still in the group since Wallflower’s founding, Keefer held a position of seniority that complicated decision-making processes. As the membership changed, women brought in new ideas that reoriented the collective’s politics and direction. The group’s conflict — over racial justice strategies, what groups they should fundraise for, and other personal and political debates — came to an impasse. Several members of Wallflower decided Keefer should step back from the collective, initiating a divide between two contingents composed of, on one side, Keefer and Fichter, and on the other, Gray, Branfman, and Malaret. The latter grouping wished to carry on as a racially integrated Wallflower Order and brought in additional members including Asian American dancer Andrea Harmin. By 1984, these two sides could no longer work together. Keefer and Fichter also wanted to continue under the Wallflower Order name, as they explain: “The name, ‘Wallflower Order’ is the primary resource at this time because it’s ten year history guarantees grants, bookings, contacts and contracts” (Keefer and Fichter 1984). Following the breakdown of an internal

mediation process, collective members resorted to locking up all documents related to Wallflower, taking each other's names off of the group's post box, and cutting off access to the collective's finances. The conflict developed into a lawsuit and counter-suit over who could use the name, repertory, and resources of the collective. Both sides sent letters to colleagues in the Bay Area, leading to friends in the dance and activist communities choosing sides within the conflict.

The situation resolved in 1985 with the formation of two autonomous groups, which could use the preface "Wallflower Order presents" for a year and a half to ease the transition into new collective identities (Branfman, Gray, and Malaret 1985). Branfman and Malaret's contingent became the New York-based dance company Crowsfeet, a nod towards the wrinkles of wallflowers as they grow older. Keefer and Fichter started the Wildflower Dance Brigade (later shortened to Dance Brigade), still a vibrant San Francisco-based company.²⁴ *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* was the last evening of performance that the Wallflower Order developed. The breakup of the collective intimates the doubleness of both dance-making and feminist organizing: they contain hope and possibility as well as alienation and infighting. In reflecting on her experiences during the Wallflower period, Keefer alluded to this affective doubleness: "You have to take the bitter with the delicious" (Wiederholt 2016).

For the Wallflower Order, dance was both a reprieve from and a continuation of work. The lack of remuneration through measured hours of labor and their control over the process of production distinguished their activity from waged work. Dance-making provided the Wallflower members with a creative domain outside the alienation experienced within waged

²⁴ "Asked about Wildflower's current relationship to its sister company Crowsfeet, Keefer paused. 'We really have nothing whatsoever to do with them anymore. The clincher came a few weeks ago when they took us back to court claiming our new name, Wildflower, was too close to the old name'" (Ross 1985).

employment. Without an external director, the dancers themselves determined the content and duration of their process. Rather than giving their faculties over to a wage-earning partner and children, their reproductive labor poured into themselves, their art practices, and the social movements around them. While a nourishing practice of feminist collectivity for the Wallflower members, dance also contained elements of drudgery associated with work. Their lives as dancers functioned as part of the activities that allowed them to return to a low-paying job as labor-power, but exceeding this, dance also sustained them as feminists.

The material circumstances of the Wallflower Order suggest a contradictory tension between self-determination and depletion. For its members, the Wallflower Order generated a sense of freedom, autonomy, and political possibility. They developed a new way of approaching what it means to be a dancer. When interviewed by Barling, Near spoke of the lack of available models for understanding the life of a dancer: “the alternatives in the traditional sense were to go to Broadway, to go to LA, to go to the industry. How else did people perform? I didn’t see many options” (Barling 1982). Neeley also discussed how dancing in someone else’s company felt like the only route and narrated the process by which she began to see Wallflower as a viable alternative: “I slowly changed my mind around to thinking of myself as a dancer with these other women” (Barling 1982). While the Wallflower Order’s choreography foregrounded political content, their process of self-organization and outreach formed crucial components of the collective’s political work. When reviewing the Wallflower Order, Shepard describes the politics embedded within their means of presentation:

Tables set up in the lobby hold leaflets on the US invasion of Grenada, Dancers for Disarmament, and aid to the revolutionary government of El Salvador. If the concert is, as so many Wallflower concerts are, a benefit, a speaker opens the evening with a plea for support for his or her cause. Many women in the predominantly female audience seem to know each other. Before a single Wallflower has appeared on stage, the mood is already political, committed and

intimate (1984: 153).

They turned the context of a dance concert into a space for feminists to gather and engage with various forms of political organizing. The members of Wallflower struggled to reproduce themselves as dancers and the social movements they cared about, aims at odds with the capitalist context around them. As the Wallflower Order emerged from feminist movements, the broader debates and divisions occurring within feminist spaces manifested internally in the collective. With the groups' autonomy came a weariness and exhaustion from producing their own work. As much political commitments bound them together, these shared concerns eventually became a jaundiced wedge within the group. The material circumstances of Wallflower's *Journeys* indicate the tensions within social reproduction (as capital undermines the workers it needs to employ) and the difficulty of sustaining leftist social movements within a capitalist context.

Wallflower's Political Economic Period

As feminist groups of the 1970s found themselves in turmoil, a global economic crisis unfolded during the decade that ushered in sweeping shifts to economic conditions. The high rates of economic growth that defined the postwar period began to falter by the end of the 1960s. During the 1970s, the global economy entered a phase of stagflation in which unemployment and inflation simultaneously rose. Capitalists encountered a crisis of profitability, as asset values collapsed and rates of return on capital investment declined (Balakrishnan 2009: 10). From a Marxian perspective, Gopal Balakrishnan argues that a contradiction emerged between the forces and relations of production (18). Employers attempted to restore profitability by holding down wages, yet this diminished aggregate demand. In Robert Brenner's analysis, the economy could not reabsorb the overcapacity in global manufacturing, and the rate of profit failed to recover

(Brenner 2006).

The crisis of the 1970s ushered in a new economic epoch known as Post-Fordism. The expansion of debt stepped in to mediate the contradiction between overcapacity and inadequate demand, as Brenner argues: “Against this background of system-wide stagnation, the impetuous growth of US debt, in combination with a soaring dollar, became the central motor driving the world economy” (2004: 83). The growth of consumer and national debt compensated for low wage rates as a means to generate demand. Gains in productivity through information technology and containerization both increased efficiency and contributed to overcapacity. New kinds of financial markets emerged that introduced securitization, derivatives, and futures trading, a process now termed financialization. While speculation in finance and housing markets appeared to generate economic growth, Balakrishnan notes a widespread deceleration in the real economy (2009: 15).

In response to this crisis of capital accumulation, neoliberal economic policy displaced the Keynesianism that had oriented United States’ policy since the New Deal of the 1930s. The new neoliberal doctrine promoted privatization and deregulation in place of the public provisions that defined the Fordist era. Incoming administrations rolled back the Keynesian policies implemented to salve the Great Depression (e.g. federal fiscal stimulus, progressive taxation, and expansion of social services) and unfurled neoliberal measures including deregulated cross-border capital flows, corporate tax breaks, and targeted investments in infrastructure. Deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of public provision replaced the social welfare obligations of the Keynesian-Fordist period (Harvey 2005).

As the federal government struggled to quell inflation, it abandoned full employment as a policy objective, and a new logic emerged within labor markets. The post-war compromise

between capital and labor — that wages would rise with economic growth — dissolved as wage rates de-coupled from gains in productivity. Increased capital mobility led to the outsourcing of jobs to countries where the cost of production was significantly lower than the United States. The temporary contract of precarious, part-time employment began to take the place of full-time, salaried jobs. With decreased job security, American workers faced an imperative to accept “flexible” employment.

David Harvey has written on neoliberalism’s uneven geographic development as countries in the global south became the testing grounds for new economic policies later implemented within wealthier nations (Harvey 2005: 9). In particular, Harvey cites the Chilean example where Pinochet’s coup in 1973 was the impetus to compel the country to divest their national assets, open their markets, and slash social spending. This violently imposed process of structural adjustment had drastic effects on the Chilean population, forcing waves of migrants en route north. US military intervention in Chile and other countries followed by enforced deregulation of their economies supplied the United States with an influx of workers willing to accept low wages and precarious employment. For Harvey, neoliberalism both in the United States and abroad was “a political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and restore the power of economic elites” (19). The neoliberal project proved successful in re-asserting class power, yet faltered on the more elusive goal of increasing economic growth.

These larger political and economic changes impacted the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1970s and 1980s. Following the decline of manufacturing sectors in California that culminated in a wave of plant closings in the late 1970s, the Bay Area’s economy became defined by the rise of high tech, high finance, and real estate. Economic geographer Richard Walker describes how the restructuring of capitalist production altered the composition of the

Bay Area's working class: "we find a whole new mass working-class consisting of white female office workers in San Francisco and the East Bay, Third World female assemblers in Santa Clara County, and new immigrant waiters, busboys, maids and janitors in San Francisco" (Walker 1990: 24-5). The Bay Area absorbed a mass immigration from Central and South America, as migrants fled political coups and structural adjustment programs. With the rise of the service industry, working class laborers found themselves increasingly in temporary, part-time, and contract employment. Simultaneously, gentrification threatened their neighborhoods as speculative real estate markets pushed prospective homebuyers into new areas. As part of a larger process known as the 'tax payer revolt,' the passage of California Proposition 13 in 1978 cut social provisions by decreasing property taxes. During this period, the political priorities of the left in the Bay Area became focused on rent control, environmentalism, gay and women's liberation, anti-nuclear armament, and solidarity with those facing oppression in South Africa, Palestine, and the Americas (Walker 1990: 60-1). As capital expanded its international scope, the parallel rise of international solidarity movements responded to this restructuring of production and its social ramifications.

The economic crisis of the 1970s and the imposition of neoliberalism shifted the contours of social reproduction. Within the United States, depressed wage rates caused many women to enter the labor market, and two-earner households eclipsed the family wage model of the Fordist period. Simultaneously, the state divested from its role within social reproduction, cutting welfare, health care, education, and other social programs. As Nancy Fraser argues, the recruitment of women into the workforce coupled with neoliberal cuts to social provisions had the effect of "externalizing carework onto families and communities while diminishing their capacity to perform it" (Fraser 2016: 113). These circumstances resulted in a mass transfer of

reproductive labor onto migrant women from poorer countries who filled in this care deficit. These women perform both waged reproductive labor and the domestic work of reproducing their own families. Federici notes that the commercialization and globalization of reproductive work amounted to an extraction of capital and labor from developing countries for the benefit of wealthier locales (Federici 2012: 107). Fraser views these dynamics as a “social-reproductive ‘crisis tendency’ or contradiction” in which capital undermines the social reproduction of the workers it needs to employ to sustain the circuits of capital accumulation (Fraser 2016: 100). This crisis of social reproduction indicates the self-jeopardizing logic at the heart of a capitalist mode of production.

The political economic changes following the 1970s and the re-organization of social reproduction on a market basis have ambiguous implications for feminist politics. Placing second wave feminist movements within the context of ensuing material conditions, Fraser heeds a disturbing possibility that feminist critiques of the housewife became a necessary ingredient for the Post-Fordist reorganization of labor markets (2009: 99). Federici argues that the emergent globalization and bifurcation of reproductive labor into paid and unpaid sectors causes a crisis for feminism that “introduces new divisions among women that undermine the possibility of international feminist solidarity and threaten to reduce feminism to a vehicle for the rationalization of the world economic order” (Federici 2012: 66). While feminists in the 1970s and 1980s fundamentally challenged the gendered organization of labor, their capitalist context functioned as a wedge between women able to recuperate their struggle against the dual exploitation of production and reproduction.

These economic conditions — the fall of profitability and the ensuing crisis of social reproduction — contextualize the contradictions that the Wallflower Order encountered. While

struggling to sustain itself, the collective participated in responding to neoliberalism with what social movement scholar Karl Beitel refers to as “the construction of alternative ways of organizing social life, however nascent” (2012: 6). In describing her experience in the collective, Branfman notes the strain placed on reproduction by neoliberal policies as well as the support of social movements:

And our society doesn't provide child care. It doesn't provide medical or dental care. It just comes right down to the basic level of existence. It burns people out, which means we can't keep doing our work or doing it effectively. [...] You see yourself as part of a bigger movement happening in the world, a movement towards justice. It really does feel like that when I remember what we are doing (Vigier 1994: 228).

The social conditions of the period - the swelling of movements for liberation as well as the re-assertion of capitalist class power through neoliberalism - frame the Wallflower Order's work. For example, the political economic forces that destabilized countries in South America set in motion Wallflower's collaboration with Grupo Raíz, as the Chilean coup sent its members into exile. International and inter-racial solidarity proved to be an ever-faltering project, as feminists found themselves positioned against each other by their material conditions. The emergent crises of profitability, reproduction, and feminism shaped the collectives of the period, with the Wallflower Order being but one example of tensions that pervaded social relations. The collapse of feminist collectives during the 1970s and 1980s speaks to the connections between the struggles of the individual groups and the systemic failures of capitalism to sustain production and reproduction.

Conclusion

In reflecting on *Journeys* and the herstory of the Wallflower Order, we can understand the collective in relation to the contradictions that they wrestled with, both internally and in the social world around them. These included how to reconcile their labor as reproducing capital as

well as dance and feminism; how to sustain themselves despite capital's tendency to undermine the social reproduction of labor-power; and how to bridge material divides amongst women. While dance critics of the 1980s largely characterized *Journeys: Undoing the Distances* as simplistic and naive, I view the collective's aesthetics and politics as emerging from a legitimate grappling with the tensions of their period. Social reproduction was a theme within Wallflower's pieces as well as a key problem within their political economic moment. Considering their circumstances of production and reproduction deepens an understanding of the central questions faced by the Wallflower Order.

The contradictions internal to the category of social reproduction within capitalism emerged within the Wallflower collective, first in the sense that their efforts reproduced labor-power alongside dance and feminist movements. The Wallflower Order functioned as a social activity outside of waged work that helped to keep its members vital and prepare them to return to work. Their reproductive labor both supplied labor-power to capital and sustained their artistic and political endeavors.

Members of Wallflower turned towards dance to experience a sensuous, creative, and embodied part of their lives outside of waged work. While facing the pressures of self-production, dance allowed the Wallflower members to find in their bodies sources of resilience and pleasure. Through dance, the Wallflower collective learned to become intimate with and take control of their bodies. They participated in queer and feminist movements, engendering modes of living as women beyond the narrow role of the dutiful, exploited housewife. Embodying strength, power, and assertiveness, their choreography allowed them to physicalize their feminist politics. Critic Marcia Siegel suggested that the Wallflower Order generated a future anterior sense that the feminist revolution had already taken place: "I'm not even sure whether we're

living in the aftermath of a revolution or the prelude to one. Wallflower Order looks more like the aftermath” (1991:131). Their work represented revolutionary repercussions in advance, a re-imagination of social reproduction as solidarity rather than isolation. Simultaneously, dance was also one activity that took place during the hours they were not working for a wage.

Navigating the tension within reproductive labor, members of Wallflower struggled for and against their collective dance practice. Some targets of the collective’s political critiques (e.g. the militarism of the United States government) helped to reproduce their work: Wallflower received NEA funding at the same time that they performed in countless benefit concerts to raise money for resistance to US intervention in Central and South America. Their desire for dance funding enmeshed the collective within broader state and capitalist agendas. Siegel titled her review of Wallflower “Love Isn’t All We Need,” describing their work as “dances of anger and tenderness” (Siegel 1991). Perhaps unwittingly, her title points to the collective’s challenges to reproduce themselves as workers, dancers, and feminists. The anger and tenderness that Siegel saw in their dances reflects Wallflower’s affirmation and negation of their position as dancers.

The second contradiction within social reproduction — that capital undermines the workers it needs for production —also constrained the Wallflower Order’s ability to keep the collective afloat. In coming together as dancers and women, they faced the ongoing question of how to reproduce their activities with meager resources. The Wallflower Order contended with the circumstance that both concert dance and feminism movements require reproductive labor beyond that of sustaining themselves as individuals. The collective juggled their artistic aspirations and political commitments. The Wallflower dancers put on their performances as political fundraisers, which was sometimes at odds with sustaining the group as a dance project. As their efforts extended between three domains of social reproduction — that of labor-power,

dance, and feminism—the Wallflower dancers spread themselves thin. In desiring a creative domain outside of waged work, they found themselves in situations of self-exploitation and infighting. For a self-produced performance group, withdrawing reproductive labor would mean giving up the attempt to keep the collective together. The struggle against reproductive work contains the potential to enervate relationships that one cherishes.²⁵ The tensions within the Wallflower Order and in feminist movements of the period demonstrate the contradictions of living, loving, and dancing within a mode of production that undermines the workers it depends upon. Social reproduction, dance-making, and feminist organizing contain contradictory elements that nourish and drain, maintain and exceed the world as it is.

While their performance practice and engagement with feminism helped the Wallflower dancers to define their lives outside of capitalist and patriarchal demands, working together in a collective was not an escape into an un-alienated feminist solidarity. In their efforts to deliberately widen the scope of their work beyond the experiences of white women, Wallflower faced a problem encountered within feminist movements at large. As women in first world countries entered the work force en masse following the economic crisis of the 1970s, the domestic/care work that bourgeois women had performed in the home became waged labor for working class women, often women of color. Feminists negotiated the difficult task of building solidarity with each other despite their division by race, class, and imperialism. I view Wallflower Order's choreographic work as grappling with key dilemmas for intersectional movements and international solidarity efforts. The questions that Wallflower asked within

²⁵ Silvia Federici has written of the ambiguities within struggles over reproduction: “How do you struggle over/against reproductive work? It is not the same as struggling in the traditional factory setting, against for instance the speed of an assembly line, because at the other end of your struggle there are people not things. Once we say that reproductive work is a terrain of struggle, we have to first immediately confront the question of how we struggle on this terrain without destroying the people you care for” (2008).

Journeys were also the quandaries of their period: how women might bridge the material divides generated by the bifurcation of domestic work into paid and unpaid sectors. The breakup of the collective points toward the contradictions within social reproduction as it both knits together and alienates women from each other.

In 1980, the volume *In Her Own Image: Women Working in the Arts* included a profile of the Wallflower Order alongside examples of women's domestic crafts and 'fine' art. The book's editors viewed the inclusion of simple household objects as honoring the myriad forms that women's labor has taken and "as an example of the way in which all of women's art may be viewed and understood: that is, as emerging out of actual social and economic circumstances" (Hedges and Wendt 1980: 4). The Wallflower Order's choreography took the circumstances of women's lives as a starting point for many of their pieces. For example, *Immigration* staged women oscillating between factory work and domestic labor, which Jowitt describes:

As the women perform this canon, they build into it the idea of exhaustion, followed by a determined upsurge of energy, so that you see the whole ghastly pattern of their working days, expressed not just through the activities, but through the physical and mental effect of those activities (Jowitt 1982).

The Wallflower Order danced here the struggle against productive and reproductive labor, the remorseless shuffling between waged and unwaged work that characterizes daily life for innumerable working class women within a capitalist context. My analysis of the Wallflower Order mirrors the collective's materialist concerns, as I approach their work through its concrete circumstances.

The Wallflower Order's 'work' is not reducible to the choreography on stage, but includes their internal process, efforts at self-production, and involvement in political organizing.

Feminist critic Nina Power writes of the need to think beyond a narrow sense of what constitutes an artwork:

We need to reformulate this question, to spin it around and break it off from familiar axes: to refuse the mystification of production and reproduction [...] The artwork is not complete until we have exhausted what we mean by work - and historically no one's work has been more abused, denigrated, and yet depended upon than that of women (2012: 5).

We can rethink the question of what 'reading' the Wallflower Order's work means by expanding beyond what happens on stage to interpret the material relations of production. This attention to the social reproduction of dance and social movements is of political import, as Federici writes: "The analysis of how we reproduce these movements, how we reproduce ourselves is not at the center of movement organizing. It has to be" (Federici 2008). Without centralizing the reproductive labor that takes place outside and around what is narrowly legible as 'the work,' we run the risk of obscuring what sustains both dance and political organizing.

While splitting after nine years, the reverberations of the Wallflower Order continue to be felt within San Francisco. Keefer and Fichter's Dance Brigade still creates dance-theater works committed to feminism and leftist social movements within the Mission district. A number of Bay Area choreographers got their start within Dance Brigade and went on to found their own projects including Axis Dance, Project Bandaloop, Naka Dance Theater, the Destiny Arts Center, among others. In January 2017, Dance Brigade had a fortieth anniversary performance titled *Gracias a la Vida - Love in a Bitter Time* at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Members of Grupo Raíz continue to run La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley, a community space and venue for leftist artists particularly from Latin American countries. Spawning some of Bay Area's longstanding centers for dance, performance, and activism, the Wallflower Order remains an important case for observing what sustains and fractures feminist projects.

Conclusion: Concert Dance / Conditions / Contradictions

It strikes me that the practice of (dance and cultural) theory has been deprived of an adequate appreciation of its own context. - Randy Martin (1998: 79).

Inspired by Randy Martin's *Critical Moves*, this dissertation uses his method of *overreading* dance, or seeing a work of dance as a lens into a wider social context. The chapters have taken up Martin's charge to provide an adequate rendering of the political economic context surrounding three choreographic works. In my disorienting and catalyzing encounter with Martin's nimble mind, I learned to look for more than initially appears within a dance, to find more to say than one thinks could be said.

The preceding studies emerged from two dance historical questions: What are the material conditions of possibility for concert dance within a capitalist context? How do the contradictions of a political economic period shape choreographic works? Focused on twentieth-century modern/postmodern dance in the San Francisco Bay Area, each chapter considers a single work from three periods of economic history: Pre-Fordist, Fordist, and Post-Fordist. This periodization structure mirrors what Giovanni Arrighi considers the three segments of the 'long twentieth century': the 1870s to the 1930s, the 1940s to 1970, and the 1970s to the terminal crisis of the US regime (1994: 221). Carol Beals' *Waterfront — 1934*, Anna Halprin's *Parades and Changes*, and the Wallflower Order's *Journeys* function as avenues into these periods. Through interviews and archival research, I chart how the contradictions of their economic period marked the aesthetics, creative process, and material circumstances of these works. Taken together, these

studies exemplify what historical materialist methods can offer dance research, namely a grounding of dance in the economic dynamics of its context. The contradictions and crises that characterize the social world also pervade dance practices. While previous scholarship has proposed an analogization between dance and work, I argue that this analogization overlooks the actual examination of the material relations involved in concert dance and its relationship to capital accumulation.

While the dissertation jumps between three discrete moments, a number of connections weave the dances together with San Francisco history. The Matson Navigation Company was one of the largest employers on the docks in the 1930s, and William Matson Roth (grandson to the company's founder) used the accumulated capital from this period later as arts patronage, of which Anna Halprin was a recipient. San Francisco's urban renewal, which Lawrence Halprin contributed to as a landscape architect, targeted working class neighborhoods "that housed thousands of retired workers who had participated in the great upsurge of the 1930s" (Carlsson 1998: 82). The policy changes of the 1970s and 1980s deliberately undermined the gains that working class organizing had fought for in the 1930s. The black radicalism and third world leftism that influenced the Wallflower Order emerged in response to the racial discrimination of urban renewal at home and military intervention abroad. A reviewer of the Wallflower Order noted how the collective re-animated Depression-era leftist culture in a style that "harkens back [to] the political expressiveness of the '30s modern dance..." (Shepard: 1984: 156). What connects these dances is not a network of direct influence but a shared relationship to the Bay Area, its social movements and shifting economic organization.

The choreographic works taken up in the three chapters share similar characteristics: they are ensemble modern/postmodern dance pieces created by white women in the San Francisco

Bay Area. While the chapters are organized around temporal differentiation, the works have other forms of dissimilarity. They range in length, from a single dance to a program composed of numerous pieces. They do not have a uniform structure of authorship, as the works were created by single choreographers and by a group collectively. The choreographers have differing class backgrounds and political tendencies. They have contrasting relationships to the social movements and political organizing of their period. The works have an incongruous relationship to canonization and scholarly reception. While by no means a perfect structure of comparison, these works help chart how the material contradictions of an economic period condition works of concert dance. The chapters, in their succession, give the reader a sense of how a single work of dance bears a relationship to the wider political economic context.

Examining the work of Beals, Halprin, and the Wallflower Order together draws out the similarities and differences in their approaches to dance-making. Both Beals and the Wallflower Order understood choreography as a way to digest the political struggles going on in their midst, while for Halprin, it functioned to attune dancers to their internal lives, fellow performers, and sensory environment. Halprin and the Wallflower Order both used improvisation within their creative process, which for Halprin represented a freeing of the individual from codified techniques and for the Wallflower Order functioned as a means to generate material that the dancers would ultimately iron into a cogent political statement. A collaboration amongst peers, the Wallflower Order was composed of women close in age who shared similar dance training. In distinction, Halprin and Beals worked with casts that ranged from adolescents to middle-aged adults with varied levels of exposure to modern dance. The processes of Beals and Halprin resembled each other, in the sense that a dance teacher gathered a group of her students to create a new piece. While Halprin guided experiments in collective creativity but ultimately maintained

an authorial grip on the choreography, the Wallflower Order offers a model of a horizontal creative process, which was by no means a smooth or tranquil undertaking. The creative processes for Beals' *Waterfront — 1934*, Halprin's *Parades and Changes*, and the Wallflower Order's *Journeys* demonstrate how modes of collaboration can set up different structures of social organization and power relations within dancing-making. The investigation of creative processes within the dissertation brings to light the politics that are internal to the project of creating a dance, in addition to what political content might appear within a work.

The studies of the dissertation have implications beyond the specific cases of Beals, Halprin, and the Wallflower Order, as the examination of material conditions of possibility can yield insight into other dance forms. In addition to modern dance, political economic methods can apply to any dance genre. For their proximity to waged work, economic studies of nightclub dancing and dance within film, television, and advertising would provide a productive contrast to avant-garde concert dance, as they would draw out the differences between the kinds of dance that are more likely and less likely to garner payment. More commercial dance practices would illuminate the extent to which dance can be directly commoditized. Political economic methods can expand to dance from other historical periods and geographical locations. Additionally, comparisons between national contexts would provide further insight into the specificity of the economic circumstances that dancers and choreographers move within. Apart from the application of political economic methods to other types of dance, the dissertation has implications for Marxist dance aesthetics, the analysis of patronage, the function of dance writing, and the relation of dance to capitalism.

While largely focused on Marxist approaches to dance history, the dissertation contains a tacit concern with Marxist dance aesthetics. The chapters on Carol Beals and the Wallflower

Order contribute to recovering leftist dance history, or the undercurrents of radical politics within modern dance traditions. As a secondary mode of inquiry, the dissertation examines what it means to be on the left as a dancer and challenges which choreographers have come to stand in for *radical* concert dance.¹ Charting the relation of dance practices to social movement history can help dance scholars understand the role of dance within a broader scope of organizing on the left. An attention to contradiction can steer dance research away from an uncomplicated equation of dance with forms of struggle. As Marx has discerned, “revolutions are the locomotives of history” (Marx 1976: 120). Dance historians have much to gain by incorporating these swift, sweeping movements into our understanding of dance practices.

In addition to the connections between concert dance and leftist organizing, the project considers the affiliations between dance and capital. Western concert dance traditions have, in part, relied on the support of a patronage class, whose enormous concentrations of wealth and power have funded and offered legitimacy to various genres, choreographers, and companies (while others continue their work outside of these financial channels). The economic and political circumstances of dance funding leave researchers with the question of what function dance serves for the class interests of patrons. Those with access to disposable revenue to channel into dance patronage are often those who have refined strategies for capital accumulation, perhaps through monopoly production, land grabs, investing in speculative asset bubbles, union-busting, or any of the many strategies that grease the M - C - M' circuit. Dance funding may do many things at once: siphon off resources from those with more than enough, generate institutions that humanize an exploitative mode of production, as well as a myriad of

¹ The Lincoln Center in New York currently hosts an exhibition titled “Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955–1972,” which runs from May 24 - September 16, 2017.

other functions.² Whether ignored by, opting out of, or receiving patronage, dancers and dance researchers must think through their economic context and the implications of the funding that has sustained concert dance practices.

The embedment of concert dance within its capitalist context calls for reflection on the function of dance scholarship. While dance writing can think through the significance of embodied practices to social life more broadly, it can also legitimate the funding decisions of capitalist patrons. It can provide a literature that rationalizes expenditures of revenue on concert dance. A Marxist vantage point expands dance scholarship beyond the confines of a liberal political framework that might focus on securing a better institutional position for dance.³ A historical materialist methodology develops a critique of the structures in which dance is ensconced, opening up an anti-capitalist horizon for dance research. Writing about Marxian approaches to poetry criticism, Chris Nealon has discussed “the too critical critic” whose work, by putting forth a critique of capitalism, others might regard as “a betrayal against one’s friends, one’s community, one’s art” (2011: 7). At the risk of inhabiting a ‘too critical’ position, forms of institutional critique within dance studies can place economic relations at the center of historical discussions and reintegrate what might be disavowed from what dance is and does.⁴

² In *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Friedrich Engels writes: “The English bourgeoisie is charitable out of self-interest; it gives nothing outright, but regards its gifts as a business matter, makes a bargain with the poor, saying: ‘If I spend this much upon benevolent institutions, I thereby purchase the right not to be troubled any further...’” (1993: 284).

³ This statement by Bojana Cvejić and Ana Vujanović is one example of a liberal framework employed within dance and performance scholarship: “The question would be how to act upon the material conditions, to no longer compose or negotiate with them, but to reclaim art as a public good in political and economic terms, which requires reconfiguring relations between the state, the public sphere and the sphere of the private capital. To do this, critical thought from within performance practice itself will not suffice, but in fact, performance practitioners will need to politically reeducate themselves as citizens in the public sphere” (Puar 2012: 176).

⁴ Andrea Fraser, an artist associated with institutional critique, has reflected that the task of critical art and discourse is to bring into view that which has been split off and externalized from art: “The politics of cultural phenomena, from this perspective, lies less in which of these relations are enacted than in which of these relations and our

The gesture of the dissertation is to close the exit doors, to situate modern/postmodern dance as in and of the capitalist mode of production. The metaphor of having no exit doors to an autonomous outside makes visible how capitalism conditions and constrains dance practices. It accentuates the lack inherent in a world built around the needs of capital. It illuminates the essential instability of capitalism, its contradictions and crises that leave it prone to a fragile volatility. Rather than an over-emphasis on structural conditions that inhibit forms of agency, this framing of dance shows the motion already present within political economic conditions. For Randy Martin, dance is a figure that stood in for “the organizational effect of socialization of emerging affiliations without being subordinated to the production and consumption of commodities” (1998: 101). For him, dance embodied the forms of social movement made possible by capitalism that also exceed its grasp. We may not be able to exit from the room, but the room itself is in motion.

As the chapters of the dissertation take up successive economic crises, they demonstrate together that capitalism is not stagnant; it is in crisis as it is in motion. Capital must continuously re-organize itself in relation to its processes of self-undoing. Both capitalism and concert dance restructure themselves in relation to their internal tensions and the surrounding social world. In distinction to ontologies of dance, historical materialism imparts a dialectical conception of the medium, bringing to light the contradictions within works of dance. It engenders a reading practice that contextualizes concert dance within the political economic limits and pressures that render it in and of this world.

investments in them, we are led to recognize and reflect on, and which we are led to ignore and efface, split off, externalize, or negate. From this perspective, the task of art and art discourse is one of structuring a reflection on those relations that have been split off” (Fraser 2011).

While the dissertation opens up a number of avenues for dance analysis, the project also has its shortcomings. The gesture of studying a single dance in relation to a historical period possesses both strengths and limitations as a structuring device. Designing the chapters around one choreographic work allows for a detailed analysis of the myriad social and material factors that enter into the creation of a dance. It can leave other questions unexplored, such as the arch of a choreographer's work over time as well how other dances might differently register the same historical period. As I have considered three case studies over a span of fifty years, the narrow scope of the dissertation does not capture the many currents that compose modern/postmodern dance history in the Bay Area. The dissertation does not take into account other dance genres, which would have enriched the integration of dance with a social history of San Francisco. Materialist research relies on access to evidence that can detail the economic dimensions of a choreographer's life and work, and the circumstances of what has been included and omitted from publicly accessible archives shapes the arguments I have made in the dissertation.⁵ The contemporary factors that make historical evidence available or inaccessible function as a crucial limitation on the research. Despite these constraints, the deep rather than broad approach of the dissertation makes its historical materialist methods legible.

The dissertation relies on a periodization schema, which both illuminates and obscures aspects of economic history. While I draw from Arrighi's conceptualization of the 'long twentieth-century,' other periodizations are possible. One could view the 1965-1967 moment of Halprin's *Parades and Changes* as part of the tipping point leading to the economic downturn of the early 1970s. Whether the 1960s and 1980s constitute objectively different periods is certainly

⁵ Carol Beals' journals and personal papers are kept in a garage at her grandson's home in San Francisco. Despite a year and a half of phone calls, emails, and written letters, I have not been able to access this archival material. The chapter on Beals would likely be drastically different if I had been able to examine her papers.

debatable, as other Marxist economic historians have made different temporal demarcations within the twentieth-century. Others may take issue with my framing of each period as having one salient economic category (i.e. capital, labor, and social reproduction). Many workers during the Great Depression struggled to reproduce themselves, indicating that the contradictions of social reproduction also characterize the post-1929 period. As a way of conceptualizing each historical moment, I chose categories partially in relation to what was thinkable at specific junctures (e.g. the Marxist-feminist analyses of the 1970s were inaccessible in the 1930s). These economic categories provide a structure for understanding successive crises, whose complexity certainly exceed this circumscribed framework. I have selected one historical schema — as Fredric Jameson asserts, “we cannot not periodize” (2002: 29) — and with this choice comes debates about when and how economic crisis and transformation occur, questions beyond the scope of the current study.

In addition to a more thorough-going engagement with economic history and crisis theory, the dissertation project could be expanded into further materialist inquiries into dance practices. Research on the political economy of patronage would be fruitful, as it could detail why and how capitalists and the state decide to use their revenue for concert dance. As patronage of the arts has historically served the capitalist class in ways other than immediately valorizing the capital invested, dance scholars could parse out the functions embedded within the corporate sponsorship of dance, including publicity, advertising, and marketing for other commodities. Researchers could also investigate the relationship between financial allocations for dance and land rent extraction. As cultural production helps to generate a sense of geographical uniqueness and particularity, both public and private cultural investment is imbricated in processes of urbanization and real estate speculation. Additionally, research into the role of dance

departments could shed light on the economic function played by colleges and universities within the dance field, increasingly shaped by the multiplying number of MFA programs and the growing precarity of academic labor. Lastly, many theoretical questions linger regarding how and in what ways Marxism can function as a dance historical methodology.

Addendum

As I have researched the material circumstances of the dancers and choreographers included in this study, it feels necessary to reflect on my own conditions of possibility as a dancer and graduate student. While writing this dissertation, my maternal grandmother, Olive Baird McKay, passed away on January 25, 2017. Ms. McKay was the daughter of Warner and Julia Baird, members of a Chicago family that ran Baird & Warner, one of the region's largest real estate firms, founded in 1855. Warner Baird (my great-grandfather) became president of the brokerage in 1928, which he ran until 1963 when Olive's brother John Baird (my great-uncle) took over as president. Prior to running the family firm, John Baird was president of Chicago's Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council (MHPC) from 1959 to 1963, which engineered the process of urban renewal in Chicago. My mother's cousin, Stephen W. Baird, succeeded his father and became CEO of Baird & Warner in 1991. Olive was predeceased by her husband, Neil McKay (my grandfather), whom she married in 1950. Beginning his career as a lawyer at Winston & Strawn (the oldest law firm in the city of Chicago), Mr. McKay later became the Vice-Chairman of the First National Bank of Chicago. He sat on the board of directors for Baird & Warner, Visa Corporation, LaSalle Steel Company, KerrMcGee Corporation (a company involved in oil drilling and uranium mining), and Morton-Thiokol Inc. (a company producing rocket and missile propulsion systems). Through both their race and class position, Neil and

Olive McKay were able to harness the favorable conditions of the post-war period to their economic advantage.

In her book *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*, historian Beryl Satter explicitly discusses Baird & Warner and John Baird's layered legacy within the history of racialized housing disparities in Chicago. The Baird family helped found the Chicago Real Estate Board, which was one of the key forces that instituted the redlining of Chicago neighborhoods.⁶ As president of the MHPC, John Baird advocated for open occupancy laws which would make it illegal for realtors to deny housing options to non-white prospective home-buyers. Yet as Satter documents, Baird and the MHPC ignored the credit discrimination that the black community in Chicago encountered when seeking mortgages:

To Baird, redlining racially changing neighborhoods was a matter of fiscal responsibility ... Baird explicitly opposed any strategy that advocated changes to installment land contracts or additional mortgage funds for black home buyers (2009: 137).

While embracing certain aspects of progressive housing policy, Baird ultimately protected the interests of the city's powerful mortgage bankers and real estate companies.⁷ My mother's upbringing in the McKay-Baird family translated into a set of race and class privileges that I grew up with.

Through financial resources set aside by my grandparents, I had access to dance classes beginning at age 3 and an education at private colleges (Hampshire College and New York

⁶ "White Chicagoans also used nonviolent methods to contain African Americans. They formed 'neighborhood improvement associations' to pressure white owners and realtors into refusing to rent or sell to blacks. Most of these associations were organized by the Chicago Real Estate Board (CREB), the professional association of white Chicago realtors" (Satter 2009: 39-40).

⁷ In 1966, the American Friends Service Committee, led by community organizer Bill Moyer, staged a series of demonstrations at the Baird & Warner offices in Oak Park, IL citing the racial discrimination facing black home-buyers (Anderson and Pickering 2008: 198).

University) where I studied critical political economy with Marxist economist Richard Wolff and sociologist Randy Martin. The temporal scope of the dissertation concludes at the moment that I was born in 1986, providing a historical backdrop for the world I encountered as a young dance student in San Francisco. I attended high school at San Francisco's School of the Arts and took modern dance classes in the youth program at the Oberlin Dance Collective school, located in the Mission district. The questions that the dissertation takes up regarding real estate, racism, accumulated capital, concert dance, and social movements are also the same questions that have emerged in my own life. I continue to grapple with the relationships between dance, capitalism, and radical politics.

Appendices

Appendix A: Performance Chronology of *Waterfront* — 1934

1. Longshoreman's Union Hall

Second floor boxing ring

Spring of 1936

Accompaniment by Lou Harrison

2. Veteran's Auditorium

May 17, 1936

Second Annual Dance Festival, "Growth and Development of San Francisco"
presented by Dance Council of Northern California

Performed by Cecilia Bartholomew, Carol Beals, Charles Blanford, John Dobson, Rose Gisnet, Marie Levitt, Jean Lewis, Marion Mann, Mathilda Misrack, Anita Skinner, Sally Trauner, Ethel Turner, and Ruth Zakheim.

Accompaniment by Lou Harrison

3. San Francisco Museum of Art

June 15th, 1937

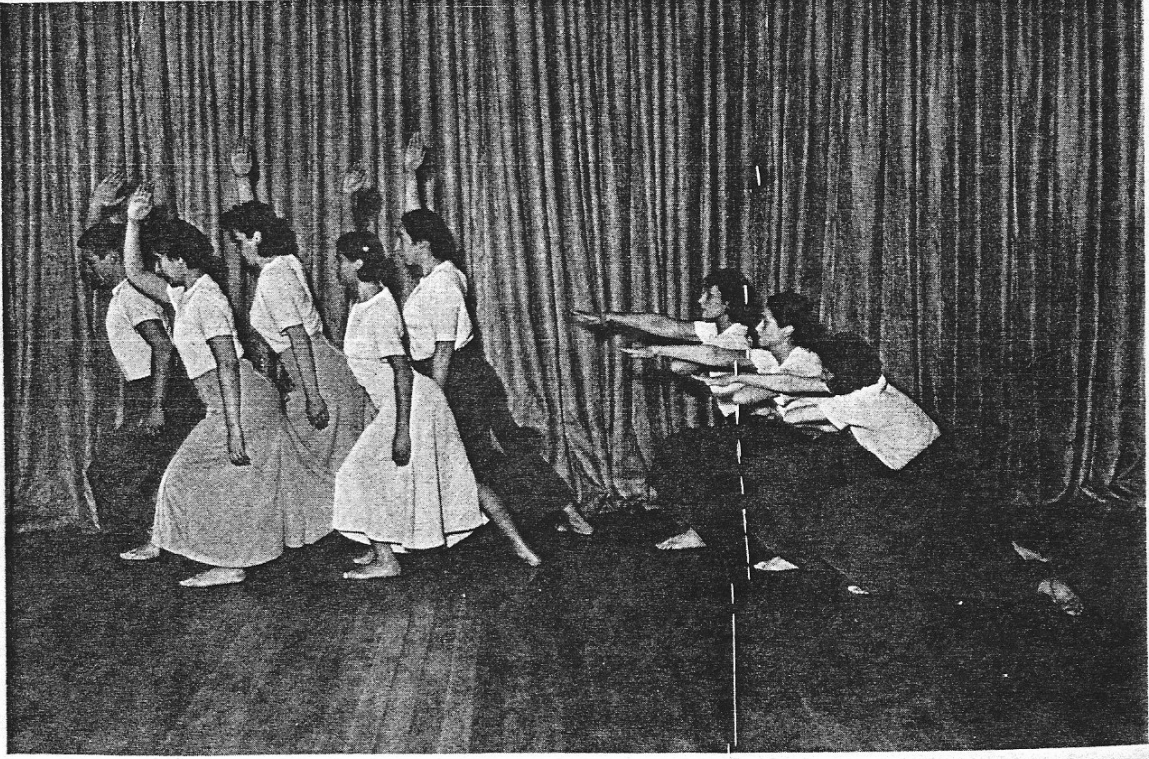
"Dance Program honoring Mr. John Martin, *New York Times* Dance Critic"

performed by the Carol Beals Dance Group

Accompaniment by Lou Harrison

4. Nature Friends Hall in Mill Valley

[Date and Cast unknown].



Carol Beals Dance Group in "Waterfront—1934"

Photo included in the Dance Council of Northern California's program "Second Annual Dance Festival: Growth & Development of San Francisco" in 1936. Collection of Dance Programs. University of California, Los Angeles Special Collections.



Strikers and Police during the San Francisco general strike, circa July 1934. Photo: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Appendix B: Performance Chronology of *Parades and Changes*

City: San Francisco

Date: March 31, 1965 - 12:30pm

Title: Excerpts from *Parades and Changes*

Theater: San Francisco State College, Main Auditorium

Cast: Karen Ahlberg, Todd Bryant, Laurie Grunberg, Michael Katz, Norma Leistiko, Daria Halprin, Jani Novak, Kathy Peterson, Nancy Peterson, Jim Theile, Peter Weiss, and Jim Yensan

Collaborators: Ann Halprin (director), Morton Subotnik (Sound), Patric Hickey (Lighting), Joan Yost (Costume Designer), Charles Ross (environmentalist)

City: Berkeley

Date: April 24, 1965 - 8:30pm

Title: *Parades and Changes*

Theater: UC Berkeley, Wheeler Auditorium

Cast: John Graham, A.A. Leath, Ann Halprin, Norma Leistiko, Consuelo Sandoval, Daria Halprin

Collaborators: Morton Subotnik and Folke Rabe (sound score), Patric Hickey (Lighting), Charles Ross (Sculptor)

City: Fresno

Date: May 9, 1965

Title: *Parades and Changes*

Theater: Fresno Five Arts Festival, Arena Theater

Cast: Norma Leistiko, Rana Halprin, Anna Halprin, and three other dancers

Collaborators: Folke Rabe, Charles Ross

City: Stockholm

Date: September 5-7, 1965

Title: *Parades and Changes*

Theater: Stadsteatern Theater, Stockholm Contemporary Music Fest

Cast: Anna Halprin, Rana Halprin, Daria Halprin, Larry Goldsmith, Paul Goldsmith, Kim Hahn, Jani Novak, John Graham, A.A. Leath

Collaborators: Folke Rabe, Charles Ross

City: Warsaw

Date: September 24, 1965 - 8pm

Title: *Parades and Changes*

Theater: Teatr Dramatyczny, Warsaw Contemporary Music Festival

Cast: Anna Halprin, Rana Halprin, Daria Halprin, Larry Goldsmith, Paul Goldsmith, Jani Novak, John Graham, A.A. Leath.

Collaborators: Jo Landor, Folke Rabe, Morton Subotnik, Charles Ross, Patrick Hickey

City: Hartford, Connecticut

Date: April 15-16, 1967

Title: *Parades and Changes* in two parts

Theater: Wadsworth Atheneum Museum

Cast: Karen Ahlberg, Todd Bryant, Michael Katz, Morris Kelley, Daria Halprin, Nick Peckham (dancer, lighting), Kathy Peterson, Nancy Peterson, Peter Weiss

Collaborators: Patric Hickey (lighting), Jo Landor (co-director, costumes), Morton Subotnik (composer) Michael Czajkowski (composer, assistant), Donald Penney (stage manager), Paul Ryan (slides)

City: New York City

Date: April 21-22, 1967

Title: *Parades and Changes*

Theater: Hunter College Playhouse

Cast: Karen Ahlberg (dancer), Todd Bryant (live jug-band music), Michael Katz (dancer), Morris Kelley (dancer), Daria Halprin (dancer), Donald Penney (Stage Manager), Nancy Peterson (dancer), Kathy Peterson (dancer), Joseph Schlichter (guest dancer), Peter Weiss (dancer)

Collaborators: Jo Landor (costumes and co-director), Morton Subotnik (composer) , Patric Hickey (lighting), Suzushi Hanayagi (classical Japanese dance, light and stage assistant), and Louise (goat)

Appendix C: Scores for *Parades and Changes*

Embrace Section: (*Dictionary definition: a close encircling with arms and pressure to the bosom, esp. in the intimacies of love; I. to clasp in the arms, as with affection; ii. to take in hand; to take to heart, to receive readily; to welcome; to accept; iii. to include as parts of a whole.*) Go as far as you can (and get away with). Maintain this focus and relax it only when your action is interrupted.

Dress and Undress: Focus on the audience and begin slowly and steadily to take off your clothes. When you are naked, notice your breathing, then put on your clothes. Focus on someone in the group and repeat the action. Repeat a third time.

Paper Dance: Make ten single sounds on the paper. Crumple the paper for sixty counts, then tear continuously, listening to your sounds. When you have had enough, collect as large a bundle of paper as you can, and exit.

— *Published in Halprin 1995: 102*

Blow, Flick, Rip, Gather, Whistle

Object: to keep rip or gather going without breaking flow.

- 1. Choose point and try to make it to that goal.*
 - 2. If goal is achieved, set new goal and try to make it to that goal but also go up a rung on movement ladder*
 - 3. If goal is not achieved, go through stop square connected to action, then start all over again.*
- Note: If you contact another person, you must curve away and then continue to goal.*

Parade Dialogue

Vocal Material: Be a tour guide

Refuse to buy life insurance

Self-Critical

Read Currencies: Real or factious

Great favorite attraction with great enthusiasm

Keep your focus on the conductor and execute material according to his signals

Treat your voice as a musical instrument

Space: Place is assigned ahead of time (if you have reason to change tell the conductor.)

Parade of costumes

Movement Materials: slow and steady (establish and keep it going with unison in group)

Walking forward: right, left, pivot turns, bending, lifting

Pay attention to: consistent sustained Movement in total body, even hands and arms while adjusting costume. Also, keep locomotion going even when bending down to gather materials.

Cues... Coat (Connie) right left yellow orange (anyone) Pass Connie, Collect (A.A.) Pass is a new cue meaning that some object will start being passed from person to person with out altering any other of the ideas.

While putting costumes on and off give your self time to appreciate the changes in yourself. This may alter your sense of regularity in intervals of time between putting on leaving on taking off.

Parade of objects

Movement Materials: Group 1. *Fast and off the ground or high short step*

Group 2. *Slow and Low*

Interchange group 1 and 2 as a grouping several times before interchanging within the groups

Space: to be selected at each theater (At UC aisles, both, connected by crossing over front and back)

Attitude toward objects:

-You can select at free will any object.

-You may encounter objects by change in your pathway or through another person

-Your focus is your own execution of your materials and Chuck will be responsible for getting objects where he wants them.

-Objects used to extend yourself in space

Construction Section

First step is for Chuck to establish the directional and spatial delineations. Second step is for the dancers to use their movement charts within the limitations set by Chuck's structure.

Up and down: Vertical directions

1. *Move continuously without any dynamic change. (Ann)*

2. *Go to a high place and stay there. Move in the high place. (Rana)*

3. *Move and collapse (Kim)*

4. *Move fast, go limp (remain limp when encountered) Daria*

5. *Run to, run away from, improvise in encounters (A.A.)*

6. *Drag yourself, collapse, improvise in encounters (John)*

7. *Move and be still (Yani)*

Parade of Light

Action: Pass lantern to another person

Attitude: be aware of what the light is doing to your figure and what it is lighting up. Where you hold the light will create a particular kind of editing. Use this.

—Halprin 1965a

Appendix D: Halprin's Influences

Section	Sources and Influences
Construction/Scaffolding Section	<p>Collaborations with Lawrence Halprin: the creation of performances based on responding to architectural structures</p> <p>Auditing classes at the Harvard Graduate School of Design directed by Walter Gropius, as well as offering movement classes for architects on how the spatial environment affected group movement.</p> <p>Tony Martin's large cargo net that occupied the stage during Halprin's dance for Berio's opera <i>Esposizione</i> (1963)</p>
Parade of Costumes Parade of Objects	<p>Cage and Cunningham: arbitrary relationships between different elements of the performance; aleatory procedures</p> <p>Object-driven task scores appeared in previous pieces, beginning in the late 1950s: <i>Birds of America, or Gardens without Walls</i> (1960), <i>Three Legged Stool</i> (1960-1), <i>Four Legged Stool</i> (1961), <i>Five Legged Stool</i> (1962), <i>Exposizione</i> (1963), and <i>Procession</i> (1964).</p> <p><i>Exposizione</i> and <i>Procession</i> involved carrying large piles of props through the auditorium.</p>
Embrace Section	<p>Avant-garde theater scene in San Francisco: San Francisco Actor's Workshop (directed by Herbert Blau with Lee Breuer and Ken Dewey as assistant directors), San Francisco Mime Troupe, the Committee Theater, the Open Theater. The Living Theater traveled to San Francisco in 1963 and shared an evening of performance with the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop at 321 Divisadero St. The work of Antonin Artaud was a critical influence on the Mime Troupe and the Living Theater.</p> <p>Allan Kaprow's Happenings. Kaprow had sent Halprin many postcards and posters with Happening scores that remain within the correspondence folders of her personal papers from the early 1960s.</p>

<p>Paper Dance Stomp and Shout Score</p>	<p>San Francisco Tape Music Center Composers, who Halprin shared space with at 321 Divisadero St.: Terry Riley, La Monte Young, Ramon Sender, Anthony Martin, Pauline Oliveros.</p> <p>Fluxus Events</p>
<p>Dress/Undress Section</p>	<p>Fritz Perls' Gestalt workshops. Perls worked with Halprin's Dancers Workshop for 8 years, beginning in 1962.</p> <p>Studying somatics and anatomy with Margaret H'Doubler at University of Wisconsin, Madison. Influence of Mabel Todd's <i>Ideokinesis</i>, Ida Rolf's <i>Structural Integration</i>, Moshe Feldenkrais' <i>Awareness Through Movement</i>, and Randolph Stone's polarity therapy.</p>

Appendix E: Wallflower Order's *Journeys*



Defiance, Wallflower Order. Clockwise from Bottom: Krissy Keefer, Lyn Neeley, Pamela Gray, Suchi Branfman, Nina Fichter, Photo by Susan Wilson.



Nina Fichter and Krissy Keefer. Photo by Jim Orjala.

Appendix F: Wallflower Order's Lyrics

Collectives song

Music by Jeff Langley and Holly Near

I have been in this collective for eleven hundred years
And every time I turn around, someone else breaks into tears
We work and dance so hard the whole day long
We must be doing something wrong
We're so sure and we are so bored

Chorus:

We're the dancers, we're the writers
We're the ones who book the tour
Make the costumes, print the pictures, organize the new brochure
Check out feelings, clear up concepts
Criticism, self-criticism until we're dead
And when we are done, we've got no time, we've got no bread

We've stayed together so much longer, more than lovers often can
This must be some strange marriage now that's getting out of hand
We even have the same home, never a moment when we were alone
Twenty-four hours with Wallflowers

Chorus

We figure life like that could only serve a small minority
You have to be white, middle-class, downwardly mobile, childless, independently wealthy
Stop making this a sorority
Its so hard to change; we only maintain
The contradictions in our lives became an awful fight
We argue late into the night about what was wrong and right
Our differences were open wide
We couldn't all just run and hide
I wanted to go far away
But I had her car that day

Chorus

There was so much that we had unity around
Like the country that we live in is controlled by the big boss
You can't maintain collectives when all else is profit and loss
We need to change this country way down deep
Imperialism we must defeat
And socialism, that is what we want

Chorus

We've changed inside and that means revolution
We've changed inside and that means revolution

Program Note

We have dedicated ourselves to the principles of criticism / self-criticism and have studied a book called *Self Criticism* by Gracie Lyons, which has helped us through many hard times.

Music: Taken from a song called "Lingerie" which was written by Jeff Langley

The words were rewritten by Krissy (Wallflower Order n.d.).

[Lyrics transcribed by author from Barling's 1982 video. Any errors are my own.]

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