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Dancing the World Smaller: Staging Globalism in Mid-Century America
Rebekah J. Kowal

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Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Kowal, Rebekah J., author.
Title: Dancing the world smaller : staging globalism in mid-century America / Rebekah J. Kowal.
Description: New York : Oxford University Press, [2019] | Series: Oxford studies in dance theory | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019002306 (print) | LCCN 2019019506 (ebook) | ISBN 9780190265335 (updf) | ISBN 9780190265342 (epub) | ISBN 9780190265359 (oso) | ISBN 9780190265311 (cloth : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780190265328 (pbk. : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Dance—Political aspects—New York (State)—New York—History—20th century. | Folk dancing—Political aspects—New York (State)—New York—History—20th century. | Dancers—Political Activity—New York (State)—New York—History—20th century. | Dance and Globalization—New York (State)—New York—History—20th century. | Cultural diplomacy—New York (State)—New York—History—20th century. | Multiculturalism—New York (State)—New York—History—20th century. | New York (N.Y.)—Ethnic relations—History—20th century.
Classification: LCC GV1624.5.N4 (ebook) | LCC GV1624.5.N4 K68 2019 (print) | DDC 792.809747/1—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019002306

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed by Sheridan Books, Inc.
United States of America

For Dave, Noah, and Isaac

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FOREWORD

Rebekah Kowal's *Dancing the World Smaller* is the first monograph to address how mid-century concert dance in New York City coincided with the aims, but also the paradoxes, of US globalist policy from the early 1940s through the mid-1950s. The practices of globalism were meant, as Kowal explains, to be pluralistic and international—indeed, were based on an aspirational notion of cultural universalism in the wake of the devastation of World War II. The United Nations was founded in 1945 and foresaw a globalized resolution to the end of the war as well as an internationalist forum located in New York City. As well, the United Nations ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Globalism, however, also served the dictates and priorities of American diplomacy once the nation became a major world power and as New York came to be considered the cultural capital of the world. Here, one notices a certain parallel in art history with Serge Guilbaut's *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, except that globalism when staged as dance obtained an ethnological dimension that interfaced significantly yet also uncomfortably with aesthetic modernism in dance whereas the relocation of the art world to New York effectively asserted a revolution in modern art itself. The globalist moment, in other terms, was of less import in shifting the cultural balance toward the idea of New York as the dance capital of the world, yet it did have a role to play in the establishment of this idea. Kowal's account is one, in the final analysis, not of triumph but of failure.

The context of Kowal's study is therefore the birth of globalism and how dance at mid-century was identified as a medium particularly well suited to foster enhanced international and intercultural understanding. This was, perhaps, the first self-conscious statement of a world-dance idea, yet starting in the 1970s dance scholars also exposed it to sustained critique. In some cases, Kowal attempts to resolve the differences between earlier views and later arguments by historicizing the early views. Kowal returns in this book to the forgotten origins of the world dance idea itself

and suggests thereby a new historiography of the concept. The artists who claim her attention may have been well known at the time but did not become canonical and today are relatively forgotten. Kowal devotes extended analysis to La Meri, Asadata Dafora, Ram Gopal, Serge Lifar, and Charles Weidman (as a representative of the United States). The venues in which these artists were produced were all influenced by some version of the globalist credo: the Museum of Natural History's *Around the World with Dance and Song* festival (1943–1952) and the international dance festival that was contained within the 1948 New York Golden Jubilee Celebration. Kowal's narrative moves adroitly between issues of presenting and production, issues of creative process and intention as well as professional status, and issues of critical reception. All of these modalities are unified under the rubric of "staging." The historiographical conceptualization of global dance unveils a forgotten cultural landscape within an early stage of globalization.

While there has been notable dance scholarship investigating how American concert dance was exported to the world at large during the Cold War, this book takes the opposite perspective. *Dancing the World Smaller* focuses on how dance from abroad was imported to the United States either literally or figuratively (depending on the background and nationality of the practitioner) and for what reasons. Kowal reveals how the situation of dance in this pre- and postwar context endeavored to move beyond the exoticism of earlier modern dance that sought inspiration in non-Western sources and how it advanced to a more scholarly and systematic approach to dance presented on stage as cultural expression. Authenticity was, however, the sticking point. Critics were often aware they were accepting as authentic something of which they had no knowledge. Further, the demands of theatricality in the representation of otherness could and did clash with the aims of modernism understood as creative work whose basis was guaranteed by the individual artist rather than the communal culture. In this critical framework, the demands of innovation and tradition clashed. The resulting friction between dance modernism and ethnographic inquiry is one of many provocative aspects of the book and should take a seminal position in generating future research.

Mark Franko
Series Editor

Dancing the World Smaller

Introduction

In the summer of 1948, New York City officials staged a Golden Jubilee Celebration to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the unification of the city's five affiliated boroughs and tasked Grover Whalen, president of the 1939 New York World's Fair, to program the festivities. Responsibility for planning the Golden Jubilee gave Whalen a second chance to preside over a grand and festive event. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 had dampened activities at the New York World's Fair necessitating a thematic shift during the fair's second season in which the utopian "The World of Tomorrow" programmed for 1939 gave way to a focus on "Peace and Freedom" in 1940 (Duranti 2006, 1).[1] Much had changed in the nine-year interim between Whalen's assignments. In securing the Allied victory, America had gained global standing in what had become a new world order (Rosenboim 2017, 2).[2] Likewise, New York City had become the "culture capital of the world."[3] Accordingly, Whalen conceived of the festivities for the Golden Jubilee Celebration as occasions to look back and to look forward. Some events highlighted the city's legacy as the national seat of 1930s popular and cultural fronts, including a "New York at Work" parade, which paid tribute to municipal laborers, a massive exposition showcasing the city's 102 municipal departments, and a month-long fashion show highlighting the city's garment district. Other events anticipated the city's future as a center for global trade and technological development, including an International Air Exposition heralding aviation innovations and transatlantic travel as well as a nuclear energy display, sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission and *Life* magazine.[4]

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DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190265328.03.0005

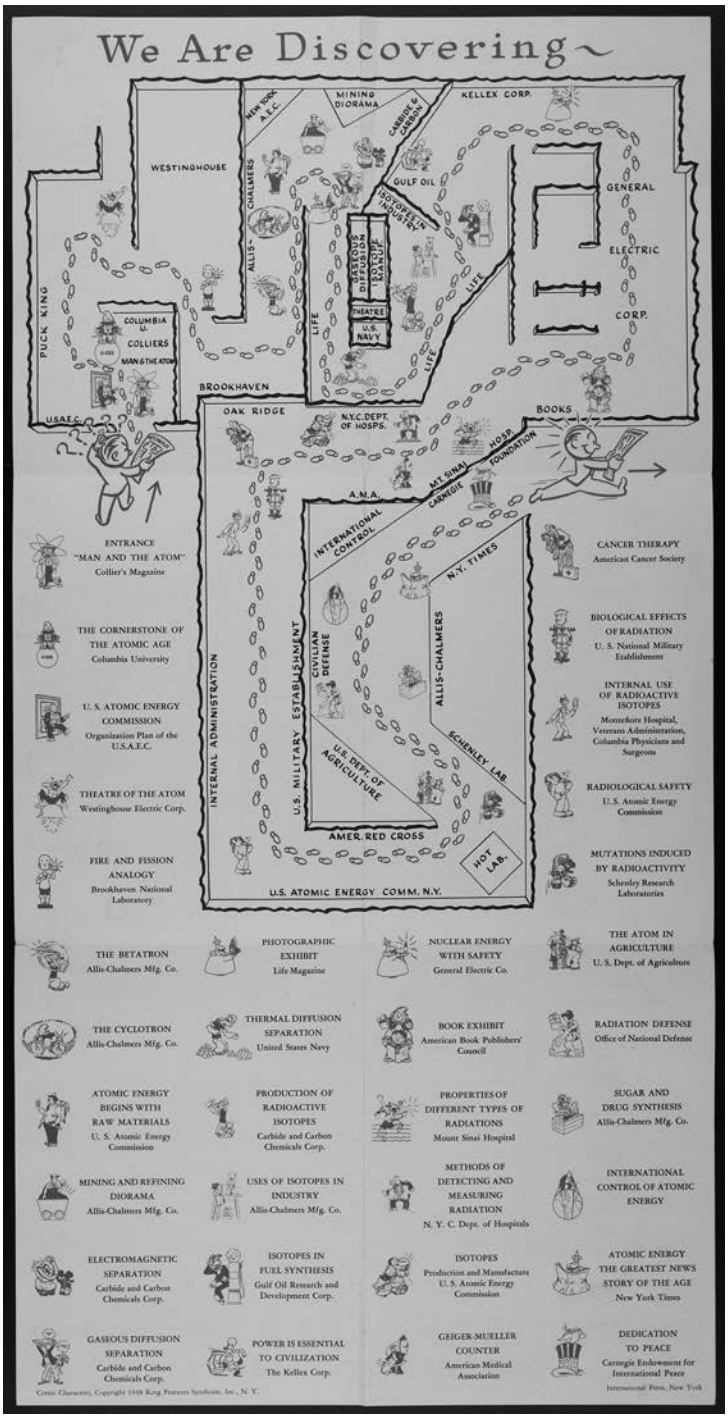


Figure I.1 "Man and the Atom" Exhibit Floor Plan. Courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives.

A *New York Times* editorial entitled "Our Great City" explained the significance of the Golden Jubilee for the city's residents, asserting that the "entertaining and enlightening show . . . will offer New Yorkers an opportunity to understand their city better" (August 23, 1948). Among other things, the celebration highlighted the city's demographic, economic, and cultural transformation over the past fifty years. Its population nearly tripling in size to 8 million people since the original unification of the city's five boroughs in 1898, by 1948 New York had become an international center of cultural and commercial production, supplanting European capitals such as London, Paris, and Berlin, all of which had been decimated by World War II. In the words of the paper's editorial board: "As a sort of capital city of the world—a position reinforced by the location of the United Nations headquarters here—*we symbolize the democracy and opportunities of America*" (1948, 16, New York City Municipal Archives [NYCMA], emphasis mine).[5] In figuring the city as "a sort of capital city of the world," the editorial advanced the idea that New York was a global nexus of cultural diversity. Going further, it underlined a correspondence between the city as site and symbol: a physical place for cultural, commercial and diplomatic activities, and a symbol of "opportunities" afforded by American democratic capitalism. The paper's editorial board therefore took advantage of the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebration to promote the city's role in furthering the nation's postwar globalist goals, premised on securing a new world order founded on free-market economic policies as well as on American political and military leadership (Hearden 2002, 51; Reynolds 2006, 305).[6]

Conceiving the Golden Jubilee Celebration as an opportunity to feature New York City in these lights, Whalen factored an international dance festival into his overall plan and hired famed impresario Sol Hurok as its producer. A native of Russia and naturalized US citizen, Hurok was well known in dance circles at the time having managed extensive American tours of Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova from 1921 to 1925 and the Ballets Russe de Monte Carlo in the 1930s; he had "played a major role in popularizing dance with a wider audience and is regarded as a major force in the rapid growth of the American dance 'industry' in the mid-twentieth century" (Robinson 2012, 1).[7] Hurok envisioned a memorable event for which invited countries would send "their representative dance companies to New York," putting the city on the map as a destination not only for modernist dance but also for international dance performances (correspondence July 3, 1947, NYCMA). In Hurok's words, "The focus of the Festival would be New York City. This would be the first time an achievement of such scope would be accomplished in this field, *a fitting climax to illustrate the cultural development of our city*" (July 3, 1947, emphasis mine). Initially Hurok sought to hold the festival at

Figure I.2 International Dance Festival Brochure Front, 1948 New York Golden Jubilee Celebration. Courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives.

Figure I.3 International Dance Festival Brochure, Back Page, 1948 New York Golden Jubilee Celebration. Courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives.

the Metropolitan Opera House, along with an international dance competition "similar [to] but more comprehensive than those in recent years held in Copenhagen, Geneva, and other European cities," which could feature "classic, folk, and native dances" (July 3, 1947, letter, NYCMA). He also entertained the possibility of organizing a national tour for participating artists to "other major cities" in the United States. In the end, none of these more ambitious plans materialized.

Whalen did follow up on Hurok's initial recommendations, however, sending a cablegram to the foreign ministers of Mexico, England, France, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Sweden, Cuba, Guatemala, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, China, and India inviting their respective countries "to participate and be represented by a classic or folk-dance group." Whalen's cablegram advertised the international dance festival as an occasion befitting the selection of New York City as the "chosen . . . capitol of the United Nations," an event that would "demonstrate" "the cultural contribution of the peoples of the world toward the growth of the City of New York" (July 29, 1947, NYCMA).[8] Correspondence by Hurok and Whalen makes manifest their belief that hosting an international dance festival within the Golden Jubilee Celebration would reinforce the city's reputation as a global destination for concert dance production, while, at the same time, showcasing its vital multiculturalism.

Considering the core contentions of this book we could go further to say that Whalen and Hurok clearly envisioned what can be called a "globalist project" in grafting the global onto the local and imagining the international dance festival as both a microcosm of the United Nations and an extension of New York City's role as the postwar cultural capital of the world. Furthermore, Whalen's and Hurok's assumptions that an international dance festival could advance such a project and that audiences would be receptive to such an event indicate salient features of the existing cultural environment within the city itself, including the institutions, audiences, and ethos that supported dance artists, dance making, and dance performance, and how these entities may already have been invested in engaging with globalist ideas and ideals.

For one, Whalen's and Hurok's plan to produce an international dance festival leveraged the city's function as "the dance center of the world," owing to the vibrant development of American dance modernism. Modern dance and ballet thrived in the city after World War II in a fertile cosmopolitan environment in which modernist art forms including in dance were celebrated as emblems of American artistic and cultural dominance (Garafola 1988; Polcari 1991; Harris 1993; Franko 1995; Jackson 2000; Foulkes 2002; Manning 2004; Kowal 2010; Harris 2017). In the ensuing Cold War years, the US government capitalized on the strength of modernist dance production, largely based in New York City, enlisting dance artists to extend the reach of the nation's dominance by sending them around the world to work as cultural ambassadors (Kammen 1996; Prevots 1998; Von Eschen 2004, Croft 2015). Functioning in this capacity, American dance and dancers embodied American cultural and political values.

Alongside these efforts to cultivate and export American artistic talent both at home and abroad was a parallel effort to promote globalism at home through engagement with international dance artists and the cultures they represented through their dancing. Initiatives such as the idea to host an international dance festival as part of the 1948 New York Golden Jubilee Celebration, therefore, both originated from and harnessed a contemporaneous zeitgeist. Evidence can be seen in two cultural phenomena beginning in the early 1940s, which form the basis of my investigation in this book: the first was a proliferation of performances of international, or what was then called "ethnic" or "ethnologic" dance, during and after World War II in New York City and elsewhere across the United States; the second was a sense among artists and audiences at the time that participation in such events contributed to national efforts toward finding common ground among diverse peoples through cultural exchanges and with an expressed goal of promoting world peace and security.

With respect to the first phenomenon, the terms "ethnic" and "ethnologic" dance were used broadly at the time by dance artists, dance critics and scholars, and audience members to denote movement forms that, in the words of dance critic Walter Terry "mirror similarities and differences which distinguish eras, races, nations and regions" (July 3, 1949). Anthropologist Maya Deren defined these terms along similar lines in an article she wrote for *Mademoiselle* magazine in 1948 entitled "Ethnic Dance" in which she asserted that "unlike modern dance or traditional ballet, ethnic dancers are physical statements of a cultural totality," and that the "accumulation of [their] labor over time results in a 'rightness' in the relationship between physical movement and ideological content, a rightness which could scarcely be achieved by a modern dancer who starts at the bottom with only her individual ingenuity and experience to bring to the resolution of an original problem" (169). Both Terry and Deren saw cultural dance forms through essentialist lenses, or, in dance historian Walter Sorrell's words in defining ethnologic dance as late as 1967, as "the art expression of a race."[9]

In this book, I deploy the anachronistic terms "ethnic" and "ethnologic dance," used during the mid-century period, as a means of investigating how artists who affiliated themselves with these terms, producers such as Hurok, and theatrical venues including the 1948 International Dance Festival, staged globalism through dance and performance practices, providing artists and audiences occasions for dancing the world smaller.[10] Other such venues in New York City included the American Museum of Natural History, which sponsored a long-running concert dance performance series, "Around the World with Dance and Song" between 1943 and

1952; Carnegie Hall, which presented three "African Dance Festivals" in 1943, 1945, and 1946; and the School of Natya, later called the Ethnologic Dance Center, which hosted what were called "reunion concerts" featuring the Natyas, students of modern dance pioneer Ruth St. Denis and ethnologic dance pioneer La Meri, La Meri's Exotic Ballet company, and other performers identified with the field of ethnic dance.[11] As I will detail in chapters that follow, as extensions of these New York–based activities, performances along the same lines took place elsewhere in the American heartland, when, for example, Sierra-Leonean choreographer and dancer Asadata Dafora and his company, Shologa Oloba, toured historically black colleges and universities and cities in the South and Midwest between 1946 and 1947; also manifesting the interest in ethnic dance, Edna Dieman and Julia Bennett, protégés of La Meri, established the Dieman-Bennett Dance Theatre of the Hemispheres in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1951, a school that operated actively until 1997 under the banner "Diversity in Dance."[12]

As I will reveal, artists whose work was produced in venues primarily in New York City and elsewhere across the United States were prominent and celebrated in their time. Yet their legacies have since been pushed to the margins of dance historical scholarship; caught in the cross-hairs of legitimate debates about appropriation, authenticity, and exoticization; and/or subordinated within assessments of their relative aesthetic value compared to modernist dance formations. *Dancing the World Smaller* recognizes these issues as part and parcel of the story it seeks to tell about what has persisted as the invisible contributions of ethnic dance artists in ushering in an era of American globalism alongside and often in dialog with formations of modernism in American dance. Whereas other scholars have focused on ideological and political aspects of globalism, my research seeks to understand globalism from the perspectives of dance and performance studies, as a practice and lived experience, on the one hand, and as a performance, on the other.[13]

In short, *Dancing the World Smaller* investigates how dance artists, critics, and audiences contested what it meant to stage globalism in midcentury America. I show how individuals and communities that formed around a common investment in international dance performance engaged in imagining America's role as a global superpower following the Second World War and a world with the US at the center. Examining both the artistic practices and productions of then-called "ethnic" and/or "ethnologic" dance artists and the discourses surrounding their labors, I seek to illuminate consequential debates both within the dance field itself and within American social and cultural life during the 1940s. In fact,

debates that might appear to pertain exclusively to a dance context can be seen on further examination to proxy larger cultural struggles over how to reconcile the nation's new role in the world and what that meant in a domestic context. In dance as in cultural politics, Americans struggled over whether and/or how to become a heterogeneous and inclusive nation. At issue was the country's fraught relationship with diversity in both international and domestic spheres, characterized by dueling impulses toward openness, multiculturalism, and multilateralism, all key components of postwar globalism, on the one hand, and nationalism, containment, homogeneity, and isolationism, vestiges of nativist and racist American cultural legacies, on the other.[14]

"DANCING THE WORLD SMALLER"

The title of the book, *Dancing the World Smaller*, comes from a headline for Henry Simon's December 14, 1943, article published in *P.M. New York*, in which he reviewed the 1943 African dance festival, an event sponsored by the African Academy of Arts and Research (AAAR) at Carnegie Hall. Here, Simon quotes Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe, director of the AAAR, who implored the crowd thus: "This is a small world. We must make it smaller. And only men and good will can make it stronger."[15]

Dance critics John Martin, who wrote for the *New York Times*, and Walter Terry, who wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune*, shared Mbadiwe's idea about the capability of dance to "make the world smaller." In *Introduction to the Dance* (1939), for example, Martin outlined his theory of "metakinesis," or "movement perception," which owed to dance's "employment" of the "movement of the body and its reactions to the environment . . . a material that is closer to life experience than that employed by any of the other arts." Martin held that movement forged connections through empathic channels of recognition, as he explained: "All types of gesture and facial expression convey meaning to us automatically because we have felt similar muscular experiences ourselves and recognize the postural attitudes and their emotional connotations as having happened to us" (48).[16]

Walter Terry's writings went beyond those of Martin to conceptualize how dance could bridge boundaries as an avenue of diplomacy. Having served in the US Army during World War II in North Africa and Egypt, taught modern dance to Egyptian students at the American University in Cairo, and lectured to US troops stationed there during his spare time, Terry passionately advocated the cross-cultural benefits of dance on returning

home. Terry frequently seized on opportunities to reflect on what he saw as dance's contribution to cultural understanding. As he wrote in 1946, "The time is . . . ripe for a realization that the art of dancing can be one of the most potent means of cultural exchange, a realization which will probably dawn slowly (and understandably so) upon some Americans unaware of the prestige of dance in many other nations and unaware of our own recent achievements in the field" (Terry, December 8, 1946). As is evident in this passage and elsewhere in his body of work, Terry reasoned that dance's role in "cultural exchange" owed to its nature as a nonverbal form of communication; in his words, "It is not shackled by the barrier of language." Dance's "greatest attribute," Terry surmised, is its "inception, its existence and its fulfillment *in the human body*" (Terry, December 8, 1946). To validate this claim, Terry recalled what dance meant to him as a member of the US armed forces fighting in World War II, thus:

> From personal experience, I can tell of the unifying factor of dance. An alien tongue, an alien faith or alien customs can be annoying or bewildering, but when the possessor of those alien properties commences to dance, accent is perforce thrown upon the common denominator of the human body and for the duration of the dance one is aware of that property which is common to all. . . . If this awareness of the common denominator can be achieved from time to time through dance, then dance has done a good job not as a panacea but as a contributing agent to unity. In these times, any unifying agent is worthy of employ. Dance, I believe, can be such an agent ("Value of Dance to Unesco's Cultural Program Discussed," December 8, 1946).

Terry's theorization of how dance functioned as a "unifying factor" foregrounds an experience of performance wherein the senses process difference in ways that would otherwise be blocked by cognitive perception. In this case, the dancing body eliminated barriers among people that would, under ordinary circumstances, underline distinctions, determine divisions, and/or open distances.

We might see impulses such as Terry's as contributing to the cultivation of what dance historian Andrea Harris has called "an interdependent global community" in New York City in the early 1940s, a socio-cultural response to the trauma of war, the crisis of Fascism, and the subsequent dissolution of faith in human reason and fundamental goodness (2018, 156). In the late 1930s and early 1940s, choreographer Martha Graham, along with counterparts in the literary and visual arts, "explored human destructiveness and apocalyptic historic events in a mythic mode," as her friend, poet Ben Belitt put it: "Tragedy in 1946 was forced upon both of us; we were

both a version of some innocent identity who had thought the world was reasonable" (Franko 2012, 6; Belitt quoted in Franko). Terry's and Belitt's perspectives offer important windows onto the ways globalist ideas and ideals shaped critical thinking about dance and artistic practices at this time; they also bring us closer to conceptualizing what might have been at stake in staging globalism during the mid-century period.[17]

From this vantage point, it is not a stretch to project forward to 1954 and to understand the rationale behind the federal initiation of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Emergency Fund for International Affairs, a program that formally enlisted dance artists as cultural ambassadors through international touring activities, engaging in "dancing the world smaller" (Prevots 1998; Kowal 2010; Croft 2015).[18] In this case, the performing arts were used to bridge individual differences and cultural divisions so as to promote American political, cultural, and economic ideas across the world. In short, the arts manifest democratic values of artistic innovation, individuality, and ingenuity, thus standing as an exhibit A, if you will, for American objections to totalitarian systems that curtailed expressive freedoms of artists and intellectuals.

AMERICAN GLOBALISM AT MID-CENTURY

Dance critics' and later the US government's assumption that dancers made good cultural ambassadors and that dance had the potential to bridge differences grew out of the national experience in the 1940s. In the early years of World War II, the United States had taken a "neutral stance" on Nazi encroachment in Eastern and Western Europe and implementation of Nazi plans to exterminate Jewish peoples. In the midst of a refugee crisis, in which hundreds of thousands of European Jews sought asylum in the United States, the vast majority of Americans polled (83 percent) opposed increasing immigration quotas to accommodate the waves of refugees ("The United States and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–1941," Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed January 7, 2019). American involvement changed after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the collective mobilization required to wage a war on foreign soil to defend the world against fascism.

The central role the United States played in the conflict changed Americans' perceptions of themselves and their country's standing in world affairs, intensifying the public's sense of the relative proximity of diverse peoples and cultures even across oceans and vast geographical distances. News accounts of battles fought abroad, as well as letters

written by service members to their loved ones back home, heightened the public's awareness of life in far-away places. Detonation of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945 intensified the public's sense of the nation's vulnerability owing to palpable fear that there was no place on earth beyond the reach of a powerful nuclear weapon (Graebner 1991).

The war brought a shift in worldwide thinking about cultivating global unity through a system of world government, called "One World" by supporters of the concept and by Wendell Willkie, former Republican candidate for president, who ran against President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and lost in 1940. This was the title of a book Willkie published in 1943 advocating that "there can be no peace for any part of the world unless the foundations of peace are made secure throughout all parts of the world" (Willkie quoted in Wittner 1993, 43).[19] Furthermore, agreements formalized in the Atlantic Charter (1941) and the United Nations Declaration (1942) outlined some of the central tenets of American globalism along these lines in the mid-century, as these formalized multilateral solutions to geopolitical conflict and international security, organized around American military might and moral leadership, even as they prompted debates over the future of European colonialism (Von Eschen 1997; Meriwether 2002).[20] We might also see the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," issued by the UN General Assembly in 1948, in this context, a document in which "the peoples of the United Nations have in their Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" ("217 (III). International Bill of Human Rights," 71).

Published in *Life* magazine, editor Henry Luce's February 1941 editorial, "The American Century," exemplified the logic of mid-century globalist thinking in envisioning America's enlarged global position as well as its responsibilities in the aftermath of the war effort. Luce expressed the nation's reluctance in prosecuting a war "not to defend American territory" but to "defend and even to promote, encourage and incite so-called democratic principles throughout the world" (1999, 161). Additionally, he wrote to persuade readers of their complicity in the nation's failure to take an active role in world affairs, which, has led to "disastrous consequences for themselves and for all mankind." As a "cure," Luce envisioned one solution: "to accept wholeheartedly our duty and our opportunity as the most powerful and vital nation in the world and in consequence to exert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit" (165).

Luce's editorial articulated a globalist ideology founded on the moral imperative to rid the world of "tyranny" by fighting for "peace" and "justice," and according to what he called a "Constitutional" internationalism envisioned "of the people, by the people and for the people." (167–68). As imagined by Luce, American globalism would seek to remake the world in the nation's own image, through the spread of democratic capitalism and "free market" trading practices, technological training of its own and the world's citizens, and an adoption of "Good Samaritan of the entire world" policies to supply foreign aid and assistance to head off or to address international humanitarian disasters (168–71). In hindsight, Luce's editorial also reveals the limitations of its own cultural and philosophical assumptions. Namely, his Anglo-centric perspective, as indicative of a dominant cultural view on the nation's mid-century moral authority, failed to acknowledge the irony inherent in a globalist ideology that would support freedom, justice, and basic necessities for all the world's citizens without addressing national policies and practices that denied Americans of color access to the same rights and comforts, and that would turn a blind eye to sexism in both the public and the private spheres.

In *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States,* 1939–1950, Or Rosenboim investigates the rise of globalist thought among public intellectuals and policymakers in the West during 1940s.[21] According to Rosenboim, globalism arose in the context of World War II and as an antidote to its aftermath, "an attempt to provide a better response to confusion and turmoil," on the one hand, and a forward-looking worldview that portended "change," a future of global interconnectivity and interdependence, that was, at the same time, transformative and perilously unstable, on the other hand (2017, 19).[22] Globalism served as an ideology formulated to envision how nation-states might forge alliances driven not by the goal of world domination or empire but by a common "concern for the future of democracy" (8). Yet what it meant to adopt a globalist perspective presented complexities and contradictions in many respects; "globalism meant different things to different people" (16).

At its core, Rosenboim argues, mid-century globalism was "anchored" in "political, cultural and social pluralism" (2017, 9; see also 8–16).[23] Nevertheless, globalism's pluralism did not necessarily equate to everyone's equal treatment under the law or to attention to social justice concerns.[24] While globalism and pluralism were complementary worldviews, they did not always square with one another with respect to handling human differences. [25] Globalism, for example, fell short in recognizing the standing of cultural others, who remained invisible through the lens of universalist notions of humankind, who lacked access to opportunities

afforded by free-market capitalism, and/or who subscribed to economic and governmental, systems perceived by the West as anti-democratic.

Globalist practices within a mid-century dance context exemplify these problems inherent in globalist thinking in that they were largely founded on and perpetuated an untroubled idea that dance bridged differences by making analogies of common experience through the physicalized language of embodiment. Martin's theory of metakinesis, for instance, positioned dance as a conduit for cross-identification whereby people, regardless of their cultural position or background, could see aspects of their lives reflected and revealed through dance. Terry's account also focused on the interplay between dancer and viewer, suggesting the interactive nature of the performance event, and the potential for an exchange extending beyond the visual into something felt, something communal, a kind of a kinesthetic communitas. In engaging with cultural others through a shared experience of embodiment, a viewer would come to perceive "a human being very like himself," as Terry put it. In these terms, ethnologic dance performance was realized through its stimulation of empathic feelings among participants, be they performers or audience members, in ways that were difficult if not nearly outside of a theatrical setting (Foster 2010, 155–56).

Ideas such as Terry's and Martin's were emblematic of a broader view among proponents of modern dance, underwriting an ideology of universalism that corresponded to the US government's foreign policy of communist containment. In modern dance, universalism provided a basis for the assumption that dance, as an embodied experience, offered a "human language," or cultural "common denominator" that could establish common ground for heterogeneous audiences. Likewise, as one of the dominant schools of US foreign policy, universalism held that people across the globe, separated by geographical, religious, ethnic/racial, political, or cultural barriers could be unified through appeals to their shared human experiences. In theory, universalism promised an unbiased valuation of all the world's citizens, looking past differences such as race, creed, color or social class; in practice, in both dance and in society, its assumption of the Western, white subject as the norm and its designation of a hierarchy of values and system of privileges in line with driving objectives of democratic capitalism, undermined the efficacy of its application in both artistic and political arenas (Kowal 2010).

As this line of thinking applies to *Dancing the World Smaller*, ideas about dance's capacities for promoting international amity through a bridging of individual differences signify the problem of universalism as theorizing kinesthetic empathy, the ultimate leveler of difference, as occurring through a desire to re-orient to sameness.[26] In an interview entitled "The Third

Space," literary and cultural theorist Homi Bhabha outlines the competing impulses involved in maintaining cultural and/or colonial hegemonies during moments in which multiculturalism flourishes. In the first place, as "cultural diversity" is "encouraged" and "entertained," "there is always a corresponding containment of it." He continues: "A transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture, which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid'" (1990, 208). In the second place, "the universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests" (208).[27] The distinctions Bhabha makes help to illuminate the contradictory implications of mid-century universalist approaches to cross-cultural embodiment that "created" diversity, on the one hand, and "contained" difference, on the other.

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's work on "friction" allows for a further theorization of dualities within cultural relations through a querying of the implications of universalism both for the promotion of diversity and for efforts toward the inclusion of difference. For Tsing, friction describes ways in which universalisms are "implicated in both imperial schemes to control the world and liberatory mobilizations for social justice." In her words: "Universalism inspires expansion—or both the powerful and the powerless" (2005, 9). Applied to more contemporary circumstances, Bhabha's and Tsing's notions of the dichotomous effects of universalism for projects dedicated to expanding room for individual and cultural difference nevertheless provide useful frameworks for thinking about the kinds of cultural dynamics at work within the mid-century examples presented in *Dancing the World Smaller*. Their theories identify tensions between artistic, social, and political impulses to liberate and also to control, as well as the implications of these impulses for the study of power relations and interests in specific scenarios at issue here.

Across the historic and thematic scope of the book, these tensions become more apparent over the decade of the 1940s. Historically and politically, this is because later in the decade, Soviet geopolitical expansion escalated the threat of so-called mutual assured destruction and precipitated the Cold War between the United States and the USSR, prompting federal and societal efforts to contain communism at home and abroad. The Truman Doctrine, formulated by President Truman in a speech to Congress on March 12, 1947, articulated what would become the nation's approach to communist aggression abroad, and eventually at home. The Doctrine advocated the containment of communism through indirect means, by "supporting free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures," rather than through head-to-head warfare. "The

Truman Doctrine committed the United States to actively offering assistance to preserve the political integrity of democratic nations when such an offer was deemed to be in the best interest of the United States," according to the Office of the Historian in the US Department of State (https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine). The Truman Doctrine also formed the basis of US foreign policy at mid-century, leading to the government's 1948 assistance to Greece and Turkey through appropriations to strengthen their respective armed forces in the face of communist aggression. And in 1949, it led to the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a strategic European-American alliance including the United States, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom, holding that "an attack against one [was] an attack against all" (https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato). As other scholars have shown, as the 1940s wore on, and the threat of communist aggression began to saturate the fabric of social and political life, pragmatism supplanted idealism in articulations and practices of American globalism, which became increasingly focused on the containment of communism to the detriment of progressive political activism (see for example, Von Eschen 1997, 97, and Meriwether 2002, 70–71).

The application of the Truman Doctrine in the US intervention in Greece and Turkey in 1948 coincides with the book's final chapter (Chapter 4), which focuses on the international dance festival staged during the 1948 New York City Golden Jubilee Celebration. In the context of the issuance and implementation of the Truman Doctrine, overtures of globalism made by the organizers of the Golden Jubilee Celebration appear to be pretexts for the demonstration of American dominance in both military and theatrical arenas. Staging the global, therefore, did not always or even necessarily lead to greater intercultural understanding, forge pathways to empathy, and/or address sociopolitical and/or economic inequities; rather, performances afforded opportunities for embodied and discursive articulations of a national identity formed in relation to performative foils of cultural otherness.

STAGING GLOBALISM

New York City plays a significant role in *Dancing the World Smaller*. A 1948 article by British author and radio journalist J. B. Priestley aptly described New York City's early twentieth-century metamorphosis. As he explained, "The New York that O. Henry described forty years ago was an American

city but today's glittering cosmopolis belongs to the world, if the world does not belong to it" (quoted in Wallock, 1988, 9).[28] Historical research offers credence for Priestley's impression, identifying the period between 1940 and 1965 as pivotal for New York City's explosive population and economic growth, massive urban development, demographic displacement, and "intellectual ferment and artistic creation unsurpassed in the history of the modern city" (Wallock et al. 1988, 9). All of these factors contributed to New York City's postwar transformation into what sociologist Saskia Sassen (2005) calls a "global city," a hub of financial and cultural industries.[29]

The city's global status, as, in Priestly's words, "belong[ing] to the world, if the world does not belong to it," speaks to its unique diversity and cosmopolitanism at mid-century. The city's demographics in the 1940s were largely a function of two phenomena in the early twentieth century: the first wave of immigration to New York City and the first Great Migration of African Americans to northern cities.[30] These migrations of diverse populations into the city played a role in the formation of distinct dance communities such as Harlem's Savoy Ballroom. As Karen Hubbard and Terry Monaghan explain: "Drawn from the largest and one of the most diverse urban concentrations of people of African descent anywhere, the Savoy's audience acquired a unique composition. The advance guard of native New Yorkers who established the African American settlement in Harlem in the early twentieth century were soon heavily diluted by new arrivals from the South, the Caribbean, and other overseas locations" (2009, 128).[31]

The city's heterogeneity during the 1940s is all the more significant if we consider the status of national immigration policy during this period. As I detail in Chapter 1 the immigration laws in place after World War II were, by and large, dictated by provisions enacted in the 1920, an era notable for its isolationism, nationalism, and xenophobia. Consider the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924, which set immigration visa quotas based on the number of country-of-origin nationals living in the United States recorded on the 1890 census. This law greatly restricted immigration from Eastern Europe and Africa, and it completely excluded immigrants from Asia from immigrating to the United States. There was some movement toward immigration reform in the mid-1940s, to address European refugee repatriation in the United States, and the early 1950s, such as in 1952, with the McCarran-Walter Act, which lifted restrictions on Asian immigration to the United States.[32] Yet both laws yielded nominal results in increasing overall numbers of aliens seeking entry to the United States and paths to American citizenship. Rather, prior to passage by

Congress of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which overhauled US immigration policy by prioritizing family ties and not national origins quotas as a basis for determining immigrant entry, the laws enacted during the postwar period were formulated to achieve targeted national foreign policy goals in the emerging Cold War against the Soviet Union.[33] Postwar laws by and large maintained the status-quo where US immigration policy was concerned with the exceptions of reforms that supported the politics of national security, and, in doing so, skirted responsibility for addressing the Anglo-supremacism inherent in the 1920s legislation.[34]

According to social theorists Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, a heterotopia is an actual, not imagined place, in which norms and conventions "are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (1986, 24; see also Soja 1996). The most heterogeneous city in America in the 1940s, New York City functioned as such an anomalous and transformative place. Sociologist Richard Sennett's theorization of the city along these lines, as a location that encourages interactions and encounters of/with difference, helps deepen this concept. As Sennett wrote in 1994, "The city has served as a site of power, its spaces made coherent and whole in the image of man himself. The city has also served as a space in which these master images have cracked apart. The city brings together people who are different, it intensifies the complexity of social life, it presents people to each other as strangers. All these aspects of urban experience – difference, complexity, strangeness—afford resistance to domination" (25–26). According to Sennett, like a theatre the city breeds intensity and complexity; it defies ease; rather it is a site of friction.

Taking their cue from theories such as these that envision the city in theatrical terms, chapters in *Dancing the World Smaller* revolve around particular theatrical and/or educational venues that served as stages for the production and reception of international dance performances. My argument is that these venues functioned as stages with the broader theatrical setting afforded by New York City itself: in other words, the stages at issue mirrored and yet probably intensified what may have occurred among people who encountered one another on city streets. While it is impossible truly to know what occurred in these locations, it is possible to imagine the kinds of intermingling and social encounters that likely took place for these international artists and their heterogeneous audiences as a result of the contact within bounded and concentrated performance situations.[35] From an analytical perspective, my study constructs these venues as multifaceted constellations of activities and sociopolitical dynamics, confluences of events that possess embodied, representational and/or ideological

imports. I aim therefore to study what is indicated by the relation of salient elements in a given theatrical context such as the development and/or performance of embodied practices, the institutions that produced them, and, whenever possible, responses of audiences who witnessed them. In this way, I hope to illuminate the nature of each context as wholistic and kinetic, allowing for the consideration of a host of relations: between the parts and the whole, the inside and outside, the self and other, the individual and the community.

Chapters examine performance practices of world-making taking place at sites where, or literally on stages on and in which dancers, dance makers, and audiences could interrogate what it meant to put globalism into practice.[36] My research indicates ways of conceptualizing globalism in terms of what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls "habitus," an ideological "structure" that "engenders products," and the dance phenomena at issue as "practices" including "thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production" ([1972] 1977, 95).[37] My central questions are premised on the assertion that practices of dancing, dance making, performance, and viewing are all means of producing meaning, and thus modes of theorization, in this instance, leading to instantiations, enactments and/or engagements with and within what we might imagine as the habitus of mid-century globalism. With this framework in mind, I contend that examination of these embodied phenomena furthers our understanding of a cultural moment in the nation's history in which the national worldview expanded, and Americans, including dance artists and audiences, came to see themselves as citizens of the world.[38] Nevertheless, as I will argue in the pages to follow, putting globalism into practice in these theatrical settings was not a simple proposition. Encounters with difference were fraught with ambivalence on many sides, thus simultaneously advancing and hindering progressive efforts toward interculturalism and the institutionalization of ethnic self-definition and self-representation in American concert dance.

THE EMBODIED ARCHIVE

I happened upon the subject matter for this book accidentally, while conducting research for *How To Do Things with Dance* at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts Dance Collection. Paging methodically through scrapbooks dated 1944 to 1960, I noticed numerous photos of dancers performing what was then called ethnic, ethnologic, or ethnic art

dance. Immersed in my research at the time focusing on the cultural politics of modern dance in New York City during the postwar period, I wondered what roles these performers had played in the development of the American concert dance field in those years and, more important, why many of their names and stories had not made it into books I was reading for the purposes of my research. In a 1952 article entitled "The World Dances through Manhattan: Dancers of Exotic Lands Lure the Pent-Up New Yorker," Walter Terry, critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*, defined this genre as "the dance form originated by a tribe, a nation, a race or a culture." I was struck by the ways the dancers' faces and dancing bodies drew readers to printed copy—occasionally advance publicity or a review of their performances, but more often than not, a generic concert calendar of dance events in New York City in a given week. Taking several days out of my planned activities, I copied 500 pages of materials and bound them into two chronologically organized notebooks, which I saved for future use. At the time it seemed to me that these documents captured a lost chapter of American dance history, one that might shed light on the aesthetic and cultural politics of the intertwining and divergences of ethnic and concert dance formations in the mid-twentieth century.

Committed to answering questions about the import of these dance artists and the implications of their artistic work for American dance and cultural history, I continued to build my archive. Working in collections across the country, I amassed thousands of pages of documents.[39] This book, therefore, draws on substantial archival research, while at the same time deploying techniques for textual and visual analysis, strategic deployment of secondary studies, and critical theories of culture, ethnicity, and race in building arguments and drawing conclusions.[40] Although I have collected a treasure-trove of source material, the items available are significantly inconsistent in number, scope, and type, which has an impact on the stories I am able to tell and the meanings I have made of them. For example, in the majority of instances, moving images of the dancers and dances I have examined are conspicuously absent from the archives. One explanation might be because even though the performers at issue might have been famous or well-regarded at the time, the ethnic-based work they did was not valued in the same ways as recognized concert dance performances. The relative lack of film and photographic documentation of artistic endeavors of my subjects compared to visual records for other concert dance artists in the fields of modern dance and ballet reflects the influence of aesthetic hierarchies, to some extent still operative today, which placed lower emphasis on recording "ethnologic dance." From what I can surmise, such performances were rarely documented visually by

critics or journalistic photographers or in films, likely because they occurred on the margins and/or outside of dominant artistic and critical economies.

Even beyond the consideration of moving image artifacts, there are significant disparities in the collection of other materials I have found, in spite of my considerable efforts to track down and ascertain sources. Because of the general lack of secondary sources available about the majority of my subjects (including the principal artists, produced works, and the venues in which they worked) , most of the chapters are driven by my findings based on original archival research and put in broader sociocultural and/or political contexts. And yet there is an unevenness to the availability of firsthand accounts of my subjects' lives and work. For example, my study of La Meri, who authored multiple books and collected a cache of personal writings and articles, photographs and films, posed a problem of excess requiring my discernment as to the respective relevance of individual items. By contrast, it has been difficult to bring out Asadata Dafora's voice, because he was rarely if ever quoted in articles or reviews. The only autobiographical account of his life I could find was a four-page handwritten biography, for what use I am not certain. Additionally, many of the supporting performers whose names appear here, in dance companies or pick-up ensembles, remain on the margins of my narrative, as I have prioritized the major subjects for the purposes of my argument. Because of the dearth of sources available to me, it has been challenging to bring out diverse voices in accounting for what happened in the past.

Embarking on a project grounded primarily in whatever I could find necessarily forces me to contend with archival lacunae and challenges me to acknowledge up front, for myself and for readers, the incompleteness of the inquiry and the limits on what can and could be known about my subject matter. In spite of all of the materials I have laid eyes on, there are admittedly holes in my knowledge and problems establishing a definitive historical record. Without films or photos, for example, it has been difficult to imagine what a performance looked like, how it felt, and what actually happened. Again, because some of the performances at issue existed outside the margins of the mainstream dance concert field, professional critical accounts of these do not always exist.

One strategy has been to complicate the narrative and bring in additional perspectives through considerations of passages in artists' autobiographies and personal correspondence and of snippets of performances. To this end, literary theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's advice in her 1985 seminal essay "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives" has served me well. Here Spivak writes both to authorize the scholar's

pursuit of knowledge as it could be revealed through archival research, and as a cautionary note, "to inspect soberly the absence of a text that can 'answer one back.'"[41] How is one to accomplish an approach to research that might accord with Spivak's imperatives? What kinds of sources might exist that could "answer back" to the dominant voices, both those voices that dominate the materials available to me and my own voice?

Allow me to share one informative instance in which my archival research turned up contradictory accounts of the same experience. In conducting research for Chapter 2 on La Meri, I discovered three different, and somewhat conflicting, accounts of the same story having to do with her relationship with Ram Gopal, an Indian-born Kathakali specialist.

Gopal appears in Chapter 4, as a performer at the 1948 New York Golden Jubilee Celebration. While both he and La Meri agree that they met in Bangalore in 1936, where La Meri and her husband, Guido Carreras, were stationed during an extended transcontinental tour, from here the stories diverge. According to Gopal in *Rhythm in the Heavens*, his 1957 autobiography, the two met through an introduction by a mutual friend during La Meri's performance run at the Opera House in Bangalore.[42] Gopal writes that "daily after that, during her season at the Opera House in Bangalore, I taught her all she ever knew of Kathakali, as she had never been to Malabar, did not intend to go there, and preferred to learn, anyway, from me directly. Finally, it was decided that after hearing her enthusiastic talk of her forthcoming Far East tour, my parents agreed that I could join her" (Gopal 1957, 41). Gopal's account establishes a record of work with La Meri initiated by her seeking him out. Moreover, in discussing his decision to travel with her and Carreras during the last stage of their tour of the Far East, he shares that Carreras agreed only if Gopal's parents would pay his way in exchange for an unpaid internship experience until the group reached Tokyo, the final stop before La Meri and Carraras would return to the United States. (41).

La Meri's account of her acquaintance with Gopal differs in suggesting that Gopal sought her out, rather than the other way around. In her 1977 autobiography, *Dance Out the Answer*, she recounts how the two met in her hotel room and she proceeded to offer him an audition to join her on the rest of her tour. In her words:

> We had to go on to Bangalore for two concerts. Between them there came to my hotel a handsome young boy who introduced himself as Bassano Ramgopal. He spoke intelligently and in perfect English, and I was most impressed with his knowledge of the dance art. He was anxious to travel and have a career and asked if I would audition him on the morrow. From all of the many auditions

> I had given, this youngster stood out, impressed me most, even if he did perform a dance of India to the music of Ravel's Bolero! But, I thought, perhaps this too was a sign of seeking. He was so anxious to join us that, after a talk with his very charming family, we agreed to take him along (97).

La Meri's story focuses most on her favorable impression of Gopal, particularly on the ways he demonstrated an adaptability to her values. I am thinking particularly about how she remarks on his ability to speak "in perfect English" as well as on his coming from a "very charming family." In these ways, La Meri's representation of the facts suggests that she believed that Gopal, with his mastery of Western ways, could make a compatible addition to her act—"even if he did perform a dance of India to the music of Ravel's Bolero!"—certainly something La Meri considered a faux pas.

Up to this point, the most significant difference in their narratives has to do with the calculus of who was benefiting most from whom. While Gopal indicates a prolonged period of time in which he schooled La Meri in the Kathakali form, La Meri, by contrast, is circumspect when it comes to details of any instruction Gopal provided to her and even the length of time she and her husband spent in Bangalore. Yet, if we were only to read La Meri's autobiography, this would be the last we would hear of Gopal. By contrast, Gopal extends the story from this point forward in ways that, if true, would call into question central features of La Meri's version of her own artistic lineage, especially her perception of simpatico relationships with international teachers, and would complicate claims she routinely made about the ways she "sourced" her dance material. In one passage, he discusses his "internship" thus:

> Perched high up on her loaded lorry full of costume trunks, to and from boats and stations, sweeping the stage, and helping to clean, put up and remove her black velvet tabs, these and lots of other jobs were mine during that period of apprenticeship. We visited all of the big cities in India and then from Calcutta went on to Rangoon, Malaya, Java, the Philippines, China and finally Japan. Everywhere I was studying the dances which this dancer attempted to learn (1957, 41).

In another passage, he recalls what went through his mind as he watched her prepare to perform, or questioned the methodology she employed in her praxis:

> "It's just a routine! I have a knack of picking up, notating and getting the proper costume," she would say.... It was an exciting lesson to watch La Meri put on her make-up, or should I say change her face with the flick of an eye-brow

> pencil and lipstick to suit the numerous characters she attempted to portray. I thought how intelligently and swiftly she changed! She was a Hula dancer one moment, then Spanish the next, and as quickly she changed to Russian ballet technique. . . . There were dozens more of these three and four minute "numbers" that filled her seemingly inexhaustible repertoire of dances. I began to think as time went on that there was something very entertaining and clever about what she did, and she did it with every ounce of conviction and sincerity of which she was capable. But I felt that if it took Pavlova a lifetime to perfect one technique alone, as it did with Nijinsky and Karsavina, and my great masters in India, how could any dancer attempt to present an 'Evening of World's Dances' (1957, 41–42)?

Through these experiences, Gopal comes to question La Meri's intentions for inviting him to travel and perform with her. Moreover, getting to know her better causes him to wonder whether or not her stated philosophical convictions were in line with her artistic practices. As he puts it: "In my opinion she completely ignored the spiritual and mental attitude and consequently her interpretations were more mental than 'under the skin' studies, authentic as they were" (1957, 42).

According to Gopal, his performance in Tokyo represented the last straw for La Meri and Carraras, who, departed for America in a hurry after their final joint performance, leaving Gopal sick and penniless and having to find a way to return to India. In his autobiography, Gopal represents this abandonment as an act of jealousy, owing to the Japanese critical reception of the performance that lauded Gopal as "the drawing card for these dance recitals" and denigrated la Meri as "a perfect dance technician . . . [whose] movements and interpretations failed to arouse enthusiasm. . . . Her conceptions are intellectual to a high degree but lack somewhat in soul" (44; see also Kothari 2003, 18).

He continued:

> All this "skill and genius" left me one morning standing on a street corner. . . . All I had was two boxes of costumes and the suit I was wearing. . . . How those parting words rang in my ears: "You can dance your way back to India doing cabaret in some hotels, maybe you'll get engagements." . . . With these words, the troupe had packed and left for America. . . . Search though I did, I felt innocent. I had worked hard, practiced, taught this dancer everything of her Kathakali dances she knew, partnered and arranged all the choreography of the two numbers we danced in, and had helped backstage in every single job given me. I had done my best to please my elder employers, and yet the more I did, and the better I danced, as I was urged to in rehearsals, the more unfriendly they became (44–45).

Tinged with bitterness, Gopal's anecdote of the ending of his professional relationship with La Meri indicates his perception of their uneven power differential. His memory of her "parting words," which relegated him to the realm of "cabaret" entertainment after he had "worked hard, practiced, and taught [her] everything . . . she knew," are particularly ironic. Moreover, his conclusion that the harder he worked—"the more I did, and the better I danced . . . the more unfriendly they became"—leaves the reader with a sense of his exploitation by La Meri and Carreras.

Gopal's account of his ill-fated "internship" and tour with the couple is complicated further by the story as Usha Venkateswaran tells it in her 2005 compendium of La Meri's life and work entitled *The Life and Times of La Meri*. Venkateswaran's book contains biographical and documentary information sourced from "memorabilia" housed at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, which I myself have not visited. Offering some gossipy, unsavory tidbits from La Meri's diary entries about Gopal, recording "amusing complaints made by Indians about Gopal, who had joined her troupe," Venkateswaran nevertheless tries to split the difference in assessing the symbiosis of their relationship. For example, La Meri and Carreras departed Japan because the "war reared its head," and therefore not in a fit of jealous resentment. As she tells it, leaving in haste "they had to cancel other plans and leave for the U.S. They shipped Rajoo (tabla-player) back to India but Ram Gopal decided to stay back in Japan and wait for a chance to go to the U.S. to go on with his career" (20). Moreover, in assessing the calculus of their relationship, Venkateswaran suggests that Gopal benefited equally from his brief partnership with La Meri, which she conveys through a quotation from Sunil Kothari, who witnessed the pair's performance in Tokyo. As she put it: "[Gopal] acquired considerable stage experience and learnt much about such matters as stage entries and exits, presentation, split second timing and lighting, . . . [as well as] about changing quickly and effecting quick-silver changes of moods and characters" (Kothari quoted in Venkateswaran 2005, 83).

What does one make of this story? Based on Gopal's account, La Meri comes off as a shrewd imperialist who took advantage of a young man's inexperience, trust, and desire for a professional career in dance by learning all he had to teach. Then once he had achieved a success that rivaled hers, she dumped him in Tokyo and hastened her way back to America. Based on La Meri and Venkateswaran's accounts, we might come away believing that La Meri's generosity, in taking Gopal on tour with her and allowing him to perform in her concerts, taught him essentials about stagecraft and touring, and, as a result, launched his career. What is the historian to do when there are obvious holes in the record and/or when

the archive and secondary research has yielded conflicting accounts that muddy the waters of interpretation and meaning making?[43]

Feminist art historian, Amelia Jones, theorizes absence as "largely [a] logistical rather than ethnical or hermeneutic" problem. In her article, "'Presence' in Absentia," she writes: "[W]hile the experience of viewing a photograph and reading a text is clearly different from that of sitting in a small room watching an artist perform, neither has a privileged relationship to the historical 'truth' of the performance. . . ." (1997, 11).[44] Jones's work underlines ideas about performance-based research as an endeavor that is always mediated, whether or not the researcher has firsthand experience of the subjects and/or objects of inquiry, and, perhaps more important, that no specific relationship to performances that occurred in the past yields any more "truth" than any other relationship. Specificity can be gained as much if not more in the study, analysis, and contemplation of documentation as in the moment of liveness. In fact, Jones argues that distance allows the analyst perspective for the identification of "patterns of history," which are essential to meaning making.

It is left to the historian to reconcile an experience of "closeness" to the evidence at issue and distance from the events leading to their production, an endeavor in which historian's efforts to shed light on the meanings and/or significance of evidence is tempered by the knowledge that whatever insight the historian might offer is inadequate to the task of comprehension.[45] The historian's imagination, as a practice of memory, extends the life of the past performance practice into the present. In the cases of Gopal and La Meri, I have allowed for the possibility that both accounts are contingently true, holding each up to scrutiny in the ways they open avenues of interpretation and knowing as framed by the inquiries in their respective book chapters. Moreover, when necessary, I have extended this spirit of holding several perspectives at once at other moments in the book, in handling gaps, contradictory and/or conflicting accounts indicated both by my sources and my interpretation of them.

THE PROBLEM OF CREDIBILITY

Allow me to offer an example of how this methodological approach plays out in real time: I'm at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts in New York City on July 21, 2015, in the reel-to-reel viewing area. The room is cold and dark. The librarian brings me several film reels, comprising all of the moving pictures of La Meri's performances that are stored here, and the most I've encountered in six years of research so far.

One is a compilation of clips Carol Lynn shot at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, where La Meri performed numerous times in the 1940s and '50s. I prepare to watch and take notes. Below is an excerpt of some of my viewing notes:

> The film entitled "Sita's Journey" is not well lit, which makes it difficult to make out details in the images. In this film, like the others I've seen, the costumes are elaborate, which seems important to establishing characters. Here, La Meri begins with a bow, her hands in a prayer position, displaying subtle and delicate movements, and focusing on placement of arms and hands. There is an obvious deliberateness—a self-consciousness—to her movement, and a sense of orientation toward the audience. She is wearing what I assume is traditional garb, including a form fitting skirt, a draped top, and a large pyramid headdress. Her studied stance indicates to me that assuming correct posture is important. Her body sheathed in a fitted dress that narrows her form, she descends into a shallow plié, hands in mudras crossed in front of her chest. From what I can tell, La Meri's governing occupation is to establish poses and hold them, as if she were a statue or a statuesque figure. I am drawn to the sense of plasticity of her movements, to their intentional slow motion. La Meri projects a sense of seriousness with her purposeful gesturing and movement. Walking forward with a slight bend at the waist, her feet and legs remain in parallel position. She gestures her arms away from and then toward her body. Then she bends over, her hands shaping mudras, and her right knee bent and raised. This leads to a slow walk toward the audience: with each step, her flexed feet brush forward and then radiate in semi-circular arcs. She is running now, then she stops and holds a pose. I've now become aware of the smallness of the stage, and the extent to which she must adapt her movement to fit the limited presentation area.

As I watch, certain aspects of La Meri's performance stand out. Above all is the feeling that she is demonstrating something to her audience: each movement seems to accentuate its very deliberateness. I would say that her "dancing" seems meant to display what she knows. It is more didactic than poetic, a conscientious performance of her credibility. I wonder how the vast majority of audience members at the time would have discerned whether what she was doing had any basis in fact or practice of the dance in India. And I wonder what audiences thought of La Meri, and if any questions about her legitimacy came into play for the audience at Jacob's Pillow as they do for contemporary scholars.

Yet, if there may have been a credibility problem for La Meri in performing Bharatanatyam at Jacob's Pillow, there is surely a credibility problem for me as I consider the significance of her performance. As

someone with no expertise in Indian classical dance forms, it is impossible for me to discern the quality of La Meri's performance based on a comparison between it and what might have been considered standard practice or conventions at the time. The lack of context provided by the film doesn't help. A silent compilation of clips, the film is an archival pastiche, conveying vital visual information but no context to assist in making sense of it, aside from the little I can glean from the library catalog description. As I consider what to do, I am left with questions, left contemplating what I consider to be the bare minimum in accounting for this archival evidence: a description recording the gist of my recollections and the questions they raise for me as I watch and think. In her book *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories*, dance studies scholar Jacqueline Shea Murphy writes that at the core of her research endeavor, "I believed that what I was doing was more important than my own uncertainties" (2007, 7). In a similar spirit, I recognize my own shortcomings while offering what I can in the hope of illuminating stories largely lost to American dance and cultural histories. This book charts interpretive paths through evidence that deserves further inquiry by myself and others in the fullness of time.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Focusing on salient performances of ethnic dance in New York City between 1940 and 1948, *Dancing the World Smaller* examines a host of paradoxical sociopolitical forces in and around concert dance practices that illuminate a deep cultural ambivalence about American globalism. Literary cultural theorist Raymond Williams might call these paradoxical impulses "structures of feeling," cultural formations that are nascent and often inchoate and yet nevertheless a coalescence of an emerging sensibility and spirt of the time (1977). These include conservative impulses toward the containment of cultural differences: ideologies supporting conformity, assimilation, and protectionism, all of which were driven by broader societal concerns about cultural change and met by a desire to preserve cultural norms and normative identities.[46] In this sense, thinking globally implied a turning in and away from the world, resistance to change, and a nostalgic defense of the status quo, that is, ideologies of white supremacy, homogeneity, and normativity. These impulses were countered by progressive trends—both resurgent and emerging—which supported movements toward multicultural integration, cultural pluralism, economic and social justice, and civil rights, all of which propelled the cultural transformation

associated with the 1960s. In this sense, thinking globally indicated an outward-reaching inclination, looking beyond the borders or boundaries of the United States and attuning a consciousness to the inclusion of cultural others. These are opposing views of America, Americans, and Americanness.

The book also tests the efficacy of my own theoretical framework, and the idea that the examples under investigation can be approached as embodied problematics. Accordingly, individually and as a whole, my chapters seek to address questions that have emerged from the research process itself, such as (1) How do dance and/or dancers convey and/or propagate inchoate ideas about cultural inclusion and/or difference? (2) How do performances both reinforce and challenge social norms that govern interactions between native- and non-native-born participants, dancers and audience members? (3) How does dance contribute to the appearance of settled reality, or to hegemonic formations? And, alternatively, how might dance introduce alternative versions of reality or disrupt dominant formations?

Along these lines, Chapter 1 considers the contradictory politics underpinning the international dance program, *Around the World with Dance and Song*, of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). I illuminate how the dance program fulfilled mid-century mandates for municipal museum reform, making formerly esoteric institutions more accessible to the general public while at the same time providing a venue for ethnic self-representation on a de facto concert stage. The first performances in the exhibition halls encouraged familiar perceptions of Anglo-cultural superiority amid human "specimen" display at venues such as world's fairs and natural history museums. Concerts held in the auditorium encouraged "cultural integrationism" (Klein 2003), and thus the well-intentioned, albeit Anglo-oriented "humanization" of foreign peoples and their ways of life. Audience exposure to cultural diversity through international dance performances aided the consolidation of Caucasian ethnic identities set in contrast to the global differences enacted on the museum stage. In these ways, the program appealed to flawed dominant cultural notions about human commonality that rationalized patterns of racial and ethnic discrimination on the basis of white-supremacist and assimilationist ideologies. I argue that at the same time, performances of the global at the American Museum of Natural History modeled approaches toward making sense of an increasingly interconnected world. Here, dancers functioned as "diplomats" whose artistic practices conveyed nascent ideas/ideals about the benefits of cross-cultural exchanges, and whose performances mediated a broader cultural transition toward expanded global consciousness.[47]

Chapter 2 investigates the interface between ethnic and concert dance formations, a contested terrain in which diverse practitioners sought to elevate dance as an established artistic form even as they actively called into question its nature and substance (Kowal 2010). Focusing on La Meri, an American-born performer who specialized in the dances of Asia, Spain, and Latin America, I investigate how practice and performances of so-called ethnic and/or ethnologic dance forms contributed to the creation of what those in the field saw as distinctly "American dance," as both foils and sources for syncretic formations.[48] My research considers debates over La Meri's contributions to American concert dance in the context of hierarchies of authenticity, artistry, and authority as they played out literally and metaphorically within her relationship to her artistic forebear, Ruth St. Denis. Focus on this relationship also reveals artistic and political contingencies associated with aesthetic and cultural constructions of whiteness in the context of the mid-century modern dance field. From here, the chapter considers questions regarding the nature and significance of La Meri's practices of "diplomacy," especially the pedagogies of ethnicity practiced at the Ethnologic Dance Center, which she founded in 1943. Finally, I examine La Meri's forays into dance modernism by analyzing the cultural meanings of what she called "creative ethnic compositions," in this case her version of *Swan Lake*, which adapted material drawn from the Western ballet tradition for the idiom of Classical Indian Bharatanatyam. In all, my research illuminates La Meri's body as a site of ambivalence that reinforced colonial ideologies and dominant racial biases in spite of her own oft-stated and arguably well-intentioned objectives of raising the public's consciousness about dance practices from around the world and what dance could contribute to American global citizenship.[49]

Chapter 3 sheds light on the cultural and political significance of a series of African dance festivals produced at Carnegie Hall by the pro-nationalist, anti-colonialist Nigerian organization, the African Academy of Arts and Research (AAAR) and directed by Sierra Leonean-born choreographer Asadata Dafora. These performances, which occurred in 1943, 1945, and 1946, raise questions about the ways in and extent to which dance performances could promote amity among diverse peoples and nations by facilitating cross-cultural exchanges. Dafora, who lived and worked in New York City between 1929 and 1960, occupies a precarious place in concert dance history, his legacy unsettled among dance scholars, especially in the context of broader efforts toward self-representation among African American modern dance artists in the mid-century.

Identifying Dafora as a transnational subject, situated at the nexus of debates over both Africanist self-representation in modern dance and

African self-determination on the African continent, this chapter investigates the aesthetic and political meanings of his artistic and ambassadorial work. My main focus is on the first "African Dance Festival," performed in 1943, and its multivalent uses, for African nationals facilitating cross-cultural sharing and empathy through dance performance, for African American activists and intellectuals promoting cultural pride in a shared African heritage, and for the Roosevelt administration signaling support for black civil rights amid an uneven legacy on this front, both legislatively and in terms of advocacy. Analysis of the performance within broader historical and political contexts also brings to light tensions between Africanist racial and ethnic identities among black peoples circa 1940. The chapter then goes further to examine the significance of African dance festivals Dafora directed for the AAAR in 1945 and 1946, as well as a tour he and his company took to the American South and Midwest to perform in urban centers and at historically black colleges and universities, in which he performed diaspora for African Americans on the eve of the American civil rights movement.

Chapter 4, the conclusion of my study, looks closely at the international dance festival at the 1948 Golden Jubilee Celebration in New York City. My aim is to turn the tables on the subject, examining the nationalistic underside of an event organized and purported to promote values of American globalism and multiculturalism. The chapter focuses on public and critical reaction to the three groups on the festival's performance slate: the Paris Opera Ballet, Ram Gopal and His Hindu Ballet Company, and Charles Weidman. Examining the cultural and critical discourses surrounding each performance illuminates the contradictory aesthetics and politics at work. Performances of the international groups served the express purpose of introducing American audiences to international performers and dance practices toward the promotion of cross-cultural understanding and in celebration of the multicultural aspects of New York City. Yet I argue that, at the same time, the performances and presence of the international guests aided in the articulation and formation of an American cultural identity counterposed to their embodiment of "foreignness."[50] In all, my research sheds light on ways in which mid-century stagings of the global conveyed a range of paradoxical intentions and ideologies, which resonated on multiple cultural and political registers simultaneously. My intention is to formulate ideas about the import of mid-century performances and performance-related practices in the context of changing cultural values about globalism in United States in the 1940s.

Along these lines, my research is animated by the following questions, which gain specificity within the contexts of each chapter: (1) What are

problems involved in "dancing the world smaller," a concept that imagined that a single dancing body could contain and/or stand for multitudes of other bodies and, presumably other peoples? (2) What are problems involved in artistic approaches to the incorporation of movement material outside of one's cultural location and/or identity position, and what new questions might be raised about notions of authorship and authenticity? (3) What are problems associated with assumptions that dance is a translational practice within which artists might serve as intercultural interlocutors? (4) What are dance's capacities to bridge and/or to reify individual and/or cultural differences?

1

Staging Integration

Around the World with Dance and Song at the American Museum of Natural History, 1943–1952

In a letter dated July 30, 1943, Hazel Lockwood Muller, a staff member in the Department of Education at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City, asked her superior, Charles Russell, to allow her to produce "native dance programs" in connection with the museum's existing "native music programs" (Postal 1952, 18). In 1939, Russell had asked Muller, who had a background in music, to "build a library of bird songs, animal cries and ethnic music, the bulk of it recorded in the field by various expeditions" (Postal 1952, 18; Bio File, AMNH Archives). Raising funds from the Carnegie Corporation, with Muller's help Russell compiled this library and began broadcasting its contents over the public address system in what had been "traditionally quiet halls and exhibits of the Museum" (Postal 1952, 17).[1] There were twelve halls, each of which depicted habitat dioramas intended to promote a visitor's flight of fancy to the distant reaches of the world. Realistic representations of animal "habitat, behavior, ecology, and environmental issues and concerns," the dioramas were not only main attractions of the AMNH in 1943, they played a key role in meeting the museum's objectives to fashion itself as an educational institution (Quinn 2006, 15).

Between 1920 and 1950 the museum "dramatically surpassed other natural history museums of similar size and endowment in the quality and quantity of dioramic production" (18). According to Julius Postal, who

Dancing the World Smaller: Staging Globalism in Mid-Century America. Rebekah J. Kowal.

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190265328.03.0001

Figure 1.1 La Meri dancing "La Pollera" of Panama on a platform in the Education Hall. *Around the World with Dance and Song* program. Image #297803. Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History Library.

worked with Russell and Muller, Russell "reasoned that lions, tigers, bears, and humming birds make sounds in nature. American Indians, Australian aborigines, African tribes all have languages of their own and make music" (1952, 18; see also HLMNYPLPA, file 103-12). Acknowledging in her letter of July 30, 1943, that Russell had thought the idea of live dance in the hall "undesirable" when she had proposed it three years earlier, Muller urged him to reconsider. "I believe it would be a great addition to have the movement and rhythm of live dancers for part of the hour," she reasoned. "I have had a number of dancers offer their serv[ic]es gratis" (HLMNYPLPA, file 103-12). According to her colleague, Postal, "somewhere along the line it occurred to Mrs. Muller that it was not enough to present merely the music of various tribes and peoples. All of them lived surrounded by a rich pattern of rituals and ceremonials in which the dance played a vital part"

(1952, 18). Staging dance among the habitat dioramas would contribute to heightened verisimilitude, and the more lifelike the exhibition halls were, the easier it would be for visitors to relate to the museum's exhibits. If visitors were unlikely ever to travel to the far reaches of the worlds portrayed in the exhibition halls, they could still experience some of the cultural and sensory aspects of these locales virtually, through dance performance.

This chapter concentrates on the eventual fruits of Muller's labor, *Around the World with Dance and Song*, a dance program she directed at the AMNH between 1943 and 1952, and evidence of the museum's efforts to stage globalism in the mid-century. "Growing literally out of a phonograph, a big loudspeaker and a collection of records," the program presented material from forty-four countries in approximately fourteen different programs annually during its nearly ten-year run (Postal 1952, 17). At first, performers danced in the museum's monumental exhibition halls, surrounded by naturalistic habitat dioramas. To accommodate the throngs of spectators, Muller moved the performances to the auditorium within the first season, thereby re-purposing what had been a scholarly lecture hall and turning it into a concert stage. In spite of the limited stage space and minimal capacity for production values, the program attracted nearly 160,000 viewers by the time the museum administration canceled it, citing cost overruns (Outline of Purpose, Educational Value, Tribute to La Meri, Audience [undated], HLMNYPLPA, file 103-12). According to Muller, however, the administration's complaints about the costs of the series was a pretext for underlying qualms. As she wrote to Dr. Margaret Mead in a letter dated February 20, 1952: "I have recently been told that the Administration does not regard 'Around the World with Dance and Song' as educational, but as mere entertainment and business, and that since the expenses exceed the income, they will probably discontinue the dances after the current season, ending in May."[2]

Although short-lived, *Around the World with Dance and Song* resonated with mid-century globalist thinking and efforts among cultural institutions to put the city on the international map as a global center for international dance production and performance. The decision to cancel the program due to the sense among the institution's leaders that it had lost its way suggests that while Muller's efforts may have been in line with the institution's globalist aspirations, ultimately a decision to move in what was deemed to be more serious and scholarly direction won the day. What is more, the program's success as well as its eventual demise provides an opportunity to study the benefits and difficulties of staging globalism in mid-century America.

This chapter reveals the contradictory cultural politics within and surrounding the AMNH's popular dance series, drawing both on documents Muller amassed over her tenure as the museum's education director and on the museum's administrative records. In total, these include notes, correspondence, contracts, programs, clippings, reviews, photographs, and recorded radio interviews. Focusing on the history of the program, I illuminate how its features reflected contemporaneous municipal expectations about the role of public institutions to serve the public good while at the same time manifesting some of the paradoxical aspects of mid-century globalism including tensions between universalism and pluralism, integrationism and containment, and Anglo supremacy and ethnic self-definition. Continuing the long legacy of cultural imperialism associated with the Western museum display of foreign peoples, early on the museum's international dance programming echoed assumptions about American cultural superiority.

Yet, as Muller and participating artists continued to modify and refine it, the program contributed to the redefinition of ethnic dance within the New York dance scene and mediated a broader cultural transition toward a heightened global consciousness among members of the American public at mid-century. By its last performance in 1952, the series had transcended its limited purpose as set forth by the museum establishment in elevating the significance of international dance performance and in expanding conventions governing the production and presentation of ethnologic dance more broadly in the United States. Speaking to these points, in a letter to Muller dated May 2, 1952, supporter Alexander Brooks opined thus on hearing of the museum's termination of the program: "I need not tell you that your series has received a great deal of acclaim and recognition in the city of New York, as providing a remarkable contribution to our appreciation of cultural heritage of other countries. Indeed, I regard the dance series as being one of the most important contributions the American Museum of Natural History can make to the citizens of New York" (HLMNYPLPA, file 103-17).

"A PANORAMA OF MANY LANDS AND MANY PEOPLE"

The program began in 1943 on a shoestring, inaugurated by a performance of the hula in the Hawaiian Hall before an audience of 250 (HLMNYPLPA, file 103-12).[3] Next, Little Moose of the Chippewa tribe presented "dances of war and hunting, as well as stories in sign language" in the Northwest Indian Hall to a standing crowd of 500 ("Ethnologic Dance Series,"

November 6, 1943, 16; see also HLMNYPLPA, file 103-12). At this point Muller's vision was modest; she invited performers who lived in or near New York City and offered them a $100 honorarium for a performance. According to Muller's colleague, Postal, "The plan was to present a few dances here and there, without too much fuss or bother, in different Museum halls. The spectators were to sit on folding chairs spread out in a semi-circle. In no time at all, there were standees. People's heads got in the way and nobody could see a thing" (18). Postal also recalled that not long after the program's first several performances, the museum built an "elaborate platform," on which the performers could dance, to improve the audience's sight lines while the performances still remained in the exhibition halls. A photograph taken of La Meri dancing on the platform in 1943 illustrates its limitations. Used "only two or three times," the platform proved insufficient to meet overwhelming audience demand (1952, 18).[4]

It appears that for reasons of expediency, rather than of intentional design, Muller relocated the performances to the museum's auditorium within the program's first season, where they remained until its termination in 1952. While providing ample seating for 1,500 people, the auditorium

Figure 1.2 La Meri dancing the "WachiTunsui Dance of Arrow" of Peru on a platform in the museum's Education Hall. *Around the World with Dance and Song* program. Image #297799. Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History Library.

had never been intended for live performance. Designed for the presentation of scholarly lectures and ethnographic films to the public, it was equipped with only a "small lecture platform and booth in the seating area for lantern slide projection," offering performers a modest and shallow stage with little capacity for large groups or production values, and no means of hiding the mechanics of choreography with coordinated entrances and exits. With no curtain, dressing rooms, stage lighting, or sophisticated sound system, performers and their audiences had to calibrate their expectations accordingly (HLMNYPLPA, file 103-12; for more information see AMNH Archives, Box 506, Memo 1173, 1949).[5]

These limitations did not seem to dampen audience enthusiasm for the performances, however. It helped, perhaps, that they were free. The events were so popular with the public that it was not long before Muller scheduled them regularly twice a month during the fall and spring. For each program there were two performances: one in the afternoon for schoolchildren and another at night for general audiences. Muller hired artists whose work drew on one or more global dance traditions, such as Uday Shankar, Jean Leon Destine, and Sergio Franco from abroad and Pearl Primus, Hadassah, La Meri, Jack Cole, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, and José Limón from the United States. While there were other venues in the city to see international dance performance—such as the East-West Association, founded by humanitarian and author Pearl S. Buck; the Ethnologic Dance Theatre, which was included in La Meri's school, the Ethnologic Dance Center; the Central High School of Needle Trades; the India Dance Theater; the Barbizon-Plaza; Carnegie Hall; and the YM and YWHA at 92nd Street—the series at the AMNH was notable for its diverse offerings and expansive definition of international dance.[6] The program was so successful that in 1949 Muller converted it into a subscription series for its last three seasons, ostensibly organizing concerts around artists or groups whose work integrated traditional and new material or shed light on ethnic dance in innovative ways.

"MUSEUMS IN A CHANGING WORLD": DEMOCRATIZATION AT MID-CENTURY

Muller's dance initiative arose at a pivotal time both for the AMNH and for municipal museums around the country,[7] whose administrations, facing pressure both from within and without, questioned openly their role in service to the public and, as a result, made moves to democratize their institutions and programs.[8]

On March 3, 1941, the *New York Times* reported that New York City's Parks Commissioner Robert Moses announced results of an evaluation he had conducted of "museums that occupied city park property" ("Museums Too Musty for Moses: He Says They Intimidate Visitors," 1). Declaring "the aristocratic tradition . . . withering," he noted that the "taxpayers [would now] foot many of the bills." In an egalitarian move, Moses advocated that museum boards shake up their membership rosters so that trustees with "fixed ideas" would be replaced by those "a trifle more liberal in their outlook," continuing: "The board of a museum is not a House of Lords nor yet an exclusive social club. The present incumbents must let down the bars gradually. There must be less emphasis on wealth, old family and big-game hunting, and more on representing great masses of people potentially interested in the museums and their work" (1). Emphasizing the "great masses of people" who funded and patronized the museum, Moses reasoned that, following in the wake of national financial collapse and rebuilding through federally funded public works, it was more likely for monies to be pooled among a great number of ordinary taxpayers than donated by a few philanthropic magnates. In this climate, museums should de-emphasize their appeal to the rich and well-heeled and redouble their efforts to serve as many people as possible.

Moses's charge followed in the wake of the Depression era, when museums and other public cultural institutions had come to rely on federal, state, and local sources of revenue in times when they could not depend on private philanthropy. As tax revenue ensured a stable bottom line for their institutions, museum leaders around the country debated questions about the benefit of their institutions to ordinary taxpayers. In a seminal article entitled "What Are Museums For?" (1930), for example, Paul Marshall Rea, a biologist, geologist, and museum curator, who served as president of the American Association of Museums between 1919 and 1921, illuminated what he believed to be a central struggle between acquisition and preservation, on the one hand, and public education, on the other. "There is thus a dilemma involved in the expenditure of every dollar of museum money," he wrote. "Acquisition of collections is one of the most important tasks of a worthwhile museum. When it is not progressing it is retrogressing. Yet the *educational value* of museum collections can be realized only by an extensive and costly operating program" (1930, 271, emphasis mine). Rea believed that the museum's pedagogical objectives could be accomplished with constant curatorial attention to upgrading collections and to providing services to visitors.

In an address delivered before the American Association of Museums in 1939, curator Morse A. Cartwright took this further, charging the

museum with the "responsibility from top to toe as an agency for molding as well as for reflecting public taste and opinion" (1939, 11). Here Cartwright focused on what he saw were the museum's educational responsibilities "in the community that it serves," and further the specific role museums might play in "developing American culture" (10, 12). As he put it: "The day is long past when a museum can be operated for the benefit of the initiated few. It is no longer a collection to be insulated against and isolated from the general public." Cartwright advocated for a populist museum catering to the enrichment of the people whose taxes underwrote its services and not to powerful philanthropic or government interests. In his words: "The museum has an opportunity to occupy a position of leadership in the socialized community of the future. . . . If museums do not choose in advance to assume their proper and rightful educational role in developing the culture of the democracy, they will find themselves prey under a centralized dictatorship to the inglorious sentence of serving in perpetuity as propaganda arms of the government in power" (12). Cartwright's address pitted the American museum squarely against the kinds of partisan demagoguery that challenged civic-minded adults to think and to reason for themselves ("The Place of the Museum in Adult Education").

The ongoing discussions within US municipal museum circles about accessibility and educational relevance to the general public took on greater urgency in the shadow of impending war. For example, Francis Henry Taylor's "Museums in a Changing World" (1939) lamented the inability of museums, especially but not exclusively those devoted to exhibiting artwork, to "meet the public on their own terms" (789). Here Taylor, who would become director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1940, harnessed both nationalist and egalitarian themes. "The American museum is, after all, not an abandoned European palace, a solution for storing and classifying the accumulated national wealth of the past," he reasoned, "but an American phenomenon, developed by the people, for the people, and of the people" (789–90). Believing that the period in question was "critical" to the mission of the American museum, he argued that *interpretation* was the institution's most important responsibility to the public. "By honestly contemplating and interpreting our resources *in the light of their potential usefulness* to society, and by reconciling the layman and the scholar—therein lies our only hope for survival in the modern world" (792, emphasis mine), he asserted. Taylor, and other museum leaders, saw their institutions' public relevance in their ability to uphold democratic ideals, in this case "reconciling the layman and the scholar."

The expectation that museums remain "useful to society" only increased with the US entry into the war in December 1941. Following an emergency meeting held by the Association of Art Museum Directors in New York City late that month, participants issued a public statement demonstrating their commitment to the public. As reported on December 28, 1941, in the *New York Times*, the statement read: "If in a time of peace our museums and art galleries are important to the community, in time of war they are doubly valuable. For then, when the petty and trivial fall away and we are face to face with final and lasting values, we as Americans must summon to our defense all our intellectual and spiritual resources" ("Museums: A Survey of Their 1941 Activities," 1941, X9).[9] As the directors would have it, museums had a role to play in educating visitors how to reason critically, thus cultivating a cognitive capacity amongst citizens that was necessary to the nation's preservation of its democracy.

In spite of this very public effort to remain relevant during the war, some still felt that the pace of museum reform did not match the urgency of preparing the public for wartime and the uncertainty to come. Among these were Theodore Low, author of *The Museum as Social Instrument* (1942) and Taylor. In a related article, Low charged that "the world has increased its rate of change with alarming rapidity, yet museums had not followed suit." He distinguished between museums born in democracy, whose powers "should be far more effective in their truth and eternal character," and "those of the Axis which are based on falsehoods and half-truths." Given what he saw as these essential ideological differences, American museums, with their "potential of reaching millions of American citizens," must not "fail to recognize their responsibility" in readying the public for "the peace to come" ("What Is a Museum?" [1942] 2004, 30). Similarly, in a collection of revised essays published in 1945, Taylor underlined the museum's role in promoting democratic humanism in the postwar years. "We must look to the study of man himself, and we must recognize that education is no longer the prerogative of an initiated few, but the vital concern of the community at large," he wrote ("Babel's Tower: The Dilemma of the Modern Museum," 1945, 53). To his mind, the humanitarian education of every individual, rather than only the "initiated few," was necessary both to sustain Western democratic ideals and as an ideological bulwark against both future war and the spread of totalitarianism. Negating the museum's historic function as a reinforcement of the privilege of the cultural elite, both Low and Taylor urged institutions to educate the American people for participation as global citizens.

REASSESSMENT AND TRANSITION AT THE AMNH

Not immune to these mid-century debates, the American Museum of Natural History experienced significant changes as an institution throughout the 1940s, which in turn had an impact on the inception and development of its international dance program. Echoing the wartime pleas of his administrative contemporaries, Perry Osborn, acting president of the AMNH, made a strong case for "museums of natural science . . . hav[ing] an important role" to play following the war.[10] In his 1943 annual report, he asserted that "general ignorance and misinformation about man and nature lay at the root of current world difficulties." Osborn argued that the general public should be better informed about the current thinking among biologists and anthropologists, who "know that save for a few primitive tribes, races and the cultures they produce are not superior or inferior. They are different." He continued: "The different attributes of people, their skills, ways of thinking, social customs and adaptations, largely the result of environment, parental care, terrain, climate and food, *should be respected*. It is even important for us to learn to like these differences" ("Museum to Depict Nature on the Job," *New York Times*, May 4, 1943, emphasis mine). Osborn's writings articulate a role for the museum in keeping with globalist ideals, namely, that it was the institution's duty to keep the public abreast of current thinking among biological and social sciences concerning both the basis of human distinctions, as a function of cultural practices, and the obsolescence of hierarchies made according to determinations of "superiority" and "inferiority." Osborn connected the ability of people to get along with each other to their understanding of and respect for their cultural differences. An education along these lines, that could be fostered and facilitated by museums, possessed the potential to foster world peace.

Albert E. Parr, who directed the museum between 1942 and 1959, indicated in the same report that "stress would be placed hereafter on exhibits that will give an understanding of man's relationship to nature." Attempting to provide up-to-date and relevant information to "the many on the city street," Parr pledged to "chang[e]" the museum "from a mere source of polite intellectual entertainment with exhibits dealing with things long extinct," to an institution whose "exhibits [were] based on the current and immediate scene" ("Museum to Depict Nature on the Job," *New York Times*, May 4, 1943). Echoing Francis Henry Taylor, throughout his tenure, Parr stressed the museum's "interpretive function" in its education of the public, decrying what he called the "dead circus" method. "Our exhibits must emphasize interpretation, not mere presentation,"

he wrote. "We must attempt to make what is important fascinating'" ("Albert E. Parr, Museum Director and Oceanographer, Dies at 90," *New York Times* obituary, Glen Fowler, July 20, 1991).

Parr's and Osborn's progressive visions represented both pragmatic and ideological shifts in the museum's approach to acquisition, display, and engagement with the public by mid-century.[11] This can be seen in their position that it was not the museum's role to elevate certain cultural groups or their survival strategies over others, or to classify and compare cultures along a Western-biased continuum to deem superiority or inferiority. They saw the museum as a place in which the public could learn about cultural others through interactive exhibits based on the "current and immediate scene"; they sought to prompt visitors' engagement with cultural heritage in ways that inspired their respect for other peoples and ways of life.[12] I would argue that Muller's dance initiative was not only in line with Parr's and Osborn's thinking but that it would prove central to the museum's mission in these respects, even if not fully appreciated by the AMNH administration by 1952.

PERFORMING INTERCULTURAL INTEGRATION

Review of archival materials suggests how *Around the World with Dance and Song* took shape over its life, its development generally tracking with its two phases: 1943–1948 and 1949–1952. Phase one began with the program's inception and continued through its offerings of free performances; phase two began with the inauguration of the subscription series and ended with the program's termination.

Certainly, in the case of the very first AMNH dance performances staged in the exhibition halls amid the habitat dioramas, the theatrical settings predetermined the performances in conceptual and physical ways, thus limiting performers' range of self-definition. In other words, serving a metonymic function of indicating the totality of the culture to which they were part, performers "become living signs of themselves" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991, 388; see also Fusco 1995). Although perhaps unwittingly, the manner in which Muller staged the first few live dance performances was continuous with this history in their premise that performers would demonstrate the "rich pattern of rituals and ceremonials" proper to a particular place and its peoples as suggested by the environs of the exhibition halls (Postal, 1952).

During the first phase, the pragmatic relocation of performances from the exhibition halls to the institution's auditorium shifted the museum's

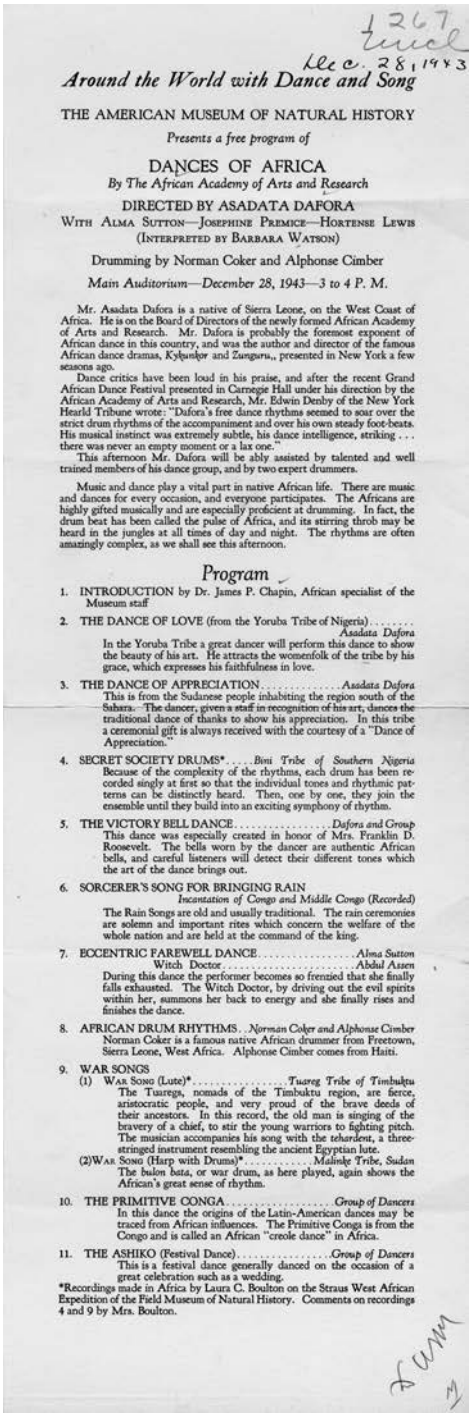
treatment of ethnic dance from specimen to artistic practice. And yet, the museum's conception of the program, through press releases, concert program copy, and programming, maintained vestiges of historic, and more exploitative, approaches to museum display of human beings. Although Muller's idea to stage live dance in the exhibition halls was new to the AMNH, it followed in a long-standing tradition of "environmental display," or the depiction of living specimens, including human beings, in their "native" habitats. A throwback to the age of imperialism, in which the presentation of human beings as specimens "served and benefited capitalism," such exhibits positioned native peoples as exotic but subhuman natural resources, while at the same time elevating the white Westerners who exploited them (Greenhalgh 1988; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991; Ames 1992, 3). Common not only to museums but also to Western international exhibitions or world's fairs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, displays such as these functioned "not only as vehicle[s] for merchandising but [as] occasion[s] for the celebration of imperial majesty and rule" (quoted in Stanley 1998, 23; see also Griffiths 2002, 46–85).

Employing an analogy of exotic travel both to entice visitors and to describe the viewing relations inside the theater, the museum figured relations between audience members and performers in touristic rather than artistic terms. A press release announcing the inauguration of the program as a subscription series in 1948, for example, harnessed the theme of world travel as an enticement to purchase season tickets. It referred to past programs thus: "Leading artists and dance groups in picturesque and authentic costumes have transplanted thousands of delighted dance lovers to far-away lands through colorful dances and music, ranging from the exotic rhythms of the East to the vigorous and exciting arts of the Western world" (Kelly, Press Release, December n.d. 1948). As Anthony Shay has argued, in a context such as this it is possible to take the word "exotic" to "connote the positive aspect of an exciting, unknown, and foreign quality of an object, person, or a dance" (emphasis original, 2008, 5). Yet it is also true that appeals to the exotic, when applied to native peoples, mobilize political economies of spectatorship and display that imply transactional relations between that those who are exhibited, or the cultures they are meant to stand for, and those who view or watch.[13]

Early theatrical programming in the auditorium also supported the travelogue concept as a vehicle for the education of the public about international peoples and customs. Between 1944 and 1948, for example, La Meri (born Russell Meriwether Hughes) appeared at least nine times. Widely recognized at the time as a foremost authority on ethnologic dance

theory and practice, she specialized in the dances of India and Spain, although she also presented all-international concerts. Assisted by the Natya Dancers, a company formed among students at the School of Natya, which she founded and directed with Ruth St. Denis until 1941, La Meri presented a series of diverse programs including "Dances of India," "Dances of the Orient" (including China, Burma, Japan, Ceylon, Java, and Morocco), "Dances of Spain and Latin America" (including Venezuela, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Andalusia, and Philippines), "Old and New Dances of Many Lands" (including South India, Arabia, Spain, Polynesia), "Dances from India to Cathay" (India, Japan, China), and "Dances of Many Lands" (India, Japan, Burma, Peru, Hawaii, Spain).[14]

Under the travelogue theme, early concerts typically covered entire regions of the world within one program. Muller enlisted other artists who worked in this vein. Based on concert programs obtained from the AMNH Archives, I can say that these included but perhaps were not limited to Tei Ko in "Dances of the Far East" (including China, Bali, Siam, Korea, Burma, Cambodia, India, and Java), "Dances and Melodies of the Pacific" (including the Philippines, Java, Hawaii, China, Bali, Japan, Samoa, Tahiti, and Korea), and "Dances of Japan and Korea"; Claude Marchant and Company in "Drums of Afro-Cuba"; Tula in "Mexican Fiesta"; "A Group of Native Hawaiians" in "Ancient Hawaiian Culture"; Dvora Lapson in "Jewish Dance through the Ages"; Pearl Primus in "Dark Rhythms (Africa and Haiti)"; The American Folksay Group performing a "recital of American 'work' songs and folk dances"; Arthur Mahoney and Thalia Mara performing "Flamenco Dances"; John Watters's Scottish Dancers and McKenna's Irish Dancers in "Dances of Scotland and Ireland"; The Radishev Folk Dance Group in "Folk Dances and Music of the Soviet Republics" (including Ukraine, Moldova, and Crimea); Mme. Jeannine Dawson and the Dance Group of the French Folklore Society in "Regional Dances of France"; Dorothea Dix Lawson and Company and Margot Mayo and the American Folk Square Dance Group in "The U.S.A. in Song and Dance"; Devi Dja performing dances of Bali, Java, Sumatra, and Borneo; Juana in "Dance Ways from Spain to the Philippines"; The Norwegian Folk Dance Society and The Swedish Folk Dance Society in "Folk Dances of Norway and Sweden"; Reginald and Gladys Laubin in "Arts and Dances of the American Indian" (including the Lakota and Ottawa tribal groups). Taken together, these performances indicated what might have amounted to a world tour as represented by the accumulated program content and countries represented. Neatly packaged cultural samplers, these programs facilitated audience engagement with foreignness, promoting the idea that such public education would make the world a smaller and more manageable place.



1267
Incl
Dec. 28, 1943

Around the World with Dance and Song

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Presents a free program of

DANCES OF AFRICA

By The African Academy of Arts and Research

DIRECTED BY ASADATA DAFORA

WITH ALMA SUTTON—JOSEPHINE PREMICE—HORTENSE LEWIS
(INTERPRETED BY BARBARA WATSON)

Drumming by Norman Coker and Alphonse Cimber

Main Auditorium—December 28, 1943—3 to 4 P. M.

Mr. Asadata Dafora is a native of Sierra Leone, on the West Coast of Africa. He is on the Board of Directors of the newly formed African Academy of Arts and Research. Mr. Dafora is probably the foremost exponent of African dance in this country, and was the author and director of the famous African dance dramas, *Kykunkor* and *Zunguru*,, presented in New York a few seasons ago.

Dance critics have been loud in his praise, and after the recent Grand African Dance Festival presented in Carnegie Hall under his direction by the African Academy of Arts and Research, Mr. Edwin Denby of the New York Hearld Tribune wrote: "Dafora's free dance rhythms seemed to soar over the strict drum rhythms of the accompaniment and over his own steady foot-beats. His musical instinct was extremely subtle, his dance intelligence, striking . . . there was never an empty moment or a lax one."

This afternoon Mr. Dafora will be ably assisted by talented and well trained members of his dance group, and by two expert drummers.

Music and dance play a vital part in native African life. There are music and dances for every occasion, and everyone participates. The Africans are highly gifted musically and are especially proficient at drumming. In fact, the drum beat has been called the pulse of Africa, and its stirring throb may be heard in the jungles at all times of day and night. The rhythms are often amazingly complex, as we shall see this afternoon.

Program

1. INTRODUCTION by Dr. James P. Chapin, African specialist of the Museum staff

2. THE DANCE OF LOVE (from the Yoruba Tribe of Nigeria) . . . . . *Asadata Dafora*
   In the Yoruba Tribe a great dancer will perform this dance to show the beauty of his art. He attracts the womenfolk of the tribe by his grace, which expresses his faithfulness in love.

3. THE DANCE OF APPRECIATION . . . . . *Asadata Dafora*
   This is from the Sudanese people inhabiting the region south of the Sahara. The dancer, given a staff in recognition of his art, dances the traditional dance of thanks to show his appreciation. In this tribe a ceremonial gift is always received with the courtesy of a "Dance of Appreciation."

4. SECRET SOCIETY DRUMS* . . . . *Bini Tribe of Southern Nigeria*
   Because of the complexity of the rhythms, each drum has been recorded singly at first so that the individual tones and rhythmic patterns can be distinctly heard. Then, one by one, they join the ensemble until they build into an exciting symphony of rhythm.

5. THE VICTORY BELL DANCE . . . . . *Dafora and Group*
   This dance was especially created in honor of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. The bells worn by the dancer are authentic African bells, and careful listeners will detect their different tones which the art of the dance brings out.

6. SORCERER'S SONG FOR BRINGING RAIN
   Incantation of Congo and Middle Congo (Recorded)
   The Rain Songs are old and usually traditional. The rain ceremonies are solemn and important rites which concern the welfare of the whole nation and are held at the command of the king.

7. ECCENTRIC FAREWELL DANCE . . . . . *Alma Sutton*
   Witch Doctor . . . . . *Abdul Assen*
   During this dance the performer becomes so frenzied that she finally falls exhausted. The Witch Doctor, by driving out the evil spirits within her, summons her back to energy and she finally rises and finishes the dance.

8. AFRICAN DRUM RHYTHMS . . *Norman Coker and Alphonse Cimber*
   Norman Coker is a famous native African drummer from Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa. Alphonse Cimber comes from Haiti.

9. WAR SONGS
   (1) WAR SONG (Lute)* . . . . . *Tuareg Tribe of Timbuktu*
   The Tuarega, nomads of the Timbuktu region, are fierce, aristocratic people, and very proud of the brave deeds of their ancestors. In this record, the old man is singing of the bravery of a chief, to stir the young warriors to fighting pitch. The musician accompanies his song with the *tehardent*, a three-stringed instrument resembling the ancient Egyptian lute.
   (2)WAR SONG (Harp with Drums)* . . . . . *Malinke Tribe, Sudan*
   The *bulon bata*, or war drum, as here played, again shows the African's great sense of rhythm.

10. THE PRIMITIVE CONGA . . . . . *Group of Dancers*
    In this dance the origins of the Latin-American dances may be traced from African influences. The Primitive Conga is from the Congo and is called an African "creole dance" in Africa.

11. THE ASHIKO (Festival Dance) . . . . . *Group of Dancers*
    This is a festival dance generally danced on the occasion of a great celebration such as a wedding.

*Recordings made in Africa by Laura C. Boulton on the Straus West African Expedition of the Field Museum of Natural History. Comments on recordings 4 and 9 by Mrs. Boulton.

Figure 1.3 "Dances with Africa," December 28, 1943, Central Archives 1267. Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History Library.

Figure 1.4 Tommy Dorsey's Dance Group, appearing circa 1945 in the museum's auditorium. *Around the World with Dance and Song* program. Image #2A1463. Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History Library. Photograph: Robert E. Logan.

Nevertheless, in spite of efforts to skirt dominant notions of Western supremacy, in the packaging of programs as world tours and the use of dance to reduce cultural differences to what could be depicted in the performance of a cultural dance, the AMNH still catered to privileged assumptions about Western superiority to cultural others (see also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991; Stanley 1998).[15] This approach was in keeping with traditions of staging encounters with cultural difference meant to evoke what anthropologist Alison Griffiths terms "wondrous difference" to suggest "the sense of both amazement and unease which have long inflicted the reception of a wide range of images, moving and still, depicting distant and exotic peoples for popular audiences in the West" (2002 xix). In this sense, the museum's use of dance as a form of international outreach and way of bridging differences also promoted cultural exchange that did not require much of the audience besides enjoyment. The museum functioned as a cultural echo chamber in which one's pre-existing notions about cultural hierarchies were reflected back, and therefore, reinforced.

In 1946 Muller began to branch out with her programming, featuring both performers who perpetuated the travelogue theme and those whose work traversed in interesting ways dance territories identified with "ethnic"

Figure 1.5 Mrs. Witsch's Swiss Dance Group (including a goat) appearing in 1948 in the museum's auditorium. *Around the World with Dance and Song* program. Image #299654. Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History Library.

or "concert" categories. One particularly illuminating example is the joint performance on May 2 by Pearl Primus and Hadassah, both choreographer-performers, of "Dance: The Universal Language" (Program, file 1267, AMNH Archives). In more or less alternating fashion, Primus appeared in works drawn from Africanist traditions in Western and Central Africa and the Caribbean, and Hadassah in those stemming from the East, largely India, Java, and Bali. The program also included a "dance conversation" with drummers Alfonse Cimber and Norman Coker. Although the Primus/Hadassah concert included material that would have been typical of a travelogue-inspired program, it diverged in its framing of that material under the

universalist banner and in the common conviction among the artists and sponsor that the performance could bridge cultural differences of region, nation, or even race through the common medium of the human body.

Correspondence in 1945 between Muller and Primus about this concert introduces universalism as an added dimension to the world travelogue theme, illustrating the ways in which the ideologies of globalism and universalism began to dovetail at the war's end. Requesting that the Trinidadian-born Primus share a fall program with the Israeli-born Hadassah, Muller wrote on July 5: "I am sure that you will find the response of the Museum audience gratifying." She continued: "We do feel that we can, through presentations of *living art forms*, reach a large public, and help along the great work of bringing all nations and races nearer together *through increased appreciation and understanding of intercultural interests*" (HLMNYPLPA, file 103-63, emphasis added). Here Muller's logic is underwritten by assumptions about the interdependence of universalism and globalism, namely, the notion that dance, as a common denominator, could foster "appreciation" and "understanding of intercultural interests."

Muller's 1945 comments to Primus imply Muller's view that universalism could be put to the service of artistic innovation in the area of world dance performance, just as it was essential to the advancement of dance modernism at mid-century. Likewise, based on her confirmation letter of August 1, 1945, Primus saw artistic leverage in the production of her work at this venue, exclaiming: "I believe that we are all agreed that the title for the performance will be 'Dance—The Universal Language . . . with a subtitle (The Orient, Africa and Haiti)—Hadassah and Pearl Primus and Company'" (HLMNYPLPA, file 103-63). Ironically for Primus, a Trinidadian-America, as well as for other artists typically defined in ethnic terms elsewhere, the AMNH dance series afforded them cultural authority and artistic license that they could not find on the contemporaneous concert stage. The concert dance stage forced Primus to define herself in terms of "Negro Dance" (Manning 2004, 175–77; Kowal 2010). However, in the context of the AMNH dance series, she appears to have felt comfortable exercising her artistic and political prerogative under the banner of cultural universalism.

The city's critics rarely reviewed performances in the dance program, in an apparent tacit judgment that such performances fell outside of their critical purview.[16] Walter Terry, however, regularly acknowledged the activity at the museum as part of what he observed as a "trend, not total but partial, toward the use by young dancers-choreographers of ethnologic and sectional material," evinced by choreographers such as La Meri, Primus, and Hadassah. Tracing the use of "such material" to Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, he notes a break in this artistic lineage caused by the preoccupation

of "many young modern dancers . . . with pure dance with topical theme, with the distillation of human behavior patterns or with characterization dance." Mentioning Elizabeth Waters, Claude Marchant, Hadassah, Saki, and Cebyn Swajty Maufaunwy, Terry observes a renewal in "the translation and transformation of American folk-dance themes and patterns into art—or theater-dance usage" (February 23, 1947).

Terry's article is puzzling in several ways, as he clearly omits many artists whose investigation of the overlap between ethnic and concert dance had persisted throughout the interwar years. They included, among others, Katherine Dunham, Zora Neale Hurston, and Asadata Dafora, who worked with Africanist materials and themes; Benjamin Zamach, Dvora Lapson, Pauline Koner, and Anna Sokolow, who worked with Jewish materials and themes; Michio Ito and Yeichi Nimura, whose work incorporated Japanese materials and themes; and Sophie Maslow, Jane Dudley, and William Bales, who drew on American folk materials. These and other artists had pioneered what we might call crossover dance, performing before varied audiences in venues running the gamut from commercial, to community, to concert, and investigating the shared spaces between ethnic and concert dance. Terry's article, therefore, marks an "invisibilization" (Dixon-Gottschild 1996) of activity that had been going on for years, which motivated the work of mid-century artists in the same vein. Nevertheless, Terry's observation of a revitalization or trend appears also to mark a moment of realization, making visible what had been overlooked or unnoticed and underlining its contemporaneity. His article presaged the increase in cultural interest in international dance at the end of the 1940s, evident in both the re-organization of the AMNH dance program as a subscription series and the increased and more mainstream press coverage of both the program and the phenomenon of ethnologic dance more generally speaking.

While not addressing the activity at the museum exclusively, Terry's writings put the dance program in a larger context relative to the contemporaneous dance field. Terry's recognition of a trend toward the use of "ethnologic and sectional material" by choreographers in modern dance, for example, and the overall support he expressed for Muller's endeavor, likely played a role in public interest in the program, which eventually led to its enhancement in its second phase.

INTERNATIONALIZING UNIVERSALISM: 1949–1952

Evaluating the second phase of the dance program's life, it is clear that the museum's commitment to public education through exposure to international

dance forms and cultures and interaction with global dance artists remained paramount. What changed, however, were the evolving ways in which Muller, museum public relations administrators, dance writers and critics, and audience members harnessed these objectives to the cause of globalism to make meaning of the program.

Figure 1.6 *Around the World with Dance and Song* Program Cover 1949, American Museum of Natural History. Courtesy of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

In spite of significant production limitations in the auditorium, which heretofore had not significantly hampered the program's success, Muller continued to expand and redefine it, charging for tickets beginning in 1949 and making it possible for viewers to purchase a subscription to attend all the events in a given season. According to a press release announcing the subscription series option:

> For the past seven years a unique and fascinating program of ethnic dances called "Around the World with Dance and Song" has been drawing capacity audiences to the huge auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History. Leading artists and dance groups in picturesque and authentic costumes have transported thousands of delighted dance lovers to far-away lands through colorful dances and music, ranging from the exotic rhythms of the East to the vigorous and exciting arts of the Western World (Kelly, "First Subscription Dance Series Begins at Natural History Museum," dated "about December 1948").

The release noted additionally that options for viewing "includ[ed] an afternoon program especially adapted to children at 2 p.m., and an evening program given by the same artists at 8:30 p.m. for adults, on seven Thursdays from February 10 through May 5, 1949." [17]

In the second half of 1949 and in 1950, encouraged by the dance program's success, the museum drew up plans and proposed financing for the construction of a "motion picture theatre and presentation house," planning to convert its current auditorium into "exhibition space" (AMNH Archives, file 1173, August 18, 1949). As proposed, the new facility would include a stage, house and dressing rooms, asbestos curtain, counterweight system, tracks, and additional draperies and furnishings.[18] Muller's implementation of ticket charges not only signaled changes she wanted to make in the program's profile; apparently, it also raised expectations among museum administrators and audiences about the program's value, purpose, and potential for generating revenue. For example, in a document estimating attendance, admission fees, "cost of talent," and net, based on twenty afternoon and twenty evening performances per year, charging $.80 and $1.25 for tickets, respectively, and with a total cost for talent of $12,000, the museum's net revenue would be $29,000.

At the same time, enticements of audiences with the promise of armchair travel gave way to claims that the program facilitated cross-cultural exchange and mutual understanding among diverse peoples. This is evident in a brief autobiographical statement Muller penned presumably near the end of the program: "The series has been of great service and

encouragement to dancers in the ethnic field and to newcomers from other countries in offering unusual opportunities to present their native art and folkways," she wrote, "thereby promoting international understanding and friendly goodwill between races and nations" (Muller personal biography, n.d.).[19]

Two articles published in the late 1940s resonated with the shifts going on at the AMNH. Maya Deren's 1948 article "Ethnic Dance" appeared in the December issue of *Mademoiselle* magazine.[20] Claiming that "as an art form, ethnic dance was almost entirely lost in the vast abyss between vaudeville and the archives," Deren highlighted a shift in cultural attitudes about ethnic dance among dancers, critics, audiences, and scholars (109). Positioning the AMNH dance program on the cusp of this change, Deren elevated its presentation of ethnic dance compared to those that reaffirmed demeaning cultural stereotypes or rarified it to the point of scholarly obscurity. "With the unassailable dignity of [the American Museum of Natural History] behind her, and acting in the name of scientifically objective educational principles, program director Hazel Lockwood Muller has shown lively courage in giving a hearing to the most exotic dancers from all parts of the world," she argued (109).

Similarly, a July 3, 1949, article by Walter Terry, entitled "The Fearsome Ethnologic Dance," identified Muller's and the museum's efforts as central to bringing ethnologic dance to the concert stage. He called "the museum's fine auditorium" a "Mecca for the growing number of ethnologic dance artists who believe firmly in the theatrical as well as in the scholarly attributes of their art and who are not content with sporadic and expensive appearances in New York's concert halls or with more frequent performances in their own little studios [or] miniature theaters." He underlined that for both the audience, composed not of cult followers "but rather the general public," and for the performers, the point was to "prove that [ethnologic] dance . . . is of general interest." Here Terry strived to demystify the term "ethnologic" through its normalization. In this extended passage, for example, he attempted both to identify and to dismantle the cultural notions surrounding the word.

> "Ethnologic" is a rather frightening adjective. To the casual ear, it seems to connote something which is vaguely scientific, remote and of interest to a seminar. It follows, then, that the ethnologic dancer succeeds by his very appellation, in frightening off the casual theatergoer. The ethnologic dancer is, of course, scientific, just as all skilled artists are scientific: He is also remote but only in the sense that he is concerned with bringing the dances of remote peoples near to other peoples and he is eligible for participation in a seminar since

> his art mirrors the similarities and differences which distinguish eras, races, nations and regions. But the ethnologic dancer is also theatrical and many of his offerings are just as theatrical as that famous ballet threesome of "Swan Lake," "Nutcracker" and "Scheherazade."

Terry went even further in an article entitled "The Dance World: Season of Modern Dance Expansion Experienced at New London Center," published on August 28, 1949, when assessing the current state of the dance field, lauding modern dance not only for its "inexhaustible" "dramatic possibilities" but also for its illustration of "new approaches to danced theater." In the work of contemporary dance artists, he argued, "as the use of ethnologic dance develops, we are finding new artistic adventure, new points of contact with peoples of other lands and other heritages and new forms resulting from the application of ethnologic dance to American theatrical needs."

In line with these cultural trends, Muller advanced innovative approaches to concert programming that both recognized ethnic dance across a spectrum of proximal relations to source material and mined productive interplays among traditional or folk and concert dance practices. While the spring season at the AMNH continued more or less in the same vein as before,[21] beginning with the fall season, Muller took a decidedly new tack. Programs "included not only the traditional dances of many peoples but also a number of new artistic dance forms created within the framework of ethnic styles." A press release announcing this addition stated: "Mrs. Muller hopes to make it clear through these programs that strict adherence to traditional techniques does not limit dance creativeness, nor does it prevent artists from enlarging and molding certain ethnological materials into interesting and varied new dance patterns" (Kelly, "Creative Dances on Ethnic Themes Featured in Museum's Fall Series," September, n.d.). Later that season, a press release described this as "dances created within the framework of ethnic patterns" (Kelly, October 23, 1949).

Artists included in the fall 1949 season under this new banner included Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, in a rare appearance together; dancers Sujata and Asoka who used "Hindu and Tibetan dance styles as the basis for a program of fascinating, brilliantly costumed dances"; the Dudley-Maslow-Bales Trio performing "'The Americas in Concert Dance,' a group of gaily colored dances from the folkways and social forms of the American people"; Claude Marchant in a "skillful modern interpretation of primitive rhythms" (December 6, 1949); Soekoro, Devi Wani and Indonesian Troupe in Dances of Bali, Java, Sumatra, which included two

premieres (December 29, 1949); and Hadassah performing her signature works "Shuvi Nafshi" and "Fable" along with "a number of new works in the Israeli, Indonesian and Hindu dance forms" (September 1949).

Muller's approach to programming during this phase suggests that artistic treatment of native material did not break down along lines of the authentic and the inauthentic, or the re-creative and the creative, as they often did and have done in critical and scholarly discussions of ethnic dance. We can only surmise whether or not audiences noted differences in the approaches to Indian material, say, from performers such as Sujata and Asoka, whose program included "several classical Hindu dances and two highly religious ritual dances from Tibet" (Kelly, October 23, 1949); to Uday Shankar, whose concert "encompassed the whole range of Hindu dance from the informal folk dances to the highly stylized Kathakali dance dramas" (Norton, January 6, 1952); to La Meri, whose work varied between a more "straight" treatment of ethnologic material and the application of that material to the purposes of the Western concert theater; to Hadassah, "with her colorful new company in dances of the Orient and Near East" (Kelly, October 9, 1949); or to St. Denis and Shawn, whose "romantic" approach to native material inspired their creative departures (Kelly, October 9, 1949).[22] By availing themselves of this range of treatments of ethnic dance material, viewers could juxtapose, compare, and contrast. While it is not possible to know for sure, cognitive tensions viewers may have perceived resulted in the extension and complication of the field in general, rather than in its attenuation.

Muller's expansion of the definition of ethologic dance went even further, however, in 1951 and 1952 when she secured appearances by well-known US concert dancers. The fall 1951 slate included dancers from the New York City Ballet, in "Ethnic Sources in Ballet," a program acknowledging "the tremendous debt that ballet dancers and choreographers owe to ethnic sources . . . in the first program of its kind presented anywhere." Ruthanna Boris, former star in the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, served as "artist supervisor" for the program, and Doris Hering, critic from *Dance Magazine*, served as commenter.[23] Billed as "a capsule of the 2,000 years of the dance," the concert "traced" "the origin of dance from its most primitive forms," including "basic forms [such] as the round, the processional and the line." Additionally, it "illustrated" "classifications as folk, character and national," and "encompassed . . . various periods of the dance from the Romantic through Russian and European Folk and up to Modern Russian, the schools of Diaghilev and Balanchine, and the American dance" (Norton, December 30, 1951).

Universalism was operative here in making the necessary translations between ballet and ethnic dance. In its tracing ballet's history back 2,000 years, and use of ballet to deconstruct all dance into its "basic forms," the program attempted to establish common expressive and aesthetic ground across all dance practices while, at the same time, asserting ballet's position as their apogee. Former US dancer with the Paris Opera Ballet, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and in musicals, Beth Dean, and her husband Australian Victor Carell, handled their concert in a dramatically different way. Entitled "Aboriginal Dance," they presented a "unique group of dances" based on their extended (five-year) research of "both the Maori culture of New Zealand and that of the Australian Aborigine" (Norton, March 23, 1952). It appears in this case that Dean and Carell's work investigated productive intersections among dance modes and practices to produce original material drawn from both studio-based and indigenous sources.

Similarly, Muller raised the series' professional profile with the appearances of celebrated international artists, such as Uday Shankar (India) and Sergio Franco (Mexico),[24] and well-known US modern dancers and companies. Among those from the United States were José Limón (Kelly, May 13, 1951) and Primus (Kelly, April 30, 1950; Norton, May 11, 1952), on the one hand, and Anna Sokolow, Jane Dudley, members of the Martha Graham Company (Pearl Lang, Erick Hawkins, and Bertram Ross), and Donald McKayle (Norton, April 13, 1952), on the other.[25]

Muller's efforts to secure and direct Limón's appearance, for example, reveal differing stakes for her and for the choreographer in conceptualizing his program. On December 8, 1950, the AMNH paid "Limón and company" an $800 advance for their performance in May of the following year, with the proviso that the museum would cover what were considered basics of any concert production. This included but was not limited to "a suitable theatre, hall or auditorium with a grand piano . . . well-heated, lighted, clear and in good order, with a comfortable dressing room near the stage for the artists: to furnish all electricians and stage hands required" (HLMNYPLPA, file 103-56). On the same day Limón's manager, Susan Pimsleur of Musical Artists, confirmed her understanding that they "would keep in mind that [Muller] desired as many Mexican works on the program as possible" and assured Muller "that upon Mr. Limón's return from Mexico, he will have some new numbers to offer" (Pimsleur to Muller, December 8, 1950, HLMNYPLPA).

By March 1951, however, it appeared that rather than perform many Mexican-inspired works at the AMNH, Limón would present a standard repertory concert, including *The Moor's Pavane*, *Concert*, *Story of Mankind*,

and *La Malinche* (the only work pertaining to Mexico on the program). In a letter to Limón dated March 16, 1951 (HLMNYPLPA, file 103-56), Muller attempted to clarify what she believed was a discrepancy between her initial understanding with Pimsleur regarding Limón's performance of Mexican-inspired works and the program content Pimsleur sent her leading up to the company's performance. Expressing her gratitude to the artist for coming, she asked for specific information about the works slated for performance, hoping to glean their "ethnic basis." Politely, she mentioned a conversation Limón was purported to have had with Reginald Laubin and Gladys Laubin, who "have appeared many times on both our lecture and dance series," about the "aim, character, etc." of the program. Attempting to use this account of the conversation as leverage, she implied that there had been a misunderstanding between her and Pimsleur that Limón himself could correct. Although it is impossible to know exactly what transpired after this correspondence, it is certain that Limón chose not to alter the content of his museum program from the works indicated by Pimsleur.

The differences between what each side of the production expected and what eventually occurred offer insight into the aesthetic and cultural politics within and outside the AMNH. From the perspective of the AMNH, Limón's booking and appearance reflected the developing professionalism of the series. Muller worked with Limón's manager, entering into a formal agreement through a third party, then negotiated in an attempt to ensure that the artist's appearance would conform to her conceptualization of the dance program. One thing that may have diminished her leverage was the inadequacy of the museum's auditorium and its inability to meet even the most rudimentary standards (e.g., stage in good order, nearby dressing rooms, stagehands, or any production elements involving technical staff/electricians). Based on the decision by Limón or his manager (or both) that he would offer a standard repertory program rather than showcase the works that had been inspired by his research in Mexico, it is possible that Muller's conceptualization of her series as a showcase for ethnic dance somehow confined the artist. For a reason that is not known, he steered away from performing works drawing on his Mexican heritage as Muller had requested and instead offered a program his company might have performed on any other concert stage in the city.

Muller and her marketing team did find ways of playing up Limón's connection to Mexico, while, at the same time, using the performance as an opportunity to promote the universal significance of Limón's artistic work. Calling him "the first male dancer of our era," the release explained, "many of Mr. Limón's dances are based on themes from folk legends and

dramatic literature, but his main concern is the inner conflicts of man, the basic emotional experiences common to all men." It elaborated: "To him, the function of the dance is to communicate emotional experience in terms of abstract movement. His works have included the legends and traditions of the people of Mexico, whose government has invited him to carry out important assignments in the field of the dance" (Kelly, May 13,1951). Clearly the release established Limón's relationship to Mexican culture through his role as a national emissary. It also traded on the universalist ideology inherent in his work, namely, its basis in legends and literature as a means of translating "the basic emotional experiences common to all men" into "abstract movement," thus illuminating once again the cultural interplay among universalism, integrationism, and ethnic dance at work in the AMNH's dance series.

The examples of Primus's and Limón's relationships with Muller and the series allows for an inquiry into relationships between ethnologic dance and dance modernism and consideration of the implications of staging modern dance in the context of a natural history museum. Without a doubt, Primus, who appeared numerous times at the AMNH, including her first US performance after her return from Africa in 1950 and the series' ultimate performance in May 1952, had much to gain from her association with the museum and appearances in its auditorium. As Primus was a dancer and trained anthropologist, the museum series provided her with a setting that validated her fieldwork-based approach to her dance-making and performance practices. In fact, the end of the AMNH dance program coincided with Primus's efforts, following her trip to Africa, to educate the public about myriad African dance ways (Kowal 2010). A press release announcing her presentation of "Dark Rhythms" established her in those terms (Norton, May 11, 1952).[26] Calling Primus "an anthropologist as well as a dancer," it announced her presentation of a "unique program of native African dance gathered from her extensive research and exploration in Western and Central Africa." It continued: "Motivated by an interest in the cultural heritage of the American Negro, Miss Primus traveled from tribe to tribe in Africa studying and recording the music, ceremonial and social dances. By actively participating in their way of life she was able not only to learn the techniques of the tribal dances, but to obtain a better understanding of the religious and social forces that originally formed them" (Norton, May 11, 1952).

This press release indicates what was at stake for Primus, not only in appearing at the museum, a venue that legitimated her status as "both dancer and anthropologist," but also in finding creative avenues for her expression of the "American Negro's" experience that extended into the

tribal cultures of Western and Central Africa. On the one hand, Primus appears to have had much to gain from her association with the museum's dance program, which strengthened her artistic status under the banner of universalism. On the other hand, Limón's presentation of a standard repertory program, grounded in the values of universalism as stated in the press release, gives the appearance that he avoided association with the program's ethnic dance identity in ways that would bolster his artistic status by contrast.

EDIFICATION VERSUS ENTERTAINMENT

Over time, the program's focus changed, becoming less invested in the travelogue theme or enticements to the exotic and more in showcasing renowned artists whose work expanded conventional notions of ethnic or ethnologic dance. In the spring of 1952 the museum canceled the dance program, citing "budgetary" overruns based on "hidden expenses" (Postal 1952, 17). Between 1949 and 1952, the financial outlay for the series doubled, owing to more generous honoraria, as Muller competed for more high-profile performers; increased overtime pay of museum staff who worked at the evening performances; and higher museum heating bills. Thus, even though profits grew almost tenfold from revenue generated by ticket sales, the net yield was only around $500.[27] In its final spring season the series posted a small but symbolic loss. According to Postal, although all along Muller's program had raised eyebrows among "many worthy people," the budgetary shortfall appeared to free museum administrators to express their qualms about the program's debatable educational value. According to Muller in a February 20, 1952, letter she wrote to anthropologist Margaret Mead the "Administration [did] not regard [the dance series] as educational, but as mere entertainment and business."

If Muller's letter to Mead is a fair indication, Muller had taken her concept too far in the eyes of administrators as she labored to transform the program into a self-sustaining producing entity. Almost accidentally, what had seemed like a reasonable extension of the museum's public mission in 1943 now appeared to the museum's leaders to be working against it. Perhaps more comfortable with the idea of moving bodies as offering collateral context within an environmental display—i.e., performances framed as living culture—administrators questioned Muller's decision to define the program in artistic terms. Essentially, Muller did herself in with her own success. In her initial attempt to heighten the program's profile, which she accomplished by charging for tickets and pursuing more

well-known and expensive talent, she had elevated audience expectations about the overall professionalism of the program. When she later converted the program into a performance series, she signaled additional amenities including the kinds of production values audiences would expect of a concert theater. Finally, in seeking to sign more notable talent, Muller forced herself into competing unsuccessfully with agents and promoters when attempting to book their most valued performers. Julius Postal's retrospective appraisal of what went wrong supports this theory. According to Postal, "As long as admission was free, the severe simplicity of the presentations could be praised by critics as happy circumstances that admirabl[y] set off the dancers and focused attention on them. The various small discomforts were cheerfully tolerated, even enjoyed as an inevitable and fitting part of the atmosphere" (1952, 19).

In a reflective memo Muller wrote "outlining [the program's] purpose," she summed up essential facts about the series as follows: "Around the World with Dance and Song started in October 1943 and continued until May 15, 1952." And there were "125 performances attended by 160,000 persons, 44 countries were represented on the program, 15 of these by native artists from Hawaii, Africa, Mexico, Indonesia, Spain, India, Greece, Israel, and other far-away lands." Muller then enumerated the program's four-point purpose thus: "(a) to add a living glow to static Museum exhibits of world cultures in the galleries; (b) to contribute, through the living arts of dance and music, toward international appreciation and good will and a realization of the worth of cultural values of other races and lands";[28] (c) to use the resources of the museum to promote and contribute to the education of young people, many of whom were drawn there for the first time to see dance performances; (d) to promote the careers of dance performers whose "engagements were often secured through the Museum" (Outline of Purpose, Educational Value, Tribute to La Meri, Audience (undated), HLMNYPLPA, file 103-12). In an undated document, presumably one Muller penned nearing the end of the run of the series circa 1952, she went further to identify the program's goals thus:

> To contribute, through the living arts of dance and music, toward international appreciation and good will and a realization of the worth of cultural values of other races and lands. As President Eisenhower has said, world neighborliness is the best prevention of future wars. And dance and music are universal languages, spring from the human hearts of all men. In the dances of people, we see their history, their physical environment reflected, events of their daily lives portrayed in beautiful movements and rhythms, their traditions, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears.

The crux of Muller's stated intention for the program, to "promote international understanding and friendly good will between races and nations," drew directly on postwar globalist ideals and envisioned the dance series as contributing to their realization (all quotes from Muller, Papers, file 103-12, personal bio undated).

Muller's memos reveal her recognition of the program's import going beyond the number of artists presented or audience attendees. In a reflective mood, and yet defiant in light of what she believed was the administration's error in ceasing the dance program, Muller underlined the *educational* aspects of the mission to animate "static Museum exhibits" and expose audiences and especially "young people" to dance. What is more, she recognized the ability of dance artists to serve as cultural ambassadors and the potential of dance performance to serve in the project of cultural diplomacy. Considering the cultural context in which the series existed, and the relative lack of prominence of ethnologic dance compared to concert forms such as ballet and modern dance, Muller's accomplishment as a presenter was no small feat. All things considered, in spite of its brevity on the New York City concert dance scene, the museum's program led the way in making cultural and aesthetic inroads in mid-century US dance practice and performance, especially by supporting the prerogative of international dance artists to define their movement practices and products on their own cultural terms, and by creating viable, visible, and legitimate opportunities for their artistic expression on the concert stage.

THE LURE OF ARMCHAIR TRAVEL

In the Introduction to the book, I enlist ideas about the nature and significance of the urban stage offered by Foucault and Miskowiec, on the one hand, and Richard Sennett, on the other. Whereas the first authors might have us consider the efficacy of the "counter-site" as a way of analyzing what, if anything else, was at stake in the museum's intercultural dance programing, the latter would underline aspects of the city itself as a site in which difference, complexity, and strangeness provide both a basis for urban social relations and a bulwark against totalitarianism. It is in the spirit suggested by their formulations that I would like to enter into the final section of analysis, in which I argue that the potential efficacy of *Around the world with Dance and Song* in staging globalism can be seen in its role as a substitution for or simulacrum of experience with cultural difference in a world in which actual interaction with cultural others, either in

a domestic setting or through expensive travel abroad, was difficult to come by.

This role becomes evident in a post-mortem article Walter Terry wrote at the culmination of the dance program. "In this city of 8,000,000 shut-in New Yorkers there is a rapidly growing number of people who flock to see the native dances of distant, exotic lands," he asserted, continuing: "These are all performances which, five years ago, might have been thought too esoteric for popular consumption. Today producers making movies on location go out of their way to film native dances . . . and they seem to satisfy the *same human urge* that makes people want to travel to far away countries, or at least to read travel magazines" (emphasis mine). Calling the AMNH dance series the "home" of ethnic dance, he lamented the museum's decision "discontinue it for the present." A veneration of the program, the article attempted to convey a lesson to Terry's readers. Asking rhetorically: "Where, one may ask, does ethnic dance really belong? the museum? the classroom? the theater?" He answered: "Like the other arts, it belongs wherever it can be of service" (Walter Terry, "The World Dances through Manhattan: Dancers of Exotic Lands Lure the Pent-Up New Yorker," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 18, 1952).

Terry's 1952 postscript resonated with an October 1947 column, in which he assessed the importance of the activities of La Meri and her Exotic Ballet Company in similar terms: "If it is our duty and our function to foster the continued creation and expansion of American dance, it is also our obligation and our privilege to acquaint ourselves with the dances of other peoples," he advocated, continuing:

> Our dance mirrors our characters and our characteristics and we may be sure that the dances of other nations perform a similar service in revealing something of the heart of a people. *Since comparatively few foreign dance groups come to our shores and since the average American is not a constant world traveler, the importance of La Meri and her Exotic Ballet to the local dance scene becomes immediately apparent* (emphasis mine, "Exotic Ballet Group Accents Global Values of Dance Art," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 5, 1947).

So far, I have discussed the educational function of the dance program as an effort aimed at teaching Americans about the peoples and cultures of the world for their edification and as a means of promoting international understanding and amity. Moreover, I have made a case for the contemporaneous perception of the dance program as serving the cause of cultural diplomacy. While Terry's writings would certainly be in keeping with these ideas, in advocating the "obligation and privilege to acquaint

ourselves with the dancers of other peoples," taken together these articles suggest two other lines of inquiry. The first is the idea that attending ethnologic performances at the museum or elsewhere could serve as a substitute for real encounters with cultural difference and would therefore "satisfy the same human urge that makes people want to travel to far away countries, or at least to read travel magazines." The second is the idea that performances of ethnologic dance would "foster the continued creation and expansion of American dance." What would account for the urge for interaction with cultural others of which Terry writes? And what did staging globalism at the AMNH achieve in this cultural context?

Writing in 1963, the historian Marion T. Bennett observed the "long life" of the Immigration Act of 1924 (1963, 70). Although predating the period examined in this book, nativist laws passed in 1921 and 1924, which placed restrictions on immigration based on country-of-origin quotas, are important precedents for postwar immigration reform.[29] Both laws, along with the Great Depression, which began in 1929, had a significant impact on the number of immigrants entering the United States from the 1920s through the wartime years. As historian Dennis Wepman reports: "Between 1921 and 1930, more than four million immigrants entered the United States. The number fell to slightly more than half a million during the 1930s, and from 1931 to 1946 it never reached 100,000 in any one year" (2002, 274). What is more, these laws were "designed to maintain racial homogeneity" by setting a baseline for all quota determinations at the year 1920 (Chin 1996, 279). In particular, the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, "the first permanent quota law," and the more stringent of the two, phased in a series of restrictions reducing the number of immigrant visas issued annually from approximately 357,000 at the time of the bill's passage to 150,000 by 1927. It also established a "national origins formula" (quoted in Wepman, 2002, 244) to be implemented in 1929, in which the United States would award immigrant visas to "countr[ies] based on the number of American citizens who traced their ancestry to that nation based on the 1920 census."[30]

As enforced by the 1921 and 1924 laws, US immigration policy established double standards when it came to immigrants of African and Asian descent, restricting the number of individuals who qualified for immigration to the United States in the early to mid-century. Americans of African heritage, who had a claim to residential longevity in the United States equal to that of many of Anglo descent, were disproportionately represented in the quotas.[31] As a result, immigrants from Africa comprised less than 1 percent of the total immigrant population (Chin 1996, 280). Immigration of individuals of Asian descent was similarly prohibitive, in

this case explicitly on the basis of racial heritage and not nationality.[32] Individuals of Asian descent born in England and having lived in England all their lives, therefore, would still be considered for immigration on the basis of their racial status as Asians rather than on their country of origin. Immigration laws such as these systematized sociocultural and dominant biases toward white hegemony and Anglo-Saxon superiority, stipulating immigration quota allowances based on the extent to which it was thought probable that a certain individual could assimilate to "American" culture based on a person's ethnicity or race of origin. As a result of these laws, in the interwar years foreign nationals hailing from non-Anglo European countries, and even those of Asian descent residing in white majority countries, had significantly limited access to pathways of immigration to, and naturalization in, the United States. Americans, therefore, as a consequence, would have had little occasion to encounter immigrants from restricted countries in Asia or Africa, areas of the world vital to the dance cultural programming offered by the AMNH.

Relevant to the inquiry of this book, US immigration policy started to shift in the mid-1940s following World War II, notably with actions meant to address two main concerns, one relating to US/China foreign policy objectives and the other largely humanitarian. In the first case, congressional repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, the year of the first concerts offered by the museum's *Around the World with Dance and Song* programming, relaxed immigration and naturalization restrictions on Chinese nationals, introducing a token quota (105 people per year) and allowing Chinese aliens to naturalize (Chin 1996, 282). US policy toward Chinese aliens occurred during the national internment of Japanese American citizens, subject to Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, who were divested of their possessions and property and forced to relocate to camps. Although not reflected in increased instances of Chinese immigration, the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act came as a result of wartime political pressure on the US government and served as a federal attempt to counteract Japanese propaganda highlighting American restrictions on Chinese immigration. Seen alongside the American internment of Japanese American citizens, reversal of its policy toward Chinese aliens stands as an example of the country's racial double standards, namely, the conditional nature of the Bill of Rights as not applying to all individuals equally under the law (Wepman 2002, 286).[33]

In 1946, Congress lifted immigration and naturalization restrictions for natives of the Philippines and India, the same year it closed the last Japanese internment camp, and the number of immigrants to the United States began rising that year.[34] Wepman attributes this upswing both to

modifications in immigration law and to a sea change in social attitudes toward immigrants and cultural others. As he explains, "Although ethnic prejudices did not altogether disappear, they ceased to be supported by law, and the generally improved relationships between races, nationalities, and religions in the United States allowed for an improvement in some of the more discriminatory aspects of immigration law" (2002, 274). Predominant factors driving this change were humanitarian concerns over displaced persons and refugees in Europe seeking resettlement in America due to communist annexation of their countries of origin, and/or to the Nazi project of the destruction of European Jewry, resulting in fears among these individuals for the lives and livelihoods of themselves and family members. On December 22, 1945, President Truman signed an order "just months after the war ended directing American consulates to give preference to displaced persons in granting visas to enter the United States" (Wepman 2002, 275).[35] And yet, this was more of humanitarian gesture, and it did little to alter the restrictive existing quota-based policy.

Federal immigration reform in the early 1950s, during the last years of dance programming at the AMNH, prioritized the appearance of American tolerance toward the cultural otherness of peoples of Asian and African descent over the actual reform of laws restricting their paths to citizenship. US immigration policy betrayed the high geopolitical stakes for legislation: in this case, lawmakers gave more weight to achieving foreign policy goals aimed at garnering allies in the Cold War against the Soviet Union over the cause for equal rights. The most salient example is Congressional passage of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as the McCarran-Walter Act, voted into law during the last year of the AMNH's dance series. The act was a result of both bipartisan dissatisfaction with existing laws regulating immigrants, displaced persons, and refugees, and public pressure to formulate a comprehensive national policy toward immigration (Wepman 2002, 278). McCarran-Walter maintained the national origins quota system established in the 1920s while at the same time abolishing laws barring Asian immigration to the United States.[36] However, by setting an annual immigration quota of only 2,000 people from the Asia-Pacific region, the law maintained the country's previous preferences for immigrants from select Western European countries (279).

While, on its face, the McCarran-Walter Act gave the appearance of accomplishing immigration reform, especially with its elimination of the long-standing moratorium on Asian immigration to the United States, in reality it functioned more as propaganda meant to achieve Cold War foreign policy and not progressive social objectives (Chin 1996,

287).[37] A product of the McCarthy era, the bill legislated no tolerance for the immigration of "aliens who are members of or affiliated with the Communist Party" in the United States or anywhere in the world (279). Considering these exclusions in total, Wepman maintains that "overall, the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 was the most rigorously restrictionist immigration law in American history, and many people considered it the most discriminatory" (279). As the US State Department points out, passage of the McCarran-Walter Act, which cast immigration reform as a means of addressing national security concerns over access of foreign nationals to the United States, signified a victory of congressional isolationism over globalism coinciding with a heightening of Cold War tensions (https:history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/immigration-act).

President Harry Truman, in fact, vetoed the bill for the reason of its anachronism, what he called "a step backward and not a step forward." As he stated in a June 25, 1952, letter to the members of the House of Representatives explaining the reasons for his veto:

> What we do in the field of immigration and naturalization is vital to the continued growth and internal development of the United States—to the economic and social strength of our country—which is the core of the defense of the free world. Our immigration policy is equally, if not more important, to the conduct of our foreign relations and to our responsibilities of moral leadership in the struggle for world peace.

Truman went further, calling for "racial or national barriers to naturalization be abolished," especially those aimed at preventing Asian nationals, or war survivors fleeing the Eastern Bloc, from entering the United States through immigration and becoming citizens (https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=2389. Seeing the McCarran-Walter Act as an extension of the 1924 National Origins legislation, and therefore not a meaningful effort at immigration reform, Truman asserted: "It is incredible to me that, in this year of 1952, we should again be enacting into law such a slur on the patriotism, the capacity, and the decency of a large part of our citizenry."[38]

Debate at the federal level over the passage of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act reveals an important political dichotomy in the national debate over immigration reform at mid-century. Isolationists such as Senator Patrick McCarran (D, Nevada) and Congressman Francis Walter (D, Pennsylvania) believed that "limited and selective immigration was the best way to ensure the preservation of national security and national interests," by

restricting entry of communists or "unassimilated aliens [who] could threaten the foundations of American life" (https:history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/immigration-act). By contrast, President Truman articulated a point of view supporting arguments for American globalism, namely, that by opening up America's borders to those who hoped to make a better life for themselves and their families, the country would be bolstering its "economic and social strength." In turn, the tension explicit here between isolationist and globalist impulses helps to shed light on what might have lured audience members to ethnologic dance performances at the AMNH, and what might have been at stake in their experiences in the theater, in which dancers performed roles as intercultural interlocutors, and proxies for absent foreigners, while audiences reckoned with cultural others and otherness difficult to find in their ordinary lives.

TWO PRECEDENTS/TWO INTERPRETATIONS

Clippings I found in Muller's collected papers offer clues as to how to approach this line of consideration. While Muller's original concept for the dance program harkens back to the historical precedent of environmental display in museums, several articles I found suggest that she was looking to comparable and contemporaneous institutions in the city for inspiration. One of these was the Bronx Zoo, which, in 1940 underwent extensive renovations intended to "make the Zoo more informative." The other was an exhibition in 1941 of "Indian" art at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), billed as "the largest and most representative of its kind ever held" ("Modern Museum Shows Indian Art," January 22, 1941, 16, HLMNYPLPA).

In the clipping Muller saved about the Zoo, Fairfield Osborn, president of the New York Zoological Society, which operated the Zoo and the New York Aquarium, is announced to have outlined "radical changes in the policy and construction of the New York Zoological Park, the Bronx" intended to "make the institution overshadow any other of its kind in the United States" ("Zoo in Bronx Being Modernized; Inmates and Visitors to Benefit," dated September 1940, HLMNYPLPA). Osborn heralded plans including complete refurbishment of the 264-acre park; installation of "tractor-trains from the World's Fair" to carry visitors around parks walkways; construction of restaurants; dismantlement of bars and cages—"long since rusty and outmoded"—replaced by animals in appropriate habitats; allowance of formerly forbidden cameras; and greater expenditure

by the Zoological Society for scientific research. A central feature of the new zoo would be an "African Plains" exhibit, complete with native animals, flora, and "sound effects, such as the distant throb of drums coming faintly across the African plains" quoting Osborn. It is difficult to know for sure why Muller saved this article; however one might surmise that she was interested in the Zoo's pursuit of "appropriate habitat" display for its animals so that visitors could watch the animals in areas that approximated their more natural environments. It is also possible that the Zoo's decision to incorporate sound effects resonated with an initiative at the AMNH in 1939 that similarly piped in sound, such as "music and dances . . . as well as sounds that accompany life," into its African Congo exhibit ("Museum Visitors to Hear the Sounds of the Jungle," April 10, 1939, 15, HLMNYPLPA).

Juxtaposed against the first several of the museum's dance performances held in its exhibition halls, the zoo's approach to public education puts in relief aspects of the museum's programming that is not wholly complimentary. Osborn spoke eloquently about his commitment to "providing information," asserting that "the world of living creatures is more than a side-show." He continued: "In days when truth is hard to find, the pleasure, recreation and instruction gained by contact with and observance of the panorama of living creatures is particularly satisfying" ("Zoo in Bronx Being Modernized; Inmates and Visitors to Benefit," September 1940, HLMNYPLPA). Yet coupled with the zoo's mission to foster "truth" through interspecies interaction was the necessity of making sure its annual 5,000,000 visitors had a good time. Examples of such catering to visitors abound, including the incorporation of narrative elements such as sound effects, contrived "native" scenery, and more blatant crowd-pleasing safari-style train rides. Regardless of Osborn's intention not to make the animals into a "side-show," in many ways the zoo walked a fine line between public edification and entertainment.

If early performances in the museum's exhibition halls were anything like the zoo's approach to combining edification and entertainment, we might see them as continuous both with the institution's longstanding commitment to environmental realism in its storied exhibition halls and its efforts to engage ordinary visitors in offering free and exotic entertainment – if not an introduction to indigenous dance practices. As such, these early stagings of ethnologic dance may have reinforced audience feelings of their cultural superiority and presumptions about American exceptionalism that underwrote the broader American public's isolationist impulses in the lead-up to World War II, evidenced, for example, by the US reluctance to intervene in the Nazis' "ethnic cleansing" in Europe.

By contrast, the precedent of MoMA's monumental 1940 retrospective of Native American art and artifacts, provides a different angle on Muller's production of the dance program. Collaboratively organized by the Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the United States and the US Department of the Interior, and sponsored by both the United States National Museum in Washington, DC, and the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology in Toronto, the exhibit was held in cooperation with universities and museums of science across the country. Billed as the "largest and most representative of its kind ever held," it displayed over 1,000 objects and "occupied all of the available space on three floors of the museum" (Jewell, *New York Times*, January 22, 1941, "Modern Museum Shows Indian Art," 16). According to advance publicity, the exhibit "presented contemporary Indian works of art against a background of their ancient traditions," its aim, to "*bring about new appreciation and deeper understanding of the much neglected art of the original Americans*" (emphasis mine, Linn, *New York Times*, August 18, 1940, "Art of the Indian to Be Displayed," 42).

Besides its traditional display of objects, during the show's three-month run the museum hosted numerous events revolving around live performance. In the galleries, artists demonstrated sand painting, weaving, and jewelry making, and in the auditorium various groups performed their native tribal songs and dances. The museum also offered film screenings, lecture demonstrations, and a three-day institute titled "The Future of the American Indian," sponsored by the American Association on Indian Affairs (*New York Times*, February 16, 1941, "Indians Sing at Museum," 39; February 21, 1941, "Indian Dances to Be Shown," 17; Linn, *New York Times*, March 2, 1941, "Indians' Future Is Institute Topic," D2; March 9, 1941, "Indian War Dances Seen at Museum," 32; March 27, 1941, "To Show Sand Paintings," 21).[39]

A harbinger of outreach efforts popular at museums today, MoMA's approach to making the retrospective interactive leveraged the institution's cultural authority to serve the public good by promoting ethnic self-definition for Native American participants and by creating multiple points of entry for visitors—artistic, scholarly, scientific, cultural, spiritual, and ceremonial. The exhibition achieved this in various ways: (1) by assembling indigenous and outside experts on Native American cultures thus supporting Native American self-representation in a dialogical context; (2) by acknowledging the role of ritual and ceremony in the formation of Native American identities by including demonstrations and performances as part of the exhibition event; (3) by convening a scholarly institute dedicated to fostering public knowledge and understanding of Native American affairs from a variety of standpoints.[40]

Thus, while the announcement of renovations at the Bronx Zoo might have suggested to Muller meaningful ways of involving the public in presentations of social science, the MoMA clipping and her knowledge of the exhibit likely provided a conceptual framework for the dance program, which she continued to mine throughout its duration. In both its conception and its execution, MoMA's Native American retrospective departed from conventions of cultural colonialism, which saw the museum's "cabinet of curiosities" as both "the material evidence of the colonial achievements of the European cultures in which museums are rooted" and a "mirror in which are reflected the views and attitudes of dominant cultures" (Simpson 1996, 1). Similarly, Muller believed that live performers not only added dimension to otherwise inanimate exhibits and prompted informative interactions with museum visitors; she imagined that such encounters furthered the aims of mid-century globalism, promoting mutual understanding, appreciation, and even, as the museum's president, Osborn put it, respect for differences among all participants.

CONCLUSION

> It had seemed to me that the series had greater value than the mere esthetic pleasure of watching artists perform. I have always been proud of the fact that one of our New York Museums could go beyond the routine museum presentation of stuffed animals and assembled artifacts, however attractively mounted, *to bring the public a living part of other cultures*. . . . Indra Kamadjojo—the outstanding dance so far in the Spring series—told me much more about Indonesia than any number of books. I imagine that Pearl Primus will have much more to say about Africa than any number of carved figures or ivory ornaments
>
> (Letter to Hazel Lockwood Muller from George Edington, May 5, 1952, file 103-17, HLMNYPLPA, emphasis mine)

In a letter he wrote to Muller at the conclusion of the *Around the World with Dance and Song* dance program, audience member George Edington identified what he thought was the "greater value" of the series beyond watching performances or learning about international dance practices by attending an exhibit at the museum. Claiming that the dance program had brought "the public a living part of culture," Edington emphasized the capability of performers, such as Indra Kamadjojo and Pearl Primus to communicate more about Indonesia or Africa, respectively, than he would

learn studying books or inanimate artifacts. The distance of time and inability to ascertain first-hand accounts poses problems for the historian in assessing what the museum's dance series meant to audience members. Nevertheless, Edington's letter, and the fact that Muller kept it among the administrative records she preserved, indicate its importance in offering us clues. For Edington, as we might imagine for other viewers, performances at the museum afforded concert-goers opportunities both to learn about world cultures and to engage with performers, thus not only bridging distances of time and space but also filling in critical details about foreign cultural practices that could possibly belie commonly-held assumptions and/or cultural stereotypes.

Museum studies scholar Jem Fraser's work on what she calls the "museum drama" furthers this theory about Edington's experience of viewing dance in the context of the AMNH, as, perhaps emblematic of other enthusiasts of the dance series. Assessing information gleaned from visitor surveys conducted routinely by museum staffs across the country, Fraser argues that "meaning" in a museum context "embraces more than learning in its narrow sense—meaning is about the impact the visit has on people's lives—their memories, feelings, values, sense of wonder—the overall impact on them of the experience of the particular place, object or set of objects" (2007, 292). Fraser goes further to articulate a performance-based model of analysis that both "recognizes the ideological and social basis on which meaning is constructed and creates an environment in which new meaning is formed and new identities are transacted." Fraser's proposition help us consider how mid-century audience members like Edington might have made sense of their experiences, which were complex, at times contradictory, perhaps leading them to affirm and/or challenge their existing feelings and beliefs about cultural others, unfamiliar cultures, and difference itself.

If audience member George Edington's letter is any indication, the AMNH experiment of staging globalism made considerable inroads into what we now enjoy as the field of "world dance" practice and performance.[41] Drawing on the centuries-long legacy of cultural colonialism associated with the Western museum display of foreign peoples, early on the dance program helped lay a foundation for the postwar ideology of containment, giving credence to audiences' perceptions of their cultural superiority in ways that promoted the containment of difference at home and abroad. Yet the vision that underwrote Muller's programming and promotional decisions regarding the museum's dance series also indicates a progressive ideological strain emblematic of mid-twentieth-century globalist thinking. We can see this on an institutional level, in the ways that *Around the*

World with Dance and Song fulfilled mid-twentieth-century mandates for municipal museum reform, intended to make public institutions more accessible and meaningful to ordinary tax-paying citizens. Moreover, on balance, series programming supported prerogatives of international dance artists to define their movement practices and products on their own cultural terms and created viable, visible, and legitimate opportunities for their artistic expression on what eventually became a de facto concert stage.

Muller staged innovative opportunities for public engagement around cultural difference, prompting productive interchange between artists and viewers alike, and functioning, in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's words as "a place for finding ourselves" (2005, 8).[42] As Muller continued to refine it, the program contributed to a redefinition of ethnic dance at the mid-twentieth century and mediated a cultural transition toward a heightened global consciousness. Thus what had at first appeared to be a strategy to attract larger and more diverse audiences to the museum with the lure of exotic dancing in the celebrated exhibition halls soon became an effective vehicle for promoting what Christina Klein has called the "global imaginary of integration" (2003, 23).[43] A "structure of feeling" characteristic of the postwar and early Cold War years, integrationism, an ideological component of globalism, prompted Americans to "look outward" (quoted in Klein 2003, 23; see also Kowal 2010, 34). Seen in these terms, it is evident that over its duration *Around the World in Dance and Song* negotiated mid-twentieth-century cultural tensions around the containment and integration of foreign others during a time when many Americans aspired to becoming citizens of the world.

2

Staging Ethnologic Dance

La Meri, Whiteness, and the Problems of Cross-Ethnic Embodiment

La Meri, born Russell Meriwether Hughes in Texas, was a frequent performer in the dance series *Around the World with Dance and Song*, produced by the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. She was among the first performers invited to appear during the program's inaugural season in 1943 and was a favored artist of Hazel Lockwood Muller, the museum's education director and producer of the museum's dance series.[1] Muller considered La Meri's contribution exceptional. [2] In a July 11, 1945, letter to La Meri, for example, she gushed: "Heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your superb contributions in helping to make the Museum series . . . the brilliant success which it was last season. I know that I speak for the Museum as well. The project seems to have stirred public enthusiasm to a new pitch" (folder 103-60, HLMNYPLPA). Muller followed by asking La Meri to commit to three performances in the winter and spring seasons of 1945, including programs featuring dances from South America, Mexico, and the Pacific Islands, noting that she "was especially anxious to stress cultures of our Good Neighbors and of the Pacific Islands at this time" (folder 103-60, HLMNYPLPA).[3] La Meri also appeared during the program's last season, performing with an ensemble on January 17, 1952. According to a press release, the "eclectic recital," entitled "Dances of Many Lands," featured dances from countries including India, China, Japan, Siam, Arabia,

Dancing the World Smaller: Staging Globalism in Mid-Century America. Rebekah J. Kowal.

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190265328.03.0002

Spain, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and Argentina, and was thus organized as a veritable world travelogue. La Meri was the featured solo performer whose broad knowledge of worldwide dances positioned her to be a cultural mediator. "La Meri's purpose in presenting dances from many countries," the press release announced, "is to interpret the likenesses and differences in our world" (Norton, January 13, 1952).[4] In venues such as the AMNH and others like it, her programs approximated world tours in which she performed dances native to continents ("Dances of the Orient") or transcontinental ethnic groups ("Dances of Spain and Latin America") with the goal of using dance to spread cross-cultural awareness and international goodwill.

Initially trained in ballet, tap, and Spanish dance, La Meri participated in pick-up vaudeville companies in San Antonio, Texas, then New York City. Her life changed precipitously when, in 1925, she was discovered in an audition by impresario Guido Carreras who, with the help of Amalia Molina, "The Queen of the Castanets," molded her into a Spanish dancer (*Dance Out the Answer*, 1977, 26–28).[5] Under the guidance of Carreras, whom she would eventually marry, La Meri spent the next ten years dancing "across the world two and a half times over." At first, she "danc[ed] Spanish" in Central and South America, Europe, and West Africa, and then, between 1936 and 1939, she performed all-international solo concerts across the Eastern World throughout Asia including Australia, New Zealand, India, Burma (Myanmar), Singapore, Indonesia, China, Japan, and the Philippines before returning to Central and South America (Ruyter 173; "La Meri Chronology" unpublished; Biographical Data for Dance World).[6]

Her promotional materials and autobiography say that throughout these tours in different locations, La Meri enlisted teachers who could school her in their native dance forms. Over time, she gained proficiency in dances of Asia and Latin America, specializing in classical dances of Spain and also of India, including Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, and Kathak (Vera Bull Hull Management Brochure; L.M. 1941, 16). When war was declared in Europe in 1940, La Meri and Carreras relocated to New York City from their adopted home in Italy, as La Meri put it, "to start over" ("La Meri Chronology," LMNYPLPA).[7] In New York she founded the School of Natya with modern dance pioneer Ruth St. Denis, later converting their school into the Ethnologic Dance Center when St. Denis moved to California in 1943. La Meri continued performing throughout the United States during and after the war, often with graduates of the Center, and writing numerous books on the theory, practice, and pedagogy of "ethnic dance."

Considering the scope and reach of La Meri's career, it is safe to say that she was one of the most accomplished and world-renowned concert dancers of her time, recognized by the concert dance establishment and international intelligentsia alike as "the most eclectic dancer of the world" and the "highest authority on ethnological dances" ("La Meri: Versatile Dancer," *Dance* magazine, February 1941; *L'Illustration* magazine quoted in a press brochure, 1941, LMNYPLPA).[8] Mid-century critics lauded her "scrupulous authenticity," "exceptional technique," protean ability to meet the demands of myriad characters or dance postures, and, finally, her adaptation of steps and stories from Indian classical dance "for the purposes of the modern theatre" (first two quotes, Walter Terry 1941; final quote L. T. Carr 1941). Although she never completed college, La Meri was a pioneer in the scholarly field of "ethnologic dance" practice and pedagogy, authoring six books on the subject.[9]

Illustrious career aside, La Meri has emerged as a vexed figure in American concert dance history. During the peak of her career, while elevating La Meri's performances to ambassadorial status and deferring to her authority as a presenter of dances of the world, dance critics raised questions about the legitimacy of her work as art, seeing her more as a "recreative" than a "creative" artist.[10] Beginning in the 1960s and continuing until the end of her life and after, critical appraisal has been mixed regarding the value and significance of La Meri's work, which staked its claim to value on the basis of its "authenticity," although to many contemporary observers it looked like a blatant example of Anglo-American cultural imperialism.[11]

Seeking neither to vilify nor to defend La Meri, this chapter examines her dance, performance, and pedagogical practices as contested sites within a larger cultural politics of globalism at mid-century, especially as relating to debates over racial whiteness and its bearing on determinations of relative artistic, and cultural, value.[12] Focus on La Meri's work during the 1940s and her theorizations of its meanings allows us to bracket the term "authenticity" and study its contradictions as embodied and expressed in and through La Meri's dance practices, which, I will argue, illuminate the nature of mimicry in dance as a function of ambivalence. Central to my argument is Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry, "the sign of double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power" (1994 [2008] 122). My analysis of La Meri's mid-century oeuvre claims that her work reveals something more to us about the aesthetic and cultural politics of embodied forms of mimicry. I argue as well that she occupied a discursive realm that makes manifest the aesthetic friction between

"ethnic" dance and aesthetic modernism, and my analysis helps to show the instabilities of cultural constructions of race and ethnicity in dance and performance practices.

MID-CENTURY FORMATIONS OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

America in the mid-century was undergoing a shift in its definition of what it is to be white, and this provides a critical context for examining the aesthetic and cultural politics of La Meri's cross-ethnic embodiments and their racial contradictions. The changing identification of white ethnics in the early twentieth century is the most salient aspect of this history for our purposes (Jacobson 1998; Roediger 2005; Carter 2007). Historian Matthew Frye Jacobson's work is especially instructive for teasing out distinctions between race and color when applied to American immigrants and immigration history. According to Jacobson, precedent scholarship "has transposed a late-twentieth-century understanding of 'difference' into a period whose inhabitants recognized biologically based 'races' rather than culturally based 'ethnicities.'" Jacobson's work, by contrast, seeks to explain the "transmutation of white races into Caucasians" (1998, 7). Specifically, his research documents how ethnically diverse groups of white people, including Jews, Poles, Greeks, Slavs, Portuguese, and Letts, "became" "Caucasians" at mid-century (1998, 6). In this light, whiteness in mid-century America can be seen as an affiliation sought by culturally diverse groups of people who identified as "white" in different ways. Jacobson's historical work provides evidence of the ways in which whiteness, for Anglo-ethnics in the United States, was an unstable and contingent, not a monolithic, formation.[13] Due to its instability, white racial dominance had to be sustained through cultural practices (i.e., continually reaffirmed and reestablished) of identifying as "white" and living as "white," and by adopting and/or observing hegemonic strategies that established and reaffirmed "a system of privileges accorded to those with white skin" (Omi and Winant 1994; quote from Babb 1998, 43).[14]

Artistic formations allow us to envision ways in which so-called devices of exclusion also serve the project of white dominance in standing as aesthetic and cultural counterpoints. Whereas some of these hegemonic strategies determine who or how someone belongs, others function as "devices of exclusion." According to literary scholar Valerie Babb, "They articulate not necessarily who or what is white but rather who or what is not white. As such, they reveal the fundamental paradox of whiteness: the persistent need of nonwhiteness to give it form and expression" (1998, 43). Africanist

cultural contributions, for example, have been integral to formations of distinctly American artistic practices. In her seminal essay "Black Matters," author and literary scholar Toni Morrison probes the role of the "Africanist presence" in the development of the American literary oeuvre. Morrison sees as analogous the ways this presence was managed in art and life: "Just as the formation of the nation necessitated coded language and purposeful restriction to deal with the racial disingenuousness and moral frailty at its heart, so too did the literature, whose founding characteristics extend into the twentieth century, reproduce the necessity for codes and restriction" (1992, 6). She argues that the Africanist presence in the American literary imagination, whether embodied implicitly, through codes and conventions, or explicitly, in characters, scenarios, and/or contexts, was instrumental both to the growth of the American literary genre sui generis and also to American writers' "sense of Americanness" (6). Taking cues from Morrison's work, dance scholar Brenda Dixon Gottschild makes a similar argument with respect to American concert dance formations in *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*. She contends, "The Africanist presence in American culture has shaped a New World legacy that sets American culture apart from that of Western Europe. It is a potent, vital force that plays a significant role in defining the American aesthetic. At the same time, it has suffered from sins of commission and omission; it has been 'invisibilized'" (1996, 1–2).

As Morrison and Dixon Gottschild hold, Africanisms, while often iterated in tacit and/or coded ways, nevertheless have provided points of contrast and/or departure that aided in the reification of mainstream American literary and dance norms over the course of the nation's history. When seen in the context of mid-century America specifically, black expressive cultural formations furthered the causes of both white modernist universalism and the consolidation of whiteness around race. What is more, modernism in American concert dance at this time sustained a cultural hierarchy in which racial identity and aesthetics were conveniently conjoined (Manning 2004).

Within this formulation, La Meri occupies an interesting position. La Meri entered the New York dance scene at the same time that mid-century modern dance artists, critics, and audience members were debating whether modern dance as both an aesthetic form and an artistic community could include diverse practitioners and aesthetics under its banner (Kowal 2010). We see this most clearly in the case of modernist ballet, which is the quintessential marker of white dominance in this respect (Harris 2018, 153, 192–93). Certainly, modern dance introduced transgressions to this code that acknowledged racialized bodies in ways that

ballet did not.[15] Nevertheless, the aesthetic and cultural environment upheld double standards that authorized La Meri's engagements with otherness through the formality of "ethnologic" dance even as it inhibited artists of color allied with dance modernism from deploying similar cross-ethnic aesthetic strategies.[16]

Given these points of reference, La Meri presents a curious and complicated case. As a white dance artist, for instance, La Meri certainly enjoyed many of the cultural and economic privileges that accompanied her dominant racial status at mid-century. As her biography suggests, these gave her access to dance training and a professional dance career that allowed her to travel around the world; adulatory treatment by her foreign hosts and host countries, including means to hire the best native dance teachers available; and cultural authority, abroad and at home. As an artist working primarily in the ethnologic dance field, however, La Meri occupied an aesthetic space outside of concert forms such as ballet and modern dance that were gaining institutional purchase during the mid-century period. The points where La Meri diverged aesthetically from the mainstream provided critical bases for challenging her legitimacy and the artistic value of her work, while at the same time justifying the maintenance of aesthetic hierarchies among contemporaneous concert dance formations. As I have argued previously, artists outside the concert dance mainstream, including La Meri as an ethnologic dance specialist, faced conformist pressures of aesthetic and cultural normalization, features of both the concert dance establishment the Cold War culture of containment (Kowal 2010).[17]

Applying this concept more broadly, I would argue that as ethnologic dance defined itself as related to but separate from other concert iterations of dance modernism, its presence on the scene aided the development of mainstream modernist forms. This occurred in two primary ways: 1) ethnologic dance modeled movement-based approaches to eclectic cultural sourcing and incorporative choreographic techniques, practices that could be adopted by modernist artists unaffiliated with ethnologic dance who nevertheless incorporated ethnic movement materials or cultural ideas into their creative work; 2) ethnologic dance, in its aesthetic and philosophical otherness, acted as an artistic foil that legitimated dominant modernist concert dance projects by contrast.

LA MERI AND ST. DENIS: ETHNIC DANCE/MODERN DANCE

These aesthetic and cultural politics become evident in the relationship of La Meri and Ruth St. Denis in the early 1940s. La Meri met St. Denis on

March 6, 1940, at the Museum of Costume Arts immediately following La Meri's "Demonstration of Costume and Dancing of India" soon after she had moved to New York City with her husband, Guido Carreras.[18] From the earliest days of their meeting, La Meri and St. Denis envisioned their relationship as a dialog between ethnologic and aesthetic modernism. The women's early encounters, pedagogy at their School of Natya, and several joint performances, functioned as analogs for a power struggle over the constitution of dance modernism and its tenuous relationship to ethnologic dance in the United States at mid-century. Examining their relationship and joint ventures illuminates how modern and ethnologic dance occupied neighboring if distinct places within the mid-century concert dance field, and, one could argue, established a symbiotic relationship of arguably mutual benefit, if ultimately an asymmetrical one in the long run.

Imagine this scene, as La Meri recalled in her autobiography:

> Scarcely was the lecture over when a beautiful tall woman, all in black, a huge picture hat setting off her white hair, burst into my dressing room. She embraced me with vigor and stepped back to survey me, augmenting the brilliance of her eyes with large gestures. "My dear!" she cried. "I will not take no

Figure 2.1 La Meri and Ruth St. Denis. *MGZEA no. 68. Courtesy of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

> for an answer; I simply will not! You *must* open a school! Together we will found a center for the study of eastern arts—dancing, painting, sculpture, philosophy! America is hungry for this. And only you can give it!" I tried to mutter that I did not want to teach, but my visitor was in full cry and did not even hear me. "Do you realize the fount of knowledge you can bring to your country?" she demanded. "The generations of youth you can feed with the knowledge of the savant and the fire of the artist? I have it all worked out. You will take the studio in the building where I am—there is one vacancy, just below me—and all I want is to sit at your feet and, at long last, learn the true technique of the eastern dance!" She paused for breath. "By the way, I am Ruth St. Denis," she said absently (*Dance Out the Answer*, 1977, 150–51; emphasis original).

Soon after the meeting, La Meri and St. Denis subsequently founded the School of Natya and appeared in several concerts together over the next two years.[19] While her alliance with St. Denis might have helped her in the short term, to get her feet on the ground in her new home, it also positioned her, for better and for worse, as St. Denis's heir apparent and logical successor. St. Denis moved to Los Angeles in 1943, leaving the School of Natya to La Meri, thereby severing their joint business venture, although evidence of joint appearances and continued correspondence indicates that they remained lifelong associates/friends.[20] Even though their formal partnership did not last long, it had significant and lasting consequences for both women, especially for La Meri.

It is important to note that although both women shared a common interest in classical Asian dance forms, or what was then called "oriental" dance, important differences between them had a bearing on what transpired at their first meeting. For one, La Meri's career was ascendant, whereas St. Denis's was on the decline. To illustrate, in a review of La Meri's appearance at the museum published in the *New York Herald Tribune*, Walter Terry, championed the performer as "the distinguished authority of folk dances of the world" ("To a Greater Dance," March 10, 1940).[21] By contrast, for the past decade, St. Denis had been searching for ways of revitalizing her sputtering career and of finding new purpose in her life. Estranged from her husband, Ted Shawn, their dance company Denishawn dissolved and bankrupt, St. Denis had moved to New York City from London in 1938 to teach at Adelphi College in Garden City (Shelton 1981, 248).[22]

Moreover, on an artistic level, Depression-era revolutionary dance modernism threw into stark relief St. Denis's motivations to use borrowed cultural material as an impetus for her own romantic musings. St. Denis's

wholesale "kinesthetic absorption" of dance forms of cultural others appeared both anachronistic and trite (quoted in Srinivasan 2011, 82). Terry indicated as much, noting that while he could see that La Meri's approach followed from St. Denis's precedent, when she had "shocked the public and enriched the world with her ballet of 'Radha' more than thirty years ago," La Meri would likely go further to "clarify the involvements of this antique dance." Then, making a vague but comprehensible reference to St. Denis he quipped: "All too often, Western concert artists seek to amuse or astonish their audiences rather than to transport them emotionally or spiritually as the Indian classical dance could" (Terry, "To a Greater Dance," March 10, 1940). Terry's assessment, therefore, fashioned a dichotomy between La Meri's "clarifying" approach to Indian classical dance and St. Denis's entertainment-oriented one.

In spite of these differences in their respective professional status, career trajectories, and approach to movement material, however, joining forces must have met both women's objectives on some level, as they moved forward quickly to formalize the partnership. For La Meri, performing and opening a school with St. Denis helped her establish herself on the New York City concert dance scene and find a way of making a living as a teacher, even though, at the time, she did not aspire to teach. For St. Denis, forging an alliance with La Meri was one of several ventures she had tried during the 1930s seeking financial solvency and artistic relevance, including embarking on a national lecture circuit and publishing her autobiography, *Divine Dancer*, in 1939.[23] According to St. Denis biographer Suzanne Shelton, St. Denis's partnership with La Meri was pivotal in re-igniting public interest in St. Denis (1981, 251).

Considered again with some skepticism, however, the encounter between the women deserves more analysis for what it reveals about the power dynamics inherent in their exchange, especially considering the terms St. Denis sought to establish for their professional relationship. By calling La Meri a "fount of knowledge" when she met her, for instance, St. Denis acknowledged La Meri's authority. And yet with this comment, and the suggestion that La Meri could "feed" "generations of youth" with "exact information," St. Denis clearly sought to position La Meri's wisdom as having primarily pedagogical value. This interpretation of St. Denis's motives is borne out in La Meri's recollection of the encounter; La Meri recalled St. Denis pressing La Meri to open a school with her in spite of La Meri's feelings to the contrary. St. Denis: "I will not take no for an answer; I simply will not! You *must* open a school!" La Meri: "I tried to mutter that I did not want to teach, but my visitor was in full cry and did not even hear me" (La Meri, *Dance Out the Answer*, 1977).

Why would St. Denis insist that La Meri open a school? An endorsement that St. Denis wrote about La Meri soon after the meeting indicates St. Denis's agenda. "In many years of the study of the Orient, both performing myself and seeing other Oriental artists and dancers," St. Denis said, "I have rarely witnessed a more intensely interesting performance, nor one that gave me so much of the fascinating color and background of the Orient." She continued: "Her technical equipment is excellent, exact, fluid, and varied. La Meri's performance is scholarly, vivid and personal. . . . She is one of those rare people that should be institutionalized. She can feed a whole generation of youth, with exact information and fire of the artist" (Reaction to a "lecture-recital" at the Museum of Costume Art at the hall of the Junior League in New York City, St. Denis, 1940, Box 1, folder 10, LMNYPLPA). With this comment, St. Denis took pains to authorize La Meri's legitimacy while, at the same time, promoting the idea that La Meri's destiny was to become a teacher. St. Denis's efforts to convince La Meri that it was in La Meri's best interest to open a joint school appear calculated since St. Denis knew full well that doing so would accomplish a vestige of the Denishawn dream of establishing an academy of international dance; at the same time, St. Denis would benefit from frequent contact and collaboration with La Meri, who she consigned to teaching her the "true technique of the eastern dance." It is also possible that St. Denis perceived an even greater benefit for herself in an alliance with La Meri. At the same time as her own artistic practice would be enriched by an infusion of new information and material from La Meri's extensive world travels and studies in the field, La Meri's ethnologic approach to working with the same cultural materials could serve as a foil for St. Denis's own brand of dance modernism and stature as a dance artist in highlighting St. Denis's individualistic approach.

La Meri's response to St. Denis, penned in April 1940, provides some clues as to the impact of St. Denis's overtures on La Meri's conception of her newly defined role, and relative stature: "I want to thank you with all my heart for your endorsement," La Meri wrote. "It is typically generous of you to write it, it is for me the most precious honorary ribbon I could ever wear! I only hope I shall be able to live up to the standard you have set me. . . . Thank you again for your generosity and encouragement. It is impossible for me to express to you all it means to me; but perhaps you, with your rare insight into human nature, have understood" (April 13, 1940, MGZMC-RES.32 folder 568, correspondence 1940, LMNYPLPA). Here La Meri appeared to accept the rules of engagement determined for her by St. Denis, setting forth in an impossible lifelong pursuit of a standard she could never attain, the ideal of authenticity.

APPROPRIATION AND AUTHENTICITY

La Meri and St. Denis opened the School of Natya in May 1940.[24] Located at 66 Fifth Avenue, in the same building used by Martha Graham, the school offered "classes of Theory, Technique, and Composition of authentic dances of India, Java, Japan, and other derivative forms of the Orient" (School of Natya advertisement, 1941, LMNYPLPA). In addition, the school hosted bi-monthly "reunions," in which the founders and students—called "Natyas"—gave related lecture-demonstrations. According to Shelton (1981), however, "The School of Natya was a shared venture in name only. While La Meri offered classes in Indian, Japanese, Javanese, and other oriental techniques, Ruth St. Denis rarely taught, and when she did, La Meri allowed her the day's 'take' from the student fees" (251). In many respects, therefore, the school institutionalized the asymmetrical power dynamic between La Meri and St. Denis, namely, a delegation of labor that assigned La Meri the role of teacher, whose job it was to pursue knowledge and to share it freely, and St. Denis the role of student, whose prerogative it was to appropriate the scholar's teachings so as to make them her own. An account by Shelton illustrates this dynamic thus: "Ruth had the notion that at long last she wanted to study authentic oriental dancing. She would summon La Meri to her studio and ask her to demonstrate some step she had noticed in her work" (1981, 251). From La Meri's perspective, this was how it worked: "I taught [Ruth] the Kathak turns because she fell in love with them . . . and she was a very quick study. But when she put them into her dance it became something else again. Technique? She had the skill if she wanted it but emotion took over and the actual cold line of the thing was lost" (quoted in Shelton 1981, 251–52).

If these accounts are any indication, it becomes clear that each woman seemed to expect a different outcome in the same interaction. According to Shelton, the learning did not cut both ways. "As La Meri taught Ruth various gestures and footwork," Shelton asserts, "she tried in return to learn some of the secrets of St. Denis' genius," and yet St. Denis characteristically withheld the information La Meri sought (1981, 252). In La Meri's words: "'Sometimes I would ask, 'Miss Ruth, how can you make a gesture with your hand and when you stop, the gesture just keeps going all the way down to China'? She would look at me and say, 'You would ask that. My dear, I don't know!' I just wanted to nail it down practically if possible, not that I wanted to use her work, I just wanted to know it, how it could be done" (Shelton, 1981, 252).

In these examples, it is clear that St. Denis subordinated La Meri not only because she was junior in stature but also because St. Denis wanted

to maintain an imbalance between the teacher and the artist that underwrote double standards concerning authenticity and authorship. Feigning ignorance—"My dear, I don't know"—in response to La Meri's questions about her approach to performing a hand gesture, St. Denis traded on the unknown and the unknowable, thereby mystifying her creative practice and seeking to place it out of reach of La Meri's comprehension. Working with La Meri in this way, St. Denis affiliated herself with La Meri's cultural/scholarly authority while, at the same time, keeping an eye on her, exercising control over what she did, and denying her the knowledge that she sought—creative tools that could have elevated La Meri's skills as an artist but did not.

The double standard between authenticity and artistry that St. Denis sought to uphold in the context of the school becomes clearer in a comment she made to John Martin for an article he wrote about the opening of the school. Whereas she touted the school as a "center for oriental dancing which would have as its base as authentic a substance of teaching as [was] possible in the West," she admits that neither she nor La Meri claimed to "know all that [was] possible about oriental dancing!" That said, she was careful to position herself and La Meri on opposites sides of the authenticity/artistry spectrum explaining thus: "Our students will be told when a technique, a costume or a dance is authentic, when it is adapted but still retaining a large measure of authenticity, and lastly when, as with the majority of my own things, it is purely a mood of reaction to some oriental subject" (quoted in Martin, "The Dance: Miscellany: Ruth St. Denis and La Meri Join Forces," *New York Times*, May 26, 1940). Seeking to corner the market for artistry, with this pronouncement St. Denis relegated La Meri to the realm of the scholar, someone who prizes accuracy and "authenticity," reserving for herself the realm of the artist, someone who took the scholar's teaching as a point of departure for her own expression: "purely a mood of reaction to some oriental subject." It is interesting to note, however, that in discussions about their relative division of labor at the school, La Meri, placed stake in the pursuit of a kind of artistic mastery defined by precision, or "nail[ing] down" steps "practically," and to see her approach as opposed to that of St. Denis, for whom, when "emotion took over . . . the actual cold line of the thing was lost."

JOINT APPEARANCES

Between 1940 and 1941, La Meri and St. Denis participated in several joint performances, all of which reiterated their dichotomous approaches

and further ingrained the critical impression of their divergent positions on artistry and authenticity. This was the case, for instance, in a joint appearance at the YMHA at 92nd Street on August 7, 1940. According to La Meri, Carreras and St. Denis hatched the plan for the concert while La Meri was performing at Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts. As La Meri's wrote in her autobiography: "I returned to New York to find that in my absence Miss Ruth and Carreras had decided to give an 'evening' at the Kaufmann Auditorium. And Miss Ruth was going to dance!" "We should have known it would be a historic occasion, and it was, for Miss Ruth had not danced on stage for many years, and she still had a public that was dithering to see her once again" (La Meri, 1977, *Dance Out the Answer*, 152).

The program was divided into five segments: in each La Meri presented a version of a regional dance (notated by type, region, and, in one case, time period), and St. Denis responded with an adaptation of each.[25] La Meri wrote about the concept of this joint concert in her autobiography thus: "The program was built on solos designed to be a sort of expository counterpoint. First I would do the classical version of a dance, say, of India or Java; Miss Ruth would then do her own romantic version of the same dance. As she explained it in her opening speech, 'La Meri will do these dances as they have been done for centuries in the land of their origin. Then I will do them as I darn well please" (1977, *Dance Out the Answer*, 152). Structurally, therefore, the performances set out to define each woman by comparison and contrast to the other. In this setup, St. Denis aligned her "artistry" with the requisites of dance modernism, which considered artistic individualism and innovation more important than a faithful treatment of movement material, while La Meri asserted her role as the scholar, whose dancing was meant to confirm the veracity of her interpretation.

Like the two artists, critics saw in this and other joint appearances a benefit of joining forces, so to speak, although the consensus among them was that it was La Meri, not St. Denis, who strengthened the reputation of her counterpart by virtue of what Joseph T. Shipley called her "wisdom" and her "science" compared to St. Denis's "spontaneity" and "art" ("There Is Still Dancing!" *New Leader*, Saturday, August 24, 1940). Shipley sized up the two artists thus: "Ruth St. Denis calls her oriental dances *romantic*, which means *she does them as she pleases*. Since they are never quite the same, they can never improve. She will have her good days, and her off days, with no steady growth." By comparison, according to Shipley, "La Meri, wisely and richly, has studied the dances of the east—*in the east*. Each time she repeats a dance, it comes out not with frills from her . . . individual whims, but the same. And *being constantly the same*, in choreography and

external technique, it can continuously grow both to outer perfection and to inner understanding and soul" (August 24, 1940). In other words, Shipley found a contrast both in the two artists' approaches to and in their relationships with their material. St. Denis's adoption of a "romantic" approach licensed her to adapt her material "as she please[d]," whereas La Meri's on-location "study" of her dances made her "repetition" of dances more "constantly the same." La Meri's "outer perfection" and "inner understanding of soul" was far preferable to Shipley than St. Denis's whimsy.

In another review of the same concert, Albertina Vitak (1940), reviewer for the *American Dancer*, took a similarly dualistic approach, characterizing the contrast between La Meri and St. Denis as a rivalry pitting "authenticity" and "theatricality." In her words, the performance "combined the *authenticity and correct* form of several types of Oriental dances illustrated beautifully by La Meri, and a *theatricalized version* of the same as conceived and performed by Ruth St. Denis—incidentally both are Americans" (19, emphasis mine). Calling the artists "protagonists" in a drama pitting personality against mastery, Vitak opined: "This idea of authenticity versus theatricality alone would make an interesting program, and given two such fine artists as protagonists the event was inevitably one of distinction" (19).[26]

In large part, critical characterizations of La Meri and St. Denis in this performance reaffirmed the artists' self-conception which established an "expository counterpoint" between ethnologic and modern dance. Reviewers authorized and legitimated La Meri for what they took to be an "authentic" approach to sourcing her work, granting her blanket authority as an expert. Meanwhile, critics deemed St. Denis stale in comparison, suggesting that she used her charm and theatricality as substitutes for artistic rigor. The reviews of this performance suggest that in spite of St. Denis's best efforts to set off her work against La Meri's by highlighting her creativity by comparison, dance critics consistently elevated La Meri's scholarly authority over St. Denis's artistic authority.

Critical accounts of another "Reunion" concert at the "New School of Natya" in November 1940, are much the same. In one, critic Grant Code[27] praised La Meri for her "unusually methodical and exact type of mind and imagination." Code recognized her ability to "give a most lucid, factual and detailed exposition of any of the types of dancing she has studied," while, in the same performance, "becom[ing] the embodiment of a style of dancing that appears to defy anything but [an] intuitive and emotional approach." He continued:

> This quality is the more striking because many explanations of dancing, and especially the exposition of Oriental dancing, are anything but clear. . . . Almost

> everyone who has taken an interest in the subject is familiar with massive and evidently learned volumes, enthusiastic and picturesque monographs, which are redolent of incense and temple bells, transfused with an atmosphere of mysticism and mythology, and yet evade every precise statement and leave the perplexed reader in a sort of whirling Oriental stupor. . . . La Meri's definite clean cut matter of fact style of explaining the most intricate and involved subtleties of Oriental thought, style and art is one of the most refreshing contributions to such studies that has ever been made (1940, 133).

Code's impression, that La Meri was both factually accurate in her exposition and "intuitive" and "emotional" in her embodiment, challenged assumptions then and now, that ethnologic dance worked as a foil to modernism, helping to illuminate the individual prerogative of the modern artist, St. Denis. According to Code: "In all this Miss Ruth supports her graciously and easily with admiration for a precise scholarship so different, she says, from her own emotional approach to the same materials" (133). In the example of Code's review, St. Denis's modernism served instead as a foil to ethnologic dance, elevating the value of La Meri's approach to cultural material as more faithful to its cultural origin and quite different from St. Denis's "romantic" approach, a term critics like Code used as a polite nod to anachronism.

Clearly there was some cachet for La Meri in the recognition that she was the "authentic" one compared to St. Denis. One review of La Meri's and St. Denis's joint performance in August 1940 offers a clue to why it worked in La Meri's favor to trade on the authenticity of her work. Here critic G.N.B. acknowledged his difficulties in making a critical assessment of performances such as this one, which demanded knowledge of dances not native to the United States. Whereas his approach to evaluating St. Denis's performance relied on past experience of her work, determining the quality of La Meri's offerings, by contrast, demanded more. In his words: "In the work of La Meri, the critic is faced with an old problem. Very few of us are equipped to pass on the validity of the Hindu dance. *We accept the dancer's claim as truth*" [emphasis mine]. Utilizing a descriptive approach, the critic said, "The dances, performed to recordings of their authentic music, were colorful and executed with the economy of movement and wealth of symbolism to which Shan Kar introduced us" (G.N.B., 1940, 106).

In this case, the critic's familiarity with Uday Shankar's past appearances in the United States provides a reference point for his understanding of La Meri's dancing. What stood out to the critic most, however, was "La Meri's own composition in the Hindu tradition," which she titled

"Lasyanatana" on the program and denoted it as a "Modern Hindu Dance." According to G.N.B.: "Perhaps the explanation of its gestures, clearly recognizable in its performance, helped. One of the briefest dances, it remains most clearly in memory" (G.N.B. 1940, 106). G.N.B.'s telling admission that due to his unfamiliarity with La Meri's movement material he chose to defer to her authority and "accept the dancer's claim of truth," suggests why it worked to La Meri's advantage in 1940 to stake her reputation on the authenticity of what she was doing.

Considering the politics of "authenticity" and "appropriation," La Meri's and St. Denis's early relationship illuminates how the terms became qualified through their indication of closeness and/or distance from an original source. St. Denis conceded the mantles of authenticity and scholarship to La Meri, while she herself assumed the mantle of the artist/appropriator.

In her role as artist, St. Denis prized her "romantic" approach, prioritizing her personal experience of her source over anything else, embracing the prerogative to express "purely a mood of reaction to some oriental subject" without regard for its cultural derivation or artistic origin ("The Dance: Miscellany: Ruth St. Denis and La Meri Join Forces," *New York Times*, May 26, 1940). By contrast, critical and audience perception of La Meri's scholarly credibility and authenticity accrued primarily because of her personal experiences, of traveling the world, attending performances, and studying with renowned experts in their native countries. As John Martin put it: "It was not long before she knew why and how everybody danced—in Africa and India and Spain, in the Near and Far East, in practically every atoll in the South Pacific where there was footroom. And she knew it in her own body, for she danced right along with them all" (La Meri, *Dance Out the Answer*, 1977, "Foreword," p. v.). "Knowing [her source material] in her own body," La Meri's was closer to her human sources and to her embodied source material, her artistic practices similarly demonstrating a commitment to closer faithfulness to an original. In the words of critic Margaret Lloyd in an April 29, 1942, review in the *Christian Science Monitor*, even though La Meri's performance did not possess the "brilliance" Lloyd associated with precedent Shankar, Lloyd still recognized La Meri's "deep understanding of her subject, based on ethnological research, travel and study, an extensive repertoire—and, wardrobe," concluding that as a "dance historian, anthropologist, and interpreter of Oriental culture, she fills an important function in the American dance world today."

When seen in this light, the joint performances of La Meri and St. Denis become useful analogs for the relationship between ethnologic dance and modern dance, where each depended on the other against which to assert its

own legitimacy. Modern dance did this by showcasing its invention; in St. Denis's words, its "romanticism" and/or impressionism set modern dance apart. Ethnologic dance, by contrast, asserted its legitimacy on the basis of its "authenticity," closeness to sources, and performance of what Ruyter calls "the experienced body" (2016). Examining the trajectory of La Meri's career in its early years in the United States highlights her use of the mantles of scholarship and authenticity for professional gain, positioning herself as a foil to St. Denis based on her comparably earnest approach to movement-based cultural research and its apparent result, her "technical faithfulness" as a dancer (*Dance* magazine 1941, 19). The implicit and sometimes overt comparison and contrast to St. Denis worked to La Meri's professional advantage in helping to define what she was doing as related but distinct.

WORLD TRAVELER OF DANCE

La Meri stressed the ambassadorial nature of her calling early in her career. Her writings and frequent talks amounted to forms of advocacy contending that the "real value of ethnologic dancing," was promoting "international understanding," by "introducing, . . . explaining, . . . and vindicating one people to another" (1933, 76). During the postwar years, a highpoint of US internationalism, members of the dance press and intelligentsia alike picked up on these themes, widely praising La Meri for, in the words of Pearl S. Buck, "interpreting peoples to one another" (quoted in Venkateswaran 2005). Others saw La Meri in this light including audiences with germane cultural expertise, as illustrated in critic L.T. Carr's observation of the reception of a performance sponsored by the India League of America at the Barbizon Plaza Theatre in 1941:

> La Meri, who is native American, has both in her performance and in her compositions, accurately captured and interpreted the spirit of the Indian dance and that she understands its relationship to Indian culture generally, was evidenced by the reception which was accorded this performance by the members of the India League, who are inclined to be a very critical audience for an alien practicing their native art (L.T. Carr, 1941).

Carr's observation showed that her performance had passed muster before "a very critical audience for an alien practicing their native art," and is noteworthy for indicating La Meri's credibility even with audiences who were familiar with dance forms she performed compared to general audiences with less specialized and culturally specific knowledge.

La Meri set herself apart in the mid-century dance field by mastering and performing dance forms she had by and large learned firsthand through study with dance masters around the world, fashioning herself as a cultural ambassador or translator, who envisioned her artistic practices as furthering cross-cultural knowledge and understanding as much as advancing artistic ideas.[28] In fact, dance critic Margaret Lloyd asserted as much when she wrote: "[La Meri's] contribution to American dance, the dance of her native land, to which after a long absence, she only last season returned, lies in enlarging the American comprehension of these dances of other lands" (1941). Lloyd emphasized La Meri's difference from the average American in her extensive world travels and vast catalog of global reference points, rare for an American circa 1940. As Lloyd tells it:

> As [La Meri] grew older, the pleasure [gleaned from learning the dances of Mexico], deepened into understanding, widening to an impulse that took her to Spain for further study. And from there is distinctly traceable the line which led her to the Far East, dances which became the object of her life-long research and devotion. The Moorish and Oriental influences in the Spanish dance took her to North Africa—Morocco, Algeria—then Arabia, thence to India, that inexhaustible treasurehouse of source material, to her the matrix, the mother country of dance. Java and Bali, Indo-China, China and Japan, the Philippines, Hawaii, all proved to hold within their art forms certain ramifications of the age-old Indian art of dance, which latter, by the way, she designates as Hindu to differentiate it from the American Indian forms (1941).

According to Lloyd, La Meri sought not only to learn dance forms in the regions of the countries to which she traveled. She engaged in a research process intended to find similarities across global dance practices, seeking an origin—a "mother"—which she identified as India, for a disparate dance progeny. According to La Meri, successful mimicry depended on the "foreign" dancer's ability to achieve what she called "natural body carriage," which she saw as a function of environment or culture, knowledge that the non-native dancer could practice and master and thus not atavistic: "Race is the backbone," she explained. "It is the carriage that counts" (La Meri quoted in Lloyd, "World Traveler of Dance," 1941, page unknown). La Meri's focus on posture as a core aspect of her creative methodology and her convictions about a universal source of all dance practices indicate ways in which La Meri subscribed to universalist ideas as a way of justifying a theatrical conceit by which her white body could serve as both a constant and yet mutable medium, the corporeal anchor of her cross-ethnic artistic practice.

As a "world traveler of dance," La Meri's racial and cultural standing as an Anglo American artist meant that she could both take her cross-ethnic embodiments across cultural and geographic boundaries with ease and was by-and-large given the benefit of the doubt about the faithfulness of her ethnographic interpretations of the dance practices of cultural others. Such prerogatives were summarily denied to dance artists of color, who faced double-binds in their pursuit of both self-representation and the representation of other subjects in dance.[29] For example, while African American artists enjoyed more artistic license in portraying aspects of the black experience on the concert stage in the 1940s, usually through the trope of diaspora, critics nevertheless judged their work through the criteria of universalist modernism that crudely associated racial identification with "appropriate" subject matter. The range for artistic mimicry for black dance artists was limited by reductive ideas about the content and subject matter, which restricted their creative range. A good example is choreographer Pearl Primus's treatment by the dance critical press prior to her trip to Africa in 1949, during which she sought to "authenticate" her work to address critical suspicions about the provenance of her source material. One of the most notable examples is the 1944 review Lois Balcom published in *Dance Observer* in which she questioned the authenticity of Primus's attempts to dance her "African heritage" and then suggested that she was limiting her development as a modern artist by doing so (December 1944, 123; see also Perpener 2001; Manning 2004, 175; and Kowal 2010 126–27).[30] La Meri's relationship with dance modernism bears on these racial issues, specifically with respect to her exemption from standards of "authenticity" that critics held over her African American artistic counterparts, such as Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Dunham, and Pearl Primus, who routinely faced critical skepticism regarding the validity of creative work that adapted diasporic cultural material for the concert dance stage (Kraut 2008 53–90, Kowal 2010, 117–50, Das 2017).[31]

By contrast to their African American artistic counterparts, in the 1920s and 1930s, Jewish American choreographers walked a line of racial ambiguity by emphasizing the "artistic" sides of their work. As 1930s dance critic Naum Rosen wrote: "The dancer who imitates or presents these outward forms of a people's dancing creates nothing and always runs the danger of unfavorable comparison with the original. The creative dancer must delve deeper into people's emotions and express them in a form of his own" (1934, 51).[32] In this example, "creativity" was a code for one's transcendence over ethnicity. Jewish choreographers thus negotiated the conflicting demands of sourcing work in materials associated with their cultural heritage at the same time as emphasizing the role of

that source material as a vehicle for artistic expression of more than the artist's distinct ethnic identity. Rosen argued that while Jewish concert dance choreographers might incorporate cultural material in an attempt to be more true to their heritage, and, as a result, more "authentically" Jewish, they should take care not to use this material "to the exclusion of all other" ("New Jewish Dance in America," 1934, 51 quoted in Rossen 2014, 32). Rosen maintained that above all, artists should strive to take a "creative" approach, a route legitimating their artistry, and be valued on a higher order than authenticity in the field of modern dance (quoted in Rossen 2014, 32). Jewish American choreographers faced these issues when deciding whether or how to incorporate Hassidic material into their modern dance creations. According to Rebecca Rossen, Jewish-identified cultural material provided "a symbolic locus for 'authentic Jewishness'" in early twentieth-century modern dance (32). However, when it came to evaluating the artistic merit of work that incorporated Jewish cultural material, Rossen notes that Jewish choreographers, like their African American artistic counterparts, faced contradictory standards.

Jewish American choreographer Anna Sokolow handled this balancing act during the postwar period in works such as *Rooms* that straddled the expression of individual subjective experiences of urban isolation and more broad-based existentialist themes that resonated both with the challenges of Jewish assimilation and with life during the atomic age (Kowal 2010). Hannah Kosstrin argues further that "Sokolow's cultural traditions informed her practice and her work with and without overt Jewish thematic material. Jewish signification appeared in Sokolow's choreography, the spectatorship and cultural assimilation surrounding her work, and the dynamic identity process that Sokolow's dance ignited" (2018, 14). In other words, Sokolow's Jewishness permeated all aspects of her creative practice; yet not all audience members could perceive its presence in her work equally and/or in the same ways.

Seeing La Meri's work in a broader contemporaneous context illuminates how she maintained performance and pedagogical traditions that saw the white body as a conduit through which to embody cultural differences and that sought to recognize diversity through the lens of cultural universalism.[33] As I have argued elsewhere, universalism functioned as a Janus-faced ideology in dominant mid-twentieth-century American cultural and political arenas (2010). In the cultural field of dance, universalism saw movement as a human common denominator, and, accordingly, dance as a form of communication that could transcend differences of race, ethnicity, nation, language, religion, and class. As we know from Chapter 1, in the broader political arena as globalism and universalism

began to dovetail in the mid-1940s, the ethnologic dancer found herself in the position of intercultural mediator in presenting what was thought to be a "living art form" in ways that would presumably help "bring . . . all nations and races nearer together through increased appreciation and understanding of intercultural interests" (Muller Papers, file 103–63, LMNYPLPA). Yet, as La Meri's work makes evident, the common experience of embodiment held up as the linchpin for intercultural understanding and unity was an experience defined predominantly in terms of the Anglo-Western experience.[34]

THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY

Neither La Meri's white body nor her aligning her artistic project with universalism guaranteed her access to artistic status within the field of mid-twentieth-century concert dance, however. While there were seldom questions about the authenticity of La Meri's work, critics failed to find the kind of formal innovation and expressivity in her dances that they associated with artistic value.[35] Two emblematic reviews illustrate this point. The first, by Walter Terry, appraised a solo evening at the St. James Theatre in which La Meri "Offered a 'Dancing Tour' of the World." Calling La Meri "a splendid craftsman of the dance and a true scholar," Terry praised her "mimetic powers [which] enable[d] her to capture the spirit of the race she is representing." Terry nevertheless faulted her inability to transcend the specificity of her cultural material: "La Meri is not . . . a great artist, for she lacks that indefinable essence that touches the beholder with great beauty, that seems to reach his very heart and that seems to actually influence his creed of living" (April 1, 1940). While Terry gave credit for La Meri's "craft" of imitation, which in his estimation lent credibility to her claims of scholarly authority, ultimately he deemed La Meri's work to rest in the realm of research and not art.

The second review, written in 1941 by John Martin, evaluated a performance of "3 Dances of India" at the Guild Theater. Weighing the various elements of the performance, Martin deduced: "The works were well conceived in their medium . . . but the performance itself never passed beyond the stage of a school exhibition. One wonders, indeed, if it is possible to put a group of young girls into such a highly developed and totally alien medium as the Hindu dance and keep them from being patently amateurish." Among other detractions, Martin faulted the artificiality of the performance in which "all male roles were played by girls, and in one number the prettiest of them appeared with mustache and chin whiskers painted

on." Martin could not square the decision to dress up the female performers to play male roles with what the program purported to present—dance "in the style of the 'traditional Indic Natya,'" commenting that "it becomes slightly embarrassing when presented seriously to an American audience." This led him to conclude that "La Meri's contribution to the dance arts seems to lie less in this field than in that which she has formerly worked here on occasions. This consisted of solo demonstrations of dances of various cultures preceded by explanatory remarks, a combination which succeeded in being informative and agreeable" (December 22, 1941). In this review, we see Martin using his evaluation of this performance as an opportunity to express doubt not only about La Meri's credibility as an artist in the presentation of "traditional" Indian dances but also about whether or not any dance artist could engage successfully with a "totally alien" medium without coming off, as did the female performers in this case, as "patently amateurish."

Reviewers throughout the early 1940s tended to confine La Meri within certain artistic parameters, as indicated by these reviews by Terry and Martin. As long as she stuck to a proven formula of "demonstrat[ing] dances of different cultures" (Martin) with exactitude and clarity, La Meri's performance pleased critics, who praised her skill as "craft" (Terry). When assessing her work in this mode, critics often trusted her authority in presenting material because many did not know any better as is evident in a review published in *Dance Observer* of the joint concert with Ruth St. Denis in 1940: "In the work of La Meri, the critic is faced with an old problem. Very few of us are equipped to pass on the validity of the Hindu dance. We accept the dancer's claim as truth" (September 1940). Yet, as this review indicates, critics judged La Meri harshly both when she stuck to this formula (e.g., Terry) and also if she strayed too much into the theatrical realm (e.g., Martin).

These examples of reviews of La Meri's work in the early 1940s illuminate how La Meri experienced critical and cultural constraints that her standing as an Anglo artist working with ethnic material could not privilege her to evade. Struggling to establish her authority as an artist during the early years of her career in New York, La Meri did not wholly disassociate her work from postwar concert dance forms so as to achieve further differentiation. Instead she sought to make finer comparative distinctions through strategic associations, setting off the particularities of what she herself was doing as both related to and distinct from the modernist project. These vulnerabilities were constant features in La Meri's life and career. Beyond the 1940s, she was beset with questions about her artistic legitimacy arising both from her own self-doubt and resentment about

students whose careers had blossomed when eventually hers diminished and prompted by comments critics made in assessing the artistic merit of her work.

From these vantage points, we might come to see La Meri as occupying a complex and sometimes conflicted subject position that benefits from an intersectional analysis. Intersectionality, an approach to understanding identity that illuminates "differences within groups," offers "an analytical tool to capture and engage contextual dynamics of power" (Crenshaw 1991, 1242; Cho et al. 2013, 788).[36] Theories of intersectionality allow us to probe the nature of identity in terms of complexities and conflicts for individuals within a self-same group and about the nature of difference as a "both/and" proposition/position, as "overlapping and conflicting dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, nation, and other inequalities" (Cho et al. 2013, 788).

Considering La Meri's mid-century artistic practices in terms of intersectionality highlights her conflicted position. On the one hand, she participated in upholding the contradictory tenets of modernist universalism, which, as I have argued in the Introduction and Chapter 1, promoted the values of cultural diversity while upholding the white, Western subject and Anglo cultures as exemplars. Envisioning herself as a cross-cultural ambassador, La Meri assumed a role oft-designated for white concert dance performers, authorizing herself to give voice to and/or speak for the "communal." On the other hand, La Meri experienced marginalization herself within dominant aesthetic circles as an artist whose work did not adhere to conventional standards for creativity and innovation within dance modernism.

In her book *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism*, the historian Mari Yoshihara investigates the significance of American women's participation in the formation of an "Orientalist discourse" in the United States in the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. She argues that "their participation in Orientalist discourse offered many American women an effective avenue through which to become part of a dominant American ideology and to gain authority and agency which were denied to them in other realms of sociopolitical life. By embracing Asia, women gained material and affective power both in relation to American society and vis-à-vis Asian subjects, which brought new meanings to their identities as white American women" (2003, 6). Yoshihara contends that women such as the anthropologist Ruth Benedict and the humanitarian and author Pearl S. Buck, both of whom were La Meri's contemporaneous counterparts, found effective ways of leveraging their gender and cultural identities as American women in service of establishing their

authority as experts on Asia and Asian cultural practices. Although La Meri did not specialize exclusively in Asian dance forms, the same thing could be said of her, as she sought to gain standing as a dance artist by leveraging both her credentials as an expert on dance forms outside the Western concert dance framework and her position as a white, middle-class, American woman.

We can see these intersectional political dynamics play out in the first chapter of La Meri's book *Total Education in Ethnic Dance* (1977). In the first chapter, entitled "What Is Ethnic Dance?," for example, La Meri asserted that she herself "introduced the term" "ethnic dance" as a means of defining "theater-dance presentation" that differed from "ballet and modern" dance forms. She added:

> I did so with the approbation of La Argentinita, Antonio, Teiko Ito, and others. It was good, for it gave an added strength to the few of us (in comparison to ballet and modern) who were dedicated to ethnic forms. At the time we who were purists referred to the art dance as ethnologic or ethnological dance. It was a convenient means of quick identification of the ethnic art dance. I must confess we did not succeed in making these latter terms stick. It is a pity, for today there is general confusion in identifying the difference between communal and art dances (1977, *Total Education in Ethnic Dance*, 1).

Here La Meri invested in establishing a working nomenclature for describing ethnologic dance while also embracing the stature associated with naming a practice. Moreover, she cited the "approbation" of other performers, such as La Argentinita, Antonio, and Teiko Ito, all international artists of color, whom she believed supported her prerogative of naming a category of dance that could connote the specificity of their artistic practices. The chapter went further to outline the aspects of ethnic dance that distinguished it from ballet and modern dance.

In short what made a dance "ethnic," according to La Meri, was its embodiment of a "communal expression" (1977, *Total Education in Ethnic Dance*, 2). "Ballet," she asserted, "is not ethnic dance because it is the product of social customs and artistic reflections of differing national cultures. It was built for the edification of the aristocratic, international minority and is not, therefore a communal expression" (2). What is more, ballet differed from ethnic dance due to its aristocratic origins and uses in the societies of courts and kings, "reflecting the mores of a class privileged by birth." Modern dance, on the other hand, was not ethnic because "it is the product of the intellectual individual, the iconoclast, the genius" (2). According to La Meri's reasoning, ethnic dance, by contrast to ballet and

modern dance, "was created by and for the peoples of whatever land or race the dance represents. . . . In its lineage, then, ethnic dance is the most truly democratic expression of dance, for it carries the aspirations and dreams of all the classes of folk who gave it birth" (2).

La Meri's writing makes clear an agenda to position ethnic, or ethnologic dance, on a level playing field with other American concert dance forms. Distinguishing ethnic dance from these other forms supported her strategy of identifying its distinct role in a "triumvirate" of expressive forms, all of which had equal value and standing. Nevertheless, La Meri's explanation of why ballet and modern dance were not forms of "ethnic" dance reaffirmed the tenets of the cultural hierarchy that she sought to disrupt in making a case for the value of ethnic dance. Her logic paradoxically reinforced long-standing classist arguments that differentiated artistic practices on a scale of higher and lower value and saw artistic production as the outgrowth of inspiration of a singular genius. Additionally, the argument she made about how ethnic dance was an essentially communal form elided consideration of the role of the artist in interpreting forms and using tradition as a means through which to speak. This perspective assumed limited avenues of the artist(s) and the artistic voice(s) within ethnic dance for choice making and creativity regarding the use of movement materials and formal structures drawn from cultural sources.[37]

PEDAGOGIES OF ETHNICITY

The Ethnologic Dance Center (EDC), which La Meri founded in 1943, provided a setting in which she could develop her ideas about the practice and pedagogy of ethnologic, or ethnic dance.[38] Evolving from the former School of Natya, which she had established with St. Denis in 1940, the school was originally located at 5 West 46th Street and moved to 110 East 59th Street in Manhattan in the early 1950s. Home to academic and community dance programs, and serving as a venue for ethnologic dance performances, the EDC played a role in educating dancers and dance audiences. The EDC also became a platform on which La Meri could raise her own professional profile and fashion herself as a dance "ambassador."

The EDC championed the institutionalization of dance study in American colleges and universities, in spite of financial and philosophical obstacles many of those institutions faced; and its broadly construed curriculum of comprehensive dance study was in step with parallel efforts of other such contemporaneous initiatives.[39] Walter Terry trumpeted this trend in a September 5, 1948, article entitled "America's Dance Leaders

Seek to Establish Dance Academies," published in the *New York Herald Tribune*. "Dance education has flowered in the colleges of the land," he wrote, "and the value of dance as an art experience and as an integrating factor in general education are truths which are gaining general recognition." In the article, Terry lamented the lack of a "dance academy" in the United States that functioned year-round.

Cases in point, according to Terry, were the examples of the Denishawn School and dance company, which suspended activities circa 1928, related efforts by Ted Shawn to found a "University of the Dance" at Jacob's Pillow, and the work of Martha Hill toward developing academic programs for dance study at New York University and Connecticut College. "The difficulty," Terry observed, "is that both leaders [Shawn and Hill] are limited to summer sessions." Advocating the institutionalization of full-fledged dance study in academe, Terry exhorted: "The need for a dance academy or university is obvious. If the art is to grow, a new generation of dancers must know not only the technique which is their specialty, but they also need experience in other and related techniques, approaches to composition, music, painting, literature, kinesiology, psychology, philosophy and even current events of social, economic, and political natures." Within the broader landscape of dance in academe and related efforts toward the development of a multi-dimensional curriculum for study of the history, theory and practice of dance, Terry recognized La Meri's pioneering efforts at the EDC in designing a three-year "teachers" curriculum, "as a precursor for, perhaps, a more extensive program," which she eventually established with the four-year "artists" program.

Associating La Meri with other dance pedagogues such as Shawn and Hill, and also with Lincoln Kirstein, Lucia Chase, and Martha Graham, all of whom were in the business of founding schools for serious dance study, Terry observed: "Their definitions may vary, but their purposes have much in common, the major one being to develop a dance professional who knows the lore of dance as well as its techniques, who dances with his head and heart as well as with his feet and torso and who, in effect, knows the art of dance and knows what to do with it once he had mastered its principles." Aligning La Meri with these contemporaries for their common efforts, Terry nevertheless singled her out for promoting "growing awareness" within the dance educational community "of the student's need for broad dance training" (Terry, September 5, 1948). On this point, Terry lauded La Meri as someone who has faced this challenge in a "courageous and forthright manner." The EDC, he wrote, "has not been greeted with shouts of popular approval since most dancers have neither the inclination nor the money for four years of intense study."

Although popular only with a select constituency, the "broad dance training" at the EDC offered dance study taught by instructors from around the world, whose "countr[ies] of origin" included India, Spain, Hawaii, Mexico, Argentina, North Africa, New Zealand, Ceylon, Burma, Java, Japan, Philippines, and Chile. The school offered "academic" and "non-academic" classes throughout the day, starting at 11 A.M. and ending at 9 P.M. The "academic" courses of study included two certificate programs in ethnologic dance, a four-year "artists' course," and a three-year "teachers' course," both of which ran thirty-two weeks per year. Enrolled students took courses in dance technique, pedagogy, repertoire, writing, speaking, and composition. "Fees for the academic year" ranged from $340 for either the "Oriental" or the "Spanish" courses, and $625 for both. The brochure also lists non-academic classes and fees for "Hindu" and "Spanish" techniques, at either the "basic" or "applied" levels (undated brochure, circa 1950, LMNYPLPA).

The EDC's multifaceted curriculum for "artists" and "teachers" included elements that today are compulsory in a comprehensive academic dance education including lectures, "corollary dance techniques," and "cultural courses" (undated brochure, LMNYPLPA; 1977, *Total Education in Ethnic Dance*, 155). In a 1950 column entitled "The Dance World: An Academy of Ethnic Dance Arts Establishes Valuable Study Plan," Terry acknowledged as much, praising La Meri for founding such a serious institution devoted to the intensive study of dance: "The academic plan is not, of course, original with La Meri for as I have suggested, other dance schools have incorporated some of its principles but la Meri is, I believe, the first to go the whole way in establishing a year-round four-year plan of exhaustive dance study with an eye toward fostering the cultural as well as the physical techniques of the dance art."[40]

At schools such as La Meri's EDC and Ted Shawn's University of the Dance, founded in 1948, study of ethnologic dance techniques occurred alongside those stemming from Western concert dance. Shawn's school, established on the fifteenth anniversary of Jacob's Pillow, home to the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, Massachusetts, since 1931, supported a curriculum that included "training in several techniques and styles of dance, in history, theory, composition, production and in related art and study activities." According to Terry, who wrote about the school's founding in a July 18, 1948 article entitled "Jacob's Pillow, the Founding of a University of the Dance," published in the *New York Herald Tribune*, attention would be paid to facilitating "shifts in faculty in order that the student avoid absorbing the idiosyncrasies of a single teacher in a given technique." He continued: "The Jacob's Pillow curriculum does require the

student to be alert, studious and adaptable. In one day, he may have classes in ballet, modern dance and some form of ethnologic dance in addition to lectures on dance backgrounds or experience with creative, experimental work in a rehearsal." For Terry, the rationale behind such an approach was based on the idea that the dancer/choreographer would be enriched by comprehensive study: "the more a dancer or choreographer knows about the whole field of dance, the better he is in the area he selects for his special activities; certainly his coloristic, his stylistic gamut is greater for such knowledge."

There is no doubt that founding and directing the EDC further legitimated La Meri's reputation as a scholar and pedagogue and, like Shawn's University of the Dance, it offered a setting for her pursuit of dance advocacy. An address La Meri gave at the EDC's grand opening celebration, entitled "The Intentions of the Ethnologic Dance Center," suggests that even at the outset La Meri understood the school's functions to her own particular lofty ends. "From a practical angle the Center dreams of building many things to serve its idealistic scope of the brotherhood of man," she asserted (emphasis original). "We want first of all to build a public for the ethnologic dance. Building it, we will build the companies of artists to satisfy this demand. And through this dancers with ideals will not be forced into night-club work." Besides envisioning an outsized role for the EDC in promoting the "brotherhood of man," La Meri used her opening address to fortify her own credentials as the founder of such a school that went beyond her experience as an artist or a pedagogue of ethnologic dance. "I am an ambassador. . . . And don't laugh. I really am," she exclaimed. She continued: "For eleven years, I have been an unofficial ambassador for my country" (all of La Meri's quotations in the paragraph are drawn from her address, November 10, 1943, *MGZR clippings, LMNYPLPA)

La Meri's attempts at self-deprecating humor appear to have been part of a strategy to elevate the status of what she was doing as if what it was on its face were not enough. Likewise she sought to explain what she meant in calling herself "an unofficial ambassador for my country." In an anecdote she offered her audience to this effect, she shared details of the results of a chance meeting with President Herbert Hoover and his wife in Chile following a devastating earthquake—she had been there dancing and he came to Santiago as part of his "good-will tour" following his election in 1928. She said that Hoover had written her a letter following the meeting in which he said that "my [La Meri's] work was doing more for my country 'than all diplomacy.'" According to La Meri, this experience and the years of traveling and performing that followed gave her "the ambassador habit." She continued: "And I am home again, only to become an

'ambassador' from all these other countries to my own . . . for it is my unalterable conviction that the folk, the little people, are good and fine all over the world." La Meri concluded her address by expounding on what she thought made ethnologic dance "important today," as an approach to dance that "embodied far more than just entertainment or even inspiration. The ethnologic dance, expression of race, of a people, of a nation, is inextricably tied up with many other human activities. It is the most direct, the most sincere expression of a folk" (all of La Meri's quotations in the paragraph are drawn from her address, November 10, 1943, *MGZR clippings, LMNYPLPA).

A brochure used by the school to advertise its offerings amplified La Meri's representation of herself as an "ambassador" of dance, featuring testimonial quotes supporting this impression alongside information about class offerings, schedules, and fees (brochure 1943 , 13, LMNYPLPA). In one testimonial included on the promotional brochure, *New York Times* dance critic John Martin observed the obvious, that "La Meri is neither Oriental nor Hispanic herself, but a perfectly good North American." He continued: "Her own basic movement instincts are thus the same as ours, and she is accordingly able to present the movement arts of alien peoples against a background that makes them increasingly intelligible to us. She speaks, as it were, our language as well as theirs, which makes her *an ideal translator*" (13) The brochure also included a quotation by humanitarian and author Pearl S. Buck who endorsed La Meri in the same vein as Martin: "To present dances from many countries beautifully and honestly, as La Meri does, is to bring together in unison and in contrast the likenesses and differences in our world" (13). Sounding the same themes in another testimonial on the brochure Indian poet, playwright, and journalist Krishnalal Shridharani said: "In bringing the Indian dance so brilliantly to America, Madame La Meri has rendered a singular service, not only to the cause of Indo-American understanding, but also to the cause of cultural and artistic understanding between peoples and races of this globe which has shrunken so much that humanity cannot long survive unless yesterday's strangers develop the capacity to live as today's next-door neighbors" (13).

The testimonials of Martin, Buck, and Shridharani struck familiar chords, recognizing La Meri as a credible and "honest" "translator" in a more literal sense, a movement polyglot who bridged cultures with fluencies in multiple dance languages, and in a figurative sense, as an interpreter of cultures, who could make what might appear "alien" "increasingly intelligible to us." All three saw in La Meri the potential to advance, in Shridharani's words, the "cause of cultural and artistic understanding between peoples and races of

this globe" at a moment when the world needed to find ways of coming together. These testimonial quotes suggest that the EDC's approach to educating ethnologic dancers in movement techniques and cultures from around the world was seen by others to combine contemporaneous globalist ideas about dance higher education and sociopolitical thinking about citizenship in ways that accomplished "dancing the world smaller."

La Meri was advanced for her time, in that her dance advocacy and pedagogy assumed a role for dancers as public intellectuals who lauded their art for its own sake as art and also for its role in public life. In keeping with midcentury universalist thought and ideas about cultural integrationism, the school's curriculum associated the work of dance and of dancers, asserting that both possessed special capacities for bridging social and cultural differences. This way of thinking aligned with prevailing views, articulated by prominent critics such as John Martin and Walter Terry, and prominent dance figures such as Martha Graham and José Limón, regarding the body's role as a human common denominator (Kowal 2010, 9–10). La Meri deliberately aligned her pedagogy and advocacy with the common parlance and contemporaneous social debates. She strategically sought to position dance as the answer to the world's problems—as the title of her autobiography *Dance Out the Answer* suggests. Today, La Meri's idealism about dance as an effective globalist practice might seem far-fetched and make her appear to be a Pollyanna. Yet testimonials by luminaries of her day suggest that her claims of this nature were plausible and convincing for that time.

If it is possible to move beyond skepticism about La Meri's intentions for a moment, let's consider the relevance of the conversations she fostered at the EDC about approaches to dance education that positioned Western concert dance practices within a global scheme. It is true, and important to note, that La Meri, as would have been in keeping with a contemporaneous perspective, viewed the cultures and practices she taught at her school through an Anglo-centric lens. There is no way of getting around this fact. Nonetheless, this fact alone should not obscure some of the advances she and others, like Ted Shawn at the University of Dance, made in developing dance curricula that recognized a need to expand the American dancer's training to include study beyond Western concert dance forms.[41]

CREATIVE ADAPTATIONS

We have been conditioned to believe that both ballet and modern dance, but not ethnic forms are creative.

La Meri Total Education in Ethnic Dance 1977, 31

At the same time that she founded the Ethnologic Dance Center, La Meri forcefully asserted her standing as a choreographer, creating "translational" works such as *Swan Lake* (1944), *Scheherazade* (1945), *Gesture Songs* (1945), and *Bach-Bharata Suite* (1946), which sought to "fuse" Western and Eastern dance compositional practices. Moving away from a lecture/demonstration format, these were stand-alone works that adapted Eastern dance material to Western dance narratives and music.[42] Additionally, she founded the Exotic Ballet Company in 1946, which included fourteen dancers, three of whom were returning veterans on the GI bill. According to an undated personal chronology, the company performed in "concerts all over," in venues spanning the United States.[43] In important ways, these developments were extensions of La Meri's globalist pedagogical activities meant to educate students and the public at large about the practice and significance of ethnologic dance.

Beyond this, there is a benefit to thinking about what La Meri called her "creative ethnic compositions," and her company-related activities in the mid-1940s, as assertions of the value of what she was doing, embodied responses to the constraining and often patronizing critical discourse surrounding her. She choreographed these dances, after all, during a period of her career when she faced questions about the merit of her art making. Seen in this light, I contend that these so-called translational works, and her speeches and writings about them, represent an attempt to navigate territories between authenticity and artistry, on the one hand, and ethnologic dance and modern dance, on the other.

This passage from a review Walter Terry published on December 21, 1941, illustrates the general aesthetic confines La Meri inhabited when it came to critical assessment of her work:

> Although [La Meri] is more of a *recreative* artist than a *creative* one, her theater performances are entertaining and stimulating for her range of dance action keeps one wondering what is to come next as she reveals the folk flavors of alien peoples. This is no mean public service, for the written word cannot describe the quality of a people as well as the age-old dances of that people can do. The Hindu, his religion, his behavior and his likes and dislikes are probably all very vague to most of us, yet after you have seen La Meri perform many of the traditional dances of India, the nation himself begins to take shape. . . . The themes of India's dances and the manners in which they are danced reduce a nation to human size, thus making it possible to an American audience to watch and understand ("Gesture Language").

Reading this passage, it is difficult not to miss Terry's reductive point of view, with respect both to his estimation of La Meri's artistry and to her

subject matter. Here Terry emphasized her scholarly qualifications, her technical accuracy, and her methodical approach to her creative work. Insinuating his view in counterposing "recreative" and "creative" as qualifiers, he suggested that La Meri's work was akin to a "public service." Nevertheless, in conceptualizing La Meri's dancing as an activity that would "reduce a nation to human size, thus making it possible to an American audience to watch and understand," Terry suggested that La Meri's performances could "dance the world smaller."

La Meri herself subscribed to and even benefited from the common view of the value of her work as scholarly and ambassadorial in nature, but her choreographic output in the mid-1940s might be seen as a deliberate effort to counter the critical underestimation of her artistic work. She likely also sought to defend the capacity of the ethnologic dance artist to contribute in meaningful ways to the contemporary formation of mid-century concert dance.

For example, La Meri's writing in the Introduction to *Total Education in Ethnic Dance* (1977) lays out a case on both counts.[44] In addressing the larger question "What Is Ethnic Dance?," she lingered to consider the perils of what she calls "applied techniques," an approach to artistic creation by which "traditional techniques are applied to alien themes, music, costume, and motivation" (6). In this case, an artist has "transplanted" a folk or ritual dance to the stage, adapting it for the purposes of artistic expression. According to La Meri, this route to artistic creation was filled with peril: "There is often great danger in passing from a folk expression to an art form. Emasculation may lie between" (6). Associating this approach with "the purely inspirational work of Ruth St. Denis," she cautioned, if one is to depart from "the traditional" or "the authentic," "one must always depart from strength, not weakness. To depart from authenticity, one must know authenticity very deeply. One must understand not only the authentic forms but the motivations, else one loses the essence of ethnicity, and the result is a mishmash of schools with no aesthetic value" (6). Here La Meri made a point of distancing herself not only from Ruth St. Denis but also from the latter's compositional methodology, by implying that St. Denis's flaws as an interpreter of ethnic dance forms were a result of her having not "know[n] authenticity very deeply." As a corrective, La Meri emphasized the necessity of the artist's focus on faithfulness to the emotion at the core of the practices. In her words: "For the ethnologic dance is not a product of the mind but of the emotions. . . . Technique, or body control, must be mastered only because the body must not stand in the way of the soul's expression" (7).

The ideas La Meri formulated in her 1977 book reiterated verbatim or in large part "press preview" talks she gave during the 1940s to frame performances of *Swan Lake* and the *Bach-Bharata Suite*. With these theoretical articulations, La Meri sought both to establish criteria by which compositional approaches to ethnologic dance might be evaluated, and to challenge the critical prioritization of technical ability and mimetic fealty to tradition or to authenticity in evaluating the ethnologic dance artist. Throughout, she argued that the artist's and/or the composition's faithfulness to the emotional essence of the source material should supersede all other considerations. As she explained, in the case of what she called "creative departures," in which "techniques remain traditional but may be mixed as to school or handled more freely," and "the music may be completely alien . . . *the general aura of motivation [should be] kept intact*" (1977, 5 emphasis mine).

La Meri considered *Swan Lake* her "first radical departure from pure authenticity" (quoted from *Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 50). In an undated "press preview" she penned near the time of the work's premiere,[45] La Meri explained the origin of her idea to adapt a work from the Western classical ballet tradition to serve her expressive purposes (original document from LMNYPLPA; document republished in *Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 43–44). Calling the 1940s the "golden age" for her "somewhat unorthodox departures from tradition," she said she got her idea during a conversation with dance critic Anatole Chujoy (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 44). Following a performance of the traditional *Swan Lake* ballet "by one of the several excellent companies now working in this country," La Meri and Chujoy decried the inadequacy of the "conventional pantomime of the classical ballet," which over centuries had been trimmed or "sacrificed completely to the acrobatic technique of the protagonists" (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 44, 45). Alternatively, the two discussed the parallels between the "accepted classical mudras of Bharata" and those of the Andalusian and Neapolitan gesture languages (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 44).

La Meri presented her motivations to create her *Swan Lake* as academic in nature, embarking on what could be seen as an exercise in lexical comparison and/or adaptation, on the one hand, and an effort to demonstrate the relative worth of Indian classical dance, on the other. In her words: (1) "to show the great clarity of Hindu gestures when applied to a well-known story"; (2) "to show that the technique of Hindu natya is so complete that the thrill of pirouettes and leaps need not be sacrificed"; and (3) "to prove"

Figure 2.2 Corps de ballet from *Swan Lake*, 1944. Photograph: John Lindquist. © Houghton Library, Harvard University. Courtesy of the Iowa Women's Archives.

to those "who feel that the Hindu dance is limited . . . that it is not" (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 45–46.

La Meri produced *Swan Lake* with these intentions in mind. The work adapted "the second act and prologue" of the ballet choreographed by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov for the Russian Imperial Ballet (1894, with music by Tchaikovsky).[46] As La Meri detailed it, her version was a "staging [of the] ballet in Hindu style," a "new visualization" of a Western story imagined by a "Hindu" child, and populated therefore by characters familiar to that child, expressing the tale in culturally consistent ways—through song, dance, and gesture (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 48).

A silent film of a brief excerpt of this dance as performed at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival is available in the Dance Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. While it would be my wish to provide an account of the entire work, the description I offer below details ways in which La Meri used movement motifs to develop the main character, the Swan Queen, through thematic movement motifs that amalgamated mimetic vocabulary from Eastern and Western classical dance traditions.

> Costumed in a flowing skirt, form-fitting top, and headdress, the lead dancer or Swan begins seated downstage on the floor. Pecking at something with her

Figure 2.3 Tableau from *Swan Lake*, 1944. Courtesy of the Iowa Women's Archives.

> head, she undulates her torso. All the while, her arms draw in and out making delicate decorative movements which frame her upper body. The Swan stands then moves around in a circle, her left arm extended upwards. Repeating the pecking motions with her head and neck she spins in a circle, her arms responding to rhythms by crossing in front of her body and then pulsing outwards. This arm motion leads her into a slow strut in which the pecking gesture is now taken into the entire torso. Abruptly she lunges, then comes up again to spin. Facing the audience, she travels upstage. Standing centerstage facing the audience, the Swan begins another pulsing sequence, this time with her arms in a horizontal organization (like playing the flute), her mudras and facial expressions enacting a story. This moment ends abruptly and she walks slowly off stage (*"Hamsa-Rani" Dance of the Swan Queen from La Meri's Indic Translation of "Swan Lake,"* Lynn 1951).

This brief excerpt illustrates how La Meri employed aspects of two streams of pantomimic traditions to deepen the sense of the main character and advance the narrative. La Meri's own writing about this work, as well as critical accounts, provide further indications of the work's form and content. In one instance, in a column published on February 20, 1944, Walter Terry adopted La Meri's perspective on the work's origins repeating

information she had offered in her "press preview" presentation, in which she had explicated her "story-telling thesis." As Terry recalled: "What would an East Indian, familiar with Indian but not Occidental dancing, imagine 'Swan Lake' to be like, were he to hear the score on records and be told the general action?" Terry's review seems to have taken La Meri's academic objectives to heart. To his mind, to "ballet-goers, this version offers a running comparison between ballet and Hindu dancing that is very interesting and sometimes—as in the Cygnet Quartet—very witty. La Meri with her usual fine tact does not press the parallel too solemnly" In other words, Terry's emphasis on the comparative aspects of *Swan Lake*, and his evaluation that it was "interesting," presented the work more as an academic exercise than as a work of art. Certainly, Terry's review did not offer an unqualified endorsement of La Meri's "creativity."

Other reviews of the work described it in similarly dry terms, as more of scholarly pursuit than an artistic one. The critic R. B., for example, expressed the opinion that La Meri had not been far off in assuming that balletomanes would see her work as a sacrilege. In his words:

Figure 2.4 Quartet from *Swan Lake*, 1944. Photograph: John Lindquist. © Houghton Library, Harvard University. Courtesy of the Iowa Women's Archives.

> She may not be far from wrong, at that. For, after a program of delightful authentic Hindu dances done to recorded Indian music, weird and singy-songy, the strains of Tchaikowsky's [*sic*] immortal "Swan Lake" flood the little theater. But, instead of a Markova, Slavenska, or Baronova dancing the beautiful Petipa choreography, La Meri and her group interpret the ballet in typical Natya fashion, head-wiggling, finger-language, and all. As an experiment in dance translation, La Meri's version of "Swan Lake" is undoubtedly interesting in an academic sort of way, but to a patron of the ballet, watching this performance is startling. Something like finding out his mother is a kept woman. Choreographically, La Meri has done a remarkable job. . . . Just the same the various ballet groups needn't worry (*New York Herald Tribune*, February 27, 1944).

R.B.'s characterization of the ballet as "an experiment in dance translation," is a case in point regarding the critical assessment of the work in scholarly terms. Moreover, it is not difficult to perceive the sexism implied in the critic's employment of a metaphor of familial betrayal and infidelity, and the critic's patronizing pronouncement that regardless of La Meri's "remarkable job," "various ballet groups needn't worry." In a similar

Figure 2.5 Principals trio from *Swan Lake*, 1944. Photograph: Joan Liffring. Courtesy of the Iowa Women's Archives.

dismissive fashion, John Martin of the *New York Times* expressed skepticism about the consequence of La Meri's experiment. Calling the work a "translation of [*Swan Lake*]," he quipped that it "does considerably less damage to it than some of the strictly academic performances it receives at the hands of the various ballet companies." In what seems a bit like wishful thinking, Martin wrote: "To La Meri's eternal credit, however, let it be said that if she is not perpetrating a gag, neither is she trying solemnly to institute a trend. She is as convinced as anybody else that 'there is no permanent wedding between pure Hindu Technique and pure ballet libretto and choreography.' She is simply making an experiment in comparing" (1944, X4).

In all three reviews, critics framed La Meri's *Swan Lake* as "an experiment in comparing" and "an experiment in dance translation," stressing the experimental and comparative nature of the work as a kind of "academic" exercise more than an artistic accomplishment. Perhaps a reviewer for *Musical Courier* put it best:

> Mme. La Meri's Hindu version of the ever-popular *Swan Lake* turned out to be a lavish and pretentious affair as well as interesting. The adaptability of the Russian symphonic music to the dance-idiom of India is quite surprising. Of course, it is not recommended that a general practice be made of the stunt, but in the hands of the highly intellectual and capable La Meri the work was more than acceptable ("Swan Lake a la Indone").

In all of these cases, critics offered qualified encouragement with the caveat that such experimentation in intercultural fusion should be limited in scope and seldom repeated. Moreover, if it had been La Meri's objective to prove to critics that "ethnic forms are creative," she had little success if these reviews are any indication.

LA MERI'S MODERNISM

Apart from these critical accounts of the work by dance reviewers, how else might we comprehend other meanings of this *Swan Lake* in the context of mid-century modernist concert dance practices? La Meri's writings as well as my description of the excerpt that I have seen provide some basis for this thought experiment. Taking La Meri's word about the experimental nature of her creative practices at face value, what, if anything, was experimental about this work? How did it depart from mid-century concert dance compositional precedent to make its claim to innovation?

Perhaps La Meri's employment of cross-identification, in that she imagined *Swan Lake* as a visualization seen through the eyes of a "Hindu child," would qualify? As she explained it:

> If we must have a simple thought from which to depart in order to organize the logic of this east-west experiment, I suggest that the watcher imagine that a Hindu gentleman, having just returned from an extended trip to Europe, is asked by his children and their friends to tell them a story (a very usual situation in India). So this gentleman takes out the records of "Swan Lake" and tells the story, illustrating it with Tchaikovsky's music (also the usual way of telling a tale in India . . . to illustrate it with music in the proper mood). What happens on our stage is that the Indian children visualize as the tale unfolds. Just as the German fairy-tale could only live in a child's imagination, so this new visualization could only live in a child's imagination . . . and this time, a Hindu child (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 48).

Adopting a convention in ballet of allowing a dance to present the world not as is but as a fantasy, La Meri shifted the frame of reference; in her version, on hearing the traveling gentleman's story, a listening Indian child might translate the Western ballet story into a kind of pan-Indian movement idiom. This is a bit far-fetched, certainly, but informative all the same.

We might interpret La Meri's approach to point-of-view as in keeping with outmoded conventions of what dance historian Susan Manning refers to as "metaphorical minstrelsy," in which the white, often female dancer assumed the role of a "neutral" canvas for the expression of solidarity with marginalized cultural others (2003, 10). In this case, the adoption of an alien point of view as a framing device for the unfolding of the work could have bolstered the legitimacy of La Meri's stated intention of elevating the "Hindu dance" as a source for dance composition.

Alternatively, La Meri's adoption of a cross-ethnic identification is also in line with more contemporaneous interventions by choreographers with academic training in dance ethnography. I am thinking in particular about Pearl Primus's adoption of the persona of a white male viewer in her solo work *Strange Fruit* (1943): "My dance shows a member of the mob as he leaves the scene of the crime. . . . He looks back at the black body hanging by its neck and reviles himself for what he has done" (Kowal 2010, 126; Primus quoted in Carter 1944, 5). Primus, a Trinidadian immigrant who traveled to the American South in order to understand the experience of American blacks, deployed a technique of cross-identification as a way of demonstrating the horror of lynching through an embodiment of self- and

cultural alienation. La Meri's utilization of this technique of cross-identification was likely meant to produce a different effect, in this case, bringing the audience closer to an experience of cultural otherness, in an attempt, therefore, to make the foreign familiar and more comprehensible as seen through the eyes of an Indian child.

La Meri's use of an eclectic movement lexicon drawn from multiple styles of classical Indian dance might also be considered "experimental." As she explains: "As a whole the technical style used is that of the renaissance school of modern India," which she attributes to Shankar. "But in certain numbers," she continued, "and in certain characters and moments the style is purer. The character of Rakshasa is Kathakali. The second solo of Hamsa-rani is pure North India. The quartette of the little Swans is in Bharatnatyam style. The bird movements of Hamsa-rani at her transformation, as well as in her first solo, are from Kathakali" (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 49). Based on La Meri's account, she felt at liberty to mix and to match movement traditions drawn from the emerging Indian classical revival and therefore did not seem constrained by expectations regarding lexical consistency stemming from techniques or schools that choreographers within the ballet and modern dance fields would have faced at this time. In fact, her experimentation with pantomime and development of lexical conventions that bridged Eastern and Western approaches to embodied exposition were aimed deliberately at innovating within the balletic tradition. As La Meri put it in a program she presented at the AMNH: "The ballet is in evolution and needs new material, new approaches and new angles" ("Theater Stylizations of Folk-Dances," May 12, 1945, LMNYPLPA).[47]

Finally, I would argue that La Meri's transposition of pantomime traditions to serve her narrative purposes and her combinational approach to her source material was both innovative and leading the way toward modernist aesthetic experimentation during the postwar period. On the subject of her employment of pantomime, La Meri explained that "the prologue is a purely pantomimic scene between Rakshasa (Sorcerer) and the girl who is transformed. It is choreographically as well as musically the introduction to the ballet. It would be impossible to tell a Hindu natya without some explanatory action to introduce the nrtta passages" (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 46). The passage that I describe above also employs pantomimic gesture, in Hamsa-Rani's movement of her head miming the action of pecking, for example, and in gestures that evoke playing the flute. However, through the description I have provided we might also see how Hamsa-Rani's movement further extends these more literal gestures into full-bodied movement, such as the undulation and

pulsation of her torso, and actions of strutting, spinning, and lunging—accomplishing a synthesis of ethnic and modernist movement lexicons.

Studying La Meri's creative output later in the 1940s, it is possible to see her utilization of pantomimic gesture as a basis for more full-bodied movement expression as a precursor to works such as Yaravi, "a little ballet suggested by an Ecuadorian Indian song." A November 14, 1948, review by Walter Terry implied as much. According to Terry: "'Yaravi'... probed more deeply into the nature of the Indian, into the being of the individual through the employment of dramatic situation and through the *use of purely expressional movement*. It is a fine work, quite different from most of La Meri's other creations in that the *dance action is not projected by a traditional dance vocabulary*" (emphasis mine). What made Yaravi stand out to Terry, therefore, was its modernism—a dance choreographed as a result of "deep" investigation "into the being of the individual," and "the use of purely expressional movement" that was not, therefore, "action... projected by a traditional dance vocabulary." The dance was still ethnologic in character in that, according to Terry, La Meri "[had] of course, flavored her actions with behavior patterns, tempos, the physical bearing associated with the Indians of that region and has sought to capture or to comment upon the emotional qualities inherent in the accompanying song." And yet Terry believed the dance transcended the limitations that had constrained the impact of La Meri's previous works, as "a lament, a love-lament in dance form, [which] *discloses La Meri, the choreographer, as a sort of ethnological Martha Graham,* a new and artistically important role for a gifted artist" ("Dance: Operatic, Ethnologic and for Night Club Patrons," emphasis mine). Terry's designation of La Meri as "a sort of ethnological Martha Graham" certainly elevated the choreographer above her former critical standing, putting her on par with Graham within her own artistic field, while, at the same time, marking her difference from the paragon of mid-century American dance modernism.

In the context of mid-century dance modernism, the innovation La Meri achieved in *Swan Lake*, and, by extension, some of her other translational works, appears in keeping with the kinds of creative concerns that compelled the artistic practices of contemporaries, especially those in modern dance. She theorized her original intentions in similarly quasi-literary ways, claiming that her "creative ethnic compositions" arose from "motivations... that are common to all mankind." As she explained further, "People are interested in basic and universal emotions, not personalized problems... [s]o you must speak in a language that is at once universal in its basic message and abstract in its possibilities of inner interpretation" (*Total Education in Ethnic Dance* 1977, 39 and 41). Sounding universalist

themes based on commonalities thought at the time to extend across humankind, La Meri stressed the expressive potential of her endeavor to forge a movement language drawn from Eastern and Western dance traditions, thus synthesizing ideologies and practices of dance modernism and cultural universalism.

MEDIATING DIFFERENCE(S)

In a 1947 review published in the *New York Herald Tribune* and entitled "Exotic Ballet Group Accents Global Values of Dance Art," Walter Terry considered the "global values of dance art," thinking specifically about La Meri's contributions in the 1940s. Making a case for the reconsideration of La Meri's significance in the world of American dance, Terry acknowledged that she had "never been fully appreciated in this, her own country." "It is partly her own fault," he reasoned, "for when she first returned from her years of study in foreign lands she was authentic, accurate and a little cool." Illuminating the changes he had witnessed in La Meri's presentation of herself and her work, he observed that "in recent seasons she has grown into a warm and glowing artist and has succeeded in giving American accent or, one might say, American clew to her ethnologic presentations." "La Meri is . . . far more than a kinetic 'National Geographic,'" Terry asserted, "for although her dances may teach, they are, very often, theatrically exciting in themselves." Furthermore, Terry saw creativity in "her application of the classical dance technique of India to 'Swan Lake,' her 'Bach-Bharata Suite' and to other non-Oriental themes," claiming that these "works of art [were] intrinsically as important to America as any contemporary application of Western classical dance (ballet) has achieved." He concluded: "*Perhaps she and her fine company are ahead of their times in assuming that our art heritage can no longer be mainly Western or European but that it must become global in scope*" (October 5, 1947, emphasis mine).

Terry's review provides a useful frame through which to formulate some concluding thoughts about the significance of La Meri and her dance practices, particularly about the problems involved in putting ethnologic dance in service to American globalism at the mid-century. Here Terry appears to be attempting to strike a balance between acknowledging La Meri's "American accent" and the "American clew" of her work and an overall sense that La Meri and her company were forward thinking in producing work that challenged the dominant Anglo-centric world view of "our art heritage," envisioning it instead as "global in scope." With this equivocation, Terry's review illuminates some of the contradictory

impulses identified by Homi Bhabha concerning a universalist approach to cross-cultural engagement, which "creates" diversity, on the one hand, and "contains" difference on the other.

In this particular example, creating difference occurs in the ways La Meri, and Terry, imagine her body and her company's artistic activities as mediating distant and unfamiliar cultures and cultural perspectives of peoples, even countries, whose dances she and her company members performed. Seen within the scope of the performance program, *Around the World with Dance and Song*, at New York's American Museum of Natural History, as I argued in Chapter 1, such activities represent the better cultural impulse associated with what Christina Klein has called the "global imaginary of integration" (2003, 23).[48] More specifically, La Meri's ethnologic dance compositions embodied the global imaginary of integration as a corporeal synthesis of East and West, epitomized by the synthesizing processes necessary to facilitating La Meri's own cross-ethnic embodiments.

From this perspective, it is possible to imagine that La Meri's teaching ignited her students' love of dancing and curiosity about the world in which they lived; that La Meri's talks and performances were reminiscent of the firsthand narratives returning GIs told their families and friends about their encounters with peoples from distant lands, groups many in the United States had only seen represented in photographs or films; that the public's encounters with dancers such as La Meri and her company might have encouraged the contemplation of the responsibilities of global citizenship not only in New York City but also elsewhere; or that performances of La Meri's travelogue programs, and *Swan Lake* and the other translational works, might have led some in the audience toward broader cultural understanding of global affairs, public interest in foreign cultures, and/or acceptance of refugees and/or immigrants, all of which might have paved the way to meaningful immigration reform by the mid-1965s.

Alternatively, containing difference occurred in Terry's placing diversity in an "American" package. The global existed as seen through La Meri's eyes as defined by the particularities of her artistic and scholarly imperatives, and conceptualized often in her own image—as a personification of multitudes in one, Anglo-American female body. In these ways, La Meri's body and her cross-ethnic embodiments functioned both to mediate difference(s), and also as containers of an unfamiliar, incomprehensible, and possibly unruly, otherness. La Meri managed this discomfort by exercising prerogatives in line with her white, American, female subject position. Such strategies can be seen in the fundamentally appropriative

nature of her work, not only in her purposing and repurposing of foreign cultural material to satisfy Western-centric universalist imperatives but also in the conceits that she, herself, could credibly perform otherness, and, that by doing so, she was "dancing the world smaller."

La Meri appropriated material from several Indian classical dance forms toward the purposes of her artistic experiment, homogenizing them in the process. Whereas she asserted the importance of maintaining a connection to the spiritual "essence" of movement material, it could also be argued that her translational works, for example, disassociated necessary elements (characters, movement, gesture, song) from their aesthetic, cultural, philosophical, and spiritual moorings within these forms. These included the idea that dance styles could be wrested from their cultural contexts and "used as a technique to interpret the abstract dance art of any nationality of artist," and the notion of the "universality of the artist-creator" seen through what she described as the "architectonic technical expression of ecclesiastical inspiration" (*Total Education* 1977, 51). La Meri therefore used her knowledge of Eastern dance forms to reinscribe Western aesthetic and cultural values even as she sought to promote Indian classical dance as being equal to ballet as a "complete" form. Such universalist contentions moreover had a double purpose. They not only asserted the validity of La Meri's choreographic creations but also her artistic authority as their creator.

If La Meri's white female body offered a solution to the representation of otherness, perhaps it was because her embodied synthesis of myriad cultural identities, a kind of corporeal assimilation; she personified reigning ideas about cultural assimilation and the process by which cultural others became Americans and/or Americanized. According to Richard Alba and Victor Nee, whose book, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*, studies the "mainstreaming" forces in American social life, assimilationist thought reached the height of its cultural influence during the postwar period, in both academic and popular contexts (see also Kazal 1995, 438).[49] In their studies of the assimilation process, prominent mid-century social scientists sought to explain the ways in which immigrants to the United States, or even socially and economically marginalized groups such as African Americans and Native Americans, moved into the dominant cultural mainstream.

W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole's *Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (1945) is emblematic of this school of thought. The book depicted the assimilation process as one of "absorption" into the mainstream and "dissolution" of ethnicity and/or minority heritage (2003, 2). For Warner and Srole, assimilation meant that in the context of the American experiment, and over time—sometimes generations—individuals came to prioritize

their identification with the dominant culture over identification with their cultures of origin, often discarding as irrelevant markers of their difference, whether linguistic, religious, or cultural in nature. In other words, assimilation occurred by a shift of identification, when a person's self-identification as "American" trumped the identification with any other affiliation.[50] The metaphor of the "melting pot" became an important signifier during the mid-century, seen as an ultimate leveler of differences that, over time, would engender a homogeneous society.[51] In this case, the melting pot functioned to combine or alloy metals, resulting in a bonding stronger than the sum of the constituent parts, producing a homogeneous and synergistic result. Applied to the problem of cultural assimilation, the image of the melting pot suggested that differences associated with cultures of origin would dissolve regardless of both economic and political factors: allegiance to a common "American" identity would supersede connection to culture, nation, and/or community of origin.

Acknowledging that the United States as a nation brought together myriad peoples, native and non-native alike, assimilationists nevertheless elevated the goal of working toward a shared, common, and national "American" culture, which would transcend and supersede differences of creed, heritage, religion, language. Proponents conceptualized the flow of cultural change as occurring in one direction, from the outside in, by which cultural outsiders would change to become more like cultural insiders, and the majority culture would remain essentially unchanged.[52] The cultural prioritization of assimilation worked to catalyze the homogenization process I discussed earlier, by which white ethnic Americans became "Caucasians," thus more identified with their white racial characteristic than with their ethnic heritage and/or country or region of origin. As a function of the ideology of consensus, therefore, assimilationism left little room for difference and/or the expression of difference. It was exclusionary, premised on white hegemonic norms, racial whiteness, and Anglo-behavioral codes.

It is in this cultural context that we might consider reasons that La Meri's own incorporative cross-ethnic embodiments outlasted the convention within dance modernism of "metaphorical minstrelsy." In modern dance such practices of this nature had lost their credibility by the late 1930s because they were seen at the time, and continued to be seen throughout the mid-century period, as gross "interpretations." Falling audience and critical estimations of the value of Ruth St. Denis and her work in the 1940s is a case in point. By contrast, however, La Meri's activities were accepted as legitimate representations of knowledge. Whereas critics questioned her artistic credentials, they accepted her embodiments as manifestations of truth. One reason was that audiences often did not know

any better and therefore could not tell the difference because the material she presented was just too "foreign" and unfamiliar. But another reason might be that mimesis was replaced with a more conceptual attitude, which also got La Meri into trouble as a theater artist.

La Meri's success during this period, and the authority granted her by those drawn to her performances, owes to more than public ignorance. An explanation could be that La Meri's cross-ethnic embodiments exercised an imperative affiliated with globalist thinking, in this case the concept that a single body, such as the United Nations, or a polyglot dancer such as La Meri, could contain and/or stand in for multitudes of other bodies, and presumably other peoples. La Meri's bodily practices were themselves assimilative. In fact, her approach to technical mastery and artistic production were both premised on the skills of the dancer to mask any ruptures between the self and the other, the known and the unknown. In short, these were the prerogatives of her dominant standing.

Seen in the context of her time, La Meri was more than a stand-in for those absent and/or imagined cultural others living outside US borders; rather she embodied unreconciled cultural tensions between the individual and the universal, between race and ethnicity, between the creation and containment of diversity, between the national and the global. In La Meri's staging of the global we come to see the ways in which she functioned as an avatar for the paradoxes of American globalism, providing a safe and familiar (white) conduit through which Americans could express their desires to commune with cultural others, as well as a persona onto which to project their desire for and anxiety about foreigners and foreignness.[53] La Meri's case highlights difficulties associated with assumptions that dance was a translational practice and that artists could serve as intercultural mediators. In La Meri's artistic practices, and in the cultural controversies that surrounded them, we come to see mid-century globalism as a process associated more with becoming more "American" than with becoming more diversified as a country. Moreover, the problems associated with La Meri's incorporation of the perspectives of cultural others into a syncretic movement practice presaged problems we associate today with artistic appropriation and the difficulties for any artist seeking to illuminate personal and/or cultural experiences outside of one's own identity position.

EPILOGUE

One of the more poignant expressions of La Meri's wistful sentiment is found in an unpublished personal chronology that she compiled at the end

of her life (Box 1, folder 2, 8, LMNYPLPA). The chronology, created in 1973, details "personal recollections" of her life and career, and chronicles her "major dance works," "books published," "graduates of the E.D.C (Ethnologic Dance Center)," "personnel of various companies," "master classes and lectures," and "stray leaves" (all quotes here taken from the 1973 "Chronology"). Reflecting on the span of her career, and her perception of her success, or lack thereof, La Meri writes:

> What one has achieved in my years one can be objective even about one's self. As a dancer I had something special . . . an instinctive anatomical ability to catch and project the body-line and motivation of other peoples. As a choreographer this instinct for (alien) motivations carried over into my creative work. . . . I also have a good instinct for music, both eastern and western. As a teacher I care more for motivation then technique . . . thus I turn out dancers, not technicians. These abilities were recognized by every teacher abroad with whom I studied, and in every country in which I danced . . . EXCEPT my own. In the United States, it was only the top-flight artists who were aware of this gift, for the general public (and often the critic) was inclined to compare my Spanish dance to Argentinita's . . . and my Hindu to Shan-kar's. *Compared to such figures I came off (naturally) a technically poor second best!*

She goes on:

> For 30 years I have plowed through a sea of obstacles . . . from simple misunderstanding and bitchy remarks to sheer unethical dirty work. But I have been kept afloat by the encouragement and friendship of such figures as St. Denis, Argentinita, Shan-kar, Respighi, Kriesler, de Falla, Coomaraswamy, Lin Yu Tang, Pearl Buck, U Po Sein . . . and many others. There are few westerners who have had the incomparable Balasararswati touch her forehead to their feet! Well . . . one can't have everything . . . and I will settle for the affection and respect of the "greats" I have named ("La Meri Chronology," Box 1, folder 2, 8, LMNYPLPA).

In some of La Meri's last words, we see a performer who struggled her whole life for recognition as an "artist," and who dedicated herself to developing pedagogies successfully to teach others the myriad forms and practices she knew, and to the professionalization of her art form. We see a woman who dedicated her life to "dancing the world smaller." In La Meri's oeuvre, whiteness appears to be ubiquitous and mutable: it contains the unknown and unknowable by deploying modernism's formal terms and constraints; and it acknowledges cultural differences at the

same time it depicts otherness in its own image. Appraising La Meri's significance in these ambivalent terms, it is also possible to acknowledge that in the eyes of the artist herself and her defenders she was a white woman who took a sincere and dedicated interest in the dance forms of cultural others, a person who staked her career on the "authenticity" of her pursuits and who died an unfulfilled and unappreciated artist.

3

Staging Diaspora

Asadata Dafora and Black Cultural Diplomacy

The Negro has been a man without a history because he has been considered a man without a worthy culture.

Arthur A. Schomburg 1976, 221

In a 1925 essay entitled "The Negro Digs Up His Past," Arthur A. Schomburg, an author, intellectual, and philanthropist associated with the Harlem Renaissance, reflected on the barriers to cultural pride for African Americans in the early twentieth century, the most significant of which had been "the depreciation of Africa which has sprung up from ignorance of her true role and position in human history and the early development of culture." As a corrective, Schomburg advocated the "scientific study of African institutions and early cultural history," which, if sustained and comprehensive, could "reclaim" the past as a source of "pride" and "self-respect," "making history yield for [African Americans] the same value that the treasured past of any people affords" (221). First published in the Harlem-based journal *Survey Graphic*, and later the same year in Alain Locke's edited collection *The New Negro*, Schomburg's essay represented what was then known as the "vindicationist" school of thought, including black intellectuals and authors such as W. E. B Du Bois, Carter Woodson, and Joel Rodgers, who sought to "reclaim for Africa its proper heritage," and, in doing so, would "redeem . . . the ancestry of persons of African descent everywhere" (Meriwether 2002, 19). In the years to follow, vindicationism would dovetail with emerging pan-Africanist movements,

Dancing the World Smaller: Staging Globalism in Mid-Century America. Rebekah J. Kowal.

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190265328.03.0003

led by Du Bois and activist Marcus Garvey, which envisioned a world in which peoples of common African heritage would unify around a shared racial identity. Leveraging strength in numbers, pan-Africanism mobilized black populations across the globe against institutional forces of oppression including white supremacy, colonialism, and capitalist exploitation of black labor.

Historians debate the extent to which these early-twentieth-century movements touched the lives of many African Americans outside of these activist cultural and political circles. In fact, according to historian James H. Meriwether, whose research looks at the relationships between black Americans and Africa, the majority of African Americans at this time maintained an ambivalence about their racial and cultural connections to the African subcontinent, in large part subscribing to negative primitivist stereotypes perpetuated in educational textbooks, accounts by missionaries and travelers, and the popular print media (Meriwether 2002, 11–26). In important ways, however, pan-Africanism fostered an internationalist current within black American activist communities, which, even if it did not have an impact on the lives of the majority of African Americans in the early twentieth century, grew in size and force following the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Historian Penny Von Eschen, for example, contends that Italy's failed attempt to colonize Ethiopia "was a watershed for black American consciousness, since it exposed," in the words of singer and activist Paul Robeson, "the parallel between [black American] interests and those of oppressed peoples abroad" (quoted in Von Eschen 1997, 11). As a result, Robeson and fellow traveler Max Yergan, founded the International Council on African Affairs (ICAA) in 1937, which they renamed the Council on African Affairs (CAA) in 1942, a leftist organization that played a central role in the articulation and pursuit of an agenda linking anti-colonialist causes abroad and civil rights struggles at home.[1] Advocacy by the CAA shifted away from an earlier politics of diaspora based on a common racial heritage and toward a more radical anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist stance recognizing shared experiences of oppression and encouraging coalitional and global thinking; in Robeson's words: "Our fight for Negro rights here is linked inseparably with the liberation movements of the people of the Caribbean and Africa and the colonial world in general" (quoted in Von Eschen 1997, 20).

Against this historical backdrop, this chapter focuses on the artistic, cultural and political significance of choreographer Asadata Dafora's work in the mid-1940s, making a case for the ways in which it illuminates roles for the black dancing body in making and keeping history, and in furthering the political mobilization of black peoples in mid-century America. Dafora was

a Sierra Leonean national who immigrated to the United States in 1929 and who lived and worked in New York City until 1960. In the 1940s, Dafora worked under the auspices of the African Academy of Arts and Research (AAAR), a pan-Africanist and anti-colonialist organization founded in 1943 by Nigerian nationals Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe, Mbonu Ojiki, and A. A. Nwafor Orizu, all of whom were students in New York City (Diamond 2001, 3; Lynch 2002, 188).[2] First, I examine three African dance festivals that Dafora directed and produced at Carnegie Hall on behalf of the AAAR within the contexts of African American civil-rights activism, anti-colonialist pan-Africanist politics, and contradictory federal efforts, led by the Roosevelt administration, to address issues of racial equity. I argue that these performances of diaspora gave visibility to black creativity and resistance and embodied bonds of Africanist cultural retentions, which bridged 1930s anti-colonial and 1960s post-colonial/civil-rights solidarities toward the formation of a black American identity defined in global terms. Second, I investigate the significance for black audiences of a national tour Dafora took with his dance company, the Shogola Oloba African Dance Group, across the American South and Midwest in 1946 and 1947. Examination of the tour sheds light on Dafora's identity as a transnational subject and as a mobile and liminal figure who gave embodied testimony to experiences of being both within and outside of Africa and of America.[3]

"EVERY MAN HAS HIS TIME"

> In my country, he says, we do not talk of age. We have a saying, Every man has his time. I do not think of how old I am, but of my time.
>
> Quoted in Heard 1999, 149—from a souvenir program for *Kykunkor*

In a chapter of his book *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Michel de Certeau contemplates what he calls "The politics of silence: The Long March of the Indians." Recounting profoundly disturbing instances of colonial abuse of indigenous peoples in South and Central America, de Certeau asserts the importance of embodiment in keeping alive "a painful recognition of four and a half centuries of colonialization." As he puts it: "This inscribing of an identity built upon pain is the equivalent of the indelible markings the torture of the initiation ceremony carves into the flesh of the young. In this sense, 'the body is memory.' It carries, in written form, the law of equality and rebelliousness that not only organizes the group's relation to itself, but also its relation to the occupiers." In his essay, de Certeau insists on the centrality of the body in serving multiple purposes,

as a vessel for keeping painful memories alive, an instrument of resistance, and a "locus" for the formation of the "the collective memory of the social body." For de Certeau, the body is integral both to the recognition of past events as they have borne on a people, and to the organization of a response. De Certeau quotes twenty-one-year-old Justino Quispe Balboa, speaking at the first Indian Congress of South America in 1974, who asserts: "Today, at the hour of our awakening, *we must be our own historians*" (1986, 227, 261, emphasis mine).[4] As such, De Certeau imagines that practices of documenting their own history might promote a heightened consciousness and political mobilization of indigenous peoples.

In light of de Certeau's ideas about the necessity for disenfranchised peoples to be their own historians, I begin by considering the significance of a handwritten autobiographical statement Dafora penned in 1961, in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he and his wife were living "until after the [nation's] Independence Celebrations" ("Personal Papers," box 1, folder 1, ADSCRBC). In this document, Dafora took stock of his life and career, in effect producing his own history. Writing in the third person, Dafora claimed himself to be the "first African to put an African show [in] the American Theatre and concert halls." In his autobiographical statement, Dafora mentions the following accomplishments: (1) "present[ation] of his first African Dance Drama, 'Kykunkor' . . . [which] was acclaimed as one of the best plays of that season"; (2) participation in three African dance festivals produced at Carnegie Hall by the African Academy of Arts and Research (AAAR) in 1943, 1945, and 1946; (3) other New York City appearances at Columbia University, the United Nations, the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, the Empire State Building, the 1940s World's Fair. He also lists other performances staged across the United States, including a mid-century tour to historically black colleges in the South and Midwest, including Fisk, Tuskegee, and Lincoln, in his words, "the leading Negro colleges of America"; and media appearances in "The Greater Tomorrow," a movie produced by Kingsley Ozuombo Mbadiwe, founder of the African Academy of Arts and Research, and in a 1958 television program, "Dances of All Peoples." Considering the history that Dafora narrates in this statement it is clear that when Dafora relocated to Sierra Leone in 1960 in failing health he saw himself as having established himself in New York City during the peak of his professional life, as many of the performances that he mentions in this statement had occurred there.

In her essay "Choreographing History," dance theorist and historian Susan Leigh Foster investigates the possibility that choreography is a form of "bodily writing," "capable of generating ideas," and that one of the jobs of the dance historian is to consider the meanings of such writings as

evidence of a subject's "potential agency to participate in or resist whatever forms of cultural production are underway." She explains how such an approach to the study of dance history "endows body-centered endeavors with an integrity as practices that establish their own lexicons of meaning, their own syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of signification, their own capacity to reflect critically on themselves and on related practices" (1995, 15).

In the light of Foster's ideas, Dafora's writing is important for several reasons. It is one of the few documents in which Dafora represented his career from his own perspective and in his own voice. For an artist who was as prominent as he was in theatrical and concert dance circles, he was seldom quoted by authors who wrote about him during his lifetime. Thus, the document reveals Dafora's attempt near the end of his life both to produce an account of his activities in the United States and to shape perceptions of their importance. In other words, Dafora's writing establishes the choreographer as his own historian, the one chronicling his artistic achievements of note and, thereby, writing himself into the history of American concert dance. Additionally, Dafora's writing provides an essential if small lead in his thinking about the significance of his life and work in the 1940s, especially about ways in which Africanist dance praxis and performance contributed to the global movement toward Africanist self-definition and self-determination in concert dance for both American and African nationals.

Recent histories of African American concert dance in the United States position the 1930s and early 1940s as a watershed for the production of Africanist dance on the modern dance stage, affording artists of African heritage increased opportunities for embodied self-representation (Heard 1999; Manning 2004, 55, 118). This is also the period in which the diasporic supplanted the primitive in danced representations of Africa. According to received scholarly accounts, Dafora, who is credited with having established "America's first African dance theatre," plays an important if contradictory role in this history (Martin 1975; Butcher 1973, 94).[5] A classically trained opera singer, schooled in Milan at the La Scala opera house from 1910 to 1912, Dafora moved to New York City in 1929, at the age of thirty-nine "Biographical/Historical Information" for Asadata Dafora, accessed June 7, 2019. http://archives.nypl.org/scm/20812#overview, ADSCRBC; Perpener 2001, 106–7; Needham 2002, 233–36). The facts surrounding his move to the United States are unclear, as are the reasons behind his subsequent decision to abandon his singing career for one in choreography.[6] By all accounts, however, he devoted the next thirty years of his life and work in his adopted home to educating the American public

about African performing arts, by staging African dance and ritual traditions as concert/theatrical dance, and in the latter years of his career, by acting in the capacity of an ambassador for African culture in the United States.

With the exception of Marcia Ethel Heard (1999) and John Perpener (2001), scholarship on Dafora has tended to focus on the 1930s, when he achieved commercial and critical success with productions such as *Kykunkor* (1934), an eventual Broadway hit; *Macbeth* (known as the "voodoo *Macbeth,*" a production by Orson Welles for which he served as choreographer) (1936) for the Federal Theatre Project; *Bassa Moona* (1937); and *Zunguru* (1938). Dafora also presented "African dances" in the collaboratively choreographed "Negro Dance Evening" at the 92nd YMHA (1937).[7] Less noted but no less important were Dafora's activities in the 1940s (beginning with a performance at the 1940 World's Fair American Commons exhibit), during which Dafora assumed a role of ambassador for African arts and culture in America.

Scholarly assessments of Dafora's artistic significance in the field of US concert dance are mixed. Some scholars emphasize his contributions in elevating the performance of African dance forms, which promoted general public awareness and acceptance of African performance practices as well as African American pride in a common pan-African cultural heritage. In this vein, his 1934 "Native African Opera" *Kykunkor* has received considerable scholarly treatment. The work dramatized an inter-tribal courtship in which the bridegroom is cursed by an evil Witch Woman, a curse that is eventually exorcised by a Witch Doctor during a scene of spirit possession (Needham 2002, 237).[8] In her seminal book *The Negro in American Culture* (1956), Margaret Just Butcher contends that "*Kykunkor* represent[ed] that beginning of an entirely new and healthy adaptation of the pure Africa tradition of ritual dance, costume and music. After several generations of mere effects, this was refreshing" (1973, 96).

Along these lines but writing from a contemporary perspective, dance historian Julia Foulkes argues that the critical and commercial success of works such as *Kykunkor* "signaled the arrival of black choreographers commanding artistic authority on the American stages and an increase in theatrical presentations of Africa and the Caribbean" (2002, 64).[9] Foulkes argues further that *Kykunkor* contributed to Africanist artistic efforts in the 1930s to "remake the jungle—Africa, this other place—from a frightening, maniacal state into one of vibrancy and ceremony" (1999, 41) In photographs of *Kykunkor*, for instance, Foulkes sees a dichotomy of "freedom" and "restraint," states of body and mind that characterized black social life at the time (41).

Figure 3.1 Asadata Dafora as the Bridegroom, with two women dancers, in a scene from *Kykunkor*, ca. 1934. Image #57692751. Photograph: Maurice Goldberg. Courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

Likewise, K. K. Martin, who has written several articles about Dafora, concludes that while "the total impact of Shologa Oloba, the Asadata Dafora Dance Troupe and the African Dance Troupe of the Federal Theatre is hard to assess," it could be argued that "for blacks they clearly presented a more dignified acceptable image of Africa than those offered by the popular white media, though one perhaps too exotic and remote to attract large scale interest" (1975, 127). And dance scholar Maureen Needham argues that "Dafora's historical impact on American musical theater has been considerable, for it is generally acknowledged that he opened the way for African Americans to be accepted as serious performers on the concert stage [and] . . . provided a positive model of African music and dance for those who attended the performances" (2002, 249). Needham suggests therefore that Dafora's success increased access to the concert stage for other black artists, capitalizing on the broader general public awareness and interest in Africanist cultures in the context of the Harlem Renaissance.

Other scholars in dance studies, however, such as Thomas DeFrantz, Susan Manning, and Anthea Kraut, challenge the conclusions that

Dafora's productions advanced in significant ways the causes of other artists of color working at the time or changed the public's perception about African peoples and/or cultures. In fact, these scholars argue to the contrary, first that Dafora capitalized on his native African status to authorize a sensationalist treatment of cultural material as "authentic," thus perpetuating American stereotypes of Africa and African cultures, and second that Dafora's portrayals established a precedent for the exoticization of Africanist subject matter that worked against efforts by African American dance artists to legitimize their ethnography-based approaches to black self-representation. As DeFrantz puts it:

> For many critics, the success of Dafora's work hinged upon its use of "authentic" African materials derived from firsthand knowledge of classic West African aesthetics. *Kykunkor* defined successful black concert performance as serious, ritual-based exotica, unimaginably complex and distinct from mainstream modern dance. Though Dafora confirmed the great theatrical potential of African American dancers, his success set in motion a critical formula which emphasized the exotic novelty of the black body on the concert stage. From this time on, black dancers became increasingly obliged to prove themselves as "Other" to the concert mainstream (1996 [2001] 343).[10]

In other words, while Dafora's work provided professional opportunities for performers of color and showcased their talents, it neither challenged existing cultural misperceptions about Africans and African cultures, even among black Americans, nor did it translate into a more favorable climate for the artistic activities of black dance artists.

Some of my own contemporaneous sources reaffirm this latter position. Take, for example, business correspondence between Hazel Lockwood Muller, education director at the American Museum of Natural History, who spearheaded the *Around the World With Dance and Song* series discussed in Chapter 2, and choreographer, dramatist, and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston, whom Muller consulted for advice.[11] Muller wrote to Hurston in the very early stages of her outreach initiative, as she was attempting to secure a roster of performers who could appear in the museum's exhibition halls surrounded by habitat dioramas. Muller hoped Hurston could "tell [her] the names of some authentic African dancers" to perform in the Akeley Hall of African Mammals. In a letter dated August 18, 1943, Muller inquired:

> Miss Ruth Burchenal has suggested that you might be able to tell me the names of some authentic African dancers. For the past four years we have been having

> programs of recorded music of various countries, including Africa. This music is played over our sound system, and I would like to have some native African dances in connection with these programs in the fall. The music is played from 3 to 4 P.M. on Tuesdays, and my plan was to alternate the music and the dances. We could pay a fee of $25 for one performance. Do you know anyone . . . who you could recommend from an anthropological standpoint. Our African Hall, as you probably know, is very beautiful, and would make a dramatic setting for these dances (Muller papers, NYPL, "Business Correspondence," 1939–1949 [103–15]).

Writing from Daytona Beach, Florida, on August 22, 1943, Hurston responded: "If I were in New York I could run those African dancers down for you in a jiffy, as all the primitive dancers there considered me their headquarters." Hurston recommended the Duke of Nigeria, Leonard Stirrup, known as "Motor Boat" (a waiter at a Harlem night club), adding: "he is one of my Bahaman [*sic*] dancers, and they keep in touch with the Africans. He knows Duke and all the rest. There may be a little professional jealousy as the Bahamans [*sic*] would rather dance for you than find the Africans, but tell him I say to find them for you." Considering further, she wrote: "There is Asadata Dafora, in Hollywood but I was not too impressed with what I saw of his group. He is too eager to 'sell' in Hollywood to stick to authenticity." Hurston then made a pitch for the inclusion of Bahamian music and dance on the program, since the "Bahaman [*sic*] music is African in origin." She went on:

> In the same connection, the Govt. has brought thousands of Bahamans [*sic*] to Florida to work. Don't you think it would be a good idea while they are fresh to do some recording? They have actual African words to some of their tunes. What is more, most of their tunes are African, even though alleged English words have been added. . . . I think that fact is an important link between Africa and what the American Negro does. WE have lost our connection completely. But it is not likely that our ancestors are very different from theirs. The Bahaman [*sic*] materials could be used as a sort of control element, don't you think? (emphasis original, Muller papers, NYPL, "Business Correspondence," 1939–1949 [103–15]).

Muller's idea to stage a performance of "authentic African dancers" in the African Hall grew out of a city-wide initiative prompted by New York City Parks Commissioner Robert Moses and was intended to increase public attendance at municipal museums. Staging dance performances in the exhibition halls at the AMNH built on existing programming attempting to liven up exhibits by piping in recorded music from "various countries" and

sounds from anthropological field research. Coming early in the history of the *Around the World with Dance and Song* series, Muller's wish to incorporate African dancers illustrates the museum's early treatment of performances of ethnic dance as cultural specimens, as I explained in Chapter 2. Later in the history of the series, the museum sought to frame performances as artistic practices while staging spectacles of cultural difference in the promotion of cultural integrationism.

This historical framework provides a basis for understanding the correspondence between Muller and Hurston and interpreting each woman's particular objectives. It is evident that Muller sought out Hurston and valued her advice and opinion. Likewise, Hurston appears to have felt comfortable offering her advice, speaking to Dafora's qualifications both from "an anthropological standpoint" and to the cultural politics of dancing diaspora. Hurston's response is interesting on several counts. Calling herself a "headquarters" for "primitive dancers," she confirmed the rationale behind Muller's decision to reach out to her for contacts. She then threaded a rhetorical needle, first recommending dancers such as Stirrup, a "Bahaman [*sic*]" dancer, to Muller, and conveying his likely willingness to participate, and then half-heartedly mentioning Dafora, whom she took to be too "eager to 'sell' in Hollywood to stick to authenticity." Hurston's comments about Dafora's showmanship, her reluctance in recommending him to Muller, and her suggestion of one of her associates as an alternative, all provide evidence of her apprehension regarding Dafora's legitimacy in light of Muller's standard of "authenticity."

The second longer quoted passage also bears contemplation, specifically Hurston's suggestion that for Muller's purposes Bahamian dancers and cultural material would contribute to Muller's performance concept, both because of the dancers' "freshness" and because their performance could manifest for audiences the "important link between Africa and what the American Negro does," as, in Hurston's words, "a control element." Hurston's proposal that Muller consider Bahamian dancers for the performance could have been predicated on an assumption that, in the context of 1940s concert dance practices, any dancer of color could presumably pass as an "authentic African." It is true that choreographers treating Africanist cultural material did employ dancers of color across a spectrum of African and sometimes Latin American heritage, including American-born dancers. During this period, Dafora himself employed a company of dancers from a variety of countries of origin, including performers from Africa, the United States, and the Caribbean (Heard 1999, 203–5; Lynch 2002, 192). However, my sense is that Hurston's explanation of a diasporic

cultural continuum regarding Africanist dance practices was meant in a spirit of instruction, teaching Muller how to think differently about conceptualizing the museum's needs and objectives for the performance of African dance in the exhibition hall. In line with changing anthropological theories about Africanist cultural retentions, Hurston argued for the benefit of the museum's framing of "African" dance as evidence of cultural continuity rather than of rupture.[12]

When all was said and done, Dafora did perform at the American Museum of Natural History on January 25, 1945, in a performance sponsored by the African Academy of Arts and Research, in spite of Hurston's expressed skepticism about his authenticity (Heard 1999, 130). Perhaps ironically, although his African American artistic contemporaries in the dance field, including many trained anthropologists, may have questioned the legitimacy of his stagings of diaspora, Dafora had many ardent supporters who embraced him and his work as exemplars of the bonds of African heritage across the Atlantic and confirmation of a common racial identity during a transitional moment in the history of social justice for African Americans and African nationals alike.

BUILDING BRIDGES

In December 1943, Dafora directed the program entitled *An African Dance Festival*, presented at Carnegie Hall under the auspices of the pan-Africanist and anti-colonialist African Academy of Arts and Research (AAAR).[13] The event represented the first of many collaborations between Dafora and this association.[14]

AAAR founder Mbadiwe, from a "politically and commercially prominent" Nigerian family, had come to the United States in 1939 to attend Lincoln University, a historically black institution in Jefferson City, Missouri (Lynch 2002, 184). Whereas many other young and affluent Nigerians might have pursued advanced study in Europe, at Oxford or Cambridge, Mbadiwe was drawn to the United States because of his interest in African Americans and their culture. As he put it: "American Negroes were the hottest selling point" (quoted in Lynch 2002, 185). To his surprise and chagrin, however, many of the African American students he encountered never gave Africa a thought. In his words: "Even though the late Marcus Garvey made a large percentage of the Negro population Africa-conscious, the large majority and more especially the youths, were dubious about its people, and preferred not to have any connections with it" (186).

Never a strong student, Mbadiwe was known for "spending more time on extra-curricular activities than on formal studies" (Lynch 2002, 187).[15] Intending to remedy black American ignorance about Africa and to promote his pan-Africanist/anti-colonialist politics, he co-founded the African Students' Association of the United States and Canada in 1941. He also published a book entitled *British and Axis Aims in Africa* in 1942, based on a series of lectures attempting "to rally blacks to the Allied cause so as to secure a victory for democracy over totalitarianism and, consequently, to win the cooperation of the British and other members of the United Nations in ending colonial rule in Africa" (Lynch 187–88).[16] And,

Figure 3.2 Photo of Eleanor Roosevelt in the Program for *An African Dance Festival*, December 13, 1943, Carnegie Hall. Courtesy of Carnegie Hall Archives.

in the spring of 1943, having transferred to Columbia University, he established the AAAR with the goal of "widen[ing] the sphere of the struggle for freedom" (Mbadiwe 1991).[17]

Launching the AAAR with the 1943 *An African Dance Festival*, Mbadiwe secured name talent in the directorship of Dafora, whose relatively recent on- and off-Broadway successes would draw an audience, and in the assistant directorship of Nigerian Effiom Odok, an accomplished drummer, who similarly directed an African dance group (Lynch 2002, 191). Mbadiwe also enlisted prominent sponsorship in First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, president of the National Council of Negro Women and a close associate of the First Lady, both of whom contributed $500 to the fledgling organization. Mbadiwe invited both to serve on the AAAR Board of Directors. These guests functioned as headliners who ensured press coverage, lent gravitas to the affair, and provided direct connections to useful entities and communities (Carnegie Hall program, December 13, 1943, CHA; "Africa and America meet through the African Academy of Arts and Research" brochure, AAAR; Mbadiwe 1991, 17).

AN AFRICAN DANCE FESTIVAL

Dafora's 1943 production, *An African Dance Festival*, promoted the value of Africanist cultural practices and ideas about the necessity of African independence, and conveyed the message to American audiences through the performing arts. Dafora's contribution to the event was integral to its critical and political success. Conversely, the artist benefited professionally from his involvement in the festival and the affiliation with the AAAR. Not only was Dafora's choreographic work seen in a newly valued artistic light by New York dance critics, but the cultural capital he gained from his high-profile role as racial and African cultural ambassador in the context of the event facilitated an important shift in his career that has yet to be examined by scholars.

The program title page billed the event as one in which "Africa and America Meet through the African Academy of Arts and Research," listing "Music," "Dance," "Education," and "Friendship" as bullet-pointed goals (AAAR, "Africa and America Meet" program, December 13, 1943). In a press release, Dafora is designated as the "acclaimed" "director" and the program is described as "ambitious." The release went further to preview the production thus: "the theme of African courtship and wedding festivities will be the connecting link between various dances, songs and music

Figure 3.3 Page from Program for *An African Dance Festival*, December 13, 1943, Carnegie Hall. Courtesy of Carnegie Hall Archives.

interludes" (Dreiblatt, November 14, 1943, ADSCRBC).[18] Theatrical content aside, in reality the festival was part dance concert, part political rally, owing to the mission of the AAAR as indicated in the release: "The African Academy of Arts and Research is a new organization devoted to spreading information about that continent which is practically unknown to most Americans, where many of our soldiers are now fighting and perhaps witnessing, in some villages, similar festivities to those that will be

Figure 3.3 Continued

seen on the Carnegie Hall stage." According to historian Hollis Lynch, the academy's founders intended the festival to accomplish the overriding goals of their fledgling organization: "to project Africa favorably and promote its interest" (2002, 190).[19] As the program noted, Dafora "staged" the event and also "created and arranged" the music and the dances for the festival, which he drew from "authentic African sources" (as listed in the program). Mostly adapting movement-based material he had used before, Dafora "built" the program "around ceremonies of courtship and marriage"

Figure 3.3 Continued

(*New Amsterdam News*, December 18, 1943). The revue-style show featured dancing, singing, drumming, and political addresses by Mbadiwe, the First Lady, and Dr. Bethune.

The evening began with a prologue including the singing of the *Star Spangled Banner* and an "Overture . . . E Raga," or "song of welcome to the audience," and introduction of the narrator, Ernest Kalibali, of Harvard University ("An African Dance Festival," December 13, 1943, 7, CHA). Following this, the program proceeded in three sections: the first and the third sections were held together by a wedding narrative, which provided

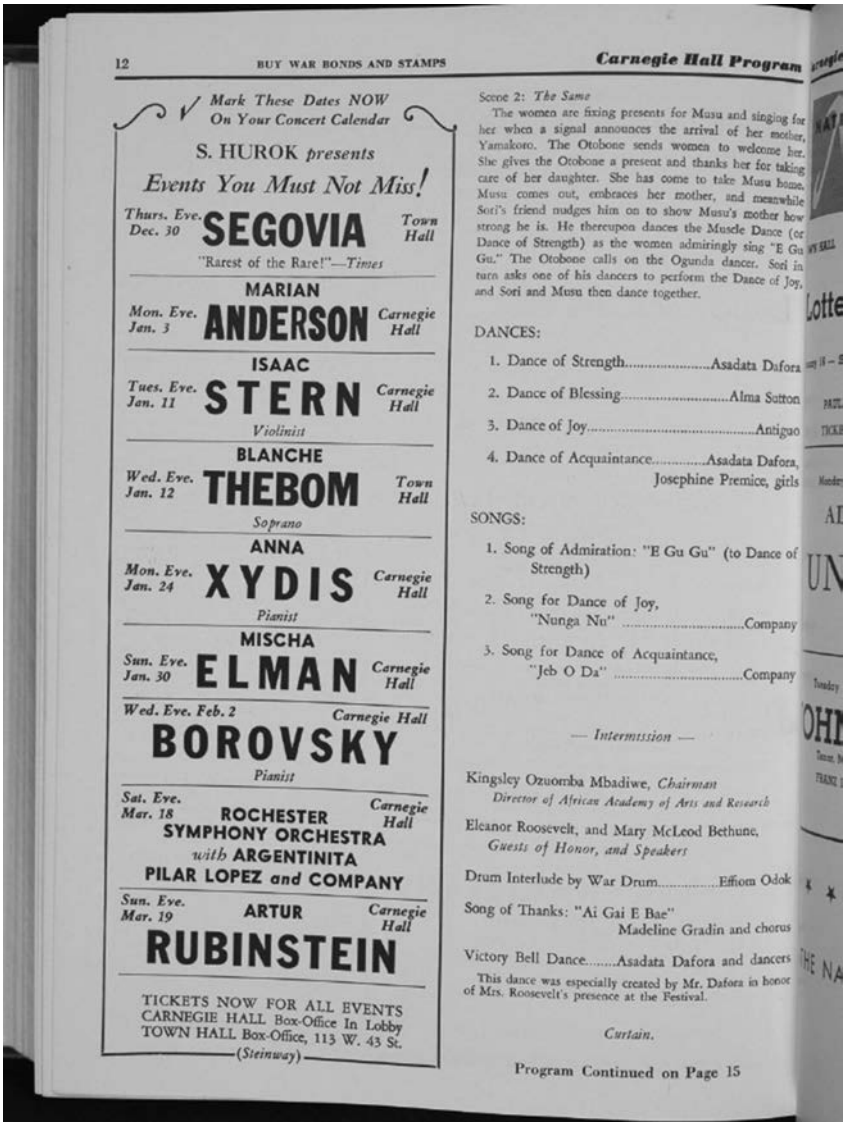
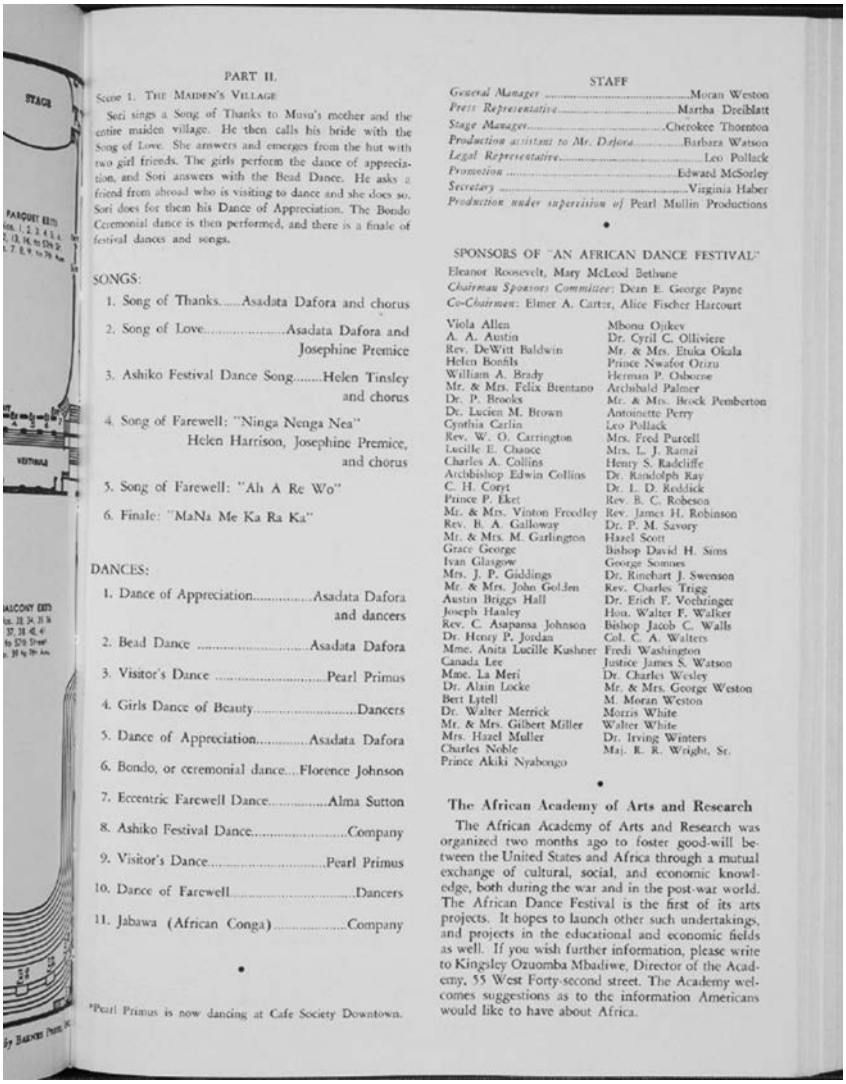


Figure 3.3 Continued

a thematic structure for numerous performances of song and dance; the second section, following the intermission, functioned as a political rally with speeches by Mbadiwe, Roosevelt, and Bethune, and musical performances. To pull this off, Dafora employed a company of eleven dancers including himself and guest artist Pearl Primus, ten singers, thirteen musicians including seven drummers, and one narrator.



PART II.

Scene 1. THE MAIDEN'S VILLAGE

Sori sings a Song of Thanks to Musu's mother and the entire maiden village. He then calls his bride with the Song of Love. She answers and emerges from the hut with two girl friends. The girls perform the dance of appreciation, and Sori answers with the Bead Dance. He asks a friend from abroad who is visiting to dance and she does so. Sori does for them his Dance of Appreciation. The Bondo Ceremonial dance is then performed, and there is a finale of festival dances and songs.

SONGS:

1. Song of Thanks.....Asadata Dafora and chorus
2. Song of Love.....Asadata Dafora and Josephine Premice
3. Ashiko Festival Dance Song.....Helen Tinsley and chorus
4. Song of Farewell: "Ninga Nenga Nea" Helen Harrison, Josephine Premice, and chorus
5. Song of Farewell: "Ah A Re Wo"
6. Finale: "MaNa Me Ka Ra Ka"

DANCES:

1. Dance of Appreciation.....Asadata Dafora and dancers
2. Bead Dance .....Asadata Dafora
3. Visitor's Dance .....Pearl Primus
4. Girls Dance of Beauty.....Dancers
5. Dance of Appreciation.....Asadata Dafora
6. Bondo, or ceremonial dance....Florence Johnson
7. Eccentric Farewell Dance.....Alma Sutton
8. Ashiko Festival Dance.....Company
9. Visitor's Dance.....Pearl Primus
10. Dance of Farewell.....Dancers
11. Jabawa (African Conga).....Company

•

*Pearl Primus is now dancing at Cafe Society Downtown.

STAFF

General Manager .....Moran Weston
Press Representative.....Martha Dreiblatt
Stage Manager.....Cherokee Thornton
Production assistant to Mr. Dafora.....Barbara Watson
Legal Representative.....Leo Pollack
Promotion .....Edward McSorley
Secretary .....Virginia Haber
Production under supervision of Pearl Mullin Productions

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Walter White
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•

The African Academy of Arts and Research

The African Academy of Arts and Research was organized two months ago to foster good-will between the United States and Africa through a mutual exchange of cultural, social, and economic knowledge, both during the war and in the post-war world. The African Dance Festival is the first of its arts projects. It hopes to launch other such undertakings, and projects in the educational and economic fields as well. If you wish further information, please write to Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe, Director of the Academy, 55 West Forty-second street. The Academy welcomes suggestions as to the information Americans would like to have about Africa.

Figure 3.3 Continued

The program detailed the sequence of events and performers in each section, helping us imagine how the performance of the wedding drama progressed. The dance segments enacted the romance of the protagonists (Dafora and Josephine Premice) in "A Maiden's Village." In the first scene, an Otobone, or chaperon (Helen Harrison), presides over a young man's (Sori/Asadata Dafora) selection of a bride (Musu/Josephine Premice) ("An African Dance Festival," December 13, 1943, 7, 9, CHA). According to the program: "The girls and older women are beating the rice from its husks

with Otobone (chaperon) supervising to see that the girls learn their work properly. Drum beats announce the approach of a young man, who according to custom is visiting the maiden's village to choose a bride." The "older women" of the village dance to "clear the ground" for the visitor. Presented with a "good-will gift" from Sori, the suitor, Otobone and the other women of the village sing in appreciation, then Otobone "calls the girls to dance for the visitor." Sori dances with each young woman, then selects Musu as "the girl he wants" ("An African Dance Festival," December 13, 1943, 7, 9, CHA). As the newly betrothed couple dance together, the onlookers "congratulate them and offer them good wishes." In the second scene, the women of the village prepare for the upcoming nuptial, "fixing presents for Musu and singing to her," and receiving her mother who gives thanks to Otobone for "taking care" of her daughter. As Sori, Dafora performs a "muscle dance" of strength, and others perform dances of blessing, joy, and acquaintance accompanied by their given songs ("An African Dance Festival," December 13, 1943, 9, CHA).[20]

In addition to the addresses given by Mbadiwe, Roosevelt, and Bethune, instrumental, vocal, and dance numbers rounded out the performance. These numbers included a "drum interlude" (by Effiom Odok) on the war drum, a "Song of Thanks: Ai Gai Bae" by vocalist Madeline Gradin, and a chorus, and "Victory Bell Dance" by Asadata Dafora ("An African Dance Festival," December 13, 1943, 9, 12, 15, CHA).

According to media coverage in advance of and after the event, the festival drew in a substantial, diverse, and sympathetic crowd. The Harlem-based *New York Amsterdam News* announced that publicity for the event had stimulated interest and "close competition" for tickets among "boxholders from Washington and Boston" and "prominent New Yorkers" ("African Dance Festival Attracting Many," December 11, 1943).[21] The same newspaper described the scene thus: "Before a huge audience of Negroes and whites, Mrs. Roosevelt, Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune and Kingsley Ozumba [*sic*] Mbadiwe, director of the academy, spoke for the establishment of understanding between the peoples of the world." The paper's review of the event confirmed its earlier expectations in a headline announcing "Dance Festival Gives African Culture [a] Boost." Calling the festival "one of the most successful ventures into the downtown Carnegie Hall," the reviewer wrote that "members of the academy showed that in such an undertaking they had the full support of thousands of New Yorkers, black and white" ("Dance Festival Gives African Culture a Boost," *New York Amsterdam News*, December 18, 1943).

In the absence of film or photographs, descriptive reviews by Edwin Denby, for the *New York Herald Tribune*, and Henry Simon, for *P.M. New*

Figure 3.4 Asadata Dafora, holding candle, with Esther Rolle, 1960, photographer unknown. Image #57692747. Courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

York, assist in envisioning the performances as critics experienced it. In his December 14, 1943, review entitled "In Brightest Africa," Denby characterized the performance as "bright and full of fascinating dancing," and heaped praise on all of the performers. In particular, he recognized Dafora for "ha[ving] all of the qualities of a great dancer—the verve, the precision, the variety and brilliance within his own dance tradition, the sweetness

Figure 3.5 Asadata Dafora and female dancer, ca. 1930s, photographer unknown. Image #57692749. Courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

of stage personality," and guest artist Pearl Primus, "our own negro star," who "brought down the house with her wonderfully intense 'Ritual' number." Denby's description of the movement he witnessed is especially detailed:

> [In West African dance, t]he feet keep a rather steady rhythm of strong and light beats—the light ones being sole taps, the heavy ones changing the step from one foot to the other. The feet are light and quick, and move from the ankles. The torso is bent forward slightly, the chest is open and the shoulders relaxed. It is in the arms chiefly that the dance ornamentation takes place, and they can move with extraordinary speed, and with great precision, without looking strained. When they fly out the force of the gesture is toned down just before the end so that the movement remains graceful and the gesture does not break off. There are spinal movements and head movements too but they play a lesser role. Dafora also makes gentle leaps and turns now and then.

Figure 3.6 Three women dancers from Asadata Dafora's dance troupe, ca. 1930s, photographer unknown. Image #57692753. Courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

Denby described the dancers' engagement with drum polyrhythms, in "strong" and "light" variations of foot beats, countered with fast, precise arm movements. In emphasizing the relaxed torso and the gracefulness of the arm gestures, he evoked the dancers' characteristic Africanist reserve, or "cool," amid the energy of the feet.

For his part, Simon, a professional music critic, was at ease in identifying the distinctive musical elements of the performance. Setting the stage, he wrote: "The festival itself was a clear, simple representation of courtship and marriage celebration in an African village. The girls got ready for the visit of the prospective groom; they sing and dance with him; he chooses his bride; everyone joins in the celebration. That's about all there was to the story, but it was presented with such art, rhythmical feeling and directness as to be fascinating throughout." Concentrating on the "rhythmical feeling," he commented on the centrality of the drums—"the only important musical instrument used"—as well as the drum rhythms,

whose "beats were full of such syncopation, cross rhythms and cross-rhythmed syncopations as you never hear in jazz bands." Whereas Simon believed the rhythmic aspects of the performance to be superlative, some of the performance's vocal aspects fell short of his expectations. Calling the incorporated songs "reiterative, mostly in unison and based on a five-tone scale," he opined that the "few…harmonized in thirds and sixths [which] used the diatonic scale…were less effective than the more primitive ones." Simon appeared to have found it more challenging to give an account of the dancing, although attuned to the more obvious differences between Africanist and Western approaches and the involvement of the torso, as compared to the feet and stepping, as key points of distinction. Nevertheless, feeling the need to comment on the "authenticity" of the performance, Simon admitted to deferring to "an African expert," who "told me during the intermission that it was all just as typical and genuine as the program said it was." "I wouldn't have known otherwise," Simon confided, "but I still would have known that the art and the tone of the evening presented by these Africans couldn't help but make the world smaller in the sense that Mbadiwe was talking about" ("Dancing the World Smaller," *P.M. New York*, December 14, 1943, 20).

These critics were not alone in their attunement to the capacities of the performing body as an efficacious medium, seeing in the festival a corporealized realization of the AAAR's cultural and political mission. John Martin, of the *New York Times*, came to roughly the same conclusion as his colleagues, viewing the event as having sowed a fertile meeting ground for intercultural performance and politics. "Undoubtedly there are subtleties both musical and choreographic, which escape the eyes of an audience so alien in culture," he wrote, "but there can be no question that the elemental qualities in both cultures find a meeting place here, for neither movement, song nor rhythmic pulse requires translation. The academy, accordingly, could scarcely have chosen a more persuasive medium for initiating its program of mutual understanding" ("African Dancers in Festival Here," *New York Times*, December 14, 1943).[22]

Looking for the crucial ingredients in engaging audiences, Martin identified the potent combination of drum rhythms, "played with extraordinary rhythmic subtlety and dynamic nuance, whether as an ensemble, in pairs or singly," and "the dancing itself," which he described as "grow[ing] out of an inner impulse." Noting the expressive capacities of dancing bodies, he noticed "wonderful vitality behind them which never oversteps into mere exuberance. They are elegant and self-contained to the last small gesture." While the reviewers positioned themselves differently relative to the performance, each came away with a similar impression of

Dafora's legitimacy as a dance artist working with African cultural material, and of the event as having served its express purpose, as Martin paraphrased, "to create in this country an understanding of African culture, to dissipate the curious misconceptions which Americans have of Africans, and Africans, in turn, of Americans" ("African Dancers in Festival Here," *New York Times*, December 14, 1943).

Departing from the general globalist themes sounded in the reviews discussed above, George Beiswanger, writing for *Dance Observer*, concluded that the festival effectively had disabused audiences of the popular notion that "Africans are savages and their dance the emotional outpouring of the savage" (January 1944, 9). In a backhanded, and baldly racist compliment, Beiswanger credited Dafora with having "firmly disposed of the idea that the dances of Africa are exclusively or even basically those of barbarians." For Beiswanger, the festival was a far cry from what he viewed as Dafora's having capitalized on stereotypes of Africa in *Kykunkor*, where, in his words, Dafora had "raise[d] the savagery to a level of extraordinary virtuosity." As he saw it, the festival had redeemed Dafora's career, its "program reveal[ing], to this commentator at any rate, a hitherto unsuspected range of talents in Asadata Dafora himself." Applying a formalist hierarchy which legitimated racial stereotypes on aesthetic grounds, Beiswanger apparently made the calculation that he could not dismiss the performance as a depiction of primitivism owing to its demonstration of virtuoso dancing.

Save for the review by Beiswanger, critical accounts of the 1943 *An African Dance Festival* illustrate a common globalist assumption at the time, discussed throughout this book, that dance performance was able to bridge cultural differences and bring diverse people together in ways that were distinct and powerful. Specifically, all three reviews mentioned reference the element of rhythm to accomplish these goals, or what Simon called the "rhythmical feeling" evoked by the drum cadences and bodies engaging with percussive polyrhythms. Martin's writing about the 1943 festival, in particular, harkened back to his reviews of *Kykunkor*, which focused on the ways the performance of the work moved audiences to a place of common understanding through a shared metakinetic experience (Franko 2002, 84). Dance anthropologist Deidre Sklar argues that "movement is a way of knowing . . . [capable of] embody[ing] different . . . realities" (2001, 30). In the case of Dafora's 1943 performance, dancing the world smaller in mid-century America occurred as a function of immediate corporeal encounters of and with difference.

Applying Martin's theory of metakinesis to his own examination of the significance of *Kykunkor*, dance scholar Mark Franko argues similarly that Dafora's work on the whole reconceived prevailing dance modernist approaches to embodied communication due to the ways it played on affective and rhythmic registers simultaneously. In his words: "*Kykunkor* suggested a different model through which national identity might be identified not with land or blood, but with drums that endowed emotions with formal rigor, aesthetic inevitability, and improvisatory freedom" (2002, 84). Franko's interpretation of *Kykunkor* recognizes the diasporic representational milieu in which Dafora worked and yet underlines the "cultural" rather than the "exotic" significance of the artist's depictions of Africa. His reading correlates modernist African American representations of Africa with a nascent black cultural nationalism and growing awareness among peoples of African descent of their common cultural roots. Franko's research on *Kykunkor* harmonizes the choreographer's transnational identity and his aesthetic values, suggesting a model for understanding Dafora's significance for dance and American cultural history.

Assuming via Franko's theory that Dafora's works engaged diverse audiences through metakinesis, we might also consider if there were other factors that contributed to his recognition as an intercultural interlocutor and spokesperson for African culture, someone whose creative practices could represent bonds of transatlantic continuity and aesthetic value manifested discursively as choreography.

Dafora's African origin, for example, appears to have bestowed upon him greater cultural authority in treating Africanist subject matter and incorporating embodied cultural material than his African American choreographic counterparts enjoyed. We know this to be true based on existing scholarship in dance studies on African American choreographers who, unlike Dafora, found themselves continually navigating the terrain between authenticity and authorship. On this point, we might remember dance scholar Anthea Kraut's discussion of choreographer Zora Neale Hurston's *The Great Day* (1932), a theatrical adaptation of the Bahamian Fire Dance, in Kraut's 2008 book, *Choreographing the Folk*: "As a black woman working with 'low art' black vernacular forms during a time when dance was struggling to establish itself as a respectable field, Hurston faced a convergence of racial and artistic hierarchies that made it unthinkable for her to identify herself as a choreographer" (2008, 57).

Early critical reception of choreographer Pearl Primus, who immigrated to the United States from Trinidad as a child and who made her New York debut dancing in the 1943 *An African Dance Festival*, provides another example. As I have argued previously and also in Chapter 2, Primus struggled to validate her choreographies of diaspora in the 1940s, prior to her trip to West Africa in 1949 supported by the Rosenwald Foundation (Kowal 2010,125). An excerpt from Lois Balcom's 1944 article "The Negro Himself" in *Dance Observer* illustrates: "Of course, the African heritage enters into her attitudes, her insights, her ambitions, and her dance movements; nevertheless, what she knows about tribal ceremonies she has learned actually from books. With the trusty intuitions of her blood to guide her, her interpretations achieve a closer approximation of authenticity than would those of a white dancer—but they remain approximations" (123). The "critical formula" Dafora established, which "emphasized the exotic novelty of the black body on the concert stage" (quoting DeFrantz) ran contrary to efforts by other black dance artists, such as Hurston, Primus, and Katherine Dunham, all of whom pioneered new possibilities for black representation by adapting material gleaned from on-site fieldwork for theatrical purposes (DeFrantz 2001; see also Manning 2004).

Dafora's African native status, therefore, seems to have served as the trump card in questions of credibility regarding his sourcing of materials and the accuracy of his portrayals of African dance forms and cultural life. What is more, due to their lack of familiarity with African dance forms, some critics (such as Henry Simon) held back opinions regarding the quality of Dafora's work, either deferring to "experts" or avoiding the issue altogether. With respect to the 1943 *An African Dance Festival*, for instance, reviewers of the performance were not universal in their praise of its virtues. Yet not one of them called into question the "authenticity" of the performance or Dafora's legitimacy as a cultural ambassador. The same spirit of generous critical acceptance was not extended to African American choreographers who adapted Africanist diasporic content for the concert dance stage, and were often held to racially biased double standards.

"SHAR[ING] IN THE ABUNDANCE OF ONE ANOTHER'S CULTURE"

An event constructed to stage diaspora, the 1943 *An African Dance Festival* accomplished some of the core imperatives of mid-century globalism, drawing connections between African self-representation and

self-determination. As I have already described, the format used a dance drama organized around a wedding ceremony as a focal point around which to organize political speeches and appearances by guest dancers and musicians, providing a simple structure that became a formula for similar events the AAAR produced with Dafora in the years to follow, including additional festivals at Carnegie Hall in 1945 and 1946.

As it offered a description of the performance event itself, the concert program also indicated the political significance of Dafora's 1943 dance drama for its various stakeholders. Mbadiwe's "Foreword" to the program, for example, alluded to the connection between African self-representation and independence, and a desire to be included in the global community oriented around the United States. Mbadiwe identified the festival as "the first major affair sponsored by Africans themselves for the purpose of introducing their country's culture to the American public." He continued: "If this Carnegie Festival, costing about $8,000, was sufficient to even partly change the conception of the 'Dark Continent,' to 'brightest Africa,' then it was well worth the effort" ("Foreword," AAAR, "Africa and America Meet through the African Academy of Arts and Research," December 13, 1943). From the perspective of Mbadiwe and the other AAAR organizers, the event was meant to present African dances and cultural life in ways that both challenged reigning American misconceptions and encouraged cross-cultural curiosity. Its presentation of the arts of the African continent worked on both descriptive and metaphorical levels—on the one hand, to demonstrate the sophistication of what many Americans believed was a primitive civilization and, on the other hand, to enact through dance performance the AAAR's objectives of interdependence and cooperation.

Mbadiwe's "Foreword" exercised a soft strategy of leveraging these positions toward advocacy for an Africa free of colonial interference. For people across the globe, World War II had seemed to bring "distant and hitherto unknown lands and islands" into much closer proximity. Reminding audiences of this, Mbadiwe contended that "the present world's struggle" has "brought [these places and peoples] into focus." As he saw it, worldwide participation in the war effort had led to the occupation of "peaceful arcadias by the shot and shell of conflicting armies and armadas," thus leading to unprecedented wide-scale interaction of ethnic and cultural groups not seen before. Imagining that exposure to difference would lead to greater harmony among diverse peoples, rather than to further conflict, Mbadiwe echoed globalist arguments made in the Atlantic Charter (1941) and the United Nations Declaration (1942) to the effect that "the harmonious cooperation of nations" and "interdependence" among them

is necessary for coexistence and for the future of world peace. This suggests as well that the significant monetary cost of the performance did not outweigh its potential benefit of countering persistent racist stereotypes of Africa and Africans and embracing Africanist unity under a banner of mid-century humanism.[23]

Framing the event for attendees, Mbadiwe's "Foreword" signaled his intention to represent the continent on the basis of expressed concerns of Africans themselves, rather than to accept a Western vision of Africa. It is interesting that Mbadiwe identified the continent as a "country" with a singular and perhaps unified "culture," rather than as a continental area home to myriad countries and tribal groups, some of which fell under the sovereignty of European colonial empires. In claiming a unitary country and continent of Africa, Mbadiwe advocated a universal African sovereignty and therefore not independence on a case-by-case basis. Similarly, Mbadiwe's book *British and Axis Aims in Africa* articulated a vision for African self-determination, advocating that Africa "be her own interpreter . . . to tell what her aspirations and grievances are" (quoted in Lynch 2002, 188). According to Lynch: "The goal of the book was to rally blacks to the Allied cause so as to secure a victory for democracy over totalitarianism and, consequently, to win the cooperation of the British and other members of the United Nations in ending colonial rule in Africa" (2002, 188).

As embodied manifestations of the sophistication of African peoples and cultures, cultural practices such as dance and drama played a key role in Mbadiwe's case for an independent Africa. In the book, for example, he argues that Africa had participated in "the progressive march of human history" through its cultural forms and customs, and that contact with European colonial powers "had set back our progress thousands of years. They have thrown us in the most terrible confusion" (Mbadiwe quoted in Lynch 2002, 189). Lynch's account of this period in Mbadiwe's personal and political history explains how dance became a means to these political ends. "By the spring of 1943, [Mbadiwe] had decided that an organization whose emphasis was cultural, highlighting African culture—music, dance and drama—would win widespread attention and support" (Lynch 2002, 191; see also Heard 1999, 187).

In his own words, Mbadiwe set out to distinguish his politics and political instincts from those of other "sophisticated African elite of the period." Rather than "build . . . walls of prejudice" and foment "retaliations at home," he sought to "break the racial barrier" by "shar[ing] in the abundance of one another's culture";[24] he promoted togetherness and cultural "awareness" through the practices of art making, performance, and

appreciation. In founding the AAAR, therefore, Mbadiwe hoped to establish "an organi[z]ation which could not only be a meeting ground for mutual exchange of views between the peoples of Africa and other races, but also one that would create an awareness of what Africa can offer, given liberty and freedom" (Mbadiwe 1991, 18). As Heard explains, "In addition to the ordinary functions of an organization with offices, operational expenses and the charge of implanting policies, the Academy, hav[ing] selected the arts as a point of entrée into American society, also had the added expenses associated with being the producer, partner and financial backer of Shologa Oloba [Dafora's dance company] in several of its productions, particularly between 1943 and 1946" (1999, 122).

Starting in 1945, the AAAR used the festivals as occasions to present the "Wendell Willkie Award," honoring the late Willkie, the Republican nominee for president in 1940 who had lost to Franklin Delano Roosevelt in an election for a third term. After losing, Willkie provided invaluable assistance to FDR as a staunch internationalist and proponent of the "One World" approach to US foreign policy, including the nation's relationship to Africa. In a rally in Willkie's honor held in Harlem on October 29, 1945, AAAR board member Prince A. A. Nwafor Orizu asserted: "Africa wants to belong to the 'one world' which Mr. Willkie stood for" (Mbadiwe, 1945, 10, 13). Nikhil Pal Singh argues that the "global rationale for fighting WWII upped the ante of the promise of American universalism in ways that had unprecedented implications for blacks in the U.S." He continues: "The sentiment transcended partisan politics. As Willkie argued in his popular book, *One World* (1943), the international sphere was now a social, political, and economic unity, which meant an end to the old politics of isolationism and spheres of influence. It was possible to sustain empires abroad, Willkie argued, not the 'mocking paradox' of 'our imperialisms at home'" (Singh 2004, 104). Presentation of the Willkie Award to recipients who stood for similar values provided an opportunity for the AAAR to engage in the mainstream American political sphere while at the same time, leveraging Wilkie's name recognition and internationalist stance for its own battle against colonialist imperialism.

"UNDERSTANDING THROUGH ART AND CULTURE"

Above all, in his advocacy for African independence Mbadiwe sought to reach African Americans, owing to his keen awareness of how the AAAR and performances such as the ones he staged at Carnegie Hall could have an impact on their perceptions of the African subcontinent. We see this in

his efforts to involve prominent African American intellectuals, entertainers, and activists on the fifty-six-member committee he assembled to sponsor the 1943 African dance festival, and in the subsequent membership of the board of directors he assembled for the AAAR.[25] African American sponsors of the 1943 festival, for example, included but were not limited to Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, president of the National Council of Negro Women and of Bethune-Cookman College, who was an official festival patron; and Walter White, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who served as vice chairman (Lynch 2002, 191).

In addition to inviting supporters to participate in the planning and production of the festival events, Mbadiwe cultivated black American interest in the AAAR through an edited journal the organization published in 1945 entitled *Africa, Today and Tomorrow*, which, according to Lynch, circulated widely in the United States in African American circles—the one and only publication produced by the AAAR—in spite of plans to produce more volumes. The journal contained articles about the organization, the dance festivals, editorials, and contextual pieces about current events and cultural practices. In the section entitled "The Dance Festivals," the journal featured addresses presented at the 1943 event, such as those by Bethune and Roosevelt, as well as essays authored by black luminaries such as Bethune, Alain Locke, and Canada Lee, an actor with the Federal Theater Project (Mbadiwe 1945; see also Lynch 2002, 193). In their speeches and essays, Locke, Lee, and Bethune reflected on the founding of the AAAR and production of the 1943 African dance festival, focusing on how African interests could be advanced through cultural means. Their writings introduced ideas about exactly how the staging of diaspora through Dafora's dance drama could advance the cause of African independence through what Locke called "understanding through art and culture"[26] in recognition of, in his words, "the new relationship of Africa and its peoples to the Western World" (1945, 23).

For Locke, dance served this function as a "vivid and easily comprehended [medium]" that could "interpret" "the respective native culture of the African continent . . . to American audiences, who have so limited and often so misrepresentative a conception of things African" (Mbadiwe 1945, 23). He explained further:

> No one can come away from any of these festival performances with his old stereotyped concepts of African life unchanged. The virtuosity of the rhythms of African dances, the sophisticated control and refinement of the dance steps and figures, the complete harmony of the costume and decors, the force of the

> dramatic pantomime, and the basic expressiveness of the symbolic interpretations of nature are all a revelation, even to the most sophisticated adepts of our Western culture (23).

Locke's experience of aspects of the dance performance, "virtuosity," "control and refinement," "harmony" of production elements, "force" of the performers' characterizations, and "expressiveness" effectively changed his mind about the "sophistication" of African cultural practices. Locke then reflected on the impact of this realization: "We begin to realize, among other things, where the artistic facility and creativeness of the American Negro originated, and learn, to our surprise, that the parent stock in its unbroken tradition of culture is, if anything, more wholesomely and effectively artistic than our own familiar Afro-American art-hybrids make manifest" (23). In the performances, Locke found a wellspring of cultural forms, as well as examples of "artistic facility and creativeness." "This is not to disparage the American Negro contribution, but rather to show it in 'truer perspective,'" he wrote (23).

Whereas for Locke, the festival performance brought a recognition of the value of Africanist cultural continuity, for Canada Lee it inspired pride in claiming his African heritage: "Let me say that I am an African of African descent," he announced, "though a loyal and devoted American." He continued: "I say, therefore, without apology or hesitation, that it is through Africa that American Negroes can revive their pride and then be proud of their heritage. This recovery of pride is a forerunner to total freedom" (Mbadiwe 1945, 14). As I discussed at the outset of this chapter, the sense of a common history with Africans and all peoples of African descent had long been an important part of African American thought; but the global dynamics unleashed by World War II brought it to the forefront of black American politics and animated political discourse at an unprecedented level. Historian Penny Von Eschen calls this "the making of the politics of the African diaspora" (1997, 7).

For Bethune, as with Locke and Lee, involvement with the festival production and experience of the performance deepened the pride she felt in her African heritage. President of the National Association of Colored Women since 1924, and organizer of the so-called Black Cabinet in the Roosevelt administration in 1932, Bethune's advocacy for the advancement of women of color became increasingly internationalized by the early 1940s.[27] According to biographer Joyce A. Hanson, "Bethune believed African Americans needed to realize that the political and economic problems faced by blacks in the United States were in fact worldwide problems for peoples of color" (2003, 181). Bethune expressed this conviction in a

speech she presented at the 1943 festival, entitled "Hands across the Waters," which was subsequently published in *Africa, Today and Tomorrow*.

Here Bethune acknowledged the importance of this "great historic hour," which had allowed her "to see the Africans themselves in action, to listen to their philosophy, and to realize their faith." She continued: "We [are] Americans who are descendants from Africa—and I stand here proudly feeling that the royal blood of Africa runs through my own veins—and I have no apology to make for what the Africans are accomplishing here in America." It was the experience of witnessing "the Africans themselves in action," both in the organization of the production and in the performance of the dance drama, that inspired her pride. Bethune went on to mention Robeson, Yergan, and her study of Africa through the CAA, and envisioned the festival as a furthering of her understanding of African arts and culture and of her feelings of "brotherhood and fellowship and good will." To see "these African students . . . expressing themselves in a cultural way, bringing to us the techniques of their own demonstrations in our native land, I am firmly convinced that Africans are folks just like us," she acknowledged, continuing: "These are the hours when we must see our fellow men here, there and everywhere, in the spirit of love and fellowship and cooperation."

By the early 1940s the nation's involvement in World War II had heightened the national consciousness of the country's standing in the world in general, and its role as a guarantor of freedom from the tyranny of fascism. African American awareness of the significance of world affairs in particular increased during World War II, piqued by the conflict in Ethiopia and nurtured by increased familiarity with pan-Africanist ideology (Meriwether 2002, 59). At the same time, African American participation in the war effort at home and abroad, which occurred amid the massive relocation of the Great Migration of black peoples from the South to Midwestern and Northern cities, engendered in the words of historian James T. Sparrow a newfound "freedom of movement" (2012, 17). Experiences of physical mobilization, such as travel abroad required of military service members or the option to relocate in search of improved living conditions, sparked feelings of enlarged possibilities among black Americans in a Jim Crow or de facto segregated society. Sparrow goes further in arguing for the significance of wartime for African Americans: "Only the overwhelming mobilization of society and the popular mentality—occasioned by American entry into the Second World War, and sustained by the continuing prospect of total war thereafter—made it possible to cement the legitimacy of national citizenship" (2012, 16).

Addressing the audience at the 1943 African dance festival, Bethune therefore played a complex role, representing several sides of the globalist equation. Bethune's participation in this event was a boon to the efforts of the AAAR to legitimate itself on the world stage and the Roosevelt administration's efforts to strengthen US/Africa relations during and after the Allies' North African Campaign. Her prominent presence on the AAAR board of directors and at the festival may also have been important in the eyes of African American voters who were becoming increasingly cognizant of the connections between anti-colonial movements in Africa and their struggles for civil rights at home.[28]

"PREJUDICE SPRINGS FROM IGNORANCE"

Like Bethune, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's role in the in the political drama enacted by the 1943 African dance festival was multi-faceted. Serving as members of the organization's board of directors and patrons of the event, both women were AAAR insiders, and yet each was also an organizational outsider in her respective capacity as a public servant within the federal government. For her part, Mrs. Roosevelt sent a letter to Mbadiwe three weeks before the festival's premiere, offering a multi-pronged appeal for the uses of dance as an instrument of American globalism. In her letter, quoted in newspaper coverage from New York City, to Chicago, to Pittsburgh, Roosevelt wrote:

> Many of our soldiers who have come back from Africa have learned something of the folk lore of its people, but presentations of this kind will make us better able to understand people whom we now know so little about. The future of the world depends on our knowing more about each other and on our developing mutual cultural and economic interests. The arts are the best bridge between peoples of different races and we must hope that the African Academy of Arts and Research, though a new organization, will be very successful in building that bridge (original letter from Roosevelt to Mbadiwe written on November 22, 1943, AAAR; the letter was published in a number of newspapers, for examples see: "Mrs. FDR Lauds African Festival," *New York Amsterdam News*, December 4, 1942, 5A; "Mrs. FDR Sponsors Dance Festival, *The Chicago Defender*, December 11, 1943, 2).

Roosevelt's letter saw the performance of the 1943 festival as a bridge to cross-cultural understanding and an example of the role the performing arts could play in securing the world's peaceful future. Here Roosevelt

implied that the performance could help Americans at home feel more connected to the experiences of armed service members returning from fighting on the North African front. Transportation into the world of African ceremonials could encourage empathic understanding, not only for the soldiers' experience of fighting in an unfamiliar land but also for their experience of returning home and adjusting to a newly unfamiliar life. She made an argument about how "knowing more about each other and on developing our mutual cultural and economic interests" might help pave the way toward a future and lasting peace among peoples and nations. Finally, she underlined the power of the arts as "the best bridge between peoples of different races." Roosevelt's statement reiterated and reinforced the dominant mid-century globalist narrative, which she sounded in order to frame the significance of the festival in the minds of the war-saturated American public.

Might African American audience members have heard more in Roosevelt's words? Consider Nikhil Pal Singh's assertion that "just as had New Deal reform, the global rationale for fighting World War II upped the ante of the promise of American universalism in ways that had unprecedented implications for blacks in the U.S." (Singh 2004, 104). Read as a paean to the "promise of American universalism," Mrs. Roosevelt's patronage, appearance at the festival, and activity on the board of the AAAR could have been taken as a signal of closer ties between the Roosevelt administration and US civil rights activists, even if only a symbolic one. Such an interpretation would be supported by Mrs. Roosevelt's co-sponsorship of the event and close friendship with Bethune, whose advocacy had drawn compelling and more direct parallels between domestic and foreign movements for black independence. Mrs. Roosevelt's letter indicated the administration's sensitivity to the plights of black peoples under colonialism with the acknowledgment that the performance might "make us better able to understand people [in Africa] whom we now know so little about" ("African Dance Festival Gets Mrs. FDR's Okeh," December 15, 1943, 2).

These sentiments are also in line with Mrs. Roosevelt's outspoken stance in support of black civil rights under the New Deal administration and her belief in the connection between "progressive social reform and racial equality" (Sklaroff 2009, 22). In fact, the First Lady had pursued the total elimination of prejudice around racial and religious difference, exemplified in a speech she gave at Brooklyn College in 1944 to commemorate the 1939 massacre of Czech students by the Nazis: "We must do away with these things in this country. . . . We did appeal to dangerous things in the campaign: we aroused thoughts of racial and religious differences: and if you allow prejudice on any subject, then you have prejudice on many

subjects. Prejudice grows until everybody has a special prejudice of his own and then unity is destroyed." If an article entitled "Mrs. Roosevelt Tells Students 'Bias Must Go'" published in the Harlem-based *New York Amsterdam News* on November 15, 1944, is a good indication, her words likely resonated with readers who themselves had been subjected to prejudice on the basis of race, and who had suffered the consequences of race baiting during the 1944 campaign in which President Roosevelt won a fourth term over the Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey.[29]

Pronouncing in 1942 that "the day of the white man's burden is over. Henceforth we must treat all races with respect as equals," for his part President Roosevelt opposed colonialism throughout the war years and in negotiations with his ally Winston Churchill, who remained a staunch supporter of British imperialism throughout the conflict (quoted in Singh 2004, 104). In fact, the United States "continued to press Britain over the issue of colonial emancipation, especially in India, throughout the war" (Sherwood, "There Is No New Deal for the Blackman in San Francisco," 1996, 71–72). President Roosevelt's support for the self-rule of colonized peoples aligned with leftist African American constituencies, led among others by labor leader A. Philip Randolph, who formed the March on Washington Movement in 1941, applying pressure on Roosevelt to address discrimination in the defense industries (Von Eschen 1997, 74).

Since the early 1930s, the black press had aligned the "American South and Nazism to point to the inherent hypocrisy in fighting for democracy and equality abroad, while racist ideologies existed in strength at home" (Knauer 2014, 17). The irony was perhaps greatest for African American members of the armed forces, who faced racial discrimination in uniform—relegated to menial labor and involvement in supply chains and barred from participation in combat (Knauer 2014, 19). According to historian Christine Knauer, "With their willingness to serve in the military, blacks believed they had earned every right to protest, and especially among black soldiers, impatience with the unequal system was growing. . . . Black soldiers represented the most visible and, despite their subjugated status, empowered men, who managed to seriously put white supremacy into question" (18). Experiences in wartime, therefore, both enlarged the global perspective of peoples of African heritage living in the United States and cultivated their expectations for unqualified recognition and unrestricted participation in every sphere of life as fully fledged American citizens.[30]

Additionally, it is also interesting to note that the 1943 African dance festival occurred during a watershed year for US/Africa relations. Amid the Allies' North African campaigns, in January, President Franklin D. Roosevelt flew to Africa, first to Morocco to participate in an Allied

strategy summit, called the Casablanca conference, with British leader Winston Churchill, and then to Liberia, to negotiate a lend-lease arrangement to construct a modern seaport in Monrovia, the capital city (Dallek 1979, 367–75; Lynch 2002, 190; Duignan and Gann, 1984, 304–5). He also visited with American commanders and troops while there (369). With this historic trip, Roosevelt became the first American president both to travel by plane and "to leave the country in wartime" (369).[31] More important, he became the first president to visit sub-Saharan Africa (Lynch 2002, 190). Roosevelt's journey had important implications for the Allies' pursuit of the war. According to military historian Alan Wilt, the meeting in Casablanca served to solidify the "formation of [a "realistic"] Anglo-American strategy" (Wilt 1991, 528).[32] Liberia was also important for the Allied war effort: "Although [it] would not declare war on the Axis Powers for another year, it had become de facto a strategic American base in West Africa" (Lynch 190). In this context, it is possible to imagine how Dafora's embodied "Africa" served the purposes of US internationalism during World War II, specifically US/Africa relations in the midst of the North African campaign, in ways that might also have resonated in positive ways among people of color living in the United States.

Nevertheless, in spite of indications to the contrary, the Roosevelt administration had a mixed record on civil rights issues. In her 1949 autobiography entitled *This I Remember*, for example, Mrs. Roosevelt recalled her frustration with the slow pace of political change regarding civil rights legislation, such as an anti-lynching bill and the elimination of the poll tax, the latter of which suppressed voting by Americans of color: "Although Franklin was in favor of both measures, they never became 'must' legislation. When I would protest, he would simply say: 'First things come first, and I can't alienate certain votes I need for measures that are more important at the moment by pushing any measure that would entail a fight'" (quoted in Sklaroff 2009, 1; see also Roark 1998, 37).

This reluctance to fight for change had an impact on President Roosevelt's criticism of European imperialism at the negotiating table as well. As Marika Sherwood has shown, in negotiations as early as 1943, Roosevelt went along with Churchill's recommendation to limit the recognition of sovereignty provisions only to European nationals in spite of his distaste for colonialism (Sherwood 1996, "There Is No New Deal for the Blackman in San Francisco," 73). US equivocation on African self-rule continued after the war, during the negotiations of the Atlantic Charter in 1945. Roosevelt's successor President Harry Truman acquiesced to a proposal proffered by the British government to maintain the political status quo in its colonies, ignoring arguments made to the contrary by a National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) delegation headed by Bethune, Walter White, and W. E. B. Du Bois (Sherwood 1996, "Diplomatic Platitudes"). Federal pronouncements that the war was fought abroad on the premises of freedom for all ultimately rang hollow for the legions of non-white American citizens who remained oppressed by social and legal constraints organized around white supremacy.

A DANCE AMBASSADOR

Dafora's involvement in the first African dance festival in 1943 paved the way to other projects he directed, which were sponsored by the AAAR, including two other postwar festivals at Carnegie Hall: "African Dances and Modern Rhythms" held on April 6, 1945; and "A Tale of Old Africa," held on April 25 and 26, 1946.[33] Utilizing the same basic structural formula as the 1943 event, the programs in 1945 and 1946 combined performances of dance, music, song, and political speeches. Likewise, both events promoted the globalist ideology that had undergirded the festival in 1943. Austin O'Briggs-Hall, production manager for the 1945 festival put that belief this way:

> If it may be said with any measure of truth that the varied manifestations of expression called "Art" are reflective of the most natural and true aspirations of human beings, then it is to be hoped ever more people will indulge in free and unbiased examination of the aesthetic creations of their human neighbors and will allow the nature of the understandings from their inquiries—and possible enjoyment—to be the basis of all attitudes in their day to day dealings with them ("African Dances and Modern Rhythms," April 6, 1945, Program 1945, 5, CHA).

Mobilizing globalist themes, O'Briggs-Hall underlined what he saw as the centrality of artistic expression within the human experience, and the potential that activities involving art making and art sharing had to promote "unbiased examination" of unfamiliar cultures, "understanding," and "possible enjoyment." As he concluded, "such a course of honest applications of realities could never be productive of the disturbing disagreements which so tragically affect the lives of all of us" ("African Dances and Modern Rhythms," April 6, 1945, Program 1945, 5, CHA). With these words, O'Briggs-Hall counterposed the "honesty" of performance practices against other manifestations of "realities," which would produce "disturbing disagreements" leading to strife.

The 1945 program, "African Dances and Modern Rhythms," was divided into five parts depicting a panoramic journey from "West Africa in the 1600's," including a series of scenes of colonial conquest including "strange visitors," "departure," and "the slave ship," to resettlement in the "Western Hemisphere," through performances of dance forms native to Brazil and the Caribbean, on the one hand, and the United States, on the other. The evening featured guest artists Maurice Rocco, Bill Robinson, and Mary Lou Williams. Eleanor Roosevelt also attended as the guest of honor. According to Lynch, "On that occasion Mrs. Roosevelt read greetings from the President in which he expressed the hope that the Academy 'will provide a bridge of communication and understanding between America and Africa" (2002, 192).

The performance was well received by New York critics. For example, John Martin wrote in the *New York Times*: "Like all Mr. Dafora's compositions, this work deals with tribal community life through its rhythmic persistence and the sheer vitality of its performance" ("African Festival at Carnegie Hall," April 5, 1945, 27). Likewise, Edwin Denby wrote, in the *New York Herald Tribune*: "At Carnegie Hall last night, the African Academy of Arts and Sciences [*sic*] presented its second annual festival under the title of 'African Dances and Modern Rhythms' and gave us polyethnic New Yorkers another fascinating glimpse of the West African cultural tradition and of its derivatives on the American continent. Last night's program, beginning with dance and song evocative of seventeenth century Africa and ending with 52nd Street jive offered a kind of *saga of Negro rhythm*" ("The Dance," April 5, 1945, n.p., emphasis mine). Both Martin and Denby noted the persistence of rhythmic elements in the performance as a key to the event's energy. Moreover, Denby's perception of the performance's warm reception by "polyethnic New Yorkers" indicates the extent to which a globalist parlance seemed familiar to the audience.

The 1946 program, "A Tale of Old Africa," featured "Katharine [*sic*] Dunham's Group" in a performance of "Rites De Passage" as well as an additional cast of nearly fifty dancers and drummers. Depicting "male puberty" and "fertility" rituals, the first part of the program presented a story of African cultural life before Western conquest, "the action [of which] takes place in a village of a small West African kingdom before the white man's time" (program, p. 7). The program explains that rites of passage are "a set of rituals surrounding the transition of an individual or group of individuals from one life crisis to another" ("A Tale of Old Africa," Program, April 25 and 26, 1946, 7, 9,11, CHA). The second part, entitled "A Tale of Old Africa," was set first in the palace of "King Burah," and next in the "Slave Ship: What the Soothsayer told the King." Rosalia Duncan and

Company sung "Aninga Nenga Nea" (translated as a Song of Sorrow) and "Ai jai bai" (translated as Song of Farewell), leading to the presentation of the Annual Willkie Memorial Award, to Haile Selassie, emperor of Ethiopia, for "his contribution to international peace and goodwill" ("A Tale of Old Africa," Program, April 25 and 26, 1946, 10, CHA); citation quoted in "Selassie Receives Art Academy Prize," *New York Times*, April 27, 1946, p. 12). A Finale closed the show.[34]

Like the festival 1945, the 1946 event received positive reviews by New York critics. Writing for the *New York Times*, John Martin was notably laudatory:

> It is far and away the best of the three works Mr. Dafora has created for the series. It has a unified if extremely simple plot, telling how the efforts of two European slave traders back in the early days to trick an entire village into slavery are foiled by the vision conjured up by a soothsayer. It is well staged, excellently rehearsed, and full of the same native singing, lively and rhythmic dancing and wonderful spirit that have characterized previous Dafora productions ("African Academy in Dance Festival," April 26, 1946, p. 28).

For his part, Walter Terry, writing for the *New York Herald Tribune*, explained how the work caused him to reminisce about his deployment to North Africa as a service member during the war:

> Dafora, Randolph Scott, Clementine Blount and the many other artists made me homesick for Army days in Africa. In their dancing I saw again boys and girls dancing on the shore of the Gold Coast; the glittering pomp of a meeting of tribal monarchs in dusty Accra; an aristocratic chieftain and members of his retinue receiving us in a clearing in the Congo bush; the rumble of drums, the flash of a torch, the whisper of running feet cutting through an African night. The validity of "A Tale of Old Africa" not only provided memories for those who knew that rich continent and its richly gifted peoples but it also provided others with a glimpse of a culture alien to us but one worth our interest and our fostering ("The Dance," April 26, 1946, n.p.).

In this case, and in their own ways, both Martin's and Terry's accounts of the performance legitimized Dafora's depiction of historical events. From Martin's perspective, elements of the production such as the singing, dancing, staging, and polish of the performance contributed to his assessment that this was the "best of the three works Dafora has created for the series." Alternatively, what validated the performance for Terry were the ways it evoked his sense of place through its characterizations and its

visceral evocation of his memories and emotions of serving on the North African front in World War II.

African dance festival performances sponsored by the AAAR in 1945 and 1946 occurred at the beginning of the domestic Cold War and its anti-communist red baiting, which doused the spark of internationalist activism among African Americans. Gerald Horne argues that "the tagging of anti-colonialists as 'red' slowed down the movement against colonialism and—perhaps not coincidentally—gave 'white supremacy' a new lease on life" (Horne 1999, 326). As a result, African American anti-colonialist activists trained their focus on domestic issues and adopted a more moderate stance toward national self-determination abroad. According to Meriwether, "in a dual shift during the late 1940s and early 1950s, this growing internationalist perspective reverted to a domestic focus, while specific links between the black freedom struggle in America and rising Third World nationalism largely slipped away into a more vaguely constructed and pursued anticolonialism" (Meriwether 2002, 58). Beginning in the mid-1940s, black leftist activists, fearing anti-communist reprisals, moved into the liberal mainstream ideological fold. As Meriwether puts it, "Black Americans, like most groups in the country, sought to emphasize their 'Americanness' during the early Cold War years" (2002, 58).[35]

In this context of communist red-baiting and federal targeting of black activists, it is interesting to note that both the 1945 and 1946 festivals, compared to the festival in 1943, took on even more directly the subject of the Middle Passage. As embodied in dance performance, the Middle Passage served as a proxy for demonstrating both the devastating impact on African culture and cultural practices of chattel slavery and colonialism and the resilience of peoples of African heritage seen in the retention of values and beliefs shared by black peoples across the Atlantic. The performances in 1945 and 1946 employed dance as a counter hegemonic strategy to keep painful memories alive and to serve, in de Certeau's words, as "the collective memory of the social body."

Besides these dance festivals at Carnegie Hall, there were other performances drawing on the same material held in several New York City venues including at the YMHA Kaufmann Auditorium, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (Heard 1999, 122; see also miscellaneous programs, box 1, folder 6, ADSCRBC). Additionally in 1944, Dafora appeared at the East and West Association with Mrs. Paul Robeson, W. A. Hunton (education director of the CAA), and a number of other guests on a panel entitled "What Do the Peoples of Africa Want?" ("Mrs. Paul Robeson Speaks for Africa," *NY Amsterdam News*, November 25, 1944).[36] Participation in additional production activities, and on

panels with illustrious colleagues, such as the East West Association directed by humanitarian and author Pearl S. Buck, provides further evidence of Dafora's standing as an artist and advocate whose opinion of matters pertaining to African affairs was sought by others. In fact, as a transnational subject, Dafora both embodied and assumed a role as an advocate for a US globalist perspective.

Hoping to bring the African dance festival concept on tour, thus promoting globalist values in the American heartland, the AAAR collaborated with Dafora to present a performance in Norfolk, Virginia, December 17 and 18, 1945. However, in spite of heavy marketing in black churches, on the radio, and in the African American newspaper the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, and an endorsement by the state's governor, Colgate W. Darden Jr., the concert was poorly attended (Lynch 2002, 192). Dafora also undertook an extensive national tour under the banner of his own company—the Shogola Olobo African Dance Group—between 1946 and 1947, in which the company performed at numerous historically black colleges and universities across the Southern and Midwestern United States.[37]

Figure 3.7. Group portrait of Shogola Oloba dance troupe that was headed by Asadata Dafora (*front row, center*) and included dancer Esther Rolle (*lower right-hand corner*). April 1960. Image #57692745. Courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

An article entitled "Asadata Dafora's African Ballet Group Displays Obscure Native Dance," published in the *Chicago Defender*, a newspaper catering to an African American readership, provided an account of a performance in late 1946. "Performing dance stories to the throbbing rhythms of an African drum and a Cuban conga," it began, "the unique ballet company of Asadata Dafora recently brought to the Midwest samples of the refined, but little known culture of West Africa." The author then recounted elements of the performance: "primitive foot shuffling, and gracefully weaving shoulders and arms in different tempo show off the skill of female dancers, just as they did in African villages generations ago." The reviewer concluded "The company . . . plan(s) to tour Negro colleges soon, in an attempt to bring African culture the recognition it deserves" (December 7, 1946). Similarly, reviewing the October 16, 1946, performance at Lincoln University, a reporter for *The Call* provided a similar explanation of the event's significance for the community in and around Kansas City: "Africa came to the great middle west this week," the article began, continuing, "In their appearance lies an inspirational story of Negro culture and folk art that is finally coming into the prominence it justly deserves" (October 18, 1946, p. 8).

Dafora's extensive touring activities reveal a strong commitment to staging diaspora for black students and faculty on university and college campuses and for general audiences on the eve of the US civil rights movement, thus building audiences for his work, and work like it, beyond ticket-holding audiences in the northern urban centers. Emblematic of other journalistic accounts of Dafora and his company's performances on tour between 1946 and 1947, the reviews just quoted emphasize the import of exposing African American communities to African dance practices, as a source of knowledge and a cause for pride. Recognizing the significance of telling one's own history, the reporter for *The Call* highlights the significance of Dafora's treatment of Africanist movement material which could "tell an inspirational story of Negro culture and folk art." If these accounts are accurate representations, it appears that audiences in the American Midwest and South experienced the performances of Shogola Oloba as evidence of a broader cultural shift, in which peoples of African heritage in the United States could claim a history for themselves through the celebration of a "worthy culture" (quoting Arthur Schomburg). Seeing Dafora in this light allows us to contemplate the complexities of his role as a de facto ambassador of African culture in the United States. On the one hand, he embodied the spirit of mid-century globalism as a freedom of movement and perhaps stood as a symbol of expanded possibilities for black Americans at that time. On the other hand, Dafora's liminal position

helps illuminate tensions between Africanist racial and ethnic identities among black peoples of African heritage living in mid-century America.

POSTSCRIPT: DISCERNING DAFORA'S POLITICS

Pondering Dafora's affiliation with the AAAR, I have wondered to what extent he subscribed to the organization's politics. I have also wondered whether Dafora felt vulnerable advocating African self-determination and black solidarity in the context of that period's culture of containment and a heightened federal surveillance of black activists. I wonder if the AAAR's causes aligned to some extent with Dafora's views, or if the alliance was mostly a business-driven decision on his part. The leftist political leanings of Mbadiwe, Roosevelt, and Bethune are obvious in the public record, but the lack of primary sources authored by Dafora himself, or in which he is quoted, has made it difficult to answer this question with any certainty.

Franko has taken a stab at answering the question in a 2002 article. Quoting secondhand sources in a "souvenir booklet," he writes: "Quiet and composed and very well dressed off-stage, he [Dafora] listens to dressing-room visitors who express their enthusiasm for his work and their amazement at the revelation that Africa may not be so 'barbaric'. 'Barbarism?' he murmurs, 'but there are lynchings in this country. And voodooism? But that is a real religion, practiced as any other religion is practiced'" (quoted in Franko 2002, 80). Based on his contextual reading of these comments, Franko concludes: "These comments of Dafora clearly indicate his awareness of the political force of his work" (2002, 80–81).

There is one other source from the archive that suggests complexities for the artist at the meeting ground of dance and politics. Consider a letter Dafora wrote to Mbadiwe dated November 16, 1943, one month before the festival opening. "I realize that the following suggestions should have been taken care of before we went into rehearsal—as I find now that it is very embarrassing to hold the cast together," the letter began, then continued: "When we discussed the situation of the cast over a week ago (Sunday, November 8th) it was my understanding that they were to be paid for rehearsals as of November 9th[.] To date they have received nothing—and are definitely beginning to feel no responsibility toward attending rehearsals." Dafora then noted: "I am enclosing the final revised budget—which I would appreciate your taking care of immediately, as contracts are necessary if we are to have a show at all," and concluded, "As you know—a lot of people are looking for Negro talent at this time" (November 16, 1943, box 1, folder 2, ADSCRBC).

On its face, Dafora's letter suggests that money must have been tight for Mbadiwe and the AAAR, and that, while grand, the organization's ambitions did not take into pragmatic consideration the requirements of putting on a show—namely, rehearsal pay for directors and performers and money for studio rental and directorial assistant. In fact, Lynch points out that "inexperience in promoting such an affair . . . led to a deficit of two thousand dollars ($2,000)—'a great blow to the fledgling organization" (2002, 192). Yet because Dafora put first the livelihoods of himself, the performers, and the studio building owner Mrs. Gellendre, "who earns part of her living from rentals," it also suggests that Dafora might have given at least equal weight to his obligation to his financial responsibilities to his performers as to his political commitments at this stage in the process. From his parting words about the market desire for "Negro talent at this time," Dafora indicates that he had leverage with Mbadiwe in negotiating the terms of his involvement in the festival and that it was possible to deploy politics in service to the development of an artistic practice in the same instance as the artist agreed to use his work to further any political objectives he might have shared with Mbadiwe and the AAAR.

4

Staging Diversity/Staging Containment

Paradoxes of Mid-Century Globalism

On September 28, 1948, the *New York Times* published an article entitled "Daughter of India's Envoy Here for a Visit," announcing the arrival of Mrs. Nitya Nand Wagle, daughter of Rama Rau, Indian ambassador to the United States, and her husband. A photograph accompanying the article shows Mrs. Wagle waving to onlookers underneath the wing of a British Overseas Airlines jet emblazoned with a Union Jack. Youthful, with an easy smile, her shoulder-length hair pulled back from her face, she is dressed in an elegant sari and carries a purse at her left elbow. Surrounded by planes taxiing on an active tarmac at La Guardia Field, she appears poised, relaxed, and approachable. The article is short, but rich with personal details: we learn that Mrs. Wagle has flown from London to New York and that she and her husband, "a business man in Bombay," will be staying for two days at the Hotel Ritz-Carlton "where the Ambassador has a suite," and then continuing on to Washington, DC, before embarking on a two-month tour of the United States. In a choreographic sleight of hand, the article reveals the coincidence of another arrival in New York City on the same day: "A Pan-American Airways plane from London, arriving at the airport earlier, brought thirteen members of the Ram Gopal Hindu Ballet, who are to give four performances at the Golden Jubilee international dance festival at City Center, beginning Thursday. They are to go on tour in the United States later."

In effective ways, the article and photograph in the *New York Times* advanced a narrative about mid-century globalism that harnessed the ease

Dancing the World Smaller: Staging Globalism in Mid-Century America. Rebekah J. Kowal.

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190265328.03.0004

of international cultural exchange to the technological advances in transcontinental airline travel that made such exchanges possible. The *Times*' portrayal of these synchronous arrivals conveys a consonance of local and national globalist agendas. In this context, as the terminus of the convergent pathways of famous Indian nationals, La Guardia Field stands as a gateway not only to New York City but also to the United States. Moreover, if the sense of comfort Mrs. Wagle exudes in the photograph is any indication, it would appear that such travel and movement into and through the United States were commonplace, even for foreign nationals.

All the same, the *Times* announcement downplayed the logistical intricacies and cultural considerations that surely must have gone into planning these trips, thus masking many of the actual challenges of accomplishing globalist aspirations outside of the kinds of ideal circumstances suggested by these examples. To appreciate this point as it relates to the relative ease of air travel in 1948, recall that only five years earlier, in 1943, President Roosevelt had to travel five days to reach Africa to negotiate with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill about the lend-lease agreement in Liberia. The war had precipitated technological developments in the airline industry that increased mobility across vast distances. And yet the advances that made transcontinental travel more commonplace did not necessarily coincide with American policies making it easier or more common for foreign nationals to enter the United States, especially if they wished to immigrate. Consider, as an example, that just two years earlier, in 1946, the US government had lifted immigration and naturalization restrictions on residents of India and the Philippines while still enforcing quotas for entrance from these countries from the National Origins Act of 1924.

Immigration historian Mae Ngai details the extent to which Cold War politics influenced decision making at the federal level during the mid-twentieth century, including policymakers' awareness that maintenance immigration quotas set by 1920s' National Origins legislation "tarnished the overseas reputation of the United States as a champion of democracy. America's anti-Communist allies, from Greece to Japan, smarted under the sting of discrimination that was attached to low quotas; like Jim Crow segregation, the quota system was fodder for Soviet Propaganda about American racism" (2006, 110). Reformist lawmakers, such as New York congressman Emanuel Celler, put the problem this way: "Is the way to destroy an iron curtain . . . to erect an iron curtain of our own?" (quoted in Ngai 2006, 110). In a win for the immigration reform movement, Celler would eventually co-sponsored the Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965; this legislation revolutionized US immigration

law, opening paths to migration and American citizenship for individuals and families across the developing world who desired new lives in the US, not just for the select and privileged few such as Mr. and Mrs. Wagle, relatives of the Indian ambassador, who could enter the US easily for the purposes of sightseeing and shopping.

During the Cold War years, however, the kinds of local and national impulses toward globalism that led to the formulation and passage of the transformational Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act were tempered by isolationism and nationalism, contrary impulses that grew in intensity in the late 1940s. President Truman's issuance of the anti-communist Truman Doctrine in March 1947, and subsequent federal and military enforcement of the policy at home and abroad, made the containment of difference a national security issue. Warranted by the Truman Doctrine and authorized by the culture of containment, domestic fear of foreignness, whether expressed as garden-variety racism, exoticization of cultural others, or as insidious and blatant racism, could now be rationalized and legitimated, as could articulations of American superiority and ideological bellicosity. As the following in-depth examination of the politics within and surrounding the 1948 International Dance Festival will illustrate, the containment of perceived and/or real difference was a cultural issue too, revealing sociopolitical tensions between globalism and pluralism, on the one hand, and unity and diversity, on the other. In American dance circles, proponents of universalism saw the body as a "human common denominator," a medium for cross-cultural mediation and interculturalism. Yet, as we have seen throughout this book, the logic underwriting this equation was always on Western terms and acting in a manner to support hegemonic norms, "to permit" and not to authorize diversity (Bhabha 1990, 208).

These are themes that historian Or Rosenboim treats in her research on 1940s globalism and that I have developed in the preceding chapters of *Dancing the World Smaller*. As discussed earlier, while globalism and pluralism were compatible worldviews and could be harmonized on the level of aspiration, they were more difficult to square with respect to the valuation of individual and/or cultural differences including "non-Western forms of political order" (2017, 9). Unity and diversity could also be coordinated in theory, as Rosenboim explains: "Globalism emerged from an awareness of the political significance of the globe as a unitary whole made of interconnected, diverse political units. The recognition of the world's 'oneness' did not always mean political monism. Globalism often implied a renewed awareness of diversity, and an attempt to envisage a world order to preserve it" (2017, 4). And yet, in the context of liberal democracy there is a

challenge of balancing the good of the whole social body with the interests of individuals, self-identified groups, and the nation. These mid-century cultural tensions around how to practice globalist values are on full display if the 1948 International Dance Festival is any indication. Here, promotion of cross-cultural exchange and openness to difference sought by organizers through dance festival planning and programming took a nationalistic turn judging from the public reception and critical discourse surrounding festival performances. Recalling Bourdieu's formulation of relations between habitus and practices that I discussed in the Introduction, we see globalism as an ideological container, or habitus, and its cultural expressions, or practices, at odds with one another—"whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production" ([1972] 1977, 95). Celebrating diversity and pluralism furthered the goals of American globalism as long as it could be put into the service of and/or was not in conflict with other national priorities such as the demonstration of US ideological, geopolitical and/or cultural dominance. Efforts by festival organizers and dance critics to make good on globalist ideals constricted under the strain of containment, signaling growing public anxiety about the threat of cultural outsiders and outside influences. In this light, the case of the 1948 International Dance Festival exemplifies obstacles to achieving the aspirations of globalism in America during the early Cold War years.

THE 1948 INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL

As we know from the Introduction, the international dance festival was an event encompassed within the 1948 New York City Golden Jubilee Celebration, which marked the fiftieth anniversary of the unification of the city's five affiliated boroughs. Organizer Grover Whalen hired impresario Sol Hurok to produce the dance festival, imagining a grand event that would spotlight New York City's emergence as the dance capital of the world in parallel to its selection as the home of the United Nations headquarters. As I argued, Hurok saw the dance festival as accomplishing several goals at once (1) affirming the city's global dominance in the field of concert dance; (2) showcasing the intercultural capacities of dance as a medium of cultural diplomacy and mediation; (3) demonstrating the global diversity of the city's residents; (4) recognizing the contributions of its heterogeneous residents to its cultural and economic ascendance. Festival organizers' assumptions of this nature was consonant with the ethos of dance critical paragons such as John Martin and Walter Terry and

prominent modern dance artists, such as Martha Graham and José Limón, all of whom subscribed to dance universalism (Kowal 2010). In fact, as we saw in Chapter 2, universalism underwrote not only modernist but also ethnologic dance practices. In the case of La Meri, for example, while dance was seen to possess capacities of bridging cultural differences, the terms of these connections and manner of engaging were defined primarily in terms of the Anglo-Western experience.

Hurok invited countries to send their representative dance companies; the goal was to assemble a program of performances that could showcase dancers from disparate reaches of the globe and represent the cultures and traditions of their respective countries. They would come together in New York City, a "global city" (Sassen 2005) where cultural heterogeneity could be harmonized in a densely populated metropolis. For a variety of reasons, however, the 1948 International Dance Festival came off as a feeble internationalist gesture, in spite of organizers' grand plans and much to their chagrin. The event took place in September and October of 1948. Of the fourteen countries invited only three sent representative groups, including the Paris Opera Ballet (France), Ram Gopal and Dancers (India), and Charles Weidman (an American) (Mayor's Committee announcement and Festival brochure, NYC Municipal Archives). Evidently, very few countries responded to the initial invitations, and such a low response rate undercut the original idea of having worldwide participation at the festival.

Logistics were also a problem. Since the Metropolitan Opera House was already booked by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for a three-week run, organizers scrambled to find an alternative venue, securing City Center as a substitute.[1] Scheduling the international dance festival at the same time the Ballet Russe was performing created an impossible situation for the city's dance critics, who couldn't be in two places at one time and therefore couldn't review performances of both the festival participants and the Ballet Russe. John Martin commented on this lack of foresight by planners in an article of August 29, 1948:

> Rub your eyes and beat your brain as you will, you will probably fail to discover what esoteric reasoning lies behind the selection of these particular companies in this particular proportion to celebrate this particular event. To confuse matters further, the entire festival will take place during the three-week season of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo at the Metropolitan Opera House. But the union of the five boroughs fifty years ago is cause for a celebration at this time, and these companies seem to be available. Ergo—("The Dance: Jubilee," X5).

Presenting only two international companies at City Center, a theater not equipped to accommodate the physical demands of large-scale productions, and before ill-humored New York dance critics, the festival failed to live up to organizers' ambitious plans. It came across not as the grand globalist gesture organizers imagined but rather as a lesson in the actual difficulties of dancing the world smaller.[2] Individual case studies organized around the three featured groups, the Paris Opera Ballet, Ram Gopal Hindu Ballet, and Charles Weidman, reveal how dance as a medium of mid-century globalism operated inconsistently, acting as much to stress difference as to promote unification.

THE PUBLIC MALIGNING OF SERGE LIFAR

I begin by examining the debacle surrounding the Paris Opera Ballet's eleven performances at New York City Center between September 21 and October 3, 1948. With its illustrious history, the Paris Opera Ballet offered a headlining production showcasing the persistence of the French balletic tradition displayed by a French company that had managed to survive World War II. A story of best-laid plans gone awry, this is not in fact what occurred. The company's performances were overshadowed by the presence of company ballet master and artistic director Serge Lifar, which caused the eruption of a public firestorm during the company's run, and a public relations disaster for international dance festival organizers Hurok and Whalen.[3]

A Russian expatriate, Lifar had been accused of collaboration with the Nazis during World War II, an alliance he had justified for professional reasons (Lifar 1970, 169–70).[4] Tried before a Purification Commission, Lifar was judged to be a collaborationist; his status as an artist and a foreigner led to a one-year suspension from company activities as punishment (Franko 2017, 227.)[5] This sentence did not appear to appease the suspicions of audiences in New York City. Reflecting in his 1970 autobiography on the uproar surrounding the company's performances at the 1948 festival, he wrote: "I was caught up by a quarrel of worldwide significance" (316).

Even before Lifar and his company arrived in New York, there was trouble. As he wrote in his autobiography:

> We were to perform at Montreal, Chicago, and then at New York and Washington. I was to take a plane and follow the troupe which had gone on ahead. In order to do this and to get an entry visa for the United States I had to

> get an attestation (No. 24,977) from the Ministry of War and this document must be signed by Colonel Poupard as proof that I was in order with my adoptive country since the American embassy at Paris had denounced me as a Soviet agent (1970, 316–17).

Although I cannot verify Lifar's account of his difficulty obtaining a visa, his story does indicate that he had aroused the suspicion of American authorities who appear to have wanted to check out his legal status in France as a measure of his political allegiances to the West. Here Lifar also mentions comments about him that appeared in Sol Hurok's 1947 memoir, *Impresario*, which "repeated the worst of the calumnies spread abroad about me—[that] I had received Hitler, I had welcomed the capture of Kiev by the Germans and had even gone there to dance while the town was in flames and the inhabitants being massacred" (1970, 317).[6] According to Lifar, Hurok's account amounted to a portion of a larger public campaign waged against him in the United States. As he wrote in his autobiography, "At New York the climate was stormy." For this atmosphere, Lifar also blamed *Daily Mirror* gossip columnist and syndicated radio commentator Walter Winchell, who, according to Lifar, "had been carrying on a campaign based on the theme 'Serge Lifar, Hitler's shadow, is among us' . . . And all the while he was surreptitiously denouncing me to the authorities as a Russian and a Communist. I was asked to point out those stage-hands of the troupe who might be Communists, and this I indignantly refused to do. But feeling was running high" (1970, 317). An opening salvo in what would become a months-long effort to discredit Lifar, Winchell's column anticipating Lifar's arrival only portended what was to come.

On the company's arrival, it became quickly apparent that the New York City Center theater was a poor alternative to the Metropolitan Opera House: it was much smaller and its stage was not as deep as the stage at the Met. Sets sent over from Paris were three times too big to fit City Center, and the company had to cancel two of its full programs. What is more, neither the public nor the city's dance critics were enthusiastic about the programs the company presented. John Martin pounced on what he saw as fundamental flaws of Lifar's choreography, saying that Lifar took "what he found in the way of technical style, all very old-fashioned and run down in vitality, and superimpose[d] his own ideas of modernism" (October 3, 1948, X8). Balletic works that had once been the toast of Europe came off to Martin as anachronistic and hackneyed compared to the neoclassical talent cultivated on US soil, such as with George Balanchine's Ballet Society. If Martin's columns were emblematic of overall public reception of the company's productions, the pendulum for

innovation in ballet had clearly swung in America's direction (see also Kowal 2014, Harris 2017). According to dance historian Mark Franko, Lifar's reception in New York was consistent with public reaction to him in Paris and London following the war. For example, "in [postwar] Paris, the left-wing press lampooned Lifar with homophobic venom" in the same spirit as Winchell. Moreover, audiences subjected him to hostility: "During his exile from France Lifar was booed in London" (2017, 228).

New York festival organizers had not anticipated the intensity of negative public response to Lifar, and this public reaction threatened to ruin the festivities outright.[7] Performances at City Center sparked demonstrations against Lifar as well as a public campaign to boycott the company's performances, even as dance festival organizers Whalen and Hurok downplayed Lifar's political liabilities. According to Martin, in an article entitled "Dance: Quandary: What to Say about Paris Ballet and Ourselves," "A picket line in front of the theatre denounced Mr. Lifar's alleged collaborationism during the war, *casting a shadow over the aspect of the international amity which the festival is designed to stimulate* (emphasis mine, September 24, 1948, X8). Protesters in New York City identifying themselves as the Antifascist Protest Committee published letters in *Dance Magazine* suggesting that Lifar's presence with the company during the festival had come as a surprise, thus: "The early information released to the press indicated pretty clearly, even specified Lifar was not to accompany the troupe" (October 1948, 9; quoted in Franko 2017, 248).[8]

Either not aware of or not concerned with Lifar's purported alliances, and not swayed by the public outrage, Martin neglected to weigh in on questions regarding Lifar's comportment during the war at the time of the Paris Opera Ballet's performances at the 1948 festival. For Martin, Lifar's artistic shortcomings far outweighed the importance of the public's suspicion of his guilt. As Martin quipped: "The shadow cast over the festival inside the theater, however, has nothing to do with Mr. Lifar's politics, but rather with his functioning as choreographer and a ballet master. In neither of these capacities is it so easy to acquit him" (September 24, 1948, 30).

In a wrap-up article, Martin summarized what had been a troubling scene in which "the city, for reasons which seem a little obscure, decided to invite over a ballet company which dates back several centuries and for the better part of the last one has increasingly shown its age." Adding in the constraints of City Center, "an extremely poor theatre for any kind of spectacle," and the presence of Lifar, "who has a couple of pretty awkward points against him," including rumors of his collaboration with the Nazis and his "conspicuous shortcomings as an artist, which we have had occasion to note on his two previous visits here in 1933 and 1938, and which

no official denial is loud enough to shout down," there was not much that Martin liked about the whole occasion. "Some of our dancers have picketed the theatre nightly, protesting the presence of Lifar and trying to draw a fine line between him and his colleagues." Martin beseeched manners columnists Emily Post and Beatrice Fairfax to enlighten all involved on a situation in which, in Martin's words, "we have been a bad host to a rather shoddy guest" ("The Dance: Quandary," October 3, 1948, X8). For Martin, public outrage over Lifar's appearance with the company in New York indicated some of the difficulties involved in putting globalist aspirations into practice and highlighted the festival's failure to "stimulate" feelings of "international amity" due to poor planning and execution.

To some, Martin's minimization of Lifar's history, noting only that he had "a couple of pretty awkward points against him," put Martin in the same category as Hurok and Whalen: they, after all, had invited the company to perform at the festival with apparently little thought of the ethical dimensions of inviting a convicted fascist sympathizer to perform on US soil or the potential for a public-relations disaster as a result. None of this sat well with *Daily Mirror* gossip columnist Walter Winchell, whose caustic commentary about Lifar also implicated Whalen in what he saw as a sordid and embarrassing affair. In one column, Winchell wrote:

> *Variety* reveals Serge Lifar and the Paris Ballet sailed back Wednesday. This accused Nazi collaborator rec'd a whitewash from the Paris Opera chief, fooling Grover Whalen and several newspapermen. A tardy cable from Paris says: "The Committee of the Resistance of French Artists protests against the patronage of Serge Lifar, the collaborator during the Occupation, and against Favre Lebret, agent of the German Propaganda Office during the war." [Lebret was the ballet company's manager]. Some local faces must be very cerise. They belittled the exposes of the Queereographer's pro-Nazi activities" (October 17, 1948).

And in another column he reported:

> The *New Yorker's* Paris bureau reveals that the "Paris Ballet" is back home, somewhat lamed by the critical drubbings it received in New York. That's the outfit Grover Whalen tried to give a clean bill to—after Nazi-collaboration charges against balletmaster Serge Lifar, the louse, were echo'd in Variety and here. . . . The latest fashion from Paree is sloping shoulders. Has U.S. shoulder-pad makers in a tizzy (November 15, 1948).

Siding with protesters, Winchell made Whalen, Hurok, and "newspapermen" like Martin out to be dupes and apologists, who, like Lifar, should be

subject to public shame for downplaying the importance of Lifar's pro-Nazi entanglements. Winchell's comments were true to form and therefore in line with his "impassioned denunciations of Hitler" and Nazism in the 1940s, and familiar to his vast readership and radio audiences (Michiko Kakutani 1994, http://www.nytimes.com/1994/10/18/books/books-of-the-times-of-winchell-and-the-power-of-gossip.html, accessed November 15, 2017).[9]

In important ways, therefore, festival organizers' plans to showcase the pinnacle of French culture as represented by the Paris Opera Ballet flopped. In the court of public opinion, exemplified both by disapproving accounts of cultural critics and by public protests outside the theater, Lifar appeared not as a paragon of European cultural superiority but as a criminal. Rather than inspire "international amity," as John Martin imagined it might, the whole incident touched off the public expression of anti-Nazi, anti-fascist convictions, becoming a rallying moment for an American moral authority signified by designation of its cultural superiority.

A close reading of Winchell's comments highlights how this played out. Winchell's reference to Lifar as a "Queerographer" in his October 17, 1948, column, for example, allied Lifar's fascist political leanings as "queerness" writ large. Using Lifar as a target, Winchell leveraged what he assumed to be the public's broader fear of sexual difference in service of his anti-fascist and nationalist agenda, an agenda that would become increasingly anti-communist in the coming decade.[10] As a cultural reference, we might consider how Winchell's homophobic tactics aligning queerness and blanket amorality are not unlike those used by then-FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, who commented in June of 1948: "It is important to the very future of our national life that we hold fast to our faith. Man's sense of decency declares what is normal and what is not. Whenever the American people, young or old, come to believe that there is no such thing as right or wrong, normal or abnormal, those who would destroy our civilization will applaud a major victory over our way of life (quoted in "Must We Change Our Sex Standards?," June 1948, 6). Hoover's statement is paradigmatic of the ways in which generalized public unease about totalitarian challenges to democracy in their many forms could be mapped onto anxiety regarding gender identity and/or sexual orientation during the early Cold War years.

Through the lens of Hoover's homophobic insinuation, resonance between Winchell's and Hoover's tactics comes to light. Winchell coded unease about Lifar's political threat as a sexual one, thereby equating the peril he presumably posed to common decency and normalcy with a threat to democratic values, in this case owing to his fascist sympathies.

Vilification and condemnation of Lifar, including Winchell's suggestion that he was homosexual, became avenues for maligning his character, at the same time that dance critics questioned his choreographic viability. Lifar was effectively othered in this process, made into a spectacle of anti-democratic fascism, on the one hand, and the choreographic ancien régime, on the other. He was reduced to ineffectiveness, his influence nullified.

By contrast, denigration of Lifar and the Paris Opera Ballet provided an opportunity for critics to trumpet choreographer George Balanchine, who had immigrated to the United States in 1934 from Russia and had become a US citizen in 1939. In an ironic turn of events, Balanchine had considered taking the job of ballet master at the Paris Opera both in 1929, and again in 1947 when he served in a visiting capacity during Lifar's banishment from company activities. According to Balanchine biographer Bernard Taper, Balanchine would likely have made the move both times, in the latter case dividing his time between New York and Paris, if it had not been for the artistic and political entrenchment of the company's establishment, which not only organized a petition in which "nearly a thousand people" signed in favor of a permanent ballet master, "not a guest, and not a foreigner," but also "treated [Lifar] as a hero for having held the Opéra ballet together during the occupation" (1984, 128, 217; see also Franko 2017, 228).[11]

By 1948, the embattled and choreographically stunted Lifar served as a foil against which critics could champion the advent of American choreographic ingenuity, a sure sign of a changing of the guard in ballet in favor of new, "home-grown," neoclassical work. As in dance then in geopolitics. It is difficult not to see a parallel here between the death of the Old World in the destruction of cosmopolitan cities such as London, Paris, and Berlin as casualties of the war, and the arrival of a new, global superpower in the United States.[12] Against the backdrop of Lifar and his company's failure, American ballet could emerge as an exemplar of the nation's postwar cultural prowess and promise, affiliated with democratic capitalism.

"BUT NEW YORK WAS THIS VERY INSTANT, THIS NOW"

Ram Gopal and the Hindu Ballet Company performed at the international dance festival September 30 through October 3, 1948.[13] If, in the context of the festival bill, Lifar had brought the stain of fascist totalitarianism and represented its threat to American democracy, Ram Gopal's performances

re-oriented the program toward promoting the values of global cosmopolitanism. While it is likely that Gopal was selected by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to represent India at the festival, it is also probable that Gopal's connection with Sol Hurok helped secure the engagement. Hurok had been responsible for organizing Gopal's 1938 tour of the US coasts and

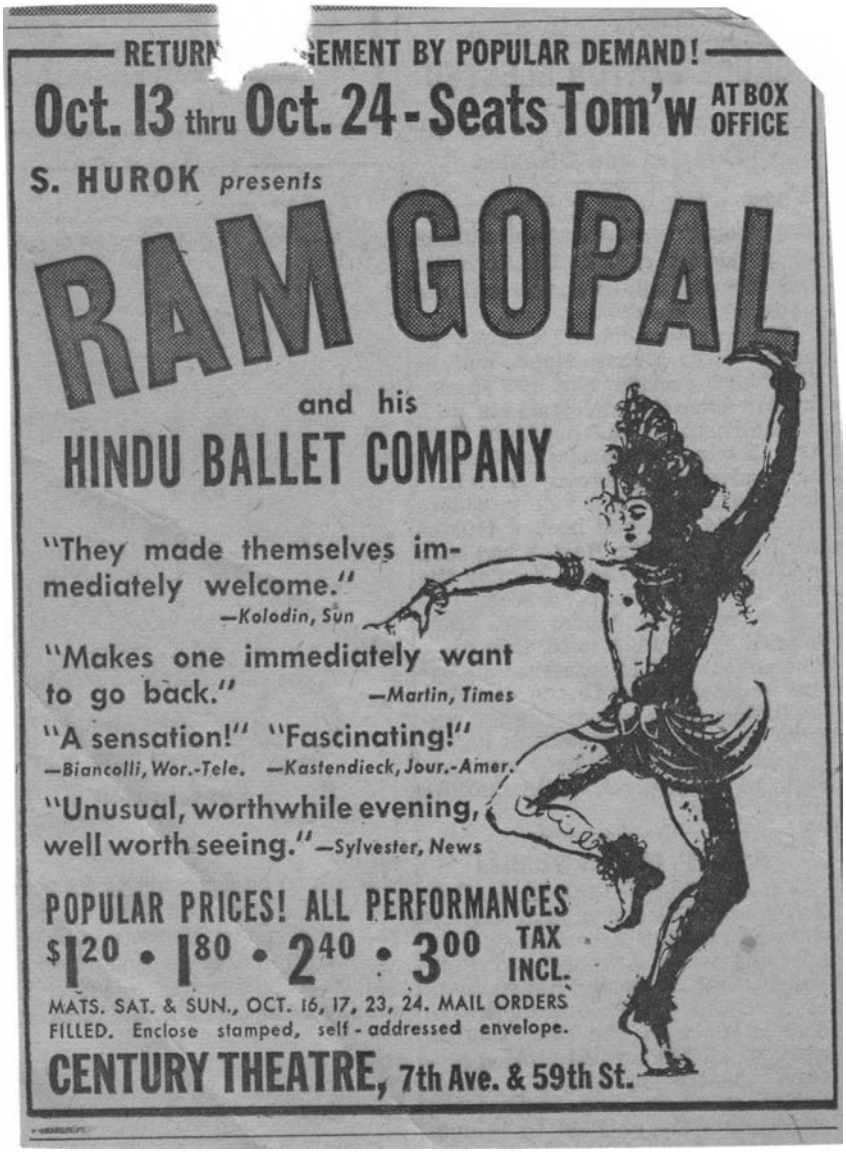

Figure 4.1 Newspaper advertisement, source unknown. Courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives.

for arranging his performances in Hawaii, California, and New York City.[14] As Gopal represented India at the 1948 International Dance Festival, Hurok added a dimension of the "East" to the slate's "Western" headliner group.

In his autobiography, Gopal mused romantically about his first trip to New York City in 1938 and what the city represented to him, thus: "And this was New York, soaring into the sky. How breath-taking it all was! New York was 'Today,' it was 'Now.' The East was 'Yesterday' . . . and all its thousands of years. Later, I found that Europe was the yesterday that influenced today's day. But New York was this very instant, this NOW. And how awed I became of its rhythm and its babble and movement and smell of power and money. But I loved it nevertheless" (1957, 62). Gopal brought together his physical experience of being in the city, amid the towering skyscrapers and masses of people, with his sense of the city's physical scope and contemporaneous relevance. His reminiscence conveyed the city's hold on his imagination, and how his trip and performances connected him to what he believed was the world of the present moment, full of possibility in artistic and transnational ways.

We can imagine that he felt similarly about the opportunity to appear again in New York City, this time invited by the Indian government and under the aegis of the international dance festival. Reflecting in his 1957 autobiography on the importance of his experience performing in New York City and the positive reception by some of the city's dance critics, Gopal wrote that the trip "only gave me one further ambition, and that was to carry the art from the fields of Europe to the vast continent of America and spread a further love and understanding of my country" (1957, 181). In this passage, Gopal envisioned himself as a cultural ambassador, presenting his country for view by outside eyes. Gopal saw these performances as opportunities for teaching Americans about India and for spreading international understanding, from which, he believed, goodwill would necessarily follow. A press release announcing Gopal's 1948 tour indicates how he framed the performance for his American audiences: "And now, after the most destructive war humanity has yet witnessed, Ram Gopal comes to dance for us, bringing with him like a great white light from the Himalayas all the truth, beauty, and philosophy of India, the cradle of so many civilizations and religions" (Gopal press release, 1948, 1948NYCMA). Presenting Gopal as the bearer of "great white light from the Himalayas," the release envisioned the dancer as a cultural emissary for the history and culture of India, and as a person whose luminous presence could bestow wisdom upon those who beheld his art.

Gopal's autobiographical and promotional writing indicates his self-identification with the cultural movement within India during the early twentieth century to resuscitate Indian classical dance.[15] In an unpublished promotional statement, for example, he called himself a "true representative of India," whose "burning desire to resuscitate the genuine and classical South Indian dances and present them artistically where they had been debased of all their authentic charm and vigor by indifferent dancers" led him to "devot[e] all his powers and skill to this task" (unpublished autobiographical notes, no date, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Gopal clippings file).[16]

Gopal's perception of the nature of his work as "resuscitation" resonates with both the revival of Indian classical dance and the restoration of Indian sovereignty in 1947. As dance historian Pallabi Chakravorty argues, "During the nationalist phase in the early twentieth century, the

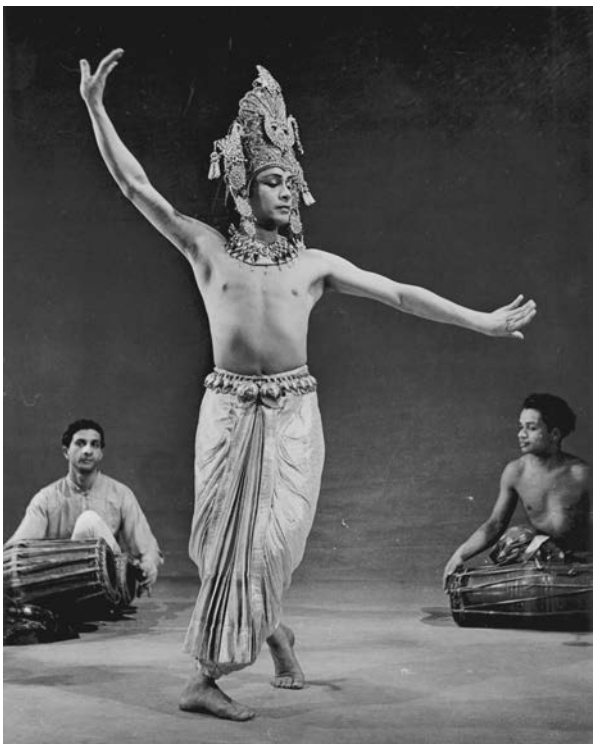

Figure 4.2 Ram Gopal, Royal Opera House, 1948; Photographer: Roger Wood. Courtesy of ArenaPAL; www.arenapal.com and Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

revival of Indian classical dance came to be associated intimately with the construction of India's national identity" (2000/2001, 111). As she sees it, "The discourses of 'East' and 'West' fused to form both the dominant ideology of classical Indian dance and a nationalist reconstruction of a linear progressive history for the incipient Indian nation-state" (2000/2001, 115).

Gopal's vision of his dance practices as forging connections between the East and the West was fundamentally intercultural in its purpose in furthering Western understanding of India and Indian culture through an engagement with Indian classical dance. In his 1957 autobiography, *Rhythm in the Heavens*, for instance, Gopal wrote: "I love the West. I am happy to be 'Westernised' as some Indians childishly accuse me. Of course I am Westernised, bridging the gap between East and West. I am gloriously Westernised. Being Westernised completes for me the circle of East and West and consequently gives me the added knowledge and harmony of being a complete human being" (x). Here he theorizes his diasporic identity as a crucial link between cultures and contexts. Further, Gopal's intercultural practices supported the causes of Indian classical dance revival.[17] As dance scholar Janet O'Shea explains with respect to the classical dance form bharata natyam, "Between 1923 and 1948, [p]erformers, critics and promoters brought bharata natyam to the urban proscenium stage, recontextualizing and renaming it. In doing so, they crafted a genealogy in which bharata natyam came to represent ancient tradition and critical experimentation, nationalism, regional identities, and the global transference of forms outside of geographical and cultural boundaries" (2007, 4). Gopal's articulation of his dance and performance practices in intercultural terms, as the means of cultivating respect for cultural differences across differing cultures, were continuous both with the larger revivalist movement and its ethos of leveraging global dispersal of classical Indian dance forms and international renown toward the projects of artistic and cultural legitimization and formal syncretization.

"STEPPING UP" THE DANCE

Gopal's advocation of his interculturalism however seems to have had little impact on his reception by US critics, who downplayed the ambassadorial aspects of his performances and focused instead on the extent to which his work met their aesthetic expectations.[18] In this case, Gopal's attention to the accessibility of his work to American audiences may have worked against favorable critical reception and estimation of the artistic value of his company's appearances. Analysis of the critical discourse

surrounding these performances reveals some perils associated with the presentation of international dance in a US postwar context and the barriers to the realization of globalist aspirations when ascriptions of value come into play.

As a measure of his effectiveness, critics held as reference points several key precedents including Gopal's earlier appearances in the city in 1938, when he made his debut at the 46th Street Theatre, as well as Uday Shankar's extensive American tour in the 1920s and 1930s, as bases for their assessment.[19] For example, reviewing two performances for the *New York Times*, John Martin framed his account of Gopal's opening-night as "only a brief first impression" due to the performance's double-booking against a bill for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo at the Metropolitan Opera House. Hedging, Martin explained that while his first impression was "generally a good one . . . [i]t is clear that the style of the performance has been considerably theatricalized for Western audiences." In his words: "Gopal seems quite different from the slip of a boy who appeared here in solo recitals ten years ago. He has more authority and much more showmanship." Martin called this a "stepping-up" process, finding an analogy in Gopal's incorporation of a microphone to amplify the sound of the "native orchestra." Ultimately, however, Martin judged the evening a success in that "this process of internationalization has not destroyed the poise and serenity of the Hindu dance. Indeed, seeing a small sample of the program makes one definitely want to go back for the rest of it" (October 1, 1948, 30).

However, in a subsequent review published on October 4, 1948, after having seen Gopal's entire program Martin doubled down on his criticism, identifying the salient elements of the performance as "color, exoticism, and a technical skill which even the layman can recognize." Martin trivialized the performance through an association with Orpheum-circuit vaudeville. "What it lacks to those of us who were deeply indoctrinated by Uday Shan-kar in his seasons among us, is elevation of tone," he wrote, continuing: "The nobility of the classic Hindu dance, its elegance of spirit, the sense of its having been handed down by Brahma himself to Bharata and his hundred sons in immemorial days, its sweet remoteness—all these things, dead for many a year until the recent revival, were recreated for us by the intuitive genius of Shan-kar in unforgettable fashion."[20] Martin's account resorted to nostalgic orientalism, in this case evaluating Gopal both against his own assumptions about what classical Indian dance should look like based on his experience of Shankar's past performances and also in terms of his understanding of its historical and cultural genealogies.[21] In this way, Martin raised Anglo-centric questions about Gopal's ability to representing India and Indian culture.[22]

Martin's reception of Gopal and the bases for his critique of his 1948 performances signal a problem for his theory of metakinesis, which postulated the phenomenon of what he called "inner mimicry" that could promote "sympathetic awareness" between diverse performers and audience members, leading thus to empathic feelings. Whereas the concept of metakinesis implies that any form of dance would possess the capacities of bringing people together, in this application Martin activated aesthetic and cultural hierarchies as a way of discriminating qualifications for these capacities. Clearly, while the theory of metakinesis could explain the potential of dance practices and performances to forge intercultural pathways of understanding and mutual goodwill, as we saw in the discussion of Asadata Dafora's performances in Chapter 3, the phenomenon of metakinesis did not occur universally or always, or, perhaps was a function in circumstances in which other factors were necessary to support its occurrence. The connections people feel when communicating in dance-based situations do not occur irrespective of their cultural context and/or the power relations of which they are part.

"TAK[ING] SOME LIBERTIES WITH TRADITION"

Not all critics who attended Gopal and his company's performances, however, subscribed to Martin's view. To wit, accounts of Gopal's performances written by Cecil Smith, critic for *Musical America*, and Walter Terry, are illuminating in the ways sought to imagine how dance could promote interculturalism.[23]

In watching Gopal and his company perform, Smith found much to admire. Calling into question the kind of critical shorthand Martin employed in elevating Shankar as the prototype for all approaches to Indian classical dancing, Smith sought to disabuse readers of the false assumption that "Indian dancing is careful, almost a precious form of art with little theatrical flair, and virtually no element of exhibition." To the contrary, he argued, "the falsity of this assumption was demonstrated from the start by the vigour and dramatic impact of Ram Gopal and his dancers, their magnificent wide use of space, and their unhesitating use of devices to startle the observer, to move his emotions, to keep his attention fresh" (quoted in Gopal 1957, 180–81). Describing the performance further he observed:

> There is nothing esoteric or withdrawn about Ram Gopal; he is not afraid to establish a rapport with his audience, or to let them see the technical difficulty

> as well as beauty of his art and nobody left the City Centre without realizing that he had seen a practitioner supreme in his field. Ram Gopal has opened a tremendous new world of dance and music to us and he is sure to develop a large and permanent following in this country (quoted in Gopal 1957, 181).

In contrast to Martin's reticence about Gopal's showmanship, Smith reveled in the interaction Gopal staged between the dancers and the audience, noting Gopal and his company's ability to "startle" and to "move" observers in ways that trained their attention on the freshness of his interpretation. Moreover, Smith praised the immediacy and directness of Gopal's approach and its value for introducing audiences to a "new world of dance and music."

Walter Terry reviewed two evenings, on one of which the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo was performing, and like Smith, he focused on the ability of Gopal and his dancers to forge connections of understanding.[24] In one review, Terry highlighted Gopal's artistic strategies of "tak[ing] some liberties with tradition in order to give some contemporary force and, perhaps, Occidental interest to some of his creations" ("Gopal," October 4, 1948). According to Terry, one of these strategies was a kind of lecture/demonstration format, in which "early in the program, [Gopal] provides his audience with a talk on the various kinds of Indian dance and demonstrates and explains those hand gestures which are to be employed as key symbols in the dances with considerable dramatic intensity." Another strategy had to do with the "current program," which Terry believed was "cannily arranged to make a highly stylized dance form, still alien to many theatre-goers, of immediate interest to the uninitiated." Yet another strategy had to do with Gopal's editing and manipulation of "traditional" material, in which "the basic techniques, the choreographic forms, the thematic materials are certainly authentic, but it seems probable that judicious cutting of traditional dances has been accomplished, accents sharpened and the manner of presentation theatricalized."

Through this account, Terry presented Gopal in conversation with his American audiences, viewing any "changes" that he might have made to the traditional presentation of the dances he performed as adaptations meant to spark "Occidental interest" in his work. He continued, calling this "the right of any creative artist and particularly of one who is aiding in the renascence of his country's national dance." Saying that the second performance was "skillful," on the whole, Terry underlined Gopal's artistic prerogative in determining his own relationship to tradition and in making decisions accordingly. That said, Terry did not hold back in expressing preferences for certain dances and performers over others. For

example, he lauded the "cool, reserved, and elegant" dances over the "highly decorative and virtuosic" ones." Moreover, Terry found the "costumes and elements of décor" to be "handsome and colorful," if "garish" at times, "with profusions of rhinestones leading the way." In other words, Terry faulted the aspects of Gopal's performances that he found excessive and flamboyant, and praised instead the toned down and reserved, and the individualistic. On this count, Terry's criticism echoed that of Martin in finding fault with the more over-the-top aspects of Gopal's pageantry, and in being drawn to a more understated approach.

In both reviews, Terry singled out a performer named Shevanti, a soloist with the company. Reviewing the company's first performance, he exclaimed that "Shevanti . . . was the surprise of the performance," likening her to "a dream of dance beauty. Softly lyric, fluid of motion yet suggesting latent fire, she made one quickly forgetful of technique, of alien style and swept the beholder, kinesthetically at least, into the quiet ecstasy, the happy serenity of her dancing" ("The Ballet," October 1, 1948). Reviewing the company's second performance, Terry praised Shevanti for her "technical skill" and more for her "personal style of dance which is wonderfully lyric, serene, and effortless, yet curiously dynamic" ("Gopal," October 4, 1948). In both of these accounts, Terry described occasions when he was moved by the performance of the dancer so as to be "swept" into a kind of intercultural duet, whereby East meets West, made possible through kinesthesia and approximating closeness with the performing other. The ideas Terry expressed about the ways in which Shevanti's dancing broke barriers of cultural difference are consistent with this theorization of the capacities of dance to serve as an "agent" that could promote "unity" and encourage commonality. In this case, Terry's remarks about Shevanti articulated in other terms his core beliefs, discussed in the Introduction to this book, that the body in motion possessed capacities to transform experiences of alienation into moments in which participants might recognize their shared humanity via corporeality, or "that property which is common to all" (December 9, 1946).

Taken as a whole, the criticism surrounding Gopal and his company's performances shows critics trying to reconcile their own standards for artistic objectives with Gopal's aims of cultural diplomacy through dance. Reviews of Gopal's work provide insight into the calculations that went into ascriptions of significance and bring to light contradictions within globalist thinking as they applied to the uses of dance performance to achieve intercultural ends. Seen in these ways, Gopal's performances at the 1948 International Dance Festival satisfied mutually beneficial and intertwining objectives in which his pursuit of cultural diplomacy through

dance could be married to the globalist aims of festival organizers, while, at the same time, furthering the aims of the Indian classical dance revival movement toward the internationalization of Indian creative and cultural practices.

AN AMBASSADOR FOR INDIA

Throughout this book, when possible, I have attempted to heed the imperative advanced by theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in finding ways of including sources that "answer one back," adding complexity to my own interpretations and also posing challenges to other dominant voices in the discourses surrounding them. This makes me wonder, what was Gopal's position? While his autobiographical and promotional writing provides some perspective on his objectives and preferred means of pursuing them artistically and rhetorically, it is still difficult to construct where he stood relative to the public discussions about the meanings and significance of his 1948 performances. Besides what is available in the sources I have discussed, the artist's discourse is essentially private at this juncture; however, materials I procured during my research for this project having to do with Gopal's third trip to the United States in 1954 when he performed at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival shed light on Gopal's own positioning within the critical debate over the value and significance of his artistic and ambassadorial work and the ways in which he himself made meaning of his labors. These sources reveal the rationale behind his own calculus of the value of his artistic contributions, on the one hand, and the ways in which they fit into the overall schema of so-called ethnologic dance performance at mid-century.

Of interest is correspondence between Ted Shawn and Gopal, negotiating the terms of Gopal's contract and organizing his travel plans prior to his trip to Jacob's Pillow. Shawn and Gopal had already worked out the terms of one contract, which Gopal has accepted and signed. In a letter dated May 2, 1954, Gopal introduced complications and stated his desire to renegotiate terms (TSJPA). From Gopal's perspective there were three basic issues. One had to do with the commission Shawn offered him for his performance at Jacob's Pillow. Representing himself thus, "I want the best, for the best, giving the best," Gopal made an argument that Shawn's offer was not an adequate compensation for an artist of his stature. In Gopal's words, "The terms offered to you for me by the hotels and other organisations are far too little for a dancer of my standing." Gopal continues, "Should I dance before the big Theatre of the glorious American public

I cannot appear LESS than Shankar or others from My country, and must consequently be presented with as much care, forethought and planning and in a manner that will do my 15 years of pioneering and devotion full justice, less than that I would not, could not, under my artistic principles appear" (emphasis original). In these passages, Gopal revealed his rationale for requesting a higher commission for his performance. In both cases, Gopal underlined his "standing" as an artist as a way of conveying his worthiness of more generous remuneration. In the latter case, however, Gopal coupled this appeal with a reference to "Shankar or others from My country," suggesting his awareness of Shankar's precedent on critical and audience perception of the value of his own work and perhaps hoping to use his accommodations as accoutrements in order to elevate the American impression of his stature.

Another related point of contention regarding the commission had to do with the financial parameters Shawn placed on Gopal's plan to bring a personal assistant, Mr. Serafin Kycia, of Polish descent, with him to the states.[25] Shawn had initially offered to allow Gopal to bring Kycia to Jacob's Pillow with him, providing them both free room and board at the festival, and $1,000, a fee that Shawn estimated was enough for round trip transportation and other living expenses besides the artist's fee. Shawn had also offered to try to set up other arrangements for Gopal to tour the United States giving lecture demonstrations after his appearance at Jacob's Pillow as a way of generating more income for Gopal than Shawn himself could guarantee, but this option never came to fruition. The request for a personal assistant was in keeping with Gopal's socioeconomic stature in India. The son of a prominent Brahman barrister in Bangalore, his family had connections to the well-to-do throughout the country.[26] As Gopal explained in another letter, dated June 26, 1954, "I always have and always WILL need an assistant" (emphasis original, TSJPA).[27]

The third issue revolved around Gopal's request for more money after having signed his initial contract; herewith he communicated an impression that he felt he was being underpaid, while, at the same time, requesting that Shawn build in additional compensation for the cost of travel and accommodations for his assistant. Shawn had factored all of this into his original offer. This did not sit well with Shawn, who responded:

> Now you ask that we increase the amount paid you by al[m]ost one half again of the original offer! This is an experience unprecedented in my long career of dealing with hundreds of the most famous dancers of the world. . . . In no case has any artist ever asked for more money after they had received my offer and agreed to it, as you did by cable and letter—dated December 29, 1953. . . . Let

> me remind you that Jacob's Pillow is entirely an educational institution, and has no endowment. . . . This is not a commercial, profit-making theater. . . . I think I have shown from the beginning that I am willing to do anything in my power to help you—and I have given proof of that already. But I cannot do what is beyond my power. I am counting on you to fulfill your contract with Jacob's Pillow, and make such adjustments regarding your assistant as are in keeping with your own financial situation. . . . We still hope that further engagements will come through which will justify your bringing your assistant, but for the Jacob's Pillow engagement itself, he is not necessary, no matter how desirable or convenient it may be for you to bring him (emphasis original, letter dated June 15, 1954, TSJPA).

On one hand, it is possible to see this exchange over Gopal's remuneration as a battle of two strong personalities, both of whom were convinced of their own authority and the power of their reasoning and stature to influence the other. We certainly see this in Shawn's appeal to his own "long career of dealing with hundreds of the most famous dancers of the world" as a counter to Gopal's references to his "15 years of pioneering and devotion." On the other hand, however, it is possible to see the terms of this exchange to be signifiers of cultural difference. Take for example, Shawn's emphasis on the "non-profit" nature of Jacob's Pillow as a ballast to Gopal's expectation that his importance be recognized through generous accommodations and production values.

Cultural differences are also evident in the men's exchange about the necessity for a personal assistant. Whereas this was something to which Gopal was accustomed, Shawn thought it to be an extravagance. In his words:

> I do appreciate, as an artist, that is agreeable to have an assistant. But in 1947, after a career which involved many assistants—a whole staff most of the time—I went to Australia absolutely alone and danced 47 solo performances, lectured and taught—using an Australian pianist, and Australian dancers for my performances. La Meri has performed many, many times at Jacob's Pillow using recordings as accompaniment for her dances, and we have furnished her with people to help her make costume changes. Bringing an assistant is in the nature of a luxury unless there are other engagements which pay enough to cover that extra expense (emphasis original, letter dated June 15, 1954, TSJPA).

Shawn's incredulity regarding Gopal's insistence about bringing a personal assistant, shown not only in his tone but also in providing examples (himself and La Meri) of how it was possible to function without one,

evidences what could be seen as socioeconomic and cultural divides between Gopal's "Old World" and Shawn's "New World" sensibilities and experiences.

It is interesting that in his correspondence with Shawn, Gopal went out of his way to underline his and Mr. Kycia's political neutrality, signaling the pressure of Cold War realities and Kycia's Polish ancestry:

> Neither Mr. Kycia nor I have ever been interested in any sort of political opinions either one way or another, left right or center. Any information and reference YOUR AUTHORITIES may want from the HIGHEST in the land I shall obtain. But I assure you that neither I nor anybody working with me in both Europe or India has ever been a Communist, or a member of any political party. Mr. Kycia has been in England for ten years, and in the Polish Army in England under British command, which is rabidly ANTI-COMMUNIST! He has his full police attendance record, i.e. each time he has shifted his address in London alone. In addition, every single move and occupation of his has been under the strictest supervision and drilling of the authorities here both political and civil. So you can see he is quite covered. And I don't think there will be the slightest difficulty from your side or ours (emphasis original, letter dated May 2, 1954, TSJPA).

Gopal's decision to emphasize certain words by capitalizing every letter, such as "YOUR AUTHORITIES," gives the impression that perhaps he was writing as much—or perhaps more—for federal immigration and naturalization authorities as he was for the purposes of reassuring Shawn that neither he nor Mr. Kycia had any communist ties or leanings.

As it turns out, Gopal did ultimately bring his assistant, as is evidenced by a letter dated June 30, 1954, from Charles F. Quinlan, Chief, Entry, Departure Section for the United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service to Ted Shawn approving Shawn's request to "import for 60 days Ram Gopal and Serafin Kycia as dancers and instructors." And Shawn did increase Gopal's rate of pay slightly from $1,000 to $1,200 (Statement of Account, August 12, 1954, TSJPA).

On another note, close reading of the correspondence reveals the different perceptions of the two men when it came to discerning the value of performers and/or performances of ethnologic dance. This is manifest not only in the ways in which Shawn put Gopal in the same category as himself and La Meri in the discussion of the need for a personal assistant, but also in a discussion that followed Shawn's offer to enlarge Gopal's ensemble by including in Gopal's performance several dancers trained by La Meri. Perhaps owing to Gopal's experience with La Meri, to which I alluded in

the Introduction, Gopal was not keen on this idea replying: "Regarding the two American girls who have learnt *some sort of Oriental dancing* from La Meri and others I would like very much to see first if they are up to the required standard, i.e. Classical Bharata Natya, Kathak, and Kathakali (emphasis mine)?" Gopal continued in this vein: "I would like to show the American People the very purest and BEST from my humble efforts and would not like to make a false move in any way" (letter dated May 2, 1954, TSJPA).

Gopal's cynicism about the provenance of the dancers schooled by La Meri, and the adequacy of their training, underlined a distinction Gopal sought to make between his and La Meri's approach to the performance of the classical Indian repertoire. Gopal insinuated that performances of non-native artists, such as La Meri, were less valid that his own, which "ha[d] the backing from the Govt. and others to bring you a FULL STRENGTH NATIONAL co. to the States." Gopal continued that he wished to "give something worthwhile instead of the sort of stuff that other worthy artists had attempted to show of their OWN interpretation of India, rather than the Classical dances themselves" (*sic*, emphasis original). In these exchanges with Shawn, Gopal underlined his legitimacy as a national cultural ambassador, as an artist who had received the support and endorsement of the Indian government.

Relative to the sequence of the argument developed in this book, note that around 1957, with Gopal's letter to Shawn as an example, we are seeing heightened expectations that there be a correspondence between performers' national, racial, and/or ethnic identity and their approach to their work. Gopal's logic underlines the perceived qualitative difference between cultural dance forms presented as "themselves" and "interpretive" impressions of those forms presented by cultural outsiders. His argument suggests that cultural shifts had occurred that would delegitimize the kinds of travelogue-format programs that had been presented at the American Museum of Natural History during the *Around the World with Dance and Song* series between 1943 and 1952 in which dance artists such as La Meri had been authorized to, in effect, take viewers on regional or global tours through the performance of multiple regional dance forms in a given evening. Gopal's reference to his own authorization to act as a representative of his nation of birth suggests that, at least according to him, certain standards and protocols had to be observed in considering who was authorized to "speak" on behalf of others and/or to serve in the capacity of cultural ambassador. From the perspective of hindsight, and given some of La Meri's last written words expressing her misery at feeling misunderstood and unappreciated at the end of her life, it is possible

to see Gopal's logic as a harbinger of things to come. Certainly, by the early 1960s, standards for accountability had been raised for artists within the field of ethnic dance, concerning their accuracy in matters of cultural appropriation in the sourcing and utilization of material outside their cultural experience and/or heritage, on the one hand, and any self-authorization to speak for, to represent, and/or to stand in for cultural others, on the other.

That said, there is a twist where Gopal is concerned. As noted, Gopal saw himself as an ambassador for India, an artist who dedicated his life to interpreting India to Western audiences and who sought to hold other artists accountable for what he believed were their weak interpretations of his country. Yet, as we have seen in the critical reception of his 1948 performances in the international dance festival, his approach to his own cultural production did not necessarily endear him to Western critics, who doubted his cultural authenticity.

And Gopal suffered similar critical misunderstandings during this period in India as well. A positive review from an American critic like that of Cecil Smith of *Musical America* could provoke negative reaction in his home country as it appeared to offer evidence that he had somehow sold out to Western expectations of what Indian classical dance was like, even within the scope of the debate in the United States about the "authenticity" of his work compared to that of Shankar. According to dance scholar Lena Hammergren, Indian critics at that time and since questioned the "Indianness" of Gopal's work compared to dance practices emerging from the revival of classical Indian dance in the 1940s (2009, 19–26). An obituary by Leela Venkataraman illustrates this view: "Ram Gopal's dance transcended gender and regional boundaries. Turned out in exotic costumes, in all probability designed by Western garment experts, Ram Gopal's dance represented not so much a form like Bharatanatyam, Kathak or Kathakali, as an essential Indianness he was trying to convey to western audiences" (2003).

Venkataraman's interpretation suggests that Gopal, in ways not unlike La Meri, was caught in a time of changing cultural conceptions and standards for performances of Indian classical dance. He was confronted by double standards springing as much from shifting cultural notions about what authenticity in ethnic dance performance looked like as from evolving expectations of audience members and critics for artistic positioning within and relative to an artist's treatment of movement materials and cultural content. Venkataraman's observation also speaks to ways in which the ethnic might become the modernist, as the problem between collective creations, geared toward the preservation and/or maintenance

of cultural traditions, and modernist artistry, stressing the innovation and insight of the individual artist, was one of cultural specificity versus the relation of forms to their essence, a modernist precept.[28] We have seen this tension several times in this book: with choreographers Pearl Primus and José Limón, discussed in Chapter 1, as each had a different relationship to performing works relating to his or her racial and/or ethnic heritage at the American Museum of Natural History; in questions of La Meri's modernism treated in Chapter 2; and in debates over how to assess Asadata Dafora's contributions to the formation of Africanist dance formations in American concert dance detailed in Chapter 3.

CHARLES WEIDMAN: "AMERICA'S LEADING MALE DANCER"

Ironically, in a dance festival schedule meant to showcase the rich diversity of dance from around the world, *New York Times* dance critic John Martin considered American Charles Weidman's one-night appearance the brightest spot.[29] If the case of Weidman is any indication, the performances and presence of international guests during the 1948 International Dance Festival aided in the articulation and formation of an American cultural identity produced in contrast to their embodiment of "foreignness."

Falling within the run of the Paris Opera Ballet, and occurring just before the four appearances of Ram Gopal and His Hindu Ballet, Weidman performed on Monday evening, September 27, 1948.[30] His billing appears to have been slotted into the schedule on perhaps the most undesirable day of the week and for the least possible number of nights, compared to the multi-date runs of the other two companies. My research has not turned up any reviews of Weidman's performances other than Martin's. Nor have I any clues as to why an American choreographer was included in the slate for the 1948 International Dance Festival or discovered a rationale for Weidman's selection by festival organizers as the single representative from the United States. If Martin's reviews are any indication, however, any handicap Weidman may have experienced given the billing of his performance does not appear to have had a negative impact on his ultimate critical reception. To the contrary, Martin's rave reviews of Weidman portrayed him as coming out ahead by comparison to his competition for the spotlight. Study of Martin's reception of Weidman's performance at the festival in the contexts of other media attention Weidman received in 1947 and 1948 and debates within the dance field regarding the role of men in dance reveal aesthetic and political dynamics that might otherwise

be invisible, namely, nationalistic themes ascribed to Weidman at a moment presumably dedicated to celebrating the virtues of diversity in the United States.

Considered one of the pioneers of American modern dance, Weidman grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska, an aspiring architect or historian, whose fortune turned on seeing a performance by Ruth St. Denis when he was fourteen.[31] Soon after, he moved to California to study at the Denishawn School, eventually becoming a member of the Denishawn Company, where he met Doris Humphrey. With Humphrey, he founded and directed the Humphrey-Weidman Company in 1927, performing with her and creating work for the company until 1945 (*Dance Magazine*, September 1975, 10–11). Drafted into the armed forces in 1942, Weidman contributed to the war effort briefly (Lloyd 1949, 119). Summing up his accomplishments in these years, Valerie Vogrin writes: "Following the lead of Ted Shawn, Weidman made significant strides in creating and expanding a place for male dancers in modern dance, getting men involved to begin with, developing an exceptionally successful system of technical exercises, and then creating some of the best roles for them" (1998, 818). One of these men, José Limón, would become Weidman's lover (Murphy 2000).

Weidman had a reputation for lightness; his comedic touch appealed to the more popular sensibility among dance audiences. His work treated Americana fare in accessible ways, never taking itself too seriously. Prior to the 1948 season and his appearance at the international dance festival, Weidman was perhaps best known for Americana works such as *Flickers* (1941), *On My Mother's Side* (1940), *And Daddy Was a Fireman* (1943); the first was a mimetic spoof of early silent movies and the latter two were nostalgic looks at his early childhood and family life growing up in Nebraska. Weidman reflected on his approach to portraying familiar themes in accessible ways in an essay he published in 1951 entitled "Random Remarks." Here he discusses his artistic objectives and commitment to finding ways of communicating with audiences regardless of their experience in artistic circles or with modern dance specifically. As he put it: "I have always been impatient with the 'art pour l'artist.' Clarity and understandability has remained the basis of my dance creations. Their intent, concerned with human values and the experience of our times, must be carried by the fullest emotional impact the artist can muster" (Weidman [1951] 1966, 52). To accomplish his goals of intelligibility Weidman often used pantomime. According to Martin, "[Weidman] has always worked best and most significantly, both as a dancer and choreographer, in terms of movement that derives from pantomime. . . . It is by no means realistic pantomime when he gets through with it, for he takes

actual gesture and reduces it to its very essence as movement" (Martin quoted in Hodgson 1975, 35 and 72).

Weidman's commitment to making his work accessible to broad audiences set him at odds with the forces driving many of his choreographic counterparts in modern dance at the time, who cultivated sophisticated followings. In fact, in spite of the few works that took on matters of consequence, such as *Lynchtown* (1936) and *A House Divided* (1945), both of which confronted issues of racial injustice, Weidman's preference for comedy and employment of pantomime cast him as a lightweight compared to Doris Humphrey (with whom he worked most closely) and, perhaps more significantly, ascendant colleagues such as Martha Graham and José Limón, whose treatment of consequential subject matter and serious tones were pitch-perfectly aligned with the sobriety of the immediate postwar years (Kowal 2010).[32] Weidman fashioned himself as a corrective to these approaches to modern dance that he considered to be opaque and off-putting, thus offering work that stood in contrast to those associated with high modernism.

Comments Limón made about Weidman, published in *An Unfinished Memoir*, illuminate Weidman's outlier status within the field at the time. Recalling his "tutelary decade with Humphrey-Weidman," of Weidman Limón wrote: "Toward the end of the 1930s Charles permitted himself to be seduced by the siren song of Broadway, and it was perhaps inevitable that his product, as the decade approached its close, should suffer" (1999, 73).[33] From here, Limón made a correlation between the "different economic circumstances" that led [Doris] Humphrey and Weidman to making different choices regarding the accessibility of their work to popular audiences. Limón argued that because Weidman had "to support himself and his endeavors," he went the more commercial route, which Limón believed compromised Weidman's aesthetic development and status as an artist. Limón saw this in contrast to Humphrey's "fortune[e] in having the support of her husband, Charles Woodford," a situation that afforded her "the privilege of undiluted, uncontaminated art" and which "quite automatically insulated her from the blandishments of commerce" (1999, 73).[34]

Perhaps aware of his colleagues' assumptions about the reasons behind his aesthetic choices, Weidman presented another version in his own writing. In his essay "Random Remarks," Weidman defended his use of pantomime not on the basis of its accessibility but because of the ways it allowed him to make physical connections between movement and the world of human beings and "reality."[35] As he put it: "Art demands that we be part of life and merge with it. Art and life are as indivisible an entity as the artist and his audience" (Weidman [1951] 1966, 54). Of interest is Weidman's

concept that pantomime is "the transport of an idea into movement." Seeking to combat notions about his work that equated pantomime with demonstration, literalness, or storytelling Weidman articulated the ways pantomime functioned both as a mode of abstraction and as an adherence to "strict form" (Weidman [1951] 1966, 53). Additionally, in his essay Weidman explained the role of humor in his work. Whereas he admitted that "in the beginning," he employed humor of the "obvious" and "satiric kind . . . the effect of which is almost guaranteed with every audience," he reflected that "with time, I was continually looking for a broader expression of what I wanted to achieve, and I attempted to abstract the essence of any emotion projected through movement" (Weidman [1951] 1966, 53).

The debate over the substance and meanings of Weidman's work, illuminated both by Limón's remarks and Weidman's reflections, is salient because it reveals both the aesthetic politics within his intimate relationship with Limón, and, more broadly speaking, Weidman's standing relative to his colleagues in the modern dance field. In these contexts, Weidman attempted to address a perception expressed by Limón and perhaps shared by others, that he had sold out to commercial interests, and, as a result, the quality of his "product" had "suffered." In his own defense, Weidman sought to point out that, contrary to expectation, his approach to composition was up to the task of rendering observations about the human condition just as much or more so because of its folksy and relatable tone and representation of the travails and foibles of ordinary people, rather than those of heroic or monumental historical and/or mythic figures.

With the quality and substance of Weidman's work being debated, one wonders why he was selected by festival organizers to appear at the 1948 International Dance Festival, especially when there were other American modern dance choreographers working at the time whose careers were on the ascent. Was it perhaps the very accessibility of Weidman's work and its light-hearted portrayal of Americana that raised his stock as the American representative, the one to represent America to American audiences?

The year 1948 brought Weidman increased attention in the mainstream American press surrounding performances of his work *Fables for Our Time*. His production of the work supported by a Guggenheim Fellowship, Weidman premiered the dance at Jacob's Pillow in the summer of 1947, then performed it in New York City at the Mansfield Theater on Broadway, April 19–24, 1948, and at the 1948 International Dance Festival.[36]

Whereas his early works had presented visions of pre-war regionalist folkways, *Fables* took a lighthearted look at human foibles and faux pas. The work drew the attention of *Life* magazine, which profiled the dance and the artist in April 1948 in an article entitled "Fables in Dance."[37]

Figure 4.3 Charles Weidman, Felisa Conde, Marc Breaux, Betty Osgood, Betts Lee, Sherry Traver, in "The Owl Who Was God" from *Fables for Our Time*, rehearsal at the Mansfield Theatre. 1948. Photographer: Fred Fehl. Photo courtesy of Gabriel Pinksi. Image #57691270. Courtesy of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Picking up on the themes Weidman himself espoused, the article in *Life* constructed a dichotomous picture of American modern dance, in which "dance lovers" faced two radically different realities on a visit to the theater: one, filled with tension, in which they engaged in a hermeneutic analysis of a work, "trying to figure out what is going on," and another, in which they could "sit back and relax," enjoying works treating "themes [that] are familiar and American." The magazine's reference to "Freudian significance in the Greek chorus," and "repressed desire," in characterizing the first option, are almost surely callouts to Martha Graham's recent mythic works, such as *Dark Meadow* (1946), *Night Journey* (1947), or *Errand into the Maze* (1947) to which it found Weidman's compositional and communicative approach a direct opposite (April 19, 1948, 79).[38]

In her 1948 profile of Weidman in *Dance Magazine*, critic Doris Hering highlighted Weidman's accessibility in declaring him "America's Leading Male Dancer." Her article characterized Weidman as an artist of the people, whose "annual transcontinental tour[s]" brought him in contact with "the people of America . . . the people in large towns, small towns, high school auditoriums, and concert halls" (1948, 19). As if referring to a politician, Hering described Weidman's audiences' fond reception of him thus: "They

welcomed him as a dancer who speaks to them a language they can understand completely and respond to warmly" (Hering 1948, 19). In fact, Hering portrayed Weidman as a populist artist who met audiences where they were. Reflecting on Weidman's "bearing" relative to his audiences, Hering wrote: "He still has the gentle humility of one who has much to learn and who satirizes keenly but never unkindly" (19). As quoted in the article, Weidman himself spoke to this intention thus: "I have no desire to mystify my audience—to send them home with a glazed look in their eyes. I try to be completely clear and choose themes that are drawn from the fabric of America." These portrayals of Weidman contributed to a discourse that fashioned him as an "American" choreographer for the people: a modern artist, yes, but also a plainspoken man of the nation's heartland. Finding affinities between Weidman's Americanness and his masculinity, this fashioning glossed over other truths about Weidman that would have undercut this image: he was bisexual, and also he was a dancer—and dancing was a profession assumed by the public to be for effeminate men.

Along with his male counterparts in modern dance, Weidman had attempted to counter these assumptions for years. Dance historian Julia L. Foulkes, who studied Weidman in the context of other male dancers such as Ted Shawn and José Limón, argues: "Either as a group of robust men dancing in tight trunks or paired with women, these male dancers epitomized a kind of manliness on stage that was far removed from common notions of queer effeminacy" (2002, 95).[39] In a world in which "queerness" was coded through a man's exhibition of effeminate behavior, a phenomenon at the time referred to as "gender inversion," it was possible to appear "straight" through the performance of one's identity as such. In the case of these dancers, we might observe, in Foulkes's words, a "detachment" of "masculinity from heterosexuality [which begins] . . . to unravel the definition of homosexuality based on gender inversion" (2002, 95). To combat the perception that all men in dance were effeminate, and therefore homosexual, many male dancers, including Weidman, "embraced virile dance in response" (80).[40] "Virile dance" could be manifested through hyper-masculinity, expressed through coded movement meant to exhibit a dancer's power and strength or simply vested in the potency displayed by a dancer's athletic physique. These and other expressions of hyper-masculinity in dance contexts aligned the performance of gender with gender identity through the embodiment of a stereotypical masculinity.

Populism was another strategy cultivated by choreographers such as Weidman, Shawn, and Lester Horton to counterbalance societal assumptions that dancing made men effeminate. As Walter Terry wrote of Shawn, "He brings the most understandable art to the greatest number of people"

(Terry quoted in Foulkes 2002, 99). Aligning themselves with the "common man," these choreographers adopted the mantle of anti-elitist accessibility as a way of bolstering their male credentials through an appeal to their own white masculinity. As Foulkes points out, this often involved mocking the seriousness of female choreographic counterparts, either directly or obliquely; by setting up women as foils, they amplified their aesthetic differences—code for their gender differences.

In the early Cold War years, some male dancers redoubled their efforts to refute social assumptions about the effeminacy of men in dance. In doing so, they sought to uncouple their unconventional identities as gay male dancers with notions of sexual deviance and anti-democratic tendencies (Kowal 2010, 72–75). José Limón's 1948 article "The Virile Dance" embraced the issue head-on in an attempt to normalize, and ultimately to valorize, his chosen profession. Here, Limón asserts that "the male of the human species has always been a dancer." He continued: "Whether as a monarch, hunter, priest, philosopher, or tiller of the soil, the atavistic urge to dance was in him and he gave it full expression" (1948, 21). With these words, Limón sought to undo ideas about the male path to dance as being out of the ordinary and only for those who felt the need to deviate from the kinds of careers associated with masculinity. Here Limón imagines a role for the male dancer as a hero who could "affirm man's sanity and dance it," placing him in the context of a world in which the "extinction" of mankind could occur.[41] As the ultimate sign of the truth of his words, he envisions the president of the United States as a dancer "lead[ing] the nation in a solemn dance on great occasions" (1948, 21). Sadly, Limón's article is not without its own expression of sexism in its portrayal of men's advancement in the field of "serious dance" as a zero-sum game. As Limón's saw it, men's artistic pursuits had been hampered both by the "economic factor," whereby men have "gravitate[d] to more lucrative aspects of dance, in musical comedies and the films, which certainly do not encourage serious creative efforts," and by the dominance of women, who "have fallen heir to the wealth and power of this nation" by dint of their ability to marry into privilege and use their husbands as their economic patrons.

CHARLES WEIDMAN: "DANCER FOR AMERICA"

Seen in the Cold War context of homophobic anxiety about male gender inversion, we might view populism and "virile dance" as interlocking and reinforcing strategies whereby white male dancers could leverage their identities as Anglo men of the American heartland against the perceived

threat of their homosexuality, a mode of containment of communism from within. From this vantage point, we might consider Limón's appeal to "virile dance" as a double masking, as a means of creating cover both for his Latin heritage and his bisexuality, either or both of which could have disadvantaged him and made him a target of discrimination and/or suspicion.[42] The discourse concerning virility and populism in art and in life form a backdrop against which to examine Charles Weidman's role in the 1948 International Dance Festival.[43]

On the festival program, Weidman and his company performed four extant American-themed works from his repertory—*A House Divided*, *Lynchtown, And Daddy Was a Fireman*, and *Flickers*—along with *Fables for Our Time*, a relatively new work Weidman had premiered at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in the Summer of 1947.[44] Reviewing the performance for the *New York Times* on September 28, 1948, Martin exclaimed: "Let it be reported straightaway that Mr. Weidman and his colleagues upheld the honor of the nation and are hereby nominated for a Congressional medal. . . . [O]ur one lone native crack at the international festival was a good one, and it is with a clear conscience that this evening we can give it back to the French and Indians" ("Weidman Scores at Ballet Fete"). Martin reviewed the piece performed at the festival as well, noting that "The Thurber "Fables" came too late for this reviewer to see them, but a report related from the front was favorable. For the four other numbers there is nothing but praise; they have never been better done" (September 28, 1948, 31). Apparently not having even seen this rendition of *Fables*, Martin used his endorsement of Weidman's performance as an opportunity to express patriotic pride by questioning the impulse to sponsor international performers whose work he deemed inferior to dance made in the United States and the expense of bringing foreign companies "all the way from Europe, when right here at home we have the master of the medium and . . . an excellent company supporting him" (September 28, 1948).[45]

As John Martin was the only critic to review Weidman's performance at the 1948 International Dance Festival, his perspective is instructive at this juncture. This is not because it could be seen as exemplary in the absence of other reviews of the same performance but because of the questions it allows us to consider regarding the cultural and political significance of Weidman's performance. As an impetus toward the conclusion of this book, this section entertains what appears to me to be a quintessential paradox: What did Weidman's performance have to do with staging globalism and with dancing the world smaller?

In an obvious way, performing at the 1948 International Dance Festival as "America's leading man" helped Weidman advance his career and

Figure 4.4 Marc Breaux, Saida Gerrard, and Carl Morris in "The Unicorn in the Garden" from *Fables for Our Time*. 1947. Photographer: Edward Hedges. Image #57691265. Courtesy of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

choreographic bona fides. Given the rise of other choreographers in modern dance, such as Martha Graham and José Limón, who were associated with high modernism in the dance field, Weidman's selection is notable. In fact, Graham and Limón were among the first choreographers supported by the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA) Dance Panel to tour abroad under the aegis of the US Department of State as goodwill and cultural ambassadors; Limón and his company performed throughout Latin America between December 1954 and January 1955. Funded through the Emergency Fund for International Affairs, established by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1953, ANTA was an arm of the

United States Information Agency (USIA) (Kowal 2010, 36; see also Prevots 1998; Croft 2015).

In each of these cases, modern dance was deployed to demonstrate American artistic prowess and the superiority of American modern arts. Weidman's selection for participation in the 1948 international dance festival would have been consistent with the elevated standing of modern dance during the postwar years. The dance form had come into its own, so to speak, as an artistic practice in the early twentieth century. In fact, modern dance, along with jazz, was seen as one of the original indigenous American art forms (Martin 2000). By mid-century, modern dance had become increasingly institutionalized in its adoption in curricula of colleges and universities across the nation and with the establishment of networks of patronage in theaters and by the nation-state itself (Kowal 2010, 9).

And yet decisions about who would perform where and before whom illuminate important differences to consider among these cases. A Dance Panel meeting memo from January 13, 1955, records members discussing Weidman's *Fables of Our Time* for possible touring. It reads: "Drama Panel recommended we ask Dance Panel's opinion of this. Panel feels he is not representative, therefore not approved" (memo dated January 13, 1955, ANTA). The fact that Weidman was not endorsed for touring abroad through ANTA suggests that for those making decisions about funding for touring for the purposes of cultural diplomacy, there were differences between representing America for American audiences at home, in this case in the context of an international dance festival such as the one in 1948, as Weidman did, compared to representing America to audiences abroad, such as was the case for Graham and Limón. In other words, the discrepancy suggests that there is a difference between the America the organizers of the 1948 international dance festival sought to portray at home and the America the ANTA panelists (as proxies for the US State Department) sought to portray abroad.

One way of looking at ANTA's decision not to fund Weidman has to do with the persona he cultivated as embodying an American "everyman," and his populist approach. As a white, Midwestern male, Weidman stood for a kind of mythic American way of life: simple, straightforward, uncomplicated, bold, and removed from the cultural urbane.[46] And yet given his bisexuality Weidman did not completely fit this mold. Due to Weidman's gender nonconformity, it is possible that his masculinity, and perhaps even his Americanness, might come into question due to the relative weakness of his gender performance compared to the masculine norm.

In "Closets Full of Dances," Susan L. Foster identifies pantomimic depictions of male-associated activities as strategies male modern dance

choreographers used as a means of passing as straight (2001, 163). In Weidman's case, as much as pantomime served as a central semiotic communicative mode in his work, it also created a haven for his gender difference in providing alternative avenues for his physical expression of identity. In fact, works such as *On My Mother's Side* and *And Daddy was a Fireman* explored themes of gender identity within the context of conventional gender roles and Midwestern personae.[47] Later work, such as Weidman's 1954 *War of the Sexes* explored gender and strife, portraying men in a sympathetic light amid mid-twentieth-century expectations for masculinity. Thus, as a closeted bisexual man, Weidman strengthened his performance of masculinity as cover for his non-normative sexual orientation.

Seen in the context of the 1948 International Dance Festival, Weidman's performance of gender identity mapped onto national and cultural identities, shoring up his masculine credentials. Weidman's success in performing his American masculinity in this context was likely amplified against two discursive foils: Lifar and Gopal. In this equation, Lifar played the role of artistic anti-hero within a critical discourse in which he was othered as a "Queerographer" as a function of his choreographic irrelevancy and his fascist leanings. Gopal, on the other hand, played the role of a foreign exotic, in critical debates animated both by Anglo-centric assumptions about the nature and quality of his company's performances. These discourses served to substantiate Weidman's whiteness and gender normativity by contrast. Weidman's identity, therefore, can be seen as a function both of his ability to perform his difference from these cultural others and of the depiction of masculinity in the context of his work that accorded with contemporaneous gender norms.

From this vantage point, we might see how critical and public responses to performances at the 1948 International Dance Festival reveal a mentalité necessary to the containment of difference as much as if not more than to the cultivation of diversity. In this case, containment was exercised, in Michel Foucault's words, as "force relations . . . whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies" (1990, 93). As an event manifesting "force relations," therefore, the 1948 International Dance Festival "crystallized" ideals and contradictions of mid-century globalism. Aimed at bringing people together, it also facilitated a setting of people apart, evidence of the "intelligibility of the social order" of the containment of cultural difference in America in the early Cold War years.

In her book, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, political philosopher Bonnie Honig investigates what she calls "intricate relations" between democracy

and foreignness, namely, the idea that the figure of the foreigner can "teach us about the insufficiencies, challenges, dramas, and dreams of democracy" (2001, 14). Honig's idea helps explain Whalen's and Hurok's impulse to include Weidman on the slate of international dance artists. In playing the role of an "American," and not just any American but a white, male American, Weidman's presence in the festival functioned as a means of reifying the distinctions between the native and the foreign. Furthermore, looking at this phenomenon from the perspectives offered by Joshua Takano Chambers-Letson's research, we might come to understand the staging of the global in the 1948 International Dance Festival as contributing to the cultural production of racialized subjects in and through performance. Along the lines of my own research in which I argue that dancing enacts a kind of "doing" that is both representational and constitutive, Chambers-Letson's work outlines the ways in which subjectivity is produced and contested through the physical enactment of identity, in this case, in conjunction with law. As Chambers-Letson puts it: "Stare decisis allows a statement of law to retroactively become a statement of fact at the exact moment that a judge's ruling exceeds the constative function of a legal decision in order to *make* law, to *make* a convicted felon, to *make* an enemy combatant, and or *make* Asian Americans into *a race so different*" (emphasis original 2013, 15). Along these lines, global performers "stood in" for cultural diversity and the values of multiculturalism, while, at the same time becoming foils onto which audience members could project feelings of desire, animus and/or anxiety. In embodying differences from the cultural norm, therefore, global performers at the 1948 international dance festival inadvertently aided in the articulation and formation of an American national identity produced in relation to their embodiment of otherness.

CONCLUSION

In a profile trumpeting the 1948 Golden Jubilee Celebration entitled "Big Bonanza," *Time* touted the city's role as a global "melting pot," aligning the magnitudes of the city and the festivities thus:

> In the boom year, 1948, New York is the biggest, richest city the world has ever seen. Almost eight million people live in its boroughs, almost 13 million in its metropolitan area—at least three million more than in Greater London. Its wealth is incalculable. Its physical assets are worth as much as all the real estate in the eleven western states. Its 157 banks and 94 insurance companies

> handle treasures which [could] ransom an army of maharajas. It is the world's greatest port, the world's greatest tourist attraction, the world's greatest manufacturing city and the world's greatest marketplace ("Big Bonanza," June 7, 1948, 24).

Playing up the city's world-class status, the article emphasized its defining features including its port, tourist attractions, role in American manufacturing, and marketplace for American goods. It also deployed familiar assimilationist language of the period to evoke a metropolis teeming with myriad and diverse people forged together as one populace through the common experience of living and working side by side. In one passage, the author compared the job of Mayor Bill O'Dwyer to that of the ruler of "many a sovereign nation." Building on the idea that the city brought together diverse multitudes, the article continued: "New York is still a melting pot. It has more Irish (500,000) than Dublin, more Jews (2,000,000) than Palestine, almost as many Italians (1,095,000) as Rome. It has 412,000 Poles, 57,000 Czechs, 54,000 Norwegians, 53,000 Greeks. Half a million Negroes are jammed into New York, alongside almost a quarter-million Puerto Ricans" (June 7, 1948, 27).

Evoking the image of the "melting pot" to recognize the city's rich ethnic mixture, the *Time* magazine article implied that in spite of the difficulties of living and working together amid the crush of humanity, the experience of commingling served to unite people, making them more alike than different. In these ways, the image of the "melting pot" signaled assimilationist thinking in its idealization of a process by which newcomers, that is, cultural others, became "Americans" by integrating themselves into life in New York City.[48] Acknowledging that the United States as a nation brought together myriad peoples, native and non-native alike, the image of the "melting pot" nevertheless elevated the goal of working toward a shared, common, and national "American" culture, which would transcend and supersede differences of creed, heritage, religion, and language. At the same time, in imagining the New York City mayor's job as akin to the role of the president of the United Nations General Assembly, the article spoke to globalist values embodied in institutions such as the United Nations in which many sovereign nations banded together across common interests in global peace and security, promotion of liberal democratic forms of government, advocacy for human rights, and development of transnational trade and free-market capitalism.

We see the intertwining and yet diverging threads of mid-century globalism in the cultural formation of the 1948 International Dance Festival, an event organized to represent and celebrate the history of

multiculturalism in New York City. On the one hand, the festival promoted international unity and interculturalism. Performances allowed audiences to learn about non-native cultures and peoples as represented in dance. And invited performers served as proxies for cultural differences that Americans would likely never actually encounter in the course of their daily lives because of federal policies regulating immigration and naturalization that had been in place since the early 1920s. On the other hand, staging globalism at the festival fueled fodder for the reification of cultural stereotypes and assertion of America-centered aesthetic, cultural, racial, and geopolitical hierarchies. What is more, as aesthetic foils to dance modernism, global dances by exotic others encouraged the institutionalization of concert dance forms by naturalizing their dominance.

From the larger perspective offered by the sequence of case studies presented in this book, we might see the 1948 International Dance Festival as indicating the larger stakes for globalism in mid-century America. Manifesting globalism's pluralistic ideals, the dance practices and performances at issue produced meaningful chances for public engagement with cultural otherness as well as opportunities for ethnic self-representation, artistic authorship, and definitions of individual and national identities. Resonating with the paradoxes of mid-century globalism around the valuation of universalism, these stagings of global dance performance illuminate changing American cultural attitudes and a warming to diversity while at the same time revealing public and political pressures to control and contain the impact of difference on what many saw as the "American" way of life. Alternatively, we might also see efforts by choreographers whose use of "sectional" or "ethnologic" movement material to varying degrees heightened their consciousness of subordinating indigenous source material to their artistic intentions, as resonating with larger forces redirecting the terms of US global engagement away from unilateralism and toward intercultural reciprocity.

These pressures worked on intersectional levels and therefore did not benefit or disadvantage any one group in always the same ways. As I discussed in Chapter 2, in the early part of the twentieth century, white American ethnics began to see themselves as "Caucasians." Changes in the ways white people identified themselves led to the homogenization of white identity within American culture, bolstering notions about white superiority, normalcy, and neutrality, which, in turn, authorized nativist nationalism and protectionism, and rationalized scientific and cultural racism deeming non-white peoples as inherently alien, inferior, or unable to assimilate (Jacobson 1998; Roediger 2005; Carter 2007). As David Roediger argues in his book *How Race Survived U.S. History*, "white

supremacy persisted not only by working against the forces of freedom, of openness, and of economic rationality in US history, but also by working through them" (2008, xv).

My research suggests likewise that audience exposure to diversity through global dance performances aided the consolidation of dominant racial communities around their difference from cultural others and what were perceived to be foreign ways of life, thus reifying cognitive and visceral experiences of ethnic and racial differences. Yet even as performers functioned as foils for the formation of a homogeneous white American identity, imagined idealizations of global others, and metaphorical proxies for ethnic diversity, they nevertheless fostered productive intercultural interactions, which likely helped to catalyze significant transformations in US immigration and trade policies as well as social thought about racial and ethnic differences by the mid 1960s.

As such, we can imagine interactions among performers and viewers in these venues as having promoted eventual broad scale shifts in public opinion about the benefits of national diversity, racial integration, and social justice in ways that that catalyzed federal reform of US civil rights and immigration policies by the mid-1960s. In other words, it is not a stretch to imagine how intercultural interactions within the protected space of the theater posed challenges to white dominance on the eve of political movements for civil rights at home and against colonialism abroad. This could be explained by the very dint of their having been embodied by dancers, brought into being through performance, and incorporated into the ongoing cultural conversation, even if behind the fourth wall of the theatrical space.

Taken as a whole, the case studies presented here manifest a profound ambivalence toward globalism endemic to mid-century America, a cultural response, perhaps to what it meant to live in a world that was at once interconnected, symbiotic, and international in scope at the same time it remained divided by myriad differences of culture, religion, race and ethnicity, economics, and politics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dancing the World Smaller began as a lark and has sustained my curiosity and imagination for many years since. I am profoundly grateful for the support of my family, friends, students, and colleagues for their interest in the project over the time of its genesis and for lifting me up and/or offering a hand when needed.

Because this book depends on a vast archive of primary sources, I have relied in great part on archivists, librarians, and colleagues to help me find my way, bring resources to my attention, guide me through collections, and assist in securing rights and permissions. These individuals include: Alexandra Hilton, Sylvia Kollar, and Ken Cobb at the New York City Municipal Archives; Borough of Manhattan Historian Michael Miscione; Gregory August Raml at the American Museum of Natural History; Charles Perrier, Arlene Yu, and Phillip Karg at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Linden Anderson at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; Kären Mason and Janet Weaver at the Iowa Women's Archives; Marianne Mason at the University of Iowa Special Collections; Rob Hudson at the Carnegie Hall Archives; Norton Owen at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives; Kenneth J. Chandler at the National Archives for Black Women's History; and Christopher Brick for the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at George Washington University.

Students, working individually and on research teams, have also provided excellent assistance in managing and analyzing source materials. Amanda Hamp deserves profound thanks for her rigorous research assistance in the early phases of the project. Amy Jacobus and Katie Skinner have provided superlative research and editorial assistance at various stages and help on research trips to New York City. I have been inspired by tenacity and intelligence of undergraduate students working with me under the auspices of the Iowa Center for Research for Undergraduates, including, Dorothy Armstrong, Elizabeth Dickson, Irina Gass, Mikaela Mallin, Allison Ordman, Jennifer Pray, Emma Robertson, Katie Skinner,

Eliana Trenam, and Lauren Vanchina. I would like to extend additional thanks to the members of an undergraduate research team who contributed to research necessary for Chapter 3 on Asadata Dafora. These gifted students include Allison Ordman, Mikaela Mallin, Madelyn Andree, and Brooke Robinson, with a special shout out to Dorothy Armstrong. I have valued the assistance of other undergraduate students taking research practicum courses with me through the University of Iowa Honors Program, including Madelyn Andree, Alexis Finer, Margaret Hermanson, Brooke Robinson, and Carly Vanderheyden. Graduate students Jeremy Blair and Joseph Cox provided astute research assistance over two summers. I am also grateful for the sustaining conversations I have had over the period of my research with MFA students at the University of Iowa, including Jesse Factor, Alyssa Gersony, Jennifer Harge, Duane Lee Holland Jr., Chafin Seymour, Elizabeth Bergman, and Emily Climer, whose ideas, questions, and embodied research have prompted me to reflect on my sources, methods and thinking.

I am deeply indebted to colleagues who read portions of this project and whose feedback was essential to its development, including Susan Leigh Foster, Antha Kraut, Mark Franko, Gerald Siegmund, Kate Elswit, Christopher-Rasheem McMillan, and Kimberley Marra. Susan Leigh Foster has been a guiding light for my work for many years and contributed generously in conversations as I was conceptualizing the scope and details of this book. Kate Elswit played an important role in discussing with me some of the theoretical underpinnings of my core contentions. I am in great debt to Randy Martin, whose mentorship and ideas about relationships between dance and politics have shaped my thinking in countless ways. I am also thankful to Jean-Christophe Agnew for his sage advice in training my focus on globalism as an essential component of my argument and in recommending key sources to me at a critical stage in the development of the project.

Conversations with others at various stages along the way were of great benefit in shaping my concept, posing important questions about my sources and methods, and focusing my arguments. These individuals include Paul Scolieri, Emily Wilcox, Thomas F. DeFrantz, Rebecca Rossen Pavkovic, Allana Lindgren, Kimerer LaMothe, Anne Flynn, Hannah Kosstrin, Joanna Dee Das, Ninotchka Bennahum, Clare Croft, Anthony Shay, Barbara Sellers Young, Brenda Dixon Gottschild, Janice Ross, Susan Manning, Susan Cook, Andrea Harris, James Moreno, Nancy Ruyter, SanSan Kwan, Paula Amad, Sherril Dodds, and Victoria Geduld. Thanks also to Michael Miscione, Janet Werther, Michael Kammen, and Robert A. Schanke for keen research leads.

I am especially grateful to Susan Leigh Foster, Anthea Kraut, Kate Elswit, Jean-Christophe Agnew, and an anonymous reader, for their help with early versions of the Introduction, and to Mark Franko, Gerald Siegmund, Christopher-Rasheem McMillan, and Alyssa Gersony for commenting on later drafts of the Introduction in the final stages of completing the project. I am thankful to my anonymous readers throughout the process for their comments, suggestions, and questions. This is a better book for their contributions. David Bullwinkle provided astute editorial suggestions in the final stages of writing. I cannot imagine having completed this project without Katie Skinner's phenomenal editorial assistance.

The material in Chapter 1 was originally published in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Ethnicity,* edited by Tony Shay and Barbara Sellers Young, and has been reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press [https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-oxford-handbook-of-dance-and-ethnicity-9780199754281?cc=gb&lang=en&]. For permission to reuse this material, please visit http://global.oup.com/academic/rights.

Funding from various sources has ensured the continuation of this research over a number of years. I received a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend Award in 2012, which allowed me to concentrate on completing an early chapter draft. In addition, my scholarly work has been sustained by financial support from the University of Iowa. Two Arts and Humanities Initiative grants from the Office of the Vice President for Research proved instrumental in getting this project off the ground. I am especially indebted to Dan Reed for his investment in me and his encouragement of my thinking, as well as to Ann Ricketts for her collegiality. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has funded semesters for research as well as book subvention awards, and I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Deans Raúl Curto, Joseph Kearney, Chaden Djalali, and Marc Armstrong for their strong support of my scholarship and professionalization. My experience as a Fellow-in-Residence at the Obermann Center for Advanced Research was key to my early thinking and research, including conversations with Obermann director Teresa Mangum and fellow scholars Ellen Lewin and Kathleen Diffley. Funding from the OVPR and UI Honors Program has supported my ongoing work with gifted undergraduates; I appreciate the assistance of Honors Program staff members Bob Kirby, Lindsay Marshall, and Melinda Licht in managing these grants over the years.

I am grateful to present and former colleagues at the University of Iowa for their friendship, collegiality, and insight. Special thanks go to Jennifer Kayle, Charlotte Adams, Christopher Rasheem-McMillan, Kimberley Marra, Alan MacVey, Steve McGuire, Lena Hill, Kathy Lavezzo, Cornelia

Lang, Rachel Williams, Paula Amad, Eric Gidal, Harilaos Stecopoulos, David Cunning, Jennifer Buckley, and Linda Kerber for their ongoing support, ideas, and inspiration. Thank you to Kayt Conrad, Deborah Arenson, and Molly Dahlberg for guarding my time for research. I am also indebted to my colleagues, staff, and students in the Department of Dance and inspired by their brilliance and commitment to dance each and every day.

My editor, Norman Hirschy at Oxford University Press has seen this project through each and every step; I am deeply grateful for his encouragement, vision for this project, and belief in me and my work. Mark Franko's guidance over many years has played a pivotal role in my scholarly development; I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work closely with Mark throughout the research and writing process. Likewise, I am indebted to Joellyn Ausanka, the production editor for this project, who has expertly guided the process of transforming my manuscript into a book.

Working on this project and bringing it to completion would not have been possible without the love and support of my extended family including my two sets of parents, Sheila and Blake and Ira and Joly, my sister, Jessica, brother-in-law, Blaine, and their kids, and the entire Bullwinkle clan. To Dave, my husband, thank you for your companionship in going through life with me, for your intelligence, your listening, and your kindness. To my sons, Noah and Isaac, for everything you are and will be. I dedicate this book to you.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Regarding this thematic shift, British author Wyndham Lewis wrote: "A World's Fair and a World War, in the same compartment of time, somehow do not harmonize. A visit to the former, with one's mind numbed by the latter, makes of one a bad Fairgoer. A conflict is set up: one sees more, and one sees less, of the Fair than otherwise one would. Gazing at the massive fountains, you think of the flamethrowers. Looking at the death's head of the Peruvian mummy, you recall the unburied, helmeted dead of the battlefields. As you make your way down to the 'Court of Peace,' you balk at the nomenclature, instead of, as you should, appreciating the good intentions" (from Wydham, *America, I Presume*, 1940, quoted in Duranti 2006, 1). For more on the 1939 New York World's Fair see Curts 2015; Cull 1997; Kuznick 1994; The Official Guide Book of the New York World's Fair 1939; Going to the Fair 1939). Thank you to Alexis Finer for her assistance with this research.
2. Rosenboim (2017) dates discussions about "world order" to 1939 and an address by Lionel Curtis at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) entitled "World Order," 2017, 1. According to Rosenboim, at the conclusion of the war, intellectuals utilized the term "to embod[y] their attempt to make sense and reorganize the belligerent and disordered post-war world. They hoped to overcome the political chaos that was seen as the tragic consequence of the international disorder, economic strife, and social unrest of the interwar years. The idea of order did not necessarily imply a rigid, unifying, or homogeneous system. Rather, many conceptions of world order revolved around the aspiration to accommodate change and flexibility as valuable and desirable aspects of human life." She concludes: "The tension between order and instability remained a central aspect of mid-century political commentary" (3). Rosenboim argues that globalism arose as an ideology "[seeking] to elaborate an alternative defining principle of world order, against the exploitative unequal political space of empire" (7).
3. According to Leonard Wallock, "The selection of New York as the site of the World's Fair of 1939–1940 and for the headquarters of the United Nations in 1946 merely confirmed what was then the popular consensus—that the city had been transformed" (1988, 1).
4. According to an article in the *New York Herald Tribune*, these events would be enhanced by a "continuing celebration in every part of the city, to be marked by music festivals, school activities, museum and art exhibits and industry

demonstrations of many kinds" ("Good Omen for the Anniversary," April 27, 1948; see also Whalen 1955, 279–86).

5. An editorial entitled "Good Omen for the Anniversary," published on Tuesday, April 27, 1948, in the *New York Herald Tribune* followed suit, proclaiming that "the enthusiastic collaboration of thousands of citizens in planning for New York's Golden Anniversary affords the happiest of omens for a memorable and inspiring celebration" (New York City Municipal Archives [NYCMA]).
6. As David Reynolds argues in *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the* 1940s: "During the crisis years 1940–1945 America developed an enhanced awareness of its global reach and new conviction that its own self-interest required a greater managerial role in world affairs. At the same time the capacity of the federal government to harness national power and to use it internationally was greatly enlarged" (2006, 305).
7. In an encyclopedia essay written for the Dance Heritage Coalition, Harlow Robinson assesses Hurok's impact on the development of American audiences for dance in the early twentieth century thus: "The performing arts impresario and manager Sol Hurok of the company 'S. Hurok Presents,' was the leading presenter of dancers and dance companies in the United States from the 1930s until his death in 1974. . . . With [Anna] Pavlova, Hurok shared the belief that ballet was an art form that belonged to a mass audience, and not only to the aristocratic elite with whom it had traditionally been associated in Europe" (2012, 1). For more on Hurok, see Hurok 1946; Robinson 1994.
8. In my research of the planning for the international dance festival I have not come across any document or information explaining the rationale behind the choices of these countries. As I will detail in Chapter 4, in spite of the volume of invitations extended, only three companies performed at New York City Center during September and October of 1948: the Paris Opera Ballet, invited as the headliner act, gave eleven performances September 21 through October 3; Ram Gopal and his Hindu Ballet performed three times September 30 through October 3; and American Charles Weidman and his Dance Theatre Company performed once, on September 21.
9. Anthropologist Joanne Kealiinohomoku took on these reductive equations in her seminal article "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance" published in 1969–1970. As she points out from the vantage point of twenty years in hindsight: "In the generally accepted anthropological view, ethnic means a group which holds in common genetic, linguistic, and cultural ties, with special emphasis on cultural tradition. By definition, therefore, every dance form must be an ethnic form" (2001, 39). Kealiinohomoku's essay demonstrated the extent to and ways "a pervasive ethnocentric bias" among Western dance scholars had left the dance scholarly literature "rife with unsubstantiated deductive reasoning, poorly documented 'proofs,' a plethora of half-truths, [and] many out-and-out errors" (2001, 33). The legacy of Kealiinohomoku's research is still very present with us today and is perhaps as pertinent as ever.
10. Methodologically I am taking a cue from Susan Manning, in *Modern Dance/ Negro Dance: Race in Motion*, who uses the anachronistic term " 'Negro dance' to query the relations between American modern dance and black concert dance from the early 1930s when the two practices emerged in tandem, to the late 1960s, when black dance eclipsed Negro dance" (2004, xiv).

11. Study of "Events of the Week" listings in the *New York Times* and "Dance Notes" published in the *New York Herald Tribune* newspapers between 1940 and 1949 indicates that there were a number of venues in New York City that presented ethnological dance performances. Examples of additional venues in the city included YMHA and YWHA at Lexington Avenue and 92nd Street, the City High School of Needle Trades (225 West Twenty-fourth Street), the East-West Association, the India Dance Theatre (211 West Fifty-seventh Street), the Ethnologic Dance Theatre (at the Ethnologic Dance Center, 110 East Fifty-ninth Street), the Barbizon-Plaza Theatre, the New School Auditorium (66 West Twelfth Street), International House (500 Riverside Drive), and the Cooper Union Auditorium.
12. The quotation of the Dieman-Bennett Dance Theatre of the Hemispheres credo, "Diversity in Dance," comes from the guide to collection records on the Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa website: http://collguides.lib.uiowa.edu/?IWA0265. I have spent significant time working in this collection alongside undergraduate research assistants, all of whom I thank heartily for their curiosity about the past and for bringing important details about the lives and work of Edna Dieman and Julia Bennett to my attention. Emma Robertson and Carly Vanderheyden deserve special acknowledgment in this respect.
13. For example, see Rosenboim 2017, Sluga 2013, Reynolds 2006, and Hearden 2002.
14. Sluga argues that American mid-century internationalism, an ideological antidote to the nationalist ideologies that lay at the root of the First and Second World Wars, gave way to nationalism again as a bulwark against Cold War fears (2013, 7). For more on 1940s internationalism as it developed in the scope of the alliance between the United States and Britain see Reynolds 2006.
15. In undertaking this investigation, I am grateful for earlier work in the field of dance studies that has paved the way for my inquiry. Key sources include Pillai 2002; Kwan 2003; Hamera 2007; O'Shea 2007; Foster ed. 2009; Krystal 2012; and Manning 2017.
16. For a further discussion of kinesthetic empathy in discussions of mid-century modern dance see Kowal 2010, 27; and Foster 2010, 112–13. In *Choreographing Empathy*, Susan Leigh Foster makes a connection between John Martin's pedagogy and that of other innovators in modern dance, including Martha Hill and Margaret H'Doubler, who identified kinesthesia as "provid[ing] verification of the natural organization of physicality" (2010, 112).
17. Thanks to Mark Franko for his help in bringing out this important point.
18. The exportation of American cultural artifacts and practices has provided a lens through which scholars have correlated the political and cultural angles of the US emergence as a global superpower following the Second World War. Within these studies, State Department–sponsored international tours of modern dance artists Martha Graham and José Limón, jazz musician Dizzy Gillespie, and composer and lyricist Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein played major roles in federal efforts to convince foreign peoples that Americans were more than "gum-chewing, insensitive, materialistic barbarians" (a New Jersey congressman in 1954, quoted in Kammen 1996). Books by Prevots (1998), Von Eschen (1997; 2004; 2012), Klein (2003), and Stecopoulos (2008) for example, reveal the political complexities of artistic cultural exchanges meant to "help people 'to identify themselves with

America' and 'correct the fiction that America is racist'" (Alfred Barr quoted in Von Eschen 2004, 17). Shifting the focus to the domestic politics of cultural importation, *Dancing the World Smaller* instead concentrates on formations of international concert dance and dancers in the United States.

19. For more on the One World movement, including activity by the members of the Federation of American Scientists toward global nuclear disarmament see Wittner 1993.
20. The UN Declaration, for example, embodied American and British efforts to choreograph a concerted war effort by the Allied nations "subscribing to a common program of purposes and principles . . . engaged in a common struggle against savage and brutal forces seeking to subjugate the world" http://www.un.org/en/sections/history-united-nations-charter/1942-declaration-united-nations/index.html. An early salvo for mid-century globalism, the Declaration stated shared intentions and formalized the idea that massive collective action had more potential for efficacy than a cause prosecuted by nations acting alone or in limited concert. Penny Von Eschen argues that debates about the interpretation of the Atlantic Charter that ensued in the African American press after its issuance in 1941 "helped shape the subsequent politics of the African diaspora." As she writes: "The debate over the Atlantic Charter was essentially a debate over the future of colonialism" (1997, 26).
21. Rosenboim focuses on "the writings of a diverse group of scholars and commentators who actively engaged in transnational debates on world order and sought to influence public opinion on international affairs," all of whom "shared an awareness of the role of public debate in sustaining political change" (2017, 17 and 15).
22. As Rosenboim writes: "Globalism emerged from an awareness of the political significance of the globe as a unitary whole made of interconnected, diverse political units. The recognition of the world's 'oneness' did not always mean political monism. Globalism often implied a renewed awareness of diversity, and an attempt to envisage a world order to preserve it. The tension between diversity and unity is, therefore, a central aspect of the idea of globalism" (2017, 4). Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (2017) study similar twentieth-century phenomena under the broader heading of "internationalisms," arguing that "internationalisms were central to the major political questions and themes of the twentieth century: war and peace, imperialism and nationalism, states and state-building." Sluga traces a rise of internationalist thinking into the mid-twentieth century, culminating in Western cultural and institutional formations such as the United Nations, and within it the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), heralding cosmopolitan values such as "world citizenship," "collective security," and international cooperation. For more on the "international turn" in the mid-twentieth-century see also Sluga (2013, 5–6).
23. Pluralism connotes a condition of power relations in which "states could not claim sole authority over individuals," and in which "other associations, groups, and organizations provided individuals—and 'persons'—with important opportunities to interact and construct political spaces to advance their political, social, and cultural interests" (Rosenboim 2017, 10).
24. Quoting Sunil Amrith in an essay included in their volume, historians Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin assert: "Histories of international institutions,

internationalist ambitions and international initiatives, all need to be embedded in the broader political debates to which they emerged as a response: debates about the shape of the world, about inequality, and about the (differential) value of human lives" (2017, 6).

25. As Rosenboim puts it: "It was difficult to valorize non-Western forms of political order and insist that the Western interpretation of humanity embodied a universal truth" (2017, 10). She continues: "By consequence, the proponents of the globalist discourse struggled to reconcile the universalizing and the pluralistic aspects of their visions of world order, which thus collapsed sometimes into deference of Western moral and political values" (10).
26. Thanks to Anthea Kraut for helping me tease out this argument.
27. Susan Foster elucidates the problems with Martin's theory of inner mimicry in *Choreographing Empathy* thus: "Empathy thus functioned for Martin not only to connect people to their surroundings but also to unite them across different registers of representation. In all its inclusiveness, however, Martin's theory persisted in exercising the same kinds of exclusions and double standards that [Adam] Smith had assumed two centuries earlier. It was, after all, the white, middle-class body that could feel into and for all others" (2010, 162).
28. Similarly, American author and New Yorker E. B. White quipped in his 1949 book *Here Is New York*: "[New York] is not a capital city—it is not a national capital or a state capital. But it is by way of becoming capital of the world" (Harper and Brothers, 51–52).
29. In her book *The Global City*, Sassen defines "global cities" in terms of their functions: "They are sites for (1) the production of specialized services needed by complex organizations for running a spatially dispersed network of factories, offices, and service outlets, (2) the production of financial innovations and the making of markets, both central to the internationalization and expansion of the financial industry" (3–4). In essence, global cities function as centers for "high-level business services," since, according to Sassen, "they are the most *advanced* production sites for creating these services" (4). She outlines a worldwide economic and spatial transformation from the postwar period through the 1980s, predicated on "an international regime based on United States dominance in the world economy and rules for global trade contained in the 1945 Bretton Woods agreement" (Sassen 2013, 3). This regime advantaged New York City as the focal point of US and global economic dominance until the early 1970s, when, according to Sassen, "the conditions supporting that regime were disintegrating" (2013, 4). For more, see also Cox and Skidmore-Hess 1999, 37–65 and Sassen 2005.
30. Speaking to the first factor, the historian Nancy Foner asserts, "Between 1880 and 1920, close to a million and a half immigrants arrived and settled in the city—so that by 1910 fully 41 percent of all New Yorkers were foreign born. The influx changed the way New Yorkers lived, the shape of their institutions, the flavor of their politics, the very food they ate" (2000, 1). Speaking to the second factor, the historian Isabel Wilkerson writes, the "imprint" of the Great Migration, "is everywhere in urban life. The configuration of the cities as we know them, the social geography of black and white neighborhoods, the spread of the housing projects and well as the rise of a well-scrubbed black middle class, along with the alternating waves of white flight and suburbanization—all of these grew, directly or indirectly, from the response of everyone touched by the Great Migration" (2010, 10).

31. Terry and Monaghan argue further, "The twenty-five million pairs of social dancing feet that moved across the Savoy's burnished dance floor between 1926 and 1958 told their own diverse but nevertheless significant stories. Their many cultural identities enriched the dancing and enhanced the sense of community through sustaining individual group identities, thus enabling new arrivals to located their compatriots as the wider diasporic mix grew" (2009, 128).
32. For more on the history of US immigration see DeLaet 2000; Kandel 2014; Ngai 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005; Ngai and Gjerde, 2013; Waters and Ueda 2007; Wepman 2002. For more on Chinese exclusion see Chin 1996; Lee 2003; Park 2004. For more on the 1952 McCarren-Walter Act see Waxman 2017.
33. For more on the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 see Chin 1996.
34. For more on the history of "immigration control policy," see Zolberg 2007. Zolberg notes that during the postwar period prior to 1965, there were some groups of immigrants whose numbers did increase within the existing quota system. These include immigrants from Mexico, via the *bracero* program, "a government-sponsored temporary worker program, which reinforced ongoing flows and enhanced the dependence of both economies on their continuation," and immigration of black peoples from the English-speaking Caribbean, who were allowed entry to the United States due to their British citizenship status (29–30).
35. Similarly Richard Schechner theorizes theatricality as related to and distinct from ritual and from everyday life in "From Ritual to Theater and Back: The Efficacy-Entertainment Braid." Here he argues that ritual events are both actual and symbolic, "not simply a doing but a showing of a doing" ([1988] 2003, 114).
36. My approach in this respect is not unlike that of Alison Griffiths in *Wondrous Difference, Cinema, Anthropology and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture*, in which she examines the early twentieth-century natural history museum as a "staging ground for debates over cinema, anthropology and visual culture" (2002, xxii). I am indebted to Gerald Siegmund, Christopher-Rasheem McMillan, and Paula Amad for their assistance in helping me formulate these ideas.
37. Bourdieu weighs the relative opportunities for "determinism and freedom" with regard to practices "engendered" by conditions of habitus. In his words: "Because the habitus is an endless capacity to engender products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it secures is as remote from a creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from a simple mechanical reproduction of the initial conditionings" ([1972] 1977, 95). In other words, while practices stem from conditions of habitus and are therefore expressive of its ideological structures and conditions, practices do not possess a one-to-one relationship with those structures, nor do they mirror them exactly. In engendering practices, the habitus serves as an ideological locus for the stemming of and/or conditioning of expressive labors and forms, which bear a resemblance to that locus while, nevertheless, possessing and/or being endowed with their own particularities and paradoxes. Bourdieu affords for these variations at the beginning of *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, when he cites Edmund Husserl's notions (through Emile

Durkheim) relating practices to artistic forms as a way of departing from viewing them in semiotic terms as "texts," thus: "the work of art always contains something ineffable, not by excess, as hagiography would have it, but by default, something which communicates, so to speak, from body to body, i.e. on the hither side of words or concepts, and which pleases (or displeases) without concepts" ([1972] 1977, 2).

38. Among others, dance scholar and choreographer Anna Pakes establishes firm grounds for this assertion (via philosopher Gilbert Ryle) in delineating the difference between knowing *how* and knowing *that*. Pakes theorizes the claim that choreographing dances is a form of research toward the production of knowledge thus: "for Ryle . . . knowing how is a legitimate form of knowledge in its own right, not a derivative operation premised on prior theoretical understanding. Thought and knowledge are embodied in the activity of those who know how" (2009, 11). Randy Martin's idea of "kinestheme" also helps make sense of my findings. The concept of the kinestheme illuminates both causal and/or unintentional connections among movement/body-based practices, cultural dynamics, and sociopolitical strictures. It also helps to identify "the regularization of bodily practices, the moment of power by and through which bodies are called—and devise responses—to move in particular ways" (2015, 158). Martin's framework illuminates how dancing bodies, and/or dance-centered ideologies, participate in cultural practices of world making.
39. These archives include the New York Public Library Performing Arts Collection and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Archives at the American Museum of Natural History, the New York City Municipal Archives, the Jacob's Pillow Archives, and the University of Iowa Women's Archives.
40. In formulating a methodological approach to handling source materials, I have looked to the scholarship of others for guidance. Diana Taylor's research outlining the role of embodied memory, or "repertoire," in establishing the historical record has been salient in this regard. According to Taylor, "part of what performance and performance studies allow us to do, then, is to take seriously the repertoire of embodied practices as an important system of knowing and transmitting knowledge" (2003, 26). Such an approach reveals performances to be forms of "embodied praxis and episteme," keys to scholarly insights into lived experience, for example, or to cultural ideologies and/or worldviews (17).
41. As Spivak explains further: "We cannot privilege the narrative of history-as-imperialism as such an originary text. Our task is more circumscribed: first, to indicate that, even in varieties of radical critique, that narrative is reduced out; and second, to suggest that the narrative of history-as-imperialism should be at least irreducible. Otherwise the willed (auto)biography of the West masquerades as disinterested history, even when the critic presumes to touch its unconscious" (1985, 252). I am indebted to Kate Elswit for encouraging me to interrogate these issues further.
42. Cyril Beaumont writes of Gopal's introduction to the dance in an undated essay, "The Art of Ram Gopal." According to Beaumont, Gopal was born into a family of means: his father was a "well known barrister; his mother, a Burmese lady of unusual beauty. His parents were fond of company and had many friends: scholars and members of the legal profession. From them young Ram heard some of the countless tales of Indian legend and folklore and was shown

examples of that strange gesture language known as mudras, which number from four thousand examples. These stories of famous gods and kings led the boy to visit nearby temples, where he studied their deeds portrayed in ancient sculptures and frescos. He even persuaded his father to let him take lessons in dancing from local teachers, permission being accorded in the belief that dancing might help his son's deportment when later he entered the legal profession. One day, Ram was invited by the Maharajah of Mysore to dance at his Annual Garden Party, a proceeding which came to his father's ears, who set off to punish the boy for bringing such disgrace upon the family. At that time Indian Dance had fallen into decay and disrepute, and to dance was regarded as something dishonorable. The Maharajah, however, seeing promise in the young boy, persuaded his irate father to let him be trained as a dancer. Moreover, the Maharajah's brother agreed to help Ram in the matter of lessons if, in return, he would promise to do his utmost to revive the lost art of Indian Dance. The bargain was struck" (Beaumont 2003, 10).

43. Michel Foucault has characterized the work of the historian in ways that have been useful for me in this regard. Foucault conceptualizes the historian as a "receiver" of cultural communication, which he calls "enunciation." The work of the historian, therefore, involves a "mapping of an *enunciative* field" (emphasis mine, 1972, 130). Within this account of the historian's labor in the analysis of archival materials, Foucault also recognizes the necessary work of bridging distances of time and space. As he puts it: "The analysis of the archive, then, involves a privileged region: at once close to us, and different from our present existence, it is the border of time that surrounds our presence, which overhangs it, and which indicates it in its otherness; it is that which, outside ourselves, delimits us" (1972, 130).
44. Jones argues further: "It is my premise here . . . that there is no possibility of an unmediated relationship to any kind of cultural product. . . . Although I am respectful of the specificity of knowledges gained from participating in a live performance situation, I will argue here that the specificity should not be privileged over the specificity of knowledges that develop in relation to the documentary traces of such an event. . . . As I know from my own experiences of 'the real' in general and, in particular, live performances in recent years, these often become more meaningful when reappraised in later years; it is hard to identify the patterns of history while one is embedded in them. We 'invent' these patterns, pulling the past together into a manageable picture, retrospectively" (12; for more see also Jones 1998).
45. Contending with the challenges posed by historiographical performance research, writing by Mark Franko and Annette Richards has also been instructive. Acknowledging the inherent linkage between live performance and the past, Franko and Richards advocate an approach to the scholarship of performance that works in kind. In Franko and Richards's words: "When the historian, archival inscriptions in hand, revisits the deserted site of display, the vivid presence of the performance is long gone. It is then that memory passes through theory by virtue of cultural necessity and the historian's interpretation becomes the prosthesis of an imaginary performative practice" (2000, 1). See also Hayden White in "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," thus: "One of the marks of a good professional historian is the consistency with which he reminds his readers of the purely provisional nature of his characterizations of events, and agencies found in the always incomplete

historical record. Nor is it to say that literary theorists have *never* studied the structure of historical narratives. But in general there has been a reluctance to consider historical narratives as what they most manifestly are: verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences"(emphasis original, 2002 in Richardson et al., 192). Thanks to Mark Franko for bringing this text to my attention.

46. Herbert Gans offers a working definition of the terms "assimilation" and "acculturation." Gans makes a distinction between these terms "based on the difference between culture and society" thus: "acculturation refers mainly to newcomers' adoption of the culture (i.e., behavior patterns, values, rules, symbols, etc.) of the host society (or rather an overly homogenized and reified conception of it). Assimilation, on the other hand, refers to newcomers' move out of formal and informal ethnic associations and other social institutions into the nonethnic equivalents accessible to them in that same host society" (1997, 877). Gans also makes the important point that assimilation is not equally accessible to all newcomers. In many cases, it is racially contingent: "Ethnics can acculturate on their own, but they cannot assimilate unless they are given permission to enter the 'American' group or institution. Since discrimination and other reasons often lead to a denial of that permission to the immigrant and even the second generation, assimilation will always be slower than acculturation" (1997, 878).
47. I am taking theoretical cues here from Jacques Rancière. In his essay "The Paradoxes of Political Art," he illuminates "a paradox that resides at the heart of the relationship between art and politics" (2013, 140). Rancière conceives of a role for art in the world that works against formations of "consensus," what is settled, accepted, normalized (2013, 43). By contrast, art and politics seek in paradoxical ways to upend the logics of consensus through what Rancière calls dissensus, "a dissensual re-configuration of the common experience of the sensible" (Rancière 2013, 140). He continues: "Within any given framework, artists are those whose strategies aim to change the frames, speeds and scales according to which we perceive the visible and combine it with a specific invisible element and a specific meaning. Such strategies are intended to make the invisible visible or to question the self-evidence of the visible; to rupture given relationships between things and meanings and, inversely, to invent novel relationships between things and meanings that were previously unrelated" (141). I am grateful to Anthea Kraut for helping me sharpen this point.
48. For example, in an August 1946 column published in the *New York Herald Tribune* entitled "Distinctive Characteristics of American Dance Now Apparent," dance critic Walter Terry identified American dance as an amalgam of Anglo and ethnic forms (exact date unknown). In his words: On the point about ethnic dance operating as a foil for the recognition of what made dances "American," he indicated that the "distinctive characteristics of American dance" became apparent "in the presence of an array of balletic, modern, African, Oriental, Hispanic and perhaps revolutionary styles of dance." On the point about American dance as an amalgam of many forms of dance, he opined: "Our American dance is not Anglo-Saxon, although that heritage is most certainly present, for our ballet, modern dance and independent dance styles are touched with the African, the Celtic, the Latin, the Slavic and even

the Oriental, just as our music, our theater and our painting are so affected, just as our populace is so derived. We respect the ethnologically pure in dance (if there is such a thing) and we cherish tradition, but we believe in using materials for the creation of new products."

49. Thanks to Susan Foster for helping to underline this point.
50. For a discussion of the role of foreignness, and foreign others in the formation of American democracy see Honig 2001.

CHAPTER 1

1. To date I have not found any additional information about the museum's music program in its archives, nor has the archival staff at the AMNH (Gregory Raml, e-mail message to author, October 14, 2010). There are a few relevant clues in the Muller Papers, such as undated typed notes, "African Negro Music," from Diedrich Hermann Westermann, ed., *Africa: Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures* (1928); a description of proposed recordings for the *Music for African Hall*, such as "Lions Roaring," "African Xylophone" (recorded in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt Expedition), "Sorcerer's Song for Bringing Rain—Incantation," and "Hippopotamus Roaring" (September 11, 1939); and notes on Natalie Curtis Burlin, *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent* (1920). There is a note in Hazel Lockwood Muller's "Bio File" that the music program was intended to "supplement, through the sense of hearing, the visual impressions made by the exhibits," and that the "records played may be of sounds directly connected with exhibits or of a more general character to supply a suitable tone and atmosphere and background in the hall" (AMNH Central Archives). As for information about Hazel Lockwood Muller, it is in short supply. Based on biographical records at the museum, Muller received a BA from Wellesley College in 1912 and was hired as staff assistant in Education at the museum in 1938. She quickly rose through the ranks within the Education department, becoming Supervisor of Library and Editorial Service in 1942. in 1945 her title was changed to Supervisor of Dance and Lecture Programs (AMNH Central Archives, "Bio File.")
2. A letter dated February 20, 1952, written by Muller to Dr. Margaret Mead is candid in its assessment of the reasons for the museum administration's discontinuation of the concert series. Writing to Mead, February 20, 1952, Muller asked for her support in trying to keep the series going: "I have recently been told that the Administration does not regard 'Around the World with Dance and Song' as educational, but as mere entertainment and business, and that since the expenses exceed the income, they will probably discontinue the dances after the current season, ending in May." Hoping that Mead might intercede and assist in convincing her superiors otherwise, Muller entreated: "I would, therefore, appreciate having your opinion as to [the program's] educational and cultural value, aside from the financial problem." These letters are in the HLMNYPLPA, file 103-17.
3. Title of the section is taken from a press release dated Sunday, February 20, 1949, and entitled "Hebraic Dance Program Featured at the American Museum of Natural History." From the AMNH archives. Dana P. Kelly.
4. I have not found any information in Muller's papers confirming use of a platform.
5. The fact that the auditorium was never intended to be used as a theater is suggested in a memo dated 1949, the year the museum began charging money

for tickets to the performances and made them available through a performance subscription. Considering a renovation of the auditorium, the memo notes: "the outstanding faults of the Museum's present auditorium represent the lack of basic requirements and facilities for a motion picture theatre and for stage presentations. It is used as such in a make shift manner at present. . . . The auditorium was built in 1900 for use as a lecture hall, its only equipment a small lecture platform and booth in the seating area for lantern slide projection. Except for makeshift facilities, no improvements have been made since its construction" (memo 1173, written in 1949, AMNH Central Archives, Box 506).

6. Expanding on a note about my source materials that I made in the Introduction, I have identified these primary venues for international dance performance around New York City based on study of numerous "calendars" published in the city's dailies between the period of my general inquiry: 1940–1960. The *New York Herald Tribune*, for instances, published varied versions of collateral information entitled "Dance Notes," "Ballet Schedule" or "Notes on Dance Events," alongside some of its articles and reviews about dance, whereas the *New York Times* published "Events of the Week," "On the Dance Calendar," "This Week's Events," or "This Week's Programs," alongside its dance articles and reviews. All of the venues listed in the paragraph are, for example, noted in the "This Week's Programs" column published in the *New York Times*, February 9, 1947, X8.
7. The title comes from Francis Henry Taylor's "Museums in a Changing World" (1939).
8. For more on the history of museums in the United States and their changing public role at mid-century see Anderson 2004.
9. Speaking for all "American museums," they pledged to "do their utmost in the service of the people of this country during the present conflict; . . . continue to keep their doors open to all who seek refreshment of the spirit; . . . with the sustained financial help of their communities, broaden the scope and variety of their work; . . . be sources of inspiration illuminating the past and vivifying the present; they will fortify the spirit on which victory depends" ("Museums: A Survey of Their 1941 Activities," 1941, X9).
10. In 1943, acting AMNH president Perry Osborn "reported that 1942 had been one of the best [financial] years in [the museum's] history." "Our membership of 26,864 exceeds all previous numbers. . . . Gifts from friends, trustees and foundations have been more numerous and in greater amounts than for many years past. These contributions, together with the splendid bequest from the estate of Charles R. Towne, have enabled the museum not only to close the year with a small cash surplus but to add considerably to its endowment." In the same article, Osborn also pointed out that "the contribution of the City of New York to the operation of this institution for the past six years has averaged 27 percent of the total amount of monies received by the museum from all sources, and that in 1942 the contribution from the city was only 21 percent of the total amount received." ("Museum of Natural History Here Will Be Modernized after the War," *New York Times*, January 12, 1943, 25). The article announced comprehensive renovations to the museum to be made after the war. Financial stability was not something on which the museum could depend, however. An article in the *New York Times* dated January 20, 1944, for example, reported that that year the museum faced a budget deficit of $152,000 "because of a continuing decrease in income from capital

investments." "The museum presented a request for a 1944–1945 appropriation of $538,162, an increase of $49,573 over the current allotment from city funds." The same year, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Public Library also faced budget deficits, requesting monies from the city to make up the differences. ("Museums Seeking More City Funds," *New York Times,* January 20, 1944, 21).

11. Parr, a marine biologist and professor of oceanography at Yale University, replaced Roy Chapman Andrews, who had presided over the museum administration in the Depression era when the museum had "cut salaries, curtailed publications, and eliminated staff positions" in 1932 prohibiting "the use of Museum funds for fieldwork and expeditions" (Preston 1986, 110). Andrews's cuts were anathema to a staff that, since 1881 with the appointment of Morris K. Jesup as the museum's third president, had pursued an unparalleled expansion among its US counterparts centered on "active collecting" (Preston 1986, 23). According to Douglas Preston:

> [Jesup] launched the Museum into a golden age of exploration—the fifty-year period from 1880–1930, when the Museum sent over a thousand expeditions into the field, many to the remotest corners of the earth. By 1930 the Museum had been involved with expeditions that discovered the North Pole; that penetrated unmapped areas of Siberia; that traversed Outer Mongolia and the great Gobi Desert; that penetrated the deepest jungles of the Congo—expeditions that, in fact, were to bring Museum representatives to every continent of the globe (23).

With the museum's active pursuit of specimen acquisition through its extensive expedition program under Jesup came questions about how best to display its natural-historical treasure. At first, the museum concentrated its zoological exhibits on "taxidermy specimens" (Quinn 2006, 15). Yet, according to Stephen Quinn: "Gradually, the museum's visitors, curators, and scientists became dissatisfied with displays of specimens only. They wanted a more complex, accurate, and entertaining way to convey habitat, behavior, ecology, and environmental issues and concerns" (2006, 15). The solution was the habitat diorama, which was both an inventive approach to display, combining scientific, artistic and theatrical techniques to "stage" the taxidermy specimens, and in line with prevailing thought among scientists that "nothing in nature is of isolated origin but rather is the product of complex interrelationships" (15).

Drawing on museum exhibition practices in Europe and elsewhere in the United States, the tradition of habitat display at the AMNH adapted mid-nineteenth-century innovations in photography, specifically the daguerreotype, mixing scientific and theatrical elements to encourage the public's encounter with "nature." Within proscenium-like frames appeared scenes "replicat[ing] the experience of encountering wildlife in the out-of-doors" (Quinn 2006, 12), replete with naturalistic backdrops, topographical foregrounds, and animals ready to spring to life. Early dioramas at the AMNH featured what were called "habitat groups," or the representative specimens associated with a particular environment. The Hall of North American Birds, for example, which opened in 1902 and was designed by ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, artfully portrayed birds atop botanical models in glass cases (16). Over time, techniques enhancing the naturalism of the exhibits

continued to advance, prompted by the museum's considerable effort to collect and find interesting ways of presenting its unique specimens. In large part this owed to what had become an institutional tradition, begun by Chapman, "of embarking on an expedition to the site to be depicted in each diorama" (16).

One of the most celebrated results was the Akeley Hall of African Mammals, which opened in 1936 and was conceived by Carl Akeley and a team of scientists, taxidermists, and artists, many of whom had traveled to Africa together. In a cathedral-like hall, a herd of life-size elephants is surrounded by twenty-eight dioramic depictions of native landscapes. Bathed in light intended to evoke a "single moment in time," "each startlingly realistic scene features one or more of the large mammals of Africa and includes the plants, soil, trees, and birds that shared the animal's native habitat. A landscape mural curves behind the mounted specimens and three-dimensional foreground, creating the impression of a limitless vista" (Quinn 2006, 18–19). Animation of the artfully poised specimens owed to theatrical production values such as light, color, texture, and mise en scène. Composed as scenes, the harmony of natural elements lent narrative and dramatic dimension to each diorama, a far cry from the depictions of single species groups. According to Quinn, "born in an era when film and wildlife photography were in their infancy, dioramas . . . introduced museum goers to the earliest forms of 'virtual reality'" (10).

Halls of this specificity, magnitude, and painstaking rendering were not cheap for the AMNH, either to create or to maintain. By 1937, Chapman "estimated that two-thirds of every dollar of the museum's budget at that time went to the creation and maintenance of exhibits at the museum" (Quinn 2006, 18). "Many patrons were willing to provide the funding for their creation in exchange for having the diorama dedicated in their name" (Quinn 2006, 18). Yet, at the same time, not only had considerable sources of wealth available for philanthropic donation dried up during the 1930s but also, according to Preston, "the need for grand exhibitions had passed" (1986, 110). Extensive specimen collection, especially from environmentally sensitive areas of the world or of endangered species, appeared at cross-purposes with the museum's purported mission of protecting and celebrating nature (Quinn 2006, 21). Technological advances in travel and communication outmoded ambitious and costly expeditions (Preston 1986, 110). With these changes went "large-scale support from wealthy individuals, who liked to associate themselves with grand projects" (110).

12. The primary sources available for analysis in the case of the AMNH suggest focused efforts by leadership to move the museum in a more egalitarian direction were more in keeping with the prevailing political and financial winds in the mid-century. Scholarship in the field of museum studies, however, provides important context in interpreting the evidence. There is no doubt among scholars that, compared to their commercialized counterparts, public museums democratized further by the early twentieth century, due to their reliance on public revenue to cover bottom-line operating costs. And yet, according to Michael Ames, their economic stock in such institutions rising, members of the educated classes increasingly felt entitled to "expect that . . . collections would present and interpret the world in some way consistent with the values they held to be good, with the collective representations they held to be appropriate, and with the view of social reality they held to be true" (Ames 1992, 21).

13. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out, "Ethnographic objects are objects of ethnography. They are artifacts created by ethnographers when they define, segment, detach, and carry them away. . . . Ethnographic objects are made, not found, despite claims to the contrary. They did not begin their lives as ethnographic objects. They became ethnographic through processes of detachment and contextualization. Whether in that process objects cease to be what they once were, is an open and important question. That question speaks to the relationship of source and destination, to the political economy of display. The answer tests the alienability of what is collected and shown" (1998, 3).
14. For various performances, the Natya Dancers included Mera Goorian, Gina, Lucille Peters, Juana, Carolyn Hector, Anna Mandal, Mera Goorian, and Aldo Cadena. Sometimes La Meri's sister, Lillian Hughes, would serve as narrator. I gleaned the information about these performances from collected concert programs I obtained both from the AMNH Archives and the La Meri Papers (Hughes, Russell Meriwether (La Meri), Papers, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts).
15. For his part, Nick Stanley theorizes this type of interactive economy in terms of "gratification," an exchange between visitors and museums in which institutional pandering to audience expectations palliates audience exposure to contrived experiences meant to move visitors out of their comfort zones in an attempt to cultivate empathic responses to the unknown (1998).
16. I am making this assertion about a dearth of critical reviews of performances produced at the AMNH based on a rigorous survey of hundreds of related materials and an extensive search for pertinent newspaper articles. It is also important to point out at this juncture that few if any press photos exist of the programs. The photos that I have found were taken by the museum's house photographer for the purposes of institutional documentation of the program.
17. Tickets for individual performances cost $.74 for daytime and $1.80 for evening. A subscription to the afternoon performances cost $4.20 whereas for the evening performances it cost $8.40 (press release, "about December 1948").
18. According to the September 16, 1949, document, the estimate is "based on current experience with similar activities on a smaller scale in the old Auditorium and is believed to be conservative" (AMNH Archives). According to another memo dated May 11, 1950, Parks Commissioner Robert Moses approved both an addition to the museum and the building of an auditorium to be designed by architect Frank Voorhees. The proposal still had to be approved by the Management Board, and subsequent meetings were scheduled among Moses, Frederick Trubee Davidson, the museum's president, and Mayor William O'Dwyer (AMNH Archives).
19. Whereas this source in undated, contextual clues, such as Muller's reflections on the accomplishment of the dance program, suggest that Muller wrote it near the end of the program or once it was over.
20. Deren was a multimedia artist (dance and film) who had traveled to Haiti in 1947 to conduct fieldwork on Voudoun (Debouzek 1992).
21. Artists who appeared during that first subscription season included the Korean Dance Troupe led by Taik Won Cho; Dvora Lapson and Company; Reginald and Gladys Laubin; the Radischev Russian Folk Dance Group and Polyanka Ensemble; Lyda Alma and Yianni Fleury (Greek Dance); Rita and Rozzino; and Josephina Garcia assisted by Renato and San Miguel, Josephine Premice, and

Jean Destine and Group (Haiti); La Meri and company with guest artist, Juana ("exotic dances of various countries of the Old and New World which she has visited").

22. Among the works St. Denis performed was *Nautch*, "a typical street dance of the nautch (street) girls of India," claimed in the October 9, 1949, press release to be the "first nautch dance ever done in America."
23. Dancers included Nora Kaye, Patricia Wilde, Herbert Bliss, and Frank Hobi.
24. Evidence suggests, but does not confirm, the museum's sole visa sponsorship of Franco and his company. In a letter of December 4, 1950, Wayne M. Faunce, vice director and executive secretary, "certif[ies] that we have engaged the young Mexican dancer, Sergio Franco, and his group of Mexican dancers to appear here on January 11th, 1951 on our series of intercultural programs called 'Around the World with Dance and Song.'" Faunce continues: "These programs are presented in the interest of international understanding a[nd] friendship, and have been most successful since 1942, when they were inaugurated. We should deeply appreciate your cooperation in facilitating the entrance into this country of Mr. Franco and his company, with their costumes, especially since Mr. Franco is coming for the purpose of bringing the culture of Mexico to us, despite the small fee that we, as an educational institution, are able to pay him." Although I have found no government documents in response to this request, based on evidence of a concert program it is evident that Franco and his company were allowed to enter the United States for the artist's "New York debut in a Museum concert" on January 11, 1950, drawn from ancient Aztec, Mayan, Zapotecan, Totonacan, and Tarascan dances. Faunce's letter is located at the AMNH.
25. This program included Sokolow in *Retablo* (Mexican); *Kaddish* and *The Bride* (Hebraic); Jane Dudley in *Reel* (premiere), *Harmonica Breakdown*, and *Cante Flamenco*; Martha Graham company members Pearl Lang, Erick Hawkins, and Bertram Ross in a revival of *El Penitente*; and Donald McKayle in *Games*. Doris Hering of *Dance Magazine* served as commentator (Norton, 1952, "Outstanding Modern Dancers Relate Modern Dance to Ethnic Forms").
26. "Dark Rhythms" included a number of dances from across Africa, for example, *Impinyuza* (Watusi), a "tribute to the invincibility and beauty of their monarch," and *Egbo-Esakapade* (Nigeria), a court dance. *Drum Talk*, *Dance of Strength*, and *African Ceremonial* were "based on authentic African dance forms recreated by Miss Primus" (May 11, 1952).
27. My understanding of the dance program's financial position is based on several documents including a tally kept by Muller entitled "Dance Program Finances." In document entitled "Income, Expenses, Profit and Loss for programs from Spring 1949 to Fall 1951," Muller lays out expenses versus income for the following programs:

    Spring 1949: Income $5448.24; Expenses $5370; Profit $77.95
    Fall 1949: Income $7735.31; Expenses $7006.17; Profit $2106.68
    Spring 1950: Income $8038.95; Expenses $7006.17; Profit $1032.78
    Fall 1950: Income $7510.60; Expenses $9088.67; Profit? $63.93 (Franco loss $1642)
    Spring 1951: Income $7693.74; Expenses $7981.63; Loss $287.89
    1951: Income $11,202.81; Expenses $10,619.07; Profit $583.74

    A separate sheet with spring 1952 numbers includes Income $5,776.19; Expenses $6659.99; Profit: $1966.66; Loss 328.35. Muller also penned a

cryptic note thus: "I started to isolate d. [dance] expenses. . . . loss of $1900 (no salaries or overtime) per Geo Decker . . . 1650 . . . Mus. [Museum] does not wish to reveal deficit" (HLMNYPLPA, Folder 103–18).

28. This point continues: "As President Eisenhower has said, world neighborliness is the best prevention of future wars. And dance and music are universal languages, spring[ing] from the human hearts of all men. In the dances of people, we see their history, their physical environment reflected, events of their daily lives portrayed in beautiful movements and rhythms, their traditions, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears" (Outline of Purpose, Educational Value, Tribute to La Meri, Audience (undated), HLMNYPLPA, file 103–12).
29. According to a report commissioned by the US Congressional Research Service: "Immigration to the U.S. was peaking at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1910, foreign-born residents made up 14.8% of the population" (Kandel 2014, 2). However, immigration to the United States dropped as a result of the numerical limits and national origins quotas imposed by the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924.
30. According to Dennis Wepman, "Because the population was still predominantly Anglo-Saxon in 1920, the national origins quotas would effectively restrict the newer immigrant groups even more than the former quotas, which were based on only the population of foreign-born residents. The national origins quotas allotted to countries from northern and western Europe were 85 percent of the total 150,000 admissible to the United States" (2002, 245). As reported by the Congressional Research Service: "The Immigration Act of May 19, 1921, imposed the first numerical limits on countries to 3% of the foreign-born of that nationality who lived in the United States in 1910. "Each country received a minimum of one hundred visas per year" (Chin 1996, 280). A few years later, the Immigration Act of May 26, 1924, established the national origins system, which set quotas based on the number of foreign-born persons of that nationality in the country in 1890 and 1920. Both laws exempted Western Hemisphere countries from the limits" (Kandel 2014, 3).
31. As Chin points out: "Americans of African descent were not counted for purposes of awarding quotas to foreign nations. The law also provided special restrictions on colonial immigration which disproportionately affected persons of African descent" (1996, 280). Chin asserts: "A consistent feature of anti-Asian immigration laws was categorization by race and ancestry, rather than by place of birth" (1996, 281). The Immigration Act of 1924 drew on precedent nativist laws such as the Immigration Act of 1917, which barred immigrants from a so-called Asiatic Barred Zone and required literacy tests on Asian immigrants living in the United States, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which identified individuals of Chinese descent as being ineligible for American citizen due to assumptions about their inability to assimilate to Anglo-normative values.
32. As Senator Ellison D. Smith of South Carolina argued in 1924:

    I believe that our particular ideas, social, moral, religious, and political, have demonstrated, by virtue of the progress we have made and the character of people that we are, that we have the highest ideals of any member of the human family or any nation. . . . Thank God we have in America perhaps the largest percentage of *unadulterated Anglo Saxon stock*. . . . It is for the

preservation of that splendid stock that has characterized us that I would make this not an asylum for the oppressed of all countries, but a country to assimilate and perfect that splendid type of manhood that has made the American the foremost nation in her progress and her power, and yet the youngest of all nations (emphasis mine, speech before Congress, April 9, 1924, Congressional Record, LXV, part 6, p. 5961; quoted in Wepman 2002, 238).

Smith's nativist argument is founded upon the notion that immigration to the United States, and intermarriage, would "adulterate" the nation's "Anglo Saxon stock," thus leading to a degradation of the nation's core values.

33. Anthea Kraut's comments have helped me sharpen this point.
34. According to Wepman: "When shipping lanes reopened after the war, immigration surged upward again, at least from countries with quotas that allowed it, and newcomers met with far less opposition than they had before the war. In 1945, the final year of the international conflict, only 38,119 immigrants entered the country. The following year, the number rose to 108,721, and it continued to mount through the remainder of the decade, reaching almost a quarter of a million by 1950" (2002, 274).
35. As Wepman points out with respect to the Truman administration's legislation recognizing displaced persons: "This was a humane recognition of the hardships suffered by the victims of war, but it was cautiously framed and did little to extend American hospitality. Since the directive specified that all new admissions be counted against the quotas granted for each country, and since most of the homeless were from countries with low quotas, only about 41,000 people were able to enter under its provisions" (Wepman 2002, 275; for more see Wyman 1968). Additionally, the Displaced Persons Act, a law passed in 1948, focused on the repatriation of Western and Eastern European refugees who had lost their homes due to the war. In at least 40 percent of cases, the refugees assisted by this act shared an experience in which their country of origin had been "de facto annexed by a foreign power" (Bennett 1963, 76). Initially, this law imposed quotas on entry to the United States, which continued to restrict the number of visas available even to designed displaced persons, which disproportionately affected Polish and Romanian Jews fleeing anti-Semitic riots and Jews and Catholics seeking to exit communist-controlled countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the Baltics. President Truman signed the bill with great reluctance, objecting especially to those religious provisions as discriminating "in callous fashion against displaced persons of the Jewish faith" (Wepman 2002, 276). According to Wepman, these and a series of other "displaced person" laws enacted in the late 1940s and early 1950s, "met with considerable opposition and were passed only because intense lobbying secured strict adherence to the quota system of the 1924 immigration act. The laws strongly favored people of Germanic background and exiles from the Baltic States, and the 1948 bill specifically stipulated that more than 80 percent of those admitted under its provisions be Christian (2002, 276). Eventually under strong public and political pressure, Congress waived quota requirements under this law in 1957 (see Bennett, 1963, 77).
36. According to Wepman, the McCarran-Walter altered some of the numerical quotas compared to the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act; however, "it made no fundamental changes in the principle of selection" (2002, 278).

37. By contrast, mid-century immigration reform peaked in 1965 with the passage of the Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, a wholesale revision of US immigration policy. Among other provisions the law repealed national origins quotas, therefore raising the ceiling on the number of immigrants who could legally enter the United States and allowed entry of persons for whom entry had formerly been denied or significantly restricted. According to Chin, the 1965 Act was "revolutionary" because it removed "race and national origin as selection criteria for new Americans." He argues further that the law "represents a high-water mark for opponents of immigration restriction" and has had a marked impact on the number and nature of immigrants seeking entry to the United States. "Diversification of the immigrant stream is, from this perspective, no less a civil rights triumph than is equal opportunity under law in the voting booth or in the workplace. The elimination of race as a factor was a practical as well as symbolic change. Since 1965, upwards of seventy-five percent of immigrants have been from Asia, Africa, or Central or South America" (Chin 1996, 275–76). Chin attributes this shift to the "humane spirit of the 88th and 89th Congresses which, in two remarkable years, passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the 1965 immigration law" (1996, 276).
38. For an interesting contemporary take on the legacy of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran-Walter), and its influence on the Trump administration's 2017 travel ban, see Waxman 2017.
39. For example, see (all published in the *New York Times*): "Indians Sing at the Museum," February 16, 1941, 39; "Indian Dances to be Shown," February 21, 1941, 17; "Indian War Dances Seen at Museum," March 9, 1941, 32.
40. For more, see "Indians' Future Is Institute Topic," *New York Times*, March 2, 1941, D2.
41. I employ the term "world dance" in line with contemporary parlance; however, I do so with awareness of the complexity of this terminology. As Susan Leigh Foster points out in her Introduction to the 2009 volume *Worlding Dance*, the term "world" evolved as a euphemism for the term "ethnic" to denote dance practices that fell outside of the Western artistic canon. In her words: "The term 'world dance' intimates a neutral comparative field wherein all dances are products of equally important, wonderfully diverse, equivalently powerful cultures. The titling of art as 'world' also promises maximum exposure to a cornucopia of the new and exotic. Yet through this relabeling, the colonial history that produced the ethnic continues to operate" (2).
42. For perspectives on the contemporary politics of dance in the museum, see "Dance in the Museum," a special issue of *Dance Research Journal* edited by Mark Franko and André Lepecki 46 (3), December 2014.
43. In Klein's formulation, the "global imaginary of integration" contrasts with the "global imaginary of containment," a corollary but contrasting sensibility she associates with postwar US culture.

CHAPTER 2

1. The recitals, which were first scheduled for 3:30 P.M. on Tuesday afternoons in November and December of that year, opened with a performance by Chippewa, Little Moose. According to an announcement published in the *New York Times* on November 6, 1943, "Other programs will include dances of

Argentina, Chile, Peru and Panama by La Meri on Nov. 16, classic and temple dances of India on Dec. 14, also by La Meri, and dances of Africa by Asadata Dafora on Dec. 28" ("Ethnologic Dance Series: First Recital Here Tuesday at the Museum of Natural History," 16).

2. Programs I obtained from the American Museum of Natural History Central Archives suggest the extent of La Meri's early solo participation in *Around the World with Dance and Song* including performances January 6, 1944: "Dances of India" "(with recorded music)"; February 3, 1944, "Dances of Spain and Latin America" ("with recorded music)"; April 5, 1945, "Old and New Dances of Many Lands," (with recorded music) includes South India, Arabia, Spain, Polynesia; January 1944, "Dances of the Orient" including China, Burma, Japan, Ceylon, Java, Morocco. She also appeared at the AMNH with "The Natya Dancers" (Mera Goorian, Gina, Lucille Peters, Juana, Carolyn Hector), including a performance in May 1945 in a program entitled "Theater Stylizations of Folk-Dances (with recorded music) (AMNH, Box 739).
3. La Meri followed up with a letter dated August 1, 1945, in which she confirmed three programs for 1945 as requested: "Pan-American Folk Dance, Dances of the Pacific Islands, and Dances of the Orient" (HLMNYPLPA, folder 103-60).
4. In performances at the AMNH and elsewhere, however, La Meri did not limit herself to the presentation of the world's dances exclusively. On several occasions she also appeared in the museum's series with modern dance artists in mixed bills, such as on May 18, 1950, when she performed with Myra Kinch, who headed the modern dance department at Jacob's Pillow starting in 1948. In a program meant to explore "trends in ethnic and modern dance," La Meri and Kinch sought to "show how the modern dancer is turning to ethnic forms for fresh inspiration, while the ethnic dancer is modernizing traditional techniques" (Kelly, May 14, 1950).
5. La Meri adopted her stage name from an article published about her during a stay in Mexico City in the mid-1920s. As she writes in her autobiography: "Unexpectedly, Mexico City become the place of my 'christening' with the stage name that, having to my mind both logic and charm, has served me agreeably through the intervening decades" (*Dance Out the Answer* 1977, 29).
6. By the early 1930s, La Meri offered "her first all international dance concert in Vienna, and in 1938, in New York" (Ruyter 2000, 175).
7. The voyage home on the S.S. *Argentina* "was a sad trip. As though nature herself shared in our confusion, typhoons knocked us about in the Caribbean. The talk was all about war, of our abandoned homes in Europe" (*Dance Out the Answer* 1977, 150).
8. These documents were part of a promotional package that La Meri probably sent to various presenters. It is likely to have been compiled by La Meri herself or by a publicist. Its exact origins are not noted in the archive (LMNYPLPA).
9. These included *Dance as an Art Form: Its History and Developments* (A.S. Barnes, 1933), *The Gesture Language of the Hindu Dance* (Columbia University Press, 1941), *Spanish Dancing* (A. S. Barnes, 1948), *Dance Composition: The Basic Elements* (Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, 1965), *Dance Out the Answer: An Autobiography* (M. Dekkar, 1977), *Total Education in Ethnic Dance* (M. Dekkar, 1977). La Meri enrolled in the College of Industrial Arts in Denton, Texas, in 1916 although it is not clear that she ever completed a degree there (*Dance Out the Answer* 1977, 9–10).

10. Two reviews early in La Meri's career in New York illustrate the critical barriers La Meri faced throughout her career to establishing herself as an artist and/or proving the artistic merit of her work. Reviewing a joint appearance with Ruth St. Denis in 1940, for example, Albertina Vitak opined that La Meri had "mastered the difficult, because so delicate yet complex art of the Oriental dance, to such a fine degree that there is no possible doubt as to their authenticity." And yet, Vitak could not shake doubts about the artistic merit of La Meri's performance, thus: "Her personality shines through even the most formalized gestures with what Ruth St. Denis referred to as 'austere charm.'. . . What a large and varied repertoire La Meri possesses and what a store knowledge of her art!" Reviewing the same performance, John Martin similarly underlined the value of La Meri's scholarly credentials, and, in this case, the effectiveness of the lecture/demonstration format in which her sister, Lilian, served as a guide. In his words: "An afternoon with Miss La Meri is rather like being shown a small corner of some connoisseur's collection of choreographiana. In the past this has required perhaps a bit more background than the average member of the recital audience could be expected to possess, but yesterday's presentation hit upon the excellent, if a trifle unorthodox plan of providing a guide for the tour. Before each number in the first half of the program a charming Southern speaker (La Meri's sister according to report) described informally the essentials of what was to follow." "It is not every dancer's program, to be sure, that could stand such a method," Martin concluded, "but La Meri approaches her work with so objective a point of view that there is no inconsistency involved. It is to be questioned, indeed, if the objective approach is not, after all, the one best suited to the performance of racially foreign dances. Certainly no one could have attended yesterday's recital without learning a great deal and learning it by an entirely painless process" (April 1, 1940).
11. Detractors point to some basic contradictions endemic to La Meri's project and questions surrounding the ways she privileged her white body as both locus of and vehicle for myriad cultural dance forms. Such portrayals cast La Meri's sincerity in an ethnocentric and self-serving light. Since the late 1960s, critics have taken issue both with the basic premises and the ideologies that underwrote La Meri's artistic practices. In 1969, writing for the *Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Renee Renouf reviewed the revised edition of Anatole Chujoy and P. W. Manchester's *The Dance Encyclopedia*—for which La Meri was the sole contributor on Asian dance. Renouf faulted La Meri for maintaining the "Graeco-Judaic cultural-religious dichotomy not present in traditional Indian culture" in terming Bharatanatyam "Hindu Natya." She also took issue with La Meri's contention that "ballet is not an ethnic dance" because "it has been built for the edification of the aristocratic, international minority and is not, therefore, a communal expression" (383–84). Dance ethnographer Joann Kealiinohomoku picked up where Renouf left off in her seminal essay "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance" (1969–1970). Placing La Meri with ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs, dance critics John Martin and Walter Terry, and historians Lincoln Kirstein and Walter Sorell, all of whom had added to the scholarly literature on ethnic dance, Kealiinohomoku affiliated La Meri with the larger project of Western ethnocentrism, expressed in these cases through "the need to believe in the uniqueness of our own dance forms" (35). Cases in point are La Meri's claims

that (1) ethnic dances are "communal," which, Kealiinohomoku argues, supports the ethnocentric premise that such dances "grew out of some spontaneous mob action and that, once formed, became frozen" (2001, 35); and (2) what Kealiinohomoku takes as La Meri's euphemistic use of "ethnic" in place of "such old-fashioned terms as 'heathen,' 'pagan,' 'savage,' or the most recent term 'exotic.'" More recently, dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster expands on these critiques with particular attention to La Meri's approach to "choreography." Foster identifies fundamental problems in La Meri's performances in the 1930s and '40s, as her concerts "seemed to offer a window onto diverse societies, signaling the desire to know and communicate with foreign cultures, but also displaying those cultures as small, collectible, and lacking in complexity" (2010, 58). As does Kealiinohomoku, Foster aligns La Meri's work with that of Sachs, "whose *World History of the Dance* (1937) presented the first attempt to collate and compare dances from around the world, and who argued that all dance originated in an 'effervescent zest for life'" (Sachs quoted in Foster 2010, 58). According to Foster, "Both agreed that cultures look different on the surface, but their underlying structures reflect the contours of the human predicament. Thus, dances may manifest in a vast diversity of forms, yet they are unified by their common function of providing an ecstatic alternative to quotidian life" (2010, 58). Like Sachs, "La Meri found in all dances formal elements which she identified as aspects of their choreography" (2010, 58). Foster argues that La Meri interpreted global dance forms through the prism of contemporaneous dance modernism, embodying a contradiction of "embracing all forms of dance while at the same time establishing [modernism] as the meta-practice through which all forms could be evaluated" (2010, 60). La Meri's modernist perspective on her creative and scholarly practices recognized the value of cultural diversity through a reductive axiom that saw traditional movement practices as static, ecstatic, and/or linked to an imagined eternal human history.

By contrast, La Meri's defenders have extended laudatory arguments emblematic of the mid-century period to a contemporary assessment of the significance of her work. For instance, they highlight La Meri's "seriousness and sincerity" compared to precedents such as Ruth St. Denis who took a "romantic" approach to so-called oriental sources (Vatsyayan 2005, vi–vii). Crediting La Meri as "the first to lay the foundations of the first serious school of systemized training of Indian dance, specifically Bharatanatyam," dance scholar Kapilia Vatsyayan observes that her approach was "no longer . . . an impressionistic reconstruction of a mysterious Orient through a kinetic vocabulary totally alien to the East. Instead, it was a purposeful and painstaking attempt to understand and analyze another vocabulary of body language and kinesthetics" (2005, v–vi). Similarly, dance scholar Usha Venkateswaran stresses the in-body knowledge La Meri acquired by "tour[ing] and perform[ing] in different corners of the world. She simultaneously learnt the local dances and imbibed their cultural content, later adding them to her repertoire" (xiiv-xiv). Venkateswaran also commends La Meri for her ability to perform the dance forms she knew outside of their countries of origin. She writes: "So Indian Dance was performed in Colombia, Spanish dance in Japan, Hawaiian dance in Morocco, etc." (xiiv–xiv). For Venkateswaran, these aspects of La Meri's career speak to her role as a cultural ambassador. She highlights

La Meri's feat of "transforming herself into nearly thirty different nationalities in their distinctive dance styles and costumes" (xiv), on the one hand, and "crystallizing the essence of each dance form so as to perform and teach it with clarity," on the other (55). As Venkateswaran puts it: "Above all [La Meri] was a patriotic American who understood human nature and so could appreciate different cultures and art forms. She had the sensitivity to perceive the potential that these art forms had for enriching the minds of people, thereby bringing about a better understanding conducive for fostering friendship" (xiv). Dance scholar Nancy Lee Ruyter concurs with both Vatsyayan and Venkateswaran, noting that La Meri "was the first 20th century American dancer to actually pursue the study of foreign dance languages—the movements, choreographic forms, the styles, and the cultural components" (2000, 173). According to Ruyter, La Meri's was the "experienced body," not a "representation of the other, clothed with sinuous and flowing garments" (Vatsyayan 2005, vi). Nancy Lee Ruyter concurs, arguing that "in the beginning she was following that ["superficial"] path, but as she became more deeply interested in the cultures that she studied and in the whole process of understanding and acquiring new dance language, her work demonstrated an attempt to render the dances in a more seriously 'authentic' way and not to simply exploit them for glamour and exoticism" (2000, 185). Among these defenders, Ruyter reconciles La Meri's dance historical significance with the criticism that has been leveled against her of late. "It is clear that La Meri's entire life work was based on what today some might criticize as a questionable appropriation of dance material from cultures not her own," she reasons, adding, "during most of her career, however, the theoretical and ethical questions that are now being asked about such practices were not even considered." Ruyter's impulses are to counteract the standing critiques of La Meri by calling them anachronistic and to defend the artist on this basis, arguing that it is unfair to hold her accountable for what we now see as her ethnocentrism because she did not approach her work with this awareness. Leaning on themes of La Meri's authenticity and ambassadorial role, Ruyter "believes [she] served an important function for her time—to introduce dances of the world to the world, thus broadening cultural experiences and understanding for all" (2000, 185–86; see also Ruyter 2016, 452).

12. My thinking here parallels an excellent analysis by Jane Desmond illuminating the cultural imperialism manifest in Ruth St. Denis's *Radha* 1906 (2001, 257).
13. Similarly, Julian Carter contends that whiteness is "a social ideal, rather than a description of social reality," and is marked by "evidence of how a dominant racial class represent[s] the legitimacy of its power (2007, 32).
14. See also Toni Morrison, 1992.
15. Thank you to Mark Franko for helping me better articulate these dynamics.
16. This double standard can be seen with respect to African American dance artists, such as Zora Neal Hurston, Katherine Dunham, and Pearl Primus, all of whom struggled to legitimate their choreographies of the pan-Africanist diaspora. For more, see Manning 2004; Kraut 2006; Kowal 2010; Das 2017.
17. Carter argues that in the context of mid-century America, "'normality' came to serve as a sort of discursive umbrella under which white, heterosexual Americans in a formally democratic society could claim both physical and cultural ownership of modern civilization" (2007, 31). Normalization,

therefore, elevated whiteness through the establishment of standards to determine the grounds for a person or group's cultural belonging. These were standards "to which no real person can ever quite conform, though the members of some social categories gain real social privileges by their perceived proximity to those ideals" (2007, 31). Normalization also upheld racial privilege. Americans who identified as "white" "acquired a language of neutral self-description that identified them with all the best ideals and achievements of civilization." White folks could infer their racial superiority over others by dint of elevating the values of so-called Western civilization, for example, and other associated projects, including aesthetic modernism, either explicitly or implicitly through the use of nuanced coded language and/or insinuation. In these ways, whiteness was "celebrated" "without mentioning the existence of 'inferior' races" (2007, 32). I have also examined the politics of normalization for modern dance during the Cold War and in the context of the culture of containment (2010, 53–58).

18. La Meri was invited by Irene Lewisohn to present a "lecture-recital" entitled "Dancing in India" at the Museum of Costume Arts in March of that year.
19. Evening-length concerts in 1941 included engagements at the Barbizon Plaza (sponsored by the India League of America, November), and the Guild Theater (December), both in New York City. Reviewers of these concerts widely recognized La Meri as the heir apparent to Ruth St. Denis and as a masterful performer of foreign dance forms in her own right. In addition, that year La Meri appeared in several performances: solo in "A Dancing Tour of the World," at the St. James Theatre, and at least two times billed with St. Denis.
20. Throughout the rest of their lives, the two continued a friendship, which was sometimes strained, especially revolving around what would become their common connection to Ted Shawn and Jacob's Pillow. Correspondence from 1942 reveals some of these tensions. In one letter, St. Denis expresses bitterness about the obvious shift in her status as an artist given the season lineup for 1942 at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. She writes of her "disinclination to share my program with another star of equal magnitude." The reasons for St. Denis's dissatisfaction can be gleaned from piecing together other bits of the letter while referencing the season's calendar from 1942; it appears that La Meri and her Natya dancers were given a performance early in the season and then Ruth St. Denis was included in a concert featuring La Meri and the Natya Dancers later in the Festival. Regardless of which performance series this letter addresses, sharing the bill with La Meri was not to St. Denis's liking. As she put it: "I am pro[u]d as a peacock that the reunions are getting into their stride and nothing could make me happier than to see Meri presented as only you can present her with the fruit of her own Radha. [W]ill simply have to look around for something to put between her weight if she ever gets that far. And this is possible, as least it seems to me, that even if Meri does appear before I do and used the dancers, perhaps she could in the event of my coming much later in the season give them entirely new dances to suit my show"[*sic*]. St. Denis expresses resentment toward the apparent shift in her status with Shawn and at the Pillow—this seems to signify a distinction between their methods, or at least the reception of her work and La Meri's. "In times past, so far as I know, Meri has not shared her stardom with any one and I never have except with Ted." When referencing Jacob's Pillow performances—La Meri was featured in all seasons 1942–48—Ruth St. Denis

was only billed as having participated in 1942. However, in spite of these apparent tensions, the two women corresponded at least through 1956 (all correspondence on microfilm, NYPL MGZMC-RES 32 folder 522: correspondence 1941 misc. (M)/RSD). I am deeply indebted to Amy Jacobus for her help with the La Meri papers and with the interpretation of this correspondence.

21. Terry saw as prescient La Meri's comments during the performance, that, all too often, Western concert artists seek to amuse or astonish their audiences rather than to transport them emotionally or spiritually as the Indian classical dance could" (Terry, "To a Greater Dance," March 10, 1940). Terry then went further, suggesting that La Meri's knowledge of Indian classical dance forms would not only "clarify the involvements of this antique dance," making it comprehensible to Western audiences in ways no one else, even Uday Shankar, could, but would also "give us an important clue to the proper course of development for our own American dance."
22. In St. Denis's lights, this period signaled a chance for "rebirth," a "third epoch of my life" having suffered "three separate deaths—in my art, my life with Ted, and now in Denishawn" (1939, 359).
23. One of several initiatives meant to "revive her career," the publication of her autobiography, *An Unfinished Life*, in 1939, according to Suzanne Shelton, "sparked a new phase in Ruth's career." "With her story told, she graduated to the pantheon of senior citizens of the dance. She was considered charming rather than passé, quaint rather than old-fashioned" (1981, 249, 250). As Anthea Kraut has documented, "By 1933 . . . the Denishawn School faced bankruptcy, and St. Denis was forced to pursue a number of moneymaking schemes, [which] include[ed] joining the lecture circuit" (2007, 193). Kraut interprets a proposal St. Denis made to Zora Neale Hurston that the two appear together, as an example of St. Denis's financial troubles and a way she sought to put Hurston's cachet to her own advantage. And although the two never did appear together, according to Kraut, Hurston encouraged the collaboration in order to "capitalize on St. Denis's solicitation" (2006, 194).
24. For his part, John Martin of the *New York Times* wrote that the School of Natya would function as more than its name might suggest. In spite of the fact that it was a "school in which the Hindu dance is taught, it will be considerably more than that, if the intentions of its directors are carried out." He continued: "[It will be] a center for the study and diffusion of the dance, music, and drama and allied arts of the Orient" ("The Dance: Miscellany: Ruth St. Denis and La Meri Join Forces," May 26, 1940). Grant Code, writing for *Dance Observer*, shared a similar thought, this time recognizing the opening of the School of Natya as "the achievement of one of the Denishawn ideas, a school of international dance arts" ("Reunion at New School of Natya," 1940, November). Code recounts La Meri's prior career as a prologue for this subsequent collaboration with St. Denis: "Nor is it any accident that she should be associated with Miss Denis and should have followed in her footsteps. It was one of Miss Ruth's early programs that inspired 'Dickie' Hughes to become a dancer, though it was years later that they met for the first time and Miss Ruth recognized in La Meri an able protagonist of her own youthful inspiration" (133).
25. To illustrate, La Meri presented "Alarippu" or "Archaic invocational dance of South India, and St. Denis the "Incense Dance"; La Meri the "Marwari—

Kathak" or "Dance of North India," and St. Denis the "Green Nautch"; La Meri the "Mayura Nrtya" or "Hindu Peacock Dance of the Kathakali" and St. Denis "The Peacock"; La Meri "Srimpi" or "Javanese Court Dance" and St. Denis "Srimpi"; and, finally, La Meri "Lasyanatana" or "Modern Hindu Dance" and St. Denis "Black and Gold Sari." According to the program, "the dances of La Meri are accompanied by the reproduction of their authentic music," it noted that Alexander Alexay was "at the piano for Miss St. Denis" (Program, "The Dance Theatre of the YMHA Presents Ruth St. Denis and La Meri, Wednesday Eve., Aug. 7, 1940, at 9," LMNYPLPA).

26. In the review, Vitak provides an account of St. Denis's "delightful introductory talk" in which she "related a short history of events which led up to this interesting association with La Meri of whose work she spoke with the greatest admiration." Apparently, during the talk, St. Denis "did not hesitate to make many amusing jibes at herself, as when she mentioned her 'more than forty years of dancing' and hastened to add that if her audience 'could take it,' she could." St. Denis's introduction and dancing did little to impress Vitak, who presents St. Denis as passé: "Notable was her Incense Dance, one of her very first Oriental dances on her first Oriental program at the Hudson Theatre in 1906 or the Peacock or the lovely Green Nautch: what a revelation *they must have been at that time*! It gave one a sense of reliving a period in dance history and there were many in the audience who apparently remember these dances with great pleasure" (1940, 19, emphasis mine).
27. At the time he wrote this review for *Dance Observer*, Grant Hyde Code worked as the founder and manager of the Brooklyn Museum Dance Center from 1935 to 1938, a presenting venue that is notable for its location outside of Manhattan. Code had also worked as an editor for *Dance Observer*. For more, see http://archives.nypl.org/dan/19649.
28. For more on Ruth St. Denis's exploitation of cultural others and otherness toward the development of what she saw as her individualistic artistry see, for example, Desmond 2001 and Srinivasan 2012.
29. Flash forward two decades in which not much had changed. To illustrate, consider this statement by John Martin in the 1963 edition of *Book of the Dance* in which he stakes out a position that within the field of dance there were registers of representational acceptability based on performers' racial identities: "The Negro artist, like the artist of any other race, works necessarily and rightly in terms of his own background, experience and tradition. He makes no fetish of it, but on the other hand, like any other artist, he recognizes that there are some roles and categories that do not suit him. Race—exactly like sex, age, height, weight, vocal range, temperament—carries with it its own index of appropriateness" (189). Martin's argument is illuminating of the racism endemic to the field of modern dance at the time, seen both in his normalization of a "separate but equal" ideology as applied to the assignment of roles in dance works, and in his assumption that racial difference in and of itself invited an implementation of restrictions that he expected black dancers to respect and to impose on themselves. Much appreciation goes to one of my anonymous readers for bringing this passage to my attention.
30. Rebecca Rossen's work on the postwar formation of Jewish modern dance is also instructive. In contrast to the experience of African American modern dancers, whose skin color provided a marker of difference relegating them to

the province of "dancing black," Jewish Americans, from the 1930s to the 1950s, not possessing such a clear marker of their racial difference, exerted a white privilege in embracing modern dance and its universalist ideology to "become white." In Rossen's words, choreographers such as Pearl Lang, Sophie Maslow, Anna Sokolow, and Helen Tamiris "were able to effectively convert Jewish particularity into American universalism through the vocabulary and ideology of modern dance" (2006, 39).

31. Although I do not examine this here, transnational mobility and the ability to conduct ethnographic and creative research abroad with significant cultural informants was also a factor. Hurston, Dunham, and Primus in various ways and means accomplished this during their careers as dancers and as trained ethnographers.
32. Rosen continued: "Young American dancers, in common with novelists, musicians, and painters, in their overwhelming desire to be American, have the most difficult time deciding just what is representatively American. In their search of material, it soon becomes apparent to them that there is no *one* America, nor *one American*" (quoted in Rossen 2014, 32).
33. Universalism, as an ideology governing mid-twentieth-century concert dance production, had a marked impact not only on what was produced by established artists but also on work created by artists on the margins of modernism—artists of color, as well as homosexuals, or others who sought to make an aesthetic, and thus ideological, departure from the norm (Kowal 2010). In other words, universalism constituted a worldview that elevated white artistic privilege by prescribing approaches to identifying and developing source material for choreography, thereby advantaging white-identified artists by enlarging their palette of options and disadvantaging artists of color by prescribing their sources, which, as a result, circumscribed their materials and creative choices.
34. Susan Manning has documented an aesthetic turn within the broader context of universalist modernism that is important to consider. According to Manning, the 1940s saw a shift away from the convention of "metaphorical minstrelsy, whereby a white dancer's body referred to nonwhite subjects" (2004, 10), and toward "mythic abstraction," on the one hand, "in which white dancers "staged universal subjects without the mediation of bodies marked as culturally other" (118), and greater black self-representation, on the other. Deploying what Manning would call strategies of "metaphorical minstrelsy," Depression-era dancers expressed their solidarity with culturally marginalized and economically disadvantaged peoples through a conceit of dancing "as" others. By contrast, as "metaphorical minstrelsy" fell out of favor with critics and audiences by the late 1930s, modern dance artists developed strategies of "mythic abstraction," synthesizing the complexity of cultural diversity to its lowest common denominator: the white dancing body. As long as they steered away from the literal impersonation of cultural others, Anglo artists enjoyed a large palette of representational options in which their bodies were accepted as neutral conveyors of a universal human experience assumed to transcend any cultural particularities. With the strong involvement of artists of color in Popular Front leftist political and artistic movements, there became less and less reason for white, often Jewish American, artists to assume black subject positions as demonstration of political solidarity. One important litmus test for the observation of this sea change is Martha Graham's *American Document*

(1938–1944), as the work was "patterned freely after an American Minstrel Show," although created for an all-white cast. Manning notes a critical shift in response to the performance from ringing approval to approbation with respect to the work's relationship to minstrelsy (2004, 139–40). Manning also notes with respect to this work the anticipation of Graham's mythic abstraction, an approach that flourished after the war, especially "in the sections in which Erick Hawkins joined the group, and the choreography staged the white body as the universal American body, bypassing the mediation of subjects of color" (127). For more on the politics of Depression-era dance movements, see Graff 1997 and Franko 2002.

35. For example, see Walter Terry, "La Meri Offers a 'Dancing Tour' of the World," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 1, 1940, in which Terry proclaims that La Meri's work did not demonstrate the necessary capacities to "change his worldview," an implied slight indicating that her work met with his standards for effective dance art.
36. In her seminal article on intersectionality, Kimberle Crenshaw argues that "the problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences" (1991, 1242).
37. Written in 1977, *Total Education in Ethnic Dance* appears to have been tempered by time, compared to some of the positions La Meri had taken at mid-century. More reflexive, the book gestures to what might be seen as a more contemporary perspective on the practice and study of ethnic dance, thus: "The ethnologic dance is not a product of the mind but of the emotions. Style is its essence, and technique is of purely relative importance. . . . This, then, is ethnic dance—a vast panorama of human expression in its purest form, forever changing and growing, both in its natural habitat and in its transplantation to alien ground. It is a study for one who is at once a scholar, a dancer, and a creator, hence its protagonists are few and deeply dedicated" (7). Here La Meri suggests that innovation occurs within and with deep knowledge of the forms, and it is the artist's responsibility to find an individual voice within the context of collective expression.
38. I owe much gratitude to Dorothy Armstrong for helping me to compile and make sense of the vast number of primary sources that document La Meri's work at the EDC as well as her ethnologic concert dance adaptations, research I am treating in the next several sections of this chapter.
39. For more on the institutionalization of modern dance in the mid-twentieth century see Martin, 2000.
40. Terry's review highlighted what made the EDC distinctive in its development of a long-term curriculum that allowed study of dance practices alongside courses on their cultures of origin. Moreover, the EDC coupled the study and performance of ethnologic dance through the presentation of "reunion" concerts for La Meri's performance group, the Natya Dancers, at the school. Eventually in 1946, La Meri transformed this group into the Exotic Ballet Company, also based at the EDC (undated brochure for the Ethnologic Dance Center circa 1951, Box 1, folder 16, "Academy of Dance Arts/Ethnologic Dance Center," LMNYPLPA).
41. La Meri closed the EDC in 1956. "This was the sign-off year. . . . Students were leaving me for foreign study and careers . . . and I felt very 'do trop' [*sic*]. So on September first I closed the EDC" (undated school brochure, Box 1, folder 16, "Academy of Dance Arts/Ethnologic Dance Center," LMNYPLPA).

42. For more about these works see *Total Education* (1977, 43–54).
43. According a 1973 document entitled "La Meri (Chronology)," in 1946 during the year of its founding, the Exotic Ballet Company performed at the Brooklyn Museum; in New London, Connecticut; Chicago; Berkeley, California; at Jacob's Pillow, Becket, Massachusetts; and in cities in New Jersey, Illinois, Wisconsin, Florida, Louisiana, "New England, etc." (Box 1, folder 2, 8, LMNYPLPA).
44. In the Introduction to *Total Education in Ethnic Dance* (1977), and specifically addressing the question "What Is Ethnic Dance?," La Meri makes some distinctions that are relevant to consider. Here she separates "ethnic dance" into two categories: folk dance and art dance. Folk dance, she writes, is connected to a people and region of origin: "Folk dance is the folk, dancing, and you will not see it until you travel to a community of its birth." Forms of ethnic "art dance," or "ethnologic dance," "gro[w] out of the folk tradition," and "carr[y] with them . . . the highest forms of the ideas and beliefs of the people who gave them birth" (1977, 4). Within the category of the "ethnic art dance" she delineates further, among (1) "The Traditional," in which "the performing artist retains the traditional costume, music, techniques, and dance form, or routine"; (2) "The Authentic," in which "the artist uses the traditional costume, music, and techniques but takes certain liberties with the form"; (3) "The Creative Neoclassical or Renaissance," in which "the artist may take some liberties with costume, music, and form," and yet "stays within tradition in style and motivation"; (4) "Creative Departures," which I have defined above; (5) and "Applied Techniques," in which "the traditional techniques are allied to alien themes, music, costume, and motivation" (5–6). Among these categories are sometimes thin lines of distinction. Questions arise for me about how such categories are discerned or maintained.
45. The title of the section is the title of a "press-preview" La Meri presented prior to the premier of *Swan Lake*; in it she sought to explain her motivations for creating the work to audiences, and primarily dance critics.
46. In the prologue, the protagonist Prince Siegfried celebrates his twenty-first birthday, a significant rite-of-passage during which his mother instructs him that it is time now to choose a wife. During Act 2, while he is hunting in the woods, the Prince encounters Odette, Queen of the Swans, of whom he is instantly enamored. Under the spell of an evil sorcerer, Von Rotbart, Odette can be freed only between midnight and dawn, and only by a man who promises to marry her. After spending precious hours with Siegfried, at dawn Odette is summoned by Von Rotbart and forced to leave Siegfried. In La Meri's version, Rakshasa is the name of the sorcerer, and Hamsa-Rani is the Swan Queen. I am using the scenario for "Swan Lake" from Rosalyn Krokover's *The New Borzoi Book of Ballets*, published in 1956, as it is closely contemporaneous with La Meri's 1944 adaptation. My ability to provide a visual account of this work is extremely limited due to a dearth of sources; however, I have seen a section of this work in a silent film housed at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, as well as bits and pieces performed in a lecture demonstration presented by the Diemann-Bennett Dance Theatre of the Hemispheres in Southeast Iowa, probably in the 1980s. These are as follows: "A Glimpse of India," V160 [IWA0265_31858065639183] Dieman-Bennett Dance Theatre of the Hemispheres Records, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City; "Swan Lake Excerpts—South Bear,"

[IWA0265_31858065639225], Dieman-Bennett Dance Theatre of the Hemispheres Records, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City.

47. La Meri's 1945 program, entitled "Theater Stylizations of Folk-Dances," showcased excerpts of works in progress that "adapted . . . steps of typical folk-dances to theatre-dance." Here she staged "three original ballets . . . based on the technique of typical racial dance forms." Promoted as "the first full ballet to be created using the modern traditional hula technique as a vehicle," *Ea Mai Hawaiinuiakea* (or Legend of the Birth of the Islands) employed "modern hula technique, which is a combination of the old pantomimic hands and the newer form of dances also with the feet and hips," to dramatize the "Legend of the Birth of the Islands." In *Iberia* (music by Claude Debussy), La Meri adapted "traditional" Spanish dance to tell a story about an acculturated gypsy who longs for her former "simple" life. And, in *Swan Lake* she "applied the Hindu dance-idiom to the story of Swan Lake" (AMNH Archives, May 12, 1945).
48. In Klein's formulation, the "global imaginary of integration" contrasts with the "global imaginary of containment," a corollary but contrasting sensibility she associates with postwar US culture (2003, 22–23).
49. Kazal defines assimilation "as referring to processes that result in greater homogeneity within a society" (1995, 438). He offers a definition of assimilation in an "immigrant context" thus: "as referring to processes that generate homogeneity beyond the ethnic-group level. Such processes bring different immigrant ethnic groups, or their members, together in any number of arenas, creating common ground among them, or between them and a socially dominant group (1995, 439)." He goes further to offer an account of the processes involved in "Americanization" thus: "Americanization [is] that particular variant of assimilation by which newcomers or their descendants come to identify themselves as 'American' however they understand that identity.
50. In Warner's and Srole's words: "The future of American ethnic groups seems to be limited," they wrote, "[and] it is likely that they will be quickly absorbed. When this happens one of the great epochs of American history will have ended. . . . Paradoxically the form of American egalitarianism, which attempts to make all men American and alike, and the force of our class order, which creates differences among ethnic peoples, have combined to dissolve our ethnic groups" (1945, 295–96).
51. Alba and Nee are critical of Warner's and Srole's view of assimilation. In their words: "As part of this assimilation process, ethnic groups must, according to [Warner and Srole], 'unlearn' their cultural traits, which are 'evaluated by the host society as inferior,' in order to 'successfully learn the new way of life necessary for full acceptance" (quoted in 2003, 2; original, 285).
52. Alba and Nee are critical of this perspective in that it fails to recognize the possibility that cultural change can occur as cultures "converge" into one another, bringing them closer together; in other words, "elements of minority cultures are absorbed alongside their equivalents of Anglo-American or other origins are fused with mainstream elements to create a composite culture" (2003, 25). To their minds, this would constitute a kind of "cultural pluralism" whereby the distinct elements of minority cultures are preserved, as in an orchestral ensemble, and, when combined, contribute to a variegated and yet harmonic whole (2003, 26).

53. In her book, *Incorporations: Race, Nation, and the Body Politics of Capital*, Eva Cherniavsky theorizes ways of "de-universalizing" whiteness within white cultural studies. As she puts it: "a good deal of the recent scholarship counters the (supposed) invisibility or universality of whiteness by (re)positioning white subjects within the bounded specificity of white bodies." "In so doing," she continues, "we miss the way in which it is precisely the boundedness of white embodiment vis-à-vis capital that confers on white personhood an interior core—a property in self that appears to precede every social mediation and thus upholds the colonizer's sense that the world is only a function of his seeing it, and he himself its unmarked and original point of reference. From this perspective, the critical world of de-universalizing whiteness risks merely reconstituting the white subject and/in its protected relation to capital (xxii). In other words, positioning whiteness as the focus of cultural study so as to reveal its invisibility and tacit dominance can have an inverse impact, in effect reinscribing the privilege of its position in the very process of calling it out.

CHAPTER 3

1. Meriwether identifies the height of the CAA's influence between 1943 and 1947, under the leadership of Robeson, Yergan, and Alphaeus Hunton Jr., who served as the organization's educational director and editor of its journal *New Africa*. Other prominent African American leaders and thinkers were also active members including W. E. B. Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, Alain Locke, Rayford Logan, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., and Channing Tobias (Lynch 2002, 61).
2. Dafora's association with the organization is not fully clear. According to Heard, he helped to co-found AAAR (1999, 113). However, I cannot independently verify this claim based on my own research of primary sources. For more about the early history of the organization, see Mbadiwe, "Africa—Today and Tomorrow," 1945.
3. According to literary scholar Deseley Deacon, the term "transnational" does not necessarily depend on "geography, on moving from one part of the world to another." It can also allude to a "vicarious experience, that is to say, when one writes and reads about a transnational being, one's own thinking may become transformed. One is led to think of other areas of the world, of other races and civilizations" (2009, xi–xii).
4. In his 2001 article, Michael Terdiman examines the ways in which Michel de Certeau's theory of "heterology" invested in marginality, or what Terdiman calls "the constancy of difference," in order to elucidate "problem[s] that implicat[e] real bodies and always disclos[e] the affliction of real human beings" (401).
5. According to Perpener 2001, Dafora's last name, Horton, was his grandfather's surname adopted from his slave master.
6. Perpener 2001 attributes Dafora's decision to give up singing to his lack of success, or to audience lack of interest (2001, 107); the Schomburg biography, however, explains his decision in terms of a breakthrough that happened when he was performing in Germany in 1910. As Dafora wrote regarding this turn of events in his own life, "The European tour affected the direction of his life and career. While in a German nightclub one evening in 1910, he happened to hear the orchestra play a medley of African songs. Overwhelmed with emotion at the sound of his native music, he spontaneously began to dance. The audience, never having witnessed true African dancing, was fascinated and wildly enthusiastic at the performance. Consequently, the management asked that he remain there to assist

in the training of a group of dancers to celebrate the opening of the Kiel Canal." Perpener quotes two Margaret Lloyd articles, "Dancer from the Gold Coast, Parts I and II," in the *Christian Science Monitor*, May 16, 1945, n.p., and June 9, 1945, 5, in which Dafora is quoted as saying that white people performed as Africans in these performances. For additional information see Heard 1999, 215–16.

7. For an overview of Dafora's career in the 1930s, see Heard 1999, and Needham 2002.
8. Regarding *Kykunkor*, scholars have focused on the artist's sensationalization of his subject matter and the ways his primitivist representations of African culture perpetuated racist stereotypes of African peoples and cultures at the time. Similarly, reviews written about Dafora's works perpetuated these stereotypes. As K. K. Martin argues with respect to the reception of *Kykunkor*, for instance, "the critical response was overwhelmingly favorable, though frequently uninformed and noticeably patronizing" (1975, 119). For an additional description of the work based on photographs, see, for example, Manning 2004, 44–55.
9. For similar arguments see Butcher 1973, 93–94 and Perpener 2001, 105.
10. For more, see Manning who argues, "Although a few white critics looked differently at black bodies after seeing *Kykunkor*, the new appreciation of Negro dance did not necessarily carry over into subsequent reviews. Nor did the success of Dafora's production challenge white critics' acceptance of metaphorical minstrelsy. . . . Despite Dafora's success in securing commercial theater patronage for *Kykunkor*, other Negro dancers found it no easier to present their works in New York City during the 1930s (2004, 55).
11. For more on Zora Neale Hurston's life and career, see Kraut 2008.
12. Katherine Dunham played a large role in advancing knowledge of an Africanist cultural continuum in dance in the field of anthropology. For more, see Vèvè A. Clark and Sara E. Johnson (2005) and Joanna Dee Das's astute chapter entitled "Finding a Politics of Diaspora in the Caribbean," 35–53, in her 2017 *Katherine Dunham: Dance and the African Diaspora*. New York: Oxford University Press.
13. There is a discrepancy regarding the title of the performance. In a press release preceding the event, it is called the "Grand African Dance Festival" (undated, NYPL Dafora clippings file). However, in the Carnegie Hall program it is called "An African Dance Festival." For the purposes of this chapter, I have adopted the latter one as it is designated as official in the program.
14. For more information about the AAAR and Dafora's involvement in several joint projects, see Lynch 2002, 191–93.
15. After a meandering academic career that took him from Lincoln to Columbia University, where he received his BS in 1943, Mbadiwe received an MA in political science from NYU in 1948 (Lynch 2002, 185–86).
16. Hollis Lynch writes of Mbadiwe: "Of all African students ever in the U.S., it is probable that Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe of Nigeria made the greatest impact on American Society, and did more than any other to foster pan-African links between Afro-Americans and Africans as well as general understanding and goodwill between America and Africa" (2002, 184)."
17. Of Mbadiwe, Lynch writes: "By the spring of 1943 he had decided that an organization whose emphasis was cultural, highlighting African culture—music, dance and drama—would win widespread attention and support" for his politics. At the time, there were two other organizations in existence dedicated to a similar cause, the Council on African Affairs (CAA), begun by Max Yergen

and Paul Robeson, and the Ethiopian World Federation; neither of these appealed to Mbadiwe (2002, 191).

18. The press release continued: "Not since he staged 'Kykunkor' and 'Zunguru,' his dance dramas which received so much acclaim some years ago, has Dafora attempted such an ambitious presentation. Besides singers, dancers and specialty dancers, the African Dance Festival will involve in orchestra of six drummers, including the largest war drum in this country, and six other musicians" (Dreiblatt, November 14, 1943).
19. A brochure of the same vintage put the organization's goals more urgently, appealing to the public's wartime sensitivities: "At no time in the history of the world has the necessity of interdependence among peoples been more keenly felt than at the present time." It continued: "Thus we can see that in the world of tomorrow national existence will depend much more upon the harmonious cooperation of nations than upon isolation and the outmoded principle of the survival of the fittest" (brochure entitled "Africa and America Meet through the African Academy of Arts and Research," 1943, ADSCRBC). Unfortunately my research has not turned up any transcripts of the speeches delivered at this event besides those I have mentioned. The AAAR did, however, circulate a publication in 1945 entitled *Africa: Today and Tomorrow* as a supplement to the 1945 "An African Dance Festival" held at Carnegie Hall; it published some of the addresses given at the 1945 event including those by Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary McLeod Bethune, Alain Locke, Raymond E. Baldwin, Nicholas Murray Butler, Martha Dreiblatt, and A. Balfour Linton.
20. According to John Martin, in his review entitled "African Dancers in Festival Here: Mrs. Roosevelt, a Sponsor, Speaks at Inauguration of the Academy of Arts," published in the *New York Times*, after an intermission several speakers addressed the audience including Mbadiwe, Roosevelt, and Bethune, and then Mrs. Dafora presented the female speakers with gifts, "consisting of fabrics woven and dyed in native style" (December 14, 1943).
21. According to Heard, "over 2,850 persons from all walks of life," attended the performance (quotation from Dafora papers in Heard 1999, 116).
22. Similarly underlining the efficacy of performance, in Mbadiwe's words, "to foster goodwill between the U.S. and Africa through a mutual exchange of cultural, social and economic knowledge," reviewer George Beiswanger (G.W.B.) of *Dance Observer* noted that "the aptest words came from the dancers," presumably surpassing the spoken addresses of Mbadiwe, Roosevelt, and Bethune (*Dance Observer*, January 1944, 9).
23. In fact, the AAAR had poured substantial financial resources into the performance to make this case and had wound up with a sizable deficit. As Lynch details: "Inexperience in promoting such an affair had let to a deficit of two thousand dollars ($2000)—a 'great blow' to the fledgling organization" (2002, 192).
24. Mbadiwe 1991, 18.
25. For more on the membership of the sponsoring committee for the 1943 African dance festival and the eventual board of directors, see Lynch 2002, 191–98.
26. This is the title of Alain Locke's article published in the journal *Africa, Today and Tomorrow*, Mbadiwe 1945, 23.
27. Hanson explains Bethune's role in organizing Roosevelt's Black Cabinet thus: "The Roosevelt administration's willingness to appoint racial liberals to key

government posts encouraged African Americans. Bethune's transition from Hoover supporter and member of the Board of Counselors to the Women's Division of the Republican National Party in 1932 to her role as director of the Office of Minority Affairs and organizer of the Black Cabinet under the Roosevelt administration is symbolic of the shifting loyalties of the black electorate. Behind the scenes, Bethune became an adviser on black politics to Democratic party officials, New Deal administrators, and FDR himself" (2003, 124). For more on Bethune's life and work see Hanson 2003; McCluskey and Smith, 1999.

28. The year 1943 was difficult for Bethune personally, professionally, and politically. As her biographer Joyce A. Hanson described it: "Bethune was on an emotional roller coaster in late 1942 and early 1943." This was partly due to setbacks regarding Bethune's efforts through the National Association of Negro Women to integrate nursing training facilities in Des Moines, Iowa, which had failed, whereas other similar efforts in facilities on the East coast had been more successful. In early 1943, Bethune was also publicly accused by Texas congressman Martin Dies, of being a communist and was called to appear before HUAC in April 1943, after which time "the committee quickly exonerated Bethune" (2003, 187–88).
29. For more on the 1944 presidential campaign, see Jordan 2011.
30. Von Eschen 1997 argues, for example: "From the 1935 invasion of Ethiopia to the strikes that swept the Caribbean and West Africa in the late 1930s, from Nigerian responses to Roosevelt and Churchill's dispute over the meaning of the Atlantic Charter to India's dramatic challenge to the British during the war, African American political discourse was keenly informed by and deeply responsive to events in Africa, in the Caribbean, and throughout the colonized world. Even issues which on the surface appeared strictly domestic . . . were approached from an anticolonial perspective and guided by the premise that the struggles of black Americans and those of Africans were inseparably bound" (1997, 7). For more on the history of the relationship between African Americans and Africa in the early to mid-century, see Von Eschen 1997, Meriwether 2002, Tillery 2011, and Swindall 2014.
31. As described by Dallek: "The exhausting five-day trip by train and plane via Miami, Trinidad, Belem, Brazil, across the Atlantic to Bathurst, British Gambia, and on to Casablanca, where they had agreed to meet in the suburbs of Anfa, exhilarated the President who treated the journey as a 'first class holiday'" (Roosevelt quoted in Dallek 1979, 369).
32. In his words, "Casablanca assured that the war against the Axis was on a sure footing, and that outcome was certainly no small achievement. A realistic strategy for the entire war was now in place" (Wilt 1991, 529).
33. My accounts of these performances are drawn from Carnegie Hall programs and newspaper reporting. I am grateful to Rob Hudson, archivist at the Carnegie Hall Archives, for helping me procure program materials.
34. The *New York Times* article notes that there were dignitaries in the audience including "Dr. Oscar Lange, Polish delegate to the U.N. Security Council, as well as staff members from other delegation[s]" "Selassie Receives Art Academy Prize," *New York Times*, April 27, 1946, 12.
35. For an account of the political intersections between African American and anti-colonial activism during the Cold War Years, see Tillery 2011 and Plummer 2013.

36. In the same vein, Dafora and the AAAR produced another performance together entitled *Africa: A Tribal Operetta* at the YMHA Kaufmann Auditorium in 1944 (Heard 1999, 122). Dafora performed "African Drums and Modern Rhythms: A Panorama of Negro Music and Dance" at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on April 2, 1946 (Program, box 1, folder 6, ADSCRBC).
37. Venues included but were not limited to the following: the North Carolina College for Negroes (Durham, NC, January 7, 1946), Albany State College (Albany, GA, January 9, 1946), Tillotson College (Austin, TX, February 5, 1946), Howard University (Washington, DC, May 4, 1946), the Hampton Institute (Hampton, VA, July 30, 1946), Lincoln University (Jefferson City, MO, October 16, 1946), the Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee, AL, February 27, 1947), and Baylor University (Waco, TX, March 4, 1947). Outside of university- or college-sponsored events, the group also performed in the following cities, often sponsored by regional organizations: Beaumont, TX (February 4, 1946, YMCA); Indianapolis, IN (November 11, 1946, sponsored by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority); Corpus Christi, TX (March 8, 1947, sponsored by a private individual), and Tuscaloosa, AL (March 12, 1947, no sponsor indicated). Performance venues and sponsors are confirmed by contracts drawn up by the National Concert and Artists Corporation. These materials are housed in the Dafora Papers collection in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, box 1, folder 3, ADSCRBC.

CHAPTER 4

1. City Center proved to be an inhospitable venue for the festival headliner, the Paris Opera Ballet, where a vastly limited stage depth (40 feet compared to 120 feet at the Paris Opera House) caused the company to cancel two of its planned productions because "the scenery [was] too large for the theatre" (Martin, September 24, 1948; quote from Martin, September 27, 1948).
2. Gratitude goes to Dorothy Armstrong for her sage words of advice concerning this turn in the argument. It is also important to mention that even though archival research illuminated many aspects about the international dance festival, there are many questions left unanswered due to lack of documentation.
3. Lifar served as ballet master and artistic director of the Paris Opera Ballet between 1930 and 1945 and again between 1947 and 1958.
4. As Lifar explained in his 1970 autobiography: "I was to utilize my prestige—and my origins—to preserve under the tidal wave of Occupation that part of the national patrimony represented by the Opera, its stage, its dancers, its treasures, its archives" (169). Lifar goes on to explain his relations with the Nazis in subsequent chapters. Much appreciation goes to Emma Robertson, who assisted me with research concerning Lifar and the Paris Opera Ballet.
5. As Franko details: "After the liberation of Paris Serge Lifar was called to testify before the Comité National d'Epuration. Lifar went into hiding after the Liberation of Paris, but appeared at his trial with armed Russian guards who were immediately arrested. He was judged to be a collaborator. . . . The committee judged Lifar guilty of an anti-national point of view unbefitting a foreigner who had been granted asylum in France. . . . His punishment consisted of a one-year professional suspension from French national stages imposed retroactively. . . . The failure of the Minister of Education to act on the

recommendation of the Purification Commission to further sanction Lifar served definitively as a de facto rejection of the commission's recommendation. . . . During this suspension, Lifar worked at the Opéra de Monte Carlo where he was also forbidden to appear on stage (2017, 227). I am grateful to Mark Franko for sharing his current and forthcoming research on Lifar with me.

6. Given Hurok's purported animosity toward Lifar based on Lifar's account, I do not have an explanation for why the Paris Opera Ballet would have been invited to perform at the international dance festival except that the company had been selected by French government officials. As Lifar explains the selection in his autobiography: "For the centennial festival of New York held in 1948, the Paris Opera was invited to the United States and Canada. It was to figure in the programme of a French delegation led by the chairman of the Paris Municipal Council, then Pierre de Gaulle, brother of the general" (1970, 316).
7. Research by Lynn Garafola and Mark Franko confirms what audiences suspected of Lifar (see Garafola 2005, 408; Franko 2017). Documenting the ways in which "opportunism and political commitments informed Lifar's actions" during the German occupation of France, between 1940 and 1944, Franko, for one, finds strong connections between Lifar's politics and the choices he made as artistic director of the Paris Opera Ballet (2017, 219). He concludes that "Lifar was politically astute, calculating, and manipulative. He saw in Goebbels and in the Nazi propaganda machine an opportunity to further his own career on a European scale with the enduring support of the Third Reich. The evidence also shows that Lifar's activities coincided with his political convictions, which he discussed quite openly, and which were consonant with Nazi ideology, particularly that of anti-Semitism" (240). For more on the subject of dance artistic collaboration with the Nazis during the period of the Third Reich, see Karina and Kant 2003.
8. Franko stipulates that "it would seem from this that the prohibition on Lifar's dancing in France was not extended to international tours" (2017, 248).
9. Here Kakutani notes: "At the height of Walter Winchell's power in the late 1930s, some 50 million Americans—roughly two-thirds of the adult population—either listened to his weekly radio broadcast or read his daily newspaper column" (1994). For more on Winchell's life, see Neal Gabler 1994.
10. Kakutani writes: "After the war and Roosevelt's death, Winchell's liberalism began to sour. Truman disappointed him and so did Dewey and Henry Wallace. By the early 50's, he had become an ardent supporter of Joseph McCarthy, not solely out of Communist fervor . . . but also out of a willingness to employ similar tactics of finger-pointing and innuendo" (1994).
11. Balanchine was not ignorant of the irony that the French public did not like "foreigners." Taper reports that in a conversation with Lifar, Balanchine's expressions of interest about joining the Paris Opera in 1929 as its ballet-master were met by skepticism. As he writes: "Lifar asked Balanchine what his plans were for the immediate future. Balanchine replied that he was in need of work and was thinking of talking to Rouché about the ballet-master job that Rouché had spoken of to him before he fell ill. Lifar did not seem to think that was a very good idea. 'They don't like foreigners here, you know,' he said. 'What about you—and Efimov? Aren't you foreigners?' [Balanchine asked.] 'Well we're here already [Lifar answered]. But I don't think they want any more' [Lifar added]" (1984, 128).

12. As Serge Guilbaut argues: "In the immediate postwar period, Paris refused to see the radical changes that were affecting economic and artistic relations between Europe and the United States. When New York, through its spokesman Clement Greenberg, declared that it had at last achieved international status as a cultural center and even replaced Paris as the cultural symbol of the Western world, the French capital was not strong enough, either economically or politically, to protest. . . . France, which had lost nearly everything in the war . . . set about holding on to what the entire world had for centuries recognized as hers: cultural hegemony. Hence for the United States to shift the center of artistic creation from Paris to New York was no mean undertaking" (1983, 5). Thank you to Mark Franko for reminding me of Guibaut's and my parallel arguments.
13. Gopal's appearance at the 1948 International Dance Festival was the second of three trips he made to the United States to perform. In 1938, he made his New York debut at the 46th Street Theater, presented by Sol Hurok (program dated May 1, 1938, 1948NYCMA). Prior to appearing in New York City in 1938, he performed in Honolulu, Hawaii, and in Hollywood and Los Angeles, California (Kothari 2003, 18d). He performed at the 1948 International Dance Festival in New York City. And he returned to the United States in 1954 to perform at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Lee, Massachusetts. Gopal and his company's trip to New York to perform at the 1948 International Dance Festival followed extensive touring in London, Paris, Stockholm, and Oslo also in 1948 (two letters dated August 11, 1948, to Grover Whalen from Julian Braunsweg, and August 16, 1948, to Sol Hurok: memo of letter to Whalen, 1948NYCMA). Serge Lifar wrote of Gopal after an appearance in Paris also that year: "A new friend of the dance has come to us from antique Asia, from that mystical and enchanting India. The exotic side of his dancing charms and fascinates us; but what really moves us is the mystic spirit that animates him" (Lifar quoted in Gregory, 2003).
14. Gopal writes of the importance of his connection to Hurok in his autobiography thus: "We opened at the New York City Centre in October, and gave a series of performance which were presented by the great Sol Hurok, whose name was often more exciting to the public than the performances, in that Hurok, having presented Pavlova, Duncan, Challiapine [*sic*] and other great artists down to Shakar before and after the war, was the undisputed king of ballet impresarios, both from the West and East" (1957, 180).
15. For more on the history and politics of the revival of classical dance in India, see, for example: Meduri 1988; Gaston 1996; Chakravorty 1998; O'Shea 2007; Meduri 2010. In fact, writing about "celebrated revivalist" Rukmini Devi Arundale," Meduri contends that Arundale "envisioned an international, portable, concert stage setting for the dance in the formative years of what is known as the Indian dance revival of the 1930s" (2010, 253). O'Shea extends this thesis to argue that "the transformations that bharata natyam underwent in the revival also placed it within a global dance milieu" (2007, 5).
16. Janet O'Shea argues, "Like his predecessor Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal turned the attention of mainstream dance viewers abroad to Indian forms. . . . Gopal enjoyed greater acclaim abroad than in India" (O'Shea 2007, 145).
17. Gopal's understanding of his own artistic significance more or less squares with that of scholars, who argue that Gopal contributed both as a pioneer of Indian classical dance and as an artist who sought to fashion his performances in such

a way as to represent India to the West. In their 2003 tribute following Gopal's death, the editors of *Nartanam: A Quarterly Journal of Indian Dance* put it this way: "Ram Gopal as a true visionary had also imbibed the quality of synthesis and assimilation of negating forces. He realized, early in life, the need for classical Indian Dances to reach the Western connoisseur and to get his/her approval and appreciation to be ultimately accepted in the world. He also found that he must do this on his own terms." Further, the editorial cites a 2002 article by Ann David arguing that Gopal "had the virtuosity to 'translate' the Indian Dance idiom for his western audiences" (editorial, *Nartanam,* 2003, 7). Lena Hammergren makes a similar argument that Gopal's transnational status, his moving between Eastern and Western cultural contexts, challenged him to "translate" his experience through his dance practices (Hammergren 2009, 22). Studying the meanings of Gopal's appearances in Sweden in 1947, Hammergren sees this translational work not as an acquiescence to universalism, but rather as indication of Gopal's assertion of his "right to 'difference in equality,'" a strategic stance that allowed him to navigate the changing and contingent cultural expectations around his work as well as the "various limitations of recognition and institutional indifference that he and his dances encountered" (quote is from E. Balibar, in Hammergren 2009, 22).

18. This section heading is taken from John Martin, October 1, 1948, 30.
19. For more on Shankar's tours of the United States see, for example, Abrahams 2007 and Purkayastha 2012.
20. Martin's exoticization of Gopal echoed that of author Carl Van Vechten, who penned this account after watching Gopal's performances in New York City: "Ram Gopal tears us away from the untruths of everyday life into the reality of his mystic visions" (Van Vechten quoted in Gregory, October 14, 2003). Van Vechten's comment exemplifies a Western critical approach to Indian classical dance performance that sought to create distance between the performer and the viewer through the employment of orientalist tropes.
21. Identifying the characteristic features of Gopal's approach to classical Indian dance performance, which he judged as lacking in "nobility," Martin surmised: "It has what is generically known as color, exoticism, a technical skill which even the layman must recognize, and a large infiltration of that style which can perhaps best be described as Orpheum-circuit." Dance scholar Prarthana Purkayastha's research focuses on Shankar's work during the 1930s, the period to which Martin eludes. She argues that during this time Shankar exhibited a "tendency to play to the popular European imaginary of the Empire . . . [representing] a phase in which he willingly identifies, as a native of India, with Euro-American expectations of the exotic oriental dancer" (2012, 75).
22. Dance scholar Ann David's analysis of the visual politics of Gopal's self-representation during this period adds another layer to this analysis. David contends that Gopal's approach, of "actively [seeking] the spectator's gaze upon [his] beautiful dancing bod[y]," turned the tables on conventional visual power relations in asserting the performer's agency in making himself a spectacle to behold. As David points out, British dance critics during the interwar years deployed orientalist tropes as a way of reasserting their position of power in the face of Gopal's performances, responding to "such scopophilic, pleasured looking at the idealized male body" with "an exotic

controlling gaze, as well as a relationship of power, despite Gopal's own manipulation of such dynamics" (2010, 2).

23. This section heading is taken from Terry, "Gopal," October 4, 1948.
24. Reviewing the opening performance, Terry wrote: "Your reporter is forced, this morning, to offer a rather breathless review of last evening's dance events" (October 1, 1948).
25. Describing Mr. Kycia's services, Gopal writes: "My Assistant Mr. Kycia has been a British Government Scholarship student at the South West Essex Technical College for four years, finalizing this year, and who is coming into business with me" (letter dated 12 April 1954, TSJPA). Queried by Shawn about why he would need an assistant, Gopal replied in a subsequent letter: "As for my friend Mr. Kycia he has been doing part time instruction and work under me during many Continental tours of mine. [H]e is primarily very efficient in dealing with the complicated 'know how' of my work and temperament. That is why I must have one assistant to help me to do what I could never do alone, anywhere, East or West" (letter dated May 2, 1954, TSJPA).
26. For more on Gopal's childhood see Gopal 1957, 1–46. Here, in his autobiography, Gopal recounts his father's ambivalence toward his passion for dancing. In one episode, the teenaged Gopal is invited to perform at a party hosted by "the Yuvaraja, brother of the Maharaja and father of the present ruler of that state" [Mysore] (20). Not invited but hearing about the performance from "some Brahmin on the staff of Father's office," his father crashed the event and, yelling at Gopal to stop, halted his performance. As Gopal recalls: "When I heard that voice boom across the heads of the Royal Ones and the respectable seated and silent audience, I quickly parachuted to earth, leaving all those stars and moons hanging in the sky of my dance" (22). Reflecting on his father's conflicted feelings, Gopal wrote: "I think he was secretly amused. He must have been impressed by what he saw. But something of the Rajput in his blood must have revolted at seeing his son dancing nearly naked in front of the citizens of his home town, thus bringing, as he thought, disgrace upon his name and family" (23).
27. In fact, in another letter, in reference to the discussion between Shawn and Gopal concerning the necessity of Gopal's bringing Kycia, administrator A. L. Crampton Chalk wrote of Gopal: "As to my persuading Ram to come alone—which is the only constructive thing open to be done at this stage—it would be as easy to persuade the Sphinx to shift over in the sand a bit and give the Pyramids more room" (letter dated June 21, 1954).
28. Thank you, Mark Franko, for assisting in the formulation of this idea.
29. Weidman is called "America's leading male dancer" by Doris Hering, "Charles Weidman: Dancer for America," *Dance Magazine*, June 1948, 19.
30. The exact dates are as follows: Weidman's performance, on September 27, 1948, fell between the Paris Opera's full run (between September 21 and October 3), and the performances of Ram Gopal and His Hindu Ballet (between September 30 and October 3).
31. In her article "Charles Weidman: Dancer for America," Hering identifies this moment as a conversion experience when Weidman's "love of architecture, and history, and movement suddenly fused into a magnificent whole that was infinitely more beautiful and more wonderful than any of its parts" (1948, 19).
32. According to Vogrin: "Comparing the two as choreographers, Weidman was generally regarded as less talented and more limited; Humphrey was seen as

the serious one. . . . His relative lightheartedness can be seen as a preference rather than a lack of ability as Weidman was a joyous and gifted comedic dancer" (1998, 818–19).

33. I am grateful to Janet Werther for reminding me of the invaluable resource of Limón's *An Unfinished Memoir* for thinking about Charles Weidman's career within the context of the sexual and aesthetic politics of the postwar modern dance field.
34. In his memoir, Limón vows to exceed the accomplishments of his mentors Humphrey and Weidman, thus distinguishing his creative path from theirs: "The years of innocence were ended. Blind worship of my artistic heroes gave way to a more discriminating and far from total acceptance of their works. And, stirring uncomfortably in a dim recess of my awareness, at first unrecognized, then by slow degrees more palatable, was a persistent question, a challenge even. 'Can you do as well? Do you think that, some day, some year, you could do better?' " (1999, 74).
35. The full quote is as follows: "Some may say that I am going too far when I desire to make my dance creations as easily understandable as a movie. But this may explain why more and more I have come to believe in the pantomimic dance drama. The word 'pantomime' does not mean to me the presentation of a dumb show, as most dictionaries define it, or the mere telling of a story or action without the use of explanatory words. To me it is the transport of an idea into movement, the animation of the feeling behind the idea, an animation in which suddenly all commas and periods, all silent moments of an unwritten play become a reality in movement" (Weidman (1951) 1966, 52–53).
36. A May 3, 1948, article in *Newsweek* entitled "Thurber by Weidman," noted that the performance of *Fables* was the first time in nine years that Weidman and his company had performed on Broadway: "The dance critics in particular and the press in general welcomed him with generous notices. Only a box-office slump all along Broadway kept the Mansfield their from drawing the crowd the show deserved." In an asterisked comment at the bottom of the page, the author explains what she/he believes is the reason for the slump: "The Ballet Theater was hit hard, too, as were many music events. Some said it was because of the circus and the opening of the baseball season. Others felt that money was getting tight" (76).
37. The article began: "The first time they sit through a performance of a new modern dance, initiates watch tensely, trying to figure out what is going on. If they can spot Freudian significance in the Greek chorus or repressed desire in the tortured twist of a dancer's arm, they go home triumphant. If they can't they worry about themselves. This week, when Charles Weidman's most recent dance series opens on Broadway, dance lovers will be able to sit back and relax. Weidman, who is one of the foremost choreographer-dancers in the United States, decided long ago that modern dancing should be straightforward and unpatronizing as entertaining theater. His themes are familiar and American" (April 19, 1948, 79).
38. *Life*'s reduction of Martha Graham's Freudian themes in this insinuating callout is likely a reference to the mainstream press's general portrayal of Graham in the 1940s as a choreographer whose work tended to be inscrutable to general audiences. For more examples of this coverage and shifts the press began to make in interpreting her work beginning with *Appalachian Spring* in 1944, see Kowal 2010, 22. In *Martha Graham in Love and War*, Mark Franko

interrogates correlations between myth and accessibility to audiences, thus: "Although theatrical, Graham's mythic works of the late 1940s were certainly not accessible in the way of commercial musical theater or even of ballet: they presupposed erudition. Yet, even without a sufficient background to plumb the depths of the most complex references in her work, the audience could follow the story while maintaining an awareness that the actual task at hand was to contemplate the effects of the unconscious" (2012, 99).

39. Foulkes explains this phenomenon thus: "At this time the delineation between 'queer' and 'straight' signified an inversion of gender roles more than particular sexual acts or partners. Queers were men who exhibited perceived female traits and behaviors . . . [including] an interest in the arts, especially dance" (Foulkes 2002, 80).
40. Historian George Chauncey has documented a coinciding phenomenon in his study of gay men in New York City in the early twentieth century, specifically an interest in the iconography of masculinity and a " 'new virile look' of young homosexuals" at the time (1994, 358; see also Kowal 2010, 83).
41. For more on the sobriety of America in the 1940s see Leuchtenburg 1983 and Graebner 1991.
42. For more on the sexual and racial politics inherent in Limón's work, see Kowal 2010 and Moreno 2017.
43. The subtitle for this section—Charles Weidman: "Dancer for America"—comes from Hering, June 1948, 19, 28.
44. Weidman choreographed the comedic *Fables* while supported by a Guggenheim Fellowship. Inspired by James Thurber's 1940 collection of the same name, the work received favorable reviews after its premier in 1947 at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and after its performances by Weidman's company in the New York season in April 1948. According to Vogrin, "Weidman received perhaps the most recognition" for *Fables of Our Time* (1998, 819). After seeing its New York City premier in April of 1948, Martin wrote: "It is a visualization of James Thurber's bland but penetrating little apologues, set to music by Freda Miller, and employing speech movement and plain theatrical ingenuity. There has been no effort to copy Mr. Thurber's quite uncopyable cartoon style but an approximation of the Thurber approach has been nicely achieved by the use of a simple set of adjustable scenic elements and a certain shagginess of costuming" ([*sic*] April 19, 1948, 28). Martin observed further that in his performance in *Fables*, "Weidman proves himself once again to be an incomparable mime with a wit and a style all his own" (April 19, 1948, 28), and that the work demonstrated Weidman's contribution to what Martin described as "a popular theater medium within the modern dance" (April 4, 1948, X3).
45. It is not clear whether other critics reviewed this Weidman performance at the 1948 International Dance Festival. This is the only review I have been able to find in my research. For this reason, research for this section will also rely on other critical and journalistic accounts of Weidman and his company's performances at the Mansfield Theatre in April of that year.
46. For more on the impact of "rugged individualism" on cultural notions of masculinity, and the extent to which these played into the politics of nativism during the early Cold War years, see Higham 1955; Michaels 1995.
47. For more on Weidman's early works see McDonagh 1976, 110–20.
48. Premised on an Anglo, ethnocentric bias that "elevat[ed] a particular cultural model, that of middle-class Protestant whites of British ancestry, to the

normative standard by which other groups are to be assessed and toward which they should aspire," assimilationism represented conservative politics at mid-twentieth-century (Alba and Nee 2003, 4). An extension of the ideology of consensus, assimilationism left little room for difference and/or the expression of difference, dissent, and diversity. It was exclusionary, premised on white hegemonic norms, racial whiteness, and Anglo-behavioral codes.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

AAAR	American Academy of Arts and Research, Records, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.
AMNH	American Museum of Natural History, Administrative Archives.
ADSCRBC	Dafora, Asadata, Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.
ANTA	Dance Panel, Notes, International Exchange Program, American National Theater and Academy, Bureau of Educational and Historical and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection, Special Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
CHA	Carnegie Hall Archives
UIIWA	Dieman-Bennett Dance Theatre of the Hemispheres Records, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City.
RGNYPLPA	Gopal, Ram, Autobiographical Notes and Correspondence, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
LMNYPLPA	Hughes, Russell Meriwether (La Meri), Papers, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
HLMNYPLPA	Muller, Hazel Lockwood, Papers, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
1948NYCMA	1948 New York Golden Jubilee Celebration, Records, New York City Municipal Archives.
NYPLPA	Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
TSJPA	Ted Shawn/Jacob's Pillow Correspondence Collection, Jacob's Pillow Archives, Becket, Massachusetts.
GWNYCMA	Whalan, Grover, Papers, New York City Municipal Archives.

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