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When an Artist Chooses to Represent the Other: The Case of Eleanor King

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I. Introduction

The annual conference of the Congress of Research in Dance (CORD) in 2006 was concluded with a special tribute to American modern dancer Eleanor King. As one of the founding members of Humphrey-Weidman Company, King, along with José Limón, is recently shed light on as one of the important "Humphrey dancers." However, what was presented in the tribute event revealed another aspect of King as an artist who was inspired with other cultures. In a hall decorated with King's collection of Chinese calligraphies and miscellaneous items including Korean dress *Hanbok*, a few reconstructed works of King including *Northwest Spirit Dance* (1945) and *Salutation: a meditation on the East* (1963) were performed. As what were presented in this event suggested, King was deeply interested in other cultures, most of which were non-Western cultures, and reflected those cultures' influence on her

dance works. As the elements of other cultures functioned as the major source of artistic inspiration, the issue of representing other cultures seems another significant lens through which contemporary scholars should perceive her works.

The existence of the Other is an epistemological condition for constructing one's identity; in other words, to define one's nature has meanings only when it is distinguishable from the Other. In the context of American dance, contemporary dance scholars acknowledge that convergence of various cultures has been an undeniable stimulus in constructing the nature of the American modern dance in the early 20C.[1)]

However, while artists cannot be separated from cultural encounters with other cultures, the issue of representing other cultures is influenced by the agency of individual artists. Based on their distinctive worldviews and artistic logics, modern dancers had to encounter with those other cultures with particular attitudes−negotiation, assimilation, or resistance. For example, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn chose to represent other cultures, while Doris Humphrey and Martha Graham chose not to do so.

In this context, I approach the case of Eleanor King as an artist who consciously and reflexively chose to represent other cultures. Chronologically tracing the process of how Eleanor King incorporated the elements of non-Western dance cultures into her works, I examine her attitudes and logics in using those cultures as both artistic inspirations and scholarly subjects. Although it sounds like another trope of the "white-artist-representing-the-Other," her case is more complicated than those of early modern artists, since she was conscious of the predicament of representing the Other−particularly

1) Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright (2001). Historical Moments: Rethinking the Past. Introduction to Part III. America Dancing. *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Edited by Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright (Connecticut, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press), pp. 232-237.

the case of Ruth St. Denis. In fact, it was not until she encountered with actual rituals of Native Americans that she abandoned her initial rejection of representing the Other. In this regard Her self-conscious approach to other cultures implies that the way a culture migrates and permeates another culture is not only through geographical dislocation of people and cultural artifacts, but also through the conceptual shift within a person's view.

Regarding her targeted cultures, I delimit my scope to Native American, Japanese, and Korean cultures. Although she also visited other places such as Greece, Bali, Burma, and Sri Lanka, I exclude them because their influence was less significant on her work than the three cultures did and because she did not write on them. Rather, focusing on the aforementioned three cultures, I trace the penetrating rationale in her act of bringing other dance cultures into the American context and its consequential implications. Also, due to the limited access to the primary sources, I analyze her general approaches shown in her writing and other publicly available materials, rather than proving detailed facts. Particularly, her second autobiography *Transformation II: To the West*, which focuses on the era that she was actively involved with non-Western dances, was not published, which fatally limits my access to the primary source material. Inevitably, some crucial primary sources including parts of this second autobiography are quoted from the secondary sources.

Cultures always flow and change in contact with one another; however, it is not a neutral process. My emphasis regarding Eleanor King's case is the disparities in her attitude: King slowly gained the status of a scholar, amateur anthropologist and even cultural impresario−although she never overtly claimed it. Indeed, her shifting identification from a humble artist to an established scholar throughout her exploration of other dance cultures is the outcome not only of her agency to be a mediator between those cultures and American dance culture but also of the unequal power relationship between

cultures. Moreover, I would argue that, no matter how ideal her hybrid works and multicultural dance programs seemed, she repeatedly cast exogenous meanings and values on perceiving other cultures. This repetition of mistakes is doubly compelling, given that contemporary scholars begin to historicize King while remaining silent on the disparities in her approach. In the end, Eleanor King's case reminds us that cultural encounter does not always happen in a way that does justice to both sides.

II. Eleanor King's Choices in Representing the Other

Leaving the Humphrey-Weidman Company where she had danced for seven years as one of the founding members, King settled in Seattle in 1943 and founded the Eleanor King Creative Dance Studio in 1944. Her move from the east coast to the west coast of the United States means more than geographical dislocation, as she evidently shifted her perspective of the cultural representation. In 1945 she attended Native American dance rituals, and also met Japanese dancers; since then, she had enthusiastically absorbed non-Western dance cultures and produced both choreographies and writings about these cultures throughout the rest of her life. After joining the faculty of the University of Arkansas in 1952, she visited both Europe and Asia, including England, France, Holland, Greece, and Japan. Also, between 1967 and 1976 a few research grants allowed her to visit Japan, Korea, Bali, Burma, and Sri Lanka. Besides these far-reaching visits and affluent outputs, she also initiated multicultural dance series called "One World in Dance"in 1947 and "Dance Bridging East and West" in 1975. In 1971 King became Professor Emerita of the University of Arkansas, and in 1986 was named "Santa Fe Living Treasure." Throughout her forty-year career, she became an honored

and prolific cultural mediator between the East and the West.

King deeply immersed herself into other cultures to the extent that pupil Andrea Seidel recalled her as an "ethnic dance specialist,"[2] but the way she incorporated non-Western dance elements in her works was far from a smooth process of cultural acquisition. Rather, it was a ruptured process with repeated misunderstandings and errors. Particularly, King, who had been fascinated with Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian duality, perceived every culture through this conceptual framework. In the following sections, I analyze Eleanor King's particular standpoint in approaching Native American, Japanese, and Korean dance cultures respectively.

1. A Turning Point: The Encounter with Native American rituals

Two years after King settled in Seattle, in 1945 anthropologist Erna Gunther, a professor at University of Washington, invited King to her fieldwork trip to the Salish Treaty Day Dances of the Native Americans at La Conner. King took the University station-wagon with anthropology fieldworkers and students "whenever the Indians are about to dance."[3] After a few visits, King choreographed *Northwestern Spirit Dance* (1945), and wrote four articles on Native American rituals in periodicals, including the *Dance Observer.*

In her choreographic career, *Northwestern Spirit Dance* became a turning point for her to refute her initial hesitation of representing other cultures, and to include them in her choreography. As a pupil of Humphrey King had inherited Humphrey's point of view that rejects Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn's representation of other cultures, which Humphrey and Weidman

2) Andrea Seidel (1988). Crossing the Bridge from West to East. *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*. ed. Nicole Plett, New Mexico (Santa Cruz: Moving Press), p. 24.
3) Eleanor King (1945). Indian Dance in the Northwest, *Dance Observer* XII, Dec., p. 111.

disdainfully called "-ese" dances. Therefore, to make *Northwestern Spirit Dance*, King needed concrete and reflexive rationales to adapt her point of view. King remembered the initiation of *Northwest Spirit Dance* as follows: "In the fall of 1945, I went beyond writing about the dance to *reproduce*, on Gunther's insistence, a solo Spirit Dance in my repertory (Italic is mine)."[4] In this comment, she conceptually distinguished writing about dance from making dance, as well as faithful reproductions from artistic creations as different degrees of representing other cultures. According to this stratagem, while making dance was inevitable for her−because the anthropologist insisted−she justified her decision of making dance with the fact that the result was not, at least, her artistic creation.

Interestingly, while generally describing what she witnessed in the ritual in the *Dance Observer*,[5] she seemed to focus on one section of her description and developed it into a dance: a young female's possession dance. In her description, a young girl who wore a short black dress and a tight girdle with a fringe of rattles around the waist was making convulsive movements in rhythmic agony, gradually getting to her feet, moving like one entranced, springing lightly, and gradually trailing off the outcries without climax-which became the basic structure of her choreography. Considering her "several refusals that stemmed from her dread of Denishawn's pseudo-ethnic show,"[6] the abstract yet accurate details of the dance seemed to reflect her conscious decision to faithfully reproduce what she witnessed. As a result, King's *Northwest Spirit Dance* depicts a scene of the ritual as if it is happening without any exterior interference; it lacks history, presence of Western viewers, and contact with modern society. However, as Linda Nochlin

4) Citation unidentified. Quoted from Spirit Dances of Three Continents. Gertrude Prokosch Kurath (1988). *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 34.
5) Eleanor King (1945). Indian Dance in the Northwest, *Dance Observer* XII, Dec., p. 111.
6) Nicole Plett (1988). *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 16.

argues,[7] describing non-Western cultures with naturalist or realist details does not necessarily mean that the whole message is true, while obscuring the fact that it is produced by the outside viewer. In this sense, her dance did not connect the ritual with contemporary audience, but segregated it from the reality as a buoying image of an ahistorical Native American.

Meanwhile, this dance also functioned as a turning point in King's career in that it opened her intersection with scholars, particularly anthropologists. It does not only indicate that the anthropologists brought her to the rituals; she also began to publish articles on others' cultures in a scholarly voice, whereas she had neither written about her own culture nor been trained as a scholar before. In the article "Indian Dance in the Northwest," she distinguished herself from the White and the scholar audience, although she was one of the white visitors, and referred to herself as an "artist." As a neutral and indifferent viewer, she described the subtle relationship between Indians and white people. According to her, Indians became resentful if the white people joined their dance, although they were too polite to show this resentment openly.

Despite her conscious distancing from the white visitors, however, she accepted their perspectives from the moment of "[stepping] out of a station-wagon onto ground that is far removed from civilization."[8] Comparing the ritual with another Indian Shaker ritual, she evaluated that the Indian dance was "purer in primitive form, still untouched by white civilization."[9] Like other traditional white anthropologists in non-Western cultures, she equated "primitive" with "non-White." Also, she saw primitive rituals as doomed to extinction, without necessarily realizing that her existence there contributed to it. Rather she asked, "How much longer can this primitive expression endure,

7) Linda Nochlin (2002). The Imaginary Orient. *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History*. ed. Kymberly N. Pinder (New York, London: Routledge), pp. 69-85.
8) Eleanor King (1945). Indian Dance in the Northwest, *Dance Observer* XII, Dec., p. 111.
9) Ibid., p. 114.

untouched by modern life?"[10] Moreover, she was even disappointed in the fact that the supposedly "personal expression" and "genuine experience" of this ritual dance resulted only in "a conservative monotony about the form and gesture."[11] Imposing Western aesthetic value, she seemed to expect to see the American modern dance standard of "individual expression" in the Native American ritual.

Upon her engagement with Native American culture, there exist disparities between what she felt, what she researched and what she produced as a dance. Although finding "disturbing in its manifestations of trance and possession"[12] and even learned that "it [was] considered impolite to watch a dancer 'get into his spirit,'" King nevertheless choreographed a work of dance about the process of trance. If it is impolite to watch the possession in the ritual, is it acceptable to make it into a concent dance piece particularly when it is made by, and viewed by outsiders? By the same token, if Native Americans criticized white visitors joining the dance ritual, is it acceptable to simulate the ritual in a form of artistic dance practive? After all, the rationale for her to pursue "artistic reproduction" of the Native American ritual, while defying its discrepancy, may be found in the tendency that "'sacred' context [of rituals] easily fuse with dominant western concept of art."[13] Regarding King's incorporation of Native American rituals, Native Americans' responses to it still remain unknown. However, it is at least clear that this cultural migration was not consented by both sides. Indeed, her inspiration to turn the ritual into an artistic dance overwhelmed what she learned in the ritual and described in her article: Native Americans did not welcome outsiders' joining in their rituals.

10) Ibid., p. 112.
11) Ibid., p. 112.
12) Citation unidentified. Quoted from Spirit Dances of Three Continents. Gertrude Prokosch Kurath (1988), *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 34.
13) James Clifford (1987). Of Other Peoples: Beyond the "Savage Paradigm." *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*. ed. Hal Foster. No. 1 (Seattle: Bay Press), p. 124.

2. Life-long Fascination with Japanese Culture

Compared to her interest in the Native American rituals, King's fascination with Japanese culture was more enduring, passionate and prolific. Gertrude Kurath succinctly explains the reason as follows: "in contrast to the agonizing American *Spirit Dance*, Japan offered Eleanor enjoyments such as cordial receptions, colorful dance festivities, folk, theater, ritual, and modern hybrid dance."[14]

In Seattle where people "naturally looked to Asia rather than Europe for inspiration,"[15] Eleanor King encountered Japanese dance, particularly from May Tsutsumoto and her teacher Madame Fuku Nakatani. First visiting Japan in 1958, she spent her sabbatical leave in Japan in 1960; she also received the Fulbright Research Grant to study in Japan in 1967, and Volgestein Foundation Travel Grant to visit Japan as well as Burma, Bali, and Sri Lanka. Over a period expanding twenty years, she choreographed about eight works[16] influenced by Japanese dance, and wrote *The Way of Japanese Dance* (unpublished) and several articles on Japanese culture.

However, it is not that she produced Japan-inspired works after gaining her deep understanding of Japanese culture and dance; in contrary, it is the failure of her first Japanese-inspired work that urged her to visit Japan to study further. In 1957, King choreographed *Hagoromo* based on Noh drama, although she had never seen it yet. Thirty years later, she recalled it as follows:

> I chose on Arthur Waley's translation of "Hagamo".... I thought it was very

14) Gertrude Prokosch Kurath (1988). Spirit Dances of Three Continents. *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*. Edited by Nicole Plett, p. 34.

15) Eleanor King. Transformations II. (unpublished), p. 1. Quoted from *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American dance*. Edited by Nicole Plett (1988), p. 22.

16) The following works are directly or indirectly influenced by her interest in Japanese culture: *Hagoromo* (1957), *Images Japonaises* (1959), *Salutation: A Meditation on the East* (1963), *Haniwa* (1963), *Synthesis: The Well-Tempered Dancer* (1967), *The Medium Adresses the Kami* (1970), *Night Song/Day Cry* (1971), and *A Fantasy on T'ai Chi* (1975).

> poetic and would make a good dance subject. But I did not know enough about Noh dance and when I did it, I Kabukized it. I bastardized it. Really, I mean, everything was wrong aesthetically. I didn't know it, but I just jumped in and put make-up on the chorus, which is never done in Noh. Just everything I did was completely the opposite of what I should've done. Because Noh and Kabuki are antithetical, which, again, I didn't realize.[17]

The audience was "baffled"[18] with *Hagoromo*, and King herself called the work "bastard Kabuki."[19] This huge failure urged her to reflect on her approach, "Why don't I go to Japan and see how they're still doing it as they have been doing it for 600 years? Why not go see?"[20] Her confessional comment proved that the discrepancy between the original Noh convention and her work was not her "creative interpretation" but ignorance of the original genre. Nevertheless, I find this self-examination valuable, since it became a driving force for her to transform mistakes into a more fruitful energy in understanding Japanese culture. Also, her honesty and courage to confess her misunderstanding thirty years after the premiere is tremendously precious, considering the reluctance for a revered artist to acknowledge one's own fault.

Andrea Seidel explained King's visits to Japan in detail in her article "Eleanor King in Japan: Dance Bridging East-West." During her first visit to Japan, King was welcomed with press interviews, a reception and performance requests, and was revered as a great American modern dancer– even called "a goddess of the dance."[21] King herself saw the reason of this

17) Interview with Eleanor King by Nicole Plett. Oral History Project. Transcription. New York Public Library. Jerome Robbins Dance Collection. 1987.7.30, cassette 1, side B, p. 21.
18) Eleanor King. *Transformations II* (unpublished). Page unspecified. Quoted from Eleanor King in Japan: Dance Bridging East-West. Andrea Mantell-Seidel, the 15th annual conference proceeding of the Society of Dance History Scholars. University of California (Riverside, California. 1992. 2. 14-15.), p. 115.
19) Kathleen Verity Shorr (1988). The Well-Tempered Dancer. *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*. Edited by Nicole Plett, p. 52.
20) Interview with Eleanor King by Nicole Plett. Oral History Project, pp. 23-24.
21) Andrea Mantell-Seidel (1992). Eleanor King in Japan: Dance Bridging East-West. The 15th annual conference proceeding of the Society of Dance History Scholars, p. 115.

exceptional hospitality as the fact that she "had come to Japan on ... her own to study from them ... their art and culture."[22] Although she interpreted it with Japanese rhetoric of seeing a foreign traveler as a sacred traveler from God, it seems more realistic to see the reason being that she gave up the conventional power relationship between the two political entities–America and Japan right after the World War II.

This euphoric hospitality also involved more earthly bartering between King and Japanese dancers. King wanted to learn Nihon Buyo from Japanese, while Japanese wanted to learn American modern dance from her. As a result, King was given opportunities of workshops and performances, while learning various Japanese dances from eminent dance masters including Fujima Fujiko, a National Living Treasure of Japan. Asked to choreograph a modern dance for Japanese dancers during her last visit to Japan in 1967, King instead taught them *Synthesis: The Well-Tempered Dancer*, which had been sketched several years ago influenced by her previous Japanese trips. Set to Bach's fugues, *Synthesis* literally synthesizes Kabuki, Yoga, East Indian dance, pre-Classic dance forms, Western ballet, T'ai Chi, and even Humphrey's movements.[23] The dance premiered in 1967 in Kyoto with three Japanese dancers. While this choreography might truly represent her knowledge of Eastern and Western movement, she still perceived and evaluated Japanese dancers from the very Western standard: "they [Japanese dancers] looked so funny. All with short legs. But superb from the chest on up. But no legs."[24]

In fact, her selective and discrepant perception of Japanese culture is clearly visible in her predilection for Kyoto, an ancient city, in contrast to her disgust with Tokyo, a modern city. What she found in Kyoto was the heart of old

22) Ibid., p, 119.
23) Idem (1988). Crossing the Bridge from West to East. *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 26.
24) Interview with Eleanor King by Nicole Plett. Oral History Project, cassette 1, side B, p. 28.

Japan, the paradise of dance. Contrarily, Tokyo was to her a congested, smog-ridden, and homogeneous modern city in which she yearned for the freedom and diversity of American culture. As long as Japanese culture was "a balm to her soul, pleasing her aesthetically, spiritually, and visually,"[25] the painful process of modernization that Japanese people were going through did not interest her. By the same token, she recognized Japanese dance as "the solution to [her] search for the purest form of theatre, all so deceptively simple,"[26] despite Japanese dancers' desire to absorb American modern dance.

The following vignette at Sumiyoshi Rice Planting Festival, which she published in the Congress of Research in Dance *news*, shows her failure to see through the inner discrepancies and heterogeneousness embedded in Japanese society and dance:

> NHK reporter: "Do you think such an old-fashioned ceremony like this belongs in the 21C?"
>
> Dr. Floyd Ross (the Shinto scholar): "It is always good for man to be reminded that his life is sustained by what the earth gives, and to be grateful for it."
>
> Eleanor King: "Even if Japanese people should give up eating rice, I hope they will not give up this Sumiyoshi Festival, because it is unique and beautiful."[27]

These two American scholars, who were treated as special guests at the event, did not catch the Japanese reporter's concern with the dynamic cultural dismantling that Japanese struggled with. Instead, what they saw was the lost paradise of their own culture. Thus, the peril of rice agriculture in face of

25) Andrea Mantell-Seidel (1992). Eleanor King in Japan: Dance Bridging East-West. The 15th annual conference proceeding of the Society of Dance History Scholars, p. 119.

26) Eleanor King. Transformations II. (unpublished) Page unspecified. Quoted from The Well-Tempered Dancer. Kathleen Verity Shorr (1988). *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 52.

27) Idem (1971). Sumiyoshi Rice Planting Festival. *CORD News*, 3(2), p. 17. I selected only direct quotations from the original description.

industrialization and Japanese's estranged perception from the traditional way of life did not appeal to Eleanor King, since it had never been a part of her perception of Japan, the pure and beautiful culture.

In this context, Japanese dance according to Eleanor King was an abstract concept, rather than a conglomerate culture. King described Japanese dance with the following adjectives: pure, fundamental, abstract, metaphorical, delicate, depersonalized, impersonal−therefore universal.[28] Moreover, King saw Japanese dance as antithetical to Western dance. In her understanding, the subtle Japanese movement that "[reflects] upon the beauty of these passing forms" was opposite to the Western extroverted, technical and narcissistic movement that shouts, "Look, ma, I'm dancing!"[29]

Idealization of Japanese dance and its opposition to Western dance functioned as her solution for the devastated Western modern culture and dance. King saw in Noh, "the solution to [her] search for the purest form of theatre,"[30] while she concluded that "the Eastern world knows something beyond our frantic restlessness; the orient knows that the beginning and the end of motion is stillness." However, perceiving any culture pure and primordial is problematic, as Andree Grau argues that, "Cultural purity is a myth, in a sense that contacts between cultures are probably inevitable."[31] Moreover, perceiving one culture's form as a solution for another culture essentializes and petrifies the dynamic within the original culture. Inevitably, King was never concerned with the dramatic change that Japan went through from a defeated nation to an arising industrial power during her several visits.

28) Interview with Eleanor King by Nicole Plett. Oral History Project. cassette 3, side B, pp. 62-63.
29) Citation unspecified. Quoted from The Well-Tempered Dancer. Kathleen Verity Shorr (1988). In *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 52.
30) Eleanor King. *Transformations II*. (unpublished). Quotedfrom Kathleen Verity Shorr (1988) Ibid., p. 52.
31) Andree Grau (1992). Intercultural Research in the Performing Arts. *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 10 (2), Autumn, p. 11.

3. Meeting Dionysus in Korea

Both Native American and Japanese dances satisfied King to the halves in terms of "aesthetic-ethnographic value."[32] The former was more ethnographically intriguing, while the latter was more aesthetically intriguing to her; at the same time, however, the former had too earthy and sensuous movement quality, while the latter lacked the ritualistic ecstasy. Thus, when she saw Korean shaman dance in Korea, she recognized that this cool yet ecstatic ritual was the ideal aesthetic-ethnographic object of hers. Spending several months in Korea on the Fulbright Research Grant in 1976 and a renewed grant in the following year, she researched the shaman ritual *kut*, while learning the theatricalized solo dance derived from the ritual, *Sal Puri*, from eminent Korean dancers. Out of this fieldwork, King published five articles in both Western and Korean journals and developed a lecture/demonstration on *Sal Puri*. Demonstrating the dance in both artistic performances and academic lectures, she transformed it as the ideal aesthetic-ethnographic object.

Unlike the cases in Native American or Japanese cultures, King did not make any choreographic work inspired by Korean shaman rituals; she needed not to, since it was her ideal. Thus, she positioned herself as a scholar rather than an artist regarding Korean dance. However, she rarely called herself a scholar; rather, she introduced herself as 'somewhat culturally-deprived American dancer, non-academic dancer, incurable amateur' in her first article appeared in a Korean journal. However, the same journal introduced her as 'emeritus professor in America, senior Fulbright grantee'[33]—this was her

32) James Clifford (1987). Of Other Peoples: Beyond the "Savage Paradigm." *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, p. 129.
33) Eleanor King (1977). Reflections on Korean dance. *Korea Journal*. 17 (2), August, p. 36. Introduction of her by the journal committee is printed at the bottom of the page.

identity perceived by Koreans. Thus, when she visited Korea, she was not a mere dancer who came to learn dance, as she had been in her first Japan trip, but was an established, privileged, and granted scholar−whether she acknowledged it or not. This power relationship explains how she could "luckily" be given access to affluent Korean dance scenes as well as to many eminent Korean dancers, artists, and scholars.

Furthermore, I claim that she became an amateur anthropologist in two senses. First, she followed the anthropological conventions that anthropologists studied other cultures, conducted fieldworks in other cultures, and published what they observed in academic journals. Indeed, the subtitle of her article, "*notes* from the *field* on a shaman ritual in Korea (Italics are mine)," is firmly grounded on the idioms and customs of ethnographic fieldwork. Second, she was an anthropologist, who used the dance *Sal Puri* as an ethnographic object obtained the field and displayed it to the homeland scholars by performing it. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett claims that ethnographic objects are made through "processes of detachment and contextualization,"[34] King juxtaposed *Sal Purl* to the Western academic conference setting as a specimen of Korean shaman rituals. While the ritual had already been transformed into an artistic dance form in a Western sense, King even altered it as an objective and scientific object representing the essence of Korean dance culture.

However, these two anthropological aspects of hers inevitably involved the same predicament of traditional anthropology. First, imposing the Western gaze, King persistently compared the Korean shaman ritual to the Dionysian ritual, which enabled her to meet Dionysus in Seoul. In her description of the ritual, the Greek ritual functioned as the parameter from which the affinity

34) Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998). *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Los Angeles: University of California Press), p. 2.

with the Korean ritual should be found (e.g., "Korean shamans dancing with raw flesh in their mouths in ecstatic communion with their spirits seem but one step removed from the ancient Greek maenads who ritually tore live animals to pieces and ate them"[35]). Furthermore, she even predicted the future of the Korean shaman ritual. Since Greek ritual evolved into the Greek tragedy, so will become the Korean ritual into drama, "For she [Korea] has here the basic ingredients: the love of drinking, singing, and dancing as the necessary beginning."[36] This comment reveals that King viewed the Korean ritual, although contemporary, had not yet reached the point of the ancient Greek ritual on the linear civilization barometer.

With great effort, King found three parallels between Korean and Greek shaman rituals: "women predominate as followers, transvestism appears, and pigs are used."[37] However, as James Clifford argues in regard of comparing different cultures, we often forget that possibilities of cultural differences are limited. "Invention, while highly diverse, is not infinite."[38] In this sense, it is feasible to find resemblances between Korean shaman rituals and Dionysian rituals; however, she left behind the questions whether those signs of affinities were meaningful, and whether vast differences were overshadowed by a handful of affinities.

A rare critical response to her Western gaze on Korean dance came from Youngsook Kim Harvey. Introducing both articles of King and Laurel Kendall who conducted research on the same Korean shaman ritual at the same time, Harvey acutely pointed out the fallacy as follows:

> King was "transported" to the mythical times of ancient Greece where she

35) Eleanor King (1983). Dionysus in Seoul: notes from the field on a shaman ritual in Korea. CORD. *Dance as heritage*, Vol. 1, *CORD Dance Research Annual* 14, p. 220.
36) Idem. (1977). Reflections on Korean dance. *Korea Journal*. 17(2), August, p. 53.
37) Idem. (1983). Dionysus in Seoul: notes from the field on a shaman ritual in Korea, p. 221.
38) James Clifford(1994). *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), p. 191.

> "saw" Dionysus himself, at home among the Koreans at kut...In her enthusiasm, King perhaps goes to excess in referencing what she observed at the kut to what she already familiar with.... [Meanwhile] Kendall...very nicely offsets any ethnocentrism that King may be accused of by placing the shaman dances in their proper religious and sociocultural contexts.[39)]

As Harvey pointed out, King perceived the Dionysian ritual as the archetype of the Korean shaman ritual, although both were distanced so far in time, space and culture. Based on this universal and ahistorical perspective, King explained Korean shaman ritual with its affinity to Japanese *Noh*, Sri Lankan *Sokkari*, Balinese trance dance, Spanish Flamenco, Dervish dance, and Western youth "Rock" culture, since all of them could be linked with the ancient Greek concept, ecstasy.

Meanwhile, King's demonstration of *Sal Puri* causes another complicated problem due to the distinction between the ritual and the artistic dance. Unlike the Native American ritual that she reproduced as an artistic dance, ritual *Sal Puri* had already been diverged into an artistic dance form. Although both the shaman ritual and the artistic dance are generally referred to as *Sal Puri*, which means "to untie the evil spirit," Korean dancers have made a highly stylized dance version to fit it into the Western theater convention, which later became an Intangible Cultural Treasure no. 97 in 1990. King was exposed to both forms and learned the artistic dance form from Korean concert dancers. However, since King did not specify which one she was presenting, it caused a great deal of confusion in evaluating her presentation. For example, reviewing the retrospective performance, critic Jennifer Dunning criticized that "Miss King's presentation of 'Sal Puri,' a traditional Korean shaman dance, though respectful, was a disturbing venture into Western theatricalization of a ritual form." However, although it may be true that it is "disturbing" to watch the

39) Youngsook Kim Harvey (1983). Introduction of Part VI. Dance as heritage, Vol. 1, ed. Betty True Jones. *CORD Dance Research Annual* 14, p. 211.

"Western theatricalization of a ritual form," it is incorrect to attribute the venture to King.

Her ambiguity of whether she reproduced the ritual, the concert dance form, or presented her own artistic interpretation also caused troubles in her lecture/demonstration of *Sal Puri*. In the video record of her last public lecture-demonstration conducted in 1990,[40] a few problems emerged out of her unauthentic demonstration. First of all, her demonstration of *Sal Puri* was out of the conventional presentation of the artistic dance form. She had a high bun with jeweled hairpins, bare feet, a watch and a red scarf, whilst Korean dancers usually dance with a tidy low bun, traditional socks or shoes, and a white scarf. Particularly, using a red scarf violates the convention, since the white scarf is the indispensable symbol of mortality and spirituality that the dance shares with the shaman ritual. Even if some dancers may change the color of the costume, they never change that of the scarf. To make matters worse, the movement quality and choreography were even more radically changed. She used the popular version of the recorded music and started at the corner of the stage in white dress holding the scarf, but nothing else resembled the dance. Although we acknowledge that this video was recorded in her final years in which she could not demonstrate the proper movement quality, her dance cannot be said to be faithful; she was skipping in triple steps, rolling the scarf into a ball and tossing it to the floor, and even disappearing into the wing in the middle of music. After the demonstration, Eleanor King came out to answer the questions of the audience who were presumably dance students

40) Eleanor King (1990). A lecture-demonstration on *Sal Puri*. Recorded in the Marvin Center Theater, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., on November 7, 1990. Sponsored by the Department of Theater and Dance, George Washington University, chair, Nancy Diers Johnson. 1 videocassette (31 min.) : sd., col. NTSC ; 1/2 in. (VHS) New York Public Library. Jerome Robbins Although the lecture part is missing and the recording quality is too poor to catch the whole conversation, it still provides a glimpse of her approach and understanding of the specific Korean dance.

and scholars and taught a few pre-selected audience members some movements as an expert on Korean dance. Considering that she was "gifted" the dance from the prominent Korean dancers, it is not acceptable to change everything arbitrarily while presenting it as a "demonstration." If she meant to do "an artistic interpretation," she should have clarified it.

In the cover picture of the dance performance brochure commemorating her dance career, King sat grinning in Korean shaman dance costume in high heels. To Koreans, this white dress, *Sobok*, is metaphorically related to mortality so that it is always worn with desperation and tears, not with high heels and a grin. It seems that, despite her honest acknowledgement of the mistake only a few years ago, she repeated the same mistake of Kabukizing Noh in *Sal Puri*.

III. The Use of Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian Duality as the Perceptual Schema

As seen in the analyses, Eleanor King drew the schema of Dionysian/Apollonian duality in her perception of Native American, Japanese, and Korean cultures. The more she gained knowledge of other cultures, the more she became convinced of this duality in each culture's characteristics. In the end, adoring *Sal Puri* as her favorite,[41] Eleanor King declared that the Koreans were the ecstatic Dionysians of Asia, while Japanese were formalist Apollonian.[42] Besides that, she further found the duality between the Northwest Spirit Dance and the dances of Southwest Pueblos as "the former consummately Dionysian, the latter pure Apollonian."[43] It seems that she

41) Andrea Seidel (1988). Crossing the Bridge from West to East. *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 26.
42) Eleanor King (1983). Dionysus in Seoul: notes from the field on a shaman ritual in Korea, p. 215.
43) Nicole Plett (1988). *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 14.

could have found the same comparison in every region and continent, as she saw more similarities than differences between *Sal Puri* and Northwest *Spirit Dance*, although people of those cultures might not agree with it.

Interestingly, King's preoccupation with Nietzsche's concept is, in fact, the particular factor that stemmed from her earlier career in New York before moving to the west coast, which situates her in the context of other early modern dancers, who were fascinated with Nietzsche's idea[44] including Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman, Doris Humphrey and Martha Graham. In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Friedrich Nietzsche identified two central principles of the Greek culture into the Apollonian and Dionysian duality; strict and austere Apollonian is of the apotheosis of individuation, while pleasure-seeking and excessive Dionysian is of the whole. Although Nietzsche idealized the balanced combination of both, which he thought culminated in Attic tragedy, he emphasized Dionysian more than Apollonian in attempt to criticize his contemporary German culture. Accepting Nietzsche's preference of Dionysian and tragic myth, most early modern dancers pursued Dionysian quality in their dances. Calling Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* her "Bible," Duncan converted her approach to Greek culture from the Apollonian to the Dionysian.[45] Mary Wigman "danced Nietzsche"[46] while Humphrey pursued to achieve the Apollonian/Dionysian duality in human movement by developing "the arc between two deaths," an equilibrium between Apollonian and Dionysian states. As pupil of Humphrey, King seemed directly influenced from Humphrey who, according to King's memoir, included Nietzsche in the

44) For the influence of Nietzsche's concept on Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham, see *Nietzsche's Dancers: Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, and the Revaluation of Christian Values* by Kimerer L. LaMothe (2006) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

45) Ann Daly (2001). The Natural Body. *Moving history/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*, p. 290.

46) Deborah Jowitt (1988). *Time and the Dancing Image* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), p. 165.

reading list of her dancers.[47] Although King did not specify how much she shared with Humphrey on Nietzsche's ideas, the fact that King's debut works included *Bacchanal* (1932)[48] proves her early interest in Nietzsche's Dionysian concept. Intriguingly, *Bacchanal* was performed in the same year in which Humphrey also choreographed *Dionysiasques* (1932) and *Les Choéphores* (The Libation Bearer) from Aeschylus's *Oresteia* trilogy which King thought "the best work that Doris had yet done."[49]

However, although both Humphrey and King enthusiastically accepted Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian duality, they dramatically deferred from each other in tems of the way they applied the concept of the Dionysian universality and tragic myth within their own culture. According to Humphrey, unlike people in other times and countries who had shared cultures and religions, Americans lacked a common ground as concrete as others, due to the conglomerate racial heritage and modern environment. In this regard, she, as an American modern artist, did not have the past to go back, memory to have nostalgia. Instead, what was left to her was the keen attitude toward the meaning of existence. Thus, Humphrey declared, "My ballet *Dionysiaques*, although stemming from ancient days is a modern psychological drama about ourselves."[50]

Although King subscribed to Humphrey's perception of Americans as people without common memory, unlike Humphrey's restriction to her own

47) Eleanor King (1978). *Transformations: The Humphrey-Weidman Era* (New York: Dance Horizons), p. 22.

48) Eleanor King made a trio Danse with José Limón and Earnestine Stodelle in their debut concert in 1931, but changed its title to *Bacchanal*the next year in their New York debut. Besides this work, King choreographed dances with direct references of Dionysian, such as *Three Ritual Figures from Hellas* (1956) and *Enthousiasmos* (1970), as well as many dances influenced by the ancient Greek culture.

49) Eleanor King (1978). *Transformations: The Humphrey-Weidman Era*, p. 123.

50) Doris Humphrey (1932). Note for an article. *Trend*. Quoted from *Transformations*: *The Humphrey-Weidman Era*. Eleanor King, p. 118.

culture, King universalized the concept of the Dionysian with which she viewed other cultures. To be clear, although Nietzsche vaguely commented on Indian Buddhism in referring to Dionysian orgies,[51] his description of Dionysian was basically focused on the ancient Greek culture. When it came to King's interpretation, however, she sought for the past, memory and myth in other cultures, including non-Greek ones, and sympathized with them. It made sense to her, since she pursued the universal and fundamental memory penetrating different particular cultures. For example, out of her experience in Japanese Noh she arranged a lecture program called "Toward the New Noh," which was meant "to awaken [American] poets and dancers to the possibilities of using Western myths and legends in a similar disciplined form."[52] Here, the form of Japanese Noh was to remind Western people of their "new Noh," although it had never been existed. Thus, having "nostalgia without memory,"[53] she yearned for things that had not existed, and brought them from other cultures by making them universally applicable.

Besides "Toward the New Noh," King initiated two multicultural dance series: "One World in Dance"in 1947 and "Dance Bridging East and West" in 1975. According to her report,[54] the first season of "One World in Dance" presented seventy-one dancers and artists of thirteen ethnic groups including Native American, Palestinian, Mexican, Philippine, Scottish, and Japanese dancers. Also, it covered various genres of dances including folk dance,

51) Friedrich Nietzsche (1872). The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music. In *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 1967, 2000), pp.110, 124-5. The translator and scholar Kaufmann commented that neither "Buddhistic" nor "Brahmanic," which Neitzsche used confusingly, seems to make much sense.

52) Eleanor King. *Transformations II: To the West*. Unpublished. Quoted from Eleanor King in Japan: Dance Bridging East-West. Andrea Mantell-Seidel (1992). p.122.

53) Arjun Appadurai (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p. 30.

54) Eleanor King (1948). Seattle Letter. First Season of Seattle's Only Dance Theatre 'One World in Dance.' *Dance Observer*, February, p. 22.

classical dance, ballet and modern dance spanning from the 16th century to contemporary time frame.

Although this series seemed to be the true predecessor of contemporary multicultural dance festivals, it also revealed the general predicament of multiculturalism. The series selected "audition winners" among disparate ethnic dances; moreover, King presented twenty one solos in eigth performances, while her company gave seven performances of modern dance choreography. I wonder whether this incoherent and unequal juxtaposition of diverse cultures really suggested anything about each culture or remained as differences in a "metropolitan supermarket"[55] there would have been no difference even if the 16th Century Japanese Classic dance were displaced with Hawaiian dance, as long as they were consumed for "multi-cultural" purposes. In the end, each ethnic dance served as an ahistorical and archetypical aesthetic-ethnographic object, as if a Philippine dancer could represent the whole Philippine dance. Her brief report of the event implies that one world in dance was indeed unequal.

IV. Conclusion

Currently, Eleanor King is being historicized for her artistic value, while her use of other cultures as inspirational sources is trivialized. With her "retrospective concert" program initiated in 1988 as a turning point, she began to be recognized as one of the pioneers of the American modern dance. Particularly, as a founding member of the Humphrey-Weidman dance company, King is always called a "Humphrey dancer." It seems that, although she danced with Humphrey for only seven out of her sixty years' career,

55) Aijaz Ahmad (1992). *In Theory: Classes, Nation, Literature* (New York: Verso), p. 128.

Humphrey legacy outweighs her intersection with other cultures for the rest of her life. Most critics legitimize the significance of her works, as critic Jack Anderson commented that King's "retrospective serves as eloquent reminders of the riches we may lose if we go on letting dances vanish."[56] Although the program contained a few works inspired by other cultures, most reviewers took it casually, while saying that "her interest in Far Eastern dance was long lasting and intense, but at the core King was an American 20th Century modernist."[57]

However, I claim that, not "despite of" but "because of" her interest in non-Western dance, King was an American 20th Century modernist. As Bruce Fleming aptly put it, Western modernity is fueled by "our [Westerners'] disgust with ourselves, our conviction that we are not the best of all civilization but, indeed, probably the worst...and the belief that out there, people are different."[58] King sympathized with Nietzsche the feeling of disgust against their own cultures; when it came to the solution, however, Nietzsche had found the Attic solution in temporal sense, while King found multicultural "Out There" in the geographical sense.

Pursuing her ideal of "Out There," Eleanor King situated herself as a cultural mediator between Western and non-Western cultures. Assuming purity and authenticity in Native American, Japanese, and Korean cultures, King aimed to protect those dance forms before they were destroyed in modernization from the perspective of "salvage paradigm."[59] In fact, the salvage paradigm was the biggest stimulus for her to make *Northwest Spirit*

56) Jack Anderson (1988). Eleanor King Retrospective: Vintage Works, New Life. *New York Times*. Dance View. 1988.6.12. http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=940DE4DF1F30F931A25755C0A96E948260.
57) George Jackson (2005). Looking Back. *Danceviewtimes*. 2005.9.19. http://www.danceviewtimes.com/2005/Summer/09/king.htm.
58) Bruce Fleming (1995). Looking Out: Critical Imperatives in Writing about World Dance. *Looking Out: Perspectives on Dance and Criticism in a Multicultural World*. Edited by David Gere. Dance Critics Association (New York: Schirmer Books), p. 19.
59) James Clifford (1987). p. 129.

Dance, since anthropologist Gunther urged her to "interpret what she had seen at La Conner for stage performance *in order that the form would not be irrevocably lost* (Italics are mine)."[60]

The reason salvage paradigm particularly appealed to her was that she saw in these non-Western dances the specimen of "our past" and the lost history of Western cultures. To her, Japan had a dance culture where "dance [was] part of Buddhist and Shinto ceremonies that the Christianized West lost thousands of years ago."[61] It seems that not only the formality of Japanese dance but also its contextual meaning and function invoked nostalgia. Moreover, the existence of concrete persecutors of those cultures in reality strengthened her self-imposed responsibility for the salvage; White American against Native American, Korean government against shaman rituals and modernization process against all non-Western cultures. In fact, when Japanese dancer May Tsutsumoto first visited Eleanor King shortly after the release of Japanese people in America prisoners in 1945, Tsutsumoto wanted to learn American modern dance due to the hostility against Japanese after the World War II.[62] However, King urged her to keep Japanese dance; in other words, King salvaged her from losing "classical heritage."

King's salvaging and migrating activity of other cultures may had a positive effect, particularly in the case of May Tsutsumoto. With King's advice, Tsutsumoto kept dancing Japanese dance and later appeared in King's "One World in Dance" series. However, what is unclear is whether she, besides keeping Japanese dance, had a chance to learn American modern dance. Did she receive any new experience in this cultural exchange, or did she only contribute to Eleanor King and American society by providing "multicultural"

60) Nicole Plett (1988). Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American dance. *Eleanor King: Sixty Years in American Dance*, p. 16.
61) Interview with Eleanor King by Nicole Plett. *Ibid*., p. 24.
62) Interview with Eleanor King by Nicole Plett. *Ibid*., p. 17.

dances? The point is that cultural migration does not always happen as equal exchanges, and so was in King's case. In her last visit to Japan, she was asked to choreograph a modern dance for Japanese dancers. However, to save time as much as possible to learn Japanese dance, King instead taught them a pre-sketched work. King seemed to ignore the fact that she learned Japanese dance from eminent dancers including a National Cultural Treasure of Japan.

Contemplating on King's career, a question arose in regard of her attitude to Greek dance culture. As previously stated, King was fascinated with the ancient Greek culture more than any others, choreographed many works, and independently traveled and studied in Greece in 1955 and 1973. However, she has never written any "scholarly" works on Greek dance, as opposed to the fact that she produced prolific reports, articles and books on Native American, Japanese, and Korean cultures. What was the control gadget in her approach to these cultures, and what was its rationale?

The possible answer for these disparities in her approach is that she could establish academic privilege more easily in discussing of non-Western cultures than Western cultures. In other words, the unequal power relationship between Western and non-Western cultures enabled her to become a special guest wherever she went, and opened her to new opportunities. Thus, when it came to non-Western cultures, King was not a simple artist; rather, she transformed herself as 'Western artist who represented the Other,' 'Western artist who became an anthropologist of other cultures,' and even 'Western artist who became a cultural impresario for non-Western artists.' In the end, "transformations," the title of her two autobiographies and of a choreographed dance, occur on another level in her career. With her metamorphosis between an artist and an anthropologist, King coincidentally turned the dances of other cultures into the "aesthetic-ethnographical" objects to display and circulate.

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국문요약

예술가가 타자를 재현할 때: 엘레너 킹 (Eleanor King) 사례 연구

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예술가의 작업이 문화적 맥락에서 벗어나 존재할 수 없는 반면, 타문화에 대한 재현 여부와 그 방식은 개개 예술가의 논리에 따른 선택의 결과이다. "험프리 댄서"로 알려진 미국 현대무용가 엘레너 킹(Eleanor King)은 다른 문화를 재현하는 것에 대해 반대하던 초기의 입장을 번복한 후 타문화, 특히 비서구의 춤문화를 적극적으로 받아들였다. 이처럼 타문화에 대한 킹의 의식적인 관점변화는 바로 문화가 전파되는 방식이 단지 문화적 매개체의 물리적 이동 뿐 아니라 한 개인의 의식적 변화까지도 포함하는 작용임을 암시한다. 본 연구는 예술적 영감 및 학문적 연구대상으로서 다른 문화의 무용형식을 받아들이는 킹의 내적논리를 유출하고, 그녀가 안무 및 글쓰기를 통해 그 논리를 구체화하는 방식을 분석하고자 한다. 나아가 문화에 대한 킹의 관점을 재평가하고 그녀가 예술가의 위치를 넘어 학자, 나아가 동서양의 문화적 중재자로서 변모하는 과정을 집중적으로 논의한다.

본 연구는 킹의 다양한 관심사 중에서도 미국 토착 인디언, 일본, 한국 문화에 대한 관심과 그 예술적, 학문적 활용을 분석했다. 킹은 사라져가는 문화를 보존해야한다는 구제 패러다임에 입각하여 미국 토착 인디언의 신들림 의식(possession ritual)을 무용작품으로 재현했다. 또한 일본의 문화를 순수하고 근본적이며 보편적인 이상으로 파악한 나머지 킹은 일본춤의 형식을 본래의 맥락과는 별개로 활용했을 뿐 아니라 그 현실적 상황에 대해서는 철저히 무관심했다. 마지막으로 한국의 살풀이굿을 접한 킹은 이것이 그녀가 갈망하던 이상임을 확신했으나, 니체의 디오니소스 관점을 그대로 적용함으로써 한국의 굿을 고대 그리스 의식과 동일시하였다. 이러한 분석을 종합해 볼 때, 타문화에 대해 외재적이고도 비일관된 킹의 관점은 문화적 전이가 분열적이고 미완성적인 과정이며, 이질적인 주체간의 끊임없는 타협과 전유, 그리고 상호의존이 이루어지는 과정임을 알 수 있다.

문화는 다른 문화와 접촉하며 항상 흐르고 변화한다. 그러나 이는 늘 자연스럽게 이루어지지 않는다. 엘레너 킹의 사례연구에서 강조되어야 할 점은 이질적 문화간의 불균형적인 힘의 관계로 인해 킹이 학자, 나아가 문화중재자의 위치를 부여받았다는 점이다. 또한 그녀의 다문화적 작품세계와

기획행사들이 아무리 이상적으로 의도되었을 지라도, 이를 실천하는 과정에서 킹은 외재적 관점과 틀을 반복적으로 적용해왔다. 이것이 바로 그녀가 한국의 굿판에서 디오니소스 신을 만났다고 선언할 수 있었던 근거이기도 하다. 결론적으로 엘레너 킹의 사례연구가 현재 무용연구자들에게 암시하는 바는 문화간의 접촉과 전이가 양 측면을 모두 만족시키는 방식으로 쉽사리 이루어지지 않는다는 점이라 할 수 있다.

주제어: 엘레너 킹(Eleanor King), 예술가/인류학자(artist as anthropologist), 문화적 재현(Cultural representation), 구제 패러다임(Salvage paradigm), 니체의 디오니시안/아폴로니안 이분법(Nietzsche's Dionysian/Apollonian duality)