Art of state / State of art: the European tours of Martha Graham and her dance company, 1950-1967

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ART OF STATE / STATE OF ART:
THE EUROPEAN TOURS OF MARTHA GRAHAM
AND HER DANCE COMPANY, 1950-1967

by

Ileana Camelia Lenart

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Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York
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Abstract. Praised for inventing a new language of dance and for freeing the human body and spirit through it, Martha Graham (1894-1991) is one of the most revered artistic innovators of the 20th century. In spite of the complexity of her art and persona, the scholarly work devoted to her reflects a fascination with “Graham the artist”, limited to the “magic years” of the thirties and the forties, considered the peak of her artistry and “technique” dance innovation. The rest of her long life and artistic career have not been not thoroughly explored by dance historians, since they unjustly assume this later period to be just a “prolongation” of the work and fame of previous decades. Examining Martha Graham’s European tours during the fifties and sixties the present doctoral dissertation is an interdisciplinary approach which lies at the interface of dance, cultural, and diplomatic history.

Having as a historical background the Cold War, complicated by the social changes and movements of the fifties and sixties, it expands and enlarges historians’ and audience’s perception of Martha Graham, while also proving that during that time the modern dancer’s life and career entered a new phase, on and beyond the artistic stage, by no means less unique than the previous ones. During this time the famous American artist entered the political scene, and became an American cultural diplomat, in both Eastern and Western European countries. Exploring the new political and social role played by the American modern dancer, fully expressed during the European tours, the present work also completes the biography of the artist, and enlarges and refines the scholarly understanding of the unique creator and complex personality Martha Graham was.
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Introduction

*Why Martha Graham? Why again Graham?* was the author asked when revealing the topic of the present dissertation to a well-known dance historian.

Following the death of the artist, in 1991, a few years short of her centennial celebration, the interest in the life and career of the one considered by many as the inventor of modern dance did not diminish, but attained new heights. Focusing on her career and persona, books were written, articles were presented in conferences and symposia, and her dances were revisited and performed to the public. The indifference of the audience – the feeling she feared the most – did not apply in her case. Martha Graham exists for art lovers worldwide and continues to inspire the cultural historians who maintain and enrich the memory of her contribution to the history of dance and of mankind’s culture.

A short biographical sketch: Martha Graham was born in 1894, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania to an affluent family. Her father was a physician who specialized in psychiatry. In 1908 the family moved to Santa Barbara, California, but only the mother and three daughters, Martha, Mary, and Geordie, lived there and the father just came to visit. During one of these visits, in 1911, he took Martha to Los Angeles, where they saw Ruth St. Denis dancing. In 1916, after the death of her father and her graduation from high school, Graham enrolled as a dance student in the Ruth St. Denis School of Dance and related arts, which also trained the well known dancers Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. The rest is history. It is important however to mention is that Martha Graham was a late-bloomer, as she started dancing at an age considered even then too late for a professional career in the field. Her years with St. Denis were
not particularly happy or successful for the 5’2”, dark haired and independent Martha Graham.

The most notable event is that she met Louis Horst, who became her partner for a long time and tremendously influenced her career. They had an “esoteric relationship” as he called it,\(^1\) and a very ambiguous one, one might add, as Horst never divorced his wife Betty, even if they did not live together. After she left Denishawn (the combined name of Ruth St. Denis and her husband Ted Shawn,) Graham started her career as an independent artist on April 18, 1926, at the Forty-Eight Street Theatre in Manhattan.\(^2\) During her Denishawn years, she also visited Europe for the first time.

Due to her complexity and uniqueness, both as a dancer and as a persona, there are still untold stories and histories of Martha Graham. My work focuses on a special “long moment” of her life and career, namely her European tours, which started a few years after the end of the Second World War, in 1950, but which were not given special attention by dance historians until now. However, my present work focuses specifically on the fifties and sixties.

Researching Graham’s tours to Europe was for me like painting a large and very complicated canvas whose main character, Martha Graham was in the center of the work, and it was the only one with clear contours. The rest, namely the factual and narrative elements of the tours, the context in which the tours took place, the response of the audience, and, last but not least, and most importantly, the relationship between them, became clear only while advancing with my work. In my research I combined the traditional historian’s methods with non-traditional ones, collating the “surviving evidence” with my own imagery of the happenings,\(^3\)

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approaching the dances as structures of the interaction of performer and spectator, while using the context as a crucial constitutive element of the text.  

Unlike in the case of a movie, a filmed play, or a text, a performance can be “read” only through its traces – on the page, on the memory, on film – the reconstruction of a performance remains our own construction. As filming performances became an option and a custom mostly after the fifties, dance was until recently an art hard to preserve, as the “product,” whether a dance or an entire spectacle of dance, was disappearing the moment it was created. Thus, imagining based on collateral information and findings is a method which dance historians use extensively, as they cannot truly see the performances they analyze, which happened – as in Graham’s European tours case – more than half century ago.

Dance writing, a rather young scholarly area, was in the beginning mostly concerned with technique and artistic judgment, but gradually started to use historical reconstruction, reportage, social and cultural history, or gender perspectives. I used this approach too, as it would have been not only impossible to recover, reconstruct, and analyze Graham’s European tours as “singular entities,” outside of the fifties’ and sixties’ social, political, cultural and ideological context, but also inefficient and confining. The above mentioned realities in which the tours happened influenced tremendously, but differently from a decade to another, and from a country to another the way Graham and her company were received by the European audience.

Taking place during a time when “what Western Europe had lost in political power and political prestige it was now making up for in the arts,” Martha Graham’s tours to Europe were

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4 Ibidem
6 Tony Judt, Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945 (Penguin, 2005), p.77
received differently from a country to another, and from a decade to another. It was fascinating to discover the way in which the lenses through which modern dance and its promoter were watched in Europe were maximized or minimized by factors from outside the arts’ sphere. Thus, the European like or dislike of Graham brought into the equation emotions which revolved around national pride and identity, anti-Americanism, cultural traditions, and feminist discourse, to name just a few. Not by coincidence Graham faced the most difficulties during the fifties, the decade when, after a devastating war, the Europeans were trying to reconstruct the “good old times,” with their “safe” social and cultural rules, keeping at bay modernism and feminism, and having mixed feelings about the American leadership of the world. Not by coincidence also, the artist received the most praise during the sixties and seventies, when her nationality, gender, and modernism did not strike such a discordant note in the European space, where the Americans were by now an accepted political presence, and modernism and gender struggle were a reality, on the “agenda” of all Western European countries.

Writing the story of Graham’s tours to Europe and to all countries of the continent is an endeavor which should benefit all dance and art lovers, but for a researcher it would be a Sisyphean task, fascinating, tempting, and empowering at the same time, but hard to achieve in a lifetime. Therefore for my doctoral dissertation I discuss Graham’s tours only to France, England, The Netherlands, and behind the Iron Curtain, to Yugoslavia, Poland, and Romania. Looking for Graham in more than one country gave me the possibility to tell the story as it happened, thus enriching the knowledge of Graham, but also to compare the way she was received in each, the nuances and differences of reception, as well as, the analysis of the reasons which lay behind these differences.
I picked France, incited by the country’s refined culture, but also because I am intrigued by the complicated way in which the makers of this culture position themselves in the relationship with other cultures and their representatives. I was not disappointed: Graham had the most contorted and difficult relationship with French audience, and after the fifties she did not tour the country again. Britain was an easy option, as the “special relationship” of the two countries invited the cultural/dance researcher to see how it happened outside of the political space. I was not disappointed again: Graham had the richest and most fulfilling relationship with the British audience. She and her company toured Britain twice in the fifties, and also twice in the sixties, all topped by the first “official” success, in 1963 at the Edinburgh festival, which was followed by a week of performances in London, organized spontaneously afterwards. The tours to the Netherlands came into the scenario as the country was in a more “neutral” position towards American culture and politics, neither opposing them directly, nor supporting them. Not surprisingly, the relationship with The Netherlands, toured both in the fifties and sixties, did not reach the drama experienced in France, nor the thrilling success and support experienced in Britain.

The choice of the communist countries was both simple and complicated. In their books dedicated to Graham, Agnes de Mille⁷ and Ernestine Stodelle⁸ claimed that the famous dancer and choreographer visited Romania during the sixties. While Stodelle mentioned briefly Romania among the countries toured in 1962 by Graham and her company, de Mille went further, saying that “Romania was the only country beyond the Iron Curtain where Graham danced.” As I was born, raised and trained as a dancer in Romania, I could not help but be in

awe: Martha Graham in Romania in my native country? The excitement propelled my interest in Martha Graham’s trip to Romania, first as a Master’s presentation, then as a doctoral proposal, and the rest is history and a doctoral dissertation. But as my research proves, Graham danced in Romania neither then nor later. However, the statements above are more than a mistake; they are a multiple mistake, as not only Graham did not dance in Romania, but the cities of Belgrade and Zagreb of former Yugoslavia, venues of Graham’s performances mentioned by the two writers were mistakenly listed as not being in 1962 part of the communist bloc, an error I found problematic and surprising. De Mille and Stodelle also did not mention at all Poland, another communist country where Graham performed during the same tour.

While looking for Graham in these countries, her performances and reception of her art there, I paid close attention to the role Graham played as a cultural ambassador of the United States in Europe. Among her international tours, the European ones have a special significance as she started the internationalization of her art, as well as her role as a cultural diplomat in Europe. The European tours were Graham’s first international ventures, begun before the relationship between the artist and the State Department became official, which has so far been dated to the Asian tour in 1955, her State Department sponsored tour to Asia. During the early fifties, the American “grand cultural strategy” went through a “rehearsal” period when, as in Martha Graham’s case, top American offices actively and carefully supervised, intervened, and helped from behind the stage their “cultural diplomats in the making.” As my work shows, on the occasion of her 1950 first European tour, the State Department and highly ranked American officials were already involved in Graham’s presence there, “rehearsing” both their future official relationship and modern dance’s ability to demonstrate that Americans had more to
offer the world than their political and diplomatic leadership. Martha Graham was also aware that having “the State Department’s blessing,” 9 expected to be a “major ambassador for America,” 10 and thanked by the State Department after the tours “for understanding her role overseas” 11 she performed politics in the avant-premiere of her role to be started soon officially. During her later European tours Graham’s role as a cultural ambassador of her country became more and more defined and successful, while also giving a new dimension to the artist’s career.

The story of Graham’s patronage by the State Department is the story of a unique relationship, which transcended the physical parameters, as on the one hand there was a living legend, the quintessential American dancer and the inventor of an “American art”, and on the other the “body” of the State Department, strongly linked with high politics, diplomacy and the competition of the Cold War. The State Department became a “patron de l’arts”, a role which belonged until the era of the international conflicts of the twentieth century and especially of the Cold War, mostly to individual art lovers, crowned heads, and affluent people. The dynamic of the relationship between Graham and the State Department and American politics, and the way in which the two partners, Graham and State, shaped and imagined their relationship, which were, separate or together, their goals and expectations, and how their relationship evolved over the years is a page of cultural history of the Cold War.

During the European tours, separately or concomitantly, Graham was supported not only by her own country, in the virtual “persona” of the State Department, but also by European

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9 Letter of Gertrude Macy to Sir Francis Evans, date unknown, 1950, FO 924, CRL 48/5, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
11 Letter of unknown sender to Mary Frances Stewart, February 22, 1955, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, box 230
personal friends and patrons. My work gives a special place to the artistic friendship between Graham and the European-born dance lover Bethsabee de Rothschild, and with the British luminaries John Gielgud, E.M. Forster, and Henry Moore. I chose to present these important “special relationships” in separate chapters, not disseminated throughout other chapters, in order to give the reader a better image of the way in which these important personalities started, developed, influenced and helped Graham’s presence in Europe. I “attach” them to “the fifties part” of my dissertation, as I believe that these relationships, especially with Bethsabee de Rothschild, were of essential importance during the fifties tours, when Graham struggled to receive her deserved recognition in Europe; during the sixties the relationship continued, even if, especially with Bethsabee, the dynamic of the relationships changed.

The story of Graham’s trips to Europe, and the analysis of Martha Graham’s reception there could not be done without paying close attention to the audience. Researching Graham while depicting the times’ complex atmosphere, was of maximum importance also because as artists are the individuals who reflect the surrounding realities, and often precede them, the same is the case with the audience, whose members respond to art and performance also influenced by the complex realities they live in. The audience’s importance in analyzing art and artists was stated first by the American critic John Martin, who noticed the “kinesthetic bonding” between the dancers and the audience, as while the audience responds to the dancers’ movements, the dancers transfer their intentions to the comprehending perceptions of the spectators in their seats. However, “reviving” and “reading” the audience Graham encountered during the tours was not an easy endeavor, due to the audience’s ephemeral quality, but it was a most necessary

one as this interaction is essential for the one who researches Graham’s tours. I identified Graham’s European audiences relying on the journals and newspapers, the documents, the official and unofficial correspondence related to the tour, and on the memories of those participating in the events. The hardest task was to look at Graham’s non-professional audience, the unknown art lover and spectator, as this category was the least preserved in memoirs and journals. It was easier to revive the “professional” audience of the performances, made of dancers, choreographers, and dance critics, other journalists. At her performances also came creators from other artistic domains: artists, members of the intelligentsia, and members of the social elite of the countries she visited. Last but not least, Graham had also a “political” audience, as she was also in the attention of her country’s embassies abroad, a cultural diplomat of her country, so her performances were attended also by officials and diplomats, American and European.

My dissertation is a multi-layered analysis of Martha Graham’s European tours of the fifties and the sixties. On one hand, it brings new perspectives on political, social, and cultural developments of the first two decades of the Cold War in Europe, all in the context of American cultural diplomacy in Europe. On the other, my work writes a new page of dance history, analyzing the importance of dance, with a special focus on modern dance, in the cultural exchange of the conflicting times which followed the Second World War. Last but not least, revolving around a major personality of twentieth-century culture, the modern dancer Martha Graham, my dissertation enriches, completes, and at times challenges her story and history.
The art she invented and gave to the world was the kind of art which went beyond entertainment and asked one to reflect, analyze, and discover continuously. Writing about Martha Graham, her art, and her tours engages one in the kind of writing which does not have an end. Reflecting a special moment of Graham’s career and life, namely her European tours, my work, which is also under the sign of analysis and discovery, aims not to end the story of Martha Graham but only to start it, to continue and to enlarge it. Thus, my dissertation is not an end of a story but, in many ways, just a beginning.

**Martha Graham and Europe**

“I am a sixth-generation American with a line of Scotch-Irish ancestors which included Miles Standish,” said Graham when asked about her ancestry.

When Martha Graham traveled to Europe during the spring of 1950, planning to perform with her company in Paris and London, the artist was highly renowned nationally but less known outside the USA. Already a legend in her country, considered the inventor of modern dance – the unconventional and energetic “art of and from America –” before her first European tour she seemed little preoccupied with the internationalization of her art. Graham was very proud of being an American, and she often mentioned that she was a sixth-generation American with a line of Scotch-Irish ancestors which included Miles Standish, who came to the New World on Mayflower. But these were mostly to stress her true Americanism, as belonging to a “founding

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family”, and less to connect herself to Europe. Martha Graham’s relationship with Europe and its culture was not a significant one before the 1950s, but it is worthy of being analyzed, as at least indirectly her life and creation had some European influences.

Before the 1950s Graham visited Europe just once, in 1926, when she was still part of the Denishawn company.\textsuperscript{14} The Company and the school were created by Ruth St. Denis (1879 – 1968) and her husband Ted Shawn (1891 – 1972), and Martha became their pupil in 1916, without much success at the beginning. St. Denis was considered an early modern dance pioneer, who, in the line opened by Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan, was inventing a new language of the movement, different from that of ballet.\textsuperscript{15} Her performances quickly became popular, and she toured extensively. During one of her tours to England Martha Graham was among her dancers.

Graham sailed with the Denishawn company from Boston to England, and the first performance was at London’s famous Coliseum.\textsuperscript{16} The tour was not a good time for Graham professionally, as in London Ruth St. Denis insisted on dancing Martha’s solo, Xochitil herself.

It was hard for Martha, as it was not only a role created for her by Ted Shawn, but also the one which changed her status as a performer, being her first solo. Inspired by a pre-Columbian legend, and first danced in 1920, it was not definitely “Graham-esque,” but it enabled her to exhibit her passion, power, and determination.\textsuperscript{17} As if this was not enough, during the cross-country tour, St. Denis also decided to dance Malguena, which was Martha’s duo with Ted

\textsuperscript{15} Her early works were inspired by exotic mysticism and spirituality, Indian culture and mythology, and she was influenced by the actor Sarah Bernhardt and the Japanese dancer Sada Yacco.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{17} Don McDonagh, \textit{Martha Graham: a biography}, (New York, Praeger, 1973), p.27
Shawn.\textsuperscript{18} Deprived of the chance to do what she loved the best, namely to dance having the attention of the audience focused on her, as she was reduced to the role of a member of the company which accompanied the star, Ruth St. Denis. At a personal level Graham was also unhappy, as she had to perform alongside Betty Horst (the wife of Louis Horst, Martha’s longtime companion), who danced with the company on that occasion. Maybe because of the professional and personal challenges encountered during the first trip to Europe, Graham spoke little about the tour in general and did not mention it at all in her autobiography, \textit{Blood Memory}. And not but coincidence, it did not take long until she established, with the help of Louis Horst, her own company and school. Still, Graham remembered dancing in London with Denishawn, and also in Bristol and Manchester. She also remembered that while she was waiting to get on stage to perform, the horse of a vaudeville company also there, licked her shoulder. Afterwards she went to Paris with Louis Horst to see Diaghilev’s company, and she remembered “Petrouschka.”

Graham met Louis Horst (1884 –1964), a musician “with a practical Germanic side of his nature,”\textsuperscript{19} at Denishawn, where he was in charge with the music for the creations of Ruth St. Denis.\textsuperscript{20} Martha Graham called him “an American with rather European ways,”\textsuperscript{21} as he was highly knowledgeable about European music, which he introduced, especially the new “modern” composers of Europe, into the school repertoire, but also into Graham’s life and creation. Due to her father, Dr. Graham, a Presbyterian, Graham already knew about the details of the Presbyterian service, with its music, costumes, and pomp, while Lizzie, an Irish nanny and a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibidem, p.40
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ernestine Stodelle, \textit{Deep Song: the Dance Story of Martha Graham} (New York: Schrimer Book,1984), p.36
\item \textsuperscript{20} Agnes DeMille, \textit{Martha. The Life and work of Martha Graham} (New York, First Vintage Books Edition, 1992), p.45
\item \textsuperscript{21} Martha Graham, \textit{Blood Memory} (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 75
\end{itemize}
former patient of Martha’s father who took care of Graham and her sisters, taught her the language of the Catholic religious traditions and the myths and songs of the Irish culture, full of fantasies, fancies and tales.  

Horst introduced Graham to the music of Franck, Schubert, Schumann, Debussy, Ravel, Rachmaninov, de Falla, and others. He also soon became her lover and collaborator, and had a great influence in her life and creation. In 1925 Horst left Denishawn for Europe, during a time when the Americans were still looking to Europe for guidance. Having to choose between the two leading musical centers, Vienna and Paris, he chose Vienna, but he felt disappointed by the dry, pedagogical methods used at the Akademie. But in spite of his personal disappointment with the didacticism of the Viennese professors it was an occasion for him to learn more about the European developments in dance, as in the Akademie there was a department for modern dance (Kunstlerischer Tanz), connected to the Laban Schools. Horst had the chance to gain firsthand experience of the new developments in dance and theater, as he also met Max Reinhardt and one of his actress–dancers, Tilly Losch. In spite of the good time Horst had in Vienna and the interesting contact with its cultural life, he wanted to return to America and “to

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22 LeRoy Leatherman, *Martha Graham, Portrait of a Lady as an Artist* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p.33; As the dancer declared later, this dual exposure to the “ritual and the theatre of the Church” would have a deep influence on her, on her way of imagining the spectacle of dance, and on the way she perceived and explored myths and their place in human life.


24 Max Reinhardt Special Collection, Tilly Losch Section, Special Collections, Binghamton University Libraries SUNY Binghamton; Losch would later enjoy moderate fame in London and in the US, and was interested also in modern dance, taking classes with Grete Wiesenthal and Mary Wigman. It is ironic that during a time when Graham was still struggling to build her career in New York, for a short time Losch had a company, Ballets 1933, created for her by her rich husband and dance lover Edward James, with dances choreographed by George Balanchine himself, while having as advisor Boris Kochno, Diaghilev’s former secretary.
share his ideas with Martha – eager to return to his real homeland where he was freer to follow more modern directions in the arts.”

At Horst’s suggestion again, Graham read Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, European thinkers she admired very much, and they had long intellectual discussions about them. Graham herself would mention the philosophers’ names as highly influential in her life and career, and she did not make a secret of the fact that, along the lines of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer’s philosophy, she too believed in the “mission” of her art, and her superior endowment. She did not hesitate to declare, “I did not choose to become a dancer. I was chosen.”

Immediate European events prompted the creation of Deep Song and Immediate Tragedy in 1937, inspired by the Spanish civil war. In 1943 she created Deaths and Entrances, based on the dramatic and romantic story of the Bronte sisters, with all its elements, which included madness and Gothic. (The title was “borrowed” from a famous poem by Dylan Thomas.) She had a special relationship with the modern European art, also encouraged by Horst. He used to take Graham and their colleagues, already in the Denishawn years, to see what modern painters and sculptors were creating. Graham’s favorite painters were Chagall (whom she met in person) and Matisse, whose works, as she remembered later, stirred a powerful emotion in her. She also confessed that, when seeing Kandinsky’s paintings for the first time, she declared, “I will make a dance like that”, while having the confirmation, as she herself put it, that she “was not mad” because while wanting to break free from the constraints of tradition in art she, like the

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27 Ibidem, p.38
European painters she admired, was looking for new ways of expressing the human condition’s deep meanings.\(^2^9\)

But while she, even if not extensively, accepted and acknowledged some cultural and artistic European influence, when it came to the relationship between Martha Graham and the European dance her attitude was clear: “I never learned any European dances.”\(^3^0\) Graham also stated that “she never saw Pavlova (...) and Isadora. I saw the six girls once. I never saw Nijinsky,”\(^3^1\) but that she saw Karsavina on the occasion of a visit to Paris, when she danced in *Firebird*, and also in *Scheherazade*. Graham claims this to have happened in 1922 or 1923,\(^3^2\) even as she describes being in Paris with Ruth St. Denis, which actually happened in 1925, a trip mentioned in Ruth St. Denis’ biographies, but mostly as a personal journey of St. Denis and her husband, Ted Shawn. In her own autobiography, Tamara Karsavina did not mention having danced in Paris after the Diaghilev Company – whose prima ballerina she was – disbanded. So, the question is whether Graham truly saw Karsavina, or was it another ballerina?

Graham knew about European developments in dance already from 1925, when Louis Horst wrote to Martha from Vienna and sent her information and pictures about the *Ausdruckstanz*. When he came back he brought books and new pictures of the central European modern dancers.\(^3^3\) Martha Graham knew Mary Wigman, the German pioneer of *Ausdruckstanz*, personally, but their relationship was not a close one. Graham cultivated a polite indifference vis-à-vis Wigman and her disciples, even if it is obvious that the two dancers did know about each

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\(^2^9\) Graham, *Blood Memory*, p. 98
\(^3^0\) Ibidem, p.75
\(^3^2\) Ibidem
\(^3^3\) De Mille, *Martha*, p.69
other’s innovations of movement and career decisions. Wigman toured the United States in 1930 with her company of dancers, and when performing in New York City, Graham and Horst met her and attended her performance. Wigman also founded a school in New York City in 1931, led by Hanya Holm. As LeRoy Leatherman mentions in his book about Graham, when she was offered to go to Germany and study with Mary Wigman, Graham declined the offer. When, in 1932, she received a fellowship given by the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, instead of going to Germany she preferred to go to Mexico, as she thought that there she could focus better on creating something American. As she later confessed, it was because she knew she had to discover the new art in her own country, or, in case she did not succeed in her endeavor, she wanted to go to Europe on her own.

However, when the occasion came, namely when she received a Guggenheim fellowship, she did not consider Europe, as, she stressed, it was more useful for her to travel to other places. On the occasion of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, Graham received her first invitation to Europe from Hitler, to dance at the opening ceremonies. A year before the Olympics, the German officials started their courting of Graham, when a telephone call from the German Embassy announced to Graham that she would receive a personal message from Nazi cultural arbiter Joseph Goebbels, beamed directly from Berlin. The dancer went to the photographer Barbara Morgan, who owned a shortwave radio, and listened to the message. Shortly afterward, a German delegation visited Graham, and they gave her the official invitation.

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34 Madden, You Call Me Louis (Harwood Academic Publishers: 1996), p.112
36 Leatherman, Martha Graham. Portrait of a Lady as an Artist, p.33
37 Graham, Blood Memory, p.35
39 Graham, Blood Memory, p.151
signed, among other officials, by Rudolf Laban, president of the Deutsche Tanzbuhne and Joseph Goebbels, the Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda. Graham refused the invitation in harsh words, saying that she could not dance in a country which persecuted the Jews, when half of her company was Jewish, and even when she was promised that her Jewish dancers would be treated “with courtesy and dignity”, she did not change her mind. This act of defiance made Goebbels put Graham on a list with people “to be taken care of” once the Nazi conquered the USA, a gesture which the artist declared was one of the biggest compliments she ever received. Through her courageous stance, Graham expressed moral responsibility, something which some of her German colleagues never considered,” as Mary Wigman and Gret Palucca danced for Hitler, while Wigman also contributed to the opening night spectacle at the Olympics with a work called Olympic Youth, which embraced the fascist esthetics with a glorification of the Fuhrer.

However, two years after Graham refused to dance in Germany, she received an invitation from Dorothy Elmhirst, the creator and owner of Dartington School, to visit Britain, but Graham declined, as she did not want to travel because of the European political situation. One does not know how and when Graham and Elmhirst met, but as Dorothy Elmhirst was an American heiress from a very wealthy family, with strong family ties in the US, it is obvious that the occasions to meet existed. After Dorothy married Leonard Elmhirst, an Englishman who studied agriculture at Cornell University, she moved to Britain, and the two started a courageous

39 Ibidem, p.150
40 De Mille, Martha, p.334
41 Ibidem, p.223
43 Susan S. Manning, Ecstasy and Demon. Feminism and Nationalsim in the Dances of Mary Wigman ( Berkely: University of California Press, 1993,) p.3
project, the Dartington School in Devonshire, where among other causes they also supported the arts, including dance. Due to their avant-garde artistic interests in dance, it is not a surprise that Graham was among those who received an invitation from them.

Another acquaintance, related to both Graham and the Dartington experiment, was Margaret Barr (1904–1991), a dancer who during the 1930s taught at Dartington Hall and later opened a studio in London. Born in India of an English mother and an American father, she studied in the USA with Geordie Graham, Martha’s sister, who for a while taught modern dance in the Denishawn style at Santa Barbara, the place where Barr met Martha, too. Martha invited her to study in New York with her, an invitation Margaret gladly accepted. In New York Barr danced professionally for the first time in a performance next to Graham and also taught Graham’s technique in different schools, most likely in England too, a country where she moved to and pursued her own idea of dance and creation.45 However, beside Barr, there were other British dancers trained at Martha Graham School already before the Second World War, which was not the case with the French dancers, perhaps because the country which hosted modernism in so many arts, in terms of dance was behind the rest of Europe and the world. As the dancer and the dance historian Jacqueline Robinson put it, referring to that period: “our land (France) did not experience the same spontaneous generation, the same degree of genius as occurred elsewhere, in America, Switzerland and Germany, for example.”46

But, in spite of her limited interest in the European culture, of her lack of interest in European developments in dance, and of her hesitancy to travel to Europe due to her political beliefs and concerns, Martha Graham was not unknown to the cultural circles of Europe. Due to

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Louis Horst and his friendly and outspoken personality, easily making friends and entertaining them, she was surely, known in Austrian artistic circles. The same was the situation was in Germany, due to Mary Wigman and Hanya Holm, her pupils, who both traveled and were active in the European and American artistic world.

Most of Martha Graham’s European admirers and friends prior to her European tours were from England. One of them was Frederick Ashton, a supporter already since 1927, when in New York, Ashton saw her dancing at the Little Theater. Unlike his friends who were about to leave the performance before the intermission, he appreciated the art and innovation he was witnessing.\footnote{Graham, \textit{Blood Memory}, p.125} Graham was also known, as their ulterior correspondence shows, even if most likely not personally yet, by Marie Rambert and Ninette de Valois, who, next to Frederick Ashton, were two pillars of the British ballet. It is relevant that beside the “crème de la crème” of the British dance, already prior to her European tours Graham was not unknown among the British artistic elite. The best examples in this regard were the actor John Gielgud, the writer E. M. Forster, the sculptor Henry Moore, and the poet Dylan Thomas. While she met the first two already before the war, and the other two after it, she established a long friendship with all of them. They attended her performances in the USA and also in England, corresponded over the decades with her (with the exception of Dylan Thomas who died very young,) and also met her on different other occasions, in the USA or Britain. John Gielgud and Henry Moore also served on various committees related to Graham’s work, tours and performances in Britain. Their relationship wrote a page of cultural diplomacy of that time, as John Gielgud, E.M. Forster, Henry Moore, and Dylan Thomas met Graham while they were visiting the USA as part of a
carefully designed effort of British cultural diplomacy in the USA. In 1940 a Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (after the war it was renamed the Arts Council of Great Britain) was appointed to help promote and maintain British culture, and the USA was targeted in this national and cultural endeavor.\footnote{The Papers of Lydia Lopokova Keynes, GBR/0272/PP/LLK, King's College Archive Centre, Cambridge. The Council's first Chairman was John Maynard Keynes, the husband of former ballerina Lydia Lopokova.}

The French cultural elite came in contact with American culture mostly after the end of the war, as French cultural diplomacy infrequently targeted the USA prior to the Second World War, and after France’s fall in 1940 only a few intellectuals fled to America.\footnote{Stanley Karnow, \textit{Paris in the Fifties} (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997), p.249} The cultural exchange between the USA and France was more vigorous after the end of the war, but there is no documented relationship between the dancer and the French intelligentsia, and no mention of Martha Graham in the memoirs, biographies and autobiographies of the French cultural pillars of the time. France, so generous before with modern arts and their promoters, remained the most resistant to Graham over the decades, but on the other hand France “gave” Graham the French born Bethsabee de Rothschild, who first invited Graham to Europe, to her hometown Paris.

Martha Graham’s first international tour happened in Paris, in 1950, when the story of her tours to Europe began. In spite of her country and friends’ pride related to her tour, Bethsabee de Rothschild’s involvement and the State Department’s “blessing,” Graham was aware of the fact that conquering Paris would not be an easy road. Writing to Helen McGehee, a dancer of Graham who was then living in Paris, Graham affirmed that her dance will be “setting all Paris on fire with controversy and shock.”\footnote{Letter from Martha Graham to Helen McGehee, October 16, 1949, Helen McGehee Umana Collection, Box 9, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington} She claimed that working on \textit{The Eye of Anguish} – supposed to be premiered in Paris – made her happy, but one can easily feel a sense of doubt in
the upcoming tour and in her troubled marriage, whose problems were already plaguing Graham’s life and her company, and would contribute to the difficulties experienced in Paris. “I do not have fear, but I know that I cannot afford the time to doubt or have fear now,” she wrote, also warning McGehee that she had a responsibility for her talent for dance, that she had to “treasure her beauty,” and to be aware that marriage could change her dancer’s commitment for dance. One cannot help but feel that she was in fact talking about her own emotional dilemmas and struggles. However, in spite of all doubts and fears, Martha Graham was committed to go to Europe “in May or June,” (“I am still determined to go to Europe in May or June,”) thus rejecting an offer she received to teach in Switzerland.\textsuperscript{51} Publicity material distributed in Europe to influential people claimed that she was also made previous offers to dance in France, Austria, Denmark and England.\textsuperscript{52}

Graham’s relationship with Europe was a complicated story – as Europe was the hardest continent to conquer artistically – which would have its moments of insuccess and denial, its moments of praise, glory, and eventually triumph, and which would last until the end of the life of the creator.

\textsuperscript{51} Letter from Martha Graham to Helen McGehee, October 16, 1949, Library of Congress, Box 9, Helen McGehee Umanan Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
\textsuperscript{52} Ibidem
The Challenging Fifties

“Good God. If my constituents thought that I approved legislation to use their money for pink toe shoes, I’d never be reelected!” exclaimed an American senator in the early fifties

Walter Terry, Frontiers of Dance. The Life of Martha Graham


Historians who have written about post-bellum cultural Europe have not reached a consensus regarding its creative energies. Some claimed that Europe of that time was experiencing “cultural fatigue,”53 while others said that on the contrary it was going through a new phase of “cultural Renaissance.”54 But both sides agreed that during the fifties Europe experienced an internationalization of its culture, through exchanges with other countries and continents at a level never reached before. In the complex situation of “World War III,”55 as the Cold War was called, cultural diplomacy reached a level without precedent. By the mid-fifties, when a hot war was no longer an immediate scare, the role of cultural diplomacy, instead of diminishing, became even more important.

Even if officially only the Cold War transformed arts into diplomatic weapons, already prior to and during the Second World War culture was seen as an export product, meant to enhance a country’s positive image abroad. For Europeans, cultural exchange was not a total

novelty, but for the Americans it meant to get into this new undertaking, and their leadership of
the Western democratic bloc required it. The competition between the USA, USSR, and their
allies during the Cold War manifested itself first in the political, economic, and diplomatic
spheres, but soon it extended to the cultural one too, culture becoming a product which could be
exported, supporting and strengthening a country’s cause in the complicated international arena.

Until the end of the Second World War the cultural exchange was mostly an “internal
affair” of the Europeans, as the French, Germans and Italians had pursued cultural diplomacy
since before 1914,56 and while the Soviet Union created a “Society for Cultural Relations with
Foreign Nations” in 1925. Americans did not have yet a well organized cultural diplomacy, but
at least already before the Second World War they also promoted the “good neighbor” cultural
initiatives, so American artists and companies started to travel outside the country, including in
Europe. The French, next to the Germans, were the most driven to “export” their country’s
culture,57 and came into the open with a government office called “Cultural Relations;”58 the
Soviet Union created the “Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Nations” in 1925. The
British officially enrolled in the European cultural exchange only in 1934, the birth year of the
British Council, which aimed to support foreign policy through the velvet glove of high culture,59
helping “to spread far and wide” the fame of British artistic luminaries.60 Set up and partly
funded by the Foreign Office and working closely with it, the British Council had its own

56 Tony Judt, *Postwar*, p. 33
58 Ibidem, p. 177
59 Ibidem
Books, 2005), p. 76
Chairman and Committee and was responsible for its own policy and activities, a degree of independence which influenced the way British cultural diplomacy was shaped.

Called newcomers in “the battle for people’s minds”, the American cultural diplomacy started only during the Second World War with the tour of the American Ballet Caravan to Latin America in 1942, and was first designed in “good neighbor” terms by Nelson Rockefeller, who believed that “good culture is good propaganda.” By the mid fifties, when the Soviets were sending their artists abroad in unprecedented number, the cultural policy of the Americans was a subject of debate in their own country and in the process of finding its own voice and organizing itself.

Some American officials understood the importance of cultural diplomacy, convinced that the Americans had and could compete in the cultural arena. They believed in the power of culture in undoing Soviet totalitarianism, in demonstrating that the USA was more than the pragmatic land of the dollar, while also in dispelling the cliché that the American culture was represented by Hollywood movies and exotic performers. Among them was President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was convinced the Americans could win the competition over “the human soul, the human heart, and the human mind” with the help of cultural diplomacy, and who supported the coming to life of the USIA in the late summer of 1953, and helped it with special funds derived from Congress for the establishment of the Cultural Exchange Program. Less hesitant than his predecessor Harry Truman, President Eisenhower sent philharmonic orchestras and performing artists overseas. But this was not the case for the Martha Graham Company. Graham had not been sent abroad by ANTA (American National Theatre and Academy), because the

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costs of her large company, expected to be around $80,000, were considered too high. The full bloom of Graham’s role as a cultural diplomat happened only after the mid-fifties when the partisans of American cultural diplomacy gained more power over those who did not believe in it.

If a Soviet ballerina or a premier dancer carried travel permits equal to those of an army general, in the United States some saw arts as a luxury.\textsuperscript{63} There were voices in Congress who did not see the necessity for cultural export and considered that sending dance groups or art exhibitions abroad was only self-satisfying, with no particular relevance,\textsuperscript{64} and who believed that the true Americanness was shown through landscapes and “serious topics”, and not by any means through modern dance. Other legislators did not deny the importance of cultural export, but the way they envisioned it was not very imaginative, as Senator Homer Capehart believed that the task of the cultural diplomacy was, “to sell US to the world just as a sales manager’s job is to sell a Buick or a Cadillac or a radio or a TV set.”\textsuperscript{65} And with Senator Joseph McCarthy’s only now being challenged, to be a modern artist in America remained problematic, because being different could mean being dangerous. American exhibitions considered “too communist” were recalled from Europe,\textsuperscript{66} artists such as Aaron Copland had to testify before Congress before going to Italy on a Fulbright scholarship, and most Washington political opinion held that

\textsuperscript{64} Leo Bogart, \textit{Cool Words, Cold War, Premises of Propaganda: Reassessing the USIA’s Operating Assumptions in the Cold War} (University Press of America; 2nd Revised edition, 1995), p.xxxv
\textsuperscript{66} John W. Henderson, \textit{The United States Information Agency}, p.234
the true Americaness was shown in art through landscapes, social realism and “serious topics”, and not by any means through modern dance.\footnote{Haigh, p.77}

However, the “international” language of bodies in motion put it on the top of the list of the artisans of Cold War cultural diplomacy, and made it an important cultural weapon. Due to its new political and diplomatic importance and role, dance became more visible and pertinent on the cultural stage, but with the new power came a new responsibility. The dance and dancers sent to foreign countries had to convey a message to the audience and critics best able to serve the interests of their own country. Within the dance world, modern dance seemed to respond better to this requirement, namely to have a message, brought up by the tactics of the cultural war. Ballet, which was beautiful and elegant but mostly entertaining, tried to adapt, so famous choreographers of the 20th century reinvented ballet in order to respond to the calls of the cultural diplomacy of the Cold War and to the new rhythm and pace of the decades. Neither beautiful or elegant in the common sense, modern dance did not have to reinvent anything, as since its birth it relied its power on message. Beside this, namely that modern dance emerged as “ready for” the cultural competition with its adaptable message, as it was not bound by traditions and history like ballet, modern dance was more in synoncy with the social changes of the era.

Due to the new emphasis on dance in the general context of cultural diplomacy, and on modern dance – an art made in the USA – in particular, it would have been expected for Martha Graham to be considered a very promising product for cultural export and to be sent overseas right away. In fact, things did not happen that way. Graham became an official cultural diplomat of the Americans only during the mid-fifties, but due to private support she was on the
international stage already since 1950, once she traveled to Paris.

Martha Graham’s first international tours came during the early fifties, when she and her company toured Europe twice, once in 1950 and the second time in 1954. Her biographers and entourage, and the dancer herself preferred to remember them limitedly. The “first tours moment” of Graham’s career has been little mentioned and analyzed, being perceived mostly as a “stumble,” and as a short gap between her national success, as before her European tours, Martha Graham was artistically recognized and acclaimed in her country, and her international achievement, as after the European tours she became an official ambassador of the USA during the very successful State sponsored tour of Asia in 1955.

Yet analysis of Graham’s dual role as an artist and a cultural ambassador must begin with the 1950 tour, when Graham planned to perform in Paris and London. The whole tour was reduced to two performances in Paris, but Graham’s overseas activity resumed with the 1954 tour. Then Graham and her company visited numerous European countries; only the appearances in Paris, London, and the Netherlands will be scrutinized here.

It is not clear whether the initiative for the first European tour of Martha Graham’s company, belonged to Bethsabee de Rothschild or Erick Hawkins, at that time still Martha’s husband and still powerful in influencing her decisions. At that point Graham was not yet invested with the role of a cultural ambassador of her country, and the State Department, which was later a major presence during her tours to Europe, was not yet involved directly, but this does not mean that American diplomacy was unaware of her first attempts to conquer Europe.

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68 De Mille, Martha, p.290-291
69 McDonagh, Martha Graham: a biography, p.213
The evidence revealed in these pages challenges the idea that the fifties were only totally private tours, with no political implications.

Documents in numerous archives and collections compel the conclusion that Graham’s overseas tours were marked from the very beginning by the complex and complicated political life of the moment, and that already in 1950 the State Department was involved logistically in Graham’s presence on the European stages. During the following years, the State Department’s presence became more and more visible, completing and enriching the continuous contribution of Bethsabee de Rothschild to Graham’s success, while during the sixties the equilibrium between private and state sponsorship was less stable, with de Rothschild moving her interest from Graham’s sphere, and the State Department becoming the main supporter of Graham.

During the early fifties the American “grand cultural strategy” went through a “rehearsal” period when top American officials actively and carefully supervised, intervened, and helped from behind the stage their “cultural diplomats in the making.” Even if not (yet) officially endorsed, their performances were carefully and consistently observed at and analyzed by highly ranked American political agencies and personnel. Beside Graham and other modern dancers, American ballet companies, jazz musicians, symphonic orchestras, and abstractionist painters toured Europe, and beside private sponsorship (Bethsabee de Rothschild and Lilla Acheson in Graham’s case, and Peggy Guggenheim in Pollock’s), they also received the State Department’s support in order to extend the artistic message beyond the theatrical stage and the exhibition hall, and to help the effort of their country in the competition for cultural supremacy.
Already before the Asian tour in 1955, when the State Department became the official sponsor and supporter of Martha Graham, during the 1950 and 1954 tours Graham already received the attention and support of the State Department. Even if not at the level she will experienced later as a cultural ambassador, already from the first European tours Graham’s role exited the private and artistic sphere, and one can say that the European tours, and especially that of 1954, were the avant-premiere of Graham’s role as a cultural diplomat and of the State Department’s involvement in her international exposure, a time when both the artist and the State Department “rehearsed” the future spectacle of dance and politics on the world stage. It is true, however, that during the European tours of the fifties the support of the State Department was manifested mostly, if not entirely, through logistical rather than financial means.

Analyzing Martha Graham’s European tours in the context of the emerging American cultural diplomacy, and the way the relationship between the dancer and the system she would represent started and developed, is most revelatory and interesting. During the early fifties both “parts” were redefining and envisioning their future influence and impact, while also rehearsing their new roles: Martha Graham as a cultural diplomat, and American cultural diplomacy as a valuable competitor in the field of cultural exchange. The existence of this relationship prior to the 1955 tour to Asia proves, on one hand, that the political side of her first tours cannot be contested. It also shows that American cultural diplomacy of the early fifties was less hesitant than often assumed, and that whenever needed, the artists performing abroad, including Graham, benefited from the support offered by the State Department and the American embassies abroad;
even if not skilled, sophisticated, or fully organized it was benevolent and pragmatic, and helped the cultural diplomats and American cultural diplomacy.\textsuperscript{70}

Graham’s first European tours reflect the characteristics of the “early stage” of American cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange. Focusing less on the financial support for the traveling artists, the State Department, USIS (named after 1954, USIA,) and the American embassies abroad offered mostly a logistic help. This spirit (or maybe careful attitude) was best embodied by Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles’ words in 1953, when intervening on behalf of an American company touring Europe: “If, however, such a tour could be realized with private financial support, the Department would be glad to extend all of its facilitative services.”\textsuperscript{71} Or, on the same note, by the suggestion of a USIS representative that the institution played “an important albeit quiet role in assisting” American companies touring Europe, and “helping” the cultural events in which the American artists were performing.\textsuperscript{72}

For instance, one year prior to Graham’s second tour to Europe, the performance “Porgy and Bess” was performed in Germany and Austria under the State Department’s sponsorship, but

\textsuperscript{70} Embassy’s Note no.426, June 30, 1955, and the Ministry’s reply the same day, Affairs Etrangers, Relations Culturelles. Series 2, 1956-1959, Etats-Unis 2-63, Les Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France: by the time Graham first toured France her country was already organizing a “campaign of truth” there “targeted to counterbalance the steady march of dictatorship” by proving “the moral strength” of the Americans. The USA and France have signed already on May 28, 1946, a Memorandum of Understanding, renewed in 1955, stating the financial involvement of the two countries in the cultural exchange, and promising assistance to the artists and companies visiting each other’s countries.

\textsuperscript{71} Telegram from the Department of State to the American Embassy in the Hague, Signed Dulles, February 9. 1953, NND 852917, RG 59, Box 2383, National Archives at College Park, College Park

\textsuperscript{72} Letter to the State Department from the American Embassy in The Hague, signed Collier D. Huyler, Public Affairs Officer, November 29, 1950, NND 852916, RG 59, Box 2409, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA; one year prior to Graham second tour to Europe, the performance “Porgy and Bess” was appearing in Germany and Austria under the State Department’s sponsorship, but has made other European appearances under private auspices
made other European appearances under private auspices. Another notable example is Margaret Truman, the daughter of the former American president, who in 1951 was concerting in Europe, following another trip of the continent happened during her father’s presidency. In Britain she felt “it felt like coming home,” even more than when arriving by ship she was welcomed by the Mayor of Southampton and by Mallory Brown, the American official of the Embassy in London, the one who wrote to Graham in 1950 proud that she would perform in from “of their British friends.” Like Graham in 1954 when visiting London, Margaret Truman would meet British and American officials and members of the British society and intelligentsia.

Graham’s presence in Europe also highlighted how the role of the politicians, American and European, changed, expanded, and was redefined due to the cultural diplomacy of the Cold War. The more artists of countries involved in the Cold War were present on foreign stages, for highly ranked officials, attending an artistic performance was becoming increasingly a statement of political alliances and partisanship. As my paper will prove, the American politicians were well aware of “the effectiveness of this kind of propaganda” and acted accordingly. In Graham’s case, already prior to the “Brussels moment,” the American Secretary of State, numerous American ambassadors in Europe and their European counterparts, important ministries, and cultural attaches knew and helped her and her company’s presence in Europe.

73 Letter to the State Department from the American Embassy in The Hague, signed Collier D. Huyler, Public Affairs Officer, November 29, 1950, NND 852916, RG 59, Box 2409, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
75 Margaret Truman, *Souvenir, Margaret Truman’s own story*, p. 286-287
76 Letter from the American Embassy in The Hague to the Department of State, February 23, 1953, ND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
The presence of the Queen of the Netherlands at one of Graham’s performances in 1954 was another exceptional event which speaks for itself, and I will present it at large.\textsuperscript{77}

The other assumption my work approaches from another perspective is the extent of the “disastrous” outcome of Graham’s first European tours. First and foremost none of the American modern dance companies sent to Europe were highly successful. In November 1954, the José Limón Dance Company was sent by the State Department to perform in Latin America, being the first officially government-sponsored initiative in using performing arts as part of the Cold War effort,\textsuperscript{78} but, when the same company was sent in 1957 in Europe, it had a limited success, and especially in Paris. Thus, while I agree that they were not a success, especially the 1950 one, I believe that the perception of Graham’s “disaster” needs to be revised and looked at from a fresher and newer perspective. On one hand, as my works shows, there were positive responses to Graham’s art from the European audience and critics, which cannot be overlooked, but recorded, included in the context of her tours, and analyzed.

On the other hand, looking at Graham’s fifties tours lack of success one has to remember that it was a very complicated decade. American participation in cultural exposure and exchange, linked with the role of the USA as the leader of the free world, was perceived negatively by most European countries, which were recovering from a devastating war and were reacting with increased nationalism to the presence of the Americans on the continent.\textsuperscript{79} As a result, not only Martha Graham, but other American artists had difficulties in winning approval from the European audience and being successful there. For instance, the American reporters in Paris

\textsuperscript{77} Private Collection
\textsuperscript{78} See Naima Prevots, Naima Prevots, \textit{Dance for Export} (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998)
\textsuperscript{79} Camelia Lenart, “Martha Graham’s Modern Dance and its Impact on France during the Fifties”, \textit{New Readings}, November, 2008
blamed its audience and critics for their open nationalism and lack of taste, accusing the audience of liking more “flapping posteriors and amateurish-ness artistic” (sic,) than the quality of the “vital visiting groups” of the American modern dance companies which performed France. Thus, Martha Graham’s and Jose Limon’s “frustrations” with the French public were considered by the American observers “ironically and tragically understandable as one watching this audience in its blindness to movement, its indifference to meaning and its acceptance of mediocrity,” as “the indifference and disdain (of French audience) … have caused many of us who are working here to despair.”

Last but not least, Graham’s modern dance was a “difficult” art in the context of the fifties, when domesticity and conservatism were the marks of the time. Feminist and dance historians rightly argue that modern dance ended the male supremacy in a culture which had been dominated by the art of ballet, made and controlled by males – choreographers, impresarios, directors and the most powerful part of the audience, the critics, and only danced by women – the ballerinas. Modern dance, which rose to fame internationally after 1945, proved that women could do more than dancing, namely choreographing, owning companies, planning tours, making a new art, and achieving fame. Martha Graham was one of the women dancers able to do all these, but for that decade it was a complicated issue, which was reflected on the reception of her art in Europe.

All this being said, let us pull the curtain, get the lights on, and let the story begin.

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80 Laura Sheelan, “Report from Paris,” *Dance Observer*, nr. 6 (1958): p.85; Sheelan claims that Limon’s company “twas criticized for lacking the two most important elements in the French esthetics of dance, namely lavish spectacle and virtuosity in the Allegro work;” that “the critics have seldom been as unfriendly as they were on this occasion;” she also shared her aim to work “towards bettering the relations (sic) and understanding of European dancers towards the American dance and dancers.” Besides, the “richness of the French companies’ costumes” was considered “an immoral expenditure in the face of the economic and political crisis crippling France.”
A Tale of Two Cities: Martha Graham Tours to Paris and London in 1950

The Tour to Paris


“Miss Graham’s coming had been better and more discreetly prepared. Besides, it was generally recognized that her presentations had been more seriously studied than those of the preceding troupe.” Excerpt from the Monthly Report for May 1950 of the USIS-OIC (Cultural Relations Sections), American Embassy, Paris.

When Martha Graham came to Paris for the first time the French were not at the most happy time of their history. Once the leader of the political world, during the early fifties France was in the process of rearranging the last, less than glorious decades of its past, while dealing with a very difficult present, and contemplating the future with a sense of uncertainty. It was reassuring that France remained “une personne,”81 but the “personne” was neither healthy nor recuperated, and having to deal with difficult decisions which divided the spirit of the nation and maintained its insecurities. Next to their neighbors, the British, the French were aware that their

81 Herbert Luethy, France Against herself, A perceptive Study of France’s past, Her Politics and her Underending Crises (New York: Frederick A. Praeger,1955),p.1
primacy in the political and diplomatic world was coming to an end, that the hegemony of Europe was questioned and, equally disturbing for their national self-image, that their country was an outpost could not hold it alone. As in a sad manner Simone de Beauvoir remarked, “We do not exist by ourselves anymore. Everything happens in Russia and America not here.”

Confirming that the philosopher Bertrand Russell’s cry that God was not anymore European and bourgeoisie was true, the leadership of the world after the Second World War was disputed between the USA and USSR. The French wondered, which God to follow, the Yankees or the Soviets? The French could never commit totally to an “open relationship,” with any of them, but admitted that they sought refuge from danger “behind the broad shoulders of the US,” they did not like the Americans better. The image of the smiling Yankee from the top of his tank liberating the city started to vanish; France was feeling “tired of being occupied.”

Still, the French established, beside the Embassy in Washington, five consulates in the main cities of the USA, and they had more than numerous associations for “échanges culturelles.” They also kept the American society and politics under scrutiny, relevant in this

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82 Herbert Luethy, *France Against herself*, p.352  
83 Simone de Beauvoir, *A Transatlantic Love Affair. Letters to Nelson Algren* (New York: The New Press, 1997), p.94; or, as she also wrote to Nelson Algren (p.83), that they were “just two blocks in France now just as outside: “USA or USSR, De Gaulle or Thorez, a kind of civil war.”
85 The majority of the French society, led by its intellectual elite, felt that France was caught between two hostile powers, and that any choice they would make was far not a good one, while with both these powers, the Soviets and the Americans, the relationship of the French was complicated and dual, a mix of continuous love and hate.
89 Various documents, Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres Collection, No 359, RC.I.BF, Les Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France
sense being a letter of Henri Claudel, the former French ambassador to the USA (1926-1933) who answered the question, probably assigned to him previously, related to the essential “themes” which the French Information Service should utilize in the USA. After musing about the fact that “L’amitié n’est pas toujours inspiré par la resemblance,” thus suggesting the disparities between the history and culture of the two countries, now more or less “forced” to be allies, and after stressing that “Les relations de la France et des États-Unis sont la meilleure illustration de cette vérité,” he answered simply: “To sell France to America,” due to the Puritan foundation of the Yankee mentality.”

However, anti-American activities in the capital of France were a disturbing reality, and even people like the American journalist Janet Flanner, long committed to the charms of the Parisian life, had to admit that the American-French alliance was more an illusion. The word Americanization was forged by Baudelaire, first being perceived as a synonym with modernization, mechanization, and mercantile spirit, and looked upon as a distant phenomenon. As the decades passed, Americanization was perceived increasingly threatening; by the fifties, it felt to be an invasion, and the area feared most to be under attack was French culture, which in a disappointing present was their last “redoute” to hold on to and their hope to reshape and

90 http://www.traces-cl.com/mag2001/paul1.htm: in this source his son, Paul Caudel talked about his father. In New York, Henri Caudel knew J.P. Morgan and was received on Wall Street by all the big investors. He sent the French ministry of foreign affairs very important information in which he foresaw the Great Crisis of 1929. He, a man of letters, was the creator of the economic peace pact between French President Briand and American Secretary of State Kellogg in 1928.
91 Letter of Henri Claudel to unknown receiver, 20 November 1948, R.C. (Relations Culturelles) 1948-1955, Serie I, 1.1. Affaires generales, Les Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France
redefine the sense of a national identity. In other words, the French saying “Culture remains when everything else is forgotten” 93 was true.

Therefore, when Graham came to Paris, the French were in the midst of the battle against what was metaphorically called the “Coca-Colonization” of France, which was a national issue, discussed in the pages of *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. The image of a French person giving up the tradition of drinking wine for Coca-Cola was portrayed as an outrage and a conquest by American materialism. The French mused that “it was not the powerful America which lay in the danger zone but war-shattered Europe,” 94 that Americans were arrogant, lacked manners, and that they were not speaking any other language than their own. 95 They were “the barbarians of the civilization, who will devour the World,” 96 and their cultural offensive, was “un-equal exchange” and “asphyxiation of French culture.” 97 The fight against American cultural influence was consistent and widespread, which worried the American officials in charge of the cultural exchange with the European countries, started soon after the end of the Second World War. The semiannual report of the US Advisory Commission on the Educational Exchange in 1950 signaled that a communist paper in France wrote maliciously about the Americans, presented as uncultured and not interested in reading. The American complained, even more so as they

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95 Beauvoir, *A Translatantic Love Affair*,p.105
claimed, the article was based on false information. The communist paper published a correction, but only in small print, refusing to take further action.98

Anti-Americanism was not an obscure and undefined attitude manifested sparingly, but it was a strong feeling manifested constantly, widely, and strongly. Knowledge of America and American art was limited in France, as there was limited tourism from France to the USA, and much immigration,99 including intellectuals, even during the Nazi threat, compared to Britain and Germany.100 The only people who could help the French construct an image of America were the French intellectuals, but they presented it as a “cultural desert” in which the French authentic intellectuals felt “like a ghost,”101 and the Americans as a nation of Chevy-drivers and gum-chewers, for whom thinking “was a waste of time,” “titans in the material world, but Lilliputians in matters of mind.”102 Before Graham’s tours to France, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone Beauvoir, Jean Cocteau, to name just a few, traveled to the US, and back home shared their American experience with their compatriots. Only a few intellectuals, such as André Maurois, seemed to believe in “the cultural bond between the US and France,” accepting that “the US has taken the lead;”103 the rest, strongly represented by Sartre and Beauvoir, looked at America with contempt, reassuring themselves and the culture they represented that America could not be a menace to French culture, “renowned for sophistication and brilliance.”104

98 Semiannual report of the US Advisory Commission on the Educational Exchange in 1950, NND 852916, RG 59, Box 2383, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
102 Roger, The American Enemy, p.425
104 Grau and Jordan, Europe dancing, p. 36
American women were considered inferior to the sophisticated French women – yet another occasion to blame America and its values, and the negative publicity regarding American women was consistent and powerful, in newspapers, books, and cartoons. Like their husbands, they were seen as anti-intellectual, incapable of passionate love, materialistic, and badly dressed, not having imagination to create style and charm but, as Jacques Fath remarked, only able to buy from stores “wearable glamour.” 105 The France-Amérique edition of Le Figaro called them also exigeantes et égoïstes comparées à leurs soeurs européennes, who, “Parisiennes ou paysannes, elles demandent peu et donnent beaucoup.” 106 ‘Les Américaines exigent beaucoup mais elles donnent peu.’107 said the same magazine. Beauvoir, who came back from her American trips with few words of praise for Americans, excepting their efficient bank clerks and bartenders, depicted American women as falsely self-assured, servile, incapable of any social or political thinking, and, because of the Puritanism of their culture, ignorant of their bodies.108 No wonder that she could not refrain from writing ironically to her lover, Nelson Algren, in 1950: “your beautiful, smart, talented sweet-voice Margaret Truman is in Paris and every day newspapers tell us in what dancing she danced (sic.) Nobody seems to be in love with her beauty or her charm. What a disgraceful thing you got as a president’s daughter.”109

Worth mentioning is that prior to Graham’s tour to Paris, her American agent released a number of informational flyers, provided to the most influential Parisian critics. They stated her opinions on her European tours, dances, successes to date, and also, very interestingly, on

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107 Ibidem, p.200
fashion. However, “Martha Graham on Feminine Fashion” can be called without hesitation one of the worst possible publicity moves one could make before going to France. Most probably, very happy with the success of an article which appeared in January 1950 in various American newspapers called “Satire on women,” and in which Graham was criticizing women for their very bad posture, now she was giving fashion advice to French women. Addressing the “average woman” (obviously not including herself, as Graham never considered herself an “average woman”) who “starts with her costume rather than herself,” it was a pretentious and conceited collection of clichéd fashion statements, typical for women journals (which could easily be classified as “tips” for one to look good and charming). She talked about colors, costumes, costume jewelry, and “dressing according to one’s mood” (as women are a combination of “many moods,”) while ending with the thoughtful warning that women have to look as pretty as they can “in these times it’s the least she can do towards brightening the grim world picture.”

It is very hard to believe that this material, advising French women in fashion – which was, beside their culture, a huge and indisputable source of pride – enhanced Graham’s chances to be appreciated and liked in France of that time.

Besides, like nowhere else in the world, the French intellectuals had a special and respected role in reviewing and interpreting the time’s challenges and in influencing the way the society responded to them. Paris was a “communal workshop of the intellect and the arts,” in which the press was more at the heels of writers and public figures than at those of the politicians, shaping the cultural likings of the French society. Thus, in order to charm and

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110 Flyer issued by Consolidated Concerts Corp, 1950, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, flyer issued by Consolidated Concerts Corp, 1950, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris

111 Luethy, France Against herself, p.70
conquer France, one would have to pass the “redoute” of its intellectuals, not unusual for a new art, in this case modern dance, to get the approval of the “connoisseurs.” Even in New York Graham had first just a limited audience.\textsuperscript{112}

The philosopher Julia Kristeva remarked, related to the foreigners’ condition in France, that there was a sense of hopelessness and confusion as they always have to confront their constant “otherness” and “a ghost from the past.”\textsuperscript{113} In the case of American culture, their “otherness” was constructed on its lack of tradition, value, and depth. It was perceived as an “entertaining” variant,\textsuperscript{114} consumerist, trivial, unsophisticated and casual, with their cartoons, the musique of the “negres”, and the movies.\textsuperscript{115} However, the biggest irony is that Graham was the quintessential non-commercial artist, who actually had to face a constant limited audience in her own country, along with financial problems and, at that point, an unglamorous life style; besides, at that point modern dance was considered already highbrow art.

All in all, to be “an American in Paris” in the early fifties was more complicated than in the box-office success movie with the same name. Not to mention that in the movie the American artist – a dancing Gene Kelly interpreting the role of a painter – was the one who in the end surrendered to the charms of the fresh and lovely French girl, instead of the rich, materialistic, and pretentious American lady. Martha Graham was neither French, nor young, the themes of her works were complicated and tense, and she herself was not professionally and personally at the best moment in her life. And the way she came to France, as a protégée of one

\textsuperscript{112} de Mille, Martha, p.167
\textsuperscript{113} Julia Kristeva Interviews, Edited by Ross Mitchell Guberman, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.4
\textsuperscript{114} Pells, Not like us, p. 238
\textsuperscript{115} Pascal Ory, L’Aventure Culturelle Francais, 1945-1989, (Paris: Flammarion, 1989), p.32-33; Even in science, from the French perspective the Americans entered the “savante” fields only after the Second World War.
of the most famous and influential French families, and helped from behind the stage by the American artistic community and politics, looked more like a cultural invasion.

While half a century previous the Ballets Russes’ presence in Paris had little or nothing to do with the nationalistic feelings of the French, their self-image and self-confidence still at the peak, their culture reasserting the nation’s place among the world’s powers, in Graham’s case it was quite the opposite. The Paris of the fifties – the eternal “moveable feast”\(^\text{116}\) was still a fascinating place where, to put it into Robin Wright’s words, “art, literature and sex, and the feeding and drinking seem more genuine,”\(^\text{117}\) but something was changing in the artistic dialogue, as the new American artistic guests in Paris, including Martha Graham, did not seem to come to France having the same expectations and emotional needs.

For decades the French accepted and hailed the foreign artists who recognized the French uniqueness and cultural superiority, while admitting openly their need to live in France as being the place where they could further and refine their art. Or at least, like Thomas Jefferson, to love their own country but love France as their second country. Martha Graham did not consider any of these options and also behaved in a strikingly different way than the other American dancers, Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan and Josephine Baker, famous in France.

Fuller declared that she “was made in France;”\(^\text{118}\) ironically, Duncan, the artist who wanted to “see America dancing” and encouraged the Americans to give up European inspiration and traditions and create a truly American dance, also preferred to live mostly in Europe,


\(^\text{118}\) Richard Nelson Current and Marcia Ewing Current, \textit{Loie Fuller, Goddess of Light} (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), p.4
including France. During a time when actors and dancers were replacing the royalties in the European public’s interest for celebrities, Duncan made the “delice” of the public with her hectic life, tumultuous love affairs, and unfortunately, tragedies. Baker’s African-Americaness gave the French audience a double perspective on her sexuality: on one hand, her “torrid, exotic black sexuality”\textsuperscript{119} fit perfectly not only in the whole decadent atmosphere of the decade where jazz and the “negro dances” were re-discovered, but her “crazed body” and “farouche and superb bestiality”\textsuperscript{120} were the physical expression of the African continent, which at that time was a place where the white colonists, including the French, were continuing to bear “their burden.” \textsuperscript{121}

Having American origins and innovating this art in one way or another, like Fuller, Duncan and Baker, was the most the four American dancers had in common. Graham never considered living anywhere else but in the United States, did not show any kind of reverence to the French cultural greatness, her art was by no means exotic or entertaining, and she claimed on different occasions that it was purely American.

In the end the tour was considered a disaster, but as neither successes are the same, nor are disasters. Martha Graham’s has its own special story.

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\textsuperscript{120} Ibidem, p.70
It is not clear whether the initiative for the first European tour of Martha Graham’s company, belonged to Bethsabee de Rothschild\textsuperscript{122} or Erick Hawkins,\textsuperscript{123} at that time still Martha’s husband and still powerful in influencing her decisions. However, the artistic community of New York felt proud that the artist would represent the country in Paris, the capital of arts, and they started to assist Graham’s plans to impress and conquer Europe both financially and in services.\textsuperscript{124} Agnes de Mille telephoned people in the theater profession in order to help the dancer’s presence in Paris; some contributed with money, others, designers, couturiers, and hat makers, contributed in their own way, making Graham look like a “royal bride,” as they felt (including de Mille) that “she was carrying our banner and wished her to walk proud.”\textsuperscript{125}

The efforts to aid Graham came also from her friend and benefactor, actress Katherine Cornell, who was “heading an unofficial group that raised $25,000 for the tour to Europe.” It was also made official that Mrs. Donald Bloomingdale, namely Bethsabee de Rothschild, promised $10,000 for Graham’s tour.

The political side of Graham’s first European tours has been totally ignored until now, but this does not mean that it did not exist. It is true that the American cultural diplomacy of the moment was only in its first steps, and “in the making,” but it was definitely not so naïve and unsuccessful during the first part of the fifties’ decade, as has been assumed so far. In fact the first tours of Graham to Europe were a very successful rehearsal of both her role as a cultural diplomat of her country, and also of her country in the cultural competition of the Cold War.

\textsuperscript{123} Don McDonagh, \textit{Martha Graham: a biography} (New-York: Paraeger, 1973), p.213
\textsuperscript{124} De Mille, \textit{Martha}, p.291
\textsuperscript{125} Ibidem
Everything shows that not only Donald Bloomingdale, from the famous Bloomingdale family, then Bethsabee’s husband and also an “attaché to the US Embassy in Paris,” knew at the Embassy level about Graham’s trip there. Already prior to her tour, there was a hint of its “ politicization”, as Walter Terry (an influential American dance critic, and soon to be an important member of the Dance Panel of the American National Theater Academy) suggested that she should perform in countries menaced by totalitarianism (sic), as she is “a symbol of the free individual.” That happened only another decade later, when she performed in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Warsaw, but still, the political role of spreading free dance (as modern dance was still often called) from a free country to Europe was more than interesting. Martha Graham herself did not hesitate to accept to be named in one of the publicity materials circulated in France prior to her tour “The First Lady of Dance.”

In fact, even prior to Graham’s first appearance in Paris, she was a subject of attention by American officials. The correspondence between the State Department and the Committee of the American Festival in Paris is also relevant in showing the interest of an emerging cultural diplomacy in Martha Graham. The American officials were informed that beside the Ballet Theater, “ready and anxious to appear” in Paris, “a new dancer (sic) who is considered absolutely remarkable,” namely Martha Graham, “indicated that she is more than willing to come with her company.” Furthermore, what made her an even more suitable candidate for the new role, that of a cultural diplomat, was that for her possible presence in Paris “only a small amount of money would be needed for this and Mrs. David Bloomingdale (the youngest

127 Clipping, “First Lady of Dance,” Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
daughter of Baron Edouard de Rothschild) has donated a substantial part of this and is personally attempting to raise the remainder.”

Indeed, the 1950 tour to France of Martha Graham was officially sponsored by Mrs. Donald Bloomingdale – Bethsabee de Rothschild – who was an older friend and supporter of Graham and whose husband was at that moment an “attaché to the US Embassy in Paris.” However, the American Embassy in Paris and the State Department were not unaware of Graham’s plans. The American Embassy already hosted a lecture-demonstration of Helen McGehee’s, (a Graham dancer living in Paris since 1949,) an event organized in early 1950 by the American representative of the Cultural Organization of the United Nations.

The link between culture and politics, and also the fact that Graham and her plans to come to France were not unknown to the American Embassy in Paris is proved by Helen McGehee’s (a Graham dancer living in Paris since 1949) demonstration at the American Embassy. As shown by the correspondence between highly ranked officials and important offices of the institutions mentioned above, they helped with the preparation of the tour, and supervised her presence there, proving that the rehearsal of American cultural diplomacy in France (considered to be “a free and open market for news and a propaganda battleground”) was already a serious topic on the agenda of the American politicians.

When Graham’s representative went to Paris to arrange the details of the upcoming tour, a telegram signed by no one else but the Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, informed the

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128 Letter from Pomerania Ekstrom, in the name of American Festival in Paris, to Mr. Johnson, State Department in Washington, February 2, 1950, Registered at the state Department, Public Affairs office, on February 13, 1950, NND 852916, RG59, box 2386, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
129 de Mille, *Martha*, p.290-291
American Embassy that Charles Green, “manager Martha Graham dance troupe, arriving Paris April 13, Hotel George Fifth. Plans call Brady. Suggest facilitation.”130 (Lesley S. Brady was the cultural attaché at the American Embassy.) The communication related to Graham’s upcoming tour continued, and a month later, in a telegram from Paris, the Secretary of State was informed in a worried tone about “the incredibly bad performance” of the Chicago Ballet Theater, having as a possible outcome that “Prospects for Martha Graham (…) were definitely endangered by this unfortunate preview.”131

In the May Report of the Cultural Relations Sections of the USIS-OIC from Paris, prepared by the cultural attaché Lesley S. Brady (the same person whom Graham’s manager was prepared to contact in Paris), Graham’s performance was analyzed carefully. Compared to the “disappointing” presence of the Chicago Ballet Theater, Graham appearance “though painless was able to do little to repair the first,”132 but was appreciated because “Miss Graham’s coming had been better and more discreetly prepared. Besides, it was generally recognized that her presentations had been more seriously studied than those of the preceding troupe.” The American official also admitted that “the results (were) a bit disappointing” as “French critics, always a little surprised by American ballet, had time only to express their initial displeasure, and not to express their final appreciation,” referring to the fact that “Miss Graham suffered an injury very early in her stay here.” Most interesting, but not surprising, is that the cultural attaché in charge of the report also knew that “500,000 francs had been accorded to Miss Graham,” and

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130 Telegram from Dean Acheson, to the American Embassy in Paris, April 12, 1950, NND 852917, RG 59, Box 2383, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
131 Telegram to the Secretary of State from the American Embassy in Paris (signed Bonbright), May 10, 1950, NND 852917, RG 59, Box 2383, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
132 May Report of the Cultural Relations Sections of the USIS-OIC from Paris, NND 852917, RG 59, Box 2383, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
raised the possibility for partial remission of taxes for Miss Graham’s company, the sum requested being 600,000 francs (approx. $17000).\textsuperscript{133}

What about this money? Les Archives des Affaires étrangères in La Courneuve, have yielded some revelatory letters, previously unresearched, related to this topic. The correspondence between the Ambassador of France in Washington and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris shows that already by April 1950 the Ambassador in Washington knew about Martha Graham’s planned trip to Paris. The ambassador informed the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs about this, while also asking for Graham to be “treated the best” (sic), and offered the best facilities for her performance while in Paris.\textsuperscript{134} Soon after, the Cultural Relations Department office (part of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of France) informed the US Embassy in Paris (assuring the American Embassy of its distinguished consideration) that Madame Martha Graham was offered 500,000 francs in order to help her trip to France.\textsuperscript{135} On the same occasion, the “American ballets de Mme Ruth Paige and M. Bentley Stone” were also offered 300,000 Francs.\textsuperscript{136} It is worth mentioning that Ruth Paige and Bentley Stone were also not foreign to the relationship between art and politics and not unknown to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt either, as they co-directed the Dance Project of the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Theater at the end of the thirties.

\textsuperscript{133} Monthly Report for May, Cultural Relations Sections, of the USIS-OIC, American Embassy, Paris, to Department of State, received August 21, 1950, NND 852917, RG 59, Box 2383, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
\textsuperscript{134} Letter (no.01670) of the French Ambassador in Washington to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, April 1950, Minister des Relations Extérieures, R.C. 1948-1955, Serie II, Echanges Culturelles, Etats -Unis, Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France
\textsuperscript{135} Letter from the Cultural Relations Department to the US Embassy in Paris, 10 May 1950, Minister des Relations Extérieures, R.C. 1948-1955, Serie II, Echanges Culturelles, Etats -Unis, Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France
\textsuperscript{136} Ibidem
The Washington-Paris communication related to Graham’s tour came full circle when, during the same days the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris announced with a tone of “mission accompli” to the French Ambassador in Washington that Graham was offered the financial support mentioned in the letter of the Ministry of Finance to the American Embassy.\(^\text{137}\) (However, maybe due to the fact that he was writing to an office located in the US, he called Martha Graham “miss” and not “madame,” as she was called in France, a thing which if she knew she would have appreciated, as she loved to call herself “miss” until in her nineties.) The business focused on the material help offered to Graham concludes with a final letter involving “Le Direction Generale des relations Culturelles, Echanges Artistique/Le Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres” which addressed directly the office of “Monsieur Le Ministre des Finances” (Direction des Contributions Indirectes) on 26 June 1950, announcing that Madame (sic) Martha Graham received the subvention of 500,000 francs from the the French Association of Artistic Action, but, very interestingly, as an reimbursable “avance” in order to present her “ballets” in France.\(^\text{138}\)

Martha Graham drew attention of the American Ambassador in Paris, David Bruce. Prior to her tour he announced to the Secretary of State in Washington that the American artists’ presence in Paris, including Graham’s, could be complicated by the presence of Serge Lifar’s sympathizers, all revengeful after the problems encountered by him and his company in Paris on

\(^\text{137}\) Letter from le Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres 12 Mai 1950, with reference at letter no.01670, from April 1950, of the French Ambassador in Washington to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, related to Graham’s trip to Paris, Archives des Affaires étrangères, Minister des Relations Extérieures, R.C. 1948-1955, Serie II, Echanges Culturelles, Etats –Unis, Archives des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve, France

\(^\text{138}\) Letter from the “Direction Generale des relations Culturelles, Echanges Artistique/Le Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres” to “Monsieur Le Ministre des Finances” (Direction des Contributions Indirectes) on 26 June 1950, Minister des Relations Extérieures, R.C. 1948-1955, Serie II, Echanges Culturelles, Etats –Unis, Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France
the occasion of the Ballet de l’Opéra tour.\textsuperscript{139} Besides, Bruce warned the Secretary of State that the French impresario Anatole Heller, supposed to represent the American companies, was “unscrupulous and bungling,” thus suggesting to have his role restricted and minimized. Emphasizing that even “high French officials” recognized the dangers, Bruce warned that the impact of all these factors could negatively affect the “Franco-American cultural relations.”\textsuperscript{140} To all these, Dean Acheson responded promptly and advised utmost care and “soonest completion.”\textsuperscript{141}

When the first night in Paris for Graham and her company arrived, it was attended by important American personalities, such as Eleanor Roosevelt (in spite of a very busy agenda)\textsuperscript{142} and the American ambassador, David Bruce and his wife (in spite of the fact that he did not like modern arts).\textsuperscript{143} As a bad omen, Mrs. Roosevelt was late,\textsuperscript{144} due to an upsetting Security Council meeting,\textsuperscript{145} but after she arrived, the former First Lady sat in the center box of the theater with Mr. and Mrs. Bruce.\textsuperscript{146} That Mrs. Roosevelt, a former acquaintance of Graham, might have been there in spite of her busy schedule in order to admire again Graham, is highly possible. As \textit{Paris Presse} did not fail to notice, the former first lady had applauded the dancer first at the White

\textsuperscript{139} His alleged collaboration with the Nazi was loudly disapproved by the American audience and the press
\textsuperscript{140} Telegram, David Bruce to Dean Acheson, June 15, 1950, NND852916, RG 59, Box 2386, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
\textsuperscript{141} Telegram, Dean Acheson to David Bruce, June 20, 1950, NND852916, RG 59, Box 2386, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
\textsuperscript{143} Raj Roy, \textit{Ambassador to Sixties London: The Diaries of David Bruce, 1961-1969} (Republic of Letters, 2009), p.77
\textsuperscript{144} DeMille,\textit{ Martha}, p.294
\textsuperscript{146} Clipping, \textit{Le Parisien Libre}, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
House in 1937. But it is hard to believe that the participation of the Bruces was a personal and not a political gesture; later, as an ambassador of the USA in the swinging sixties London, he declared himself openly a fiery enemy of any kind of modernism.

Taking into consideration the preoccupation with the tour of the American politicians shown above, their presence there was not a surprise. The official correspondence related to Graham dating from 1950, involving highly ranked American and French officials and offices, and related to various aspects of Graham’s presence in France – from a possible avant-premiere at the American Festival in Paris, impresarios, accommodation, money and taxes issues, to the analysis of previous American appearances considered to have been bad publicity for her – show that the interest of the American politicians in the dancer was comprehensive and substantial, and not coincidental. Besides, it also asks for a reconsideration of the chronology of the politics and of the State Department’s involvement in Graham’s appearance in Europe.

Undoubtedly Martha Graham’s presence in France was not yet labeled at that point, either by the USA or by France, as cultural diplomacy, but this did not mean that her presence in France in 1950 was unknown, unobserved and even more so not helped by important government agencies from both countries. Already before the official beginning of the Cold War between the USA and France a cultural agreement existed, signed on May 28, 1946. Called the Memorandum of Understanding, it specified among other things the financial involvement and

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147 Clipping, *Paris Presse*, June 29, 1950, signed Andre Varnod, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
support of the two countries in the cultural exchange,\textsuperscript{149} from which as Martha Graham was to benefit. The document is an obvious manifestation of the Americans’ desire to get aligned to the cultural diplomacy of the moment as early as possible, but also – as proved by involvement in cultural exchange at the highest governmental level – that politics and culture were courting each other and were becoming involved in each other’s presence and performance abroad. For instance, in the Americans’ case, the financial matters of cultural exchange were managed by the Department of State, and in France’s case by the Government of France itself.\textsuperscript{150} Through the door opened by the cultural exchanges, politics entered the arena in which the unique and powerful mélange between culture and politics became a weapon intended to fight the Cold War battles. Martha Graham’s European tours are an eloquent example in this regards, as documents show the involvement of the State Department prior to her Asian tours in 1955. And Paris of 1950 was not an exception, on the contrary.

Magazines and journals from all over the country, including states which one might have considered less interested in Martha Graham’s tours, such as Iowa, Ohio, and Colorado, announced that Graham would start a very long tour of Europe. However, the news about the planned trip was quite contradictory, as on March 13, 1950, a newspaper from Dallas stressing that the dancer was supposed to go to Paris, London, Rome and Tel-Aviv; just a week later the same Dallas newspaper disclosed that she would go from London to Scandinavia and

\textsuperscript{149}Embassy’s Note no.426, June 30, 1955, and the Ministry’s reply the same day talked about the “agreement between the two countries” related to the cultural exchange. \textit{Relations Culturelles. Series 2, 1956-1959}, Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France

\textsuperscript{150}Letter from the Embassy of the United States to the French Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris, April, 2, 1958 mentioning that the Government of France paid 178, 474,500 francs into the account Joseph A. Dagenhardt, who was the Disbursing Officer attached to the Department of State \textit{Relations Culturelles. Series 2, 1956-1959, Relations Culturelles. Series 2, 1956-1959}, Archives des Affaires étrangères, Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France
Mediterranean countries, while at the end of April, the critic John Martin enumerated Paris, England, Italy and Scandinavian countries as Graham’s destination of the tour. It was announced that Graham would dance at Theatre Sarah Bernhardt, and that Ferdinand Lumbroso was considered to be the local impresario in presenting Graham’s company in Paris. Ted Dale was supposed to be the musical director, Charles E. Green, the tour manager, and Craig Barton Martha Graham’s personal representative in Europe.\footnote{Clippings, Scrapbooks , Box 327, Washington, Library of Congress, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress , Washington}

But not everyone in the USA was very excited and positive about Graham’s venture to Europe. John Martin warned Graham that she should “better get out the old rabbit’s foot for luck,”\footnote{John Martin, Clipping, Scrapbooks , Box 327, Washington, Library of Congress, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress , Washington} while Walter Terry, dance critic and supporter of Graham, went a step further. On one hand he also voiced his doubts: “Will Paris Understand?” he wondered, as “in Paris the international language of dance was put to the test,” and “the French may understand our dance themes but may not like them.” On the other hand, he was the first who linked Graham’s presence on the Parisian stage with the idea of “shock.” Admitting that Graham’s style was “not necessarily a language of love and cajolery,” (who could contradict him thinking at Graham’s psychological and often disturbing themes of her dances?), he worried that it might cause shock in France, but added hopefully, “the shock treatments can be good.”\footnote{Walter Terry, Clipping, Scrapbooks , Box 327, Washington, Library of Congress, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress , Washington}

A flyer issued as publicity material and circulated in Paris before Graham’s trip presented her in a glowing manner, her “unparalleled activity,” her awards, and that three major composers wrote for her, while the Library of Congress was the theater for her dance. However, it did not
fail to mention that her art “shocked the conservative and reactionary,” but her greatness still remained undisputed. Reassuringly, the flyer ended with a victorious cry: “Martha Graham’s own competitor was….Martha Graham.”

There was also an intense correspondence between the members of the artist’s staff, such as Isadora Bennett, Graham’s public relations representative, and her friends, all concerned to set up the best publicity for the European tour. A souvenir book was issued, meant to introduce to the sophisticated European audience the American “priestess of dance”, with all her accomplishments and honors: it emphasized her American fame and recognition – as being chosen the “Woman of the Year” by Washington’s National Press Club, the only person who ever danced at the Library of Congress, who also, through the radio series in which she participated, also helped charitable causes; nonetheless, the souvenir book made known that the artist had famous musicians composing for her, such as Aaron Copland, Paul Hindemith, and the French composer Darius Milhaud.

The book was followed by other publicity material, in which Martha Graham’s dances were depicted in great detail, all using large excerpts from Bethsabee’s book, La Dance artistique aux États-Unis, for which the famous critic Pierre Tugal wrote the introduction. In the meantime the future European audience was also encouraged to read the books already written about Martha Graham and her dance. The influence Erick Hawkins had in the company and in Martha Graham’s heart is shown by one of the tour’s posters: Martha Graham’s and Erick Hawkins’ names first, with equal size letters, followed on the second line by the names of May

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154 Flyer designated to be used by the critic Irene Lidova, 1950, no date, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
155 Correspondence, Box 1, Folder 3, Martha Graham Center of Dance Records, 1944 -1955, Jerome Robbins Dance Division for Dance, New York Public Library for Performing Arts
156 Ibidem
157 Ibidem
158 Ibidem
O’Donnell and Pearl Lang in smaller script, and continuing on the following lines with the names of the rest of the company’s members much smaller.159

Another poster, the one most widely circulated in Paris before the performance, is even more interesting: it has just Graham’s and Hawkins’ names, the program of the tour supposed to start on June 27 and end on July 9, and “endorsed” by the New York Times, which compared Graham with the Greek tragedians, and Chicago Herald Tribune, which claimed that Graham was the most important artistic personality of the American dance. Last but not least, a signed praising testimony by Serge Koussevitzky, from Paris in 1950, who described her and her contribution to dance in grandiose terms.160 The renowned composer and conductor knew Martha Graham from the United States, where he was the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and he was due to his profession and at one point of his personal life, a “connoisseur” of dance and “musical literature” for dance, as he named it.161

It is hard to appreciate to what extent was Graham known in France – at least by the dancing profession – prior to her tours. However, already in 1933 (just a few years after Graham presented her first original work), the writer and critic Alin Hans wrote a complete, objective, and very informative article about the world’s developments in dance, and mentioned Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey among the leaders of modern dance.162 In the same manner, Serge Lifar published an article called “L’art de la danse” six years later, shortly before the beginning

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159 Poster for the tour. Box 1, Folder 6, Martha Graham Center of Dance Records, 1944 -1955, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for Performing Arts
161 Serge Koussevitzky was one of the first examples of artists and intellectuals who even if immigrated to the USA remained active in the artistic life of the country were they started their career, in this case France. He spent each summer in Paris on artistic engagements.
162 Alin Hans, clipping, “Periodique,” in Archives internationale de la danse, 15 Janvier, 1933, p. 20-23, Centre Nationale de la Danse, Pantin
of the Second World War, also mentioning Martha Graham as a leading figure of American dance.\footnote{Serge Lifar, “L’art de la Danse” in Conferencia, 14, 1939, p.94-104, Centre Nationale de la Danse, pantin}

Helen McGehee, a dancer of Martha Graham’s company, was living in Paris since 1949, where she married her husband, the Colombian born artist Umana, in January 1950. At the ceremony (as Bethsabee de Rothschild warned them, the “maire” spoke for half an hour and only in French) one could meet other members of Graham’s New York entourage, such as Lee Leatherman, who was one of the witnesses of the newlywed couple. Leatherman, next to Craig Barton – another member of Graham’s staff present in Paris – Helen McGehee, Bethsabee de Rothschild and her husband Donald Bloomingdale, formed a “pro-Martha Graham base ” in the capital of France, contributing in diverse ways to the tour’s preparation. (More about the dramas during their presence in Paris in the chapter dedicated to Bethsabee de Rothschild.)

McGehee’s activity in France indicates that already prior to the 1950 tour there was an interest in Graham and her art among the connoisseurs in Paris. After McGehee contacted “Le Association des Ecrivains et Critiques de la Danse,” offering to demonstrate Martha Graham technique, the dance critic Pierre Michaut told her that she could make a Graham technique demonstration “aux Archives;” Bethsabee and her friend, the influential critic Pierre Tugal, were also involved in arranging a Graham demonstration in the capital of France, on which occasion McGehee gave a talk in French about Graham’s career, art, technique and her place in the American culture. McGehee recalled that the twenty-five critics present there were very
enthusiastic and wanted to find out more about Graham. Informed, Graham was pleased with what she called the “outstandingly successful” presence of McGehee in Paris.

The combined work of Graham’s friends in Paris prior to the tour in popularizing Graham’s art, planning the Parisian details of the tour and advertising it, seemed to have positive outcomes, as reflected by a letter sent by Barton to Graham on March 31, 1950. It was full of encouraging details (“you cannot imagine the interest and excitement (here)”); “you were coming at the peak of the season”, “there is a constant conversation about it”) but also about more practical things (“tell everyone to bring his full quota of cigarettes: 5 cartons for men, one for women” and that it was hard to find accommodations in London.)

Graham arrived in Paris, during the spring of 1950, and she and her husband were the guests of the Rothschilds on the rue du Faubourg St. Honore, while the rest of the company was hosted in a hotel in the center of the city. Bethsabee’s family was warm and welcoming as always, but none of them besides her were swept off their feet by the American dancer; their residence had hosted numerous geniuses and famous artists over the decades, and Graham herself was not in the best of her moods. Besides the normal tension before the show, she was dealing with serious marital problems, which were making her even more edgy and restless than

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164 Letter of Hellen McGehee to her mother, Box 9, Helen McGehee Umanan Collection, Box 9, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington; due to Bethsabee, there was even larger press coverage, as a journalist from Paris Match, ARTS and Le Monde, and shortly after she was interviewed “by a woman for a Czechoslovakian magazine.”
usual. Still, Graham had the time to visit the city, meet with friends, \textsuperscript{167} and continue the rehearsals.

But in spite of some positive signs it also seemed that even before its beginnings, for various and numerous reasons the tour did not start on the right foot, metaphorically and also literally. A lot has been said about Graham’s knee injury considered to have prevented Graham to glow on the Parisian stage during the spring of 1950, even if it is not clear when and where the incident happened. Gertrude Macy remembered that already prior to the tour Graham was injured in a bitter fight with Erick Hawkins.\textsuperscript{168} The idea that the accident happened before the first European tour was supported by Pearl Lang, Graham’s soloist during that time\textsuperscript{169} and May O’Donnell, another dancer with the company,\textsuperscript{170} who said that during the last rehearsals in New York, watched by a lot of people and plagued by high tensions, Graham injured herself while rehearsing \textit{Letter to the World}. Others, such as Bertram Ross and Stuart Hodes, both dancers in Graham’s company, remember that the dancer got injured in Paris during the first night.\textsuperscript{171} Hodes says that he was watching from the wings and that he saw the actual moment Graham hurt her knee:\textsuperscript{172} “I was watching from the wings. The dance was \textit{Every Soul Is a Circus}, a duet between herself and Erick Hawkins, likely the Tango. She came down hard on her left leg, and I heard a sound like a twig snapping. It may have been the last dance on the program. The first was \textit{Errand Into the Maze}, a duet in which I was the \textit{Creature of Fear}. Martha took her bows and I did not see her after that. Usually there would be an opening night party. Not this time. I recall being

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{167} Private Collection
\item \textsuperscript{168} De Mille, \textit{Martha}, p.293
\item \textsuperscript{169} Pearl Lang, Interview with the author, October 2008, tape recording
\item \textsuperscript{170} deMille, \textit{Martha}, p.296
\item \textsuperscript{171} Ibidem
\item \textsuperscript{172} Ibidem
\end{itemize}
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deeply concerned, as was everybody, about Martha's possible injury. This was confirmed next morning, I was summoned to her hotel, went to her room to see her in bed, left knee swollen beneath wrappings."¹⁷³ Both Graham and her husband Hawkins also declared that she got hurt in Paris, more exactly while indeed dancing in Every Soul is a Circus.¹⁷⁴

Other issues maintained the tense atmosphere in the company, announcing a difficult debut on the Parisian stage, even if one has to admit that tensions are an everyday reality of the life of artistic companies on and off stage.¹⁷⁵ This applied to the atmosphere within Graham’s company, which even during normal times was rarely a very peaceful one, and now became even tenser. (A former dancer of Graham even declared that, “the solution for a relationship with Graham was to be so in love with dance that working with her did not really matter.”¹⁷⁶) During the tour, most of the dancers felt that they had been left behind and that it was a personal affair between Graham and her husband, ego, and delusions about her own importance. Besides the exhausting rehearsals, the costumes were not ready, which was not uncommon for the company, whose leader was known for the habit to ask the rest of the company to undo and remake the costumes several times before the shows. This time it was not better, as dancers removed the pins until the last minute, before the curtain’s rise. Even with these efforts, as Helen McGehee stated, the members of the company presented themselves in front of the audience in funny costumes in general, while the men had “saddest-looking costumes” ever.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Stuar Hodes, email to the author, July, 2010
¹⁷⁶ Ibidem
Prior to the performance, and trying to ease the tense atmosphere while also making publicity for the upcoming artistic event, the Rothschilds organized a champagne party at the Plaza-Athénée Hotel, where the press was invited, “much champagne was consumed,” 178 and where Graham and the company made a positive impression. 179 In a picture published by Dance Magazine in August 1950, one can see Graham at the Plaza Athénée surrounded by a smiling Bethsabee, Irina Lidova, (well known personality of the world of dance, writer on dance, friend and benefactor of innumerable dancers and choreographers and wife of dance photographer, Serge Lido), the critic Pierre Michaut, and in the background an uneasy looking Erick Hawkins. 180 The French social elite was very fond of sophisticated parties and “balls,” as shown by Nancy Mitford in a letter to the British writer Evelyn Waugh, talking about a party organized by Anne Marie de Noailles (who shortly after attended Graham’s first night in Paris) in January 1950, gathering the whole elite of Paris and during which her guests wore crowns. 181

The first night arrived. It was June 27, 1950, at the Theatre des Champs-Élysées, and not Sarah Bernhardt as it was announced first, when “Martha Graham and her Company made a bow to Paris.” 182 Before the show France Soir, published an article about Graham and her ballets renowned for their taste and intelligence. 183 The first night gathered a quite large number of people, but one has to remember that even in America and Germany, countries with more tradition in modern dance than France, modern dance audience was not as large as the ballet audience of that time. Anyhow, Theatre de Champs Elysee, with its Art-Nouveau structure and

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179 deMille, Martha, p.294
181 The Letters of Nancy Mitford to Evelyn Waugh, Edited by Charlotte Mosely (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company), p.171
183 Clipping, France Soir, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
decorations, it is not a big theater, its capacity being enlarged mostly on its verticality, with three rows of balcony. It is also most likely that the night’s audience belonged to the middle and upper middle class members of the society, as one ticket for Graham’s performance was between 200 and 800 francs, \(^{184}\) something between $10 and $20 dollars in today’s money, not a huge amount of money but in a country struggling with the postwar years, not necessarily affordable.

Reconstructing the audience is, even if the hardest, one of the most rewarding tasks to perform while researching the tours, and also of major importance. As the controversial French painter Marcel Duchamp put it, “the creative act is not performed by the artist alone, as the spectator brings his work in contact with the external world (…), thus contributing to the creative art.”\(^{185}\) In a similar manner, the response of the audience is also essential for the dance historian as well. However, very few sources referred to the audience Graham gathered at her opening night. *Time Magazine* claimed that Graham’s audience was made of “remnants of the Parisian elite, teen-aged Americans fans, and unwashed philosophers from St. Germain-au-Prés,” \(^{186}\) an assumption which contradicted the American critic Claudia Cassidy’s opinion on the “regular” Parisian artistic audience. “Parisian first nights are not like our at all,” she wrote, as “the best seats go by invitation to a handpicked list of the celebrated and the chic, and the critics don’t fall in either category,” this selection putting together a “highly ornamental, notably untypical audience, whose verdict may be sharply reversed the second night.”\(^ {187}\)

\(^{184}\) Poster of the 1950 tour, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
\(^{185}\) Marcel Duchamp, talk “Session on the Creative Act,” at the Convention of the American Federation of Arts, Houston, Texas, April 1957.
\(^{186}\) Clipping, *Time Magazine*, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
However, even if, as *Time Magazine* claimed, Graham’s first night was attended by the “remnants” of the Parisian elite, they were the most “distinguished” of it, as the Rothschild family was the main organizer of the event. One can wonder whether Baron Guy de Rothschild, the brother of Bethsabee de Rothschild, was at the performance, as he attended a Helen McGehee recital previously. But certainly present were his mother, Baroness Germaine de Rothschild, and the Countess de Noailles, a patron of the arts herself, one of the most renowned protectors of the surrealist movement in France; she was a friend of the Rothschilds, and as the composer Ned Rorem remembers, Marie-Laure de Noailles spent time in New York during 1949 (and again in 1951), where she met Bethsabee and her protégé. One cannot know exactly who the “American teen-age fans were,” but some youngsters attending the performance might have been members of the group of the American students studying in France as part of the Fulbright program.

Helen McGehee’s recitals, a few months prior to the star Martha Graham’s performance, gathered a large number of artistic personalities such as: the modern dancers Jacqueline Robinson, and Dominique and Françoise Dupuy; the critics Pierre Michaut, Pierre Tugal, and Irene Lidova; artists such as the composer André Boucourechliev (an admirer of modern dance since the time he spent in the USA), the painter Lancelot Ney, Pierre Berlioz, and also the French-born famous actress Claudette, who was during 1950 in her native country filming a movie. This predicted a pretty large interest in Martha Graham and her company’s performance,

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188 Ibidem
190 Ibidem, p.355
191 Report of the Cultural relations office of the American Embassy in Paris, RG 59, NND 852916, box 2388, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MA
an assumption reflected also by one of the publicity materials released by Graham’s staff prior to the tour. It claimed that Graham was already a legen of dance in Europe, and not only at home, that she was already besieged with offers from Europe, that in Paris she was already having her circle of fans, “a serious group of the avant-garde.”Interestingly, *Times Magazine* did not mention at all among those present at Graham’s performances the category of professional artists, so well represented at McGehee’s performances.

Among the artists present at Graham’s opening night was the dancer and choreographer Serge Lifar, who remembered later watching the “dark-eyed, starkly alone, barefoot modernist Martha Graham;” again the British-French dancer Jacqueline Robinson and the Dupuys; Boris Kochno, a collaborator of Serge Diaghilev and Serge Lifar; the musicians Francis Poulenc, Henri Sauguet, Georges Auric (one does not know if Darius Milhaud, on whose music the work *Imagined Wing* was created in 1944, was there); and people linked in a way or another to the world of dance, such as Jacques Fath, the famous “couturier” and fashion creator, who created costumes for ballets; there were “incidental artists,” such as the famous ballerina Anna Pavlova’s last partner, who did not enjoy the performance very much, as he was heard muttering in the lobby “Very mysterious…”

The “unwashed philosophers from St. Germain-au-Pres?” Could *Time Magazine* make reference to the big names in French culture? It might have been so, as Café de Flore and also Les Deux Magots were close to the Boulevard Saint-Germain, and they have long been

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192 Flyer “First Lady of the Dance Goes to America First,” Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
194 Ibidem
celebrated for their intellectual clientele. (One cannot fail to notice that at that point, shortly after the release of *The Second Sex*, one of the regulars of the cafés, Simone de Beauvoir, did look anything but unwashed, and also not a die-hard feminist, with her hairdo, long red painted nails and pretty clothes.) In fact, the intellectual elite of France were the big absentees of the night, who, as their works, correspondence and autobiographies show, did not take notice of Graham and her tours to France. Among other “silences” related to Graham’s presence in France, Simone de Beauvoir’s is the most relevant one. She never mentioned Martha Graham in her correspondence, diaries, or articles, even if it is impossible not to have known about the modern dancer’s career and value, as she often traveled to the States during the forties and the fifties, lived in New York City, and participated in its cultural life. However, she liked another American dancer, namely “Catherine Dunham” (sic), whom she described in the letters to Nelson Algren as “an American colored girl, both an anthropologist and a dancer,” whose performance was in the theater decorated “to be a jungle, with high green trees, tigers and snakes.”

However, Graham’s compatriots living in Paris did not show more interest in the famous American dancer. Janet Flanner, the American correspondent who lived most of her life in Paris, scrutinizing with a keen eye the city’s social, political, and cultural life, did not mention Graham in any of her letters or diaries. (Her British counterpart, Nancy Mitford, one of the famous Mitford sisters, also did not acknowledge Graham in any of her writings or letters of that time.) Did they know about her? Most likely yes, as they were linked to the cultural and social elite of

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196 Ibidem
Paris, and both Flanner and Mitford were part of the Rothschilds’ social circle.\(^{197}\) Like Beauvoir, Flanner seemed to be more interested in what was perceived as more “entertaining” dance, such as that of Josephine Baker, about whom the American-born journalist wrote extensively.\(^{198}\) Neither did Stanley Karnow – the *Time* correspondent in Paris in 1950 – seem to notice the presence of Graham in Paris, nor Buster Keaton, who was in Paris during the same time as Graham, and the list goes on.

The program of the evenings and matinees looks well chosen, sophisticated but balanced, as Graham also brought before the Parisian audience dances created during different phases of her career. Having the suggestive, minimal props of Isamu Noguchi, often just a huge shell, a pair of bull’s horns, or some hanging ropes, Graham planned to present a mix of older works and some newer ones, deriving from various sources of inspiration. Some were based on famous Greek legends and famous authors (Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, Ben Belliot), focusing on psychological “dark and profound,”\(^{199}\) dramas and exploring the world of emotions, fears, repressed desires, and sexual fantasies of her heroines. “Miss Graham often finds the internal conflicts of the modern human in the violent, sometimes savage actions of the heroic age,”\(^{200}\) admitted rather proudly the publicity materials issued in France prior to her tour. There were also works inspired by history, American and European, *Appalachian Spring* being the most acclaimed in this category. Others were retelling the story of love from a light and almost amusing perspective, but also in a modern way of dancing.

\(^{197}\) *The Letters of Nancy Mitford to Evelyn Waugh*, Edited by Charlotte Mosely (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company), p.77
\(^{199}\) Clipping, “Martha Graham’s Only Competitor,” 1950, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham
\(^{200}\) Ibidem
One can say that Graham tried to “play safe,” presenting a combination of more accessible and more difficult pieces, while also the works planned to be danced the most (five times in total) were the two lighter pieces, *Diversion of Angels* and *Every Soul is a Circus*. However, more difficult pieces such as *Errand into the Maze*, *The Eye of Anguish*, *Cave to the Heart*, *Herodiade*, *Night Journey*, *Appalachian Spring*, *Deaths and Entrances*, *Stephen Acrobat*, and *Dark Meadow* were supposed to have three representations each, while *Letter to the World* and *El Penitente* just two. (A more complete description of the dances can be found in the annex of this chapter.)

It is interesting that the poster of the show announced four pieces to be danced on the opening night, namely *Errand into the Maze, Cave of the Heart, Every Soul is a Circus*, and *Eye of Anguish*, while the playbill shows that the program was richer, as the company was supposed to also dance *Dark Meadow, Herodiade, Diversion of Angels, Appalachian Spring, and Deaths and Entrances*, the “heavy artillery” of Graham’s repertoire, acclaimed and successful works, except for the new one supposed to launch Erick Hawkins. Among the flyers circulating prior to Graham’s tours to Europe and the one in Paris, the most complete one, with the most details and exclamation marks was dedicated to the *King Lear* piece. Hailing the choreographer, Martha Graham, and her inspiration, William Shakespeare, the extended publicity was an obvious attempt to assure a good reception of the piece meant to “show Europe the real Hawkins,” thus helping or at least easing the problems in Graham’s marriage with Hawkins.201

The playbill has beautiful pictures of Graham and also Hawkins, and of the main

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201 Clipping, signed by Irina Lidova, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
members of the company, namely Pearl Lang, Helen McGehee and Stuart Hodes, among others. The texts of the playbill were written by Bethsabee de Rothschild, Agnes de Mille, Roy Leatherman, and very impressively, by Jean Cocteau, the famous French intellectual, an admirer of modern art and dance. Graham’s own career and accomplishments were described in the words of Merle Armitage and Robert Horan, enriched with the superb photographs of Barbara Morgan and the drawings of Charlotte Trowbridge. The only artists who, beside Graham, benefited from a biography in the playbill were once again, not surprisingly, the husband-dancer Hawkins, May O’Donnell, and Pearl Lang, who was one of her most gifted dancers.202

At the time of the intermission, “the exhausted audience”203 started to leave. But not the entire audience, as after the show Graham was introduced to some members of the audience backstage. One of the pictures presents a tired and tense Graham right after the end of the show, in a white dress, with tightly clasped hands, alone, without any of her dancers or her husband Erick Hawkins around, while Germaine de Rothschild introduces her to individuals and couples, as they were waiting in line to be presented to the dancer.204 The evening gowns, the tuxedoes, and the jewelry show that the people interested in meeting Graham were part of the upper class of Parisian society. The contrast between their appearances and their relaxed and friendly attitude were in sharp contrast to the tense and deserted look of the dancer.205 But as Stanley Karnow put it, French politeness was not synonymous with generosity, much less kindness.206 Martha Graham might have felt at that reception, among the French social elite, after not a successful

202 Playbill, Martha Graham’s performances in Paris, 1950, Martha Graham Dossier, Centre National de la Danse, Pantin
203 deMille, Martha, p. 300
204 Private Collection
205 Private Collection
opening night, injured and alone, like one of Nancy Mitford’s characters, the English bride that
the French marquis she married “expects her to identify Empire objects d’art, analyze Braque’s
early cubism, quote Verlaine, and discuss Girardoux, and have an opinion on Camus.”

During the same evening the generous Rothschilds, mother and daughter, also hosted a
party for the company “chez Rothschilds”, which was not a success either, as the dancers from
Graham’s company arrived by the time the rest of the guests were leaving. The next night was
cancelled, and afterwards they had another night where they did El Penitente, The Eye and
Stephen Acrobat. The show was excruciating, as one of her former dancers said, and nobody
was buying tickets. Not at all supportive with her company, Graham declared: “If I can’t dance, I
don’t give a damn if anyone dances.” The next day the season was closed. Au Matin published
the announcement that “as a result of an accident which has happened to one of the dancers( sic)
of the Company of Martha Graham, the second performance has been canceled.” The group
traveled to London, but they did not dance. It was, in the words of Helen McGehee, one of the
most gifted dancers of the company, “a big mess.” The words of Stuart Hodes are eloquent in
describing the way the tour ended: “Paris was in 1950, a scene of defeat for Martha…”

An audience which left at the intermission, unsold tickets, a wounded star, a company in
distress. …and, with a few exceptions, a press response which was strongly critical and

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207 The Letters of Nancy Mitford to Evelyn Waugh, Edited by Charlotte Mosely (Boston, New York: Houghton
Mifflin Company), p.77
208 deMille, Martha, p.297
210 McDonagh, Martha Graham, p.216.
211 Clipping, Le Matin, June 29, 1950, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections,
Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham
212 Tracy, Goddess, p.134.
213 Stuart Hodes, email to the author
dismissed totally the performance, Martha Graham, and her art. Indeed, a disaster, which did not benefit at least from a “succès de scandale.” While for the Americans “the most violent protest is to walk out,” the French audience – whose voice was represented by its critics – could react powerfully when they liked or disliked something, could be reserved in approving a “transgression into a culture so entirely their own,” or be positive and appreciate quality – as in the case of the same Russian Ballets – when they admitted that “la danse revient” to France.  

Surprisingly, the refined audience, as the French loved to portray themselves, did not appreciate the innovation of dance on display on the Parisian stage, reflected by the themes, choreography and technique of Graham’s dances focusing on love, hate, sins, self-reflection, human fallings, all interesting and challenging topics, which then and there failed to reach the audience and please the critics. Reading the comments of reputed critics, one cannot fail to notice that they analyzed and criticized Graham’s art, not focusing on what the performance(s) offered, but mostly on what they expected to be watching and failed to see, as it was not “provided” by the American modern dancer and her company. The majority of comments looked uninformed (the critics kept calling Graham’s art ballet and not modern dance) nostalgically outdated, pretentious, nationalistic, and some of them simply puerile and whining, quite surprising, as they were coming from critics who were living in the city proud to have hosted innovation in several arts, such as painting and music.

216 Karsavina, Theatre Street, p.200-2001; Tamara Karsavina, one of Diaghilev’s ballerinas, remembered that when the Russian Ballets performed in front of the French they appreciated its “authentic features”, were mesmerized by “the barbaric splendor of frenzied movements, by the naïve spontaneity of Russia, and the studied ornateness of the East,”
In the article which appeared in *Le Figaro*, Graham’s works were called ballets (sic) and considered boring because they were “impermeable,” while the critic also admitted that “we do not like ballets loaded with ideas.” He went even further, saying openly that “at the end of the evening, one could not stand any more symbolism and metaphysics” and “would have liked to see the French cancan or the ballet from Faust,” which was at least a surprising remark, even if it was coming from a country where its dancers – as George Balanchine put it – spoke with their feet.

In the same tone, the critic of *Le Monde* dramatically informed the readers that he went to the show “full of good intentions,” which were destroyed by the “obscure and dark” and “morbid and puerile complications” of Graham’s choreography. Like the critic from *Le Figaro*, he was clear about the fact that he resented the lack of entertainment in Graham’s works, and ridiculed the psychological implications of Graham’s dances, as “Dancing is not suitable for metaphysics and psychological subtlety.” However, unlike his colleague, at least he did not expect to see ballet, knowing that Graham performed modern dance, as he compared Graham’s dance with “Joss ballet but poorer,” but did not renounce his sense of superiority and shattered artistic expectations, as he concluded that “bare-foot makes one laugh.”

That Graham’s art was expected to be “ballet” (with just a handful of critics aware that it was modern dance) and was therefore judged accordingly, for lack of classicism and beauty, is shown by the article from *Le Parisien Libre* which sighed, “One has to forget the past, the classical beauty, and charm of the romantic toe-dancing”, and also gives a negative depiction of

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217 deMille, *Martha*, p.297
219 Clipping, *Le Monde*, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
220 Clipping, *Le Figaro*, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
the night and the dances, characterized through “strange contortions, bizarre gestures” and “hysterical gesture of the interprets.”\textsuperscript{221} In \textit{Epoque}, Maurice Brillant, who signed an article called “At the summit of American dance,” criticized Graham precisely for her art’s modernism: “free, rhythmic, expressionist” dance, accused of being more acrobatics than dancing, for its “vague poetry, philosophy, symbolism, lyrical exaltations.”\textsuperscript{222} He also, like the other critics, accused Graham of trying to denaturize the meaning, methods and styles of dance, as “dance is not made for these excesses of expressionism,” and true dancing, with “its logical, demanding melodious system is at Opera;” her dance was also considered “childish and too symbolist.”\textsuperscript{223} Maurice Pourchet in \textit{Les Arts} said that the Parisian public was disconcerted by the “profound novelty of the movements, the extremely intimate and subtle nature of the rhythmic continuity, the occasional mixture of advanced symbolism and tragic and caricatural elements.”\textsuperscript{224}

Analyzing the press reactions, one can notice that the comments related to Graham’s art and performance followed the same line of negation, employing the same key words, which were centered on the “lacks” of Graham’s art; lack of entertaining qualities, lack of classicism (which meant the break with tradition, and a new technique), lack of beauty, and lack of “normality.” However, if one looks closer, one can say that their dismissal was in fact a praise of glory: being new, being different, being American – thus not being classical ballet, not escapist and entertaining, not a French innovation or at least French inspired, all these were elements which until then nationally, and shortly after internationally, would be considered the material from which the greatness of her art was cut.

\textsuperscript{221} Clipping, \textit{Le Parisien Libre}, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris

\textsuperscript{222} Clipping, \textit{Epoque}, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris

\textsuperscript{223} Ibidem

\textsuperscript{224} Clipping, \textit{Les Arts}, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
Part of the negative reception Graham had to face in France was due to the fact that its public and critics were not “trained” in watching and analyzing modern dance, as it was a marginal art in French culture.\textsuperscript{225} It hosted famous foreign “innovative” dancers but “the French failed to produce first-rate” ones,\textsuperscript{226} while their choreographers were less innovative and less successful than the British and especially American counterparts during the same time. Modern dance never became a dominant element in French culture,\textsuperscript{227} and since already 1930 Georges Pomies, one of the most prominent French dancers between the wars, was asking for rehabilitation in dance in France as it was at that point subject to indifference.\textsuperscript{228} The efforts of Rolf de Mare to bring to France “the beautiful rhythms of today,”\textsuperscript{229} and of Serge Lifar,\textsuperscript{230} were not enough in order to create a layer of public and critics with real interest in modern dance.

However, it is more than interesting and revelatory in discussing the reaction of the French critics vis-à-vis Martha Graham to look at the way they reacted when the German dancer Mary Wigman, another major figure of innovation in dance, visited France. Wigman toured successfully the USA in 1931, on which occasion John Martin called her art “an autonomous art exemplifying fully the idea of modernism,”\textsuperscript{231} and shortly afterward she came to Paris and danced at Théâtre de Champs Elysées. Like Graham, she felt apprehensive about the trip, and

\textsuperscript{225} Surrealist, fauvist and cubist exhibitions were presented to the public before and during the early fifties, while Picasso, Leger, and Vlaminck regained a new wave of fame; Proust was “freshened up” and presented to the French public in exhibitions which acclaimed his role in modern literature.
\textsuperscript{226} Andree Grau and Stephanie Jordan, \textit{Europe dancing-perspectives on theatre, dance and cultural identity} (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), p.4
\textsuperscript{227} Grau and Jordan, \textit{Europe dancing}, p.36
\textsuperscript{228} See Jacqueline Robinson, \textit{Modern dance in France. An adventure. 1920-1970}
\textsuperscript{229} Erik Naslund, \textit{Rolf de Mare, Art Collector, Ballet Director, Museum Creator} (Alton: Dance Books Ltd, 2009)
\textsuperscript{230} Vaughan David, “Classicism and Neoclassicism”, in \textit{The Ballets Russes and its World}, Garafola Lynn, Nancy Van Norman Baer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 157; Lifar experimented since the thirties with neoclassicism in ballet which, like modern dance, also used a contemporary stylization of the technique.
admitted that delivering a speech in French on “La philosophie de la danse” was for her “an excursion into anxiety.”  

However, the keywords used by the French critics dismissing Mary Wigman were astonishingly identical with those used later to criticize Graham, as they also stressed the superiority of French taste and artistic innovation, criticized the ugliness and incomprehensiveness of Wigman’s dance, and saw it as an expression of the “mental problems” of the dancer.

The critic Fernard Divoire considered that Wigman’s dance “hard to understand,” and burdened with “heavy, macabre, sadistic Germanisms which displease the French sensibilities.”  

André Levinson went even further, saying that the German artist has done a great disservice in the eyes of the Parisian public “as they might wonder what the world was coming to,” that her performance was “nothing more than affectation” and “a psychological inflated art.”  

As Divoire, Levinson touched the relation between art and nationality claiming that Wigman’s style conveyed a “crisis in German sensuality and thought, a state of mind that it is not longer relevant today.”  

Last but not least, he could not fail to stress that “the climate of the Ile-de-France is not favorably disposed towards such disturbing spells,” and that there was a risk that “what might appear to the naturally smart French [!] as an encroachment is the result of a kind of a collective illusion, a phenomenon of nervous and moral ill-being characteristic to post-war Germany.”

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232 Robinson, Modern Dance, p.109  
233 Ibidem  
234 Robinson, Modern Dance, p.110  
235 Ibidem  
236 Ibidem
One has to remember that when Wigman visited France, its dance critics were in ecstasy with Josephine Baker, and just a few years after they gave a great reception to Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan, without being much disturbed by their nationality, bare-foot dance, and the style of dance different from ballet. All of them were undoubtedly superb dancers, who left a great mark in dance, but none of them innovated dance at the extent to which both Graham and Wigman did. And the same can be said when – as will be shown in a few pages – one analyzes the way Katharine Dunham performed on the Parisian stages. Dunham’s contribution to the art of dance was a major one too, given her success in France from the very beginning, while Graham had to struggle hard. It was not the quality of the art to be held responsible for this, but the message it transmitted.

Post Second World War French culture was going through a time of “vacillation between modern and nostalgia,” when there was a temptation to “lean on past,” but also to experiment with the new, but the French modernism of the time was manifested in arts in which France had already gained a pride in rebelling against traditions, such as visual art, literature, and theater but not in dance. Dance did not foster innovation but reinforced classicism, as a way to rebuild and strengthen the French dance spectrum, but also to cleanse it from the recent memory of being one of the most “collaborationist” arts under the Nazi occupation. On the national stage classical works, such as *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Copellia*, were presented by promoting only French dancers. After 1945 even long forgotten ballets were presented, such as *Les Indes Gallantes*, whose premiere was during Louis XV’s reign. Also, because every valuable

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personality of the French culture was needed, the ‘not-enough’ intellectual patriots from the war were acquitted or forgiven, this being the case of Lifar, the director of the Paris Opera Ballet.\[^{239}\]

After the war some modernist attempts in dance attracted a moderate interest from the French public, such as “Jean Weidt’s Ballets 38,”\[^{240}\] which toured during the fifties with Ballets Moderns de Paris, and Jean Cocteau’s *La mort de l’homme*, presented in 1946 by Roland Petit Ballet.\[^{241}\]

Danced to jazz and Bach’s music, with angular and acrobatic movements, Cocteau’s attempt was not in fact modern dance, but an interesting experiment which had the merit of presenting to the French public other forms of dance than ballet.\[^{242}\]

Besides, ballet had another quality which made it more suitable for a major trend of post-Second World War society, namely the return to domesticity and its values. Unlike modern dance, ballet’s stories and their characters “permitted” women to remain “women” and men to remain “men,” the saviors of the suffering, beautiful, and vulnerable women/ballerinas. Ballet reinforced the idea of powerful masculinity – also linked to the idea of nation, control, and power – affected and wounded by the occupation years in Europe and especially in France. Thus, besides being a French creation or “protected by French creation,” ballet was also an art which reinforced a male dominated society, which preferred to dim the lights on women’s place and

\[^{239}\] Paolacci, Claire (2004). “Serge Lifar and the Paris Opera during World War II.” *Journal of the Oxford University History Society*: 8; Even if the Comité d’épuration tried to demonstrate that he worked for the Nazi and befriended prominent German families, in the end his friends were successful in showing that even under the Palais Garnier was a temple of art and a monument to the French spirit, and that in fact Lifar protected the French dance, knowing how to manipulate the Germans, so of the fifteen ballets choreographed by him, only one was German, and even to quote the *Marseillaise* in Francis Poulenc’s *Animaux Modèles*, based on the fables of Jean de La Fontaine.


\[^{241}\] Flanner, *Paris Journal*, p.59-60

\[^{242}\] More on this topic in Jacqueline Robinson’s *Modern dance in France. An adventure. 1920-1970*. 75
role; even women’s effort during the war and Resistance years was forgotten, as fewer than a dozen women who fought during the Resistance were decorated.

The role of women in 1950s France was expected “to erase the oppressive memories of those dark years and pretend the war had never happened,” remaining “eternal little girls” in the way they looked and behaved (and when the French said “girl” they truly meant “girl,” not like “in America where every woman under fifty calls herself a girl!”) The New Look, the Princess, Corola, and Tulip lines of French fashion reinforced the feminine woman, and brought back the erotic clothes of the Belle Époque into vogue, with its laced corsets, fitted waists and bodices, a symbolic relationship between fashion and sexuality. The cinema also tried to restore the elegance and beauty of the former years, but while keeping women in “their place” on the silver screen and in the society. They were expected to use their bodies for the re-birth of the nation, literally and metaphorically, and not to dance their sexuality and emotions, like Graham’s characters; to remain anchored in domains which were feminine, such as fashion,

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244 De Beauvoir, *America*, p.115
245 As Katharine Hepburn/ aka Jane Hudson stated in the movie *Summertime* (released in the UK as *Summer Madness*) realized in 1955
247 Ibidem, p.245
248 Even the American women movie stars who rose to stardom during the fifties becoming idols, and whose attitudes, manners and clothes were copied by women around the globe, were mostly all very feminine and princess-like, such as the two most powerful stars of the fifties, namely Audrey Hepburn and Grace Kelly, literally Princess Grace after 1956.
249 There was not yet the time of open sexuality on the silver screen such as the one displayed later on by Marilyn Monroe and the French Brigitte Bardot. The two of them, both remembered by audience and critics first as sexual icons and only secondly as actresses, during the fifties played characters which stressed their feminine appeal, but in a subtle way. The women they played conformed to the norm of the day and looked for the fulfillment of marriage or were made to believe in this by their mighty lovers or husbands; Not by coincidence, sensual stars such as Simone Signoret played mostly in movies in which their characters were unfit women who, also not by coincidence, could not find happiness outside of the domestic sphere - in both *La Ronde*, which was banned briefly in New York as immoral, and *Casque d’or* (1951) Signoret played roles of prostitutes; Who can forget the “tamed” Bardot in *And God Created Woman?*
ballet, and cinema, the landmark of their country, and not aspire to be creators of art, like Graham. Performers of art but not its “makers”, dancers but not choreographers, controlled not controlling...

Martha Graham, the star, was fifty-six, distressed by her marital problems, and dealing already with arthritis. It is hard to believe that she could be called an “eternal girl,” not even by Americans, or if her persona and works could have been considered by the French public “delightful esthetically.” Graham’s dances were not glorifying or inspired by the French culture, were not indebted to it or its protective “medium,” were not male-centered, but, on the contrary, they were portraying strong female characters. Never before more disturbing female personages on stage, never before were such topics presented, and with such minimal costumes, which were neither pretty, nor fancy. Besides, they were self-centered and individualistic, and not connected to the collective and its problems, as French intellectuals of the time claimed that artworks should be, when they asked art to be oriented toward the society and not the individual, and have a “cure-like” role, helping people navigate through this tenebrous existence and history. Contradicting the sexualized, submissive, and domestic expectations from the fifties’ women, Graham’s characters were “selfish,” mature, demanding, revengeful, and threatening, “abstract and anguished,” consumed more by rage and jealousy, and not by love. They wanted to be lovers, not mothers and wives, to have power and control, and to use their bodies for themselves and not the re-birth of the nation. Unlike any ballet characters (and indirectly unlike  

\[251\] Jeromine Savignon, *Jacques Fath*, p.22  
any performers embodying them) but like Wigman’s characters, Graham’s were accused of “mental problems,” their existentialist demands and expectations being catalogued as signs of craziness, unfeminine and inappropriate behavior, thus having little chance to be appreciated.

However, if the powerful female characters had no chance to be given credit and appreciation in a paternalistic and male dominated society, in a country struggling with the recent memory of its past and the unsatisfying present, it is hard to believe that the American inspired works could be successful. Prudently, Graham and her staff scheduled just two “historical” themes to be presented, but their topic were more than powerful and disturbing. *El Penitente* is a bold piece whose departure point is the Penitents of the Southwest and the public rites of purification through penance practiced by the sect. First performed in 1940, *El Penitente* is one of Martha Graham's simplest dances, which has the flattened shapes reminiscent of work by Georgia O'Keeffe and has its repetitions and abrupt rhythms influenced by the patterning in American Indian folk art. The rituals depicted in *El Penitente*, among them flagellation and crucifixion, draw their resonance from the old Spanish Catholic Church. When it was created it was an obvious artistic response to the Spanish Civil War, but ten years later on the Parisian stage, the ideas of resistance, punishment, crucifixion and purification were not popular or desired topics by an audience which was trying to forget the war and the Nazi occupation. The theme of the American pioneers going west, such as *Appalachian Spring* could also not delight the audience. In this piece Graham was performing her national identity, while also bringing in front of the audience the motifs of the American expansion and Empire. A flyer distributed among others to important French critics prior the tour focused on the piece *Appalachian Spring*, genuinely called it “a sunny epic of young America in a spring a westward looking hope,” and
also a piece which was sunny and full “of American juice and sap.”\textsuperscript{254} How much all these could be considered appealing, interesting, and entertaining by the French is not hard to guess.

As already shown, Graham’s presence in Europe during the early fifties was not openly American cultural diplomacy but better said, it was an occasion for the American cultural diplomacy in the making to test itself in Europe. However, it is interesting to see that Martha Graham was “launched” in Europe as an American artist, this being proved by the “American profile” constructed by the newspapers which announced her visit, and based on the publicity prepared prior to the tour by her staff. Before the show on June 27, \textit{France Soir}, published an article in which the dancer was appreciated as “completely American, the soul of her country,” and the bearer of a “revolutionary art,” which has become “classical” in the US. \textit{Le Parisien Libre}, focused less on her artistic merits, but informed its readers that Graham was greatly admired by her compatriots, this explaining the presence of Eleanor Roosevelt and Mrs. Bruce at her performance in Paris.\textsuperscript{255} Leandre Vaillant, called her “Martha Graham, l’Americaine,” considering that she brought with her “une expression tipique propre aux USA,” and also of the other cultures to be found in the grand American array, namely “les Indienes d’Amerique,” the last comment being determined by the work \textit{El Penitente}.

Not surprisingly, other companies and artists, who approached the sensitive themes of the present or American history differently, were more successful, but none of them had an overwhelming success. After the Second World War several important American dancers and

\textsuperscript{254} Clipping “Martha Graham’s Only Competitor,” Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
\textsuperscript{255} Clipping, \textit{Le Parisien Libre}, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
companies came to Paris, and their success was in the best case moderate. 256 Merce Cunningham also came to Paris – shortly before Graham – but he danced with a French ballerina, Tanaquil LeClerc, and presented a combination of modern and classical works, such as The Seasons, in a modernist version.257 When the American Ballet came to Paris, a hostile group of ballet dancers from Paris Opera Ballet booed the Americans as retaliation for the New York pickets protesting Serge Lifar. 258

The best formula for capturing the French artistic public of the early fifties was found by Katherine Dunham, who traveled to France several times, starting in 1946. Unlike Graham, Katherine Duncan liked performing in Europe, where she “felt so loved (…) and returning there it was like coming home. She displayed openly her love for Paris and France, admitting that “Paris has done wonders” for her.260 The response of the audience to her dances was positive and immediate, and she enjoyed the status of a celebrity during her stay in France. During her 1946 opening night in Paris the president and several ministers attended while the audience was “at its best;” 263 Jean Cocteau, Josephine Baker, Mistinguette, Charlie Chaplin , Maurice

256 More on this in Claudia Cassidy’s article “Les ballets American,” May 1950, Scrapbooks, Box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress; shortly before Graham’s trip to Paris Cassidy wrote the article, reflecting on the complicated story of the relationship between the French audience and the foreign artists presenting in Paris.
258 In 1948 the Opera Ballet led by Lifar visited USA and they were not a smashing success, and Lifar was criticized and given a hard time for his supposed collaboration with the Nazi during the Second World War.
260 Terry Harnan, African Rhythm, p.134
261 Ibidem, p.142
Chevalier and also Jean Paul Sartre and Jean Marais, were part of it. With the exception of Charlie Chaplin and most likely of Jean Cocteau, there are no proofs that any of the people mentioned above ever attended a performance of Graham or met her in person.

Like Graham’s, Dunham’s company also danced barefoot, but as dance critic Margaret Lloyd stressed, the audience did not perceive Dunham’s art as modern. Again, in her case too, her art was perceived as entertaining, continuing in the line opened by Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan and Josephine Baker. Unlike Graham, Dunham was exotic as she presented dances of the Caribbean, such as *Ragtime, Rites of Passage, L’Ag’Ya, Nanigo, Tropics* – unlike Graham’s, non-threatening towards the core of French culture – and the critique of the American racism, presented in *Southland*, enjoyed and exploited by the French audience, was an occasion to critique the USA. Loving Dunham was a very subtle way to criticize the Americans, as the French loved to stress that the welcoming attitude towards the American black intellectuals and artists an “extension” of the way the American black soldiers were seen in France after the Liberation, pitied for the way they were treated at home. The theme of *Southland* was not unknown to the French public, as *The Respectful Prostitute*, a play by Jean-Paul Sartre, observed a woman caught up in a racially tense period of American history. (The

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265 Ramsay Burt, “Katherine Dunham’s Floating Island of Negritude,” p.100
266 Dunham also met Claude Levi-Strauss, the famous anthropologist, who was interested in the anthropological approach of her dances; see Ramsay Burt’s article “Katherine Dunham’s Floating Island of Negritude,” page 101
267 Ramsay Burt, “Katherine Dunham’s floating island of negritude,” p.97
268 Ibidem, p.142
269 “Performing the memory of difference”, in *Kaiso! Writings by and about Katherine Dunham*, edited by VeVE A. Clark and Sara E. Johnson (Madison:The University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), p.335
270 Ramsay, “Katherine Dunham’s floating island of negritude;” *Southland* was considered (prior to being presented in France) as a problematic piece for the image of the US, and - while presented in South America - the American embassies instructed the newspapers not to review the piece.
The irony was that Jean Paul Sartre, the pillar of French culture and a communist sympathizer, and one of the main French critics of the American racism, “he was not shaking black hands” outside of the public gaze.\textsuperscript{272} Dunham’s way of presenting – as André Gide put it – the “white assassins of the dignity of the black men” in USA,\textsuperscript{273} found a receptive audience in Paris, also reinforcing the idea that art in general, and especially in Paris of the 1950s, was perceived by an audience not immune to the way history happened outside of the stages where artistic performances took place.

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The French audience responded coldly and critically to an artist who was already the pride of her own country, who would be received with praise and excitement just in Asia, and would conquer Europe a decade later. The first trip to Paris, which marked the transition between “Graham-the-maker-of-a-national art,” and “Graham-the-internationally-renowned-artist” was more difficult than expected, as the first appearance of Graham and her company before of the French audience failed to convince it about the quality of their work and art. To find the reasons which lay beneath the cold reception is like putting together a canvas, made of long-term and immediate reasons and causes.

On one hand, her lack of success in Paris was due to immediate causes. Graham’s health and marital problems increased the tensions within the company, and all combined contributed to tour’s fiasco. Also, the fact that the American cultural diplomacy was still in the making limited the official involvement and help for Martha Graham’s first tour to Paris. The very limited

\textsuperscript{272} Ramsay Burt, “Katherine Dunham’s floating island of negritude,” p.100
\textsuperscript{273} Stephen Longstreet, \textit{We All Went to Paris}, p.433
“training” and exposure of the audience and critics to modern dance undoubtedly played its role in the negative way the critics and the audience reacted to Graham’s performance(s).

But to be successful in Paris during those sensitive times meant to overcome a complicated and entangled web of French emotions and clichés, which made the French audience watch Graham and her art through lenses which distorted the real image and value of the art they were witnessing. As the public is an essential part in the final stage of the creation of an artwork – through the way they react to it and perceive it – it is also essential to look at the public, whether they were everyday “performance consumers” or critics, outside of the performance hall’s space.

It is very important to establish that in Graham’s case the mechanism which generated the negative reaction towards her art was not singular and alien to the way other foreign performers were scrutinized and analyzed. The core of the discourse stressing the superiority of French culture, the “damage” or, on the contrary, the service “other” performances and performers could do to French culture, affected other foreign artists’ relationship with French audience. Besides, the conviction that America could not foster artistic innovation, due to its lack of cultural tradition did not help, especially in the world of entertainment, where the frontiers between reality and illusion are sometimes so tenuous. Being a woman, and not a very young one, whose work portrayed powerful and complicated female characters which were at that point the opposite of how women and their role in the society were imagined, was another obstacle. Therefore, being American, a modern artist and a woman – thus challenging in multiple ways the traditions in the very complicated spectrum of the cultural and social life of the post Second World War years in France – were not ingredients for success. They meant to be the wrong
person, in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

But while analyzing Graham’s presence in France and Europe in general, during the fifties, and the way it was received, one has to recognize that not all the critics spoke negatively about Graham, or that even some did mix the positive and the negative remarks. What to do with these appreciative remarks? Where to “put” these comments, what to do with them, and how to interpret them? Once they exist, they have to be taken into consideration, otherwise the analysis would be incomplete. Indeed, some were written by American critics in Paris, so one could appreciate their comments as being biased. Still, they are worth mention. Art Buchwald, from the *Paris Herald-Tribune*, called Graham’s art a “new theater experience” that divided the audience into in two, the French, who disliked Graham and her performance, and the non-French, who were the “pro-Graham audience who cheered all of the dances,”274 thus suggesting the nationalists perspective of the audience in Paris. Dinah Maggie, from *Combat*, noted that Graham and her company filled the “space in more than three dimensions,” which included the ground, and had the capacity to communicate the “entire scale of the human emotions” with a “new vocabulary,” an interesting and valuable observation, as Graham’s newness in arts and the break with traditions were her most significant achievements.275

But there were also French critics, such as Pierre Tugal, who emphasized, like Buchwald, that Graham’s presence had to be judged vis-à-vis the type of the audience which watched the performance, namely the “connoisseurs” and “non-connoisseurs.” He said: “the average spectator is bewildered and on the defensive against these complex works”…”on the contrary,

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the haut monde of France, the artists, the painters, the musicians, the writers and above all the dancers of France responded with unbounded enthusiasm. These people understood. They instantly grasped the profundity of conception and admired a technic (sic) never before seen in France."^276 He also called Graham’s presence “new and extraordinary” and claimed that “Graham lived up to what Paris expected of her.”^277 The critic of Le Figaro remarked as well that the numbers were “composed with a great deal of intelligence and taste”, and that the dancers were well trained.^278 Maurice Pournchet in Les Arts said that Graham “pushed the conception of art beyond pretty,” comparing Graham with Daumier, Bosch, Goya, and a more recent artist (in fact already by that time a friend of Graham), namely Henry Moore.^279 He also mentioned the most skilled and glamorous “collaborators” of Graham, namely Erick Hawkins, Helen McGehee, Pearl Lang and Stuart Hodes, and, even more interesting, the same critic marveled at the way the scenic space was utilized, the amazing music, and the costumes, which he considered very unique.^280 Leandre Vaillant, critic and dancer, recognized that his appetite to meet the dancer was given by the book of Bethsabee de Rothschild, and that he enjoyed “l’accent de sincérité que se dégagé de spectacles de Martha Graham.”^281 “Toute âme est un cirque” – all of us” he said, at the end of his article.

The same parallel between life and the circus arena was the essence of the movie Les Enfants du Paradis, filmed during the Nazi occupation and released shortly after the Allies liberated France. Ironically, the actress who played Garance, the loved French star Arletty, was

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^276 Ibidem
^277 Maurice Pournchet,”What Paris had to say about Martha Graham,” Dance Magazine, August 1950, p.10
^278 Andre Warnod, “What Paris had to say about Martha Graham,” Dance Magazine, August 1950, p.10
^280 Ibidem
^281 Clipping, Leandre Vaillant, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham, Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
an artist who during occupation collaborated with the Nazi. It seemed not a problem for the French viewers, as the movie was considered the embodiment of the French spirit and soul. Besides, what Garance remarked in one of the scenes – namely that even if the music box is the same, some songs are new, and it is hard to learn them – was the new reality of the complicated postwar years in France, and it was intensely understood by its people.

In the USA the news about the problems encountered by Martha Graham in Paris reached the public without making a big sensation. Several journals and newspapers mentioned Graham’s injury and the lack of enthusiasm of the French public. Most accounts were brief, without many details. One announcement from a newspaper especially encompassed the essence of Graham’s presence in Paris: “the classically minded French were unanimous in their undisputed talent of Miss Graham. A distinguished audience including Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Ambassador David K. E. Bruce gave her an ovation.”

However, one can say that the American artistic circles were not that surprised by the way Graham was received and her art perceived in France. After all, except for Katherine Dunham, no American dance company came back covered in praise. Even more so, sometimes the clash between the French audience and the American artists appearing in France in 1950 reached a level of negative emotions hard to describe. Ruth Paige and her company, among others, were victims of very aggressive and negative behavior of the French public, shortly before Graham arrived in Paris. In an article covering Paige’s lack of success in Paris, the American critic pointed out that the only desire of the 1950 Paris public was to forget about the

282 Clipping, Scrapbook, Box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
war, to be entertained, and that their only norm in appreciating a performance was their idea of “bon-gout.” Unfortunately, mused the critic, it was based on decorative appearances and not true art. “What will happen to so iconoclastic an artist as Martha Graham… is anybody’s guess,” the article ended.

Martha Graham left for London, where she and her company hoped to perform in spite of the unlucky start in Paris. Graham was rather known in Britain and expected there. Among others by Frederick Ashton, John Gielgud, Henry Moore, and E. M. Forster, all artists who met Graham previously in the USA; by British dancers who admired her art; and by the members of the American Embassy in London, eager to meet the artist who was the pride of their country. Unfortunately, her trip to London was not to be a more successful one.

The Tour to London

“Dear Miss Graham, I was sorry to hear of the injury which necessitated your cancellation of your London engagement. We had not only looked forward to your dancing in London but we considered it one of the outstanding occasions of the year whereby American dancing could be presented to our British friends”

Mallory Brown, Public Affairs Officer, August 15, 1950, from the USIS, American Embassy in London.
Prior to her tour to Europe, Arthur Todd interviewed Martha Graham for *The Dancing Times*, and her answers were published in an article “Martha Graham for England?” It informed the readers that the famous American was “the first modern dancer to appear with a big company” in England, that she was to present a form of art which had a lot in common with the British classical theater, and that after the performances in London she and her company would continue with a European tour. Graham’s answers regarding her future appearance in Britain were very courteous, balanced, and optimistic. Stating that “dance must be an integral part of the life and culture which has produced the distinguished Sadler’s Wells Ballet,” she said that her upcoming season in London was “a challenge” which she was “eager to meet,” even more as there were “many indications […] that there is a remarkable interest abroad to see what we are doing in the American dance.” Last but not least, the article unveiled the program, made up of masterpieces, namely *Night Journey, Cave of the Heart, Errand to the Maze, Deaths and Entrances, Punch and Judy, Every Soul is a Circus*, and the American saga in dance, the famous *Appalachian Spring*.

But Graham and her Company did not dance in London in 1950. After the very difficult days in Paris, a wounded Martha Graham went to London but, as the dancer May O’Donnell remembered, they tried to rehearse the dances, hoping for a miracle, which did not happen. Therefore, soon after they arrived in London it was announced that due to Graham’ injury the opening night at Piccadilly Theatre had to be cancelled but that there was hope that the rest of the

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283 Already in 1946 two other important American dancers, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, appeared in front of the British audience.


performances would take place. However, a few days later both the New York Times and Herald Tribune reported that the season was cancelled, followed by other newspapers from all over America.

The relationship between Graham and her husband also came to a very bitter end. Erick Hawkins left London, the company, and his life with Martha Graham and returned to the USA alone. “When it was clear we would not dance in London, the scene that ensued needs an Alan Ayckbourn or Harold Pinter to do justice. Erick Hawkins yelled to Patricia Birch's hotel window, borrowed money, then left forever. Lee Leatherman demanded we all take the same BOAC flight to NYC to get a special rate, saying everyone including he and Craig Barton would be on it. Martha added her bit, saying that Bethsabee deRothschild had lost $75,000 on us. I asked (not loudly) if Bethsabee would be collecting unemployment insurance in another week. Bob Cohan, Bertram Ross, and I refused, saying if we'd pay our own way home if Lee wouldn't give us the equivalent air fare. After a bike trip to Lands End, I took off in Europe and biking through Paris saw Lee and Craig at a sidewalk café sipping absinthe. Returning in 1954 was rather different.”

Cancellation of her tour to London was particularly regretted by the members of the British audience who belonged to the world of art and had contact with the dancer or her art previously. Walter George Raffe from Dance Magazine, a British writer and dance historian, who remembered Graham since her tour with St. Denis, wrote to her prior to the planned tour.

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287 Various Clippings from Times, Mirror, Herald Tribune, Box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington,
288 Stuart Hodes, email to the author, July 2010
He talked about the wide interest with which Graham was expected in Britain, asked for pictures of her “on” or “off” stage, and expressed his belief that in spite of the competing Covent Garden schedule Graham’s show would successfully “go over with the English”. In another letter sent on behalf of the *The Dancing Times* magazine, after deploring the unfortunate accident, an unknown sender said that the London audience was disappointed at not seeing an artist about whom they heard so much and who was so much awaited in Britain, while also hoping that they would see Graham soon. Graham’s absence was also regretted by dance lovers, such as the two professional dancers who, in a letter sent to Graham once she was already in London, after mentioning how “terribly interested in American modern dance” they were, asked her permission to see her rehearsal, because by the time of the projected show they were supposed to dance too. That she was indeed known to British dance society is also evidenced by an invitation received by the American artist from Dame Ninette de Valois, who was organizing a party at the end of the summer of 1950 in California, and asked Martha Graham to participate.

The official correspondence between top British and American diplomatic offices shows that Graham and her company were also in the mind of the State Department. It put at her disposal a network of connections meant to ease the success of her performances in London and helped Graham and her Company prepare and organize the tour. It showed again that even if not at the level she experienced later as a cultural ambassador, already with the first European tour

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289 Letter to Martha Graham from Walter George Raffe, July 8, 1950, Box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
290 Letter to Martha Graham from unidentified sender, in name of *Dancing Times*, 4 August 1950, Box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
291 Letter to Martha Graham from Iain Gordon, 12 July 1950, Box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
292 Ibidem
Graham’s role exited the private and artistic sphere, becoming the avant-premiere of her role as a cultural diplomat and of the State Department’s involvement in her international exposure.

The first exchange of official letters related to Martha Graham’s trip to London happened in March 1950, when, in a letter sent by Gertrude Macy, the general manager of Graham’s Company, to the British consul general in New York, Sir Francis Evans, the latter was informed about Martha Graham’s intention to tour London, and Macy inquired about any “official interest” of Britain in the American artist, whom he praised as “one of the greatest – if not the greatest – of our artists in any field.” What makes the letter even more interesting and revelatory in answering the question of who orchestrated Graham’s presence on the London stage and for demonstrating the State Department’s involvement in Graham’s first European tour, is that Macy did not hesitate to inform the British consul that “Miss Graham will be going under private auspices but with the official blessing and the well wishes of our State Department.” Macy’s acknowledgment that the State Department knew about Graham’s tour in 1950, and the use of this information in a letter to a British official not only demonstrate that Graham’s tours were not limited to an artistic message, but also brings a new element into the chronology of the government involvement in her tours. Until now, an April 1954 intervention for Graham’s tour by the American Ambassador in Brussels was considered “the first formal notice the U. S. State Department had ever taken of her,” but it is obvious that the encounter between Martha Graham and the State Department happened already since 1950.

293 Letter of Gertrude Macy to Sir Francis Evans, date unknown, 1950, FO 924, CRL 48/5. The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
294 Ibidem
295 De Mille, Martha, p.316
That Graham’s trip to London was not just an artistic enterprise but a mission with diplomatic aims is also reflected by the fact that, in the same letter, in words sounding less than those of a manager trying to find contracts for her client, but more as of a cultural diplomat aware of the goal of her mission, Macy hoped that “sending her would combat the current misleading propaganda that the Americans’ productivity is limited to commercial and material fields” and that “the artist’s presence would be a compliment to the countries that have sent us (some) of their best.” 296 It confirmed that, on one hand, Martha Graham’s presence on the London stage was expected to counteract anti-American propaganda and, on the other hand, that the artist and her manager were aware of the fact that a first step that American cultural diplomacy had to take in Europe was to deconstruct the assumption that the US was just a nation of “Chevy-drivers and gum chewers,”297 little able to compete with the sophisticated and rooted cultural traditions of the Europeans, including those of their principal opponents, the Russians. Namely to show Europe, as Graham put it, “that the Americans have more than the movies and Russian ballet transplanted.” 298

Concomitantly with Macy’s letter, the Cultural Relations Department of the Foreign Office in London received two other very important letters from the US. The first was from the British Information Services in New York, which informed the office that Martha Graham “would like some engagements in Britain” and asked the Cultural Relations Department to support Graham and to inform the British Arts Council about the American artist’s “availability,”

296 Letter of Gertrude Macy to Sir Francis Evans, date unknown, 1950.FO 924, CRL 48/5, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
as “she was a really outstanding performer.” The second letter, received by the same office in London, is the most relevant in demonstrating the State Department’s involvement with Graham’s first European tour, and it came from the British Embassy in Washington. It reported that the Embassy had received a visit from Mr. Craig Barton, an important member of Graham’s entourage and that he was interviewed at “the request of the Department of State, anxious to secure the help of the Art Council for Martha Graham’s tour to London.”

It would be hard to believe that in the midst of the Cold War, when the Russian offensive was also well organized and determined, the State Department intervened and requested that one of Graham’s staff be interviewed by the British Embassy only as a sign of courtesy towards the famous dancer, with no relationship to the emerging American cultural diplomacy on and behind the European stages!

After these letters were received, a third letter related to Graham’s planned appearance in London followed, in which the British Arts Council in London was contacted by the Foreign Office directly, for “assistance” related to Graham’s tour to Britain. If in the first reply, the Council’s secretary general, Ms. Glasgow, said that the Arts Council could not help Graham’s tour because the negotiations for engagements came too late, in a second letter, apparently after a flurry of official correspondence, Ms. Glasgow rather dryly stated that she received “a visit from Mr. Green, acting as a manager of Ms. Graham,” who, “out of sheer personal persuasiveness has apparently clinched arrangements for presenting the company for three weeks

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299 Letter from the Office of British Information Services to the Cultural Relations Department of the Foreign Office in London, March 24, 1950, FO 924, CR/L 48/5, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
300 Letter of the Education Office in Washington to the Cultural Relations Department at of the Foreign Office in London, April 12, 1950, FO 924, CR/L 48/8, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
301 Letter from A. L. Mayall to Miss Glasgow, April 24, 1950, FO 924, CRL 48/8, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
302 Letter of Miss Glasgow to A. L. Mayall, April 29, 1950, FO 924, CRL 48/9, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
in London. He also got Mr. David Webster, the General Administrator of Covent Garden to organize the visit for him.\textsuperscript{303} One can say that it was a big success for Martha Graham and for American cultural diplomacy to obtain a booking on Covent Garden’s stage in 1950, even if in reality this accomplishment would materialize only later, in 1976. Such an accomplishment was even more staggering as, by the time Graham planned her tour to Britain, the cultural relationship between Britain and the US was often considered to be “a fragile reed,”\textsuperscript{304} less developed than was to be expected between the two countries which had, as often was claimed, “a special relationship.” It must also be noted that during that time the British Council was not represented in America,\textsuperscript{305} which explains the “detour” the official correspondence took through the British Embassy and the Foreign Office representatives in the United States.

That the artist’s tour to London was considered by American officials to be a trip with diplomatic parameters is shown by the letter of the officer of Public Affairs of the American Embassy in London, Mallory Brown, sent to Graham shortly after the cancellation of the tour. After calling her presence on the London stage “an outstanding occasion of the year whereby American dancing could be presented to our British friends,” \textsuperscript{306} the American diplomat also conveyed to Graham the huge disappointment the tour’s cancellation had created among the embassy’s members, ready to applaud Graham the dancer but also Graham the cultural ambassador of her country. As it is known, because of the complications of the tour, they had to wait for another four years.

\textsuperscript{303} Letter of Miss Glasgow to A.L.Mayall, May 17, 1950,FO 924, CRL 48/10, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
\textsuperscript{305} Anthony Haig, Cultural Diplomacy in Europe (Council of Europe, 1974) p.119
\textsuperscript{306} Letter of Mallory Brown to Martha Graham, August 15, 1950, box 229, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
After the failure of Graham’s first international tour to Paris and London, Bethsabee de Rothschild picked up the pieces, brought Martha – who was crushed about her failed marriage, tour, and chances to gain international fame easily back to America, and found doctors to heal her wounded knee and soul.\footnote{De Mille, Martha, p.300} She also said to an ailing Martha “whenever you are ready – if you are ever ready – to come back and try again, I will have the means to see that you do. Don’t ever worry about that.”\footnote{Ibidem}

During the next couple of months at least, Graham went through a very difficult personal time, one full of doubt, introspection, and self-analysis. One year after the start of her European tour, the dancer wrote a very long letter – one of the most self-revelatory personal writings of Graham ever – to a psychologist whom she considered consulting before starting her professional relationship and friendship with Frances Wickes. The letter reveals a lonely and vulnerable Martha Graham, very different from the “public” one, but at the same time a very realistic, intelligent, and courageous individual, who understood that she was supposed “to take my responsibility upon myself to help myself.” The letter is one of the few occasions during which Graham, who asserted many times that she was not a feminist, talked about her opinions on women and their place in society. She believed that they were not prepared for “women
liberation,” which was “not very old...perhaps not a hundred,” claiming that women had still to
“learn to use her freedom without loss of her final deep inner being which is woman.” 309

One can also discover a deeply hurt and depressed Martha Graham. With visible literary
flair, she described a mouse she found running in her empty bathtub, and which she observed
until the little exhausted critter ran into a hat box. “I have not yet got desperate enough to have
run onto the cardboard box,” she reflected, but she added, “I am more vulnerable than ever.”
Even if vulnerable and hesitant, deeply hurt by the break with Hawkins, she was working
towards “a climb back,” aware of the fact that a life together with Hawkins was “a thing she
deeply desired” but that between them there was a “distance which can never be bridged.”
However, her lack of success on her first international tour seemed not to have preoccupied her
much, the whole trip to Europe being remembered mostly as the moment when her breakup with
Hawkins became a reality: “It is just a year ago this week since we started to Europe and this
great thing change began. I am facing other things but at least I know I am facing them. That
alone is an advance in thinking.”310

Before her European tour Graham received an enthusiastic letter from an American
admirer who, calling her “the most cherished possession,” assured her that during her
performances in Europe she would mesmerize the audience, which would kneel watching the

309 Graham also thought that there was a conflict between the “deep inner urge of her nature as a woman and the gift
of inner speech she has acquired;” it resulted in “bewilderment, great despair, real terror,” thus making everything
even more difficult for most men to understand it.
310 Letter of Martha Graham to Mr. Skippin, June 10, 1951, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of
Congress, Washington; in this letter Graham discussed at large her emotions and feelings: “it had made me more
sensitive to the small treasures of experience;” citing T. S. Elliott (“A condition of complete simplicity/Costing no
less than everything;”) she also concluded that “so much of my life has been directed toward work.”
works of “Mrs. Hush.”\textsuperscript{311} “Fire your audiences as you do here!”\textsuperscript{312} the enthusiastic and optimistic American dance lover cried at the end.

As proved in this chapter, it did not go that way. The first step in the internationalization of her art, the European tour of 1950 was not a success. The tale of Graham’s presence in Paris and London was the tale of a storm, as it was generally admitted that the tour was “a total calamity.”\textsuperscript{313} But still, one has to ask whether the European tour was a total disaster, and if there were not any signs of the “golden thread” of her future European success, which would shine completely on the occasion of her triumph in Edinburgh in 1963?

On one hand, in light of the documents one can say that during the early fifties the American “grand cultural strategy” went through a “rehearsal” period when, as in Martha Graham’s case, top American authorities actively and carefully supervised, intervened, and helped from behind the stage their “cultural diplomats in the making.” Martha Graham was also aware that having “the State Department’s blessing,” \textsuperscript{314} expected to be a “major ambassador for America,”\textsuperscript{315} and thanked by the State Department after the tours “for understanding her role overseas,”\textsuperscript{316} she performed politics in the avant-premiere of her role to be started soon officially.

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotetext[311]{Letter to Martha Graham from Ralph (unidentified sender), January 31, 1950, box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington}
\footnotetext[312]{Letter to Martha Graham from unidentified sender, June 9 1950, box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington}
\footnotetext[313]{Clipping, Saturday Review, September 1963, box 327, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington}
\footnotetext[314]{Letter of Gertrude Macy to Sir Francis Evans, date unknown, 1950, FO 924, CRL 48/5, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey}
\footnotetext[316]{Letter of unknown sender to Mary Frances Stewart, February 22, 1955, box 230, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington}
\end{footnotesize}
On the other hand, even if mostly unnoticed, little discussed, and even less given its place in the way we look at the relationship between Graham and her European audience, during the early fifties, the dancer consolidated a “special relationship” with a small but refined intellectual elite of the European audience. Contrary to the general assumption, Graham was not quasi-unknown to the Europeans prior to her tours, as she had friends and admirers among European intellectuals. Not surprisingly, and it will be explained later in the chapter dedicated to Graham’s tour to Britain in 1954 they belonged, with very few exceptions, to the British intelligentsia. A separate chapter will also discuss the dancer’s friendship with the actor John Gielgud, the writer E. M. Forster, and the sculptor Henry Moore, the three British luminaries who befriended Martha Graham in the USA and continued their relationship over the decades, as being the most representative in this regard. Their special artistic and human connection had important ulterior consequences, as Britain was the country which opened the door for “Martha-Graham-the-artist” and “Martha-Graham-the-cultural-diplomat” during her European tours of the mid-fifties and sixties, all culminating with a special Gala dedicated to the artist at Covent Garden in 1976 and graced by the Queen Mother’s attendance.

Back in her country, after the European tour, Martha Graham was at a crossroads in her personal life and career. She deepened old friendships and made new ones, while also welcoming new dancers into the company. In January 1951 she was back on the stage of Carnegie Hall dancing Judith, being acclaimed, and receiving the confirmation that, in spite of the lack of
success of her European tours, she was a star of American artistic life and culture. Soon, due to Rothschild’s efforts, her company and school would move to a new building, at 316 East Sixty-Third Street, between Second and Third Avenues. In full creative swing, from 1950 to 1954, she created masterpieces such as *The Triumph of St. Joan, Canticle for Innocent Comedians, Voyage* and *Ardent Song*. The last would be presented on the stage of the Saville Theater, on March 18, 1954, on the occasion of her second European tour, started this time in London.

**Martha Graham and Bethsabee de Rothschild – An Artistic Friendship in the Service of Modern Dance**

“They were like Ludwig of Bavaria and Wagner.”

To discuss about Graham’s European tours would be impossible without considering the role of Bethsabee de Rothschild, the generous friend and patron of Graham for decades. Bethsabee de Rothschild was one of the two major private supporters of Martha Graham Company over two decades, being literally next to Martha Graham and her dancers during her international tours, commissioning some of the most famous Graham works, establishing two Israeli dance companies which perpetuated Graham’s art, and acquiring a house on East 63rd

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street in New York City\textsuperscript{318}, which for many years was rented for a modicum amount of money to the company.

Bethsabee de Rothschild had supported Graham and her art outside of the US before the State Department became officially involved in the American cultural diplomacy; because of the benefactor’s passion for dance and of her generosity, the artist and her art benefited from an “avant-premiere” on international stages, especially on the European ones. Considering that the whole fifth decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century was a continuous struggle for the American cultural diplomacy to demonstrate to the Europeans that America was more than nation of Chevy-drivers and gum-chewers\textsuperscript{319}, the tour to France in 1950 sponsored by Bethsabee de Rothschild, even if not a success, was for Graham and her company a good occasion to “sense” the European audience, its expectations and taboos, and for the organizers of American cultural diplomacy an interesting experiment which played a preparatory role for the following tours. Martha Graham’s and Bethsabee de Rothschild’s artistic partnership and the latter’s patronage also brings a new perspective on the relationship between artist, art and the individual cultural philanthropist during the complex times of the Cold War when the State itself became a “patron de l’arts”, when art and artists were invested with roles outside of the artistic sphere. During those sensitive times when the artists became and were involved in the complicated games of diplomacy and propaganda, Bethsabee’s genuine devotion, proved and sustained during all her life, had a special significance which deserves attention, recognition, and praise.

\textsuperscript{318} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{319} Camelia Lenart, “Martha Graham’s Modern Dance and its Impact on France during the Fifties”, \textit{New Readings}, Cardiff, November 2008
However, the Baroness was not the only “patron” of Graham over the years. The list of Graham supporters is very long, and includes stellar names. One cannot fail to mention Lila Achenson Wallace, who met Graham in 1921 in Greenwich Village, had her numerous times as a guest in her “High Winds, Gatsby like villa,” and donated to her the building on East 63 Street – first rented to Graham by Bethsabee. Katherine Cornell, the famous actress, was another benefactor. She was a member of Graham’s school and company Board for years, and helped Graham in various important ways. In the context of Graham’s European tour, Bethsabee can be compared with Robin Howard, the British aristocrat and veteran of the Second World War, who was mesmerized by Graham’s dance since he first saw her dancing on the London stage in 1954. Both opened dance schools, one in Israel and the other one in Britain, influenced by their relationship with Martha Graham, thus perpetuating and prolonging Graham’s influence in European dance and culture. If the fifties were the “de Rothschild decade,” as Bethsabee was the main sponsor and presence during the international tours, beside de State Department’s one, was that of Bethsabee de Rothschild, the sixties were more a Robin Howard decade. During this time, when de Rothschild’s interest shifted towards her own Dance Company and School based in Israel, Howard played a similar but not identical role in Graham’s appearance in Europe. His role, influence, and relationship with Graham and her company will be discussed at length in the chapters dedicated to Graham’s tours to Britain.

321 Heidenry, p.354
Baroness Bethsabee de Rothschild (1914 –1999) was born in London in a “family of fortune”\textsuperscript{323} – the French branch of the Rothschild family, her father being the head of the Rothschild bank in Paris\textsuperscript{324}. Unlike Martha Graham who loved and enjoyed her fame, Bethsabee was almost a reclusive person, who led her personal life and supported the development of modern dance discreetly and quietly. The friendship and professional collaboration between the two women started when Bethsabee began to take classes with Martha in New York after she and her parents had to flee the Nazi, shortly before the fall of France in 1940\textsuperscript{325}, when, as the Baroness recalled later, “her father decided to leave France after the fall of the invincible Maginot line”\textsuperscript{326}. Their artistic collaboration developed over the next decades, reaching its peak during the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, weakening during the next years, but never ending totally. The artistic partnership between Bethsabee de Rothschild and Martha Graham is mentioned in the books dedicated to the dancer and her work, even if the role de Rothschild played in the development of American modern dance and the international recognition of Martha Graham remained somehow peripheral in the story of Graham, of her art, and of her international fame. It is an unfortunate lapse if one thinks that their collaboration has a deep significance and not only from the biographical perspective of their personal lives, but for the culture of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Their artistic partnership contributed to the flowering of Martha Graham’s art in the US, but also had a major impact on the way it was internationally received during the sensitive times of the Cold War, when Martha Graham Company’s tours abroad were the beginning of the transformation of American modern dance into a world class art.

\textsuperscript{325} DeMille, \textit{Martha}, p.238
\textsuperscript{326} Ora Brafman, “Israel honors its baroness of dance-dance-company founder Batsheva de Rothschild”, p.1
From the memoirs of Bethsabee’s siblings Guy de Rothschild and Jacqueline Rothschild Piatigorsky one understands that the life of the Rothschild children was from the beginning under the sign of art in the family’s residence, the castle of Ferrieres, nineteen miles away from Paris. Bethsabee and her sister were educated by their mother in the idea that “girls need no work,” but they received a strong musical education and were given dance classes; what is remarkable is that “instead of waltz and tango” they learned “the more fashionable fox-trot, South American dances, and the tap-danced Charleston.” One cannot say if her love for dance was born then and there, Bethsabee having little chances to come into contact with modern dance in France, where at that point it was in its “experimental” phase. After high-school Bethsabee enrolled as a biology student at the Sorbonne, studies she continued later at Columbia.

Living in New York City during the Second World War, Bethsabee’s fascination with dance started with her technique classes in Graham’s Fifth Avenue School. It was an artistic enterprise without tremendous success, but it was the beginning of Bethsabee’s genuine interest in Graham’s dance theatre. She became soon a presence around the School and Company, but from her modest and discreet manners no one would have guessed that she could be the rich heiress of a financial empire; not until Erick Hawkins discovered that there was a significant “de” in front of her name. Soon Bethsabee became a friend of the artists and her dancers, helping

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327 Cowles, The Rothschilds. A Family of fortune, p. 249
328 Piatigorsky, Jump in the Waves. A Memoir, p.5
330 De Mille,Martha, p.288
331 Ibidem, p.289
them generously through picking up the company’s deficits after each season and becoming a confidant of Martha.\footnote{Ibidem, p.206}

Compared by Agnes de Mille to “Ludwig of Bavaria and Wagner”,\footnote{Ibidem} Bethsabee de Rothschild and Martha Graham reached their golden time during the fifties, when the Cold War had already begun. Since the thirties American modern dance was seen at home as a national treasure, “an art of and from America”\footnote{Julia Lawrence Foulles, “Dancing America: Modern dance and cultural nationalism, 1925-1950 ”, PhD Thesis, University of Amherst, 1997}, “pure Americana”\footnote{Don McDonagh, Martha Graham: a biography, p.137}, unconventional, full of vitality and energetic, but it was little or not at all known outside the American borders. It is true that some American artists and companies travelled outside the country, including in Europe, but this was not the case for Martha Graham Company. Martha had not been sent abroad by ANTA (American National Theatre and Academy) because the costs of her large company, expected to be around $80,000, were considered too high.\footnote{De Mille, Martha, p.290}

The State Department became the official sponsor and supporter of Martha Graham in 1954, and the artist and the companies were constantly sent abroad as cultural ambassadors. Bethsabee de Rothschild was a few steps ahead of her time, being a precursor of the official cultural diplomacy and making possible Martha Graham’s and her company’s first tour to Europe in 1950. She was a precursor of another domain, too, namely that of writing and publicizing modern dance, which at that point was only at its incipient phase in America, while in Europe it was nonexistent. Prior to the company’s trip to Europe, de Rothschild published her book \textit{La Dance artistique aux États-Unis}, the result of her interest and fascination with modern dance.
dance, but also a smart move for advertising the company, American dance, and Martha Graham before their first trip to Europe. The book shows not only the deep interest the author had for the topic, a deep knowledge, a “finesse” of observation, and a clarity of exposure, but also a deep sense of fairness for the merits of inventing and enriching the world of modern dance; besides the detailed exposure of Martha Graham’s life, career, and each work (an performance accomplished afterwards by just a few writers), B. de Rothschild (as she signs the book) also discusses about other important American dancers.

It is not very clear who posed the initiative of the first European tour of Martha Graham’s company, Bethsabee\(^{338}\) or Erick Hawkins.\(^{339}\) Unlike him, Bethsabee was known for her discretion and the fact that she was not at all intrusive in the Company’s artistic decisions. Even if maybe both envisioned a European tour as a starting point of Martha Graham’s international exposure and fame, what Bethsabee had certainly more than Erick besides discretion, was the money she was ready to spend on the tour\(^ {340}\), but also a large network of connections, because Paris was after all her city, where her family was powerful and influential. During the summer of 1949 Bethsabee’s father, Baron Edouard, died, and her brother Guy de Rothschild became the leader of the French branch\(^ {341}\), himself an art lover and supporter. He and Bethsabee’s mother were to help her prepare Martha Graham’s trip to Paris\(^ {342}\).

Before the tour, there was an intense correspondence between the members of the artist’s staff, such as Isadora Bennett, Graham’s public relations representative, and her friends, all

\(^{338}\) De Mille, Martha, 77

\(^{339}\) McDonagh, Martha Graham: a biography, p.213

\(^{340}\) Ibidem, p.214

\(^{341}\) Cowels, The Rothschilds. A Family of fortune, p.248

\(^{342}\) deMille, Martha, p.77
concerned to set up the best publicity for the European tour. A souvenir book was issued, meant to introduce to the sophisticated European audience the American “priestess of dance”, with all her accomplishments and honors. The book was followed by other publicity material, in which Martha Graham’s dances were depicted in great detail, all using large excerpts from Bethsabee’s book, *La Dance artistique aux États-Unis*. In the meantime, the future European audience was also encouraged to read the books already written about Martha Graham and her dance.

But once she got out of the shadow of her incognito, announcing her readiness to sponsor the tour, de Rothschild had to face the fact that it could be more challenging than it looked at first sight to participate in preparing the European tour and working with Martha Graham, her company, and staff. Bethsabee’s relationship with the members of the company over the years was not extremely close, but she enjoyed a good reputation, which did not save her though from all the intrigues and dramas of the artistic world. Before the beginning of the first European tour, she had to face the complicated web of the Company’s internal tensions, between Graham and her husband/dancer, the rest of the dancers, the staff, and of Graham with herself. In fact, the conflicts of the fifties were just the beginning of the internal tensions which will plague the life of the company during the following decade and will contribute to the end of the close artistic partnership between Graham and de Rothschild. Now, even if still informally part of the Company, de Rothschild had to face the mixed feelings of Graham’s entourage related to Graham’s first tour to Europe.

343 Souvenir Book, Box 1, Folder 3, Martha Graham Center of Dance Records, 1944 -1955, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library
344 Ibidem
345 De Mille, *Martha*, p77
In a letter addressed to Gertrude Macy on April 1, 1950, the unknown author (but most evidently a person close to both Graham and Macy) informs Macy that “the horror has happened somehow from Paris, and a very detailed release announcing dates and everything has emanated from a radio station in Dallas announcing a leave of absence for Craig Barton to act as a personal representative on the tour” and that “there is a great confusion and everybody is a spokesman for Martha (...) and there is a great confusion in England”\(^{346}\). All these remarks are surely very confusing also for one not accustomed to Martha Graham’s circle, and her new and old friends. Craig Barton was her personal secretary, who, after gaining Katharine Cornell’s and Gertrude Macy’s approval, was supposed to go to Paris to arrange the tour. What created a stir was the fact that besides Barton, his friend from Dallas, Leroy Leatherman was chosen at the last minute to accompany him, which upset Graham’s friends and dancers \(^{347}\).

Macy, who was then Graham’s producer, was positive about the tour because “it was hopeful”\(^{348}\) for Martha Graham’s fame and recognition outside the American borders, but she and Cornell hesitated to approve the trip of Leatherman to Paris as an unnecessary expenditure. On the other hand, de Rothschild was supportive of both Craig and Leatherman to travel to Paris. Neither Craig Barton nor LeRoy Leatherman were very popular among the troupe, who did not see them very as personable or professional in the way they dealt with the dancers and the company’s problems. As Martha Graham’s former dancer, Helen McGehee put it, Graham never “entertained the idea of having a manager who was not a friend who could be dominated.

\(^{346}\) Letter from unknown sender to Gertrude Macy, April 1, 1950, Box 1, Folder 1, Martha Graham Center of Dance Records, 1944-1955, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library
\(^{347}\) De Mille, Martha, p.291
\(^{348}\)Letter from Gertrude Macy to Bethsabee de Rothschild, Box 1, Folder 1, Martha Graham Center of Dance Records, 1944 -1955, , Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library
She had to be surrounded by somehow lesser people. She preferred to do everything somewhat by herself and this she did until the work became so large that it was utterly impossible for her to do it alone. (…) This leads to frustration and tantrums.” Such as the turmoil determined by the trip to Paris of the duo Barton-Leatherman, which also involved Bethsabee, because the letter’s allusion to Paris was a euphemism for her name and persona, she being the only person around the dancer who was related directly to the city. Supporting the trip to Paris of the duo Barton-Leatherman, Bethsabee upset, against her will, the majority of the Company’s dancers and the staff, and went under their scrutiny; in the light of the past and present, they were wondering if the new friend of the dancer would be a positive or negative influence.

Bethsabee and her family’s contribution to the expected conquest of artistic Europe by American modern dance in 1950 were discussed at length in the previous chapter. In 1954 Graham came again to Europe, but by that time, her quality as an ambassador of American dance to Europe was doubled by the official quality of cultural ambassador of her country, so unlike in 1950, when it was privately sponsored by de Rothschild, now Graham’s tour was an official part of the American cultural diplomacy, her tours being closely supervised by the State Department, CIA and USIA, her activity overseen on and off stage, carefully “monitored” and back in the country her successes nationally praised and she received awards and public recognition. The official involvement of the state in Martha Graham’s tours did not mean that the role of Bethsabee the Rothschild, as sponsor and supporter disappeared. It diminished, but de Rothschild had a major say in the way the tour was designed financially and strategically. In an

349 Helen McGehee, *To be a Dancer* (Lynchburg: Editions Heraclita, 1989)
351 Don McDonagh, *Martha Graham: a biography*, p.146.
exchange of letters from Europe to the USA prior to the tour, it is clearly specified that even if the new tour was supposed to start this time in Britain, it should not miss France because otherwise “Miss de Rothschild would not be interested in this venture at all without Paris”352, and a year after the tour in a letter from Bennet & Pleasant, Bethsabee de Rothschild is informed about bills from the tour which were expected to be paid by her353.

In spite of the official involvement and Bethsabee’s efforts, the tour in 1954 was not a tremendous success, but it could not be called a failure either. As it will be shown in special chapters, in Britain a large part of the audience was positive about Martha Graham, while in Paris the negative and loud reaction of 1950 changed into a more polite one, but without being by any means a thrilled one. In Switzerland, Holland and Italy the Company registered a reasonably positive response. The only place where Bethsabee did not accompany and support the company and its leader was Germany, because she promised her father that she would never spend any Rothschild money in Germany354.

The fifties were the “golden age” of the professional partnership of Graham and de Rothschild. In spite of the initial lack of success on the European stages, during that time the American modern dancer’s fame was growing internationally, even if at a personal level the artist was having difficulties. The end of her marriage with Erick Hawkins left a deep mark on her355, and she fought years in therapy to regain her emotional balance. She was also witnessing

352 Letter, Box 1, Folder 1, Gertrude Macy Papers, 1953-1976, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library
353 Letter, April 1, 1950, Folder 1, Martha Graham Center of Dance Records, 1944-1955, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library
354 De Mille, Martha, p.316
355 Stodelle, p.171
the personal dissipation of her sister Geordie, due to alcoholism, while the tensions within the company were mounting. Last but not least, Martha Graham herself started to have problems with alcoholism, a problem which would become serious during the sixties. But she continued to grow and accomplish artistically, and Bethsabee was part of this process. The most triumphant tour abroad during this decade was to Asia from late October 1955 to early March 1956, when the company went to Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Burma, and Israel. Again, she was accompanied by Bethsabee and Leroy Leatherman, her manager, and her press representative, Craig Barton.

This time the success was instantaneous, and Asia and the Middle East were mesmerized by the American modern dance. In Israel, which was not initially on the list and where the baroness personally arranged an extension of the tour, the success was “massive and unrestrained”. Graham also enjoyed visiting with Bethsabee the ancient cities and meeting important people. One of the trips took her to Jerusalem, where the mayor was one of her friends from “the early days”, Teddy Kollek; after one of her shows, the philosopher Martin Buber saluted her and made appreciative comments about her work, while also Moshe Dayan insisted to meet Graham and offered her a present.

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356 De Mille, Martha, p.307
357 Ibidem
358 De Mille, Martha, p.176
359 Ibidem, p.177
360 Ibidem, p.208
361 De Mille, Martha, p.323
362 Graham, Blood Memory, p.209
After the tour which pleased everyone, including the State Department and Graham, who increasingly was seeing herself as a “national treasure”\(^3\), she went with her friend to Greece for a vacation. Helen McGehee was also vacationing there with her husband and some other members of the company\(^4\). The two friends had a wonderful time, as shown by a letter thus far not cited in the literature about Graham. After the writer (unknown) states that “the tour has been wonderful”, Bethsabee is mentioned as being one of the most appreciated and useful persons on the tour, for the “serious and valuable things that she does” and for her “gay, witty” spirit, in spite of the fact that the rich baroness functioned as the personal roster of the tour showed, as a “wardrobe mistress”, who was “pressing and sewing herself”\(^5\). The letter also reveals a rarely seen joyous side of Bethsabee, who during that vacation decided to change her hairdo, enjoyed buying clothes and spending leisure time accompanied by her friends, including the writer of this letter and Lee (Leatherman), who were convincing Graham and de Rothschild to “pierce their ears for some (earrings) are too valuable” to be worn casually.\(^6\) The Asian trip and the vacation to Greece were the peak of their professional collaboration as well as of their friendship.

During the sixties, Bethsabee continued to be involved in Martha Graham Company’s life, but the relationship became increasingly strained. On one hand, Bethsabee was more and more committed to the cultural life of Israel and was in the process of starting a dance company there, which influenced her financial and time commitments to her previous cause. On the other

\(^3\) Ibidem
\(^4\) McGehee, *To Be a Dancer*, p.77
\(^5\) Letter from unknown Sender to Germaine de Rothschild, Box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
\(^6\) Ibidem
hand, in spite of the national and international fame and recognition Graham achieved during the sixties, the life of the company was plagued more than ever by inner tensions, Graham losing one after another her closest and best friends and supporters, some of them leaving after decades spent around and in the service of modern dance and its “goddess”\(^ {367}\), everything being aggravated by Martha Graham’s dependence on alcoholism and her health problems.

That Bethsabee was still part of the Company’s life is shown by the generous donation necessary for the success of two years of engagement in New York City on Broadway between 1961–1963, she being one of the benefactors (next to Howard Cullman and Katharine Cornell) who gave $30,000 for the seasons’ costs.\(^ {368}\) Similarly, a letter Gertrude Macy received from de Rothschild on April 27, 1964 about a new work by Graham, with Danny Karavan designing the set, also shows that Graham and de Rothschild still worked together on the most important decisions related to the Company’s activity. Besides, de Rothschild, helped by Craig Barton, continued the work of preserving Graham’s work, sponsoring the making of “work films of those works in the current repertory which had already not been filmed”\(^ {369}\), an endeavor started during the fifties when Bethsabee de Rothschild encouraged Martha Graham to make the famous movie \textit{A Dancer’s World}, while also sponsoring its making, along with the Mellon Foundation.\(^ {370}\)

After years of functioning under the same roof with Martha Graham School and Company, by December 1964 the Betshabee de Rothschild Foundation had moved to a new address, 70 Pine Street New York. Still, the Baroness was contributing financially to the

\(^{368}\) Letter, Box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
\(^{369}\) Letter, Bethsabee de Rothschild to Gertrude Macy, April 27, 1964, Box 357, Folder 5, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
\(^{370}\) Don McDonough, \textit{Martha Graham. A Biography}, p.247
Company’s budget, but the worries about the financial participation of de Rothschild to the finances of the company were mounting, with a clear tendency of Bethsabee to withdraw gradually from the life of the company and to concentrate on her new cause, modern dance in Israel. In a letter sent to the White House by Gertrude Macy, the secretary of the Martha Graham Foundation for dance, asking for federal support for Martha Graham and her artistic projects, Macy praises the dancer’s and her company’s accomplishments, enumerates her plans for the future, and emphasizes the importance of Martha Graham in the national cultural life and its international recognition, but in order to strengthen her request, she also mentions that the private, non-federal support Martha Graham received so far was no longer a certainty: “Since 1950 a single donor has been primarily responsible for meeting much of these deficits. Now that donor is no longer able to continue her generosity.”\textsuperscript{371} Indeed, by December 1965, the first official step was made in the “separation” of the artistic paths of Graham and de Rothschild when de Rothschild Foundation issued a statement in which asked that “during this phase the Graham Foundation should take over all the work now done by the Rothschild Foundation for the School”\textsuperscript{372}.

Soon, the exchange of letters between the School and the Rothschild Foundation will focus almost entirely on the problems and details of the future changes in the relationship between de Rothschild and her foundation on one side, and Martha Graham, her foundation, company and school on the other. The break was gradual, with ups and downs in the process, Bethsabee seeming to have problems in cutting the last ties with the cause which concentrated

\textsuperscript{371} Letter to Gertrude Macy, Gertrude Macy Papers, 1953-1976, Folder 4, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library
\textsuperscript{372} Ibidem, Folder
her efforts and occupied her time for two decades. But her hesitation was short and the future developments showed that Bethsabee was still willing to go ahead with her plans to loosen her ties with the Martha Graham Foundation, School and Company and support modern dance in particular and culture in general in Israel. In a letter sent later that year by Gertrude Macy, now the vice president of the Martha Graham Foundation for Contemporary Dance, to Carl Haverlin, the radio broadcast pioneer, she stated that “we desperately need funds to maintain the school – which is the training ground for the Company,”373 while also in a meeting at the beginning of 1967, Robin Howard expressed his doubts that de Rothschild would continue to support the Company, which was “an assumption for which there was no justification.”374 Also, the building where the School and the Company were functioning became for the first time a clear issue, Robin Howard announcing that de Rothschild offered to sell it to the Company if they wanted to buy375. By the end of 1967 the last uncertainties (and maybe hopes) regarding the normalization of the changing relationship between de Rothschild and Martha Graham were clarified, when at the combined annual meeting of the members and board of Martha Graham Foundation it was announced officially that de Rothschild was “tapering off her financial support of both corporations” and that her plan was to make a contribution of $34,000 (part in services) for the current year, an unspecified lesser amount in each of the next two years, and after that no contribution other than a preferential rent376.

The massive diminution of Bethsabee de Rothschild’s support of Martha Graham’s artistic activity during the late sixties came at a moment when Graham and her art were both

373 Ibidem, Folder 27
374 Ibidem, Folder 27
375 Ibidem, Folder 27
376 Ibidem, Folder 28
recognized as national and international values, acclaimed and praised all over the world; thus the financial impact on the Company’s life was, even if probably serious, not deadly. But besides the financial changes in the life of the Company, the sixties were also the decade when Martha Graham had to face the reality of the dissipation of her “old guard” of friends and supporters, most of whom left, affecting profoundly the future development of Martha Graham’s and the Company’s life, among those who left being also Bethsabee de Rothschild. The tensions and stressful situations, on or off tours, were not a novelty in Graham’s life or in her Company’s, but never before had the conflicts generated such compelling decisions. One of the first major blows and departures was that of Robin Howard, who, as shown by the minutes of the combined annual meeting of members and of the board of directors, was withdrawing from the life of the School and Company because he “retuned to Europe on account of personal business”\(^{377}\). After helping American dance more than a decade, with a genuine devotion, financial generosity, and personal kindness comparable just to that of Bethsabee de Rothschild, Robin Howard left. It was officially said that, like Bethsabee, he was too busy with the “transplantation” of Martha Graham’s dance to another geographical and cultural space, opening The Place and its School for Contemporary Dance in London, but the truth was that beneath there were hurt feelings as well; Graham had a tendency to upset the people who were the most devoted to her. With his well-known gentleness, Robin Howard made the departure as mild as possible, remaining a “special consultant” of the School and of the Company with which he preserved a “special relationship.”\(^{379}\)

\(^{377}\) Robert Tracy, *Martha Graham’s Dancers Remembers*, p.181
\(^{378}\) Letter, Gertrude Macy Papers, 1953-1976, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library
\(^{379}\) Ibidem
A letter from March 1968 received by the Martha Graham Foundation marks the official
departure of Bethsabee de Rothschild as well. Resuming the past and the present of her
relationship with American modern dance and subsequently with Martha Graham, and her own
future plans, the letter marks the end of two decades of one of the most interesting and devoted
patronages of dance in its history: “I am sponsoring dance in Israel on a larger and larger scale,”
said de Rothschild in her letter. “At the same time interest in the dance in America and the
subsequent flow of the financial help seems never to have been so great. Therefore I feel that at
this stage and after so many years it is not only justified but a natural and healthy course of
events for the future that Martha Graham school should obtain in America itself enough
endowment to survive and grow. Over a year ago I informed the board that my contribution to
the school would be cut with the purpose of stopping them entirely within a three
year period.[…] Since I do not live in America and cannot be active as a President should be, I take
this opportunity to resign from that office; but I am happy to remain a member of the board if so
desired”380. (Bethsabee was later elected as an officer of Martha Graham Foundation381). If the
reason for de Rothschild’s resignation was entirely professional, or, as in the case of other people
who left, there were emotions and frustrations involved, one cannot say for sure. What was
certain, though, was the fact that Bethsabee’s departure was one more after Cornell’s, Howard’s
and Gertrude Macy’s, and maybe one whose consequences were the hardest to overcome by
Martha Graham and her Foundation in later years.

LeRoy Leatherman, who in 1966 dedicated his book *Martha Graham. Portrait of the lady as an artist* to Bethsabee de Rothschild, was the last one from the old team to leave in 1972,

380 Ibidem, Folder 29
381 Ibidem, Folder 27-28
after some previous un-finalized attempts. But not before facing and solving a new crisis in the Company, caused, as shown by a letter sent to Kit (Katherine Cornell), concerning “Martha’s illness and Geordie’s long, continuing illness”\(^\text{382}\), Leatherman pointing at Graham’s sister alcoholism and at Graham’s health problems, aggravated by her own abuse of alcohol. When Leatherman realized that the School could not provide the income Martha and Geordie needed\(^\text{383}\) during those difficult times, he thought of Bethsabee, who at that point was living in Israel. The fact that the Baroness answered positively and the way she offered her help speaks one more time about de Rothschild’s human qualities and generosity: “In trying to meet this crisis I have been in touch with Bethsabee and I have learned today she wants to help and will help substantially. Typical of her the sole condition she imposes is that Martha never suffers the embarrassment of knowing that anyone has asked for money to meet her personal needs”\(^\text{384}\). It is most likely that Graham never found who was the mysterious benefactor, but two years later the friendship seemed restored at least partially, Gertrude Macy meeting de Rothschild in New York City at one of Graham’s openings\(^\text{385}\), while also during the summer of the same year “miss Graham is currently in Israel” in a good spirit, planning a State Department sponsored tour of Asia.\(^\text{386}\)

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\(^{382}\) Letter, Gertrude Macy Papers, 1953-1976, Folder 32, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library

\(^{383}\) Ibidem

\(^{384}\) Ibidem, Folder 32

\(^{385}\) Ibidem, Folder 33

\(^{386}\) Ibidem, Folder 33
The Tide Was Turned
The Tour to London in 1954

“London was hard”, Martha Graham wrote from Europe in the spring of 1954 to her long time friend, the musician Louis Horst. “It was mixed but a critic […] turned the tide for me. The houses were small at first but then we finished with filled houses and bravos. It seems that the thing most amazing is that we as Americans have a culture other than the movies or Russian ballet transplanted.”387

“We went to London (in 1950) in hopes Martha could heal enough to dance. Alas, she did not, and the tour was canceled.

We returned in 1954. This time opened in London. Richard Buckle was enthusiastic. Other critics ranged from puzzlement to dismissal. But a claque from the Royal Ballet came every night, sat in the first few rows and cheered wildly. This support from dancers we deeply admired, was balm for the soul.”388

In February 1954 Graham, a company of fourteen dancers and the musical director Simon Sadoff sailed from New York on RMS Queen Elizabeth.389 In an unpublished photograph one can see on the deck of ship, ready to leave New York harbor on a hazy morning, Martha Graham

388 Stuart Hodes, email to the author,April 18, 2009
389 McDonough, Martha Graham, p.228
next to the Baroness de Rothschild, and ten other people, among whom one can recognize the dancers Paul Taylor, Linda Hodes, Stuart Hodes and Helen McGehee.\textsuperscript{390} The picture bears the Baroness’s handwriting which says: “to Europe, 1954.”\textsuperscript{391} Robert Cohan, dancer with the company, also remembered the trip, the society games they played on board, and also Graham’s resilience when the weather was bad.\textsuperscript{392}

In the USA the announcement of the tour came a year before in \textit{Dance Magazine}, the most prestigious journal of its kind in America. The journal informed the readers that Graham and her company had given up a Broadway season and were planning to tour Europe, and that the company wished to visit all Western European countries for four months.\textsuperscript{393} Graham and her company received more attention and space in the journals’ and newspapers’ pages than four years before, both at home and in Europe. Shortly before the debut on the London stage, the same \textit{Dance Magazine} which announced the tour dedicated to her an article in which the tone, not as cheerful as one year before, now oscillated between pride and worry. Martha Graham was called a “pioneer” but the American dance lovers were prepared for another difficult time for the company in Europe, because “modern dance is virtually unknown in Europe and she (Graham) came almost unheralded and unsung. It is difficult to convey to the Americans how completely disinterested London can be in forms of dance other than classical ballet.”\textsuperscript{394}

The first journal which announced Martha Graham’s tour in Britain was \textit{Dancing Times}, the English magazine for dance. A short background on the American modern artist was

\textsuperscript{390} Private Collection
\textsuperscript{391} Private Collection
\textsuperscript{392} Robert Tracy, \textit{Martha Graham’s Dancers Remember} (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), p.145
\textsuperscript{393} Clipping, \textit{Dance Magazine}, March 1953, 3.
\textsuperscript{394} Clipping, \textit{Dance Magazine}, April 1954, p.77
presented, emphasizing her creative force in American art, but it focused mostly on her controversial artistic personality. The magazine cautiously tried to warn its readers and possible ticket buyers about the “range of emotions” that Graham stirs, “from intense dislike, to fanatical admiration, and total indifference.”

If in 1950 the initiative to go to Europe was considered to have belonged more to Erick Hawkins and Bethsabee de Rothschild than to Graham herself, in 1954 the situation was different. The artist herself wanted to make her art known in Europe, as shown by the fact that in 1955, when Martha Hill and Walter Terry were charged by the dance panel of ANTA with persuading Graham to go to Asia as a cultural ambassador, she declared to them that at that point she was not interested in the Orient, but that she was “wishing to return to Europe.” Even if she seemed more interested in Europe than four years before and consequently in the “internationalization” of her art, Graham was aware that a tour could not have been done relying on the very modest means of her school and company, as the costs of traveling with a company were very high, and because cultural diplomacy in the Europe of the fifties was complicated by the very powerful and carefully organized Russian cultural offensive on Western stages, Graham needed strong financial and logistical support overseas. But one cannot say if Graham’s second tour to Europe started with Britain due to a logistical consideration, as in Paris four years earlier her tour did not start under positive auspices.

Like the previous tour, the second one was advertised officially as privately sponsored one, but if in the 1950 the problem of sponsorship was more openly discussed prior and during

396 Pearl Lang, Interview with the author, October 2008, tape recording
397 Naima Prevots, Dance for Export (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), p.44
the tour, now it would be hard to estimate exactly the contribution of Bethsabee de Rothschild to it, but her support to Graham’s 1954 tour to Europe was a reality. The Baroness, also a member of ANTA’s first dance panel, a benefactor of this organization, and already a sponsor of the dance festivals held in 1953 and 1955 in New York, 398 with her family’s help, 399 became involved in the 1954 tour to Europe. She was a key factor in the decisions related to it, as shown by an exchange of letters between the European impresarios and Graham’s New York “headquarters” prior to the tour. They reflect the fact that the benefactor was positive that the tour was to start in Britain, France had to be included on the list of the company’s appearances, otherwise “Miss de Rothschild would not be interested in this venture at all without Paris.” 400 A year after the tour in a letter from Bennet & Pleasant (Graham’s press representatives), Bethsabee de Rothschild was informed about bills from the tour, which were expected to be paid by her. 401

In Europe Graham achieved success first in the British Isles, on the occasion of the 1963 Edinburgh Festival, continued shortly after with a thrilling presence on the London stage. As mentioned already, European recognition happened almost a decade after the international acclaim she obtained in the rest of the world, starting with Asia in 1955. The European tours of the fifties received in general a very limited and not in depth attention, in spite of the fact that they had much more professional content and incipient political intent than assumed so far.

However, the British tour of 1954 has to be reconstructed, reanalyzed and put in a larger

perspective not only because it was one of the fifties’ forgotten tours, but also because of a possible link between it and the triumph of 1963. The first necessary step of this endeavor is to spot and put into perspective the differences between the 1954 tour, the Parisian one in 1950, and the rest of the 1954 appearances, and to see if these differences, combined with the tour’s outcomes (which will be described in detail later) might allow the 1954 tour to Britain to be viewed as a “special moment” of Graham’s career, which even if not in itself the instance of success, announced and initiated the recognition accorded to her in the sixties in Britain and afterwards, in the rest of Europe.

Coming to Britain in 1954 in order to present art was not an easy task, even if the political and diplomatic atmosphere in which the tour started was different in various ways in Britain compared to other European countries. One could argue that analyzing the political, social and diplomatic setting in which a cultural event or enterprise takes place is not necessary or meaningful, as it is impossible to link a certain “atmosphere” with specific cultural moments such as, in this case, Graham’s tours. But at the same time one can also argue that even if the above assumption is true, one cannot deny also that art is a sublimated expression of a certain historical time and the response to it – one cannot imagine George Grosz art outside of the post-Great War context, or Martha Graham’s art outside of the 20th century. Thus, it is impossible to present cultural developments outside of their time context, even more so when the event under scrutiny happened during the first decade the Cold War, when politics, society, culture and diplomacy started their intricate mélange without precedent in any other historical times.

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402 Paul Gore Both, *With great truth and respect*, p.177; the Americans also disliked the British whom they considered inefficient and old fashioned
By the time of Graham’s tour, the political, national and cultural context in Britain was definitely different and unique in the Western bloc: during the mid fifties the Americans and British were trying to develop another special relationship, now in culture; British anti-Americanism was not at the height existing in other countries; last but not least, by 1954 Graham was not unknown in Britain, as she had supporters of her art there, as she already had developed artistic friendships with some important British luminaries. Could one say that these could not and did not influence the way Graham impacted the British audience, and even more, that the experience of the 1954 tour and more welcoming reception – the only one on the European continent – was not in any way linked to the fact that almost a decade later the British would open the door for Graham the artist and the cultural diplomat?

Anti-American feeling – very powerful in France by the time of the tour of 1950, significantly contributing to Graham’s tour’s lack of success, and considered by Andrei Markovits as part of the European identity403 – was also a reality in the Britain of 1954. As Robert Hewison put it, “Anti-Americanism, (…) was strong in writers and intellectuals of both Right and Left. There was enormous resentment of the USA’s material power and cultural dynamism in the post-war period. It didn’t do any good to be resentful, of course, and popular culture lapped up America and all it had to offer.”404 Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, Margaret Drabble, and Bernard Shaw saw the USA as a “nation of villagers,”405 very pragmatic, down-to-earth, materialistic and insensitive,406 and even if less threatened by the assimilation in

403 Andrei Markowitz, Uncouth Nation, (Princeton University Press , 2007), p.43
404 Robert Hewison (specialist of British culture after the Second world war) email to the author, Fall 2011
406 Ibidem, p.34
the mainstream of the national culture, as in France, the American artists living in Britain prior to the Second World War also had to face the assumption of coming from a country with “vulgar people,” considered equally “light” and underdeveloped; Cole Porter was considered a “writer of light music,” and Agnes de Mille – friend and biographer of Graham – felt overlooked by Britons obsessed with “foxes and delphinium,” and often treated with cultural prejudice. During the Second World War, the Americans, from the military to civilians, were looked upon with feelings ranging from superiority, dislike and concern regarding their casualness and easy-goingness. Even after the war, some British intellectuals, such as the writer Evelyn Waugh, also preferred the Soviets more, whom they have viewed as more cultured, European-like and sophisticated than the Americans. However, even if existing, British anti-Americanism was not by far not as rampant, loud, and deep as the French current, the British culture was the most “inclusive” one among the European cultures, while already since the early fifties the cultural exchange between the British and the Americans was the most advanced of the Western bloc, in spite of the fact that the American cultural diplomatic field was still under construction.

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407 Agnes De Mille, *Martha*, p.346
410 de Mille, *Speak with Me*, p.208; Charles B. Cochran considered that de Mille had to accept less payment for their joint work because of her less impressive artistic background, and not on few occasions the British actors and impresarios ridiculed the Americans for their obsession with their movie stars, whose turbulent lives were “more important for them than serious developments of the world’s history.” p.116: Dame Ninette de Valois, did not want to “waste time on an American”
412 The *Letters of Nancy Mitford to Evelyn Waugh*, edited by Charlotte Mosely ( New York: Houghton Mifflin Company) He wrote to his good friend Nancy Mitford that in Moscow “one is safe from the impertinence of the natives. In New York one is not free from taxi drivers, lift men, interviewers, autograph collectors etc. which make New York hideous.”p.335; however, one have to mention that Nancy Mitford did not truly agree as she believed that: Russia is like England, “awful clothes, food, no wine , the deeply ingrained Calvinism” (in *Love from Nancy, The Letters of Nancy Mitford*, Edited by Charlotte Mosly, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993, p. 328)
The reasons for the friendlier, more permissive and balanced cultural diplomacy between the two countries were complex and intricate, having both historical as well as present grounds. Before the war British culture, overshadowed by the French and German ones, looked towards its immediate neighbors for cultural partnership. Once the Cold War became a reality and cultural exchange a part of the diplomacy involved in this conflict, the Americans became the “desirable others,” and “the pond,” as the Atlantic ocean was called, felt often and also culturally less wide than the English Channel. Referring to the cultural exchange British officials admitted that “nothing could be more effective than this kind of propaganda,” as well as “a growing understanding of the American life.” Besides, as the public patronage of culture in Britain had its golden time in the fifties, permitting access to arts for a less elite social class and narrowing the gap between “art” and “high-art,” the newly established middlebrow audience needed other products of entertainment; its main source of distribution was the USA. The Americans, too, considered Britain the country where their chances to validate the quality of their culture were the highest, while a success in Britain could be a great asset in presenting American culture successfully in other European countries, thus helping the effort of the Cold War. In one of its reports the State Department, the members of the American Commission

416 Correspondence between British Information Services and the State Department, FO 953/1161, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
417 Ibidem
419 Garlake, *New Art, New World*, p. 8
420 Roy and Gwen Shaw, “The Cultural and Social Setting” in *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain. Vol 9. Since the Second World War*, Edited by Boris Ford, p. 2; especially the British modern artists would also welcome the American version of Subtopia, appropriating film, consumer goods and popular magazines in their work

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responsible for the cultural exchange between the British and the Americans, created shortly after the war, stressed that “in those countries where the prejudice is particularly strong, or is felt to be of special importance, grants are to be made under the categories of leaders and key specialist to key individuals in the fine arts fields to visit the US.”

Without doubt, Britain was one of those countries. However, the Americans were aware that, as another report of the Commission stated, in Britain too, “among the prejudices concerning the US to be found in other countries, one of the most firmly established is the view that US is “mechanical-minded, materialistic, and essentially uncultured.”

Still, one does not have to believe that the cultural relationship between Britain and the USA during the Cold War was a sentimental endeavor or a process dictated by hearts and not minds. It had problems and setbacks, often being “a fragile reed,” as the project Mayflower II showed.

It was not helped either by the fact that the British Council was not represented in America, and that while the British signed cultural agreements with West Germany in 1954 and with the USSR in 1955, with dancers included for the first time in a Soviet delegation of speakers and performers in 1953, their first appearance on the London stage being at the Scala Theatre, in November 1953; no cultural agreement regarding dance existed between the British and the Americans at that time.

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421 Report to the State Department of the American Commission, FO 924/794; CRL 25/31, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
422 Ibidem
424 Ibidem; designed to be a symbol of British-American friendship, of their mutual support and cultural collaboration, proved to be a source of disagreements and tensions
However, sharing a common language and a common past, having more common diplomatic interests, and also having previous cultural communications on both sides of the Atlantic (this aspect is detailed in the chapter related to Graham’s friendship with some British cultural luminaries,) helped the British-American cultural relationship, which was the most functional one in the Western bloc. It definitely influenced the cultural exchange, the way their artists were supported in order to present art in the “others’ ” cultural space, and ultimately contributed to their success there. Last but not least, the British-American cultural relationship was a logical outcome of the Cold War’s politics, as not only it was based on necessity and mutual interests, but it was also helped by the existent similarities in the way the British and Americans imagined, projected, and used their cultural diplomacy.

It was most interesting that in spite of the fact that the fifties’ general cry was the return to the conservative values of nation, home, sexuality, and art (often linked one to another,) Britain – the country seen as the promoter of traditions – and the USA – the country without a long or any tradition in the arts – supported more than any other countries modernism in arts. Indeed, the British were attracted by romantic nationalism, by the “safe and old and good values of the prewar years,” and planned also to export “high culture,” and in the States

427 Peter Clarke, Hope and glory: Britain 1900-1990 (London : Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1996), The “classical” arts and famous British poets and novelists also became cultural diplomats; British orchestras, ballet companies and ballet stars, such as Margot Fonteyn, were part of the British cultural export. There are high chances that Graham went to see Margot Fonteyn, the star of the British ballet while in the USA, but none of the dancers, neither Graham, nor Fonteyn talked about their first encounter, even if later they will participate in each other’s celebrations of their art and international fame.
428 Peter Clarke, Hope and glory : Britain 1900-1990, p.217
429 The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain, and in Various reports BW/120/1, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey; Drama Advisory Committee meetings show that in 1944, they were planning the tour of the Old Vic to the USA, in 1947 they discussed that ballet Rambert was supposed to go to Australasia in June 1947, and to have an extended tour to Latin America; Sadler’s Ballet went to Italy, Canada and USA in 1949; in may 1950 they planned a tour to Paris of Ballet Rambert; Margot Fonteyn had an engagement with Belgrad Ballet and in the
modernism was not a major art trend with a large audience, but still, at the official level both the British Council in the Arts and the State Department openly supported modernism in the remaking of national culture and identity, as it was considered able to prove the vitality of a nation and its promising future better than classicism.

One could call it pragmatic, but promoting and supporting modernism as part of the official “exchange” between Britain and the USA had immediate and long term consequences in the way that American modern artists, including Graham, were perceived in Britain, as modern artists were sent overseas and major modern exhibitions were organized, encouraged, sponsored, and advertised in order to be presented to the public on the other side of the Atlantic, as also between the wars New York was replacing Paris and Berlin as the Mecca of modern arts. Sending a modern artist to the USA assured an established, even if limited, audience and market for the one’s art. Not by coincidence two modern and controversial American artists, Jackson Pollock and Martha Graham, first established a legacy on the European continent in Britain, even if their full success was to happen in the British Isles in the sixties. But there were signs which announced it during the fifties.

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cultural exchange with USSR, ballet was considered; also Old Vic toured Yugoslavia with Hamlet in 1959 and USSR. 
430 The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain, p.104; Major exhibition on modern art were organized: the one was called “40,000 years of modern art,” emphasizing modernism of the ancient, tribal and modern art; 20,000 visitors, and the ones dedicated to Picasso and Matisse at Victoria and Albert Museum. Alan Davie, the first British painter influenced by Jackson Pollock and American Expressionism. In literature , before the war the arts in Britain were overshadowed by their French and Russians counterparts” but now, especially in theatre there was the time “of redivivus” with modern themed and written plays, such those of Harold Pinter, John Osborne, and Arnold Wesker; 
431 Ibidem, p.77
Martha Graham and her Company danced in London between March 1\textsuperscript{st} and March 20\textsuperscript{th}, 1954. They were not the first American modern dancers to perform before the British public, as Charles Weidmann and Doris Humphrey, were on the London stage before them.\footnote{deMille, \textit{Speak to me}, p.169} 

Graham and her company arrived in London several days before the beginning of the performances, with most of the company ill with a flu, but they started rehearsing intensely, sometimes even after the evening performance.\footnote{Robert Tracy, \textit{Martha Graham's Dancers Remember} (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), p.145} Bethsabee was there, contributing to the tour financially, while with the help of another friend, the therapist Frances Wickes, Graham was more balanced emotionally than four years before,\footnote{Letter from Martha Graham to Gertrude Macy, April 2, 1963, Box 1, File 1, Gertrude Macy papers, 1953-1976, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library.} a time span during which her creative energy produced no less the four major works, including \textit{Canticle for Innocent Comedians} and \textit{The Triumph of St. Joan}.\footnote{De Mille, \textit{Martha}, p.448-449}

Interpreting the information displayed in the programs of the season, especially the one of the first night is more than a necessary first step of reconstructing not only the London performance(s) of 1954, and the thinking and planning associated with of it. The way the program was conceptualized leads one to reflect on the importance of artistic programs in publicizing art and their makers, but also in preparing and influencing the audience prior to a performance.

The first night’s program shows that Graham, her staff, and those involved in the cultural enterprise of her tour to Britain advertised and presented Graham, the company, and their art in the best possible way. On one hand, the program carefully listed all people who, through their
previous fame or artistic career, made the artistic enterprise to London look more qualitative and polished: it was proudly announced that Graham and her company were presented by the B. de Rothschild Foundation of the Arts and Sciences Inc., under the management of Anatole Heller, that the musical director was Simon Sadoff, and the conductor was Eugene Lester; it also informed that Martha Graham and her company were presented to the British public by the local impresario Peter Daubeny. There was a list of the authors of the musical scores, of the costumes and of the settings’ designers, and of the dancers who accompanied Graham. They included those who were and would be connected, in a way or another, with Graham and her company for the rest of their lives: Pearl Lang, Yuriko, Helen McGehee, Linda Margolies(Hodes), Mary Hinkson, Miriam Cole, Matt Turney, Robert Cohan, Stuart Hodes, Bertram Ross, David Wood (their names put on the program accordingly with their importance, with Martha Graham’s name printed with big letters, followed by the names of Yuriko and Helen McGehee, then the rest of the company, while Pearl Lang’s name was also emphasized at the bottom of the poster.\footnote{Scrapbook, Ethel Winter and Charles Hyman Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington} One could also see names of dancers who disappeared from Graham’s company.\footnote{They were Louisa Pierce, Lillian Biersteker, and Cameron McCosh.}

On the other hand, the program shows that older, already established pieces were combined with new ones, such as Ardent Song, while also, not by coincidence, were included works which could be tied with the British culture or its heritage in America. During the first night the dances picked had an already established fame, but they also combined the “dark,” Greek themes with the “lighter,” with more joyful ones. Not only was it a chance to show the largeness and depth of Graham’s talent as a choreographer, able to work with an array of topics, but this dark-light combination had a better chance to impress the audience, which often
complained about the seriousness of Graham’s works. The first of the three works was *Errand into the Maze*, created in 1947 and derived from the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Described by the program of the evening as “an errand journey into the maze of the heart’s darkness,” the duet was danced by Graham with Stuart Hodes, surrounded by a set created by Isamu Noguchi, which comprised a gateway with hanging shapes and cords which gave the impression of a tree. The second work was *Diversion of Angels*, an “old favorite” of many people, as it interpreted “a mood of happiness,” and announced with a quotation from Thomas Traherene, in yellow, red, white and brown costumes the dancers (Pearl Lang, Helen McGehee, Mary Hinkson, Robert Cohan, Bertram Ross and Stuart Hodes) interpreted a “pure movement ballet suggesting the ecstasy and sense of wonder” related to the joy of love. The critics responded immediately: “It contained the best dancing..more athletic than music…some unusual lifts and made some sort of a pattern on the stage,” wrote a critic. Richard Buckle considered it “wordsworthian,” while another British critic who signed JHM, claimed that it “was an exercise in more or less storyless dance. The third was *Night Journey*, one of the most “enduring” pieces of Graham, premiered in 1947 and danced by her company every season (except for 1979.) Also based on Greek myth, the dance told the story of Jocasta “at the moment of her death when she faced and understood the forces which had molded her life,” described by the critic A.V. Cotton as “tight-packed with tense symbolic actions, movements and gestures,”

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438 Program Saville Theatre, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections, London
439 Ibidem
440 Clipping, Unsigned, Martha Graham Collection, box 329, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
441 Clipping, Richard Buckle, Martha Graham Collection, box 329, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
442 Clipping, A.V. Cotton
Buckle believed that the work “turns another black and splendid myth to her purpose,” and JHM called it a “pretentious work” with “passionate, awkward, dramatic force.”

During the first week, after the opening night, the company’s performances continued to rely on already famous works, such as the most American one, namely Appalachian Spring (commissioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, with sets by Isamu Noguchi.) It had no real story but was profoundly American through its theme, using key themes of American history and culture. Graham danced the Wife in all the performances but one night, Stuart Hodes was the Husband, and Matt Turney was pioneering woman. Criticism concentrated on the “delicate, refreshing and airy score which Aaron Copland composed for it,” being called a “Genevan psalmody as filtered through New England Puritanism..the music told more of the story than the dance;” Williams praised the “ folk dance themes are beautifully woven into the tapestry of these simple people from the Appalachian mountains,” but another critic believed that “the actual choreography is less attractive, consisting of fidgety jerks and contortions which rarely connect into what ballet calls an ‘enchainement.’ What is more serious, the repetition of forced , inflexible patterns of movement emphasizes the limitation of Miss Graham’s free dance idiom, which should by right have no limitation, since it is free.” Somehow in the middle, not dismissive and not truly appreciative, Cyril Beaumont admitted that even if “sometimes disjointed and incongruous” the dance “was one of Miss Graham’s best works.”
During the first week the company also presented *Canticle for Innocent Comedians* (the title being that of a poem by Ben Bellitt,) in which Graham did not appear, and it was danced by Stuart Hodes, Helen McGehee, Robert Cohan, Pearl Lang and Mary Hinkson. Barnes considered it as “a Whitmanesque side to the ever-surprising Graham personality. ‘Canticle’ shows the life-cycle of the world in simple unpretentious terms. Each element is praised with an expressive dance, and the work is linked together by the dancing of the ‘participants’. is a wonderful theatrical experience, exciting and moving.” 448 Another critic also liked it as it “is the most enjoyable of the works and it allows the personality of Yuriko, most talented of the troupe, to emerge…as a dancer Miss Graham herself has little grace and in every role she remains the same; there is no trace of interpretation that enables one to divine a character;” 449 it was also called a “charming lyrical song,” 450 while Williams considered that “the symbolism is easy to discover and needs no searching into the deep recesses of the mind.” 451

Most likely not coincidentally, a work well received in the States, linked to the British culture, *Deaths and Entrances*, was on the list: having as a title one of the complexly famous Dylan Thomas’s poems, it involved the drama of the Bronte sisters. They were presented revisiting their past experiences and childhood while playing a chess game. Unfortunately, without much success: Williams considered that “there is …a slight similarity between the doom-eagerness of three sisters, and that of the sisters of Haworth Parsonage, but there the resemblance ends,” admitting that “there is a feeling of timelessness,” and that “the heart really

448 Clipping, Clive Barnes
449 Clipping, Unsigned
450 Clipping, unsigned
451 Clipping, Peter Williams
belongs to one of the protagonists – to Graham.” 452 Cotton did not like at all as it was “too packed with hints and small clues which do not clarify into a clear statement.”453

As shown by the sparse selection of criticism Graham’s works and performances received during the first week, even if Graham and her company were not having disastrous performances as in Paris in 1950, the praise and the success they were counting on and expected were not there. The second week of the three planned to be spent in London started for Graham and her company in a cautious mood, while the critic Richard Buckle, already converted to Graham’s art, was musing, “I am delighted that a number of discerning people have discovered and warmly appreciated the life-enchanting qualities of Martha Graham whose season continues at Saville to small but enthusiastic audiences.”454

Continuing the “British Theme” during the second week the work Letter to the World, considered by critics “Martha Graham’s famous experiment,” 455 was presented. It was based on the life and art of a famous New Englander, Emily Dickinson, whose role was played by Graham, while Pearl Lang read the lines of the poems presented concomitantly with the dance. Clive Barnes considered that Graham dances gave a “limitless vista of possibilities to the watcher;”456 JHM noticed favorably the “silent language of arms and legs,” called the piece a “dance-drama,” and suggested that the major achievement of the work is “the possibilities of dramatic choreography… which is no small achievement.” However, one can only wonder how Graham felt, finding that his other suggestion was that her innovation in dance could be

452 Ibidem
453 Clipping, Andrew Cotton
454 Clipping, Richard, Buckle
455 Clipping, Unsigned
456 Clipping, Clive Barnes
“enriched and continued by others less intense and... more aware of the limitations of their medium.”

However, during the last week, on March 18, 1954, a new piece, namely Ardent Song was premiered. It was advertised by The Times simply: “Tomorrow and Friday – World Premiere, Ardent Song.” Reminiscent of the first night in Paris in 1950 when the dancers removed the pins of their costumes until the last moment, in London the tensions were maximized by the fact that the work was not ready, which was the case again. There were the “chaotic” rehearsals, which sometimes ended at 2:00 in the morning, and at 8:00 am the dancers were summoned back. Pearl Lang and the rest of the company had to improvise during the first night, which some considered a very difficult and traumatic experience. Others, like the dancer David Wood, considered it “exciting” as during the first performance the company worked “cohesively” like never before in order to make it work, and, as the same dancer confessed, it worked beautifully. The dance was called by a critic “a revelation,” it was considered by JHM as a “feast” even if “vague mystique” and “general symbolism” but “exceptionally successful work because some of its combined effects of lighting and movement are exquisite.”

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457 Clipping, JHM
458 Clipping, Times, March 18, 1954
459 Ibidem
459 de Mille, Martha, p.314-315
460 Robert Tracy, Martha Graham’s Dancers Remember (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), p.192
461 Ibidem
462 de Mille, Martha, p.33
463 Tracy, Martha Graham’s Dancers Remember, p. 221
464 Clipping, Unsigned
465 Clipping, JHM

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It was followed by *Dark Meadow*, which received positive comments, as it was “a dance action which re-enacts the mysteries of primitive worship…a new paraphrase of the basic idea of Stravinsky’s ‘Sacre du Printemps,’” and a “strange, incredibly beautiful series of dances and stylized mimic contacts and conflicts between male and female elements.”

Williams called it “excellent” in spite of the fact that it showed a weakness to Graham’s approach to dance creation. The very ambiguity that gives the dance its peculiar quality of poetic insight, makes it a sitting target for symbolic extravagance; Barns appreciated in it “the joy of movement.”

Another piece presented during the last week was *Voyage* (advertised as *Theatre for the Voyage*), but it did not capture much attention from the critics.

One also has to answer the question related to the audience which gathered and encountered the art created and presented by Graham and her company came at the Saville Theatre. Regarding the program which advertised and tried to “sell” Graham to the public, the first element which comes to attention is its size. Given the audience for modern dance in general and in particular at that moment in time, as well as Graham’s limited popularity at that point in Europe, it is not surprising that the audience was not a large one. However, more than half a century after Martha Graham danced at Saville Theatre in the spring of 1954 it would be very hard to pinpoint exactly how many people were in the theatre during those weeks, but those who wrote about this topic agreed that it had a small size. The feared critic Kenneth Tynan declared that Graham played to “thin but ecstatic houses at the Saville Theatre in London,”

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467 Clipping, Coton
468 Clipping, Williams
469 Clipping, Barnes
Buckle said that “when Martha Graham first came to the Saville there were 12 pilgrims in the house at one matinee,” and Robin Howard, remarked in an interview that “we were 25 each night, but now there are 5000 who said that they were there that night.” Interestingly, Pearl Lang remembered something different, namely that they had a pretty large audience. Mary Hinkson, a talented dancer from the company, also fondly remembered with fondness the tour and the performances from the Saville Theatre.

Even if not numerous, who was in the audience then and there? In connection to this question, one wonders which was the role played by politics and diplomacy in Graham’s presence in 1954 London, as for the scheduled (but never fulfilled) plan to dance in 1950 London the role of American officials ready to help the cultural enterprise of Graham and her company was obvious and has been demonstrated. For Graham’s presence in London in 1954 things were more intricate. A necessary question for the reconstruction of Graham’s tours of the fifties to Europe is to find out “Who paid the piper?” On one hand there were voices which claimed that the American Embassy in London was not paying attention to Graham and her company. On other hand there are proofs that like four years earlier, the State Department and other important offices were aware that Graham was touring Europe. Pearl Lang, the soloist of Graham’s company, who premiered Ardent Song on the London stage in the spring of 1954, suggested that

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471 Ibidem
472 Interview with Robin Howard with Tobi Tobias, 22 August 1978, in London
473 Pearl Lang, Interview with the author, October 2008, Tape recording.
when Graham attempted Europe again, “she was little interested in who helped her art as long as it could be promoted” outside of the American borders.\textsuperscript{476}

In a letter sent to Ms. Mary Stewart Frances, the chief of the International Exchange Program in the Department of State, at the beginning of 1955, a half a year after the tour, the sender, an unidentified member of the dancer’s entourage, thanked Stewart Frances for the help she gave to a Graham dancer in a matter regarding visas, but also for “all the help while we were there.” The sender also asks for further support for another European tour, which appeared at that point as a serious possibility, but cautiously Ms. Frances Stewart is warned that it “will have to be without the Foundation underwriting” (one can easily understand that it was referring to de Rothschild’s Foundation). Finally, the sender asks Stewart Frances to analyze the reports on the tour she had received in order to suggest to Graham and her company which locations would be the best and safest to try again, while also asking for any comments and reports provided by the embassies to the State Department, on Graham’s “appearance there”, which could be helpful “for planning the next tour.”\textsuperscript{477}

A further confirmation of the official involvement in the tour is the letter sent by Bennet and Pleasant, Graham’s press representatives, to her and her staff while she was still in Europe. Thanking them for their postcards received from them and letting them know how proud they were of their success (“thrilled with the wonderful reports,”) Isadora Bennett also informed that “The Voice of America” had reprinted 70,000 copies of an article about Martha Graham and

\textsuperscript{476} Pearl Lang, Interview with the author, October 2008, Tape Recording
\textsuperscript{477} Letter of unknown sender to Mary Frances Stewart, February 22, 1955, box 230, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
distributed them throughout Europe.\footnote{478} While in London, Graham also received a letter regarding the publicity with which the company and its leader were assisted by the State Department and USIA in Germany, prior to their appearance there, as the Baroness de Rothschild promised her father that she would never spend a dime on German soil, so she was unable to help the company; therefore the State Department and USIA took over the task.\footnote{479}

However, for the 1954 tour there were more sources from which Graham received support. In 1950 the members of the American Embassy in London were disappointed not being able to present Graham to their “British friends.”\footnote{480} Four years later their interest did not vanish, and by 1954 the American cultural diplomacy was better organized, refined and developed, while the “grand cultural strategy’s” steps were well established, just one year later Graham would become officially a cultural diplomat of her country. Besides, another element most likely contributed to the way the American diplomats in London viewed and expected Graham’s tour: Winthrop Williams Aldrich, the American ambassador in London, was linked in a personal way to the world and entourage of the American moderns and modern art. He was the maternal uncle of Abigail "Abby" Rockefeller Mauzé, the patron and sponsor of MOMA in New York, (called by one of her sons, “Mommy’s museum,”) and the great-uncle of Nelson Rockefeller, who was a direct supporter of Martha Graham through the Rockefeller Foundation.

\footnote{478} Letter of Isabella Bennett to Young Woodley, May 21, 1954, box 230, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
\footnote{479} Agnes De Mille, Martha. The Life and Work of Martha Graham (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), p.316
\footnote{480} Letter of Mallory Brown to Martha Graham, August 15, 1950, , box 229, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress; Mallory Brown, Mallory Brown, Public Affairs Officer, USIA, American Embassy To Foreign Office, Cultural Relations Department
New findings from the Archive of the Rhode Island Historical Society, hosting the papers of the American Ambassador Winthrop Williams Aldrich,481 prove that the presence of Graham in London on the occasion of her 1954 tour, started in this city,482 was not unknown to the officials of the American Embassy. In fact, soon after her arrival, Graham would be the guest of the American Ambassador and of his wife. “Late in the afternoon we had a cocktail party, which really turned into a very pleasant occasion,” remembered Harriet Aldrich, the Ambassadress, while writing to her children from London, on February 27, 1954. After enumerating her guests, members of the British aristocracy and also American artistic personalities (Donald Ogden Stewart, American author and screenwriter, Ben Wells, New York Times correspondent, Cornelia Otis Skinner, actress,)483 she mentioned the presence in the select circle of “Martha Graham the dancer, with her conductor and her manager.” Talking about the moment, Harriet Aldrich also mentioned that Graham was introduced to “quite a lot of Embassy People” “and it went very well.”484

It is yet unknown if the Ambassador and his wife attended Graham’s season in London, started on March 1 and closed on March 20\textsuperscript{th}. However, it is obvious that the Embassy knew about the dates of the performances, as after the final night a press conference for Graham and her company was organized in the Embassy’s building, followed by a party. Graham gave a speech in which she quoted Saint John Perse. Most probably, it was not an unconscious choice for the dancer soon to be an official cultural diplomat, to cite from another artist who also

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481 Winthrop Williams Aldrich was the brother of “Abby” Rockefeller, the patron and sponsor of MOMA in New York
482 The company arrived on February 22, after they left the New York harbor on February 17, on Queen Elizabeth
483 Letter, Harriet Aldrich to her children, February 27\textsuperscript{th}, 1954, Folder 7, Series I, Subseries 2, Correspondence, Harriet A. Aldrich Collection, Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI
484 Ibidem
combined as well art and diplomacy, as Perse did. (Beside being an important French diplomat he was also in the circle of friends of important personalities such as F.D. Roosevelt, the Attorney General Francis Biddle and his spouse, author Katherine Garrison Chapin, and on good terms with the UN Secretary General.)

As one would have expected then and now – while reconstructing and deciphering the tour to London in 1954 – the “tier” of the audience most represented at Saville Theatre was artistic. Acknowledging that in Paris the artistic and cultural life of the city and its representatives preferred to leave mostly unnoticed Graham’s presence there in 1950, and there are not any proofs of a “special relationship” between American dance and members of the French cultural elite, the same cannot be said about her presence in London. Little discussed before, under the assumption that Graham was unknown to the European audience prior to her tours to there, it is clear that outside the American borders the dancer was most known in Britain. A fairly large number of people from the artistic sphere who knew and had met her previously recorded their encounters and friendships with the American dancer. A subsequent chapter describes and analyzes Graham’s most important relationships with British luminaries, the actor John Gielgud, the writer E. M. Forster and the sculptor Henry Moore, who all met and befriended the dancer in New York during the mid and late forties, while their relationships lasted until the seventies. This unprecedented reality, unique and exclusive in the spectrum of Graham’s relationship with the artistic Europe, is another proof that the reception of Graham in Europe, started in Britain, was not an isolated and circumstantial moment of Graham’s life and career, and that, as stressed before, not by coincidence Graham’s success started officially on the British Isles in 1963.
Were Henry Moore, John Gielgud and E. M. Forster in the London audience in 1954? The chances are high that they did not miss the occasion to see Graham again, especially in the case of Gielgud, who was an avid theatergoer and socialite. She was also known to important members of the British dancers’ circle, and to other personalities such as the composer Benjamin Britten and his collaborator and partner, Peter Pears. However, in the audience there were several members of the Sadler’s Wells Royal Ballet, who came almost every night. Important personalities linked to the dancers’ world were also present: the dancer Margaret Barr from Dartington told a friend that after Martha Graham’s first night at Saville Theatre, she remembered her Dartington’s colleague, Louise Soelberg’s Bagatelle no.4; in the audience was also Dame Marie Rambert, the former star of the British ballet, who before Graham’s tour to Britain, used to mock Martha Graham’s style of dance, considering it too far from the beauty and grace of ballet. Under the impression of the first night in London, the white-haired Rambert came to Martha Graham’s dressing room, and, after she embraced her the level of her enthusiasm rose so high, with loud weeping and cries of admiration, that it worried the rest of the crowd. There were the choreographers John Cranko and Frederick Ashton too. Ashton met Graham in the USA and was a promoter of “modern” ballet. (Dame Margot Fonteyn compared Martha Graham’s way of choreographing with the one of Sir Frederick Ashton. Suggestively, he also drew a line between his and Graham’s creation, declaring: “I had to dig deeply into myself to do

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486 de Mille, Martha, p.314
487 Clipping, “How Britain went modern,” Dance and Dancers, December, 1985
488 David Vaughan, Frederick Ashton, p.249; For instance, Daphnis and Chloe which was closer in style, theme and perspective to Martha Graham’s style than any ballet work to date, with a story in which “sexuality and innocence were not mutually exclusive.”
it,” while Martha Graham said: “One does not create dances. One dances feelings.” Like Graham too, Ashton was also accused of ruining the beauty of dance making it impossible to be understood by the public.)

Martha Graham’s dressing room was the place where Kenneth Tynan, the drama critic known for his eccentricity, irony, and very high artistic standards, met Martha Graham, and his awe “confined him to monosyllables” while noticing her “formidable sort, enigmatic, ambiguous beauty”; nonetheless, he became an admirer of her. James Roose Evans actor, dance critic and director, became also a devoted supporter of the artist. His letters to Graham, which he started to send to her right after her trip to London in 1954, spanned several decades, displaying admiration and amazement. In one of his letters he also recalled the experience of seeing Martha Graham dancing as a major and life-changing moment of his existence: “The best experience I ever had as an artist…seeing you gave me a sense of direction and showed me kind of dance I respond with my whole being”.

But the response of the artistic tier presented was outmatched by the more powerful and influential (not the least because they were all recorded in writing) responses belonging to the

489 Stodelle, Deep Song, p.217
490 Ibidem, p. 251
491 Ibidem.p.254-255; Tiresias, “a delicate psychological fantasy with profoundly philosophical overtones” “symptomatic of a general decline in artistic standards”
493 Ibidem.
494 Letter of James Roose Evans to Martha Graham, August 5, 1950, Box 230, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington; Evans was a the founder of the Hampstead Theatre Club, and member of the Royal Society of Arts
495 Ibidem; In his letter he shows a deep knowledge of Graham’s creations (“I loved Lamentation and Frontier”), publications related to the artist ( Barbara Morgan’s book “has been a source of meditation and joy”), plans to visit the USA and Graham, but even more so hopes that he will have the chance to see Graham in London again. The work which impressed him the most was Ardent Song.
judges of art(s), in this case the dance critics. The British critics’ rejection of Graham was almost total, getting to the point that they wondered: “Was this trip necessary?” Their responses revealed incessant criticism, little praise, and a lack of understanding of the new form of art. Even if by the time of Graham’s trip modern dance in Britain was more advanced in conception and teaching than in the rest of the European countries, and in spite of that Graham’s name was better known in Britain compared to other European countries, the critics’ responses to her first tour gives one a sensation of déjà-vu, as they bore a striking similarity with that of the French critics four years before.

The British critics considered and classified Graham’s art and presence in London as unconvincing and not valuable due to the same “problems” identified by their French counterparts: it was not ballet, but a different style of dance, it was not entertaining, but complicated and cerebral, and the women presented in her dances were “dark” thus not submissive and decorative. However, like the French, the British critics found themselves in an interesting and peculiar position, namely that while representing the culture of a nation which claimed to have tradition and elevated artistic expectation, they dismissed Graham’s art for being too intellectually demanding, too little entertaining, and for not being what they knew.

Discrediting the value of a creation based on the idea that it was new and not entertaining was not a novelty, as over centuries the new artistic trends were usually received with reserve. If one looks even closer, it is obvious that the way art was judged was also strongly influenced by the nature of the society and times during which it was created and performed. In Britain during the war, Shakespeare felt like their contemporary, with his dramas and vivid depictions of the

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496 McDonough, *Martha*, p.229
dark side of human behavior, but just a decade later, during the fifties – like the rest of Europe and the world – the British preferred a lighter side of art and life, themes and characters which were less Shakespearian and intense, and not “torturous art, high-minded, and pretentious” art, as Graham’s dance was considered in Britain by most critics. At the 1954 performances at the Saville Theatre, where Graham and her company performed, this lighter mood of most of the audience and critics is evident, as well as that Graham and her style of art “fitted” little there and then. The only other dance performance during that year was Teresa and Luisillo, a Spanish ballet which had its heyday in the early fifties and was entertaining and ethnic. On March 24, 1954, right after Graham and her company, Saville presented The White Countess, a play long forgotten, followed by Cockles and Champagne (Cecil Landea,) Pay the piper (Laurier Lister,) which held the poster for the Christmas of 1954, and Accounting for Love, a play which not only is unremembered but also impossible to be found in any data bases of the Saville Theatre or any other theatrical institution.

However, while considering as benchmark the way the French critics responded previously, and the fact that Graham’s tour took place during the tame fifties, one cannot help but wonder if Graham’s lack of success in the eyes of critics London critics in 1954, was due to her inability to convince them about the quality of her art, or it was vice versa, their lack of capability and competence (in the field of modern dance) to see and understand her art. The way they responded, the comparisons they made, the faults they found, and the language the British

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498 Playbill, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
499 Clippings, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
critics used for analyzing modern dance and Graham’s works clearly show that most of them lived in the past.

The champion of criticism targeting Graham, her dance and the way it was created, imagined, and danced, was undoubtedly Cyril Beaumont. He led the rejection of Graham’s newness and innovation in dance. He criticized the “esoteric symbolism difficult to comprehend,” the style of dance “ultra-modern” and the “negation of normal conceptions of art.” Graham, he said, danced with “arm and leg distorted, steps often begin with the working foot (toe upward), ..and there is much use of staccato pelvic tilts, constricted thorax and abdomen, and rolling on the floor.”\textsuperscript{500} Other critics followed him on the same note; another ironically observed that “the trouble with apostles of freedom is deadly serious” and that Graham disregarded all the conventions and techniques of ballet “beyond the language of dance,” but he gave her some credit for “extending the capacity of dance, enlarging its idiom, and experimenting,” but only to become negative again, musing that “unless she shows us something more varied in mood, more musical in invention, less tortured in execution and less high minded in themes,” then “she is not likely to establish her case.”\textsuperscript{501} More precisely, not to dance modern dance and get back to beautiful old ballet! Graham was accused of being on “a technical blind alley,” too “intense,”\textsuperscript{502} while another critic saw her problem in the fact that her art’s “language

\textsuperscript{500} Clipping, Cyril Beaumont, \textit{Sunday Times}, March 7 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
\textsuperscript{501} Clipping, Unsigned, \textit{Times}, March 2 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
\textsuperscript{502} Clipping, Unsigned, \textit{Times}, March 9 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
is that not only is much of it private and therefore to be learned by the audience,” but “some is the same as ordinary mime movements but with the meanings scrambled.”

As shown by the above examples, the critics’ main problem was that they evaluated at a new art using an ineffective and old-fashioned “device” which not only belonged to ballet, but, ironically, even for the ballet of the 1950s was outdated, as British dance was going through transformations which in their own way were unique in the European spectrum. British dance’s past was linked to vaudeville and music hall, but, on the brighter side, not being haunted by tradition, previous fame and level of expectations, it did not have (like the French for instance) to get back to a certain past or a certain path. Therefore, in making (and not re-making) the greatness of British dance, the British choreographers had manifested a tendency to include and not to exclude the modern movement and developments. The former ballerinas Marie Rambert and Ninette de Valois (who admired Kurt Jooss and his *Green Table*, but considered both Martha Graham and Marie (sic) Wigman “too cerebral,” wanted to “align ballet with other arts,” but not by refreshing old techniques and themes, but modernizing it. Even ballerinas such as the famous Beryl Gray incorporated the “modern movement” in her classical training, studying with Audrey de Vos, the dance teacher who developed the instruction of ballet inspired form modern dance.

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503 Clipping, box 219, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
504 Charles B.Cochran, *Cock-a-Doodle-do*, p. 277, as the reputed English theatrical manager affirmed, cabaret was the favorite dancing style prior and during the Second World War in Britain
505 Ninette de Valois, *Invitation to Ballet*, p. 178
506 Ibidem, p.242
507 de Mille. *Speak with me, dance with me*, p.235; however, Another British choreographer who was inspired by modern dance was Anthony Tudor, but he went and flourished professionally in to SUA.
The reality of the fact that the critics remained in the past while their own country’s
dance moved forward was noticed by Robin Howard, who believed that the British critics were
so negative as “some (…) had never even heard of Graham, but also because “of their
impenetrable barriers,” which made them immune to see that “new ideas were coming forward.”
Thus, he also observed, they preferred to remain anchored in the past, as “they only knew
classical ballet” and were concerned only with “how many steps, how long was the balance” and
not with the straight theater of the piece, or the total impact of it.” 508 “People have heard of
American dance through magazines and books,” and there was an “abyssal ignorance”
regarding modern dance, as “they knew only Jooss,”509 Howard also stated.

The last statement is more important than it might look at first sight and should be
interpreted. First and very important is that the critics and public knew Jooss as the German
modern dancer was living in Britain, after the coming to power of the Nazis, which led to notable
modern dancers to leave the country. Ninette de Valois admired Kurt Jooss, for his “vitality,
rhythm, and freedom of movement,”510 Rudolf von Laban and Sigurd Ledeer also left for
Britain,511 and helped the School of Dance-Mime opened at Dartington 512 once two of its most
important dancers-teachers left. (Shortly after Martha Graham established her school in New
York, Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirsts – acquaintances of Graham who invited her to Britain513 –
opened a dance department at Dartington. Margaret Barr, a former student of Martha Graham.514

508 Interview with Robin Howard with Tobi Tobias, 22 August 1978, in London
509 Ibidem
510 Ninette de Valois, Invitation to Ballet, p.179
511 deMille, Martha, p.217
513 Ibidem, p.46
514 Ibidem, p. 60
and the Seattle native named Louise Soelberg,\textsuperscript{515} taught classes inspired by the Graham technique. They also organized and presented shows praised by John Martin, the American dance critic who himself toured Britain during the thirties. Afterwards they left the school, one going to Australia and the other one returning to the USA.)

Remaining anchored in the past, comparing modern dance’s impact on the public with ballet, and disregarding the developments in dance from Britain, which even if timid were not inexistent or unimportant, the critics failed to recognize that Graham was connected to a select club of innovators in art, to which names such as Picasso, James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence belonged. However, during the sixties, comparing her with them would be the favorite and almost omnipresent “metaphor” of those who wrote about Graham. During the fifties, most British critics, by habit, or training, turned to the past in the way they positioned and compared to Graham’s art. They called it “Wordsworthian,”\textsuperscript{516} a “Genevan psalmody,” or “Whitmanesque.” However, it is almost an irony, because linking Graham to these images was an unintended sign of appreciation, as indeed, Graham’s works had a lot in common with Walt Whitman’s hidden sexuality, the preciseness and clean beauty of the Genevan psalms, and even the romanticism of William Wordsworth’s poems.

Beside being constantly and intensely compared to ballet, the themes and the message of her works came also under fire, and the critics had even more reasons to complain about the artistic journey of the American modern dance creator to London and outside of the ballet’s world. In the eye of the British critics – again comparable the French ones – enjoyment and

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{515} Ibidem, p.75  \\
\textsuperscript{516} Clipping, Richard Buckle, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
\end{flushleft}
entertainment were the “must have” qualities of dance of the current time. But, alas, Graham’s dance was “impressive but not designed for the enjoyment,” attracting even more critical responses: “(the) works shown were deadly serious,”“strictly and uninterruptedly serious,”“a symbolic journey into the dark places of the heart…whiles the symbolism is so direct and so potent that it makes an overwhelming effect.”Canticle for Innocent Comedians, perceived as a “divertissement” was the very favorite, as it would “frighten no one.” By comparison, Errand into the Maze was disliked for being “so persistently strained in movement, so intense in mood, and so pretentious in theme.” Her dance was called an “abstruse drama,” “suicidal existentialism,” and was considered “a journey into fear,” and denied artistic value, as “the unceasing effort to deduce from these dance dramas even a hint of Miss Graham’s abstractions and philosophies leaves one exhausted rather than entertained.”

Last but not least, if the newness of modern dance, its themes and the lack of entertainment in Graham’s dances were not in conformity with the fifties Britain and its arts, the characters presented on stage – by “one rapt female archetype succeeding another” were also not concurrent with the times’ gendered discourse. The decade’s women journals and magazines centered on the noble duties of women as mothers and wives, even refreshing Victorian guidelines and commandments for women. An illustration first published a century before was

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517 Clipping, Cyril Beaumont, *Sunday Times*, March 7 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
518 Clipping, *Dancing Times*, March 2 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
519 Clipping, Andrew Porter, March 2 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
520 Clipping, JHM, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
521 Clipping, Unsigned, *Dancing Times March*, 12 March 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
522 McDonough, *Martha*, p.229
523 Clipping, Kenneth Tynan “Martha Graham, Holly Acrobat,” *Observer*, 18 August 1963
revamped and republished, showing the stages of a woman’s life as a staircase, with an ascending part, followed by a descending one. The first was until the woman became a very devoted mother ("A mother's anxious love and care/With toilful (sic) heart is hers to share"); once she took the next step, literally (in the drawing) and metaphorically, her decline started, her only concern becoming how to take care of the others ("Now to the poor her hands dispense, the blessings of benevolence") and to be “Absorbed in household duties now, The weight of toil contracts her brow.” British women lived in a postwar prudish climate, when even the new queen preferred to have a “clean coronation.” Women’s sexuality was transformed into a national problem. It was not a new phenomenon, as between the wars due to the works of Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis, women’s sexuality was under scrutiny, but now the topic was perceived from a different perspective, as marriage and traditional sexuality were the pillars of state. Thus, books concerning the morality of married women were published, while there was an official anxiety over the falling birth rate, combined with promotion of maternity and family.

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524 Clipping, Unknown author
525 Gale, *British theatre between Wars*, p.83
526 During the Second World War, British women found an interesting life outside of the parental, state and church control, while also discovering new meanings of old situations. Because their own fiancées and husbands were at war, being single lost its previous isolationist and somewhat derogatory implications; that they embraced professions which before would not have been considered appropriate for a woman, gave new nuances to “ladylikeness”; because of the fragility of life and the lax moral code of the war years, the sexual intercourse received new significance, closer to pleasure and a good time, and further from the procreative scopes; when sex ended with a pregnancy, the child was less under the moralistic scrutiny of the society, which seemed more willing than ever to close an eye in favor of the continuation of life; last, but not least, women discovered that to meet men from other countries was interesting and fascinating. Dating American boys took its toll in tears when it came out that they were the married fathers of several children, but it also ended with thousands of marriages thus contributing to the acceptance of the Americans in Britain and a diminishing of their “otherness”. In 1954 Britain the struggle between the state and the church which tried to reassert their paternalistic, controlling and moralistic roles in women’s lives and the British women was on. Opposing their redirection towards the domestic sphere, a part of the women wanted to keep their jobs, gained independence and sexual freedom.
The arts reflected the moment’s spirit, too. During the postwar years in the British theatres the standard narrative of the plays focused on middle class women, who looked for fulfillment in motherhood, marriage, and business while those with power ones and in charge were the men, who also represented the idea of citizenship and nation. It was not much different in dance, where ballet was, beside cabaret the most popular style of dance, both having a large audience. But, as always, even if danced by women, it was in the hands of men (managers, impresarios, choreographers) and under the gaze of men, who objectified the women dancers. As the dancers were always intensely both on and off stage under the gaze of the public, the expectations of the fifties reached into their lives too. The dancers, mainly ballerinas, were expected not only to interpret delicate characters, but also to behave (on and off stage) in a delicate manner. For instance Galina Ulanova and Alicia Markova (born in London as Lilian Alicia Marks) both mesmerized the British public with their femininity, dancing characters which did not depart from the old formula of ballet and the revamped Victorian woman of the fifties, who were supposed to be fragile, virtuous, and very feminine, without power and will. Even the movies dedicated to ballet and ballet dancers followed the same very formula.

The public loved the dramas of the Swans ballerinas on stage, on the silver screen, and, why not, in the real life. The British movie Red Shoes was also a big success, also proving this point. Focusing on a ballerina danced by a very charismatic dancer-actress, Moira Shearer, it was loosely based on the Andersen story. What made the movie even more appealing was that it was

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528 Gale, West End Women, p.102
529 Agnes de Mille, Dance to the Piper (New York: Little, Brown,1952), p.144
530 Such as Grand Hotel (1932), starring Greta Garbo as a ballerina, and Lionel Barrymore.
inspired by the real-life meeting of Sergei Diaghilev with the British ballerina Diana Gould (a very promising ballerina who in real life renounced her career and became the second wife of Yehudi Menuhin,\textsuperscript{531} but also by the fact that women remained “women” and men remained “men.” In the movie the talented and stellar dancer interpreted by Shearer became the “prima ballerina” only when another talented dancer married (interpreted by the not less famous Ludmila Tcherina.) However, when Shearer’s character behaved in a “masculine way,” choosing career over love, she had to pay with her life.\textsuperscript{532} Another good example for the mood of the domestic fifties is that during the same time Benjamin Britten’s opera \textit{Gloriana}, which depicted the relationship between Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex and was composed for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, found little success and disappointed everyone, including the young queen, as it presented the first Elizabeth as a sympathetic, but flawed, character motivated largely by vanity and desire.\textsuperscript{533}

Graham’s strong female characters and her undomestic personality could not find an easy place in the fifties’ audiences likenings. Beside the fact that her dance themes were too dark for the post Second World War years, her characters and her personality were not “compatible” with what was expected from women during a decade when gender and power were under intense scrutiny. The men in her works were the sex objects, and not vice-versa, with very minimal and equally visually disturbing costumes.\textsuperscript{534} Besides, even if Graham’s stories did not have happy

\textsuperscript{531} See Diana Gould, \textit{A Gynapse of Olympus} (London: Metuhen, 1996)

\textsuperscript{532} \textit{The Red Shoes}, movie, (1948) with Moira Shearer, Anton Walbrook, Michael Powell

\textsuperscript{533} \textit{Gloriana} is an opera in three acts by Benjamin Britten to an English libretto by William Plome, based on \textit{Elizabeth and Essex} by Lytton Strachey. \textit{Gloriana} was the name given by the 16th-century poet Edmund Spenser to his character representing Queen Elizabeth I in his poem \textit{The Faerie Queene}. It became the popular name given to Elizabeth I. It is recorded that the troops at Tilbury hailed her with cries of “Gloriana, Gloriana, Gloriana”, after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

\textsuperscript{534} Robert Tracy, \textit{Martha Graham’s Dancers Remember} (New York: Limelight Editions,1997), p.239
endings for the female characters, before they paid the price for their life choices, her characters fought and contested the power of men over them and their lives. But even more so, in an utterly against the grain, they displayed male characteristics, as they were revengeful, powerful, sexual, enraged, assertive, jealous, and angry and the list could continue within the same range of adjectives which at that point in time and history were considered as totally unsuitable for women.

Could the female characters from the Night Journey and Errand into the Maze have been appealing to the British public and critics? As Night Journey opens, a solitary woman stands motionless upstage holding up a loop of thin rope, the noose with which she will hang herself. Jocasta, the queen finds that she has married her son, Oedipus, and as the story and the dance unfold, one can see that she has wanted both sides of this relationship, to have this man as her lover and her son. Just briefly, as she cradles her son one can imagine a Pietà but mostly an Oedipal male-female relationship. Errand into the Maze is the dance in which the Minotaur-Labyrinth legend is told in terms both female and sexual, and a very powerful and equally sexual Ariadne is the main character, and the Theseus-Ariadne relationship is by no means a male dominated one. Maybe Dark Meadow? One reputed critic said that it has to be sensed rather than understood, as the heroine is in search of a sexual awakening amid Isamu Noguchi’s phallic sculptures, but also searching for life's mysteries. It is a special work, not only because it has a special delicacy but also because in it Graham, who admired rather Jung than Freud, projects one a version of Jung's collective unconscious. The encounter between the woman and the embodiment of a male principle, hurried along by an earth mother priestess, is meaningful to us.

precisely because Graham is dealing in archetypes. Although this is not strictly one of her "Greek" pieces, Graham makes use of a chorus, danced entirely by women. *Ardent Song*, premiered in London and *Voyage*, a piece rarely danced compared to other pieces, did not have a less “feminist” message as well. *Appalachian Spring* which has beside the women in the chorus as female characters *The Wife* and *The Pioneer Woman*, did not have a sexualized content as it was the work which had strong national references.

Even when graham’s protagonists at least apparently belonged to the circle of gentle women, such as Emily Dickinson (portrayed in *Letter to the World*) and the Bronte Sisters (*Deaths and Entrances,*.) they were not truly reinforcing the portrait of the fifties women. The writers Dickinson and Bronte, one a New Englander, and the others British, were intellectual women, with reclusive and strange personalities, and even if in an unsubstantial and phantasmal way, they loved outside of the sacred institution of marriage. Still, like Graham herself and her characters, they carried during their lives a “special” quality which made them stand out and not blend in:

‘A solemn thing – it was – I said –

A Woman – White – to be –
And wear – if God should count me fit –
Her blameless mystery’ (Emily Dickinson, c. 1861)

The very sexual and very determined females from Graham’s choreographies needed a unique individual as Kenneth Tynan to be able to admit that, even if he felt oppressed by the “iron solemnity” of Graham’s dancing, the female characters presented on stage mesmerized
him. But not all critics, and other members of the audience, were as able as Tynan to accept “rapt females!” It is almost ironical again, that even if Graham claimed repeatedly, at different moments of her career and life, that she was not a feminist, the criticism which targeted her work had since the beginning of her exposure in Europe had strong anti-feminist accents. Graham’s female characters and the stories they unfolded on stage were questioning and contesting, instead of supporting male dominated societies. After the first show Cyril Beaumont of the Sunday Times called the artist’s intense expression a suggestion “of a mentally wracked woman,” and although himself at a pretty ripe age, he brought into discussion Graham’s age, as she was “in her late fifties.” Another critic, after dismissing her “hungry-looking,” “tragic,” and “soulful,” characters, felt happy and relieved to discover, or better said to perceive her as “warm, soft, sensitive,” namely a real fifties’ woman. (The feminism related to Graham’s work has received attention from several dance historians, as it is a fascinating and complex phenomenon, but the anti-feminist accents encountered by Graham on her first European tours were have been analyzed so far.)

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The negative reception of most of the critics was not the only response Graham and her art received in London. A witness to Graham’s performances declared: “They (the audience) held very mixed views. Some were puzzled, others bored and others enthusiastic.” Puzzled and bored the French were too four years previous, but enthusiastic? While up to a point the British

536 Ibidem.
538 Clipping, Andrew Porter, March 2, 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
539 Clipping, Unsigned, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
critics and audience followed in the footsteps of the French ones, in the 1954 London something special happened, as a small but distinctive group of people reacted to Graham’s art in a way which cannot be compared to any other among the European audiences of the fifties. The limited but strong appreciation Graham encountered in 1954 in Britain could not and did not change the overall negative response to her art, and did not have the power of an earthquake, but it definitely was a significant moment which made a crack in the negative manner the European audience responded to Martha Graham and her art. Because of its uniqueness and its importance the British positive response it is a reality which cannot be overlooked but must be analyzed and given full consideration.

The first level at which the change was noticeable was in the critics’ circle, as by the end of the season some critics “turned on” to Martha.\(^{540}\) Up to a point it was not an uncommon phenomenon, as in France there was also a group of critics who liked and appreciated Graham’s art. The interesting aspect of the British critics’ transformation is the way in which they did it, envisioning the impact Graham could and would have on the future of dance in Britain. It started with an article from Dance Magazine which cried: “The Picasso of dancing sums it up”\(^{541}\) and continued with others: one associated Graham with modern movement and ideas, as Graham’s dance was “angular and intellectual as geometry, yet fascinating in a way difficult to define;”\(^{542}\) Peter Williams believed that “there is no doubt that the snowball will gather..."
momentum and size,” 543 A.V.Cotton called Graham “one of the great dancers of our time,” Paul Holt of the London Daily Herald claimed that Graham has “brought stimulating new life in Britain,” 544 while Paul Tassovin thanked Martha Graham for her “consummate artistry” and asked her to come to Britain again because “her fame will take root in our midst.” 545

Several works received individualized praise: Arden Song was considered by a critic “the most successful,” while its special technique was “sufficiently overcome by imagination to produce poetry movement;” 546 Commenting on Appalachian Spring was considered by Cyril Beaumont admitted that even if “sometimes disjointed and incongruous” the dance “was one of Miss Graham’s best works,” 547 besides having a “satisfying set;” 548 Night Journey because it was “tense and gripping,” while Diversion of Angels was “beautiful to watch.” 549 The most acid critic of Graham in 1954 London, Cyril Beaumont admitted that Letter to the World that “has moments of beauty.” 550

An important and revelatory difference compared with the Parisian reception, was that, with one exception, the British critics did not react to Graham’s Americanness, and did not offer remarks aimed to present her as “cultural invader” from an inferior culture. The only exception

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543 Peter Williams, the ballet critic, journalist, founder editor of Dance and Dancers magazine, and committee man, was tall, shy and enigmatic. Somewhat aloof and mannered, he smoked cigarettes through a long cigarette-holder and when confronted with an impressive spectacle would drawl “Awfully pretty”.

544 Clipping, Dance Magazine, (1954): 33

545 Clipping, Dance Magazine, (1954): 34

546 Clipping, Unsigned, 19 March 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections

547 Clipping, Cyril Beaumont, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections

548 Clipping, Unsigned, 19 March 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections

549 Clipping, Andrew Porter, March 2, 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections

550 Clipping, Sunday Times, March 14 1954, THM/22/1/6/2/1-9, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
was the same Cyril Beaumont, who stated, “Graham comes from Pittsburg (sic), and her kind of ballet is the ballet of barefoot. This is the America of the frustrated woman on the psychoanalyst’s couch.” The irony and nationalistic sense of superiority of his statement are undeniable, but it is interesting that the rest of the critics did not see *Appalachian Spring*, mainly and above everything as a piece of Americana. Still, it was the most American and “political” of Graham’s works to date, and not only because it depicted an Americana story and brought into the discussion the American idea of space; it was also commissioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, a modern arts protector, which was in partnership with the Library of Congress in Washington. The British critics saw it as a psychological study and a pastoral, and the criticism it attracted concentrated mostly on the choreography. However, even if they were not thrilled by it, the piece received a good number of appreciative comments, focusing on the score, set, and folk inspiration.

Not only did some of the British critics appreciate and acknowledge Graham and her art – comparable with the same development in France and in other European countries, which even if not extensive, cannot be forgotten and disregarded – but the impact Graham had on them was major and decisive and turned certain people into lifelong apostles of her art in Europe. The person who went through a complex transformation from modern dance hater into a Graham fan and lifelong advocate, an unprecedented situation in Graham’s career and life so far, was Richard Buckle, the critic considered by Graham to have “turned the tide” for her. Buckle, writing for *The Observer*, was an ardent dance lover, who was already known for his positive attitude vis-

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552 During the time Martha Graham was in London, Buckle was in the process of organizing an exhibition concentrated on the life and work of Diaghilev). What is significant is that he was not alone in the endeavor to
a-vis the American culture, its dancers,\textsuperscript{553} and its choreographers.\textsuperscript{554} However, Martha Graham was not among his preferences, and when she arrived in London, as Lincoln Kirstein recalled, Buckletold her that he did not at least like the idea of her dances and that he would be immune to them. A week later he changed his mind\textsuperscript{555} and wrote: “Now I conjure every idle habit-formed fellow, in need of a third eye to see new beauty that he should visit the Saville theatre and watch Martha Graham. She is one of the great creators of our time. I hope all thoughtful people will see her, for she enlarged the language of the soul.”\textsuperscript{556}

Richard Buckle’s favorite piece was \textit{Letter to the World} and, and he also liked Graham the performer, not only the choreographer, as he considered her dancing “astonishing.” During the three weeks of Graham’s stay in London he was a constant and determined admirer, and he did not hesitate to say: “I prophesy that Martha Graham performance in London will be as historic as Isadora Duncan’s in St. Petersburg.”\textsuperscript{557} Richard Buckle was conscious that he was opening a door in the way dance, Graham and modernism were perceived: “and another little path on the back of myself was when Martha Graham came in 1954. She was a new taste to support Graham but was followed immediately by a pretty large number of critics; Richard Buckle, \textit{Katherine Dunham. Her Dancers, Singers, Musicians} (London: Ballet Publications Ltd, 1949), p.X

\textsuperscript{553} Richard Buckle, \textit{Katherine Dunham. Her Dancers, Singers, Musicians} (London: Ballet Publications Ltd, 1949), p.X: Before Graham’s tour in 1954 wrote a book about the African-American dancer Katherine Dunham, and her “dancers, singers and musicians”, who were touring Europe at that time. The introduction he wrote to the beautifully illustrated book was glowing (translated also in French), calling the African-American dancer a “conqueror of Europe” and appreciating “her creative genius and the passionate artistry of her dances”

\textsuperscript{554}He was also one of the first European critics who welcomed George Balanchine whom he considered “the greatest choreographer in my lifetime. But in London Critics were shocked by ballet without a clear story-no queens, thrones, jesters and nymphs, no scenery

\textsuperscript{555} Clipping, “Martha Graham Dance Company” by Francis Mason, date unknown, Box 225, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress

\textsuperscript{556} Ibidem. He was also the intermediary who connected Graham with various circles of British artistic society and not only this; several years later Richard Buckle and Robin Howard pleaded the cause of Graham to Lord Harewood, the outcome of this support being the presence and tremendous triumph of the artist at the 1963 Edinburgh Festival.

\textsuperscript{557} Clipping, Richard Buckle
English people and she had empty houses. But I though her invention was absolutely wonderful and I wrote and wrote and wrote about her;” he also remembered proudly: “Years later her biographer quoted a letter of Martha’s to Louis Horst: ‘First we had empty rows, but this man called B. wrote about us and everything changed. She said: The main was a power!’”

Graham also liked Richard Buckle, as she felt “they connected intellectually.” Still, she had a bad memory related to him in 1954, namely the pork he served and the chilly house of the critic, when he invited Martha Graham to dinner.

While Buckle was part of the artistic world, and the impact Graham and her art had upon him could be explained more easily, as he was more of a “connoisseur” of artistic language, it is equally important and suggestive to observe and analyze the impact Graham’s first tour to Britain had on a “non-artistic” group of people who came to her performances: the unknown dancers – as the ones who wrote to her four years before, asking permission to see her rehearsal; or admirers, whose opinions on Graham were not “recorded” officially, but some entered to the memory of Graham’s reception by chance and coincidence, as the letter of a young woman, who after the 1954’s tour to London wrote to Graham: “it was for me a glimpse into a whole new world of hope, courage, and complete greatness. You brought to us the idea that here was something that no sacrifice could be too great for – because it hold such beauty”, and continued “thank you, thank you for giving us that moment! And now it is for us to preserve it, to cherish it, and perhaps from time to time, to challenge it.” (Jan Hunter, the most famous impresario

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558 Paul Jackson, “Richard Buckle at Eighty”, *Dance Now*, vol. 5, 1996  
559 Clipping,”Martha Graham Dance Company” by Francis Mason, date unknown, Box 225, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Box 225  
560 Letter of unidentified sender to Martha Graham, Unknown date, 1950, Box 230, Martha Graham, Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Box 230  
561 Ibidem
after the Second World War saw Graham, and shortly afterward he contacted Gertrude Macy, Graham’s producer, while Eric Bentley, another feared critic, became one of her partisans.

Beside the positive feedback of some critics, strengthened by Richard Buckle’s metamorphosis, and the limited anti-Americanism of the British, there was another element which made the tour to London a special one, namely the unprecedented powerful impact her art and persona had upon individuals living outside the artistic microcosm. The magic Graham worked on this category of audience was at a level never experienced by the dancer before and during the 1954 tour in Europe, and thus not comparable in this regard to anything outside the American borders. Very important is also the way the impact and admiration materialized, as in some instances it developed into much more – as in the case of Robin Howard – and had major and multiple consequences in Graham’s success in Britain, Europe, and modern dance development there.

The meeting between Graham and Robin Howard was memorable, as he became a generous, admiring and devoted supporter of her and her company for most of his life, while also, under the influence of his meeting with the inventor of modern dance, he contributed tremendously to its development in Britain. About seeing Graham for the first time in 1954 he remembered: “I was completely bowled over. It was one of the greatest – perhaps the greatest – theatrical evenings of my life, and I changed my entire program (...) I vowed that I would never

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562 Letter, Box 1, File 27, Gertrude Macy papers, 1953-1976, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library
564 Born in London, Howard was the grandson of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and his love from arts came from Lady Lorna Howard, his mother. He studied at Eton College and served in World War II as a lieutenant (1942–45), until he sustained injuries that resulted in the loss of both his legs. In 1945 he resumed his education at Trinity College, Cambridge, and passed the bar examination to become a lawyer, but he never practiced; instead he entered the hotel and restaurant business.
look at dance again until I brought the Graham Company back to London.”

He wrote a fan letter—the first and only of this kind as he remembered—to Martha Graham, and during the season he had the chance to her and various members of the company. He went to see Graham at the insistence of a friend who studied in the USA, and “knew a lot of them,” (namely members of Graham’s company) but he accepted his invitation only as “he was getting a bit tired after having seen my hundredth ‘Swan Lake,’” and even if, as he admitted, he never heard of Graham. First he did not like her performance, and “it was only during the second night that I overcame the shock, and I started to enjoy,” “his life undoubtedly changed that night,” and he became a permanent member of the audience and “saw every performance except one.”

It is interesting to compare the way most critics looked at Graham’s art, and the way Howard did, as the comparison proves that the key for his love of modern dance—as it is love for any art in general—was to look at Graham’s works from a fresh perspective, unrelated to the past and unbiased, but no less intellectual. Robin Howard called his acquaintance with modern dance as “an uplifting experience” and a kinesthetic one. “Every piece appealed to my intellect and had an intellectual content,” remembered Howard, also suggesting that instead of puzzling him, it had an opposite effect. He also observed that “every piece was a whole,” allowing him to be mesmerized and not disconcerted or troubled by the dances’ quality to be “magically thought-provoking,” and the result was that the dances did not bore him (as in the case of critics), but they were worked upon him in a positive way, uplifting his spirit. Last but not least, during a time when (with a very few exceptions) the company’s members were left unnoticed, and while

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565 Tobbi Tobias interviewed Robin Howard Ballet Bulletin, August 22 1978, Oral history, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for Performing Arts
566 Ibidem
he considered Graham “a great performer,” and a person of “great brain power, and great dynamism,” Howard also paid attention to the other dancers, whom he considered outstanding, skillfully powerful in case of the female dancers, and masculine but “not Baryshnikov or Nureyev,” in case of the male dancers.

Loving Graham’s art in a mature and objective way – which was a major compliment during those years of mostly negation in Europe – was even more remarkable as Robin Howard took action on Graham’s behalf and of her art. His actions occurred at multiple levels. On one hand, he tried to change the critics’ perception of Graham’s modern dance, as he considered her presence in Britain “the most amazing thing which came to this country,” and thus he “wrote letters to the papers and said that their reviews were ridiculous.”

It would be very interesting to find out more about this endeavor, as – proved by several interviews in which he talked about Graham’s first visit – Howard believed that he and his friends contributed to the fact that “several young critics had come through” by the end of the season. In spite of the negative voices of the majority of the critics, mostly turned towards the past and having little interest in modern dance, Howard considered that in Britain of that time “there was a certain sort of ‘help-the-British-to-understand-something-which-is-good” feeling in the British arts, and that “those sort of circumstances arise very, very rarely.”

Howard became a full-time patron of modern dance in 1963, beginning with his sponsorship of performances by the Martha Graham Dance Company. He persuaded Graham to return to Britain to appear at the 1963 Edinburgh Festival and in a London engagement.

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Ibidem
Ibidem
Following the company's successful tour, he established Graham-inspired classes, and by 1967 he had founded the London Contemporary Dance Group (afterward renamed the London Contemporary Dance Theatre) and the Contemporary Dance Trust. Details of the relationship between Martha Graham, Robin Howard and modern dance during the sixties are examined in a separate chapter.

However, once the 1954 season was over, Robin Howard organized an Elizabethan party for Graham and the company at one of his hotels, the Gore Hotel, on Queen’s Gate, where he put Graham on a Queen chair. The food was served at tables from the sixteenth century from wood plates, while attended by personnel dressed in the time’s attire. Howard’s guests could taste real Elizabethan recipes such as Elizabethan cucumbers in Madeira wine, boar’s head, royal salad, and gooseberry tanzye.\(^{569}\) However, it was not the only party celebrating Graham and her company. Another one was thrown by Dr. Patrick Woodcock, the celebrities’ psychiatrist in London and friend of John Gielgud,\(^{570}\) and there was also a reception at the American Embassy. Graham and her company’s stay in Britain was topped with various visits around London,\(^{571}\) and a trip in the countryside, at Stonehenge.\(^{572}\)

Intriguing is also the fact that the memory of the tour to London was not for Graham’s dancers a gloomy one. For instance, two of Graham’s principal dancers, Pearl Lang and Stuart Hodes, had good memories about it. Pearl Lang recalled with great satisfaction a couple of

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\(^{570}\) Letter of Patrick Woodcock to Lee Leatherman, May 28, 1954, Folder 47, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress,

\(^{571}\) Photo Album, box 6, Ethel Winter and Charles Hyman Collection 1955-1964, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington

\(^{572}\) Photo Album, box 17, Helen McGehee Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
times: “In London, they loved us, they loved us!” while Stuart Hodes remarked, comparing the 1954 tour with the one four years earlier in Paris: “In London it was different.”

Seeking a conclusion about Graham’s tour to Britain in 1954, it is very suggestive to take another look at the article published in Dancing Times in which Martha Graham and her company were presented to the British readers prior to her tour. Including a beautiful picture from Letter to the World, in which Robert Cohan was in a superb jump (very Nureyev-esque, in style and height) close to a Graham posing on a bench, the article gave the reader important information which might have prepared the dance lover for the moment: “unlike any other kind of dance used in contemporary or part theatre, and that there is a special emphasis on steps while also all anatomy is used;” the décor of screens, frameworks of wood, trees and branches were considered innovative, and the costumes, very unique; the article also listed the works supposed to be presented, the year they were created, the cast, and information about the music and themes.

However, at a closer examination, the attentive reader could have detected more than useful information, namely that already before the performance Graham and her art had an established non-grata artistic status in the eyes of the British critics: “Not all are great works; in some the symbolism is too far outside the broad cultural stream of this time and place to strike off a responsible spark to us. The honest way to look at, attempt to absorb, and react to Graham’s work is to recognize that she has gone back to primary problems of using the body as an

573 Lang, Interview with the author, October 2008, tape recording
574 Stuart Hodes, email to the author, July 2010
575 “Martha Graham,” Dancing Times, p.407-410
576 Namely Letter to the World, Appalachian Spring, Night Journey, Errand into the Maze, Diversion of Angels, Canticle for Innocent Comedians, Deaths and Entrances.
expressive instrument,” the signing critic advised the reader/dance lover in a paternalistic, protective but also controlling way. Most interesting is that the article and its genuine statements opened the door to future recognition, genuinely acknowledging that Graham belonged to a special “room with a view” in the world and chronology of art: “She accepts no readymade conventions –nor did, in early careers, such other derided artists as say, Henry Moore, James Joyce, Frank Lloyd Wright, Bela Bartok. This is the company of the kindred spirits of which Martha Graham is a member.” Well said!

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After extensive recovery from the war, which allowed the Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to proclaim proudly to the nation “you never had it so good,” by the mid fifties Britain was heading towards a new path, full of transformations at multiple levels announcing the roaring sixties. “Look back in Anger,” was premiered in the same year, 1956, when Tate Gallery introduced the work of the Abstract Expressionists, including Jackson Pollock, in the exhibition Modern Art in the United States. Just two years before, Martha Graham and her Company, after dancing for three weeks in the capital of Britain, went to Paris. The long 1954 tour covered most of the Western European countries, and lasted until the end of the fall, when she returned to America. Just a year later, in 1955, she took another step on her path to international glory. The rehearsal time was over, and the State Department became the official sponsor of her tour to Asia.
Of Graham and Friends

Graham was a special human being, gifted with artistic qualities and the capacity to innovate the field of dance, but she was not the type of genius who lives in an ivory tower. Besides, her activity as a performing artist and choreographer, and as the head of a company which toured abroad, got her in touch with numerous people who made her circle of acquaintances increasingly larger. Some of them called themselves, and she called them, friends, but the dynamics of Graham’s personal relationships was very complicated and often tedious. It would be hard to say that Graham could feel deep human attachment to people. Still, she was surrounded by devotees who encouraged, supported and worshiped her, and played an important role in the way her career and fame happened. As it will be shown later, the circle of her friends changed at different moments of her long life, often for reasons which were determined by her very peculiar behavior, and the difficulties others encountered in working with her and becoming close to her. However, on Graham’s account, she had an open mind, thus in her company were welcomed people who experienced difficulties in the society of that time, such as the homosexuals, Jews and African-Americans.

Her devotees were sometimes from the circle of her dancers. Some of them danced with the company for a short period of time as they could not find the strength to continue. Some left because they created their own companies, such as Merce Cunningham and Erick Hawkins in the fifties, and Stuart Hodes, Pearl Lang, Paul Taylor and Robert Cohan in the sixties. Pearl Lang left at the end of the fifties, but she came back and was part of Graham’s life until her mentor’s
death in 1991; others, such as Hodes and Cohan, danced with the company as guest dancers. There were few who stayed with the company starting with the fifties until the late seventies, when they retired. The most notable names are Helen McGehee, Mary Hinkson, and Ethel Winter. However, in the few memoirs of Graham’s dancers (Paul Taylor and Helen McGehee) and from one book of collected memories, her dancers talk little about Graham. It is clear that they respected her genius, but they were never emotionally close to or fond of her, and they often felt oppressed and challenged by her personality. On her part, Graham also never discussed her dancers and her relationship with them in interviews, her biography, or in the speeches she delivered.

There were also her patrons, as Graham’s career was helped by numerous people who, more openly or more discreetly, funded her national and international appearances. Among them were: Lilla Acheson Wallace, the actress Katharine Cornell, and the Rockefellers, who stepped in and helped financially when Graham needed it. Her most devoted, faithful and generous patrons were Bethsabee de Rothschild and Robin Howard. Due to their importance in Graham’s career, European tours and also legacy – as both opened schools of modern dance based on Graham’s model, in Israel and Britain – the relationship with them is discussed separately. Their relationship with Graham spanned the longest period, was most intense, with moments of glory and also misery, and never ended totally. De Rothschild never made any public comments about her relationship and sponsorship of Graham, but pictures taken after Bethsabee moved to Israel

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577 Interview
579 Helen McGehee, To be a dancer (Lynchburg: Editions Heraclita, 1990)
show them still attending the same events and parties in the US or abroad; however their relationship does not reflect the same closeness they once shared.\textsuperscript{581} Howard was more outspoken of his relationship with Graham, but he also left many unanswered questions related to the break, even if he gave more hints that the new circle of friends in Graham’s life, and most noticeably Ron Protas,\textsuperscript{582} made the relationship between them almost impossible.

In Graham’s life there were important people present, such as Louis Horst, her once lover and guru, her therapist Frances Wickes, members of her staff such as Gertrude Macy, but with all of them the relationship was often strained or lost power and substance. There were also political personalities who highly regarded her, in different countries including her own: the Queen of The Netherlands, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the American Ambassadors in Europe; but their interest in Graham (at the least in the case of Roosevelt) was helped by the requirements of the cultural diplomacy of the Americans in Europe. Through de Rothschild’s family she was also in touch with upper class members from the French society, but again, these relationships did not continue outside of the sphere of social conventions and occasional gatherings. This reality applied to her relationship with members of the European intellectual elite from different countries; Graham knew Carl Jung, who was the mentor of Frances Wickes, Maurice Utrillo and his family, and French writers. But the relationship with this refined level of the European

\textsuperscript{581} Private Collection
\textsuperscript{582} In the late 1960s Protas became introduced to the Martha Graham Dance Company. When Graham's health began to fail, Protas stepped in and nursed Graham back to health. Over the next several years the influence of Protas grew, eventually he and Graham restructured the company entirely. According to Agnes de Mille, Protas soon embarked on a campaign to copyright the Martha Graham Dance Technique and became the second most powerful person in the Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance, second only to the founder herself. Shortly after the death of Martha Graham, Mr. Protas sued the Martha Graham Dance Company forbidding them from performing Martha Graham's choreography. Only after a lengthy and multi-million-dollar legal battle were the rights to the choreographic works restored the Martha Graham Dance Company.
society and audience – including the European dancers and choreographers – was minimal and not personalized, with few exceptions, namely Graham’s relationships with the British John Gielgud, E. M. Forster, and Henry Moore.

In the large array of complex relationships Graham had with people around her, the special friendship with the three British luminaries lasted for decades, was rich and nuanced, and helped refine and redefine, at times, her persona and career. It also shed light on Graham’s relationship with the European audience, in the context of the cultural diplomacy and exchange on both sides of the Atlantic, proving one more time the unique place and role of Graham’s friends from Britain.

A Different ‘Special Relationship’: Martha Graham and the British Cultural Luminaries John Gielgud, E. M. Forster, and Henry Moore

Of these three connections Martha Graham’s friendship with John Gielgud, started the earliest, in 1947, was the longest in time and the most active (until the mid seventies,) as it was also the most documented one, due to the fact that John Gielgud was an avid letter writer. Also, each of them expanded his or her relationships in the other’s circle of friends and collaborators. Their relationship, which lasted more than three decades, during a time when they moved from national to international artistic eminence, was the most representative in demonstrating the “special relationship” crafted at an official level between the British and American artists, and doubled at the unofficial one by a closer and personal friendship.
They met on both sides of the Atlantic numerous times as cultural diplomats of their countries. John Gielgud traveled to America and played on Broadway boards as a live performer fifteen times between 1928 and 1976, and most of his professional visits to the USA were accompanied by a certain degree of political exposure. He cultivated relationships in important political circles; during his trips to the USA he was often invited to the British Embassy to lunches and parties such as an “enormous one at the British Embassy,”583 but also by American political personalities. Eleanor Roosevelt invited him to the White House on several occasions, first in 1937, when he met important people from the British Embassy584 and the second time in 1947.585 His political connections also reached outside the British-American diplomatic world, as on another occasion he proudly wrote to a friend that personnel from six embassies came to the opening of a play, including the Russian officials.586

His professional and official presence, as a cultural diplomat in the USA, was completed and enriched by his personal love for the country: “My times in America have brought me so many cherished moments and I always feel it is my second country.”587 He loved its culture, its cities, especially New York and Washington (“Washington looked wonderfully, spacious and green,”)588 the success he achieved here and that, compared to the British society, he felt less

583 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add. 81310, John Gielgud letter to his mother, no date, 1955
584 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add. 81309, Letter to his mother, February 1, 1937
585 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add. 81310, John Gielgud letter to his mother, November 17, 1947 (“she (Eleanor Roosevelt) had aged considerably, but she has charm and dignity.”)
586 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add. 81310, John Gielgud letter to his mother, no date, 1955
587 Ibidem
588 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add. 81309, Letter to his mother, May, 14th. 1947
under pressure and personal scrutiny. Besides, as he often remarked, the American enterprise and energy invigorated him!

He also participated in American artistic and social life, meeting numerous celebrities, from “Stravinsky, Ina Claire, Dorothy Swanson” and “some frightful faces, Dorothy Parker and Elsa Maxwell,”589 to Kit Cornell, a friend and supporter of Martha Graham.590 Cornell was one of his closest American friends, who added a personal touch to the propelling of Gielgud’s career in the USA and introduced him to Martha Graham. After this first encounter of Gielgud with Graham’s art, whenever Gielgud was in New York, “playing on Broadway he did not miss any occasion to attend her shows again.”591

The first time when John Gielgud saw Graham was on February 15th, 1947: “I am going to all the musicals and to see Martha Graham dance. Many people think that she is the one genius of America – she is fifty I believe and very ‘modern’. I am most curious to see her and her Company. She makes no money and has only a couple of short seasons every year in New York, but has a great cult among the intellectuals. I met her and she is interesting and striking looking – a great friend of Kit Cornell,”592 he informed his mother. From his comments one can see that, even when attending a performance of another artist, John Gielgud was analyzing his new artistic acquaintance from a professional point of view. His negative comments on Graham, regarding her age (anyhow, Gielgud was no more than ten years younger), her limited financial resources and professional success showed the tendency towards prejudice in Gielgud’s

589 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add. 81309, Letter to his mother, February 1 1937
590 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add 81309, Letter to his mother, February 15, 1947
592 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, add 81309, Letter to his mother, February 15,1947
personality, a human falling brought up by more than one of his biographers. However, the positive part of Gielgud’s letter is that it also reflects a real interest and appreciation, even more valuable given that established stars like Greta Garbo, Ingrid Bergman, Marian Anderson and even his best friend Vivien Leigh received from him only limited words of praise, which did not spare them from also receiving unpleasant comments about their physique, manners, and artistic skills.593

On February 22, 1947, shortly after the week in New York during which he went twice to see Graham perform, he wrote again to his mother about her, while he was vacationing in Florida. His very long letter entirely focused on the modern dancer was an exhaustive, complete and attentive analysis of Graham’s art, inspiration, age, look, and the impression Graham made on him; located at the Manuscript Collection of the British Library, it has never been published, analyzed, and discussed. Gilegud’s comments, in their entirety, follow: “I also saw two evenings of ballet with Martha Graham, who is the modern equivalent of Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman, and the barefoot, realistic, mime school. Her work is strikingly original, and her productions brilliantly simple and imaginative, both in comedy and tragedy – quite a small company and they dance against black velvet props, costumes, and details are quite inspired, and she herself, a little woman of over 50 with a marmoreset (sic) like face and no particular beauty except in her shifts and acting and managing her body makes an amazing effect of whatever mood she wishes to suggest – something of Beatrice Lillie in her lighter movements, she can also be terrifying and poignant in her ballet of Jocasta and Oedipus, and I was only able to see 5 of her performances,

593 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add 81309, Letters of Gielgud to his mother: April 9th, “I had a box at Metropolitan to hear Marian Anderson, the Negro singer. She had a crammed house;” April 15: “I had a long talk with Garbo, who is the most extraordinary individual.
out of a repertoire of 10 or 12, and some of her best ones are said to be the one I did not see. I was greatly impressed with the white setup, and it gave me a very new feeling about the possibilities of combining tragedy with stylized movement, which I should try to experiment […]. The Graham ballet have much of the suggestive quality which the Quinze achieved so wonderfully in the Obey (sic) plays and I feel from the way that Noah succeeded to some extent (was in the rather poorly executed English productions I was in) that with care and simplification though out beforehand it might be possible to do Shakespeare play without front scenes and set pieces of scenery in seminalistic décor. It is something to think anyway.”

In the light of this long, detailed and admiring letter, it was not a surprise that the two artists would continue to meet and befriend each other.

It is not certain if John Gielgud attended Graham’s 1954 performances in London, as correspondence for the year of 1954 is very limited, with just a few saved letters for this time, and no surviving letters of Gielgud to anyone between January and August. It is not surprising, as in 1953 the most controversial incident of Sir John Gielgud's life happened. The actor was accused of soliciting a man, who was an undercover policeman in a public lavatory. In unenlightened 1950s Britain, in which the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain still powerfully affected the arts and artists, the event, splashed across the nation's newspapers, caused a national furore. Even if carefully concealed, the puritan and conservative Britain did not approve Gielgud’s behavior. During the same year he was not knighted like his colleagues Ralph Richardson and Laurence Olivier.

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594 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add 81309, Letter to his mother, February 22, 1947
Not surprisingly John Gielgud had a very difficult personal time. However, contrary to his and his friends’ fears, after the prosecution Gielgud was welcomed at his first performance in London with standing ovations, and he was not denied entrances in the USA. Still, all these changed little the humiliation and pain he was feeling, as Dr. Patrick Woodcock informed Graham’s entourage. The actor felt even more welcomed in the USA (“I am greatly enjoying being here again,”) compared to Britain, where “it seems to be a bit of resentment and envy.” During the fifties, both Gielgud and E. M. Forster felt the USA a less repressive place in terms of sexual codes and mores. In Britain there was an increased campaign against what Oscar Wilde called the “love that dare not speak its name:” the court cases against homosexuals rose, the papers warned about the “evil [homosexual] men” who “infest London and the social centers,” and due to the competition with television they covered eagerly sensational breaks of morals in a society which emphasized a refreshed stability and cleanliness. It was unlikely that America truly offered more understanding and acceptance for homosexual artists, as both John Gielgud, and E.M.Forster felt. America of that time was very conservative too, the fear of homosexuality being associated with the fear of urbanization and immigration. But, while before the mid-fifties sexual outcasts were “the most happy in London, Berlin, Rome, Petrograd, or

596 Letter of Patrick Woodcock to Lee Lehterman, May 28, 1954, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Folder 47
598 Ibidem
Paris,” in the postwar period New York was becoming the gay metropolis, followed closely by San Francisco.  

If not at her performances, the two artists met in 1954 in London at a party. It was thrown for Graham and her company by Dr. Patrick Woodcock, the celebrities’ psychiatrist in London, himself part of a milieu that at that point was forced by the society’s norms and mores more or less to hide their personal lives from the public critical eye. From a letter sent to Graham by Dr. Woodcock after she left Britain, one understands that the dancer was interested in Gielgud’s life during that critical period of time, finding out that the actor was “ill and depressed”, but that he “managed to appear on Cherry Orchard”.  

Besides, even if indirectly, Graham helped in this recovery too. Her visit to London ignited in Gielgud an older interest in her art. In the long letter from 1947 about Graham, he acknowledged that he was inspired by Graham’s unique handling of Greek mythology and her innovative search for the truth of the human body, mind and sexuality. Shortly after Graham’s visit to London, the actor was supposed to direct King Lear in London. At the beginning of 1955, Gielgud left for New York City from London in order to meet Isamu Noguchi, the favorite decor designer and one of the best friends of Graham. Gielgud considered and later hired him to do the décor for his King Lear – a collaboration which was in Gielgud’s mind for long years, as the actor had “a sort of hunch for him for the play since I first saw Graham Ballets in 1947.” Gielgud was also aware of the fact that Martha Graham inspired herself from the story of King

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601 Julie Abraham, Metropolitan Lovers. The Homosexuality of the Cities (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), p.XIII- XVII  
602 Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Folder 47  
Lear, when creating the dance *The Eye of Anguish*, presented on the Parisian stage in 1950, but which was not a success.

Gielgud held in high esteem the artist Noguchi, whom he did not meet, “but everyone tells me that he is the very man”\(^{604}\) and also that “I hear his designs are most original and exciting, and hope devotedly I shall go on. It will be an interesting collaboration, I am sure.”\(^{605}\) The collaboration was not highly successful, but did not end in bitterness and with hard feelings, either. And it did not affect the Graham-Gielgud friendly relationship.

Five years later, in 1959, while John Gielgud was playing on Broadway, Graham attended his performance in *Much Ado about Nothing* at Lunt-Fontanne Theatre on September 17, 1959. She was there next to famous names such as Anna Magnani, Simone Signoret, Marlene Dietrich, and Harry and Mrs. Truman, “all of them making the first and second nights glamorous,” as the actor himself considered.\(^{606}\) There are no proofs that they met between 1959 and 1963, but it is certain that they did on the occasion of her grand success at the Edinburgh Festival in 1963. Gielgud wrote a new letter focusing entirely on Graham, this time to his former lover and later longtime friend Paul Anstee. In the letter he discussed *Circe*, *Embattled Garden*, and *Judith*, considered by him a “nice sexy selection,” which brought “not such a camp audience as in London, but a good many duos of gentlemen and loads of ladies.”\(^{607}\) The last sentence is rather ambiguous and needs to be interpreted. It is evident that Gielgud refers to a Graham performance which did not have a “camp audience as in London,” so it hints at one which happened in Edinburgh, as at that point Graham and her company did not dance elsewhere.

\(^{604}\) Ibidem
\(^{605}\) Ibidem
\(^{606}\) Ibidem, p.238-239
\(^{607}\) Ibidem, p.296
in Britain. However, this also means that he went there to see Graham, a gesture which speaks for itself.

They met again in London in 1967, one year after another visit of Gielgud to South America and the USA organized by the British Council.\footnote{Sheridan Morley, \textit{The Authorized Biography of John Gielgud}, p.335} A picture from one of Gielgud’s personal albums found at the British Library shows the actor and Martha Graham, photographed at the American Embassy in London, at an exhibition of pictures organized by the Embassy and the USIA, and dedicated to Graham’s long career. At that point Martha Graham was already a very successful cultural diplomat of her country, her art and persona being admired and prized all over the world. The two were photographed in a semi-official pose, as they both look formal, well-dressed, and concentrated. But at the same time their body language reflects quite a friendly encounter, with Gielgud holding a hat and a cigarette, listening attentively to Graham, wonderfully attired in a black dress, wearing exquisite jewelry and hat, talking.\footnote{British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add 8146, Photo Album}

One cannot know for sure when the parameters of their friendship changed and why, even if it did not cease to exist. In 1976 Graham was celebrating half a century of artistic activity, being the star of national and international festivities; Gielgud preferred not to participate in the White House celebration because, as he wrote to the same devoted friend Paul Anstee on October 15, 1976, “not having dinner jackets with us, we decided to make our excuses. I’m sure it would have been a great bore and we did not want to seem rudely conspicuous, arriving when it was half over.” \footnote{John Gielgud, \textit{Gielgud’s Letters}, edited by Richard Mangan (Orion Paperbacks, 2005), p.230 One cannot say if it was just a circumstantial situation which led to Gielgud’s decision not to attend, or it was more, as during that time, due to...}
important changes in Graham’s professional and personal circle, some of her older friends and
associates decided to limit or totally end the relationship with her. However, during the same
year, John Gielgud participated in the New York celebration of the dancer, next to some of his
longest and best friends from the USA. It was a year short of three decades since in 1947 the
two major artistic personalities met and started their friendship.

The novelist E. M. Forster was another famous British luminary who met and befriended
Martha Graham in 1947. A pair of letters at the Library of Congress, never mentioned by any of
Graham’s or Forster’s biographers offers insight into the “special relationship” Graham had with
Forster. About the two letters: in September 1963, E. M. Forster wrote to the dancer (on the
King’s College letterhead, the famous college being the place where he was living then) on the
occasion of Graham’s participation in the Edinburgh Festival and of her presence on the London
stage. In the letter he mentioned their meeting in the USA, and the fact that Forster then became
acquainted with her work: “My dear Martha Graham, I wonder whether you remember meeting
me in the late forties and driving with me one evening towards New York. I remember well, and
also the pleasure I had from your work, and I am delighted at your outstanding success in
Edinburgh.” In the rest of the letter he expressed his desolation about the impossibility to see her
dancing in London in 1963, because of health related problems. The letter ended with: “my
kudos and respects, yours very sincerely, E. M. Forster.” The second letter reflected the fact that,
while the writer received a response from Martha Graham, he changed his mind and was making
plans to meet her in London, where she was continuing her triumphant trip to the British Isles.

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611 Library of Congress, Martha Graham Archive, Clippings
In 1947 Forster was invited by Harvard to give a series of lectures. As officially one cannot call E. M. Forster a cultural diplomat, as there are no proofs which would indicate a direct relationship between the British Council and the reputed novelist, it would be also hard to believe that his trips were solely a personal venture with no connection to the cultural politics of the British. Even more so that, since the Bloomsbury Circle years, the writer was a friend of John Maynard Keynes (and also of his wife, the former ballerina Lydia Lopokova), the first Chairman of the Arts Council of Britain, which supervised the cultural diplomacy of the country after the Second World War.

E. M. Forster arrived in New York City by mid-April, and lived with the family of William Roerick, an actor he met during the Second World War in Britain, who played with Sir John Gielgud in “Hamlet” and with Katharine Cornell in "Romeo and Juliet." Like Gielgud, E. M. Forster enjoyed very much being in the USA, as he also had large circle of friends, both American and British. Beside Bill Roerick and his partner Tom Coley, Forster met again Lincoln Kirstein (whom he first met Britain), his wife Fidelma, and other people who belonged mostly to the world of dance. The writer was also entertained by a group of British intellectual émigrés, such as Christopher Isherwood, Wystan Auden, and Gerald Heard.

Also like John Gielgud, Forster loved American energy, its culture he discovered while travelling extensively, the grocery store abundance, and also the cuisine during his visits he

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614 Ibidem, p.64
615 William Roerick, “Forster and America”, in *Aspects of E.M. Forster*, p.66
615 Ibidem, p.64
616 Ibidem
developed a love for the country, which he called in his correspondence “My Dear America.” Forster’s love for America was also enriched and reinforced by a feeling of personal liberty he could enjoy here. He felt more at ease regarding his sexual orientation, less scrutinized and judged than in Britain; therefore he enjoyed immensely the liberated atmosphere of Greenwich Village, joyful and pleasant, compared with the “stuffed atmosphere” from home.

While participating in Harvard’s three day symposium, with talks all day, and concerts – new pieces by Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson – and dance in the evening, he met Martha Graham. During the final evening of the symposium she presented a new dance, namely Night Journey, on an innovative score by William Schumann, premiered on May 3, 1947 at Cambridge High School; Forster compared it in his diary to a “catheter.” For one who did not see the dance, considered a masterpiece, or knows its story based on the love between Jocasta and Oedipus, the word “catheter” might be an interesting if not ironic choice. In fact, it was a superb one – not unexpected coming from a literary personality like E. M. Forster; it was also a very suggestive and accurate metaphor of this dance, which asks both dancers and audience to acknowledge and analyze the deepest and most intimate emotions.

The second time the writer came to the USA was in 1949, at the invitation of the Academy of Arts and Letters, accompanied by his close friend and partner Bob Buckingham. Not anticipating his second visit with great excitement, as he wrote to Frederik Ashton that he

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618 Ibidem, p.265
620 Wendy Moffat, A Great Unrecorded Story. A New Life of E.M. Forster, p.269
“will be off on a ghastly tour of USA five months,” once in the country he changed his mind; in his diary he even named the year 1949 the “annus mirabilis.” With Bob he visited Colorado, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago, but his favorite place was, as his correspondence shows, the Berkshires in New England. There he again met Martha Graham, when both were invited by his friend Bill Roerick, who had a vacation house there. As it is implied by the letter from 1963, the two, Graham and Forster, came back to New York together.

Unlike John Gielgud who was an avid letter writer, Forster was not, so it is not clear how their acquaintance developed. But more than a decade later, in 1963, the author greeted the American dancer and reminded her of their acquaintance and of his admiration for her. By that time Forster was living a sort of a secluded life in Cambridge, where, as his letters and personal diary show, he was reluctant to leave his place unless the reasons for which he had to go were very important. During Graham’s presence in England the writer was going through a difficult personal time, as he was fighting a physical illness, emotional distress, and domestic problems, all combined making him reluctant to go to London to see Martha Graham.

He changed his decision, and during the first week of September 1963 – the time of Graham’s tour to England – he was in London. “Thank you so much for your kind wire. I am

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622 King’s College Archive Center, Cambridge, The Papers of Edward Morgan Forster, Letter to Frederick Ashton LLK/5/10
623 King’s College Archive Center, Cambridge, Edward Morgan Forster Diary, p.91
624 King’s College Archive Center, Cambridge, The Papers of Edward Morgan Forster, Letter from E.M. Forster to Lincoln Kirstein, no date, 1949
625 Ibidem
626 E.M. Forster fell off the chair and a wall in his apartment fell and was in need to be replaced; he also had a minor accident which was causing him pain.
627 King’s College Archive Center, Cambridge, The Papers of Edward Morgan Forster, Letters to Bob Buckingham, 26 May 1963
628 King’s College Archive Center, Cambridge, The Papers of Edward Morgan Forster, Letters to May Buckingham: one, postmarked 28 august 1963 is from Keighley, Yorkshire, about his plans to go to London; in
better and shall be able to come up tomorrow (Wednesday for the performance). I will come round to see you afterwards, as you suggest,” Forster wrote to Martha Graham again. In order to disentangle even more the story of their meeting, E. M. Forster’s diary is helpful but equally challenging, as he kept it in a totally unorganized manner; the details of some days are abundant, while others are just a line, or even worse, just the date and afterwards nothing. In his diary he talks about the play he saw at the beginning of the week, that he attended a concert at its end, but unfortunately he wrote nothing about the exact dates when Graham danced, or even if they met. It is also revelatory that Martha Graham, without being an avid writer either, while also at the peak of her success and international recognition, had been eager to rekindle her relationship with E. M. Forster, sending “a kind wire,” and making him change his mind; and also that Forster himself, who at that point was not very social and even more reserved and self-centered than he used to be, wanted to see the American artist.

E. M. Forster died at the beginning of the seventies, when Martha Graham, forced by age and complicated health and emotional problems, had to stop performing. As Forster did not travel to the USA again, there are chances that they met again on the occasion of Graham’s 1967 tour to Britain, but this remains to be researched more in depth in the near future.

The last major British artist who enjoyed a special relationship with Martha Graham was Henry Moore. Moore was the first one to meet the dancer in person, in New York City in 1946. He spent there the four “most hectic weeks of his life” helping with the installation of his work. 

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629 Ibidem
630 King’s College Archive Center, Cambridge, Edward Morgan Forster Diary
retrospective exhibition, which attracted 158,000 visitors in three months. His visit to New York was also a combination of British cultural diplomacy in the USA and of his personal artistic ties and connections on both sides of the Atlantic. Henry Moore was seen by the British Council, which organized his first exhibition in New York in 1943, as “one of the most vitally creative figures in British art today” and an “imaginative genius,” so his art continued to be promoted overseas, including the USA, after the end of the war. Moore’s presence in New York, twice within three years, and the strong support he received from the British Council reflect the way the British designed their cultural diplomacy abroad while making full use of modern arts. It was a similar trend to that developed by the Americans when exporting their arts, including first the abstract expressionist painters and the modern dancers on the list of cultural diplomats abroad.

In an interesting turn of fate, the second president of the Art Panel of the British Council, after the death of John Maynard Keynes, was Kenneth Clark, a very close friend and supporter of Henry Moore. They served together during the war in the Arts Council, and their friendship would endure during their lives, Clark supporting Moore and his art tremendously. But as Dorothy Miller remembered, Moore went to New York also with the help of Curt Valentin, an art curator who fled Nazi Germany and knew about Moore since his time in Europe. Moore, considered by Margaret Barr (the wife of the famous curator Alfred Barr) as “most charming, playful, gay, amused, hopeful and probably short of money” person, had a very active social

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633 Ibidem, p.211
634 Victoria and Albert Collections, London, THM, 998/2/1
635 American artistic personality, art curator and modern art supporter
636 Interview with Dorothy Miller, Courtesy of The Henry Moore Foundation Archive
637 Letter of Margaret Barr to Roger Berthoud, January 19, 1985, The Henry Moore Foundation Archive
life in New York City, as in order to promote his exhibition and persona to the American social
and artistic elite, Curt Valentin organized receptions for Moore to meet people: 638 it was “an
exhausting round of parties,” as the artist himself remembered. 639 In the artistic and social
circles of New York, even if very large, people were tied by numerous and sometimes invisible
connections; therefore it was not surprising that Moore eventually met Martha Graham.

There are high chances that Moore knew about Martha Graham before he left the USA,
as she knew Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst (also a Yorkshireman, like Moore). The
philanthropists, who invited Graham to Britain in 1938, also commissioned a work from Henry
Moore, a “Memorial figure” supposed to celebrate the life of Christopher Martin, the head of the
Arts Department at Dartington Hall. 640 It is not clear who was the person who introduced the
modern artists to one another. It could have been Curt Valentin himself. He knew Graham, and
they had numerous mutual acquaintances, one of them being Alexander Calder, the artist
designer supported by Valentin, who also worked with Graham for a while. Or, it could have
been Rene d’Harnoncourt, who participated in the installation of Moore’s exhibition, 641 also a
lover of all modern arts, and an adviser of Nelson Rockefeller – the “politician-lover-of-art” –
himself already a supporter of Martha Graham. Whoever initiated their acquaintance, Henry
Moore’s first memory of Graham was while “falling asleep in a taxi with his head in Martha
Graham’s lap!” 642 But he also remembered having talks about the sense of space in sculpture

641 Letter of Margaret Barr to Roger Berthoud, January 7, 1985, The Henry Moore Foundation Archive
642 Roger Berthoud, The Life of Henry Moore (London, New York: Faber and Faber, 1987), p.204; Falling asleep he
remembered in 1972, when confessing this to Alan Wilkinson.
and modern dance, as Moore and Graham had in common the way they innovated the art of dance and sculpture. It might look surprising, as dance and sculpture are “opposite” arts, one being the epitome of motion and the other of the static, but they reinvented the role of horizontal space, as no dancer before used the floor the way Graham did, and in a similar manner Moore created his “reclining figures.”

After their first meeting in New York, one cannot know how their relationship developed as, in spite of his fame and wealth, Henry Moore preferred to live a simple and quiet life in Hertfordshire, and started to employ a secretary who kept a record of his correspondence only in the late fifties. During the fifties and the sixties Moore would be constantly linked to Martha Graham, as the first school and company of modern dance outside America opened in Britain, a result of the efforts of Robin Howard, a special admirer and promoter of Graham and her art.

Henry Moore was often invited to performances at The Place (the unofficial name of the school for modern dance in London) and received numerous letters to support the newly created school. Without exception, the senders brought Graham’s name into discussion as a guarantee of success. In 1968 Henry Moore was assured by Robin Howard himself that the endeavor for which help was required was supported by Martha Graham and Martha Graham Foundation. Bob Cohan, Graham’s former soloist, now the artistic director of the Contemporary Ballet Trust, wrote a letter “under his American Graham hat, rather than his

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644 Letter from Contemporary Ballet Trust to Henry Moore, 26 April 1968, The Henry Moore Foundation Archive
645 Letter from Robin Howard to Henry Moore, 26 April, 1968, The Henry Moore Foundation Archive
Contemporary Dance one,” underlining that, “Miss Graham and all of us would be most grateful.”

Moore must have been most honored by these requests, as his correspondence shows that he was constantly invited to the performances of the Contemporary Ballet Trust, including an invitation to the performance which celebrated a major moment from the life of the Trust, namely the move to the Artists’ Rifle, on Duke Road. On this occasion, Moore was again informed that “three of well-known Graham’s movies, Dancers’ World, Night Journey, and Appalachian Spring”, as well as three films “of earlier American dance, including Martha Graham’s Lamentation,” would be performed. In May 1970 Robin Howard himself wrote to Moore again, inviting him in person to see Graham’s famous work El Penitente, performed at The Place. However, Henry Moore also found himself and his work linked to Graham outside Britain and the USA, as in 1974, when he accepted to be quoted on the souvenir program of Toronto Dance Theatre, which was promoting Graham’s “movement and theatre principles.” In 1967 the sculptor became officially a member of the board of the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, next to Martha Graham and John Gielgud; he would remain an active member of the board until the end of his life.

During the seventies Martha Graham and her staff contacted the sculptor several times on the occasion of Graham’s 1975 Gala in New York, celebrating 50 years since she was an active presence on the national and international artistic stage. The tone of the correspondence lacked
any formality, suggesting that Graham and Moore were in touch over the years. Henry Moore was asked by Graham herself to create “a signed colored lithograph for the anniversary,” while she also informed him that the famous dancers Margot Fonteyn and Rudolph Nureyev accepted to participate. Soon after, Francis Mason, Martha Graham’s close collaborator, wrote to Henry Moore on the same topic.

Moore’s answer was: “terribly sorry, but I have to end a sculpture before I go abroad,” but he wished a terrific success for the Gala’s performance, and signed with “affectionate regards.” It was not a surprise that he preferred to focus on his work than to respond to Graham’s wish, as he was the person who even turned down a knighthood in 1951, because he felt that the bestowal would interfere with his work. Anyhow, Graham’s celebration was a major artistic and social event, and the artwork for it was created by Joan Miro – as soon after the event a person from Graham’s staff announced to Moore. A wide range of famous personalities participated in the Gala, from Jacqueline Kennedy, Irene Worth (the American-British actress,) Joanne Woodward, and Gregory Peck, to Woody Allen, but also including her longtime British friends Robin Howard and John Gielgud.

One year later, in 1976, Martha Graham’s Company and Graham herself, even if she was not dancing anymore, were preparing to perform at Covent Garden. Even if the year before Moore was not able to commit to creating the artwork Graham wanted, he was asked again by a member of Martha Graham’s staff to contribute to the event with some posters and a lithograph,
being assured that “Ms. Graham will be very pleased.” That the most famous modern dancer wanted to enrich her celebration with the artwork of the most famous modern sculptor could not be a surprise. Henry Moore was part of the committee created for the Martha Graham Gala at Covent Garden, while being also a member of the Anglo-American Exchange Committee meant to help the organization of the festivities which celebrated in Britain the two hundred years of American independence and of the “special relationship” the British and the Americans claimed to have developed.

Over the centuries and decades, and at different points of their history, the British and the Americans reflected on their relationship, whether diplomatic or political, often using the term “special.” Analyzing “another special relationship,” namely between the American modern dancer Martha Graham and the three British intellectual luminaries proves that, unlike it was assumed so far, Graham was not unknown to the European public. “The special relationship” Graham had with British luminaries was linked to the circumstances of the cultural diplomacy between the British and the Americans, which existed prior to the Second World War, was maintained during the conflict, and intensified even more during the Cold War. It helped to start and develop the relationship of British and American individual artists, such as Graham and the three British luminaries. “Special relationships” are in the end the creations of humans, who personalize, refine and complete what history begins.

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655 Victoria and Albert Collections, London, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, THM/22/2/5/1-2
656 Ibidem
The Queen and Graham

“After London came Holland, where success was more widespread. Audiences have different characters. New Yorkers and Londoners cheer, the Japanese toss bouquets. The Dutch sat in their seats and applauded solidly, many curtain calls.

Memorable for me (and all) was a visit from the Queen. She came incognito, which, Martha explained, meant that although everyone knew she was there, she was not fussed over or at. (Amazing people, the Dutch.) Came backstage afterward, spoke to us in our dressing rooms. I was taken by her gentle lovingness, reminded me of Helen Keller, the famous one born deaf and blind, who had visited the Graham studio during rehearsal, led to dancers at the bare, where she felt their bodies as they danced. When I jumped onto a curved flat, she was placed where I would arrive, and in the second or so I balanced there, her hand touched my foot. Helen Keller had the warmth I recognized in the Queen. I told this to a distinguished Hollander who was accompanying us and a few days later he told me he had conveyed it to the Queen.

This tour had other high points. We were warmly received throughout Switzerland, although not with the heat the Dutch had shown.” (Stuart Hodes, email to the author, April 18, 2009)

For the Holland season, the second country visited by Graham and her company in 1954, several possible schedules were imagined For prior to the tour, quite different from one another. The first planned that second European tour would begin with Holland on March 22, 1954, with a press conference during the same day, followed by daily performances until March 30th in Amersfoort, Rotterdam, Den Bosch, Utrecht, and The Hague. This scenario also included a
reception at Mr. R. Donnhauser in Vasenaar (a hugely affluent neighborhood of The Hague) and a free day on March 28. The dancers were supposed to stay at a hotel in The Hague the entire period, and from there they would leave for the performances. The second possibility, having as a start date March 31, scheduled two performances in Amsterdam (Theater Carre,) two in The Hague (Gebouw voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen, known also K & W) and one in Hilversum; this time the dancers being were suppose to stay in Amsterdam, and to commute by bus to the other locations.

However, the final program for Holland was a combination of the above options. Martha Graham and the company arrived in Holland on March 23, after closing in London. Stuart Hodes, dancer with the company, remembered the trip from Harwich to Amsterdam,\(^658\) and how the dancers enjoyed the sunny day playing and relaxing on the boat.\(^659\) The performances started the next day, with appearances in Delft, Amersfoort, and Rotterdam (March 24–26), Hertogensbosch on March 27, while on March 30 they performed in The Hague. Between March 31 and April 2 the company had performances in Amsterdam, returned to The Hague on April 3 and 4, and closed in Hilversum, on April 5.\(^660\) Not surprisingly, the company and Martha Graham performed mainly in the most “cultural” cities of Holland, namely three times in Amsterdam, and twice in The Hague. It is not clear if the reception was still held, but during the free day the company visited the cities of Delft and The Hague.\(^661\)

\(^{658}\) Stuart Hodes, Email to the author, April 18, 2009
\(^{660}\) Ibidem
\(^{661}\) Pictures, Box 9, Hellen McGehee Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
Staying at the “Hotel des Indes,” made famous by Anna Pavlova, or better said, her death in one of its rooms, Graham did not accompany her dancers during the free day but wrote a long letter to her therapist. In it she discussed the state of her emotional life after the break with Erick Hawkins, about being lonely, “not in a way but in another,” and about how her reading *Myth and Ritual in the Christianity* by Alan Watts made her understand better her own work *Dark Meadow*. She ended her letter with the acknowledgment that she enjoyed the “vast and small pleasure to be looked at as a woman and appraised as a woman here in Holland.”

Beside this reason for her satisfaction, which came at the right moment after the bitter separation from Erick Hawkins and seemed to please her wounded pride and soul, Graham had many other reasons to be proud and content in Holland. At one of the performances of the American dancer in The Hague, an event without precedent took place: Queen Juliana and Princess Irene of the Netherlands attended one of Graham’s performances, as shown by a photograph found in a private collection. The Queen, adorned by beautiful jewelry, and the young princess are shown greeting Martha Graham, most likely prior to the performance. In front of her dressing room, Graham, who was wearing her Chinese robe, with a bandana tying her hair, looked comfortable but also content next to the royal guests. However, it is hard to believe that an event of such importance, such as the visit of a royal at an American artist’s performance,

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662 Anna Pavlova (February 12, 1881 – January 23, 1931) While touring in The Hague Pavlova was told that she had pneumonia and required an operation. She was also told that she would never be able to dance again if she went ahead with it. She refused to have the surgery, saying "If I can't dance then I'd rather be dead." She died of pleurisy in the bedroom next to the Japanese Salon of the Hotel Des Indes in The Hague, three weeks short of her 50th birthday.

663 Alan Wilson Watts (1915 - 1973) was a British-born philosopher writer, and speaker, best known as an interpreter and populariser of Eastern philosophy for a Western audience. He moved to the United States in 1938 and began Zen training in New York. Watts became an Episcopal priest but left the ministry in 1950 and moved to California where he joined the faculty of the American Academy of Asian Studies.


665 Private Collection
could have taken place and could have been organized without the knowledge of both embassies and the involvement of the State Department.

The presence of the queen in person was an exceptional event, as it was the first of such importance and political implications in Graham’s career. Until then Graham had received national honors and was invited to perform at the White House; in the capitals of France and Great Britain Graham and her company received the attention of members of embassies and other highly ranked officials; later on, during her 1955 tour to Asia heads of states would attend her performances. But it was the first time when a head of state, even more so, a royal, came to see her in Europe.

The presence of a queen and of the princess at the modern dance performance of an American company and its star, Martha Graham, deserves careful consideration, as it was unprecedented and full of significance on multiple levels: for Martha Graham’s career and her relationship with the European public, for the place, status and development of American cultural diplomacy in Europe – the most sensitive area where the Americans were conducting it, but also, at a theoretical level, the presence of a queen at a modern dance performance was a proof of the way in which politics, diplomacy and culture accompanied, completed, enhanced and helped (or not) each other during the Cold War.

As will be show later, the presence of the Queen at Graham’s performance was undoubtedly a political gesture. The more that cultural diplomacy became a weapon of the Cold War competition, and the more the artists of countries involved in the Cold War were present on foreign stages, the more the political personalities of those countries could not remain outside of
this cultural exchange. For heads of states, highly ranked officials, ambassadors, and embassy members, going to a dance performance, to theater, or to exhibitions was an act which was leaving the area of one’s personal life and likings and was entering gradually the arena of political alliances and partisanship. However, the personal connotations in the presence of the Queen at Graham’s performance, which made everything even more enthralling, have to taken also unto consideration.

Queen Juliana had a special place in her heart for the Americans, as during the Second World War they showed her consideration and support while she was living during a part of her exile in Lee, Massachusetts. Beside, the American-Dutch relationship had a historical tradition, as it was closely linked to the Dutch colonial Empire. 666 Last but not least, already since 1941, Juliana and her husband Bernhard had a friendly relationship with the most famous Dutch-Americans in the White House, the Roosevelts. 667 Eleanor Roosevelt – a supporter inside and outside the United States of Martha Graham – visited Queen Juliana numerous times in her country, including a visit in 1951, 668 while the two remarkable women saw each other again in 1952, on the occasion of Juliana’s trip to the USA.

The non-pretentious “regal without being royal queen,” who often even refused the traditional curtsy of bowing, 669 made an important visit to the USA in 1952. 670 The royal couple visited the USA extensively, gave a speech in Congress, and in Washington they were the guests

666 During the official visits to the States the queen and her husband always visited regions from New York State which still had a rich Dutch heritage.
668 William Hoffman, Queen Juliana, p.11
669 Ibidem, p.93
670 Ibidem, p.125
of the Trumans. It was a good occasion for the daughter of the president, Margaret Truman, an aspiring opera singer, to meet Queen Juliana again. They first met in The Hague in 1951, when Truman was touring Europe and was invited to the palace, where she also met the future Queen, Princess Beatrix. However, neither the queen, nor the princesses went to Margaret Truman’s performances, a detail which makes their presence at Graham’s performance even more important and significant. As the Queen stated in an interview, when asked about her interest in the arts, she and her daughters attended a public performance “on special occasions.”

In 1952 Juliana and her husband visited Kingston, New York – a must on the agenda of any Dutch personality in the USA – which gave them the possibility to visit Mrs. Roosevelt at Hyde Park (a few miles away from Kingston,) where they spent the night. No one can say if then and there the Queen found out about Martha Graham, but on April 9, when the royal couple did not have official engagements, they went to see the musical “The King and I,” on Broadway. On this occasion, along with other famous names of American arts and culture, they met Graham.

Queen Juliana loved arts, including modern dance, an art she studied since her childhood, when she took classes at the Royal Palace alongside the future Madame Van Roijen, the wife of

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671 Margaret Truman, Souvenir, *Margaret Truman’s own story* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), p.297; The president’s daughter performed as an opera singer in Amsterdam around the same time as Graham, and even if the Queen and her husband, Prince Bernhardt, had been the guests of the Trumans on the occasion of the Queen’s official visit to the States in 1952, they were not in the audience.

672 Interview with Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, box 13727-13753, M. Buitenlandse Zaken, 1955-1964, Nationaal Archief, The Hague, and Publicity material issued by The Netherlands Information Service on the occasion of the Queen’s visit to the USA in 1952, and reproduced in the most important women journals in the country, box 24948, M. Buitenlandse Zaken, 1955-1964, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

673 State Department’s Program of Queen Juliana’s visit in the USA, 1952, box 24950, M. Buitenlandse Zaken, 1945-1954, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

one of the most prominent Dutch ambassadors to the USA.\textsuperscript{675} The princesses, her daughters, especially the older ones, studied rhythmic dance as well.\textsuperscript{676} That the queen was interested in a modern art was not that surprising if one takes into consideration that she was highly unconventional monarch for the standards of her time. Even Margaret Truman found interesting that the queen biked through The Hague, that she was in many ways very modern, and that she lacked formality,\textsuperscript{677} all traits which captured the eye of many other people.\textsuperscript{678} Not surprisingly, during the same visit of 1952, the American General Federation of Women’s Club invited the queen and the wife of the American ambassador in Holland to meet American women, as the queen on various occasions expressed her belief in the way women and their lives could positively affect the international understanding.\textsuperscript{679}

But, could the presence of the Queen of the Netherlands have been an entirely personal choice and gesture, which had no relationship with the state of the multiple level relationships between the Americans and the Dutch a decade after the end of the Second World War and in full Cold War? As expected, the answer is no.

After the Second World War, Holland, one of the most damaged and heroic countries in Europe, was regarded as the most pro-American Western European country,\textsuperscript{680} benefiting highly

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{675} March 19, 1952, interview with Mme Van Roijen with WWDC mutual Women’s Commentator, Hazel Markel, box 24952, M. Buitenlandse Zaken, 1955-1964, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
\item\textsuperscript{676} Publicity material issued by The Netherlands Information Service on the occasion of the Queen’s visit to the USA in 1952, and reproduced in the most important women journals in the country, box 24948, M. Buitenlandse Zaken, 1955-1964, Nationaal Archief, The Hague, box 24950, M. Buitenlandse Zaken, 1955-1964, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
\item\textsuperscript{677} Margaret Truman, \textit{Souvenir, Margaret Truman’s own story} (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), p. 297
\item\textsuperscript{678} Fleur Cowles, \textit{She Made Friends and kept them}, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996, p.227
\item\textsuperscript{679} Press release, signed by Mrs. Hiram Cole Houghton, President of General Federation of Women, 1734 North Street, N.W. Washington 6, D.C., box 24952, M. Buitenlandse Zaken, 1955-1964, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
\item\textsuperscript{680} Mark T. Hooker, \textit{The History of Holland} (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), p.139
\end{itemize}
from “the goodwill of the war years.\textsuperscript{681} Already in 1949 an agreement regarding the settlement
land-lease, surplus property, mutual aid, military reliefs and claims was signed between the
Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the USA.\textsuperscript{682} The Marshall plan offered the
Dutch one of the highest amounts of money ever received by a European country,\textsuperscript{683} while
during the devastating flood in 1953, when almost half of the country was below the sea level, the USA again provided Holland very generous help.\textsuperscript{684}

Soon the initial Marshall Plan would be doubled by the “mental Marshall plan.” A
program of the USIS, drafted in 1953, carefully listed and analyzed the psychological objectives
(immediate and long term) regarding Dutch attitudes vis-à-vis the American influence in their
country, as well as the favorable and unfavorable factors which could (or not) help with the
success of the American cultural offensive in The Netherlands. USIS saw Holland a promising
country for the American cultural offensive, as it had a “strong democratic tradition,” it was
“strongly bound to the West,” and, the “communist influence is not particularly strong.”\textsuperscript{685} Thus, the cultural exchange with the USA during the early fifties was one of the most advanced in
Europe, even if the country did not have the cultural power and prestige of France and Britain,
and some other problems emerged. On one hand, there was not of a strong tradition in this sense,
as beside the Dutch immigrants of the previous centuries and the personality of Piet Mondrian,

\textsuperscript{682} Text of the agreement, signed 17\textsuperscript{th} May 1949, published on May 28, 1947, Box 1945-1954, M. Buitenlandse
Zaken, 1945-1954, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
\textsuperscript{683} Holland received between 1948 and 1954 $1.127 billions
\textsuperscript{684} The amount of \$400 million.
\textsuperscript{685} Final draft for the USIS program in The Netherlands, January 21, 1953, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409,
National Archives, College Park, Maryland
quite renowned in the American cultural circles, not very much was known in America about Dutch culture. On the other hand there was a tradition of criticizing the USA, led by the philosophers Johan Hunzinga and Menno ter Braak, very strong in their dislike of the American culture and way of life. Certain worries were also related to the fact that “in the [Dutch] cultural field a certain intellectual snobbishness is apparent, notably in the wide use of the academic titles.”

But in spite of the “downs” of the American-Dutch cultural relationship, the cultural exchange was gaining consistency and power. Very early in the fifties “a long awaited cultural officer” took up his position at the American Embassy in The Hague, and the exchange of persons facilitated by an international arts program was very successful and moving ahead quickly. The American Embassy in The Hague was contacted by a representative of the Ministry of Education, who stated that Holland was interested in collaboration with the USA, and “a draft of the Cultural agreement between the USA and Holland is being prepared in the Department.”

As a result, the cultural exchange made progress: the Department of Fulbright awards for Holland allowed Dutch students to study, teach and do research in the USA; the National Arts

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687 Final draft for the USIS program in The Netherlands, January 21, 1953, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland
688 Letter from the American Foreign Service in The Hague to the State Department, December 27, 1951, USIE Field reporting, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland
689 Ibidem
690 Dispatch, October 23, 1953, from The American Embassy in The Hague, to the State Department, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland
691 Official release no.425, signed on June 7, 1949 (it was preceded by an agreement was signed between Holland and the USA On May 17,1949), box 13071-13075, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1945-1954, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
Foundation, had as one of his members Dr. J.H. van Roijen, the Dutch ambassador in Washington, who accepted the membership hoping that the association would promote “the encouragement of the arts, and the interchange of arts and artists between countries.” The reorganized Nederlandsch-Amerikaansche Fundatie sought to promote “mutual understanding between the USA and the Netherlands” and to facilitate the exchange between the countries, for educational and cultural purposes. Even a committee for Dutch music had been formed in the US for the purpose of furthering the works of Holland’s composers, which proudly announced that “Dutch music, classical and modern, is now within easy reach of the American public;” Dutch modern literature was also promoted.

However, the Dutch interest in American art was visible, and “there was [in Holland] an awareness of the American accomplishments in the arts.” Interest in American dance was openly manifested and strong. Marko Fotez, a Croatian journalist, published an article called “Impressions de Pays-Bas,” in which he suggested that “dance is very loved,” and that “they (the

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692 The National Arts Foundation, Incorporated, was a private American New York not-for-profit corporation devoted to promoting fine arts. Robert Carleton Smith founded the organization in 1947, served as its president and later as Chairman of its Advisory Committee.
693 Letter from Dr. J.H. van Roijen to Mr. Carleton Smith, undated, Box 24835-24850, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1945-1954, Nationaal Archief, The Hague; Robert Carleton Smith was the director of the National Arts Foundation and also the European correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune.
694 Founded in 1921, the NAF is the leading bilateral foundation initiating and supporting high-impact exchange between the Netherlands and the United States.
695 More material about the association can be found box 12999-13003, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1945-1954, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
697 Correspondence between Mr. Hayden Carruth, Intercultural Publications, The Ford Foundation and Hans Konigsberger, Deputy of the Cultural Attaché of the N Embassy, Nov 5, 1952, box 24 851-24857, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1945-1954, Nationaal Archief, The Hague; Talks about a project of anthology of modern Dutch prose and poetry, Dr. H. Friedericy, Head of the Cultural Affairs of the N Embassy; A year after modern Dutch poetry and prose planned anthology was discussed by the Dutch cultural attaché with the representative of the Ford Foundation, while announcing that “personal and official sympathy to this idea” was shown by the officials from Holland’s embassy
698 Letter from American Embassy in the Hague to the State Department, February 4, 1952, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland
Dutch) have a lot of journals and magazines from all over the world,” including the American ones which cover the developments of this art, so the audience from this country has a “cultivated spirit.” 699 The American Embassy in The Hague also received a visit from a Dutch journalist who claimed that Dutch people wanted to see in dance “something new and original,” 700 that there was a wide interest in American ballet and other forms of dance, while concluding that by not sending their “cultural goods” to this country, “the United States was passing up an important and subtle implement of propaganda.” Interesting language for a Dutch reporter, mixing that of a merchant with that of a cultural diplomat! Seemingly impressed, the officer who received the journalist suggested to the State Department to encourage the artists in giving performances in Holland. 701

The way in which the Americans were making and rehearsing their cultural diplomacy in Holland is just a sample of the larger phenomenon manifested in other European countries during the early fifties, affecting and including Martha Graham’s European tours as well. The methods used by the cultural strategists during that stage of the American cultural diplomacy in Europe was to combine the private sponsorship of different patrons with the cautious, benevolent but also thorough, logistical and official “protection” of the State Department, USIS (after 1954, USIA) and the American Embassies in Europe for the artists present on the continent.

One year prior to Graham’s own tour, “Porgy and Bess” appeared in Germany and Austria under the State Department’s sponsorship, but made other European appearances under

699 Clipping, Marko Fotez, Politika, April 8, 1956, Box 13727-13756, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1945-1954, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
700 Foreign service dispatch, USIC to State Department, February 5, 1952, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland
701 Foreign service dispatch, USIC to State Department, February 5, 1952, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland
private auspices;\textsuperscript{702} when a “a negro group” of singers wanted to tour Europe including Holland, Dulles wrote to the American Embassy in The Hague: “if, however, such a tour could be realized with private financial support, the Department would be glad to extend all of its facilitative services.”\textsuperscript{703} Similarly, while discussing the problem of bringing New York City Ballet and National Ballet Theater to “smaller countries” including Holland, USIS admitted that they “played an important albeit quiet role in assisting the Festival of Holland directors.” Furthermore, the way they assisted the New York City Ballet made the American Embassy in The Hague “think about the effectiveness of this kind of propaganda.”\textsuperscript{704} In most of the correspondence revolving around American cultural diplomacy in Holland, one can find involved the same efficient Ms. Mary Stewart French, Program officer, Leaders and Specialists Branch, Educational Exchange Offices, International Information Service, who also assisted Martha Graham during her 1954 tour to Europe, and with whom Graham’s staff corresponded frequently during the tour, as shown previously in the chapter related to Graham’s presence in Britain in 1954.

The presence of the Queen at Graham’s performance could be interpreted as a gesture which was the outcome of the mélange between the Queen’s personal choices and sympathies, and the necessity to show the support towards the culture of a country which not only was helpful numerous times towards Holland, but with which the cultural exchange was advanced and apparently mutually advantageous. But, was there something more, and even more so, was

\textsuperscript{702} Letter to the State Department from the Ambassador (Signed in his name by Coulter D. Huyler, Public Affairs Officer) about the visit of Porgy and Bess, November 29, 1950, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland
\textsuperscript{703} Letter from the State Department to American Embassy in the Hague, Signed Dulles, February 9, 1953, NND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland
\textsuperscript{704} Reply to the above letter, USIS from the American Embassy in the Hague, to State Department, Feb. 23, 1953ND 852916, RG 59, box 2409, National Archives, College Park, Maryland -- 202
the Dutch-American relationship, including the cultural one, after the Second World War, a total success? Or were there reasons for discontent, manifested in both “camps,” the American and the Dutch one?

By the mid fifties, viewed from the outside, the American-Dutch relationship seemed to be a growing, mutually satisfactory and almost perfect one, as the Queen herself concluded in one of her speeches during her official visit in 1952, when she said that the two countries were “easily at home with one another within our common Atlantic community.”705 However, it was not quite so, because the relationship was facing some serious difficulties inside. There was a growing anti-American feeling in Holland, as the Americans were blamed for the economic dilemma of the Dutch, seen as a result of American foreign policy, which made them lose their colonial Empire, while the American regulations, which forced them to cut to the bone the trade with Eastern Europe, deepened the crisis even more.706 Also, during the early fifties, the Dutch followed the McCarty phenomenon very closely and were worried and uncomfortable about the way in which the “McCarthy problem” was evolving.707

It is very interesting to notice that less than two months prior to Graham’s visit, the Bilderberg Conference was organized. Between May 29–31, 1954, in the presence of Bernhard, Juliana’s husband, leaders from European countries and the United States were brought together, to discuss the growth of anti-Americanism in Western Europe, and possible methods for

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706 Clipping, article “Inside Washington,” no date, The Netherlands Information Service, box 24948, M. Buitenlandse Zaken, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
promoting Atlanticism and better understanding between the cultures of the United States and Western Europe. Among the eleven famous American politicians present, the list included Dean Acheson, David Rockefeller, and William Fulbright.

Thus, there is a high likelihood that the presence of the Queen at Graham’s performance was not only the outcome of a combination between her very complex and modern personality, and of the appreciation she and her country had for the Americans, but one can build on the idea that she was there in order to appease the increasing feeling of discomfort of the Washington officials vis-à-vis Dutch anti-Americanism, during a very sensitive political, economic and diplomatic time.

Translations from Dutch of the works of the country’s intellectual and cultural personalities are minimal, if not inexistent; therefore it was almost impossible to find out who, beside the queen, her daughters and their entourage, attended Graham’s performances in Holland. There are minimal chances, though, that the audience lacked the presence of Sonia Gaskell, a Russian dancer émigré, who took charge of Dutch ballet during the same year, in 1954. However, in 1959, the National ballet split in two, and a splinter group left and formed the NTD (Netherlands Ballet Theater) in The Hague. 708 This event brings into discussion the validity of the belief that, outside of the United States, the first modern dance company was the one established by the devoted fan of Graham, Robin Howard, in Britain, almost a decade later. It is true that the Dutch preferred to attach to their “departure from ballet” a name which still had in it the word “ballet,” but included “theatre” (“theatrical dance” was often the term used in Europe

for modern dance,) thus making the break less tense and problematic. Did the presence and performances of Graham in Holland in 1954 speed the process of modernization of Dutch dance?

It would be also hard to believe that Lucas Hoving did not try to see his earlier master, Martha Graham. On a tour to New York with the Jooss Company in 1941, he studied at the Martha Graham School, and when the Jooss Company disbanded at the onset of World War II, Hoving was invited to join the Graham Company, appearing in Graham's tribute to Emily Dickinson, *Letter to the World* in late 1941. Hoving might have wanted to see his former master at least for the alleged positive way in which the male dancers were treated in Graham’s company in the forties.\(^{709}\)

Martha Graham was known in Holland outside of the artistic profession too. Prior to her visit, but very close to it, two gentlemen wrote to her from Rotterdam, aware of Graham’s tour and dates of the performances in Holland.\(^{710}\) They used the occasion to introduce to Graham an aspiring dancer (Veronica Kraayvanger,) to remind her that they met in Santa Fe as guests of the Expressionist painter Cady Wells, and to express their sadness for not being able to see her dancing as they were on business outside of Holland, hoping that they would meet Graham again in the USA.\(^{711}\)

The critics who reflected on the way the audience responded to American modern dance and its star. Some were objective: “The audience in its reaction appeared divided between

\(^{709}\) Stuart Hodes, “Part Real, Part Dream”, kindle edition

\(^{710}\) Letter, from Vronsky and Babinsky to Martha Graham, March 20, 1954, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington

\(^{711}\) Ibidem
adoration and utter rejection,” “Graham’s ballets set off animated discussions among the audience in which enthusiasm and bewilderment were the main elements.” Others tried to warn the future spectators that their role changed in the relationship with the new form of art: “This new art of dancing requires from the audience intent observation, and warrants repeated seeing. It is immensely rich in contents, and emotionally profound. It does not offer an easy compromise for the passively lazy spectator.”

The program of the Holland appearances included the much appreciated and already famous pieces (all described at length in the Appendix): Dark Meadow, Ardent Song, Letter to the World, Deaths and Entrances, Canticle for Innocent Comedians, Errand into the Maze, Diversion of Angels, and of course, the most American inspired one, namely Appalachian Spring. All the works with no exception were applauded and positively commented. The ones which captured the most interest and were mentioned the most were Letter to the World and Errand into the Maze. Errand was seen as having “a great lyrical power and overwhelmingly dramatic moments,” as well as “a moving dance composed of elements of death and life,” and considered to have “packed a maximum of expressiveness, rarely before we have seen man portrayed in such arresting way in such an expressive gamut of dance movements.” But the most appreciated was Letter to the World, “the unforgettable highlight of Martha Graham’s performance,” especially “the second half of this dance drama, [in which] the choreographer shows real genius in the way she embroiders on some lines from Emily Dickinson’s work. With

712 Clipping, Het Parool, March 26, 1954, box 218, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington; all notes below containing clippings from 1954 Dutch newspapers and journals are to be found in box 218, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
713 Clipping, Algemeen Handelsblad, March 31, 1954
714 Clipping, Het Vrije Volk, March 27, 1954
715 Clipping, Het Vrije Volk, March 31, 1954
716 Ibidem

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her own and some borrowed themes, she has composed an arresting dance of love and death.\(^{717}\) Appalachian Spring, the work which lyrically discusses “the heritage of the Western frontier” in the American spirit,\(^{718}\) was also among favorites, seen as “a passionate pastoral,”\(^{719}\) reflecting “the realities of the American way.”\(^{720}\)

The rest of the works were appreciated as well: “after the inspired divertissement Diversion of Angels, we saw new wider perspective unfolding before our eyes during the performance of Errand into the Maze and Ardent Song. These ballets open new doors to the world of bewildering novelty where a different, immensely rich language is spoken.”\(^{721}\) “The ballet entitled Dark Meadow is fraught with symbolism almost to a breaking point. Less dogmatically symbolic and based on Greek mythology are Errand into the Maze and Night Journey. What will stand out the most in the memory is the pure dancing of Canticle for Innocent Comedians and Ardent Song.”\(^{722}\)

That Letter to the World was one of the favorites was not a surprise, as it was one of the most praised works of Graham in the USA, and also during her 1954 European tour. Part of the explanation is that, at least apparently, it was a more accessible work, back home and in Europe. It combined dance with theater, namely the reciting of Dickinson’s verses, a formula which “guided” the audience towards a better understanding of the piece, and at least for the European

\(^{717}\) Clipping, Het Vrije Volk, March 27, 1954
\(^{719}\) Clipping, Algemeen Handelsblad, March 31, 1954
\(^{720}\) Ibidem
\(^{721}\) Ibidem
\(^{722}\) Clipping, Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, April 5, 1954
public, this was an already experienced formula. Moreover, in Holland, for the spoken part every member of the audience received a flyer with the translation of the words in Dutch.\footnote{Program of the performance, box 5, Ethel Winter and Charles Hyman Collection 1955-1961, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington}

That the American inspiration of \textit{Appalachian Spring} was appreciated in an unbiased and neutral way, without passion involved (as in the case of the French critics in 1950) was to be expected; on one hand, because by 1954 the intensity of European criticism vis-à-vis the Americanness of Graham’s works and of her as a person started to lose power and context, as the American culture was, volens-nolens, an increasing presence in Europe; on the other, because in Holland, even if existent, anti-Americanism was by no means comparable with that in France, and less noticeable even compared to such sentiment in Britain. However, what is surprising in the way the masterpieces of Graham were received in Holland is that the “lighter” pieces (\textit{Canticle} and \textit{Diversion}) were less liked here – which is in contrast with what happened in the rest of Europe, including France and Britain – than the hard to comprehend, heavy work \textit{Errand into the Maze}.

In the light of Holland’s response to Graham’s presence and artistry, characterizing the 1954 tour as a total failure was and it would be a mistake. It is true that the 1954 tour did not register the level of success Graham and her company would have a year after, in Asia. But even if one compares the responses of the critics from Holland, for instance, with those Graham received in the US at the beginning of her career, it is obvious that a new and solid road was opening for Graham in Europe as well. One must not forget that Graham came to Europe
presenting and introducing a new form of art, and that with very few exceptions, “making it new” was never easy and simple, for any artist, at home and abroad.

The way Dutch critics reacted vis-à-vis Graham was by no means negative, as it can be seen in some of their responses. However, while underlying the keywords framing the response to Graham’s dance, one has to keep in mind the way the British analyzed Graham’s innovation – presented in the previous chapter – and to anticipate the analysis of the French response, which is the main concern of the next chapter. Doing so, namely seeing the Dutch response to and perception of Graham’s dance compared and contrasted to them, completes, refines and enriches the overall view and analysis of Graham’s European tour to Europe in 1954. (But, is it not what any member, of any audience, in front of any piece of artistic work would do? Namely to witness and perceive art while using in the process, consciously or not, previous artistic exposures and in the meantime getting prepared for the future ones?)

The Dutch responses were to be found in two sources: the first is the Dutch newspapers and journals of the time, and the second, clippings of the same articles carefully gathered and kept in a large folder at the Library of Congress. Who created this collection of Graham’s performance in Holland in 1954? There are chances that someone from Graham’s staff or friends ordered the newspapers and journals and preserved the clippings. But there are at least equal chances that members of the American embassy, especially those involved – as demonstrated above – in the very organized and functioning cultural exchange, did it. “Government picked up all or parts of the tab in Holland, Sweden and Germany,” said Stuart Hodes. The fact that the

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725 Stuart Hodes, “Part Real, Part Dream” kindle edition,
American ambassador to The Netherlands, Harrison Freeman Matthews,\textsuperscript{726} who served as Deputy Undersecretary of State, was a close member of the entourage of Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles (both architects of American cultural diplomacy) definitely increased the chances that Graham’s visit to Holland was not ignored and unobserved. Besides, when the Queen of the country and two of her daughters attended the performances, could the American high officials do otherwise?

As expected, there were negative comments related to Graham’s work, which more or less followed in the footsteps of similar European negative response to Graham’s appearances. Some belong to the area of negative expectations, based mostly on a prior and incomplete perception of her “ballets”: “Martha Graham’s ballet performances, planned for several European countries, will provide the theme for many discussions. The wide range of her ballets gives an exhaustive survey of the gamut of her capabilities as dancer and as a choreographer.”\textsuperscript{727} Other critiques followed an old tune, namely to compare Graham to Wigman, and to insinuate that her works were not comprehensible and qualitative: “The core of Martha Graham’s art is to be found in the school of Mary Wigman, the rest it is an almost superhuman and spasmodic effort of great intelligence to perpetuate this school and give it a future…This effort has not convinced us, it is both admirable and tragic because it rests on misconception and misunderstanding.”\textsuperscript{728} However, it is worth mentioning that the last comment belonged to De Tijd, the most widely circulated Dutch language Catholic daily newspaper, which embodied an extremely traditional view of the arts. Remarkably, not all critics had the same opinion related to

\textsuperscript{726} In 1953 Matthews was appointed Ambassador to the Netherlands and he remained in this post until 1957.
\textsuperscript{727} Clipping, \textit{Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant}, April 5, 1954
\textsuperscript{728} Clipping, \textit{De Tijd}, March 4, 1954
the above link between Graham and Wigman’s German modern dance. On the contrary: “Martha Graham obliterates reminiscences of the past art of German dancing and makes us the Europeans the renaissance of the dance starts today.”

Graham’s originality seemed undisputable to many Dutch critics: “Martha Graham ballet (sic) made deep impression...and revealed a great originality of expression and stage setting;” “She never repeats herself...novel idea, gestures, never seen before or subtle shades of differences which give the well known features an entirely new accent;” “a choreographer of great ingenuity;” “With inexhaustible creativity she has given the stage a novel form of art.” “Martha Graham’s art is introvert and at the same time highly expressive; it is highly original in its technique and choreography.” “(This dancing) is one of the greatest perfection showing a rare balance of technical skill and creative ability. Each of the dancers of the group has a power of expression which puts him or her in the top bracket of solo dancers. Martha Graham’s dances are an inexhaustible means of expression, poetic, and rich.”

The same positive view of the critics can be found when discussing the American dancer’s uniqueness of choreography and artistic innovation, and her impact on other dancers: “Martha Graham is a name we will have to add to the list of names of those who have helped the dance to develop from a form of amusement and a pastime to an instrument of all human emotions;” “great and original artistry, a pioneer of dance as one seldom come

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729 Clipping, Algemeen Handelsblad, March 26
730 Ibidem
731 Clipping, Het Vaderland, March 31, 1954
732 Clipping, Het Vrije Volk, March 27, 1954
733 Clipping, Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, March 27 1954
734 Clipping, Algemeen Handelsblad, March 26
Motives from the emotional world disclosed by modern psychology are at the base of this fascinating art of dancing. This art is utterly serious and mature, it has none of the easy, beauteous, galvanizing, charming element, nor, on the other hand, the nebulous and pathetic character of the, more often, impotent modern dance."

About her innovative technique the critics said: “The dancers every gesture has absolute expressiveness, the choreographic patterns bear the hallmark of genius.” “The dancing itself remains always light even in the more dramatic moments. And this would not be possible without the perfect technique of the dancers, a technique which is never mere virtuosity.” About her Greek inspiration: “Martha Graham has created a form of stage dancing in its cathartic effect only comparable perhaps with the Greek ancient tragedies.”

Thus, in the view of the above very positive, objective and thorough reviews, it cannot be a surprise that “craziness,” a word used often by intolerant critics, was not to be found in any of the writings related to Graham’s presence in Holland in 1954. Again, on the contrary: “In spite of the intellectual and literary elements and the hidden symbolism of many of Martha Graham’s dances, the movements are so dynamic and tense that the dances fascinate the audience and keep it spellbound.” Other critics appreciated that “In her dances... she expresses an inner world. Her private language, however, is never obscure, every moment is symbolically expressive.” Last but not least, the uniqueness and innovation of her works were not a proof of a “problem,”

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735 Ibidem
736 Clipping, Het Vrije Volk, March 27, 1954
737 Clipping, Het Parool, March 26
738 Clipping, Het Vaderland, March 31, 1954
739 Ibidem
740 Ibidem
741 Clipping, Het Vrije Volk, March 31, 1954
but, on the contrary, of her art: “Even if the spectator would not immediately grasp the deeper sense of these ballets, he sees a composition of lucid, tense movements, a stage scene of enrapturing beauty and strange fascination.”

On April 6, the Company staged its last performance in Holland, in Hilversum. After it, the company left for Denmark (April 6–10), Sweden (April 11–19), and Belgium (April 21–23). The next step was Paris, where they arrived on April 24 and opened on April 30, performing until May 8. As the chapter will show, Paris would be not as pleasant and successful for Graham as the visit to Holland, but by no means as disastrous as the 1950 abbreviated appearance there.

Les Enfants du Paradis
The Tour to Paris in 1954

At first look the France of 1954, the year of Martha Graham’s second tour to Paris, seemed similar, if not the same, to the France of 1950. Then the American dancer performed unsuccessfully in a country which struggled with the bitter memory of the Second World War, openly manifested its mistrust and dislike of Americans, and exhibited a superior skepticism toward their culture. Now the country’s new challenges, mostly revolving around the leadership of the world and Europe and the future of the French colonial Empire, helped neither the already injured national pride of the French nor the relationship with America. Foreign policy – in which

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742 Clipping, *Algemeen Handelsblad*, March 31, 1954, Box 329, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
the Americans were making the rules – was now to be blamed for the French external crisis, while the Korean War was a new occasion for the French to accuse the Americans for their imperialist spirit, their racism, and lack of human emotions.

However, even if anti-Americanism was a permanent element of French culture, towards the mid fifties there was a significant change in the way French viewed at their alliances with the United States and consequently, their place in the post 1945 world. Based on the fact that, liked or disliked, accepted or still rejected, American leadership in politics, diplomacy, and economy was no longer only an option, a possibility, or a temporary solution, but a present and steady reality, by the time of Graham’s second tour French-American relationships in general, including those in culture, had “thawed” and entered a new phase; that it was the result of necessity and of the Cold War’s competition and alliances rather than on a real understanding or emotions was true, but it did not change much the outcomes.

In 1954 French pride in their culture’s universal heritage and their superiority in the Pantheon of “culture-makers” remained the same as in 1950, but what started to change also was the perspective through which they looked at these soothing beliefs, as well as at the possibility of maintaining their sole and unique leadership in the arts, which became an increasingly unrealistic aim in the context of the Cold War. For the French, as for the rest of the

743 Luethy, p.455
744 Le Monde reported about the “terrifying mentality” of the American GI’s and airmen who cheerfully machine gunned civilians in North Korea, all negative propaganda resulting in a feeling of Schadenfreude with the “official” Korean enemy.
746 The French loved the idea that they were the revolutionary torchbearers of mankind, who, speaking the language of civilization in the name of humanity, had a major role in its development (Luethy page 1). For centuries the French enjoyed the idea that “everyone had two countries, his own and France”, while also they portrayed themselves as the saviors of the intellectuals produced by other countries, who came to Paris in order to find the true and inspiring intellectual milieu able to enhance, enrich and further their creation.(Luethy, p.7)
Europeans, it soon became clear that not only American political and diplomatic leadership had to be accepted, but also the presence and the growing impact of American artists and arts in the European cultural space – including France – was another reality which had to be taken into consideration.

The present chapter challenges the assumption that Graham’s two tours to France during the fifties were unsuccessful in an identical way, and that both happened without leaving a mark in the cultural consciousness of the French public. If compared to the fame Graham enjoyed in the USA, or the acclaim she would experience just a year later, during her Asian tour, or that Graham would have in Europe during the sixties, indeed, the 1954 tour to Paris cannot be considered a success. But, if one considered the previous appearance of Graham in Paris, in 1950, the reconstruction and analysis of the second tour to France shows how different they were. And the differences cannot be left unobserved, not analyzed, and not put into perspective, inasmuch as in all historical writing, including that focused on culture, the differences are essential in understanding the facts, their evolution, and importance.

It is not only that during the second tour Graham and her company performed for more than a week, unlike during the first tour, reduced to two nights of performances, with just one with Martha Graham on stage. The major difference between the tours lay in the way the critics responded to it and in the way in which, compared to the blurred and inconsistent presence (could one call it better “absence?”) of Martha Graham in 1950, during the 1954 tour American modern dance and one of its finest representatives became a reality in the eyes of the French public and critics; criticized and disliked most of the time, liked by some, but most importantly, by no means ignored.
As in 1950, in the Paris of 1954 there was still negative criticism, as well as critics and people who did not like Graham at all, although by no means as numerous as four years before. However, unlike in 1950, in 1954 there were also glowing reports of her performances. But most important for judging the way in which in 1954 Graham’s tour was different, is not to focus on those who, in a positive or a negative way, hailing or denying Graham, reached the extremes, but to survey at “average” responses of the critics, fellow artists, and refined intellectuals who observed and analyzed Graham.

This layer of the audience was the one which started (or, better said, continued) a more objective dialogue with Martha Graham and her art, thus generating another kind of perception, which made the difference between the two tours. Not surprisingly, in 1954 the dialogue between the Parisian critics and public and the artist, her company and her art lost, even if not completely, the superior tone, of the 1950 critique of Graham. Her Americaness, with its negative connotations, which was stressed and used in arguing against the dancer and her art four years before, now lost space and firmness in some critics’ eyes. Accordingly, the more unprejudiced and dispassionate way of “seeing” Graham, the less powerful the distorting lenses through which her art was viewed, including but not limited to her nationality and cultural “pedigree,” the more her artistry and innovations gained well defined contours and nuances in the eyes of those watching her.

Ironically, this subtle but very important change of perspective related to the way Graham and her art were perceived happened during the mid-fifties. For most European audiences, it was a time when analyzing artists from other cultures, and appreciating their performances and impact on one’s own cultural space were becoming more and more an ideological option, not
only an artistic one. The changes, differences and dynamics of Graham’s second tour to France, especially if compared to the first one, were a microcosm of the changing American relationships with Europe in general, and, more specifically, of American artists with the cultural Europe, its audience, and its critics. Liked or disliked, as the country she came from, during the 1954 tour Martha Graham was not ignored, and the responses to her performances showed that she was no longer seen as an insignificant American artist from a culture which lacked significant accomplishments. Being an American artist overseas was not what it had been just a few years before.

The acceleration of the ideological conflict which divided Europe into two warring factions meant more than choosing a political side, as the French admitted worriedly that they were in the strange situation of having to choose between two models of “guerre froide culture.” Both were appealing, and both were terrifying options, and all these kindled a passionate debate, which put even the Catholics and Communists on the same page.\textsuperscript{747} The Soviet “culture proletarianne,” seen in France as a culture of liberty,\textsuperscript{748} apparently had the advantage over the American culture, as numerous French,\textsuperscript{749} including their leading intellectuals, continued to lean towards the Left, feeding what Guy de Rothschild (brother of Bethsabee de Rothschild,) called the “maladie de gauche.”\textsuperscript{750} American culture had fewer supporters and traditions in French culture, even if some French intellectuals stressed that American culture was an extension of

\textsuperscript{748} It was present before in the works of Emile Zola, Victor Hugo or Gustave Courbet
\textsuperscript{749} polls showed that among those who hoped that “communism will win on earth”, 64% believed that the communist will obtain the “majorite absolute”, 67% thought that the US were preparing a war, 61% were giving money to the organizations which were attached directly or not to the party.
\textsuperscript{750} Guy de Rothschild, “Mon Ombre Siamoise.” p.30
Thus, the scenario in which the “Culture of Belle Epoque,” of the “Annes folles,” and of the “Annes noires –” cultural stages impregnated with the French cultural exceptionalism – would be followed by the “Annes Américaines” seemed unacceptable. French chauvinists continued to caution against the sinister influence of American pop culture, with its “westerns, le jazz hot, and the American strip-tease,” which were threatening the nation’s glorious patrimony. Theater was the flag-bearer of the French artistic stage consciousness and carried an anti-American message, and the plays, irrespective of their target (whether they opposed the bourgeois theater, described the Resistance, or experimented with realism and existentialism, and even with “communist theatre,”) often contained a strong anti-American tirade.

But, even if the Anti-American cultural discourse was and continued to be a constant of the French culture, it started to lose power, as it could not be denied that American culture was a presence and that it had a strong appeal to a significant segment of the population. The protectors of French culture remarked with satisfaction that the American products could impact the non-elitist part of the audience, the “movie-goers” and not the theater-goers, but soon this started to work to in the advantage of American culture, as there was an increased appetite for the American “policier” novels, a renewed interest in jazz, and an immense popularity of the American cinema.

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752 Milza, p.434; even the clasics were criticized; Casablanca: “melo and propagande”, Gilda “erotisme de bazaar”, and “Le port d’angoise,” also considered a “collection of poncifs.” During this time almost two-thirds of the movies were American compared to one third which were French, which determined a virulent critique from the film critics de “L’ecran Francais” who rallied against the American silver screen “invasion.”
754 Ibidem, p.421
Not all French culture lovers believed in the soothing effect of the good old times. Thus there was a French audience looking for modernity and fostering a curiosity for the modern, as their country had been over the decades the place where various “isms” could become a major trend. So, “le modele Americane,” could not be excluded from the equation, as American culture carried more than any other culture of the time the idea of modern in art. It was an element which American cultural diplomats soon understood and used in the way they designed cultural export. Thus, Martha Graham and Jackson Pollock, not necessarily favorites in the USA, became a valuable asset for their impact in a world seeking the modern and new. Even more, towards the mid-fifties, the American cultural products targeting low and highbrow culture started to be visible and to impact cultural France. However, the French started to rethink American “otherness,” and at the official level the French-American relationship cultural exchange reached a new level, advancing and becoming better organized. During the mid-fifties the Americans continued in France their “campaign of truth” meant to prove “the moral strength” of the Americans, and to improve the image of America, its politics and culture; the exchange of “key specialists” from different domains was intensified, and those invited to the USA were expected to observe carefully “our reality” and, back home, to “paint the true picture.” The success the Americans needed in France was considered crucial and a “world necessity” as it was linked to the fight against “the steady march of dictatorship.”

Based on the previous Memorandum of Understanding of the two governments, in 1955 the USA and France signed a new agreement, which stipulated even more precisely the financial

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755 Ibidem
involvement of the two countries in cultural exchange.\textsuperscript{756} Based upon the agreement, France had to pay 178,474,500 francs to the Department of State, to be used for the cultural exchange involving French artists in the USA.\textsuperscript{757} The new agreement also showed the Americans’ continuous desire and determination to be part of the cultural exchange, while the involvement of the highest political offices also showed that more than ever at politics and culture were courting each other and were becoming involved in each other’s presence and “performance” abroad.\textsuperscript{758}

The French also needed American stages in order to promote their art, as even the art of a country with a reputable culture needed international exposure. Moreover, after the Second World War, the British were increasingly exporting their art to the USA. The already existent French Association of Artistic Action (established in 1923, and among whose members was Philippe de Rothschild, Bethsabee’s uncle) arranged the American tours of notable French theatrical companies to Washington, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. They presented to the American public individual dancers such as Leslie Caron and Violette Verdy, and dance

\textsuperscript{756} Embassy’s Note no.426, June 30, 1955, and the Ministry’s reply the same day, \textit{Affairs Etrangers, Relations Culturelles. Series 2, 1956-1959, Etats-Unis 2-63}, Les Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France; The amount of money was paid as shown by a letter into the account Joseph A. Dagenhardt, Disbursing Officer attached to the Department of State/Paris, April 2, 1958; Les Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France
\textsuperscript{757} The Government of France payed 178, 474,500 francs into the account Joseph A. Dagenhardt, who was the Disbursing Officer attached to the Department of State
\textsuperscript{758} \textit{Affairs Etrangers, Relations Culturelles. Series 2, 1956-1959, Etats-Unis 2-63}, Les Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France; for instance, when Darius Milhaud (MG DANCE) participated at the Festival of Faith and Freedom Committee, under the patronage of Leonard Bernstein, Gregor Piatigorsky (Bethsabee de Rothschild’s brother in law) and Arthur Rubinstein, the correspondence between the American Embassy in Paris and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and its Direction Generalle des Relations Culturelles

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companies such as that of Roland Petit.\textsuperscript{759} Roland Petit’s Les Ballets de Paris, which had opened in the fall of 1949 on Broadway, ran there until January 1950.\textsuperscript{760}

It is more than interesting and meaningful for analyzing Graham’s reception in France, to examine the way in which Zizi Renée Jeanmarie, a dancer with this company and the wife Roland Petit (who also appeared in several Hollywood films,) compared the French and American audiences. Her opinions – which appeared in an interview published in France a few months after Graham’s second Parisian season – echoed Jean Cocteau’s words: “in Paris there is a curious habit of destroying, belittling and …writing of a man as finished at the slightest sign of weakness.”\textsuperscript{761} Jeanmarie liked the American audience better as they listened with attention and “application,” came to performances for seeing an artist (“voir un spectacle qui les interesse) and not for being seen, thus giving the artists a chance; last but not least, she considered that the American public did not “kill” a dancer for one mistake, unlike in France, where not only this happened, but also “the critics have a curious, dishonest and common attitude, to ride the horse of chauvinism each time that a foreign company performs on the Parisian stages.”\textsuperscript{762}

Not unexpectedly, in this intensified and mutually necessary American-French cultural exchange, and in the context of the increasing importance of modern artists in the American cultural exchange, Martha Graham came into the discussion slightly earlier than on the occasion of her tour to the capital of France and in circumstances not linked to it. The occasion was the

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\textsuperscript{759} Affairs Etrangers, Relations Culturelles. Series 2, 1955-1956, Les Archives des Affaires étrangères (Archives diplomatiques), La Courneuve, France; it is significant that on this occasion they danced consecrated works such as Carmen, and more modern ones such as Le Loup and Cine-Bijou

\textsuperscript{760} Following the New York engagement, the French company toured America before returning to Europe. Renée Jeanmaire, Colette Marchand, Gordon Hamilton, and Mr. Petit were the principal dancers.

\textsuperscript{761} Unknown author, “Appreciation,” in Foyer, CND, Pantin, France

\textsuperscript{762} Paris Theatre fall 1954, p.13-14, CND, Pantin, France
International Festival of the Dramatic Art in Paris. The matter itself, namely an invitation for a theater group from the USA to participate in the festival, deserves full attention, as it shows again that talking about and exchanging culture in the mid-fifties meant exiting the purely cultural sphere and involving in it the political one. In a letter sent from the USIS offices in Paris, Lawrence S. Morris, the Public Affairs Officer and the Cultural Attaché of the American Embassy in Paris, informed the State Department in Washington that the French, represented by Mr. A. M. Julien, director of the famous Sarah Bernhardt Theater, wanted to invite a “first rate” American theater group to represent the USA at an international dramatic festival. It is also very significant that the sender felt it necessary to stress that Mr. Julien asked specifically that the State Department should be informed about the invitation.

While suggesting that serious attention should be given to the matter, as their country’s achievements in theater “have been poorly represented,” the American official of the Embassy brought into discussion Martha Graham as a possible choice for the Americans to prove their cultural achievements and successes. The American cultural attaché had a perfect knowledge of Graham’s schedule, of her previous trip to Paris, and its outcome: “It is too early to know the results of Martha Graham’s appearance, beginning April 30, though she was coolly received by the press in her previous Paris engagement,” said the sender, but he thought that she should be considered for future support from the State Department.

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763 Letter from Mr. A. M. Julien to Mr Fairley, Assistant Cultural Attache, American Embassy in Paris, 2 April 1954, National Archives in Maryland, NND, 852917, RG 59, BOX 2389; (Interestingly, next to other famous professional theater groups from Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and possibly even communist countries such as USSR and Poland.)

764 Letter from Lawrence S. Morris, the Public Affairs Officer and the Cultural attaché of the American Embassy in Paris, to the State Department, April 20, 1954, NND 852917, RG 59, BOX 2389
Graham did not accept to participate in the Festival, most likely because of her conflicting schedule as during the spring she was back in Paris, to dance again at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. It was a special setting, as she had danced there four years ago, and it was a place infused with the history of American dance: the figure of Isadora Duncan was carved in bas-relief in the hall, Loie Fuller danced there “La Mer” and “Les Nuages,” while in 1925 Josephine Baker opened her show there singing “Yes, Sir, That’s my Baby.” The correspondence exchanged with various persons from Graham’s entourage prior to the Parisian appearance showed that it was prepared with care; for instance, information and pictures of Graham and the company were distributed to various journals. LeRoy Leatherman, the general manager for Graham’s company, was asked to pay for the sixty-one pictures made “on his assignment,” and, in spite of previous tensions, Anatole Heller was representing Graham again. Before the start of Graham’s new journey to Europe, the Paris based impresario sent her a telegram wishing her and the company a “happy crossing, au revoir in London.” One could wonder how Graham was feeling about returning to Paris, and if she was very affected by the lack of success of her first tour. A part of the answer lies in an interview taken shortly after the unsuccessful appearance in 1950 in Paris, by the famous French critic Pierre Tugal, and published in Dancing Times. The interview itself is great reading, with memorable quotes everywhere – “I think the reason dance has held such an ageless magic for the world is that it

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765 Brian N. Morton, Americans in Paris, Ann Arbor: The Olivia and Hill Press, 1984, p.145; she was applauded by Picabia, Robert Desnos, and Fernard Leger
766 A letter from Pierre Deligant who was living in Texas To Craig and Lee
767 Letter to LeRoy Leatherman, from unknown sender, Box 329, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
768 Barton asked all letters to be forwarded to Anatole Heller’s office
769 Telegram, Box 329, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
770 Clipping, Pierre Tugal, Dancing Times in October: 21-22, Box 329, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
has been the symbol of the performance of living,” Graham said – while also demonstrating that her self-confidence was not much diminished by the unsuccessful first appearance in Europe.\textsuperscript{771}

In 1954 Martha Graham danced in Paris for a week, starting on May 1.

Before beginning the analysis of Graham’s 1954 tour, one has to perform another task of major importance for the entire analysis of Graham’s appearance in France, and at a larger scale, in Europe, namely to “assess” the place of Graham and her art in the spectrum of the French audience prior to her second tour. This task has to define the way in which the concepts of “change” and of “different,” and their outcomes, evolved not only from one tour to another, but also from the first notice of Graham in France, happened in the thirties, to the moment she was about to tour France again, namely in 1954.

The starting point of “Graham in perspective” analysis is the article \textit{Le Ballet en Amérique} by Christine Rivoyre, French journalist and author, published in 1952. This heterogeneous article – under the umbrella of “ballet” the author gathered American jazz, ballet, vaudeville, movies and modern dance, and named the American dancers and choreographers most known in France –\textsuperscript{772} is a benchmark in understanding how American dance in general was conceptualized by the French critics and the audience they represented.\textsuperscript{773} Graham was mentioned at the end of the article, mostly as an act of justice, as “It would be unfair to end without mentioning the names of Ruth Page and Martha Graham.” Graham was not by


\textsuperscript{772} They were Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Josephine Baker, Rita Hayworth, Katherine Dunham (“une superbe interprete.”) and the “defenseurs” of the American ballet, the choreographers George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins and Agnes de Mille

coincidence paired with Page, as both toured France in 1950 and had to face the negative energy of the French public, and their lack of success was attributed by the author to the same reasons: “the two dancers came to Paris and the public with their hermetical choreographies. [To like them or not] it is a question of perspective.” Still, compared to Ruth Page, Graham, even if obviously not considered yet of major importance, was given the merit of “having tried for ten years (sic) to translate the American heart, its anguishes and happiness in an expressionist style (sic), and of having a school where she was teaching her style of dance.”

Before Christine Rivoyre’s 1952 commentary two other articles concerning Graham, had appeared previously in France: one written in 1930s by Alin Hans, the first ever mentioning the modern dancer Martha Graham to the French public, and the second, a conference presentation of Serge Lifar, called “L’Art de la Danse,” later published as an article in “Conferencia. Journal de l’ Université des Annales,” in 1939. Published at the distance of almost a decade, they also play the role of a case-study able to reveal in which way the image of Graham and the opinions related to her innovation in art changed – or not, – and in which way they evolved, – or not.

Alin Hans’s article presented Graham rather not as an artist on her own, but as a counterfeit: her dance was “exotique,” and she drew her inspiration from Native American dancers. Ironically, he labeled her art “distinctive,” but as most of the French critics would do in 1950, Hans compared Graham with Mary Wigman, suggesting that Graham mostly copied the German dancer. In a very patriotic way, he even claimed that not only the German dancer inspired Graham, but also the Ballets Suédois, active in France, who influenced the emerging

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774 More on the impact of Ballet Suédois can be found in Paris Modern. The Swedish Ballet, 1920-1925, Washington University Press, 1996; Based in France, they were experimenting with modernism from the twenties.
American “danse de groupe,” as he called modern dance.\textsuperscript{775} Alin Hans was not a well-known or influential critic and did not leave any other traceable mark, but this does not mean that his opinions were without importance, even if they were based on a rather limited knowledge of Graham’s art, as he did not mention any other sources of inspiration of the American dancer beside those mentioned above. Still, his comments have the merit of demonstrating that the American dancer started to be known outside of the refined circle of dance practitioners and connoisseurs in France already in the thirties, and they also have the merit of being, even if not necessarily positive, an honest dislike of the dancer.

Which cannot be said about Serge Lifar’s conference presentation,\textsuperscript{776} published in 1939, which analyzed the “problems” of American dance, and in which he focused extensively on Graham’s creation? It is not without importance to mention that Lifar’s talk came one year after the bitter experience of presenting his \textit{Icar} in New York (in 1938), when he claimed that, even if it was loved by the public, the critics “loudly discharged him,” an opinion which contradicted Jeanmarie’s. His presence in New York allowed him to see Graham for the first time dancing three “ballets” namely, \textit{Frontier}, \textit{American Document}, and \textit{Imperial gesture}, at Carnegie Hall.\textsuperscript{777}

Lifar’s talk was an open attack on the past and present of American dance, but it developed after the introduction into a harsh critique of Martha Graham, which expanded and enlarged the parameters of analysis used by Alin Hans. Lifar disliked American dance, which he also considered an imitation of European innovation in dance; he also considered it influenced by the innovation bred in France by foreign dancers and choreographers. However, after ignoring

\textsuperscript{775} Alin Hans, approx. 1932, CND, Pantin, France
\textsuperscript{777} \textit{Imperial gesture} (Lehman Engel) was premiered on April 7, 1935 in Los Angeles
Ruth St. Denis, and admitting his dislike of Lincoln Kirstein and John Martin, the author finally gave credit to Isadora Duncan for influencing French ballet, but, a line below he called her a “dilettante,” whose art was the result of the Ballets Russes’ and Mary Wigman’s influences combined! He also claimed that Graham’s *American Document* was inspired by his own *Icar*.

Above everything and everyone in the American dance, he disliked Graham, a “Terpsichore mecanique,” who, he believed, failed in her aim to create a new American dance. The reasons for his total and vehement criticism of Graham were multiple. On one hand, like Hans, Lifar claimed that Graham borrowed her style from Mary Wigman, “with her pathetic style, and expression.” Again like Hans, Lifar believed that Graham “drew” her inspiration from Europe, not the Ballets Suedois this time, but the famous “Sacre de Printemps.” In Lifar’s perspective, all Graham created was bad: she had a predilection for military demonstration (“marche militaire,”) gymnastics, cirque, and cerebral dance, all used poorly; she, like Doris Humphrey, also chose “poor music” and the dances had poor movement, as there was not a proper relationship between music and dance; nothing was new in her style, as she did not have a plan of the composition. All in all, and above everything, her dances did not exhibit anything American and anything modern, as Lifar did not find any jazz, folk, or at least the rhythm of American life he witnessed in New York! Thus, he recommended to Graham to improve her work by using cowboys and black folklore.

“She is totally artificial, unable to create an American ballet,” concluded his analysis. (But, one wonders, as obviously Lifar did not, whether Martha Graham ever wanted to create an American ballet.) The only credit he gave Graham was alternating a spoken text with dance, a formula he also used. While his anti-Graham tirade was read by the actor Roger Lannes, Lifar
danced *La Cantique des Cantiques*\(^{778}\) with three ballerinas, including the very popular former Ballets Suédois star, Carina Ari.

The two critics expressed their era’s spirit and perspective on American culture, dance, and Martha Graham. Alin Hans’ dislike for Graham and limited knowledge of the artist was even if negative, a genuine echoing of the decade’s reserve vis-à-vis modern dance and towards an American dancer who, in any case, was just beginning her own path to glory in her own country. Compared to Hans’ shorter and less informed analysis, Lifar’s article-presentation displayed a thorough knowledge, doubled by his personal experience of dancing in the USA and being in the dance audience in New York City, but the same dislike of Graham. But, one wonders, was Lifar’s dislike and negation of Graham a result of an inability to understand the progress and innovation her art fostered, or, did his aggressive and “demonstrated” dislike have in it already the seeds of fear of an ‘invasive’ art form from an invasive culture?\(^{779}\)

Up to a point one can believe that Lifar was honest in his dislike too. As the dancer and choreographer Dominique Dupuy claimed, Lifar truly believed that classical dance was the only accepted form of dance, thus throwing a “voile” (veil) on other forms of dance. But as Dupuy also observed, Lifar especially resented the dance innovations “qui vient de l’étranger,” thus foreign.\(^ {780}\) Thus, was it a wholly genuine dislike, or was it more? At least part of the answer can be found in the question posed by Rivoyre at the end of her article: “Mais pourrait-il engendrer

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\(^{778}\) *Le Cantique des Cantiques*, was one of Lifar’s modernist experiments, based on the Song of Solomon from the Bible, *Le Cantique de Cantiques*. He took the leading part himself, and needed a partner.

\(^{779}\) Ironically, Lifar’s character and artistic drive were often compared with Martha Graham’s, as both had a necessity to be in the centre of the works they created (as he put it, he loved to create a world “a lui don’t il était le centre,”) and also like Graham he also felt that the movement came from the interior, an impulse with “necesitee interieure.

\(^{780}\) Ou va la danse, L’aventure de la danse par ceux qui l’ont vecue, Amelie Grand et Phillipe Verriele, Seuil/Archimbaud, 2005, p.33; \(^{780}\) famous and very longeviv French modern dancer
des compagnies de ballets semblable a celle de notre Opera?"781 (Can they, the American innovations, foster dance companies similar that of our Opera?) It suggests that by 1952, two years after Graham’s first tour, and two years prior to Graham’s second tour, the dislike and criticism of American dance, and implicitly of Graham, even if not admitted openly, was supplemented by a realization that American art, like American politics, was no longer just a possibility which could be accepted or rejected, but a reality which had in it the potential to influence and “endanger” other cultures, including the French. Thus, Rivoyre’s question appeared less as another cry reflecting a strong belief in French cultural exceptionalism – like Hans’ but definitely not like Lifar’s – and seemed more as the embodiment of a self-reflective, renewed, and increasingly self-doubtful discourse in the face of the offensive of other cultures.

A part of the French audience and the critics preferred to disregard the new realities of European culture, including its “internationalization,” with so many foreign artists visiting, performing, and [in the end] influencing and changing their own cultural spectrum. Others started to accept the time’s changes and challenges. Thus, even if the anti-Graham, the neutral, and the pro-Graham coverage coexisted, as during the previous tour, these segments’ distribution was different compared to four years before. If in 1950 the negative was prevalent, and the positive reactions were minimal, now the proportions changed. As already stressed, Graham’s presence in 1954 could not count as an overwhelming success, but, compared to the 1950 shortened tour to Paris, her reception in 1954 was different, and the difference was positive, as some of the critics’ response to the American dancer moved from the aggressive negative tone towards a more balanced and positive one. Thus the American inspiration of some of Graham’s

781 Christine Rivoyre, “Le Ballet en Amerique,” p.69-75
works and the sexuality of others – both very much disliked by the critics who analyzed Graham’s previous performance in Paris – were no longer a major basis for negation. All of the above were completed also by a better knowledge of her art, persona, and influence in dance, displayed already in the announcements of the tour.

However, to the French dance lovers’ comfort, the same Serge Lifar self-confidently answered Rivoyere’s first question (in 1953,) in the first number of Art et Danse, Les Information Coreographiques, declaring proudly on the first page: Triomphe de l’Academie! Interestingly, in his article, he did not attack American dance, mentioning it just sparingly, as Balanchine (spelled Balanohine) and Katharine Dunham, already a favorite of the French public, alone attracted his attention. The same dance magazine which published Lifar’s new reassuring cry had also the merit of informing its clientele first about Martha Graham’s new tour to France. The news was crammed in the section called “Petites Nouvelles,” the date of the tour was announced as March 14, and the readers were informed that she would visit “également” France.

The announcements of the tour – numerous, thoroughly informed and displaying beautiful pictures of Graham – were a rehearsal of a different way of seeing and perceiving Graham, for the critics, their readers, and the rest of the audience. From the announcements one can see that what was the norm in 1950 Paris – an unleashed negative criticism – changed into a more nuanced attitude, varying from negative, to neutral-informative, and to the positive


783 Art et Danse, Les Information Coreographiques, No.3, mars.avril.1954

784 Art et Danse, Les Information Coreographiques, No.3, mars.avril.1954
responses, all having a more balanced tone, not aggressive and seldom disrespectful. Equally significant is that the refreshed attitude was replicated just a few weeks later in the tour’s press coverage.

In 1950, in a very unique way the role of the “foil dancer” for Graham was the German dancer Mary Wigman. Comparing Graham and Wigman was meant to emphasize without exception their common “craziness,” “ugliness” and lack of artistic quality, so being “like” Wigman meant being not a real dancer. By 1954 Paris had a more “international face,” so beside Martha Graham, the ballerinas Alicia Markova and Galina Ulanova, and the opera ballet of Amsterdam 785 toured the city almost simultaneously. (The British ballerina Alicia Markova 786 was announced to dance at the Palais de Chaillot, while Galina Ulanova, the star of the Soviet Ballet, came to Paris ten days after Graham concluded her tour.) Therefore, Graham was now paired with figures among the elite club of famous dancers. However, even if those writing about Graham continued to feel more comfortable “pairing” her with other dancers, in order to be (or not) given credit, to be (or not) placed among the elite of famous dancers, analyzing and comparing Graham – especially to Alicia Markova – led to different conclusions than four years before.

Thus, the comparison with Wigman almost disappeared, while the comparison with ballet was not – as happened in 1950 – unfavorable to Graham. A few examples: Paris Presse

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786 Markova: In 1950, Markova and Dolin became the co-founders of the Festival Ballet, a company formed to celebrate the Festival of Britain. Dolin was to be the company’s first Artistic Director, with Markova as Prima Ballerina. The company went on to tour extensively to less conventional venues both in the United Kingdom and internationally. Markova remained the Prima ballerina of the company until 1952, after which she continued to appear regularly as a guest dancer until her retirement from professional dancing.
announced that Graham would dance in Paris during the same time as Alicia Markova, “the most romantic dancer of the world,” who pleased the French audience more, as she declared that she would dance in Paris for “la Coeur” (her heart); still, attached to the article was a beautiful large picture of Graham.\textsuperscript{787} Le Parisien Libre talked about the “two big international ballerinas” (ironically, the article stated that Graham was not “classical”) scheduled to appear on the Parisian stage, but hailed Graham as the more original and “the most discussed one in town.”\textsuperscript{788} Comedia liked the American dancer more, announcing Graham’s visit in a very welcoming tone, and publishing pictures of both dancers, (the larger one belonged to Graham,)\textsuperscript{789} and while calling the American dancer’s style “plastic-rhythmical,” the critic seemed not to be bothered that it was also “purely American.”\textsuperscript{790}

As the Parisian scene had become more international, the comparisons between Graham and other dancers and choreographers were as well: two with the American Jerome Robbins and one with the British-American Anthony Tudor, “in a style reminding of Jerome Robbins ‘Diversions of Angels’ has color and sensibility, noticed one critic,\textsuperscript{791} while another said that “she was inspired by Anthony Tudor and Robbins.”\textsuperscript{792} One critic compared her with the French modern dancer, Irene Poppard\textsuperscript{793} (“Bare feet and mysterious gymnastics” a la Poppard,\textsuperscript{794}) while

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{787} Clipping, \textit{Paris Presse}, April 24, 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris \\
\textsuperscript{788} Clipping, \textit{Le Parisien Libre} April 24, 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris \\
\textsuperscript{789} It listed Markova’s recent accomplishments, including her recital at Albert Hall, and at the American TV \\
\textsuperscript{790} Clipping Jean Silvant, \textit{Comedia}, 28 April 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris; however, what was announced wrongly was the venue for Graham’s performances (Chaillot Theatre) but Heller was announced correctly as her impresario. \\
\textsuperscript{791} Clipping, \textit{France Soir}, 11 mai 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris \\
\textsuperscript{792} Clipping, \textit{Le Monde}, 5 May, 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris \\
\textsuperscript{793} Robinson, in “L’Aventure..” talks at length about Poppard
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another traveled back in time and compared her with two innovators in dance, Émile Jaques Dalcroze\textsuperscript{795} and Isadora Duncan, as they all shared “incontestable plastique beauty.”\textsuperscript{796} Only one critic compared Martha Graham to Mary Wigman, and not even alone but teamed with the Hungarian-German-moved-to Britain dancer Rudolf Laban, suggesting that Graham’s art was “a branch of the German school.”\textsuperscript{797}

The 1954 announcements of the tour also displayed a better knowledge of who Graham was and what she did, informing the readers about her based more on researched information. \textit{Libération} announced Graham’s visit in the context of her entire European tour, mentioning that she danced previously in London, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Belgium, and, it also provided a complete list of Graham’s works to be presented in Paris.\textsuperscript{798} One day before the first performance, \textit{Le Figaro} also published a note about Graham’s program in Paris, accompanied by a beautiful picture of Helen McGehee, in \textit{Canticle for Innocent Comedians}, under the announcement: “répétition au Théâtre des Champs-Élysées,”\textsuperscript{799} referring to the fact that a day prior to the first night, on April 30, Graham and her dancers offered an hour of demonstration, which was a very good publicity move.\textsuperscript{800} One can remember that it was not totally a new move

\textsuperscript{794} Clipping, \textit{Le Monde}, 5 May, 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
\textsuperscript{795} Dalcroze (July 6, 1865 – July 1, 1950), was a Swiss composer, musician and music educator who developed eurhythmics.
\textsuperscript{796} Clipping, \textit{Le Figaro}, 4 May 1954, \textit{Le Figaro}. Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
\textsuperscript{797} Clipping, 8 May 1954 \textit{Le Figaro Litteraire}, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
\textsuperscript{798} Clipping, \textit{Liberation}, 28 April 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
\textsuperscript{799} Clipping, Undated, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
\textsuperscript{800} Clipping, 29 April, 1954, \textit{Le Monde}, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris

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for Graham and her company, as four years before Hellen McGehee gave a series of lecture-demonstrations in Paris prior to the official tour in the summer of 1950.

An article-announcement of this newer knowledge of Graham was published by *Combat* and signed by Dinah Maggie, later a strong supporter of Graham in France. Her article revealed a real connoisseur of Graham and her art, with whom she came in contact on the occasion of her 1950 tour. In words similar to the comment of Jean Cocteau (“Graham disturbed Paris, and that he wanted Paris to understand the intensity of Martha Graham even if this intensity is disturbing.”) Maggie also predicted that the performances would cause irritation but not indifference. Asserting that Graham was increasingly influential in the world of dance, and that her art was based on a true relationship between body and spirit, she strengthened her argument with excerpts from Barbara Morgan’s book, and ended with the cry that Graham was “astonishingly magical” and that her presence would be a “world class event.”

The program of the first night stated that the tour was sponsored by the “Bethsabee de Rothschild Foundation for the arts and the sciences,” and that Graham was represented again by Anatole Heller. Gertrude Macy was the general manager, Craig Barton was the representative for Bethsabee’s Foundation, while LeRoy Leatherman was the manager for Martha Graham Company. The program also included photographs of Graham dancing, but most interesting were the advertisements: one for the “Revue trimestrielle. N° 2: Lettres, art, musique des États-Unis. Profiles, the cultural life of the USA,” and two for Andre Malraux’s *Voice of silence*, and for

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802 Clipping, *Combat*, 27 April, 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex. However, if one might think that they were the result of some “political” sympathies, given that Malraux was known as the most pro-American intellectual of France, while the journal was clearly a result of American propaganda, it would be hard to explain the advertisement for Beauvoir’s book, as her dislike of America and Americana were notorious, and well documented in her books, especially in her America Day by Day.  

As was to be expected, a good part of the audience, beside the critics, was composed of the artistic milieu. However, prior to the tour Graham did not seem much preoccupied with the way her presence in the capital of France was to be received, and again Bethsabee de Rothschild, her family, and members of Graham’s staff took care of the publicity. There are no proofs that Graham tried to appease the French personalities influential in cultural circles or Americans with similar power. The writer Anais Nin, popular and with important cultural connections in the country of her birth, and a long time admirer of Graham’s personality and “black hair,” complained that Martha Graham ignored her. “It was this one friendship I wanted and I could not have. Because the close relationship between her work and mine, I sent her books, a letter, met her socially at Dorothy Norman’s, but she showed no interest… I could have helped her, love her.” (After seeing Graham dancing in 1952, Nin remarked that what they had in common

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803 Beauvoir, “America Day by Day”
807 The Diary Of Anais Nin, 1955-1966, Edited and with a preface by Gunther Stuhlmann, New York and London: Harcourt Bravce Jovanovich, 1976, p.88; Nin admired Graham’s works “full of rhythm and color” and that “every gesture illuminates with meaning; nothing is lost; magic power of art to create and transform” p.120-131; She even wrote some pages in Ladders on Fire, inspired by Graham’s suggestiveness, characters, symbolic enacting.
was refusing to be catalogued as feminists,\textsuperscript{808} even if their works contained liberating feminist messages – strong proofs of their “pelvic consciousness –” while they also shared the same interior world.\textsuperscript{809})

Reconstructing the audience is by all means one of the most difficult tasks one has to undertake when analyzing Graham’s presence in Paris, or elsewhere in Europe. As stressed already, the audience, like the dances performed, is one of the most volatile elements of the entire encounter between the art performed on stage, the artists, and the spectators, including the critics. However, while the critics’ response was retained by being printed in the newspapers and journals in which they appeared, and thus more easily found, reconstructed, and interpreted, the rest of the audience’s response is hard to discover; the biographies and the correspondence between artists and intellectuals of the time can be very helpful, but that is not always the case.

“We were quite numerous at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and we were just a handful to applaud,” claimed an American expatriate living in Paris, but he did not name anyone in the audience. Valuable information about Graham’s first night in Paris was given by the critic Oliver Merlin, who, overcoming his circumspections related to the “heavy names of the works from the program,” had the inspiration of naming people in the audience: the playwright Maurice Maeterlinck, who liked Graham’s performance\textsuperscript{810}, and Marcel Aymé, the writer, who did not like it as it was “unheard esoteric;”\textsuperscript{811} Merlin even mentioned that the bar’s bartender considered Graham’s performance “special.” Besides, Merlin acknowledged the “certain warmth” Graham’s

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[809]{The Diary, p.122}
\footnotetext[810]{Maurice Maeterlinck was a Belgian playwright, poet, and essayist who wrote in French, awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1911}
\footnotetext[811]{Marcel was a French novelist, children's writer, humor writer and also a screenwriter and theatre playwright}
\end{footnotes}
Another critic also reflected on Graham’s audience in Paris, which aligned beside the “skeptical spectators” and the “snobbish” ones, the true “connoisseurs,” “délirant” at the end of the night; as a proof, he talked about a young couturier he befriended, “jeune Alwyn,” who knew by heart “Ardent Song.”

French dancers were also represented in the audience. The fifties were a time when especially people from the dance profession were increasingly aware that the American dance was more than “jitterbug, boogie-woogie, and Rocket girls,” that “le ballet modern” (sic) found in the USA “une terre idylique,” and that Martha Graham was “representing l’avant-garde.”

Dominique Dupuy and Jacques Chaurand, modern dancers, both remembered the 1954 tour. The latter alleged that watching Graham on that occasion had a tremendous influence on him afterwards. The dancer and choreographer Jacqueline Robinson was also in the audience. She wrote to Graham prior to her visit, reminding her of their 1950 acquaintance, when she was the interpreter for Graham and her company. In her letter, Robinson remarked that the memory of Martha Graham was still very vivid among the dancers, due to the “unforgettably thrilling” performance and that, inspired by Graham, a group of dancers in Paris, including her, were to form a modern dance group. “A bientôt and welcome to Paris!” she signed her warm letter, while

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813 Ibidem
814 Clipping,”La Mallarme de la Danse,” *Dimanche Matin*, 16 May 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
815 PARIS Theatre, October 1954, p.13-14, CND, Pantin, France
816 Interview with Jacques Chaurand “Danse Moderne, ou est tu?”in *Ou va la danse, L’aventure de la danse par ceux qui l’ont vecue*, edited by Amelie Grand et Phillipe Verrielle (Paris: Seuil/Archimbaud, 2005), p.64-68
concluding that the artistic France was awaiting Graham’s arrival with excitement. It is also significant that during the same time Martha Graham received several requests from young French dancers to study with her in the United States, and she granted scholarships for her school to some promising French students. (The visit to Paris was for the dancers an opportunity to explore the city and its surroundings accompanied by French dancers; for instance, during an afternoon Ethel Winter went to visit the Cathedral of Our Lady of Chartres.)

One cannot say for sure if Maurice Bejart, French dancer and choreographer, was in the audience. However, remembering Graham on the occasion of an interview, beside stating that she “came before all of us, and changed everything, transformed, invented, … and liberated the bodies,” he claimed that they met first in Venice. As known so far, Graham visited Venice in 1950 and during the early eighties (after Bejart’s interview), so they most probably had known each other before the 1954 performance.

Ironically, Graham’s visit to Paris was again little noticed by her countrymen, thus contradicting the belief that “Americans in Paris love to read about other Americans in the city.” Neither did Stanely Karnow, reporting from Paris on the political and cultural life of the city, mention a word about Graham, nor did the composer Ned Rorem, even if he was part of the musicians’ circle in Paris who knew and collaborated with Graham. Others were in the

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817 Letter to Martha Graham, from unidentified senders, Box 329, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
818 Scrapbook, Ethel Winter Collection, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
819 Unknown author, “Martha Graham,” in Ballet Danse, trimestrial l’Avanat Scene, juin/aout 1982, p.77
820 Private Collection, Pictures show her next to Bethsabee de Rothschild feeding the pigeons in San Marco Plaza
audience, such as the artist John Franklin Koenig, present at her performances (both in 1950 and
1954.) His recollection of Graham’s visits to Paris (full of errors: he claimed that Graham first
came to Paris in 1951 and that Erick Hawkins left in 1946) called Graham’s performances
“disasters –” as her “poetical murmurs, the cries of joy, the songs for the simple moments, the
messages,” were not well received by the Parisian public. Interestingly, the tone of his writing
about his famous compatriot contained elements of the “cultural superiority” discourse, specific
to the way the French used to react toward the performers from other cultures. Thus, he
attributed Graham’s lack of success to the fact that “we smoked” (sic) these kinds of arts too
often,” suggesting that, due to their sophistication and power in “making an artist,” the Parisian
stages were too often chosen to present “futurist” art. (“Nous fumes pres nombreux au Théâtre
des Champs-Élysées, et nous fumes une poignee a applaudir.”) Still, even if disliking Graham, he
admitted that “her dance had an echo into the hearts of the people opened towards life, but did
not have the same effect on those in love with ballet.”

Still, the correspondent of the New York Herald Tribune, Thomas Quinn Curtis was very appreciative and called her magnificent, “the finished, shining product of something new, a long and arduous experience,” and the night “a fascinating evening.” His favorite works were Letter to the World, Ardent Song, and Errand into the Maze.

As in the tour’s announcements, the parallel with Alicia Markova was preponderant, but
with various nuances, and, unlike four years previous, the comparison with ballet was not a way
of demonstrating Graham’s inferiority. For instance, L’Aurore covered Markova and Graham’s

824 John Franklin Koenig, La danse Contemporaine (Paris: Libraire Artheme Fayard, 1980)
825 Clipping, Thomas Quinn Curtis, New York Herald Tribune, May 5, 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham
Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
performances, declaring from the title “Graham and Markova, quel contraste!” The details about
Markova’s performances abounded, but Graham was as much appreciated for the inedited
richness of her works, and for the new school and method she pioneered, “something we have
not seen and did not discover yet.” Dimanche Matin compared the two dancers in its article
suggestively entitled La Mallarme de la Danse, noticing their differences – unlike Markova,
Graham was “cerebral,” – but chose not to favor any dancer.

There were critics, such as Marie Brillant, who continued to dislike Graham profoundly,
as “going from the theater, where Markova danced, to Champs Elysees was like boarding an
elevator, which takes one to the basement,” as “Graham’s dance was not expressionism, nor
symbolism” but an “argument without subject, and philosophies for elementary school; of course
there are some elements of free dance, gymnastics, cirque and a lot of hysteria.” In a manner
reminiscent of the critics’ harsh reaction in 1950, Brillant also warned the audience about the
“disgust” they might experience. As in Brillant’s case – which used the customary way of
disliking Graham (“hysterical,” and not truly innovative, simplistic and unconvincing,) other
critics’ reproaches were almost identical to the ones launched four year previous. For instance,
after a minutia description of Night Journey, a critic enumerated, in an exasperated tone, the
“unlikable” characteristics of Graham’s performances, which were hard to understand, had
difficult themes of dances, as they were abstract and cerebral, and the decors were too
“essential.” Some critics disliked the “slow motion of her dances,” the “too courageous colors,

826 Clipping, L’Aurore, a liberal, socialist and literary newspaper, May 3, 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham
Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
827 Clipping, Le Crix, 7 May 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections,
Paris
green and violet,” and again that the works were not “readable,” while others complained of “too pretentious and too long” dances, while comparing Graham’s company with people who “dance like they participate in a benevolent amateur evening.”

The champion of the negative crowd and of those who in 1954 chose not to change the mental tools and perspective, and hence discourse in analyzing the American dancer, was Claude Baignères, from *Le Figaro*. He “provoked” Graham to work hard in order to create a masterpiece, which “sadly was not yet created” and thus not presented in Paris, while reassuring her that she had the capacity to do it. The rest of his article reminded one of the superior tone of the 1950 critics of the American dancer; Baignères believed that Graham was “too intelligent not to have answers” for the questions posed by her dances, that she came (literally and metaphorically) during a time when explanations were no longer enough, that she shocked but without being able to touch the intelligence of the audience. But at the end of the article, he seemed to have changed his mind in the most unexpected way, while comparing Graham “with a painter who would have discovered original colors, rare brushes, and would have written revolutionary and seductive esthetic treatises.”

Modern dance in general and Martha Graham in particular, were accused of not suggesting and embodying beauty. In 1950 Graham’s “lack of beauty” was often criticized. Once Graham declared “I did not want it to be beautiful or fluid. I wanted to be fraught with inner

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828 Clipping JL (probably Irina Lidova,) *France Soir*, May 11, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris  
830 Clipping, *Le Figaro*, 4 May 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
meaning, with excitement and surge. I wanted to lose the facile quality.”

During the second tour some French critics understood this, and, even if surprisingly, Baigneres was among them. Looking at Graham’s newness, her impact in modernizing the art of dance, and at the effect on the viewer from a different angle and a refreshed perspective, made some French critics able to appreciate the uncompromising, non-commercial qualities of Graham’s dance, and its dance-philosophy. Leaving the zone of denying Graham and her art, and moving towards a new appreciation made them accept that she innovated in the art of dance, and that she “felt the pulse of the time – the anger, sharpness, aggression in life at that time – and she was able to put those things into an art and communicate them.”

The present chapter does not intend to give an exhaustive repertoire of all that was said and written by the pro-Graham critics during the 1954 tour, but aims to demonstrate that, compared to 1950, the difference existed, and for this purpose some examples are necessary. One critic noticed that Graham created a “cerebral dance” through which the dancer “talks to the audience and wants them to get the sense of the heart,” while admitting that her “shocking” dancing style emphasized the new, liberated the bodies, while expressing the soul. Another journalist claimed that it was not easy to like her, as “sometimes she is not precise” and it “was pretentious,” which was an “irritant for the French,” but also that it was impossible not to see her unique technique and not to notice her art’s “transforming of the spirit and heart.” Other critics also appreciated that she innovated, literally and metaphorically, the “vocabulaire of danse,” as

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831 Meyer, *Martha Graham*, p.45: Michel Fokine told Graham: “You must admit that md is ugly,” she responded “Yes, it is, if you are living in 1890”

832 Walter Terry, *Goddess*, Sophie Maslow interview

833 Clipping, *Combat*, 5 Mai 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
“the term ballet” could not be used for her style of dance. “Martha Graham is the only real poet of Dance in our time,” cried a critic who signed JL (could it be Irina Lidova?)834 There were critics who, while describing Graham’s style of dance with “contractions, falls, bare feet,” and giving a long list of her composers and of her works, “psychoanalysis and Greek myths,” focusing on “powerful heroines,”835 welcomed Graham’s new technique, and the fact that her dancers were “of an incontestable class.”836

Graham’s foremost champion in Paris in 1954 was Dinah Maggie. She anticipated Graham’s visit with great interest, and wrote a glowing article covering Graham’s performances. In it she stressed the way Graham was influencing contemporary dance and called her work a “real and luminous art.” Not only was her very positive article completed by a superb picture of Graham, but she did not mention a word about any of the other dancers in Paris at that time, including Markova. However, the level of devotion toward Graham and her art reached heights which in Paris one could find until then only in the British audience, encompassing a deep, almost visceral reaction, very similar to that of the writer E. M. Forster, of Robin Howard, and of British dance lovers, such the unknown young dancer who wrote to Graham, all presented in the previous chapter.837 The best example for the was the article Offrande d’une jeune danseuse a
in which the author considered Graham a great artist, who brought to Paris not only an artistic message but a revolutionary one, which only “the incredulous and ignorant would not admit.” Before thanking Graham wholeheartedly for it, the author gave a feedback of her “titanic work,” full of “emotions and richness.” Even if one might think that the article was a publicity piece, the probability is not that high, as the article contained a mistake – calling the dances “ballets –” which no member of Graham’s entourage would have done.

While in Paris in 1950 the sexuality of some of Graham’s dances and the American inspiration of others were disliked and criticized, the critique of Graham’s tour in 1954 shows that the staged narrative of the Greek myths with their disturbing eroticism, and the American inspiration, which previously disconcerted the audience, were less of a reason for negation. Cultural historians, including those of dance, agree that in the making of an artistic piece of work and the innovating of an artistic field, as well as their reception, timing – a certain historical time, with its customs, codes and mores, influenced by social and political developments – plays a major role. What can be hugely bothersome at one moment to see on a stage can become little noticed or even appreciated at another time.

In 1954, discussion about Graham’s Greek inspiration (used for at least half of Graham’s dances presented) was either dropped entirely, or it occurred without the usual negative connotations. For example, the article “Martha Graham won recognition in Paris,” preferred to describe an audience which went from a skeptical to an enthusiastic public; that her works were

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839 Clipping, Undated, Claude Baigneres, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
psychological dramas, inspired by the “heavy climate of the Greek tragedy,” remained simply a statement, without being followed by negatively heated commentaries, as happened often four year before. One cannot forget that by the time of Graham’s second tour to Paris French women had started to question, refine, and redefine their place, while seeking a more powerful and articulate position in the society. The radical changes related to women’s place in society belong officially to the revolutionary sixties, but already during the fifties French women – who until then, whether “maitresse en titre” of a potent politician or “madame la caissière,” were considered mostly defenseless auxiliaries to men – were looking for the new in general, and new options in particular.

Thus when Coco Chanel tried to revive the classic line she was not successful as “it was like you were back in 1925.” Some combined profession and motherhood, such as Marguerie Duras, who “did the cooking, wrote her books, and had a baby;” other, like Simone de Beauvoir and Françoise Sagan, wrote best-sellers dealing with controversial situations and problems of women. Marie-Claire, created in 1953, was teaching French women “to make their voices heard,” as it was wrong to continue to “think [that] they have to be what others want them to be.” All in all, women of the mid fifties were challenging the past’s roles for women in the society and the understanding of womanhood, so, not unexpectedly, the “powerful and threatening” women of Graham’s dances, inspired by classic Greek female characters, were less striking oddities. Similarly that the pretty and domestic “type” of womanhood was also

840 Clipping, France Soir, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
841 Stanely Karnow, Paris in the Fifties, p.233
845 Marie Claire Magazine was founded by Jean Prouvost and Marcelle Auclair; Its first issue appeared in 1937
challenged by the more explicit, free, and questioning women’s own sexual fulfillment “type,” fully embodied in the French fashion and cinema of those times.\textsuperscript{846}

Besides not being heavily criticized for the erotic connotations of her works, another very poignant anti-Graham argument in 1950, namely her Americanism, also lost power and substance. Previously, the reflections on her nationality were part of the anti-Graham tirade, and the discourse concerning her nationality had negative and belittling connotations, as numerous critics looked upon her Americanness and the American inspiration of her dances as a proof of the lack of quality. In 1954 critics seldom mentioned it, and the fact that she was American and that some of her works were inspired by American history and culture were presented as information and did not become the start of an anti-American tirade. Some critics even found Graham’s Americana dances a “fascinating stylization of the American life, namely puritanical, enthusiastic and intransigent, which, like in \textit{Letter to the World}, presents a little familiar America to us, the Europeans.” Others believed that \textit{Appalachian Spring} is the American life “emaciated and stylized.”\textsuperscript{847}

When analyzing the way Graham and her art were perceived in the articles that appeared in the French journals and newspapers of the time, one might expect to find a parallel between the political orientation of the written source and the attitude vis-à-vis the American dancer, with the leftist press more anti-Graham than that the center and right. Yet such relationship is not visible between the newspapers’ and journals’ orientation and the position they took on Graham.

\textsuperscript{847} Clipping, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
On the contrary, sometimes the leftist press proved to be more pro-Graham than the others, proving that “la liberté de la presse,” so much cherished by French, was not an impression.

Still, the question remained: was Graham’s visit to France in 1954 political or not? As shown at the beginning of the chapter as in 1950 the American embassy in Paris, knew in detail about the upcoming visit of Graham to the city and the dates of her performances. The probability for Graham’s performances to have had official attendees in the audience is high, even if C. Douglas Dillon, the U.S. Ambassador to France, who was an impressionist art lover and collector, might have not been attracted by modern dance. But David Bruce, the American ambassador to Paris in 1950, was not a modernist either, and he still went to see the American dancer performing, accompanied by Eleanor Roosevelt.

Her visit intersected with politics in a very unexpected but suggestive way. On the last night of her performances, May 8th, the night she was closing, Galina Ulanova and the Soviet ballet were supposed to start their season. This did not happen, as the fall of Dien-Bien-Phu made the government prohibit the show of the Soviet ballet, a hard moment for those who had bought 10,000 tickets, wanting to see the Soviet company’s performances, and their star “with her sweet face and humble manners.” “Our friends are angry today, because they have denied the Soviet dancers the right to dance. They seem to believe that Russian dancers are the ones who took Dien-Bien-Phu,” mused Simone de Beauvoir. Instead of performing in Paris, the Soviet company and their star went to East Berlin, where they were triumphant.

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848 He was a long time trustee of the Metropolitan Museum, its President 1970–1977, and then chairman.
At first sight, the two dancers’ presence on the Parisian scenes might have looked like an interesting coincidence which happened during a confusing international context. For an attentive observer, Graham versus Ulanova, modern dance versus ballet, USA versus USSR virtual meetings signified much more. On one hand, they showed the extent to which politics was already influencing culture, making, or not, possible a cultural performance. On the other hand, it was one of the first confrontations of the two superpowers in the cultural field, and, even more importantly, in the field of dance. Both dancers, Martha Graham and Galina Ulanova, were on the Parisian stage more than as dancers, namely as cultural ambassadors of their countries, roles in which they were to become most successful in the years to come.

The fact that these events happened in Paris, not elsewhere, was full of significance too. It showed that winning approval for their cultural “finesse” and accomplishments from the French audience and critics, in the most renowned (still) “capital of the arts,” was a key step for every culture, but even more for those competing for leadership. But it was also true that while France belonged officially to the democratic world led by the USA, a significant number of its inhabitants had political, cultural, and emotional sympathies towards the Soviets. For this part of the French audience, and not only that segment, the simple fact that Graham danced and Ulanova did not, might have been also a moment of reflection, leading to the conclusion that in the Cold War competition, as never before, the mélange between diplomacy, culture, and politics left the personal emotions and sympathies outside of this equation. Thus, even if there were more who would have loved to see Ulanova and not Graham, and thus more Soviet and less American culture, the political alliances and decisions dictated otherwise. In the same manner in which,
liked or disliked, the American power was not an option but a reality, as well as, in the world of arts Martha Graham was also becoming a name impossible to be ignored.

Martha Graham and her Company left Paris on May 10, by train for Switzerland. The tour lasted one more month, covering also Italy and Austria, and on June 10, they were back in Paris, from where they went to London and then home. But not all the members of her entourage returned directly to the USA, as dancers from Graham’s company explored more of Europe: Helen McGehee went to Provence, while Anatole Heller wrote to Craig Barton, who was visiting Spain, using the occasion to stress that their cooperation was a happy one and that he was also happy to find out that “Martha is in such good spirits.”

When remembering Graham’s tour to Paris in 1954, John Franklin Koenig pictured a disappointed and infuriated Martha Graham, who “jura de ne plus revenir a Paris.” Others who remembered the 1954 tour, such as Jacques Chaurand and Dominique Dupuy, loved also to mention Graham’s allegedly furious disappointment and emotional reaction after the tour’s lack of success. Still, it would be hard to believe that Graham had such an impetuous reaction of disappointment in front of so many people, so the story looks more like all was a “bon mot” so much loved by the French!

849 Photo Album, Ethel Winter and Charles Hyman Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
850 Ibidem
851 Photo Album, Helen McGehee Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
852 Clipping, August 1954, Dossier d’artiste Martha Graham Bibliothèque-musée de l’Opéra Collections, Paris
853 John Franklin Koenig, La danse Contemporaine (Paris: Libraire Artheme Fayard, 1980)
854 Interview with Jacques Chaurand “Danse Moderne, ou est tu?” in Ou va la danse, L’aventure de la danse par ceux qui l’ont vecue, edited by Amelie Grand et Phillipe Verrielle (Paris: Seuil/Archimbaud, 2005), p.64-68
855 Bon Mot: French, clever remarque, witticism
The American *Dance Magazine*, reflecting on Graham’s presence in Paris, concluded that her appearance “accomplished its mission in rousing great interest,” thus suggesting the idea of “fait accompli.” The article of the French critic Irene Lidova, also focusing on Graham, is important and intriguing in multiple ways. Not only that it was the most consistent writing about Graham in the Parisian press after her departure, but her perspective – combining the older anti-Graham tirade with the newer perspective on her art – is the most complete sample of the critique of Graham in France of 1954. In one article one could see together the main pro and contra arguments of the French critics who wrote about Graham, the “struggle” between criticizing and liking her, with a prevalent sense of the fact that a newer appreciation of Graham was emerging in France too. Moreover, it is very important to look at the date it was published. It was July 1954, thus more than two months after Graham’s Parisian appearances, even if it covered Martha Graham’s London season, which happened in March. The fact that a reputed critic such as Lidova chose to publish it, makes the analysis of this second tour of Graham, to Paris even more compelling.

Lidova liked *Night Journey*, but still considered some of the dances’ themes “unhealthy,” as they were undressing the “suppressed desires” of the mind; still, the author claimed that Graham was “rising to the grandness of Greek tragedy,” thus able to bring a new contribution to the psychological field, and Lidova loved the use of nuances, the pure passion, and the fact that no human feeling was unknown to Graham’s work. While admitting that Europe was not accustomed to modern dance (still considered merely an experiment), the critic claimed that

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Graham, an “ageless” woman with a “theatrical personality,” had the merit of having enlarged the sensorial and emotional power of dance; therefore, like other critics, she also acknowledged that it was hard at first to like and understand this new style of dance, but for those who came again, it was possible to enjoy the “telepatique technique,” which “spoke directly to the heart,” and which was the reflection of an “authentic sensibility.” Most meaningfully, Lidova ended by reinforcing Cocteau’s older idea that Graham’s coming to Paris in 1950 “bousculé les habitudes” of the dance lovers, and by concluding that “no one could remain indifferent to her new form of expression which, using bodies and gestures, is the vehicle of a relationship and communication between heart and spirit, audience and dancers.”

Voila! In the end, could Graham hope for a better understanding of her art and its meanings than in the above statements? A few months later, in the section “La Galerie de Paris - Théâtre” of the journal Paris Theatre, published in October 1954, Graham and her company were included among the important foreign artists worth mentioning for their visit to France during the year that ended. Martha Graham was presented to the readers in an article completed by a beautiful picture from Letter to the World, with Robert Cohan jumping near the bench where Graham was sitting in a lovely pose. Her professional past was reiterated, also her main works, and her uniqueness was stressed for “le plus beau style de mouvement” (for its most beautiful style of movement); her technique was considered the most important event in the history of dance, as she influenced Tudor, Robbins, and Balanchine. However, on the same list were two favorites of the French public, who danced or were supposed to dance, during the same time with Graham, namely Katharine Dunham and Galina Ulanova.

857 La Danse, no. 1, Juillet 1954, CND, Pantin, France
858 Paris Theatre, Number special consecrated to the dance, October 1954, p.5, CND, Pantin, France
Not everyone believed that Graham was worth mentioning. For instance, in “Panorama de la Danse,” talking about dance in the fifties in France and the foreign influences on it, Madeleine Cluzel did not even mention Martha Graham. In 1959 Art et Danse, Les Information Coreographiques announced that Martha Graham was choreographing Passacaglia, to Anton Webern’s music, and that Graham was following “the example of Brigitte Akeson in initiating the classical dancers in modern dance;” the information is hard to believe as the mentioned French choreographer did not pass the exam of time, and it is impossible to find out more about her, while Graham’s years to come were another step towards the status of a dance legend.

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In the fall of 1954, Richard Buckle, the champion of the positive responses to Graham in Britain, was organizing a Serge Diaghilev exhibition in London, in the memory of the Russian-born manager who modernized and revolutionized the face of dance at the beginning of the century. During the same time Serge Lifar, not an equal friend of Graham, was choreographing The Firebird dedicated to the same Diaghilev, and the Comédie française was playing with packed houses in Moscow.

At home Martha Graham was awarded a medal, thanked by the State Department “for understanding her role overseas,” and was getting ready for the tour to Asia. The European

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861 Letter of unknown sender to Mary Frances Stewart, February 22, 1955, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, box 230
tours – the rehearsal of the next chapter in the history of dance and of the cultural diplomacy, featuring Martha Graham as a “principal” dancer and respectively, cultural ambassador – were over.

Martha Graham would not return to France until the mid seventies, unlike Britain and the Netherlands, where she would return during the 1960s, while also performing in other European countries including some from beyond the Iron Curtain. Still, this does not mean that she disappeared completely from the attention of French dancers and dance lovers. The way in which they followed Graham’s career and her impact on the development of modern dance in France will be also discussed in the next chapters.
Intermezzo

On September 19, 1957, Martha Graham danced at the inaugural ceremony of the Berlin Congress Hall opening. On the same occasion the building was presented to the City of Berlin by the US government as a gift.

Soon after completing the second European tour, back home, at the beginning of September 1954, Graham told her dancers that “they were considered for a State Department tour.” It would take place soon after, in 1955, in Asia and the Middle East, and being the first of Graham’s tours officially sponsored by the State Department. The tour was also a huge success for the dancer, her company, and for American cultural diplomacy abroad.

After the European and Asian tours of the fifties, Graham became even more a personality of American arts and culture, while her fame expanded internationally, the New York seasons of her company continued successfully, and her creative talent continued to produce masterpieces. But, even if less visible to the public’s eye, there was a layer of her life not always glamorous and happy. Now well into her sixties, even if not yet as damaging for her personal life and creation as later on, her health problems, especially alcoholism, were obvious, as obvious were the tensions within the company. Luckily, her relationship with the therapist and friend Frances Wickes continued successfully and helped her a great deal.

862 Stuart Hodes, Part real, Part dream, kindle edition
During the second part of the fifties, the first movies about the dancer were also created. Casting the most prestigious members of Graham’s company and produced by Nathan Kroll – then the husband of Lucy Kroll, the agent who played an important role in the dancer’s life – *A Dancer’s World* was produced in 1957. Even if its shooting was unexpectedly complicated, as Graham had camera fright and it was difficult to get her out of her dressing room, the movie was a success.865 The journal *Dance Observer* dedicated an article to the movie, quoting some of Graham’s lines: “the dressing room is a very special place,” “dance is communication and the great desire to speak clearly, beautifully and with inevitability,” and “the dancer’s world is the heart of man with its joys and its hopes and its fears and its loves.”866 The movie, next to *Night Journey* (1960) became a “classic” of American cultural diplomacy, both being projected for years to come in American embassies abroad during Graham’s next tours, including the 1962 one to Western and Eastern Europe.

During the second half of the fifties, the dancer came to Europe mostly for leisure trips, such as the one to Italy, as a photograph – showing Graham and Bethsabee feeding pigeons in San Marco Square in Venice – demonstrates.867 The first “professional” trip Graham made was a historical one, to West Berlin, Germany, on September 19, 1957, when she performed on the occasion of the opening of the Berlin Congress Hall.868 Commissioned by The Benjamin Franklin Foundation, a non-profit American foundation led by Eleanor Lansing Dulles, the building was presented that day to the City of Berlin by the US government. The artistic program

865 Private Collection
866 Clipping, *Dance Observer*, vol.25, nr.1, 1957, p. 5
867 Private Collection
868 http://www.hkw.de/en/hkw/gebaeude/gebaeude.php. Thousands of onlookers from East Berlin have made their way to the new Congress Hall that evening and pressed their noses against the huge glass panes over the next few days

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of the opening ceremony combined dance, theater, symposia and concerts, and it brought together prominent artists, scientists, and politicians. Interestingly, in another event, entitled “The Old and the New World”, focusing on transatlantic relations, Isamu Noguchi, Graham’s friend and collaborator, gave a speech. Martha Graham’s dance was greeted with applause, even if the German media maintained (again) that it “displayed too little emotion and too much analysis.”

Choosing Graham to perform was not un unconscious decision of the politicians and diplomats involved in the event, as her presence there and then went beyond the fact that her art’s modernism rhymed with the building’s design, already emphasized by many elements: the modern architecture, its structure, which employed the most modern technology, and its entrance decorated with the abstract sculpture “Large Divided Oval: Butterfly” of Henry Moore, a friend of Graham. In fact, the American dancer’s presence in Germany carried multiple messages and had a nuanced significance for Graham and her country, as her performance in Berlin was not just an artistic one, but a refined political performance as well.

The trip was the first one to the continent and to the country after the 1954 European tour, when Graham and her company performed in Germany but, unlike in the other countries visited, without the financial help of Bethsabee de Rothschild. (As Bethasabee promised her father, she did not spent “at least a dime” in the country which persecuted and killed Jewish people, so in 1954 the costs of Graham’s presence in Germany where covered by other sources, including the State Department.)

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869 Clipping, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
870 The interior of the Congress Hall had technological equipment that could, at the time, be found only at the UN Building in New York. Similarly, the auditorium was inspired by the United Nations General Assembly Hall.
871 I discussed this moment in the chapter dedicated to her tour to Europe in 1954.

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than two decades from the moment when she was invited but refused to participate in another opening, of the Berlin Olympic Games, in 1936, organized by the Nazi.

The performance in Germany showed Graham’s importance for the cultural diplomacy of her country abroad. Unlike in 1954, by now, Graham was not only an internationally acclaimed dancer, but also officially a cultural diplomat of her country, and the presence of the American modern dancer at the opening of the Hall was clearly a statement conveying the importance of the USA in reshaping postwar Europe. The chair of the foundation which commissioned the hall was Eleanor Lansing Dulles, whose brothers were the US Secretary of State and the head of the CIA. Herself a diplomat and an employee of the State Department, Landing Dulles was an expert in the problems of Germany and European reconstruction. While she was participating in the opening of the Congress Hall in Berlin, her brother, John Foster Dulles, was taking part in a general debate at the UN, attacking the USSR over the growing division of Germany.

The moment also had a personal significance for the dancer, as her trip to Berlin signified Graham’s recognition, if not by the entire European audience, certainly by the European dance world. As shown by letters from all over the continent, the admirers’ group was expanding, and Graham’s relationships with members of the artistic European milieu also flourished. The dancer was often invited to attend exhibitions in the USA of European artists whom she met during her tours, while in 1957, at the International Congress of Choreography, Serge Lifar’s keynote speech proved that his anti-American and anti-Graham feelings diminished in intensity;

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872 Letters from all over the continent were received by Graham, they can be found mostly box 339, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
873 Invitation to a Maurice Utrillo and Suzanne Valadon Exhibition, date unknown, 1958, box 339, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
while paying an homage to those who were absent, such as Leonide Massine, Mary Wigman, and Kurt Jooss, he also mentioned the Americans Martha Graham and Lucia Chase.\footnote{Florence Poudru, \textit{Serge Lifar: la dance pour patie} (Paris: Hermann Editeurs, 2007), p.189}

Graham’s performance in Berlin was attended by the German dancer Mary Wigman, considered the European inventor of modern dance. (The two innovative dancers knew each other since the thirties, when Wigman had her own school of modern dance in New York City.) After Graham’s performance, Wigman rose first from her seat and applauded and cheered Graham openly. Graham, Wigman, with the other dancers, Jose Limon and Dore Hoyer, were photographed together after the performance while chatting in a friendly atmosphere.\footnote{Hedwig Muller, \textit{Mary Wigman: Leben und Werk der grossen Tanzerin} (Berlin: Quadriga, 1997), p. 303} (Hoyer, an important German dancer with a tragic destiny,\footnote{Interview with the author, Garnet Schmidt, January 20, 2014} was impressed by Graham, so afterwards she went to New York, and among others, she studied with Graham. She also commented on Graham’s technique in her diary, showing that she found it interesting and inspiring.)\footnote{Ibidem}

Mary Wigman was present not only at the ceremonies, but she was also involved in supporting and publicizing American modern dance in Europe, as well as in participating in other activities. At the press conference organized by the American consulate, Wigman talked extensively about American dance, and made publicity for the American dancers, as she confessed to her former student and collaborator Hanya Holm.\footnote{\textit{Liebe Hanya, Mary Wigman's Letters to Hanya Holm, Compiled and edited by Claudia Gitelman (Madison: University of Wisconsin press, 2003)}, p.144} In 1958 Graham and Wigman met again at a party given in New York by Arthur Todd in Mary Wigman’s honor, at her first
visit to the USA since 1933. After the party Graham, who was leaving the city, offered Wigman her apartment, which she did not accept, as “I do not know Martha well enough.”

Beside the presence of Graham in Germany and the renewed acquaintance with prominent dancers of the country, during the fifties Graham’s relationship with cultural and artistic Britain continued to develop as well. To the names of European luminaries – such as John Gielgud, E.M. Forster and Henry Moore – whom she saw on various occasions and with whom she corresponded, others were added. One of them was Benjamin Britten, whom she met during her Asian tour on a street in Delhi, while both were touring the city. In 1959 Graham also rekindled her relationship with Marie Rambert, the “midwife of the British ballet,” this time in the USA, as her company was invited to dance at Jacob’s Pillow. Norman Morrice, the Ballet Rambert’s young choreographer and a protégé of Rambert, presented in the Berkshires his modern drama called Two Brothers, a work inspired by the James Dean film East of Eden, which reflected the aesthetics of “the young angry man” trend.

In her Diary, used by Marie Rambert to write her autobiography, Quicksilver, she remembered that “It was lovely to have Martha Graham and Agnes de Mille come and see us and renew our friendship.” However, it is very interesting to compare the three drafts of the book and see that Rambert, when focusing on Graham, not only that increasingly extended the space

879 Clipping, Dance Observer, vol.25, nr. 5, 1958, p.69
882 He joined Ballet Rambert, Britain’s first ballet company, in 1953. On his return he became Rambert’s principal choreographer and gradually abandoned his performing career. Morrice had started as a classical choreographer, but after America, moved into a more contemporary aesthetic. Named Associate Director, Morrice was largely running Rambert on a daily basis. He invited American choreographers to work with the company, including Anna Sokolow and Glen Tetley.
883 Marie Rambert Diary, Rambert Archive, London
and attention given to the American dancer from one version to another, but also she went back to the text many times – marked with red ink corrections, – as she was preoccupied with finding the exact and most polished words in penning Martha Graham as accurately as possible. About their first acquaintance Rambert said: “I had first seen Martha Graham’s company fifteen years before and had been completely staggered and carried away by both, her choreography and by her impeccable dancing in her own idiom. Her style was absolutely different from the classical style of ballet.(…) This language had a great influence on many disciples of Martha who found through it their means of expression. In our company we teach her exercises along side with the classical ones, because they complement one another…” “Martha Graham dancing has nothing to do with classical ballet (…) Hers (the dances) was (sic) above all the expression of a tormented soul. She threw herself on the ground (…) and had created something completely new.” However, Rambert did not mention that in 1954, after Graham’s performance in London, she was so impressed by the American dancer’s performance that she came weeping to her dressing room and cried under the strong impression which the performance left on her.884

Their rekindled relationship continued, as shown by a letter of Graham giving permission to Rambert to use one of the works: “Dear Marie, You can imagine my horror when my letter came….I would be happy to have you use Cave of the Heart – it would be in loving and wonderful hands.”885 One cannot say which were Rambert’s news, producing such a strong reaction in Graham, but it is most interesting to see that already in 1960 the British dancer and choreographer was presenting Graham’s works in her country. However, Rambert and Graham’s acquaintance and artistic exchange were enriched by a new development, beside the fact that, as

884 I discussed this moment in the chapter dedicated to Graham’s presence in London in 1954
885 Letter to Marie Rambert from Martha Graham, October 6, 1960, Correspondence, Rambert Archive, London
various letters show (among many other personalities, addressed to or received from Robin Howard, Agnes de Mille, Bernard Shaw, the Oliviers, John Gielgud, Irene Worth,) Rambert and Graham had a common circle of friends on both sides of the Atlantic. After *Two Brothers* was shown previously at the Jacob’s Pillow dance festival in the United States, Norman Morrice received a study fellowship in choreography in the USA. The fellowship, which was part of “Young Artist’s Project – 1960-1961” was administered by the Institute of International Education under a grant from the Ford Foundation,”886 another proof that the cultural exchange between the USA and Britain was constant and mostly successful.

“I enjoyed being on the town,” declared Morrice in the article published after his return to London in the journal *Dance and Dancers*.887 One can say that he was also like under a Graham spell. The article had two pictures of Graham, one as Jocasta, next Paul Taylor as the Seer, and Bertram Ross as Oedipus, and another one of Graham and Morrice at the opening of the Kirov, where he was sitting next to the dancer, “who insisted in taking out his heavy British jacket…and shared the cooling breaths of her oriental fan;” the article also described a lecture-demonstration of Graham technique in her school, and the film *Night Journey* which, Morrice informed, was shown at the American Embassy in London upon the article’s publication; last but not least, one of the pictures and a line in the article posed the same question: ”When are we going to see Graham in London again?”

It did not happen the year Graham came to Europe again, in 1962, as she did not visit Britain. That year Marie Rambert became a Dame of the Empire, while in 1965 she renamed her company New Ballet Rambert. After his American time, Norman Morrice encouraged Rambert

887 Norman Morrice, “Morrice in Town,” *Dance and Dancers*, 1962, p. 18-19,
to introduce contemporary dance technique based on Graham’s teaching. She incorporated the
dynamic torso of Graham’s technique into the ballet’s elongated line and partnering. As shown
above, earlier than Morrice’s “infusion” with Graham’s style, Rambert was spreading the
American’s art in Britain. Thus, after being a midwife of British dance, Rambert became the
“Pioneer of ballet,” the company became noticed for showing the “mark of Graham but with its
own native accent,” for being “one of the most American-oriented companies in Britain,” and
for leading British dance “on the modern road.”

In 1963, due to the combined efforts of some of Graham’s British and Britain based
admirers, Graham came to London, after a huge success at the Festival in Edinburgh.
Significantly, on that occasion Marie Rambert told Robin Howard, who played a huge
contribution in the “Bringing Graham to London process,” and afterwards in opening the first
school of contemporary dance in Britain: “I do not know why you do all these, but keep doing
it.” A few years later, in 1967, when Martha Graham was offered in London “The Anglo-
American Award” for her contribution to dance, the ones who represented her, as she was unable
to make the trip, were the American-British actress Irene Worth (also from the circle of friends
of John Gielgud) and Marie Rambert. (Another recipient of this prestigious award was, a year
earlier, in 1966, the playwright Arthur Miller.) Last but not least, in 1968, an anniversary
book-album dedicated to Rambert’s eightieth birthday bore next to the words of Lydia

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Also see Pritchard, Jane, and Sarah Rubidge, comps. Rambert Dance Company: An Illustrated History Through Its
889 Clippings: the first belongs to Carolyn Swift, unknown journal and date, and the second appeared in Evening
Standard, also unknown date, Rambert Archive, London
890 Robin Howard stated this conversation in many of his interviews, which I will discuss in the chapter dedicated to
Graham’s presence in London in 1963
891 Susan C. W. Abbotson, Critical Companion to Arthur Miller: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work (New-

Beside her friends and supporters from the European artistic world, already since her first tours to Europe, Graham had another pool of important friends. As shown earlier, already in the early fifties, Graham was not unknown, and her visits were not unnoticed by the political and diplomatic America. From important American political personalities, such as Eleanor Roosevelt, the American Embassies in Europe, to the American Ambassadors and their wives, they all helped the dancer while on the continent, supported her logistically, attended her performances and entertained her. This positive and supportive attitude continued in the late fifties and was even more visible in the sixties when Graham was in Europe.

Of most importance in this regard is Francis Mason’s letter – the cultural attaché of the American Embassy in Belgrade – from 1957, which is discussed at length in the chapter analyzing Graham’s tours behind the Iron Curtain. The letter, containing the invitation to dance in Belgrade, is very important as, like the participation of Graham in the opening of the Congress Hall in Berlin, it shows the place of Graham in the cultural diplomacy of the Americans in Europe. Started during the first European tours, and made official and fructified during the Asian tour in 1955, Graham’s role as cultural diplomat became even more clear and

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892 Anniversary book for Marie Rambert at her 80th anniversary, Rambert Archive, London
894 Letter from Francis Mason to Martha Graham, Munich 17th December 1957, box 339, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington; Francis Mason was cultural attaché to the United States embassies in Belgrade (1956-60) and London (1960-65)
895 Ibidem
substantial in the late fifties, opening the path and announcing her total success in Europe during the sixties.

One can say that the sixties were Graham’s time. During this decade, her artistic success and impact was total, as Europe, where she previously received mixed reviews, finally acknowledged her value, artistry and innovation. Ironically, as she was born in 1894, by now Graham’s time as a dancer was coming to an end, a reality which was causing her denial and pain, and was also the concern of her company, friends, and American officials. However, as a choreographer, her creative force was not diminishing, and she and her company would present new masterpieces. Her role as a cultural diplomat was recognized and appreciated, while becoming even more complex and refined. During the 1962 tour, Graham and her company crossed the border between Western and Eastern Europe, and went beyond the Iron Curtain, to Yugoslavia and Poland.
The Changing Sixties

Michel Fokine: “You must admit that modern dance is ugly”

Martha Graham: “Yes it is, if you are living in the eighteen-nineties”

Dialogue between Michel Fokine and Martha Graham

"No artist is ahead of his time. He is his time. It is just that others are behind the time.”

Martha Graham

“In the early Sixties, the chasm widened. If the previous decade was marked by generational division and conflict, the Sixties saw the young not merely rattling and shaking the culture but increasingly taking charge. Youth (...) finally attained the commanding heights in theatre, film, television, pop and fashion.”


During the fifties’ international tours, started in Europe, Graham’s and modern dance’s popularity and recognition expanded and became richer. Already an American cultural diplomat by 1955, the success of her tours to Asia and Middle East helped her fame, and by the sixties she was a worldwide acclaimed personality, compared in terms of innovation with other famous moderns, such as Pablo Picasso, Igor Stravinsky, and James Joyce. Towards the end of the fifties decade it also became an incontrovertible fact for her supporters and deniers alike, that she was the maker of quality art, and that her name could no longer be ignored in Europe as well.

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896 Gerald Meyers, Who’s Not Afraid of Martha Graham (American Dance Festival, 2008), p.45
As proved already, Graham’s relationship with Europe prior to the sixties cannot be described only in negative terms: European cultural personalities appreciated her art and befriended her, and during her tours to the continent, there were critics and members of the audience who responded positively to her performances. Some admirers went even further and claimed that she was one of the “few elemental creative artists who has lived to see her works triumph over the hostility, and stupidity, and misunderstanding that always challenges genius.”

Still, Graham would achieve full success in Europe only during the sixties, quite late compared with the rest of the world. The 1962 tour to Europe, the first of the sixties decade, was considered a success, but only in 1963, on the occasion of the Edinburgh Festival, Graham and her companies were hailed by the press and the audience at the level they had already been praised in the rest of the world.

One can say that the sixties were a special time in Graham’s relationship with the European audience. However, the “changing” decade was a special time in general: for some a golden time, “the place where modern began,” for others just a time of a hectic disintegration of old values. The sixties challenged and changed the fifties’ socio-cultural rules and expectations, influenced by a strong and rigid social hierarchy (with women and non-white races were seen as complementary), by formalism (which went hand in hand with a dress code and the “respect for family”) and by “arts without color.”

The sixties were for Graham and the European audience a new beginning. In the new political, social, and cultural environment Graham’s artistic message reached the European audiences more freely, was received and deciphered in a more

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897 Robert Sabin, Clipping, *Dance Observer*, nr. 6, vol 26 (1959), p.85; Interestingly, Sabin’s sister Evelyn was a member of the early Graham’s dance group

relaxed, less dogmatic and conservative manner than during the “grey fifties,” and, consequently, the artistic dialogue between the American star and the European audiences was successful.

Even if they are “illusory and imaginative,” the arts, the artists and the audiences are in a relation of power and a symbiosis with one another, and closely linked to the historical times they live in and belong to. On one hand, the times’ context is used in creating and expressing art, while on the other hand, the audiences’ minds and gaze are influenced by the times’ codes, mores and spirit; thus, they are more or less “liberated,” “nationalized,” “sexualized” or “gendered” in the way they analyze, accept, or reject art. As an example, Graham’s difficulties in the Europe of the fifties were influenced by the decade’s conservatism, anti-feminism, as well as the powerful anti-Americanism, all reinforced by a minimal or inexistent trust of the European audience in the quality and originality of American arts and artists. Feeling “the pulse of the time – the anger, sharpness, aggression in life (…) – and “able to put those things into an art and communicate them,” Graham’s art reflected “an inner mood,” and was non-compromising and non-commercial. (“I did not want it to be beautiful or fluid. I wanted to be fraught with inner meaning, with excitement and surge,” as she said.) Thus, her philosophy, style of dance, and innovation resonated with the decade’s spirit, in a relationship which was not only most explainable and most fortunate, but also to be expected.

The Western European countries’ political attitude vis-à-vis American leadership and European-American cooperation and alliances was also during the sixties, even if not without problems, less tense than in the fifties, thus benefiting the cultural exchange of the Americans

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899 Susan Manning, Ecstasy and the Demon. p.5
900 Sophie Maslow, in Gerald Meyers, Who’s Not Afraid of Martha Graham (American Dance Festival, 2008), p. 43
901 Gerald Meyers, Who’s Not Afraid of Martha Graham p.54: Since the beginnings Graham denied that her dances were “puzzling” claiming that “there is no hidden meaning, no surrealistical implication in any of her dances.”
902 Ibidem, p.45

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with the European countries. When Graham started touring Europe again, Pax Americana and the American multilayered leadership was already a fait accompli, and the quality of American culture was not contested anymore. But, one has to stress, with differences from a country to another.

Besides, unlike in the fifties, when the relationship between Graham and politics just started and was crafted – being in the rehearsal stage up to the mid-fifties, and openly assumed and asserted in the second part – during the sixties, the political side of Graham’s tours was clearer and thus better organized. It also lacked the stumbles and drama of the previous decade, when her tours to the continent were helped and supervised from behind the curtains.\textsuperscript{903} By the time of Graham’s second European tour, in 1962, American politicians and diplomats were convinced that cultural propaganda was a crucial element of cultural diplomacy,\textsuperscript{904} so the state’s patronage of the American artists, including Graham, was assumed completely, the material involvement in the tours was consistent and generous, and the success of the American artists and cultural diplomats was praised and used with great care for propaganda purposes.

It is also true that during the sixties the American discourse of Graham’s presence in Europe was, at least in the area of her performances, more subliminally expressed. Did the lack of, or better said, more subtle politicization of Graham’s repertoire help with her sixties success in Europe? Most likely yes. As Graham consciously created modern dance as an American Dance\textsuperscript{905} and was very proud of her “Americana” dances,\textsuperscript{906} of her Americaness and long line of

\textsuperscript{903}See the chapters dedicated to the presence of the artists in Europe during the fifties
\textsuperscript{904}Andrew Defty, Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-53, The Information Research Department (London: Routledge, 2004), p.221
\textsuperscript{905}Susan Manning, Ecstasy and the Demon. Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 554-261
\textsuperscript{906}Gerald Meyers, Who’s Not Afraid of Martha Graham, p. 45
American ancestors, all these would continue to be brought up in interviews and in the programs of her performances, but during the sixties, they were perceived less as an “Americana manifesto,” less culturally assertive, and more friendly. Besides, even if the American pieces continued to be part of the repertory in Europe, the majority of Graham works presented on stage on those occasions were inspired by Greek mythology.\textsuperscript{907}

During the sixties, Graham and her company came to Europe three times. The first was in 1962, when she toured extensively Europe, including the Netherlands, and for the first time went beyond the Iron Curtain, to Yugoslavia and Poland, but not, as believed so far, Romania. During this tour she did not visit France or Great Britain, both visited in 1950 and 1954. The second tour to Europe was in 1963, and she and her company were invited to the Edinburgh Festival, a set of performances which continued with an impromptu London season. In 1967 she again toured Europe, went again to Britain and The Netherlands, but again did not visit France.

The fiercest opponent to Graham, France was not toured in the sixties. Also as proved in the previous chapters, Graham’s relationship with the French audience and critics was the most tense and problematic. It is not known if the decision to avoid France in the sixties was Graham’s or the State Department’s, but the exclusion of France from the roster of the countries visited was a clear statement. However, it was also a cautious move, as in the sixties the French stance vis-à-vis foreign arts and artists did not change much, and remained, as before, self-conscious and self-adulatory. After the 1958 election of General de Gaulle and his “politics of grandeur” (\textit{politique de grandeur}) France remained a difficult territory for American artists and diplomacy. Promoting an independent foreign policy and a strong stance on the international stage, de

\textsuperscript{907} The programs of her performances are discussed in detail in several chapters of the dissertation
Gaulle hoped to restore the primacy of France in the world, while, with the help of the first head of a new Ministry of Culture, the writer André Malraux, he also strived to maintain and enhance the French “grandeur” in culture. While, if at the “low-brow” cultural level the Americanization of France could not be prevented or stopped and remained a continuous topic of debate and worries, at the higher plane, the regulations and rules installed for foreign cultural products and artists were very strict and protective of French culture and maintained an unfriendly background for the possible visits of foreign artists, including Martha Graham.

While officially the cultural exchange with France was still complicated, by the late fifties French artists, including dance professionals, started to acknowledge and appreciate Graham’s art.\textsuperscript{908} Among them were the modern dancers Dominique and Françoise Dupuy, who went to see Graham in London in 1963, dancing at Saville Theater; afterwards they wrote about her and signaled that her exclusion from French cultural favor was a mistake. Besides, Graham’s dancers and members of the company also taught in various cities of France from the sixties, contributing to the Graham-ization of French dance.\textsuperscript{909} However, Graham would enjoy full recognition in France only during the seventies, culminating with the Gala organized in her honor by the Paris-Opéra and attended by the most prominent people in French arts, culture, diplomacy and politics.

Unlike France, the Netherlands was a country visited by Graham and her company both in the fifties and the sixties, and the dancer and her company enjoyed a balanced, neither ecstatic, nor dismissive, recognition there. In fact, Graham’s relationship with the Dutch audience reflected at a smaller scale the rapports between American and Dutch politics, which did not rise

\textsuperscript{908} See chapter “Intermezzo”
\textsuperscript{909} See chapter “The Curious Case of Martha Graham in Romania”
neither to the level of discontent registered in France nor to the closeness which was the trademark of the relationship with the British. In the sixties the Netherlands remained a strong member of NATO and other Western political alliances, and, as the papers of the Dutch Information Services in New York and San Francisco and of the Dutch-American Foundation prove, during the sixties the cultural exchange with the US continued along the same lines as during the previous decade. Among the most covered events were the Royal Hague Orchestra’s performances in the USA in 1963, and launching of Dutch books, such as *Holland’s Queen Juliana*, which had a great success in New York.

A well-known quip commonly attributed to Heinrich Heine has it that if the world comes to an end, the Netherlands is a good place to be, since history there only happens with a fifty-year delay. Still, the 1960s the Netherlands was the “anarchists’ social laboratory,” with strong taboos in areas such as governmental control, privacy, and racial relations, with a diverse spectrum of national views, ranging from conservatism, to the ontzuiling (which meant depillarisation) and also not lacking moments of unrest and open dissent. The liberal atmosphere of the country and its openness had an important influence and impact in culture and the arts, thus, during the sixties, the country had a strong avant-garde of musicians and painters,

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911 Newspaper clippings, Ministerie Van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1955-1964, Inv. 13727, Nationaal Archief, The Hague
913 Rob Kroes, “Recalling the Netherlands in 1968: Trendsetter or Follower?”, *European journal of American studies* [Online], Special issue | 2008, document 5, Online since 08 September 2008, connection on 10 February 2014. URL : http://ejas.revues.org/2902; In 1966 in Amsterdam when the royal wedding of Crown Princess Beatrix took place, while the royal cortege advanced, smoke bombs clouded the streets and people expressed their discontent, thus putting The Netherlands on the map of international protests of the sixties.
committed to social and political engagement,\textsuperscript{914} and it was welcoming towards foreign artists. Last but not least, the dance “avant-gardes” advancements continued tremendously during the sixties.

Graham’s “complete” success in Europe happened in Britain in 1963. For closer observers, it was not a surprise: the first “thawing” towards Graham in Europe happened in Britain during the 1954 tour, Graham had the most supporters and friends – prior to, during and after she became famous in Europe – within the circle of the British cultural elite, while, united by a similar spirit toward each other since before the war,\textsuperscript{915} Britain and the USA, developed and afterwards maintained an active and smooth cultural exchange, which helped with the success of Graham in the country.

During the sixties the British and the Americans continued to develop their “special relationship,” both in the political alliances and the cultural exchange of the Cold War. Still, when asked, people preferred to have “no opinion” if they had to choose between the Russians and the Americans,\textsuperscript{916} and in the early sixties the British continued to have mixed feelings towards the Americans: on one hand there was admiration for their generosity, but also resentment for their “big-headedness;”\textsuperscript{917} However, by the time Graham came to Britain in 1963, the country was aware that glancing over the shoulder at a disappearing past in a “post-imperial and nostalgic” mood was not a real option, so facing the reality that the Empire did not resist, that the Indian sub-continent were not part of it, and that the Common Market had been

\textsuperscript{915} Don McDonough \textit{The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance} (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1970), p.23
\textsuperscript{916} Family Britain, 1951-1957, David Kynaston, New York: Walker &CO, 2009, p.322
\textsuperscript{917} Ibidem
established by the Treaty of Rome in 1957,\textsuperscript{918} in the early sixties the British were forging over onwards and upwards. Even if playing “the game both as pro-Europeans and pro-Atlantic community,”\textsuperscript{919} the “importance and delicacy” of the relations with the USA continued to be acknowledged; \textsuperscript{920} thus in June 1961 John Fitzgerald Kennedy dinned at Buckingham and made conversation with Elizabeth II, who as a little girl was once required to make polite conversation with his father, \textsuperscript{921} while in 1962 Jackie, on a private trip to London, was invited to lunch by the Queen.\textsuperscript{922}

The desire of the British “to weaken (…) the enemies behind the Iron Curtain and Asia,”\textsuperscript{923} remained an extra incentive to maintain the relationship with the Americans; taking pride in “the steadfast character of the British people (which) has not changed since (…) the days of Napoleon –” the British also loved to believe that they were “responsible for parts of the world,” as being a “cornerstone of democracy,” and leaders in the pursuit of “a happier and more peaceful world.”\textsuperscript{924} In a very similar way, the Americans, also worried about the spread of communism and about the relationship with the countries from “behind the curtain,” and claimed that their aim was to show “to people of other nations (..) that their own aspirations for freedom are (…) the objectives and policies of the US.”\textsuperscript{925}

\textsuperscript{918} The Queen, A Biography of Elizabeth II, Ben Pimlott, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1997p. 130.
\textsuperscript{920} The Drogheda Report
\textsuperscript{921} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{922} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{923} Paul Gore-Booth, With great truth and respect, (London: Constable, 1974), p. 238
\textsuperscript{924} British Information Services Report, signed Paul Goore-Both, FO 953/1161, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey; The British Information Services’ offices from all over the world but also in the USA were “constantly engaged in supplying the facts about this country, the Commonwealth and our policy.”
\textsuperscript{925} Andrew Defty, Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-53, The Information Research Department(London: Routledge, 2004), p.226
The British-American relationship was not always an easy liaison, and there were complaints on both sides. American culture was blamed for its lack of class and materialism, and was considered flashy and “identity threatening,” as the British continued to feel superior to the Americans culturally (even though they tried in their cultural export not to make it obvious that they were “bringing culture” or trying to “educate” the Americans.)\textsuperscript{926} The Americans also believed that British were “soft on communism”\textsuperscript{927} and not efficient the anti-communist propaganda. Still, the cultural exchange of the two countries continued successfully, mastered inside and helped and supervised outside in quite similar manner in both countries. In Britain the British Arts Council receiving financial support from the state,\textsuperscript{928} helped by the Foreign office,\textsuperscript{929} while in the USA, the endorsement by the American State Department, Foreign Embassies, USIA and ANTA of American cultural diplomats, including Graham, was not a secret anymore.

Besides, the British-American cultural exchange had a special characteristic which supports the cultural historians’ opinion that “Cultural affinity and calculations of national self-interest are not mutually exclusive” and that “the bonds deriving from political calculations can be supported by the influence of history, language and sentiment.” Benefitting from the positive result of the relationships created outside of the boundaries imposed by the political organizations, and strengthened by the activity of the non-governmental organizations, the British-American “other special relationship,” the cultural one, confirmed that human agency’s

\textsuperscript{926} Report British Council in the USA, 15 January 1968, signed CC B Stewart, FCO 13/96, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
\textsuperscript{927} Gore, \textit{With Great truth and respect}, p. 230
\textsuperscript{928} Roy Strong, \textit{The Spirit of Britain}, p. 640-641
\textsuperscript{929} Frances Donaldson, \textit{The British Council, The First Fifty Years} (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p. 192-193,
intervention can exert a considerable degree of influence on the way in which two countries relate to one another.\textsuperscript{930}

A “Report on the Cultural Links between the United Kingdom and the United States of America,” confirmed this assumption, stressing that “a variety of British and American organizations and associations worked for the understanding between the two countries,” and emphasizing that “there were many more personal links which were not fostered by special organizations” which lead to “a spontaneous growth between people with a common language and a common cultural heritage.”\textsuperscript{931} The same idea appeared in other official documents also discussing the cultural contact between the two countries, underlying that “through non-official organizations and private individuals”\textsuperscript{932} the USA and Britain developed a unique relationship in the Western bloc during the Cold War. As a result, beside American scholarships (Marshall, Rhodes, Roosevelt, Rockefeller, Fulbright), teacher exchanges, the “official” exchange of fine arts\textsuperscript{933} and the tours of orchestras in both countries,\textsuperscript{934} the British-American clubs and societies and the associations for Anglo-American understanding\textsuperscript{935} continued to create a solid bridge across the Atlantic.

\textsuperscript{930} A good example would be within one’s country: Garrett Drogheda had a passionate love for music and ballet, so the partnership between Garrett Drogheda and David Webster (the manager of the Royal Opera House) was a good time for the British musical history.\textsuperscript{930}
\textsuperscript{931} Report “Cultural Links between the United Kingdom and United States of America,’ FO 924/1092, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
\textsuperscript{932} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{933} Letter from John Hulton, deputy Director, Fine Arts Department to Sir Philip Hendy, Director, National Gallery, 20 September 1965, BW63/36, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
\textsuperscript{934} Report on the activity of British Council, 1962-1963, BW 151/24, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey; only in 1962-1963, there were four hundred British theatrical and musical performances overseas, most of them in the USA and Canada.
\textsuperscript{935} Report ‘Cultural Links between on the United Kingdom and USA in 1963,’ FO 924/1495, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
As for Martha Graham, her presence in Britain was also helped by both the institutional ties of the two countries and the personal involvement of individuals. Her tours combined “official” cultural diplomacy – with well designed tours to the country, preceded by carefully organized publicity, meetings with British personalities, ceremonies in which Graham received accolades and awards, photography exhibitions related to her life and career – with “her own special relationship” with the British audience and intellectuals. The mélange between politics and “special relationships” continued in the sixties as well: in 1963, Graham’s British special fans, friends and politicians, worked together to bring Graham to the Edinburgh Festival, which continued with an impromptu season in London. However, it was more than this, as during the sixties Graham continued her friendships with John Gielgud, E.M. Forster and Henry Moore, but also developed another set of special relationships with British cultural personalities such as Dame Marie Rambert, who transformed her ballet company into a modern one also influenced by Graham.936 Another was Robin Howard, the British aristocrat who fell under Graham’s spell already in 1954 and who became during the sixties the “it” person in Graham’s success in Britain and Europe. He also made her legacy permanent in Britain, opening the first contemporary dance school in London, and Europe, in 1967, informally called “The Place.”

Towards the second part of the decade, an already existing gap between the Americans and British was growing, alarming those who saw a possible breakdown of this relationship.937 The British Council continued not to operate in the USA (considered a mistake in the reports of the Cultural Relations Department of the Foreign Office,).938 and not only the British

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936 See chapter “Intermezzo”
937 Gore, With Great truth and respect, p.231
938 Letter from The treasury Chambers to the Foreign Office, 13 March, 1946, FO 924/364, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
commitment to the USA weakened, but also the Americans were in the process of diversifying their cultural exchange with other countries, including, not surprisingly, the Soviets. [“The Soviet government is genuinely concerned to keep the USA-Soviet relations from sliding too far down the hill,” as a letter from the British Embassy to the Foreign Office remarked, and a joint agreement between the two countries was signed in 1966.] Most importantly, the British did not get involved in the Vietnam War, which made a British official remark that “The British cultural influence will be regarded as no substitute for our military and political powers.” But by the time this “special relationship,” was losing intensity and power, Graham was a star, an internationally hailed artist and a cultural diplomat whose persona, innovation and art, fused together, became over time a national and international “cultural brand,” which was powerful enough not to be affected by the political, social and cultural waves of the times.

Beside the friendlier, or better said, the more settled political atmosphere of the sixties, other factors contributed to a better reception of Graham’s art and her tours in Europe. In the sixties not only was Graham’s value gradually no longer contested in Europe, but the transformations in its culture and society were a more welcoming setting for her art and its message, as the decade’s ideas of change and its search for better and more accurate ways to express the time’s realities had an unparalleled impact in artistic developments both then and afterwards. As the traditional cultural hierarchies were breaking down, and as “it was no

939 Gore, *With Great truth and respect*, p. 121-141
940 Letter from the British Embassy to the Foreign Office, 29 March 1966 (the agreement was signed on March 19, 1966), FO 924/1553, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
941 Report ‘British council in the USA,’ signed by CCB Stewart, Cultural Relations Department, 15 January 1968, FCO 13/96, The British Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey
longer possible to accept art forms still based on the continuation of standards and concepts that have lost validity,”

Graham’s modernism and innovation in dance, the topics, the characters, the sexuality, and perspectives of her dances were not in sharp contrast as like in the fifties – with the decade’s spirit, aim, and atmosphere. On the contrary, they were in a fusion.

In sixties’ Europe, the arts were moving along with society in a new direction, more daring and less constricted by censorship and prudishness, and by the fifties morals and mores. In both Britain and the Netherlands the censorship was abolished or was just symbolic, “skirts were up, princesses were mod, and the accents of the working class were fashionable.” Movies like Blow-Up by Antonioni captured not only the atmosphere of the “swinging London” but also of the changed cultural atmosphere of Europe. Not of all Europe, though: the Anglo-Soviet relations “suffered a setback” when Madame Furtseva, the Soviet Minister of Culture, was taken to Covent Garden to see Moses and Aaron and she left the venue furiously, as the sexuality of the work “offended” her.

In 1930, dancer and choreographer Martha Graham proclaimed the arrival of dance as an art of and from America, but the innovations she championed went beyond aesthetics, as through their art, modern dancers challenged conventional roles and images of gender, sexuality, race, and class. While modern dancers devised new ways of moving bodies in accordance with many modernist principles, their artistry was indelibly shaped by their place in society; modern dance

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945 Martin Julius Esslin was an English producer and playwright dramatist, journalist, adaptor and translator, critic, academic scholar and professor of drama best known for coining the term “Theatre of the Absurd” in his work of that name (1961). This book has been called “the most influential theatrical text of the 1960s”, p. 307

946 KT, Letters, edited by Kathleen T., p. 418

947 Moses und Aron is a three-act opera by Arnold Schoenberg with the third act unfinished. Georg Solti conducted the first performance at the Royal Opera House, London on 28 June 1965

was distinct from other artistic genres in terms of the people it attracted: white women (many of whom were Jewish), gay men, and African American men and women. One can say that in the thirties Graham discovered the sixties’ voice.

During the sixties, for more than one reason, the “gaze” and minds of the spectators were different. Less disturbed by the fifties’ preconceptions, the sixties’ European audience was more willing to appreciate modern dance’s capacity to be very responsive to the socio-political context it was performed in, and better prepared to look at Graham’s art, especially since modernism was “the new sensibility” of the decade. Thus, Martha Graham, next to other modern artists who were once considered “threatening and outrageous,” and accused of stressing an elitist and absurd message through their works, became fashionable. Besides, culture was also becoming, if not yet global, at least international, and less bound to national borders; fashion, Beatles, James Bond, Elvis Presley, Pop Art artists, to name just a few, were not only national but international stars, while the exchange in the arts was at a level never experienced before.

The sixties were also “the age of spectacle” and “the age of body,” thus whether individual, social or political, bodies were as never before under so much scrutiny; like in modern dance, the aim of the decade was to free them and to make them experiment and express emotions and feelings outside of the conventional range. Dance gained a new artistic status, as long gone were Hegel’s times when dance was put together with gardening, when only Poetry

950 James A. Winders, European Culture Since 1848. From Modern to Postmodern and Beyond, p.16; Hewison considered 1945 the end of the modernism and the beginning of postmodernism (see Hewison, Too Much, p.xiv)
951 Hewison, , Too Much, Art and Society in the sixties 1960-75, p.xiv
952 Marvik, The Sixties, p.319
953 Marvik, The Sixties, p. 13
and Painting were the ear and eye of the world, and their inseparable sisters, drawing, sculpture, architecture, music and drama. In particular, American dance finally received recognition and had its contribution and quality recognized in an artistic area for a long time dominated by Euro-Russian sensibilities and by the misconception that Americans could not understand “real” dance.

The forties’ and fifties’ Europe applauded Oklahoma, and Jerome Robbins’ Fancy Free, but they labeled them as a “music-hall” entertainment, and not works carrying an innovative “vocabulary of dance.” During the same period the companies of Martha Graham and Jose Limon, representatives of American experience in dance, were received rather coolly, while Merce Cunnigham’s and Doris Humphrey’s dance did not receive the best reviews either. During the sixties the negative perception of American dance started to change. By the mid-fifties the Soviet ballet, represented by the Bolshoi Ballet and Galina Ulanova, was very successful in Western Europe (even if in the prudish atmosphere of the decade their ballet dancers were asked to wear shorts over the tights,) while other ballet companies, including the Americans, had a moderate reception from the audience. But, a decade later the NYC Ballet came and had a huge success, and the world of ballet – considered to be a quintessential European form of dance – now hailed Balanchine, who was now highly successful in Europe,

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955 Meyers, Who’s Not Afraid of Martha Graham, p.47
958 Greg Lawrence, Dance with demons, The Life of Jerome Robbins (New York: Putnam & Sons, 200), p.102
959 Christine Conrad, That Ballet Man (London: Booth-Clibborn Editions, 2000, p.112; Jerome Robbins said “We (Americans) dress, eat, think, talk and walk differently (…) we also dance differently.”
962 Ibidem, p. 244
including the USSR, for changing “antiquated and unable to express contemporary themes” ballet. In 1962, the New York City Ballet performed in Moscow as part of its eight-week US State Department–sponsored Soviet tour while the world anxiously watched the unfolding of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Soviet ballet dancers would also tour the USA, with performances attended by the President Kennedy and his wife. Modern dance, the “autonomous and self-reflexive art,” and a creation of the Americans, also was recognized in Europe. Thus, besides the American “pioneers” of modern dance, Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis, by late fifties Martha Graham and her generation’s dancers also started to receive accolades from European dance professionals, and to be acknowledged for enriching dance with an intellectual perspective never experienced before. Martha Graham, Jose Limon, Katharine Dunham, Doris Humphrey, Alvin Alley and their companies were invited and toured Europe multiple times.

Last but not least, the decade was considered the “women’s turn.” During the sixties “sexual intercourse began,” and women started to make substantial changes in their sexual behavior. There were still women who, like Monica Dickens, the columnist of “Woman’s Own,” warned: “Don’t try to be the boss; the slightly abnormal woman who tries to have her cake and eat it – women who want everything from a man but do not want to let the man to be the head of the household.” However, these cautions did not stop the changes of the decade, so “Sex-with

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965 See Chapter “Intermezzo”
966 Gerald Meyers, Who’s Not Afraid of Martha Graham, p. 53
967 Phillip Larkin,

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“love” ceased to be the only possible sex for women.\textsuperscript{969} “The Myth of Vaginal Orgasms” was debated, and the cry of the time was “more sex, in more variations, less guilt, less fear, less furtiveness.”\textsuperscript{970} Women, wearing “liberating” miniskirts and mascara, behaved sexually not only in intimacy but also in the society.\textsuperscript{971} They also became main characters in novels, such as Doris Lessing’s \textit{The Golden Notebook}, and in theater and cinema, which were experiencing an interesting symbiosis, as numerous successful plays written during this time became successful movies. Even if the sixties cinema’s focus was still strongly “male oriented” (\textit{Room at the Top}, and \textit{The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, Look Back in Anger, Angry Young Man}, not to mention the commercial James Bond series) the camera lenses focused on women’s destinies and desires, such as \textit{A Taste of Honey, Darling},\textsuperscript{972} and many others.\textsuperscript{973}

The change in women’s behavior, the renewed preoccupation with “what women wanted,” and the attention which the women of New Wave novels, theater and cinema\textsuperscript{974} brought upon women’s lives made Graham’s female characters – on stages for decades – “rhyme” better with the sixties’ women’s new profile.\textsuperscript{975} Expressing their emotions, anger, and anxieties to the fullest,\textsuperscript{976} the sixties’ women and Graham’s women were not “light” characters, but anti-

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\textsuperscript{969} Brian Masters, \textit{The swinging Sixties}, p. 36; \textit{Time} devoted an article to the phenomenon of sex, “which exploded in the national consciousness and national headline,” the \textit{Lady Chatterley’s Lover} scandal just brought more attention to the topic, while in 1965 Kenneth Tynan used the “f-word” for the first time on TV.

\textsuperscript{970} Marvik, \textit{The Sixties}, p.681

\textsuperscript{971} Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell, \textit{Sweet freedom: The Struggle for Women’s liberation} (Boston: Blackwell Publishers, 1987), p. 162

\textsuperscript{972} \textit{A Taste of Honey} is the first play by the British dramatist Shelagh Delaney initially intended as a novel, but she turned it into a play, premiered in London in 1958. The movie with the same name was made in 1961.

\textsuperscript{974} Winders, \textit{European Culture Since 1848}, p. 174

\textsuperscript{975} Victoria Thoms, discussion with the author, August 2010, London

\textsuperscript{976} Winders, \textit{European Culture Since 1848}; he named Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, Paul Sartre, Harold Pinter and John Osborne
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archetypical ones, able and willing to acknowledge “the inner darkness,” and to question the boundaries of the interior and exterior realities of their existences, of their sexual orientation and gender, and of women’s place in the society. Most importantly, for both Graham’s and the New Wave’s women (real and fictional characters,) sexuality and change was not a taboo topic.

The sexual revolution and feminism impacted dance, and modern dance rhymed with sixties’ feminism at multiple layers and in many ways. For centuries dance was ballet, and “ballet was the woman.” But the women-ballerinas were seen as a mixture of goddesses and objects. Graham and modern dance interrogated human sexuality and looked at the female body differently, as a partner of the soul, and not only as instruments. Even if Graham declined any kind of association with feminist or political movements, it is hard to separate her totally from feminism, as modern dance as an art was considered a “feminist practice, pioneered and danced by women.” It also challenged many anti-feminists’ practices and perspectives such as the eroticization of the female performer and voyeurism of the male spectator, while in her company the male dancers had mostly a secondary status, both as performers and embodiments of characters. It is even harder to separate Graham’s works and the feminist message of the

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977 Scne from the movie “A taste of Honey” involving the main character Josephine (Jo)
978 Arthur Marwick, The Sixties, p. 117
979 Meyers, Who’s Not Afraid of Martha Graham, p. 40
981 Susan Manning, Ecstasy and the Demon, p. 2; Graham’s relationship with politics outside of her role as a cultural diplomat of her country was an interesting one. Even if she denied any political connotations of her works, dance historians billed her works from 1930 to 1950 as “radical Graham,” and afterwards, labeled her as a “humanist dancer,” arguing that her artistic trajectory evolved from the engagement of radical politics to the disengagements of radical individualism.
982 Lynn Garafola, Legacies of Twentieth Century Dance, p. 246
983 Manning, Ecstasy and the Demon, p. 5
984 Ibidem, p. 93
sixties when the dancer herself declared in 1961 that “her dances were about the freedom of American women. It comes in as a moment of emancipation.”

Her works were often reproached for their “disturbing sexuality,” which was in sharp contrast to the renewed Victorian norms imposed on women and their lives, while a bit ironically, but also suggestively, Graham’s school of dance in New York City was also called “the house of pelvic truth.” Ironically, but not surprisingly, as the sixties America was remembered by Kenneth Tynan as very prudish and “a bit anti-sex,” and there was criticism in the country of Graham’s open sexuality. In 1962, two American senators, Edna Kelly of Brooklyn and Peter Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, after watching *Phaedra* in Cologne – not knowing the Greek legend of a queen’s passion – denounced in Congress Graham’s art as obscene and too explicit to be a proper cultural export for the United States, and they declared that due to the sexuality of her works she was not truly representing American values, and they asked that Graham should not be allowed to be a cultural diplomat of her country abroad.

The first tour to Europe in the sixties came in 1962 and it was a State Department tour. After performing in Israel during October 1962, Graham and her company travelled to Europe. The countries and cities visited were the following: Turkey (Ankara, 6–9 November), Greece (Athens, 10–14 November), Eastern Europe, in Yugoslavia and Poland (Belgrade, Zagreb and Warsaw: 16–24 November), Germany (Munich, 25–28 November; interestingly, the company also performed in Cologne), Sweden (Stockholm, 3–5 December) Norway (Oslo, 6–8 December)

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985 Meyers, *Who’s Not Afraid of Martha Graham*, p. 45
987 Different sources

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Finland (Helsinki 9–11 December), the Netherlands (12 December, Amsterdam, 13 December Haarlem, 14 December, The Hague, and 15–16 December Heerlen.)

It would be an epic tour. In 1962, Graham and her company performed in two Eastern European countries, beyond the Iron Curtain; but not in France or Great Britain.

Soon after, in 1963, they would have an enormous success at the Edinburgh Festival. With the help of her special British friends, it would be continued with an impromptu season in London at the Prince de Wales Theatre. It was the trip to England when E. M. Forster wrote to her and reminded her of their acquaintance and of his admiration for her, followed by a wire which showed that, in spite of his poor health he wanted to see her in person after the performance. Bethsabee de Rothschild accompanied for the last time the company to Europe in 1963; she would leave afterwards for Israel and start there a dance company and a dance school.

In 1967 Graham and her Company would return to Europe, but it would be a different story. By this time her legacy was preserved there, through the opening of a school of modern dance in Britain, but it was also the time when Graham’s age and health problems became an issue, conflicts challenged the company’s life, and many talented dancers left. Besides, now 73 years old, Graham toured with the company, but seldom appeared as a dancer.

Still, the Graham story did not lose power, but on the contrary, it reached new heights.

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989 Ibidem
“Dancing beyond the Iron Curtain”
Martha Graham’s 1962 Tours to Yugoslavia and Poland

At the end of December 1957, Francis Mason, the cultural attaché of the American Embassy in Belgrade, sent Martha Graham a letter in which, after he reminded her of their acquaintance in New York, and informed her about the Jose Limon Company’s visit in Belgrade, which “had had there, and in seven other cities in Yugoslavia, a warming and phenomenal success” and “had press conference after press conference,” in which Limon explained “with sympathy and intelligence what he and his company were about.” Mason also gave Graham a perspective on the popularity of American dance in Yugoslavia, which “no one cared or knew about” and, most importantly, asked her to consider a tour to the communist country: “I don’t like to think that it will be another two years – or near it – before I see you again. More than two years at least before the possibility of seeing you and your company. May I go out on a limb and insist, within my limited powers, that you come to Yugoslavia? “He also promised to inform the State Department and ANTA, about the possibility of a tour to Yugoslavia.

Francis Mason’s letter was written two years after the famous inventor of modern dance reached international fame during her first State Department sponsored tour to Asia, in 1955. The invitation to come to Europe was a delicate one, as the dancer’s two tours to the continent, one in

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990 Letter from Francis Mason to Martha Graham, Munich 17th December 1957, box 339, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington; Francis Mason was cultural attaché to the United States embassies in Belgrade (1956-60) and London (1960-65)
991 Letter from Francis Mason to Martha Graham, Munich 17th December 1957, box 339, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
1950 and another in 1954, privately sponsored, had just a limited success.\textsuperscript{992} However, as has been shown, during the first European tours Graham rehearsed her role as a cultural diplomat, while from behind the stage or openly, the American ambassadors, embassies’ officials, and cultural attaches, supported and logistically helped the American dancer while in Europe. The best proof of the political element in Graham’s fifties’ European tours is a picture of Juliana, the Queen of the Netherlands and Princess Irene greeting Graham after a performance.\textsuperscript{993}

The dancer would perform beyond the Iron Curtain, but only in 1962, on the occasion of Graham’s first State Department tour to Europe, when she and her Company would visit Yugoslavia and Poland. However, they did not, as wrongly stated in Graham’s biographies, perform in communist Romania.

While unfolding the story of Graham’s first performances in Eastern Europe, this chapter looks for the reasons behind the choice of these two communist countries to be toured by the famous artist, for the logistics involved in the tours, while also searching into the way in which they made the Iron Curtain less opaque, making possible, at least for a short time, the construction or re-construction of the “other’s” image on both sides of it. Last but not least, it also places them in the larger context of the American grand cultural diplomacy of the Cold War, which refined and enlarged the artists’ roles. Until then, expected to be just “witnesses of their time in history,”\textsuperscript{994} now artists were given the choice of becoming cultural diplomats, actively


\textsuperscript{993} Camelia Lenart, “Rehearsing and Transforming Cultural Diplomacy: Martha Graham’s Tours to Europe during the Fifties,” paper presented at the International Joint Conference in Dance Research “Dance ACTions—Traditions and Transformations,” Trondheim, Norway, June 2013, and published in the SDHS Proceedings

\textsuperscript{994} Robert Rauschenberg, American painter whose works anticipated the pop art movement
involved, but, as cultural diplomacy mirrored, helped, adjusted and softened the “real” diplomacy, also sharing the latter’s difficult moments.

Martha Graham’s 1962 State Department tour was the best example of this, as it took place during a very complicated political context, marked by the construction of the Berlin Wall and the Bay of Pigs fiasco, increased by the Cuban Missile Crisis’ significance, and culminating with the naval blockade of Cuba which ended on November 20, 1962. That day, Graham, who was already touring Eastern Europe, staged her second performance in Zagreb. On November 15, 1962, she and her dancers traveled to Belgrade, and had two performances on the 16th and 17th in the city’s Opera House; the next day they traveled to Zagreb, where they performed for two days. On November 21, the Company traveled to Warsaw, and had three performances at Theatr Dramatyczny. They had a press conference at the Airport, and during the evening they attended the Wieniawski Violin Competition Gala Concert.

The political atmosphere did not affect the arrangements made for Graham’s new tour, with Anatolle Heller as the impresario again, so in 1962 Graham and her company visited nine countries in eight weeks. Graham’s inclusion on the list of the cultural diplomats to Europe in the early sixties was not surprising. She was worldwide famous, an American icon, and her 1955 to Asia was a success. Dance had cultural visibility, could knit together easily art with politics, and make and un-make national identities. Besides, it did have a specific language – of the bodies in motion – whose meanings were harder to be untangled, especially in countries where

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995 Schedule of the tour, Box 350, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
996 Ibidem
997 Ibidem
998 Program of the tour, Box 350, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
censorship was a problem, as it was the case in the communist countries. Last but not least, she was performing an art through which the Americans were proving not only their advancements in the field of culture, but also their uniqueness. In 1962 the New York City Ballet also went behind the Iron Curtain, to the USSR, as part of its eight-week US State Department sponsored Soviet tour. But, ballet was at origin an European art, and the New York City Ballet’s George Balanchine roots were also foreign, a Georgian born in St. Petersburg. Modern dance was their invention, an American art, and Graham was undoubtedly one hundred percent American. However, as I will show later, while dancing in Eastern-Europe Graham’s Americanism was softly and not openly asserted.

Even if involved officially in the State Department’s tours since 1955, Graham was not much of a “political person.” She was proud to be an American, and during her tour to Asia her Americanism was carefully emphasized. Some of her works had political themes, but she was neither involved directly in politics nor close to political personalities. For instance, she did not honor the invitation to the inaugural ceremonies of John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s presidency. As one of her former dancers, Pearl Lang, put it: “She did not care! All she cared about was dance.”

However, becoming a cultural diplomat asked artists, including Graham, to rethink, redefine, and refine their political stance and commitment, as shown by the language of an official letter – pragmatic, precise, task-oriented, and clearly branded – received by Martha

1002 Letter from Kay Halle to Martha Graham, February 1, 1961, box 350, referring to a previous letter left without response, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
1003 Pearl Lang, interview with the author, October 2008
Graham prior to the tour: “As you are about to start on a tour for us, under the Department of State’s Cultural Presentations Program, we want to send you this word of gratitude and to let you know that we shall be following every performance with the keenest interest, as the reports come back from our embassies and consulates. […] The money for your and all other tours comes from the American taxpayers, through annual appropriations by the Congress. The amount has been about two and a half million dollars each year. […] She was reminded about the tickets sold at a “very low price” to encourage attendance, that ANTA (with whom she had the contract) was the agent of the State Department, received funds from it, and had the last word in sending her abroad. Chosen for her “artistic pre-eminence,” her name was next to other “huge names of American arts” and she was expected to demonstrate her “belief in this program,” as “never was the comprehension (mutual understanding) more important for the survival of our country and our way of life.”

It was pointed out to her that she would be “constantly in the limelight, off stage as well as on,” but that at every stop she would be “in the hands of the USIS” and “in the charge of the cultural officer of the USIS,” while her activity would be reported directly to the American ambassador. Most importantly, she was told that the American officers would arrange for her “to meet the nationals” and this is where her “offstage activities” were beginning, it was suggested to participate in many activities, but keeping “in mind that, as guests in their country and as representative of our American Government program,” she was in a “special position.”

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Why this special person, with a “special position,” in Poland and Yugoslavia? And why not Romania?\textsuperscript{1005}

For centuries the imagery of Eastern Europe, especially in the western world, was associated with the Babel of contrasting and conflicting religions and nations. Once communism encapsulated them, a new image was constructed, based on the idea of a compact block, leveled by the Soviet ideology, and reduced to the status of powerless satellites. In fact, there were many tensions within the bloc and different degrees of independence from the USSR, all varying from country to country and from one decade to another. Almost each communist country had its moment of rebellion against Moscow’s leadership, and its moment of “refreshing” and questioning communism’s development and of finding solutions for its future. Ironically, the critique trend was initiated by Nikita Khrushchev himself in the fifties, but the beginning of the sixties was the end of the optimistic era,\textsuperscript{1006} the Soviet “awakening” stopped,\textsuperscript{1007} while a new kind of Cold War started.\textsuperscript{1008} The conflicts between East and West became increasingly powerful, the Soviets blaming the American for the world’s problems.\textsuperscript{1009}

In this sensitive and confusing Eastern European context, the task for American politics – whose hope was evolutionary changes than the revolutionary ones in the area – \textsuperscript{1010} was to help create a division within the Soviet bloc which would be independent from the Kremlin. In this scenario, the key element was Yugoslavia, which had an “anomalous position in the Cold War

\textsuperscript{1005} Camelia Lenart, “The Curious Case of Martha Graham in Romania,” dissertation chapter, PhD diss, State University of New York at Albany, 2014
\textsuperscript{1007} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{1010} Lorraine M. Lees, \textit{Keeping Tito Afloat. The United States, Yugoslavia and the Cold War}, (University Park: The Pensnsylvania State University Press, 1997), p.236
that objectively suited U.S. purposes”¹⁰¹¹ and was considered a “non-Soviet bloc” nation.¹⁰¹² Tito’s regime split with Stalin in 1948, limited its rapprochement with Moscow and maintained its sovereignty internal and external, which put the country and its leader in the grace of the Americans. As the Soviets were rolling “westward across Europe,”¹⁰¹³ the Americans helped Yugoslavia to resist and preserve its independence from the Soviets,¹⁰¹⁴ expecting that not only that the country would remain non-aligned,¹⁰¹⁵ but also that it would cooperate with its benefactors and their foreign policy. In fact, Tito and his country did not fulfill these expectations, remaining communist and neutral.¹⁰¹⁶ However, he was still considered to exercise a disruptive influence on the Soviet bloc, and maintained good relations with the West,¹⁰¹⁷ but during the Kennedy era, after the Bay of Pigs invasion and the U-2 spy incident, the relations between Yugoslavia and the United States began to break down. In 1961 Tito criticized the Americans and expressed “understanding” of the Soviet actions,¹⁰¹⁸ which made President Kennedy to be even unhappy with Tito, in spite of the American ambassador George Keenan’s efforts to maintain a cordial atmosphere between the two countries.¹⁰¹⁹ By 1962, Congress had passed legislation to deny financial aid grants to Yugoslavia and to revoke the country’s most favored nation status.¹⁰²⁰ By the time of Martha

¹⁰¹³ Larson, p.286
¹⁰¹⁴ Ibidem, p.289
¹⁰¹⁶ Ibidem, p.235
¹⁰¹⁸ Ibidem, p.49-54
¹⁰²⁰ Ibidem, p.308
Graham’s arrival, the difficult situation had a moment of respiro.\textsuperscript{1021} Tito sent a letter to Acting Secretary UN stressing Yugoslavia’s un-aligned position,\textsuperscript{1022} which remained the established basis of its foreign policy,\textsuperscript{1023} while the American Department of State released a summary statement on the “five goals of US Foreign Policy” stressing that they wanted to win “peace through perseverance.”\textsuperscript{1024} Still, the softness of the cultural diplomacy was a necessary factor in furthering the aims of American politics and diplomacy in the area.

However, in this atmosphere of the hopeful past, unfulfilled expectations, and a tensed present which characterized the American-Yugoslavian relationship, it was to be expected that another communist country would be picked for Graham’s performances. With USSR out of question, and Romania and Czechoslovakia not openly seeking independence within the Soviet bloc until 1968, Albania and Bulgaria less open and prepared for grand American politics, the choices were not many. Hungary had an anti-Soviet momentum during mid fifties but it ended in bloodshed, so beside Yugoslavia, Poland looked the more advanced on the way towards a non-aligned status, and a good target American cultural diplomacy.

The early sixties known also as “Gomulka’s thaw” were the time when the relationship with the West was apparently normalized,\textsuperscript{1025} while the critique of communist exaggerations\textsuperscript{1026} seemed to have made Poland a more democratic country and brought to it a moderate optimism and an air of hope. Gomulka even started to ask the public consensus for his actions, foreign movies were regularly shown in Poland, including American ones, travel to foreign countries

\textsuperscript{1021} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{1022} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{1024} Larson, p.310
\textsuperscript{1025} Leszek Murat, email to the author, October 27, 2013
\textsuperscript{1026} Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, \textit{A Concise History of Poland}, (Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 260
was permitted, and they (the Poles) “were allowed to think that they were part of the world.” 1027 It was a phase of “bearable communism,” of a less strict communism and Poland had a degree of independence, but it was just apparent, as deep within it was becoming even more dogmatic. 1028

Finding countries culturally friendly towards American art in the Eastern bloc was also a necessity, as Martha Graham was never invited to USSR, neither in the sixties, nor later. By the time that Graham was preparing her tour to Eastern Europe, the country and its leader, Nikita Khrushchev – a man of “meager culture” whose favorite entertainment was the circus – were openly against modern arts,1029 while Soviet artists were expected to reject the “hostile attacks on socialist culture”1030 and follow the Socialist-realist tradition.1031 Besides, the Soviets looked at the cultural exchange with circumspection, aware that it could possibly be the Trojan horse “smuggling into the country alien and hostile ideas,”1032 and “rotten conceptions of bourgeois morality,”1033 so the censorship on “cultural products” entering the country was extremely rigorous.1034

Folk dances, with a strong nationalistic display, and ballet were the favorite dance style of the communist countries, including the Soviet Union. When it came to “exchanging dance,”

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1032 Werth. p.188-191
1033 Werth. p.188-191
American critics were asked to be part of the jury in important ballet competitions,\textsuperscript{1035} American ballet companies were invited, but not modern dance ones. Ballet suited better the cultural exchange involving Soviet Union, as it was not only a male dominated art, but also a controlling one, in which the dancers, as people in a communist system were mostly objects. Modern dance was disobedience, sexuality, female lead and control, questioning, and unrest. In particular, Graham was considered too sexual for the Soviet stages\textsuperscript{1036} and for the “Soviet man” whose sexual life – also observed and censored by the Communist Party – was expected to be focused on reproduction and not pleasure.\textsuperscript{1037} 

Compared with the stern cultural atmosphere of the USSR and other Eastern European “gray countries,”\textsuperscript{1038} the ones visited by Graham displayed, an openness toward the USA and a level of awareness of the American culture, whose artists were more welcomed here than in other places of the Eastern bloc. The artistic milieu of Yugoslavia and Poland had personalities who penetrated the boundaries of the Iron Curtain, embraced the universality of artistic creation, and chose to act as channels of communication and information between the two sides of the curtain.\textsuperscript{1039}
One million Yugoslavians were employed or studied in the West. No one stopped Ivo Andrić in 1961 to travel to Stockholm when he won the Nobel for literature, while American tourists flocked the Adriatic coast, including the famous Liz Taylor and Richard Burton. Even if Yugoslavia’s Tito believed that American jazz, and pop music “cheated people of their money and spoiled young people,” Belgrade’s Contemporary Theater was in the midst of its golden period in the sixties, owing to particularly successful performances of the works of contemporary American playwrights. The “contemporary dance” experiments were not inexistent as well, especially as the history of dance in Serbia had a unique feature, as contrary to other countries, modern ballet was established in Serbia before classical ballet, with Maga Magazinović the first and the most dedicated champion of modern dance.

After the conservative fifties, Poland’s sixties were also quite innovative and more culturally permissive. Major international achievements of Polish artists, such as the films of famous director Andrej Wajda, put a brighter light upon the country’s culture, while the stage arts, which were the “court entertainment” of the regime, were flourishing. Warsaw had twenty

1040 John R. Lampe, Yugoslavia as History, Twice there was a country, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.2
1041 Vesna Drapac, Constructing Yugoslavia, a Transnational History (New –York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2010), p.243
1042 Sabrina Petra Ramet, Balkan Babel, Politics, Culture, and Religion in Yugoslavia, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p.82; Aspiring to constant professional education, she often attended specialist courses in Europe. After the Second World War, she worked as a teacher in several subjects in the State Ballet School. One of the subjects was the History of Dance, on which topic she wrote the first book in Serbian.
1043 Some of the works presented were Death of a Salesman, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Glass Menagerie, Mother Courage and Her Children, A View from the Bridge
1046 In the 1960s Wajda showed the world an epic film The Ashes (1965) based on the novel by Polish writer Stefan Żeromski and directed some films abroad: Love at Twenty (1962), Siberian Lady Macbeth (1962) or Gates To Paradise (1968)
large performance halls, so there was always a choice between Greek tragedy, an American psychological play, and world classics.\textsuperscript{1047} On Polish stages “psychologism (sic) was connected with a specific type of expressionism, in acting and mise-en-scene,”\textsuperscript{1048} the result being the visual theater style – in which performers communicated information, relationships and emotions primarily through movement, various forms of dance, sign language, while the performances combined spoken words, music, or other sounds – which prepared the audiences for modern dance. Polish dance experiments also existed, having Tacjanna Wysocka as initiator and leader, \textsuperscript{1049} while dancers and choreographers living abroad (such as Jan Cieplinski, born in Poland but working in New York,) kept dance lovers informed about the newest developments in this art.\textsuperscript{1050}

Choosing the countries of Yugoslavia and Poland for Martha Graham’s first performances beyond the Iron Curtain proved to be an inspired move. The tour was a success: it took place in a favorable atmosphere and without major incidents, and generated mostly positive reactions from the audience and critics. All showed that the political and cultural permissiveness of the two countries was a necessary factor for the success of American cultural diplomacy in the area. However, the success was due to much more than a good choice and serendipity, as Graham’s tours were designed ahead of time – skillfully and holistically, – with great care, attention for every detail, and solidly sponsored. Last but not least, the way they were architected proved the growing importance of the area in the larger spectrum American interests, as well as the importance of cultural diplomacy in the sophisticated mechanism, supposed to make Eastern Europe a friendly space for the American culture and politics.

\textsuperscript{1047} Kazimierz Braun, p.67-69
\textsuperscript{1048} Kazimierz Braun p. p.89
\textsuperscript{1049} Tacjanna Wysocka, “Martha Graham,” Theatr, Cultural bi-weekly, no. 2, Jan 16-31 1963, p.25
\textsuperscript{1050} http://www.mazury.org.uk/
The arrival of Martha Graham and her company in Eastern Europe was carefully prepared. Movies about Graham were presented at the American Embassy’s locations. "A Dancer's World" was very well received in Poland, being considered by local journalists a mesmerizing and unprecedented story of the dancer, but also a “far-sighted” move of American politics in the area. Graham and her company arrived in style, had press conferences, lived at the best hotels, and attended officially cultural events, dinners and galas. Graham gave lectures –demonstrations in every visited city, and the newspapers covered her presence prior to, during, and after the performances. These were attended by American ambassadors, American officials, and their local counterparts, and after the first nights telegrams were sent to the USA, reporting the progress of the tour. The Program of the performances, the largest issued on the occasion of Graham’s performances abroad, was a complete and complex piece of elaborated cultural diplomacy itself, containing an extended biography of the artist, numerous pictures of her dancing in Jocasta and Seraphic Dialogue; there were also pictures from the performances, presenting Graham’s most known dancers, such as Yuriko, Helen McGehee, Linda Hodes, Robert Cohan, David Wood, David Powell, Bertram Ross. The program also included biographies of the set designer Isamu Noguchi, and of the musicians who composed the scores for the dances, such as Robert Starer, Norman del Jojo, Carlos Surinach, W. Schuman, Habim El-Dabh, and Vivian Fine.

Following a tradition of the American embassies abroad when American dancers performed in the capitals of Europe, the night she arrived in Belgrade, the dancer was invited to a

1051 Ibidem
1052 Ludwik Erhardt, "Ballet Philosophy"((Cultural Review), Przegląd Kulturalny, no.9, December 6, 1962, p.8
1053 Schedule of the tour, box 350, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
1054 Telegram, unknown sender, box 352, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
dinner hosted by Mrs. and Mr. Engle, the Cultural attaché of the US Embassy in the city. The dinner was also attended by local artistic personalities, such as Vera Kostic, the ballerina Mira Sanjina, the choreographer Dimitrije Parlic, and the directors of the opera ballet and of Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra.

After the first night’s performance Martha Graham was celebrated in a lavish reception at the Hotel Metropole, by the American Ambassador George F. Kennan and his wife. A total of 126 people attended, without counting the spouses or partners with whom they were invited to attend. It is interesting to notice that the Belgrade’s Grand Hall of the Opera has 3 levels, and the ground level has 219 seats, which means that at least half of the audience was invited to the reception. There were more than one hundred local guests, twenty people from the American Embassy, and four members of foreign embassies (two British, including a representative of the British Council, the French attaché, and one member of the Polish Embassy.)

1055 Invitation to dinner from Mr. and Mrs. Engle, box 350, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
1056 "Rehearsing and Transforming Cultural Diplomacy: Martha Graham’s Tours to Europe during the Fifties," published in the Proceedings of Dance History Scholars Conference, October 2013
1057 Dimitrije Parlic, Upon graduation from the Drama and Ballet School in Belgrade went on to further his education in Vienna and Bonn. Parlic joined the Ballet Company of the National Theatre of Belgrade
1058 The reception started at 22.30
1059 They were nine critics from the music and theater sector (including Branko Dragutinovic, from the The Politika,) fifteen conductors and musicians, four choreographers (Dimitrije Parlic, Ana Radosevic, Rozalia Dobrovoljac, Vera Kostic), six scenographers and costume designers, eight Ballet School teachers; Twenty five ballet Dancers from the National theatre, and six from Contemporary Theatre (Irena Kis, Ivanka Dragutinovic-Zivojinovic, Tomanija Simic, Kista Kovacevic, Vlada Olujic, Ljubiba Simic,) eight composers, four singers, eight sculptors, twelve people from the theater management, academy and artistic agencies, four actors and play directors, five journalists from local and foreign press.
1060 Invitation to Martha Graham from Ambassador George F. Keenan, box 350, Martha Graham Collection, Music division, Library of Congress, Washington
Prior to her arrival in Poland, the fifth issue of the “Kultura USA” journal, edited by “Ambasada Amerykanska” was dedicated to Graham.\textsuperscript{1061} Already a month before her visit, “Trybuna Ludu” (“People’s Tribune,” the official media and propaganda outlet of the Polish United Workers’ Party) started a series of weekly article focusing on Graham, explaining the “ballets,” presenting the biographies of the dancers, all complemented by pictures (one from the dance \textit{Secular Games} and another one from her school.)\textsuperscript{1062} Calling her one of the “six most prominent women in America,” they presented her beginnings, her school, her collaborators, and the dates of her performances.\textsuperscript{1063} Last but not least, the first night performance was attended by Tadeusz Galinski, the Polish minister of culture and art, other important representatives of Polish culture and art, members of foreign diplomatic missions, while the American Embassy was represented by Albert W. Shearer.\textsuperscript{1064} After the performance, fifty-seven people were invited to a reception at the American Embassy, followed the next day there was a tour of the capital, including a tour of the new opera.\textsuperscript{1065}

But beside the political and diplomatic performance of the Americans touring the two Eastern European countries, the dancer and her company performed another task, not scheduled, planned, or organized, namely the “thinning” of the Iron Curtain. Once it was lifted, even for a short time, people from both sides, the American dancers on one hand, and the Eastern European audience on another, could re-invent each other, give more substance to the frames of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1061] “Kultura USA” journal, edited by Ambasada Amerykanska, box 350, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
\item[1062] Irena Turska, “Martha Graham,” \textit{Trybuna Ludu}, no. 317, November 8, 1962, p.5
\item[1063] Irena Turska, “Martha Graham with her ensemble will perform in Warsaw,” \textit{Trybuna Ludu}, no. 317, November 15,1962, p. 5
\item[1064] Unsigned article, “Martha Graham”, \textit{Express Wieczorny}, no. 278, November 23, 1962, p. 6
\item[1065] Schedule of the tour, box 352, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
\end{footnotes}
“otherness,” change nuances, mirror one another’s culture, and also relieve some of the anxieties on the two sides of the curtain.

The traveler dancers of Graham’s company could see that beyond the curtain there was a nuanced and diverse world, with common traits as well as differences. “Yugoslavia is very nice, people are friendly and very sweet,”1066 wrote the dancer Helen McGehee, who could go to dinner to her friend Vera’s house, whom she did not see for “many years,” and met her and her family undisturbed on different other occasions. McGehee did not like Poland much: “I still can’t describe [it] – the life in the hotel was most circumscribed, uncomfortable;” “The city would be beautiful, with long avenues and trees, they still reconstruct the city. But now life is very depressing!”1067

The “communist spectator’s” features were more complex than often imagined and constructed by those outside the Iron Curtain. The “peasant-like naïveté and simplicity”1068 associated with the Eastern Europeans, and their total “lack of sophistication” proved to be a myth, as the Easterners did not lack artistic refinement. The official report of the tour considered the communist audience “which filled the theaters,” “sophisticated and highly critical, with 95% of them being “standard European intellectual type, including commerce, business, and officials.”1069 The success of the 1962 Eastern European tour was considered by the State Department comparable with the one to the Far East in the mid fifties, as each night crowds watched an “elated and exhausted” Company, and on the closing night in Zagreb people did not

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1066 Letter from Hellen McGehee to her husband, November 27, 1962, to Box 9, Hellen McGehee Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
1067 Ibidem
1069 Evaluation of Martha Graham after the tour, box 354, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
leave after thirty curtain calls, screaming “Mar-tha, Mar-tha, Mar-tha,” so she had to take a personal call with each member of the cast.

But, unlike probably expected, imagined, or hoped, the “communist spectator” of the early sixties was not a political one. Liking Graham was an artistic choice, not a political one, except for those for whom communism was hardly bearable; for them, attending Graham’s performances was a gesture of subliminal rebellion, as America and its culture were considered the epitome of modern, but also of freedom. It might have come as unexpected, as the intellectual world of the Eastern European society was often described as under the spell of the communist ideology, thus entirely leveled. As an official observer of the tour remarked: “In Poland and Yugoslavia their utter novelty (Graham’s dances) did not create reactions less sympathetic.”

The communist spectator was also curious, intelligent, and could be a little snobbish. The Eastern European spectator was mostly a lover of classicism in the arts, and rather resistant to modernism, or, as a journalist put it: “Maybe our disappointment comes from our upbringing – we were accustomed to classical dance, here (in Graham’s performance) totally rejected. Maybe we are disappointed because of the lack of mysticism and symbolism that are so important to us.” (The journalist’s remark is most interesting as “mysticism and symbolism”

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1073 Evaluation of Martha Graham’s tour, box 354, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
1074 Miriam Raducanu, interview with the author, August 2011
1076 Zdzislaw Sierpinski, ”Martha Graham's Ballet,” *Zycie Warszawy*, no. 283, November 28, 1962, p.4
were rarely viewed as attributes of ballet tradition, but of Graham’s modern dance, and were usually reproached to her as a problem for the audience in “understanding” her art.) Eastern Europeans loved opera in spite of the huge prices, while the ballet dancers and opera singers were celebrities and treated such as, and often invited to diplomatic receptions.

But the communist spectator, even if he or she lived beyond the Iron Curtain, was not unaware of the past and the present of the arts, including the modern ones. Graham was considered a “spiritual sister of Isadora Duncan,” her art being analyzed in the context of Rudolf Laban, Kurt Jooss and Mary Wigman, but the Eastern European audience could encompass her artistry, comparing and contrasting her with her fellow American artists, who had already visited Eastern Europe, namely José Limon and Jerome Robbins. The Polish Trybuna Ludu, called Martha Graham’s performances “to be the story-of-the-season in Warsaw,” but took the chance to present her next to other prestigious guests who had already visited their city, such as “the Great Theatre's Ballet in Moscow, the Kirov's Theater Ballet from Leningrad, the Moysieyeva's Team, the Bieriozka, Margot Fonteyn, the American Ballet Theatre, Jose Limon and Jerome Robbins,” and of those supposed to come: “To complete this list, we still have to wait for the New York City Ballet and Maurice Bejart's Twentieth Century Ballets.” However, not only that the communist spectators knew about the past and present of dance, but they looked at the visitors, Western or Eastern companies who visited Poland and Yugoslavia, with a composed excitement, as the same journal concluded: “These are not just snobbish oddities: the

1077 David, p.6-15
1078 Ibidem
1079 Adina Cezar, interview with the author, August 2006
1080 Branco Dragutinovic, Politika, November 18, 1962, Clipping translated, Scrapbooks, Box 350 Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
1081 Irena Turska, “Martha Graham’s world of dance,” Ruch Muzyckny, no.1W, Jan 15, 1963, p. 9
possibility of comparisons and juxtapositions of various dancing art styles provide sound conclusions that continue to reverberate through time. It has a great influence on the audience, dancers, pedagogues, and choreographers."1082

Looking at the paradigm of the “communist audience” proved to be an informed, rather uninhibited and not highly political one, it is not surprising that the critics’ response paralleled it, thus not ideologically or politically oriented, but on the contrary, containing the “normal” Graham mix, namely the positive, negative, puzzled, neutral, and informative tones. However, unlike it happened in Europe previously, Graham’s Americaness was not the concern of the Eastern European critics. The ironical and cynical tones, mocking her nationality, age, and “mental state,” so present in the Western European critics’ responses earlier, were also absent in the Polish and Yugoslav critical response to Graham’s art.

It is equally true that during her 1962 tour the Americana pieces, namely Frontier, American Document or Appalachian Spring were absent from the company’s performances to Eastern Europe. The works presented in Yugoslavia and Poland focused on Greek myths, philosophical themes, big themes of human existence, and included also the lighter pieces of Graham’s creation. Presented in Belgrade were Seraphic Dialogue, Diversion of Angels Embattled Garden, Secular Games, Phaedra and Clytemnestra. In Poland were danced Seraphic Dialogue, Secular Games, Night Journey, Diversion of Angels, Legend of Judith, Acrobats of God.

The critics’ dislikes of Graham in Eastern Europe were in tone with the ones she had to face previously, in the USA or abroad. Some critics considered modern dance ugly, difficult to

1082 Irena Turska, "Martha Graham's Team," Trybuna Ludu, no. 331, November 29, p.5
like, and with little chance to increase its popularity,\footnote{Branka Rakic, “Forms of a new Esthetics, An Encounter with Martha Graham and her art,” Zagreb Weekly Telegram, November 23, 1962, p.7} and claimed that Graham, lacking “physical and interpretative power,” had no chance “to win over the conformism,” unless she used “the stubbornness, typical of small, apparently weak women, (who) persistently followed her path.”\footnote{Ibidem} The dislikes of the critics from the visited Eastern European countries were the usual ones: the lack of classicism, as her dancers did not float, as “He” (sic) is lying with his feet, palms, knees, face, – a man (sic) turning over in dust, and that while ballet relaxes the viewer’s psyche, modern urges one to think and unpleasantly mobilizes the viewer;\footnote{Ibidem} the ugliness: Graham’s works had “many curses and slang words,” and did not have harmony;\footnote{Ibidem} the length of her works: “for some, her works were a revelation, to others were boredom, the majority considers them tiresome, and only a few will go to a fourth performance,”\footnote{Nenad Turklaj, “Ovations for Martha Graham,” Vecernji List, Zagreb, November 21, 1962, p. 7} as it was “tiring for the spectators, for whom everything was new.”\footnote{Mieczyslav Radost, “Martha Graham”, Curier Polski, 24-25 November ,1962, p. 8} (Thus Clytemnestra was seen as “a rather long and tiring story,” was not very popular in any of the countries visited,)\footnote{Vjessnik, November 23, 1962, Clipping translated, Scrapbooks, Box 350 Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington} because of “the complicated group scenes,”\footnote{Branco Dragutinovic, ‘Martha Graham” Politika, November 19, 1962, Clipping translated. Scrapbooks, Box 350 Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington} its monotonous pace.\footnote{Zdislaw Sierpinski, “Martha Graham”, Zycie Warszawy, November 28, 1962, p. 4}

The critics also had reservations vis-à-vis her “symbolic and suggestive style,”\footnote{Ibidem} and as would happen soon, on the occasion of her presence in Edinburgh and London in 1963,\footnote{Ibidem} the
scores of her works, “neither modern nor classical,” were mostly disliked. Their “repetitions, emotional declines, unachieved gradations” were criticized, while it was also claimed that the music did not reach the audience, which “remained unmoved many a time (sic), and with no artistic excitement”

Most interesting were the responses of the critics who belonged to the “mixed feelings and puzzled opinions” category, and not only because their criticism brought together the dislikes, likes, clichés about Graham, the known and unknown about her, but also because their articles could be considered the epitome of the response of the Eastern European audience facing Graham’s modern dance: a bit surprised, a bit uninformed, maybe puzzled, but not unwilling to appreciate modern, newness and “otherness.”

One article representative for this group is one which appeared in the periodical Vecernji List. As a response to the first night performance, a large biography of the dancer was published beside some very laudatory words such as: “modernity of artistic expression,” “phenomenal submission to dance technique,”“dancing of freed (sic) movements,” but which heavily resembled the lines of the program. The next day the same critic signed a new article, with a picture of Graham holding a lecture demonstration at the Croatian theatre. However, after calling her the greatest living American dance artist, he criticized the company’s strenuous

1095 Ibidem
manner of dancing and concluded that the night was “tiring for the spectators, for whom everything was new.”

Irena Turska, a Polish former dancer and one of the most reputed dance personalities of the country, also dedicated a mixed (and very large) article to Martha Graham, two months after Graham’s visit. The well-written piece of analysis, bearing the mark of a person with a solid professional training and expertise in dance – she discussed the dancer’s positions, kneeling, bare feet, tension and relaxations, the swings – offered an objective perspective on Graham’s art. Admitting that modern dance was an art foreign to Poland, but an art which aroused widely diversified discussions and controversies, Turska considered that the liking of Graham was a matter of personal taste. She disliked the “certain monotony” of the style and suggested that Jerome Robbins’ artistic message, “of simple and spontaneous stimuli was not better,” as Graham’s ballet (sic) “is very intellectual but in an unfamiliar way to us” and thus, “does not always appeal to the sensibilities of the spectator. Still, she appreciated the “superb technique” and the “meticulously studied form of movement, the mastery of the body, physical dexterity, balance, elasticity,” and the “softness of the movement.” She corrected the widely circulated idea in Poland that Graham’s dancers were trained as classical dancers, but mistakenly claimed that the Graham’s style, which was philosophical and metaphysical intersection of “symbolism, abstractionism, and strange conventions,” was a combination of negro (!) and Indian dances, and

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1098 Nenad Turklaj, “Martha Graham,” Vecernji List, November 22, 1962, p. 5
1099 Irena Turska graduated in 1943 from the School of Dance Arts Eurhythmics. The knowledge of dance and ballet supplemented later under the direction of Stanislav Glowacki, and in the years 1964-1966 at the Ecole Superieure d’Etudes Chorégraphiques in Paris (as a scholar of the French government). From 1946 to 1948 she taught at teaching the history of dance in the Theatre Academy in Warsaw (located in Lodz). In the years 1972-1989 she taught history and aesthetics of dance in absentia Higher School of Dance Teachers of Music Education at the Faculty of Music in Warsaw. For many years she worked with the "Movement Music". She has published, among others Dance in Poland, 1945-1960 (published in 1962), What is the ballet (1957), Summary of the history of dance and ballet (1962), In the circle dance (1965), Guide Ballet the History of contemporary dance (1980), Almanac of Polish ballet 1945-1974 (1983).
inspired by Isadora Duncan, Laban, Delsarte, and Mary Wigman.\textsuperscript{1100} However, at the end of the article she still cried: “less of philosophy and more of dancing!”\textsuperscript{1101}

The admirers’ group was not left unrepresented either, as some of the Polish and Yugoslav critics loved her “crystal pure style of the modern art,” the movements of the dancers which were “perfect” and for whom \textit{Night Journey}, which was usually considered a “dark” piece, “a dance full of decisiveness.”\textsuperscript{1102} They also loved the “modernity of artistic expression,” “phenomenal submission to dance technique,” “dancing of freeded (sic) movements,” and her “new artistic language.”\textsuperscript{1103} Exploring themes from literature and philosophy was found interesting, as well as her excelling technique, and the “poetic charm” of her art.\textsuperscript{1104} She was called the spiritual sister of Isadora Duncan, also mentioning her art in the context of Laban, Jooss (spelled Josh ) and Mary Wigman. She was a “ever young, excited, intelligent, fanatic seeker of the new,” whose art was a “rebellion against the five positions of ballet.” The Polish \textit{Trybuna Ludu} was ecstatic: “Martha Graham showed us her original school – not in the sense of an institution – but as a general style that is the best among all non-conventional dancing arts. The company's dancers are well-trained, have excellent command of their bodies, and act in a thoughtful, beautiful manner. Their physical fit, flexibility, precision, efforts, and internal discipline prove their high level of professionalism.”\textsuperscript{1105}

She was hailed also “as a great dancer who incorporates to her art elements of drama. Her ballet emanates with great artistry, and despite several moments that seem to us controversial

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1100} Irena Turska, “Martha Graham’s world of dance,” \textit{Ruch Muzyczny}, no.1W, Jan 15, 1963, p. 9
\textsuperscript{1101} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{1102} Milica Zacev, “The perfect culture of movement,” \textit{Borba}, November 18, 1962, p. 3
\textsuperscript{1104} Zdislaw Sierpinski, untitled article, \textit{Zycie Warszawy}, November 28, 1962, p. 4
\textsuperscript{1105} Irena Turska, "Martha Graham's Team," \textit{Trybuna Ludu},no. 331, November 29, p. 5}
from a purely aesthetic point of view, their way of dance is admirable. Each performance showed a great individuality, unified style expressed indirectly, yet well recognized in the atmosphere.” Others discussed her mastery which “brought out the inner beauty of her,” and the way in which her works explored themes from literature and philosophy, her excellent technique, considered to be a combination of dance, pantomime, gymnastics, and acrobatics.

After the last performance in Warsaw, Graham and her company left for Germany and the Nordic Countries. The tour was completed in December 1962, and was considered a success inside and outside the dancers’ world. The analysis made by the State Department, based on “post reports and press comments” from Yugoslavia and Poland, stressed the same. Even if “there were several reservations” towards the music, the “mechanism of their movements, the lack of development of the plot, and the mysticism and symbolism,” from the point of view of the State Department, the aims of the tour were reached: the company and their leader conveyed in Eastern Europe, on and off stage, “a good propaganda to the American way of life,” “the group showed the inventiveness of the Americans in Greek myth and biblical themes,” and Graham “skillfully handled the questions.” Besides, “there were no special problems on the tour.” But most importantly, Graham left upon the audience a mark, as “she inspired followers to continue in her vein.” Thus another tour to Europe of the company was considered possible. As Graham’s age was consider as an increasing problem for an eventual success, they

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1106 Anna Szawinska, "Games on dancing island", Kierunki, no. 49, December 9, 1962, p. 9
1107 Mieczyslav Radost, “Martha Graham”, Curier Polski, no. 279, 24-25 November, 1962, p. 8
1108 Zdislaw Sierpinski, Życie Warszawy, no.283, Nov. 28, 1962, p. 4
1109 Evaluation of Martha Graham’s tour, box 354, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington
foresaw a possible tour of the company, ironically, with her just performing the lecture-demonstrations, which were already becoming a “trade-mark” of Graham’s presence abroad.

Graham’s artistic and political performance beyond the Iron Curtain, redefined and enlarged the dancer’s career and the boundaries of American cultural diplomacy in Europe. It also showed that the tour was a significant moment, which, while using the versatile power of dance in making the political and ideological curtain less opaque, gave contour and substance to American culture, politics and modernism in Eastern Europe. Not less significantly, it also made Eastern Europe for the rest of the world, European or not, a more immediate space and reality, which, as history showed, was waiting to be (re)discovered and (re)invented.

The Curious Case of Martha Graham in Romania

“Romania is a grey place”

Allen Ginsberg

Two of Graham’s biographers, Agnes de Mille and Ernestine Stodelle, claimed that the famous dancer and choreographer visited Romania during the sixties. Stodelle mentioned briefly Romania among the countries toured in 1962 by Graham and her company, while de Mille went further, saying that “Romania was the only country beyond the Iron Curtain where Graham danced.” In fact, Graham did not dance in Romania, neither then, nor later, while the cities of Belgrade and Zagreb of former Yugoslavia – venues of Graham’s performances

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mentioned by the two writers – were part of the communist bloc. Finally yet importantly, de Mille and Stodelle did not mention Poland at all, another communist country where Graham performed during the 1962 tour.

During the early sixties cultural exchange between Romania and the USA was almost inexistent, and modern dance – with its controversial themes and style – was seen in the country as an enemy art and discouraged. The only American artists who visited Romania in 1962 were the soprano Claire Watson,\textsuperscript{1113} the Russian-American classical pianist Alexander Uninski,\textsuperscript{1114} and some American students in music.\textsuperscript{1115} In the fall of 1962 when Graham and her company danced in Belgrade, Zagreb and Warsaw, the only foreign company invited to dance in Bucharest, was the Paris Opera Ballet, which presented \textit{Daphnis and Chloe}.\textsuperscript{1116} The American dance companies started to visit Romania only in the late sixties, the most memorable visit being that of the Alvin Ailey Company.\textsuperscript{1117}

The cultural isolation of the early sixties was in sharp contrast with the years prior to the Second World War, when the developments of modern dance in Romania were among the most advanced in the Eastern European countries. this phase was “the stage of belonging” of Romanian dance, as – while the curtain did not yet separate Western and Eastern Europe, so ideas and artistic innovations circulated freely – Romanian dance could get inspired by, benefit from, evolve and belong to the mean core of the dance world.

The pages of the times’ journals and newspapers show that “little Paris,” as Romanians loved to call their capital, had a vibrant dancing scene, with artists – most of whom studied

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{1115} Arta Florescu, \textit{In dialog cu Iosif Sava} (Bucuresti: Contrapunct liric, Bucuresti; Editura Muzicala, 1987), p.170
\textsuperscript{1116} Anca Florea, p.130
\textsuperscript{1117} Anca Florea, email to the author, December 2013
\end{footnotes}
abroad – who were aligning Romania to the new movement in dance. Among them was Iris Barbura, who studied expressionist dance in Germany and lived in Dresden with her partner, the soon to be famous Romanian conductor, Sergiu Celibidache.\footnote{Raluca Ianegic, Repere coreografice (Bucuresti: UNTAC Press, 2011), p.144} (He accompanied Iris’ recitals, a duo that could remind the dance lovers of Martha Graham and Louis Horst.)

She was not alone in this venture. As Barbura’s nephew, Vergiliu Cornea remembered, Romanians had a “good knowledge of the European cultural assets including modern dance, as at the time Romania had not yet been excluded from the flow.” Two of his ballet teachers from childhood (Delia Bărlea and Edith Poticeanu) “had learnt the ropes with that celebrated ballerina Mary Wigman and also Harald Kreuzberg,” besides his aunt Iris Barbura, “also a former student of Wigman’s who had danced in Germany for a while, and tried to spread this modern, highly expressive trend in Romania.”\footnote{http://vergiiucornea.blogspot.de ; http://www.ithaca.edu/icq/2006v4/depts/south_hill/sht2006_4cornea.htm} One of the best ballet dancers of the fifties and sixties decades, Gabriel Popescu, also mentioned that “he was prepared to understand modern dance, because my first teachers from Banat, Delia Bărlea and Edith Poticeanu attended the expressionist German school of Mary Wigman or Harald Kreutzberg.”\footnote{He recalled Maurice Bejart’s The Rite of Spring as his awakening moment for modern dance}

Other dancers who studied the modern style were Katherine Han, also with Mary Wigman, Maghiar Ester Gonda who studied with Laban, Trude Kresse, and others. A true lover of modernism for its endless means of expression (he called it violently modern) was Barbura’s
student Trixy Cechais, who had a recital of expressionist dance in 1943 at *Maison des francaises*, during which, bold and imaginative, he interpreted the phases of Picasso’s painting.\(^{1121}\)

However, the “belonging stage” ended in 1945, even if those who did not leave the country (such as Iris Barbura who, after her departure, inaugurated a modern ballet school at Ithaca College, and performed for a while in Jose Limon’s company) continued for a while their teaching of modern dance in what they called studios and also had recitals of their works. Soon after the beginning of the Soviet occupation, the studios were closed and recitals banned, and a new phase of the Romanian dance emerged, namely the “conservative and nationalist one.” Not surprisingly, this phase paralleled the same orientation in Soviet culture (in the early sixties Dmitri Shostakovich declared that the musicians should focus on the “purity of the national style,”)\(^{1122}\) thus unlike in Yugoslavia and Poland, where more experimentation with modern music and dance was allowed, in Romania modern dance became an enemy.

When the alleged visit of Graham took place, in the fall of 1962, Romania was by no means at the level of openness towards American politics and cultural diplomacy experienced by Yugoslavia and even Poland at that time. It is true that following the model of Yugoslavia, Romania’s “traditional friend,”\(^{1123}\) the Party and country’s leader, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, also avoided total identification with Moscow\(^{1124}\) and managed to withdraw the Soviet troops from the country in 1958.\(^{1125}\) However, in spite of this progress, Romania was still a grey country, and

\(^{1121}\) He knew about Kurt Joos and Kreuzberg’s developments in this field, and also about the persecution of modern dancers in Germany.


\(^{1123}\) Ibidem, p.106


\(^{1125}\) Campbell, p.110; Dej initiated diplomatic relations with the Western countries, thus establishing the foundation for the image of Romania as “open country,” later on developed skillfully by Nicolae Ceausescu, by seeking
the sixties’ Romanian culture was very little modern in general, and in dance in particular. Censorship in arts was an everyday reality,\textsuperscript{1126} the arts were controled,\textsuperscript{1127} while nationalism and conservatism were very strong.

Classicism was preferred on stages, “as Shakespeare could have not been connected to Romania of the present,”\textsuperscript{1128} and was thus not “harmful” to the construction of the most “luminous stage” of Romanian history, the communist one. Nationalism, which “ran deep” in the country,\textsuperscript{1129} also shaped and reshaped the parameters of Romanian culture, including dance, as well as the cultural exchange with other countries. Folk dance and ballet, mostly of Soviet inspiration, were the only dance styles encouraged and supported. Thus, Romania was visited by ballet companies and stars such as the British Margot Fonteyn, Svetlana Beriosova, Alicia Makarova, and Anton Dolin;\textsuperscript{1130} the Soviet star Maya Plisetskaya, and also the National ballet of Cuba led by the famous Alicia Alonso.\textsuperscript{1131} Romania sent abroad folk companies and ballet dancers, but mostly to other communist countries.\textsuperscript{1132} The inclusion of the Romanian dancers on the list of the cultural diplomats was helped by the fact that the president Gheorghiu-Dej loved opera and ballet, and protected the dancers, who were given communist titles and decorations, and special facilities to leave the country while touring abroad. Some of the Romanian ballet

\begin{itemize}
\item advantageous economic deals with the Western countries, taking independent positions in international conferences
\item Ibidem, p.109
\item Ileana Iliescu, “Dance,” \textit{Informația}, nr. 41- 42, 1965, p.3
\item The most famous Romanian dancers studied abroad mostly in Moscow or in Leningrad
\end{itemize}
dancers enjoyed an international fame, even if rather limited, compared with other stars of the Soviet bloc.\textsuperscript{1133}

The nationalistic and conservative phase in dance was marked by the activity of the former ballerina Floria Capsali,\textsuperscript{1134} who, ironically, had once been the dance instructor of the Romanian royal family’s daughters.\textsuperscript{1135} She was not unaware of modernism,\textsuperscript{1136} due to her years in Paris, where she met Sergei and Enrico Cechetti and studied eurhythmics with Jacques Delcroze.\textsuperscript{1137} Still, she did not encourage modernism in dance, thus fitting perfectly in the time’s expectation, as she inspired her work from Romanian folklore.\textsuperscript{1138} Nonetheless, it was the source of some very valuable choreographic creations, but the over emphasis on folklore limited the Romanian developments in dance.\textsuperscript{1139}

Besides, at the end of the fifties and beginning of the sixties, the “cleaning” of the Romanian society and culture “from the debris of bourgeois thinking was in full swing.” Western dance and music were banned or marginalized, as they were considered “unhealthy,” the Romanian composers were asked to create an “optimistic” kind of music, linked to the problems of the “masses,” while foreign composers such as Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud, and Aaron Copland – names in Graham’s musical repertoire – were ignored.\textsuperscript{1140} Dance was expected to be nationalistic, propagandistic, able to educate the masses, and, last but not least, proper. For

\textsuperscript{1133} Clippings, \textit{Art et Danse}: Magdalena Popa no.107, p.1, Marinel Stefanescu: no.109, p.7
\textsuperscript{1134} Floria Capsali (1900, Macedonia - 1982, București) a fost o balerină și maestră de balet din România
\textsuperscript{1135} Regina Maria, \textit{Povestea Vietii Mele}, vol.3 (Bucuresti: Cartea Veche, 2013),p.77
\textsuperscript{1136} Emanoil Ciomac, “Dance,” \textit{Music and Theater}, 1931, p.5: Capsali presented a recital in 1931 including “free dance resembling Isadora Duncan’s ori Clotilda Sakharoff’s innovation of dance in a modern manner”
\textsuperscript{1138} Ballet performances such as \textit{Wedding in the Carpathians} by Paul Constantinescu (1938), \textit{Miss Mariatza} by Mihail Jora (1942), \textit{The Elf} by Zeno Vancea (1943), \textit{When Grapes Ripen} by Mihail Jora (1954) and \textit{The Romanian Rhapsody} by George Enescu (1955).
instance, in 1959, Bartok’s *The Miraculous Mandarin* presented by the Budapest ballet in Bucharest was disliked because of its strong sexual notes, and the choreographer Gelu Matei, a former student of Trixy Cechais, claimed that the eroticism of the work disqualified it from the “real art” status, as it did not “serve the new order and its ideals,” and thus, its only use was “for medical pathological analysis.” Modern dance was looked at with circumspection as a “threatening art,” and the dancers who were still debating between classic and modern were seen as enemies, destroying from within the system, and were accused “to have plotted against the Party.” Improper sexuality (sic) was also targeted, and homosexuality was harshly punished. The dancers and coreographers Trixy Cechais, Stere Popescu, and Gabriel Popescu (not relatives), considered to have the wrong (sic) sexual orientation, were sent to trial and incarcerated.

It is hard to imagine that in this tense and dense political, social and cultural context, the Romanian officials would have invited an American modern dancer, namely Martha Graham, to present her innovative, controversial, and sexually inspired works on the country’s stages.

However, in March 1965 a promising Romanian president, Nicolae Ceausescu, came to power in a very complex international context, culminating with the tensest moment within the Communist bloc, namely Prague 1968. However, Romania’s unique stance, interpreted as a defiance of the Kremlin, reinforced and fed the moment of freedom of Romanian society, which was the pinnacle of a historical time characterized by contradictory traits, such as confusion,

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1141 Gelu Matei, clipping, *Contemporanul*, nr. 37 (675), 18 septembrie, p.7
1142 Anca Florea, email to the author, October 2013; The great star Galina Ulanova herself intervened for their liberation.
1143 Stelain Tanase, email to the author, December 2013
hope, and defeat, apparent progress and underlying regression, some prosperity and openness towards the West.

These changes affected the way in which the arts developed and the cultural exchange took place in Romania, and for a short period of time, mostly visible between 1968 and 1972, Romanian culture experienced a Renaissance in the arts. Dancers started to travel outside of the country more freely, dancers and choreographers were allowed to experiment more and to have a “clear perspective over international ballet developments.”\textsuperscript{1144} Irinel Liciu, a famous Romanian ballerina, who studied with Maurice Bejart and who loved “expressionist ballet” (sic), interpreted modernized classical ballet roles, and Magdalena Popa even danced the main role in the (in)famous \textit{The Miraculous Mandarin}. In a premiere, \textit{The Rites of Spring}, by Igor Stravinsky and Gershwin’s \textit{An American in Paris}, were presented on the Romanian stages.\textsuperscript{1145} The composer Mihail Jora, the “European and modern musician,” who was accused during the intellectual purge of not being a true communist (the accusations were not helped by his musical studies in Paris and Leipzig), was rehabilitated. His very modern \textit{The Return from the Depths} (“Intoarcerea din adancuri”) was presented on the stage, having a very modern setup.\textsuperscript{1146}

In this context, of some openness, progress and some re-alignment of Romanian dance to the newest developments in this field, there took place a crucial moment which could have been the moment of rebirth of modern dance in Romania, and, eventually, of a possible visit of Martha Graham in Romania. At the International Dance Festival in Paris in 1965\textsuperscript{1147} the Romanians –

\textsuperscript{1145} Ibidem, p.172
\textsuperscript{1146} See Florinela Popa, \textit{Mihail Jora - un modern european}, Editura Muzicală, București, 2009
\textsuperscript{1147} Dana Gheorghiu, “Dance,” \textit{Contemporanul}, nr. 46 (997), 12 noiembrie: in the jury were Galina Ulanova, Tamara Karsavina, Georges Balanchine and Leslie Caron
known abroad until then as a country of ballet dancers and folk companies – presented a work based on Pierre Boulez’s music, namely *Le marteau sans maître* (“the Hammer without a Master.”)

The premiere did not have the much-expected success, and what made things worse was that Stere Popescu and Gabriel Popescu, the choreographer and the principal dancer, defected, which brought repercussions upon the Opera’s dancers and personnel and stopped for the moment the modernization of Romanian dance. That the failure of one premiere – not an uncommon moment in artistic trajectories, national or individual – had consequences, which exceeded the personal disappointment, showed how linked politics and culture were in communist countries too. Even Martha Graham, an artistic icon of a democratic country, was at times reminded that she was an agent of the State Department when touring abroad. In communism there were not too many friendly reminders to artists or arts who did not serve the cause as expected by the system and its leaders.

However, even if *Hammer without a master* was not able to help the cause of modern dance in Romania and put Romania on the map of modern dance, the popularity of Ceausescu and Romania during the late sixties, combined with the complicated turns of the Cold War

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1149 The initiative of the presenting a modern piece belonged to the conductor and director of the Opera, Mihai Brediceanu, a lover of avangarde music, but also a man with an open mind, and, last but not least, some power within the intellectual communist elite of the time. As Anca Florea noted in *Opera Romana. Deceniul cinci, 1961-1971*, vol. 2 (Bucuresti: Curtea Veche, 2006), p. 17, “The choreography was signed by Stere Popescu, who seized the opportunity to “to express the triumph of love over the tribulations of the human existence, through movements which looked for depth not beauty, aimed not to be liked, but to get into the essence of things;” Ileana Iliescu, in *Viata mea, dansul*, (Bucuresti: Geea, 2009), p.77, mentioned that Gabriel Popescu and Simona Stefanescus had the leading roles.
1150 Gabriel Popescu danced classical ballet in Oslo afterwards but, influenced by the Swedish choreographer Ivo Cramer, he started modern dance again. The other dancer, Stere Popescu, left for London, and worked for a while with the Rambert Company. In 1968 he committed suicide. In the most unexpected way, I had the chance to find out more about his activity in London and his death when working in the Rambert Archives in 2010. When hearing that by birth I am Romanian, the archivist gave me many important information about his, even if short, presence at Rambert.
“brought” Graham to Romania in another way. Thus, because of the unprecedented, but short-lived, opening of the artistic gates of Western Europe to the Romanian artists, they started to discover Graham abroad and bring her art to Romania.

The dancer Adina Cezar benefited from this opening, as after Charles de Gaulle’s visit to Romania, in May 1968, she received a scholarship from the French Government for 1969–1970 and attended the courses of the cultural institute “Scuola Cantorum” in Paris. Cezar remembered that in Paris there was an invasion of professionals from the USA,¹¹⁵¹ so she had classes with one of the most of Graham’s important dancers, Yuriko, who had one of the longest careers, and was a cultural diplomat on her own. After she performed at the Festival of American Dance and Humanities, organized by the USIS and by the American Embassy in London in 1966, she was invited to teach Graham technique almost every summer in Europe, especially in Paris.¹¹⁵² Cezar learned from her Martha Graham’s technique, something she found very new but fascinating.¹¹⁵³ Interestingly, she perfected it in Germany, with another Graham dancer, Glen Teetly, whom she met at the Academy of dance in Köln in 1970. After this nuanced exposure to Graham’s innovation, back home Cezar left definitively classical ballet and started her own company of “contemporary dance” (the term used in Romania for modern dance) called Contemp, which performed for decades.

Highly interesting is also the way in which another non-classical dancer, Miriam Răducanu, became a part of the late sixties’ opening of Romania towards Western culture, as well as her “relationship” with Graham. Her impressive life and career would deserve a larger

¹¹⁵¹ Adina Cezar, Interview with the author, August 2005
¹¹⁵² Flyer of the Festival of American Dance and Humanities, London, Victoria and Albert Collection, THM/22/2/5/3
¹¹⁵³ Adina Cezar, Interview with the author, August 2005
space and more attention, but for the present chapter it will suffice to say that Răducanu was present on the Romanian stages since the fifties, dancing her own works, which could not be called modern or contemporary, but not classical ballet either. In the seventies, as she worked at “Țândârică” Theater, in Bucharest, she presented her innovative dances there in a very successful series called “Nocturnes.”

Răducanu also met one of Graham’s dancers, namely Stuart Hodes, and after she and her student, then partner Gigi Caciuleanu, performed at the Festival in Edinburgh in 1971, their paths crossed with Graham’s too, in a most interesting and challenging way. After the Edinburgh performance there was an impromptu invitation for the Romanian dancers to perform at The Place, in London. “The two dancers were on their way back from Edinburgh, where their late night ‘fringe’ performances were extremely well received,” and thus “several people whose opinion we value, suggested a private showing,” explained the program of the performance. The Place was the theater of the Contemporary Dance School in London which was inspired by Graham’s persona and her innovative art.

On September 17, 1971, the “recital” – as it was called – of the “foremost Romanian contemporary dance company” took place. Twelve critics were invited to the performance, among them the most reputed names of dance critique in Britain such as Peter Williams, John Percival, Noel Goodwin, Richard Buckle – the first lover of Graham’s art in Britain, – and the esteemed American critic, Selma Jean Cohen. The program of the night was a combination of sixteen pieces interpreted on original Romanian folk music, jazz, classical music and “en vogue”

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1154 Miriam Răducanu, Interview with the author, August 2011
1155 Ibidem
1156 I discuss at length the relationship between Robin Howard and Martha Graham the afferent chapters
1157 Program, THM 22/8/3/65, Victoria and Albert Collection, London
1158 Ibidem
songs, and it started with the most known piece of the dancers, namely “Rain, rain, rain.” Five of the dances were inspired by the Romanian folklore: “Miorita” – considered to be the Romanian “saga” which reflects within one poem the specific Romanian national trajectory in the history of mankind, “On the Peak” – a shepherd’s story (shepherds are a symbol of the Romanian soul,) “Song of Merrymaking,” and “A curse of love.” There was also a piece called “Lament,” described in the program as a “song of grief at a burial.” The presence of the piece in Răducanu’s repertoire, its title, and the story around this piece deserves close attention, as they are in a very strange and fascinating way related to Martha Graham, while also being one of the most interesting moments of the research related to this dissertation.

In 2011 the author finally met Miriam Răducanu in Bucharest. She insisted that the interview would be at her place, in a charming but by no means pretentious, neighborhood of the Romanian capital. It was not an easy interview, as none of the Romanian interviews were. The interviewees were people who lived most of their lives under communism, thus preserving the memory of communism in subliminal ways: they maintained a fear vis-à-vis questioning (many times I was asking what exactly was intend to be done with the information), most of them displayed some nostalgia of the communism’s “structure” (which allowed progress in culture, while – they stressed – the Romanian transition to democracy was inefficient in this sense), and also had a nuanced approach to the author’s dual nationality.

At one point Ms. Răducanu brought out the poster of the above mentioned Edinburgh Festival in 1971. Next to the pictures in which the dancer and her partner were photographed in the folk inspired dances, there were several photos presenting her in Lament. Beside the title,

1159 I carried out the interview accompanied by Cristian Lenart
which is strikingly similar to Graham’s most famous solo, *Lamentation*, there are many other puzzling similarities. The costume of Răducanu, a piece of fabric looking like a tube, in which the contortioned body was encapsulated, was almost identical with Graham’s from the above mentioned work. Miriam Răducanu explained that *Lament* was inspired by the “song of grief at a burial” performed by the family and friends of a deceased person in Romania; however, Graham’s *Lamentation* was described as a portrait of a grieving woman, a “piece about the emotion of grief.”

When Ms. Răducanu was told that her *Lament* was very reminiscent of Graham’s *Lamentation*, she replied unperturbed that it might be so, but that it was her original work created for the Festival in Edinburgh. Was such a coincidence possible? Since the interview, more than two years by now, the pros and cons remain unrestricted, and a final and definitive conclusion cannot be drawn. It was not impossible that a constant of the human existence, such as grief, would inspire two artists, on two continents, four decades apart, in creating a dance. Not surprisingly, the time of the creation is located for both dancers rather at the beginning of their careers as “official” modern dancers: for Graham in the late twenties, for Răducanu at the end of her sixties (in Răducanu’s case, not by coincidence, the phase coincided with the second phase of the “Romanian cultural Renaissance.”) Ms. Răducanu had not been to the USA prior to her *Lament*. However, she might have seen a magazine portraying Graham in *Lamentation*, but all American journals and magazines were heavily restricted in Romania, and the chances for a dance magazine to make it through censorship were slim to none. It would have been an exceptional coincidence that a dance journal or magazine, having a specific picture of Graham

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dancing in *Lamentation*, was seen by the Romanian dancer. Besides, Ms. Răducanu did not speak English, and at least until 1989, Romanians were traditionally attracted and influenced by French culture as a source of inspiration. Also because her works were absent from the Romanian stages, and her technique from dance training in choreography schools, Graham was never popular among the Romanian critics and dancers. Not surprisingly, Romanians liked what they knew, namely German Expressionism, considered by all the Romanian dancers and critics to be responsible for the “true” birth of modern dance. Unfortunately, Graham was considered – unjustly – just a pupil of the European modern dance, an “expressionist dancer,” who built upon the foundation established by Mary Wigman in the USA.\textsuperscript{1161} Interestingly, this biased view of Graham did not change in Romania, not even later, when, during the very limited cultural exchange, Romanian artists had the chance to travel to the USA as guests of the State Department, \textsuperscript{1162} or when they saw the American icon in person.\textsuperscript{1163}

So, when Răducanu’s *Lament* was created, Romanians were just discovering Graham, and they never grew to fully acknowledge her unique contribution to dance. Thus, why would a Romanian dancer try to find inspiration in a Graham piece, and in a figure without much popularity in the country? And even if this happened, would that dancer/choreographer bring beyond the country’s borders a work heavily “inspired” by another, and not to another communist country, but at a renowned international Festival in England? It is hard to believe that Răducanu and her artistic circle would have acted in such a naïve way.

Even if no final answer accounts for the striking similarities between one of Graham’s works and the piece presented by Ms. Răducanu in Edinburgh and London, it is certain that,

\textsuperscript{1162} Clipping, *Dance Magazine*, August 1969, p.5
contrary to the assertions by de Mille and Stodelle, Graham never came to Romania, and that by no mistake Alwin (sic) Ailey was remembered as the only American modern dancer “who visited our country”\textsuperscript{1164} during the sixties.

Demonstrating that even if Graham never toured Romania, her work, innovation, and persona had – even if indirectly – an impact on important Romanian dancers and dance, required more than interviewing, reading books about history and culture in Romania, researching journals and magazines of the time, and digging into archives. Researching “The curious case of Martha Graham in Romania,” which meant encountering not her presence, but her absence from Romania, also asked the author to go back into her own Romanian memories and revise from a new perspective her country’s history and culture, and also her dreams of becoming a dancer. It gave her the chance to understand one more time that Graham’s absence from her country and her life – Graham’s technique did not exist in Romanian ballet schools, and a career in modern dance was impossible – made her the dance historian she became.

\textbf{The Lady Is Not for Burning …} \textsuperscript{1165}

“I had been a regular follower of the ballet for many years and to my surprise, had been overwhelmed by Martha Graham’s first performances in London in the fifties. (...) I just happened to be chatting with some friends when one of them said something like, ‘Remember you were so impressed with Graham company years ago, well, they are coming to Europe, not to London.’ I asked why not, and was given the answer that no one prepared to lose money on

\textsuperscript{1164} Raluca Ianegic, \textit{Repere coreografice} (Bucuresti: UNTAC Press, 2011), p.213
\textsuperscript{1165} Christopher Fry’s most famous play, \textit{The Lady’s Not for Burning} (1948), was directed by John Gielgud and Esme Percy, and starring Gielgud, Richard Burton, and Claire Bloom
presenting her. (...) I rang up Lord Harewood, then director of Edinburgh Festival, who immediately agreed to present her company in the Festival, and with that to build on, I soon got a provisional London engagement.”\textsuperscript{1166}

The year of 1962 was a memorable one for Graham. Besides successfully completing the first European tour of the sixties, she also premiered \textit{Phaedra}. A “phantasmagoria of desire,” as Graham described it, was one of her relatively late works, a stark, dark, and dramatic work: the tortured husband, Theseus, is betrayed by Phaedra, who is not only unfaithful to him, but is involved with Hippolytus, her stepson, as a result of a curse from a jealous Aphrodite, who, herself, wanted this stepson. The work, considered a masterpiece, aroused a scandal in the American Congress, as two senators claimed that Graham was “Too Sexy for Export,” and they suggested that because of the disturbing themes of her works she should no longer be endorsed by the State Department.\textsuperscript{1167} It was not the only scandal of the year for Graham, as the newspapers also talked about the “$49,000 blow,” namely the money Graham had to pay to an injured former student, who accused Graham that she abused her physically during rehearsals.\textsuperscript{1168}

Ironically, it was one of the articles focusing on the much discussed \textit{Phaedra} which, after informing the readers that in 1963 Graham would tour Israel sponsored by the Department of State, posed another interesting question: “Martha Graham for Europe?” The article suggested that there was a “strong possibility that the above engagement will be followed by a tour to

\textsuperscript{1166} Interview with Desiree Fortunee, in City Lights, Robin Howard,“The Man behind London Contemporary dance”\textsuperscript{1167} Clipping, “Too Sexy for Export,” box 219, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress\textsuperscript{1168} Clipping,\textit{Herald Tribune}, box 219, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
Western Europe, under the same sponsorship of the US State Department.” Indeed, in 1963 Graham went to Europe, but it was not the expected long tour, as she was invited to dance in the Edinburgh Festival, and afterwards in London.

“Make Way for Martha” cried dramatically an article in the journal Dance and Dancers already in June 1963, claiming that “the queuing (for her shows) will be something to watch,” that since she last visited the country “the audiences grew all the time,” that people knew her better since they had “the chance to see her films,” and last but not least, that while “Bolshoi represents all of ballet’s history,” “Graham belongs completely to this century.” As this chapter will show, the above claims were confirmed during the tour.

Why Edinburgh and London, and who helped Graham perform there?

The tour of 1963 was a very special one, as it marked a crucial moment in Graham’s career, her relationship with Europe, and it was also a turning point in Graham’s personal life and relationships. The tour was very successful, most probably the most successful of Graham’s tours to Europe, and, in the light of the long struggle of Graham to obtain a positive response from the European audience, it was the moment when she, her company, her patrons and admirers could declare that Europe was no longer contesting and opposing her art. With this success, Graham was now fully a worldwide recognized artist, as was her innovation in modern dance.

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1170 Letter of David Bruce to Robin Howard, July 16, 1963, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1171 Clipping, “Make Way for Martha,” Dance and Dancers, June 1963, Box 219, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress

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However, the new tour was reminiscent in many ways of the fifties’ European tours, as it took place as a result of human agency. While during the fifties, Bethsabee de Rothschild initiated and sponsored Graham’s tours, this time Graham’s invitation to dance in Britain was arranged by Robin Howard. Even if he did not offer the kind of help Bethsabee did, who benefited from her family and her affluence, in a similar manner Howard was helped by his own circle of friends from Britain, some of them very influential in the British social and cultural circles, including members of the Royal Family. As Bethsabee, too, Howard was involved financially in the tour, as the amount of money needed for the tour was 20,000 British pounds, half of which Howard covered.\footnote{Paul R. W. Jackson, The Last Guru. Robert Cohan’s Life in Dance. From Martha Graham to London Contemporary Dance Theater} Bethsabee accompanied – for the last time – Graham to Europe, thus it is very likely that she also helped defray the tour’s costs; Robin Howard’s efforts, as well as those of the Gulbenkian Foundation, a company based in Britain, proved to have helped with Graham’s presence at the Festival and, as it will be shown below, so did the American Embassy in London.

One of the tour’s paradoxes is that, even if highly successful in 1962 in Europe, the 1963 tour was not a State Department one. The official reason for the State Department’s lack of interest in sponsoring a tour of Graham in Britain was due to the fact that the country was not considered in the “Soviet sphere,” and thus funding a large company could have been perceived as a waste of money.\footnote{Paul R. W. Jackson, The Last Guru. Robert Cohan’s Life in Dance. From Martha Graham to London Contemporary Dance Theatre (London: Dance Books Ltd, 2013), p.117} Still, one cannot totally discard the possibility that, for the politicians who decided the artists and companies to be funded for overseas appearances, Graham’s age was a minus factor. As shown in the previous chapter, in the analysis of the 1962 European tour,
people in charge stressed that Graham’s days as a dancer were in the past. But, as this chapter proves, also in a manner reminiscent of the fifties tours, in 1963 too, the American Embassy in London would help endorse, support and popularize Graham.

However, the fading interest of the politicians in Graham’s persona, or better said the limited interest in her, points out another striking paradox, namely that Graham received full European approval while she was increasingly a “ghost”1174 in her own life and career. While during the fifties, when she was still dominating the stage with her artistry and passion, she was mostly denied European approval, she received it now when, as a dancer and vibrant artist, she was already a memory: during the 1963 tour Graham was not at her best as a dancer, her drinking affected her in multiple ways, the former friends and supporters were disappearing from her life, and she was increasingly estranged from the members of her company. The 1963 tour, even if successful, was not recalled much. Graham’s biographers did not pay particular attention to the tour. In fact, Stodelle did not mention it at all, while de Mille only said that “Graham returned to London in 1963, and this time it was a success;” strangely, she did not at least mention her appearance in Edinburgh.1175 Graham herself did not talk directly about the tour in her autobiography, as she mentioned just that “in London, after a performance of Night Journey, Nureyev came backstage to meet me. He had recently defected in 1963.”1176 None of Graham’s dancers, including the ones who were with her and the company for the longest time, talked about the tour.

Still, it was a tour to remember. Therefore, due to the importance and implications of the tour, and the limited knowledge about it, its reconstruction from journals and newspapers

1174 Ibidem
1175 De Mille, Martha, p.320
1176 Martha Graham, Blood Memory, p.242
clippings, from the few recollections of people who met Graham then in Edinburgh and London, including Robin Howard, Lord Harewood, and American officials, is a most needed and important scholarly endeavor, completing not only the story of Graham’s tour to Europe but also Graham’s biography.

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As the motto of the chapter – an excerpt from one of the many interviews in which Robin Howard discussed the chronology and people involved in the “bringing-over Graham” momentum in 1963 – shows, that again Graham’s “special friends” from Britain were involved in her presence in Edinburgh and London. Howard was the Scottish aristocrat who, after he saw Graham for the first time in 1954 (when “he felt boredom to watch the same ballet all the time,”) fell in love with modern dance and became a strong supporter of this art. He was not in contact with Graham after 1954, but while he was working for the United Nations Association with Refugees in 1962, he heard again about Graham, and he decided that he should do something about making possible for Graham and her company to dance again in Britain. About his own role, Howard modestly declared that, “I have not changed anything, I enabled things to happen,” as he only “felt that London was ready to understand and appreciate Graham.”

The ease with which Howard talked about that memorable moment, in several different interviews, might give the false impression that Graham’s visit happened in a simple manner, after just a few phone calls. Howard was assisted in his decision to “help-the-British-understand-something-which-is-good” by the British critics Clive Barnes and Richard Buckle,

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1177 Interview with Desiree Fortune, in City Lights, Robin Howard, “The Man behind London Contemporary dance,” THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1178 Ibidem
1179 Interview with Robin Howard with Tobi Tobias, 22 August 1978, London
both supporters of Graham since 1954, and who, to put it in Howard’s words, “were owning (sic) this to Graham, to show respect and understanding” [Howard loved to emphasize especially Buckle’s opening towards Graham on numerous occasions and in several interviews.] Barnes and Buckle “prepared the press which was queuing for tickets,” organized pre-publicity, and convinced the young critics that “popular tastes were obviously changing, and so was the climate in the dance world. Dancers wanted to study this new form of dance.” Clive Barnes was the one who “got hold of Craig Barton” (Graham’s manager) and who, at Howard’s suggestion, phoned the American cultural attaché at the Embassy in London, Francis Mason.

However, Howard’s most important phone call related to Graham prior to her 1963 tour involved the President of the Festival, Lord George Harewood. He mentioned Robin Howard in his autobiography, next to Anthony Lyttleton, as one of his lifetime best friends. The three friends had a lot in common. They were part of the aristocratic British circle, as Harewood was a cousin of the Queen, and Lyttleton and Howard were also from aristocratic families, both linked to the highest political and business circles of the country. They also had a common interest in the arts: Harewood was a lover of opera, Lyttleton was linked to the National Theater, and Howard would become the supporter of modern dance in the country. Robin Howard was the one who asked Lord Harewood to invite Graham to the Edinburgh festival, which he eventually did,

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1180 Interview with Desiree Fortunee, in City Lights, Robin Howard, “The Man behind London Contemporary dance”
1181 Ibidem
1182 Lord Harewood, son of Mary, Princess Royal was the grandson of King George V the nephew of kings Edward VIII and George VI and the cousin of Queen Elizabeth II
1184 Howard was the grandson of the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, while Lyttleton’s father was Secretary of State for the Colonies during Winston Churchill.

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even if he was not, in particular, a lover of modern arts or an admirer of Martha Graham.\textsuperscript{1185} When talking about his role as a president of the Festival (1947–1965,) and when discussing the companies from abroad invited to perform in 1963, he mentioned just briefly “Martha Graham’s company,” while he gave more details related to “the Dutch Symphony orchestra, the Hungarian State Opera, the Stuttgart Ballet under John Cranko.”\textsuperscript{1186}

The “political side” of Graham’s presence in England in 1963 is most interesting, even if, as stressed previously, it was not a State Department tour. An article which appeared prior to the opening of the Festival stressed that the upcoming appearance of Graham at the Festival would be under the patronage of “many distinguished people,” namely the American Ambassador David K. E. Bruce, Lord Harewood and Lord Wakehurst, and the stars of the British dance, namely Dame Ninette de Valois, Dame Marie Rambert, and Frederick Ashton.\textsuperscript{1187} Not mentioned, even if essential in the process of inviting Graham to the Festival, was Francis Mason, the deputy cultural attaché in London, who was “really devoted to dance,”\textsuperscript{1188} and a friend of Graham who helped her 1962 tour to Yugoslavia and Poland. Mason was also contacted by Robin Howard in relation to Graham’s expected tour of England, and it was a fortunate and unique situation that Howard and Mason were friends, as this helped with the tour’s preparations and its developments.

\textsuperscript{1185} Robin Howard lost 8000 pounds
\textsuperscript{1186} George Harewood, \textit{The Tongs and the Bones. The Memoirs of Lord Harewood}, p.192
\textsuperscript{1187} Clipping, \textit{The New Daily}, August 20
\textsuperscript{1188} Interview with Robin Howard by Desiree Fortune, in City Lights, “The Man behind London Contemporary dance” “I have not changed anything, I enabled things to happen”: (in 1963 Mason was the “editor of Balanchine’s Complete stories of the George Balanchine and he was he was involved in the presence of Jose Limon’s company in Eastern Europe
In fact, Mason found out about Graham’s upcoming presence in Edinburgh not only from Robin Howard, but also from Graham herself. Mason announced the event to the American Ambassador in London, David Bruce, who was an older acquaintance of Graham. Bruce was not a lover of modern art or in particular of Graham. Still, whenever he could, he endorsed and promoted Graham. (He did the same thing for other American personalities, or British cultural diplomats popular in the USA; an example is the ceremony held by the Academy of the Arts and Letters to honor the sculptor Henry Moore and the writer Graham Greene, considered by him a part of his professional obligations.)

Prior to the tour, Bruce wrote to Robin Howard a very relevant letter. “Thank you for your letter, and the kind invitation to become a sponsor for the visit here of Martha Graham and her Dance Company. I accept with pleasure, not only because of my admiration for Miss Graham, but also because of the importance many of us attach to her visit here.” (…) I have heard of your own interest in the visit of the Graham Company. Indeed, I understand that without it we should not be fortunate enough to have the group here at all, either for the Edinburgh Festival or for the London Season. We are most grateful to you…” Robin Howard replied with a letter on the 18th of July 1963, thanking him for becoming a sponsor, which “will be an immense help.” Thus, the special relationship which Graham had with her new patron, upon whom she made the first and richest in outcomes impact already in 1954, received the diplomatic

1189 Letter of Martha Graham to Francis Mason, May 1963, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
1191 Letter of David Bruce to Robin Howard, July 16, 1963, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1192 Ibidem
blessing, while the American diplomacy recognized one more time Graham’s value and helped her.

That Graham’s plan to dance in Edinburgh and London was known to the American officials prior to her arrival there, was also shown by the Martha Graham retrospective photographic exhibition organized in July 1963 by the American Embassy in London. “Picture from an Exhibition at the American Embassy in London, to be seen until September 11!” announced the Times Educational Supplement. On display in the building of the American Embassy, in the USIS gallery in Grosvenor Square, the exhibition contained “200 photos of more than 300 works” of the renowned American dancer and choreographer, “tracing the distinguished career of this famous American dancer and her associated artists,” and was opened to the public from July 26 to September 13 1963. A day earlier than the official opening, there was also a private viewing of the exhibition, attended by highly ranked officials.

The program of the exhibition deserves close attention. After announcing Graham’s “first visit since 1954,” “from 26 to 31 August in Edinburgh, and in London between 3 and 14 of September,” and after describing the American artist’s merits, including the power to “turn dancers into heroes and Gods,” the program gave a detailed list of the works to be presented. It also included a large article, “The Dance-Theatre of Martha Graham,” in which the author, most probably Francis Mason, chose to present Graham to the British public from a new, assertive, and proud perspective: she was a modernist, “like other disturbing gentlemen of the first half of

1193 Letter Robin Howard to of David Bruce, July 18, 1963, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1194 Flyer of the Photographic Exhibition, American Embassy, USIS Gallery, opened July 25, 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
1195 Clipping, Times Educational Supplement, August 27, 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
the century,” “her inventions brought a new standard of seriousness and beauty in dance” through “her new style of movement;” her “realistic technique,” which had “effort and vitality,” surpassed that of the “static ballet.” Even more interestingly, the article also attempted an area of analysis of Graham’s work new for that time, namely the relationship between Graham’s art and theater. Stressing that Graham used drama in her dance – from Greek tragedy, to the poems of Mallarme and Emily Dickinson – while her stage sets, especially those of Isamu Noguchi, were comparable in their modernity to those of modern plays, the article went even further. It claimed that Graham’s dance technique freed the dancers in a “modern” manner and that her “theatre” was the “closest thing we have to theatre in classical sense. (...) it is a discovery and that makes it at once very American and very human (...), and which pushes the search forward toward man in his wholeness where his only certain freedom lies.”

The materials published by the American Embassy in London, including the article “The Dance-Theatre of Martha Graham,” showed that, as in 1962, Graham was openly endorsed by American cultural diplomacy, as she was already a “complete” and already successful cultural diplomat. Not by coincidence, the article included elements such as Americaness, freedom, innovation, inspiration, and “wholeness,” all meant to increase the value of the artist and of her art in the eyes of the European audience, but also to portray her as a representative piece of Americana. Most importantly, the article also opened the road for the “new critique” of Graham, which is analyzed at large on the following pages.

In fact, a few days prior to her first performance, on August 24, 1963, the American ambassador, David Bruce and Mrs. Myron M. Cowers (the wife of another American ambassador,) organized a reception to which they invited Martha Graham and her company at
Inverleith Place, a most fashionable place in Edinburgh, used for hosting upscale receptions and events. Two days later, Lord and Lady Harewood also organized a buffet supper and invited Graham as well. Prior to her performances, a picture of Graham with Lord Harewood in front of the Festival’s poster was published, while after the first performance in Edinburgh, Lord Harewood sent Graham a congratulatory telegram, followed by another one once Graham and her company arrived in London. Lady and Lord Provost also invited Graham to a supper party in the Festival Club on August 29.

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Before following Graham’s journey to Edinburgh and London, and analyzing the audience’s response to it, some clarifications are necessary.

Graham’s appearances in Edinburgh and London, are referred to with the singular “tour,” as even if she presented her work in two locations, this happened within a month, and besides, it was approached by her, her company, the American officials and the critics as one tour, with two “segments” and not two separate ones. The articles used in this analysis were found as clippings in three major collections related to Graham, namely at the Library of Congress in Washington, at Victoria and Albert Collection in London, and at the National Resources Center for Dance in Surrey. For most of them the source, the author, and the title are clear, but a few could be considered incomplete, as they miss either the name of the article or of the author. However, as they are included in the above mentioned respected collections, they are

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1196 Invitation to Martha Graham from David Bruce and Mrs. Myron M. Cowers, August 29, 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
1197 Invitation to Martha Graham from Lady and Lord Provost, August 29, 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
used here for the valuable information they offered, and thus for enriching the analysis of this
tour.

The articles published in newspapers and journals in 1963 are of an extraordinary
importance, as they reflect the audience’s feelings, memories of the previous tours, information
and misconceptions, the stance vis-à-vis the newness of modern dance, the comparison with
ballet, the effect the decors and costumes had on people, the themes of the works – all related to
Graham, her persona, art, and her company, and thus completing the story of the European tours
and of Graham’s career. But, given the large quantity of material related to this tour, the choice
could have been made to select and discuss just some of these reports and assessments. I
considered selecting and discussing just some of them. Yet, “selecting” the material would have
inevitably left parts of the story out, and would understate its significance for “rescuing,”
restoring, and analyzing the 1963 tour, which is a most necessary endeavor. This tour was the
milestone of Graham’s relationship with the European audience, having been preceded by her
lack of success in the fifties, and the successful 1962 tour, but which did not include Britain,
while after 1963 Graham and her art received a total recognition. Besides, the analysis of
Graham’s 1963 performance in Edinburgh and London has never been carried out in depth by
dance historians, and thus, for researchers interested in Graham, a thorough exposition of the
critical response to her 1963 tour is very important as a basis for future interpretation.

The press coverage of Graham’s tour is “divided” it into three temporal and
chronological moments: “waiting for Graham” one, which happened prior to the tour and was
reflected in the announcements of the event, the “Festival in Edinburgh” moment, in August, and
the “season in London”, which took place at the beginning of September. But, even analyzed
separately, each is considered in a relationship with one another, following the same parameters of the critics’ response to Graham’s art, such as, among others, the way they recalled and reinterpreted Graham’s previous lack of success, her style of dance, including her modernism and innovation, her persona, and her company. These elements, it must be remembered, were part of the framework of the discourse related to her on the occasion of her previous tours to Europe. It is thus very important to observe the ways in which the discourse related to Graham, her persona, and her art changed or remained the same over the two decades.

Not unexpectedly, the discourse was not identical. Proving again that the response of the critics to Graham’s art was at least up to a point a subjective construction, the tone of the voices behind the articles on Graham ranged from cautious in the articles announcing Graham’s trip, to still reserved but positive in Edinburgh, and then to almost ecstatic in London. The phenomenon was visible at the individual level, too, and then to an eloquent example is that the prominent critic Andrew Cotton, started the critique of Graham on a negative tone but changed it gradually into a positive and appreciative one.

Unlike during the fifties, most journalists looked at Graham with objectivity and professionalism, and analyzed the dancer and her art ‘per se.’ Whether they were announcing Graham’s coming to the British Isles, or were writing about her and her company’s performance in Edinburgh and London, they looked at Graham’s art and persona in a different manner. The parameters of the critique remained mostly the same – such as the comparison with ballet, the modernism of her art, the impact on the audience, – but the way these were components of the Graham discourse changed and evolved. Other themes such as the discussion on her nationality,
disappeared. Some, as the discussion about her age, and the sexuality of her dances, did not disappear, but the tone changed, from negative to balanced.

Thus, when analyzing the style, method, technique, themes, sets, costumes, and the list could continue – with some exceptions – the critics and the rest of the public looked at Graham’s art as something “different - but - qualitative,” and not “different - and - weird, odd, and funny.” The comparison with ballet existed, but it was not omnipresent and unfavorable to her, her Americaness was little or at all discussed, while her age, even if brought up, did not touch the level of misogyny and even cruelty attained in the fifties. Besides, also signaling a change in the perceptiveness of the European audience, it is relevant to remark that in 1963 the members of her company started to be noticed and appreciated.

The analysis of the negative critique deserves a special attention too, as it prompts an important discussion related to Graham’s success of the sixties, compared with the lack of it during the fifties. Not studied in depth until now, the European tours had been presented in the literature in black and white terms: the fifties were presented as a completely dark time for Graham in Europe, while the sixties were presented as the time of an unprecedented and unmitigated success. In fact, Graham’s European tours’ reception was more complex and nuanced than believed so far, as during the 1950s, the critics’ positive responses to her and her art were not absent, while during the 1960s, the negative responses were also present. Graham’s presence received mixed remarks even in Edinburgh and London; therefore, in contrast with the conventional view, the reception of her European tours cannot and should not be described in absolute terms.
Analysis of the 1963 tour reveals that each of its main moments mentioned above had its most representative article. Written by Kenneth Tynan for the “waiting for Graham phase,” by Oleg Kerenski and Clive Barnes for her presence in Edinburgh, and by the same Clive Barnes and Richard Buckle for her performances in London, these articles have a special significance, as they were indicators that the European denial of Graham was coming to an end. Beside the way they were conceptualized, written and delivered to the public, they were also proving that Graham’s critique was evolving from its “organic” phase to the “connoisseur” phase at multiple layers.

The critics who wrote these articles knew Graham from 1954, and – with the exception of Kerenski – they were supporters of Graham since then, thus being able to reveal to the public a more personalized than ever view on Graham’s art and persona. In a manner resembling the article published in the Program of the American Embassy, “The Dance-Theatre of Martha Graham,” they presented Graham to the audience from the perspective of people who “knew” not only her, but also the importance of the work she did in the world of dance, and who looked at her as to an already successful and worldwide recognized artist.

Not surprisingly, one can say that these articles set up the direction for the way in which the journalists looked at Graham and her innovative art: not only more analytical and informed, but also more relaxed about old taboos such as her age, nationality and modernism, and less biased. However, it did not mean that the “new “critique of Graham, including the representative articles, was entirely positive about her art, as it was not. Even Buckle, one of the most fervent supporters Graham had in Britain, was at some point critical of her. However, it should not be
interpreted as negativism, but on the contrary, as a proof that Graham was viewed at in a more balanced and less biased way, which excluded extremes and searched for substance.

But not all the wrong approaches to Graham’s art disappeared during the sixties, not even in the articles of those hailing her: all of the above mentioned critics continued to call her dances, ballets!

“Martha Graham, Holy Acrobat.”

The most relevant article prior to Graham’s opening performance in Edinburgh was called “Martha Graham, Holy Acrobat,” signed by the famous British critic Kenneth Tynan and published in The Observer on August 18. His article is one of the most comprehensive pieces ever written about Graham and contains the main “themes” of the critics’ writing of the sixties vis-à-vis Graham. That Tynan wrote the informed and informing, but also laudatory article on Graham, meant to prepare the audience in Edinburgh and London, and to ease and to help Graham’s success, was not a coincidence. He met Graham in 1954, when he became an enchanted partisan of her in Britain, he was one of the most daring and non-conformist theater critics of his time, and he also lived and worked in the USA since the early sixties, on which occasion he rekindled his relationship with Graham.

Completed with a very large picture of Martha Graham in a black dress, with hair pulled back, Tynan stressed that “You do not have to love ballet to admire Martha Graham” but “to love the human body and the capacity for expressive movement.” He quoted Agnes de Mille saying, that Graham’s “contribution is the single largest contribution in the history of Western dancing,”
and claimed that “the cult which grew around her baffled the balletomanes;” he also informed readers that she did not go on the old path of using “grace, beauty or gymnastics,” and unlike in ballet her dance language was “angular and compressed,” and “removed from ballet as Oriental ideograms from a Victorian copper plate.” As proof, he repeated Stark Young’s joke that Graham “could give birth to a cube.”

Bearing the subtitle “Great Actress,” Tynan remembered the 1954 moment of “Her playing to thin but ecstatic houses” in London, when they first met, and when he was talking to her in “monosyllables,” as he was impressed by her “iron solemnity.” Tynan loved comparing her with people from theater: “in the line of Duse (…) who dwarfed her own company,” with Ruth Draper, with Helen Weigel in ‘Mother Courage,’ and Beatrice Lille (a comparison used also by their common acquaintance, John Gilegud) as Kabuki Lilie,” and at times with Nefertiti, “a woman who looked 40 and could be 400.” In the section of the article called “Sunday School,” he described her physically – with her hair stretched back in high bun, and sipping brandy between paragraphs – as in 1963, prior to her tour, he saw her when they met in her New York apartment, “a home of a geisha turned puritan,” with “Chinese scrolls on the walls.”

Tynan shared with the readers their talk about marriage, her divorce, the lack of children (which, she stressed, “had nothing to do with art”) loneliness (she did “not believe in cloisters for the artists,”) and religion (she also claimed that she felt “the 23 psalm in everything ” and admitted that Zen philosophy had a big influence upon her.) They also discussed Graham’s characters, “rapt female archetype one after another,” who expressed “the torments and anxieties of women, mythological, Victorian and contemporary.” When Tynan noticed that her ballets (sic) were focused on destructive and tragic women, Graham responded that she wanted to create
a vocabulary which would be adequate for the past and for the 20th century, as “tragedy is a triumph.” As a proof that her effort in this direction was not singular, she talked about other similar experiences, such as Galina Ulanova’s, who was “self-destructive and that’s how she achieves illumination,” and Margot Fonteyn’s in Sleeping beauty, and her friend John Gielgud’s in Hamlet. After this probing analysis of Graham’s persona and art, the article ended with information about Graham’s school (hosted in her most faithful friend, Bethsabee de Rothschild’s building,) with a hundred people from nineteen countries, and, about a film on Martha Graham at work in her studio, which could be seen at the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square every evening during the third week of August, and for which the admission was free.1198

One cannot help but exclaim: “Quel mélange!”

However, the other announcements of Graham’s participation in the Festival in Edinburgh had one or more elements to be found in Tynan’s article; they varied from shorter to longer ones, from being simply informative to giving many details, and were, most of them, also like Tynan’s article, eclectic. Some journalists were skeptical, claiming that the Festival “lost impetus,”1199 and announced Graham’s visit “from New York” in a very restrained manner,1200 considering that the company would offer just a “fringe” production in Edinburgh, which would be “a challenge” to the Festival.1201 But most of the announcements of the new Graham tour were positive and excited about the upcoming visit.

1198 Clipping, Kenneth Tynan “Martha Graham, Holly Acrobat,” Observer, 18 August 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress: all the following clippings are from the same source, namely box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
1201 Clipping, Norman Riley, Daily Telegraph, 20 August 1963
The articles published before Graham arrived in England show that, even if not totally committed, rather cautious, and, at times, stressing Graham’s “problems,” most journalists saw her now as an accomplished artist, a valued and valuable one, whose stature could no longer be contested. “Opera from Italy. Drama from Austria. Ballet from Hungary. Music from India. Art from France,” announced the Edinburgh Evening Dispatch. The “little, fierce queen,” the woman who “has done pioneering work in USA” and her Company – announced another journal – were “the highlight of the Festival.” It warned its readers, though, that her art was “widely different from typical ballet.”

From the Glasgow Herald: “Original, creative and dynamic Martha Graham” and her “outstanding company” would present nine “ballets” which were “different from conventional classical ballet.” With a picture of Yuriko in Embattled Garden, by the famous photographer of dancers Anthony Crickmay, Illustrated London News informed that “the high priestess of dance” would visit the country for the first time since 1954, asserting that while England and Russia were leaders in ballet, the Americans, led by Martha Graham, were the leaders of modern dance.

Most of the announcements that informed the readers about Graham’s coming to Edinburgh, also stated that the company would continue with a season in London, and also that Graham will premiere a new work there. Financial Times published the list of “the ballets” to be presented, announced that Circe would be premiered in London, and that “students and will get cheaper prices;” The Guardian communicated that Graham and her company would have “a short season” in London, and a new premiere, Circe; the information was also
disseminated in the pages of *Stage and Television Today* (which also published a list of all the members of the company,) \(^{1207}\) and *Illustrated London News*. \(^{1208}\) *Scotsman* suggested that Martha Graham would be “the highlight of the season at the Festival,” and published a picture of her and Bertam Ross on the controversial bed from *Night Journey*. As a novelty, the article informed its readers that ballet might not be the “appropriate term” for her dance as she “loves to call it contemporary dance,” and that “since 1954 the (...) audiences changed their thoughts;” even if “she is controversial” (*Legend of Judith*, which was considered to be influenced by Graham’s Scots Presbyterian parentage was a proof in this sense,) she had “great dramatic power and brilliant core talents;” pensively and cautiously the journalist concluded: “we shall see what we shall see.” \(^{1209}\)

*Viewers TV Guide* told its readers that, being on their first visit since 1954, the American company led by Graham brings an individual style to the week’s “programme.” \(^{1210}\) The article from *Edinburgh Evening* used a picture from *Seraphic Dialogue* and emphasized that Graham was again in England after almost a decade; \(^{1211}\) the next day, the same newspaper called *Phaedra* was “a frightening study of lust.” \(^{1212}\) *Edinburgh Evening* published an article with an unusual title “Graham the appetizer,” informing the readers that “the greatest inventor in the world of dance,” whose “first three ballets of the first night were the appetizer of her repertoire,” would take over the second week of the festival. Appreciating her art as being “far removed from

\(^{1206}\) Clipping, “Synopsis, MG will give a short London season at Prince of Wales from September 3 to 14,” *Guardian*, August 14, 1963

\(^{1207}\) Clipping, *Stage and Television Today*, August 15, 1963

\(^{1208}\) Clipping, “A scene from Seraphic Dialogue, Aphere London,” 17 August, 1963

\(^{1209}\) Clipping, E.N. Adam, *Scotsman*, 17 August 1963

\(^{1210}\) Clipping, *Viewers TV Guide*, Edinburgh, 24 August 1963

\(^{1211}\) Clipping, “Modern Movement,” *Edinburgh Evening*, 26 August 1963

\(^{1212}\) Clipping, *Edinburgh Evening*, 27 August 1963

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classical ballet,” the author talked about the “exceptional performance” of the company’s dancer Ethel Winter, and claimed that Graham was “a dynamic performer” with endless choreographic talents.1213 Another article, “Flowing Movement of Graham dance,” appreciated that Graham’s dancers “were molded to a style that is strongly nonemotional but with all power concentrated in making the human form respond with flowing movement.” 1214

In the Company of Greatness

Graham and her company arrived in Edinburgh by plane, accompanied by the feared critic, John Martin.1215 Numerous telegrams welcoming her and wishing her good luck arrived on Graham’s name at Queen’s Club Edinburgh in Scotland – proving that Graham was known to and expected by more people than the critics’ and the politicians’ spheres. Among the messages received by Graham in Edinburgh, some were from American friends and her sister Geordie, but a great number of telegrams and cards were – beside those from Robin Howard, Lord Harewood, and a card with the inscription “best Love is sent by Dickie” (Richard Buckle) – from artistic personalities of the country, confirming the very special relationship Graham had with many distinguished members of artistic Britain. Beside the famous Frederick Ashton and Ninette de Valois,1216 older acquaintances of Graham, telegrams came from Svetlana Beriosova1217 and the actor Kenneth Haigh (who played the central role of Jimmy Porter in Look Back in Anger in 1956, and who was at, that time, filming in Cleopatra.) Another famous British personality who

1213 Clipping Edinburgh Evening, 27 August 1963
1214 Clipping, Bedford Savage, “Feast of the Arts,” Courier, August Edition
1215 Picture of the Company arriving in Edinburgh, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
1216 Telegrams from Frederick Ashton and Ninette de Valois, 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
1217 Svetlana Beriosova (1932-1998), was a Lithuanian-born British prima ballerina who danced with The Royal Ballet for more than 20 years
was waiting for her was Christopher Fry, the famous playwright,\textsuperscript{1218} along with Peggy Harper, who sent Graham a warm welcoming note. Evidence suggests that Harper was the one who persuaded the patron Robin Howard to attend the first performances in London by the Martha Graham Company in 1954. Harper knew Graham for a long time, as she lived in the USA in her twenties, studying and occasionally performing with Martha Graham and other luminaries of the international dance scene including Mary Wigman, Rudolf Laban, Katherine Dunham, and Doris Humphrey. In the mid-1950s, Harper, a native of South Africa and specialist in Nigerian dances, moved to London and continued to be a very vivid and unique presence in the British dance research.\textsuperscript{1219}

As Tynan’s article was the most representative one for the spirit of the “waiting for Graham” phase, two articles, one by Oleg Kerenski, and the other by Clive Barnes, were the most representative for the “seeing Graham in Edinburgh” phase. Both were written after the first night in Edinburgh, when Graham and her company performed in the “ballet” section, “revolutionary works,” next to “an Indian dancer, and Stuttgart ballet,” (led by John Cranko who attended Graham’s performance in 1954 in London.)\textsuperscript{1220} Interestingly, both Kerenski and Barnes also published their articles in more than one newspaper or journal.

Kerenski, who was not a “diehard” fan of Graham, expressed in his article the old reservations vis-à-vis Graham but, what is most important, in a different tone and manner than the journalists did almost a decade before. He viewed Graham from a new perspective, and

\textsuperscript{1218} Cristopher Fry, British playwright (1907-2005)
\textsuperscript{1219} http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/jul/16/obituary-peggy-harper Peggy (Margaret Carlyle) Harper, dancer, choreographer and theatre director (1923 – 2009) trained as a ballet dancer and then studied drama, visual arts and philosophy at the University of Cape Town before travelling to Switzerland, the UK and US in her early 20s, studying and occasionally performing with luminaries of the international dance scene including Mary Wigman, Rudolf Laban, Martha Graham, Louis Horst, Katherine Dunham and Doris Humphrey.
\textsuperscript{1220} Clipping, Sunday Times, August 18, 1963
commented on her and her art in an analytical and respectful manner, even if not necessarily in an ecstatic one. For instance, when he made references to Graham’s 1954 visit, he claimed that, even if “the memories of Graham’s previous visit should be forgotten,” it should be so because “in 1963 her dancers were more talented and her choreography more inventive!” But, in spite of the fact that “it is hard to describe her work,” as “some of her works are light, not dark and harrowing” that he had to see Phaedra twice to understand its symbolism, and that one “must prepare to take time to tune in to Graham’s wave length, and to work hard to appreciate her creation,” he concluded that “it was a deep esthetic experience (…) and the effort is well worth the trouble.” Besides, he admired “the suppleness of the dancers” and the “amazing Isamu Noguchi decors.” His criticism went towards the overpriced program, as he was “shocked that the Edinburgh Festival (…) exploited its audience in this way!”

Clive Barnes, who knew Graham since 1954, and saw her in Cologne during her 1962 tour, wrote two articles from Edinburgh, which were published in Spectator and in Times London. In the first he also recalled the 1954 moment, but from a different perspective than Kerenski: “In 1954 she was scurvily (sic) treated. With a handful of notable exceptions, blind-mouthed critics scorn over her, and audiences stayed away.” Continuing his analysis of Graham’s new performance, also from a fresh perspective, he liked the “originality, theatrical power and dance interest, her off balance movements (which) have a crazy poetry,” and the way “she uses core to explore the hearts and minds of the characters.” In the second, he also expressed apologies, stressing that Graham was the “caviar” for the British public, and they had

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1221 Clipping, Oleg Kerenski, “In the Company of Greatness,” Manchester Daily Magazine, 27 August 1963
1222 Clipping, Clive Barnes, Spectator, 30 August 1963, National Resource Center for Dance, University of Surrey, Guildford; the following clippings are from Martha Graham Collection, National Resource Center for Dance, University of Surrey, Guildford
to develop their taste: “We gloriously unprepared by our own suburban traditions, were weighted in the balance and found wanting… Now even after one performance it feels safe to predict that the general public (and perhaps her critics) has developed a taste for caviar in the years between.” Barnes compared ballet with modern dance, “endorsing” the second, which was “more sculptured and less mobile (…), innovative, (…) and complex;” he also liked Graham’s “theatrical gifts, and concluded that Phaedra felt “like an American tragedy, a tragedy for our times.”

As in Tynan’s case, lines and perspectives from Kerenski’s and Barnes’ appreciations could be found in the rest of the articles covering Graham’s presence in Edinburgh. Other journalists also compared modern dance with ballet, and also started to give credit to it too, as the “power of expression, in spite of the lack of classical beauty” of modern dance, started to be found refreshing. Even when compared with other favorites of the British public, such as Jerome Robbins, Graham began to gain new adherents: “it still lives, which Jerome Robbins does not, in the framework of the ballet (sic) (…) and the dancers move with a freedom of gesture which is utterly original to us;” “She brought back to dance the sense of touch (…), her dances are alive in every limb, her settings are not decors around the dance, but part of the dance,” considered another critic; Night Journey had “plasticity and expressiveness;” “choreography was free and imaginative,” “free dance and bare feet helps the floating on air, a delight to watch;” “Variety of her work was amazing” and her “new language of dance” with

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1224 Clipping, “Dancers in Full-Scale Ballet,” Glasgow Herald, 30 August 1963
1225 Clipping, “New Concept in Beauty in Dancing,” Glasgow Herald, 28 August 1963
1226 Clipping, “From Edinburgh Festival,” Financial Times, Andrew Porter, 30 August, 1963
1227 Clipping, “A.K. Holland reports from the Festival,” Liverpool Post, 31 August 1963
1228 Clipping, Edinburgh Evening News, 29 August 1963
“out flung arms, furious lunges, striking positions, feeble prancing… etc” was considered exciting,1229 as “it was the sheer joy of movement that triumphed at the Empire,” and it also “reflected the greatness of Graham’s technique.”1230

The critics’ response also showed that, as the feared critic John Percival (another acquaintance of Graham since the previous visit) admitted, “tastes have changed since she brought her company to Britain in 1954.”1231 The novelty and the modernity of her works were noticed without negative undertones, since “this time audiences were more perceptive” and more able to appreciate that Graham “brings greatness on to our stage.”1232 The reputed Andrew Porter, not as much on Graham’s side over the years as Clive Barnes, also cried: “The suppleness of the dancers and the sheer simplicity of the décor convinced that Martha Graham and her companies are all they have been cracked up to be!,” claiming that “her dancers are more creative, her choreography more inventive than nine years ago, and her works were not all somber.”1233 “Not all the movements are beautiful” admitted another critic, but he added “they are not are meant to be.” (He liked less Diversion, which he considered “a poem in dance, with not much plot,” than Acrobats of God, but he approved totally the sets which were “like Dali’s paintings.”)1234

An unthinkable compliment a decade ago, namely linking Graham’s work with “beauty,” became increasingly present in the critics’ comments: even if they had “geometric but elegant

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1229 Clipping, Guardian, 29 August 1963
1230 Clipping, Guardian, 29 August 1963
1231 Clipping, John Percival, “The Arts and Entertainment Section,” The New Daily, August 29, 1963
1232 Ibidem
1233 Clipping, Oleg Kerenski “Curtain Up on Greatness,” Daily Mail, 27 August 1963
1234 Clipping, Scotman, 29 August 1963
design,” Graham’s performances were now considered to have “haunting beauty,” with “superior execution” and “amazing fluency;” her performances were appreciated for the “sheer beauty of her spectacle,” while *Seraphic Dialogue* also had a “sheer beauty of design;” “she seeks to impose on a new concept of beauty in dancing,” claimed another critic. That Graham explored “the dark and secret parts of the heart,” which before was considered a minus of her arts, was becoming a plus. “Forty years worth of research, experiment and planning by Miss Graham are crystallized in the company’s present repertoire,” mused Andrew Cotton, and continued saying that “The dances are dramatic, comic and lyric,” and “the excitement is given by the beauty of the moving human form.” He also appreciated that Graham’s art offered “an exhilaration that no other sort of dancing can give (...) and the company provided the most original feature that the Festival has displayed in seventeen years.”

When Graham’s dance style and her artistic innovations were debated, not only did the comparison with beauty become a positive element of the analytical discourse, but also the words modern and contemporary were not as frightening anymore. Besides, “the blending” of Graham’s art with other arts, such as theater, was not seen as a minus, but as a plus: “She offers a ‘contemporary’ world rather than the overworked word modern,” claimed one critic;

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1235 Clipping, *Edinburgh Evening*
1236 Ibidem
1237 Clipping, Andrew Porter, “From Edinburgh Festival,” *Financial Times*, 30 August 1963
1238 Clipping, A.K. Holland, “Reports from the Festival,” *Liverpool Post*, 31 August 1963
1239 Clipping, “New Concept in Beauty in Dancing,” *Glasgow Herald*, 28 August 1963
1240 Clipping, “Dancers in Full-Scale Ballet,” *Glasgow Herald*, 30 August 1963
1242 Clipping, “Graham dances dazzle,” *Scotsman Edinburgh*, 28 August 1963
“Tempting to look at her with our bleary English eyes,”cried in apology a Scottish critic, while another suggested: “Her great theatre rewards the senses, stirs the emotions, and enriches the mind,” stressing that “at the core of her art is the concern to make visible the interior landscape,” and that there was in her dances “a precise and subtle gradation which accompanies the tension (…) and which brought up “the intensity of joy and grief.”

Now sixty-seven, going through a challenging time, and being towards the end of her career as a dancer, Graham’s persona continued to capture the attention of the critics. However, even if there were discussions around her age, that some believed that “she cannot dance as before (…) the hard parts,” and that she was a “little middle aged,” unlike nine years before, Graham’s age was brought into discussion with more curiosity than cruelty; besides, remarks related to her mental state, such as that of a 1954 critic, who said that the “Pittsburgh native belongs to the psychoanalytical couch,” did not appear in the 1963 critique of Graham.

Most of the critics considered that “it was a privilege to see Graham in action, as (…) her stage presence is arresting,” commended her “highly intelligent and theatrical sense,” and her innovation (“She expects her dancers to take strength from the Earth, not to fly in ballet shoes,”) and described her in flattering terms: a “small slight woman, with small bones,” with a “head (…) held high,” who “could leave the ground any moment like a rocket, because of her energy,” and whose “speeches are precisely and crisply elaborated,” and who aimed and

1243 Clipping, “Dancing Brilliance. Another hit by the Americans at the Empire,” Glasgow Herald, 29 August 1963
1244 Clipping, Andrew Porter, “From Edinburgh Festival,” Financial Times, 30 August 1963
1245 Clipping, “Meaning and beauty of her dances,” Glasgow Herald, 31 August 1963
1247 Clipping, John Tonge, “Martha Graham figure of legend,” Aberdeen Press and Journal, 26 August 1963
1248 Clipping, Times London, 31 August 1963 and Clipping, Frank Dibb “Domestic bliss and Greek tragedy,” 30 August 1963
1249 Clipping, John Tonge, “Martha Graham figure of legend at the Edinburgh Festival, Aberdeen Press and Journal, 26 August 1963
succeeded “to interpret life at many levels;”\textsuperscript{1250} she was also called a “living legend,”\textsuperscript{1251} “a little wisp of a woman, with the dignity of an Egyptian goddess” who “dominates the stage,” who told “the story of Holofernes in an Ibsen way” and created “spell-binding ballet”\textsuperscript{1252} or “a remarkable woman” whose “force of creation gained momentum over the years” and “fascinated with process of reminiscence.”\textsuperscript{1253} Her choreography was much admired, as it made “no concession to the visually spectacular,” and her dancing too – her “performance in Clytemnestra compels admiration”\textsuperscript{1254} cried a critic! The compliment probably pleased her very much because, as she stressed many times, she wanted to be remembered more as a dancer than a choreographer.

Not only were the “futuristic symbolism”\textsuperscript{1255} of Graham’s creation and American nationality less or not at all emphasized in a negative manner, and her persona seen through more positive and benevolent lenses, but in an unprecedented manner the members of the company became more visible in the eyes of the critics. Under the title “Honoured Shared” the members of the company were praised,\textsuperscript{1256} and the company’s efforts to the success were called a “contribution of heroic size;”\textsuperscript{1257} “Company is unique and well worth seeing,” said another critic who liked “the light-hearted frolic Secular Games.”\textsuperscript{1258} The hard to please Andrew Cotton claimed: “The style of her company cannot be matched by any other dance group in the world;”

\textsuperscript{1250} Clipping, “Meaning and beauty of her dances,” \textit{Glasgow Herald}, 31 August 1963
\textsuperscript{1251} Clipping, Bedford Savage, “Feats of the Arts,” \textit{Courier}, August Edition
\textsuperscript{1252} Clipping, A.K. Holland, \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 27 August 1963
\textsuperscript{1253} Clipping, “New Ballets for Martha Graham,” \textit{Times London}, 28 August 1963
\textsuperscript{1254} Clipping, “Epic Quality in Dancing of Clytemnestra,” 29 August 1963
\textsuperscript{1255} Clipping, “Ballet on Biblical Theme,” \textit{Edinburgh Evening News}, no date
\textsuperscript{1256} Clipping, “Dancing Brilliance. Another hit by the Americans at the Empire,” \textit{Glasgow Herald}, 29 August 1963
\textsuperscript{1257} Clipping, AV Cotton, “Heroic Dances,” \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 29 August, 1963
\textsuperscript{1258} Clipping, “A Ballet Feast in Festival Diary,” \textit{Dundee Courier & Advertiser}, 28 August 1963
The “young men and light-as-air girls” created “a talented and versatile company,” which triumphantly conquered Britain, appreciated another critic, who used to be a performer himself. Among Graham’s dancers, equally skilled and “masters of their instrument,” and most liked for their artistry and technique, were Yuriko, Linda Hodes, Bertram Ross, Gene McDonald, and Ethel Winter. Beside Graham, the dancers most portrayed in pictures were Helen McGehee and Ethel Winter. Still, criticism was not totally absent, represented by a critic who considered that “the girls danced less good than the men, partly to the no-hip build typical to American women (sic.)”

But was all criticism gone in 1963, and did Graham and her company receive only positive remarks? Can one say that her success in Edinburgh was absolute, complete and unmitigated? It was again, not the case, and not everyone loved modern dance. A day after Graham’s opening, Guardian received a letter, written to the editor by a member of the Festival’s Society, who claimed that “the festival should offer entertainment for the people” and that “the Indian artists and Martha Graham” failed to achieve this, as they “could not be described as being of universal interest.” As in the fifties, the disapproval of Graham was based on the fact that she was not “entertaining” enough, and, like the Indian artists, was foreign to the English taste!

1259 Clipping, AV Cotton,”Human’s Form Splendour by Martha Graham Group, “ Daily Telegraph, 28 August 1963
1260 Clipping, “Graham’s dancing is Unique,” Edinburgh Evening, 28 August 1963
1261 Clipping, Times London, 31 August 1963, and Clipping, Frank Dibb “Domestic Bliss and Greek Tragedy,” 30 August 1963
1262 Clipping, “Ballet on Biblical Theme,” Edinburgh Evening News
1263 Clipping, “Greek Tragedy in Dance, Clytemnestra of force and impact,” Scotman, 30 August, 1963
1264 Clipping, Scotman, 27 August 1963
1265 Clipping, Bedford Savage, “ Feats of the Arts,” Courier, August Edition
The disappointed gentleman was not the only one unhappy with Graham. Some journalists called the audiences “slightly disappointing,” that “her dance, topics, delights some, puzzles others and infuriates many of the rest,” while in a sensationalist manner another journalist cried that “Graham provided a topic of furious controversy which still rages in the Festival Club.” (In fact, the reality was far less dramatic than the title announced, as there was no other proof which could sustain the possibility of a scandal due to Graham’s art at the Festival club, and as there was not another article signaling the “enraged controversy.”) “The battle between the traditionalists and the modernists was on,” cried a newspaper, publishing a suggestive picture from the ballet (sic) Night Journey, with Graham having a rope around her neck, while another famous work, Legend of Judith, was criticized for the “abstract quality which rather puzzled than enthralled.”

The dance style of Graham and her company also received at times straightforward criticism: “there are 150 minutes of friezes in motion, unfolding panoramas, activated tapestries (…) with little feeling of continuous narrative but of great pictorial impressiveness,” disappointedly suggested one critic, who also remarked that “at times the dancing was like an exercise.” On the same note were other critical responses: “dancing had the character of an exercise,” “this is less dancing than a unique method of stimulating emotions, suggesting characters, and revealing situations,” “there was little in the Diversion (…) as there were

1267 Clipping, A.K. Holland, “Reports from the Festival, Liverpool Post, 31 August 1963
1268 Clipping, “Oh! Those aching backs,” Edinburgh Evening News 28 August 1963
1269 Ibidem
1270 Clipping, John Tonge, “Martha Graham figure of legend,” Aberdeen Press and Journal, 26 August 1963
1271 Clipping, “Graham’s dancing is Uniqu,” Edinburgh Evening News 28 August 1963
1273 Ibidem
1274 Clipping, AV Cotton, “Human’s Form Splendour by Martha Graham,” Daily Telegraph, 28 August 1963
repetitive and sterile passages (…) What received most solid and constant criticism however, as during the 1962 tour, was the music, especially the score of Halim El-Dabh. It was considered sketchy, “undistinguished,” “the weakest element (…), a self-consciously adventurous structure of over brisk atonalities with too little rhythmic variety;” “not heard” and “sometimes ungainly.” (Some liked “the eerie-sound music of Halim (…) exerts a hypnotic fascination.”) But not only the music received negative remarks. Even if, most of the time, the scenery was considered suggestive, and the “steel shapes” of Isamu Noguchi’s sculptures were appreciated by most of the critics, others disliked them: “the costumes or Noguchi décor strike off as less originally than usual” and “the characters could be Mexican peasants and the decors suggest fittings for a jumbo-sized kindergarten.”

Laughter in heaven

By that time, the dancer and her company had made their appearance on the city’s stage, and the American Embassy in London included a lecture on Graham in the Program of the USIS office for the month of September 1963, next to lectures on American music, politics, poets, 18th

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1275 Clipping, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 29 August 1963
1276 Clipping, A.K. Holland, *Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 1963
1277 Clipping, AV Cotton, “Human’s Form Splendour by Martha Graham,” *Daily Telegraph*, 28 August 1963
1278 Clipping, AV Cotton, “Heroic Dances,” *Daily Telegraph*, 29 August 1963
1279 Clipping, “Greek Tragedy in Dance, Clytemnestra of force and impact,” *Scotman*, 30 August 1963
1280 Clipping, “Dancers in Full-Scale Ballet,” *Glasgow Herald*, 30 August 1963
1281 Clipping, “Miss Graham turns on the horror,” *Daily Express*, 29 August 1963
1282 Clipping, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 29 August 1963
1283 Clipping, A.K. Holland, “Reports from the Festival,” *Liverpool Post*, 31 August 1963
1284 Clipping, “Miss Graham turns on the horror,” *Daily Express*, 29 August 1963
1286 Clipping *South Wales Evening Argus Newport*, 31 August 1963, and Frank Dibb, “Domestic Bliss and Greek Tragedy,” 30 August 1963

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and 19th American costume. As *Guardian Daily* informed the readers, the American Embassy also presented a series of ballet film, including Martha Graham’s “A Dancer’s World –” an event which was announced by *Evening News* too. The “ballet-goers” were invited “to visit the American Embassy cinema” to see famous dancers, including Martha Graham. As a card from Francis Mason to Robin Howard shows, the activity was a success, as “3,300 saw ‘A Dancer’s World.’”

Numerous newspapers and journals announced the visit of the dancer and her company to London, at Prince of Wales Theater. Scheduled from September 3 until September 14 (after the performances of the American comedy “Too Late” ended,) the “short season” was expected with great interest. The prospective London audience was informed that in Edinburgh, Martha Graham – invited by Lord Harewood, who allegedly knew that she would be an “absolute winner –” had some of the most appreciated performances: her artistry was considered “one of the festival’s principal achievements,” her art “showed how dinginess can be converted to beauty,” and “her dances have the moral power of religion (…) and also the power of strength more than beauty of proportions.” The audience was also told that “most of the ballets (sic) were new in this country,” that Graham and her company would premiere *Circe*, and also reassured that “the company did not stage erotic dances.”

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1287 US Information Service Programme, September 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
1290 Card from Francis Mason to Robin Howard,
1291 Clipping *Theater World*, September 1963
1292 Clipping, *Daily Telegraph*, 7 September 1963
1293 Clipping, *Music and Musicians*, October 1963
1294 Clipping, *Times Educational Supplement*, 6 September 1963
1295 Clipping, undated
The Programme\textsuperscript{1296} listed all the works to be presented, which can be divided between the heavy ones and lighter ones, or, into the “pieces noirs, and pieces rose” as Clive Barnes called them.\textsuperscript{1297} In the first category, of somber, analytical, sexual, and “legend-inspired” pieces were \textit{Circe}, the premiere, which was the story of “the world Ulysses sees is his own, the inner world of bestialities and enchantments where one discovers what it costs to choose to be human.” \textit{Clytemnestra} was the piece which proved that “evil and things of terror came quickly,” that there is “love in hate, and hate in love,” while the heroine tried to understand “her past and future;” \textit{Legend of Judith}, was the story of another seducer, in which Holofernes was an enemy-lover, and whose action takes place within the “unknown landscapes of the mind,” while the famous \textit{Night Journey} (commissioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation) and \textit{Phaedra} were stories of lust and tragedy. The list of the above mentioned works was completed by the lighter pieces \textit{Acrobats of God}, “fanfare for dance as an art,” \textit{Diversions of Angels}, (choreography and music were commissioned by Bethsabee de Rothschild Foundation,) \textit{Secular Games}, and \textit{Seraphic Dialogues}. The program announced that the sets were the creation of Dani Karavan and Isamu Noguchi and that the costumes were made by Helen McGehee, and it listed all the members of the company,\textsuperscript{1298} along with Craig Barton as the manager of Martha Graham. Last but not least, the program assured those who might be concerned that the requirements of the Lord Chamberlain were respected.

\textsuperscript{1296} US Information Service Programme, September 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress


\textsuperscript{1298} Helen McGehee, Robert Cohan, Yuriko, Mary Hinkson, Robert Powell, Ethel Winter, Linda Hodes, Wood, Gene McDonald, Richard Gain, Clive Thompson, Takakao Asakawa, Phylis Gutelius, Noemi Lapzeson, and Dudley Williams.
When in Britain, “Americans, in particular (...), usually go to Savoy or Dorchester. They want modern décor, American food, all the things that will make them feel at home,” believed Agatha Christie.\(^{1299}\) It is not certain where Graham stayed on this occasion, but she might have preferred the Savoy, as on other occasions. The dancer, who “entered the Prince of Wales Theater in triumph,”\(^{1300}\) gave a lecture-demonstration to a full house of dancers, students and critics: twenty dancers dressed in black (Clive Thompson and Robert Powell were noticed as extremely good) \(^{1301}\) demonstrated Graham technique, while Graham stood at a side of the stage,\(^{1302}\) from where, “gay and grave,” she delivered a lecture on dance.\(^{1303}\) A critic mused that, even if she was a remarkable speaker, she “could sound pompous.” Still, he concluded, her art was “completely fascinating,” and better than the Bolshoi Theater.\(^{1304}\) Present at the demonstration, another journalist noticed that the most frequently asked questions about Martha Graham and her dancers were related to the way in which way their technique differed from classical ballet.

In London Graham had the chance to see older friends. Beside the meeting with the novelist E. M. Forster, presented previously, she saw other people too. On 6 September 1963, the American (based in Britain) actress Irene Worth wrote to Graham from the Theater Royal where she was playing, to invite Graham and Craig Barton to supper. In the letter – an invitation, – Worth discussed Patrick Woodcock’s possible attendance (he was a common friend of the two

\(^{1300}\) Clipping, *Times Educational Supplement*, 6 September 1963
\(^{1301}\) Clipping, *Sunday Times*, Richard Buckle, 15 September 1963
\(^{1302}\) Clipping, “Surge-of-life dance,” *Yorkshire Leeds*, 10 September, 1963
\(^{1303}\) Clipping, “Surge-of-life dance,” *Yorkshire Leeds*, 10 September, 1963
\(^{1304}\) Clipping, *Times London*, 10 September 1963
artists and also of John Gilegud, wished the best to the dancer, who allegedly was fighting a cold, and suggested her a novel for reading. Mr. and Mrs. Francis Mason threw a lavish reception on September 8, at Cannonbury Place, Mason family’s place, for Graham and company. Bethsabee de Rothschild was also invited along with more than one hundred people were invited, including American diplomats, press officers, American and foreign journalists, and important personalities of the British artistic milieu. There were Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, Lynn Seymour, Antoinette Sibley with her husband, the ballet dancer Michael Soames, Kenneth MacMillan, Norman Morrice, and many other dancers; there were famous dance critics such as Richard Buckle, Williams, Andrew Cotton, Ivor Guest and Ann Hutchison Guest; Kenneth Tynan was represented by his wife.

The most representative articles of the London season were (again) those of two older admirers of Graham, namely Richard Buckle and Clive Barnes. In his article entitled suggestively “Laughter in heaven,” Richard Buckle remembered the 1954 moment – when “at Saville there were twelve Christians in the house,” who gave Graham and her company “a warm reception,” as the beginning of the special relationship with the British audience: “there were people who liked her, because I got fan letters from actors and directors.” With his flair, he sensed that the sixties were a new start and décor for Graham and her innovative dance style:

1305 Letter from Irene Worth to Martha Graham, September 6, 1963, box 357, Martha Graham Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress
1306 Clipping, Dance &Dancers
1307 Dame Antoinette Sibley, (born in 1939) is a British prima ballerina
1308 Michael George Somes CBE (1917 – 1994), was an English ballet dancer, a principal dancer of The Royal Ballet, London, and the frequent partner of Margot Fonteyn
1310 Ivor Forbes Guest (born in 1920) is best known as a historian for his study of ballet. He was chairman of the Royal Academy of Dance for twenty three years (1970–93) and has been a Vice President since 1993
1311 Ann Hutchinson Guest (born 1918) is a movement and dance researcher and may be considered the preeminent world authority on dance notation, especially Labanotation
“the New Wave happened in the British theatre” and “now flags are flying.” Even if a devoted fan of Graham, Buckle admitted that, like most of the sixties’ critics, he did not like the music: Del Jojo music was “just functional, “El Dabb’s music for Clytemnestra was “a war of nerves.” However, he loved the Graham and Robert Cohan “flirting scenes,” (in spite of their open sexuality) and called Graham “a queen of style and a kingmaker.” He also admired Helen McGehee, Ethel Winter, the “impulsive” Yuriko, the “sultry” Linda Hodes, and the “fantastic” Mary Hinkson, concluding: “if sex has not been here already, Graham would have invented it.”

After making in 1962 a trip to Cologne to see her dancing Phaedra, Clive Barnes met Graham again in New York, when they had vodka martinis on the rocks in a restaurant. He recalled the moment in an article published after the first London appearance in 1963, claiming that “the first lady of the American dance” was “nervous as a lean and stray kitten about her upcoming British tour,” but confident that “they (the British audience) have to accept me even if they do not like me.” Clive Barnes signed a new article on Graham a few days later, in which he called Graham “bewildering and stunning,” “an artist of infinite variation,” and an innovator of “spatial design, intellectual content, and general feel.” Graham, Barnes said, gave “British ballet the shock they missed in 1954.”

Buckle and Barnes were not alone in drawing a parallel between 1954, when the “warm, small and sensitive” Graham created just a mild stir,” and 1963 one, “when her dance is the finest of this kind in the world.”

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1312 Clipping, Richard Buckle, “Laughter in Haven” September 8, 1963
1313 Clipping, Clive Barnes
1315 Clipping, Daily Telegraph, 3 September, 1963
tribute to her originality, to her contribution to modern dance, and the extraordinarily well drilled attractiveness of her company, but a gesture of repentance for the failure to do her honour nine year ago,” a critic claimed apologetically.\textsuperscript{1316} Other critics also acknowledged the change and stressed that it was due to the fact that the public in Britain was now able to appreciate her art: “She did not start where she left during her previous visit,” because the change happened “in us not her,” as the “British interest in her dance had matured.” Critics believed that between the moments when Graham “was cold shouldered,“\textsuperscript{1317} and now, when she had packed houses in London, the British had the chance to see quality dance – “visits from the Russians and Jerome Robbins” – \textsuperscript{1318} which educated the taste of the audience, and helped it understand quality.\textsuperscript{1319} Now, unlike previously, when comparing Graham with Jerome Robbins – who triumphed in Edinburgh earlier with “Ballets: USA” – \textsuperscript{1320} Graham was considered at least Robbins’ equal.\textsuperscript{1321} Still, there were critics who claimed that the greatness of the British audience was the same, and it was Graham who “developed a better style over the years,” and her dances were no longer “dull!” \textsuperscript{1322} The critics started to “explain” Graham’s art in order for it to be better understood, and shared their conclusions with the readers. Thus, according to one critic, her innovation was based on a combination of \textit{Training} (allegedly Graham used in her teaching and choreography ballet, Spanish ballet, North American dance, Eastern European and European folk dance,) \textit{Relaxation} (the style was closer to naturalistic style,) the \textit{Ecstatic} approach of movement (Graham left a lot

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\textsuperscript{1316} Clipping, James Kennedy, \textit{The Guardian} 4 September 1963
\textsuperscript{1317} Clipping, “Graham dancers charm London,” \textit{Dance Magazine}, 6 September, 1963
\textsuperscript{1318} Clipping, “Graham dancers charm London,” \textit{Dance Magazine}, 4 September 1963
\textsuperscript{1319} Clipping, James Kennedy, \textit{Stage and Television Today}, 19 September, 1963
\textsuperscript{1320} Clipping, \textit{Times London}, 4 September, 1963
\textsuperscript{1321} Clipping, \textit{Middlesex County Times}, 11 September 1963
\textsuperscript{1322} Clipping, Annabel Farjeon, “Martha Graham,” \textit{New Statesman}
\end{flushleft}
to the imagination,) the *Philosophic* one (the dance-dramas are on familiar myth stories,) *Spontaneity* (it was not only dancing but wordless acting,) and *Discipline*.\(^{1323}\) Her dances were still called “a spell-binding ballet,”\(^{1324}\) but most critics accepted modern dance as a new art, whose novelty was not disturbing: “her dances (…) are barefoot, but the style she developed does not have a wide vocabulary, she is very much of the New World.”\(^{1325}\) Her dance style, so much criticized in the past, was now praised: “Graham is back in triumph,” cried an article, also admiring the “delicate and sensuous” music, and the “magic” lightning;\(^{1326}\) “first effective impact after 40 years of effort;”\(^{1327}\) “Martha Graham has evolved a new whole teaching,” “music, dancers and décor assume a singleness of purpose;”\(^{1328}\) she “is revolutionary, ruthless and prodigal (…) modern Wagner of dance, new and vital,” who “rejected the traditional language of her art;”\(^{1329}\) “the difference between modern dance and ballet is a gulf like the one separating Schoenberg and Brahms;”\(^{1330}\) her “art seem to aim at the inner truth than behind the external act,”\(^{1331}\) “her moves are more natural than in ballet,” and were not “ballet or the ‘zippy, freestyle dance’ of Jerome Robbins.”\(^{1332}\) The relationship with theater was also seen in a positive light: “you can love it or hate it but you cannot dismiss it as untheatrical or pretentious,”\(^{1333}\) as both were using “hieratic, a symbol rituals,”\(^{1334}\) and both were visual, complex and

\(^{1323}\) Clipping, *Stage and Television Today*, 9 September 1963
\(^{1325}\) Clipping, “Edinburgh Festival Diary. Martha Graham the High Priestess of the Dance,” *Sunday Times*, 1 September 1963
\(^{1326}\) Ibidem
\(^{1327}\) Clipping, *Daily Telegraph*, 18 September 1963
\(^{1328}\) Clipping, *Musical Opinion*, October 1963
\(^{1329}\) Clipping, A. Bland, “Graham the Great,” *Observer*, 1 September 1963
\(^{1331}\) Clipping, *Liverpool Post*, 7 September 1963
\(^{1332}\) Clipping, *Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 1963
\(^{1333}\) Clipping, AV Cotton, *Daily telegraph*, 7 September, 1963
\(^{1334}\) Clipping, *Middlesex County Times*, 11 September 1963

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psychological. \textsuperscript{1335} “Her theater,” considered a critic, was “an arena of conflicting forces,”\textsuperscript{1336} and Graham was “a theatrical poet, a Sybil and her cave is the theater (to whom) you pay the money and you get your answer.”\textsuperscript{1337}

As in Edinburgh, Graham’s persona, her talents and abilities were mostly admired, and the comparisons, metaphors, and adjectives used by journalists in order to describe her personality and the way she portrayed her art were of an amazing variety and imagination: “mother of revolt”, and “daughter of revolution,” “a rare creature who was not been ground down by commercialism,” “a little wisp of a woman, with the dignity of an Egyptian goddess” embodying “puritan lust;” “her voice is puritan yet obsessed with sex.”\textsuperscript{1338} Interestingly but not surprisingly, the idea of Graham-esque emerged, showing the recognition of her uniqueness in the world of art.\textsuperscript{1339} But the problem of her age continued to preoccupy the critics. Some discussed her with consideration, giving just hints of her age, while informing the readers about the highlights of her career,\textsuperscript{1340} while others were less gentle, in spite of undeniable admiration for the aging dancer and choreographer: “Graham herself, now through past her best as a dancer, still dominates the stage with her fierce intensity and anguish as Judith;”\textsuperscript{1341} “it was impossible to think of her as no longer young (…) with her slim and erect figure.”\textsuperscript{1342} “She has a lofty view of her art” and she was “an extraordinary woman,” considered a critic who, on the other hand, did not abstain from expressing his amazement that she danced at seventy (in fact Graham was sixty

\textsuperscript{1335} Clipping, Richard Buckle, “The voice from the cave,” \textit{Sunday Times}, 1 September 1963
\textsuperscript{1337} Clipping, Richard Buckle, “The voice from the cave,” \textit{Sunday Times}, 1 September 1963
\textsuperscript{1338} Clipping, Alexander Bland, “In Ballet section,” \textit{Observer}, 15 September 1963
\textsuperscript{1339} Clipping, Alexander Bland, \textit{Guardian Manchester}, 7 September 1963
\textsuperscript{1340} Clipping, \textit{Musical Events}, October 1963
\textsuperscript{1341} Clipping, John Percival, “Martha Graham in the Legend of Judith at Price of Wales,” \textit{New Daily}, 5 September 1963
\textsuperscript{1342} Clipping, \textit{Inverness courier}, 3 September 1963
nine.) His surprise was shared by one of his colleagues who wrote that the “choreographer, teacher and dancer still performs at her age,” but admired her for “integrity and professionalism.”

The world premiere of Circe was the most discussed and analyzed of her works in London. The excitement was understandable as “In 1954 London had the honor to have the premiere of Ardent Song, now they had Circe.” Unlike in the fifties, when it was considered a “butchering” of the Greek legends, now Graham’s use of Greek mythology in her dance was seen as a positive and “freeing” innovation. Circe, considered Graham’s Odyssey, and whose “frankly sexual imagery, (... ) extends the language of the body as a medium for high tragedy,” was hailed as another masterpiece, “a dangerously seductive ballet,” (sic) “the only full tragic ballets in the full sense of the word.” “Ulysses was not the only enchanted,” cried a critic; “it is not a simple retelling of the epic poetry,” but “an expedition into the unknown landscape of the mind,” said another; “the work grinds and groves (...) but how thrilling and exhilarating;” “Circe is a highlight!” The open sexuality of the work did not shock but was accepted and even admired: “I suggest that Graham is the most sexual of choreographers,

1344 Clipping, “Solemn, but what dancing,” Evening Standard, 1 September 1963
1345 Clipping, “Erotic Themes in a very moral ballet,” Times London, 7 September 1963
1346 Clipping, “Erotic Themes in a very moral ballet,” Times London, 7 September 1963
1347 Clipping, Susan Lester, “Ballet,” Daily Telegraph, 8 September 1963
1348 Clipping, Richard Buckle, Sunday Times, 15 September 1963
1349 Clipping, Andrew Porter, “Circe,” Financial Times, 7 September 1963
1350 Clipping, Andrew Porter, “Circe,” Financial Times, 7 September 1963
1351 Clipping, Noel Goodwin, “Ulysses was not the only enchanted,” Daily Express, 7 September 1963
1352 Clipping, Jane King, “Ballet, Circe,” Daily Worker, 9 September 1963
1353 Clipping, Daily Mail, 7 September 1963
1354 Clipping, The stage, 3 September 1963
that does not mean that her art is not noble, high and spiritual;”1355 “The climax of Graham triumphant opening night at Prince of Wales in London.”1356

Also as in Edinburgh, in London the company continued to receive compliments, as was hailed as “the greatest single ambassador our country sent abroad,” and the “superbly trained” dancers were “proofs that the teaching of Graham dancers is exceptional.”1357 Critics considered that her teaching method made the dancers have a cohesive style, and made “her ballets a game of make-believe.”1358 While stressing that “this American company is great and different,” the critics asserted that it was because “No ballet skirts. No tiptoeing ballerina, No sweetly surging Tchaikovsky, no fairy-stories, no particular prettiness,” allowing “the force and greatness of Graham” to be obvious, and “as indisputable as Garbo’s and as full of dance instinct as Ulanova’s.” “The lean, athletic dancers (“Men look like Olympic athletes mused another critic,)1359 weave a myriad of patterns that catch the eye and lift the heart.”1360 The compliments abounded: “The cast is ideal!”1361 “Unorthodox concept of movement and esoteric choice of subject (...) highly trained company (...) not sentimental or familiar topics, truly modern.”1362 The most appreciated dancers were Helen McGehee, Robert Cohan, Ethel Winter,1363 Mary Hinkson,1364 Bertram Ross,1365 Clive Thompson, Robert Powell,1366 Gene McDonald,1367 and

1355 Clipping, Andrew Porter, “Phaedra,” Financial Time, 5 September 1963
1356 Clipping, “Legend of Judith” Financial Times, 4 September 1963
1357 Clipping, Jewish Chronicle, 20 September 1963
1358 Clipping, John Percival, “Martha Graham in the Legend of Judith at Price of Wales,” New Daily, 5 September 1963
1359 Clipping, A. Bland, “Graham the Great,” Observer, 1 September 1963
1360 Clipping, “American dancers score a triumph,” Daily Express, 4 September 1963
1361 Clipping, The New Daily, September 1963
1362 Clipping, Susan Lester, “Approach to Marsha Graham”
1363 Clipping, “Ball picked out in flashes of lightning,” The New Daily, September 1963
1364 Clipping,, Andrew Porter, “ Clytemnestra,” 6 September 1963
1365 Clipping, John Percival, New Daily, 10 September 1963
1366 Clipping, Richard Buckle, Sunday Times, 15 September 1963
Linda Hodes.\textsuperscript{1368} Pictures of other dancers than Graham were published, such as the one of Mary Hinkson,\textsuperscript{1369} David Wood,\textsuperscript{1370} or the large picture from \textit{Seraphic Dialogue}. Isamu Noguchi’s and Dani Karavan’s “innovative” settings were mostly admired and also considered innovative.\textsuperscript{1371}

But like in Edinburgh, in spite of the “extraordinary impact on London,” some critics did not like Graham. There were voices which criticized \textit{Circe}, seen as a “comb of intellectual and violence (...) repetitious and ugly in movement;”\textsuperscript{1372} others disliked the “sensual use of the movement,” and considered that “the success was due only to the novelty.”\textsuperscript{1373} “Martha Graham appeared only in \textit{Legend of Judith}, but the piece does not have coherence (...) she is obviously trying to break away from tradition, but their ballets are not more than divertissement,” mused another dissatisfied critic.\textsuperscript{1374} Other critics also considered that: “(her work) was without conflict,” “there was little at Prince of Wales (Theater) to justify that Martha Graham was a ‘revolutionary of dance,’” “her dancers are barefoot athletes (...) surrealist landscape (...) the relation to the movement is obscure (...) Graham is weird, the story telling incomprehensible. With the costumes they produce an effect of extreme absurdity,”\textsuperscript{1375} \textit{Legend of Judith} is a far cry from \textit{Sleeping Beauty}.”\textsuperscript{1376}

But in spite of the criticism, the “third invasion of London”\textsuperscript{1377} and, previous to that, the appearance in the Edinburgh Festival were an overwhelming success and a reconfirmation of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Clipping, \textit{Manchester Quarterly}, 5 September 1963
\item Clipping, Susan Lester, “Approach to Martha Graham”
\item Clipping, “A Goddess inspired by Punch and Judy,” \textit{Daily Express}, 7 September 1963
\item Clipping, \textit{Dancing Times}, October 1963
\item Clipping, “Festival dance and Song,” \textit{The Sphere}, 7 September 1963
\item Clipping, Elizabeth Frank, “Splendid Dancing by an enchantress” \textit{Daily Herald}, 7 September 1963
\item Clipping, \textit{The Dance and Dancers}, September 1963
\item Clipping, “Joan of Arc against aluminum,” \textit{Yorkshire Post}, 4 September 1963
\item Clipping, Jane King, \textit{Daily Worker}, 5 September 1963
\item Clipping, Duncan Harrison, \textit{Evening News}, 4 September 1963
\item Clipping, Andrew Porter, September 1963
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Graham’s value as an international artist. Her overseas tours, started in 1950 and continued in 1954, 1955, and 1962, created the “international” Graham, who was seen increasingly as a cultural value of mankind, but only with the above mentioned success one can say that Graham was “officially” accepted in Europe. Andrew Porter, once a contestant of Graham, who also warmed up gradually to Graham’s art, admitted that she was “the most influential person in dance of the time.”

Francis Mason, the dance lover diplomat, saw Graham’s success from an even larger and more complex perspective, with underlying nationalistic tones. Thus, he considered that the “four months of American dance – ” as beside Martha Graham, there were also Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey and Paul Taylor (a former student of Graham) – educated and made the British public and critics accept American uniqueness and innovation. They “delighted the British critics,” and the audience, and now even “the ushers (who) first said that the music was driving them up the wall, ended liking it.”

The French modern dancers Dominique and Francoise Dupuy went to see Graham in London. Their gesture had a special significance, as France was and remained the country “officially” unimpressed by Graham. After seeing Graham, the Dupuys published a large article, called “The triumph of Martha Graham, or the right returning of choices,” in which they reported the amazing success of the American dancer in their neighboring country, and worriedly signaled that her exclusion from French culture was a mistake. However, by the end of the fifties, some French artists and artistic luminaries had started to reconsider their stance vis-à-vis

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1378 Ibidem
1379 Clipping, Francis Mason, September 1963
1380 Francoise and Dominique Dupuy, Une danse a l’oeuvre, (Centre National de la Danse, La Riche sur Yon, 2001), p.219
Graham, while during the sixties, Graham’s dancers, especially Yuriko, would spend the summers in Paris, teaching Graham technique classes.

The Dupuys were not the only French openly liking and supporting Graham. Dinah Maggie, of the French newspaper *Combat*, also wrote a large article about Martha Graham in London, following an article of the same author, published during Graham’s season in London.\textsuperscript{1381} In the new article, the journalist presented with details *Legend of Judith*, and analyzed and listed other creations of Graham. She also mentioned most of Graham’s dancers, the makers of the décors (whom she also liked,) the wonderful lighting of Jane Rosenthal, and the costumes. Maggie called Graham’s dancing a “celebration of shapes, colors, dance and spirit of the heart,” and Graham a “fascinating character.” Citing Marie Rambert, who allegedly claimed that because of Graham, the rest should throw away their dancing shoes, Maggie urged the Parisian public to follow the “awakening” of London’s, and to make place on the stages for the amazing Graham Company, and evolve into appreciating and understanding Graham’s art, now comparable with that of Picasso and Stravinsky.\textsuperscript{1382}

Maggie then published another article,\textsuperscript{1383} in which she debated the idea of patronage of the state versus the one of private people in the arts. Not surprisingly or by coincidence, she brought up Martha Graham’s case, and the successful way in which the state patronage helped her international fame. However, while mentioning the importance of the state in her success, she failed to mention the importance of Bethsabee de Rothschild, whose impact on Graham’s international tours, especially in the fifties, was tremendous. Nevertheless, while talking about

\textsuperscript{1381} Clipping, Dinah Maggie, “Graham La grande, ou la fete de la danse,” *Combat*, September 12, 1963
\textsuperscript{1382} Dinah Maggie, “Graham La grande, ou la fete de la danse,” *Combat*, 25 septembre, 1963
\textsuperscript{1383} Dinah Maggie, “Mecenat prive at mecenat d’Etat,” *Combat*, 26 septembere, 1963
private patronage, Maggie listed the name of Robin Howard, the “promoter of the London season.”

Maggie was not the only one who seemed not to notice Bethsabee much. Even if she was, still, a major figure in Graham’s life, and of her artistic activity, being also present in Edinburgh and London, Bethsabee de Rothschild was little discussed. The exceptions were two articles: one just mentioning that Miss de Rothschild was present in London, and another which talked about “the financial lift (...) Martha Graham Company” received from the Baroness, who made “concession to anyone or anything,” and who was recognized for her “string of foundations” in the USA and Israel supporting the arts.

Indeed, things were changing. Into Graham’s life re-entered Robin Howard, “the man who gave courage to contemporary dance.” Not only the French journalist Dinnah Maggie, but also the feared American critic John Martin sensed that in Graham’s life another “patron de l’art” had arrived. He dedicated two articles to the Graham moment in England in which, after claiming that Graham “made a conquest comparable with the one of 1066,” he recalled the “calamity” of 1950, when Graham and company “came from Paris with bruised souls,” and had to cancel the tour, and the 1954 moment, “when they were less than fifty people in the house.” Most essentially and in a visionary way, Martin stressed in the 1954’s audience the presence of the group of people who had admired Graham since then, and of Robin Howard, in these words: “What was not evident, however, was that among those fifty who did come were some passionate including a small but influential contingent of the press, who remained not only to

1384 Clipping, *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 September 1963
1385 Clipping, *Daily Express*, 6 September 1963
1386 Interview with Desiree Fortunee, in *City Lights*, Robin Howard, “The Man behind London Contemporary dance”
1387 John Martin, “Martha Graham conquers all but a few,” and John Martin, “Graham Triumphant,” both published in the fall of 1963
party but to set out on the sawdust trail with the zeal of evangelists. Also in this company of converts was a layman (…) his name was Robin Howard."

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A new era for Graham was starting.

The successful 1955 tour to Asia was hailed as Graham’s first real international success. Afterwards, in 1962 Graham danced behind the Iron Curtain and many other European countries. Still, all these indisputable achievements were not complete until Graham was hailed in 1963, in Edinburgh and London, as the “priestess of dance,” a recognition which fully established her reputation in Europe, and confirmed and completed her international standing. As a result, even if not involved officially in the 1963 tour, in 1967 the State Department would include Britain on the list of the European countries in which Graham’s Company was planned to appear.

But, at the same time, with the 1963 tour, an era was ending. When the tour to Edinburgh and London ended, she was less than a year from her seventieth anniversary. That year it became even clearer that Graham’s professional and personal life was once again under the sign of various and important change. Her circle of friends changed, and was about to change even more. Bethsabee’s new life in Israel and her support for arts and dance there diminished her impact on Graham’s art, internationalization and progress, but the patronship of Robin Howard started. In itself it was a unique and amazing enterprise which deserves to be fully explored, as it opened a new page in the history of modern dance. Most significantly, Graham’s relationship with herself became increasingly “haunted” as her alcoholism was not a secret.

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1388 Clipping, John Martin, “Martha Graham conquers all but a few”
1389 Clipping, John Martin, “Graham Triumphant,” September 28. 1963
1390 Private Collection
1391 Victoria Thoms, *Martha Graham: Gender & the Haunting of the a Dance Pioneer* (Chicago: Intellect, 2013)
for anyone anymore, and was affecting her physical and emotional health. Her body was failing her, and she could barely dance, and when she did it she often embarrassed herself. “I want to be remembered as a dancer,” she often said, but instead, she was more and more hailed as the choreographer of her company, which she deeply resented.

On her last European tour of the sixties, which would happen in 1967, she would barely dance. But she would attend numerous receptions, was photographed and interviewed, while her long and highly successful career was celebrated even more than before through exhibitions and galas. She was still useful to the cultural diplomacy as a renowned artist and cultural diplomat. On her side, she also used this opportunity to remain literally and metaphorically speaking in the stage light, which was the essence of her life.
A few months prior to her trip to Edinburgh and London, Graham participated in a round table concerning “Artists’ Impression of Foreign Audiences,” next to Alvin Ailey, and the British Ambassador David Ormsby Gore. While both men elaborated and discussed at length the relationship between audiences and cultural diplomacy, Graham was elliptical: “They like you or not. They show this to you.” As the previous chapter demonstrated, on the occasion of her 1963 tour, the British audiences responded with enchantment, appreciation, and praise to her dance, which consolidated and sealed her fame and artistic prestige in Europe.

Prior to her new European tour, in 1967, Graham premiered Cortege of Eagles, with the role of Hecuba designed for herself. It was one of her last attempts to identify with a character. The dance was a masterpiece, but Graham’s interpretation “was considered acting not dancing.” Like Hecuba, Graham was becoming increasingly a tragic character, who was losing everything.

Graham’s last tour to Europe during the sixties was in 1967.

It was a busy year for the State Department, as it sponsored the “handsome young negro” Alvin Ailey’s tour to Africa. Ailey was a protégé of the State Department since

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1393 Stodelle, Deep Song, p.251
1395 Clare Croft, "Photographs and Dancing Bodies: Alvin Ailey’s 1967 US State Department Sponsored Tour of Africa
1962, when his Dance Company had its first overseas tour, even if he was suspicious of his government benefactors’ motives;¹³⁹⁶ Jose Limon also toured the world numerous times under the State Department’s auspices, while Merce Cunningham Dance Company’s first international tour was in 1964, including performances in Western and Eastern Europe, India, Thailand, and Japan. Interestingly, all the leaders of the modern dance companies involved in the cultural diplomacy of the Cold War were former students or collaborators of Graham, “the high Priestess of dance.” Thus, her gospel marked not only the beginning of dance in America, but through the way it was propagated by her former pupils and collaborators, Graham was even more an essential part of the American cultural diplomacy.

Graham’s relationship with the State Department during the sixties was complicated. In spite of her fame and contribution to the success of the American cultural diplomacy, her capability to perform and represent her country at her best was doubted after the 1962 tour. Thus, the State Department’s contribution to Martha Graham and her company’s tour to Edinburgh and London was marginal. The success Graham obtained at the Edinburgh Festival in 1963 was a stimulus for the State Department to reconsider Graham for financing and logistic support when touring abroad. Therefore, in 1967 she was again officially endorsed, but it is true that the new tour was not an extensive one: they performed in Germany and the Nordic countries and, with renewed confidence, she and her company spent three weeks in London; again, not in Paris.

During 1967 the State Department was represented by Charles Ellison in London, and the help they offered to Graham and her company “made our job easier,” as Robin Howard, the other person involved in the tour’s planning, considered. For the first time Graham had two contracts,¹³⁹⁶ He suspected they were propagandistic, seeking to advertise a false tolerance by showcasing a modern Negro dance group.

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one with the State Department and the second with The Grade Organization Ltd, which was in charge with helping foreign artists perform in Britain and especially in London. Besides, David Bruce was still the American Ambassador in London in 1967 and, prior to her tour, the American Embassy and the USIA in London organized an exhibition of pictures dedicated to Graham’s long career. It was an important event attended by important politicians and cultural personalities, and it was well covered by the press. A picture from one of John Gielgud’s personal albums shows the reputed actor and Martha Graham, photographed at the American Embassy in London in front of the pictures from the exhibition. The two were photographed in a semi-official pose, as they both look formal, well-dressed, and concentrated. But at the same time their body language reflects quite a friendly encounter, with Gielgud holding a hat and a cigarette, listening attentively to Graham, wonderfully attired in a black dress, wearing exquisite jewelry and hat, talking. One can say that it was the meeting of two friends, two great artists and also two reputed cultural diplomats.

In an ironic way, during the fifties, when the approval of the European audience was hard to obtain, the State Department stepped in, both in an informal and a formal way, and helped Graham establish her name in the countries she toured. However, when, due to her age, she was considered by the State Department less fit to complete the task of cultural diplomacy through

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1397 Letter to Robin Fox October 13, 1966, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1398 Bernard Delfont was the in charge with the tour’s accounts and schedule.
1399 After being United States Ambassador to West Germany from 1957 to 1959, he was the Ambassador to the United Kingdom from 1961 to 1969.) Oral History Interview with David K. E. Bruce, Washington, D.C., March 1, 1972, by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library Independence, Missouri
1400 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add 8146, Photo Album
1401 Sheridan Morley, The Authorized Biography of John Gielgud, p.335; the next year Gielgud would go to South America and the USA in another tour organized by the British Council
1401 British Library, Manuscript Collection, John Gielgud Archive, Add 8146, Photo Album

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her dancing, the European success reignited the interest in her and helped her remain active by touring internationally.

Another interesting aspect was that, like during the fifties, when Bethsabee de Rothschild paralleled the efforts of the State Department in making Graham an international star, it was Robin Howard’s turn to play an essential role in making the tour another success. The effort Robin Howard put into organizing Graham’s 1967 European tour was impressive. In fact, Howard had plans for another tour to Britain in the summer of 1966, which never materialized.\textsuperscript{1402} Howard sent Robin Fox a new proposal, which discussed Graham’s appearances in London (either March or April,) and also disclosed that there were “other possible European arrangements,”\textsuperscript{1403} including a Paris season for one week in May 1967.\textsuperscript{1404} Howard also advertised the tour, arranged for Graham and her company interviews, photo sessions, and press conferences, and ordered the posters and the playbill of the tour. As shown by the correspondence with Thomas Kilpatrick, the general manager of Martha Graham dance company, both handled with patience and grace the requests for rooms of the dancers (and the additional likes and dislikes related to this problem,) the problems related to the dancers’ passports, or lack of them, and last but not least, the complications related to Graham’s hesitations, who could not decide final approval of the program and dancers.\textsuperscript{1405}

In December 1966 Howard wrote to the dancer Robert Cohan that Martha allowed “finally” the touring of Britain, and consulted Cohan about any wishes he and other senior

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{1402} Letter of Robin Howard to Robin Fox, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
\textsuperscript{1403} Letter of Robin Howard to Robin Fox, 30 March 1966, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
\textsuperscript{1404} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{1405} Exchange of letters between Robin Howard and Thomas Kilpatrick (February 24 and March 2, 1967), THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
\end{footnotes}
members of the Company had regarding performances. He also expressed his trust that working together will “ensure the future of the company and help Martha personally.”

During the same month, he announced Gertrude Macy that “finances in London are bad but I still think that it is almost essential for the welfare of the company to come here,” and that he planned to pay “up to 5000 pounds of the cost of the London visit (...) if it was worth the anticipated deficit.” (The letter also contained a hint of the tour’s dates, namely February 6 – May 14.)

Howard’s effort to find financial support for Graham’s tour in many places suggests that the State Department’s financial contribution was not an extensive one. Howard corresponded with Dr. Alvin Eurich – president of the Aspen institute for Humanistic Studies, who promised to finance Graham’s European tour, informing him on the progress made for the tour, of the financial difficulties of it, and of the successes; Eurich found out that Howard’s friends from Paris were positive about the possibility to finance Graham’s tour to Europe (which in fact never happened,) an that “a former pupil of Graham reappeared with considerable funds from contacts of his.”

Howard also had an exchange of letters with another soon-to-be very important person from the American entourage of Graham, namely Benjamin Garber, who wrote to Howard about his and Graham’s meeting with Lilla Acheson Wallace, the Reader Digest’s owner, which “was a marvelous moment,” even more so that “in addition to matching the $30,000 the Aspen Award is giving Martha,” Acheson was “prepared to finance the tour.”

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1406 Letter of Robin Howard to Letter to Robert Cohan December 1966, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1407 Letter of Robin Howard to Gertrude Macy, 13 December (“Pearl Lang and Donald McKayle were supposed to help with teaching classes in the Company’s absence.”), THM 22/2/5/3, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1408 Letter, 19 January 1966, THM 22/2/5/3-7, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1409 Letter from Benjamin Garber to Robin Howard, December 29, 1966, THM 22,2,5,3-7, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
Howard was also close to Geordie Graham, the problematic sister of Martha, whose alcoholism was by then a well known problem.\textsuperscript{1410} Due to his social status and connections, and of his desire to help with Graham’s success in his country, Howard brought Graham in the attention of Morris Barr, the president of the English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth, which had among its patrons the Queen of England and Prince Phillip. It is not known if he helped Graham financially or logistically, but he invited Graham and the co-directors of her School in New York, Robert Cohan and Bertram Ross, to lunch, on the occasion of their presence in London.\textsuperscript{1411}

Picking a venue for Graham’s performances was also a tedious challenge. The first arrangements were made for Victoria Theatre, which was booked on June 20, 1966 for three weeks in April 1967, thus leaving behind the plans made around the Palace Theatre. In the end, Graham danced at Saville Theatre, where she also danced in 1954. The accommodation for Graham was arranged at Savoy, while the rest of the company was supposed to stay at Shaftesbury Hotel.\textsuperscript{1412} The season, which took place between April 4 and April 22, brought an ecstatic response from the press. On the stage were older members of the company (Ross, McGehee, Robert Cohan, Ethel Winter, Yuriko, Mary Hinkson, Clive Thompson, Robert Powell, David Wood,) and newer members. The flyer of the shows listed the dances to be presented, each of them being described with great detail: \textit{Legend of Judith, Appalachian Spring, Embattled Garden, Acrobats of God, Secular Games, Night Journey, Circe, Clytemnestra, Dancing-Ground, Corteges of Eagles, Part Real-Part Dream, Diversion of Angels, Seraphic Dialogue},

\textsuperscript{1410} Letter of Robin Howard to letter to Geordie Graham, 19 august 1966, THM 22/2/5/3-7, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
\textsuperscript{1411} Letter to Robin Howard from Morice Barr, 13 April 1967, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections,
\textsuperscript{1412} Note of Robin Howard, THM 22/2/5/6, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections,
and Phaedra. On the same occasion, another flyer was distributed to the attendees, meant to promote the Trust, announcing that the dancers from Graham’s company had taught at London School of Contemporary Dance and that the school has Graham’s “permission and encouragement.”

Still, in spite of the rekindled relationship with the State Department, of the press success of the tour, and of Robin Howard’s devotion, the 1967 tour was in many ways considered Graham’s grand finale tour. But was it? During the tour it was obvious that her career as a dancer was coming to an end. It would be the last time when she danced on a European stage and she danced very little. Reluctantly, she had to assign most of her signature roles to some of her best dancers, a process which made her go through “agony,” thus she danced in Clytemnestra and in four other less physically challenging dances; Ethel Winter took the lead in Appalachian Spring and Night Journey, and Hellen McGehee danced the lead role in Cave of the Heart. During the tour it resurfaced that “she was lonely, ailing, and despondent, although universally admired.” By the time of the tour, she lost one after another some of the most important people in her life: the collaborator and former partner, Louis Horst, her therapist and friend Frances Wickes, and her manager Craig Barton (who will be replaced by Robin Howard for a while.) Bethsabee de Rothschild, who generously sponsored Graham prior to the sixties, “spoke to her finally about her desire to go to Israel.” Since the early sixties, Bethsabee spent a lot of

1413 Saville Theatre Playbill THM 22/2/5/2/4, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1414 Flyer, THM 2/5/2/4, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1415 Interview with Desiree Fortunee, in City Lights, Robin Howard, “The Man behind London Contemporary Dance”
1416 deMille, p.324
1417 Craig Barton letter to writes to Robin Howard, February 26, 1967, THM 22/2/5/3-7, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
her time in Tel-Aviv, where she established in 1964 the Batsheva Dance Company, which became one of the most influential cultural role models in Israel.1418

In fact, the 1967 tour was not an end, but a beginning. It revealed that, while the physical and emotional challenges were strongly affecting and dissipating Graham the human, the other Graham, the legend, was increasingly visible. Modern dance, which was now an acknowledged art, hailed Graham – including in Europe – as one of its pioneers. She was not anymore only a persona and an artist, but a symbol, which existed, perpetuated, and evolved.

Graham’s legacy was established by her dancers who performed and taught in Europe. Even if they taught in many countries, such as France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland, since the mid sixties, they were most visible in Britain. In 1965 the members of Martha Graham Company danced in the “Balletforall” Festival organized at the Theatre Royal Stratford, next to members of The Royal Ballet Company;1419 Ethel Winter and Mary Hinkson performed afterwards a lecture-demonstration in London,1420 teaching Graham’s technique (their colleague, Bertram Ross, remembered that they were “in three or four different places a day (…) and it was a murderous schedule.”)1421 In 1966, Yuriko (considered by the dance critic Jacqueline Maskey able to evoke the best the “delight and desperation,” both characteristics of Graham’s choreography,)1422 and Clive Thompson participated on June 15, 1966 in the American Embassy Festival of the Arts and Humanities in London (also called just the Festival of the

1418 In the mid-1960s, she met the South African-born classical dancer, Jeannette Ordman, who had come to Israel in 1965 from London, and they worked until Rothschild's death. With Rothschild's financial backing, they formed a dance school and a few years later the Bat-Dor Dance Company in 1968 with Ordman as the company's artistic director.
1419 Flyer, THM.22/2/5/1-2, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1420 Interview with Desiree Fortunee, in City Lights, “The Man behind London Contemporary dance”
1421 De Mille,Martha., p.321
1422 Clipping, NY Herald Tribune, February 3, 1966
American Arts and Humanities.) Their presence was advertised and helped by USIA and the American Embassy in London, as shown by the intense correspondence between Martin Caroll, the Deputy Cultural Attache from the American Embassy, and Anette Massie; the flyer of their performance at the Festival, with details about the two dancers, was also published by USIA. On these occasions, accompanied by Mary Hinkson, Yuriko and Thompson taught Graham classes in London. Since 1967 most of the established dancers of the Graham Company also taught at the London Contemporary Dance School.

On another hand, Graham’s legacy was established through the Graham-inspired schools of modern dance. Bethsabee de Rothschild, who played an essential role in Graham’s life during the fifties and at the beginning of the sixties, was establishing her legacy in Israel. Helped and endorsed by Graham, Robin Howard – the man who was “bowled over” in 1954, initiated the Edinburgh moment, and brought Graham to London in 1963 – opened in 1967 “The Place.” It was the first European-based school of modern dance, and for this he made substantial efforts, including the selling of his library and of others valuables at Sotheby’s. Dancing Times announced that it was opened by Lord Goodman, it “aligned London next to New York and Paris in dance, (as) more companies were incited to perform in London.” The building was equipped with a theatre and rehearsal rooms, and its inaugural patrons were Lord Harewood, Sir John Gielgud, Henry Moore, Ninette de Valois, Marie Rambert – all “special friends” of

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1423 American Embassy in London was informed about this and helped the dancers. (Letter to Martin Caroll from Peter Brinnen, 16 June 1966)
1424 Flyer of USIA in London, THM 2/5/2/3, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1425 Interview with Desiree Fortune, in City Lights, “The Man behind London Contemporary dance” and the letter from 9 August 1966, Howard’s secretary sends a letter to Wilson about an eventual charity sale in London or New York before the fall of 1967 but which Mr. Wilson seemed “keen” to organize, but only before the fall of 1967
1426 Flyer, THM 22/1/11/2-8, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
Graham. Graham herself served as Artistic adviser at the outset, and the School was the only place in Europe authorized to teach Graham technique.\textsuperscript{1427} Jane Dudley, a Graham dancer, became the Director of the Graham Studies program at the School; soon after, she invited Nina Fonaroff to be Head of Choreography. The same year Robert Cohan\textsuperscript{1428} became the first Artistic Director of the Contemporary Dance Trust in London, a collaboration which, as time will prove, was most fortunate and successful.\textsuperscript{1429}

A longer exposure of the way in which Howard’s School and Company came into existence would exceed the dissertation’s scope and purpose. Still, it is important to stress that the idea was born due to Graham, as in 1963 she was “so pleased with the outcomes of her Company’s British visit that she offered scholarships to British students, if someone could run a scheme for this.” Howard also claimed that the initiative was helped by Dame Marie Rambert as well, who told him that “you must give British dancers a chance of having this. It is so important and so good. The thing to do is to ask Graham if she will have some British students.”\textsuperscript{1430} Indeed, Graham accepted to give free tuition to British dancers, and the first two students chosen by Dame Marie Rambert were Eileen Cropley and Christian Holder. They arrived in New York as soon as Christmas 1963, and four others came in 1964. If initially Howard sponsored British

\textsuperscript{1427} Conversation with Marie Rambert, recalled by Howard in the interview with Tobi Tobias (August 22, 1978), Article for Royal Academy of Dancing Gazette: “The Beginnings of the Contemporary Dance Trust

\textsuperscript{1428} Robert Cohan trained at the Martha Graham School, and began his professional career in dance when he joined the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1946. He quickly moved to soloist and then performed throughout the world as a partner to Graham herself. He left in 1957 to start his own small group of dancers and started his long career as a choreographer. Returning to the Graham Company in 1962 for its European tour he soon became a Co-Director of the Company with Bertram Ross.

\textsuperscript{1429} However, not only Graham and her dancers helped the building of the British modern dance but also for two seasons, 1965- 1967 Howard also commuted to New York as Executive Director of the Graham Foundation. His new quality was prompted by one of the first major losses in Graham’s life, namely the death of Craig Barton, Graham’s long time manager died in 1967; Letter from J.Klingman, the President of Coomgo PRInc, to Robin Howard, asking him to replace Barton for a period of time as a “director of planning,” THM 22/2/5/3-7, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections

\textsuperscript{1430} Howard gave credit to Marie on different occasions, THM 22/1/6/1/ 1-11, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
students to attend the Graham School in New York, in order to prevent the drain of talent to America, he changed the tactics and invited American dance teachers to work in Britain. The project started with Graham-inspired classes – the dance journals *Dance and Dancers,* and *Dancing Times* announced: “Graham Classes” in London and led to the foundation in 1967 of the School and the London Contemporary Dance Group (afterwards renamed the London Contemporary Dance Theatre,) which was a “very small but very professional dance company;” first it was supposed to perform with members of Martha Graham Dance Company and with the students from the School, but it was expected that it “will branch out on their own soon afterwards.”

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During Graham’s long life, the writings revolving around her were dedicated mostly to her art, which was described and explained, photographed and praised. However, the works related to her persona mostly exposed her indirectly: pictures of her were gathered in a book, her notebook was published, and two biographies were written, in laudatory words, but which were incomplete, as large parts of her life and activity were left uncovered. During the nineties decade, shortly after her death, the Graham writing exploded: an autobiography and a biography were published shortly after, her former dancers were interviewed, and her dance, theory, training and technique were analyzed; even a novel, in fact a compilation of elements from other books, and a book explaining Graham to the young audience, appeared. The last decade is also most

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1431 De Mille, *Martha,* p. 320
1432 Clipping, “Graham for All,” October 1965, THM 22/1/6/1/ 1-11, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1433 Clipping, *Dancing Times* “Graham Classes in London,” September 1965, , THM 22/1/6/1/ 1-11, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1434 Letter from Robin Howard to David Reynolds Esq, the ARTS Council, May 1967, THM 22/1/6/1/ 1-11, Contemporary Dance Trust Archive, Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Collections
1435 Ibidem
interesting, representing a new phase in “Graham writing,” as dance historians looked for and succeeded in revealing and analyzing less known ‘bits’ of Graham, and opened new venues in the research dedicated to her.

However, Graham’s touring, nationally and internationally, did not get attention from scholars until very recently, while her tours to Europe were never looked at and analyzed, even if they are the story of the passage between the status of a national famous artist, and of an international one.

Analyzing Martha Graham’s European tours between 1950 and 1967, a piece of American history in a European context, the present work writes a new page of Martha Graham history, dance history and diplomatic history. The present work reconstructs Graham’s biography and rescues this part of her life unjustly left in the shadows, as Graham’s European fifties were the “forgotten” part of Graham’s career. On one hand, they stood between the “magic years” of the thirties and the forties, considered the peak of her artistry and dance “technique” innovation, and the late sixties, when the “glamorous” Graham was hailed thoroughly in the world as a genius. On the other, the relationship with Europe was the most complicated one for the artist, as there, even if she started touring as soon as 1950, she received the recognition the latest, and it was the hardest to conquer and to convince that she and her art deserved recognition. Focusing on her tours to Europe, having as a historical background the Cold War, complicated by the social changes and movements of the fifties and sixties, the work expands and enlarges historians’ and audience’s perception of Martha Graham, and corrects inaccurate postulations related to her tours to Europe. Last but not least, it also brings various new perspectives to the way Graham’s art and persona were internationally recognized.
The present work writes a page of diplomatic history, as what complicated, nuanced and made even more fascinating the analysis of the tours was that, during this time, the famous American artist entered the political scene, and became an American cultural diplomat, in both Eastern and Western European countries.

The relationship between the State Department and Martha Graham prior to the Asian tour was not researched and analyzed, and unjustly remained an “empty area” of Graham’s story, while also some elements of it were wrongly stated. The present work demonstrates from a completely new perspective, based on important findings from archives and collections, that the 1950 and 1954 tours did not lack the attention and help of the American Embassies in Europe, of the American Ambassadors there, and of the State Department which intervened on Graham’s behalf, and that by no means the first official attention Graham received from the State Department was in Brussels in 1954. It happened much earlier, as, among other findings, the picture of Graham with Queen Juliana of the Netherlands demonstrates. During the 1950 and 1950 tours to Europe, both Graham and the American diplomacy “rehearsed” their role to begin officially in 1955, on the occasion of the Asian tour.

The easiness with which the State Department included on their list Martha Graham foiled the complicated and long way in which the European audience responded to her art. That the State Department liked to help Graham in her European appearances of the early fifties was not surprising, as at that point she was the perfect artist to be promoted: she was famous nationally, she as a person and her creation were thoroughly American, and she promoted modern dance, which at that point did not have international competition; the other innovator, Mary Wigman’s stance during the war made her little visible especially during the fifties. Last
but not least, Graham already had the attention and help of a rich protector, Bethsabee de Rothschild, which paralleled and helped the State Department’s own investment in Graham as a cultural diplomat.

Closely supervised by the State Department, CIA, and USIA, her political role as an ambassador of her country was carefully overseen on and off stage, and at home her success was nationally praised. In parallel with the story of the tours, the dissertation analyzes the way in which the politics of the Cold War influenced and changed the language of the body and the language of dance, during a time when the role and the importance of arts changed like never before, as arts became weapons, and the artists warriors, well organized by their countries’ cultural diplomacy for each “offensive” on the “enemy’s” or the “allied” territory. For dance, which until then was considered to have an “international language,” without words and language barriers, it meant that, even if this unique quality did not disappear, it was enlarged and refined, and more than ever before the dancers’ performance was perceived and analyzed based on the “message” they transmitted.

The question which this work asked, and answered, was why in Europe, among all places toured, Graham had to face the reality stated above? The nuanced analysis of Graham’s European tours proved that there was a relationship between the response to Graham’s art and the very sensitive times of the early fifties when Europeans – who were already biased in the way they looked at the capacity of young and non-traditional America to create original and valuable art – were recovering from a devastating war. Thus, they were holding on to their primacy in culture as one of the ultimate proofs of their importance in the history of humanity. Not by coincidence, the champion of the opposition to Graham was France, where the negative
response was at its heights during the 1950 tour, and where the lenses through which the audience looked at the American artists were blurred the most by nationalism, Anti-Americanism, feelings of cultural superiority, and sexism. In 1954 things were better, but Graham chose never to tour the country again.

The least prejudiced against Graham were Great Britain and also The Netherlands. Both countries were political and diplomatic partners of the USA, a quality which still did not save Graham’s tours to these countries from complications and tensions. But compared to France, which was the most dissatisfied with the United States leadership of the Western bloc, Britain maintained its “special relationship” with the USA, and The Netherlands, which was the “new kid on the block” of the Western alliance, remained constantly in amiable terms with the USA. In this web of politics, diplomacy, nationalistic discourse, and difficult partnerships, the diminished resentment towards the “hard power” of American political leadership, and the “soft power” of American cultural diplomacy in Britain and The Netherlands helped the logistic of Graham’s tours to these countries (especially in the fifties,) and their outcomes. Therefore, as proved, Graham had a mixed reception already during the fifties in both of these countries, and not by coincidence she and company toured these two countries very often, compared to France where she never returned after the 1954 tour. Also not by coincidence Graham had the most unofficial support in Great Britain, as well as the most important proofs of her legacy were first established here.

Graham achieved full success in Europe during the sixties. The sensitive fifties remained behind, the American cultural diplomacy was in full swing, while the whole “ambiance” of the decade was under the sign of “change” and “different,” thus favorable to the message of
Graham’s art and to its novelty. This context which helped and fostered Graham’s success in Europe reasserted the multilayered relationship between success, audience and the historical times in which the artist creates and offers his or her art to the audience. During the sixties Graham received full acknowledgement in Europe, starting with Great Britain, but she and her company stepped outside the Iron Curtain, and toured two communist countries, Yugoslavia and Poland. But, as this work demonstrates, she never toured Romania, as it was incorrectly stressed and believed so far. She also never toured USSR, for whose politicians Graham was a bad example through the themes and sexuality of her dances, and “a product of the rotten American imperialism,” a much beloved propaganda cliché which was applied extensively by the communist officials over the decades.

However, the relationship between Graham and the State Department during the sixties was, as shown by her European tours, not less interesting or intricate, and by no means as idyllic as it is tempting to believe. On the contrary, after the 1962 tour, Graham’s presence on the roster of American cultural diplomacy was in jeopardy, as pragmatism and not idealism moved the mechanism of cultural diplomacy abroad. By now the Americans were the uncontested leaders of the Western bloc, their culture and artist less mistrusted, and American modern dance had numerous successful dance companies (many of them had as leaders former Graham dancers.) Graham herself was an aging artist, with a life marked by numerous contradictions and personal challenges. However, what brought Graham, with full rights and support, back in the attention of the politicians were two factors, which helped her when she most needed it: namely the brilliance of her art, which during the sixties was already part of the mankind’s classics and, ironically, as for her the decade was one of dissipation, her own personal relationships.
Besides focusing on Graham’s role as an agent during the Cold War in Europe, this work also premiers an analysis of her “special” relationship with the European artistic elite, and not only. It shows that even if her character had its peculiarities, Graham’s personality and genius secured her support during most difficult times, via the special friendships and relationships she developed. There were Graham’s relationships with her dancers, who were also part of her struggle with the European recognition and danced with her during those difficult times on the European stages: Pearl Lang, Ethel Winter, Stuart Hodes, Robert Cohan and Helen McGehee.

Due to fortunate circumstances which allowed the author of this work to undertake research in a private European collection and also to study materials from Victoria and Albert Collections, which are classified until 2030, the work also reveals elements of Graham’s life and career never discussed or analyzed before at large, namely the commitment and support of Bethsabee de Rothschild to Graham’s fifties and early sixties tours to Europe, the special role played by de Rothschild in Graham’s relationship with Europe, and also the effort and commitment to Graham’s and modern dance’s place in Europe, of Robin Howard, which culminated with the opening of a school of modern dance in Britain. In a similar manner, this work also demonstrates that Graham was not, as also too often believed, always struggling, alone, and an unknown artist for the foreign audience, and especially for the European one. The present work reveals a very human Graham through the light it sheds on the artistic relationship between Graham and E. M. Forster, Sir John Gielgud and Henry Moore, and her acquaintance with refined members of the European audience, actors, writers and dancers such as Katharine Cornell, Irene Worth, Mary Wigman, Dore Hoyer, Serge Lifar, Maurice Béjart, Roland Petit,
Thus, the analysis of Graham’s tours to Europe between 1950 and 1967 performs simultaneously the difficult task of writing, re-writing and completing Graham’s narrative, and revealing new “faces” of Graham: an artist among diplomats, a diplomat among artists, but also a human Graham. Graham was a cultural diplomat during the Cold War, endorsed by the State Department, but also by powerful special friends during her touring of Europe, and had a complex relationship with her “patrons de l’art.” Graham was also a struggling artist, who received the well-deserved recognition from the European audience more than a decade after her first tour.

Annex

American dancers:

Loie Fuller (born Louise Fuller in USA) was the “Goddess of Light” which mesmerized the European and especially the French public with the way she played with the combination between the human body and the light. Beginning with the last decade of the nineteenth century, she lived in Paris where she entertained the clientele of Folies-Bergere, and she liked to stress
that she “was made in France,”\textsuperscript{1436} while the art critics remarked that even if her dance was born in America “it could be truly appreciated only in such a country as France where the esthetic instinct is so pervasive and so refined”.\textsuperscript{1437} It is true that in France the Art Nouveau, with which Fuller's unique and imaginative human flowers were matching so well, was more developed than in the USA, but without the exception of a few visits, she never returned to her native country, and even her autobiographical memoire "Quinze ans de ma vie" was written in French and published in 1908 with an introduction by Anatole France. Comparing Graham and Fuller, the only point where their creations resembled might be the novelty in the way the scenery and lights were used in order to create a maxim effect upon the viewers.

Isadora Duncan was another American dancer adored by the French public. Like Graham later, who was not afraid either to face criticism of the ballet lovers for not being “beautiful” on stage, Duncan stressed the break with the nineteenth century “ladyhood” and Europeanism in dance. Also, both Graham and Duncan found inspiration in the European music and art, with a strong emphasis on the Greek myths, but the similarities end here. While Duncan remained an artist who undoubtedly paved the way to changes in dance, but never invented a new, solid technique, while her sources of inspiration were with few exceptions European,\textsuperscript{1438} Graham not only viewed modern dance as an American art, but she created major pieces inspired by the American culture and history. Ironically, Duncan, the artist who wanted to “see America dancing” and encouraged the Americans to give up the European inspiration and traditions and create a truly American dance, also preferred to live mostly in Europe, including France; during

\begin{footnotes}
\item[\textsuperscript{1436}] Richard Nelson Current and Marcia Ewing Current, \textit{Loie Fuller. Goddess of Light} (Boston:Northeastern University Press,1997 ), p.4
\item[\textsuperscript{1437}] Ibidem, p.4
\item[\textsuperscript{1438}] Gerald Meyers, \textit{Who's Not Afraid of Martha Graham}, (American Dance Festival, 2008), p.7
\end{footnotes}
a time when the actors and dancers were replacing the royalties in the European public’s interest for celebrities, Duncan made the “delice” of the public with her hectic life, tumultuous love affairs, and unfortunately, tragedies.

Not less famous than Duncan for her complicated love life and preference for the France soil was Josephine Baker, who, like Fuller and Duncan and not at all like Graham, made France a home, and enjoyed a steady fame there, starting with the roaring twenties and continuing several decades after. The fascination of the French public with Baker brings into discussion a new element which is no less relevant in the analysis of the way they reacted towards Graham’s art during the fifties and sixties, namely the sexuality of their dances. It is interesting that while the French audience loved Baker’s strong sexual connotations of her dances, they ignored or criticized the same quality in Graham’s ones. However, Baker’s African-American-ess gave the French audience a double perspective on her sexuality: on one hand, her “torrid, exotic black sexuality”\textsuperscript{1439} was fitting perfectly not only in the whole decadent atmosphere of the decade where the jazz and the “negro dances” were re-discovered, but her “crazed body” and the “farouche and superb bestiality”\textsuperscript{1440} were the physical expression of the African continent, which at that time was a place where the white colonists, including the French, were continuing to bear “their burden.”\textsuperscript{1441}

On the other hand, Baker’s “savagery” was also an expression of the feeling associated for centuries with the New World, by those who traveled there and back to France, and who linked the American continent with primary and unsophisticated emotions, in sharp contrast with the civilized and refined Western Europe, led by France. While it is almost impossible to find

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1440] Ibidem, p.70
\end{footnotes}
similarities in the way the two dancers innovated and created dances, Graham and Baker have in common that both were looked at by an audience which was strongly influenced by the context of the decades they performed in, and by emotions and perspectives which not all belonged to the cultural world, but also to the social and political ones.

*Some of Martha Graham’s Dances:*

It is worth to describe at least some of them, in order to have a better idea of the dances presented in front of the Parisian audience. The *Cave of the Heart* tells the story of Medea and Jason, being the first in Graham’s Greek cycle. Discovering that her husband was unfaithful, sorceress Medea kills her rival, their own children and then presents their bodies to Jason. In a solo Medea/Graham dances her hate and jealousy, partly on her knees and partly squatting, and at one point she seems to eat a ribbon which for some symbolized her own heart transformed into a serpent, while for others the ribbon’s symbol is even more visceral, being her own intestines. The decors were minimal, a true Isamu Noguchi, at one point Graham dancing on wood pedestal from which a “tree” of metallic, bare branches was growing.

In *Errand into the Maze*, inspired by one of Ben Bellit’s poem (Errand into the maze/Emblem, the heel’s blow upon space/Speak of the need and order the dancer’s will/But the dance is still), 1442 Graham danced the role of a female Theseus, who confronts the Minotaur, and the role of …was interpreted by Stuart Hodes, as himself remembers more than sixty years after the performance. 1443 The décor was again minimalistic, a white tape symbolizing the maze of the human insecurities, fears and self-doubt. The dance was a special one for Graham, because as

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1443 Hodes, email to the author, July 2010
she declared, it expressed the way she conquered the fears of her own life.\footnote{Russell Freedman, \textit{Martha Graham. A Dancer’s Life}, p.114} \textit{Deaths and Entrances} was inspired by a legend of the heart’s life with its own “hopes, fears, remembrances, dreams.”\footnote{Box 328, 1950 tour}

Love was, even if in a different form, the reason for which she choreographed the story of \textit{King Lear}, \textit{The Eye of Anguish}, through which she wanted “to show Europe the real Hawkins,”\footnote{Tracy, \textit{Goddess}, p.134.} as the role was “tailor-made” for her husband.\footnote{Tracy, \textit{Goddess}, p.143} Graham wanted to show in this piece how the hero “achieves insight and self-knowledge, and in the end redemption.”\footnote{Box 328, 1950 tour} In a letter to Helen McGehee Graham seemed quite content with the piece while working on the piece supposed to be premiered in France and present Europe her husband, but the plan was not successful as the work was not liked and did not impress the audience. In fact, nor the company. Hawkins blamed Graham for the failure, saying that she never truly worked on it. This statement was supported up to a point by Yuriko, who believed that \textit{The Eye of Anguish} was not “important enough, or dramatic enough for her”, so indeed she did not work whole heartedly on the dance, but also that Erik was not dramatic enough in the role,\footnote{Ibidem, \textit{Goddess}, p.143} affirmation supported by the dancer Robert Cohan who said that Martha would have made a better Lear than Hawkins.\footnote{Ibidem, \textit{Goddess}, p.143} May O’Donnell called \textit{The Eye of Anguish} was “cumbersome” and the best part was in fact the role played by Pearl Lang, namely Cordelia.\footnote{Ibidem, \textit{Goddess}, p. 37} The costumes of for this work were also quite strange and uninspired, as shown by a picture of Stuart Hodes, and two of his “daughters.”\footnote{Goddess, p.146}
El Penitente, presented during the second show in Paris, is a work based on episodes from the Bible, and the title suggests the sects of the Pentients of the American Southwest who practice penance as a means of self-purification of the sins.\textsuperscript{1453}

*Diversion of Angels* (originally called *Wilderness Stair*) was a lighter piece, a lyric dance about the loveliness of youth, the pleasure and playfulness, quick joy and quick sadness of being in love for the first time. The dance follows no story. Its action takes place in the imaginary garden love creates for itself. Martha Graham once described Diversion of Angels as three aspects of love; the white couple represents mature love in perfect balance; red, erotic love; and yellow, adolescent love. It was a dance which talks about the beauty and delights of love, considered as one of the few works where Graham does not puzzle the viewer,\textsuperscript{1454} not by coincidence it was created during the peak of the love story between Graham and Erick Hawkins, who shortly after the dance was premiered, will marry in Santa Fe, Mexico, surprising everyone.\textsuperscript{1455} This dance was also the end of the professional relationship with Louis Horst, the one who years ago introduced Graham to the art and music of Europe.

Also on a lighter side was another work presented, namely *Every Soul is a Circus*, a humorous and satirical work, where the dancers describe in a sour/sweet language of the bodies, the complicated web of the human emotions, their dreams and unrealistic love stories and the ups and downs of the human existence. (Details related to the work *Herodiade, Stephen Acrobat*, and *Letter to the World* will be discussed on other occasions.)

*Dark Meadow*: Created in 1946 to a commissioned score by Carlos Chavez is a great but difficult work. It contains some of Graham’s most beautiful ensemble choreography, for a chorus

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1453] Stodelle, *Deep Song*, p.115
\item[1454] Freedman, *Martha Graham. A Dancer’s Life*, p.114
\item[1455] Freedman, *Martha Graham*, p. 115
\end{footnotes}
of archaic lovers who amplify the heroine's own search. Terese Capucilli as the archetypal female offered a wonderful lyrical performance in a delicate role that makes her look deceptively passive. "Dark Meadow" itself is a delicate work. It would be easy to reduce the action to boy meets girl with a matchmaker involved. One might even say that the sexual symbolism, in decor and images, might look too obvious. But if the worship of the lingam, the phallic symbol derived from the adoration of the Hindu god Siva, is clear, the specific details on view would require a scholarly treatise. These specifics are as usual open to interpretation. The title comes from Empedocles: the dark meadow of Ate is where the soul fell from the region of light. Graham said that she was not depicting a ritual, but the success of "Dark Meadow" lies in its ritualistic case.

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