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Choreographing the Other: The Serbian State Folk Dance Ensemble, Gypsies, Muslims, and Albanians

ANTHONY SHAY

Kolo, the Serbian State Folk Dance Ensemble, has produced several choreographic productions that feature the dances, music, costumes, and, to some degree, the customs of three of the largest and most unpopular minority groups: the Gypsies (*Roma*), the Muslims of the Sandjak of Novi Pazar (*Muslimani*), and the Albanians of Kosovo-Metohija (*Shiptari*), which also constitutes a large Muslim presence. Dance, of all of the forms of cultural production, possesses polysemic means of communication, and because it is embodied and immediate, dance carries a unique capacity to create iconic and stereotypical images. I will argue, through close readings of the choreographies found over the years in the Kolo repertoire in two videos (see the videolog) and live performances in America and Beograd, that these depictions, which can range from the quaint and primitive, to negative, dismissive portrayals of these ethnic minorities, contributed to the violence and hatred that ensued with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia through the reinforcement of already extant stereotypes. In fact these portrayals constitute choreographic creations of the "Other" in Serbian society.

I argue that the power to represent is not only power in a theoretical Foucauldian sense, but the power of representation, especially of those powerless to resist the field of representation provided by state-supported national

dance ensembles, is a very real power. Dance scholars have begun to look at issues of representation and dance and human rights within fascist (Kant 2004; Manning and Benson 2001; von Bibra 1987) and communist (Maners 2005; Shay 2002; Zemtsovsky and Kunanbaeva 1997) contexts of the past, as well as questioning the stances toward dance taken by theocratic regimes like that of the Islamic Republic and Iran and the former Taliban regime of Afghanistan (Shay 1999, 2005). I also suggest that the actual content of the dances, as well as their context, needs to be interrogated to provide details of the ways in which dance can be utilized by specific regimes to choreographically denigrate and erase the presence of unwanted and unpopular ethnic and minority groups.

Dance and Anthropology

Anthropologists over the past two decades have begun to give dance and other movement activities increased attention as forms of cultural expression that, like social organization and kinship, have the potential to provide lenses through which to observe issues of identity formation, ethnic difference, and culturally learned aesthetic viewpoints, and other pertinent information regarding human behavior. But this attitude has been late in coming.

In 1974, I gave a paper at the American Anthropological Association meeting in Mexico City in a session of four papers that was the first full session devoted to dance ever organized by that august body. In "...And Then They Danced," I described the way in which anthropological fieldwork typically slighted the role of dance by giving intricate descriptions of feasts and banquets and other societal celebratory events, including what such events could tell us about particular societies such as kinship networks, social organization, food ways and economic structure. Upon finishing these elaborate descriptions, the typical anthropologist would add: "...and then they danced." American studies scholar Jane C. Desmond notes that:

The academy's aversion to the material body, as well as its fictive separation of mental and physical productions, has rendered humanities scholarship that investigates the mute dancing body nearly invisible. That dancing — in a Euro-American context at least — is regarded as a pastime (social dancing) or as entertainment (Broadway shows), or, when elevated to the status of an "art form," is often performed mainly by women (ballet) or by "folk" dancers or nonwhites (often dubbed "native" dances, etc.) also surely contributes to the position of dance scholarship [1997, 30].

However, the "meaning" of dance and how it is employed and regarded in various human societies can form a central vehicle for research, particularly in those societies in which dance and related forms of movement occupy a

central role in group activities. As Desmond notes: "So ubiquitous, so 'naturalized' as to be nearly unnoticed as a symbolic system, movement is a primary not secondary social 'text' — complex, polysemous, always already meaningful, yet continuously changing. Its articulation signals group affiliation and group differences, whether consciously performed or not. Movement serves as a marker for the production of gender, racial, ethnic, class, and national identities" (1997, 31). Thus, as this case study of the Serbian State Folk Ensemble demonstrates, movement and performances of movement can serve as powerful ethnic markers of the most basic kind and demand close readings by anthropologists in order to understand the political, ethnic, and social dynamics present in the former Yugoslavia and other Eastern European states.

Dancing for the State: The Art of the State

Throughout history abundant evidence exists that once large states existed, the arts were pressed into service to create powerful and positive images of elite elements of the ruling classes. For example, Iranian dynasties utilized architecture, architectural ornament, sculpture, clothing and other decorative elements to give a dynasty such as the Timurid dynasty (1380–1506) a specific and unique image. The *kitabkhana*, the government atelier in which large groups of artists and craftsmen produced manuscripts of epic poetry like the *Shahnama* (the epic history of Persia with intricate calligraphy and fabulous miniature paintings, highly prized objects for royal eyes only), also designed more public aspects of image for the regime like architectural edifices such as palaces and mosques, outdoor pavilions and elaborate tents, and tiles and clothing. Islamic art historians Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry note:

Out of this newly emerged, literary-based Timurid vision came the constituent visual elements that fueled the dynasty's cultural aspirations and established the basis of its art. Through the kings, heroes, and lovers from traditional works like the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi or the *Khamsa* of Nizami, Timurid myths and fantasies were repeatedly played out in an idealized setting. The perceived glory of Timurid destiny was presented in scenes that through repetition assumed their own distinct and visionary qualities.... This imaginary world was portrayed with a perfection of form and purity of color heretofore unseen in Islamic painting; its iconlike compositions were painted with ever-increasing precision and lyricism, as if to assure [*sic*], like sympathetic magic, its certainty and existence. The dynasty's consistent pictorial re-creation of a princely world cast it in Timurid guise, as contemporary

court fashion, architecture, and inscription in these pictures strengthened the linkage.... The key to the creation of the Timurids' art lies in the methods and objectives of the kitabkhana staff, those artists and craftsmen responsible for visualizing princely aspiration [1989, 162–163].

Dancers appear in central positions (after the shah) in Timurid and Safavid (1501–1725) miniatures in festive scenes that suggest that the symbol of the dancer indicates a joyful, carefree life in which the rulers were at ease and not concerned about barbarians at the gate, which constituted an essential aspect of royal propaganda. However, the miniatures depicted an idealized world; the real world was, in fact, filled with danger: barbarians were frequently at the gates. Troupes of dancers actually performed at court festivities, but there is no evidence to suggest that dance was any formal aspect of the court image per se, as it did at the court of Louis XIV.

It is important to grasp that the public performance of dance by professional performers in the Islamic Middle East and Central Asia, while serving as a form of cultural expression, has always been linked to prostitution for both male and female performers. In addition, public female dancers are widely viewed as invading male, that is, public space and in an Islamic context they have the potential to produce *fitnah*, or social chaos, a tearing apart of the social fabric. Thus, dance per se is not reviled by any but the most zealous, such as the Taliban of Afghanistan; rather it is the public performance of it that can frequently bring down clerical ire for threatening societal order.¹

One of the most spectacular early uses of dance employed for the purposes of exalting the king, his court, and his nation was the case of Louis XIV, the Sun King. Louis himself appeared in these elaborate and expensive productions in which he played the role of Apollo and other mythological figures to represent his glory and brilliance as a ruler.² He was, by all accounts, a brilliant dancer in his youth. Baroque dance scholar Wendy Hilton observes: "In a seventeenth-century ballet, Louis XIV was usually the central figure of the performance, his roles reflecting his deification; the King's most famous identification was with the Greek sun-god Apollo, a role he danced many times" (1981, 7). Hilton adds the important point that the prime minister, Jules Mazarin, specifically sought visual means to glorify the crown: "When peace reigned once more in Paris [after the Fronde], Mazarin sought ways to reestablish confidence in his government and in the person of the King, who was then fourteen years old, beautiful to behold, and talented as a dancer. In the ballet de cour, Mazarin found an ideal vehicle for the achievement of this latter purpose" (1981, 7).

A potent later example of the state use and control of dance and move-

ment in Nazi Germany is described by dance historians Manning and Benson:

In the Third Reich dance came under the authority of Josef Goebbels' Ministry of Culture, which issued a stream of directives setting standards for prospective dancers, including proof of Aryan origin. The Ministry sponsored large-scale dance festivals in Berlin in 1934, 1935, and 1936.... The Nazis staged immense spectacles by enlarging the scale of the movement choir ... with thousands of Berlin school-children, who executed precision patterns on the field of the Olympic stadium. Moving in unison ranks, the boys and girls glorified the presence of the Führer, who reviewed them from the stands. The movement choir had become the basis for mass propaganda [2001, 223–223].

Anne von Bibra, in her study of folk dances of the Lower Franconian region of Germany, indicates that folk dance was frequently utilized by the National Socialist Party in the same way as the movement choirs described by Manning and Benson: "Organized by the NSDAP [National Socialist Party], these huge gatherings of villagers in *Trachten* [traditional dress] were held in Nuremberg" (von Bibra 1987, 57). Following the strong eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Enlightenment models, the rural populations, the folk, embodied the "purist" ethnic elements of each state—an idea that David Shoenbaum put succinctly: "the practicing German farmer was a superior individual and the city with all it represented was a moral swamp" (quoted in von Bibra 1987, 379).

The Soviet Union, and later several of its satellite states, also utilized productions featuring masses of folk dancers and others. "Thirty-five pompous Ten-Day Festivals of 'national arts' were staged in Moscow from 1936 to 1960, merely for show and propaganda" (Zemtsovsky and Kunanbaeva 1997, 8). These festivals, as in the case of Nazi Germany, were to symbolize mass support for the regime. In the case of the Soviet Union, "the folk" in whose name the regime had been established were smiling peasant folk dancers. The Soviet ruling elite were so impressed with the effects that these festivals produced that in 1937 they directed Igor Moiseyev to found a professional company of folk dancers, which came to bear his name in the West after World War II.

Such mass demonstrations, especially the huge 1952 and 1956 Moscow Festivals, which received coverage in the American media, sent chills through much of the American public who were unused to such flagrant political manifestations of thousands of people demonstrating for the state. But when the Moiseyev Dance Company finally arrived in the United States in 1958, premiering before millions on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, and appearing in every major city, the one hundred performers, all smiling all the time, completely captivated American audiences, destroying the carefully crafted American government image of the "evil empire" (Shay 2002, 57–60).

The Characteristics of State Folk Dance Ensembles

I suggest that for purposes of this presentation that state-sponsored national folk dance ensembles come in two general types: (1) those that represent single ethnic nation-states such as Mazowsze of Poland; the Turkish State Folk Dance Company; the Armenian State Folk Dance; LADO, the Croatian State Ensemble of Folk Dances and Songs; and the Dora Stratou Greek Dances Theatre, and (2) those that represent multi-ethnic nation-states and attempt to include a pan-ethnic representation in their programs such as Bayanihan of the Philippines, Ballet Folklórico of Mexico, the Moiseyev Dance Company, and the former Iranian State Folk Dance Ensemble (known as the Mahalli Dancers when abroad).

There are typically four types of representation found in the repertoires of state-sponsored dance companies. The first type is positive representation. For example, LADO, the Croatian State Ensemble, shows Croatian peasants in a positive light through the dancers' elegant, noble bearing, modest costumes; by extension, the Croatian people are shown to be a fine nation. Mexico's Ballet Folklórico creates a similar positive image of its represented groups. For example, to look at the noble bearing of the Aztecs through Amalia Hernandez's choreography one would never suspect that their ancestors slaughtered thousands of victims at the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan, ripping open their chests and pulling out their still beating hearts before casting their corpses down the bloodied stairways of the sacred site.

It is perhaps the most typical of the fields of representation that we find in the repertoires of these state-sponsored ensembles. This positive representation, such as the Russians in the Moiseyev company, most frequently characterizes the titular majority group that the particular ensemble represents.

A second type of representation is the "quaint," "exotic," or "primitive" representation of a minority ethnic group that enables the state, through the choreographic lens of the state ensemble, to portray specific ethnic groups as "less" than the majority population by depicting a specific group as "noble" (or not so noble) savages. Thus, the Yaqui Deer Dance depicts the Yaquis as primitive, in contrast to the festive Mestizo dances that constitute representations of Jalisco or Vera Cruz. Moiseyev's depictions of the Baltic peoples fall under the "quaint" category as they execute droll polkas with often doll-like movements.

A third representation is negative or pernicious choreographic images frequently used to reinforce majority prejudices toward unpopular ethnic groups. Such openly negative representation tends to be infrequent, but the negative

portrayal of Gypsies by Kolo, the Serbian State Folk Dance Ensemble, in this paper demonstrates how such stereotyping can produce and promote corrosive interethnic relations.

The last is no representation: in other words significant minorities are not represented in the repertoires of particular dance companies. The Bulgarian State Ensemble of Folk Songs and Dances (known as the Philip Koutev Ensemble outside of Bulgaria) never represented the Turkish population, which constituted over 10 percent of the total population of Bulgaria. This lack of representation echoes the governmental erasure of Turkish identity to the point that all those of Turkish ethnicity were required to adopt Bulgarian surnames. Gypsies, too, were absent from the Bulgarian representational field. The Turkish State Folk Dance Ensemble, reflecting the official government's political stance, has never represented the Kurdish population, estimated at between 20 and 30 percent of the total. The Turkish government has steadfastly maintained that Kurds do not exist in Turkey; instead they are designated as "Mountain Turks," or some other such fictional identity.

The Moiseyev Company, despite Moiseyev's Jewish origins, never produced a suite depicting Jewish life until after the Soviet Union collapsed. Many observers find Moiseyev's "Fiddler on the Roof" images of Jewish stereotypical behavior less than compelling as an authentic depiction of shtetl life.

It should be pointed out that in many repertoires the urban population is almost completely missing. This, of course, underscores the romanticism of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century intellectual preoccupation with the concept that the peasant constituted the "pure" repository of all that is good and authentic in the national ethos. The urban population, on the other hand, were perceived as somehow corrupted and open to "alien" and "foreign" traits; therefore, they display negative behavior. In the former Soviet Union, the term "cosmopolitan" became a code word for the politically suspect. Ironically, it is largely for the upper and middle urban classes that these repertoires were created, for their support is crucial to the financial well-being of these dance ensembles. Among such audiences there is frequently a desire to see their respective peasantries shown in a positive, naïve, and above all hygienic light with all traces of bodily functions erased.

Also, the second and third modes of choreographic representation, the "quaint/exotic/primitive" and the "negative" are often presented to contrast the positive depictions of the majority population. Thus, in the Moiseyev Company concerts the Russians are noble, proud, and elegant, while the Lithuanians or Latvians are quaint peasants.

Lynn Maners, in his study of government-supported and amateur dance companies in Bosnia (2005), introduces a useful concept in the manner in

which the state recontextualized dance for the stage: "authenticity of intent and authenticity of content":

These two divergent types are seen as anchoring a continuum, whose end points are authenticity of content and authenticity of intent. From the state's perspective, authenticity of intent is far more important than the idea that the content of a performance be true to its performance in its original context. As an ideological production, folk dance performances are important for what they symbolize about the state: its hegemonistic or idealized self-image and its projection of that image to others. The state cares less about the recontextualization of a dance to the stage than it does about the message the performance sends to its audience(s). The transformed and recontextualized dance performance becomes an important part of state level political symbolism, and states invest in creating or converting both amateur and professional ensembles. Authenticity of content (steps, costumes, music, props, and instruments) may, in fact, be an important goal for a group's choreographer or artistic director. When this aligns with the state's interest in authenticity of intent, i.e., when the ideological message is appropriately conveyed through content, then intent and content fuse.

Thus, as far as the state is concerned, authenticity of intent, which frequently characterizes choreographic productions like those of Moiseyev and Kolo, take precedence over authenticity of content.

The Establishment of State Folk Ensembles in the Former Yugoslavia

The Soviet Union, tolerating no deviations from their own practices, directed the founding of state-sponsored dance companies in all of the Soviet republics and autonomous regions, and in the countries of the soviet bloc, which in that period included Yugoslavia (before Tito's break in 1947-48). Modeled after the Moiseyev Dance Company, local companies adjusted their repertoires and choreographic strategies to local conditions. Even after the break with Moscow, Tito's Yugoslavia continued to support the burgeoning world of folk dance and song. Josip Broz Tito himself benefited from the appearances of these companies since several panegyric songs and dances were composed in his honor, reminding their audiences of Tito's role as leader of the partisans who freed Yugoslavia from the fascists and civic and ferocious ethnic strife that characterized wartime Yugoslavia.

Immediately after World War II, throughout Yugoslavia, partly in response to the fear that a precious folkloric tradition would be lost, and partly to provide urban youth with wholesome physical activity, a huge movement of amateur folk dance companies rose. These amateur activities gener-

ated genuine interest among large portions of the urban population, which to a large extent continues today (*Folklor Naroda Jugoslavije* 1963, n.p.).

Kolo was the first of the dance ensembles of the former Yugoslavia to be established on a professional level in May 1948 under the title of the "State Ensemble of Folk Dances of the People's Republic of Serbia"; it took the name Kolo (after the most popular genre of Serbian folk dance) in 1953 (*Folklor Naroda Jugoslavije* 1963, n.p.; *Kolo, Beograd-Yugoslavia* n.d.). Kolo was designed to show the happy rainbow of ethnicity and ethnic coexistence of the Yugoslav Republic through the choreographic strategies of providing a dance from each of the republics, as well as Vojvodina and Kosovo, the two autonomous regions of Serbia. The ensemble also maintained an all-Serbian repertoire for special occasions. Kolo, under the title of Yugoslav Folk Ballet, performing "Slavonic Rhapsody," which first toured the United States in 1956, created considerable interest in the concert world as the first cultural representatives of the communist world. The publicity never featured the word "Serbian."

The original plan was to have a professional ensemble in each of the six constituent republics, but Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Slovenia, while having considerable amateur dance activity, never established professional companies. Croatia and Macedonia established their professional companies LADO and Tanec from pre-existing amateur companies (Jožo Vlahović and Koco Racin, respectively), which had won significant prizes in major Eastern European festivals (*Folklor Naroda Jugoslavije* 1963, n.p.).

The Yugoslav government, as the Soviet government before them, found that Yugoslav folk dance was both a terrific propaganda tool, reminding the world of Tito's independence from the USSR and Yugoslavia's existence between East and West, and a profitable economic venture since the tours to the West garnered much-needed Western currency. All three of the professional ensembles had intensive touring schedules, and Yugoslav folk dance concerts became a popular concert staple throughout Europe, the United States, Australia, and Asia during the next four decades.

All of the dance companies came under considerable state management, especially when on tour abroad, and in the first years, government agents accompanied the dance companies to prevent defections to the West (Shay 2002, 116-117). All of the companies, invariably titled "Yugoslav Folk Ballet" when on tour outside of Yugoslavia, featured folk dances from the various republics and autonomous regions. The three professional ensembles maintained two distinct identities: that of a pan Yugoslav dance company as well as of a specific republic identity. For example, LADO, the Ensemble of Folk Dances and Songs of Croatia, performed both all Croatian and pan Yugoslav evenings in their annual appearances in the Dubrovnik Summer Festival.³

Serbian Identity

Serbia and Montenegro have a combined population of over 10 million, of whom 2 million, almost entirely Albanian, live in the autonomous area of Kosovo, and so, although officially still a part of Serbia, this population essentially lies outside of Serbian control. I need to stress that to be identified as a Serb an individual must be a speaker of Serbo-Croatian, and most importantly, be a member of the Serbian Orthodox faith. This does not imply that a particular Serb is a believer in Orthodoxy, but that his or her family is identified as Serbian Orthodox. Also, one does not have to reside in Serbia to be a Serb. Prior to the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, fully 12 percent of the population of Croatia was Serbian. It is important to grasp that even during the communist era, when religion was cast in a negative light in social life, religion remained a major marker of ethnic identity. Many Serbs have little or no faith, but if Serbian Orthodoxy was an integral element in their heritage, they are still considered to be Serbian. Thus, it is these ethnic requirements — Serbo-Croatian as one's native language and being born in a family whose origins lie in the Serbian Orthodox faith — that determine an individual's "Serbianness"; that means that Gypsies, Slavic Muslims, Albanians, and other minority groups residing in Serbia can never be Serbian.

I need not reiterate for anyone that Serbs, often with the tacit or explicit support of the Serbian government, have been shown to have engaged in ethnic cleansing in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo in the worst atrocities that Europeans had seen since World War II. They targeted Croats (who are Roman Catholic), Slavic Moslems, and later in Kosovo they attacked the Albanians. Thus, ethnic representation of these minorities in a state-sponsored dance company assumes a crucial significance in national life.

It is important to stress, as I describe the way in which ethnic minorities are represented in Kolo's repertoire, that no state directive existed to deliberately denigrate any specific group and individual choreographers did not harbor evil notions of hatred toward any specific group. In fact, to be represented in the repertoire of the state-sponsored dance ensemble was often considered an honor for one's ethnic group (Shay 2002, 23). Rather, I suggest that individual choreographers, in undertaking the state imperative to represent the various ethnicities within their repertoires, turned to unmediated, pre-existing ethnic stereotypes that already floated freely in Serbian society to create the choreographic images that ultimately appeared in their programs.

I turn now to a close reading of four choreographic depictions from the repertoire of Kolo, the State Folk Dance Ensemble of Serbia. In the opening sequences (prologue) of the video *Kolo* (1987), dancers' faces are shown in

what I call the "Heroic Young Serbia" representational mode juxtapositioned with Serbian Orthodox icons of saints, inviting the viewer to see how the Serbs resemble the chaste and the martyred saints — that they are, in fact, the same. The opening dance sequences, Dances of Serbia (#1), reinforces these images with the Serbian dancers from Šumadija (Central Serbian region) modestly dressed. The music is tastefully, almost classically played by a "folk" orchestra whose instrumentation is perhaps more suited to playing Mozart's chamber music, always a hallmark of Kolo's productions.⁴ The dances display moderation rather than vigor; the demeanor of the dancers is elegant and dignified. The choreography of lines and circles characterizing these kolo dances are ordered. Thus, this depiction of the Serbian peasant, and by inference the Serbian nation, constitutes a positive depiction, described as my first category of modes of representation.

In the second depiction that I describe (#9), the Albanians (Shiptari) are represented in the "primitive" mode. The Albanian population, largely but not entirely located in the Kosovo-Metohija region of what is officially South Serbia, numbers over 2 million. The austere costumes, the noble demeanor of the dancers, and the solo drum, all highlighted by dramatic lighting, show the Albanians as noble savages. They are, of course, performing as primitive men with the prehistoric cave men fighting over a woman, and their dance represents death and resurrection, a primitive folk belief. The staging suggests a hypermasculine and primitive, dangerous environment. All is one-dimensional and spare. The two dancers (Serbs), brandishing their swords, have been chosen for their hawklike, and therefore, warlike facial features, dramatically lighted to emphasize these martial characteristics.

In the third dance (#3), the Muslims of the Sandjak, a small group of Slavic Muslims who, like the Muslims of Bosnia, are depicted as exotic. The women wear gauzy veils never seen in this region, but that are very much a part of the orientalist depictions found in Hollywood and Broadway musical productions like *Kismet*. Here the women go to fetch the water (because obviously they have no piped water in their primitive houses). The emphasis of the dance with languorous hip movements, devoid of energy, choreographically produces the orientalist notion of harem women as slothful creatures used to sitting around all day in their luxurious abodes. This is a feminine and "feminized" culture.

Each of these choreographed ethnic portraits of the "other" in Serbian society varied according to the ethnic group being portrayed. The Gypsies (#10) are shown as childlike, indolent, over-sexed and therefore worthless people. The choreographies featured stereotypical props as a Gypsy wagon, a camp fire and the clothes were covered with patches. They are shown in

high relief in the programs of the Serbian State Ensemble in comparison with the Serbs. In the Serbian folk dances, the women are portrayed as demure and the costumes cover the entire body except the lower arms, while the hair is arranged in "proper" braids. The Gypsies on the other hand have their hair free and disordered to signify "sexual looseness," and the blouses are off the shoulder and they show bare legs (none of this is what actual Gypsies would do). At the end of the dance, a man runs his hand up the woman's leg under her skirt until the lights fade out, indicating an evening of unbridled passion ahead.⁵ Most of the viewers of these images in the conference presentation in which I gave the original version of this paper were shocked by the overtly negative images of Gypsies contained in the choreography.

It is perhaps useful to mention that Roma have always played important roles in both café and village musical life in Serbia, and they are widely perceived as having an "innate" musical talent, much in the same way that African Americans were perceived as having "natural rhythm." Currently, Roma have taken a prominent role in turbo music, which is wildly popular with Serbian youth. I suggest that this popularity also parallels the experience of African Americans in rock 'n' roll in which white youth flocked to rock music, which was the despair of the older generations and the American establishment. Turbo music, like rock 'n' roll, contains the elements of generational rebellion that challenges established attitudes toward ethnicity and proper behavior in Serbian society.

The Albanians fare only slightly better: they are depicted as "primitive" and "warlike." Like the Gypsies, the choreography shows the Albanians fighting over a woman. The Muslims of the Sandjak of Novi Pazar are depicted as exotic, dreamlike creatures from the *Thousand and One Nights*. It must be grasped that the Muslims of Bosnia, who were slaughtered, raped, and tortured in the thousands, are essentially the same as those of Serbia—that is, the process of Islamicization of the two populations was historically similar.

As social scientist Craig Calhoun notes: "Underlying much of the pressure towards repressive sameness and essentialist identities is a tendency to think in terms of what Harrison White (1992) has called categorical identities. The abstractness of categories encourages framing claims about them as though they offered a kind of trump card over the other identities of individuals" (1994, 26).

I argue that, in fact, these choreographies visually establish these ethnic groups as lower "Others" in Serbian society. To what degree can such negative, disparaging depictions of the "Other" permit and encourage the excesses of ethnic cleansing that characterized Serbian civil life during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia?

The representations of state-sponsored dance companies come with all of the panoply and authority of the financial and political support of a national government and create little space for resistance. The examples of representation that are provided through video images for this essay beg the question of how the represented peoples might have represented themselves.

By using the examples from the Kolo repertoire, I by no means wish to suggest that the practice of choreographically depicting the Other exists only in the Serbian company. There also exist other examples in Ballet Folklorico, in which the rebellious and poverty stricken peasants of Chiapas are depicted in a never-never land in which the dancers wear lacy, embroidered black dresses and dance to the mellifluous strains of the giant Isthmus marimba and the sizeable African Mexican population is choreographically totally absent except for giant Black Sambo images in the Vera Cruz carnival scene. The Bayanihan ensemble of the Philippines depicts its Muslim population as cold, distant and haughty.

This then poses the question: What are the responsibilities of choreographers in the depictions of the Other? My conclusion is that the choreographer who represents the Other bears responsibility when creating and reinforcing negative, dehumanizing images. On the most serious level of evaluation they can aid the state and the individual to participate in crimes against humanity such as those perpetrated in the former Yugoslavia by regarding minority groups as "lesser others" and perpetuating negative popular images through their artistic production. The burden lies on the choreographer, and the ensemble for whom they create choreographic works, to represent all ethnic groups in an ethically responsible manner.

Notes

1. In this discussion of dance in the Middle East, it is solo improvised dance performed by professional dancers, rather than communal, regional folk dances, that are widely held in ill repute. In Afghanistan, all forms of dance were banned by the Taliban.

2. Other monarchs, notably Henry VIII and his daughter, Elizabeth I, were highly lauded as excellent dancers and several paintings depict them performing at court. There was, however, no conscious effort to turn their performances into public propagandistic displays as was the case for Louis XIV.

3. One evening in 1974 in Poreč, a Slovenian resort town on the Adriatic coast, I saw a joint concert of Kolo, LADO, and Tanec. Each of the ensembles performed four dance suites representative of its specific republic. Kolo performed the "Serbian Suite," "Dances of Vranje," "Banat Dances," and "Dances of Eastern Serbia."

4. Although Yugoslavia has a wide variety of untempered folk instruments (that is, instruments with uneven tunings not compatible to the piano), the policy in Kolo seemed to be to avoid the use of these instruments in favor of an orchestra of violins, flute, oboe, and clarinet, which created sounds more congenial to the Western listener. The oboe, for example, replaced

the *zurna*, a double reed instrument with a piercing sound. By contrast, the Croatian ensemble, LADO, utilized a wide range of authentic folk instruments in their pursuit of "authenticity of content" in Maners's terms.

5. One might contrast the use of stereotypical images of Gypsies found in the 1947 film "*Golden Earrings*" starring Marlene Dietrich with the pernicious images projected by Kolo. In the depiction in "*Golden Earrings*," the Gypsies are shown with all of the stereotypical elements of Gypsy life known to Americans at that time. Unlike the Serbian version of childlike, lustful, oversexed, and indolent characteristics found in the two choreographies of Kolo, "*Golden Earrings*" depicts the Gypsies as a freedom-loving, romantic, and colorful people living a simple, pleasure-filled life, shorn of any negative characteristics.

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