How to Do Things with Dance opens up numerous possibilities for rereading well known and lesser-known dance works of the postwar period. Thus Anna Sokolow's *Rooms* (1952) is reconsidered with respect to the planned contemporary living spaces of Americans as seen by an "outsider" (115); Donald McKayle's *Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder* (1959) is seen in the time of the Civil Rights Movement and the first sit-ins, and in relation to Talley Beatty's and Katherine Dunham's earlier works *Mourners' Bench* (1949) and *Southland* (1951), respectively. A key chapter is the one on Pearl Primus, which develops Kowal's (2007) research, for which she received the 2008 SDHS Gertrude Lippincott Award. Primus's account of her trip to Africa in 1949 "offers a fuller picture of postwar diasporic subjectivity as a condition of defamiliarization: the feelings of belonging and not belonging to peoples and places she desired to call 'home'" (149).

This reader was particularly struck by the place of Paul Taylor within the book. A reader cannot fail to notice the photograph of a besuited Taylor (1957) on the cover. He strides toward you with great purpose—a man of action—and stirs memories of a different age. I saw Taylor's *Insects and Heroes* (1961) in 1973 and *3 Epitaphs* (1960) two years later, both during UK tours. The former dance was, to a young man four decades ago, quite baffling. Kowal's analysis shines a new light on both these works and, by refracting this light through the broader culture of the period, reveals something fresh and vital that I had not seen before. She considers Taylor along with Cunningham in terms of found objects and the use of "ordinary movement (action) to highlight elements of everyday life that people typically glossed over in the course of experience" (175). Her detailed descriptions ring true: the way she revisits the contemporary critical reception and identifies Taylor's innovations is a powerful response to any idea that the modern dance of the 1950s—*3 Epitaphs* appeared in its first version in 1956—was lacking in creativity. This example could stand for the rest of the book. Throughout, there is a most sophisticated rereading of dance of this period, and the dancers and their social situation appear refreshed, their relevance renewed.

The changes in postwar American modern dance and in American society are most ably addressed in *How to Do Things With Dance*. This new history challenges the conventional view of the dance of this period and contributes well to dance research, which has begun to discover new depths in modern dance in America. It would be interesting to place the ideas that emerge here in a broader international context, with John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in mind.

Michael Huxley
De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

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The Dance Claimed Me: A Biography of Pearl Primus by Peggy and Murray, Schwartz. 2011. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 336 pp. text + 16 insert pp., photographs, notes, appendices, works cited, index. $35 cloth.
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Choreographer Pearl Primus (1919–1994) was a key figure in the development of American concert dance. Her dances of social protest, most notably *Strange Fruit* (1943) and *Hard Time Blues* (1943), caught the attention of critics,

audiences, and political activists. Her choreographic vocabulary, which emphasized dynamic movement and gravity-defying jumps, brought a new aesthetic to modern dance. Though others such as Asadata Dafora had come before her, Primus was largely responsible for introducing West African dance to American audiences. Because of the multiple contributions Primus made, almost all books that survey twentieth-century dance at least mention her. Despite Primus's importance, however, *The Dance Claimed Me: A Biography of Pearl Primus*, by Peggy and Murray Schwartz, is the first published book about the choreographer.[1]

The authors argue that the story of Primus's life, a "life filled with passion, drama, determination, fearlessness, and brilliance," has yet to be told (1, 9). The existing scholarship, such as Richard C. Green's "(Up)Staging the Primitive: Pearl Primus and 'the Negro Problem' in American Dance" (2002), they believe, fails to capture the multiple worlds in which she circulated or to reach "those unschooled in academic vocabularies" (289, note 2)—a group of readers they hope to attract with this biography.

Part of the dearth of scholarship has to do with the lack of available sources. The Pearl Primus Collection at Duke University only became fully indexed and available to the public in 2004, but more importantly, Peggy and Murray Schwartz have many of Primus's papers in their private collection. *The Dance Claimed Me* is a highly personal biography, and the authors reveal, in their introduction and elsewhere throughout the book, the nature of their close relationship to the choreographer. One can sense the deep love that guides the writers as they set out to tell the story of Primus's life.

Despite the stated intention to write for a nonacademic audience, *The Dance Claimed Me* makes a major contribution to dance studies by providing an accurate and specific chronology of Primus's life. This book explores heretofore little-discussed dimensions of the choreographer's career that provide exciting avenues for future research. The first two chapters detail the depth of Primus's involvement with the political Left during the early 1940s, including stories of her experiences as the dance instructor for Camp Wo-Chi-Ca (Worker's Children's Camp). The authors' discussion will certainly enrich scholarship on the relationship between modern dance, "Negro dance," and the political Left. The second chapter also discusses the main years of Primus's performing career, from her stellar debut at the 92nd Street Y in 1943 to her national tours to her appearances on Broadway in the revival of *Show Boat* (1946) and *Caribbean Carnival* (1947). The Schwartzes argue that Primus saw herself as a modern dancer for whom "the idea that African traditions could be encapsulated and set apart from the central thrust of modern dance aesthetics was alien" (42–3).

With this last claim, the authors insert themselves into one of the major debates in dance scholarship. For the past two decades, scholars have examined the role of African-American choreographers in the history of concert dance in the twentieth century (DeFrantz 2002; Gottschild 1996; Kraut 2008; Manning 2004; Myers 1993; Perpener 2001). In particular, Gerald Myers and others argue that African-American choreographers should be seen as part of the modern dance canon. This inclusive move seeks to erase what Brenda Dixon Gottschild calls the "invisibilization" of black contributions to the aesthetics of both ballet and modern dance (Foulkes 2002; Gottschild 1996; Myers 1993).

Other scholars, such as Susan Manning, argue that the categories "Negro dance" and "modern dance" remained "conceptually distinct" in the mid-twentieth century, and thus any historical study must acknowledge how the imposed division differentially shaped the experiences of black and white choreographers (2004, xiv–xxiii). Richard C. Green questions the motivations of those eager to put Primus under the category "modern dance" (2002, 127), though as the Schwartzes point out, Primus herself categorized her work as modern dance. This particular debate forms a part of the larger question about how to balance the importance of documenting a "black tradition" in American dance with the necessity of challenging the assumptions imposed by a racially circumscribed category such as "black dance."[2]

Dance scholars will also benefit from the chapters that discuss the last three decades of Pearl Primus's life. In other scholarly publications, except for Julia Foulkes' "Ambassadors With Hips: Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus, and the Allure of Africa in the Black Arts Movement" (2005), Primus seems to disappear after returning from Liberia in

1963. In contrast, the authors dedicate three chapters to Primus's career in academia in the 1960s through the 1990s. Throughout these decades, Primus struggled to reconcile her expansive visions with the strictures of higher education. The Schwartzes' exploration of this struggle provides a fruitful entry point into debates about the role of artists in academia.

The Dance Claimed Me also contributes to the field by complicating certain narratives about Primus. In 1948, the Rosenwald Foundation awarded Primus a grant to study dance in Africa. This trip, as most scholars agree, transformed her life, giving her a sense of belonging to the African diaspora (Kowal 2010, 139). In Chapter Three, the Schwartzes trouble this transformation by pointing out that Primus's marriage to Yael Woll, a son of Russian-Jewish immigrants and a member of the political Left, occurred after—not before—her trip to Africa (73). This fact reminds readers that finding a racial or cultural identity does not mean that a person abandons other aspects of her identity. In this case, Primus retained her commitment to both interracial solidarity and left-wing political causes even after finding "rebirth" in Africa (77).

In Chapter Six, the Schwartzes again question the established narrative when discussing Primus's return to Africa in 1959 to direct the Konama Kende Performing Arts Center in Monrovia, Liberia. Although most scholars focus on the ways Primus created diasporic linkages in Africa (Green 2002, 121; Perpener 2001, 173), literary scholar Brent Hayes Edwards argues that using the term "diaspora" also requires an attention to dissonances (2003, 8). The authors explore the tensions of diaspora that Primus faced in her return trip. Primus believed that she was helping Liberia and the other nations she visited to preserve their traditional dances by introducing Western theatrical techniques and modes of production. Some citizens of those nations, however, felt that such Western influences threatened their own cultural identity. Several Africans also suspected that she intended to exploit their cultural traditions for personal gain. One night, the Zulu African People's Union stormed into a rehearsal in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and accused Primus of working for European colonizers. According to the Schwartzes, the Union's accusations caused "a traumatic threat to [Primus's] identity" (154).

A greater sense of the historical context would flesh out the Schwartzes' argument in this section and in other parts of the book. In the late 1950s, an intense sense of nationalism emerged in much of Africa as a wave of decolonization swept the continent. In 1960 alone, seventeen nations won their independence from European colonial powers. Cultural self-determination formed a key aspect of independence movements; the opposition to Primus makes sense in light of this history. Nor do the Schwartzes seize that moment in *The Dance Claimed Me* for an exploration of the dynamics of African diasporic performance. Recently, scholars including Rebecca Kowal, Anthea Kraut, Susan Manning, and Halifu Osumare have found diaspora and a related concept, the Black Atlantic, to be effective frameworks for articulating how black choreographers made cultural connections among African-descended peoples around the world (Kowal 2010, 117–25; Kraut 2003; Manning 2001; Osumare 2010).

The Schwartzes deliberately do not use highly academic language, as they explain in their notes (289, note 2), and thus we cannot judge them for not engaging with certain concepts. Although readers in dance scholarship will wish for more analysis of race, gender, sexuality, authenticity, primitivism, and politics in Primus's performances, the Schwartzes have a different goal. Their book tells a personal story, and by the end of the biography, one gets a sense of the character and personality of this complex woman. The inclusion of Primus's poems about Africa, for example, provides a lyrical and emotional window into the dancer's world (84–7).

The personal nature of the biography also means that certain topics of potential interest are foreclosed. Chapter Four discusses, to a much greater degree than any other extant publication, the FBI's proceedings against Primus, yet the authors shy away from digging deeper into Primus's involvement with the Communist Party or the effect that the multiple FBI interrogations may have had upon Primus's mental health. There is a rich story here that could shed further light on the State Department's persecution of artists during the Cold War. Many interesting discussions in *The Dance Claimed Me* happen in the footnotes, such as the debate about why Katherine Dunham has received

more attention than Primus (289, note 4). Understandably, the Schwartzes do not want to break the narrative flow of the biography, but introducing such debates into the text would give readers a greater sense of Primus's historical context.

Putting aside these concerns and focusing on the authors' stated goals, they accomplish the task they set out to do. *The Dance Claimed Me* brings Pearl Primus to life, revealing multiple dimensions of her world to new audiences. Now that more information on Primus is available, scholars should take the next step and conduct further research on this important figure in dance history.

Joanna Dee Das
Columbia University

Notes

1. There has been one dissertation and one master's thesis in the past thirty years, but nothing published by a major press (see Barber 1984; Glover 1989).

2. For a good overview of this debate, see DeFrantz (2002, 3–35).

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edited by Melanie Kloetzel and Carolyn Pavlik. 2009. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida. xi + 316 pp., foreword, preface, acknowledgments, 84 b/w photographs, notes, bibliography, index. $34.95 cloth, $27.50 paper.
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In the past decade, discourses that examine site-based art practices have developed in nuance,