VIEWPOINTS

Visual Anthropologists at Work

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CHAPTER 10

Steps to an Ethnography of Dance

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So you are here to study dancing and culture in Yemen? Well, you must look at bara'. *It is a very important dance. You should see the bara' performed in different regions and talk to...*

Bara' isn't raqs! *Come to the wedding tonight, and we will show you beautiful* raqs.

The two quotes above reflect responses given to me when I first went to the highlands of Yemen to study potential relationships between dancing and culture. It was clear early on that I had to study something called "bara'," but it also soon became evident that I was not to call it "raqs," the term usually used in Arabic for the English word "dance." Thus, while the English dance described both activities, a distinction between these two genres was important locally.

Later, I found out that bara' was performed only by men out-of-doors to the beat of drums, and each tribe had its own distinctive bara' that differed from the others in rhythm; steps; the way men held their daggers (traditionally, men in Yemen who self-identify as tribal wear a dagger, which they use as part of bara' performance); whether or not they chanted poetry during a performance; and whether or not a reed instrument also accompanied the dance. Bara' performance was one of the markers that distinguished tribesmen from men not defined as tribal, and the style of bara' performed distinguished one tribe from another. Although women never perform bara' in public, most women I met knew this dance and could teach its steps to me.

FIGURE 10.1. *Men in the village of Mahjar perform bara'. Drummers are seated toward the rear of the photograph. The performer on the far right, carrying a dagger in his uplifted right hand and a shawl in his left, is wearing the clothing worn by tribesmen in Yemen's northern highlands until the 1970s. (Photo: Najwa Adra, 1979)*

FIGURE 10.3. *The fourth movement of bara' is an optional duet performed only by the best dancers. Here, two master performers of the village of Al-Husn perform this movement while other men and boys watch. Drummer, with black turban, stands in the middle rear. (Photo: Najwa Adra, 1979)*

FIGURE 10.2. *Men in the village of Al-'Urra perform bara'. Drummers are seated to the right. (Photo: Daniel M. Varisco, 1978)*

The term "raqs," on the other hand, refers to any of the more than fifty other "dances" performed throughout Yemen. In the valley of Al-Ahjur, where I initially conducted eighteen months of fieldwork in 1978–1979,[1] raqs refers to a couple dance, named "lu'b," which is usually performed indoors, in gender-segregated spaces, during weddings and other celebrations, or in the intimacy of family gatherings where women, men, and children relax together. At large parties, lu'b is always accompanied by song and musical instruments performed by professional musicians. At home, lu'b is danced to taped music or the beat of a drum (or even of an upturned cooking pot). Although raqs varies with region, it is not a tribal marker.

At first, I was told that men and women never dance together. But months later I would hear female friends say something like, "When my husband and I were first married, we danced together more often." Or, "My cousin and I used to dance together when we were kids." Or, "I learned to dance from my father." I was puzzled and intrigued by this new information. Why was bara' not labeled raqs, and what was its connection to the tribe? How did women learn it? Why did everyone tell me that men and women never perform raqs together when clearly some of them did sometimes?

Over the next twenty-five years, Yemeni society experienced radical changes, including changes in dancing behavior. I documented some of these changes on subsequent trips to Yemen in the 1980s and again beginning in 2001, but it was not until January 2005 that

I had the opportunity to focus on changes in the dancing in the highland community where I had conducted my original research.[2] The following sections summarize my major findings.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

My argument is that the artistic phenomena we find satisfying are those that resonate with our own value systems and that the arts form basic elements of the anthropological concept of culture. I define culture in terms of aesthetic principles that order everyday life but are not necessarily verbally articulated. These are largely appreciated by members of a single society and differentiate societies from each other.[3] In order to test this conceptualization of culture, as well as its expression in, and construction through, dancing behavior, I lived in a community and learned as much as I could about daily life, values, and attitudes. I also attended weddings and other dance events, learned and filmed dancing when I had permission,[4] interviewed good dancers, and asked everyone who would let me about local classifications of dances, appropriate contexts for dancing, suitable dress and music, who danced and who did not, what dancing stood for, dance spaces, and any other information I could glean. I also collected proverbs and poetry about dance and dancing and dialect terms that refer to dancing.

Local people had no problem giving me rules of appropriateness, information on the classification of dances, and folklore related to dancing. Most, however, could not provide the more abstract information about the symbolic dimension of dancing in their lives. Their dances were simply aesthetic forms that they appreciated. They performed and watched dancing for pleasure. It was among sociologists and folklorists in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, that I could discuss these abstractions. My husband, Daniel Varisco, was with me conducting research on irrigation and water use. He filmed the dancing at men's wedding parties. We also filmed people working in the fields and in cooperative work projects and sowing sorghum with a step that is called "dasa'" and often compared to the first movement of the local lu'b, also called dasa'.

DANCE RESEARCH IN AL-AHJUR

THE COMMUNITY

Al-Ahjur is a verdant basin-shaped valley about 34 kilometers north of Sanaa. In the 1970s, the Al-Ahjur region contained about twenty-four villages with populations ranging from fifty adults to five hundred. Its population has increased dramatically in the past thirty years. The majority of Al-Ahjur's population self-identifies as tribal, *Qaba'il* (sing. *Qabili*).[5] By local definition, this means they belong to a cooperative social unit that inhabits a more or less bounded geographic region. Tribal subdivisions in Al-Ahjur are distinguished by villages, each with its own leader (*Shaykh*). These are, in turn, divided into extended families (Adra 1983). Most of the tribal population in this region is composed of farmers who cultivate their own land in addition to sharecropping land that belongs to others.[6] Although an increasing number of Qaba'il have moved to towns and cities where they participate in wage

1. My fieldwork in 1978–1979 was funded by a National Science Foundation Grant for Improving Doctoral Dissertation Research and a Temple University Graduate Fellowship.
2. My fieldwork in 1983 focused on local attitudes toward breast-feeding and fertility and was funded by a MEAward in Population and Development, The Population Council. My 2005 research on changes in dancing and tribal identity was funded by a fellowship from the American Institute of Yemeni Studies. I made other trips to Yemen in conjunction with consulting assignments.
3. Some anthropologists have given up on the culture concept because it seems so elusive. Especially in our global world, it is difficult to distinguish the cultural from the universal in local economic and political systems, architecture, or clothing. Another reason that many anthropologists are wary of the concept is that culture has sometimes been made to seem absolute and unchanging. It has been seen as coercive, as dictating that each individual in a given society is a model of the culture. This is, of course, simplistic. Culture seen through an aesthetic lens, on the other hand, is flexible and can elucidate cohesion, difference, and societal responses to change.
4. Although I was encouraged to film bara' and raqs performed by men, I was rarely permitted to film or photograph women's raqs performances.
5. Tribe is a problematic concept in anthropology because it has been used indiscriminately to refer to groupings as diverse as families or nations. The term as used in this chapter is a direct translation of the Arabic *qabila*, which denotes the English word "tribe."
6. In other regions of Yemen, Qaba'il may be itinerant herders or fishermen.

labor, most maintain their ties with their rural villages. Tribes in Yemen are still associated with rural life.

In the northern highlands of Yemen, the tribal population is distinguished from two other socially recognized status groups. The first is a scholarly and religious elite, *Sada* (singular: *Sayyid*; *Sada* are said to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) and *Fuqaha'* (singular: *Faqih*, which means "judge"). The other major nontribal grouping includes low-status service providers known collectively in this region as *Bani Khums* (or *Khadam* or *mazayina*). This group includes professional musicians, barbers, and butchers, among others. Some members of the elite and service providers live in Al-Ahjur, but both of these groups were historically associated with towns and urban life. In the past, each status group was endogamous, and Bani Khums were not allowed to own land. Since the formation of the Republic of Yemen in 1962 and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in the south in 1969, these and other status distinctions have been made illegal, in theory equalizing all groups. Although Bani Khums have greater access to education than they did in the past and are now permitted to own land, and although many have accumulated considerable wealth, intermarriage between the groups remains stigmatized. To a lesser extent than in the past, these social distinctions still affect local self-definition.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE TRIBAL IN AL-AHJUR

Qaba'il were (and are) very aware and proud of their own identity. Whenever I asked what distinguishes a Qabili from other members of the society, I would be told that a Qabili is honest, generous, hospitable, courageous, perceptive, strong, and hardworking, and can be trusted to follow through on his or her word. Proverbs refer to the urban population as weak, in contrast to the perceived strength of rural tribes. This self-definition, which I first heard in the 1970s, is still provided today. Ironically, city people are said to be "ignorant," although the scholarly elite were historically associated with learning. There are times, however, that Qaba'il may refer to themselves self-deprecatingly as rough, simple people in comparison with a perceived sophistication of the urban population. Attitudes of the nontribal populations toward the tribes are also ambivalent. Sada, Fuqaha' and Bani Khums often idealize tribal honesty, hard work, courage, and generosity. They invariably add, however, that the tribal population is "unruly," "crude," "rough," and "uncultured."

Qabyala

In the Yemeni highlands, I often heard the term "qabyala" used to describe appropriate and admirable behavior. This behavior ranged from the fulfillment of social duties, such as hospitality, to beauty, as in a beautiful and appropriate dress. The term is derived from qabila (tribe), but is not heard in other Arabic-speaking countries. It is a purely Yemeni term that denotes tribal customary law and a set of values associated with the tribe. These values emphasize cooperative behavior in war and peace, courage, hospitality, the protection of the weak, generosity, integrity, and an egalitarian ethic, as well as autonomy and resistance to authority. From a tribal perspective, the term refers to the "good, true, and beautiful." Those who are not tribal, however, often associate qabyala

with arrogance and warlike behavior. Thus, the concept of qabyala unites the tribes around a set of values with which they identify and distinguishes them from the nontribal population that disdains the tribes at the same time as it gives value to characteristics attributed to them.

Tribal Law

Tribal customary law is still followed in rural areas of Yemen to settle most disputes. Essentially, this system is based on persuasion rather than coercion. All levels of dispute are mediated by a third party. The parties involved present their cases, usually in poetic form.[7] The mediator's decision is based on the consensus reached after open discussion of the case. The party considered at fault provides a gift to the victim (the monetary value depends on the seriousness of the infraction) and slaughters an animal, which may be a chicken in the case of domestic quarrels or a bull in serious quarrels that involve entire communities. All parties share in the subsequent meal, thus indicating that they consider the decision binding.

Tribal law is based on precedent. When Qaba'il say that the urban population is ignorant, they are referring to its lack of familiarity with the rules of tribal law. City folk, on the other hand, often criticize tribal law as un-Islamic. In fact, both tribal and religious law are intertwined: the religious law practiced in the towns incorporates principles of tribal law, and tribal law includes precepts of formal Islamic law.

An Egalitarian Ethic

Unlike some hierarchical communities in other regions of Yemen and in other Arab countries, historical status distinctions are downplayed in Al-Ahjur. A visitor who does not know the individuals concerned cannot readily distinguish a Qabili, Sayyid, or member of the Bani Khums. Clothing differences reflect differences in wealth and identification with urban fashion, rather than status. Especially today, members of the Bani Khums may be quite wealthy and some of the elite quite poor.[8] Houses resemble each other. All eat and socialize together. In the 1970s, only Sada and Qaba'il farmed grain, and only members of one group of Bani Khums grew vegetables for sale. Currently, most landowners in all groups participate in cash cropping. Technically, only members of the Bani Khums play musical instruments professionally, and only Qaba'il perform bara'. Yet, I have seen Sada and Bani Khums performing bara' in Al-Ahjur, and an increasing number of Qaba'il and Sada are playing musical instruments for pay at weddings and other celebrations. Recently, a member of the Bani Khums was elected Shaykh (leader) of his village, further blurring historical status distinctions. This deemphasis on status reflects the egalitarian ethic of rural communities in Yemen's northern highlands. It is supported by tribal law, which stresses equality among all Qaba'il and, before 1962, by the egalitarian theology of north Yemen's religious leaders.

TWO GENRES OF DANCING: BARA' AND LU'B

As mentioned earlier, bara' is a men's dance, performed outdoors during the day on occasions of celebration. As few as two, or as many as forty, men perform in an open circle with the leader positioned near the middle, rather than at the

7. For extended discussion of the use of poetry in the mediation of tribal disputes in Yemen, see Caton (1990, 2005).

8. Clothes did define status groups in the past, especially in towns (Mundy 1983; Adra 1998).

head, of the line formed by the dancers. In the bara' performed in Al-Ahjur, the men stand close enough to one another so that each can place a hand on his neighbor's shoulder or his waist with elbow slightly bent. The basic step is a forward step-together-step-hop initiated by the left foot, followed by a forward step-hop on the right foot, accompanied by appropriate arm movements.

To the fast-paced accompaniment of one or two drums, the men perform skips, small jumps, slides, turns, and knee bends while brandishing their daggers above shoulder level. The line of dancers may reverse its direction of movement or lunge forward toward the middle of the arc before stepping back. The coordination of steps with the drumming is so close that it is not initially clear to the observer if changes in rhythm are initiated by the drummers or the dancers. The dance leader signals changes. He is flanked by the older and more skillful dancers, while novices perform at the two ends of the arc. When others join in during a performance, they usually enter at the edges. Less skilled dancers tire early and may drop out during the dance. Drummers are almost always professional musicians who have a contract with the village, but they are not paid in cash for accompanying bara'. Instead, they receive a portion of the harvest for their services.

FIGURE 10.4. *Bara' performance in the village of Al-Husn. Dances performed locally seldom appear as tidy as those performed on stage. Here, children play in the foreground. A boy in the rear of the photograph flourishes a plastic sandal in place of a dagger because he could not find one to borrow. Although impertinent, this move is taken in good humor by the others. (Photo: Najwa Adra, 1979)*

Whereas the steps themselves are not very difficult to execute, it takes much practice to perform in unison with the other dancers while wielding a dagger, and learning to excel in bara' is taken seriously. Generally, all of the men present at an occasion perform. Members of a community perform bara' together, and each community performs its own distinctive bara'. A genre of tribal poetry known as "zamil" is chanted on the way to bara' performance and during breaks in dancing as dancers walk to a new location together. Although no one in Al-Ahjur associated bara' with warfare, the dance is considered warlike by Yemenis from other areas. In the 1970s, all the people I talked with asserted that this dance had not changed throughout history.

Lu'b, the form of raqs performed in Al-Ahjur, is also the Arabic term for play. This dance involves intricate steps and light weight shifts. As dancers move forward and back, their steps outline geometric designs on the floor. This is a couple dance performed indoors, in the afternoon or at night, during times that are normally devoted to leisure or sleep.

At gender-segregated celebrations, one or two couples at a time perform in a small space cleared for dancing in a room that is otherwise crammed with people sitting on mattresses on the floor. Generally, a person dances with a close friend or relative. Lu'b is accompanied by the singing and playing of a paid professional musician if the hosts can afford this. (Dancers also pay the musicians a small fee when they get up to dance.) The songs may be love songs or songs in praise of God or the Prophet Muhammad or of the dancers and hosts. Sometimes song lyrics include humorous sexual puns. Musical instruments

include the mizmar (a kind of double-reed clarinet), most commonly at men's parties, or 'ud (lute) along with percussion instruments. Lu'b is performed at weddings and other parties to mark rites of passage, such as circumcision (only infant boys are circumcised in Al-Ahjur). In the past, it was performed after harvest when several families worked together. As late as 1979, lu'b events typically lasted until three or four in the morning. In recent years, however, women's dances stop at sunset, and men only dance until midnight.

Although there is regional variation in lu'b, dancers may perform the dances of other regions, and new steps are constantly added. In the Al-Ahjur region in the 1970s, three forms of lu'b were performed, corresponding to the age of the dancers, with the oldest dancers performing the most traditional steps. Younger dancers performed two versions of lu'b indigenous to the city of Sanaa. Guests from other regions would perform their own dances while Ahjuris watched with interest. One of Al-Ahjur's villages performed its own distinct dance. When residents of this village attended weddings in other villages, the musicians would play their particular beat. Some urban conservative religious leaders have found the frivolity of lu'b offensive. Thus, some urban families did not perform this dance, and its performance has been banned in some periods of Yemen's history.

DANCING AS A METAPHOR OF CULTURE

I had been in the field about a year when I was faced with the data presented above: two dances, one considered frivolous and the other a tribal display of skill, but both performed first and foremost for pleasure and enjoyment; a set of values strongly tied to local definitions of tribe and tribal identity; and conflicting data on status distinctions. To help make sense of all of this, I focused on the dancing itself.

Bara' clearly is a dance of display, in which tribal groups show off their members' skills to each other and outsiders. Not only does a particular bara' identify a tribal group, but there is fierce pride in one's own bara' style. While watching the performance of another group, men are quick to say, "But you should see ours," implying that their bara' is superior. Guests from other parts of Yemen are greeted with bara' performance. Bara' confirms the contractual union of two families at a wedding and occurs soon after the common meal that seals this union. It is also performed to celebrate religious and national holidays.

Bara' is closely linked to cooperative work projects. All adult male members of the tribal group who can do so contribute labor to projects that a single family or individual cannot perform alone, such as cleaning cisterns, repairing roads, or building schools or mosques. Like tribal litigation, these projects rely on and express the cooperative nature of the tribal unit. I was surprised to learn that during these projects half of the workers perform bara' while the other half works; then the two groups switch activities. That bara' is performed only by men reflects the male public face of the tribe. While women's behavior, like men's, can affect a tribe's reputation (positively or negatively), women are rarely asked to formally represent the tribe in public. Women watch bara' discreetly as they run errands or from windows and rooftops.

The bara' performance itself necessitates cooperative behavior, as it teaches performers to synchronize their movements with each other. Failure to do so

would not only ruin the dance but could also endanger other dancers if daggers are not wielded properly. The leader of a bara', who decides changes in direction, steps, and tempo, is almost always an older man. Throughout the performance, the eyes of all other performers and drummers focus on him. He performs in the middle of the circle, not at its head as in the *dabka*, a line dance performed elsewhere in the region.

FIGURES 10.5, 10.6. *Learning bara' is an integral part of the event when performed locally. In Figure 10.5 a young boy enters the performance space on the left with the intention of practicing the last movement with the masters. Others try to pull him away, out of camera range. The boy successfully ignores his detractors and is seen practicing in front of the master dancers in Figure 10.6. (Photos: Daniel M. Varisco, 1978 [10.5] and 1979 [10.6])*

FIGURES 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10. *Men performing lu'b at the men's party at a wedding in the village of Al-'Urra, Al-Ahjur. The performance takes place in a large guest room. Guests are seated along the walls. Two musicians, seated on the right, accompany the dancers. Facing the camera (fifth from rear of the room) and wearing a straw hat is the mizmar player, Salih al-'Arusi. No photographs of women dancing are included in this chapter because women of Al-Ahjur prefer that their photographs not be published. (Photos: Daniel M. Varisco, 1979)*

Bara' performance can be seen as a metaphor of what it means to be tribal in Al-Ahjur. Cooperation is the paramount value of tribal identity. That the leader performs in the middle affirms the egalitarian ethic of qabyala. Although warfare has not been an issue in Al-Ahjur's recent history, Yemen's tribes were historically its warriors, charged with defending the unarmed population (women, the scholarly elite, and the service groups), hence the importance of the dagger and the interminable drum beat. Finally, the tribe, as displayed to others, is symbolically male. In performing, bara' tribesmen in Al-Ahjur learn and affirm a set of values that define them as tribal to themselves and to others in the society.

But what of lu'b? Although its performance is not displayed openly as is bara', I did not meet anyone in Al-Ahjur who did not appreciate this dance. Weddings are seen as dancing occasions. Those who do not dance enjoy watching; spectators pay attention to the dancing and praise good dancers audibly. A Yemeni proverb states, "A people that does not dance will not survive." So why was this dance relegated to performance indoors? Why the verbal insistence that it is only performed by same-sex couples, when this was not the case in practice? Why had it been banned in periods of Yemen's history?

In contrast to bara', lu'b highlights the individual virtuosity of the dancers. Few individuals dance at large celebrations without having mastered the steps. The songs that accompany lu'b may have religious themes, but they also include love songs and praise of individuals, especially dancers, hosts, and guests. Group cooperation is deemphasized in this context. Lu'b events highlight intimacy, as dancers perform with close friends or relatives, not necessarily anyone in their community. Autonomy is also accentuated. Dancers decide the beat for their dance, which version of lu'b to perform, and how long they wish to dance. As a couple dance, lu'b references marital relations.[9] Sexual connotations in song lyrics serve to counteract the strict prohibitions against sexual behavior in public. The mizmar, the favored traditional instrument to accompany lu'b, is itself rife with sexual imagery, often referred to as the "cock of paradise," with an intended sexual pun. Is lu'b also a cultural metaphor? If so, how?

As further research brought to light, qabyala does not exhaust the entire corpus of values adhered to in Al-Ahjur, but only the tribe's public face. There are clearly bounded contexts in which rules are relaxed, allowing women as well as men to express their own individuality and autonomy. These contexts include gatherings at home with family and close friends, marital relations, behavior toward intimate friends, the disposal of one's personal property, leisure, and play. Within these sites, play, romance, and friendship blossom, and joking behavior, often off-color, abounds. These contexts complement the serious demeanor and focus on others' welfare that is expected from adults in public.

Lu'b events glorify individual virtuosity and imply sexuality. Performances are limited to small, clearly bounded spaces, out of the public limelight, corresponding to areas considered appropriate for informal, intimate behavior.[10] In performing lu'b, dancers learn to express themselves within bounded contexts. Lu'b, then, is a metaphor of the intimate side of life in which a relaxed self-expression is encouraged. Bara' and lu'b together replicate two complementary sides of tribal life (Adra 1983, 1998). The opposition between bara' and lu'b is summarized in Table 10.1.

I want to make it clear that I do not think people dance *in order* to signal aspects of their culture. Especially with social dancing, people dance simply for pleasure, because it is fun to do so. I suggest that dancing affirms local values and that the values that underpin culture may be created, re-created, and changed in the process of dancing, but that this process is largely unconscious in the sense that it is not easily accessible to verbal articulation.

Cultures differ in their approaches to the basic problems of social integration faced by all societies. Examples include: how to balance public vs. personal, work vs. play, community vs. autonomy, and how to organize leadership and hierarchy. These issues are negotiated on a daily basis by all of us, whether consciously or not. In Al-Ahjur, as elsewhere in Yemen and other Arab countries, community responsibility and a serious demeanor are given priority in the public sphere, while a great deal of flexibility in modes of self-expression is permitted and encouraged in contexts defined as intimate.[11] As in other parts of Yemen's northern highlands, the expression of an egalitarian ethic takes precedence over social hierarchies in Al-Ahjur.[12] These values are danced in bara' and lu'b. With each dance, they are affirmed, created, and re-created by the dancers and their audience.

9. Sexual relationships outside marriage are expressly forbidden in this community as they are elsewhere in the region.
10. This dichotomy does not correspond exactly to the public vs. private distinction often discussed in the literature. For example, visiting behaviors and large parties are not at all private. Women and men dress in their best attire as they would in any public venue. Yet, the fact that these events are gender segregated permits an informality that would not be permitted in mixed contexts.
11. Like lu'b, belly dance, which is performed largely in urban centers in the Middle East, also signifies a playful, intimate side of social life that contrasts with the restraint expected in public (Adra 2005).
12. See Adra (1983:29–82) for a detailed discussion of this issue.

BARA'	LU'B
UNCHANGING Varies by region but ideally does not change through time.	**CONSTANTLY CHANGING** Steps are borrowed from other regions in Yemen; changes are introduced frequently.
USES LARGE SPACES Performed outdoors. Dancers often change locations during a single performance.	**CONFINED TO SMALL SPACES** Only a small space is allotted to dancers, barely enough to keep them from stepping on seated guests.
DANCE OF DISPLAY Performed outdoors during public occasions and to honor guests from other communities. Daytime activity.	**SELF-EXPRESSION** Performed indoors, among intimates or others of the same sex.
Accompanied by drum. (In some regions of Yemen, also by a reed instrument.)	Afternoon and nighttime leisure activity. Accompanied by musical instruments.
Associated with tribal poetry.	Songs may be love songs, praises of the Prophet Muhammad, or relate to the personal lives of the dancers.
Legally permitted throughout history.	Sometimes legally forbidden; sometimes frowned upon.
Serious activity, connotes skill and excellence.	Frivolous activity, called play.

TABLE 10.1. *Oppositions Between Bara' and Lu'b as Performed in the 1970s*

Culture change is accompanied, and often anticipated, by changes in dancing behavior. As people experiment with new forms of dancing they are trying out metaphors for new ways to present themselves and interact with others. Changes that are incorporated in the community's dance repertoire tend to anticipate the direction of cultural change.

CULTURE CHANGE

Al-Ahjur, along with the whole of Yemen, has experienced major economic, political, and social change since the 1970s (Adra 1983, 1993, 1998; Varisco and Adra 1984). The Zaydi Imams who ruled North Yemen in the first half of the twentieth century did their best to isolate the country in order to protect it from colonization. While this policy shielded the country from the negative impacts of colonialism, it also kept out technological developments and hindered the development of modern infrastructure. As farmers, pastoralists, and warriors, Yemen's semiautonomous tribes fed and protected the society.

The 1962 revolution that abolished the imamate and created the Yemen Arab Republic of Yemen (YAR), or North Yemen, was followed by seven years of civil war. As the new Republican government established itself, its relationship

with Yemen's tribes also changed. No longer were the tribes considered quasi-independent entities but were expected to work together as part of a single Yemeni nation. In turn, government services—including schools, clinics, roads, and electricity—have created a dependence on, and respect for, the central government. A major influx of imported goods, large waves of labor out-migration to neighboring oil-rich countries, and exposure to other lifestyles through television affected the ways Al-Ahjur's residents saw themselves in relation to others in Yemen and globally (Adra 1996). Other changes in people's daily lives included a reliance on automobile transportation and dietary changes from local whole grains to imported refined wheat and an increase in sugar consumption. Soap operas on television now took up time that in the past was spent dancing, exchanging poetry, and recounting stories.

In 1990, the former Yemen Arab Republic in the north united with the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in the south to form the Republic of Yemen. This increased the diversity of regions within Yemen. Yemen underwent further upheavals in the 1990s: during the First Gulf War (1991), 800,000 Yemeni migrant workers in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf had to return to Yemen, leading to major unemployment and increased poverty in their home country. This was followed in 1994 by a civil war between political factions in the north and south. Economic and political changes have led to a redefinition of the tribe and its place. No longer does the tribal population form the political and economic backbone of Yemeni society. Allegiance to tribal leaders has been replaced by allegiance to the president of Yemen. Growing urbanization has devalued rural lifestyles among some members of the population.

Significantly, at least some of these changes were anticipated in dance performances. In 1979, I observed and filmed young men in one of Al-Ahjur's villages experimenting with new forms of bara' learned in the capital city of Sanaa. At the time, this was considered heretical by most of Al-Ahjur's residents who maintained that bara' was unchanging. Meanwhile, older performers all over Al-Ahjur complained of subtle changes in bara' everywhere. Bara' performance declined in the villages during holidays, as men in the community traveled to towns to perform with tribesmen from other regions or simply did not respond to the drumbeat announcing bara'. In a marked change from the past, Al-Ahjur's Sada began to perform bara' at their own weddings.[13] At the same time, new urban forms of lu'b, with faster, more complicated footwork, became popular in Al-Ahjur.

In the years preceding, and those immediately following, unification with South Yemen, a southern dance (*lahji*) often replaced the northern lu'b in northern cities and, to a lesser extent, in Al-Ahjur. Lahji is livelier and easier to learn than lu'b and includes subtle hip swinging, which is frowned upon by older members of the rural community. Currently, at weddings in Al-Ahjur, several dances are performed according to the dancers' whims. These include three variations of lu'b (including the oldest versions); lahji, which is the most popular; and an Arabian Gulf dance (*khaliji*) learned from television. At a wedding in 2005, one woman performed a brief belly dance to the disapproval of many. In contrast, belly dance and khaliji have become popular in Yemen's capital, Sanaa.

A parallel diversity in dance style is found among men in Al-Ahjur. At men's wedding parties, lu'b, lahji, and khaliji are all performed. Some men no longer

13. Although some Sada had performed with Qaba'il in the past, bara' performance had not been integral to weddings of Sada.

BARA'	LU'B
NO LONGER UNCHANGING Rhythm and performance slower. Experiments with styles from other regions.	**CONSTANTLY CHANGING** New styles and steps are added according to fashion. This is not new. What is new is the introduction of dances from outside Yemen.
USES LARGE SPACES This has not changed, but increased construction has limited the spaces available for bara' performance.	**CONFINED TO SMALL SPACES** Larger rooms are now available for dancing, and several couples may perform at the same time in different parts of the room.
DANCE OF DISPLAY This has not changed.	**SELF-EXPRESSION** Lu'b is still a form of self-expression. For some people, this means that fashions and clothing have changed to reflect their taste for modernity and urban sophistication. Others maintain local dress and dance styles to emphasize their support for tradition and disapproval of new styles.
EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY AND COOPERATION This has also not changed, but fewer members of the community participate, and fewer young men learn bara'.	**EMPHASIS ON INDIVIDUAL VIRTUOSITY AND INTIMACY** This has remained the same but the times that women may dance at parties have been curtailed to omit nighttime dancing.

TABLE 10.2. *Changes in the Performance of Bara' and Lu'b Observed in 2005*

perform bara', while others are eager to learn it. Those who do perform are markedly slower and heavier than the dancers of thirty years ago. This is probably related to their increased reliance on automobile travel and their less nutritious diet. Changes observed in Al-Ahjur's dances are summarized in Table 10.2.

AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION

In the 1970s and 1980s, any swinging of the hips during dancing was considered shameful. The current popularity of lahji, khaliji, and, in Sanaa, belly dancing, indicates an interest in experimenting with more overtly sexual forms of expression. Women's dress is also more sexualized, reflecting global styles with plunging necklines, exposed arms, bare heads, and copious layers of makeup. At the same time, and in apparent contradiction, there has been a marked increase in religious conservatism in Yemen influenced by a Wahhabi interpretation of Islam imported from Saudi Arabia. This approach targets all dancing and music, as well as the mobility of rural women and their traditional modes of expression, including their sung poetry. The impact of this conservatism is felt mostly in urban contexts, where some families hire a religious chanter to entertain guests instead of musicians. Other urban families include religious chanting along with

music and dancing. In Al-Ahjur, these attitudes are reflected primarily in the curtailment of evening dancing parties for women. Currently, dancing at weddings is limited to the afternoons, or, if at night, is terminated early. Is the increase in hip swinging a response to this conservatism? Does it provide a way for young women to assert their autonomy as their mobility and other traditional forms of self-expression are curtailed? Or, does the new religious conservatism inadvertently sexualize women? Answers to these questions require further research because the situation continues to change rapidly.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

The unification of North and South Yemen in 1990 has encouraged identification with a more inclusive Yemeni nation state, one that includes tribes that are not farmers and Yemenis who do not self-identify as tribal. A large number of southern Yemenis now live and work in the north. Their presence has affected northern diets, dress, and dialects, as well as dancing behavior as discussed above.

The 1994 civil war between North and South, however, created considerable mutual resentment between the two regions. Southerners frequently express their resentment of northern hegemony by criticizing bara' as warlike and crude. They contrast this with their more fluid and, in their perception, "refined" dances, implying that they are more "civilized" than their northern counterparts. For them, bara' represents not only "arrogant" northern Yemenis but the government that has adopted a tribal rhetoric. Perhaps in response to these attitudes, and in a reassertion of their own identity, young, educated women and men in Sanaa have initiated a resurgence of traditional local lu'b performance.

Clearly, cultural transformation has been accompanied by changes in dancing behavior. The introduction of the southern lahji in northern communities in the 1980s anticipated the unification of North and South Yemen, even at a time when many rural people in the north were objecting verbally to the idea of unification. Current discord between North and South is expressed by southerners' disdain of northern dances and a resurgence of indigenous dances among some people in the north.

In sum, using dance as an example, I have argued that the relationship between artistic process and its culture is one of mutual feedback carried on through performers and audience. As the traditional model of the self-subsistent tribe began to lose its relevance in Al-Ahjur, so did the appreciation of its aesthetic representations. Young people are experimenting with new forms that better signify their changing allegiances and identities.

I have presented an example of an anthropological study of dancing in a rural community in Yemen. But this is not the only way that anthropologists study dancing in culture. The dances described differ from those in other countries, and my theoretical interests may differ from those of other anthropologists. The next section will summarize the range of anthropological approaches to dancing.

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF DANCING

Dancing is widespread among the world's populations, and its cultural significance varies from one society to another. Although social dancing is often performed just for pleasure, some dances are integral parts of political or religious

ritual. Dancing may be economic activity; it may also be a component of therapy. Dancers may be amateurs or professionals. Although some societies have specific prohibitions against dancing, nowhere is dancing unknown. Unlike food and shelter, which are also ubiquitous, the "meanings" and functions of dancing are usually ambiguous. This is what makes the anthropology of dancing such a challenging topic for study and an important subfield of visual anthropology.

Dancing differs from ordinary movement even when it mimics everyday movement. In walking or running, for example, the movement is primarily a tool to accomplish a given purpose: getting there, or exercise. But in dancing the movement itself has inherent value. Its relationship to ordinary movement adds an aesthetic dimension, like poetry's relationship to speech. In poetry, the manipulation of words for their own sake is primary, while in everyday language, words are most often tools for conveying messages. In dancing, poetry, and other artistic forms, there is a sensible exploration of the medium, and the aesthetic component takes precedence over, or is as important as, utilitarian considerations. Dancing is multisensory, invoking the visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic senses. Yet, it is not random movement. Not all nonutilitarian movement should be called dance. Usually, clear concepts of what constitutes dance are culturally defined.

Most societies regulate the situations and places where dancing is considered appropriate, and these vary from one culture to another. Dancers may perform for an audience of strangers or primarily at home in the presence of intimate kin.

Dancing may be considered the holiest of activities, as with the hula in ancient Hawaii, or the most lowly, as in professional nightclub belly dancing in Arab society. In some communities, professional dancers are selected from the highest social strata, as in Mali, and, in others, the lowest, as with the Nawar Gypsies in Egypt. Men and women may dance together (e.g., ballroom dancing) or separately (as in some line dances of Eastern Europe). In some places, only married people dance in public; in others, only the young and unmarried do so. Dancing may be performed by a few for the enjoyment of others (ballet or Kabuki), or the whole community may participate, as with the traditional Yemeni bara'.

Not all studies of dancing fall under the rubric of anthropology. Dance historians study the historical evolution of dances as well as current dances and their cultural and social contexts. Dance history differs from the anthropology of dancing primarily in its goals. If the goal is to understand the dance, then it is probably dance history. If the purpose of the research is to understand what dancing tells us about a culture and/or the impacts of culture on dancing, then it becomes an anthropological approach to dance. Anthropologists may study a culture's dances as these interact with the economy, politics, social structure, gender, identity, and/or underlying value systems. The study of dancing from an anthropological perspective varies with the problem that motivates the research (Spencer 1985). Good, but dated, introductions to the field are *The Anthropology of Dance* (Royce 1977) and *To Dance is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication* (Hanna 1987). Several approaches will be discussed below. These include early functionalist studies, approaches based on linguistic models, work that focuses on motor behavior, and studies of the historical and political dimensions of dancing, among others.

EARLY STUDIES OF DANCING BY ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead (1942) pioneered in the use of film and photography in ethnographic research. Their work on trance and dance in Bali, conducted from 1936–1938, was intended to support a theory of culture and personality that is no longer considered valid by anthropologists. Yet, this early research provided an important building block for subsequent research in dance as well as for the use of film in anthropology.

Other early anthropologists, such as A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1948), Franziska Boas (1972), and Gertrude Kurath (1960), were most interested in the social functions of dancing. Radcliffe-Brown concluded that dancing is a cohesive force, producing a level of unity and community that is felt by all. He argued that dancing achieves these functions by involving the whole body and concentration of the dancer, by the fact that dancers submit to the constraints and rhythm of custom (that is, community action), and by generating a collective feeling of "harmony" and well-being (1948:148). E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1965) further developed these ideas by paying attention to the contexts of dancing, leadership, and organization within dances, musical accompaniment, as well as detailed descriptions of the movements of each dance. He diverged from Radcliffe-Brown's implication that dancing is always cohesive by pointing out that not everyone in the community participates in a dance and that dances could be sites of conflict as well as solidarity. James Fernandez (1975–1976), who studied the social significance of dance exchanges in West Africa, wrote that "this practice serves to link otherwise disparate groups" (1975–1976:6). Other scholars have focused on historical changes and political implications of dancing in various societies. Notable among these are Joanne Kealiinohomoku (1976), Yvonne Daniel (1995), Thomas F. DeFrantz (2002), Anthony Shay (2002), Kimberly DaCosta Holton (2005), and William Washabaugh (1996, 1998). These studies point to the importance of dancing in social life.

DANCING AS SEEN THROUGH LINGUISTIC, SEMIOTIC, AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL LENSES

A number of researchers have explored the potential significance of dancing beyond issues of social, political, and economic function. They have applied linguistic, semiotic, and phenomenological models to the study of dancing in culture. Adrienne Kaeppler's application of linguistic theory to dances in Tonga are well known (1967, 1971, 1972, 1978, 1985, 1993). She abstracts a "grammar" of Tongan dance through analysis of the dance structure and isolates dance movements into analogs of phonemes, which she calls kinemes. This approach works well for dance traditions in which particular movements carry semantic meaning. Kaeppler's work is interesting for demonstrating new applications to linguistic theory and method, but it does not help anthropologists understand underlying values.

In 1973, I applied linguistic concepts elaborated by Roman Jakobson to dance parameters identified by Rudolf Laban to see if these could illuminate relationships between Balinese dancing and underlying values as described in the literature on Bali (Adra 1973). This is known as a semiotic approach to dancing. It treats dancing as one of many communicative modes in society and as a metaphor of cultural relations. Anca Giurchescu (1974, 1994); Sally Ann Ness (1987, 1990, 1992); Susan Rasmussen (1994); and Louis Hieb (1974) also apply semiotic models to dancing.

Hieb elaborates on this approach. Starting with the observation that "it is by no means apparent what dance does or what dance says," he first defines dance as:

> A multi-dimensional phenomenon which includes not simply patterned movement in space, but also as significant, the use of color and sound, the social and ritual role of the participants, the social and religious meaning of the dance as understood by the people themselves, the place of dance in a sequence or cycle of ritual activities, and the relationship of this symbolic activity to other symbol systems. (1974:222)

Hieb applies the semiotic concepts of "code" and "distinctive features" to a discussion of Pueblo dances of the American Southwest, arguing that elements used in ritual dance are selected from ways of ordering the world based on Pueblo notions of space, time, color, and number. The "message" of dance is the part it plays in expressing certain interdependencies between this world and the world of the spirits. When it is incorporated into prayer, dancing is part of a reciprocal relationship between man and the spirits. Thus, understanding Pueblo dancing helps to understand local (cultural) assumptions, and the dancing itself cannot be understood except in the context of a wider understanding of its cultural context.

Likewise, in my own work, I treat dancing as a metaphor of cultural relations. I argue that the principles of organization, which give a culture its sense of coherence and predictability and distinguish it from other cultures, are constructed, replicated, and affirmed in the principles that define that culture's performance styles. This view necessitates that culture be conceptualized in terms of particular ways of ordering the elements of social life rather than mere collections of traits or symbols.[14] Other anthropologists who have written about dancing as a metaphor of underlying cultural principles include Sally Ann Ness (1987, 1990, 1992), Edward Schieffelin (2005), John Blacking (1985), Yoshihikio Ikegami (1971), Richard A. Waterman (1962), Alfred Gell (1975, 1985), and O. S. Ajayi (1998).

In a corrective to overrationalizing the "meanings" of dancing and other body behavior, Michael Jackson (1989) turns to phenomenology. He points out that movement does not always "stand for" something that can be verbalized. The movement itself may have meaning that is prior to, or outside of, verbal explanation. Franca Tamisari's (2005) research in an Indigenous Australian community in Arnhem Land develops this approach with a discussion of a farewell ritual conducted for her when she left the field.

APPROACHES THAT FOCUS ON MOTOR BEHAVIOR

An approach to the cross-cultural study of dancing known as choreometrics attracted considerable interest in the 1970s and 1980s. It was developed by Alan Lomax, a folklorist with an expertise in folk song, and dance analysts Forrestine Paulay and Irmgard Bartenieff (Lomax, Bartenieff, and Paulay 1968). None of these researchers were trained as anthropologists. In order to demonstrate that dance style reflects everyday behavior, they plotted film clips of dancing from around the world using cross-cultural categories developed by George Murdock in the Human Relations Area Files (Lomax 1977a, b, c). Although there is little doubt

14. A number of anthropologists have discussed the ways that other artistic forms reproduce patterns fundamental to a culture. On painting in Bali, see Gregory Bateson (1972), and on poetry in Yemen, see Steven Caton (1990). James Fernandez (1966, 1977) found that principles of spatial organization in Fang architecture, village layout, and statues, are reproduced in principles of Fang social organization. Others include Adams (1973), Sugarman (1989), Turino (1989), Urban (1997), and Wade (1976, 1998).

that dancing elaborates everyday movement vocabularies, as Lomax, Bartenieff, and Paulay argue, they unfortunately used an outdated evolutionary typology of culture that anthropologists do not support. A major anthropological criticism of this work is that culture is not defined, nor is it distinguished from ecology or geographic location. Another problem is that isolated traits—such as types of stepping, the way that dancers display their palms, or the way they hold their torsos—are assumed to define a style. Although these aspects of dance style are important, dance is not simply a collection of traits. What is relevant to any study of style is the way its various components are combined, and this is not dealt with in choreometrics. The choreometric project does not account either for culture change or for diversity within a culture. Examples of dances that do not reflect everyday behavior are ignored or glossed over. Consequently, a number of anthropologists have published critiques of choreometrics, including Suzanne Youngerman (1974), Joanne Kealiinohomoku (1974a), and Drid Williams (1974).

One carefully designed choreometric study does support Lomax's thesis, however. Allison Jablonko (1968:117) identified a set of movement patterns used in the daily activities of the Maring of Papua New Guinea. These are also repeated in all of the instances of local dancing that she analyzed. Her work helped establish the idea that distinct or "signature" movement patterns characterize different societies as Lomax tried to show through choreometrics.[15]

Drid Williams' (1982, 2004) "semasiology" focuses primarily on human movement and not on dance as an aesthetic form. Basic to her approach is the application of Labanotation (discussed below) to the documentation of all movements studied. She sees this as a first step in the development of movement literacy, similar to literacy in language or music notation. It cannot be denied that an understanding of Labanotation improves the researcher's sensitivity to movement and allows groups of movement to be compared with each other. What is less clear is how a semasiological analysis will help us learn more about culture and social organization.

OTHER ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO DANCING

Although they are numerous, the approaches described so far do not exhaust the range of topics explored by anthropologists interested in dancing. The relationships between dance and identity have been studied by Paul Austerlitz (1997), Yvonne Daniel (1995), Thomas F. DeFrantz (2002), Zoila S. Mendoza (2000), and the various contributors to *Caribbean Dance from Abakua to Zouk: How Movement Shapes Identity* (Sloat 2002). Other scholars have focused on gender relations in dance (e.g., William Washabaugh 1998). Karin van Nieuwkerk (1995) has studied gender in relation to the lives of professional dancers in Egypt. Some scholars are interested in the global discourse surrounding dance. Among these are Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young (2005), who have edited a comprehensive volume on the various "histories" of oriental belly dancing. Several scholars have studied folkloric dance troupes, including Anthony Shay (2002), Kimberly DaCosta Holton (2005), and Lois E. Wilcken (2002).

SUMMARY

The approaches outlined above are not mutually exclusive. Studies of dancing and identity may also focus on historical and political impacts of, and on,

15. A history of choreometrics and ongoing project updates can be found at www.culturalequity.org/index.html.

dancing. They may treat dancing as a metaphor. The study of professional dancers often involves an investigation of gender issues; and linguistic models take history and context into account. The diversity of anthropological approaches to dance reflect the various interests of the researchers. Not all are interested in underlying values and culture. Some focus on the role of dancing in politics or economics; others in potential applications of linguistic models. Taken together, these studies enhance our understanding of the social, cultural, and historical significance of dancing, as well as the reciprocal impact of social and cultural forces on dancing.

METHODS IN THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF DANCING

The anthropological study of dancing requires field research on dance events and an understanding of their cultural contexts that are best acquired through long-term participant observation. Along with a study of the dances performed in a community, the researcher needs to live in the community for an extended period of time to develop an appreciation for the way the community operates and how its members interact with each other. Major economic, political, and environmental systems and the pressures these exert on the community should be understood. It is not only important to understand when and how people dance but also how dance events and spaces relate to their everyday lives and how individuals perceive these dance events.

In order to develop a deeper kinesthetic appreciation of the dancing, the researcher should learn the dances performed. First, it is much easier to describe a dance that one has learned to perform. Second, performing a dance provides the researcher with a dancer's perspective: what does the dance feel like? What kind of body attitude is required to perform the dance successfully? Which rules must be followed and which are flexible? Is improvisation allowed and under which conditions? What is the dancer's relationship to the audience? To the musicians? Finally, learning the dances signals to the people studied that the researcher appreciates their art form. Although most Yemenis in Al-Ahjur are much more proficient dancers than I, my efforts at performing Yemeni dances are always met with sincere and enthusiastic appreciation.

DOCUMENTING DANCES

Documentation of the dances performed is important. Film is necessary. When filming dancing for social research, it is important to film the entire dance, showing the dancers' whole bodies and including as much contextual information as possible. Some form of movement notation is useful. A large number of notation systems are available; they differ in the ways they look at movement, how they describe movement, and how much detail they include (Guest 1998b:683). The choice of notation system depends largely on the researcher's interests. Some forms of dance notation have been digitalized and motion capture systems developed. (Box 10.1 provides a preliminary list of Web sites devoted to dance notation.) For example, Benesh Notation is often used for studies of ballet, and some other forms of notation have been adapted to the study of particular national dance forms (Guest 1998b). The most popular systems appear to be Labanotation and its variations (Guest 1998a, 2005; Maletic 1998) and Benesh Notation (Inman 1998). Williams

(1982, 2004) strongly recommends Labanotation. This is a notation system developed by Rudolf Laban in which every single movement is documented. It is possible to reproduce the steps of a dance from a Labanotation score.

There are problems with the use of Labanotation in social research, however. It is tedious to apply, few scholars understand it, and it is not at all clear how steps and particular movements are related to culture or social organization. Labanotation is unsurpassed if the purpose of the study is to make an inventory of all the movements. But what do we learn about culture and society from such an exhaustive inventory? Motif Description, developed by Ann Hutchinson Guest, is an adaptation of Labanotation that records only the essential aspects of a movement sequence (Guest 1983). This may be more conducive to social science research, depending on the research goals.

Systems that incorporate Laban's qualitative analysis of movement (Laban Movement Analysis) may be more relevant to research on underlying values than Labanotation. As demonstrated by several studies (Adra 1973; Ness 1987, 1990, 1992), a qualitative analysis of dance movements can shed light on the cultural implications of dancing as well as on changes in dancing behavior. Documentation based on Laban Movement Analysis shares with Labanotation the advantage that different sets of movements can be compared to each other.

CONCLUSION

Dancing is nearly universal and is primarily an aesthetic form. As with other artistic forms, what is most important is the medium itself. Even if there are "practical" reasons for dancing (for example, for wages), the act of dancing is about movement and its exploration. Like all other behaviors, dancing is closely tied to its social and cultural contexts. Who dances, when, where, in the presence of whom, varies with culture. The importance given to dancing also varies cross-culturally. In some places dancing is central to community life; in others, such as some communities in the United States, it is a marginal leisure activity.

Anthropologists who study dance focus on different aspects of dancing behavior according to their theoretical interests. My own interest is in what we can learn about a culture through analyzing its dances. Results of my research in a highland community in Yemen indicate that the two complementary genres of dancing performed in the community affirm a complementarity in the culture between cooperative behavior and autonomy. Through dancing, people acquire experientially the values of cooperation in public and self-expression at home and other intimate settings.

Other approaches to the anthropological study of dancing include investigations of the social functions of dancing, applications of linguistic models to dances, and explorations of the relationships between dancing and identity, gender relations, political movements, and economic aspects of professional dancing. The method chosen by researchers to document dances varies according to their research needs. Film is always useful. Labanotation is used when one wishes to inventory all the movements of a dance. Motif Description and Laban Movement Analysis are more amenable to semiotic approaches. Some researchers have developed their own forms of notation to study particular genres of dance. In the final analysis, it is movement that moves a dancer.

BOX 10.1

WEB SITES DEVOTED TO DANCE NOTATION	Increasingly, notation systems are being digitalized and motion capture systems developed.
WEB SITES DEVOTED TO LABANOTATON	**Calaban.** http://aweb.bham.ac.uk/calaban/frame.htm **The Dance Notation Bureau Homepage.** http://dancenotation.org/DNB/lnbasics/frame0.html **New York University Movement Research Group.** http://movement.nyu.edu/projects/lma/studio.html **LED and LINTEL, a Windows Mini-Editor and Interpreter for Labanotation.** http://www-staff.it.uts.edu.au/-don/pubs/led.html **Labanwriter for Macintosh.** http://dance.osu.edu/3_research_gallery/laban_writer.html Labanatory. http://labanatory.com/
WEB SITES DEVOTED TO MOTIF DESCRIPTION	**Dance Notation Bureau.** http://dancenotation.org/DNB/lnbasics/frame0.html **Motif Description, Wikipedia.** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motif_Description
WEB SITES DEVOTED TO EFFORT-SHAPE	**For Effort-Shape, see the EMOTE Model for Effort and Shape.** http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=344779.352172
BENESH NOTATION	**For PC Windows software made for Benesh notation, see the Benesh Institute Web site.** http://www.benesh.org/BNAbout_Benesh.html

SUGGESTED PROJECTS FOR STUDENTS

1 Pretend you are a Yemeni anthropologist interested in studying dance genres in your hometown. Design a study that outlines what you would need to know. Include the following questions: who dances and who does not? Why? Which spaces are considered appropriate to dance in? How are these spaces used when not used for dancing? When do people dance? What would they do in this time slot if not dancing? Is this primarily a spectator or participant activity? What are the economic implications of this dance? Does anyone make money through dance events? Is the dance political? What does it tell you about gender relations in this society?

2 Choose a dance you enjoy or know about and apply the parameters listed by Hieb (1974:222) and cited above in this chapter. Describe the dance's movements; its use of color, sound, touch, or associated smells; the clothes worn by the dancers and how these compare with the clothes they wear when not dancing; the social status of dancers; how people talk about the dance and the values they attach to it. Do they think of the dance as good or evil? Where does this dance fit in the lives of dancers and others in the society?

3 From the discussion of approaches to the study of dancing, choose two references representing different approaches. After reading the two works, apply each approach to a dance you enjoy. Then evaluate how each approach influences the kinds of questions you ask and the kinds of information you uncover about the dance. How does each approach help you understand the place of dancing in your society? What are its limitations?

4 Investigate the history of a dance you enjoy or know about. How has it changed through time? What societal changes have influenced this dance? In what way has the dance affected its society?

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