Global Moves

Belly Dance as an Extra/Ordinary Space to Explore Social Paradigms in Egypt and Around the World

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Abstract/Preface

This book is a study of how dancers throughout the world use Egypt as a reference point for situating themselves within the global belly dance community and how Egypt gets romanticized and fantasized in global narratives about belly dance. I address the purpose that dance serves as an expression of joy in Egyptian culture as well as its potential to be a site for defining appropriate gendered behavior, a space for competition (friendly or unfriendly), and even a tool of resistance as cultural norms shift. I provide a comparative analysis of how dancers in the international dance community utilize dance for similar purposes, particularly those related to using dance as a site for questioning existing social paradigms, as well as the ways in which dance serves different roles for global belly dancers than it does within Egyptian society.

All types of dance provide a space outside ordinary life to challenge or to uphold predominant social paradigms. One effect of globalization is the increase in worldwide exposure of local dance forms from many regions. These not only fuse to create new forms but operate alongside one another in what can be seen as a global marketplace of dance. Different dances are then imbued with values and norms of the receiving culture. Choosing to dance in non-local styles becomes a reflection of a locally value-based choice. This book examines the way globalization via cultural, economic, and technological vehicles affects a culturally rich, values-laden social phenomenon practiced in the Middle East and by an increasing international

community. The book has a particular focus on paradigms of gender that are explored in dancing and in community discussions about dance.

Introduction: Belly Dance and Globalized Performing Arts

This is a book about how dancers throughout the world use Egypt as a reference point for situating themselves within the global belly dance community. It is about how Egypt gets romanticized and fantasized in global narratives about belly dance. It is about the purpose that dance serves as an expression of joy in Egyptian culture as well as its potential to be a site for defining appropriate gendered behavior, a space for competition, and even a tool of resistance to hasten shifting cultural norms. It is a comparative analysis of how dancers in the international dance community utilize dance for similar purposes, particularly those related to using dance as a site for questioning existing social paradigms, as well as the ways in which dance serves different roles for global belly dancers than it does within Egyptian society. These subjects can also be framed as the following questions:

1. How do dancers in the international belly dance community engage with social norms within Egypt? This question incorporates both dancers living and working in Cairo and members of the belly dance diaspora around the globe.

2. What is the significance of authenticity in framing debates about ephemeral cultural products like

dance?

3. What is the relationship between new globalizing technologies such as the internet, which are helping decrease the prominence of geographic boundaries, and new types of communities such as the international belly dance community?

4. How can gender theory provide a framework for analyzing the development of identity-forming cultural phenomena such as belly dancing? Gender theory addresses questions about gender by looking at its relationship with multiple identity-forming categories and sites of contestation like race, class and age. This book expands those categories to include the way people identify themselves through their hobbies and vocations, focusing specifically on belly dance.

To answer these questions I use a mixture of theoretical discussion, analysis of previously existing literature, and personal experiences, both my own and that of my research participants. I will begin with a pair of personal anecdotes to put my research experience in context.

On Beginnings and Endings

As I completed the doctoral research that led to this book, I was reminded of two events that took place before my fieldwork began and just as it was coming to a close. They

serve to illustrate how the nature of planned research can change dramatically in the course of carrying it out.

Before I officially started my fieldwork in Cairo in September 2008, I went there for the first time in April of that year to take a one-month course in the Egyptian dialect of Arabic. Many fortuitous things happened on that first initial foray into the field, including my introductory meeting with the person who became my principal research informant for the time I spent in Cairo, Scottish dancer and teacher Lorna Gow. Another auspicious event happened during a brief three-day trip to Luxor for the spring holiday Sham el-Nessim. Sham el-Nessim, which means "breathing the air," is believed to have roots in Pharaonic planting celebrations at the beginning of the growing season. It is a public holiday celebrated by all Egyptians on the first Monday after Coptic Easter every year.

I had never seen so many people outdoors in Egypt as I did that day, though my subsequent experiences with Ramadan crowds in Cairo made what I describe here look like a relatively small gathering. Every patch of available greenery and every stretch of sidewalk, apart from a narrow path for foot traffic, was completely enveloped by picnicking families. I couldn't tell where one party of celebrants left off and another began; an atmosphere of convivial hospitality and shared joy pervaded throughout. The main square in Luxor was not quite as jam-packed and there was enough space for children and teenagers to play football and kick-the-can. My travelling companion and I found a rooftop terrace restaurant which had a view of the main square and Luxor temple. As we watched, a group

of young men in a mix of t-shirts, traditional galabeyas, and button-down shirts began to gather seemingly spontaneously from the smaller groups of people that were sitting in the courtyard. One of them had a drum. He began to play.

A circle of men formed, with some women and younger children standing outside the crowd around the edges. The men began to dance, taking it in turns to move into the centre of the circle. When not dancing in the centre, they clapped time with the drum while rocking back and forth in the crowd. As the drumming and dancing continued, the crowd multiplied until the circle was so close I could only see the dancers' upper bodies. Various members of the crowd jumped in at different times. Eventually the crowd began to drift away and the man with the drum left.

Figure 1: Men dancing and clapping in Luxor for Sham el-Nessim.

Nothing could have been more calculated to get me excited and motivated about the research I planned to start in September—looking at dance in Egyptian social contexts, focusing especially on spontaneous dancing at events like weddings, haflas and public celebrations. I came out of that preliminary trip feeling that even though I might face some difficulties, I could at least be sure I was on the right track and that based on what I had seen I would be able to gather enough data relevant to my chosen field.

A year and a half later, I found myself in a cubicle in the public restroom at Waterloo Station donning a costume I had bought the day before. Nearby were Lorna Gow, who I mentioned previously, and Eleanor Keen, another

research participant. As I am sure you are wondering now, at the time I could only wonder at how on earth I had gotten myself there.

Unbeknownst to myself, Lorna, Eleanor and the other dancers planning to meet us, that turned out to be the day of the Mayor's Thames Festival on South Bank. We were there for what they were calling a "bellymob"—a flash mob of belly dancers. A flash mob is a group of people who suddenly gather in a public place and, against the expectations of spectators who are not involved, begin to somehow act in concert—be that pillow fighting, singing "Do Re Mi" from *The Sound of Music*, or having a lightsaber battle. These are all examples of previous flash mobs: pillow fights are a fairly common choice and there are news reports of pillow flash mobs in several United States cities for International Pillow Fight Day on 3 April 2010; 23 March 2009 saw the Do Re Mi flashmob in Antwerp's central train station (though the uninitiated crowd would have experienced this as a flash mob, since this event was choreographed as a publicity stunt it is arguable whether this really counts as a flash mob); and a lightsaber battle took place in Bristol's Cabot Circus shopping centre on 13 February 2010. I had arrived in London a couple of days before the bellymob planning to participate in a workshop with Lorna, who was in town to teach and who I had not seen since leaving Egypt the previous November, and to attend the hafla that Eleanor and her colleague Nafeeseh Rahi-Young organized regularly in London, Saqarah. Saqarah is not at time of writing a monthly event, but had been arranged on a quarterly or monthly basis for four years until May 2011.

The bellymob was a serendipitous diversion.

Figure 2: Eleanor Keen and Lorna Gow waiting for other dancers to arrive before the bellymob.

How did the research project that I intended to commence concerning dance as a signifier of social and political paradigms within Egyptian society became a study about the international belly dance community in Cairo and the relationship that the global belly dance community has with Cairo? This development was as unexpected to me as finding myself becostumed and waiting for other dancers to arrive for the bellymob under the clock in Waterloo Station on that day in September 2009. However, I believe this modification was a positive one for many reasons. Principal among these is the shifting nature of

ethnographic research: in a globalized world it is no longer possible to examine existing communities on a local level without looking at influences that are non-local, and my research now reflects this. Further, through the power of technology, communities are now able to form in ways that are not bounded by geography much more easily than at any time in the past. Beyond existing conceptions of transnational groups that mainly examine migration, studying these types of communities requires engaging with them in multiple physical localities. Scholars need to understand how these groups contact one another, how they negotiate group boundaries, and how they transmit knowledge about the identity-forming subject that brings them together, whether this be a hobby, profession, language, cultural or ethnic background, or a shared bodily experience like a disability. Given the largely female-oriented nature of the belly dance community, my research can also be seen in the light of a contribution to a feminist look at globalization(Nagar, Lawson et al., 2002).

Critical Fieldwork and Theoretical Reflections

When I first designed my fieldwork plan, I intended to spend at least nine months in Egypt examining dance in a social context within Cairene society. I was unable to carry out this plan for reasons I am about to describe. However, despite the difficulties I encountered, I believe that my experiences there were lengthy enough and pro-

found enough to provide insight on dance in Egypt, though no longer in a specifically social context. I would agree with critics who might claim that I did not spend an adequate amount of time in Egypt to conduct a complete ethnography there: instead I conducted an ethnography of the foreign dance community in Egypt and the Middle Eastern dance community in North America and Britain. This forced change brought the dimension of globalization into my research.

On paper, in methodology training courses and in the methodology sections of completed academic works, the process of fieldwork appears relatively straightforward: write the fieldwork plan, enact the fieldwork plan, come back and write up results of the fieldwork, all of which were anticipated in the fieldwork plan. Of course, every fieldwork plan must anticipate potential difficulties and every finished thesis must address unexpected problems and diversions experienced during fieldwork. However, the raw frustrations, jerry-rigged solutions and eureka moments experienced in the realities of enacting the research plan are often distilled or described dispassionately when it comes time for writing-up.

For the most part, this is done with good reason: the purpose of research, broadly, is to advance human knowledge, and those diversions have not contributed to the finished product. It would be too confusing and time-consuming to include them all; readers would never understand what the conclusions actually were if we devoted time to talking about those hours spent pursuing a task that ultimately proved fruitless. And there, really, is the heart

of the current academic consensus: if an activity did not advance the purpose of the research, then it was a futile exercise and therefore there is no value to be had in discussing it. Analyses of fieldwork methodology have begun to call for more candid information about the difficulties, diversions and even dangers of field research and it must be said that, though I still think this body of literature is insufficiently referred to when preparing new researchers for the challenges of fieldwork, descriptions of these types of fieldwork experiences continue to grow more common (Spindler and Spindler, 1969; Wintrob, 1969; Wax, 1971; Green, Barbour et al., 1993; Bibars, 1999; Markowitz and Ashkenazi, 1999; Simpson and Thomas, 2003; Macaulay, 2004).

Like the researchers I cite above, I believe that there is intrinsic value in the unexpected, even occasionally unfortunate, things that happen during research. First, these digressions are completely unavoidable. Inherent in the nature of PhD research is its novelty: every researcher is undertaking a new and unique challenge. Naturally this means that at the outset, just like any task undertaken for the very first time, no researcher has a truly clear idea of how to get to the finish or even where they might visit along the way. Of course researchers use established techniques to gather and to scrutinize data, whether those tools are microscopes, mathematical formulae or literary analysis. However, these techniques must be applied to an original area of research in order for the ensuing written conclusions to be considered valid, meaning that there is no certainty of what may emerge when known methodologies

are implemented.

Consequently, discussions of the conflicts and unexpected mishaps that arise while executing the research plan contribute to general knowledge about what to expect when undertaking the mysterious and esoteric practice of research, particularly field research. While discussions of these events do exist, I believe it would be beneficial to provide a greater degree of frankness about the uncertainties and frustrations arising from these unanticipated situations. Scientific discourse in the public mind is absolutist in tone, implying certainty and clarity where the reality during research may have been messy and confusing. Focusing more on the process of research as well as the conclusions derived from it will add to public understanding of reasonable interpretations of researchers' conclusions. Also, such examinations would be especially beneficial to novice researchers, who may then approach chaotic situations arising from their own research better prepared. The particulars of difficulties that will arise during each researcher's investigations will be unique; nevertheless, adequate preparation for these intense and life-changing experiences would be fostered by a discussion of the tools, both tangible and cerebral, required to respond to such events when they occur.

A further reason to encourage such discussion is that in the process of research it may not always be clear what the next step along the path will be. Looking back, the solution to a given problem may seem obvious, and the researcher may feel that other attempts which did not result in the desired answer were pointless and detracted

from the attempt in some way. In actual fact, most of the time these so-called diversions really contributed some important element to the resolution of the problem, and therefore cannot really be considered diversions at all.

When I arrived in Cairo to commence what I planned to be nine months of fieldwork, everything that could possibly go wrong went wrong. I became ill, I had to move out of the housing I had arranged in advance because, in addition to its listing seriously to one side and developing a backed-up drain the day I moved in, I stopped feeling safe in my houseboat when one of my roommates told me the ferry had run into it a couple days before. This is not something I had ever anticipated having to explain to my supervisor in a fieldwork update. It took me a long time to find a new place to live because it was the middle of Ramadan, which meant working hours were at very unusual times, and because I was a single foreign woman trying to find a place to live alone. This came as a surprise to me as my supervisor had not experienced such problems when she lived on her own in Cairo in the 1990s. I also discovered by going there that the AUC department with which I was supposed to have a fellowship had moved thirty miles out into the desert and wasn't yet functioning because it was still under construction, and to round everything off, my bank card got swallowed by an ATM.

Because of Ramadan many of my expatriate friends were out of the country, so for the first two weeks I really felt I was on my own, though in reality two female friends/mentors who had not left for the holiday were available to sympathize, advise and even on one occasion cook me

dinner. Eventually I managed to resolve all of these issues, but I distinctly remember feeling very miserable that not only were all these events presenting themselves to me one after the other, but that it was very much my own choice to come to Cairo and I didn't have to be experiencing these things if I didn't want to. This left me with the very pressing question of what on earth I thought I was doing there, and how I was ever going to begin my fieldwork if I couldn't even manage to move out of my hotel. But as I said, I eventually dealt with all of those issues and began the exciting process of figuring how to begin actually gathering some data.

All of what I described was difficult, but none of it was my PhD-changing experience. About a month after I arrived, there was a pollution-based dust storm that brought a black cloud down over the city so thick it wasn't possible to see buildings a block away. This brought on an asthma attack. The symptoms didn't disappear and after a few days I wound up in the emergency room of the hospital nearest my house. Eventually, I was medically advised to stay indoors and avoid locations where people were smoking. This presented a formidable problem: I have yet to meet an Egyptian adult who does not smoke, and my research obviously required me to leave my house in order to make observations.

It became clear that I was physically incapable of carrying out the fieldwork I had planned, and would have to find another way to complete my PhD. For a brief period I feared the worst, believing wholeheartedly that I had come up against an intractable barrier. Fortunately,

my supervisor was able to explain that it is quite normal to come up against obstacles which require adjusting the fieldwork plan. It wasn't that I had to abandon my whole PhD, I just had to work up an entirely new proposal.

This proposal involved me focusing on a population within Cairo where I already had significant contacts: expatriate dancers living and working there. Focusing on them meant I could commence gathering interviews immediately and that I could conduct them all in English instead of waiting for my Arabic to improve with time. I also planned to leave Egypt much earlier than I had originally intended in order to carry out fieldwork in Egyptian dance communities in the United States and Britain. In some ways this was a major shift: instead of examining Egyptian dance by situating it within Egyptian culture, I was now looking at the globalization of this cultural signifier and how it changes when moving into new cultures. But in other ways, the changes were less drastic: I was still spending time in Egypt and still examining the cultural significance of dance.

It left me heavy-hearted to cut my ties to my first research plan. But this is where my point about diversions actually contributing to the overall body of research becomes relevant: without the experience of formulating a well-constructed research plan while in the composed atmosphere of my preliminary methodological preparation, I would never have been able to produce a new one while in a place of fear and doubt.

Most elements of the original plan were abandoned out of necessity, meaning that what became important

suddenly was the competency to form a new workable plan. Additionally, what little fieldwork I had managed to complete up to that point also led to my understanding of what would be the best way to proceed: not every experience I had observed would become useful data in the end, but as a result of those events it became clear which would be fruitful avenues of exploration and which I could stop pursuing.

A key resource I depended on during that period of transition was the strong support network I had put in place before embarking on my fieldwork. My support came from my supervisor, Dr. Nadje Al-Ali, and from the research contacts and friends I had made in Egypt before settling there for an extended period, principally Lorna Gow and Sara Farouk Ahmed, both of whom will be introduced as research participants later in this chapter. This is a vital factor in any researchers' success: having a system in place to go to for help when the unthinkable becomes the unavoidable.

Though at first I found the prospect of writing up a new research proposal and undertaking a new line of work daunting, in the end I found it liberating and invigorating. The new research plan suited my abilities and areas of expertise more fully, because I had a better understanding of what the possibilities and necessities of my situation were. I could complete this plan with more confidence than the one I had left behind, and my confidence increased from the fact that I felt I had faced a truly formidable problem and been able to overcome it. On returning from my fieldwork I was able to have a number of informal

conversations with my colleagues and with more senior researchers about their own research experiences. These conversations about fieldwork, lab work, experiments and calculations confirmed that most researchers experience dead ends and might-have-beens. What looks like a clear path in the end may have appeared tenuous and meandering while working it out. I reiterate my conviction that it would be beneficial for future researchers to be aware through more thorough discussion of this topic that such daunting obstacles are a potential part of their research; possibly even the most unexpectedly rewarding part in the end.

Compared to the difficulties I experienced in Cairo, the fieldwork problems I encountered in the United States and Britain were relatively minor. Even so, not everything was straightforward. Upon arriving in the United States, I tried to plan some short research trips to different states and to Canada in order to have a diverse research sample. Unfortunately I discovered that the dance resources I had become familiar with in New York where I lived from 2003 to 2005 were no longer there: Belly Dance NY, a formidable web resource for dancers in the metropolitan area and beyond, had been shut down by its owner; Fazil's Studio where I once took classes was slated for demolition; and the famous Café Figaro on Bleecker Street which held belly dance shows with live music every Sunday night had shut its doors (Grey; Mooney, Aug 22 2008; Dunning, February 9 2008). While I know that New York remains full of resources for belly dancers of all styles, I was reluctant to try making contacts and conducting interviews over a short

period. I decided to focus my efforts on attending belly dance conventions and workshops. My first effort, the International Belly Dance Conference of Canada (IBCC), turned out to be a biennial event not scheduled to be held in 2009. Eventually I was able to attend Rakkasah West, where I conducted interviews with two prominent male belly dancers, Zorba and Jim Boz. I also interviewed dancers at a new belly dance studio opening in Saint Petersburg, Florida, and dancers based in the Orlando metropolitan area. In Britain my contacts were principally facilitated through the Saqarah hafla organizers, Nafeeseh Rahi-Young and Eleanor Keen, who I had met in Cairo when they attended the Nile Group Festival in November 2008.

While the vast majority of people who I asked to participate in my research were happy to do so, I did have a few negative responses. When I started my fieldwork in Cairo every person I asked was interested in and excited about my research, thus leading to unrealistic expectations when I started working outside Egypt. In the main, people who were not interested simply did not respond to my requests for interviews when I asked, usually via email. There were also two or three people who, after corresponding with me, decided not to participate. I suspect this largely had to do with their doubts of what my ultimate goal is through this project, and whether this will contradict their personal experiences or the validity of their beliefs on topics like what belly dance should be called, whether it is traditionally performed by everyone or only by women, and how important it is to situate belly dance with refer-

ence to 'authentic' Egyptian (or to another Middle Eastern) culture. I put the term 'authenticity' in scare quotes for two reasons[1]: first because I am wary of the idea that any cultural product, particularly an ephemeral one like dance, can be reduced to a singular geographic location and time period, which is what is usually at the heart of definitions of authenticity. Secondly, a desire for 'authenticity' in a dancer's performance is not necessarily a desire even for what I described above: often what is described or experienced as 'authentic' is, rather, a fantasy predicated on cues that the viewer has come to associate with 'authenticity'. In exploring the idea of fantastical imagery in the world of belly dance, discussed at length in chapter five, I owe a great deal to Said's Orientalism (Said, 2003), though on many levels his analysis of dance within the framework of colonialist discourse in that work is incomplete (Garber, 1992: 341; Boone, 1995: 92-93; Karayanni, 2004: 45, 64).

Though it would have been beneficial to conduct personal interviews with people whose views differed radically from mine on topics like authenticity, nomenclature, and the gendered nature of belly dance for the purpose of balancing perspective, I feel contrasting views are amply covered through the wide body of popular literature on belly dance. I include in this not only books such as Tina Hobin's Belly Dance: the Dance of Mother Earth, Rosina Fawzia Al-Rawi's Grandmother's Secrets: the Ancient Rituals and Healing Power of Belly Dancing, and Wendy Buonaventura's Serpent of the Nile: Women and Dance in the Arab World, (Buonaventura, 1998; Al-Rawi, 2003; Hobin, 2003) to name a few, but also the articles on dancers'

personal websites, in trade publications like Habibi and Yallah magazines, and the many, many online forums for discussing belly dance and hashing out a consensus (or continuing to foment disagreement) on issues important within the belly dance community.

Field Methods: The Nuts and Bolts

Through the course of my fieldwork in Egypt and the United States, which took place between September 2008 and September 2009, I carried out fourteen in-depth interviews with sixteen participants totaling just over twenty hours. Twelve of these were with women, six in Cairo and six in the United States, and three with men, all in the US. Nationally, my participants were four British women, one Hungarian woman, a French woman, a woman from the Dominican Republic, six American women, and three American men. One participant I corresponded with through email only.

I attended approximately 27 hours of professional music and dance performances, including concerts and dance shows at cultural centers and hotels, and 31 hours of amateur performances, including free community festivals and student showcases at haflas. I also witnessed several hours of spontaneous dance performance at weddings, haflas, festivals, and by other audience members at professional performances. It is difficult to estimate the total time of these spontaneous performances, but spontaneous dancing took place on at least twelve separate occasions. This

excludes the social dancing that I witnessed in Egypt other than that which could be quantified as raqs sharqi, though I frequently attended salsa dancing workshops and events held in various venues throughout Cairo, which were attended by Egyptians and expatriates alike, with friends who were also involved in the world of professional belly dancing, and there made observations about the paradigms of Egyptian social dancing.

If I were to estimate the number of hours of fieldwork completed with reference to all-day events like my overall time in Egypt, at dance festivals, and during my visit to Disney World, it would be a purely abstract notion. Though the actual performances were discrete parts of these overall events, in these situations I was constantly gathering information about the context in which dance is performed and what it means or how it is used within that context. On one occasion I spent the day, around ten hours, with a group of tourists visiting Cairo for the specific purpose of obtaining new costumes, props, music, and videos. Though the day itself did not include a performance, it was an occasion that revolved specifically and entirely around belly dancing. I also spent a great deal of social time with my friend and research participant Lorna Gow. Though I interviewed her formally only once, we have had a constant dialogue since April 2008 about belly dance, life in Egypt as a dancer, and her frequent trips home to work in Scotland. While I was in Egypt the thread of our conversation constantly turned to belly dance, her blog entries remain a source of information from Egypt, and I still e-mail her frequently for social

reasons as well as to continue to ask questions about dance. Lorna also introduced me to several of the women I later interviewed in Cairo including Nafeeseh Rahi-Young and Eleanor Keen, who became major sources of information when I returned to Britain in April 2009. My other major dance contact in Egypt was Sara Farouk Ahmed, a British theatrical producer and filmmaker who has made her home in Egypt for the past ten years. Though Sara teaches belly dance when she is in Britain, in Egypt she does not dance or teach professionally. Still, she remains a touchstone among the community of foreign visitors curious about dance in Egypt, principally through her continued connections with professional teachers in England. Both Sara and Lorna, close friends themselves, have acted as mentors for younger dancers looking for advice on how to establish themselves in the community of expatriate professional dancers in Cairo. I visited Sara's house several times and our conversation often revolved around the dance community in England as well as in Egypt. Like Lorna, though I only interviewed Sara officially on one occasion, my interactions with her were always instructive and through her I made several beneficial research contacts.

While in Egypt and Britain I principally gleaned participants through snowball modeling, my fieldwork in the United States was a little bit different. I was able to use the snowball technique with participants that I met through the Hip Expressions Belly Dance Studio in Saint Petersburg, Florida, which had its grand opening on 17 January 2009 shortly after I commenced fieldwork there. To broaden my sample while in America I also reached out to well-known

figures in the dance community who I knew would be at events I was planning to attend. I additionally met Melanie LaJoie in this way, by specifically seeking dancers affiliated with the theme park industry in Orlando.

Also difficult to quantify are the hours I spent researching the global belly dance community's interaction with the internet. This includes examining websites of students, teachers or studios, looking at articles and informational pieces written by dancers, and message boards or listservs where dancers come together to engage in discourse about various aspects of dance. Due to information obtained during my interviews I began looking with greater interest at dancers' performances on YouTube, which has become an increasingly popular promotional tool as well as an additional forum for discussing dance through commenting on videos. Perhaps the most unusual aspect of my online fieldwork is my foray into the belly dance community in the online virtual world Second Life. Much like regular fieldwork, this involved a period of acclimating to the unfamiliar surroundings before being able to discover anything pertinent to my research. There are several different groups devoted to belly dance within Second Life, and I learned that it is possible to animate the virtual representation of one's character, one's avatar, to make it belly dance. This will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

Throughout my research I collected a variety of belly dance ephemera, most notably performance programs or monographs describing the goals of the performance program; advertisements for individual dancers, costume shops, dance studios and particular dance training methodologies;

a new belly dance magazine titled Belly Dance: a Raqs Sharqi Magazine; and a variety of CDs and instructional DVDs. The latter are becoming less popular with the rise of free online video viewing through YouTube and Google Video. I also took over 350 photographs pertaining to my research and over 50 videos, available for public viewing at http://picasaweb.google.com/mcdonald.caitlin[1] and www.youtube.com/caitietube[2] respectively.

During my period of fieldwork I attended comparatively few belly dance classes. This is largely because I am already familiar with the way belly dance is taught in the United States and Britain, having taken classes intermittently in various parts of the United States and in Britain from the time I was seventeen. I felt it was more important to focus on observing other kinds of events and on conducting interviews. I have also taught dance classes to a student society at the University of Exeter. I did attend some classes at the Hip Expressions Studio in Saint Petersburg, Florida while I was conducting my fieldwork in February and March 2009 as well as the workshops in London I previously mentioned that Lorna taught in September of that year.

Before my fieldwork began I underwent the process of an ethical review by what was then the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Exeter, as must all researchers who deal with human subjects. Because the nature of my fieldwork changed so drastically,

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[1]http://picasaweb.google.com/mcdonald.caitlin
[2]http://www.youtube.com/caitietube

I had to get new approval whilst carrying out my research. One issue facing all researchers who deal with human subjects is that of informed consent. Initially, the ethics committee authorized my decision not to collect consent forms from informants. While such forms are such common practice in Europe and America that normally they would not warrant a mention, my supervisor indicated that they could provide a barrier to research in Egypt because of the widespread skepticism of all forms of a bureaucratic nature, related to suspicion of corruption in the Egyptian central government. Coupled with a general cynicism about motives behind American foreign aid granted to Egypt, which metonymically applies to much of American bureaucratic involvement in Egypt including academic research, because I am American, the presentation of consent forms could in fact put potential informants ill at ease and unlikely to want to participate. I did however provide all participants, whether in Egypt or elsewhere, with an information sheet about the nature of my research, my contact details if they wished to obtain transcripts of the interviews I conducted with them, and instructions on how to withdraw consent should they wish to do so. The main difference between this information sheet and a consent form is that my participants in Egypt did not sign a copy and return it to me.

The purpose of consent forms is to provide participants with information about the project as well as giving them a method for contacting the researcher should they wish to withdraw from the project. They also serve a more subtle function by providing a badge of legitimacy: participants

can see that the researcher is sanctioned by an official institution with procedures for ensuring that research practices are followed ethically, which generally helps put them at ease about the nature of how data they provide will be used. With this in mind, I decided to use consent forms when I began my research in the United States and the United Kingdom, because, exactly the opposite of Egypt, I imagined that my research participants would be more suspicious of my motives if I failed to provide some sort of officiating documentation. The information sheet containing a method for contacting me should participants wish to withdraw from the study was exactly the same for those participants from whom I obtained signatures and from whom I obtained consent orally. I consider this to be the key factor in determining whether the inconsistency of such a policy was ethical: all participants received the same information and all had the ability to contact me for any questions or concerns about my research, or to withdraw. The majority of the relationships I forged in the field were of a friendly nature and thus I heard from most of my participants, especially those whom I interviewed in Egypt, after my fieldwork ended. Such contacts gave my participants multiple opportunities to express concerns about the nature of my research or to withdraw consent for the use of their data.

When I initially conducted the research, I did have one research participant who wished to be known by a pseudonym. This was because of her fear that her family would discover the marriage she had entered into in Egypt without their knowledge. However, in subsequent

correspondence she told me that her family now knows about the marriage, which subsequently ended when she left Egypt in September 2009, and she would prefer to be known by her professional dance name. There were a few anecdotes that dancers, in the course of being interviewed, requested that I not share. In conducting my initial assessment of possible harm in my ethical review before conducting my fieldwork, these were both issues that I had anticipated were possible, and I acted accordingly.

Obtaining consent in the digital realm is a more complex issue. Conventions about research methods generally and consent issues especially in digital realms, like chatrooms and online games, have yet to be fully formed. Whether speech in these spaces should be considered public or private, or should be governed by the research paradigms that apply to documents or those that apply to the spoken word, is still up for debate. For this reason that I have largely avoided quoting from, for example, comments on YouTube videos or conversations that take place in online belly dance forums. My research has been informed by these phenomena, but because obtaining written consent from all the participants in such discussions would be very difficult, I decided to refer only to online media from participants when I had already obtained their consent, as in the case of quoting from Lorna's blog.

Methodology and Key Concepts

Within the belly dance community debates about certain categories, like what belly dance should and should not be called, have become so entrenched that they are no longer productive. For this reason I needed to think about a new theoretical space for discursive development within the dance community. To do this I have made use of concepts that Judith Butler originally developed in considering the construction and categorization of gender, like 'contestable categories' and the open coalition (Butler, 1990; Butler, 1993; Butler, 2004). I will explain these in further detail below. Discursive categories, those labels with which we describe categories of being like gender, race and age, relate to processes of power in society such as understandings of morality, and expectations of social normativity. Like Foucault I think power and resistance operate in everyday interactions as well as on the metanarrative level of society as a whole (Foucault, 1991).

While I recognize the importance of discourse in influencing agency and subjectivity, it is important to acknowledge the significance of historical, social, economic and cultural factors. Scholars such as Leila Abu-Lughod, Deniz Kandiyoti, Nadje Al-Ali, Reina Lewis, Iman Bibars, and Sherifa Zuhur amongst others operating in the context of the Middle East have highlighted the importance of exploring factors related to political economies, state regulations and laws, and the labor market as social processes for understanding particular gender ideologies and relations (Kandiyoti, 1991; Zuhur, 1992; Al-Ali, 1994; Kandiyoti,

1996; Lewis, 1996; Abu-Lughod, 1998b; Kandiyoti, 1998; Shakry, 1998; Al-Ali and El-Kholy, 1999; Bibars, 1999; Al-Ali, 2000; Lewis and Mills, 2003; Zuhur, 2005). I try to describe a synthesis between local social paradigms described by these theorists and the emerging influences of globalization. It is no longer possible to study local communities without examining how they are affected by cultural processes and products emerging and developing elsewhere in the world. My own research contributes to the discussion on how such influences are 'glocalized;' that is, how people engage with local paradigms in order to integrate these incoming global tropes (Featherstone, 1995a; Robertson, 1995; Karam, : 196; Kelly, 2008).

Belly dance has a long association with the feminist movement in the United States (Shay and Sellers-Young, 2005: 12-15). As a space for allowing women in America and in Western Europe to question existing normative structures of femininity, sexuality, and power dynamics, belly dance has been very effective. Some theorists suggest that this has been at the expense of men in Oriental dance (Karayanni, 2004; Shay, 2005b). The question of whether it is possible to resignify the male dancing body without denying the feminist utilization of dance more generally has also been raised (Burt, 2007: 2-5). In keeping with my use of contestable categories discussed above, I think it is possible to utilize belly dance for a number of different, and perhaps paradoxical, aims. While it may seem that a feminist use of belly dance is predicated on creating a female-only space, I believe belly dance can be approached with a feminist aim without excluding male

dancers. Further, 'women's arts' and the idea of the female artist as a space for exploring feminist aims is not limited to 'the West' (Zuhur, 1992; Lengel, 2004; Zuhur, 2005). As Sugarman points out, dancers throughout the world are now able to use many different styles of dance available through the process of cultural globalization in contrast to one another, situating themselves with reference to different cultural values that such dances are understood to mean (Sugarman, 2003). On many levels, this can be seen to contravene the aims of feminism in that it requires making use of 'other', 'not-like-us' categories of dancers, usually female, in order to situate oneself to notions of cultural propriety. But these categories can also be used to challenge predominant expectations of women's behavior, which is exactly the purpose that belly dance served at the start of Second Wave feminism in the United States, and which is still one of the uses that dancers around the world make of it now.

Feminism also serves a more subtle purpose in my research: a major purpose of feminist theoretical frameworks remains to challenge the foundational beliefs of the humanities and social sciences, which feminist scholars questioned for portraying a subjective hegemonic masculine position as an authoritative, 'objective' one when Second Wave feminism arose during the 1960s and 70s (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). Within the belly dance world, many normative expectations and values are accepted and promoted as 'the truth' without an examination of the historical or cultural evidence for such beliefs, as I discuss throughout this thesis and particularly in chapter

four.   The 'contestation of knowledge' that arises from
feminism applies to such beliefs, though in keeping with
my use of 'contestable categories' from gender theory, I
do not believe that such questions have permanent fixed
answers but rather should remain open questions that can
hold many shifting layers of significance.

Globalization, transnationalism and 'glocalization'

I make use of the globalization and glocalization con-
cepts developed by Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai, 1990;
Appadurai, 2001; Appadurai, 2005) and Roland Robertson
(Robertson, 1990; Robertson, 1992; Robertson, 1995). In
this book, both 'globalization' and 'transnationalism' refer
to the increasing traffic of people, products, and, most
importantly in a discussion of global performing arts, ideas
and aesthetics around the world. The principal difference
between the two is that, while transnationalism principally
(though not always; (Appadurai, 1990: 305)) focuses on
these flows across national boundaries and whether such
flows undermine the utility of the nation-state, global-
ization refers to movements across boundaries that can
include the traditional concepts of 'culture' as bounded
entities (discussed below), to the nation-state, and to other
ways of constructing the 'local' in opposition to the 'global'.
Transnationalism refers to the formation of community
across national boundaries, community that is defined by
shared mutual interest in a recreational and professional
activity rather than by geography, political affiliation, or

shared mutual history. It can also refer to transnational markets in physical products related to belly dance such as costumes, props, dance music, and instructional DVDs, and in ephemeral products like international dance festivals and international tours arranged for practicing and seeing dance. Where transnationalism does not specifically address this, globalization also indicates the compression in time, the speed with which this is accomplished now more than ever, which is one of the major distinguishing factors between globalization and previous processes of conceptualizing global interaction like cultural imperialism and world system theory (Boyne, 1990; Wallerstein, 1990a; Wallerstein, 1990b; Friedman, 1994: 12; Crane, 2002: 2-4). Diana Crane provides a useful overview of the differences between cultural imperialism and Appadurai's development of the model of cultural flows:

> In contrast to cultural imperialism theory in which the source of cultural influence is Western civilization, with non-Western and less developed countries viewed as being on the periphery—as the receivers of cultural influences—the cultural flows or network model offers an alternative conception of the transmission process, as influences that do not necessarily originate in the same place or flow in the same direction. Receivers may also be originators. (Crane, 2002: 3)

It is important to note that Appadurai does not imply cultural exchanges are equal in each direction of flow,

but rather theorizes that they operate under "relations of disjuncture" (Appadurai, 2001: 5). Building on examples of how flows of images and ideas that cross national and cultural boundaries, Appadurai says that "globalization—in this perspective a cover term for a world of disjunctive flows—produces problems that manifest themselves in intensely local forms but have contexts that are anything but local" (2001: 6). But the possibilities suggested by imaginative flow are not all sources of conflict; they can also open new, innovative worlds that provide that most important of human qualities: hope for the possibility of creating the world as we would like it to be, and an ever-increasing sense of what that might include (Appadurai, 1990: 296-297; Lewellen, 2002: 95; Appadurai, 2005: 52).

Scholars like Abu-Lughod emphasize the particularity of participants' experiences with relation to opened imaginative possibilities and their abilities to negotiate multiple layers of cultural meaning (2005: 50). In other words, not every person who receives the same internationally broadcast influences like television shows and branded products will perceive them in the same way; rather, they become localized within the context of the individual experience. This parallels Roland Robertson's emphasis on the effect of the local on the global in his development of a theory of glocalization. Robertson's glocalization does not contradict globalization, but rather, emphasizes a particular aspect of that process: the development by which the flows of ideas, products and aesthetics become localized. Robertson introduced the term glocalization into social theory in 1995 on the grounds that much of globalization theory up

to that point appeared to suggest that it was a process that in some way invalidated ideas about location and locality (Robertson, 1995: 26). The term came into use as part of business jargon of multicultural companies in the 1980s to describe marketing strategies aimed towards "the tailoring and advertising of goods and services on a global or near-global basis to increasingly differentiated local and particular markets" (Robertson, 1995: 28; Iwabuchi, 2002). Glocalization is not limited to describing the products of capitalist market flows, however, and the flow of ideas and aesthetics also comprise a part of glocalization, though the method by which this occurs might be through, for example, a television advertisement for a consumer item. In chapter five I will discuss several examples from my empirical research in various locations that show a process of adopting aesthetic tropes from Egypt or from the Arab world and blending them with existing local aesthetics.

The word globalization was developed in the 1980s, well before the widespread use of the internet could begin to have its pervasive effect on global communications. New explorations into the realm of the possible and the spread of imagination have increased dramatically. Timothy W. Luke examines how cyberspace has caused "the global and local flow [to] go far beyond the old realist divisions of space and time, sender and receiver, medium and message, expression and content as... complex webs of electronic networks generate new 'glocalized' hyperspaces" (Luke, 1999: 30). In the upcoming "Community" section, I shall discuss Mike Featherstone's idea of a 'psychological neighborhood' to describe the ability of technologies like the

internet to instantly unite us with others who may be at a great distance, but who share interests, worldviews and even to some extent experiences such as pieces of information transmitted globally via news media (Featherstone, 1995b: 117). Belly dancers' use of technology to stay informed about developing styles and communal understandings of what is and is not appropriate draws upon these concepts in chapter five.

Authenticity/hybridity, 'contestable categories' and the open coalition

As will become clear in chapter four, I find authenticity a problematic concept. In the context of a discussion of an ephemeral cultural product that draws on the aesthetic traditions of several world regions, a definition of authenticity that draws upon a rigid notion of adhering to a perfect replication or re-creation of a past tradition (Daniel, 1996: 783) has only a tenuous applicability. Further, unlike physical objects which can be compared with what is known to have existed within a particular location and time period, the changes in time to ephemeral products like dance are more difficult to trace, at least before the advent of methods like Labanotation[2] and technologies like film recording. Even then, since much of the 'authenticity' debate within belly dance is framed around records of what travelers reported seeing dancers do in Egypt and Turkey in the 18th and 19th centuries as I will discuss in chapter four, these techniques and technologies only have bearing on a relatively small part of that debate.

However, 'authenticity' can be reformulated in ways that are less about a protectionist attempt to control influences on cultural development or how certain aspects of culture are perceived, and more about subverting the definition of 'authenticity' to highlight the imagined, constructed elements in visions of past histories (Crick, 1994; Nuryanti, 1996; Fife, 2004). Authenticity also does not necessarily need to refer to a vision of a 'pure', uninfluenced past, but instead can be formulated to incorporate the blending of multiple cultural influences into a unified, authentic, and yet ultimately new product. Virginia Danielson provides the example that Umm Kalthoum's music is widely considered to be the most fundamentally 'authentic' Egyptian and Arab music, the Platonic ideal of what Arab music should be, even though it draws on a number of musical influences from various traditions around the world (Danielson, 1997: 158). On this sort of reunification, Wolfgang Welsch has said that "Authenticity has become folklore, it is ownness simulated for others—to whom the indigene himself or herself belongs" (Welsch, 1999: 198). He indicates that rather than being characterized by the deterministic ideas of authenticity I just outlined, contemporary cultures are characterized by hybridization rather than by previous, internally bounded models of culture which will be discussed below. Welsch's definition of hybridization is that "cultural conditions today are largely characterized by mixes and permeations" rather than being characterized by "homogeneity and separateness" (197).

Dancers may never resolve the differences in their understandings of diverse terminologies relating to what I

usually call 'belly dance,' and there are many excellent reasons for calling into question all the terms used to describe it. However problematic such understandings are, though, they still serve an important purpose by providing a place where questions about meaning and cultural interpretation may be carried out. The subject of Butler's original usage of the term 'contestable categories' was whether or not existing categories of gender (or at least, the terms that we use to refer to such categories) are still useful (Butler, 1990: 14-15). In my own research I make use of two concepts from gender theory, both the contestable category and the open coalition, to suggest a new approach to engaging with the idea of authenticity within the international belly dance community. In chapter four I suggest that keeping this concept as a constantly available site of contestation could be seen as a resolution in its own right. Butler uses the concept of questionable categories to refer to the way that social categories such as gender, age and race do not have a single set of prescribed significances, but that these change over time (Butler, 2004: 179). In earlier work Butler uses the term "open coalition" to describe the process by which different parties ascribe meaning to concepts without the expectation that a single, unified understanding will eventually achieve and sustain prominence, given that societies have shifting conceptual needs over time (Butler, 1990: 14-15). I believe that this approach of the open coalition can be used to redefine authenticity as a contestable category, which could allow it to be resignified in dynamic ways in contrast with the essentializing, reductive ways it has been previously utilized.

Hybridization is imbued in the theories of globalization and glocalization as being one possible result of these processes, with the opposing possibility being homogenization (Crane, 2002: 3-4, 10). Homogenization suggests a future in which cultural differentiation becomes increasingly similar. In contrast, hybridization usually is meant to indicate that, without losing a sense of diversity and differentiation, some aspects of cultures will merge to create new forms of identity. Most proponents of globalization theory adhere to a view of a hybridized rather than a homogenized future—and even present (Appadurai, 1990; Feld, 2001; Crane, 2002: 17; Iwabuchi, 2002; Appadurai, 2005). Ted C. Lewellen reminds us that "all cultures are already hybrid, so what we are witnessing today is one hybrid culture mixing with another" (Lewellen, 2002: 102).

Community

To conceptualize my research population, a group that had connections beyond the physically local region but was not an organized, hierarchical, or formalized structure, I turned to the word 'community.' Anthropology has a lively debate about how to define groups in an increasingly globalized world, with a focus on how to constitute the 'local' as ever speedier information technology changes the face of mass communications (Smith, 1990: 175; Featherstone and Burrows, 1995: 89; Luke, 1999: 29; Lewellen, 2002: 151; Appadurai, 2005: 189). In this context, it is important to note that I do not mean to suggest the traditional, bounded view of community with a discrete edge, but rather a more

fluid entity that has a varying degree of prominence to its individual members at different times.

Two other theorists have approached this problem by making use of the word 'neighborhood' rather than 'community'. Appadurai defines 'neighborhoods' as "life-worlds constituted by relatively stable associations, by relatively known and shared histories, and by collectively traversed and legible spaces and places" (Appadurai, 2005: 191). But because the term 'virtual' has become so enmeshed with the idea of the internet, the term 'virtual neighborhoods' cannot be usefully applied to fully conceptualize the ways that imagined communities interact both offline and online. Mike Featherstone's idea of the 'psychological neighborhood', mentioned earlier (Featherstone, 1995b: 117), might be useful to extend this idea beyond the realm of the world wide web to include other media such as the telephone, television, and even possibly group events like conferences and festivals arranged around a particular theme.

While I find Appadurai's and Featherstone's conceptions of virtual and psychological neighborhoods useful for informing my idea of community, I prefer the term 'community' because 'neighborhood' is so intensely bound to a particular region of physical space, while 'community' can be focused around a group or the association of several groups of people. Even so, my usage requires reframing from its past associations with the idea of a singular, bounded group defined by territory, language or the fixed, stable identities of its constituent members. This reframing is already being considered by anthropologists

as a whole in response to shifting paradigms within a globalized world.

Culture

Culture is one of the most complex terms in the English language. Ethnographer Jane K. Cowan describes defining it as "one of the most vexed questions within anthropology" (Cowan, 1990: 11). Specifically within the discipline of anthropology, the dominant paradigm from the turn of the 20th century has been to think of culture as divorced from demographics; "as some kind of text that had its own life and could be studied in itself without reference to the people who practiced it" (Friedman, 1994: 67). Friedman further indicates that this abstract notion of culture continued to gain ground through the 20th century (1994: 68). This rejects the previous model of cultures as bound wholes, though even in 1995 Mike Featherstone outlined the prevailing model of 'culture' as "being a particularity which is the opposite of the global" in its boundedness to a relatively small space (Featherstone, 1995b: 92). Though referring to this as the way culture is "usually" perceived, Featherstone was in fact arguing for the arbitrary nature of this conception of culture, which needs to be reformulated in a world where the 'local' is no longer limited by geography. This detachment from the 'local', this reformulation of those forces which provide individuals' lives with meaning, away from bounded physical localities is very important for my own research. This is not to say that immediate spatial surroundings have ceased to be relevant, but that

people are now more than ever able to form and sustain important relationships, whether those be economic, social, or ideological, that transcend distance or geography.

The paradigm of globalization has been expanding the concept of culture to include new meanings not bounded by locality or homogeneity in a way that doesn't require abandoning the term itself. Lewellen sums up the influence of globalization on anthropologists' conceptualizations of culture:

> Whereas traditional anthropology looked at bounded cultures and communities, globalization theorists are more likely to be interested in transnationals, diasporas, nations that are scattered in many countries, and deterritorialized ethnicities. There is an increasing self-consciousness of the degree to which the community and the local were artifacts of the participant observation method (Lewellen, 2002: 30)

This is reflected in Seyla Benhabib's view that traditional anthropological attempts to characterize cultures as bounded whole entities were largely driven by reductive desires to categorize and easily control the knowledge that cultures produce. "From within, a culture need not appear as a whole; rather, it forms a horizon that recedes each time one approaches it" (Benhabib, 2002: 5). The concept of 'culture' thus becomes a way of describing symbolic systems of defining and interpreting meaning, and social

power or status based on those definitions. Further, such systems are not closed, but rather can incorporate an ever-widening array of meanings.

Within my own research, this concept that culture can contain an array of meanings is related to Ann Swidler's paradigm of culture as a 'tool kit' (Swidler, 1986). While globalization was in its early theoretical stages when Swidler described the tool kit metaphor, the metaphor has become a useful way of conceptualizing culture in a world where the confluence between locality, group identity and geography is no longer fixed. As I will discuss in chapter five, Swidler's kit can potentially contain an infinite variation of tools. This can be conceptualized on the individual level of each person's interaction with the tools of culture, or on the level of increasingly mobile groups of people coming into contact with new ideologies that then become more widely accepted. Individual dancers might become aware and begin to make use of new choreographic styles or new developments in costume aesthetics, for example, or a fashion that has become popular in Cairo may suddenly find a new audience among a community of dancers in Texas, Japan or New Zealand. Further, the 'tools' of culture can be acquired (though not on an egalitarian basis), rejected, or abandoned for a while and then taken up again. They can act in concert or in conflict. As the flow of information, products, ideas and imagination continues to speed up and spread out, this concept of culture recognizes the increasing interaction of multiple worldviews in signifying meaning. This definition of culture takes into account the flows of power that result from having access to a tool

kit comprised of multiple systems of meaning. Equally importantly it encompasses the disjuncture experienced by those with fewer 'tools,' those who have access to fewer methods for making sense of the multiple imaginative possibilities suddenly available through the increasing traffic of products, images and ideas.

Chapter Summary

The second chapter, "Development of Normative Dance Paradigms in Cairo," begins with a discussion of the historical context of public discourse on dance within Egypt, culminating in an analysis of current public opinion on dance. This includes both legal and social/moral restrictions placed on dancers working in Egypt historically and currently. I attempt to show the bridges between the local paradigms within Egypt and those that the international dance community are in a constant process of creating and renegotiating. The third chapter, "Sanctions: Authorize, Penalize, Globalize" carries on the discussion of social expectations and group norms, expanding it to include the international dance community. While these tropes are not entirely parallel, their existences require that dancers living and working in Egypt as well as members of the international dance community engage in complex processes to negotiate the expectations of both the public and of other members of the dance community. Specific strategies that dancers use in order to do so are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four, "Dance and Theory: Research as Argu-

ment and Serendipity," is principally a literature review and comparison of the academic and the independent research that dancers have produced about their art. I begin with an overview of the debate around what the proper name for 'belly dance' is. Later in the chapter I make use of Judith Butler's concept of contestable categories (Butler, 2004) to put forth the idea that continuous, unresolved discussion can be considered a satisfactory result and that no clear 'winner' will necessarily emerge from the current field. Before introducing this model from gender theory, I discuss past and present practices of travelling, principally from Europe and the United States, to the Middle East in order to learn more about dance in its home countries. This leads to a discussion of tourism, cultural identity, and the ways in which the concept of authenticity gets employed by the global dance community and in scholarly research about Oriental dance. In addition to the concept of contestable categories, I make use of gender theory as a model for questioning all types of foundational beliefs or received wisdom in discussions of belly dance, discussions both in the academic and dance communities. This challenge to the 'natural order' also owes a great deal to Hobsbawm and Ranger's theory of the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992). Following this I discuss the transmission of cultural capital, which again returns to the idea of what 'authenticity' means in an increasingly globalized world. In the context of this I examine spaces that could be considered to take place outside culture, in video clips on YouTube that may bear little reference to where and when they were filmed, in virtual reality games like Second Life,

and dance in the created utopian spaces of theme parks like Disney World.

Chapter five, "Transmission and Learning: Building the Dance," analyses the way that dancers on an individual level learn about their art in both its technical and its community-defining aspects, the second of which I call belly dance 'civics'. This frames a larger discussion of how cultural capital gets transmitted from one culture to another, or even to spaces that could be considered to be outside culture, and the changes that take place when these pieces of cultural capital are decontextualized. To facilitate this examination I investigate the way in which social and aesthetic tropes from Egypt and from Cairo in particular are used in the international dance community, drawing on the historical basis for such usage as outlined in the previous chapter. A study of the transmission of cultural capital requires theorizing about what culture is. I rely on Swidler's metaphor of culture as a tool kit to describe how, on an individual level, people can carry 'tools' from many different cultures and no single complement of tools can ever truly be considered to constitute one complete culture (Swidler, 1986). In this chapter I also follow in the footsteps of Sellers-Young and Rasmussen to assess whether it is possible to engage with Orientalist aesthetic tropes in a manner that is constructive and which unlocks new imaginative possibilities, or whether such usages, which are common throughout the belly dance world, are always reductive and lead to consistently inaccurate perceptions of Middle Eastern cultures (Rasmussen, 2005; Sellers-Young, 2005). I further question the kinds of influence that the interna-

tional dance community has had, both choreographically and in the sense of a developing dance tourism industry, in Egypt. Following this I examine, through reports from my research participants and through materials collected during fieldwork, a variety of methods by which knowledge about the normative expectations of the international dance community is transmitted both intentionally and as a side effect of other goals like event promotion. While a more extensive catalogue of the material culture that has grown up around belly dance might be a desirable area for future investigation, the sheer amount of available material meant that I needed to limit my investigation to a representative sample rather than a comprehensive analytical overview. Finally I conclude with a look at the changing paradigms for performance and for learning about dance in the international community in the past fifty years, focusing on how the internet has enabled much faster dissemination of emerging styles through video technology. I also look at the shifting models for performance in the dance community in the United States: where in the past audiences principally engaged with belly dance at Middle Eastern nightclubs and Middle Eastern or Greek restaurants, currently a much more common venue is a hafla[3], or belly dance party and showcase, which is much more an internal community event for belly dancers than are performances for the general public in nightclubs.

Chapter six, "Gender Choreology," is a more direct engagement with gender theory and the performing body. While up until this point I have made use of concepts in gender theory to question received knowledge and existing

theoretical categories, at this point I directly examine issues related to masculinity and femininity in performance. Here I discuss the differences between performance and performativity. Distinguishing between performance in its theatrical sense, performance as an allegory for how we continually project gender and other aspects of our identity in our daily lives, and performativity has yet to be adequately theorized. The discipline of Performance Studies provides some insight into this still murky field; however, the distinction between types of performance that engage the audience directly and how these differ from performance in its everyday sense could use more discussion in the literature for clarity's sake. This chapter also examines the locus of where significance is found in both of these types of performance. The creation of meaning depends on the existing cultural understandings of the audience, the 'tool kit' that they bring to the performance, as well as the intentions of the performer. This is especially significant for female belly dancers who can make use of discourses of female empowerment to subvert predominant understandings of aesthetic performance tropes, particularly when used in comparison with other styles of dance. The use of different styles of dance that may not originate in the culture in which they are being deployed in order to negotiate or resignify standards of propriety is not limited to women alone, though what little work has been done on this topic has principally focused on women's engagement with a multiplicity of understandings of femininity. This process is facilitated by globalization: when new styles of dance become available outside the cultures from which

they originate, they can be utilized to signify different things across the societies which take them up.   This play between fantasy and existing relational structures links back to Butler's theory of the politics of embodiment (Butler, 2004: 204-231). Butler claims, and I agree, that fantasy is not merely internal but also comes to affect the interactions of the individual with others. Examples of how this takes place in the belly dance community are included in this chapter. Following this, I discuss the experiences of those men I interviewed who are members of the dance community. The amount of literature on this is extremely small, and it is such a newly discussed phenomenon (if not actually a new phenomenon) that it still deserves its own dedicated section of analysis.   Ideally as more academic literature examines belly dance, discussion of men and masculinities can be a more integrated part of the discourse rather than fenced off in its own area. For the present, it remains sensible to have a separate discussion of masculinity and femininity, as the community-based issues that male and female performers face are often very different. Enriching the discussion are my male research participants' thoughts on various aspects of being male in what is effectively a matriarchal community. While Jim and Zorba said a few things that contradicted my expectations in our interviews, what surprised me much more were the attitudes of my female research participants to men in the field of belly dance. Through the popular literature on dance I was familiar with the attitude many dancers take, that male dancers are either a new development or an unwelcome one in belly dance. While none

of my participants expressed this attitude specifically and the predominant attitude seemed to be a 'live and let live' approach, when questioned more deeply, the prevailing mind-set was a desire for very highly differentiated gender roles in choreographic performance. This desire for a lack of gender ambiguity during performance reflects, in my opinion, a surprisingly strong appeal for performances that reflect prevailing heterosexist discourse, rather than subvert them. This contrasts with the subversive discourses that female performers make use of in their choreographic presentations, as I discuss earlier in the chapter. It should be said that while female performers make use of dance to challenge predominant social conventions surrounding ideas of feminine sexuality and there is some information on the connection between belly dance and the American feminist movement in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s (Shay and Sellers-Young, 2005: 14-15), the issue of a specifically non-heterosexualized belly dance coming from women has not been discussed in the literature as yet. Nor did this emerge as an issue in my interviews, unlike the challenge to heteronormative masculine ideals. Rounding off the discussion I look at how this desire for a strong distinction between masculine and feminine modes of performance in the international dance community might be a reflection of current normative understandings of gender, including appropriate gendered performance of social dancing, in Egypt and the Middle East more generally. Finally, I give examples of how dancers in the international community attempt to negotiate their association in the public eye with other types of dance that are often perceived as demeaning

or objectifying of women. The principal element of different, in my opinion, is not choreographic but rather rests on the fact that belly dance does have a social community that during dance events can produce an experience of shared audience understanding that overlaps with the intentions of the performer, and those 'other' types of dance do not.

In my concluding chapter I attempt to show the areas in which my research synthesizes theoretical discussions in Area Studies and Performance Studies. I also discuss new methods of using gender theory: first, to jump-start discussions about discursive categories that may have become fossilized in specificity while the need for more fluid terminology became apparent, and second, to discuss performances of identity categories and from whence the meaning of such performances ultimately arises.

Notes

[1] Throughout this book single quotation marks are scare quotes, double quotation marks are direct quotes from a source.

[2] Labanotation is a system for annotating systematic movement, analogous to musical notation. The system was first published by Rudolf von Laban in 1928.

[3] In Arabic, hafla just means "party." There may or may not be dancing at such an event. As the term has taken on a new and very specific meaning in English I have not italicized it, because I do not consider this meaning to be a use of the Arabic word.

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