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*Employing Movement Analysis Techniques
To Interpret
The Nama Stap.*

Degree *Ph.D.*

Nama Marks and Etchings:
Employing movement analysis techniques to interpret the Nama Stap

ABSTRACT

The Khoisan are the indigenous peoples of southern Africa, whose existence can be traced back some 2000 years to the Cape area of what is today South Africa. The Nama, the people whose dancing is the subject of this study, are the descendants of these original inhabitants of South Africa. The Nama are scattered among five 'coloured-reserve' areas in the northwest area of South Africa. This study concerns the Nama who live in !Khubus in the Richtersveld region of Namaqualand near the Orange River.

Like other indigenous peoples in what is today popularly referred to as the 'Rainbow Nation', the Nama have been profoundly affected by colonisation and a brutal apartheid regime. It is not too difficult, at a superficial level at least, to distinguish supposedly traditional Nama customs from those they have adopted. The most obvious of these can readily be observed in language (Afrikaans), religious practices, architecture, and dancing. These activities are fertile examples of both acculturation and survival. The activities known as *The Nama Stap (Step)* and *The Nama Stap Dance* the subject of this dissertation are particular examples of such fusion and endurance. They at once demonstrate the Nama drive for survival through adaptation and their need for continuity.

This dissertation assesses and critiques movement analysis techniques. It then applies complementary methodologies including anthropology, ethnography, dance analysis, Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis, to address the continuities to be found in what the Nama call their 'national dance', how these have survived through a process of fusion, and how this historic female puberty rite has been transformed into a contemporary statement of the solidarity between Nama women.

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**Nama Marks and Etchings:
Employing Movement Analysis Techniques to
Interpret the Nama Stap**

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**University of London
School of Oriental and African Studies
Department of Music**

**Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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Employing Movement Analysis Techniques to Interpret the Nama Stap**

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Orthography and Transliteration

Nama is part of the Khoisan language group that is characterised by the use of a 'click' system.¹ Clicks are consonant sounds produced by drawing air into, rather than out of, the mouth. Since the 1800s attempts have been made to catalogue and devise symbols for Khoisan click sounds. These have included: the International Phonetic Association (IPA) system, the system used in Bantu languages, and the Standard Khoisan systems. Additionally, Hoernlé, in her 1918 paper on female puberty rights among Nama women, used the notation employed by anthropologist J.G. Krönlein in 1889.

Throughout this work the Standard Khoisan system as noted by Barnard (1992) and Hoernlé (1918) has been used.

Orthography and Transliteration of Khoisan Clicks ²	
Hoernlé after by J.G. Krönlein (Hoernlé 1918)	Standard Khoisan System (Barnard 1992)
/ Dental. A dental or alveolar affricate (sometimes described as a fricative.) Produced by sucking motion with the tip of the tongue on the teeth, as in the English expression of annoyance written "Tisk, tisk", phonetically [//].	
// Lateral. A lateral affricate (sometimes described as a fricative). Produced by placing the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth and releasing air on one side of the mouth between the side of the tongue and the cheek...the clicking sound cowboys use to make their horses go.	
! Palatal, cerebral, or retroflex. An alveopalatal or palatal stop. Produced by pulling the tip of the tongue sharply away from the front of the hard palate. When made with lips rounded it sounds like a cork popping from a bottle.	
# Palatal	# Alveolar. An alveolar stop. Produced by pulling the blade of the tongue sharply away from the alveolar ridge, immediately behind the teeth.
X gutural ch	
- over a vowel indicates that it is long	
~ over a vowel indicates that it is nasalized.	
` represents the low tone of the vowel	
' represents the middle tone of the vowel	
^ represents the high tone of the vowel	
. the sign under a vowel indicates that it is very short	
" indicates that the vowel is to be separately pronounced	
A short vowel has not special sign	

1. Khoisan languages language families or subfamilies include Khoe (also known as Khwe-Kovab or Hottentot), !Kung (Ju), Ta'a including !Xo), !Wi, and tentatively, 'Southwestern' or 'Cape' (/Xam) (Barnard, 1992, p. 22).

2. Descriptions are based on that of Barnard (1992, p. xix).

Introduction

Puberty Ceremony Among Nama Women

Agnes Hoernlé is often referred to as the ‘mother of South African anthropology’ (Barnard and Spencer, 1996). During her field research among the Nama between 1912 and 1913, Hoernlé recorded various rite of passage ceremonies. Among these is her description of the Nama female puberty ceremony. Her account is one of the earliest and remains one of the most detailed recordings of this historic rite of passage among Nama women. The subject of this research is the Nama Stap Dance, a contemporary interpretation of this female Nama ritual. Hoernlé’s eminent account of the ceremony provides an initial perspective for this research, and it is recorded here in its entirety.

A girl’s first period is called *kharú* or */habab*. Young girls told me they were exceedingly frightened by their first period, and older women reported that girls generally start crying when they realize what has happened, and tell either their girl friends or some older women of the clan, often the father’s eldest brother’s wife. Through this intermediary the mother is told. The latter gets her married sisters and her brothers’ wives to make a little mat enclosure (*kharú óms*), inside at the back of the family hut, on the left hand side. It is a screened off segment, measuring 2 to 3 feet at its widest point, in the least regarded part of the hut...it always has its own little opening leading out behind the hut. Unfortunately I never saw one of the *kharú óms* myself, but I had a model made for me, and the whole proceeding enacted. While the hut is being got ready, the mother goes to fetch a woman, who, though past childbearing now, has been renowned for her former fertility. This woman takes the girl on her back, carries her into the *kharú óms*, and cares for her while she is there. She is called the *abá tarás* (*abá*, to carry a child on one’s back; *tarás*, a dignified word for woman). Should the period come on in the veldt far from home, the girl’s companions will on no account let her walk, but will do their best to carry her home on their backs, taking turn and turn about. Were such a girl to walk home through the veldt, all the roots and the berries would scorch up. Once in the *kharú óms* the girl is seated on her skin blanket (*=goab*) and closely rapped about with her *=náms* (cloak of skins). The wind must on no account blow on her, neither must she speak above a whisper. All informants lay great emphasis on these two points. !Amatis declares that if she talks she will be a chatterbox and meddle in all sorts of affairs later on and will get a bad name among the people. The girl must not leave the hut except at night, and then it must be by the back opening with one woman behind and one in front of her, to screen her from view.

Nowadays her older girl friends visit her, but I am inclined to think that in the old days this would not have been allowed. They help her to grind sweet smelling bark or root or leaves to make powder (*sap*) which is freely used on the clothes and to rub on the skin. The Hottentots have a great variety of scented powders, each with its own name, and in the olden days some of the rarer ones were greatly sought after and exchanged for a considerable amount...these scented powders are used constantly, and a woman spends a considerable amount of her time grinding them. *!Naop*, a face paint made by grinding a soft red stone to powder and mixing it with fat, is used by the girls to paint patterns on their faces. The time during which the girl must remain in the *kharú óms* has been differently reported. It varies from 2 or 3 days to a month. Hottentots are vague about length of time, but several girls who had been through the experience recently, told me they were in the hut a fortnight. Most probably the time was longer in days gone by, for one of the chief things required of a girl in the hut is that she should get fat, with smoothly shining skin. "The girl mustn't be hungry while she is sitting in the hut," says *!Amatis*. Indeed, immediately she is in the hut, the relatives kill for her, the feast being called *kharú ≠ap*. All her nearer relatives take part in this killing. Even the girl's elder married brothers if she has any. Everything killed must be female, and chief of all must be a heifer. The entrails, pluck, etc., must not on any account be eaten by any relative, either maternal or paternal, of the girl—the visiting friends may enjoy them.

The *kharú ≠ap* is the great feast for the women, all who have already passed through these ceremonies being able to take part in it. No man or boy is allowed to have any share in it at all. One woman of the Berseba tribe said to me: "That killing is as great as the marriage killing." Nowadays the Hottentots are exceedingly poor, and cannot afford to kill recklessly as they did of old, hence the men, who formerly took part only in the feast of rejoicing to be described below, are allowed to share the meat of all but one of the first animals killed, and this concession is made use of to force the boys to submit to a part of the proceeding to which they would not nowadays be willing to submit otherwise. The only exceptions to this rule that all grown women may partake of the meat are that no menstruating woman must eat of it, "least the girl's period never stop,"... and no pregnant woman, "lest the girl's period stop never to return." The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut, while the *abá tarás* takes her share, which must always be part of the outer flesh, inside. While the girl and her friends sit in the *kharú óms*, drinking plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can, the fire which is always made in the centre line of the hut, just a little way inside the door, is *!nau* and nothing must be cooked at the fire at all. Everyone must *!karesin* for the girl. Thus no pregnant or menstruating woman must come and sit by the fire, nor must a sterile woman, least dire things befall the girl in the *kharú óms*. All this time too, she will be careful not to touch cold water on any pretence whatever.

No man or boy would come near her for fear of dread consequences to himself.

As the time of the girl's seclusion draws to a close, the feasting takes on bigger proportions, regulated always by the relatives. The young people of the village begin practising the reed dance, and the girl's friends, both male and female, play and dance round the hut in which she is confined. Then, at last, the day before she is to come out, a long series of purification rites takes place.

First, during the day, the girl is placed in front of the *!nau* fire, and is cleansed with moist cow dung (*#houp*) and *!naop* from head to foot by the old woman who carried her into the hut, to clean off all the (axa/urip) "boy dirt". The *abá tarás* smears the *#houp* all over the body of the girl, allows it to dry slightly, and then with the palm of her hand rolls it off in handfuls, *#houp* and */urip*, for the Hottentots allow plenty of it to gather. She then collects it carefully and hides it in an ant heap or animal's hole when no one is looking. The girl is then given a complete new set of clothing and the old woman carries off the old one. Meantime a ewe has been slaughtered, and one of the hind legs is given to the *abá tarás*. This she must now cook on the fire in the house, the first cooking done there since the girl entered the *kharú óms*. When the meat is cooked, it is eaten by the *abá tarás* and other women who, like her, are past childbearing. No one else touches it. Then the *abá tarás* takes the fire, ashes and all, and dumps it far from the house. She then sprinkles fresh sand on the hearth and lays a new fire. This fire must not be lit from another fire, as is usually done when a fire goes out. It must be lit with flint. Most Hottentots use tinder boxes nowadays, matches being a rare luxury. No doubt originally the fire was lighted with the firesticks which were certainly in use among them. The fire thus lit is now no longer *!nau*... "now the house is free so that anyone can come in". The girl is now ready to receive visits as *ðaxais*, that is, a young marriageable woman. All her relatives and friends pour in, each one with some present of beads, or earrings, or other finery. A great deal of this is loaned only and is returned later. The girl shines with clean, well-greased skin. She is scented all over with the *sāp* which she and her girl friends have ground. Her face is pained in curious patterns with *!naop* and *!quasab* ("ground white stone"), and her body is loaded with her presents. Then it is that the little boys, even up to sixteen years and more, come into the hut from which they have up to now been excluded, and go in to the newly made *ðaxais*. She takes her *!úros àms* ("powder puff") full of *sāp* and rubs their testicles (*#karàn*). This ensures fertility and is a protection against sexual disease. The full expression of this custom is *!úros àms /a /nara* ("to rub gently with a powder puff"). Nowadays the saying is that until the boys have been rubbed, it is too dangerous for them to eat any of the meat prepared for the girl, and the younger ones especially go eagerly in, so that they may join the feast. Some of the youths... prefer to go without the meat, and none of my witnesses had ever seen grown-up men take part.

It looks as though the custom were gradually dying out.

The feasting reaches its climax on this day. Female animals, both ewe and heifers, are killed, cooked, and eaten. It is interesting to note that the goat is never used in these ceremonial meals, if it can possibly be avoided. This is probably due to the fact that originally the Hottentots owned no goats, and only acquired them quite late from the Bantu tribes with whom they came in contact.

Towards evening the girl's friends enter the hut to fetch her out. She must leave the hut by the special door which has been made for her at the back. Her friends surround her, and for a time try to keep her from the view of the youth, for she is very shy. The youth start the reed dance, and the girls dance round them with the *ōaxais* in their midst. Gradually the youths get to the side of the girl and choose her as a partner, and in the end her shyness gives way. In the Hottentot dances the men form the inner ring, the women the outer one, and every now and then there is a change of partners somewhat like the English game of Jolly Miller. During the dancing the *ōaxais* throws sāp over the men and boys as she sees them. This is supposed to bring good luck. The dancing lasts often right through the night, and when it is over, the final round of rites begins, reintroducing the girl to her daily tasks, freeing her, as it were, from the spell under which she has been living.

The abá tarás must accompany the *ōaxais* in all these rites, but often her friends go with her too. First a visit is paid to the cattle kraal where sāp is strewn on all the male animals, also on the trees and bushes which they pass by. This was great luck, said one old man to me, and the day after such a girl had come out of her hut it was sure to rain and there would be plenty in the land; "now the white men have come, the rain has ceased, and the people are miserable." Then a cow is milked with the help of the old woman. If possible this is a young cow calving for the first time. The old woman supports the girl's arm while she milks. This milk is */nau*, to be drunk only by the old women herself or others of her age. Once this milking has taken place, the girl can resume her milking duties with impunity. Next a visit is made to the spring. The girl carries her water pot...on her head. Arrived at the spring, the woman with a branch from a tree strikes the water, scattering it over the girl. She then rubs the girl's legs and arms with clay...fills the pot, and places it on the girl's head. The girl is then free to draw water as she pleases.

...when the relatives appear for the feast at the end of the seclusion, her nearest male relative (usually the eldest unmarried cousin) takes the fat of the heifer which has been killed, hangs it over her head, and wishes that she may be as fruitful as a young cow and have many children. The other friends repeat the wish. Further, the girls who have come of age must after the festival run about in the first thunderstorm quite naked, so that the rain

pours down and washes the whole body. The belief is that this causes them to be fruitful and have many children.

He [consultant] says he has on three occasions witnessed this running in the thunder rain when the roaring of the thunder was deafening and the whole sky appeared to be one continual flash of lightning.

When men are giving account of this puberty ceremony for women, the chief thing they lay stress on is...the milk obtained from the first milking by the girl who has just come out of the kharú óms. Indeed, it was in this context that I first lit on the word *!nau* and all it means...Should anyone infringe any of the *!nau* injunctions during these puberty rites, some sort of sexual disease would beset him, and this could only be prevented from proving fatal, if he were able to persuade the abá tarás to inoculate and so free him (Hoernlé, 1918, p. 70-74).

The Nama, the oldest inhabitants of South Africa, are identified with a sequence of movement that is widely recognised throughout South Africa as the Nama Stap (Step); the Nama Stap (NS) in turn is the major movement motif of the Nama Stap Dance (NS/D). Despite obvious colonial influences (such as clothing, religious practices, and language), the Nama have declared these performance artefacts to be symbols of Nama identity. This is in contrast to more classical Nama identifiers such as the matjieshuis (mat house) and the Nama language itself. Equally fascinating are the performers who (re)enact this female rite of passage ceremony today—mature women.

The Nama female rite of passage ceremony recorded by Hoernlé no longer exists. Instead, the Nama Stap Dance is now performed. Although this modern day version incorporates some aspects of the traditional ceremony, such as dancing and presentation of an initiate, the traditional ceremony as described by Hoernlé is no longer celebrated. Despite its demise in this form, the Nama have maintained dancing as part of their contemporary interpretation, the Nama Stap Dance.¹ The tenacity of dancing within the ceremony may be indicative of a view of culture that anthropologist Alan Barnard considers, ‘stresses its resilience and internal cohesion, rather than the fleeting nature of particular practices’ (1992, p. 177).

This thesis considers dance as a dynamic archive that catalogues the status of Nama women who in previous periods had considerable status within the Nama community. The Nama female puberty ceremony, for example, serves as a symbol of

solidarity between women and is a public declaration of that relationship. Despite the changing role of women within Nama society in more recent times, a theme of female unity remains an aspect of the contemporary dance ceremony.

This research addresses how the ceremony still exists and why it is performed by women who can no longer have children.

The movement pattern known as the NS is significant within the NS/D, distinguishes Nama groups from each other, and differentiates age groups. Therefore, its movement content and its interpretation reveal, to the knowledgeable observer, the distinction between Nama peoples. Labananalysis (the use of Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis as a single tool) enables a critical examination of the different versions and interpretations of the NS and the NS/D. Relative to a history of (European) dancing, few dances have been assessed through this system, and even fewer African derived dance forms.² Since it facilitates a greater degree of consistency and accuracy of recording, it is noteworthy that Labananalysis is used in this work to distinguish the movement components of the NS and the NS/D.

Methodology

Among the existing systems for recording movement and dance are Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis. Introduced by dancer/artist/movement theorist Rudolf Laban in the 1920s, Labanotation is a symbol system that records and analyses the movement of the human body through three dimensions of space. While Labanotation can be, and has been, applied to any area of social life where there is a need precisely to record and analyse human movement, it is most commonly used in the world of dance.

Labanotation is founded on anatomical principles, and it is this methodical base that allows it to record with accuracy 'all forms of movement and styles of dance.' Its agility lies not only in its anatomical foundations but also in its attention to spatial relationship through the use of diagrammatic drawings (floor plans) and methods by which it encodes movement as graphic symbols. Similar to the letters of the alphabet, actions in Labanotation are recorded by combining symbols that spell words that, in turn, make sentences, paragraphs, and so on. This method of recording movement (on paper) has decided advantages over notoriously unreliable human

memory, the cumbersome and often subjective written word and even (though the two are often used together) film, which is two-dimensional and often misleading. Laban Movement Analysis, on the other hand, delineates the spatial and bodily dynamics of movement.

Although Laban analysis has achieved some recognition as a means of analysing and recording human movement, particularly dance, its application has largely been restricted to dance forms of western origin. Documentation of the dances of African peoples, for example, is practically non-existent.

Documentation of African Dance Forms

Laban Notation Scores: an International Bibliography compiled by Mary Jane and Frederick Warner (1984) provides one inventory of the dance heritage transcribed in Labanotation. The bibliography and its addendum consist of over 4,000 entries of which only approximately fifteen refer to the dances of African people. These include a series of dances notated by Odette Blum: *Adowa*, a traditional West African dance performed at funerals by the Ashanti (1967); *African Dances and Games*, a collection of West African children's dances, games, songs, and drumming patterns arranged by Seth K. Ladzepko (1969); *Agbadza*, a recreational dance of the Anlo-Ewe, as danced in Anyako (1975); *Atsia*, as danced in Anyako (1971); *Bagbíne*, as danced in Lawre by Lobi tribe, following Sebri dance (1971); *Gonje*, a recreational dance of the Dagomba people (1968); *Ko-Bine*, *Kobine*, as dance in Lawra (1971); *Lobru* and *Serbi* danced in Lawra (1971); *Kpanlogo*, as danced in Accra (1975); *Takai* as danced in Tamale (1971); *Tubankpeli*, as danced in Tamale (1968). Other notated dances from this genre can be found in *Dance Curriculum Resource Guide: Comprehensive Dance Education for secondary schools* (1980) and *Introduction to Dance Literacy: Perception and Notation of Dance Patterns* (1978) notations by Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck. In addition to these, I have transcribed four dances from this genre for the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, formerly University of London Schools' Examination Board, for its GCE A Level African dance syllabus. These include *Atsiagbekor*, a traditional war dance of the Ewe people of Ghana set by George Dzikunu; *Com Ina Dis*, a Caribbean dance choreographed by Carl Campbell; *Kutelu*, a dance using traditional Bàtá (of Nigeria) dance vocabulary choreographed

by Bolaji Badejo; *Woluben*, choreographed by Norman Stephenson. The dearth of notated scores for African Peoples' dances is lamentable for those who wish to investigate dance, as in the current study, as part of a movement system that forms part of the social structure of a community.

Bodily Communication

Movement can be perceived from various different points of view. It can be considered purely from an anatomical/physiological perspective in which an analysis of structure, function, and form is considered as in biomechanical analysis. Actions may also be observed as a series of relationships of body parts to each other, as a series of paths or trace forms through space, or as actions that must conform to the environment as in Laban analysis. Whatever perspective one may take in the examination of movement, movement as cultural indicator, for example, is more than the displacement of the body and its parts in space. Movement as a cultural identification needs to be observed and understood as the product of a cluster of processes.

Speech, for example, is unique to humans. Speaking, in many societies, is the major mode of communication—or so it is thought. Making oneself understood through the formation of words is, in fact, a small part of human communication. Movement, which accompanies our words, plays a major role in this interaction. According to movement analyst Carol-Lynne Moore, 'words comprise only about 10 percent of human communication while non-verbal communication makes up all the rest' (1988, p. 1). Body movement, according to Moore,

...is a highly structured, culturally-coded form of symbolic communication, equivalent in its sophistication to the better-known extension systems of language, music, and so on (Moore and Yamamoto, 1988, p. 84-85).

In a similar manner, anthropologist Adrienne Kaeppler distinguishes 'structured movement systems' which, she states, are 'systems of knowledge which are socially constructed...they are created by, known, and agreed upon by a group of people and primarily preserved in memory' (1992a, p.151). Dancing, according to Kaeppler, is such a system; it is part of a network of non-verbal communication that echoes culture.

The social uses of movement, and its meaning among those who devise and use it, can be examined through a study of dancing within the context of the cultural environment in which it is created.

Aims of the Research

This research examines the dancing of the Nama people who live in !Khubus, a small village in the Richtersveld region of South Africa. In order to understand the significance of dancing to the Nama, the Nama Stap as principal motif of the Nama Stap Dance is scrutinized 'within the cultural context in which it has evolved'. Labananalysis, in partnership with dance analysis, anthropological perspective and ethnographic methodology, provides a means of studying the dancing of the community.³

Structure

The research is divided into two parts. Part One (Chapters 1-4) introduces the people known as the Khoisan and situates the Nama within this classification. This section discusses movement analysis and notation applied especially to non-western dance forms and documents the fieldwork undertaken in !Khubus and other Nama villages. Part Two (Chapters 5-8) consists of an analysis of the movement material in the form of notation scores of the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance-Female Puberty version, and Laban and Dance Analysis of the movement content of these. An interpretation of these movement forms and a concluding statement completes Part Two.

Chapter 1 – Who are the Khoisan introduces the people who are the subject of this research, the Nama. The chapter situates the Nama in relation to the peoples known as Khoisan and offers an account of this group from the establishment of the first European colony in 1652 to the present. The chapter highlights the difficulties of constructing a history of these indigenous inhabitants of South Africa.

Chapter 2 – Laban Analysis and non-western Dance Forms. Through a review of relevant research, this chapter will consider issues surrounding the application of Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis to non-western dance forms, particularly African dance; it also notes the use of other notation systems to the analysis and

notation of this form. The chapter concludes with a review of selected seminal works on African dance (and music) and notes issues raised by scholars of African dance of the application of graphic systems of notation to the documentation of African dance forms.

Chapters 3 and 4 – Fieldwork among the Nama discusses in detail the two major fieldtrips—*Sunset along the Orange River* (2001) and *God is found here* (2003)—to the Richtersveld to observe and gather data from Nama communities. These chapters document the process and methods of collection of data that have a direct impact on the notation scores.

Chapter 5 – Nama Scores, Kinetograms, and DVD consists of scores constructed in Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis and an unedited DVD of different versions of the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance. This chapter also highlights the challenges of the system of Labanotation to the documentation of the Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance.

Chapter 6 – An Analysis of the Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance is a text based analysis of the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance based on the Nama Scores constructed in Chapter Five including notes from field research experiences in order to distinguish the prominent movement features of these two dances.

Chapter 7 – An Interpretation of the Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance. Based on an integration of research methods and the field experiences of the researcher, this chapter provides a contemporary interpretation of the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance. It argues that these dances continue to confirm female solidarity. Concluding statements emphasise the fragile status of the dance and express concerns for its continued existence.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion. The final chapter addresses key issues of the enquiry such as the scarcity of research concerning Nama dancing in South African anthropological and archaeological enquiry as well as the classification of the Nama Stap as an ‘African’ dance form.

Notes

1. Within the discussion that follows, the version of the Nama Stap Dance on which the Hoernlé description is based is labelled as Nama Stap Dance Puberty version.

2. See also Welsh Asante (2000), for a further discussion of the ‘paucity of work specifically focussed on African dance (Welsh Asante, 2000, p. 1)

3. Dance scholar/ethnographer Deidre Sklar notes that ‘the term ethnography literally means ‘portrait of a people’’ (Sklar, 1991c, p. 6). Within this perspective, an ethnography may present an account or description of a group of people. An account such as this, however, depending on the ‘theoretical, political and/or methodological stance of the researcher’ (Thomas, 2003a, p. 67), may address a variety of subjects and/or issues beyond mere description. This is because, as Sklar also notes, ‘an ethnographer seeks not only to describe but to understand what constitutes a people’s cultural knowledge’ (Sklar, 1991c, p. 6). Other dance scholars, such as Theresa Buckland, have commented that the term ethnography may refer to ‘practice and to...end result...In most West European and North American practice, ethnography is a methodology that deals with the present and typically concludes in a book known as an ethnographic monograph or ethnography’ (Buckland, 2006b, p. 4). Here the perspective is one of process as well as product. Buckland further remarks that, ‘ethnography has been utilized in a myriad of ways across a diverse range of disciplines...Ethnography’s exact interpretation and application have never been uniform in anthropology, sociology, and folk studies...’ (Buckland, 2006b, pp. 9-10). The application of ethnography to such a range of disciplines may account for a lack of ‘consensus about the meaning of the term ‘ethnography,’ even within its home disciplinary bases of the social sciences.’ (Buckland, 2006b, p. 4)

Addressing the term ethnography from the perspective of a sociologist (and dance scholar) Helen Thomas has commented that ethnography may be defined as an ‘...in-depth study of a culture, institution and context over a sustained period of time, which is usually longer for anthropologist than sociologists. Ethnographic research employs a range of methods and techniques such as participant-observation, interviews, filed [sic] notes, audio and visual recordings and, in the case of dance, movement analysis. The aims of ethnography, the (far/near) relation between representation and reality and the observer and the observed, are subject to debate and largely depend on the theoretical, political and/or methodological stance of the individual researcher’ (Thomas, 2003a p. 67). Thomas’s definition highlights some of the questions/issues of ethnographic research. The term ‘dance ethnography’ signals yet another usage of the term ethnography.

The application of ethnographic methodology to dance may address dance as ‘embodied cultural knowledge’ (Buckland, 2006b, p. 8). According to Sklar, for example, ‘Dance ethnography is unique among other kinds of ethnography because it is necessarily grounded in the body and the body’s experience rather than in texts, artefacts, or abstractions’ (Sklar, 1991c, p. 6). Within the current work, ‘the term ‘dance ethnography’ has been employed as an umbrella term to embrace a variety of intellectual traditions and theoretical positions’ (Buckland, 2006b, p.8).

For a fuller discussion of the history and application of ethnography to dance research see Buckland, 1999b, 2006b; Frosch, 1999; Giurchescu and Torp, 1991; Gore, 1999; Grau, 1999; Kaepller, 1978, 1991, 1999, 2000; Sklar, 1991c, 2000; Thomas, 2003a.

Chapter 1

Who are the Khoisan?



Map 1: Map of the Peoples of Africa

1.0. Khoisan Peoples

Who are the indigenous people(s) of South Africa? Researchers, including anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, and sociologists continually debate this question. There are many reasons why a precise or definitive answer to this question has yet to be agreed; at least one of these relates to the attitude of the early colonist. These early immigrants did not, for example, recognise the distinctive groupings and or clans among the indigenous peoples such as the Cochoqua, Gorachoqua, Goringhaiqua, Khoikhoi/Khoeckhoe/Khoekhoen and San, but, instead, identified them all as a single collective that they labelled Hottentot. It may be fair to suggest that these settlers just did not recognise that there were indeed distinct groups and clans between the Khoisan. This perception of the original people(s) of South Africa was popular in the colony at the Cape as well as at ‘home’ in Europe and is most certainly the foundation of present-day debate concerning nearly every aspect of these original people(s) (Boonzaier et al, 1996).

Alan Barnard, a leading authority on Khoisan societies, identifies the Khoisan as a group of southern African peoples that include the San, who are popularly known as Bushmen, the Khoekhoen, who are often referred to as Hottentots, and Damara. All Khoisan peoples, according to Barnard, share certain cultural features such as kinship, ritual, cosmology, territorial organisation, and gender relations. These, he suggests, represent components of structures held in common between the Khoisan that cross economic, cultural, linguistic, and racial boundaries; cultural differences between the Khoisan, he states, can be seen as part of a larger regional structure of beliefs and practices, a kind of ‘structure of structures’ (Barnard, 1992, p. 5).

1.1. Linguistic Labels

Khoisan languages and peoples have been distinguished by biological, economic, linguistic, social, religious, historical, racial, and cosmological considerations. The same word, and spelling, can even have a different meaning depending on the user or context. It should be taken into account however that language, like every other aspect of culture, is dynamic and subject to a variety of conditions that will either promote its growth or facilitate its demise. The discussion that follows will, hopefully, not only help to clarify some of the labels, both historical and contemporary, that are used to differentiate Khoisan peoples but also acknowledge my usage of present-day terminology.

Khoe, Khoi, Khoisan, Khoekhoen

Jan Van Riebeeck first recorded the noun *Khoe* as *Quena* in 1653.¹ *Khoe* is a generic term for the word ‘people’ in many *Khoe* languages.² The word *Khoi*, in traditional Nama orthography, or *Khoe*, in modern Nama, means ‘person’. In the English compound *Khoisan*, the first syllable, *Khoi*, refers to the Nama people as well as other cattle-herding Khoekhoe. The second syllable, *San*, refers to the people known as San (sometimes Bushmen). The Nama and Korana, the two original herding peoples who still exist today, use the compound *Khoekhoen*, ‘People of People’, as their self-appellation. To further confound understanding, linguists specialising in Khoisan languages use the spelling *Khoe* as a linguistic label and also when referring to the Khoekhoen (Nama and Korana) (Barnard, 1992).

San – Bushmen

Khoekhoen use the word *San* to identify Bushmen or foragers. Anthropologists who reject the term Bushmen on the grounds that it is a ‘racist or sexist’ term generally use the word San. The name San, however, is also problematic:

At times it seems to have meant ‘tramps’, ‘vagabonds’, ‘rascals’ ‘robbers’, ‘bandits’, etc. In Cape Khoekhoe dialects and in Nama it generally carried negative connotations and was applied both as a generic term (to refer to black, white, or Nama ‘rascals’) and as an ethnic label (to refer to Bushmen). In earlier times, it referred primarily to low-status Khoekhoe who had lost their cattle. It can be employed in Nama today as an ethnic label, in a more or less neutral sense, just as it is by English-speaking anthropologists (Barnard, 1992, p. 8).

As a result of this and like descriptions, many ethnographers and anthropologists who formerly used the term San have reverted to the term Bushmen. Non-specialist and South African people interviewed during the course of this field research continue to use the term San. The term Bushmen is considered by non-specialists to be pejorative.

Hottentot & Khoekhoen

Hottentot is another term whose use needs careful consideration.

...writers frequently applied the term ‘Hottentot’ indiscriminately to all Khoisan peoples...In recent decades it has acquired such offensive connotations that it is best to avoid it totally...especially as there exists

an indigenous word, ‘Khoekhoe’ which...is preferred by the people themselves (Barnard, 1992, p. 9).

As explained above, this group of people want to be known as Khoekhoen.

Koïsan and Khoisan

Around 1928 historian Lenohard Schultze adopted the term Koïsan to describe the Hottentot (Khoekhoen) and Bushmen (San) populations; Schultze used the terms as a biological or genetic label. The word Khoisan, a development of Koïsan, was later popularised by anthropologist I. Schapera who adopted it as a cultural and linguistic identifier. Throughout this research the traditional Nama spelling of ‘!Khulus’ that was related to me by cultural consultants will be used. The Nama spelling and usage ‘Khoekhoen’ will be applied to the research unless otherwise indicated. When it is necessary to discuss Khoekhoen and San peoples as a group, I will adopt Alan Barnard’s usage and spelling ‘Khoisan’. The terms San and Bushmen will follow the traditional Khoekhoen usage as described above. Finally, the use of the label ‘Hottentot’ will be avoided except when it is used in direct quote or paraphrase.

1.2. Classification, Origins, and History of the Khoekhoen

There exist hundreds of ethnic group names in literature concerning the Khoisan and authors use these in different ways—there is no common agreement. The word ‘Khoisan’ itself is an artificial construct devised by Europeans to facilitate an analysis, comparison, and understanding of them. In an attempt to classify Khoisan peoples, Barnard suggests that the only useful definitions of Khoisan ethnic divisions are those that are designed for a specific purpose or which employ a single or coherent set of criteria such as biological (genetic), linguistic, and economic; language, though far from ideal, is considered to be the most precise of these.

On the basis of geographical, cultural, and linguistic criteria Barnard classifies the Khoe-speaking Bushmen as belonging to one of four groups: the western Kho Bushmen (Western Botswana peoples), the Central Kho Bushmen of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, the Northern Kho-Bushmen of the Okavango, and the Eastern Kho Bushmen including the Khoe-speaking peoples of eastern Botswana.

Economic Classification

Using subsistence ideology as a marker, all Khoisan people are either hunters or herders. Hunters are those Khoisan whose economy is based exclusively on hunting and gathering or on hunting, gathering, and fishing. The word ‘Bushmen’ according to anthropologist Monica Wilson, is a synonym for hunters. This is in contrast to Barnard who uses the word ‘Khoekhoen’ as a synonym for herder. This distinction between hunters and herders is discussed further below. The Khoekhoen, based on economic classifications, include the Nama, the Korana, and both eastern and western Cape Khoekhoen.

Biological Classification

Much of the pre-twentieth century research in South Africa was characterised by the physical classification of groups of people. This biological classification was characterised by, for example, noting characteristics such as the shape and size of the skull. Such classification today is questionable. Contemporary researchers now focus on change rather than on what is perceived to remain the same. But, even here, geneticists are hesitant to use this type of research data as the base for ‘biological’ classification since it is generally accepted that ‘common origin is unprovable by genetic means alone’ (Barnard, 1992, p. 19). Instead, it is the corroboration of data from different disciplines that helps to determine ‘whether two populations have emerged from a single common ancestral stock or whether they are descended from two separate stocks who have interbred (Barnard, 1992, p. 18). Using this kind of collaborative research methodology, it has been demonstrated that both Bushmen and Khoekhoen populations share a considerable amount of genetic material with other southern African groups (Barnard, 1992).³ It is noteworthy that this kind of cooperative, inter-disciplinary research is now common practice in the South African research community.⁴

It is obvious that there is no direct answer to the question of ‘who are the indigenous people of South Africa’. The chronology of the indigenous people prior to the arrival of the first colonist is not precise. This early history is complicated due to many factors one of which is that the behaviour of the colonist toward the indigenous people eroded family, clan, and partner relationships and it ultimately damaged the Khoisan self image. There was, for example, a period when many Nama denied their heritage because to be a member of this cultural group was to be considered of low

social status.⁵ Attitudes such as this have made it difficult to reconstruct an acceptable picture or chart an accurate course of events that will identify the ‘real men’ of South Africa.⁶ The account of the Khoekhoen that follows, therefore, must be seen in the light of this uncertainty. It has been compiled from a variety of sources and should, therefore, be taken as an informed account rather than ‘the’ account of the Khoekhoen.⁷

1. 3. Khoekhoen

The Khoekhoen are a people whose existence can be traced back 2000 years to the Cape area of what is today the Republic of South Africa. In pre-colonial times the Khoekhoen were nomadic herdsmen, driving their cattle and sheep between suitable areas of grazing and watering as the seasons dictated. Their possession and maintenance of livestock distinguished them from hunter-gatherers of the region such as the Soaqua or San and their lifestyle and social organisation were defined by their need to find pasture and water for their herds. The language of the Khoekhoen is still spoken by a few thousand inhabitants of the Kalahari along the Orange River. They were once thought to be extinct, but direct descendants of the people who inhabited the Cape for a millennium prior to the arrival of any European still live in the harsh outback which forms South Africa’s frontier with Namibia, an area known as the Richtersveld.

The Khoekhoen were the first people encountered by European travellers in the region, and they were incorrectly identified with other inhabitants of the area.⁸ They were all simply called ‘Hottentot’. This universal designation ignored an established social structure in the region in which the Khoekhoen were, by virtue of their domestication of animals, top of the order. The Khoekhoen, San, and Soaqua did share a common language, and this fact has led, at least some historians to believe that the San and Soaqua were simply Khoekhoen who, through misfortune, had lost their herds, or that the Khoekhoen were simply San or Soaqua who had been lucky enough to get their hands on some livestock.⁹ But archaeological evidence gathered from sites on which the separate groups were known to have lived indicates entirely different cultural products and, therefore, differing cultures.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the shared language does indicate an intriguing intimacy among the groupings.

Khoekhoen Social Structure

The Khoekhoen are a patrilineal society living in large portable dwellings known as matjieshuis. These dwellings, often more than twenty of them, would be organised into clan villages inhabited by several hundred people of which the senior male was headman. Often the village would also be home to paid servants hired from among the less wealthy hunter-gatherers of the region. As many as fifteen villages could be organised into a group of related clans consisting of several thousand people, of which a chief was the recognised authority. The chief and the headmen of each village formed a council, which was the decision making body for the whole community. While animals were privately owned, the land and its resources were held to be the property of the community. Clans moved freely among the watering holes and pastures under the influence of the group with which they were connected. But they needed to obtain permission to use the resources of another group's land. Such requests, if courteously made and accompanied by the payment of traditional tribute, were seldom refused. But it was important that outsiders formally recognised the local group's custody of resources.

Of course, it is easy to apply the benefit of hindsight to historic events, to view past occurrences through the perspective of present day values and find fault with those who have gone before. This is always a mistake. But it is probably equally misguided not to identify the history of modern dilemmas. We can see the origins of the region's modern problems in the manner in which the first European visitors to the Cape handled their encounters with its inhabitants, the Khoekhoen, the San and the Soqua. Accordingly, a party of Portuguese explorers landed at Mossel Bay in the late 1400s. Suspicious as a result of never having encountered Europeans, members of the local Khoekhoen village observed from a distance, more curious, it is believed, than hostile. The Portuguese decided to take water from a watering place near to the shore. The Khoekhoen began to defend the water hole by throwing rocks at the Portuguese. The Portuguese fired back with crossbows and Khoekhoen were killed (Davenport, 2000).

The incident is illustrative of the manner in which inhabitants of the Cape and visitors to it would treat one another for generations to come. The Khoekhoen expected the Portuguese to behave as any other outsider. They had no reason to believe that the strangers would not courteously acknowledge the proprietorship of those on whose territory they had arrived and request permission to share resources.

When the Portuguese failed to do this, they were reminded of their impropriety. In response, the Europeans never questioned their own actions. They took to arms and blood was shed. For a long time following this incident, the Khoekhoen had a reputation among travellers to the Cape for being hostile and uncooperative.

It is ironic, that a people acting in accordance with their own customs and traditions should be so branded by outsiders with little knowledge of them. It is probably fair, but again easy, to say that such an incident would not have occurred among Europeans encountering one another. A delegation of Portuguese travellers landing on French shores would have assumed the existence of local customs regarding the sharing of resources and penalties for their violation. Even without being able to speak the language, they would have found a way to avoid falling foul of local law.

Social Distribution of Wealth

The Khoekhoen and other Cape inhabitants had long-established religious, social and political customs and institutions that had regulated their existence for millennia. The ownership of livestock, particularly cattle, was the basis of self-definition and social status. The larger your herd, the greater was your status in the Khoekhoen community. The numbers of people available to care for it ultimately limited the size of a herd. If a man's herd grew beyond the capacity of his sons and hired hands to maintain, he could be sure that poorer members of the community would raid excess cattle. In this way, wealth, in the form of cattle, was distributed, as were the herding skills necessary to care for them. Cattle were also traded, though they were not a part of the common currency. Portions of a man's excess herd could be traded to others for goods or services, though it was difficult to raise one's own herd in this way. If you were working for others, it was difficult to maintain the cattle in which they paid you.

The Khoekhoen seldom slaughtered cattle except for ritual purposes. Birth, marriage and death were seen as important transition periods and the slaughter of cattle attended their celebration. Status was gained by those who had great numbers of cattle to donate to such occasions. A man rich in cattle could, before his death, bequeath portions of his herd to his heirs and, in this way, make them interested partners in the welfare of his stock. Women could own cattle and it was not uncommon for them to attain herds of a size that afforded them significant status in

the community; some were chiefs or regents. As part of the marriage celebration cattle would be given by the family of the groom to that of the bride, and usually both families would make a gift of cattle to the young couple. In this way wealth was spread among generations. European visitors and settlers had difficulty understanding the significance of cattle in Khoekhoen life. To them cattle were merely animals from which one obtained milk, beef and hides. They could not comprehend the Khoekhoen reluctance to trade cattle for non-productive goods, and trouble sometimes occurred when Europeans thought that the Khoekhoen were withholding essential foodstuff.

It is not surprising that a people whose welfare depended upon a sufficiency of water and grassland for their livestock should worship a deity who controlled these elements. Legend has it that *Tsui-//goab*, the Khoekhoen creator, was the guardian of health, the controller of rain and the source of abundance and prosperity. //*Gaunab*, on the other hand, was an evil being that caused sickness and death. Early European visitors who described the Khoekhoen as godless would have been surprised to discover, if they could have, that Khoekhoen theology was as concerned with the balance of good and evil, fortune and misfortune as that of any Christian denomination. At the same time the Khoekhoen calendar is separated into periods of the year during which rains fall, grass grows, the land begins to dry, animals mate, animals give birth, and so on. It is clear that the Khoekhoen were in balance with their environment.

European Contact

Between the late fifteenth and middle seventeenth centuries Khoekhoen contact with European visitors was much as described above. Lacking any understanding of the people with whom they were dealing, Europeans often resorted to force when thwarted in their desire to trade for goods they needed. There are stories of Portuguese sailors holding Khoekhoen children hostage in order to force their elders to provide them with cattle. When lives were lost, on neither side was an understanding of the other promoted. The Europeans assumed the Khoekhoen to be savages and the Khoekhoen thought the Europeans to be uncivilised and exploitative. The Khoekhoen were willing enough to trade when the conditions of trading were beneficial, and they and the San were both willing to work for Europeans who paid them a fair wage. But the Africans were able to support themselves and saw no reason

to alter their historic style and manner of life in order to suit the requirements of the visitors. They had no intention of allowing the Europeans to remain permanently.

In 1652 the Dutch East India Company established the first permanent European settlement at what is today Table Bay, and the nature of European-African relations took a drastic turn. In the first place, the Dutch, accustomed to privately owning land, took pasture-land from the Goringhaiqua and the Goringhaikonas, two Khoekhoen groupings in the area, for the grazing of their own livestock and the raising of their own crops. Of course, this appropriation was contested, but the locals, facing superior arms, were defeated and the subsequent treaty allowed the Dutch to keep the land that they had taken. Dutch trading parties set out from their fort in search of Khoekhoen who would trade for livestock and other stuff essential for the maintenance of their existence in the Cape. In some cases they were successful, but, due to the Khoekhoen reluctance to trade cattle, they often met with failure. In many cases, they simply took what they wanted. In 1672, treaties were negotiated with the Goringhaiqua and the Goringhaikonas that allowed them control of vast lands in the area and also permitted the Company to involve itself in the affairs of the indigenous people.

By 1700, laws had been enacted restricting the Khoekhoen ability to board ships, receive money as payment for work, trade for foodstuffs, own arms and ammunition or fraternise with free-burghers in their own homes. Government-imposed legal status groups classified Khoekhoen and San according to the rights they possessed, or were denied, under law as company servant, free-burgher, slave and independent Hottentot. These were ominous foreshadows of things to come. Colonial expansion having taken vast tracts of the best available land, and the smallpox epidemic of 1713 having taken the lives of great numbers of indigenous people, the Khoekhoen and San had all but disappeared from the south-western Cape by the mid-18th century. When Dutch expansion to the north was fiercely resisted by hunter-gatherers already living in that area, it was discovered that many were Khoekhoen who had lost their lands to the Dutch in the Table Bay area. Colonists declared these impoverished herders and hunters to be predatory robbers and began a policy of extermination.

No one knows how many San and Khoekhoen were killed during the following two centuries while the policy was in place. The inhospitable Kalahari became refuge for

many. Others were absorbed into the changing world around them as domestic workers or labourers.

The Language of the Khoekhoen

For more than 2,000 years, Khoekhoengowap ('the people's language') has transmitted the cultural information of the Khoekhoen. Despite the official genocide of those who spoke it and intense social, political and economic pressure placed upon those who survived to speak only Afrikaans, the South African San Institute estimates that Khoekhogowap survives among about 6,000 speakers, mostly a small group of residents of the Kalahari desert. It is a remarkable language. Not only does it convey, mostly in the form of stories and legends (!hau) the beliefs and history of its people, it also contains detailed botanical, geological and zoological information about the environment that the speakers have inhabited for millennia. But a language that is only spoken by a few thousand people cannot be expected to last long, particularly when there exists no official encouragement for it to be used by the broadcast or print media. This language, in linguistic terms, is a disappearing one.

Of course, it is dangerous to generalise from the particular circumstances and fortunes of one people, but it is likely that the history of the Khoekhoen can be taken as instructive of the manner in which clashes of culture and interest can, with or without malicious intent, alter the development of a region and its people. For two thousand years the Khoekhoen represented the cultural pinnacle of the Cape. Their language became standard in the region; their domestication of livestock endowed them with a social organisation and economic authority that was vastly superior to that of other hunter-gatherers of the region. But within 300 years of European armed pursuit and interests in the region, the Khoekhoen were reduced to foraging for food in the desert. They were, literally, hunted as animals. The story of the Khoekhoen is not unique. It has resonance in the histories of the native people of the Americas, Asia, and Australia. But we can see in the manner in which the Khoekhoen were treated the roots of apartheid whose influences South Africa is still struggling to overcome. It is no exaggeration to say that the hunters and herders of the Cape were its first victims.

The Nama

The Nama are the best known of Khoekhoen peoples (Barnard, 1992). Originating in the northern Cape, two groups of Nama are distinguished: the Great Nama who live in Great Namaqualand in Namibia and Little Nama who reside in Little Namaqualand in the north-western region of South Africa where the Orange River separates them from their relatives in Great Namaqualand. In order to construct a documentation of Nama dancing, this research will examine the lifestyle of the Nama of !Khubus village, Little Namaqualand. Based on data gathered through fieldwork methods such as distance and participatory observation (Thomas, 2003a), a Laban analysis of what has become known as their ‘national dance’, the Nama Stap, will be created. The Laban analysis will consider not only the movement vocabulary of the dance, but also its history, dynamism, and current status in this Nama community.

The Laban analysis will acknowledge both Nama and observer perspectives and will also consider regional sources (that is, Nama communities) apart from the central source of !Khubus village. Additionally, the analysis will systematically apply both Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis (Labananalysis) as a single method in order to gain swift access to movement content. The application of Laban analysis in this manner will establish a base for kinesthetic empathy. According to Moore,

Kinesthetic empathy involves physical identification with the movements one observes being executed. The easiest way to experience kinesthetic empathy is to attend to how you use your own body while watching an exciting sports event or a tense mystery program. Most involved fans find themselves muscularly participating in the event, that is, making motions like those being observed, only smaller and more subtle. These participative movements of kinesthetic empathy, drawing on imitation and movement memory, can be a valuable extension of visual perception in the understanding of human movement (Moore and Yamamoto, 1988, p. 53-54).

While an attention to kinesthetic empathy will allow a greater understanding of movement activity, it does not necessarily mean that one experiences the movement/dance in the same way as, for example, Nama participants. Anthropologists/movement analyst Brenda Farnell clarifies this point.

To assume...that the sheer *fact* of embodiment allows one to inhabit the world of the Other, is to reduce cultural body to biological organism (Varela in Farnell, 1994). This kind of conflation only perpetuates the frequently held assumption that what looks the same

(because we share a common physiology) will mean the same across linguistic and cultural boundaries and will therefore be *experienced* as the same (Farnell, 1994, p. 937).

Kinesthetic empathy or physical engagement with the dancing is not, therefore, an end in itself, but a means to an end. In this study it, along with an advanced knowledge of Labananalysis will allow the researcher to first, physically learn the movement and structure of the dance. And second, to use this experience as a foundation for further understanding of the dance within the !Khubus community. Further, the system of Laban analysis itself will be scrutinised in order to evaluate its effectiveness as a means of analysing and documenting African derived dance forms. Therefore, the following chapter will review the application of Laban analysis (as well as two other movement notation systems) to non-western dance form and will particularly note its use for African dance forms.

Notes

1. Jan Van Riebeeck was a Dutch commander who landed at the Cape of Good Hope (Table Bay) in 1652 and established the first permanent settlement at the Cape.
2. Basically, all specialists would agree that the Khoisan peoples include speakers of numerous click-using languages which belong to some four or five language families, subfamilies or groups. The linguistically ‘generic’ relationship between all Khoisan languages have yet to be established beyond question, but most specialists do assume for reasons of practicality that we can at least speak of a Khoisan phylum or superfamily. Briefly, Khoisan language families or subfamilies include Khoe (also known as Khwe-Kovab or Hottentot), !Kung (Ju), Ta'a (including !Xõ), !Wi, and tentatively ‘South-western’ or ‘Cape’ (/Xam) (Barnard, 1992, pp. 22-23).
3. Thompson (1995) notes for example, that, ...by the beginning of the Christian era, human communities had lived in Southern Africa...they were the ancestors of the Khoisan peoples of modern times—the peoples the settlers called Bushman and Hottentots. They contributed a high proportion of the genes of the ‘Coloured’ people, who constitute 9 percent of the population of the modern Republic of South Africa...they also provided a smaller, but still considerable, proportion of the genes of the Bantu-speaking Africans, who form 75 percent of the population of the republic, and that they have provided genes to the people whom governments officially classified as white and who amount to 13 percent of the modern population (Thompson, L. 1995, p. 6).
4. As noted in *The Cape Herders A History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa*, ‘the view of the Khoikhoi has always been through European eyes. We have attempted to look at Khoikhoi history and social formation from both sides using a combination of archaeology, history and social anthropology to build up a picture of how they used the land and how they modified land usage through time, under the

pressure of new economic and social forces...the pre-colonial period is one for which there are no written records, and all information on the Khoikhoi has to come from a wide range of sources, most of which are archaeological (Boonzaier, et al, 1996, pp. 3-4).

5. See for example Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994, pp. 407-408.
6. For a detailed account of pre-colonial history of the indigenous peoples of South African see Thompson, L., 1995, pp. 1-30; also see Davenport and Saunders, 2000, pp. 3-20.
7. The story of the Khoekhoen related in this chapter has been compiled from various sources including: Barnard, A. (1992), Boonzaier et al (1996), Carstens, P. (2007, 1966) Cornell, F., (1986), Davenport, R. and Saunders, C (2000), Hoernlé, A., (1925, 1918) Thompson, L. (1995), Vedder, H. (1928).
8. Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1488 at what is today Mossel Bay and became the first European to meet the Khoikhoi (Boonzaier, et al, 1996, p. 3).
9. For a fuller discussion of similarities between languages, see Boonzaier et al, 1996, pp. 16-17.
10. For a fuller discussion of the use of archaeological evidence in relation to the 'Khoisan' see Boonzaier et al, 1996, pp. 2-27.

Chapter 2

Laban Analysis and Non-Western Dance Forms

2.0. Introduction

Dancing is often described as an evanescent, illiterate art. This perception is due in part to the inaccessibility of dance scores and, prior to the 1980s, a cumbersome and costly film/video technology. This lack of a sustained tangible history has had a debilitating effect on the accumulation of dance scores and, by extension, dance history. However, through the recording of dances in graphic form, a chronicle of dances performed by people over time can be collected thereby creating a text-based history of dances and dancing. Further, as in the case of Laban analysis, this mode of documentation can also provide a foundation for the interpretation of a structured movement system. The significance of movement notation, however, is not limited to its application to dancing; its application to movement in general is diverse. It is, for example, applied to movement therapy and movement pattern analysis in the business world.¹ It will in this study be used as a methodology to reveal the movement patterns embedded in the dancing of the Nama people of !Khubus, South Africa, the descendants of the Khoekhoen.

Various factors motivate choreographers as well as dancers to document their work. These include such things as: the availability and ease of use of technology, to comply with funding requirements, and choreographic inspiration. Whatever the motivation for this, it can be stated with a fair degree of confidence that choreographers now have their work recorded in some form. Choreographers typically record their work via film; include it as part of the choreographic process; feature film and/or multi-media as part of the choreographic product itself; or more recently exhibit and exchange their work via film streaming. Others have considered graphic forms of notation as either an adjunct to film or as the principal means of recording their work.

Systems for the graphic documentation of movement and/or dance have existed for centuries. Ann Hutchinson Guest is the recognised authority not only of Labanotation, but also of systems of dance notation generally. Her texts, *Labanotation, The System of Analyzing and Recording Movement* (1977), *Dance Notation The Process of Recording Movement on Paper* (1984) and *Choreo-Graphics*

A Comparison of Dance Notation Systems from the Fifteenth Century to the Present (1989) are major sources of information on this topic. Guest organises the multitude of systems of dance notation into five broad categories that relate to a chronology of western theatre dance. These include: Words and Word Abbreviations (Letter Codes); Track Drawings (Floor Plans); Stick Figure (Visual); Music Note; and Abstract.² This chapter will address Labanotation (LN) and Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as they apply to this research and will particularly draw attention to their application to non-western dance forms.³

Through a review of relevant research, the discussion will consider issues surrounding LN and LMA such as: the nature of the methodology; the value and/or usefulness of these to dance education and training; LN scores; and the application of LN and/or LMA to ethnographic inquiry. Part 1 provides a brief introduction of the mechanics of the Laban system including LN and LMA. This is followed by a section that addresses those issues noted above as they relate to LN, illustrates case studies in the application of LN to non-western dance forms including particular reference to African dance. This section also notes the use of Benesh Movement Notation concerning African dance. As the only notable movement notation system of African origin and due to its inaccessibility outside of southern Africa, the discussion of movement/dance notation will conclude with an introduction to the system devised by Jasmine Honoré (1994). Part 2 will consider the application of LMA to selected non-western dance forms. The initial section will address the application of LMA as the central tools of analysis; the final section of part two will examine research that has applied LN and LMA as a single tool. The chapter concludes with a review of selected seminal works on African dance and music and also notes issues raised by scholars of African dance of the application of graphic systems of notation to the documentation of African dance forms.

2.1. Part 1: Laban Analysis

In the Laban system of movement notation, symbols are standardised to represent parts of the body and the movements they are capable of making. By combining symbols representing arms, legs, hands and feet with those representing bending, stepping, folding, jumping or twisting, the Labanotator is able to record all human movement. Labanotation relates to various forms of time and is harmonious with current multi-media technology. This, however, is only part of the story.

Movement, from the Laban point of view, is more than a mere change in position. It is a *process* of change...[it] is that activity which occurs between the starting and finishing stances (Moore and Yamamotao, 1988). Moreover, it is one of the concepts that distinguishes it from other systems of movement notation and that, arguably, renders it a suitable tool to discover, record, and interpret the movement patterns to be found in the dances of human societies. The ability of a system of movement notation to distinguish between 'position' and 'motion' is essential to an understanding (and documentation) of African dance forms. African dance scholar Kariamu Welsh Asante clarifies this point,

African dance is polyrhythmic, polycentric, and holistic with regard to *motion* rather than being postural or position-oriented as an essential requisite...it is the *movement* that is challenging scholars, and choreographers of African dance to define, structure, and codify it (Welsh Asante, 1985a, pp. 71-72, italics added).

Anthropologist Brenda Farnell also points out the necessity to distinguish between these,

It is not uncommon to find actions reduced to a *position* or to a sequence of positions...such that a series of photographs, sketches, diagrams, or positions of limbs plotted on a two dimensional graph are presented as records of *movement* (Farnell, 1994, p. 929, italics added).

The concept of *movement as a process of change*, rather than a series of poses or positions, is central to the Laban system.

While a Labanotator may describe movement purely in terms of movement from one point to another, a Laban Movement Analyst understands movement in terms of its dynamic and spatial dimensions. The method examines the manner in which the body changes in response to internal and external stimulation (shape changes), analyses the energy flow of movement and distinguishes the time, space, and weight required to achieve it; these changes are collectively termed Effort. Effort, however, is but one level of description of this so-called multilayered framework. LMA consists of four related parts: Body, Effort, Shape and Space (BESS).

The Body component of LMA functions in a similar way to Labanotation in that it: describes body parts and their relationship to each other and distinguishes basic locomotor actions such as travelling, aerial forms, and gestures of limbs. It stresses the significance of phrasing and identifies the sources of initiation of movement. Introduced alongside Bartenieff Fundamentals, this aspect of the system

integrates Laban concepts with anatomical, physiological, and developmental principles. Changes in the form of the body as it relates to its environment are defined as changes in Shape. This aspect of analysis is concerned with the way in which the body alters its outward appearance. Shape provides a way to describe the plasticity of the body, the forms it reveals, and the way in which its form constantly changes (Groff, 1990, p.29). Space is the physical locality in which change takes place; it is described as a hidden feature of movement, and movement a visible expression of space (Laban, 1966).

When used together these two aspects of Laban's system (LN and LMA) give an energetic picture of the human body in motion; a representation of the inner and outer nature of motion. Though both divisions of the system have their origins in the work of Rudolf Laban, they have developed along separate paths. It is not usual for the two to be applied systematically at the same time. This distinctive evolution of the two provides, in itself, an interesting history. It is noteworthy, therefore, that this research will utilise both aspects of the system as a single tool.

Movement notation as a method of documentation has had an influence on dance and dancing throughout the 20th century. The documentation of dances in graphic notation, for example, has created tangible resources making possible the compilation of a history of dancing. Archives of notated dance scores have allowed dance literacy and the ability to read dances has contributed to dance education and to the academic study of dancing. Movement notation has provided tools of observation and analysis for dance research generally and ethnochoreology especially. Critics and practitioners of graphic forms of notation air differing views on issues of interpretation, complexity of notation systems, and on the appropriateness of movement notation itself. Such debate has exposed some of the limitations of graphic forms of notation.⁴ But rather than inhibiting the growth of Laban analysis, as indicated by the examination that follows, these discussions have contributed to its development. The use of LN as a method of documenting dances, for example, motivated dance scholar and Labanotator Sheila Marion to question the fundamental nature of systems of notation.

2.1.1 Labanotation

In her dissertation titled *Notation Systems and Dance Style: Three Systems Recording and Reflecting One Hundred Years of Western Theatrical Dance* (1997b),

Marion investigates Benesh Movement Notation (BMN), LN, and Stepanov notation systems.⁵ Marion scrutinises the movement perspective that provides the theoretical base of each system and demonstrates how this is apparent in the system's method of documentation. She notes,

...embedded within a notation system's organizing structure and devices for representing movement, are concepts and values which derive from the movement context or style in which the system either originated or was principally developed (Marion, 1997a, p. 139).

Therefore, although these systems 'aspire to universal application,' they reflect the influence of its creator(s) as well as a particular dance style. This is an historical association, as initially a system of notation developed to meet the needs of the dancing of the period in which it was produced. Dance scholar Judith Lynne Hanna, further suggests that, 'the symbols of any system have associations that are specific to the culture of the users' (Hanna, 1989, p. 431). While some systems, such as LN and BMN, are applied to a variety of dance/movement forms and contexts, no system of notation is without 'an approach' to the analysis of movement; this 'approach' is what distinguishes it from other systems. Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation, for example, is distinguished from others by the fact that, unlike LN or BMN that depicts movement in graphic form, it conceptualises movement mathematically in terms of degrees of motion. Because systems of notation have tended to 'reflect the influence of its [their] creator,' it is noteworthy that Jasmine Honoré, unlike her predecessors, did not seek to design a system for 'universal application' or to impose her own perspective on her system. Instead, she consciously based her system of notation of Xhosa dances on what she perceived as the perspective of the people she was working with thereby creating a culturally specific system as noted by Hanna above; Honoré's work will be more fully discussed below.

Even though Marion's work clearly exposed the movement perspective or 'bias' of LN and other systems of movement notation, her research was limited to an examination of these to a western theatre dance context. The degree to which a system's 'bias' diminishes its effectiveness when applied to non-western dance forms, especially African dance, was not addressed. The data from her research is useful, however, as a starting point for a consideration of 'bias' when applying western notation systems to non-western dance forms. Odette Blum, a Labanotator of both

western and African dances, emphasises the contribution of movement notation to dance ‘literacy’ and to the academic study of dancing.

The term ‘literacy’ is used here to mean ‘the ability to read and write movement so that translation into the medium of words is unnecessary for creating...appropriate descriptions of actions’ (Farnell, 1994, p. 937). According to dance scholar/anthropologist Brenda Farnell, LN provides a mode of specification and registration specific to the medium itself (Farnell, 1994, p. 938). This means that Labanotation enables its users to conceptualise and analyse ‘movement’ as ‘movement’ and not as a series of static positions.⁶ As part of her research, Blum compares the advantages and disadvantages of film/video with those of notation scores as forms of documentation. While a film/video may document a single performance of a work, Blum highlights the capacity of LN to record the ‘intent and/or motivations’ of the choreographer due to the wide range of descriptive choices available to a Labanotator.

Blum’s research, undertaken over twenty years ago, highlights a number of issues that remain relevant today. First, her research was among the first to highlight issues of dance literacy—the ability of dancers to reflect on their practice in ‘movement’ terms, to articulate, document, and study it. A second related issue was the use of film/video to record dances. Although these electronic media offer a relatively straightforward and perhaps accurate means of recording dances, they do not provide a method of examination—a system for scrutinizing, comparing, and evaluating movement/dances. Film/video is not a system of movement analysis; it is a visual record and/or interpretation of a dance. Finally, the capacity to perceive and record movement in a variety of different ways is a valuable aspect of a system of movement notation. How a notator chooses to describe a movement, for example, may be indicative of her/his understanding of it and may also reflect the ‘emic’ perspective—the point of view of the movers themselves.⁷ Also addressing the theme of dance literacy, dance scholar Jill Beck reviewed the use of Labanotation in conjunction with dance training.

According to Beck, Hartford Ballet ‘is attempting to develop a notation-literate company...in which LN is not seen as an end in itself, but as a tool to accelerate dance learning’ (Beck, 1988).⁸ In a manner similar to learning a musical instrument, young dancers are taught the fundamentals of Labanotation in the dance

studio at the same time as they are learning ballet vocabulary. The benefits of such an approach is that in the first instance dancers learn to read and write movement at the same time as they are learning dance vocabulary and this establishes a foundation for dance literacy as described above. The analytic skill that develops from such an approach benefits the dancer in that they ‘learn to think and analyse in terms of movement’ and not in terms of a series of bodily positions or shapes. Further, the dance teacher also benefits as once the basics of the system are understood, dance/movement learning is accelerated. Long term, with continued study of notation, dancers have access to dance repertoire through which they may examine dances, prepare sequences for auditions, or for professional/personal enrichment.

Unlike musicians who typically study music and learn to read music staff notation at the same time as they are learning to play an instrument, dancers typically learn dancing by following/copying the movement of a teacher. The significance of Blum’s and Beck’s research is the data it can provide on the impact of the use of notation as an integrated aspect of the training of dancers. This mode of learning is especially relevant for the ballet genre, as ballet is often perceived as a series of static positions. Teaching/learning ballet through notation (because of its ‘mode of specification’) encourages students to perceive of ballet as fluid movement through space rather than a series of picturesque poses. On the other hand, it is equally important to note that dance practitioners and some scholars of African dance especially (see Welsh Asante, as cited below, for an example), perceive Labanotation not as a ‘movement’ notation system but as a system that records positions or static forms. As the discussion above indicates, such a perspective is a misconception. Whereas Blum and Beck draw attention to the contribution of LN to dance literacy and dance education, other researchers have questioned the degree to which LN can (or can not) record culturally specific information. Dance ethnographer Judy Van Zile works extensively with Korean and Japanese dance forms. Among other notation related issues, she is concerned with ‘how much information LN symbols actually convey’ in terms of the dance form the notation records (Van Zile, 1983).

Van Zile conducted an experiment to determine if a LN score incorporated the information needed to produce a ‘culturally specific’ reconstruction of a dance; would the dance be accepted by members of the culture, in this case Korean, as ‘Korean’. Working with a reconstructor and dancers unfamiliar with Korean dance, Van Zile found that although Korean dance experts were convinced of the ability of LN to

record ‘their dances’, the performers did not pass as ‘Korean’ dancers (Van Zile, 1983, p.105). The research findings addressed issues related to the structure of the project including technical level of the dancers, method of documentation, and experience of the reconstructor. Despite criticism of the ability of the performers to ‘pass as Korean dancers’, a number of useful outcomes were achieved. LN was able, for example, to ‘convey a sense of the overall characteristics of the [Korean] dance’ as expressed by Korean dance experts. Equally significant, it was noted that ‘the intellectual understanding that comes from ‘reading’ of a score is of equal significance for dance research’ (Van Zile, 1983, p.105). Although it would appear that LN was able to record ‘culturally’ specific information, this kind of detail may depend not only an advanced knowledge of the notation system by the notator, but an understanding (and perhaps experience) of the movement form by the notator and/or reconstructor.⁹ Within the project, Van Zile was the only researcher familiar with Korean dance; hence it was noted that the *score* contained the ‘culturally significant’ details. This work highlights the fact that while it is important that a notator has adequate cultural and critical knowledge of the form, it is equally importance that *all* researchers have such knowledge. Notation scores may be used to answer a variety of different questions. Because notation scores can document movement in relationship to various kinds of ‘time’, for example, scholars have examined scores to scrutinize the relationship between movement and music.

Examining the work of dancer/choreographer/musician Doris Humphrey through LN scores, dance/music scholar Stephanie Jordan is particularly interested in the ‘music visualisation’ component of Humphrey’s choreography—‘the association between music and dance are important structural features in Humphrey’s choreography’ (Jordan, 1981/82). Jordan comments that one of the greatest benefits of LN scores to her research is the rhythmic clarity that scores provide. Although she is working in a western context, Jordan’s research is relevant to the present investigation as it centres on the close relationship between music and dance and the capacity of LN to accommodate this connection; it is my contention that this kind of association is a characteristic of (much) African dance; and this aspect of African dance is discussed further below by ethnomusicologists Doris Green and music scholar J.W. Kwabena Nketia.

Labanotation is effective in its ability to document different ‘approaches’ to time. It can, for example, relate ‘time’ to breath (inhalation and exhalation) as

recorded in the dance *Water Study* (1928) also by Doris Humphrey, where a standard metric or quantitative approach to time is not typical. It can also record duration in ‘relative’ terms in which one movement is considered fast or slow in relation to another one, or time can be organised by relating the movement of one dancer with that of another, and the simultaneous use of different body parts in different rhythms (a characteristic of many African dances) can also be recorded. Since there is a close relationship between African dance and music that needs to be recognised in the notation of these dances, the ‘rhythmic clarity’ of the Laban system distinguished by Jordan is significant to this research.¹⁰

Thus far, we have seen that LN is a versatile tool used in dance education to facilitate dance teaching and learning and to facilitate aspects of dance research. Such research has examined music/dance relationship and offered insight into the cultural characteristics of a dance form; other research has revealed the importance of knowledge of the form by the notator/reconstructor. The use of movement notation has also stimulated questions concerning the content of a notation score. As it is typically a trained Labanotator rather than the choreographer who notates a dance, for example, Judy Van Zile questions how accurately a notated score represents the intended work of the choreographer; is the score the notator’s understanding of the choreographer or expand the choreographer’s intended meaning? This equally applies to the reconstruction or restaging of dances where it is usually a notator rather than the choreographer who restages a dance from a score.

Van Zile (1985-1986) points out the levels of interpretation involved in this process: there is the reconstructor who has interpreted the LN score; the score in turn, is an interpretation of the notator’s understanding of the choreographer’s original intent; finally, there is an audience interpretation of an interpretation of yet another interpretation. This series of ‘readings’ leads to further questions regarding authenticity. Is the notation really *the* dance or a translation of it; is it a kind of artefact? Unlike film and/or video that are artefact of a specific performance, for example, the notated score can document the choreography as set by the choreographer and therefore has broader potential in terms of determining what constitutes a particular dance (Van Zile, 1985/86, p.42).¹¹ These issues (and continued discussion of them) are central to the documentation of dances. Van Zile expresses this clearly,

...dance is constituted not only of movement (both structure and quality), but of an idea that generated the movement, and both the idea and the movement must be considered in determining what constitutes a particular dance, and hence what should be documented in the score and how it should be documented (Van Zile, 1985/86, p. 44).

Related to an awareness of 'levels' of interpretation is the idea of improvisation concerning African dances. According to some scholars, such as Harper (1967), Welsh Asante (1996a), and Layiwola (1997), this aspect of African dance challenges documentation through (western) systems of notation. In reference to Yoruba dancing, dance scholar Peggy Harper notes for example,

The movements in themselves are subtle, and it is often difficult for a foreigner to grasp the variety of patterns in the dance. Each dancer brings his own interpretation of the style of dance to his performance...These subtleties are difficult for the dancer of another culture to learn, and are often too elusive for appreciation by an audience unfamiliar with the dance (Harper, 1967, pp.79-80).

While I would agree with Harper's observation concerning these aspects of Yoruba dances (and other African dance forms), I would also suggest that these features do not necessarily indicate that they are beyond the ability of a notator to understand or a system of notation to record. The issue of understanding the cultural significance of dances by a notator was addressed above; however, it is equally important for a notator to know the movement vocabulary of the dance form. Systems of movement notation record movements that happens at a particular time and place; but, a system cannot, in a practical sense, deal with every permutation of an 'improvised' component of a dance; by its very nature this aspect of a dance will be different each time it is performed. A notation system can, however, record a 'range' of 'improvisations or interpretations' and thereby record what is shared and what is distinctive between these. Such information can help to determine the range of movement vocabulary acceptable to the form even within an improvised sequence. Within the current work, for example, there is an improvisational aspect to the Nama Stap performed by youth in !Khubus. A selection of these has been recorded as an example of the content and form of movements used. These have also been recorded in a manner that indicates that these movements may change on subsequent performances (See Chapter Five for a fuller discussion of these issues). Harper also points out the difficulty foreigners have in attempting to learn these dances. While I

would agree that it might be difficult to learn the dances, I would also suggest that it is not impossible. Western dancers travel to various countries of Africa to learn dances (and music) in their cultural contexts; also, African dancers and musicians, either independently or as part of a dance company, travel to western countries to perform and to teach dance and music. While western dancers may not perform the dances in exactly the same manner as a performer who has learned the dances as a part of their life experience, westerners have become good African dancers who demonstrate an understanding of the dances (such as Welsh Asante noted below). Notators who want to specialise in the notation of African dances, such as Odette Blum (1969, 1973, 1984), Doris Green (1996, 2007), and me, are aware of the difficulties associated with the documentation of African dances and have undertaken specialist training in this form; part of this training has included the study of the dances in their cultural contexts.

Through the application of LN to dance ethnography and other movement related activities, users have assessed its benefits to dancing. These include: the ability to 'think' and therefore analyse in movement terms; the facility to freeze a movement in time in order to analyse a particular movement at a precise moment in time; to compare and contrast it with other actions within the same dance, other performances of the same dance, or other dances generally; and unlike live performance, the dance score remains constant. Scores may be used in various ways to answer a variety of questions. They may, for example, focus on the use of space or illustrate the significance of the relationship between dancers.¹² Users of graphic systems of notation have observed that they can communicate complex information efficiently especially as compared to film/video.¹³ Because LN enables a movement to be recorded in different ways, the manner in which a Labanotator records a movement is indicative of how s/he has conceptualised it. A notation system exposes assumptions concerning basic movement principles of the inventor(s) and users of it. Because it enables systematic scrutiny, movement analysis can provide the dance ethnographer with the skills needed to observe dancing specifically and movement activity generally. For example, since in LN a movement can be recorded in a multiplicity of ways, the observer is required to look at movement from various different perspectives taking into account the context as well as the movement component of the dance. This facility enables the notator to take account of not only the structure of the dance, but through analysis of other movement activities within

the culture, the perspective of the people they are working with. In this regard, it should also be noted, that LN is written from the ‘performer’s’ bodily perspective and not that of the observer’s.¹⁴

2.1.2 Non-Western Dance Forms

Most of the dance repertoire recorded in LN are western theatrical dances and this is indicative of the earlier application of the system.¹⁵ Today LN is applied to a variety of dance/movement related contexts. The following section presents a series of studies drawing attention to the application of LN to non-western dance forms including: 1) Southeast Asian; 2) Chinese; 3) Korean; and 4) African dance forms.

As part of a government supported project, dance scholar Rhonda Ryman worked with a group of dance and drama teachers from Southeast Asia—Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines.¹⁶ The programme had multiple aims: to encourage cross-cultural understandings, to train participants to notate their own traditional dances, to observe LN teaching methodologies in a non-western context, to examine the capacity of LN to effectively document the traditional dances of the participants, and to become aware of cultural biases of the Laban system.

Ryman found that although the teaching approach established by the Dance Notation Bureau—developing from a focus on ‘the abstract to the concrete’—was applicable to this context, participants exhibited ‘varying degrees of success’ in transcribing LN examples that were based largely on western theatre dance models (Ryman, 1991).¹⁷ This response by participants demonstrated the Eurocentric perspective/application of the system and the need to develop culturally diverse materials in LN. Related to this, Ryman found that the movement perspective of the system itself became evident when working outside of a western context and this in turn directed the perspective of the observer ‘.... [the notation] prevented seeing what was important about the movement...[you] see what you are looking for, not what is there’ (Ryman, 1991).¹⁸ These are valid criticisms. The Eurocentric perspective of the system is based on the fact that it is founded on principles as described above and practitioners, at least initially, are trained to see movement from this point of view. However, as the participants (in this context they may be considered cultural consultants) of the project demonstrated, this factor is not irresolvable. The student practitioners who were knowledgeable of the significant aspect of the dances were able to document these features in LN. Further, the analysis of dances from a variety

of cultures will continue to challenge the cultural perspective of the Laban system and successful documentation of these will expand the library of Labanotated dance scores. In her review of notating ‘A Chinese Classical Dance’ syllabus at the Hong Kong Dance Academy of Performing Arts, Labanotator Ilene Fox recounts her experience of attempting to devise a ‘notation methodology’ that would enable her to notate within Chinese culture.

Prior to documenting the syllabus, Fox had little experience or knowledge of Chinese dancing, language or cultural practices. Taking this (lack of experience) into consideration, Fox was concerned to develop a notation strategy that would allow her to ‘preserve a respect and appreciation for traditional forms which make them relevant for China today’ (Fox, 1988). Fox identified a number of ‘cultural’ concerns that influenced her process of work. Unlike notating in a western context, for example, Fox found that she could not rely on verbal cues. The necessity to communicate through a variety of interpreters, who, although they were dancers, were not professional translators, was problematic.¹⁹ A related issue concerned Fox’s status within Chinese society. As a professional notator, Fox’s position was equal to that of other dance professionals in Hong Kong. Such a position made it difficult for her Chinese colleagues to make critical assessment of her work and she had to devise ways to clarify questions. (cf. Morais 1992 concerning the status of notator and interpreters).²⁰ Other issues identified by Fox related to what she described as biases and preconceptions brought to the project based on her experiences of western theatre dance.

By asking a question, [for example] I may have forced a choice that served to define that which did not need to be defined...my lack of familiarity with Chinese Classical dance resulted in my identifying movements thought too basic to include (Fox, 1988, p. 82).

Fox’s concerns centre, not on the notation itself, but on issues of methodology—how does the process of producing a notated score alter in a ‘foreign’ situation, cultural positioning, self-awareness of the notator, knowledge of cultural context, and the filtering of information through interpreters? Fox, an experienced notator, found that the development of a ‘methodology...gave me a greater understanding of the movements than would have been possible just through observation’ (Fox, 1988, p.82). She further notes the position of the notator; ‘even

with familiarity with the genre it is impossible not to bring in biases and preconceptions based on personal experience (Fox, 1988, p. 82).

The kind of issues noted by Fox are matters of concern to researchers undertaking field research generally, but especially those who research cultures they are not familiar with or have little experience of. Some of the issues raised by Fox, such as translation and the position of the researcher, are routinely addressed within ethnography/anthropology programmes that address dance and movement activities. While training in field research methods may not solve these issues, researchers are made aware of them and are more prepared to deal with them in the field. To relate this to a notation perspective, very few notators have no experience of some form of dancing or other movement related activity before becoming notators; many have had careers as dancers. This previous dance/movement experience is beneficial in the training of a notator and also when notating a form with which the notator is familiar. Having had previous experience of the form, a notator will have knowledge of what is significant to the form, the kinds of questions to ask, and how to ask them. It would be beneficial, therefore, for notators undertaking ‘ethnographic’ type work to have some knowledge of ethnography/anthropology theory and field research methods (cf. Buckland, 1999a, 1999b, 2006b). Another project directed by Van Zile compared the movement of Korean Shaman in ritual and theatre contexts and challenged LN to identify ‘culture’ specific movements in these situations. Equally significant to the research was the three-part plan of analysis developed for the project.

Starting from a phenomenological base, in which ‘one’s own experiences are used as the basis for attempts to understand the behaviour and beliefs of others’ Van Zile (1997) recorded her first impressions and subjective responses to these dances in the form of verbal descriptions.²¹ Having formulated a series of questions based on these initial observations, she proceeded to search for answers to these. An analysis of the choreographic structure of the dance provided an organisation of the dances that enabled a comparison within as well as between dances; and a further detailed analysis in LN allowed for specific distinctions between interpretations to be made. This final stage, according to Van Zile, not only revealed critical differences between contexts, but also addresses some of the questions raised in her first impressions. Through the application of LN, Van Zile was able to answer questions based on the ‘movement’ aspect of the Korean Shaman in ritual and theatre context; ‘...a dimension of shaman ritual often ignored or treated only superficially by researchers

from disciplines other than dance (Van Zile, 1997, p. 133). Although, Van Zile acknowledges the significance of other aspects and methods of research such as contextual, historical, and ethnographic, she also points to the importance of ‘movement’ as a singular focus of dance research. Van Zile’s work highlights two issues, a focus on movement as a significant aspect of dance research (cf. Farnell below), and the need for a system of movement analysis that will enable systematic evaluation of movement. Of equal importance, however, are the background, training and experience of the dancer(s) and her/his knowledge of the subject matter (Korean Shaman); this would have a bearing on the performance and analysis of the material; a detailed analysis of these should form part of a study. Both Van Zile and Fox demonstrate the importance of an informed, systematic approach to the analysis and documentation of dances from cultures other than one’s own. The development and assessment of a model appropriate to such application is discussed in part two of this chapter.

Dance anthropologists/ethnographers have applied LN in various ways within their work. Some, such as Van Zile, have applied it as a key component of their research, others have used it to illuminate, support, or document their research. Anthropologist Adrienne Kaeppler, for example, working in partnership with Van Zile, combines structural linguistic analysis and Labanotation to examine and document the structure of Tongan dance (Kaeppler’s approach is discussed further in Chapter Seven of this work). Within their work, Kaeppler and Van Zile demonstrate the significance of notation to ethnochoreology not only as an effective tool for observation and analysis of movement, but also emphasise its clarity over the use of dance vocabulary or word description of movement. In a similar way, anthropologist Drid Williams supports her linguistic based movement analysis of various movement activities with LN examples.²²

In her investigation of modes of analysis applied to the documentation of North American Plains Indian Sign Talk (1994), Brenda Farnell argues in favour of LN for the analysis and documentation of this ‘talk’ that is characterised by the simultaneous use of speech and movement.²³ Within her examination Farnell outlines obstacles to the understanding of movement as ‘social action’, and also explains how LN can provide the foundation (i.e. a mode of ‘specification and registration’) that can not only facilitate an understanding of movement as ‘movement’ but may also be used to document ‘motion’.

The foundation of this debate (movement as social action), according to Farnell, is grounded in ‘dualist’ perspectives. These are the ‘objectivist’ or Cartesian point of view that separates mind/thought from body and favours ‘mind’ over body, and the opposing ‘subjectivist’ stance of Merleau-Ponty in which the ‘lived’ or ‘experienced’ body is preferred. Neither of these, according to Farnell, takes account of the ‘embodied person’—a ‘person’ (not merely a ‘body’ or a ‘mind’) who, through engagement in social life, thinks and feels and gestures vocally and physically (Farnell, 1994, p. 933). Further, ‘dualist’ thinking has prevented researchers from seeing movement as ‘social action’ having ‘intent/meaning’ in a similar fashion to spoken language. A related problem to the understanding of movement as social action is the manner in which ‘movement’ is observed/perceived—either as a series of static positions/poses or as fluid action that create paths through space.²⁴ The ability to perceive the difference between these, according to anthropologist Edwin Ardener, is dependent upon ‘our modes of registration and specification...the means by which they are apperceived’ or, more simply, our point(s) of reference (Farnell, 1994, p. 935). Aligned to this, are methods of analysis that would ‘facilitate analyses of bodily action...’(Farnell, 1994, p. 936). Because it is a system through which to think (and analyse) in ‘movement’ terms, LN can provide the point of reference from which to distinguish between position and motion, to establish ‘literacy’ in relation to the medium of movement, and distinguish between gross physical movement and ‘action’ (Farnell, 1994, p. 937). The appreciation of the Laban system as a system capable of recording ‘movement’ in the manner described above has yet to be fully understood by many practitioners and scholars of African dance—this dissertation is meant as a step on the path to develop an appreciation of such an understanding.

As explained by Marion (1987), a notation system is, at least initially, an expression of the movement perspective of its developer(s). Continued use by practitioners encourages its development and expansion of its point of view. Even with such growth, however, systems of notation must perceive movement within an analytical framework typical of the system—such as anatomical/biological or dynamic analysis (as in effort analysis). Because of this, all systems may be perceived as ‘biased’ in some way and this should be acknowledged by this notator as well as others.²⁵ Working within cultures other than their own (or those they were unaccustomed to working in) notators discovered that a notation system directs the attention of its analysts in ways they had not considered; the notator sees what they

are looking for...not what is actually there (Ryman, 1991). This realisation motivated researchers to re-examine their own observational attitudes and to challenge the notation system, and colleagues, to acknowledge such bias and to re-evaluate its analytic framework. Through the work of the International Council of Kinetography Laban (ICKL), for example, members are made aware of these issues and investigate solution to them.²⁶ Research around this concern include Labanotated scores of a variety of cultures recorded by members of the culture themselves; this approach is instructive as it teaches notators the aesthetic, socio-cultural, and, perhaps, political values of movement/dance of other cultures.²⁷ Others, such as Judy Van Zile, have re-examined the notation process itself. She suggests, for example, a preliminary reflective step in the notation process in which a notator examines their initial responses to what they observe and use these to help them realise their own perspective in order to understand that of others. Van Zile, along with others as described above and continued below, have stressed the importance of a systematic approach to the notation process. Still others, such as Jasmine Honoré, have adopted the perspective of the people they are working with and created a system that reflects this perspective. Clearly, a number of LN practitioners are addressing issues related to the documentation of non-western dance forms.

The next part of this review is directed to the application of LN to African dance forms. Practitioners and researchers of African People's dance question the capacity of systems of graphic notation to document the 'dances of Africa'. These concerns relate to: 1) the dance form itself and include questions of timing in relation to polyrhythm, the relationship of time to spoken and drum languages; 2) cultural and/or contextual knowledge, understanding of the 'unseen' or spiritual dimension of some traditional dances; 3) experience/knowledge (of African dance) of the notator; 4) the improvisational aspect of some forms; 5) still others are concerned with issues of origins and authenticity. In light of these points, it is interesting to note that much of the LN of African dances has taken an ethnographic (rather than theatre dance) approach to the notation of these in which an understanding of the historical/cultural context is part of the documentation. The following discussion considers the application of LN to African dances in this context.

2.1.3 African Dance Forms

Odette Blum spent two years (1966-1968) at the University of Ghana where she introduced LN into the dance programme and conducted extensive field research throughout Ghana. Her collection, *African Dances and Games* (1969), is a LN (and word description) of the movement activities she recorded during her residency. While *African Dances and Games* is a LN score of the dances she observed, her monograph *Dance in Ghana* (1973) is an ethnography of the people(s) and the dancing she researched. The monograph explains religious and social practices, traces history, and contextualises dancing among the Anlo Ewe, Ashanti, Dagomba, and Lobi of Lawra peoples; the collection concludes with Labanotated examples of dances of each group.

Blum does not merely ‘observe’ the dances, her scores take an ‘ethnographic’ approach to the documentation of them. Her method stresses field research, the importance of physical engagement with the dancing, classification, and meaning of dancing in West African society. These notations represent a further development of the use of LN for non-western dance forms. Blum’s notations, for example, extend the use of effort indications within the score. She comments that:

A variety of dynamic symbols are also incorporated into the score when a particular quality or combination of qualities needs to be highlighted. With increasing use of notation we are becoming more aware of the need for more specific information on dynamics which can flow along in an integrated way with the other elements in the score (Blum, 1984, p.1).

‘Motion’ description rather than standard position indications are used, attention to the use of the centre of gravity rather than the more usual ‘change of level’ indication for similar actions are adopted.²⁸ Blum points to the significance of ‘dynamic rhythm’ (effort phrase). ‘[Dynamic rhythm is]...an important element in African dance [and] it seemed crucial to begin to find ways of documenting it in some form’ (Blum, 1984, p.2). Blum’s research highlights at least three issues of importance for the effective notation of this form. First, the necessity to have a good knowledge of the socio-cultural context of the form that is, at least, equal to that of its structural components. Because of this kind of understanding, Blum was able to assess the need for atypical ways of notating the dances. Second, through her particular application of the system to the notation of Ghanaian dances (such as inclusion of dynamic rhythm), these scores offer researchers an opportunity to examine her interpretation of

the dances and also draws attention to the subtlety of movement expression (a concern of Harper noted below) that is possible within the Laban system. Finally, this work calls attention to one of the key characteristics of Ghanaian dance, dynamic rhythm, that should/must be recoded in the notation of these dances.

Doris Green is an ethnomusicologist, dancer, and Labanotator who has for many years researched African music and dance throughout Africa. Her unpublished manuscript, *Greenotation: Manuscripts of African Music and Dance*, is a LN score of dances and music staff notation that documents her extensive field research of more than 25 African cultures. In addition to these recordings, Green has also developed a method of teaching African drum rhythms based on the principles and symbology of LN that she calls 'Greenotation, a system for notating the percussion instruments of African ensembles.' Her approach, like Blum's, is an ethnographic one where direct experience of the dances in cultural context is central. Unlike Blum however Green's work systematically incorporates music staff notation of the rhythms that accompany the dances. The integration of music staff notation into the dance score is indicative of Green's understanding of the union of music and dance in the African contexts she has researched; her scores are a lesson for the reader of this intimate relationship.

Green notes:

This system [Greenotation] is a quantum leap over others as it enables one to notate the music, and align it with the dance movements, creating an integrated score with a conterminous relationship just as it is in Africa (Personal communication, January 2008).

The image shows a musical score titled "AGBADZA". The title is at the top center. Below it is a grid of symbols. The first column is labeled "Gankogui" and contains vertical bars with diagonal hatching. The second column is labeled "Axatse" and contains vertical bars with horizontal hatching. The third column is labeled "Clapping" and contains vertical bars with diagonal hatching. The fourth column is labeled "Kagan" and contains vertical bars with horizontal hatching. The fifth column is labeled "Kiddi" and contains vertical bars with diagonal hatching. The sixth column is labeled "Sogo" and contains vertical bars with horizontal hatching. There are also some additional symbols and numbers at the bottom of the grid.

Ex. 1 Greenotation.

The successful merging of these two (LN and music staff notations) is a further indication of the capacity of the Laban system to accommodate such usage effectively in an African dance context (See Ex. 1).

As part of research within the ethnochoreology department of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, ethnochoreologist György Martin did field research in eight different provinces of Ethiopia. His report titled ‘Dance Types in Ethiopia’ (1967), outlines the various methods of documentation used to record the field research including film, photographs, sound recordings, and notation. Within this work, Kinetography/Laban is used to document short movement motifs that are representative of the dance patterns of the people(s) studied.²⁹ A concentration on ‘motif’ analysis and its significance within dance structure is indicative of the approach to movement/dance analysis developed by researchers investigating Hungarian folk dance (and other dance research in east and central Europe generally) including: György Martin, Ernö Pesovár, Agoston Lányi, Emma Lugossy, Mária Szentpál and János Fügedi. Within this method researchers take a ‘scientific’ approach to the study of folk dancing in which a range of methods such as historical-geographical, social, functional, comparative-historical, and formal aspects of a dance are combined to assess and document a dance tradition (Felföldi, 1999). Kinetography/Laban is used within the ethnochoreology department of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences as well as by other ethnochoreologists working in east and central Europe including Anca Giurchescu (1995, 1999) and Roderyk Lange (1975) (cf. Kubinowski, 2000).

As it uses a variety of recording methods in addition to Kinetography/Laban, Martin’s approach is distinctive to those addressed thus far. This approach allows, not only for visual and aural documentation through electronic media, but also offers an alternative perspective to a ‘Laban’ view. The researchers involved, for example, do not necessarily share a ‘Laban’ perspective. The exchange of alternative ideas and perceptions not only allows these to become part of the analytic process, but also offers an opportunity for team members to undertake a critical examination of Laban analysis and thereby contribute to its continued development. While the experience of the team in the documentation of European (particularly East European) music and dance is extensive, the experience of the researchers of the analysis and documentation of African dance is unclear. A question the research could have considered, for example, is the validity and or effectiveness of the application of the various analytic methods, especially Laban, to the analysis of an African dance form.

Recent application of LN to the recording of African dances is my work noted previously in this paper and the research I did in collaboration with dancer/choreographer Peter Badejo, ethnomusicologists Simon Mills, and filmmaker Rufus Orisayomi. The research titled ‘The Codification and Development of Bàtábádé Technique’, is a study that focuses on an analysis of the Yoruba dance/music form known as Bátá.³⁰ The investigation, undertaken in Nigeria, England, and the United States, records in film, text, LN, and music staff notation the transition of Bátá, a traditional religion practiced in rural communities of Nigeria, to a theatre form performed in Brazil, Cuba, England and the United States. LN is used to examine and catalogue the movement characteristic of Bátá in these different contexts. The research aims, through the production of resources described above, to make African dance, particularly Bátá, accessible to a wider audience. Additionally, the research addresses issues related to the standardization of the form, transmission of Bátá from an ‘embodied’ tradition whereby participants learn the dances through a teacher to one that may include text based learning. As in other projects, the system of LN is examined to assess its facility to document these dances. In this respect, the researchers found that while knowledge of the dance form by all team members was essential, an understanding of LN by dance and music practitioners also played a crucial role in the selection of LN parameters for the recording of movement patterns. Within the project, for example, Badejo learned the fundamentals of LN in order to record the movement not as ‘gross physical movement’, but as ‘action. Farnell explains.

The difference [between these] is captured in the...example of the difference between ‘the arm goes up’ (a description of a gross physical movement) and ‘I raise my arm’ (a description of an action)...As Best puts it, ‘one cannot specify an action, as opposed to a purely physical movement, without taking into account what the agent intended, that is, there are reasons for, and purposes to, actions (Best, in Farnell, 1994, p. 938).

Other applications of LN in service to African dance include its continued use at the University of Ghana where it is part of the dance curriculum. The Ghana Dance Ensemble (at the University of Ghana) uses it as a teaching tool in dance classes and in the dance studio as a memory aid for choreography. Through the work of F. Nii Yarty (2000), former director of the National Dance Theatre of Ghana (NDT), and Doris Green (1996, 2007) dancers of NDT are made aware of movement notation

generally and LN especially. The use of LN within these major institutions in Ghana would seem to indicate its acceptance as an effective tool for the analysis and documentation of, at least, Ghanaian dances. Whereas LN has a history of use in East and West Africa as illustrated here, two other system, Benesh Movement Notation and the Honoré system have been applied to the dances of South Africa.

Benesh Movement Notation (BMN) is one of the three most widely used systems of movement notation for recording dances on paper.³¹ Its authors Joan and Rudolf Benesh introduced the system in 1955, and the first textbook describing the method, *An Introduction to Benesh Dance Notation*, was published in 1956. Its authors were both artists. Joan Benesh was a dancer with the Sadler's Wells, now Royal Ballet, and Rudolf Benesh was a visual artist, musician and accountant. Joan Benesh's contribution to the early development of the system is recognised in the predominance of texts and scores featuring ballet vocabulary. As a result of this dedicated focus on the ballet genre in the early period of the system, BMN is often associated with that form; this association may also be due to its extensive use by the Royal Ballet (London). The system has, however, undergone continuous development since its introduction. Practitioners regard BMN as a movement notation systems and this is reflected in its name.

As part of her work as a dance anthropologist Andrée Grau has used BMN to document the dances of the Twi of Australia and the Venda of South Africa.³² Grau's MA dissertation titled, *Some Problems in the Analysis of Dance Style with Special Reference to South Africa* (1979), is an examination of a collection of 'public' dances of the Venda of South Africa's Northern Transvaal region.³³ Working within an anthropological model that takes account of dancing as social phenomena as well as patterns of movement, Grau applied BMN to assist her in the identification and analysis of Venda 'dance style' (Grau, 1990). As part of her analysis, Grau addresses issues concerning the place of dancing in Venda society and the close relationship between dance and music. Using BMN as (one of her) tools, Grau notes the differences between the dance styles of men and women, the use of energy, and of space. Equally significant, in coming to a determination of style and dance/movement characteristics of groups of people, Grau points out the necessity to consider the perspective of the people one is working with. BMN has been used in the dissertation to document the dance as well as supply data for analysis and interpretation of these.³⁴

Unlike Grau who uses BMN in an anthropological setting, dancer/notator Eduard Greyling applies it to African dance performance in South Africa. Greyling is a lecturer in the dance department at the University of Cape Town where, in addition to teaching BMN, he notates the work of teachers and choreographers of African dance resident in the department. Greyling's work addresses issues of 'traditional, African Contemporary, and Contemporary African dance.' According to Greyling, 'the contemporary choreographers who come from an African background are developing their own styles of contemporary dance with a strong African essence in movement' (Personal communication, January, 2008). Greyling's BMN scores, therefore, document a progression from traditional to 'contemporary African dance' in the South African context.³⁵

There are numerous systems of movement notation and dance scholar/Laban movement analyst Mary Alice Brennan (1999) has suggested a classification of these in which systems may be organised according to their use. These include: standardised systems, such as LN, BMN, and Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation that are used by specialist; word description systems in which 'commonly understood terms' are used; and single use system where a system is designed for a specific purpose and is used by a single person or, perhaps, a small group of users. Single use systems, due to their specialist focus and small user base, have a limited application. However, such usage does not necessarily indicate that such systems are of limited value to dance research. One of the least acknowledged single use systems is, for example, that of Jasmine Honoré.

Dancer Jasmine Honoré was for many years dance lecturer at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Her unpublished manuscript, *The Xhosa Dances* (1994), produced in conjunction with Tsolwana Mpayipeli and Nicolette St. John Reid, is a collection that catalogues sixteen 'traditional' dances of various groups of Xhosa peoples, including, among other, Bhaca, Mpondo, Mpondonise, Nguni, and Thembu people who live in Transkei, South Africa. Motivated by what she perceived as the steady demise of the dances of indigenous peoples of South Africa and lack of knowledge of these, Honoré devised an extended research project to document some of these rapidly disappearing dances. Largely untrained in field research techniques, of a different culture, and contending with an apartheid government, Honoré conducted field research in Transkei over a ten-year period between 1980 and 1990.

The Xhosa Dances is a beautiful collection. Not only does the collection introduce the only known system of notation of African origin, but also carefully examines the characteristics of Xhosa dance-song-music generally and those of specific Xhosa groups. This assessment is the foundation on which Honoré bases her reasons for devising her own system of notation. Honoré was aware of existing systems of dance notation but chose to devise her own. She states:

In general African people do not relate well to abstract symbols, therefore, it seemed that the Benesh and Laban notation systems for writing down dance were unsuitable. Film or video of course are essential, but in practice a written [text based] notation fills in the gaps and clarifies much that is missed in viewing. So I devised what I hope is a workable system (Honoré, 1994, p. 3).

While Honoré does not supply evidence for her statement concerning the ability of 'African people' to relate to 'abstract symbol systems', she stated in interview (July, 2003) that it was important that the people whose dances she recorded be able to see and understand what she had documented. Therefore, she chose to visualise them in formal line drawings that include a visual representation of costumes, props and hand positions. In addition to being the lone system of African origin, her system appears also to be the first to consider the cultural perspective of the people themselves from the outset (see Ex. 2).

Honoré Notation System

CLAPS												
LEADER	A-ban - ta-ba - m ba - fik' i-zo - lo A-ban - ta ba - m											
SOLFA	,d: d	,d d	: s,	d	: l,	,s, m,	m,	:	l	,d: d	,d d	: s,
FOLLOWERS	Khanbe - the 'ban - ta-bam											
SOLFA	:		:		:		:	,s, l,	,s, : s,	,s, s,	:	
Movement on the BEAT												
Movement on the SUB-BEAT												

Ex. 2 Honoré Notation System

The Honoré system, as with other stick figure systems, is a visualisation of those characteristics that she determines are significant to the Xhosa dances she has examined. One of the most important aspects of Xhosa dance, she explains, is the idea of *ingoma* (cf. also Turner, V., 1968 and Janzen, J., 1992).

The fact that music and dance are thought of and called by one name, *ingoma*...illustrates how completely indivisible they are in African thinking. Musicians move while playing, and dancers contribute to the music by singing, clapping the noise of the foot movement...the sounds of decorative objects attached to the costumes, for example bottle tops, seed-pods, leg rattles, bracelets, bangles, etc. ...These contribute overall to the conception of *ingoma* which is the conglomerate of singing, dancing, clapping, grunting, shouting, rattles, buzzes, etc. that make up Xhosa dance-songs (Honoré, 1994, p. 4).

In documenting these dances, Honoré's purpose was to record as many of the dances of the Xhosa before they were forgotten, disappeared completely, or were reinvented beyond historical recognition. Based on these criteria, her comprehensive system has successfully achieved its aims. All aspects of the five-part system, however, must be utilised in order to reconstruct any of the dances. This is largely because this is a stick figure system and is subject to the criticisms of other such systems. These types of systems, fundamentally, give the reader an immediate visual picture of the dancing. They are representational and relatively easy to follow. This point of view, however, is also a major criticism of these systems. They are, it is argued, based on the notion that dances are designed to 'make pictures' and do not give the analytical detail of a movement (Hutchinson Guest, 1989, p. 64). Nevertheless, Honoré chose to use this form of notation because stick figures make pictures that can be understood by Xhosa people. In taking this stance, Honoré has taken account of the indigenous perspective; a view shared by anthropologists such as Paul Bohannan (1995), Andrée Grau (1990), and Adrienne Kaeppler (1992a) in this dissertation.

Not all movement can be recorded effectively in what is, essentially, a two dimensional mode. Indeed, it is in the third dimension that action such as turning presents a major challenge for stick figure systems. The tracking of time also is difficult to express. How, for example, can 'overlapping of movements', as is common in many of the dances of the Ewe people of Ghana, for example, or the vibrations of the shoulders characteristic of Xhosa dances, be recorded? As these systems are based primarily on the plotting of position, how can transition in time

from one position to another be noted? Honoré, in her analysis of the characteristics of Xhosa dancing, is unable to depict a vibration of the shoulder girdle visually and must explain these in word notes. Further, the question of what, if any, is the distinction between movement and position in such systems is crucial, especially for African dance. Despite these points, Honoré is to be commended for her distinctive approach and her contribution of this research to South African indigenous dance history, dance anthropology, to movement analysis, and dance notation.

The graphic documentation of African peoples' dance is of concern to its practitioners. These issues relate to the particulars of the dance form itself (as previously noted) and the capability of a system to accommodate these. Equally, as with non-western forms generally, there is a question of the experience and knowledge of the notator in regard to the application of the notation system as well as the dancing and its social/cultural context. These issues have not escaped the scrutiny of notators. The current investigation has addressed three systems of movement notation that have taken an anthropological/ethnographic approach to this form. In taking such a perspective, the notator must consider the dancing as well as the social/cultural issues posited by its practitioners (cf. Layiwola below for a further discussion of these).

Working within the society from which the dancing comes has enabled notators to evaluate the differences in dance practices firsthand. These direct experiences have required notators to explore ways of expressing the dancing from the point of view of the community. This in turn has encouraged notators to find ways of articulating these in notated form, and this has challenged the ability of notation systems to meet these demands. LN practitioners have addressed, for example, the issue of time/polyrhythm through the integration of music staff notation and LN within the score where this relationship can be visually perceived. The use of LN symbology as a teaching method for African drumming also reinforces the 'ingoma' relationship between dancing and music in many African societies. Other researchers have found it constructive to engage multiple forms of documentation in order to express and record the dances of African societies. The notation systems addressed in this discussion have taken account of these issues. However, Laban analysis distinguishes itself from these in its use of Effort/Shape or as described by Odette Blum previously, 'dynamic rhythm'. One of the first systematic applications

of this aspect of the Laban system to non-western dance forms was a project known as Choreometrics.

2.2. Part Two: Laban Movement Analysis

Choreometrics is the term used to identify the research project undertaken by ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax and Laban movement analysts Irmgard Barteneff and Forrestine Paulay. The research examined the cultural significance of dancing in selected non-industrialised societies and relied upon a functionalist paradigm. Based on the premise that ‘dance...is derived communication about life’ (Lomax, 1968, p. 223), the researchers cultivated the idea that dancing can be viewed as a cultural identifier. The aims of the choreometrics project were to develop a model for describing and mapping movement style families, to observe and record ‘regularities and contrasts in movement patterns sufficiently frequent and gross to produce units universally applicable in cross-cultural studies’, and to compare dance styles with song styles. Within the project, Laban Movement Analysis was used to collect and analyse data from 21 ‘non-industrialised’ societies.

Choreometrics was significant for the system of Laban Movement Analysis for a number of reasons; I will address two of these that have a bearing on the present research. First, the project brought to light the culture-specific perspective of the system. Until the time of choreometrics, the subject matter to which the system had been applied was mainly European biased; very little systematic analysis of non-western movement forms had been undertaken. The opportunity to work with a large, diverse range of movement forms was a challenge to the system and to its analysts. Through the process of examination of these, the analysts found that they had a culture-specific movement perspective as well as select repertoire of subject matter. This discovery required a fundamental change in the attitude of the analysts and a manipulation of the system. A second outcome of the project was the methods and tools developed by the analysts. The development and use of ‘coding sheets’ to organise and record observation, for example, enabled observers to examine data needed to distinguish cultural patterns required by the project’s aims and objectives (see Appendix A for example of coding sheets). Subsequent to the project, Laban movement analysts applied this tool to their own research in both western and non-western contexts. Laban movement analysts Martha Davis and Claire Schmais, for example, applied choreometric methodology to their analysis of the style and

composition of one of choreographer Doris Humphrey's major works, *Water Study* (1928). The researchers noted, 'From this work [choreometrics] we learned the first step in analyzing a dance composition should be to search for and define the most salient movement variables in the dance' (Davis and Schmais, 1967, p. 105). Together with other aspects of the Laban system, they applied variables adapted from choreometrics coding sheets to the analysis of the dance. This approach enabled a systematic study of the dance similar to that applied to the analysis of theme and variation in music (Davis and Schmais, 1967).

The choreometrics coding sheet is a tool that enables a systematic approach to the observation and analysis of movement. As its name suggests, it lists and/or calls attention to aspects of movement, such as body part usage, effort, spatial formations, and relationship. Through a 'tick' system, the observer records such items as relevant movement, frequency of movement, and the absence of effort or movement. It can be designed for a specific purpose to record, for example, hand movements only as might be needed in some Indian dance forms. The coding sheet provides information that exposes the 'chore characteristics' that contribute to a particular movement style. Although it has proved to be a useful tool for the organisation and analysis of observations it should be noted that it lists those aspects of movement specific to the Laban system. It therefore directs the perception of the viewer to a 'Laban' perspective. Observers need to understand this bias and be aware that other aspects of movement not considered by the Laban system may be present. Laban movement analysts Alison Jablonko, for example, found the use of coding sheets useful for some of her early research of the Maring people of Papua New Guinea; she later expanded her analysis to include a fuller application of LMA.

Between 1963-1964 and again in 1968 Alison Jablonko did field research among the Maring people of Papua New Guinea. During this period, she made numerous films of Maring people dancing and in other daily life activities.³⁶ Reviewing the films in 1985, a new set of issues emerged for Jablonko. She noted, for example, that her research had been devised for 'an anthropological audience unfamiliar with disciplined movement analysis' (Jablonko and Kagan, 1988, p. 148); also, her microanalysis—a frame-by-frame examination—took a quantitative approach in which a tally of the number of times a body part was used was recorded. Although this method provided information concerning the frequency of parts used and perhaps their relationship to each other, this method did not address, for example,

how parts were used. Further, Jablonko noted that during the time of her original field research ‘movement’ was not central to anthropological enquiry; ‘even when dance is the primary focus of a study....in anthropology, movement per se is rarely examined (Jablonko and Kagan, 1988, p. 148).³⁷

Working in collaboration with choreographer and Laban movement analysts Elizabeth Kagan, the pair ‘set out to explore the possibility of using LMA to derive meaning from archival footage of the Maring People of Papua New Guinea’ (Jablonko and Kagan, 1988, p. 148).³⁸ Starting from a similar point as that of Van Zile described above (1983), Jablonko states that,³⁹

We wanted to ascertain the extent to which a skilled movement analysis could look at culturally unfamiliar behaviour and, without knowing anything about the culture, derive useful observations that would extend traditional analyses (Jablonko and Kagan, 1988, p. 148).

The research addressed issues of cultural bias as noted by Fox (1988) above. Unlike Fox, however, who perceived her lack of cultural knowledge as a hindrance to the research, Jablonko and Kagan underscore the value of ‘projection’. Projection, according to the researchers, may occur when previous knowledge may cause a viewer to fail to notice ‘information inherent in the movement’ (Jablonko and Kagan 1988, p. 148). These omissions, perceived in comparison to the viewer’s own cultural experience, may be ‘articulated as statements about what...is lacking...in behavior’ (Jablonko and Kagan, 1988, p. 149). By providing her with a set of movement parameters through which to observe movement activities, LMA enabled Kagan to observe the movement content rather than what was perceived to be ‘missing.’ Thus Kagan’s lack of cultural knowledge of the Maring people combined with her understanding and application of LMA were perceived as assets, rather than a hindrance, to the research.

An alternative perspective to this application of LMA would suggest that the use of LMA shifted Kagan’s perception from that which is significant to the ‘mover’ to one that is favoured by the ‘system’. Due to a lack of knowledge of the ‘values’ of the groups, for example, subtle actions that may be perceived as ‘unimportant’ (or not perceived at all) may not be taken into account. Other movement, of value to the system (and the observer), may be readily observed and recorded but have little or no significance to the movers. Kagan’s lack of cultural understanding of the Maring people or their dance practices was a problem to the research and, once again, points

to the importance of knowledge of the form by the analysts as well as an understanding of the capabilities of the notation system. Kagan's perspective was that of a choreographer in a western context. Jablonko, however, had considerable knowledge and fieldwork experience of the Maring people as well as a knowledge of Laban analysis; her knowledge of the people and their movement practices enabled the pair to devise a creditable method of analysis for the project.⁴⁰ A review of the work of dance scholar/movement analysts Jill Gellerman highlights the importance of a knowledge of the cultural context (values) in which one is working.

Starting from a view of dancing as a form of 'symbolic or expressive code' that can convey the cultural values of a group of people, Jill Gellerman (1976), used Labananalysis (LN/LMA) to discover how these (values) are expressed in the women's dances of three different Hasidic communities in New York (USA).⁴¹ Historically, dance played a central role in Hasidic religious expression and this form of worship has continued in contemporary times. As the religion, and its different 'courts', developed and spread from its origins in Eastern Europe to the United States, religious expression, as seen through dancing, has adapted to the host society. Gellerman notes,

Hasidic dance changed from the early ecstatic stomping and singing to the more refined, controlled form one sees today...presently it shares many dances with other Jews (Gellerman, 1976, p.120).

Through her research Gellerman found that although the groups performed American social dances such as the Charleston and Bunny-Hop, these were performed in what she described as a 'Hasidic' style. The *Mayim* dance, for example, a dance performed by all three groups of women at Hasidic wedding celebrations, is not an 'Hasidic' dance but an Israeli folk dance known as *Ush'avtem Mayim*. Using the *Mayim* dance as a model, Gellerman analysed each group's performance of the dance; from this analysis, she determined the core characteristics or 'key signature' of each group of women. The information provided by each group's core characteristics provided a foundation for the evaluation of a 'Hasidic' style.

Preliminary analysis suggest that a Hasidic style may be seen in the core characteristics—basic recurring parameters peculiar to the culture as a whole—which give a kind of identifiable 'key signature' to the dance forms of the Hasidim...Thus, in large measure, the basic movement parameters described in the...analysis remains approximately the same even though the

steps and dance patterns may change or may be derived from outside sources, suggesting a cultural style shaped by common values (Gellerman, 1976, p.120).

While the core characteristics of each group provided data on the variation in movement style between each group, and a comparison of these (chore characteristics) provided insight into a 'Hasidic' performance style, movement analysis alone pointed only to shared movement preferences within groups and between groups. In order to determine *how* 'Hasidic performance style' is indicative of Hasidic cultural values, especially those of women, an understanding of Hasidic beliefs and values was necessary. Through her research of these Gellerman found that one of the most important values for Hasidic women was the principle of 'modesty'. She notes:

Following the road of restraint and religious piety, Hasidic women control and channel their movements towards one goal...the female ideal of *tsnies* or modesty (Gellerman, 1976, p.25).

Based on an understanding of the principle of *tsnies* in a Hasidic context, Gellerman related her movement analysis to this Hasidic ideal of women:

In effort terms, this behavior is indicative in the held torso, head, and especially chest, stressing an air of dignity, discipline, and control through the quality of maintained bound flow...In keeping with woman's role, effort attitudes are "quiet"—that is, passive in weight or diminished in intensity. The body attitude of held head and chest can be explained in terms of *tsnies* if one considers that...women, in general, must refrain from any movement which might invoke desire in the opposite sex...They have developed a movement style congruent with acceptable Hasidic norms and ideals of behavior which stresses order and control of the physical senses and material desires and the transformation of these to higher spiritual levels (Gellerman, 1976, pp. 125-126).

Through a comparison of core characteristics, Gellerman successfully used Labananalysis to examine the dances of three different groups of Hasidic women. This level of analysis is in itself significant as it can be the foundation for further questions and research, such as a comparative analysis of men and women's dances; or it can be used for practical purposes such as the training of young dancers. Gellerman, however, used the data to demonstrate how, through dancing, Hasidic women embrace and demonstrate Hasidic beliefs and values. This level of understanding was possible because Gellerman combined two different kinds of

analyses: Labananalysis with a study of the Hasidic belief system. Used alone, neither would have been as effective as the two applied together; each would have provided its own data reverent to its own context. Without a system of movement analysis for example, Gellerman would not have been able to articulate ‘how’ the Hasidic idea of *tsnies* was depicted in the women’s dances. Her Labananalysis would have provided data on the structure/movement components of the dance and the core characteristics or key signature of each group. Although Hasidic cultural values would have been present in the data, without an awareness and understanding of Hasidic beliefs, Gellerman would not have known that at least some of these were apparent in the dancing. Although this study demonstrates the value of Labananalysis to ethnographic research, it again, illustrates the significance of historical and contextual knowledge of the practice under investigation. Equally important is the research question and/or aims of the research. If, for example, a documentation of the movement aspects of a dance is the aim of the research, an in depth knowledge of history may not be required.

Where historical and contextual information played a key role in Gellerman’s study, other researchers have sought to discover what a focus on movement itself can reveal. In 1979 a team of movement analysts directed by Judy Van Zile at the University of Hawaii embarked on a research project that was significant to dance research broadly and the current research especially.⁴² While acknowledging the importance of other approaches to the understanding and analysis of dancing, the aptly titled project, ‘The Potential of Movement Analysis as a Research Tool: A Preliminary Analysis’ (Bartenieff et al, 1984), aimed to examine what it called ‘the heart of dance’—the ‘dancing.’⁴³ The research was directed towards the application of movement analysis as the primary method of enquiry; Laban analysis, including Labanotation (LN), Effort/Shape, and Space Harmony, was chosen for the enquiry.⁴⁴ Further, the research intended to develop procedures and tools that could be used by dance researchers working collaboratively and not only by individuals working independently.

The research is significant to this investigation as its subject matter, a selection from the Indian dance form known as Mohiniyattam, offers a further opportunity to observe the use of Laban analysis to yet another non-western context. In addition, its approach, such as the use of Laban analysis as a single tool, the value of initial impressions, descriptive and prescriptive writing in reference to Labanotation, and the

compilation of expanded and integrated scores, influence the work of this researcher's practice as a movement analyst. Further, a similar approach to that taken by the researchers has been applied to the analysis of the Nama Stap Dance (see Chapters Five and Six). The following section will address the methodology developed for the research, a three-part plan for the application of Laban Analysis—General Observations, Choreographic Outline (hereafter CO), and Scores—and will address issues that arose during the process of developing the methodology.⁴⁵ The three-part plan progresses from a broad perspective on the dancing in which general impressions are recorded to 'factual' analysis of the dancing in which precise details of bodily movement, dynamic qualities, and spatial form are documented in Laban analysis.

The initial stage labelled as 'general observation' can be likened to a 'warm-up' or 'attuning' stage as it allowed researchers to record first or general impressions and initial responses to the dancing.⁴⁶ This stage offered an 'orientation to the material, unencumbered by categories established in advance...as [may] happens with the use of existing coding sheets' for example (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p.4). This stage of analysis brought to light the 'preferred perspective' of the observer. Based on experience, training and cultural background, observers used different 'filters' and therefore were initially drawn to particular features of the dance. This was pertinent information because an awareness of 'preferred perspective' at the early stages of research can enable researchers to develop strategies to counterbalance and/or minimize, potential biases. The next phase of research involved the assembly of an outline of the choreographic structure of the dance as a whole (see Appendix B for example of scores).

The CO records the structure of a dance in terms of phrases and significant aspects of these such as effort/shape use, organises the dance into units of varying lengths such as sections and subsection, explains language and terminology used, clarifies the perspective of the researcher(s) and how this influences the CO. Although these may seem to be straightforward aspects of movement/dance, through their research observers found that there was, for example, no common agreement for such familiar terms as phrase, motif, section, and even the word dance itself. They noted for example that "phrase" and "motif" are perhaps among the most frequently used terms, but their meanings vary widely among dance researchers...' (Bartenieff et al 1984, p.6).⁴⁷ Based on these variations in meanings, they developed a set of 'unit markers' to clarify and coordinate their usage.⁴⁸ Equally significant,

they noted, is an understanding of the point of view taken in regard to these. In other words have the ‘unit markers’ been defined by the observer or performer (or someone else or the tradition itself perhaps)? Within their research, observers who are not members of the tradition under investigation have defined the ‘unit markers’.

The development of a choreographic outline served to: confirm earlier observations noted during general observations such as the partitioning of the dance, enabled observers to determine the most ‘striking features’ of each section and this helped to determine where to focus attention for the full notation stage to follow. Because it is a kind of ‘in between’ stage, it allowed observers to take both a general and specific perspective of the material; this in turn enabled them to ‘maintain a perspective on what the detailed score represented’ (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 4). It also influenced how movement was to be recorded in the final score. It was at this stage, for example, that researchers decided to use ‘design drawing’ to record some of the movement.⁴⁹ The choreographic outline, may be thought of as a kind of map or guide to the construction of a full score. Although it provides relevant guidelines to the creation of the score, it is the notation score itself which contains the ‘factual’ data of the dance. The final part of the analysis was the production of a set of notation scores. These distinctive scores are the result of a series of issues that arose during the course of the notation process. These relate to concerns such as source material, the notator, description of movement, content and organisation of scores.

Source material has a bearing on how a score(s) will be analysed and documented and ultimately, what the score represents. The team of researchers worked from video but also had access to the dancer/consultant.⁵⁰ Researchers registered two concerns related to data source. A filmed recording offered consistency of performance and ‘precise documentation of a single performance’. On the other hand, live performance allows for clear observation of movement, but due to the nature of live performance, variations between performances, both structural and qualitative, are unavoidable. Related to these concerns was the question of ‘how’ the score/s should be written.

Within their research, observers debated issues of descriptive and prescriptive modes of documentation.⁵¹ Reviewing the application of these modes of transcription in ethnomusicology, a descriptive music score, is one which,

Fully describes the precise events of a single performance; implies objectivity on the part of the notator—the actual documentation of

what transpired, without interpreting such things as meaning and importance based on the intent of the performer. This implies notating and event *after* its has occurred (Bartenieff at al, 1984, p. 8).

Because they attempt to record as much detail as possible, descriptive type scores, in a dance context, may be useful as a record of a precise account of a specific performance, to compare dances to each other, and assessing individual differences within a style. A prescriptive score, on the other hand,

Assumes knowledge of conventions of the performance tradition by both notator and reader of the notation; states the outline of the ingredients the performer needs to include in producing a performance expected by the composer. This implies notating a desired event *before* it happens and notation by the composer or creator (Bartenieff at al, 1984, p. 8).

Prescriptive scores are less precise (than descriptive scores) in that they are based on previous knowledge of the form/tradition/dance by notator and users and therefore are written in a more general way. Related to these ideas, researchers recognized that while it was common practice for a musician to compose and document their own work through music staff notation, choreographers rarely record their own work in movement notation. Therefore, can a movement notator, they questioned, truly ‘represent the intention of the creator’, can someone other the creator(s) of a dance produce a ‘prescriptive’ score?⁵² Using the concept of descriptive and prescriptive documentation as a basis, a third type of score was developed, a ‘modified prescriptive score,’ designed to determine what they called ‘core characteristics’ of a dance style.

The modified prescriptive score ‘attempts to identify the most important features of a dance by considering what seems to be the ‘essence’ of various performances, and the intent of the performer, choreographer and/or tradition (Bartenieff at al, 1984, p. 8). A set of ‘modified prescriptive’ scores were produced that represents ‘an attempt to be ‘prescriptive’ within the constraints of the project.⁵³ The scores are distinctive in the movement parameters—including LN, Effort/Shape, Choreographic Outline, Space/Harmony—that they engage, their presentation and organisation of data, and the contribution they make to the development of the Laban system of movement analysis. They are a reflection of the movement experience of the research team and resolution of issues encountered during the research.

The research team was composed of highly experienced LN and/or Effort/Shape movement analysts and it was expected that these, distinct, aspects of the Laban system would be applied to the analysis of the dance. LN and Effort/Shape had been used within scores previous to this research and some examples of this usage have been referenced above. Research on the simultaneous use of these were investigated, for example, as part of the 'Labananalysis and Dance Style Research' workshop at Ohio State University (Pforsich, 1978), and Laban analysts Suzanne Youngerman (1978) also applied both aspects of the system to her study of Doris Humphrey's dance work *The Shakers*. These applications would seem to indicate that, at least some, users of LN and Effort/Shape recognised 'a need for both types of information' (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 9). They, noted however that even when LN and Effort/Shape are taken into account, 'scores are usually separated and simply laid side by side to allow the reader to interrelate when desired' (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 9); or Effort/Shape symbols are appended to a LN score to clarify specific movements. The intent of the research team however was different to these. The material they were investigating required a shift in thinking. Rather than perceiving of these as two related but separate tools, they perceived of them as a single application. This view not only required an expansion of movement perception, but also in how to illustrate this perspective in a Laban score.

Working within the established dual-grid of LN, researchers expanded the LN staff to include columns for Effort/Shape, Space/Harmony, the choreographic outline, and information on the relationship of movements to other dance forms. A further development of this expanded staff was the 'Integrated Score' in which data was imbedded directly within the notation itself (see Appendix B for an example of an integrated score). This 'integrated' method of presentation not only allowed for 'a great deal of information [to] be conveyed in a compact way', but was also reflective of the thinking of the research team (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p.9). The detailed information recorded in the expanded and integrated scores provided the data for the determination of "core characteristics"—structural [LN] and qualitative features [Effort/Shape] that are specific to the dance segment analyzed, its 'movement signature' (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 9).⁵⁴ This 'factual' level of analysis made the distinctive aspects of the dance apparent and this information also allowed for comparison within and between styles and genre.

Although researchers acknowledge the importance and necessity of other approaches to the understanding of dancing, this research endeavoured to learn, through the application of Laban analysis (LN, Effort/Shape, Space/Harmony) what a singular focus on movement—dancing itself—could provide; the investigators were also aware of the value of a team approach to dance research. Major outcomes of the project were its application of the various parts of Laban analysis (LN, Effort/Shape, Space/Harmony) as a single tool, its procedures (General Observations, Choreographic Outline, Scores), and issues for further consideration.

Its methodology that develops from a broad perspective on dancing, to the development of a ‘factual’ score revealed both strengths and weaknesses of each stage. The initial ‘general observation’ phase, for example, revealed the ‘preferred perspective’ of the researcher, and the ‘team’ approach compounded this issue. An understanding of the perspective of team members at the outset enabled researchers to be aware of and consider such ‘biases.’ This, as noted in the work of Fox (1988), Ryman (1991), and Jablonko and Kagan (1988) above is a recurring theme, and researchers must develop ways of addressing this issue. An equally significant aspect of the research was the development of a choreographic outline of the dance.

Though structural in that it divided the dance into parts, the choreographic outline also provided the momentum for debate concerning how this partitioning was determined. This exercise revealed the ‘preferred’ nature of the use of terms such as phrase, motive, subsection, and even the word ‘dance’. This reinforced the need for some level of agreement on language/terms in dance research generally. This middle stage allowed researchers to determine where to ‘focus attention’ in each section of the dance and how best to analyse and notate these in the notation score. Constructing the final set of scores presented its own problems.

The careful consideration and selection of source material ensured that the filmed data source was recorded under supervised conditions, and the dancer/consultant was readily available to researchers. However, even with such ‘quality control’ the researchers acknowledged that a notation score is not ‘raw’ data, but a translation of a dance into another form by someone who, typically, is not the creator of the dance. Aligned to this, like others, researchers found that the ‘perspective’ of the notation system may direct the view of the notator and it is crucial to have an understanding of this perception. These issues place a notator in a decisive position and therefore, her/his expertise, experience, and knowledge of the system of

notation and dance/movement form are crucial and must form part of a quality control assessment. The flexibility of the Laban system allows for choice of description. Discussion around the issue of descriptive/prescriptive writing in reference to notation scores led to the development of a ‘modified’ prescriptive score. Finally, the team approach enabled researchers to investigate the integration of the various components of the Laban system. This integration is not only a joining of ideas but is a ‘sum’ that is illustrated in the expanded and integrated scores designed to visualise this thinking.

While this project contributed to the continued development of the Laban system, due to its primary focus on the *dancing*, it did not consider fully enough the cultural/social context, historical or aesthetic setting of the dance.⁵⁵ I would question, for example, how an understanding of ‘phrasing’ from the point of view of the dancer or choreographer (the ‘insider’s’ perspective) might alter the analytic perspective of the observers. Although the approach taken by the researchers may demonstrate the value of movement analysis as a tool for the collection of movement data, it also calls into question the *nature* of the data collected. Whereas Jablonko/Kagan and Bartenieff et al, used LMA as a primary research tool within their research, other dance scholars such as anthropologist/dance scholar Sally Ann Ness and dance ethnologists Deidre Sklar have applied a host of research tools, including LMA, to their research.

Throughout her research, Ness strategically combines LMA concepts, such as body and space, with other methods including phenomenology and word description in an ‘attempt to return bodily experience as a form of consciousness and understanding to a central place within the discipline of ethnographic inquiry’ (Brennan, 1999, p.292). While LMA is not used as the central tool of analysis as in the Jablonko/Kagan and Gellerman studies, Ness, in addition to other tools, uses the concepts and terminology of LMA to articulate her research. This approach ‘exemplifies Ness’s objective to make full and creative use of whatever is available in the language’ to support her research (Brennan, 1999, p.292). Working in a similar manner to that of Ness, dance ethnographer Deidre Sklar used LMA along with other methods as noted below to analyse and understand the ‘felt’ experience of the performers of the *Danzante*, a dance performed by men in honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe as part of the Tortugas Fiesta in New Mexico.⁵⁶ Within this research, Sklar applied qualitative movement analysis (LMA) together with her own bodily experiences to help her to ‘understand people’s religious experience.’ This

'subjective' process, similar to that of Van Zile noted above, provided her with key questions concerning the *Danzante*. Sklar notes:

...it was clear that the men's attention was neither on the execution of the steps nor on the effect their performance had on spectators. They weren't paying attention to how their movements carved the space around them or to the dance's aesthetic effect on spectators (Sklar, 1991b, p.7).

Sklar and Ness through their respective research highlight the particular strength of LMA in terms of its vocabulary and qualitative analysis of movement. Both however found it necessary to engage a range of research methods to address fully the questions of their research. Both found it necessary to go beyond movement observation only.

Only by drawing on the understandings I had gained in conversations and by looking beyond the dance itself to the fiesta context, especially the key narrative and image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, was it possible to appreciate the meaning of the *Danzante* performance and the quality of the dancers' experience. (Sklar, 1991b, p.8).

Although both Ness and Sklar employed other methods to clarify their research, the value of LMA as one of these should not be underestimated. It was Sklar's knowledge and application of movement analysis, for example, which allowed her to perceive in the first instance 'that the men's attention was neither on the execution of the steps nor on the effect their performance had on spectators' (Sklar, 1991b, p. 7).

This review of Laban analysis in service to non-western dance forms has revealed not only the capacity of the system to record these, but also demonstrates the readiness of its practitioners to acknowledge and address/resolve issues that arise from attempts to document them. The realisation and acceptance of these are a challenge to Laban practitioners. As indicated by this review, there is a flow of research through which these issues may be addressed and it appears that examination of these will continue. However, while the appropriateness of the Laban system for documenting western dance is pretty much accepted, there is no consensus among practitioners and scholars of African dance that western systems of movement analysis and notation are appropriate tools to be applied to the dances of African people. In the following section, I explore this perception, while reviewing a number of seminal works on African dance and music.

2.3 African Dance and Music

Dele Layiwola of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, expresses concerns typical of those who have reservations about the applicability of western forms of movement notation to the documentation of African peoples' dances. While he acknowledges the usefulness of Laban and other systems of notation when they are applied to western dance forms, he contends that these systems crash into their own limitations when confronted with the special requirements of traditional African derived dance forms. He notes:

Whilst the models of Rudolf Laban and Rudolf Benesh have conquered the three dimensions of space in western dances, a similarly universal mode of literal documentation is being earnestly sought in African dance studies (Layiwola, 1997, p 258)...certain gestural, expressive aspects of African dances use what we have described as their multi-metric and poly-rhythmic aspects as a metaphoric expression of the intangible...Many of the dances we document in the field carry along with them dense accretions of mythology, history, ritual and religion. If indeed we succeed in inventing a method of notation for the dances of Africa, we have to contend with ways of interpreting also the ritual and mythological allusions which often attend these dances (Layiwola, 1997, p.262).

Layiwola's concerns are not new. It is such issues and the need to document culture-bound concepts that has motivated the development of the many systems of notation.⁵⁷ Layiwola is concerned with what might be considered the cultural specific (or even 'preferred') perspective. He maintains that an intimate understanding of the cultural context and codes of the group are necessary to produce a score that takes account of the perspective of the people themselves—seeing movement as 'action' within a cultural context. As indicated by the discussion above, this is a recurring theme. Dance scholar Peggy Harper, observing the Tiv culture of Nigeria, notes what she sees as the culture-bound nature of systems of notation:

Dance notations, forms of symbolic transcription are extensively used in Europe and America to record dance. However, these transcriptions are too reliant upon personal and cultural factors to be trusted as a recording technique in Africa where a vast amount of material of a great variety needs to be recorded in field conditions (Harper, 1968, p. 12).

Harper, a former director of the School of Dance at the University of Ife Ibadan, Nigeria, conducted research within the school as well as through field research of various societies in Nigeria. An account of her research is recorded in two of her

early articles, 'Dance in a Changing Society' (1967) and 'Dance in Nigeria' (1969). These works address the place of dance in Nigeria, reviews the characteristics of the various dance forms, suggest a classification system for the dances, address issues of documentation, and examines how the dances respond to change, especially technological.

Dance in Nigeria may be divided into two broad categories 'ethnic dance' and 'theatrical' dance (Harper, 1967). 'Ethnic dances' are 'traditional' dances that serve an integral function in that they reflect the 'way of life' of a society. The movement content of the dances reveals the changing nature of the society in that the dance changes as the society progresses through time. 'Ethnic dances' are familiar to and known by all members of the community and all members participate in them. Due to a deep knowledge of the dances, community members also monitor the dances to insure continuity of purpose and form. Theatrical dances, on the other hand, do not involve the community, as do 'ethnic' ones. They are characterised by the fact that they are choreographed by individual(s) for the entertainment of an audience who may not be familiar with the 'elements' of the dance. While these dances may operate 'within the framework of a socially recognised convention' in terms of movement elements, the dance itself may not express the 'way of life' of a people, but cater instead to 'theatrical' concerns such as performing within a limited time period. Because dance in Nigeria was/is not separate or set apart from life in general, an examination of dancing may also reflect developments and/or changes in the society.⁵⁸

The 1960s saw major changes in Nigeria; in 1960, for example, Nigeria became an independent nation. Harper notes that technological developments in communication, transportation, and industrial expansion generally had an influence on dancing (as well as other aspects of society). Enhanced transportation, for example, facilitated greater travel and communication between communities; improved mass media in the form of radio, television, and film allowed for international influences. The ability to communicate more easily with other communities led to the exchange of ideas, and foreign influences, such as western popular music heard on radio, also had an impact on dancing. The training of dancers and other performance artists within a university setting also affected dancing and dances. The local, national and, international exchange of ideas influenced the transition of 'ethnic dance' to what Harper describes as 'contemporary theatrical dance'. This transition from 'ethnic' to

theatrical form is not a simple one as it also marks a change in the function and/or meaning of the dance. This is a change from a form that catalogues the ‘way of life’ of a group of people and is monitored by them, to one that is designed for a specific purpose, such as the entertainment of a ‘foreign’ audience—people of a different culture and not necessarily of a different country—and is assessed by, for example, fee paying spectators (Harper, 1967, p.13).⁵⁹

One of the chief vehicles for the transition of ‘ethnic dance’ to theatrical form has been the development of competitive arts festivals throughout Nigeria. The festivals, which are held on local, state, national and even international levels, are competitions that allow for ‘cultural display’, exchange of ideas, provide entertainment for a ‘foreign’ audience and may also be seen as a way of advertising/publicising dance groups. Alterations and/or changes within the dances are to be expected for performance within a ‘festival’ context.⁶⁰

The manner in which dances are prepared for festival competitions is different from the way in which they are organized in their home/village context. A dance group may ‘drill’ the dances to ‘perfection’ in order to satisfy ‘criteria’ of festival judges. Dances that, in a village context, may take hours, for example, may be reduced to performances of perhaps a few minutes; this necessitates not only a reduction in movement content, but also the selection of content that may be chosen for its ‘entertainment’ or ‘display’ value, rather than the value placed on it by its home community. Because the festivals bring together dance groups from various different parts of Nigeria, and, in the case of larger festivals, internationally, dancers observe each other and influence each other’s dances; and the dances of the winners of the festival will most likely influence the work of future ‘contestants’. A festival competition may have restrictions in regard to the amount of dance space and the performance area may be a proscenium type environment; this requires spatial adjustments in the dances that may influence the movements of the dance in terms of relationship of dancers to each other as well as the spatial range of movements of individual dancers. Dance groups and dancers who participate in and especially those that win festival completions may become ‘professional’ dancers who perform as paid entertainers or for professional recognition rather than for ‘cultural display’.

In assessing these developments within the form, it may be argued that the dances continue to reflect the ‘way of life’ of the people who perform it in that the dances are responding to, among others, industrial and technological growth and to

international influences that are now part of life in Nigeria. While these developments within the dances may help to ensure that they continue to play an active role in the society, the historic purpose and/or function of the dances has been reduced. In reference to Yoruba dance, dance scholar Omófolábò Àjàyí (1998) points out, that due to the way in which these dances have been adapted, much of their ‘aesthetic impact’ has diminished. This has resulted, she notes, from a change from a context in which the dances have ‘meaning’ to one that has little significance for the viewer. Therefore, ‘although the performances were [are] frequently billed as ‘cultural dances,’ one saw a dance but not the culture’ (Àjàyí, 1998, p. 6). Whereas dance scholars such as Harper and Àjàyí agree that it is not desirable, nor is it possible, to halt the development of dances, many also agree that it is important to document the dances ‘which remain as an integral part of traditional societies (Harper, 1967, p.80).⁶¹ Àjàyí notes, for example, that as part of the Festival of Arts and Black Cultures (FESTAC) 1977, ‘TV stations and National Film Archives, [were]...busy documenting these long forgotten dances in remote rural areas...’(Àjàyí,1998, p. 6). While technological advances have made the electronic recording of dances simpler and less expensive, issues that surround forms of documentation, especially movement/dance notation, continue to be discussed.

Harper points out, for example, the specialist knowledge needed to read and write movement/dance notation, and calls attention to a number of aspects of African dance forms that distinguish them from ‘European’ forms that need to be considered in the documentation of African dances. A ‘foreign’ observer, for example, might assess the dance as occurring in space and time. However, Harper notes that space and time are ‘cultural constructs rather than physical facts’; they are ‘attributes’ that help to define a group of people as being culturally alike or different (Harper, 1969, p. 293). In ‘European’ dance, movements may progress from one ‘distinct spatial position to the next’, while African dance is often characterised by movement through a ‘subtle complex of spatial grading’. African dances emphasise ‘dynamic rhythm’ and there is a ‘closely knit relationship between movement and music not found in western music and dance practices’ (Harper, 1969, p. 293). In light of these concerns, Harper found visual media (film) more suitable for documenting African dances.⁶²

In filming Nigerian dances, Harper took a team approach, similar to that taken by Martin (1967) described above, in which a professional filmmaker, musicologist, and choreographer comprised the research team. The dances were carefully recorded

to include ensemble and close-up shots, detailed recordings of dance movements, visual and audio recordings of the musicians and, where possible, dances were recorded in their home/village context. Clearly, this approach, like that of Honoré, took account of the perspective of the people themselves from the outset. Harper points out a number of advantages of this method of documentation. Firstly, dance is ‘visual’ and a recording of a dance should be as visual as possible. Second, dances can be filmed, and viewed, in their home ‘context’. Third, because film recordings do not require specialist knowledge in order to observe the dances, the recordings are accessible to a wider audience than would be possible with movement notation. Fourth, the movement and music are recorded (synchronised) in the manner in which they occur in performance and therefore give a good visual (as well as aural) picture of the relationship between these two. Finally, because systems of notation are ‘biased’, film offers a more ‘objective’ method of documenting the dances. All of these, with the exception of perhaps the final point, are reasonable arguments in support of filmed documentation of not just African dances, but dances generally.⁶³

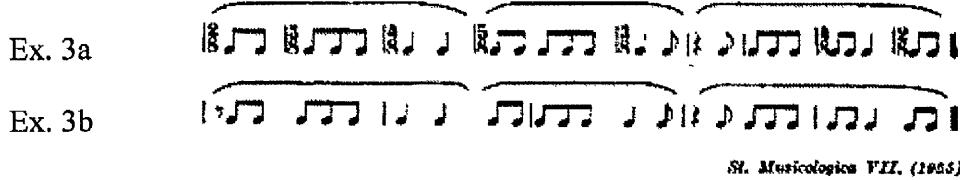
In her paper titled ‘Dance Studies’ (1968), Harper outlines a method for the analysis of African dances. The method, which is quite detailed, draws attention to aspects of African dance that should be considered in an examination of the form. These include, among other points: different kinds of time/rhythm such as metre, breath, and motor; effort, including time, weight, space-flow, and effort ‘drive’ configurations; the categorisation of movement into supports and gestures; and the analysis of direction and level of gestures by distal and proximal relationship. Harper’s movement perspective (method of analysis) is very similar to Laban analysis. This is not surprising as Harper acknowledges that, as a student of Rudolf Laban, her work is influenced by Laban theory. This would seem to indicate that while Harper is concerned about the dances being represented in ‘graphic’ form, for the reasons stated above, Laban analysis, with some modification, is an effective method for the *analysis* of African dances. Scholars and parishioners of African dance have emphasized the relationship between music and dance that is a hallmark of this form. This relationship, due in part to its poly-rhythmic structure, has presented some challenges to the examination of the dances. An understanding of this relationship is necessary for the scrutiny of African dances.

Described by music scholar Kofi Agawu as ‘the most prominent scholar of African music’ (Agawu, 2003, p. 58), J.W. Kwabena Nketia is also recognized for his

knowledge of African dance, and in regard to this research, his analysis of the relationship between African dance and music. His contribution to the study and practice of African music and dance is documented in his published works such as his text titled *The Music of Africa* (1974), and his work with The International Centre for African Music and Dance (ICAMD) at the University of Ghana. Because he is equally knowledgeable of western music theory, practice, and transcription, one of Nketia's contribution to African dance and music has been his research which clarifies this relationship for, especially, a western audience and thus makes this form more accessible to scholars, practitioners, and enthusiasts world-wide.

The relationship between African music and dance is an intimate one and this bond is a key characteristic of the dance form. Although there are a number of features that distinguish this relationship, such as the use of 'talking drum', one of these is music that makes use of, for example, polyrhythm and cross-rhythm structures. In his paper, 'The Interrelations of African Music and Dance' (1965) Nketia examines music and dance in the context of African society (especially West Africa); the following discussion will highlight his discussion of the structural aspects of music as they relate to dancing. Through the application of western staff notation, Nketia renders an analysis of the structure of rhythmic patterns used in West Africa dances. Here he demonstrates how music staff notation can effectively depict the polyrhythmic structure of the rhythms and illustrates their relationship to the rhythmic movements of the dances. He notes,

The rhythm of music for the dance is thus based on a dual principle of (a) regular elapse of time or the dancers 'motor' beat and (b) regular and irregular accentual grouping of durational values. It is easy for the musician accustomed to thinking in metrical terms to ignore the first principle and look at African rhythm as consisting only of constantly shifting metres. It is equally easy for those conscious of movement to think of the primary beats as those defined by the time line, the regular impulses felt in the recurrences of the pattern of the time line. These two ways of approaching African rhythm are reflected in current transcription of African music. In one system, barlines are used to indicate accentual groups (Ex. 3a). In another system they are used for indicating recurrences of regulative 'motor beats' (Ex. 3b). From the point of view of the dancer the latter gives a clearer guide (Nketia, 1965, p. 95).



Through a transcription of African music into music staff notation Nketia has provided an entry point for further study and appreciation of the form by anyone who can read the notation. This has wider implication for African music and dance; it enables, for example, performance and study of African music worldwide in a manner similar to that of western music (cf. Agawu below for a further discussion of this point). Further, since timing in LN can relates readily to western music staff notation, the ability to illustrate visually the structural connection between these two directly in the notation score enables this vital dimension of the form to be integrated in to the study, reconstruction, and performance of African dances. The capacity of LN to record this kind of rhythmic relationship is pertinent since in an African dance context a dancer may perform as many as three different rhythms simultaneously (Harper, 1969 p. 290). While the analysis and transcription of African music into western music staff notation has contributed to an understanding of African music generally and also clarifies its relationship to African dance, the transcription of this musical form into western music staff notation is not without its critics.

As with graphic dance notation systems, some music scholars have questioned the ability of western music staff notation to effectively record African music. These concerns, according to Agawu are based on ‘the belief that African music is fundamentally different from western music...[therefore] western staff notation was simply not suitable for conveying the reality of African rhythm in its uniqueness and individuality’ (Agawu, 2003, p.64). Although Agawu, and other music scholars, acknowledge the ‘uniqueness and individuality’ of African rhythm as well as attempts to address them, they also note that these concerns are ‘not unique to Africa’; there are issues surrounding the application of western music staff notation to the transcription of western music too (Agawu, 2003, p.64). However, rather than creating new systems of music notation as others have done, Agawu suggests that,

...in order to consolidate African practices that can eventually gain some institutional power, it makes sense to use the existing notation, however imperfect...we should train our efforts toward the superior

and extensive use of staff notation so as to make African music unavoidable in scholarly circles (Agawu, 2003, p.66).

Here, Agawu is arguing for the use of music staff notation in order to facilitate academic debate and research of African music; a similar argument can be made in reference to movement notation. Those Laban practitioners who have an understanding of the dance form as well as the Laban system (such as Green and Blum for example) have effectively applied it to African dances. Through their application of Laban analysis, they have enabled an appreciation of the dance form by making it more accessible and understandable to others; and their analysis provides a foundation for further examination and research of the form. The system of Laban analysis itself is challenged by its application to African dance forms and such a challenge has demanded consistent evaluation and development of the system. The documentation of African dances in LN has contributed to the expansion of the Laban system

Through his examination of the interrelationship of African music and dance, Nketia suggests a set of principles that characterise this relationship and also provide a guide for African dance practice. These may be organised into three broad categories including: 1) structural relationship of music in which the structure of the music influences the dances. This may include such aspects as ‘articulation of staggered rhythms’, the use of repetition—a common organization of African music and dance; 2) movement structure where the speed or timing of movement in relation to music timing, movement phrasing, and the movements of body parts in relation to different rhythms are considered; and 3) how music may contribute to choreographic ideas. Here, Nketia explains, for example how song, text and talking drums may be used to ‘provide a background for dramatic communication’. Through his work and research, professor Nketia has demonstrated the importance of the documentation of African music and dance generally. Import to this research, he, along with other music scholars such as Agawu, has demonstrated how western music staff notation may effectively document African music. The effectiveness of the application of this system to this musical form is based on an understanding of the nature of African music combined with a knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of western music staff notation. This understanding is not dissimilar to the application of Laban analysis to African dance forms. Based on the discussion above, while there may be areas of concern within this system, in the hands of a

practitioner knowledgeable of the form and the notation, as Agawu (2003) suggests in reference to western music staff notation, the use of Laban analysis can enable (and advance) academic study and research of African dance forms. Whereas professor Nketia has contributed to the analysis and understanding of African music and dance through a social and structural examination of these, especially in a West African context, social anthropologist John Blacking has examined the dancing of the Venda people of the Transvaal (South Africa).

Blacking's perspective was that of a British-trained social anthropologist of the late 1950s; his was essentially a structural-functional view that examined, for example, the function of practices in a society. Blacking was, however, also a musician who viewed the world from the perspective of an artist. Within his work, he was aware of not only the purpose of music within a society, but also the qualitative or aesthetic value placed on it by a community. Through his field research with the Venda between 1955-1958, Blacking discovered that music and dancing were inseparable; he therefore had to extend his vision and research to take account of this union.

Blacking perceived of dancing as a form of non-verbal expression that precedes verbal communication. He thought that:

...ideas and feelings can be expressed collectively through dance and music before they are articulated in speech...and that the transfer of decision making from verbal to nonverbal discourse constitutes the core of the dance experience (Blacking, 1985, pp.65, 67).

Blacking suggested that through 'core' or 'somatic' dance experiences, an expansion of existing social practices can take place and new ideas can also emerge. The Venda girls' initiation cycle was an example of this process.⁶⁴ Although the purpose of the three-part cycle was to prepare female initiates for life as adult members of Venda society, Blacking discovered that initiates progressing through the cycle were often more aware of the 'felt' or 'the aesthetic experience of music and dancing than the cycle of initiation provided...than the symbolism referring to the dance' (Blacking, 1985, pp. 85, 89).⁶⁵ The 'experience' of dancing was of value to initiates as well as those who had already been through initiation (thus extending the purpose of the ritual). In this, we can see Blacking's anthropological leanings in research, but also that he, like others, points to the close relationship of music and dance in many African societies. His work also highlights the significance of the 'experience' of

dancing to the mover and how such experiences can influence relationships and other life activities. Although Blacking found notation useful for recording the ‘object of study’—dances, he suggested that notation, as well as other forms of documentation such as film/video, could not describe or explain the ‘experience’ of dancing or dance as subjective action and conscious human intention (Blacking, 1985, p.66). Also approaching dance from the perspective of an artist is art historian Robert Farris Thompson.

The work of Farris Thompson is acknowledged in art as well as dance scholarship.⁶⁶ He is particularly recognised in dance research for his study of the relationship between African visual and performing arts that is examined in his text, *African Art in Motion* (1974). The text, which is the result of field research carried out in a variety of different West African societies between 1964-1973, examines the ‘motional’ relationship ‘which seem to be shared among makers of sculpture, music, and the dance in some parts of Africa’ (Thompson, 1974, p. XII).

Based on an analysis of data gathered through examination of historical documents, distance and participant observation, and interviews of cultural consultants that he calls ‘existential experts’, Thompson developed a criterion of ‘fine form’ that include ten key ‘motional’ aspects that are shared among African art forms of West African peoples. These include: ephebism; simultaneous suspending and preserving of the beat; get-down quality; multiple meter; looking smart; correct entrances and exit; vividness cast into equilibrium; call-and-response; ancestorism; and coolness (Thompson, 1974).⁶⁷ While these canon have proven to be useful as a starting point for the observation and examination of African dances generally, it should be noted, that they were developed in a West African context and therefore not all elements of the canon may be applicable to all African dances. Since its introduction, Thompson’s research and canon have been scrutinised and refined by African dance scholars. In a review of *African Art in Motion*, for example, dance scholar/anthropologists Judith Lynn Hanna (1975) scrutinized Thompson’s methods of data collection.

Reviewing the work through the perspective of historical and/or social science theory/method Hanna highlighted a number of issues. She argues, for example, that as a result of a careful comparison of informants’ transcripts and Thompson’s interpretation of these, that there exists a ‘disjunction between what the ‘informants’ say and what Thompson says’ (Hanna, 1975, p.6). Hanna also questions the validity

of the sample itself. For example, of the ninety-six ‘informants’ interviewed, she noted that almost all were male and nearly half were aged between 40-60. In reference to the ‘existential experts’ selected by Thompson, it is unclear whether these ‘experts’ were selected by Thompson based on his own definition of ‘existential experts’ or was this designation made by members of the community.⁶⁸ In reference to his dance analysis, in comparing movement descriptions of ‘informants’ and Thompson’s transcription of these, Hanna notes differences that may at first seem minor but may influence an analysis of ‘dance style and aesthetics’.⁶⁹

In considering Thompson’s work from a social science point of view, Hanna reveals what might be considered a collection of fundamental flaws in Thompson’s research methods and these have a bearing on his findings. Does the fact that nearly all of his ‘informants’ were male and nearly half of these between the ages of 40-60, for example, indicate that dancing takes place among these groups only? Moreover, if the ‘informant’s’ transcripts and Thompson’s interpretation of these do not agree, how is the reader to validate or situate Thompson’s statements about the motional relationship between African arts? Despite these concerns, some researchers have found Thompson’s canon useful to their research of this dance form.⁷⁰

In compiling the text, *Jazz Dance the Story of American Vernacular Dance a History of Dancing to Jazz from its African Origins to the Present* (1968), authors Marshall and Jean Stearns recorded the contribution Thompson’s extensive research of different West African societies made to the association (identification) of ‘basic movements with certain African ‘tribes’ (Stearns and Stearns, 1968, p. 14); dance scholar Omófolábò Àjáyí, in her study of Yoruba dance, notes that Thompson’s ‘works [on dance aesthetics] are particularly outstanding...on the Yoruba of Nigeria (Àjáyí, 1998, p. 8). Dance scholar Francesca Castaldi comments in her book, *Choreographies of African Identities Négritude, Dance, and the National Ballet of Senegal* (2006), that Thompson ‘...explores the continuity between African sculpture and dance, and his writings continue to be among the best analytical work in African dance (Castaldi, 2006, p.209). In light of Hanna’s (and Ames’s) criticism of Thompson’s research, one might question why scholars continue to consult his canon.

Scholars may validate Thompson’s canon by comparing them to their own findings as well as that of other researchers. Stearns and Stearns, for example, may use comparative analysis to examine data collected from the same sources as Thompson and contrast these with their own findings. Alternatively, knowledge of

the material by other researchers may support (or contradict) Thompson's work. Àjàyí, a respected scholar of Yoruba dance, notes that Thompson spent a considerable amount of time researching Yoruba arts and based on her extensive knowledge of these, accepts his analysis of these forms. Further, it should be noted that Thompson is an art historian, not a trained anthropologist. Due to his lack of knowledge and training in this area, he, similar to the movement notators discussed above, may be unaware that his lack of knowledge of field-reseach methods and/or procedures may have a bearing on the quality of his analysis/findings. While some scholars have adopted Thompson's canon, others have adapted them as needed to support their work.

Dance scholar Brenda Dixon Gottschild (1998), for example, developed five 'Africanist' elements based on Thompson's canon that she applies to her research.⁷¹ These include: embracing the conflict; polycentrism/polyrhythm; high-effect juxtaposition; ephebism; and the aesthetic of the cool.⁷² Gottschild uses these to reveal the 'Africanist' influence/presence in American life in general and in American dance especially.⁷³ Also influenced by Thompson's canon, African dancer/scholar Kariamu Welsh Asante identifies seven 'senses'—polyrhythm, polycentrism, curvilinear, dimensional, epic memory, repetition, and holism, that she applies to an 'aesthetic' analysis of Zimbabwean dance.⁷⁴ There may be a number of reasons why Gottschild and Welsh Asante found it necessary to adapt Thompson's canon. Gottschild's subject matter, for example, is 'Africanist' influence in American life. She is, therefore, concerned not only with 'traditional' African influences but also pre and post colonial influences on African traditions; she must also consider the application of these in an American context rather than an African one only. Thompson's canon do not address these issues. Welsh Asante's research is directed towards the dances of Zimbabwe and relates to the 'oral' tradition of many African societies; Thompson's research did not extend to this area. Welsh Asante therefore, developed Thompson's canon to address issues related to the dances of Zimbabwe and southern Africa more generally. Additionally, Welsh Asante questions whether systems of graphic notation can address issues related to African dance aesthetics.

Asante, like others, has reservations concerning the graphic notation of African dances. Her argument centres on issues of the African aesthetic and what she calls the 'aesthetic senses'. These 'senses', as recorded above, relate to an understanding of the 'oral' tradition/principle that is a foundation of traditional African society and

influences all of its arts—traditional and contemporary.⁷⁵ The oral tradition or principle in African society functions as both history and entertainment. However, as explained by Welsh Asante and other scholars (cf. Agawu, 2003), it is not only the ‘storyteller’ or ‘griot’ who looks after a community’s history, but also the dancer, musician, sculpture, etc., who express, through their art, the values of the group.⁷⁶ In this way, the history is remembered even though the story may be (re)told or (re)interpreted by the performer. In other words, the ‘expression’ may change, but ‘what the work represents is guarded and revered...’ (Welsh Asante, 1985a, p.73). Viewed from this perspective, the oral tradition/principle is a ‘dynamic or creative process’ in which (creative) change takes place. The dance, for example, may not be the same twice even when performed by the same artist. A question for Welsh Asante, therefore, is how a notation system can account for this dynamic process.

Rudolf Laban undertook the development of his system of movement analysis in the context of 20th century European culture. His source material was the movement vocabulary of the Central European folk dancer and also martial arts. The movement vocabulary through which his insights were conveyed carried the stylistic features of German Expressionism (Groff, 1990, p. 28). It can be asserted that any tool of analysis will resonate the culture, personality, and theoretical perspective of the author(s) who constructed it and this can be noted from the discussion above. The Laban system, however, has not stood still, and although the system continues to bear the name of the person who introduced it, it no longer characterises the world-view of a particular cultural or movement form.

Its practitioners have diversified and become absorbed into the cultural milieu of the US... LMA practitioners have been challenged to clarify the objective theory and to become increasingly aware of the philosophical stance that has permeated the system...The process of distilling the theoretical structure is especially significant as applications extend to many cultures (Groff, 1990, p. 28).

Nevertheless, it is acknowledged by this researcher that LN and LMA, like any other tool, must bear the hallmark of those who nurture and use it. However, due to its application to various movement activities such as dance anthropology/ethnography, communication, dancing, education and therapy, Laban analysis has demonstrated its ability to scrutinize a variety of movement forms, its flexibility, its commitment to diversity and continued theoretical development.

With the exception of Ghana and South Africa, no other African nation has considered any form of western movement analysis and notation appropriate for the analysis and documentation of the dances of Africa. Practitioners of this form working in the West also express their own doubts concerning this form of documentation. Yet, western music staff notation, though not universally accepted, is used as a tool of communication among musicians worldwide. Is it possible for Laban analysis to perform a similar role in relation to the analysis and documentation of African peoples' dances? Can Laban analysis meet the demands of those who conceive of dance in terms that Layiwola, Welsh Asante, and others have expressed? Taking into account the issues raised throughout this chapter, the next part of this discussion will apply Laban analysis (both LN and LMA) to the dancing of the Nama of !Khubus village. In doing so, it will not only address the particular questions of the current research, but will also contribute to ongoing research of the application of Laban analysis to non-western dance forms.

Notes

1. An example of such an application is Movement Pattern Analysis (MPA). Developed by Laban movement analyst Warren Lamb in the 1940s and '50s, MPA is based upon the innovations of movement theorists Rudolf Laban and movement consultant F.C. Lawrence. MPA is probably the most comprehensive system available for assessing a person's core motivations in decision-making process—how a person is motivated to take action and make decisions, alone and with others. It is based on disciplined observation and analysis of nonverbal behaviour and has a wide range of applications, from management consulting to career guidance (Institute of Movement Pattern Analysis, www.iompa.com, accessed 29 May, 2008).
2. See also categories of systems of movement notation organised by Mary Alice Brennan, 1999.
3. For a fuller discussion of historical systems of notation see Hutchinson Guest 1984 and 1989; see also Marion 1997a and 1997b.
4. Labanotator Odette Blum has noted some of the disadvantages or limitations of a score and/or notation system. These include: one has to know the notation system and this takes some time; a good interpretation depends on the notation [and contextual] knowledge, reading skills, imagination, and integrity of the notator/reconstructor (Blum, 1986, p. 39.); other researchers have commented that systems of notation record 'still' positions rather than the 'motion' of the body (see also Farnell, 1994; Welsh Asante, 2000, 1996a, 1985a).
5. In her dissertation, Marion clarifies her reason for choosing these three systems. She explains: Because I wished to contextualise notation within issues of

documenting and reproducing chorographic works, I examined major systems that had been set up for that purpose. The Stepanov, Laban and Benesh systems had each been created or used within the last one hundred years for notating or reproducing theatrical dance (Marion, 1997a, p. 141).

6. This idea is based on Edwin Ardener's notion of modes of specification and registration concerning western perceptions and conceptions of body movement. He notes that: our definition of...the 'events' depends upon the modes of registration available to us' (Ardener in Farnell, 1994, p. 935). The ability to perceive movement as a processual flow of events in space rather than as a series of body positions depends...upon having modes of registration and specification adequate to the task. (Farnell, 1994, p. 935).

7. For a fuller discussion of range of choices of description available to a Labanotator, see Chapter Six of this dissertation. See also, Morais, 1992 and Farnell, 1994.

8. The Hartford Ballet closed in 1999/2000.

9. While an ability to record 'culturally' specific information will certainly depend upon a knowledge of the form and cultural context of the form, anthropologist Brenda Farnell notes that the 'script' or system of notation is equally important. She notes, for example, that, ...a movement script must be capable of writing all anatomically possible bodily action in ways that will preserve the identity of movement, make possible accurate reproduction of it and maintain its semantic content. This entails a concern with recording *action* [intention/purpose] rather than gross physical movement....in this regard, it is important to note that Labanotation is always written from the actor's perspective rather than the observer's, and so has a built-in assumption of agency (Farnell, 1994, pp. 938-939).

10. Welsh Asante notes polyrhythm as one of the most recognisable characteristics of African dance. She further comments that, 'rhythm has been identified by a concordance of scholars as central to any understanding or codification of an African aesthetic...(Welsh Asante, 1996a, p. 204).

11. See also, Morais, 1992 for a discussion of the differences between film and live performances. See also Farnell for a discussion of film/video in reference to documentation of Native American Plains Sign Talk (Farnell, 1994).

12. See for example Judy Van Zile, The Use of Space in *Ch'oyongmu* (1991) and The Use of Space in *Chinju Kommu* (1995).

13. For a fuller discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of film/video and notation scores, see Blum1986, Frosch 1999, Hanna 1989, Hutchinson-Guest 1984, Morais1992.

14. Farnell notes that Labanotation is always written from the actor's perspective rather than the observer's, and so has a built-in assumption of agency (Farnell, 1994, p. 939).

15. For a catalogue of dance recorded in the Laban system see Warner, M.J. & Warner, F. *Laban Notation Scores: An International Bibliography*. USA: International Council of Kinetography Laban (ICKL), 1984.

16. The programme was organised by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Educational Council (SEAMEO) Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts that is known as SPAFA. 'The centre is an autonomous international organisation operating under the Southeast Asian Ministers of Educational Council' (Ryman, 1991).

17. Ryman noted, for example, that participants were unable to perform reading examples considered basic, such as the 'cha-cha', in a western context. Ryman commented that: This reinforces for me the pitfalls in trying to learn a dance style from notation, and the importance of reading and writing within a cultural context (Ryman, 1991, p. 141).

18. Because any system of notation directs the perspective of the user, systems will focus more directly on some things and not others. Ryman noted, for example, that she was able to 'see' what she had not observed clearly when the movement was explained (and demonstrated) to her by someone knowledgeable of the form. She commented: Labanotation provides the framework, the tools. It takes an informed person to apply them' (Ryman, 1991, p. 142). This perspective may equally apply to the use of 'coding-sheets' that may also direct the perspective of the viewer. (See also Bartenieff et al, 1984, see also 'modes of registration', in Farnell, 1994).

19. Fox noted a number of concerns that arose due to working with a variety of different translators who were not 'professional' interpreters. These include such things as: varying degrees of expertise in English and Mandarin, anticipation of questions by the translator, and degree of interpretation by the translator (Fox, 1988). See also Chapter Three of this dissertation for a further discussion of the use of translators in the field.

20. Fox commented further on this point: It was sometimes difficult to get the teachers to be thorough in the corrections they gave me. Our relationship was not teacher-student, we were peers. Cultural differences made it very hard for them to point out the errors in my performance instead of politely saying it was good. I needed to make them understand that when I said my performance was not good, I was not just following the etiquette of appearing humble; I understood my performance was not right and wanted corrections. I had to be persistent, but polite, to get them to understand I wanted honesty rather than good manners (Fox, 1988, p. 80).

21. Van Zile acknowledges the work of anthropologists Charles Laughlin whose definition of phenomenology she adopts for her study. This is: the study of consciousness as being grounded in the direct experience of aspects of one's own consciousness (Laughlin cited in Van Zile, 1997). Van Zile's application of 'phenomenology' in this way may be seen as a development of the 'general observation' stage noted by Bartenieff et al in the project titled *The Potential of Movement Analysis as a Research Tool: A Preliminary Analysis* (1984) also discussed in this paper.

22. See for example Williams application of LN in Farnell, 1995a; and Buckland, 1999a.

23. Farnell notes that earlier observers did not record this important aspect of Plains Sign Talk (Farnell, 1994, p. 948).

24. Farnell explains, for example, the use of ‘photographs’ to illustrate ‘movement’ in early anthropological research citing for example the ‘Movement in the Wedding Dance’ in Evans-Pritchard’s monograph on Nuer religion. Farnell questions, “*where*” is the movement? in this ‘still’ image (Farnell, 1994, p.929). See also Morais, 1992, for a discussion concerning the ability of systems of graphic notation to record ‘movement’ or just a series of ‘stills selected at random’

25. See also Farnell (1994), Fox (1988), Marion (1997a), and Morais (1992).

26. Formed in 1959, the International Council of Kinetography Laban (ICKL) is a non-profit international organization. Its members practice the system of movement and dance notation originated by Rudolf Laban, known as Kinetography Laban or Labanotation. The aims of ICKL are to promote the use of the system; to increase research for its development and applications; to act as a deciding body with regard to the orthography and principles of the system; to support experimental projects in related areas; to encourage information exchange among centres and individuals using the systems. Its activities include the publication of conference proceedings, bibliographies and indexes, and the organization of the biennial conference. (www.ickl.org; accessed 14 April 2008).

27. See for example Chu, 2001, Ryman, 1991. The Korean Society for Dance Documentation, www.ksdd.org/index.html, and Labanotation Study Group in Japan, www.mars.dti.e.jp.

28. Morais and Farnell distinguish between ‘position’ and ‘movement’ in their discussion of systems of movement notation. Both Benesh Movement Notation and Labanotation stress ‘movement’ description as a characteristic of its system. For a further discussion of position and movement description concerning these two systems; see Morais, 1992 and Farnell, 1994. For a discussion of the significance of ‘motion’ description to African dance see Welsh Asante, 1985a.

29. In parts of Europe the system originally devised by Rudolf Laban is known as Kinetography (or Kinetography Laban). The distinction between the two is based on ‘movement vs. spatial’ analysis. An argument for the Kin [Kinetography] point of view is: the system is based on spatial analysis so if a spatial change is made, it needs to be indicated. An argument for the LN [Labanotation] point of view is: The system was developed to record body movement...The underlying philosophies of Kin and LN differ on a fundamental level, so we approach movement notation from different standpoints (Fox, 1999). For a detailed discussion of Hungarian folk dance research, see Felföldi, 1999.

30. *The Codification and Development of Bátábádé Technique* project was part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council Research Centre for Cross-Cultural Music

and Dance Performance at the University of Surrey. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), England, the five year project (2001-2007) was a collaboration between three institutions: Department of Music, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies; Department of Dance Studies, University of Surrey; School of Arts (Dance), and University of Roehampton. Through a series of projects, the Centre aimed to address research questions raised by the performance of sound and movement particularly within Asian and African practice.

31. The others two systems of movement notation are Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation and Labanotation.

32. Grau has also applied BMN to the documentation and analysis of the dances and movement patterns of the Twi people of Australia. See for example Grau 1983, 1998, and 2003.

33. ‘Public’ dances are (Venda) dances ‘performed in the open that any passer-by can watch’ (Grau, 1990).

34. For other examples of the use of Benesh Movement Notation see: Grau 1983, Hall 1967, Morais 1992.

35. See also the application of Benesh Movement Notation to Warlpiri women’s dance at Willowra, Northern Territory, Australia in Morais, 1992.

36. The movement sample was taken from about two-dozen examples of common movement activities in daily life and in men’s dance from 68,000 feet of research footage shot by Allison and Marek Jablonko in 1963 and 1964. In 1968, the Jablonkos returned and filmed an additional 46,000 feet which Kagan and Jablonko used for the study discussed here (Jablonko and Kagan, 1988; see also Kaeppeler, 1978).

37. For a further discussion on the treatment of ‘movement’ in early anthropology see Farnell, 1994; see also Kaeppeler, 1978.

38. See also Kagan’s application of choreometrics methodology to her comparative analysis of the dances *Three Epitaphs* (Paul Taylor) and *Water Study* (Doris Humphrey) in Kagan, 1978.

39. It should be noted that one of the major distinctions between these two projects was the level of expertise of team members and their interaction with each other. Van Zile was the only member of the research team with advanced experience of LN and Korean dance forms; as part of the project, she interacted as little as possible with team members. The research team of Jablonko and Kagan comprised two highly experienced professionals; one in dance anthropology and movement analysis, the other, Kagan, in Laban Movement Analysis. Though Kagan was less experienced in anthropological theory and practice, the two worked as a team and interacted with each other consistently. The composition of the team as well as how team members were allowed to interact with each other seems to have influenced research findings.

40. A similar situation existed among researchers of the choreometrics project. The movement analysts Irmgard Bartenieff and Forrestine Paulay, had no experience of anthropological theory/method and little experience of the material under investigation. However, dance scholar/anthropologist, Joann Kealiinohomoku commented: I am not criticizing...Bartenieff and Paulay for their space-effort analyses [of choreometrics]. They are experts in a valuable field. The problem is that Bartenieff and Paulay are not trained in the theoretical concepts of anthropology, and are not knowledgeable about the intra-cultural and cross-cultural varieties of dance on a world-wide basis. (Keali'nohomoku, 1974, p.23).

41. Gellerman's research focused on three Hasidic communities: Satmarer, Bobover and Lubavitcher. See Gellerman, 1976, for a discussion of Hasidic belief system.

42. The other members of the research team were: movement analysts: Irmgard Bartenieff (E/S, S/H, LN) Peggy Hackney (E/S, S/H, LN), Carl Wolz (LN), and dance consultant, Betty True Jones. For a full biography of researchers see, Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 11.

43. Researchers commented that dance research that ignores the dancing (except for very broad descriptive statements) ignores a major component that has potential for revealing a great deal about those who create and use dance (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 3).

44. Researchers acknowledged other approaches to the study of dancing such as research that focuses on the historical development of a dance form or examines the context in which a dance event occurs or explores the background of those who dance and how this relates to social structure (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 3).

45. Contextual information, not described in this paper, concerning the dance form was included as part of the research process. However, this information was given to the researchers after 'general observations' were recorded. See Bartenieff et al, 1984 for contextual information concerning the dance sequence.

46. In the text, *Beyond Words* (1988), movement analysts Carol-Lynne Moore suggests a four-stage approach to movement observation. These are: relaxation, attunement, point of concentration, and recuperation. The second stage, attunement, is a preparatory stage in which 'ones senses the general configuration of the movement and is able to bring the elements into focus, prior to making decisions about which features are most important' (Moore and Yamamoto, 1988, p. 211).

47. Researchers further explained that the use of a 'common language'...is not to suggest that a language be developed which would exclude or discourage personal imagistic ways of speaking or recording observations, but that these personal images could be translated, if necessary, into an understood vocabulary (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 4).

48. Researchers distinguished 'units' or divisions of the dance with 'unit markers.' 'Units', such as an element, a phrase, or sequence, could be discerned by: pauses, re-

initiation of effort, a contrasting use of effort, a change in movement density, and a change in the use of joints (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 6).

49. 'Design drawing' is similar to 'line drawings' in that it creates a picture-like image of the 'shape or static design of a movement' rather than recording the 'direction and level' of an action (see also Hutchinson Guest and Van Haarst, 1991).

50. Wearing a type of dress used as daily attire in the state of Kerala, the consultant performed the dance three times in a dance studio to the accompaniment of tape recorded music. Two of the performances were video taped and one was selected for repeated viewing for the research (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 4).

51. See also Seeger (1958) and Morais (1992) for a further discussion of prescriptive and descriptive writing in references to music scores and dance notation scores.

52. These issues raised further questions regarding the concepts of creator and performer in dance. To some, the choreographer is the creator and the performer a re-creator. To others, both are creators—one of the choreographic form and the other of the actual performance (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 8).

53. The definition of a prescriptive score was modified by the fact that: only one version of the dance was notated; the notation was based on one individual's understanding of the 'essence' of the dance; the individual whose understandings are documented was not Indian (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 8).

54. The concept of core characteristics is felt to be the essence of what is meant by 'style.' Irmgard Bartenieff bases this concept on the notion of core qualities originated in her research with the choreometrics project. The word 'qualities' however was changed to 'characteristics' in order to indicate clearly the inclusion of both structural and qualitative elements (Bartenieff et al, 1984, p. 9). See also Pforsich, 1978.

55. This comment relates to the fact that, in addition to the performer/consultant, only two other members of the research team had some prior knowledge/experience of Asian/Indian dance—Van Zile and Carl Wolz (see Bartenieff et al, 1984, p.11 for biographical information on research team members). In addition, one of the aims of the project was a focus on 'dancing' and what it can reveal. Therefore, at least in the initial stages of research, team members had very little information about the dance form or its cultural context.

56. Tortugas is a small village in the city of Las Cruces in southern New Mexico. Each year the community hosts an annual religious festival in honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the 'dark Virgin' who miraculously appeared three hundred fifty years ago in Mexico City (Sklar, 1991b, p. 6).

57. Initially, systems of notation developed in parallel with the dancing of the period in which they were invented—a system was created to meet the demands of the style or type of dancing used in conjunction with it. For example, the Beauchamp/Feuillet (1700) system, initially known simply as the Feuillet system, highlighted the spatial design, stepping pattern, and relationship of dancers to each

other; these elements catalogued the significant features of the dances of this period in France. As the need for more detail developed or as a different style of dancing was introduced, either a system was revised or a new one composed.

58. See also dance scholar Omófolábò Àjàyí (1998) concerning dance in Nigeria generally. She notes in reference to Yoruba dance for example that, ...even while recognized and performed as an independent art form, many dances are created either as part of, or to emphasize and illustrate important aspects of Yoruba social structure and events. In this context, they also served as a repository of meaning to other Yoruba art forms. Essentially, therefore, to study ancient Yoruba dances in depth is really to get a good insight into that culture (Àjàyí, 1998, p.2; see also Welsh Asante, 2000).

59. Social anthropologist John Blacking notes in relation to the Venda that,...in 1956 many (Venda) lived in cities...This did not mean that traditional dances died out. On the contrary, some of the best dance teams could be found in the urban areas, and especially Soweto, where they met once a week and rehearsed their steps. Dance had become a focus of social activity, and no longer had to be sponsored by a chief or headman as in the rural situation (Blacking, 1985, p.73; see also Welsh Asante, 1978).

60. Àjàyí notes in regard FESTAC—Festival of Arts and Black Cultures—that was held in Nigeria in 1977, that this international festival, among other objectives, ‘aimed primarily at presenting Black and African cultures in its highest and widest conception’...the slogan ‘the revival of our national heritage’...catapulted dance into national prominence and almost to the forefront of the country’s policy on the arts (Àjàyí, 1998, p.5).

61. In reference to dance in rural communities, Àjàyí notes, ...the rural folks did not miss the intrusion to their lives even though they did benefit somewhat from the exposure and were able to incorporate new ideas from other troupes into their own repertory (Àjàyí, 1998, p.7).

62. While Harper used film to record the dances, her concerns would equally apply to the use of video/DVD today.

63. For a further discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of film/video in the documentation of dances see: Brennan (1999), Blum (1986), Hutchinson Guest (1984), and Morais (1992).

64. The Venda girls’ cycle of initiation consisted of three parts: *Vhusha*, *Tshikanda*, and *Domba*; the name of each of these parts also identified the dance that accompanied it. The cycle, which happened between puberty and marriage, could last for up to four years and include a large number of initiates.

65. ‘Process’ and ‘product’ became key concepts in Blacking’s discussion of music. See for example Blacking, 1969.

66. See for example Thompson 1974, 1980, 1984 and 2005.

67. Thompson's ten canon are briefly defined as: 1) ephebism or youthful power; 2) simultaneous suspending and preserving of the beat—off-beat phrasing; 3) get-down quality—descending position/melodies; 4) multiple meter—several lines of rhythm); 5) looking smart—nature and line in equilibrium; 6) correct entrances and exit—clear boundaries; 7) vividness cast into equilibrium—personal and recreational balance; 8) call-and-response; 9) ancestorism—harmony with the ancient way); 10) coolness—an all embracing attribute that unites and animates all of the other canon. For a fuller description of Thompson's canon, see Thompson, 1974.

68. Thompson defines 'existential expert' as those who have lived the tradition (in question) (Thompson, 1974, p.2).

69. Hanna notes, for example, Thompson's transcription of the following: 'When the sound of the master drummer ascends in pitch the dancers correspond by dancing 'high,' i.e., upon their toes...' Harper notes however that the 'informant' (No.34) say something rather different: 'When the drums go up high...he is supposed to dance up high (almost on tip-toe).' ...'Upon their toes' is different than 'almost on tip-toe' to an analyst examining dance style and aesthetics (Hanna, 1975, p.6). This is a valid point. As Thompson used translators for some of his research, a further question might be whether this is an issue of translation (as discussed in Chapter Three of this work) or a matter of interpretation.

70. Art scholar David Ames, who also reviewed *African Art in Motion*, in addition to positive remarks about the work, like Hanna, was also critical of its methodology. He notes: I found some aspects of the author's methodology repeatedly irritating. There was a tendency to force facts into pre-conceived pigeonholes, and since Thompson tends to rely a great deal on poetic statement, not infrequently this gives the reader the impression that facts are being bent by a kind of lexical slight of hand or that conclusions were unjustifiably being extrapolated from fragmentary evidence. Not infrequently, a few ethnographic examples stand, implicitly at least, for tropical Africa as a whole, a fairly common failing of Africanist (Ames, 1980, p. 563).

71. In addition to Thompson, Gottschild also acknowledges the influence of the work of Susan Vogal (1986) and Kariamu Welsh Asante (1985a) in reference to African aesthetics.

72. Gottschild's Africanist aesthetics are briefly described as: 1) embracing the conflict—the conflict inherent in and implied by difference, discord, and irregularity is encompassed, rather than erased or necessarily resolved; 2) polycentrism/polyrhythm—movement may emanate from any part of the body, and two or more centers may operate simultaneously; 3) high-effect juxtaposition—mood, attitude, or movement breaks that omit the transitions and connective links valued in the European academic aesthetic are the keynote of this principle. For example, a driving mood may overlap and coexist with a light and humorous tone, or imitative and abstract movements may be juxtaposed; 4) ephebism—vital aliveness, youthful power; 5) aesthetic of the cool—this characteristic is all-embracing. It lives in the other concepts, and they reside in it. It is an attitude...that combines composure with vitality (Gottschild, 1998, pp. 13-19). For a fuller discussion of Gottschild's Africanist aesthetic see Gottschild, 1998.

73. Gottschild uses the term Africanist to: signify African and African American resonances and presences, trends, and phenomena. It indicates the African influence, past and present, and those forms and forces that arose as products of the African diaspora, including traditions and genres such as blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, and hip hop. It denotes the considerable impact of African and African American culture on modern arts and letters; the wealth of African-based American dance forms that proliferate from ballroom and night club floors to popular and concert stages; and, finally, the pervasive African-rooted presence in everyday American lifestyles—from walking, talking, hairdos, and food preparation to acting ‘hip.’ In sum, the term denotes concepts and practices that exist in African and the African diaspora and have their sources in concepts or practices from Africa (Gottschild, 1998, xiv).

74. Welsh Asante’s senses are briefly defined as: 1) polyrhythm—multidimensional rhythmic sense; 2) polycentrism—movements coming from several directions at the same time; 3) curvilinear—curvilinear quality; 4) dimensional—texture; 5) epic memory—experience or memory sense; 6) repetition—intensifying; 7) holism—the parts of the creation are not emphasised or accentuated beyond the whole; neither is the individual. For a fuller description of Welsh Asante’s senses see Welsh Asante, 1985a.

75. Welsh Asante distinguishes between ‘senses’ and characteristics of African dance. She explains: among some characteristics are collective signature and creativity, theme, and uniformity...the senses refer to those qualities that make up the integral composition of the dance, while characteristics refer to qualities that the dance itself performs in and of itself. These qualities are projected by the dance. Characteristics are commonly found in African dance with the qualities that I [Welsh Asante] have indicated, but these qualities alone do not constitute the makeup of the dance. The senses undergird all of the dances regardless of theme, ethnicity, and geography. In this way, the senses like Thompson’s canon help to identify what can be described as the African dance aesthetic (Welsh Asante, 1996b, p. 212).

76. The term ‘griot’ as noted by Welsh Asante is actually a word of French origin but has become synonymous with the oral historian tradition in West Africa. Specifically it is used to denote oral history that uses storytelling, music, and praise songs to convey historical information. This is in contrast to the term ‘dyeli’ that is a Mandinke term widely used in West Africa; according to Welsh Asante, it is the preferred term for oral historian (Welsh Asante, 2000, p.13).

Chapter 3

Sunset Along the Orange River

3.0. Exploratory Field Research Among the Nama

What follows is an account of exploratory field research undertaken among the Nama people who live along the Orange River in northern South Africa. The Nama's relationship to the Khoekhoen has been addressed previously and the purpose of the field research will be discussed below. Here, I would like to call attention to those points that need to be addressed in order to situate and clarify the account that follows.

'Language competency' or an ability to communicate in the language of the people with whom you are doing research is an accepted part of field research practice. However, according to ethnographer Michael Agar (1980), a lack of fluency of the language of the research community may occur more often than is reflected in the literature (Agar, 1980, p.150). This would seem to be so, as this aspect of field research has been addressed more recently by ethnographer Maria Birbili (and others) who notes that 'collecting data in one language and presenting the findings in another is now increasingly common among social researchers' (Birbili, 2000, p.1).¹ Birbili comments on why this is so,

As the need for mutual understanding on an international scale increases, more and more organisations and individuals are seeking comparable information across national and cultural boundaries using research instruments prepared in one language and culture for use in others (Birbili, 2000, p 1).

The inaccessibility of a language outside of its language use area (as is the case of the Nama language) or an unexpected change from one research area to another are factors that may prevent a study of language prior to field research.² There may also be 'cultural' considerations in which, for example, only select members of a community understand and/or are permitted to use a language associated with, for example, a particular ritual. In such cases, the researcher is required to collaborate with a translator(s).³ The use of translators/interpreters in the field presents the researcher with a particular set of issues that must be recognized and addressed. The following section will examine some of these and will also suggest ways of addressing them.

Various kinds of interactions (during field research) may require translation. The most common among these include: 1) a researcher conducts research in a language

other than her own—in the language of the research community, for example, and the data will be ‘written up’ in her own language, such as, English; 2) a researcher communicates in her own language of, for example, French and ‘writes up’, in English; 3) both researcher and participants are bilingual and can move between languages easily; and 4) a researcher communicates through an interpreter (Birbili, 2000). All of these interactions involve different kinds of choices and decisions in regard to translation and these will most certainly have a ‘direct impact on the validity of the research and its report’ (Birbili, 2000, p. 2). This discussion is particularly concerned with the last of these.

Birbili notes five factors that have a ‘qualitative’ effect on translation. These include: 1) linguistic competency of the translator/s; 2) translator’s knowledge of the culture—and in the case of dancing, the dance activity; 3) background of the translator/s—professional translator or a member of the research community for example;⁴ 4) circumstances in which translation takes place—simultaneous translations, translation while still in-situ, or transcribed from audio tape or film on return from field research); 5) are the researcher and translator the same or different people. Where the researcher and translator are different people, for example, cultural anthropologists Clyde Kluckhohn suggests that the following should also be considered: 1) how the interpreter may affect the ‘informant’ (cf. Morais below concerning relationship of translator to ‘informant’ and research community); 2) the interpreter’s effect on the communicative process generally; and 3) the interpreter’s effect on the translation itself (Kluckhohn cited in Birbili, 2000, p 3). Whereas these issues relate to interactions between people, other translation issues relate to the construction of the ‘text’.

One of these is the idea of ‘conceptual equivalence’ in which a word/phrase/utterance in one language is related to a similar word/phrase/utterance in another language. As Birbili suggests, this is a major problem of translation, because it is not merely the translation of these from one language into another, but of culturally specific values.

In absolute terms [this is] an unsolvable problem which results from the fact that almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings, and values that the speaker may or may not be aware of but that the field worker, as an outsider, usually is not.
(Phillips in Birbili, 2000, p. 2)

Further, Birbili notes, ‘...even an apparently familiar term or expression for which there

is a direct lexical equivalence might carry ‘emotional connotations’ in one language that will not necessarily occur in another (Birbili, 2000, p. 2).⁵ ‘Literal’ or word-by-word translation of participants’ words, or ‘free’ translation in which an ‘edited’ version is produced have also to be considered carefully. A literal translation may be seen to represent the speaker’s words better, but may also hamper readability as well as understanding. On the other hand, an edited version of spoken text lends itself to ‘misinterpretation and/ or misrepresentation’ (Birbili, 2000). While researchers may, and have, developed methods to address these issues, they also note, that some of these ‘may not be completely overcome’ (Phillips in Birbili, 2000, p. 2).

Researchers have developed various ways of addressing translation related issues through an analysis of their research by various means. The first of these, called ‘back translation, ‘is one of the most common techniques used in cross-cultural research’ (Birbili, 2000, p. 4). This method looks for ‘equivalents’ through,

- a) the translation of items from the source language to the target language, b) independent translation of these back to the source language, and c) the comparison of the two versions of items in the source language until ambiguities or discrepancies in meaning are clarified or removed (Birbili, 2000, p. 4).⁶

Another testing method takes a team approach and involves consultation, collaboration, and/or debate with other researchers in order to clarify meaning or to make decisions concerning usage.⁷ Finally, and perhaps the most important point concerning the use of translators in field research is the acknowledgment by the researcher that translation related issue(s) exists, clarifying these and explaining how these have been addressed. Each solution will be specific to the research and will require different tactics. The following section presents a synopsis of translation/interpretation issues encountered during the course of field research by movement analyst/dance ethnographer Hung-Fu Lee (2001), notator/ethnographer Megan Jones Morais (1992), as well as this researcher.

Movement analyst/dance ethnographer Hung-Fu Lee conducted fieldwork in Amis villages in Taiwan. Lee stated that ‘one of the biggest challenges that I confronted during field research was understanding the native language of the Amis.⁸ This was because most senior *cikawasay* members (spirit masters) in the village are unable to speak Mandarin [the official language of Taiwan]’ (Lee, 2001, p. 9). Further,

the nature of the material that Lee was working with did not lend itself to easy access in terms of spoken language and/or translation. Lee noted that,

The rituals do not require that the *cikawasay* articulate clearly or communicate with the audience and non-*cikawasay* participants. Rather the mode of communication in the *cikawasays* ritual is an inward expression to the *kawas*—not an extroverted performance for an audience (Lee, 2001, p. 10).

A further obstacle to communication was the fact that the Amis is an oral society and do not have written records of the ritual language (Lee, 2001, p.10). Lee faced two major language issues, the Amis vernacular of older speakers and the inaccessibility of the ritual language. Lee was compelled therefore to work through a translator and to also devise a plan for ‘quality control’ to insure as closely as possible an accurate translation and transcription of information.⁹

Notator/ethnographer Megan Jones Morais did field research in Willowra, Northern Territory, Australia where she did a study of Warlpiri women’s dance. Morais too had to rely on translators to communicate with Warlpiri women about their dances (Morais, 1992). In Morais’s case, the selection of a translator was based not only on the fact that she was unable to speak Warlpiri but also on ‘cultural’ factors related to local customs. These included such issues as: gender—only females are permitted to speak about female dances, the age of the interpreter and her relationship to older women with whom Morais was working. Morais comments that these are important ‘cultural’ factors specific to the Warlpiri (women) for imparting ritual knowledge. Morais had to be aware of and consider these in her interaction with Warlpiri women. Such factors have a bearing on the transcription of data (Morais, 1992). A further consideration in this ‘culturally’ specific situation is the status and level of understanding of the *translator* of the material she is translating. Morais noted,¹⁰

The documenter should be aware that the information provided about the dances may vary considerably, depending on such aspects as the status and level of understanding of both the documenter and the ‘teacher(s)’ (Morais, 1992, p. 140).

The Nama of the current study live in the villages of !Khubus, Eksteenfontein, and the Richtersveld region more generally and they speak Afrikaans or, in some cases, Nama only. Although I have a basic understanding of Afrikaans, I do not speak it well enough to communicate in it, and Nama is inaccessible in that it is not readily spoken or

taught outside of South Africa and Namibia. As a result of this handicap, someone else transcribed all of my interactions with Nama people. My translations are based on a collaborative approach. The information gathered has been filtered, at least three times: once through my interpreter, Dave Halkett, a white South African who is not a dance specialist but a highly skilled and experienced archaeologist who is knowledgeable of the Nama and their culture; information was then translated by Halkett from Afrikaans into English; it was then interpreted, yet again, by me. Further, at a later stage in the research, all interviews were translated once again by a black South African, Ralph Bouwers, who, though not Nama himself, had considerable knowledgeable of the Nama people and their customs.¹¹ This method of exchange is cumbersome, time consuming, and most certainly has a bearing on the analysis of the material under investigation (as noted below). My language limitation was taken into account prior to the start of fieldwork, and a strategy was developed to enable me to situate myself within this constraint.

An inability to communicate directly with consultants in a field situation is a disadvantage to the researcher, as all information must pass through a process similar to that described above. Such a handicap does not, for example, allow the researcher to develop professional and personal relationships directly. A prior awareness and understanding of the implications of this obstacle to my research motivated me to consider other means of communicating. Investigation around this issue began with research on how people communicate when they cannot verbalize. Many people who live with this disability choose to converse in sign language; this way of communicating is itself a language and, similar to spoken language, necessitates knowledge of the system by all participants. As noted previously, a large part of communication is non-verbal. This understanding prompted me to consider forms of communication other than verbal or sign language. My examination of this issue inspired me to conceive of spoken language as a ‘sense’.

Senses work in harmony with each other, and it is quite often the case that when one sense is diminished or lost others are heightened. The senses also behave in a way that is characteristic of reflexes; they respond in a flight or fight situation. I perceived my inability to communicate verbally in this way. My fieldwork was to take place in a foreign environment in which I would be unable to converse personally. My protective mechanisms, I reasoned, would engage and my senses would be in a state of heightened

sensitivity; it was part of my strategy to take advantage of this automatic response mechanism. Additionally, from a developmental point of view, we look and see long before we ‘speak and hear with understanding’ (Farrow, 2004, p. 13). Additionally, as a trained and experienced movement analyst, my visual—look and see sense—is highly tuned. My knowledge of these facts along with my skill as a professional observer, I thought, would provide some equilibrium to the absence of direct verbal communication.

The use of visual and sound recording equipment was carefully considered. All interactions, where possible, were to include both sound and visual documentation; this served two purposes. First, both mediums can be transcribed into written form and so provide a verbatim translation if necessary. Second, an analysis of the movement behaviour of the speaker can be used as part of the overall cultural analysis. A digital medium was chosen in order to enable the compilation of recordings to a multi-media format at a later stage in the research. Nine hours of digital medium was utilized during the course of exploratory field research. This includes three hours of interview footage, four hours interaction, one hour Nama Stap Dance event, and one-hour featuring Nama and San archaeological sites. This later part of the fieldwork, Nama and San sites, involved an exploration of Nama rock etchings, and San rock art and encampments situated in the Cederberg Mountains. Of particular interest were the San paintings that are thought to depict dancing. Although the San do not form part of this investigation, it should be noted that the San are a related Khoekhoen group and a comparison of Khoekhoen and San dancing may inform the analysis of Nama dancing.

Having no established contact within the community or knowledge of previous residential research in !Khubus, or even if researchers would be welcome, we decided to live outside of the village. The first fieldtrip was, fundamentally, exploratory in nature and, if appropriate and possible, we planned to lay a foundation for further residential work within the village. Based on these issues, we decided to live in the matjieshuis campsite adjacent to !Khubus. However, the campsite had not been completed by the time of our arrival and therefore we lived in a campsite located very near the Orange River and a twenty-minute drive to !Khubus.

3.1. Purpose of Field research

Alan Barnard refers to dancing in his text *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa A Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples* (1992) and summarises a number of dance events, ceremonies and rituals that include dancing. None of these, however, have been subject to systematic movement or dance analysis nor have they been perceived as cultural artefacts. He states, in fact, that many dances, as well as ceremonies that include it, disappeared before they could be studied systematically (Barnard, 1992, p. 185). The purpose of exploratory field research was to identify a Khoisan community that maintains dancing as part of its social structure and to lay a foundation for further study with such a community. These goals were to be achieved through an examination of the dances of a select group of Nama people who live in northern South Africa.

As explained in Chapter One, the Khoekhoen are the original people of southern Africa. Post apartheid reconstruction has demanded recognition of the social, political, and economic equality of all South Africans and as a result of such legislation, a programme of cultural revival has been introduced for indigenous communities. The programme includes a review of previous anthropological research of South Africa's indigenous peoples. Research, both traditional and contemporary, that focuses on the Khoisan peoples, especially that of the San, has been plentiful. Post apartheid inquiry has targeted the Khoekhoen and their descendants including the Cape Hottentots, Eastern Cape Hottentots, Korana (also known as !Kora), and Naman (Nama).

A survey of current Khoekhoen research revealed no systematic examination of the dancing of any Khoekhoen people. It was necessary as part of this fieldwork research to establish the concept of dancing as a subject for conceptual examination and to lay a foundation for further research dealing with dancing from such a perspective.

3.2. Research Method

Common to the discipline of anthropology, the cultural symbols, movement patterns, and rules of behaviour that govern groups of people are to be observed in their cultural environment in order to recognise, understand, and ultimately decipher them with any degree of sensitivity and accuracy. Fieldwork as a research methodology is, therefore, central to this study. This approach to the collection of raw data is an established practice in both traditional and contemporary anthropological inquiry.

Fundamentally, fieldwork is research that is conducted among a community of people for long periods of time. It is standard practice in anthropology and researchers are expected to ‘go to the field at least for initial dissertation research.’ This practice is seen to result in superior work (Barfield, 2000). This research does not involve long-term fieldwork but will, as Barfield has suggested, involve going to the field for initial dissertation research.

Knowledge acquired through ‘doing’ is distinct to that which is gained by ‘extension’. By ‘doing’ is meant the kind of understanding that takes place when one actively engages both physical/motor and mental processes. It is not possible, for example, to learn how to dance by reading a text or dance notation only; if this were the case, I could possibly accomplish the research objective of this work without leaving the library. It is certainly possible to learn *about* dancing from text based and visual sources. However, it is in the *doing*, the activity of dancing itself, or the reconstruction of the dance score, that the kind of understanding fundamental to this research takes place. Learning by extension, on the other hand, is knowledge gained by means other than physical engagement; it is primarily, though not exclusively, an intellectual process. Both approaches are reliable; one method is more appropriate given the nature of the research question. Preliminary investigation of the research issues under examination confirmed that superior work would best be accomplished through doing, through physical participation in the dancing and other life activities of the community. This approach can have numerous benefits.

By taking part in the daily life of the society the researcher contributes to its maintenance, provides members the opportunity to scrutinise her, and identify paths through which she can begin to understand structured movement systems that distinguish the community as a group. The community benefits from the practical contribution made by the researcher. The notion of contribution is an outgrowth of contemporary anthropological thought. Today, field-researchers must be prepared to contribute to the community in some way. Additionally, the researchers and her research are subject to scrutiny by the community (Seymour-Smith, 1986). Contributing to the life of the community became a major issue during the second stage of my fieldwork (See Chapter Four for a description of this). The active participation in the life of the society in this way enables members to live and work with the researcher. This has obvious advantages for the researcher in that members of the community are

more likely to engage with the researcher and her interest if residents perceive that the researcher is engaging as fully as possible in community life and also contributing to the needs of the community (Barfield, 2000). My experience of working with African People's Dance practitioners in the West, especially England, as well as field research in Ghana and South Africa supports this argument.

While working on a research project in London related to the documentation in Labanotation of African Peoples' Dance forms I attended a series of summer schools for practitioners organised by the Black Dance Development Trust.¹² My approach to the notation of the dances was to embody physically the movement—to participate actively in all the dance classes, workshops, and seminars, including those organised for musicians. After attending the summer school over a two-year period, the school's director, Ghanaian musician and dancer C.K. Ladzekpo, informed me of his thoughts regarding my research. He explained that he had some experience of working with notators—I was unaware of this. What had impressed him about my project, he stated, was its documentation process. Unlike other notators he had worked with, I had engaged with the movement *physically*. I had attempted to understand the dancing by 'doing' it. This, he said, was significant because it gave him the opportunity to monitor my perception of the material.

These observations were important to him because he could not read Labanotation, and my performance of the material gave him some idea of the depth of my understanding, what I was recording, and how I might be recording the dances. His observation of my physical practice enabled him to make pertinent comments that helped to clarify my perception and ultimately influence my analysis of the movement. Further, my willingness physically to (try to) do the dancing altered his thinking about notation in general. He agreed to assist me in whatever way possible to carry on with research in this area; this was a defining experience for my research. He had considerable influence nationally and internationally, and from that time onward, all doors, so to speak, were open for me to work with African Peoples' Dance practitioners in England, Ghana, Nigeria, and the United States. The crucial lesson here was that I had *physically* participated in the life of the dance community.

The method of participant observation or experiential learning enables the researcher to experience the movement physically and thus establishes a basis for kinaesthetic empathy (as described previously); this method lends itself to greater

understanding and is a foundation of empirical research.¹³

3.3 Ethnographic Exploration of the Nama of !Khubus Village

The account that follows takes the form of a micro ethnography: it is a description and preliminary analysis of the major events and experiences of the field research undertaken among the Nama people of !Khubus. It is intended to not only provide a documentation of work accomplished in the field, but to also give the reader a vicarious experience of life among the people who live in !Khubus Village.

Namaqualand

Namaqualand, located in northern South Africa, is the least populated region of South Africa due in large part to its harsh, desert-like climate and mountainous terrain. It is one of twenty areas which are known as reserves, coloured reserves, or coloured rural areas.

Reserves were officially established in the early part of the 1900s as permanent settlements for the indigenous peoples of



Map 2. Namaqualand

South Africa. Namaqualand, the largest reserve, includes Concordia, Komagga, Leliefontein, Richtersveld, and Steinkopf. The village of !Khubus is part of the Richtersveld reserve, where it lies in close proximity to the Richtersveld National Park.

The exact date of the establishment of !Khubus as a mission station is not known. The old mission church once the hub of daily activity, was built in 1893 and this structure is still used today and is likely to be declared a national monument. The village of !Khubus is but one village settlement that developed out of the missionary

crusades of the 19th century. These religious campaigns were characterised by power over and domination of the indigenous people who inhabited the area. For example,

The Dutch church required that its communicants be able to read...the only schools were those supported by the church, but the KhoiKhoi and San were not drawn into these. Burghership, and hence burgher rights, were available only to Christians. This exclusion also affected the way evidence before the courts were received, since non-Christians were supposed not to be bound, as Christians were, by the oath to tell the truth (Boonzaier et al, 1996, p.91).

Ironically, it was through the mission station system that what we know today as the national reserves system was established.

...in some parts of the Cape Colony descendants of the Khoikhoi had managed to retain their rights to the land...by recognising that missionaries could offer some protection from encroaching Boers, and Bastaards....The mission stations were recognised by the government of the Cape Colony by way of 'tickets of occupation' which gave the indigenous population some guarantee of permanent access to the land around such settlements (Boonzaier et al, 1996, p 123).

Although reserves are now independent of direct mission control, the influence of the missionary movement remains a clearly discernible thread in the fabric of daily life of the reserve community. The village of !Khubus is a model of such lingering authority.

!Khubus



The first image one sees on approaching !Khubus is its remarkable scenery. This tiny village nestles at the foot of an enormous mountain that separates it from the Richtersveld National Park on the opposite side.

Figure 1. !Khubus Village

The dwellings in the central square, !Khubus Museum, the old mission church, the new church, and the village school are whitewashed and stand out in harmonious contrast to

the swarthy mountains beyond. On one side of the mountain, lettered in white stone, is the word 'Khoboes'; similar bright white rocks spell 'Welkom' on a hillside near the entrance to, what appears to be, this picturesque village.¹⁴

The village of !Khubus seems, initially, to be a curious mix of old and new, traditional and contemporary. The village architecture is an example of this delicate balance. Each small house of two or three rooms is constructed of breeze-block and tin roof; tin walls divide interior rooms from each other, and all houses have access to electricity. Each is typically surrounded by a large yard in front and rear. The front yard of one home we visited was large enough to accommodate, perhaps, three 4x4 Jeep type vehicles. In the front or rear yard is likely to be found a matjieshuis; the traditional, domed shaped, mat huts home of the Khoekhoen. Nearly all of the residents of !Khubus have one of these structures, in various stages of construction, on their premises. It was not immediately evident, nor could I ascertain at this time, what purpose these 'garden' matjieshuis served. I did note, however, that as part of the Nama cultural revival programme a matjieshuis campsite provides accommodation for visitors to !Khubus. Perhaps these 'garden' huts are for use in the camp. Nearly all the rear yards contained a traditional Nama bread oven as well as a cooking area. The homes, I am told, are made possible through a government housing scheme that finances their construction.

Language is another area in which colonial, traditional and contemporary customs are striving to establish equilibrium. The new South Africa, the 'Rainbow Nation', has adopted eleven official languages: Afrikaans, English, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Ndebele, Siswati, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda, Xitsonga. !Khubus has an interesting language history. Afrikaans is the language used by Nama in the Richtersveld; Afrikaans became the official language of South Africa in 1925. It is used in the home, at school, in business, and socially. Nama people who are fifty years of age or older may, however, have retained the traditional Nama click language, and, in many cases, are able to speak a second 'African' language. English is not a language typically spoken among the Nama of !Khubus or its surrounding area. The acceptance of Afrikaans as its dominant speech is a familiar story.

Language in !Khubus, and in the Richtersveld more generally, is closely related to South Africa's political history, especially that of the apartheid period. Even the spelling of the word !Khubus is reflective of this divisive era. I noted, for example, three different spellings of the word !Khubus. According to local consultants, '!Khubus'

is the proper Nama spelling (and this is the one used throughout this work). Nama is referred to as a ‘family’ language. This means that older members of a family, and perhaps a few youth, speak it; none of these, however, are able to write in it. Even those who do speak Nama will not use it outside of the home. According to mature adults, in !Khubus, Afrikaans was, in their youth, the language of clergy, school, employment and government officials. The use of Nama was rigorously discouraged: school-aged children were punished physically and socially, and the few employment opportunities to be had favoured Afrikaans speakers. Previously, Nama marked a speaker as uneducated and therefore socially inept. To some extent, this sentiment lingers today. As noted by Sharp and Boonzaier,

From the nineteenth century onwards, people themselves suppressed the Nama Language in favour of Namaqualand’s lingua franca (Afrikaans), relinquished customs that were seen to be distinctively Nama, and sought to win acceptance as members of social categories that had higher status (Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994, p. 408).

The Khoisan Heritage Programme (KHP) was established as part of South Africa’s nation-wide cultural revitalisation campaign. The Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) and the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) manage KHP; this is but one such scheme managed by these agencies. In the case of !Khubus, one of the major cultural revival programmes is the re-establishment of the Nama language. The first Nama language teacher was appointed to teach Nama at Johan Hein Primary School in !Khubus; as well as the children of !Khubus, young people from the surrounding villages may also take part in these extra-curricular language lessons. In light of early Nama history in regard to language, the re-introduction of Nama in !Khubus is an interesting story as related by Carstens,

Prior to 1844 all mission work in Richtersveld was carried out by visiting missionaries from Steinkopf. But in this year, J.F. Hein, a ‘Baster-Hottentot’ from Wupperthal, was sent there as an evangelist... Both he and his wife spoke Nama; they lived simply, first in a mat-house and later in a crude, stone cottage. Hein devoted most of his time and energy to evangelisation although he did establish a small school in which he taught. The medium of instruction in both these institutions was Nama. In 1893 he was ordained and became the first non-European minister of the Rhenish Mission Society in South Africa (Carstens, 1966, p. 206).

Other revival initiatives sponsored by KHP include the establishment of a Nama dance

group in !Khubus directed by Mrs. Maria Farmer and a traditional Nama guitar group. The dance group and musicians have performed in Namibia, Turkey and the USA.

3.4. Cultural Consultant

Trans Hex Diamond Mine is in close proximity to the village of !Khubus. It is also situated on land traditionally inhabited by Khoekhoen. Khoekhoen presence on this land is substantiated by the fact that a number of Khoekhoen sites on Trans Hex property have been excavated and documented by archaeologists. As part of its Community Relations Programme, Trans Hex employs a Community Liaison Officer, Betty Niewoudt, who is responsible for facilitating dialogue between !Khubus and Trans Hex officials, advising !Khubus residents on social, economic and cultural issues, and raising funds for village projects—such as a trip by the children of !Khubus to perform the Nama Stap Dance in the United States. Betty Niewoudt was a key consultant as it was she who advised my guides that dancing did indeed exist among the Nama and could be observed in the village of !Khubus. She further advised that there was a dance person in the village—Maria Farmer. The word ‘stap’ in Afrikaans means ‘step’. The Nama Stap Dance is a dance in which the movement pattern known as the Nama Stap is featured. According to Mrs. Farmer, The Nama Stap Dance is the only ‘traditional’ Nama dance in existence today.

Maria Farmer was principal cultural consultant for my field research in !Khubus. She is what might be considered the village dance teacher or ‘dance person’. Members of the !Khubus community as well as persons outside of !Khubus supported my designation of Mrs. Farmer as having this role. Upon arrival in !Khubus, we stopped at the local shop. This was a large building that appeared to also function as a social gathering place. Introducing our interests and ourselves we inquired about dance activities in the village. We were advised that the ‘dance person’ (this was my interpretation of the description given us) was called Mrs. Farmer and we were also informed of a dance performance scheduled for that evening. We questioned other people concerning the dance performance and got slightly different information from each. Finally, we were directed to the home of one of the performers who informed us we would need to speak with Mrs. Maria Farmer, the ‘dance teacher’. It was apparent from the comments of village residents that Mrs. Farmer was the designated dance person. Mrs. Farmer was regarded far and wide, inside and outside of the village, as the

Nama Stap dance teacher in !Khubus.

3.5. The Nama Stap Dance

The ceremony described by Mrs. Farmer and that which is catalogued as women's puberty ceremony by Hoernlé and Hoff have similar themes: the initiation of a young female into full membership of a Nama community. The Farmer version detailed not only the purpose of this activity but also inventoried: who was involved in it, musical accompaniment, costumes, props, and make-up utilised. She also discussed the significance of these components. More crucial to this research, she mounted a physical reconstruction of the dancing which attended the ritual. Hoff, on the other hand, made no reference to dancing in his version of this rite of passage activity; of interest to the present discussion is the distinction between the Nama Stap Dance that is a re-enactment of the Nama female puberty ceremony that includes the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap as a distinctive movement pattern or motif.

3.6. The Nama Stap

I was introduced to the notion of the Nama Stap as a discrete movement pattern not

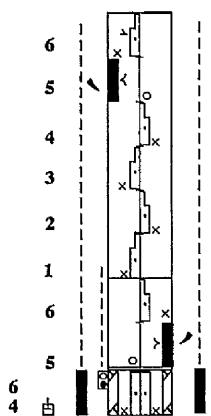


Figure 2. Nama Stap:
Betty Niewoudt

by Mrs. Farmer—she did not mention this important point in our first interview—but by Betty Niewoudt who physically demonstrated it. My first meeting with Betty was after the Nama Stap Dance event of June 2001, when she inquired about my response to the performance; she had been involved in organising the event and was interested in feedback about the activity. I asked her why something that appeared to be a ceremony was classified as a dance. My thought was that, perhaps, my understanding of what dance, dancing, or a dance was, might be different to that of the Nama—not so. Betty explained that

The Nama Stap was actually the *footwork*; it was the rhythmic, sliding, gliding pattern made by the feet. She then demonstrated her version of it (Figure 2). I had indeed noted the distinctive footwork and thought that it reminded me of the dance known as the South African Gum Boot Dance. Betty's version (of the Nama Stap) appeared to be a simplified, stamping version of that which I had observed and had filmed the previous evening.

3.7. The Nama Female Rite of Passage Ceremony

The female rite of passage or puberty ceremony of the Nama is documented in versions by noted anthropologists such as Hoernlé, Hoff, Schapera and Carstens. Three different accounts of the ceremony by three different authors—Hoernlé, Hoff, and Farmer (et al)—have been reproduced here. The first of these is the 1918 account by Hoernlé noted in the introduction to this work. This lengthy version has been presented in its entirety as it is among the first to record the ceremony in detail and is the version consulted by subsequent authors writing on this topic. Further, Hoernlé carefully notes those elements that she found to be common among all ‘Hottentot’ transition rites and these will be used as a base of comparison between the versions listed here. The Hoff version has been used to illustrate a later interpretation to that of Hoernlé, and the Farmer (et al) version represents a contemporary perspective on the subject.

3.8. Puberty Ceremonies Among Women

Hoernlé gathered information concerning ‘Hottentot’ transition rites over a two-year period, 1912 and 1913. She conducted field research in three different ‘Hottentot’ communities including Little Namaqua, the ancestors of the people who are the subject of this research, the ≠Aunin or Topnaars of Walfish Bay, and the /Hei /Khauan in Berseba (German South West Africa, now Namibia). Already at the time of her research Hoernlé found the traditional customs of the ‘Hottentots’ disappearing,

The Hottentots are now a passing people, who have practically given up the struggle of keeping alive their own traditions. What vitality is left is spent in the absorption of the ways of the incoming Europeans. One has, therefore, to be content with what remnants of their former customs and beliefs one can still gather from them (Hoernlé, 1918, p. 66).

Hoernlé did not actually witness female puberty transition rites, as she comments,

It was only by reviving long forgotten memories among the oldest of the men and women that I could gather up many of the customs of the past. One of my best informers, a woman, reproached me bitterly for encouraging her to think of things she has spent half her life in trying to forget: “You have made me live the old life once more; soon you will be going, and what shall I do then?” (Hoernlé, 1918, p. 66).

Hoernlé is clear, however, that at the time of her research the four transition rites that she recorded—puberty ceremonies among women, remarriage ceremonies, treatment of

certain diseases, and the purification of the survivors after a death—are ‘practiced even now among the people visited, though sometimes in a simplified form owing to the great poverty which prevails’ (Hoernlé, 1918, p. 66).

Hoernlé’s rendering of the puberty ceremonies appears to have been transcribed from information gathered largely from a variety of ‘informants’, and she arranged for the ‘whole proceeding [to be] enacted’ (Hoernlé, 1918, p. 70). This earliest of versions by Hoernlé is quite detailed and provides insight into numerous customs, rites, taboos (!nau), and family organisation of the historical ‘Hottentot’. It also references dancing, especially the reed dance. According to anthropologist H. Vedder,

The Christians [converted Khoekhoen] like sitting round the fire at night untiringly singing their songs and hymns. They still take great pleasure in the Reed-dance on bright moonlight nights. On such occasions the men provide music by means of flutes made of reeds and the women and girls perform old national dances, clapping their hands, singing, and stamping with their feet (Vedder, 1928, p. 137-138).

The reed dance has been noted by music scholar Percival Kirby in his collection ‘The Reed-Flute Ensembles of South Africa: A Study in South African Native Music’ (1933); a comparison between the Reed-dance and the Nama Stap dance is presented in Chapter Seven.¹⁵ Clearly, dancing was a part of the ceremony recorded by Hoernlé, an activity not found in the Hoff version.

3.9. Hoff Version of the Nama Female Puberty Ceremony

The initiate was secluded, at her first period, in a special hut called the *kharu-oms*. She was attended by an elderly woman who had borne many children. This woman, the *aba tará* or *kai tarás*, carried the girl so that her feet did not touch the ground. The girl stayed in seclusion for anything from two or three days to a month. All her near relatives took part in hunting on her behalf, and only female animals could be killed. The girl ate well and got plenty of milk to drink, but she was forbidden to touch cold water, the most ritually dangerous substance known to the Nama. Towards the end of her seclusion, she was ‘cleansed’ head to toe in wet cow dung. She was dressed in fine clothes, her face was painted, and she was loaded with presents by her friends and relatives. Then the boys, up to the age of sixteen or more, eagerly entered her hut. She dabbed the testicles of each one with buchu, in order to prevent the acquisition of sexual disease or misfortune which might be caused by food prepared for the girl’s feast, which then followed. Elements of this ceremony are still in practice today in some Nama areas (Hoff, cited in Barnard, 1992, p. 185).

Notably, Hoff does not mention dancing of any kind; a fuller analysis of this version

follows below.

3.10. Farmer (et al) Version of the Nama Female Puberty Ceremony

The following sketch of the Nama Female Puberty Ceremony is an amalgamation of the account of the ritual narrated by Maria Farmer in a series of interviews and in her introductory and concluding remarks at the performance of June 2001. The description also encompasses the comments of Ouma Hannis and Willem De Wet made at the same performance. Additionally, the remarks of Avron Thomas, principal of the village school, influence this telling of the ceremony. As these accounts are consistent with each other, they have been organised under a single description:

Having experienced the ceremony as young women, Aunty Maria and Ouma Hannis have a bodily memory of the rite. They, along with other mature women of !Khulus, who may or may not have experienced this initiation rite, now re-enact it as the Nama Stap Dance, mainly, in a performance context. It is unlikely that the ceremony described by (especially) Hoernlé, Hoff, or Farmer exists today.

Previously, according to consultants, only adults were involved in the activities surrounding the ritual. Children and young people were able to observe, but had to be of an appropriate age (teen aged) to participate; even then, a certain level of confidence was needed to become involved in the events surrounding the ritual.

In the past, this 1940s version of the Nama female puberty ceremony was more than a music and dance performance. It, like the Hoernlé version, was meant to mark the transition from child to adult; girl to woman; and signalled the onset of male attention. The ritual was a period of consolidation of tribal values and final preparation for life as an adult Nama female. This period of seclusion from other members of the community was viewed as an emotional as well as historic time. The ritual was seen as a guarantee that she, the initiate, will be able to cope with adult life; that she will have power and control of her own life; and that there are structures that will support her in her life as an adult, her 'Ouma' or life mentor (usually an aunt or grandmother) will now play a major role in her life. It is the duty of Ouma, for example, to protect and to help her find the right partner in life. A prospective husband, for example, will speak to Ouma in this regard and not necessarily the parents or the girl.

The ritual begins the first time you become a women in terms of your body...when you see the 'red flag'...your first period. When a girl gets her first period, she may consult, first, a friend and then her mother; the mother will then go to the aunt or Ouma. The mother will organise the ceremonial women. These will include family, neighbours, and prominent figures in the community; these ceremonial women will cover her face and escort her into the hut. The initiate must be separated from other members of the community as the first menstrual cycle is thought to be very powerful; if this powerful energy is not contained, the initiate might draw yet more power from nature and this deficit would cause it to wither and perhaps die. She will be in the hut approximately fourteen days.

During the period of seclusion, a goat is slaughtered; the remains are prepared in such a way that the pelvis must not be broken or should be broken in a particular

fashion. This is done to help prevent lower back pain during the menstrual cycle. Further, if a menstruating female is experiencing low back pain, she should not eat at the same table as others. This, again, has to do with 'female energy' as perceived by the menstrual cycle and the transference of this powerful energy. Additionally, small boys should not eat the meat of the goat during the celebrations; if they do they must be protected by rubbing a specially prepared powder on their private parts (sex organ).

The period of confinement is a mental, emotional, and physical preparation for adult life. During this time, the initiate eats more than usual and is groomed...her face is painted; she is made ready for the eye of a man. Should she need to leave the hut, to use the toilet for example, she must use the rear opening, be covered with a blanket and someone must lead/guide her from the hut.

There is a sense of excitement prior to her presentation into the community; the women hammer on the hut in anticipation of her appearance. When she emerges from the hut there is great competition to dance with her; this is the moment she has been prepared for; she will still have something over her head such as a blanket or a veil and her clothing will be representative of Nama values—knees covered. Her eyes are veiled, therefore, she can see nothing; she can only hear the music. Everyone knows what is going on except her. She is ready to be delivered into the adult life of the village.

Once the first man touches her, the veil is removed; this uncovering is in the nature of a presentation; her introduction into adult society; she is a virgin and is now old enough for marriage. Following her unveiling, men may dance with her. She will remain in the hut one final night. The following morning, she will take the branch of a tree and a quantity of powder to the water's edge (river, stream, lake); there she will splash the water with the branch in order to wet her face; she will then immerse herself in the water. This will mark the end of the ritual, and she will return to the community to assume her duties as an adult female.

Today, according to consultants, some of the young people of the village have gone through a ceremony or rite of passage at key periods of their life, such as twenty-first birthday celebrations or graduation from the local school; the ritual, as described by Hoernlé, Hoff and Farmer, however, has died; other contemporary influences, it is said, are too strong; no one is interested; the young girls too modern. By the late 1990s (according to consultants) nearly all historic Nama culture had disappeared. Ironically, it was this sense of loss and of things changing beyond recognition (or control) as well as a desire to 'keep the female rite of passage ceremony as it should be' that sparked the organisation of a group of mature women to address this fading aspect of Nama female life. In so doing, they maintained the fundamental principles of the ceremony and featured the dancing; they used this new version, the Nama Stap Dance, to augment other social ceremonies and activities such as birthdays, weddings, funerals, and more recently tourist activities. Thus the mature women of !Khubus have through the invention (or intervention) of the Nama Stap Dance kept alive the fundamental purpose and principles of the Nama female rite of passage tradition; a fuller discussion of this version is presented in Chapter Five.

3.11. Comparison of Descriptions

The table below is introduced at this stage in order to provide evidence that the ceremony described, and the dance based on it, by Farmer and others appears to be closely related to the traditional Nama puberty ceremony previously recorded by established anthropologists, and that the ceremony does still exist in some form today. It also begins to note and catalogue similarities and differences between these versions. It would appear that the three versions are similar enough to be close interpretations of the same ceremony. My evaluation is founded on Hoernlé's suggestion that all Hottentot transition rites share three common characteristics. These are the separation of the person from their usual surrounding, preparation for entry into a new group in society, and reception into the new group (Hoernlé, 1918, p 67). In addition to these, I have also featured rites and preparations as well as taboos or !nau. First, the Hoff version will be examined in relation to that of Hoernlé (Figure 3), and then the Farmer version is detailed in relation to that of Hoernlé's (Figure 4).

Preliminary Comparison of Descriptions	
Points Addressed by All Three Authors	Points Not Addressed by Hoff
All share the same theme: The transitions from child to adult women as marked by the onset of the menstrual cycle.	
Separation from Usual Surroundings	
Female is secluded at her first menstrual cycle.	
Length of time in hut varies.	
Preparation for Entry into New Group in Society	
Girl was taken care of during this period by an elder female.	
Relatives took responsibility for her duties (hunting, etc.) in the community.	
Initiate ate well while in the hut and drank plenty of milk.	
	Hoff does not mention the various actives that go on in the hut such as not speaking above a whisper; grinding of powder; preparation of the reed dance by youth.
Reception into the New Group	
Initiate is cleansed before leaving the hut.	
On leaving the hut initiate wore fine clothes, her face was painted and she was given presents	
	Hoff does not mention reed dance; or dancing activities.
	Hoff does not mention festivities surrounding reception into new group.
Rites and Preparations	
Food preparations for final celebration.	
Cleansing with cow dung.	
Dabbing of testicles of young boys.	
Architecture of the hut.	Hoff mentions very few rites or preparations; does not mention, for example: milking cow, ewe at end of ceremony, purification of hut, etc.
Taboo or !Nau	
Drinking cold water.	
Carrying the girl in order that her feet do not touch the ground.	
Killing of female animals.	
	Hoff does not mention fire restrictions.

Figure 3. Preliminary Comparison of Descriptions

These two versions are very similar; this is not unexpected as Hoff based his version on Hoernlé's 1918 description. Hoff's version is, however, a synopsis of Hoernlé's detailed report. Although he addresses the three common characteristics of all Hottentot rites of passage as distinguished by Hoernlé, he does not mention dancing. Both Hoernlé and Farmer record dance activity. Hoernlé specifically names the reed dance; this aspect of the ceremony is, obviously, important to this research. The exclusion of dancing is

noted here to highlight two issues: to query the exclusion of dancing in historical, ethnographic, and anthropological research concerning the Nama, and the perspective of, especially, early ethnographers and anthropologists regarding dancing as a structured movement systems and not simply a social activity of limited significance.¹⁶

The following detailed chart (Figure 4) compares the descriptions of Hoernlé and Farmer; these two interpretations, like Hoernlé and Hoff, are similar. However, while Hoernlé relied on cultural ‘informants’ for her description, Farmer experienced the ceremony as a young woman and based the contemporary adaptation, the Nama Stap Dance, on this memory of a traditional Nama female puberty rite.

Comparison of Hoernlé and Farmer Versions	
Hoernlé	Farmer
Experience of the Ceremony	
Hoernlé relied upon ‘informants’; may not have witnessed the ceremony herself.	Farmer, and other mature women in !Khubus, has bodily experience of the ceremony/dance.
Prior to entering the Kharú Oms.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frightened by first period; often cry. Tells either girl friends or some older women of the clan; this is often the father’s eldest brother’s wife. This intermediary tells the girls mother. Mother gets her married sisters and her brothers’ wives to make little enclosure in the least regarded part of the hut. Hut must have opening at back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tells her friends and/or other females in the community; then her mother. The mother goes to the aunt...Ouma. The mother will organise the ceremonial women. These will include family, neighbours, and prominent figures in the community;
The Abá Tarás	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother gets a woman past childbearing age who is renowned for her former fertility; she is called the <i>abá tarás</i>. She will care for the young girl while she is confined to the hut. The initiate’s feet must not touch the earth; <i>abá tarás</i> carries the initiate on her back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Mrs. Farmer’s time, family, friends, and prominent people of the community were involved; now only mature women of the village take an active role in the ceremony/dance. These ceremonial women, including Ouma, will cover her face and escort her into the hut.

Figure 4. Comparison of Hoernlé and Farmer Versions

Separation from Usual Surroundings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the hut the initiate is seated on a skin blanket & also wrapped in skins. • Older girl friends may visit her. • They grind bark, roots or leaves to make power. • The initiate and her friends sit in the kharú óms, drinking plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can. • She must not speak above a whisper. • She must not leave the hut except at night by the back opening. • On leaving the hut, one woman is behind and one in front of her, to screen her from view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this powerful female energy is not contained it is thought that the initiate might draw yet more power from nature and this deficit would cause it to wither and perhaps die. She will be in the hut approximately fourteen days. • Highlights the support structures available to her in adult life. • Explains the role of Ouma in the future life of the initiate. • Stress the emotional aspects of the ceremony/dance. • Only adults involved; children are not included. • The period of confinement is a mental, emotional, and physical preparation for adult life.
Preparation for Entry into a New Group in Society	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the girl's seclusion draws to a close young people of the village begin practising the reed dance. • The girl's friends, both male and female, play and dance round the hut in which she is confined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a sense of excitement prior to her presentation (back) into the community; the women hammer on the hut in anticipation of her appearance. • The 'reed dance' is not mentioned in the Farmer version.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The day before she is to come out a long series of purification rites takes place. • She is cleansed with moist cow dung to clean off all the "boy dirt". • She is then given a complete new set of clothing. • An ewe is slaughtered, and one of the hind legs is given to the abá tarás. • She cooks this on the fire in the house. • "Now the house is free so that anyone can come in." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the period of seclusion, a goat is slaughtered. • The remains are prepared in such a way that the pelvis must not be broken or should be broken in a particular fashion. • This is done to help prevent lower back pain during the menstrual cycle. • Further, if a menstruating female is experiencing low back pain, she should not eat at the same table as others. • This, again, has to do with 'female energy' as perceived by the menstrual cycle and the transference of this powerful energy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The little boys, even up to sixteen years and more, enter the hut. • She takes her... "powder puff" full of sáp and rubs their testicles. • The feasting reaches its climax on this day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small boys should not eat the meat of the goat during the celebrations. • If they do, they must be protected by rubbing a specially prepared powder on their private parts (sex organs).

Figure 4. Comparison of Hoernlé and Farmer Versions

Reception into the New Group	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards evening the girl's friends enter the hut to fetch her out. • She must leave the hut by the special door at the back. • The youth start the reed dance, and the girls dance round them with the ūaxais in their midst. • In the Hottentot dances the men form the inner ring, the women the outer one. • Every now and then there is a change of partners • During the dancing the ūaxais throws sāp over the men and boys as she sees them. • The dancing last often right through the night. • She will remain in the hut one final night. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When she emerges from the hut there is great competition to dance with her. • She will still have something over her head such as a blanket or a veil and her clothing will be representative of Nama values—knees covered. • Once the first man touches her, the veil is removed. • Following her unveiling, men may dance with her. <p>• She will remain in the hut one final night</p>
Final Rites and (Re)Entry to community	
<p>The abá tarás must accompany the ūaxais on the final round of rites...friends may go too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, a visit is paid to the cattle kraal where sāp is strewn on all the male animals and on the trees and bushes which they pass by. • Then a cow is milked with the help of the old woman • The girl can now resume her milking duties with impunity. 	<p>The milking of a cow is not mentioned in the Farmer version</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next a visit is made to the spring. • The woman strikes the water with a tree branch, scattering it over the girl. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She then rubs the girl's legs and arms with clay, fills the pot, and places it on the girl's head. • The girl is then free to draw water as she pleases. 	<p>The rubbing of the girl's legs and arms is not mentioned in the Farmer version</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the relatives appear for the feast at the end of the seclusion, her nearest male relative (usually the eldest unmarried cousin) takes the fat of the heifer which has been killed, hangs it over her head, and wishes that she may be as fruitful as a young cow and have many children. • The other friends repeat the wish. 	<p>The 'toast' is not mentioned in the Farmer version</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The girls who have come of age must after the festival run about in the first thunderstorm quite naked, so that the rain pours down and washes the whole body. 	<p>The 'first thunderstorm activity' is not mentioned in the Farmer version</p>

Figure 4. Comparison of Hoernlé and Farmer Versions

Rites and Preparations	
The day before she is to come out a long series of purification rites takes place; these have been noted above.	This is not mentioned in the Farmer Version.
The abá tarás purifies the hut; these have been noted above.	This is not mentioned in the Farmer Version.
The kharú ≠ap is the great feats for women; all who have already passed through these ceremonies being able to take part in it. No man or boy is allowed to have any share in it at all.	There is a feast mentioned in the Farmer version; it is similar to that mentioned by Hoernlé
The final round of rites that reintroduce the girl to her daily tasks, freeing her, as it were, from the spell under which she has been living; these have been noted above.	The splashing of the water is mentioned by Farmer; milking of the cow and rain activity is not mentioned.
Taboo or !Nau	
The initiate must be careful not to touch cold water on any pretence whatever.	
Highlights the power of the menstrual cycle; the power of 'female energy'.	
The initiate's feet must not touch the earth.	
She must not leave the hut except at night by the back opening.	
She must be covered and accompanied by two post-menopausal women.	
Everything killed must be female.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fire, which is always made in the centre of, the hut...is !nau and nothing must be cooked at the fire at all. No pregnant or menstruating or sterile woman must come and sit by the fire, The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut, The abá tarás share must always be part of the outer flesh; she may eat it inside the hut. Any relative must not on any account eat the entrails. 	These are not mentioned in the Farmer version.
Goats were not used during Hoernlé's period of research.	The use of a goat; how it is to be slaughtered and its symbolism.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the power of the first cycle, the wind must not blow on her. She must not speak above a whisper. 	These are not mentioned in the Farmer version.
These are not mentioned in the Hoernlé version.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hammer on hut in excitement. Veil is removed when the first man touches her
The kharú ≠ap is the great feats for women; all who have already passed through these ceremonies being able to take part in it. No man or boy is allowed to have any share in it at all	Ceremony ends when she bathes in the water.
When men are giving account of this puberty ceremony, the chief thing they lay stress on is...the milk obtained from the first milking by the girl who has just come out of the kharú óms.	Men no longer involved; except as musicians.
Should anyone infringe any of the !nau injunctions during these puberty rites, some sort of sexual disease would beset him, and this could only be prevented from proving fatal, if he were able to persuade the abá tarás to inoculate and so free him.	This is not mentioned in the Farmer version.
<p>Neither the ceremony described by Hoernlé nor Farmer is done today.</p> <p>The Nama Stap Dance is a re-enactment of these.</p> <p>The Nama Stap Dance is used to accompany other celebrations such as birthdays and is now more frequently performed as a tourist attraction.</p>	

Figure 4. Comparison of Hoernlé and Farmer Versions

Clearly, these two versions are related in structure and describe the same Nama ceremony. Although the ceremony is not observed today, it is striking how many of the elements of the Hoernlé version can be identified in a 21st century version—the Nama Stap Dance.

3.12. Documentation of a Nama Stap Dance Performance

My initial contact with the Nama Stap Dance was second-hand. A verbal account of it was related to me by my guide and interpreter David Halkett who had translated it from Afrikaans into English; Maria Farmer told it to him during our first interview session. The dance was explained to me some hours later prior to my first viewing of it. I found the description fascinating as well as puzzling. My fascination lay in the account of the dance ceremony itself—its purpose, the participants, costumes, props, make-up, and so on. Each element was spelled-out in detail: where and how items were traditionally obtained; who prepared them; how each was utilised; why each was used; the function of each. Farmer's attention to such details of the dance was an indication, I thought, of her intimate knowledge of it. She was, for example, able to describe how the pelvis of the goat used in the ceremony should be prepared and why the procedure was necessary; she had the pelvis of a goat in her possession, and demonstrated this procedure for us. Her knowledge of and skill in preparing the necessary materials and her intimate engagement with the dance lead me to think that these elements might be symbolic and hold particular meaning for the Nama (of !Khubus). But, I was also baffled.

Her account did not address the movement aspects of the dance. In this regard Farmer mentioned only the fact that it was a partner dance. Beyond that point there was no indication of the type of movements involved, how the actions were transmitted, who taught the dance, what training was necessary, or the musical accompaniment. The lack of information concerning the movement itself seemed extraordinary given the fact that Farmer had performed the dance herself as a young woman, was a dance teacher, and the amount of detail she was able to supply regarding other elements of it. There was very little in her description of the Nama Stap Dance that prepared me for what I observed during the actual performance of it. It should be noted, however, that at this stage of the research, I had no knowledge of the Nama Stap Dance or of Nama female puberty rites as described above.

The dancing I witnessed in the tiny South African village of !Khubus left me confused. What I saw, I thought, bore no relation to 'African' dance as I understood and had experienced it in the West and more recently in the villages of Ghana, West Africa. On first sight, the dancing appeared to be closely related to what is thought of as Social Dance in a European or western context. The presentation could have, with more preparation on the part of the performers, taken place, I felt, in almost any social dance space in Europe or North America without much question. The legacy of European domination was most pronounced in the use of the upper body and arms; the vertical stress of the torso and partnered turning patterns reminded me of western social dance such as American Square Dance; and the patch-work style costumes were of European influence. The music and the use of an electronic keyboard were also a manifestation of western contact.

The music was an interesting mix of folk and popular forms in 3/4 metre. The basic melody was played on an electronic keyboard into which other instruments had been programmed. The melodic pattern was played at a moderate tempo and, once established, was repeated in cyclical form. The mood of the music was light and happy; it created a festive atmosphere. I later learned that this music was not that which typically accompanies the dance; the actual music is 'traditional Nama music' that is played on guitar. The usual musicians were not available during the time of my visit; I am, therefore, unable to give any critical information concerning it at this stage. However, Mrs. Farmer clearly stated, in response to my direct question concerning them, that at no time were drums used to accompany the dance.

The most compelling aspect of the Nama Stap Dance and that which blended harmoniously with my preconceived concept of 'African' dance, was the pattern known as the Nama Stap. This movement involved the body from the pelvis through the feet or, in LMA terms, a division that separates the upper part of the body from the lower part. The Nama Stap, as its name implies, is a movement pattern that is primarily performed with the feet. The equilibrium between three movement elements provides the sequence with its distinctive character: the nature of the steps used, the rhythmic pattern of the feet, and rhythmic development or rhythmic improvisation.

The basic stepping pattern is percussive and composed of a series of sliding-gliding steps that skim along the floor progressing either forward in space or remaining on the spot in Place.¹⁷ The feet mark a simple rhythm pattern that starts on an up-beat. These

actions are repeated until, at the discretion of the performer, the stepping and rhythm pattern progressively develop into a more elaborate sequence both in stepping action and rhythmic complexity. These features led me to consider the possibility that the movement vocabulary of the Nama Stap Dance might typify two systems and thus be a dynamic visual representation of two cultural influences, perhaps Nama and Dutch. The upper body seemed to echo the influence of the Dutch settlers while the lower body, primarily the footwork, retained more of the Nama tradition.

These movement patterns were not unfamiliar to me. I observed that they were similar to those of the South African Gum Boot Dance. Structurally, these two dances share similar footwork, improvisational rhythm development, and the use of guitar accompaniment.¹⁸

3.13. Nama Stap Dance Performance - An Ethnographic Account

What follows is an ethnographic account of the dance event that I witnessed in the village of !Khubus, South Africa, in June 2001. The description attempts to paint a portrait of the event in dynamic context and, in a phenomenological sense, attempts to records my 'first' impressions of the dance without 'bias and preconceptions.'¹⁹ In so doing, I have made no comments within the text itself; these follow the description of the dance event.

You will find few streetlights, footpaths, or finished roads in the village of !Khubus. There are no nightclubs, pubs, supermarkets, cinemas, or theatres. There is no police station in or near the village. There is an old building which serves as a kind of youth centre and a local shop. Children and goats roam the village freely. Each home is surrounded by a spacious tract in front and rear, and each is set apart by fencing. People still leave the village in search of wood to kindle the Nama bread oven found at the rear of nearly every home. These are a few of the features of !Khubus that I noted on this first visit to the village.

The dance activities began in the early evening in the front yard of the home of one of the performers. A single pole-type lamp poured light onto the front steps where the speaker for the evening stood. The remainder of the yard, including the performance area, was in shadow. The dance event was in full swing when we arrived on the scene.

A matjieshuis occupied one corner (Figure 5). The area left of the matjieshuis and

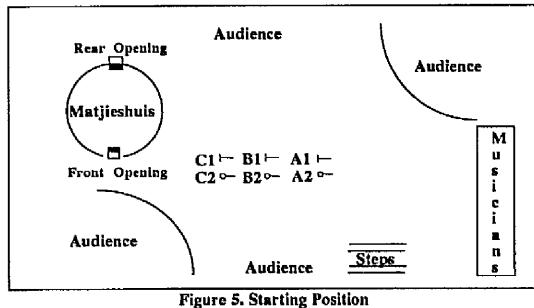


Figure 5. Starting Position

continuing fully around the periphery of the space was active. Downstage right of the matjieshuis were about half a dozen chairs intended for us and other guests from the Richtersveld National Park; these were the people for whom the festivities had been

arranged.²⁰ There was much laughing and talking among this group that also included people from the village. To the right of the seating area were the front steps of the house, and next to these an electric keyboard. This area was thumping with the sound of music and the voices of young men. Completing the circle around to the front of the matjieshuis was another group of people. Here were men, women, and children moving, dancing, laughing, and talking with each other or dancing alone. The central area, the dancing space, remained relatively clear. The mood was festive, and people seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Our host for the evening was Willem De Wet, one of the organisers of the event, a member of the !Khubus community, and a park ranger. Speaking in Afrikaans, our host acknowledged and welcomed visitors to !Khubus and also announced our presence. He gave a brief introduction of the Nama Stap Dance and of the women taking part in the performance. Sitting in front of the matjieshuis, the finer points of the dance were further explained by the performers themselves.²¹

The dance company was composed of seven mature Nama women. The experience of the women struck me as curious. The dance, I had been told, was a contemporary interpretation of a rite of passage ceremony intended for a young female to mark the on-set of her first menstrual cycle. I noted younger women in the audience, so wondered why they were not involved in the performance. The group was costumed in floor length full skirts and long sleeved blouses; they also wore a variety of accessories. Mrs. Farmer was wrapped in a short shawl, another wore a cardigan, and the other two wore waistcoats. The costumes were of patchwork design in blocks of solid colours, flower prints, and geometric shapes. Patchwork design, I had observed, was a theme in the village. The heads of the dancers were covered in either a scarf or head wrap (*doek*). They wore soft-soled shoes of various types. After another brief prologue the dance ceremony began.

As the introductory bars of music started, the dancers casually formed a line of three pairs near the opening of the matjieshuis while the seventh dancer had unobtrusively entered the hut by the rear opening (Figure 5). The observers either stood around the edges of the space or took seats on the ground, benches, steps, or around the matjieshuis. After a short stepping progression forward, the first theme of the dance was displayed.

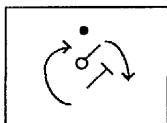


Figure 6.
Clockwise
Circular Path

Each pair of dancers made a full clockwise circular path around each other as the arms of each circled, embraced, and slid along the torso of her partner (Figure 6). This intricate inter-twining action was performed along a counter-clockwise oblong or circular-type path. Holding hands, gliding, shuffling steps defined the next segment of the unbroken counter-clockwise path. It was not possible to distinguish the rhythm for this stepping action, as the dancers did not seem to be co-ordinated in regard to timing. Each appeared to be dancing to a different beat; perhaps this is the nature of the movement. Roughly, three-quarters of the way around the circle the dancers shuffled backwards (Figure 7). This means they were then moving backwards on a clockwise circular path. This seemed to help the dancers re-organise themselves rhythmically and spatially. This collection of basic actions—progressing forward, turning around each other, and retreating—were then repeated to bring the dancers approximately three quarters of the way around the circle once again. Upon completing the second circle the first pair and second pair of dancers exchange places and the circle was repeated a third time. This circuit, however, was slightly changed from the others.

Spatially, the curved shape of the path gradually expanded to take the form of an outward spiral that aimed towards the rear of the matjieshuis. The turning of the dancers around each other also changed. This was a change in attitude rather than of movement pattern itself; each pair of dancers seemed to perform the pattern at will. This resulted in a succession of turns along a spiralling path. The visual and dynamic effect was a progression of seemingly endless spinning towards the black space at the rear of the matjieshuis into which the group disappeared.

Still moving in pairs, the dancers continued their counter-clockwise dance around the hut. As they approached the front opening of it, they gathered together, peered inside and hammered on its walls. Getting no response, they danced their way

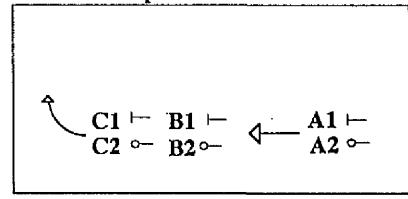


Figure 7. Clockwise Circular Path

around the hut once again. When they reappeared along the right side of the matjieshut there appeared a new member of the group. Although she was dressed much like the others, her elaborately painted face singled her out from the rest. She became the focus of attention of both dancers and observers. With her appearance, the mood of the performance was lifted to a light gay tone. As they continued their progression around the matjieshuis yet again, the dancers took it in turn to spin or turn with the new comer. When all who wanted to had danced with her, the ceremony ended. The dance event, however, was not quite complete.

The ceremony was immediately followed by a discussion of it. Though Mr. De Wet hosted this part of the evening, the performers were very much in charge. They answered questions and responded to comments regarding the dance and their performance of it. The final portion of the evening was given over to social dancing. This part gave the performers, villagers, and visitors the opportunity to meet, chat, and dance with each other. It was also a chance to have a go at learning the Nama Stap from the performers themselves. Everyone—young, old, men and women—joined in this informal dance lesson. The evening finished on a high note with everyone up on their feet and Nama Stepping to a pop-type dance beat coming from the electric keyboard.

3.14. Impressions of Nama Stap Dance Performance

The Nama Stap Dance that I viewed was organised not as a rite of passage ceremony but a performance event based on that ceremony. It was sponsored, planned, and hosted by the Richtersveld National Park and Trans Hex Diamond Mine. This fact alone alters both the performer and observer's perception of it. In view of the aims of this research, the progression of the Nama Stap Dance from ritual to theatre raises a number of significant issues, some of which are highlighted.

Ritual or Theatre

Based on the performance that I observed in !Khubus, it would appear that the purpose of the Nama Stap Dance has changed dramatically. The issue is not the fact of change itself, as this is part of the dynamic progression of living societies, but of how a change of intention may alter the viewer's understanding and thus analysis of the event. For example, what is the viewer actually observing—a reconstruction of a ritual or a theatrical performance of it? If one views the dance as theatre rather than reconstruction of a ritual practice, does one take into account such issues as choreographic merit,

technical ability of the dancers, and elements such as music, lighting, staging, and costumes? What alterations have been made for artistic purpose in its transition from ritual to theatre? What effect does the development of it into a theatre form have on symbolism? Also, how does the performer perceive of it—as theatre or ritual? These questions cannot be treated in isolation (cf. Harper and Àjàyì in Chapter Two of this work for a discussion of factors relating to change from ‘ethnic’ to theatre dance form).

The concept of cultural revitalisation is prominent in post apartheid political and economic reconstruction in South Africa. My experience of the regeneration of Nama culture is that it is linked as much to commerce as to the repair of damage inflicted on indigenous peoples by a brutal apartheid regime (cf. Witz et al, 2001). Maria Farmer first suggested the linking of culture to commerce when she expressed dissatisfaction with the matjieshuis cultural revival programme. The matjieshuis programme was set up to re-establish the knowledge and craft of matjieshuis construction. Mrs. Farmer, who declined to have this portion of the interview recorded, was disturbed by what she felt was the highly commercial nature of this programme. She felt that the knowledge of the construction of the traditional hut was part of Nama cultural heritage and should not be so closely linked to commerce. She suggested that financial issues associated with the programme were causing tension within the !Khubus community. Other activities, I observed, also seemed to be motivated by economics. A search of the title ‘Nama’ on the internet reveals web sites for Eksteenfontein, Richtersveld, !Khubus, and Lekkersing along with other Nama related areas of South Africa. The entries for these are presented in the form of a sales pitch for Nama traditional culture. My experience of two of the villages listed, !Khubus and Eksteenfontein, hinted of the commodification of Nama culture.

On arrival in Eksteenfontein, for example, the first buildings we saw were the tourist and information office and one of two guesthouses; and in the process of construction was a matjieshuis village hotel for use by tourists. In conversation with the attendant staffing the tourist and information office, we learned that there was a government-sponsored training scheme for the development of tourism among indigenous groups; she herself was a student of one such scheme. When we inquired about dancing in Eksteenfontein, she informed us that traditional Nama dance was done in !Khubus not Eksteenfontein. Eksteenfontein, she said, was where the matjieshuis programme was to be developed. This led me to think that each Nama village was to

specialise in some aspect of traditional Nama culture as a way of attracting tourist and establishing an economy based on cultural tourism. The information contained in the web pages also suggested this type of specialisation among Nama villages (See Chapter Seven for a further discussion of tourism in South Africa).

The indigenous peoples of South Africa have not had access to their countries vast natural resources such as diamonds, gold, and fertile farmland. Nor have they had access to the same superior educational opportunities or worthwhile employment as white South Africans have. This has left many indigenous peoples devastated culturally and economically. The acknowledgement of cultural identity among indigenous peoples through a programme of cultural revitalisation is a big step that has huge positive psychological and economical benefits. However, of equal importance is the process of why and how culture is restored, if indeed it can be. Dancing, in this regard, can be revised along commercial lines and developed into what has been referred to by anthropologist (dance ethnographer) Adrienne Kaeppler as 'Airport Art'. This is a form of art, in this case dancing, which caters directly to a commercial market and is displayed at tourist venues. Tony Manhire, a specialist of San Rock Art and one of my guides, expressed concern that the dances of the San were being exploited in this way (cf. Witz et al, 2001); and dance scholar Àjàyí has also noted this kind of presentation in reference to Yoruba dances (Àjàyí, 1998, p 6).

In respect of the above discussion, one of the fundamental questions to be answered in regard to the Nama Stap Dance that I witnessed is exactly what I observed: was it a historical reconstruction of a dance ceremony; a theatrical performance; a community dance event; or something else.

Music and Musical Accompaniment

It is difficult to comment at this stage on the music or its relationship to the movements of the dance. As stated earlier, the musicians were not available and I did not hear the traditional Nama Stap music that typically accompanies the dance. I will comment, therefore, only on those points that are relevant at this stage.

According to Mrs Farmer, guitars, typically two or three, have always accompanied this dance.²² Initially, I found the use of guitar surprising as drums are used extensively throughout southern Africa. The use of guitar also challenged my understanding of the poly-rhythmic character of much of the music and dancing of Africa. I am aware of the use of stringed instruments throughout Africa such as the

Kora. Further, research concerning the history of the guitar indicates that it is of 'Moorish origin'. The guitar is and has been used in parts of Africa.²³

The music for the performance was in 3/4 metre. The dancers, on the evening of the performance, moved in this metre to the beat of the music a good portion of the time. On two other occasions, however, Mrs. Farmer demonstrated the Nama Stap in different meters; once in 2/4 and on another occasion 5/4. The 2/4 metre she performed is more understandable in relation to 3/4 than 5/4. It is difficult to make a relationship between 3/4 and 5/4 time signatures; perhaps I was at fault here. In any case, I cannot be sure at this stage what the metre of the movement actually is; it may be that the metre is variable. Obviously, further research is needed to answer this and other time and metre related questions.

Dance Structure, Movement Content, Performance

Structurally, the Nama Stap Dance is a dance comprised of circles within circles. In all, the dancers make five counter-clockwise circles around the dance area. The first two circles seem to set the mood of the dance and establish three basic movement themes. These three patterns—circling around each other in a clockwise direction, gliding-shuffle step, and retreating steps—are repeated throughout the dance. Of equal importance is the spatial relationship and interaction of the dancers with each other. The third circle is a transition circle in that it is not a true circle but an outward spiral that changes the focus of the dance from the centre space and the dancers to the matjieshuis and its contents. Out of context, the spatial patterns and movement vocabulary that forms the foundation of the Nama Stap Dance appear simple and perhaps uninspiring. However, as noted by Bartenieff et al (1984) previously in this paper, the structure of the dance can be considered the skeleton on which the cultural content of the dance is supported.

Although I have worked extensively with traditional African dance forms, my experiences of them, until recently, are as dances that have been prepared for the western stage. I am well aware, therefore, that the comments that follow are influenced by those standards that govern western theatre dance practice. I also have considerable experience as a Labanotator and there is no doubt that my training and experience have conditioned my outlook to a western aesthetic. In moving to a more analytic perspective, I am conscious of and acknowledge cultural bias; at this stage in the research, I have no other standard upon which to make an analysis of the dance.²⁴

What I noted about the Nama Stap Dance presentation was its lack of precision in nearly every aspect of performance. This would include timing, spatial path, and, in some cases, knowledge of the dance.

The dancers were rarely in time with each other. This was most evident in those places where it seemed that they should have been synchronised, such as the shuffle-glide step and the turning action around each other. The relationship of music to movement was not evident; some dancers moved with the beat others off the beat, and I could not be certain of the spatial intent of the circular type paths. These could have been either circles or oblong-shaped. A few of the dancers seemed uncertain of the sequence throughout the dance and constantly looked around or physically seemed to be guided through the movement by other dancers. This kind of behaviour throughout the dance prompted me to question why the first and second pair of dancers exchanged places at the end of circle two. Was this in order to allow the less rehearsed dancers to have a better view of someone to follow? These points introduce a number of issues, the most significant being how do the *Nama* view this dance today, what is the *Nama* aesthetic in relationship to it, how would the *Nama* rate the standard of performance or would they 'rate' this kind of performance at all?

Symbolism in the Ceremony

It is difficult to discuss any symbolism the ceremony might contain without having more experience of it and more knowledge of traditional and contemporary Nama culture. The following points are presented as queries about aspects of the Nama Stap Dance that need clarification.

Costumes: What is the significance of the patchwork design? I noted in both !Khubus and Eksteenfontein this type of textile in home furnishings such as pillows and coverings for household furnishings. The costume Maria Farmer designed for the Nama Stap Dance was of this style and the tourist centre in Eksteenfontein and the Richterveld National Park had similar designs on display and for sale.

Facial Make-up: When the initiate emerged from the hut her face was elaborately painted with ochre. What is the significance of the facial design, and why is ochre paint used?

Movement Elements: When the ceremony begins, the initiate has already entered the matjieshuis; when and how does she enter it and is it important that she is already secluded when the ceremony begins? Towards the end of the second circular

path the first and second pair of dancers exchange places. Is this part of the traditional ceremony, does it hold some significance or is it as I have suggested earlier? The reason for this change is not obvious. As the dancers approach the opening to the matjieshuis towards the end of the ceremony, they hammer on the surface of it. What is the purpose of this? Is it merely to get the attention of those inside or is there a more profound reason?

Once the initiate leaves the matjieshuis each performer dances with her. Is this a choreographic addition or a traditional detail that should not be omitted? The performers remain in contact with each other throughout the dance. Does this action carry any meaning? Finally, the entire dance is done on curved paths; there are no angles or straight lines. The matjieshuis, the traditional Nama home, is constructed on curves. Do or did curves have symbolic meaning for the Nama?

Conclusion and Issues Arising

Two of the three goals of this first fieldtrip as stated previously have been accomplished. I have clearly demonstrated that there is a Nama community that maintains dancing as part of its cultural fabric and that it is possible to build a working relationship with the community. The Nama of !Khubus and Eksteenfontein are open to researchers, and there is a key consultant who is reliable and willing to act as a bridge between the community and myself. The !Khubus community is in the process of post-apartheid reconstruction and would welcome research that would help to shed light on its historical and contemporary cultural practices. South Africa is a country in transition. This is obvious in !Khubus and can be seen most pointedly in the commoditisation of its cultural artefacts. The divide between economics, politics, and culture is difficult to distinguish. Political and economic issues, which affect every aspect of life in !Khubus—including dancing—cannot go unnoticed. Economics, it would seem, is a driving force behind cultural revitalization. This raises the question of what exactly is culturally representative of the Nama.

One would think that a dance titled the Nama Stap Dance would be a cultural representation or symbol of the Nama. Yet, as we have seen, Dutch and German colonists have heavily influenced Nama culture including its dancing. As much as one might wish to think that such influence is not really Nama, it is a historical fact that the Nama were subjugated by Dutch and German pioneers and forced to adopt much of their culture, including language. How is this ‘foreign’ influence to be situated in

relation to the Nama today? It would appear that contemporary Nama accept the Nama Stap Dance as representative of their culture. This is an issue not previously considered.

The Nama Stap Dance has, however, presented its own challenges. There are a number of interpretations of the Nama female puberty ceremony including, among others, Hoernlé and Hoff. The Hoernlé and Hoff versions, detailed in this chapter, introduce elements of the dance not mentioned by Farmer such as the use of cold water and the fact that the initiate's feet should not touch the ground. What is the historical significance of these elements and why have they disappeared from the ceremony? More fundamentally, what purpose does the dance ceremony serve for the Nama today?

Field research stimulated more questions than it answered; this is not altogether unexpected as fieldwork involves working with living cultures. It is part of the process of fieldwork that dynamic, living issues that have not been identified in the literature present themselves in the field. These questions will form part of the aims of the second phase of fieldwork and the accompanying analysis.

Notes

1. For further discussion of the issues of translation in the field see also: Owusu (1978) and Temple (1997).

2. Experienced anthropologists Hortense Powdermaker (1966), notes, for example, how a sudden change from fieldwork in Uganda to 'Northern Rhodesia', now Zambia, left her with no possibility of learning the local language.

3. See also Powdermaker (1966) and Fox (1988) for a description of the use of local translators during fieldwork.

4. For examples of this usage see Agar (1980) and Birbili (2000).

5. For example, Koutsouba (1997) in her PhD dissertation on Greek dance comments: A final point concerns the inclusion of many Greek words in the study. Their use was considered necessary, as even the best translation cannot render the exact meaning of them. This holds true for a number of Greek words which have already been translated into English but which do not correspond to the pronunciation used in Greece. In this case the Greek version was preferred (Koutsouba, 1997, p 8).

6 Hung-Fu Lee (2001), used a similar translation procedure for his study of Amis Rituals in Taiwan.

7. The use of questionnaires also presents translation issues. Birbili notes, whether interviews or questionnaires or any kind of test are to be used, another way of eliminating translation-related problems is to pre-test or pilot the research instruments

in the local culture (Birbili, 2000, p 4).

8. Lee's research involved: a detailed analysis and interpretation of the relationship between the movement of the Amis spirit masters (*cikawasays*) of Taiwan and the ritual of the *mirecuk* (the worship of spirits), in order to aid in understanding of the meanings significant to the belief system as related to the spirits they worship and the realm from whence the *kawas* (spirits) come (Lee, 2001).

9. Lee described the following translation process: first, with the interpreter's help, I asked the *cikawasays* to explain the meaning of the ritual words. Secondly, the interpreter abstracted the basic sense of each word as explained by the *cikawasays*, in order to find its equivalent in the native language. Finally, we translated the *cikawasay* words as rendered in the Amis vernacular into Mandarin; in so doing, the words were interpreted as closely as possible to the original. It was thought quite rare that the meaning of a single word or phrase in Mandarin matched the vernacular utterance. In fact, it was a challenge to go beyond the limitations imposed by translating and preserve the essence of the original meaning...Lee also transcribed the ritual language into the Roman alphabet for approval by senior members of the *cikawasay*; following the approval by the *cikawasay*, these were translated into Mandarin, the official language of Taiwan (Lee, 2001, p. 10).

10. See also Fox (1988) for a further discussion of 'cultural' issues related to translation.

11. Ralph Bouwers helped with translation from Afrikaans into English during the latter part of the research. His experience of Nama culture is through his sister-in-law who is Nama and who lived in the Bouwers family home for many years.

12. The Black Dance Development Trust was an organisation funded by the Arts Council of England and located in the Midlands; it was an organisation for Black dance parishioners whose aims were, to consolidate and advance Afrikan peoples music and dance in Britain, to do this through a local, national and international network of black professionals (Adewole, Matchett, Prescod, 2007).

13. Van Zile highlights a number of concerns when using this method rather than distance observation. She notes: If one notates from observations, either in performance or as a dance is being taught, it is easy to assume one is being objective; the researcher can see subtle differences in the performance execution of others and can listen to comments of audience members or teachers. By learning the dance, it becomes possible to know the dance kinaesthetically. At the same time, however, it is easy to become so engrossed in one's own effort to master the movement that important cues (such as comments from a teacher to another student) may be overlooked. It is also possible that since one is an outsider to the tradition being studied...inaccurate performance of the movements will be accepted, while they would not be if performed by insiders. The researcher then assumes accuracy when errors are present and the errors are incorporated into the notation (Van Zile, 1999, pp. 91-92).

14. I noted three spellings of !Khubus: Khoboes, Kuboes, and !Khubus. The name is a Nama word meaning 'God is found here.'

15. In this collection, Kirby references reed-flute ensembles and the dances that accompany these known as reed-flute dances. These dances, performed by both men and women, are characterised by the use of circular formation, stamping foot pattern, singing and clapping, and flute accompaniment.

16. In regard to dancing, an 'informant' of Carstens, Oom Abbie, notes, ...the church did not approve of the honey beer, or the music, or the dancing, especially the latter. My mother told me all that (Carstens, 2007, p. 127).

17. In Labanotation the idea of Place for supports follows the basic law that place is directly related to the centre of gravity of the performer, that is, place is always directly below the centre of gravity. (Hutchinson, Labanotation, 1977, p 35)

18. For a brief history and an ethnographic account of the Gumboot Dance, see Muller, 2004, pp. 152-183.

19. According to Fraleigh, an unbiased approach to description/analysis is not possible. She notes: The phenomenologist approaches the tasks of defining or describing a phenomenon (a dance or dance experience, for instance) as though seeing it fresh for the first time. Of course, this is not possible since we do have conceptions, attitudes and assumptions that colour understanding. Phenomenology is at best an effort to remove bias and preconception from consciousness. It aims to describe through some direct route, not to analyze and theorize (at least not in the beginning), but first to describe the immediate contents of consciousness...it strives to capture pre-reflexive experience, the immediacy of being-in-the-world (Fraleigh, 1998, p. 138).

20. Situated in the western corner of Namaqualand, and named after Dr. Ricther, an inspector of the Rhenish Mission who visited the area in 1830, the Richtersveld National Park was opened on 16 August 1991. The management of the park is atypical in that community members and National Park Board manage it.

21. The dancers for this event were: Kaaitjie Cloete, Ouma Hannis, Maria J. Farmer, Betjie Joseph, Fredrika Joshua, Anna Moos, Elizabeth Moos.

22. Kirby (1933) notes the use of reed-flutes by the Nama as early as 1497. He notes that reed-flutes accompanied many of the dances of the Nama (see Kirby, 1933).

23. Carson (2007) also notes the use of stringed instruments know as *ramkietjies*.

24. Fraleigh clarifies this stage from the phenomenological point of view: It is significant that...phenomenological reduction seek the essence of experience, a re-creation in words of the living of the experience, as the most salient features arise in consciousness and other drop away [or are not noticed!]. In this, the phenomenologist knows that finally she cannot strip away her own consciousness, nor would she want to however much she may rid herself of baggage in terms of previous knowledge or attitudes. Consciousness and, moreover, her particular consciousness, will be a part of the experience and its description (Farleigh, 1998, p. 138).

Chapter 4

God is Found Here

4.0. Field Research in !Khubus

This chapter documents the second stage of field research, personal experiences, and interactions in South Africa in 2003. The research strategy was organised around a four-part plan that commenced in Cape Town, followed by overland travel to the Northern Cape, a period of residency in !Khubus village, and concluded with a return to Cape Town. Each sector of the plan was essential to the configuration of the whole and each aspect has had an influence on choices made and decisions taken in the field as well as subsequent judgement and analysis of material gathered.

This second fieldtrip differed significantly from the first. Whereas the initial research was exploratory and had as its purpose the establishment of links with a Nama community in which dancing remains an essential part of daily life, the primary intent of this second trip was to acquire a sensory knowledge of the society in which the Nama Stap Dance resides. This approach, I thought, would enable me to give equilibrium to my informed but, none the less, western perceptive of Nama culture and the Nama Stap Dance with a more Nama appreciation of these. Secondary concerns were more pragmatic: on the previous trip, I had not heard or documented the music of the dance and this was essential for a precise analysis of it. Additionally, I hoped to see other interpretations and representations of the dance, and to make further recordings of the Nama Stap Dance and other related material.

Each part of the research plan was crafted to provide particular knowledge, experiences, and interactions while, at the same time, creating connections to other aspects of the research. The first phase of the enquiry began in Cape Town where a week of ‘local’ field research was organised by Vivian Cohen. Cohen had been involved in this research from the beginning when it was merely a hazy idea, to its current stage. At the start of research, Cohen volunteered to be my ‘regional research assistant’. This was fortuitous as she was eminently qualified to perform this role effectively.

Cohen’s early years were spent in Namibia; later her family relocated to South Africa. She is well known and highly respected in academic, political, and cultural spheres in both these countries. She has a passion and empathy for people, especially

those of South Africa, and is politically and financially active in this concern. She studied Anthropology at the University of Cape Town and her compassion for people makes this an apt field for her caring nature. She organised the ‘local’ field research in Cape Town which paved the way for productive research to follow in !Khubus. Formally, her role in this research is that of regional research assistant. In this capacity she not only made available to me her extensive, strategic contacts, but also made arrangements for me to meet and interview key people in formal and informal settings. She created a ‘chain of consultants’ whose knowledge and experience significantly advanced this research. Her understanding of anthropologically based field research, extensive, strategic contacts and, most importantly, love of and compassion for people permeates this research. Vivie’s (as she is affectionately known) role in this research cannot be overstated.

The research in Cape Town was structured prudently. The morning was spent working in the Special Collection of the University of Cape Town library where I examined Nama material unavailable except in South Africa. This included text-based, visual, and aural sources. Among these materials was that of Jasmine Honoré, whose collection *The Xhosa Dances* (1994) is a fascinating documentation of these dances. Significant are the field research processes employed by Honoré for the collection of data and, most especially, rationale for the method of documentation of these dances. In interview with Honoré, she elaborated on these questions and gave further details of her method(s) of documentation. Visits to museums housing Nama collections, community centres, and historical sites were planned in conjunction with afternoon and evening interviews. Cohen organised and hosted formal and informal meetings and discussions with key people in the fields of ethnomusicology and music therapy, archaeology (John Parkington and Judy Sealy, University of Cape Town) African Studies, choreographers, and especially David Kramer.

Kramer, a South African singer, songwriter, guitarist, and producer, is well known for ‘his songs [that] are mostly stories about ordinary life in South Africa life and are usually funny, and almost always have a deeper, more serious message.’ (www.rock.co.za/files/david_kramer_index.htm, accessed on 23 August 2006). He is significant to this research as he allowed access to his extensive library of, among other indigenous recordings, Nama guitar music, including that of the Nama Stap, as well as early film footage of the Nama Stap motif recorded during tours of the Richtersveld region. Additionally, as related below, our association with Kramer provided the

leverage we needed during crucial negotiations with musicians in !Khubus. Other informal social events, such as visits to the home of architect Jenny and potter/ethnographer Hyme Robinovic, provided still more opportunities to appreciate South Africa and its people. This first part of field research was purposefully organised to provide access to experienced South African researchers and artist whose work would surely influence this investigation. Additionally, it laid the foundation for future collaborative research. The next portion of the plan was a two part process, overland travel to the Richtersveld and residency in !Khubus.

Although it is possible to fly into a tiny private airport not too far from !Khubus, we travelled overland from Cape Town to the Richtersveld area on the northern border of South Africa. This mode of travel was organised so that I might: 1) visit local sites of interest that related to my research, 2) visit Port Nolloth and Springbok, the two larger towns nearest to !Khubus where some of its children attend secondary school, 3) observe local musicians and dancers along the way, and 4) to gradually acclimatise to the Richtersveld environment. This also gave Dave Halkett, my guide and interpreter, an opportunity to continue our discussions of archaeological field research methods *in situ*. The third segment of the research, residence in !Khubus, is detailed below.

The final stage of field research involved further research in the Special Collection of the University of Cape Town library and a seminar presentation of the research undertaken in !Khubus to my local consultants. This proved to be a valuable activity in two ways. First, it demonstrated how dance, like archaeological artefacts, could be perceived as a ‘measure of culture’. Second, it clarified for Lesley Hart, director of the manuscripts and archive unit at the University of Cape Town library, the nature of the research and prompted her to suggest that I investigate the material of Honoré. The discovery of this collection of dance and music scores, videos, field-notes, and text was so compelling that a further period of research was undertaken in November 2003 to allow for investigation of the material and an interview with Honoré.

What follows is a series of ethnographic snapshots which, when viewed as a whole, gives a view of life in !Khubus during the period of my residency. My account is informed not only by my direct experiences in the village itself, but also by ‘armchair’ anthropology, field research in Cape Town, language, interviews and interactions that preceded and followed my visit. My life experience as an African-American also plays a part in my perceptions. I have endeavoured to record my sensory experiences of learning to live in !Khubus. These have been recorded in evocative

descriptions, direct quotes, photos, and field-notes. Reflections on these experiences have been documented as a process including questions raised, issues debated, and theoretical explanations sought. The opening section titled ‘Mountain Mist’ is a metaphor not only for my own perspective in regard to ethnographic fieldwork, but may be apt for field research in general. Although the information is always there, like the mountain described below, it is not always clearly recognised or understood by the observer.

4.1. Mountain Mist



Figure 8. Mountain Mist

Great mountains surround !Khubus village—Kuboesberg to the north, Van der Stel Berg to the east and the Ploegberg to the south. It is a dusty place: cocoa brown and copper-coloured earth is everywhere. The climate is dry and it is sweltering except in early morning, then it is cool and a mist temporarily hides the panoramic view of the embracing mountains hangs in the air. At this morning anacrusis, there is little noticeable activity except for mine; even my guide has yet to come to life. In this quiet daybreak, I stand in the small yard in front of my temporary home and gather my thoughts in preparation for the day’s research. My daily activities commence with an exploratory walk through the village the instant the mist lifts. Each daily excursion

provides answers, stimulates questions and creates opportunities to interact with the people of !Khubus.

Unlike our previous visit, when we resided outside the village, during this sojourn we lived in !Khubus itself. In the interval between our visits, a number of obvious changes had taken place. In addition to a strategically placed mini roundabout (figure 9), which is universally ignored, a Gastehuis (Guest House) had been opened in the heart of the village (Figure 10). The opening was a significant development for a number of reasons. First, !Khubus had a traditional matjieshuis campsite nearby. This campsite, like the new Gastehuis, was made possible by a government grant for the development of tourism among indigenous peoples, especially those living in remote areas such as the Richtersveld.



Figure 9. Roundabout in !Khubus

The matjieshuis campsite, which was under construction during our first visit, was now operational. Had tourism developed to such an extent that two guest facilities were necessary? The new Gastehuis was also significant as an emblem of tensions between groups with entirely different convictions regarding the future of !Khubus's relationship with the wider world.

According to consultants, the Gastehuis was a project organised and managed by the young adults of !Khubus. It seemed the idea of such a facility was not welcomed by some senior members of the community who had opposed it, preferring to house those guests who should happen along in the traditional matjieshuis campsite a short distance from the village. The matjieshuis is a basic, floorless, dome-like structure made of woven reeds and branches. Portable and easily constructed and repaired from available materials, the matjieshuis has, since the Stone Age, ideally met the needs of nomadic hunter/gatherers roaming the sparse and rugged environs of southern Africa. Even now when many of the Nama are settled into permanent communities, matjieshuis make the perfect temporary accommodation for short-term visitors. It provides protection from the sun and the wind and keeps out the heat of day and the cold of night. Generally, they

are located out of the way at the periphery of the village (as in !Khubus) or in the back yard so that strangers needing a place to stay are offered hospitality without being accepted into the centre of community life. The new Gastehuis in !Khubus, however, is located in the centre of the village. Visitors and inhabitants must be aware of each other and make a choice about the extent of their interaction. In addition, the Gastehuis is a far more comfortable accommodation than the mat house. It provides individual sleeping areas with beds and indoor toilet. Clearly the Gastehuis is intended to attract both long-term visitors and those who do not feel the need to share the traditional Nama experience by sleeping on the ground inside what is essentially an upturned shell.

The Gastehuis is intended to attract a different kind of tourist than the one who is willing to stay in the matjieshuis; one who will have a completely different relationship with both the people of !Khubus and its surroundings. It already employs one person, a manager, and it takes little foresight to envision that, if it becomes a popular area for tourists, other staff will need to be engaged. The Gastehuis represents a totally different vision of what the future of !Khubus will be like than the one held by those who think that visitors to the village should be housed in a matjieshuis. In fact, !Khubus is very near a new transfrontier conservation area formed by combining a 5,000 square kilometre area including South Africa's Richtersveld National Park and the Ai-Ais Game Park in Namibia. The governments of both countries are co-operating to develop a unified promotional approach to attract tourism to the area, so it is possible that business at both the Gastehuis and the matjieshuis campsite in !Khubus will take an upswing in the future. Although a few passing travellers had used the facility prior to our visit, we were the Gastehuis's first 'long term' occupants. The community as a whole, therefore, were curious and cautious about our extended presence.

The Gastehuis, we soon learned, was a magnet for the youth of the village. On the day of our arrival several young people approached and welcomed us. These were four young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three. They spoke a little English and we were able, for a while, to communicate with each other directly. They were, of course, interested to know who we were and the nature of our business in the village. They seemed somewhat bemused on learning that we were interested in the Nama Stap Dance. They all professed to know the dance (one playfully demonstrated it) and to have learned it either incidentally as young children or as part of the Nama Stap Dance Group at the local school. They were also helpful in providing information about the best dancers and musicians in the village; they furnished details about another

researcher who had done linguistic research in !Khubus a year previously (cf. also Berzborn, 2002). My Afrikaans, and their English, began to fail when they attempted to tell me about their interest, and at this stage we needed an interpreter. It was fortunate that my guide, Dave Halkett, was an archaeologist by profession as these lads were interested in gemstones. The collection and identification of these stones, I soon learned, is a popular pastime in this region and provides yet another small means of income, especially for the youth. The lads had broken the ice and given us some good leads to follow up, and we had given them something too. Dave had spent a good deal of time talking with them about gemstones and helping them to identify some of the stones in their collections, and I donated a few books on gemmology to the village library. This was an encouraging start to our research. Sometime later our key consultant, Mrs Maria Farmer, called in to welcome us and to arrange a planning meeting; we had not notified Maria of our arrival, but, somehow, she had learned of our presence.

Our location was excellent. The Gastehuis (Figure 10) was situated in the centre



Figure 10. !Khubus Gastehuis

of the village along the main entry road. Directly across from it was the Municipal Building, which housed the village post office, a community room for local meetings, and a few other offices. In front of this building were the village post boxes and water tap.

Next to our house were the public telephones, which, we quickly learned, were busy most of the day and a good portion of the night. Following on from these was a road frequented by both young and old. This path provided access to the mountains that surrounded the village. The collection and drop off point for mine workers, and anyone else needing transport, was just outside our door. Our house was situated in a highly active area. The location was not quite to Dave's liking. As for me, other than actually living in someone's home, I could not have wished for a better situation. We were at the hub of village activity.

People passed our house frequently, peering at us as they moved along. The adults would stare or sneak quick glances, while the children were far less restrained. Some of them came up to the front door and looked in. A few invited themselves inside to have a look around as did, from time to time, a goat or two. On our first day, one woman invited herself into the Gastehuis. She enquired who I was (Dave later explained that this was so that she would know how to address me), had a look around the place, and then *ordered* Dave to drive her home. We had a good laugh about this incident, and the memory of it provided us with moments of amusement during our stay. One man in particular passed our house frequently, and after a few days, he came into the yard and introduced himself to us.

He was an elderly man between seventy and eighty years old, I guessed. Characteristic of many of the men in !Khubus, he was of small build, wore very thick glasses, smoked ceaselessly, and had lost many of his teeth. Dave reasoned that the characteristic loss of teeth by the Nama might have been due, to a large extent, to diet, and in particular to the consumption of traditional Nama bread. This bread is one of the staple foods in the village and is eaten frequently. Dave reasoned that as starch breaks down into sugar, that large amounts of sugar combined with poor dental hygiene could cause the sort of tooth loss and dental decay we noted in the village. This condition is striking among adult villagers and has been the topic of recent dental research on incidence of tooth decay among the Nama.

Everyone called him Oupa (Figure 11); Oupa is a term of respect and endearment usually used for an elderly person. Oupa spent most of his day walking throughout the village talking with people and smoking. He liked children and they enjoyed him; he would playfully chase them or they him. He was quite agile for someone of his years and usually sat in a full squatting position. As the weeks passed, I began to call him Oupa too, and I grew very fond of this frequent visitor to our front yard.

I spent the first few foggy mornings wandering through the village trying to gain a sense of it as a whole and also giving its inhabitants an opportunity to scrutinize me. I discovered that the village was divided into two distinct halves separated by a large field; this rough open area was used as a playing field. One half of the village, the part accessible by the main road, seemed to consist of



Figure 11. Oupa

older and more traditional type homes as described previously, and the other half, I noted from afar, appeared to be of newer construction and style. I was hesitant in the early days to explore what I called the 'other side of town'. My daily travels developed into a routine that began along the main road in the centre of town. Walking along the main road that leads out of town, I turned left at the first side road. From here I continued to walk until I reached the road's end where it dropped into a valley. It was not only the abrupt ending of the road that halted my progress but also the spectacular panoramic mountain view from that point; it was breathtaking and inviting.

A path lined with white rocks led to the valley below. Here I noted one of two cemeteries, a goat stead, and a mass of discarded rubbish. It became my habit to spend some moments here as well as endless amounts of digital memory in an attempt to capture, without success, the beauty and intrigue of the scene (see Figure 8. Mountain Mist). From this vista, my progress through the village increased by a few roads each day until I had explored the entire central half of it. My explorations were made more interesting when I acquired a map from the municipal office to help track my trail through the village. The map added another layer of awareness to my investigations. The map clearly charted both halves of !Khubus and gave a good picture of the overall shape of the village and of each plot. There were a number of sites, however, where the map and the actual layout of plots did not concur. Although the shape and size of each plot were relatively accurate, I discovered that there were more dwellings in the village than were represented on the map. Fortunately, a group of lawyers and city planners from Kimberly visited the village during the period of our stay. They were advising residents on legal issues in conjunction with land rights and deeds to property.

Land reform has been at the heart of government policy and public concern since the dismantling of the apartheid regime in the early part of the 1990s. More than 56,000 claims have been settled for the restitution of or compensation for land allegedly taken from the antecedents of black South Africans during the colonial and apartheid periods. In a case in the Eastern Cape, a claim for R44 million was upheld in the courts. The government is anxious to resolve land claims as quickly and fairly as possible in order that the issue of redistribution does not dissolve into the sort of chaos experienced in neighbouring Zimbabwe.¹

Through discussions with members of the Kimberly group I was able to clarify my questions regarding local geography. As had become obvious, the map I was using was very much out of date. A number of homes had been constructed that were not

indicated on it or, for that matter, on the one being used by the Kimberly group. Originally, plots of land were divided into what would have been small farms, and as families grew and more housing was needed, new structures were simply built on the plot of the landholder. I found this remarkable as the climate and lack of water supply would not allow for growing of traditional farm corps. However, I soon learned that this did not mean agricultural farming but traditional stock farming. It is interesting that as family size increases, the size of each family member's share of the original homestead decreases. There must be a reason that the need for additional housing is not accommodated by arranging for the purchase of additional land upon which to construct it. While a lack of money, insufficient amounts of unoccupied and appropriate land or a simple desire to keep all members of the family in close proximity can all be inferred, I have no evidence to support any of these speculations. But the logical outcome of this practise can easily be seen; family plots are becoming increasingly crowded.

It was now clear how plots of land had been organised and that this organisation was, I reasoned, one of two apparent elements that identified the village as a community of like-minded inhabitants. The consistently large tract of land surrounding each homestead was an obvious identifier of social cohesion and most certainly a remnant of traditional land organisation. But the design of each house seemed to reflect the individual style, personality, and circumstances of its inhabitants. It was as though individual expression was encouraged within a greater context of group identity. The front doors of many homes were notable. The distinctive feature of the doors was the pattern carved into them and used extensively on older as well as newer houses in both parts of the village. The door carvings, I was told, held no particular meaning for the people of !Khubus or for the Nama (they came up from the city that way). One could not help but notice, however, that the people in !Khubus have designs carved into their front doors.

Through my travels I discovered a number of interesting areas that were not recorded on the map. These included an older cemetery near the school grounds, a building marked as a multi-media workshop that was no longer in use, and the village medical clinic that was very much in use. A local nurse staffed the clinic on a daily basis, and a doctor was in residence twice each week. Additionally, !Khubus shared a fully equipped ambulance with its neighbours in the next village. By the end of the first week I had thoroughly investigated the 'central' half of !Khubus. I decided to label this part of !Khubus as 'central' to distinguish it from the other half of the village and this

seemed appropriate as community businesses and activities such as the local shop, church, school, post office, municipal offices, Gastehuis, and the main entrance to the village were located here. It was finally time to investigate the 'other side of town'. These two parts of the village, I was to find, were very different from each other.

A long, dusty road binds the central portion of !Khubus with its neighbours on the opposite side of the 'playing field'. There are fewer homes, about a dozen, on this side of town. Of these, three were under construction. There were two obvious differences between the homes in this part of !Khubus and in the central portion of the village. There was far less land surrounding each plot, and the houses that were in the process of construction were bi-level. The split-level architecture of the houses appeared to be designed to harmonise with the hillside environment on which they were being constructed. This brought to light a third distinction between the two areas. Despite the fact that the central area had a few small hills, all the homes were on one level; the area across the 'playing field' was undulating. I had failed to notice this detail concerning level during my earlier investigation of the central part of !Khubus. Perhaps this was because *all* of the houses in that area were on one level. One other feature distinguished this side of the village, and this was Jay-Dee's Café (Figure 12).

Jay-Dee's Café was situated at the very top of the hill. It was structurally an integral part of a comparatively large house. It reminded me of western style homes that have built-in or 'integral' garages. The idea of a café in Khubus was unexpected. The only thing that came close to the idea of a café in the central portion of the village was an old building labelled as a restaurant that was never open for business. Despite many trips at various times of the day, like the restaurant, I was never able to find Jay-Dee's Café open. I can note, however, that a second café, located in the central part of !Khubus, was opened a few



Figure 12. Jay-Dee's Café

days before our departure. It was situated in the storeroom just behind the Gastehuis. It was the initiative of two women, the same young woman who managed !Khubus Gastehuis, and a more senior member of the community. It occurred to me as I continued to explore this rather remote area that this section of !Khubus might be

compared, in western terms, to a new up-market housing development. The use of a map not only helped me to navigate more effectively through the village but also attracted the attention of residents to me. As I meandered through the village, map in hand, stopping and starting along the way, people gradually began to acknowledge my presence. As my facility and confidence in Afrikaans increased, a basic form of communication began to develop between us.

In general, people rose early. This tendency was evidenced by conversations I could hear coming from behind closed doors during my walking tours. Many inhabitants, especially men, would congregate for an early morning smoke; the school day began early during the hotter periods of the year and children would begin to appear halfway through my travels; the mine operated round-the-clock and this schedule necessitated an early morning wake-up call for those who worked there. Cooking was done both in and out of doors. When done outside, food was prepared in black, cast iron pots of various sizes. These were stored in the yard and could be seen outside of nearly every house. I discovered two or three gardens in the central portion of the village and noted that more houses on the 'playing field' side of town had a small garden or at least a few flowers. One garden in particular in the central portion of the village attracted my notice. This was a small, well-maintained plot of cactus and other succulents. The women who maintained this garden and I were cordial despite the fact that we could not speak to one another. The relationship commenced when she came to my rescue.

Dogs roamed the village freely and they frequented the area around her house. Noting my hesitancy to proceed on my rounds, she would chase them away on my behalf. We greeted each other regularly and tried without success to communicate with one another. Her garden and her front yard were always well presented. Maintenance of the front yard area was an interesting practice. This daily chore consisted of first sprinkling the earth with water, and then binding a rope to a long board and pulling the board around the yard area. This process smoothed the earth and also made linear and curved designs on the ground. These designs were not dissimilar to the patterns etched into many of the front doors.

I walked the roads of !Khubus each morning until I left the village. As a result of this daily routine my interaction with people in !Khubus had become much easier. Residents became accustomed to seeing me during my early morning rounds, and while I was not a member of the village, I was less of a stranger than I might have been had I

stayed indoors and assumed the role of interloper. I had indeed established my presence in !Khubus through this routine. I had become a part of, at least, the early morning activity of the village.

4.2. The Material Question

I had four weeks in the village. Such a compact period of time is a disadvantage to field research. In this regard, Barfield's comment concerning 'intense, long-term anthropological research...' (2000) is well founded. It takes time to establish relationships, to build trust, to become aware of and understand the dynamics of the society, and to find and establish a position in the community. Today, in response to changes in attitudes to field research as well as financial constraints, long-term research is a luxury that few researchers can afford; shorter periods are not uncommon. With such time constraints ever present, I wanted to establish links as quickly as possible with as many residents as possible

The first few afternoons were spent with Mrs. Farmer discussing the Nama people in general and life in !Khubus more specifically. I was interested in knowing about everyday life, activities, and practices and how these related to each other. I was anxious to know who was who, who did what, what was prohibited, and any precautions we should immediately be aware of. Did !Khubus differ from other Nama communities, and if so how? In short, I wanted to know how to live and to behave in this Nama environment. We discussed these and other related matters and identified a number of traditional and contemporary customs as typically Nama, visible, and accessible; three of these Nama music, the matjieshuis, and Nama Stap are elaborated below. Because I was especially interested in the Nama Stap Dance, we decided on those activities that were related to dancing and the arts more broadly. In addition to interaction with people and everyday activities, I was to be directly involved in the forthcoming exhibition of Nama traditional culture.²

We were fortunate to be in residence during this period as preparations were under way for festivities to mark the signing of the agreement between the South African and Namibian governments to extend the boundary of the Richtersveld National Park to meet the Ai-Ais Park on the Namibian side of the border. The joining of these two parks would make this area the largest natural park in the western Cape. Mrs. Farmer arranged for us to be involved in this demonstration of traditional Nama culture.

I was to have the opportunity to attend rehearsals of and to learn the Nama Stap Dance, to work with and interview the musicians that specialised in Nama guitar music, help with the construction of a matjieshuis, learn traditional Nama mat weaving, prepare traditional Nama bread, spend time in the textile workshop in the Richterveld National Park, hike through the surrounding mountains and investigate local rock art and etchings. None of these activities, however, happened straight away; this was one of my first lessons.

Things moved more slowly in this environment than I was accustomed to. I had to accept that Mrs. Farmer had a life outside my interests. This more unhurried pace gave me time to consider my surroundings and the nature of the field research more closely. My preliminary research, as recorded in the section titled 'Sunset Along the Orange River', indicated that the activities mentioned above were available to anyone spending a few days in the village. I needed, however, to become more deeply involved in the community. Such a level of interaction, I realised, would be difficult to achieve due to my lack of language and time. I decided to balance this deficit by extending myself outward and, hopefully, entice villagers to take an interest in what I was doing.

Working in the front yard on a daily basis, I made myself as visible as possible. Further, I reasoned it would be a good idea to answer the public telephone. This proved to be an especially good entry to interaction since I could not speak Afrikaans well and had to resort to a combination of verbal and bodily signs to make myself understood. This proved to be an excellent introductory strategy. The benefit of our location in the village was made clear one afternoon during this period of relative inactivity when, quite by chance, finally, I was to hear traditional Nama guitar music played by two of the 'best' guitarists in the village.

One afternoon a Buckki (Buckki is the popular name for a 4X4 flat bed vehicle) stopped in front of the Gastehuis and three men approached us. The youngest of the group was an ethnomusicologist, the next older man was his father, and the third a retired archaeologist who was a former lecturer at the University of Cape Town. The ethnomusicologist, the leader of the group, explained that he was employed by the Drum Café and was collecting indigenous music and wanted to record some Nama guitar music. He inquired of a young boy who was passing about guitarists in the village. The lad provided the names of the 'best' guitarists and agreed to locate them. Not long after departing, he returned having set up the 'recording session'. Dave and I were invited to attend and to record.

Crossing a huge front yard, we were ushered into a small house. It consisted of three tiny rooms, the contents of which were very worn; the rooms were notably clean and tidy; I was to note this contrast frequently in the weeks ahead. The central room served as a kitchen, lounge, and bedroom; there were rooms on either side of this area that also appeared to be bedrooms. It was a very tight squeeze: two male guitarists (Andries Obies and Josef Obies), two female hand-clappers/singers (Sofia Slander and Lidia S. Obies Nkok), the group leader, his father, all of our recording equipment, and me. The two archaeologists decided to remain outside and talk shop. This was my first experience of traditional Nama guitar music in !Khubus.

The session lasted more than an hour. My first impression was that the music was light and easy; it had a tingling sound that appeared to glide or float on the air in recurring patterns. They played piece after piece stopping from time to time to retune their guitars or to answer questions. The women did not sing words, but hummed or made vocal sounds or ‘vocables’ in addition to light rhythmical clapping. Described by Honoré (1994) in reference to Xhosa singing, ‘vocables’ are nonsense syllables used to fill up a short line, or because the words have been forgotten. I was not certain as to whether their vocal and percussive accompaniment was part of the music tradition or merely an embellishment. I later learned that both hand clapping and singing were indeed a part of Nama music tradition.³



Figure 13. Nama Guitarist and Singers

We recorded five pieces, and among them, unbeknownst to me at the time, was the music of the Nama Stap. The recording session ended with the customary recording of names, ages, and photos; (Figure 13: Andries Obies, Sofia Slander, Lidia S. Obies

Nkok, Josef Obies), and each

artist was paid for their part in the session. Payment to the artist raised issues that were to be of concern during the remainder of our stay in the village. The most immediate of which were what we expected to pay and how much?

They were collecting material for a well-known commercial enterprise, the Drum Café. The Drum Café started as the nightclub act of South African Warren Liberman. Liberman discovered that drumming had a ‘unifying effect on his audience’. He applied this idea to the corporate environment and in 1998 the Drum Café was established. Brett Schlesinger, director of Drum Café UK, summarises the fundamental concept of the enterprise: ‘the energy required to get a drum circle going is pretty much what a company requires to function’ (Schlesinger, B. <http://www.drumcafe.co.uk>, accessed August, 2006).

The Drum Café is a well-established worldwide enterprise; it is franchised in nineteen countries. Its advertisements announce that it organises conferences, team building events, celebrations, product launches, award dinners, and training programmes for a corporate clientele. Patrons have included, for example, US presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, HRH the Prince of Wales, Zulu King Goodwill, and Nelson Mandela former president of South Africa. Notable business clients are Barclays, Coopers, Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Nike, Price-Waterhouse, and Siemens. The Drum Café proudly boasts that it provides each delegate her/his own drum and can cater for anything between 10 and 3000 people. Through its worldwide links, it engages the best known and accomplished drummers.

As an employee of a high profile, successful business, this group had an expense account, and the Drum Café would certainly gain financially from the recordings brought back from field research. Would any of the profits, I wondered, be shared directly or indirectly with the artists? I, on the other hand, had no expense account or sponsorship—I was paying all of my own expenses. I was concerned, not with regard to payment itself, but that his level of payment set up expectations as to what I was able to offer as payment. This, as anticipated, became a major issue soon after the departure of this group. As this team prepared to leave, they were astonished to learn that we would be in the village for another three weeks. In response to their bemusement, I explained that our intentions were very different to theirs. Where they appeared to be collecting material for commercial application, ours was an educational mission. Our quest was to try to understand and document the culture that produced the artefacts and not merely take them away.

Two questions arise from the incident with the representative of the Drum Café. It is likely that they will remain unanswered. First is the manner in which this sort of tourism has the potential to transform community-defining ritual into performance art.

The music performed by the guitarists for the Drum Café group had not been developed as performance pieces to be listened to by a passive audience. Originally conceived as integral parts of events in which the entire community would have taken part (and those who were too old, too young or too unwell to take active part would have clapped and sung along) this music would have demanded the participation of all within its hearing. Played as it was designed to be, there would have been no listeners or watchers, only participants. These researchers were only interested in taking away music. They abstracted it from its cultural context and took it away to be listened to by people who may never understand its relationship to the people who created and performed it. It was transformed into performance, or perhaps commercial art (cf. Harper, 1967 and Àjáyí, 1998 noted earlier in this paper; also see the ‘cultural village’ and ‘township tours’ in Chapter Seven of this work).

The question of payment to consultants also became a concern. This is an issue that is under considerable discussion among field researchers, and there is no consensus among them regarding it. The concerns relevant to this research are whether consultants should be paid or not be paid; if they are to be paid, what is the medium of exchange; what is an appropriate level of exchange. David Lewiston, an ethnomusicologist working with Indian music and musicians, refers to this as ‘The Material Question’. The issue for Lewiston is not whether or not payment should be made, as he sees it as necessary, but of how much should change hands. According to Lewiston, who has been undertaking fieldwork for over thirty years, the answer to this depends on where the work is taking place, and how you present yourself.

If you’re wearing cheap clothes and wielding a grungy cassette recorder, your hosts may accept you as a starving student and take pity on you. But if you’re nattily attired, wielding snazzy gear that your hosts can only dream of owning, be prepared to make a meaningful contribution. I use the words “meaningful” contribution” advisedly...a “token contribution” quite simply, just won’t do (Lewiston, 2004).

Keith Howard lectures in ethnomusicology at the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies works extensively with Korean musicians. He, too, thinks the first point to consider is the specific situation one is working in. For example, it has been his experience that Korean musicians require payment at a level that is not only well above that which most educational institutions can or will pay or that is commensurate with the proposed use of the material. Additionally, Howard noted

situations where a fieldworker has paid an amount on one occasion only to find that the amount has substantially increased on the following visit. South African ethnomusicologists, archaeologists, government fieldworks, and others interviewed during the course of fieldwork in !Khubus and Cape Town agreed that consultants should be paid.

Liz Brouckaert, an ethnomusicologist working in Cape Town, concurs with Lewiston; musicians, performers, and consultants should be paid. It should be taken into account, however, that in addition to being an ethnomusicologist, Brouckaert is a promoter who works with indigenous musicians and singers. She is careful of the rights of the musicians she works with and is adamant that they should be paid for what they do. Responses from archaeologists in Cape Town concerning this issue were mixed; all agreed, however, that something in the form of gifts should be given. One government fieldworker in !Khubus felt strongly that people in !Khubus should receive payment in the local currency for their participation in research. 'What you must consider,' he said, 'is that people in !Khubus have very little or nothing.' A recent fieldtrip to Ghana also highlighted this issue.

In the city of Accra, Ghana, it was not difficult to gain access to institutions and key consultants. The expectation was that you would pay something and the amount of payment was discussed and an agreement was made based on how you proposed to use the material and on your budget. In the village that we visited, we paid our consultants, dancers, musicians, and the community as a whole was given a modest gift for the information and services they provided. We also provided medical expenses and contributed to other emergency situations that arose during our stay. We also shared meals with people in our immediate vicinity. It is important to distinguish here between payment and gift.

Payment in this context is in the nature of a business transaction. However, this arrangement is not straightforward or standardised. The bargaining surrounding such agreements takes into account the nature of the interaction and the people involved. Our research was for educational rather than commercial purposes and the people involved were known previously to each other. The payment agreed reflected these facts. A gift, on the other hand, does not necessarily involve the payment of money but may be an item, a meal, or an outing. A gift is not necessarily expected or appropriate. This kind of exchange is qualitatively different from payment because it, I think, requires personal engagement with the community. This means that the researcher is

interacting with community members in such a way that she/he is aware of and sensitive to the needs and desires of the individuals and community that they are working and living in. The nature of exchange which took place in !Khubus was a combination of these. However, whether considered a gift or a payment, exchanging goods, money or services for information has the potential of polluting the research atmosphere and of creating an industry that must ultimately be unsustainable.

There is, first of all, a danger that a paid consultant will see his or her interest in continued payment rather than providing accurate information quickly. She/he may be tempted to drag out the relationship by drip-feeding the researcher or to secure her or his position by providing information the researcher is thought to want rather than that which is true and factual. It is also possible that communities become dependent upon the income from researchers spending months, perhaps years, in their midst. We have twice been to !Khubus and there is no doubt that the people there expect us to return. But to what extent our visits and their expectation of further visits and other visitors have altered the manner in which they present themselves and plan for their future is open to question. Can a community alter itself in hopes of attracting research revenue without destroying completely the cultural integrity that initially interested researchers? These questions are both engaging and important for the researcher. But they may have little meaning on the ground. The South African government has a policy of encouraging indigenous populations to develop their potential to attract tourists (for a further discussion of tourism in South Africa see Chapter Seven). This is, in part, a means of recognising and honouring a part of the country's heritage that has been suppressed since the arrival of Europeans in the 17th century. But it is also an attempt to foster the development of economic independence among local groupings. In any case, a reality has been established which the researcher must recognise and work within.

Payment, in one form or another, is expected for performance and for information. Unless it is made, essential cooperation will not be forthcoming. The guitarists of !Khubus were not interested in distinguishing between recording for the Drum Café and ourselves, but financial opportunities. We wanted something from them and the one useful thing we had to give them in exchange was hard cash. They could see that, in contrast to the intentions of the Drum Café, we had no commercial motives and were hoping only to understand their music and culture because we represented a heritage of inquiry where answers are of value in themselves. They could see that we behaved differently than the other researchers; that there was no question of individual

financial gain where we were concerned, while these issues were the sole consideration with the other researchers. So in response to our respect for and genuine interest in the people of !Khubus, they were willing to adjust their expectation of remuneration from us. But they were not willing to forego payment altogether. Whether or not the requirement of payment pollutes the research environment is, to some extent, a moot point. Researchers are perceived as being (and relative to those they study are) privileged individuals who have the time and money to travel from rich countries to spend unpaid time exploring the cultures of (at least in the case of !Khubus) people who have been living in conditions which are among the harshest and least privileged on earth.

4.3. Three Structured Systems

Economic, political, and social practices such as language, family relationships, marriage, birth, and death distinguish the Nama from other people(s) such as, for example, the Xhosa or the Nguni; these customs may also distinguish Nama groups from one another. While an in-depth investigation of any one of these may yield qualities that distinguish the Nama, three of these were evident and relevant to this research: Nama guitar music, the Nama Matjieshuis, and Nama Stap Dance.

4.3.1. Nama Guitar Music

Wandering around the front yard mid-morning of the second week, I encountered a most welcome sight. Three men with guitars sauntered toward our house. Finally, we were going to get started! This was to be the first of three traditional Nama guitar sessions to take place in the Gastehuis.

The guitarists, Simon Petrus, Josef and Andries Obies, were considered to be the finest Nama guitarists in the village. Their expertise in the performance and development of Nama guitar music was acknowledged by their peers and other residents of !Khubus such as Avron Thomas the principal of the local school. They were all of a similar age; fifty-eight to sixty-two years. I had met Josef and Andries a week before when they had played for the Drum Café researchers. Josef looked somewhat frail and his bodily behaviour (light, careful, slow movement) gave the impression that he was much older than his actual years; I would have guessed him to be in his seventies. Andries had come into our front yard for a chat and a smoke with Dave on a number of occasions. He had categorically refused to be photographed,

filmed, or formally interviewed. He consistently dressed in the same manner, blue overalls of the type worn by mine workers, light coloured cap, and soft-soled shoes. Like many others in the village, he was missing a number of front teeth. Simon was the youngest of the three and the most active in personality and movement behaviour. It soon became apparent that he had organised and persuaded the others to become involved with the research. As they prepared their instruments, we provided coffee, tea, biscuits, cakes, and tobacco. This little 'gift' was significant and became a routine 'present' during these sessions. The musicians would arrive and while setting up and tuning their guitars would look forward to refreshments. They would then play for a while, take a break for a smoke and snacks, retune their guitars and the whole process would begin again. This cycle was repeated over a period of two to three hours. Needless to say, large quantities of drink and tobacco were required. These musical sessions provided yet another direct link to interaction with the people of the village.

The sessions were held in our large front room, the doors of which opened directly onto the front yard area and the main thoroughfare. Leaving the doors open during the recording sessions had the effect of an open invitation to any and all in the vicinity. Children, adults, dogs, and goats all wondered in on hearing the music; the atmosphere was magical. People became especially interested when we screened the video recordings after each session. Robert Gino Roman, a teacher at the local school, for example, joined us daily after lessons, as did Petrus Josop. Petrus, we found, was what might be considered the village historian. He was able to give us detailed information about the Nama songs as well as historical background on !Khubus and the Nama in general. His was an interesting story.

Petrus, was in his early sixties, was born in Karasburg, Namibia. He was an ordained Apostolic minister and, in his early years had worked for a Roman Catholic priest who spoke only German; he, therefore, had been forced to learn German in order to maintain his employment. Petrus also spoke Afrikaans, Nama, and some English. He was a wealth of information about Nama history, music and dancing; he was an excellent teacher and even attempted to teach us the principles of the Nama language.

Also joining us from time to time was a second dance teacher; hers too was an interesting and relevant story. She passed the Gastehuis frequently and after some days acknowledged our presence by a smile or a nod of the head. This second dance teacher is an acknowledged leader in !Khubus. I noted, for example, that she took a prominent role during the 'Extending Boundaries' ceremony noted earlier in this thesis. Others in

the community, such as Avron Thomas also referred to her in this capacity. She is particularly noteworthy since she too has reconstructed the Nama Stap Dance.

On learning this fact, I was somewhat baffled, as our consultant had not made us aware of another dance teacher in the village. The fact that someone else in the community was working with this material came as a welcome surprise, and I, of course, wanted to talk with her and see her interpretation of the Nama Stap. To do so, however, would have put us in the position of having to choose 'sides' in an ongoing conflict. Our time in !Khubus did not allow for an in-depth examination of the history or details of the discord, therefore, only a summary of those issues that hindered the progress of this research have been recorded. The information that follows reflects the perspective of people who have similar points of view; it was not possible to solicit a contrasting account. On the surface, it appeared that the nature of the conflict concerned how the local youth Nama Stap Dance group is organised. Closer analysis, however, seemed to indicate that the issue of 'ownership' is also at the heart of the conflict.

The Nama Stap Dance group is a part of a programme of extra-curricular activities sponsored by the local school. The school provides the group with rehearsal space, equipment, and a dance director, Maria Farmer. It also scrutinizes requests for the group to perform, organises fieldtrips, and ensures adequate standards in regard to health and safety in venues where the group perform away from school. Problems have arisen when the dance group has been invited to perform outside of the confines of the school. One such situation arose when a member of the community invited students to perform the Nama Stap Dance at a function that was not organised through the school. On this occasion, parents were uncertain as to whether the performance was a school related activity or some other kind of event. This situation raised a number of immediate and far reaching questions such as who is responsible for the children outside of school authority, adherence to health and safety matters, planning and rehearsal of performances, and, pertinent to this investigation, who is reconstructing the dance and what is their interpretation of it. Also, central to the conflict, is the question of who 'owns' the dance or is 'authorised' to reconstruct or prepare it for presentation.

The points noted above have caused tension in the community around the Nama Stap Dance. It would seem that one is either in one camp or the other. As a researcher, I wanted to be impartial. I was, however, not allowed to take that stance. Consultants made it clear that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for me to be involved with both groups. There was not a choice to be made. It was evident that our consultant had

given us access to considerable contacts; she had set up interviews, rehearsals, workshops, and other activities for us. With so little time available, it would have been absurd for us to consider starting from scratch. We had become unsuspecting victims of community politics.

The subject of payment began as a light-hearted, joking suggestion at break time during the first session. Dave, mirroring the light-heartedly attitude of the guitarists, explained the nature of our research and how the material was to be used; he also clarified the difference between what we were doing and the work of the Drum Café. This laid the matter to rest, but only temporarily. On every occasion that they played for us thereafter, the subject of payment arose and the attitude of the guitarists progressively became less light-hearted and more serious. Dave and I discussed how to handle the matter. My concerns were ethical, theoretical, and financial.

I debated whether I 'should' be paying for information that was to be used for 'academic' purposes. On this point I was guided by my previous research and adopted the point of view of Barfield noted earlier in this discussion; 'the researcher should be prepared to give something back to the community.'⁴ I also questioned the value of information obtained through direct payment. In other words, would the information gathered be a 'glamorized performance' similar to that described as 'airport art'? This kind of representation, I thought, was a 'performance of a performance'. My difficulty here, as I saw it, lay in trying to situate what I was witnessing in order to discuss and analyse the material in its proper context. My financial concerns were purely domestic; I simply could not afford to pay the 'going' rate that, jokingly, had been suggested; 1000 Rand each. This was ten times more than had been paid on behalf of the Drum Café. These researchers had, I realised, spent far less time with the guitarists than we had.

I had come prepared to make a financial contribution to the village as a whole. My time in !Khubus had shown me that two social systems seemed important to most residents: the local school and the village church. The school was in need of books for its community library programme. A financial contribution to the library, I reasoned, would benefit everyone. It was also obvious, because of my attendance at church services, that the local church was also a strong focal point for the community, and an equal donation was made to the church. The guitarists were a different matter; they were individuals. It was evident that we were going to have to come to a financial agreement with them. Based on the resources available, financial and human, we paid

each guitarist a modest sum and a quantity of tobacco. Additionally, and most significantly, we agreed to make a CD of their music and to give a sample copy of it to the well-known South African guitarist and producer, David Kramer. That fact that we had direct links to Kramer and had agreed to make their music known to him diffused the tension entirely.

4.3.2. Evolution of a Cultural Symbol: The Nama Matjieshuis

The matjieshuis is not only a major component of the historical Nama female puberty ceremony and the present-day Nama Stap Dance, but is a unique form of Nama vernacular architecture. The dynamism and tenacity of this cultural artefact remains an obvious facet of contemporary Nama life. While maintaining its traditional function, the matjieshuis has, like the Nama Stap Dance, evolved to signify both traditional and contemporary Nama values. The conventional style matjieshuis is readily seen punctuating the landscape of the Richtersveld area in the northern part of South Africa where Nama coloured-reserves are situated.

The matjieshuis is a familiar edifice in !Khubus; here it continues to be utilised in a traditional manner where it provides accommodation for visitors, researchers, and is home to many of the inhabitants of the community. Its role today, as well as its status, in !Khubus, and in Nama society generally, is much greater. The function of the matjieshuis has expanded from that of providing basic shelter to one in which it is an essential part of the economic system on which the Nama rely. This expansion is a direct result of South Africa's cultural revitalization programme. The growth of purpose of the matjieshuis has had the added effect of reinforcing it as one of a number of cultural symbols that signify the Nama worldwide.

The need for a continuous supply of vegetation and water for their herds necessitated a nomadic way of life for the early Khoekhoen. The architectural design of the matjieshuis, like designer recreational vehicles today, enhanced this itinerant lifestyle. This moveable house was planned for portability, maximum function, and comfort. The early matjieshuis was,

...a semi-permanent shelter...which could be put up and taken down quickly and easily...It was a simple structure which consisted of a framework of light poles and a covering of sedge mats...The aerodynamic dome shape enclosed maximum volume with a minimum of surface area...The circular plan and upward curving roof gave the interior a spacious feeling although the actual space inside was restricted. The sedge mats fastened over the framework in a

particular pattern regulated atmospheric conditions within. In dry weather, air could pass through the mats to cool the interior but when it rained the sedge expanded to provide a water-tight roof. Two mat doors at the front and back could be rolled up to increase ventilation and augment the diffuse light that filtered through the mat walls (Archaeology and Anthropology Resources Index, 2006: <http://www.museums.org.za/sam/resources/arch/mathuis.htm>).

As in the past, women are the architects of these traditional family homes, and they continue to engineer their construction today. In !Khubus I had the good fortune to take part in the construction of two matjieshuis. Here, they are built in the traditional manner to traditional standards; this method makes their construction, from a



Figure 14. Construction of a traditional Matjieshuis

contemporary point of view, an extremely time consuming activity. The building of a matjieshuis (Figure 14) is a multi-layered process which requires, at a minimum, the collection and preparation of thorn trees needed for the scaffold; the gathering and preparation of reeds for the outer matting; the weaving of the mats; preparation of the ground; the construction of the frame and, finally, attaching the outer covering. Noteworthy in this process are the mats that form the walls of the matjieshuis. Traditionally, the pattern woven into the mat would have been distinctive of the group of people or clan who produced them. This was yet another early identifier between Nama groups. Although I noted a number of patterns on mats throughout !Khubus, which are now used for a variety of purposes, when questioned, no one considered the designs to be distinctively 'Nama'.

The matjieshuis or 'mat' house is 'considered to be very rare' today. Rare, in this sense, means that the traditional mat house, that is constructed of traditional materials, using traditional processes, and to traditional standards is not often seen. To say that the traditional matjieshuis is rare is probably a fair statement statistically speaking. However, as has been demonstrated, and, more importantly, as I have experienced, the traditional matjieshuis is not uncommon in the Richtersveld region. It has, in fact, been targeted as one of a number of traditional crafts that has been re-established as a result of government funding. It is also evident, that cultural processes,

organic as well as forced external influences, have affected nearly every feature of the matjieshuis (Figure 15),

...change in size and materials used; have produced new patterns of material culture and social organisation among the descendants of 19th c. Nama herders...variants using hessian, plastic and corrugated iron can be seen side by side with European-style houses in parts of Namaqualand (Archaeology and Anthropology Resources Index, 2006: <http://www.museums.org.za/sam/resources/arch/mathuis.htm>).



Figure 15. Contemporary Matjieshuis

Both types of matjieshuis are seen as part of the landscape of !Khubus. While still serving its traditional function, today the mat-house is also a cultural commodity. It has evolved to become a symbol of the Nama people themselves, signifying both their traditional and contemporary customs.⁵

4.3.3. Acquisition and Transmission of the Nama Stap

By the time they arrive at the school gates to begin their formal education, the children of !Khubus are familiar with the Nama Stap. Mrs. Farmer's task is, therefore, essentially one of refinement. Her mission begins by imparting to the children her seasoned understanding of the central ingredient of the dance, the Nama Stap. This movement has been described earlier, and an in-depth analysis of it can be found in Chapters Five and Six. In this section, I discuss how the dance is transmitted or passed down the generations; the students' behaviour and responses to formalisation of the dance; and my interactions with and responses to these processes. The rudiments of the Nama Stap Dance, like other activities, such as language, mat weaving, textiles, and cooking are acquired as part of the daily life experience of the children of !Khubus. The formalisation of this symbolic dance, along with other systems necessary for social interaction and survival, takes place at school as part of a larger programme of formal and extra curricular activities.

Although it is not a mandatory activity, few students pass through their school days at John Hein Primary School without having had some experience of the Nama Stap Dance. Maria Farmer has been the director of the school's Nama Stap Dance Group for many years, and at least three generations of dancers have benefited from her

knowledge.⁶ In her role as leader of the group, she clarifies the finer details of the Nama Stap, sets and choreographs the dance, selects pairs who will dance with each other, coaches soloists, organises music and musicians, prepares costumes, coordinates performances, and accompanies the children when they are on tour. Her influence permeates the entire dance experience.

The group of sixteen students who I observed in rehearsal formed an entity by way of their school uniform; these were a familiar western design. This unifying attire is contrasted by the group's composition. Ranging in age between seven and thirteen, the dancers represented two generations. There were five male dancers who partnered eleven females. As with the adults, the boys were noticeably smaller than the girls of similar age. Although they sometimes practice out of doors in the school's play area, the Nama Stap Dance Group typically meet in a classrooms after lessons. There does not appear to be anything distinctive or 'Nama' about the room's decor. It is similar to those I have observed in my own and other cultures—four pastel coloured walls and windows along one side. The room is small for the number of dancers who need to work in it. The lack of adequate space for dancing is yet another all too familiar reality. Recorded music is routinely used for rehearsals, and therefore the guitarists are not present. There are repeated problems with the tape machine and, while waiting for these to be resolved, the boys in the group drum on the tables while the girls freely dance a variety of personal interpretations of the Nama Stap; the rehearsal has begun. This impromptu 'warm-up' period continues until the problems with the tape machine have been solved and the music begins. I am very familiar now with the Nama Stap music and note that the recording is not the music of the Nama Stap.

On hearing the melody, and with no obvious direction from Mrs. Farmer, the dancers move into formation and begin the dance. This 'call to performance' was curiously reminiscent of similar behaviour observed in the Nama Stap Dance performance described previously; on hearing the music those dancers, too, casually moved into pairs and started the performance. I now questioned whether this casual 'call to order' is a significant part of the dance performance. Holding hands in pairs or trios, the dancers perform a number of counter clockwise circles of the Nama Stap. Each dancer performs the basic footwork, dynamics, and rhythms of the step in a similar manner, and each has a similar body attitude. Ironically, every pair and each performer, it seems, is, at the same time, distinctive. It is obvious early in the dance that there is a leader; she, in this case, forms part of the first pair of dancers. She occupies

the position on the outside of the circle—right of her partner. As the dance progresses, and at what appear to be key moments, such as spinning or retracing of steps, Mrs. Farmer intervenes in order to clarify or improve the dancing. This is done in-situation—the dancers do not stop moving in order to take instruction but continue their progression as these are given.

In giving instruction, Mrs. Farmer joins in the dancing and mimics the rhythmic footwork and body attitude of the group. In turn, the lead dancer mirrors these instructions a second time to the group. The director also gives instructions from the sidelines. The dancers absorb these, as before, while they are moving, they never stop dancing. In all, at least at this advanced stage in preparation for a performance that is to take place the next day, there are relatively few comments or corrections. There is, however, another level of scrutiny, and this is from the dancers themselves.

The children of !Khubus acquire the rudiments of the Nama Stap through a variety of daily life experiences. By way of typical family recreational activities, the fundamental movements of the Nama Stap are observed. Initial experiences of this Nama cultural key take place at home through observation and interaction with parents, grandparents, siblings, and family friends. According to Mrs. Farmer and other consultants, young children observe, play with, mimic, and eventually join in the movement and dance activities of the household. This is how she, in fact, was introduced to the Nama Stap. Children also observe others in the village doing the dance in either casual or performance settings. Examples of casual transmission were observed during our time in !Khubus.

The first of these occurred during our Nama guitar sessions at the Gastehuis. Young children, attracted by the guitar music, the open doors, and the festive atmosphere, gathered round and danced versions of the Nama Stap. They either imitated each other, or moved freely to the guitar music. Another instance of this process was observed during the Extending Borders celebration. After a formal presentation of the Nama Stap, children were seen, and filmed, imitating the Nama Stap, Longarm Dancing (Long Arm dancing), and moving more freely;⁷ adults joined the children in this impromptu dance recital. It is evident that peers are a medium of transmission of the dance; and the younger children copy the older ones. Through these processes children in !Khubus develop a cultural specific body knowledge of the Nama Stap. This perspective becomes the standard of excellence by which they judge themselves and

others. Two instances in which these standards were applied were noted. The first critique occurred during the rehearsal session outlined above.

The Nama Stap Dance is organised in such a way that the best dancer(s) is situated at the rear of the group; this is the last set (or two) of movers. This hierarchy is not at first apparent as, initially, the viewer's attention is drawn to the first pair of dancers where the leader of the group is situated. The leader must be a good dancer, but she/he is not necessarily the best dancer. The middle section of the dance can be considered its high point, as this is where the best dancer is introduced. This part of the dance can be described as a 'display', 'challenge' or 'exhibition' section. Either singly, in pairs, or in trios, the performers enter the centre of the crescent-shaped formation to display their best performance, interpretation, and variation(s) of the Nama Stap; the performance at this point is also an unspoken challenge to all to 'top this'. This is a point in the dance where the finer cultural specific body knowledge of the dancer is exhibited. It is at this juncture that the dancers critique each other. A second opportunity to understand the dance from the Nama perspective arose when I attempted to perform the Nama Stap for the group.

Following my initial analysis of the Nama Stap, I demonstrated my version, and thereby my understanding, of it, not to Mrs. Farmer, but, firstly, to the children. This produced howls of laughter. I was asked to repeat the step again and again. There was discussion and debate as to the merits of my performance. Finally, the 'best' dancer of the group commented. 'Miss,' he said, 'you do indeed know the Nama Stap but you must keep practising.' Practising what I thought, 'what' had I missed out, what had I not understood? Quite possibly, I reasoned, a lifetime spent in the Richtersveld; I lacked the insider's life experiences. Thereafter, each time I happened to come into contact with one of the young dancers I would demonstrate my understanding of the Nama Stap. There was always laughter and tuition on these occasions. These spur-of-the-moment lessons gave me more opportunities for interaction; not only were the children involved in these, but adults and onlookers also took a mild interest. As a result of these lessons I began to learn the more subtle aspects of the Nama Stap; these details have been integrated into the analysis and notation scores in Chapters Five and Six.

4.4. Summary

This chapter is a record of and reflection on the experiences of the second fieldtrip carried out to investigate the Nama who live in !Khubus, South Africa. This interaction with the Nama differed significantly to the first visit; most notable is the fact that on the second visit we resided in !Khubus village itself. This juxtaposition of ourselves with the people of the community enabled us to engage in daily life overtly as participant observers and covertly as distant witnesses. The information gathered from the two trips is, therefore, fundamentally different. Whereas the first trip was primarily one of exploration in order to determine the feasibility of field research among the Nama, the concern of the second was to have a dynamic experience of contemporary Nama culture and customs and to situate its dancing in relation to these. While the first fieldtrip uncovered a ‘national’ dance practiced by the Nama, the second visit enabled us to place it in a vibrant social context and to cultivate a Nama-like appreciation of it. It seems that practical exposure to the day-to-day social issues that significantly affect the lives of people as individuals and a community proved to be an excellent means for the development of such sensitivity. This kind of perspective is impossible to build through text-based sources only. Furthermore, living inside the village allowed us to understand how the segments of information gathered could be organised to form a picture of the Nama of !Khubus during the period of this research.

Field research that takes place outside of a researcher’s own culture must be carefully planned and structured. This would include, in the first instance, practical issues such as finance, language, accommodation, and knowledge of local customs. These matters are, relatively speaking, within the management of the research team. The research strategy needs also to be considered prior to departure; this plan, however, should also take into account that you are working with living people and cultures and, therefore, what you hope to do and to accomplish is as likely not to happen as it is to occur; the unexpected is a surety, and, try as you might, it is certain that the researcher will make some kind of social or political blunder. I encountered the unexpected during the course of residency in !Khubus and these have been catalogued above. The field researcher must be prepared to make modifications in the research strategy in order to, most importantly, remain in the community and to perceive and to reflect the reality of the research situation accurately.

Although it is evident that the dance and its purpose have expanded, both the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance are a vital part of life in !Khubus. The Nama have

affirmed the Nama Stap as a symbol of their identity, and this, from a considered outsider's point of view, is appropriate. The dance is meant to personify not only their history, but also who they are now and their aspirations for the future.⁸ It is an intriguing amalgamation of German, Dutch, and historic Nama influences, and, considered from this perspective, may be viewed as a visual story of the Nama. Children are exposed to it at an early age, and they acquire good body knowledge of it prior to its refinement as part of their formal education. As with many other aspects of culture, the dancing of the youth is notably different to that of the older generations. Where the young imbue the dance with youthful energy, drive and contemporary worldwide influences, the older generation have refined it into a dance of gentle beauty. A detailed analysis and interpretation of the mature version comprises Chapters Five and Six.

!Khubus is a Nama word which means 'God is found here.' This seems appropriate for a community of people who, in spite of a horrific history, still exist today and who are still dancing.

Notes

1. For a fuller discussion and case study regarding land claims in Namaqualand see Sharp (1994) and Sharp and Boonzaier (1994).
2. See also Sharp and Boonzaier (1994) for a further case study of the exhibition of Nama traditional culture in !Khubus.
3. Singing and clapping, especially among Nama women, has been noted throughout literature on the Nama. See especially Kirby (1933).
4. Notator Megan Jones Morais has also commented on the issue of payment concerning her work with the Warlpiri women's dances of Australia. She comments, Documentary exchange takes place between the documenter, the dance participants and their community, and the funding body if there is one. Traditional dances are frequently used as a means of barter. However, whether or not an actual exchange is requested by the dancers in return for their performance, they are giving the documenter what s/he wants. It is appropriate, therefore, for the documenter to give something in return whether it be time, energy, information and/or material goods. Because dance is a means of exchange and barter for the Warlpiri, it was especially important that I, as one receiving ritual information via participation in the dance event, offered something in return for being allowed to document their dances. These ritual obligations were met by fetching firewood, bringing the women food, and giving money and material goods in return for the knowledge I received (Morais, 1992, p 132).
5. In regard to the matjieshuis, UNESCO has stated: *The authenticity of the domed house is mainly intact, despite incorporation of some new materials along with the*

finely braided mats. There are increasing numbers of young people interested in continuing the traditions (UNESCO World Heritage web site, www.whc.unesco.org/en/list/1265, accessed November 2008, italic added).

6. Mrs. Maria Farmer is director of the group; however, other women in the village assist her. These are mainly the women who also perform in the Nama Stap Dance.

7. Longarm Dance or Longarm Dancing or Langarm (original Afrikaans nomenclature) is a type of informal...South African social dance for couples, probably derived from European and North American folk dances and ballroom dances. It is especially popular amongst white Afrikaner people but it has gained popularity among other cultural groups. The name of the dance refers to the particular arm positions assumed by the couple—normally male and female. The leader's left arm is held straight out while his right arm is held around his partner's torso. Both torsos are held in normal ballroom position, i.e. straight up. (Fourie, D. 2007. Unpublished report; collection of author).

8. See also Sharp & Boonzaier (1994) for a discussion of Nama 'contemporary' ethnic identity as 'performance'.

Chapter 5

Nama Scores and Kinetograms

5.0. Introduction

A dance or a movement sequence that has been transcribed into Labanotation may be considered a dance score. On the other hand, any Labanotated sequence (of movement) may be termed a kinetogram (Hutchinson, 1977). The distinction between these is one of intent and form. The former is related to composition while the latter may or may not relate to composition or may be viewed apart from the whole. Both kinds of documentation comprise the Labananalysis presented here. Kinetograms, for example, may be found in the glossary that lists particular Labanotation usage such as consistent use of the legs in terms of leg rotation. Models of these may also be found in the vocabulary section where kinetograms of the various positions of the arms are recorded. Dance scores record either entire dance compositions or sections of choreography. In this work, this would include the Nama Stap Dance/Female Puberty Version as well as the various interpretations of the Nama Stap and turning patterns.

Contextual information concerning the Nama Stap, the Nama Stap Dance and its various interpretations has been discussed in Chapters Three and Four. This chapter consists of a glossary of Labanotation usage, a series of scores and kinetograms of selected versions of the Nama Stap, and a score of the Nama Stap Dance/Puberty Version. My reasons for the selection of Laban analysis for this purpose were argued in Chapter Two. The scores already at this stage give an impression of my interpretation of the dances and this may be noted in the manner in which they have been transcribed into Labanotation. However, a detailed analysis of the score and an interpretation of the dances follow in Chapters Six and Seven.

5.1. Glossary

The score begins with a glossary that details and explains particular usage of Labanotation. For example, in standard practice two different sets of pins may be used to identify and distinguish female and male performers. In this score I have used the tack type pin \perp , typically used to identify a female, to indicate dancers on the inside of the

circle, and the white pin \downarrow , also used to label female dancers, to distinguish performers on the outside of the circle. As all dancers are female, this usage poses no confusion for the reader. However, due to its visual distinctiveness, this method immediately informs the reader of the relationship of the pairs of female dancers to each other and to space.

Sequences of movement that repeat, such as the Nama Stap, have also been recorded in a particular manner. Movements that repeat may be identical repeats or a movement sequence can alternate—a sequence that starts on the right will, on repeating, start on the left. In performance, this material is repeated a specified number of times. However, in the Nama Stap Dance, the leader may repeat a sequence as many times as she chooses. In this score, I have recorded this feature as well as the specific sequencing of the dance as it was performed at the time of recording. For example, an identical repeat is indicated with the sign for this instruction: \div . An identical repeat performed six times would be recorded as: $\div 6$. In the score I have recorded the exact number of repeats performed and also used the ad lib sign (?) to indicate that the number of repeats may vary. Thus $\div ?$ tells the reader that the sequence is to be repeated six times but the addition of the ad lib sign allows for more or fewer repeats.

5.2. Nama Stap

The Nama Stap is a distinctive sequence and is also a major component of the Nama Stap Dance. During the course of field research, I witnessed and documented in Labanotation a variety of interpretations of this popular movement motif. These include versions by my cultural consultant Maria Farmer, local youth who comprise the Nama Stap Dance Group, an account that I have labelled as tourist version, and an interpretation of the NS performed by a group of mature Nama women of the village of Nababeep. This version of the motif was transcribed from a video recording of the sequence made by my research assistant Ralph Bouwers who visited Nababeep in May 2006 as part of this research. None of these is offered as a definitive description of the Nama Stap. Instead, the various versions have been recorded to demonstrate the variety of interpretations of the sequence, the development of the Nama Stap during the course of this research, and its importance to the people of !Khubus.

5.3. Vocabulary of the Nama Stap Dance

The Nama Stap Dance recorded in the Labanotation score is based on the historic Nama Female Puberty Ceremony as interpreted by Maria Farmer and a group of mature women in !Khubus during the period of this research (2001-2003). This version of the dance is made up of the Nama Stap, three sets of arm patterns, and four turning sequences. These three movement patterns are used in a variety of ways to construct the Nama Stap Dance/Female Puberty Version.

5.4. Contents of the Scores and Kinetograms

Glossary of Usage

Nama Stap Variations

- Maria Farmer: !Khubus Village
- Maria Farmer: Orange River
- Female Puberty Version
- Youth Versions
 - Variation One: on the spot
 - Variation One: moving through space
 - Variation Two: on the spot
 - Variation Two: moving through space
 - Variation Three: on the spot
 - Variation Three: moving through space
 - Aerial Embellishments
- Mature Women of Nababeep
- Tourist Version One
- Tourist Version Two

Movement Vocabulary of Nama Stap Dance – Female Puberty Version

- Arm Positions
- Turning Patterns
 - Turn One: arm over
 - Turn Two: under the arm
 - Turn Three: wrapping
 - Turn Four: finger turn
- Leader – dancer A2
 - Movements of the head, torso, and centre of gravity
- Leader – dancer B2
 - Movement of the arm upward and downward

5.5. Structure of Nama Stap Dance/Female Puberty Version

Part One			Part Two		
Section	Bars	Movement	Section	Movement	
A	1 – 4	Turn one Turn two Nama Stap	A	41 -49	Nama Stap
B	5 - 12	Nama Stap Turn three Turn four	B	50 - 53	Any turning pattern
C	13- 17	Nama Stap Turn two	C	54 – 62	Nama Stap
D	18 – 23	Nama Stap Turn three	D	63 – 70.....	Nama Stap Any turning pattern
E	24 – 34	Nama Stap Turn two Turn four			
F	35 - 40	Nama Stap			

5.6 Music Score: Nama Stap Dance Music

The music score that follows was transcribed from a recording of the music (via mini disc) made by Jean Johnson Jones in July 2003 during a recording session in !Khubus Village; the recording session has been described in detail in Chapter Four. The guitarists for the recording session were Andries Obies and, Josef Obies; the singers were Sofia Slander and Lidia S. Obies Nkok. The music was transcribed into music staff notation by ethnomusicologists Simon Mills.

The first score titled ‘Nama Stap Dance Music’ is the full music score transcribed by Mills. The second score titled ‘Relationship of Nama Stap to Nama Stap Dance Music’ illustrates the rhythmic relationship of the music of the guitar and voices to various versions of the Nama Stap; this relationship was transcribed by Jean Johnson Jones.

5.7

Nama Stap Dance Music

Guitarists: Andries Obies, Nkok, Josef Obies

Singers: Sofia Slander, Lidia S. Obies

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The top staff is for 'voice' and the bottom staff is for 'guitar'. The guitar part features a constant strumming pattern throughout the score. The vocal part includes several melodic lines with lyrics written in parentheses below the notes. The lyrics include '(oo)', '(oo)', '(i)', '(na)', '(ne)', '(oo)', '(with guitar solo)', '(oo)', '(oo)', '(num)', and 'etc...'. A bracket spans across all staves with the text '(strumming continues)'.

Music originally recorded via mini disc by Jean Johnson Jones, July 2003,
!Khubus Village, Richtersveld, South Africa

Relationship of Nama Stap to Nama Stap Dance Music

voice 

guitar 

Basic

Nama Stap

Stepping

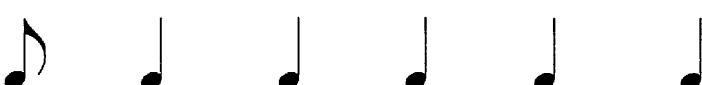
Pattern-NS/P



Nama Stap

Youth in !Khubus

NS/D - Variation Two



Nama Stap

Youth in !Khubus

Aerial Embellishment



Nama Stap

Youth in !Khubus

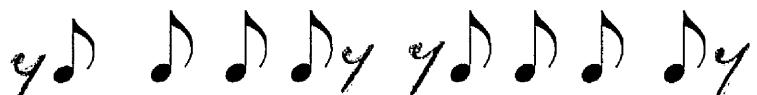
Aerial Embellishment



Nama Stap

Mature Women of

Nababeep



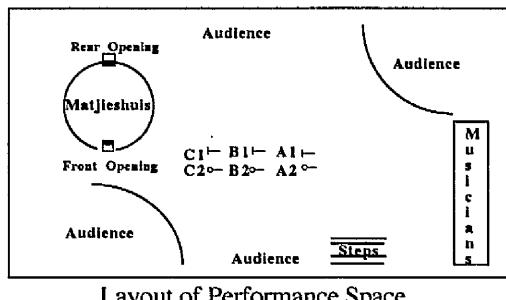
5.9 DVD Nama Stap Dance

An unedited DVD of the NS/P performed by mature women in !Khubus (2001), NS/D by youth in !Khubus (2003), and NS by mature women of Nababeep (2006) has also been included. The DVD provides another form of documentation as well as a visual record of the dances.

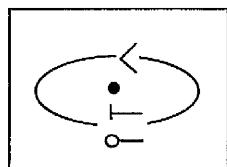
5.10 Score of the Nama Stap Dance—Female Puberty Version

Nama Stap Dance

Glossary



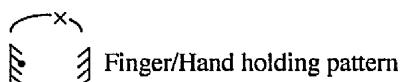
Layout of Performance Space



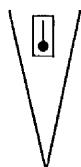
Except where indicated, one set of pins on floor plans indicate the path taken by all dancerss.



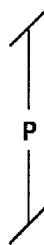
Enlargement of Matjieshuis



Ad lib timing; timing is flexible



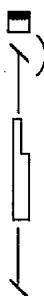
Return to line of direction,
i.e. circumference of the circle



P Circular path to the right around partner



See floor plan for path



Circular path towards the rear of the matjieshuis



Circular path towards matjieshuis

Nama Stap Dance Glossary

÷ } The use of an ad lib sign in conjunction with a repeat sign indicates, in this score, that although the bar numbers indicate a single repeat; in performance, the sequence may be repeated as many times as the dance leader chooses.

9? The use of an ad lib sign in conjunction with a bar number indicates that, in this score, the sequence has been recorded as, for example, bar 9; however, in performance, the sequence may be repeated as many times as the dance leader chooses thereby altering the bar/measure numbers.

70... Indicates that although bar 70 is the concluding one in this score, in performance, the dance may continue beyond this bar.

Direction and level of arm gestures may alter due to the difference in height of pairs of dancers.

◆ Matjieshuis

○ ☺ The centre of gravity has an resilient, bouncing quality

●

_| Indicates female dancer on the inside of the circle

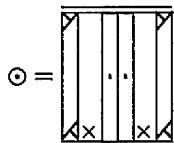
_| Indicates female dancer on the outside of the circle

△ Symbol used on the floor plan to indicate the Initiate

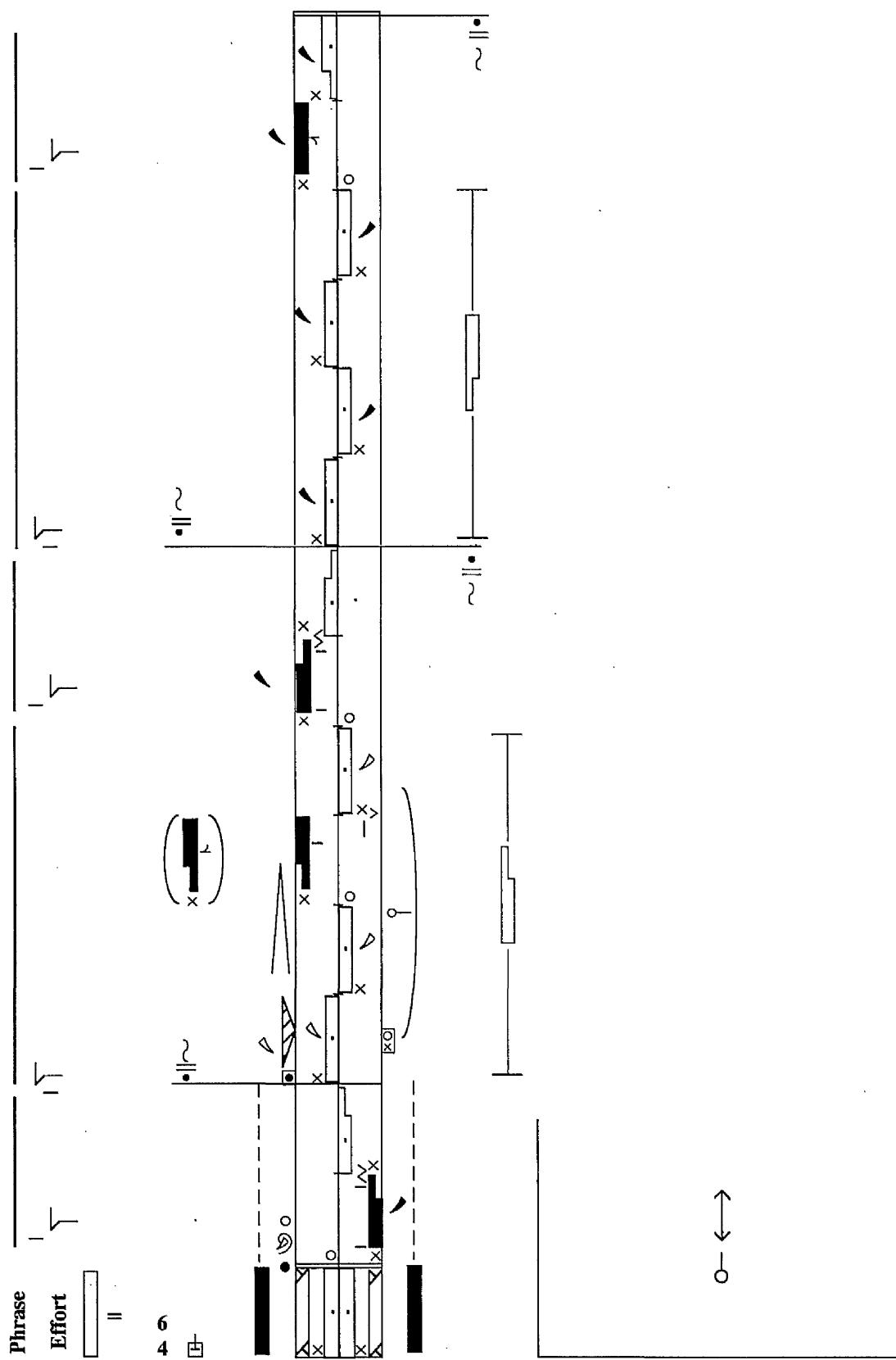
▲ Symbol used on the floor plan to indicate the Leader in relation to the Initiate

◎ Each dancer

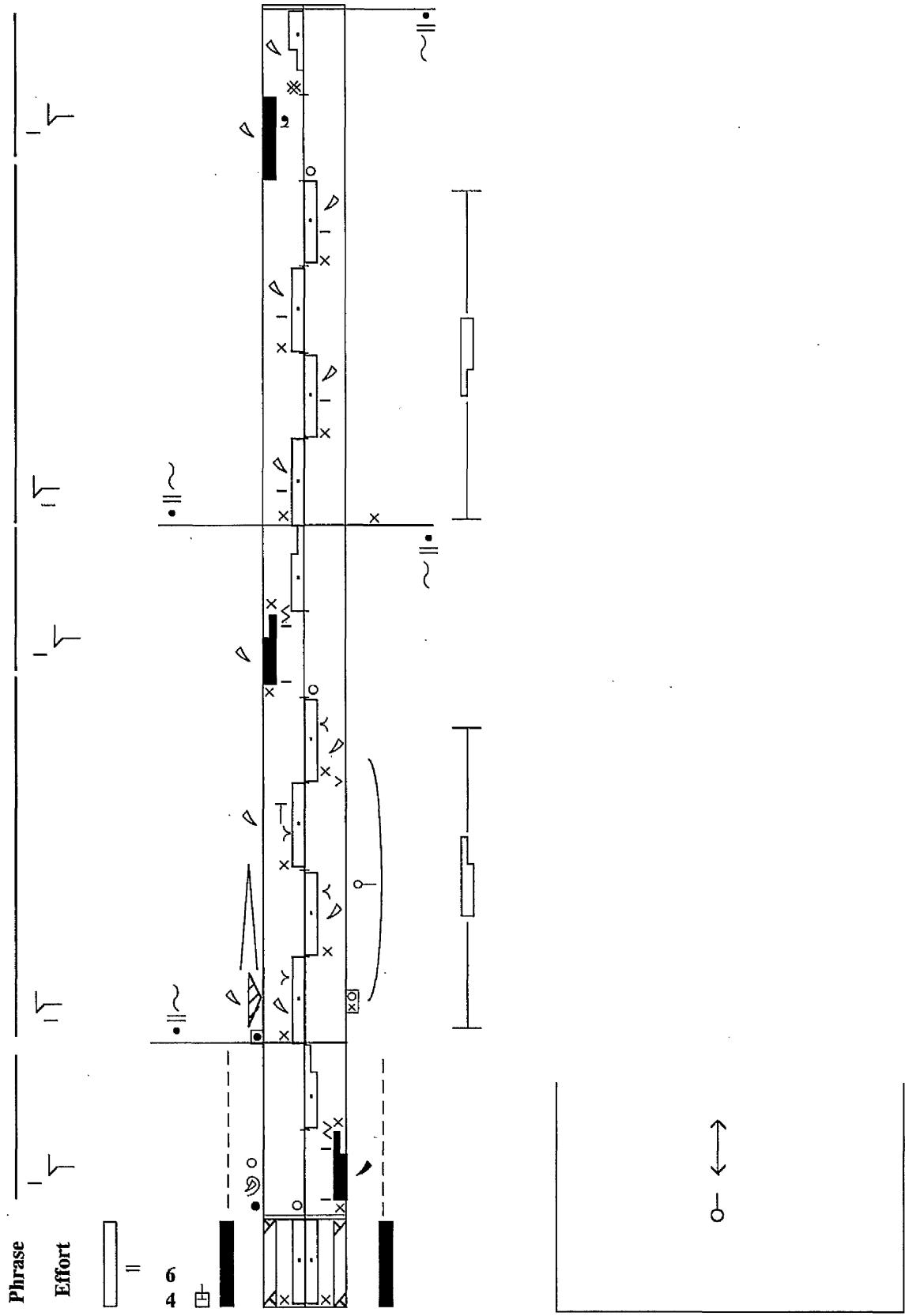
P Partner



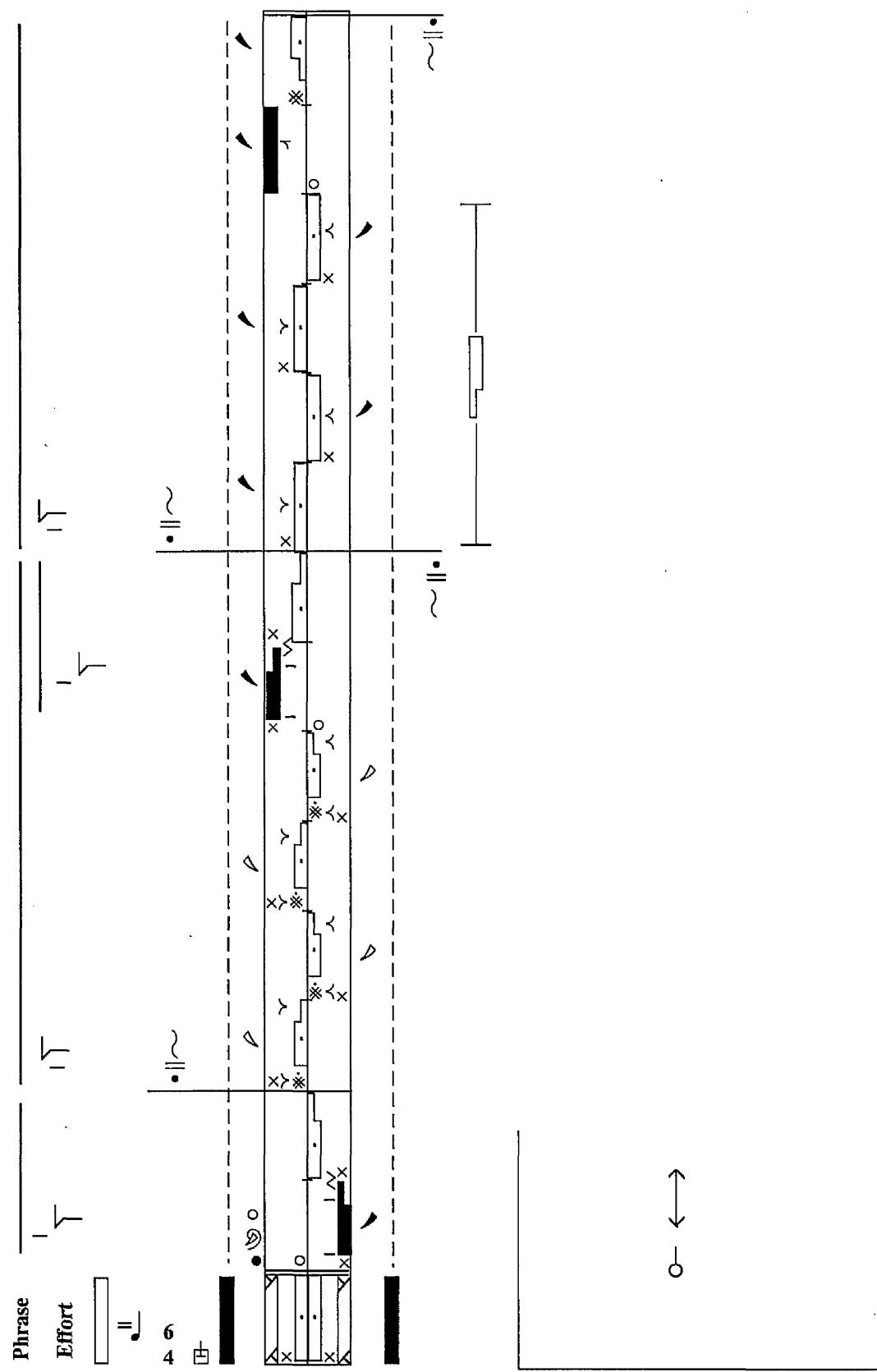
Nama Stap
!Khubus Village Version
2001



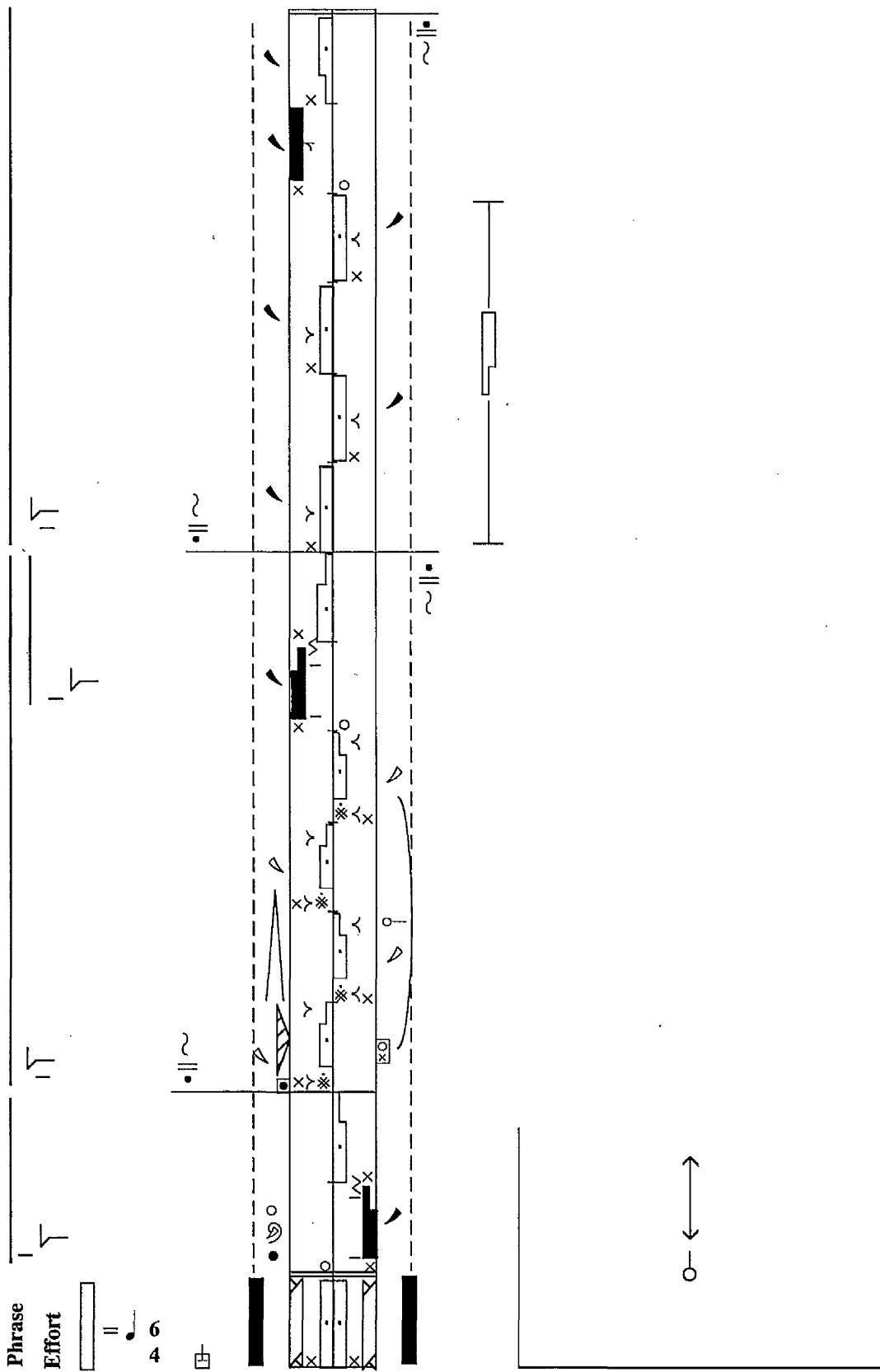
Nama Stap
Orange River Version
2001



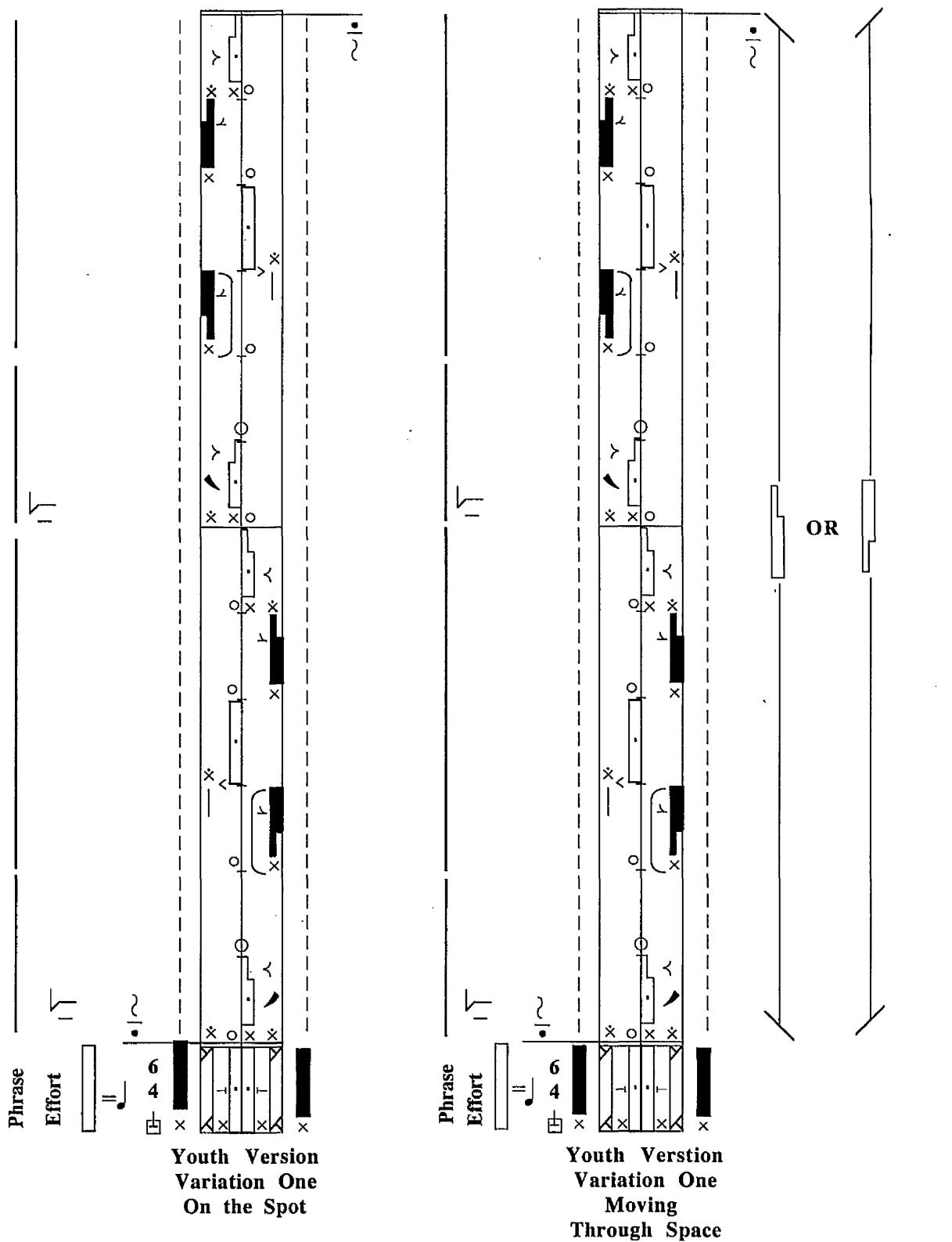
Nama Stap
The Nama Stap Dance
Based on Female Puberty Ceremony
2001



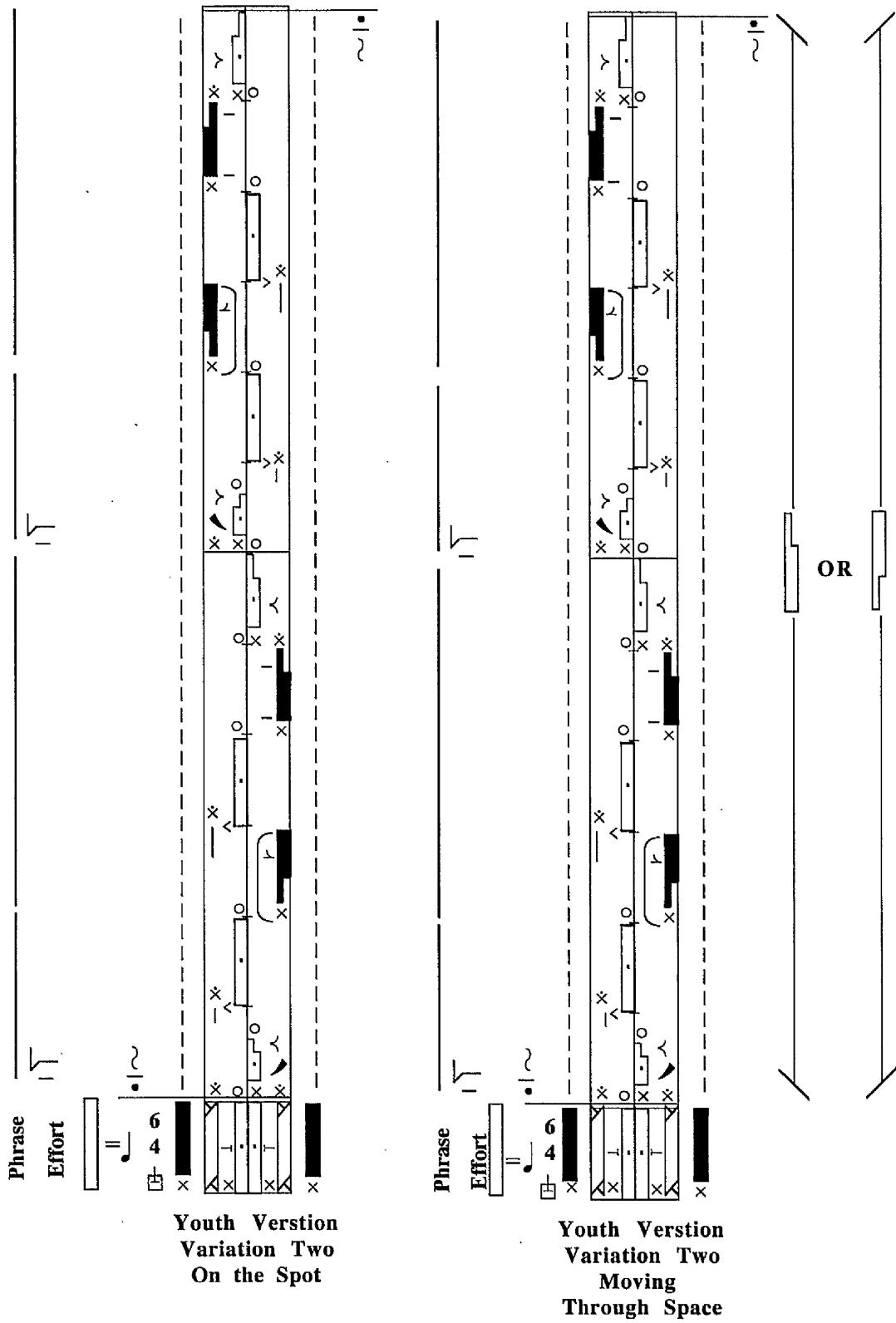
Nama Stap - Variation
The Nama Stap Dance
Based on Female Puberty Ceremony
2001



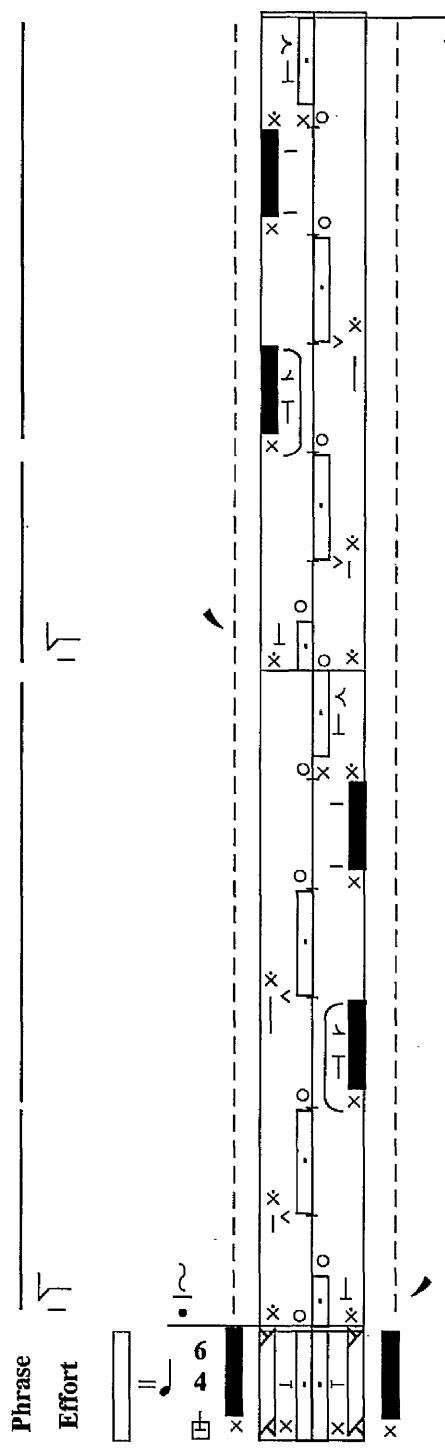
Nama Stap
The Nama Stap Dance
Youth Version
2003



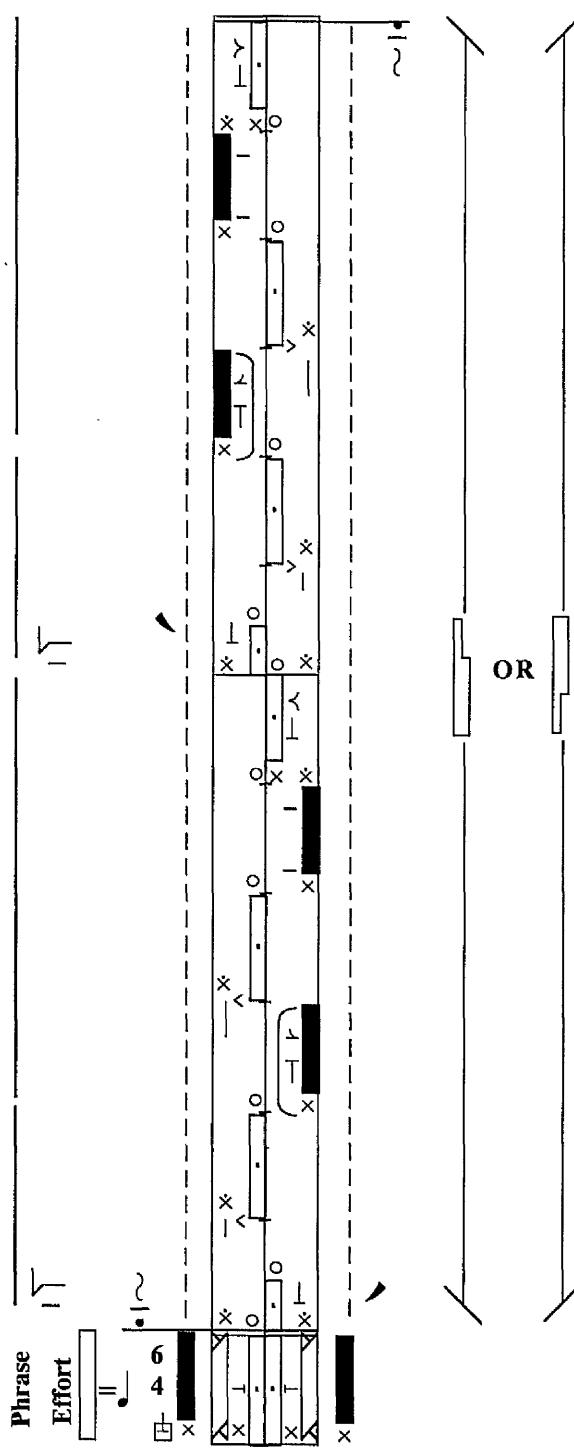
Nama Stap
The Nama Stap Dance
Youth Version
2003



**Nama Stap
The Nama Stap Dance
Youth Version
2003**

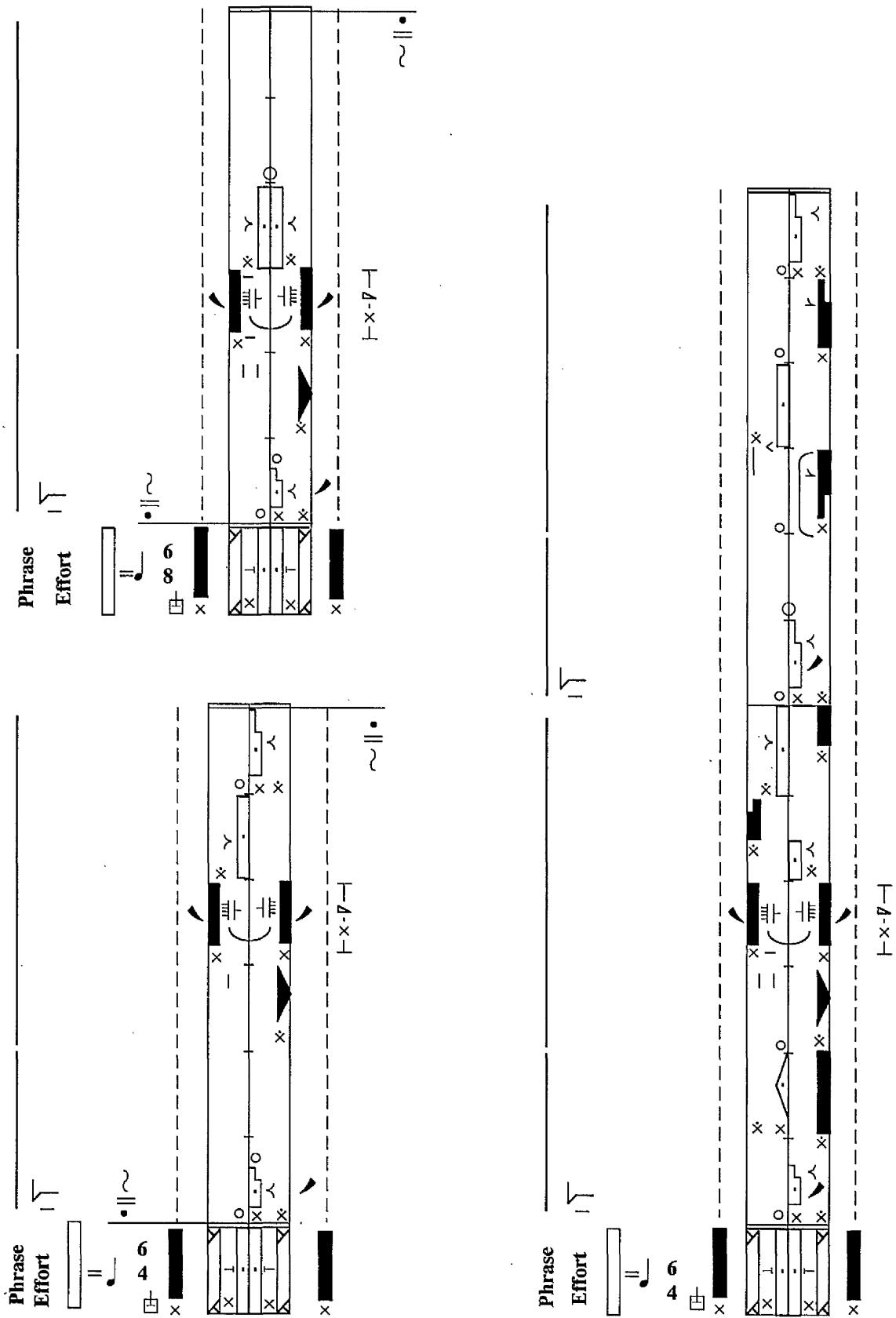


Youth Version
Variation Three
On the Spot



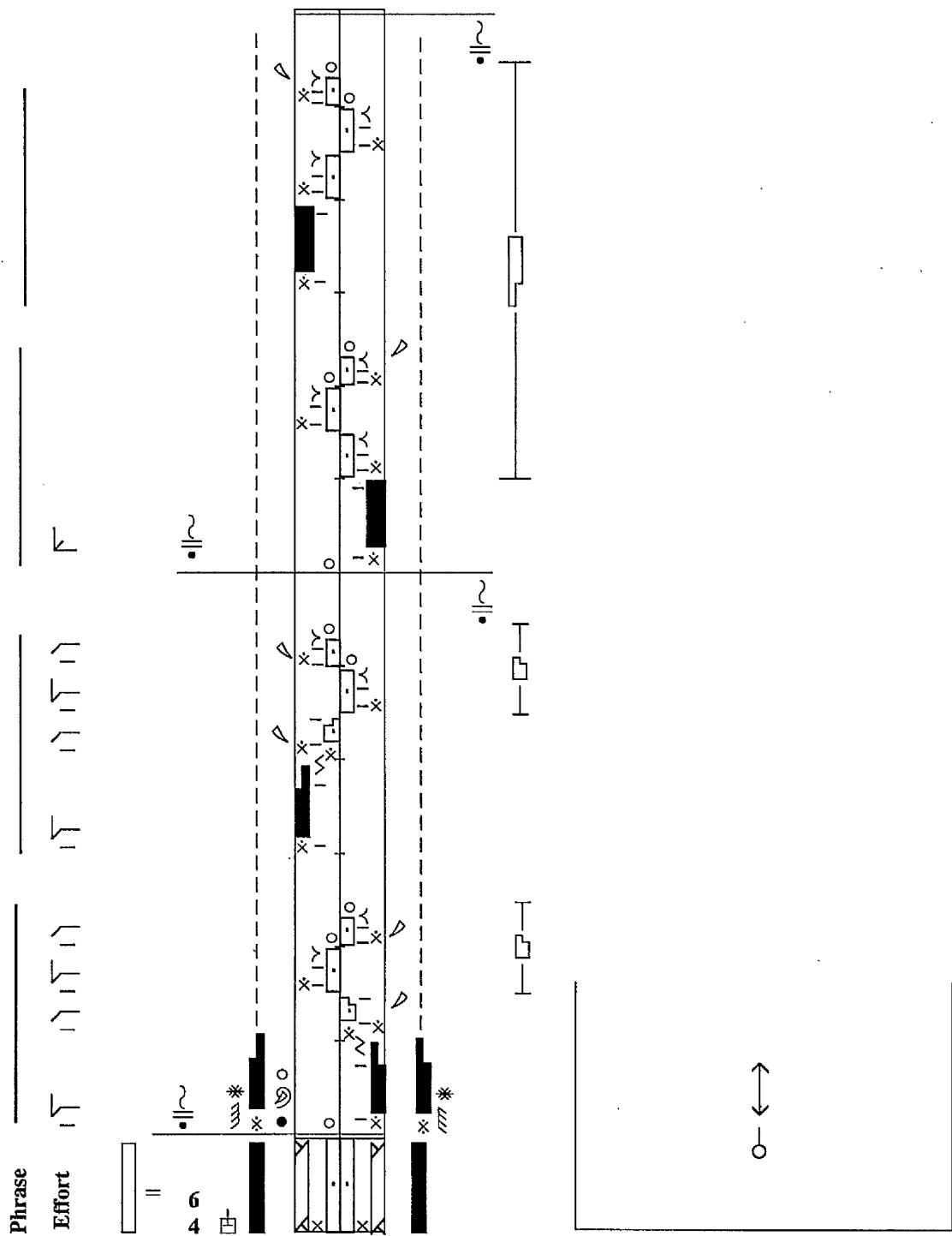
Youth Version Variation Three Moving Through Space

Nama Stap
The Nama Stap Dance
Youth Version
2003
Aerial Embellishments

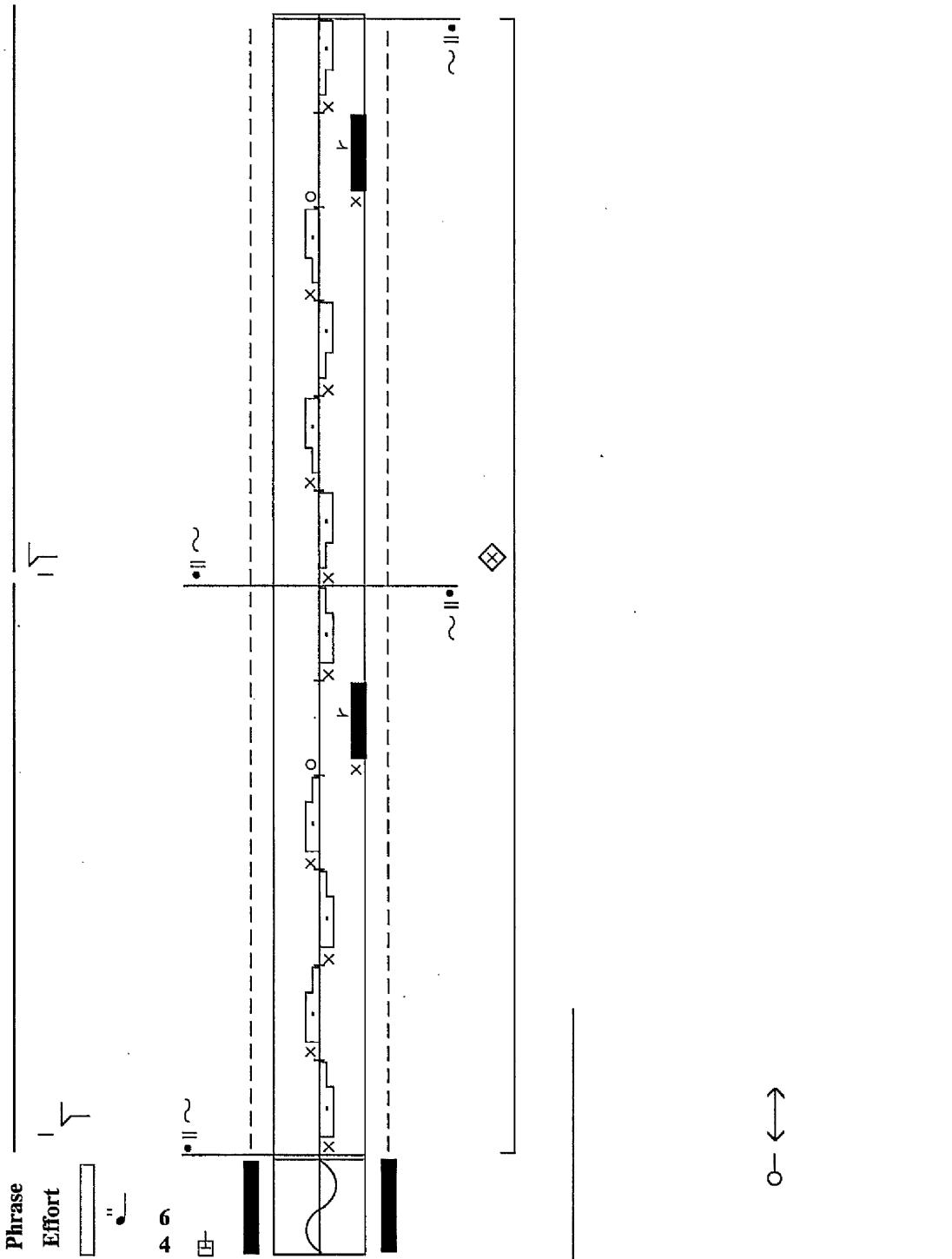


Nama Stap

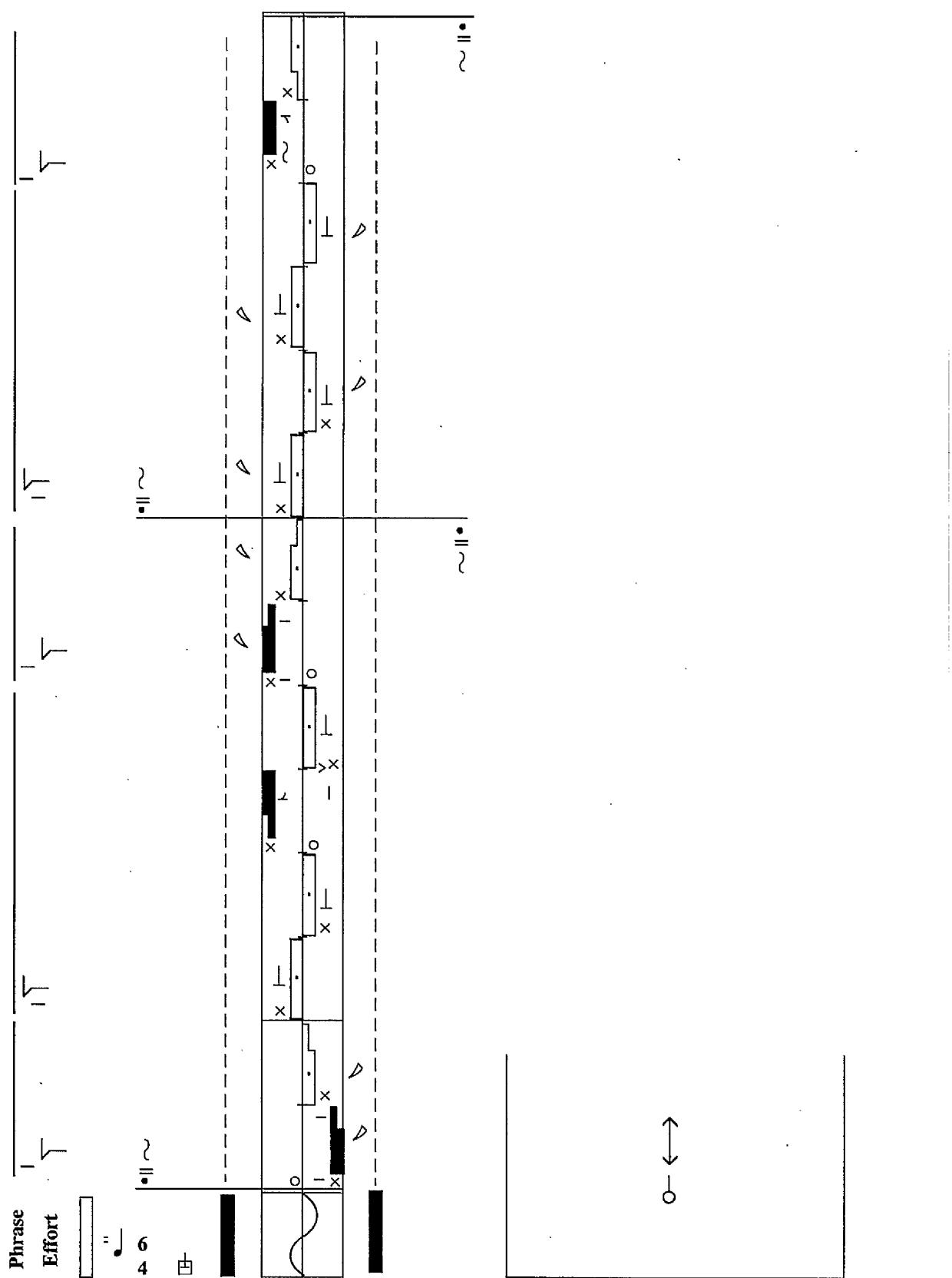
Performed by Mature Women of Nababeep, South Africa, 2006
Transcribed from video recording



Nama Stap
Tourist Version One
2003



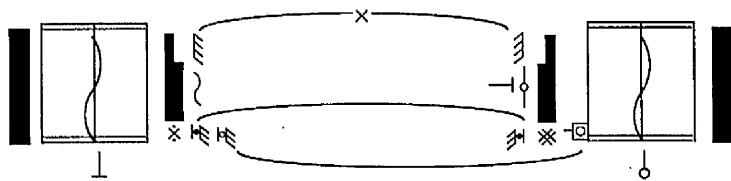
**Nama Stap
Tourist Version Two
2003**



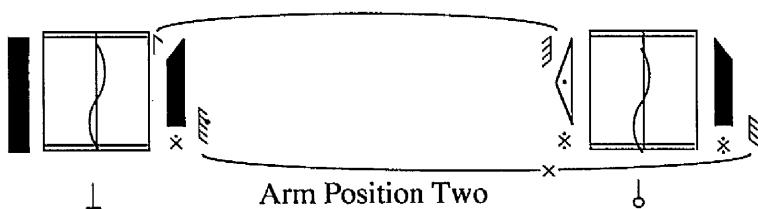
Nama Stap Dance
Based on Female Puberty Ceremony
!Khubus Village
June, 2001

Movement Vocabulary

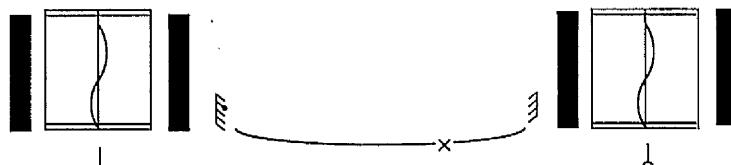
Arm Positions



Arm Position Three
Used by lead pair only
(dancers A1 and A2)



Arm Position Two
Used most frequently



Arm Position One
Used in starting position only

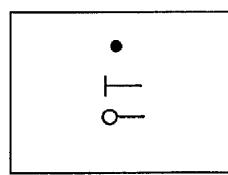
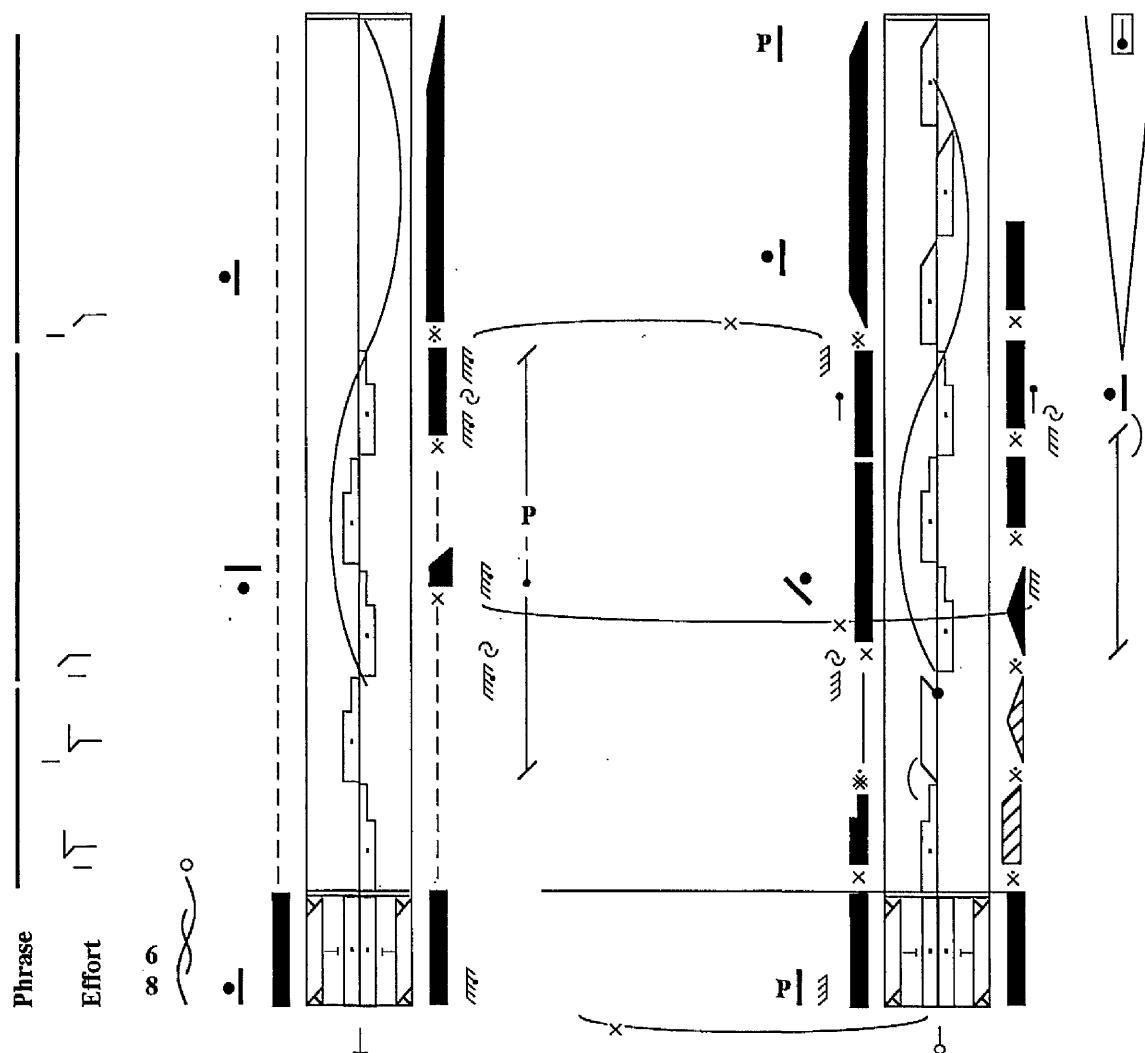
↓ = Dancer on inside of circle

↑ = Dancer on outside of circle

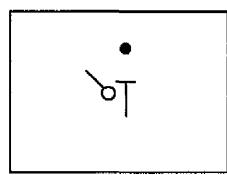
Nama Stap Dance
Based on Female Puberty Ceremony
!Khubus Village
June, 2001

Movement Vocabulary

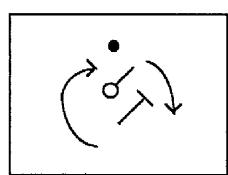
Turn One - Arm Over



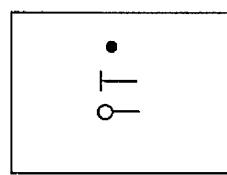
Starting Position



Cts. 2-3



Cts. 4-5

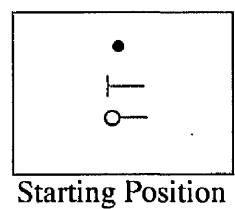
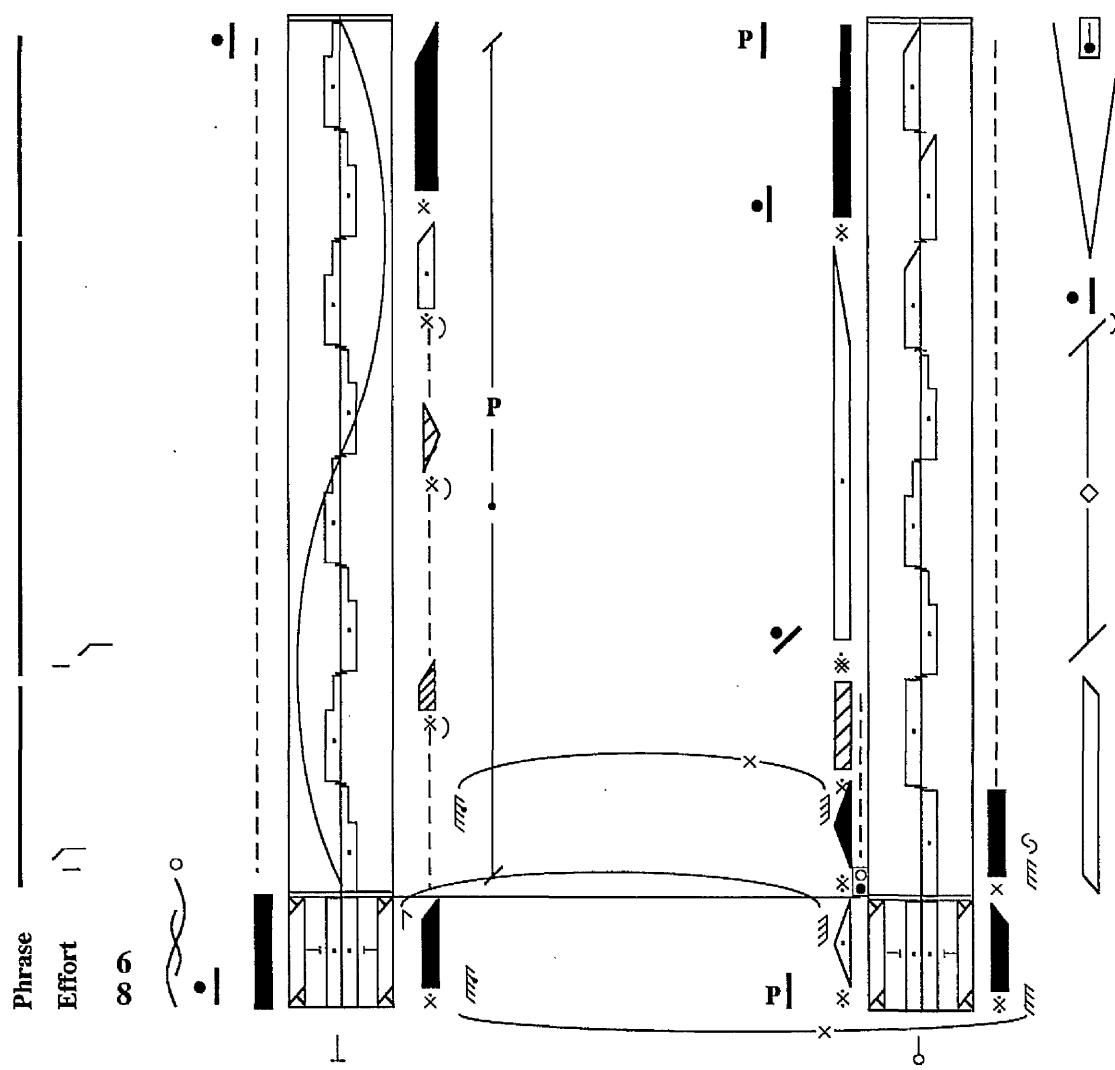


Finishing Position

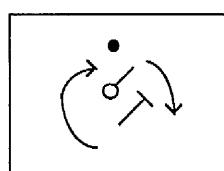
Nama Stap Dance
Based on Female Puberty Ceremony
!Khubus Village
June, 2001

Movement Vocabulary

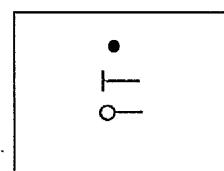
Turn Two - Under the Arm



Starting Position



Cts. 1-2



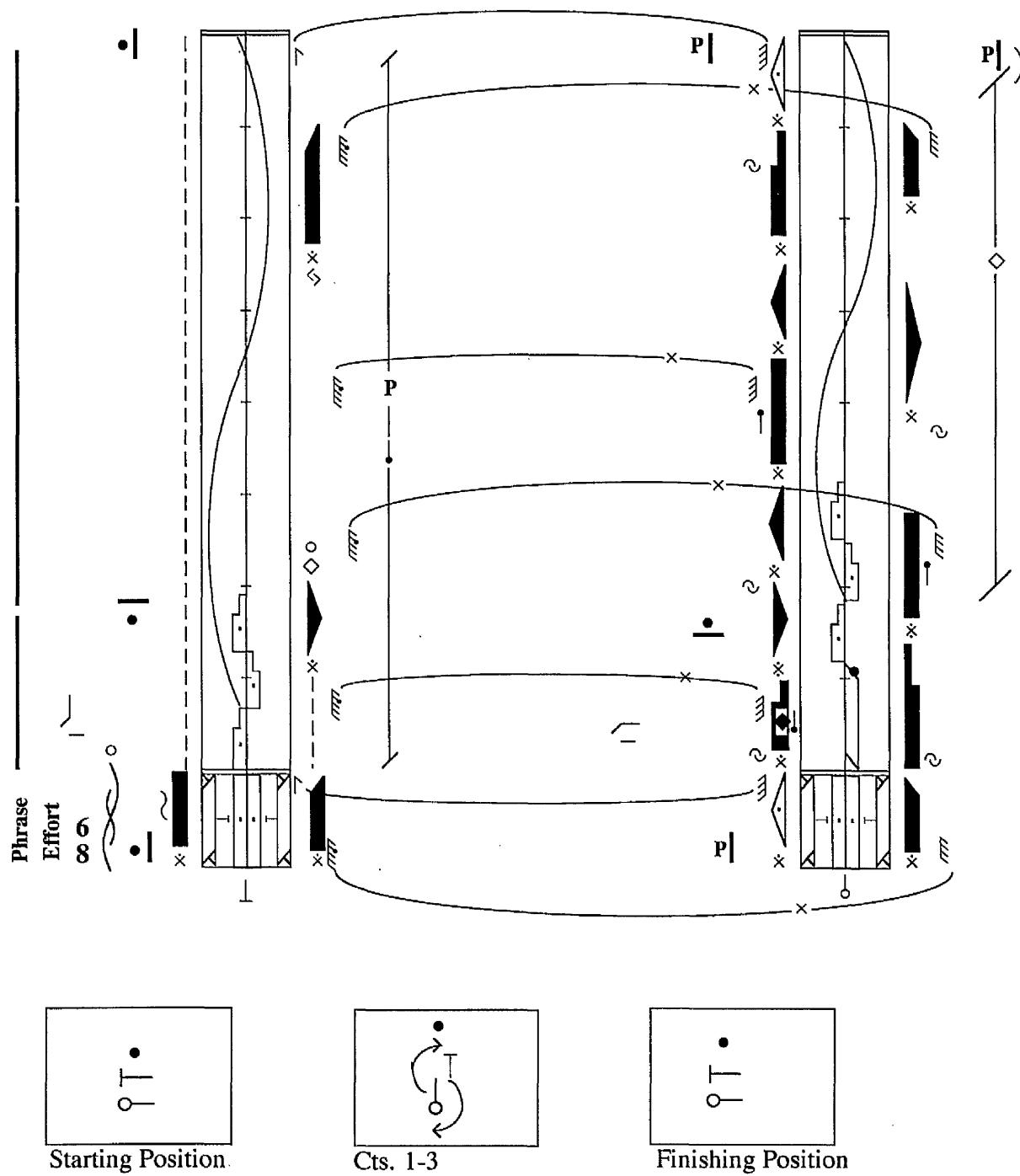
Finishing Position

• = Centre of the circle

Nama Stap Dance
Based on Female Puberty Ceremony
!Khubus Village
June, 2001

Movement Vocabulary

Turn Three - Wrapping Turn

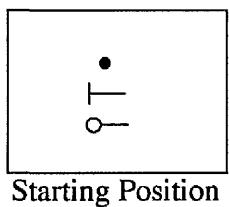
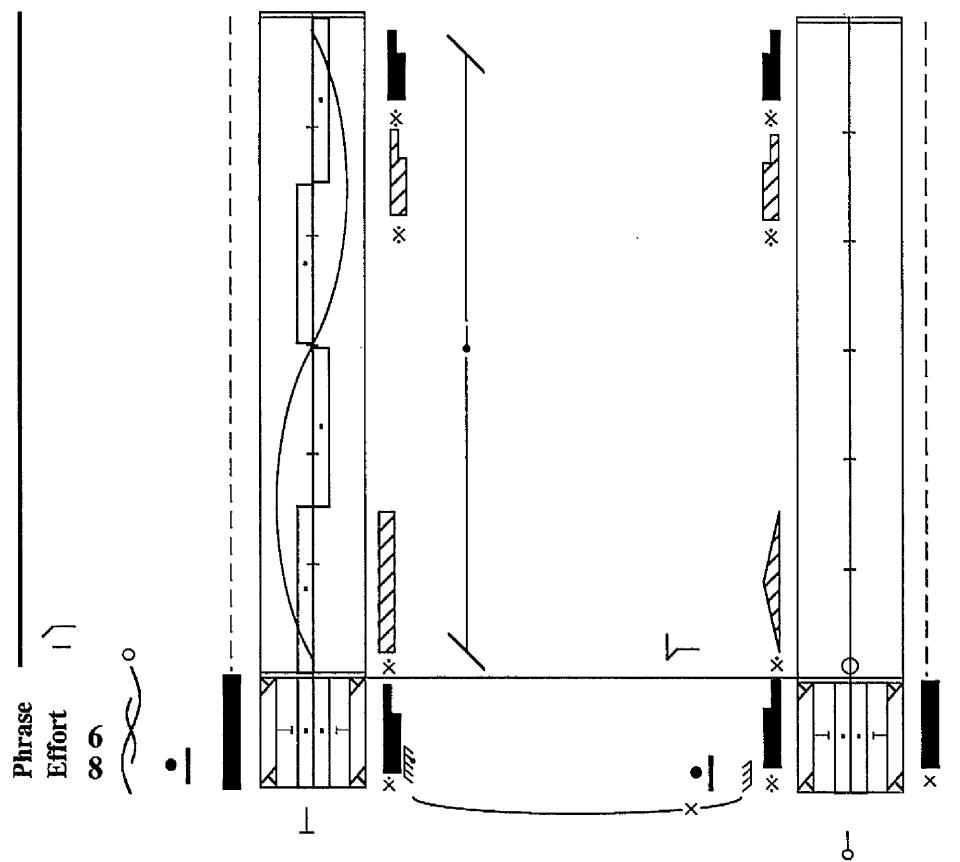


• = Centre of the circle

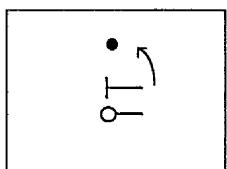
Nama Stap Dance
Based on Female Puberty Ceremony
!Khubus Village
June, 2001

Movement Vocabulary

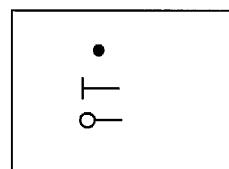
Turn Four - Finger Turn



Starting Position



Cts. 1-3



Finishing Position

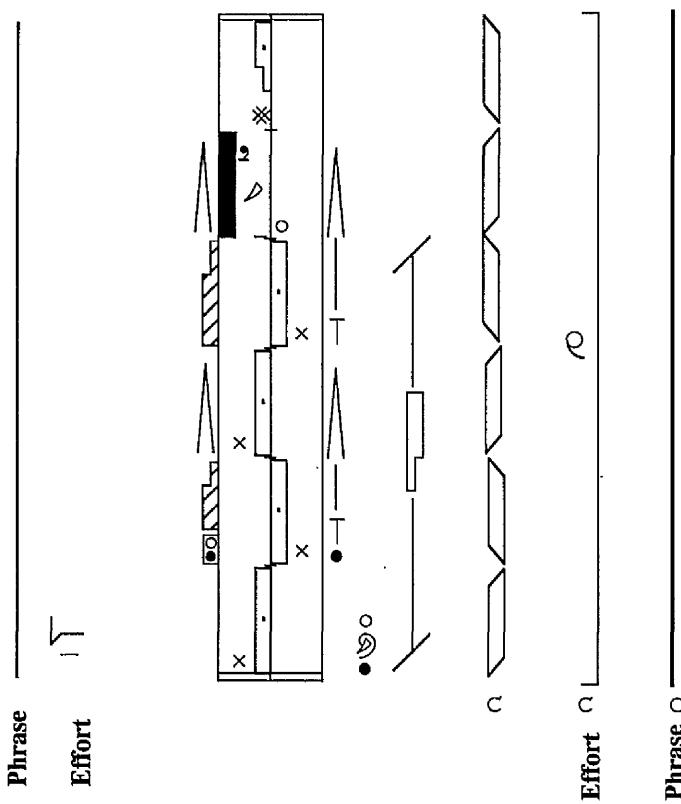
• = Centre of the circle

Nama Stap Dance
Based on Female Puberty Ceremony
!Khubus Village
June, 2001

Movement Vocabulary

Leader - A2

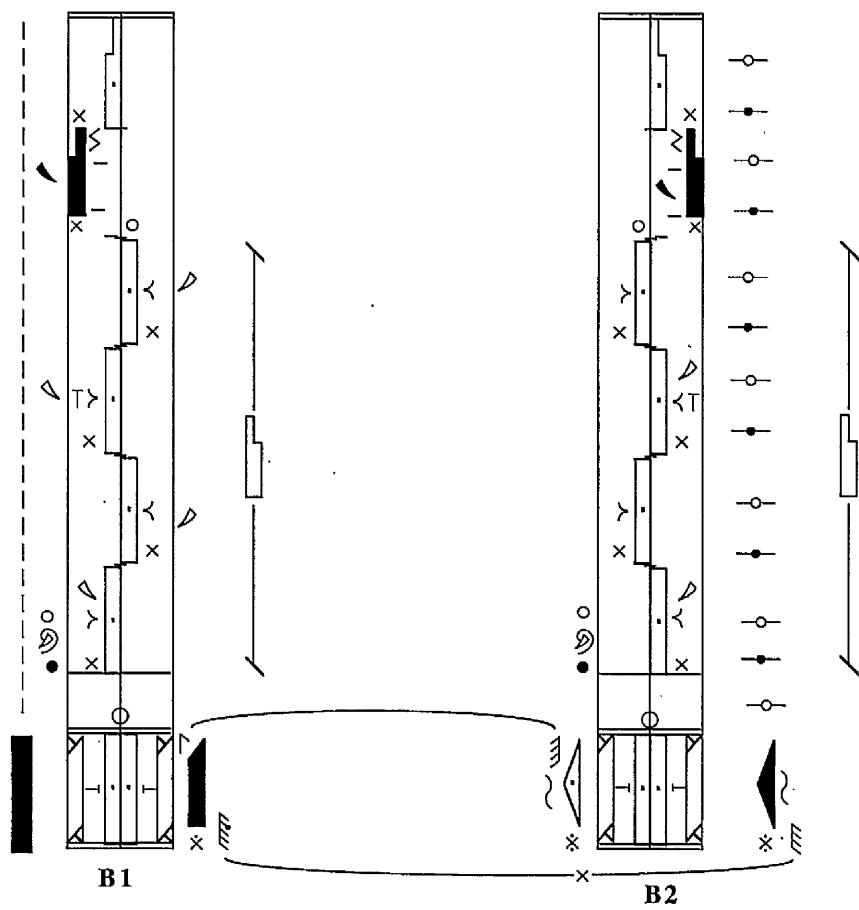
Featuring movements of the head, torso, and centre of gravity



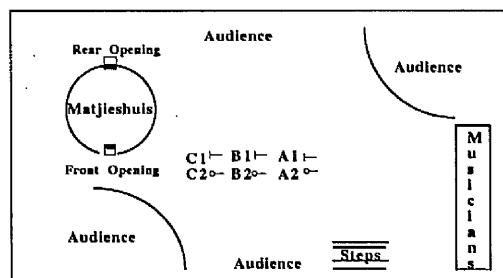
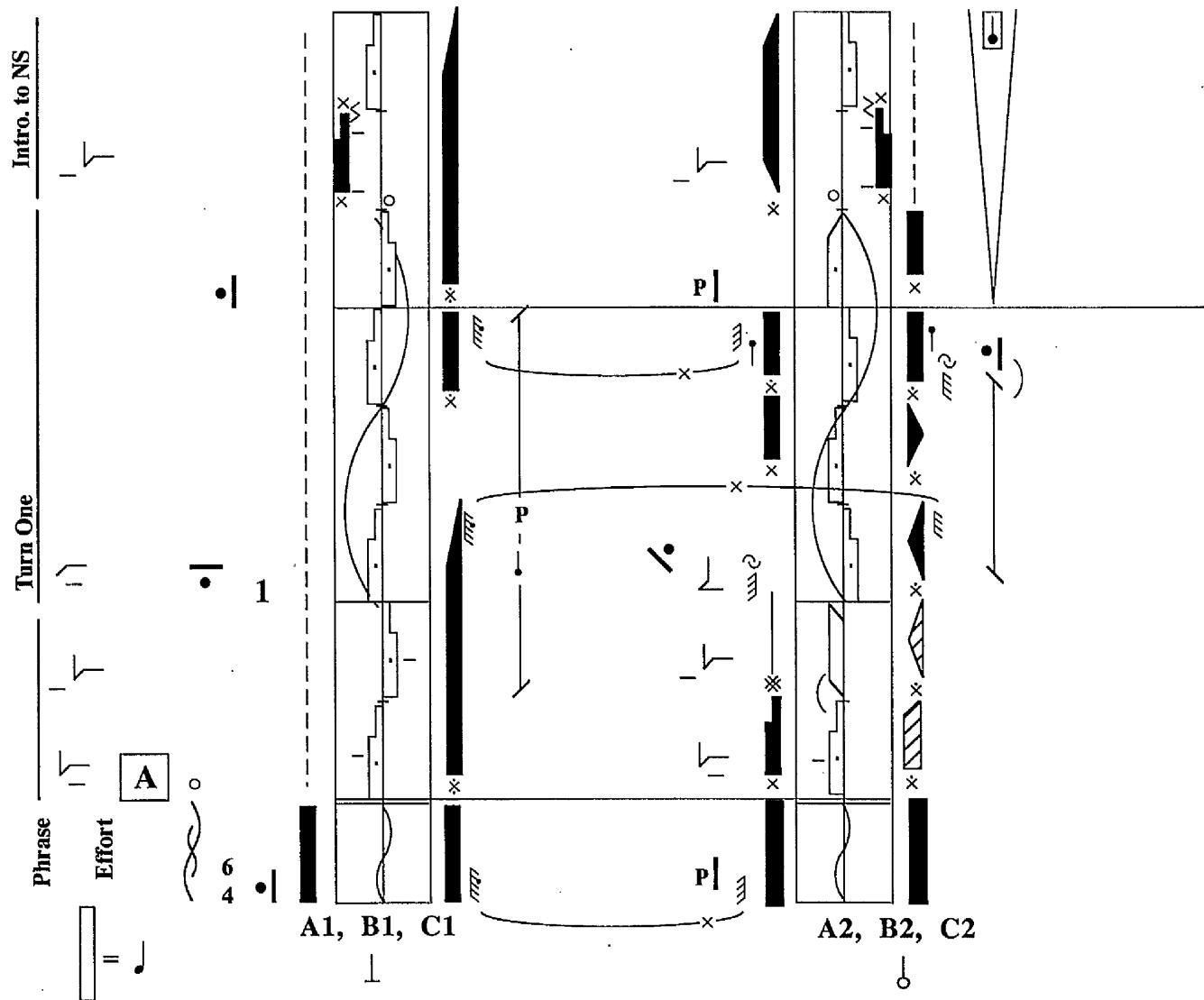
**Nama Stap Dance
Female Puberty Ceremony
!Khubus Village - June, 2001**

Leader B2

Movement Motif featuring movement of the arm upward and downward.

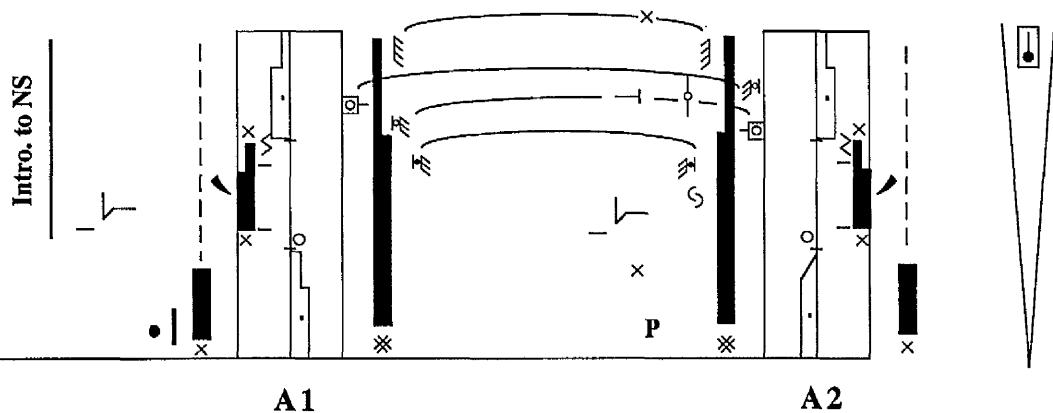


Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One



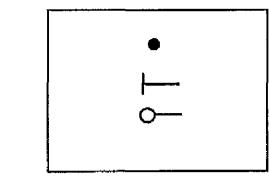
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One

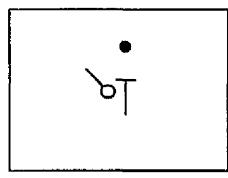


A1

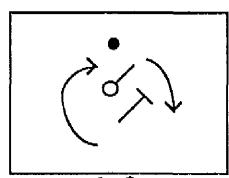
A2



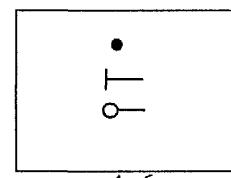
Starting Relationship



Intro.



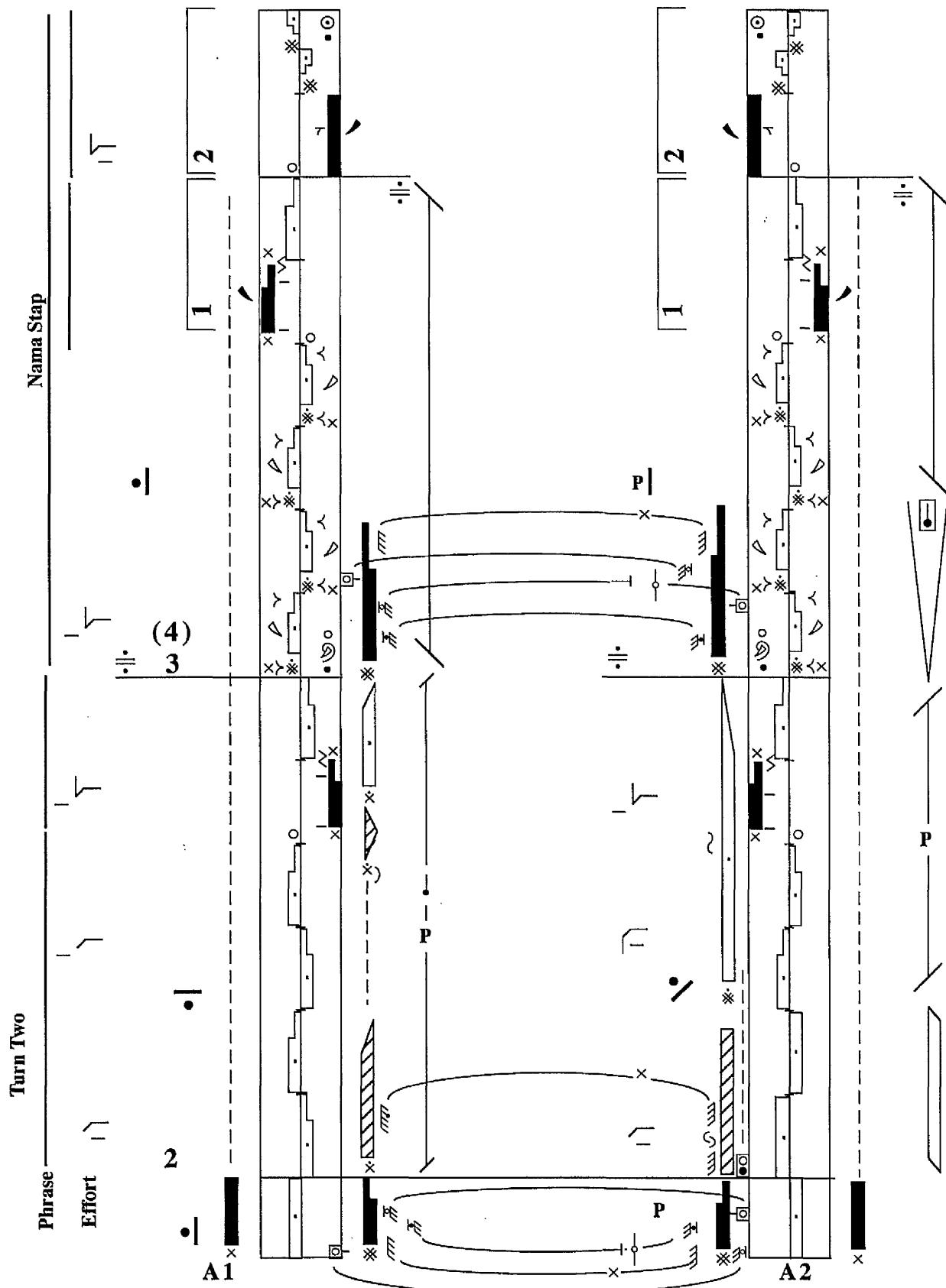
Bar 1 1-3



Bar 1 4-6

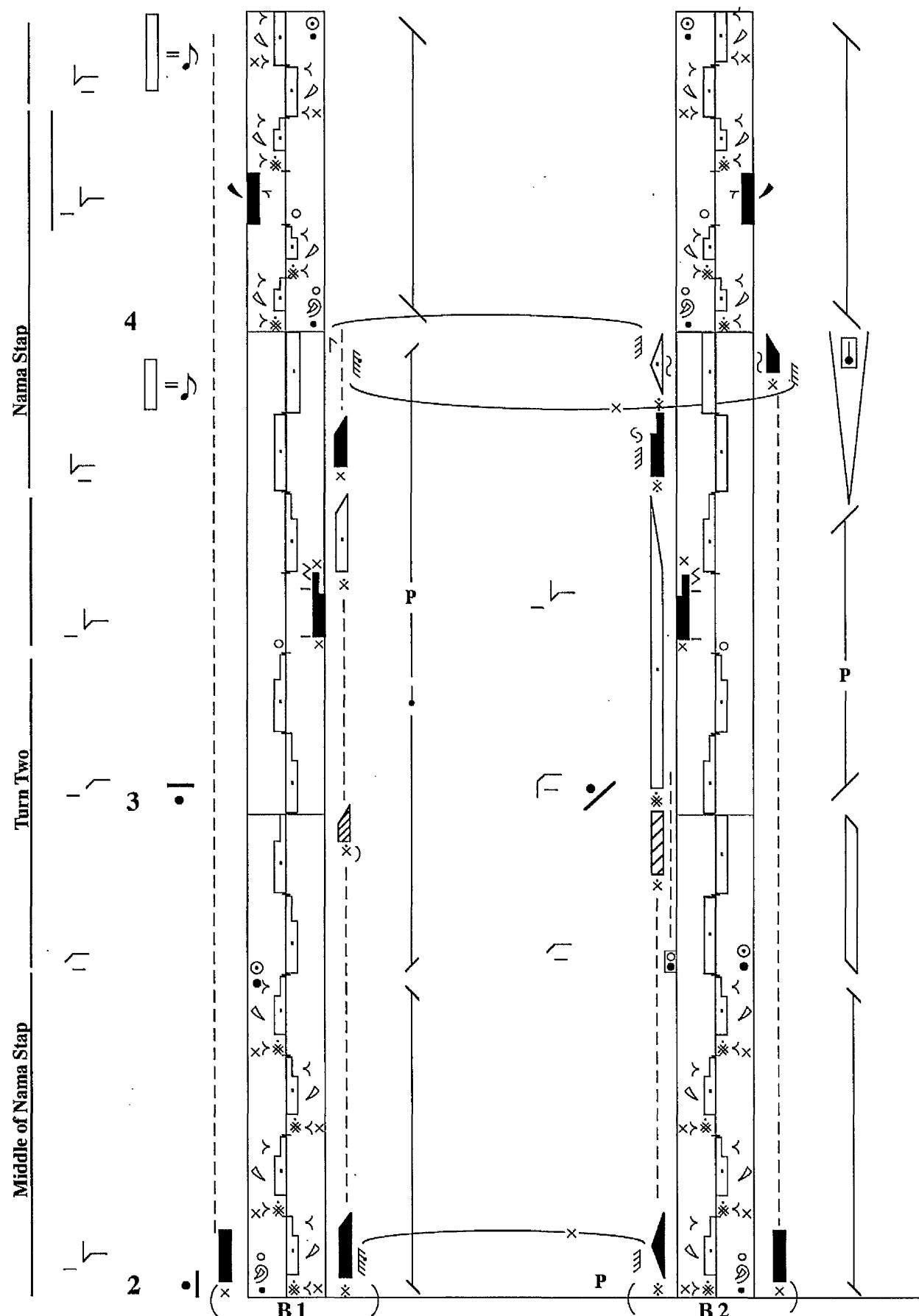
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One



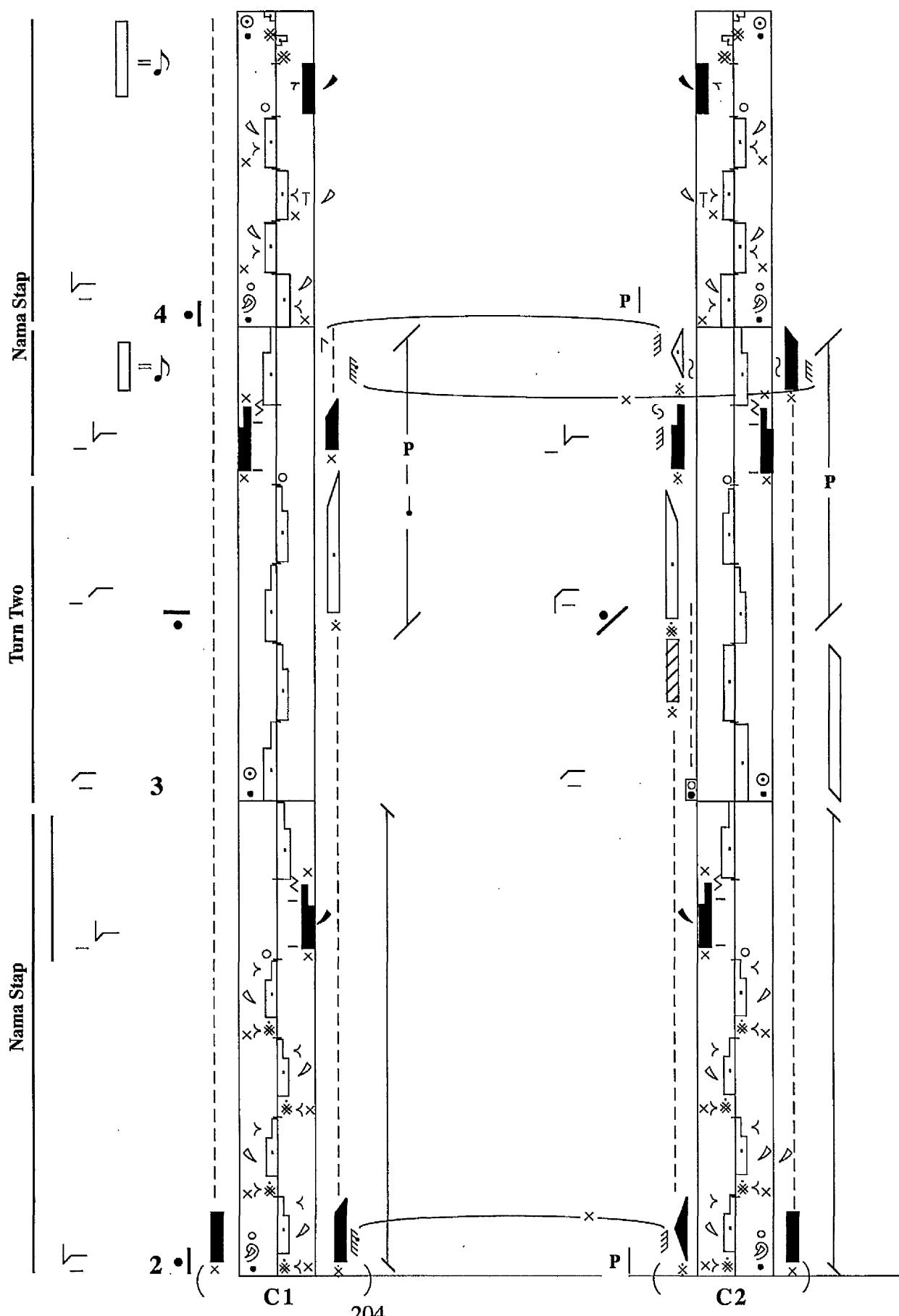
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One



Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

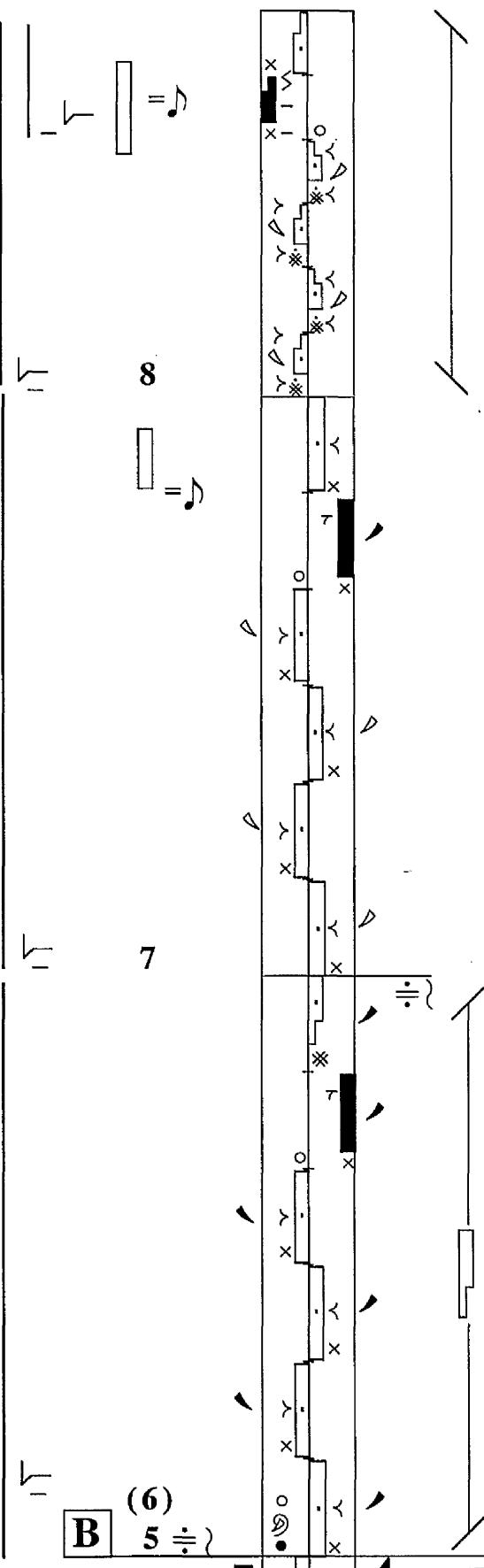
Part One



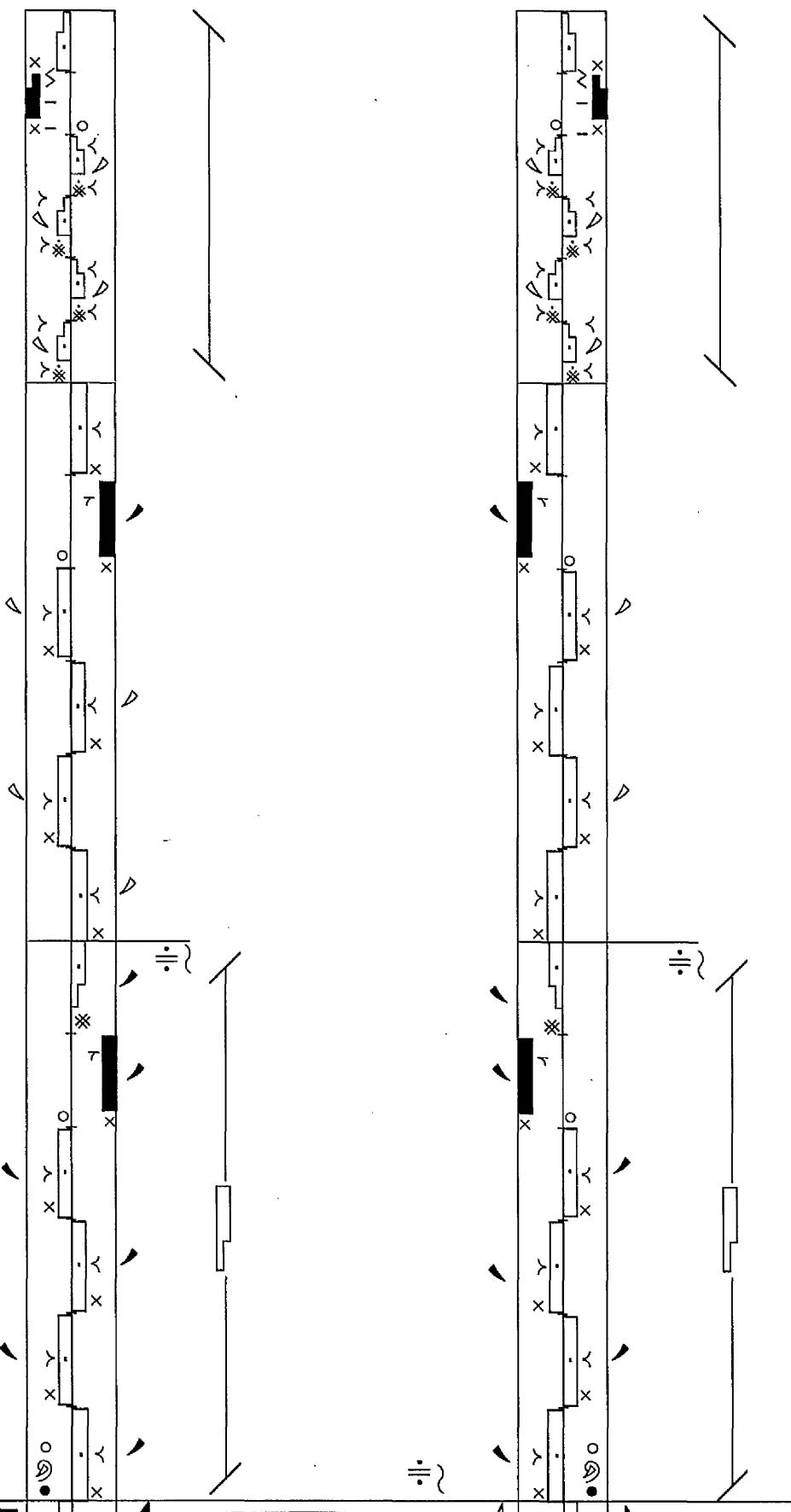
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One

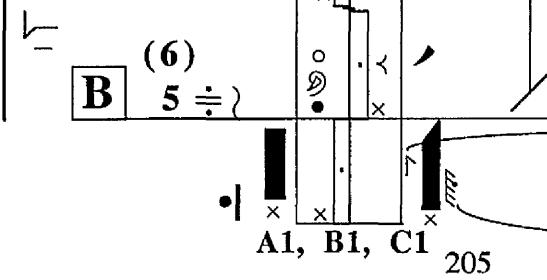
Nama Stap



Nama Staf



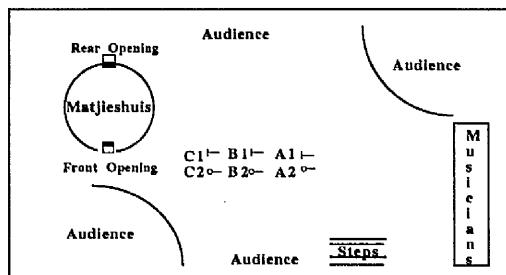
Nama Stap



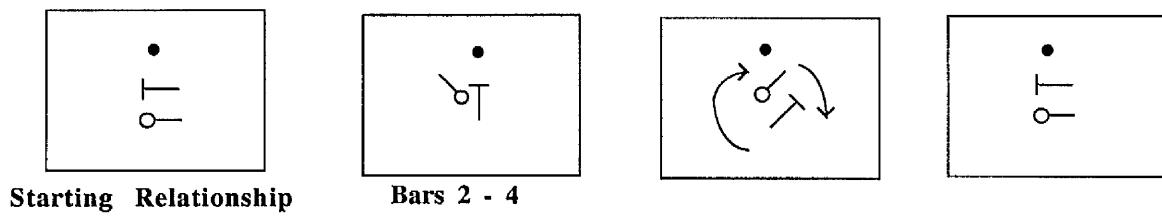
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One

Floor Plans Bars 2 - 8

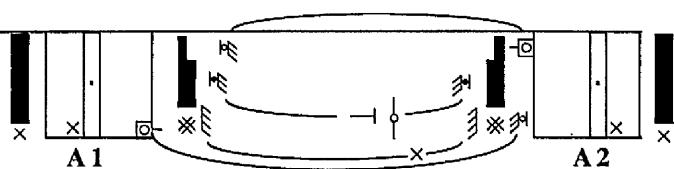
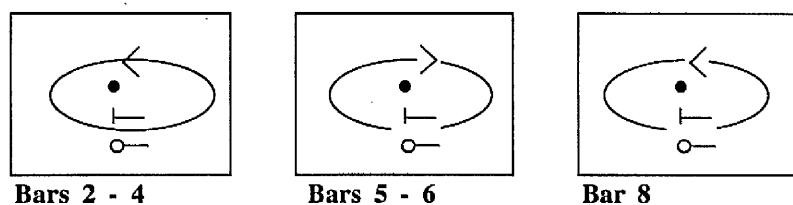
Performance Area



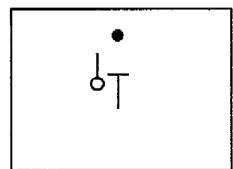
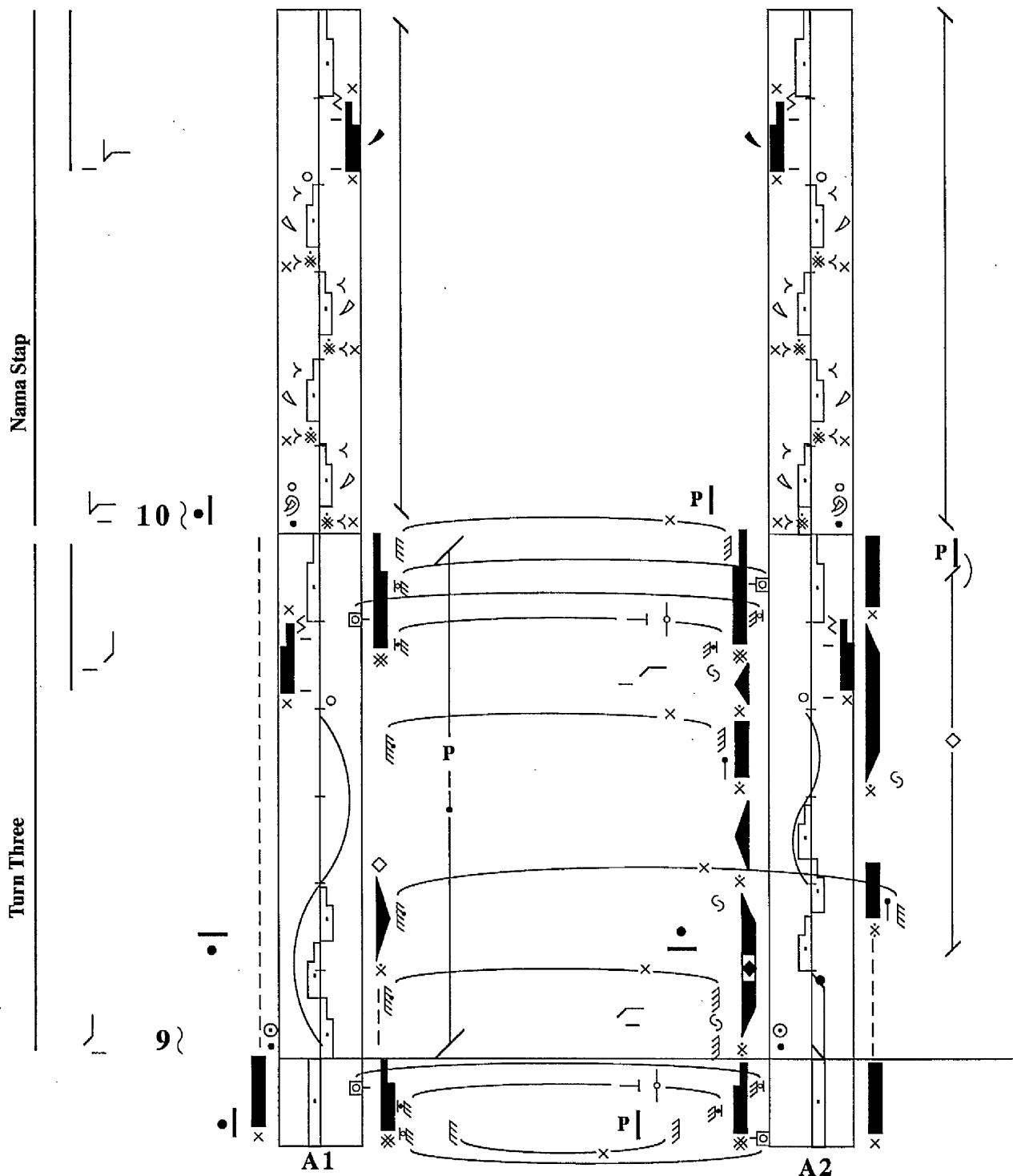
Turn Two: cannon form bars 2 - 4



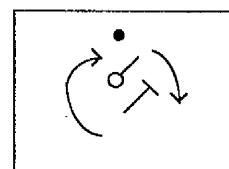
Movement Around the Circle



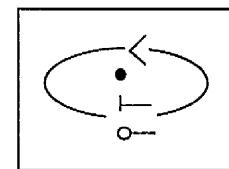
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One



Bar 9 1-2

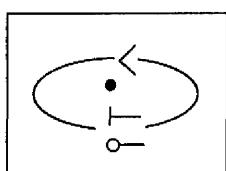
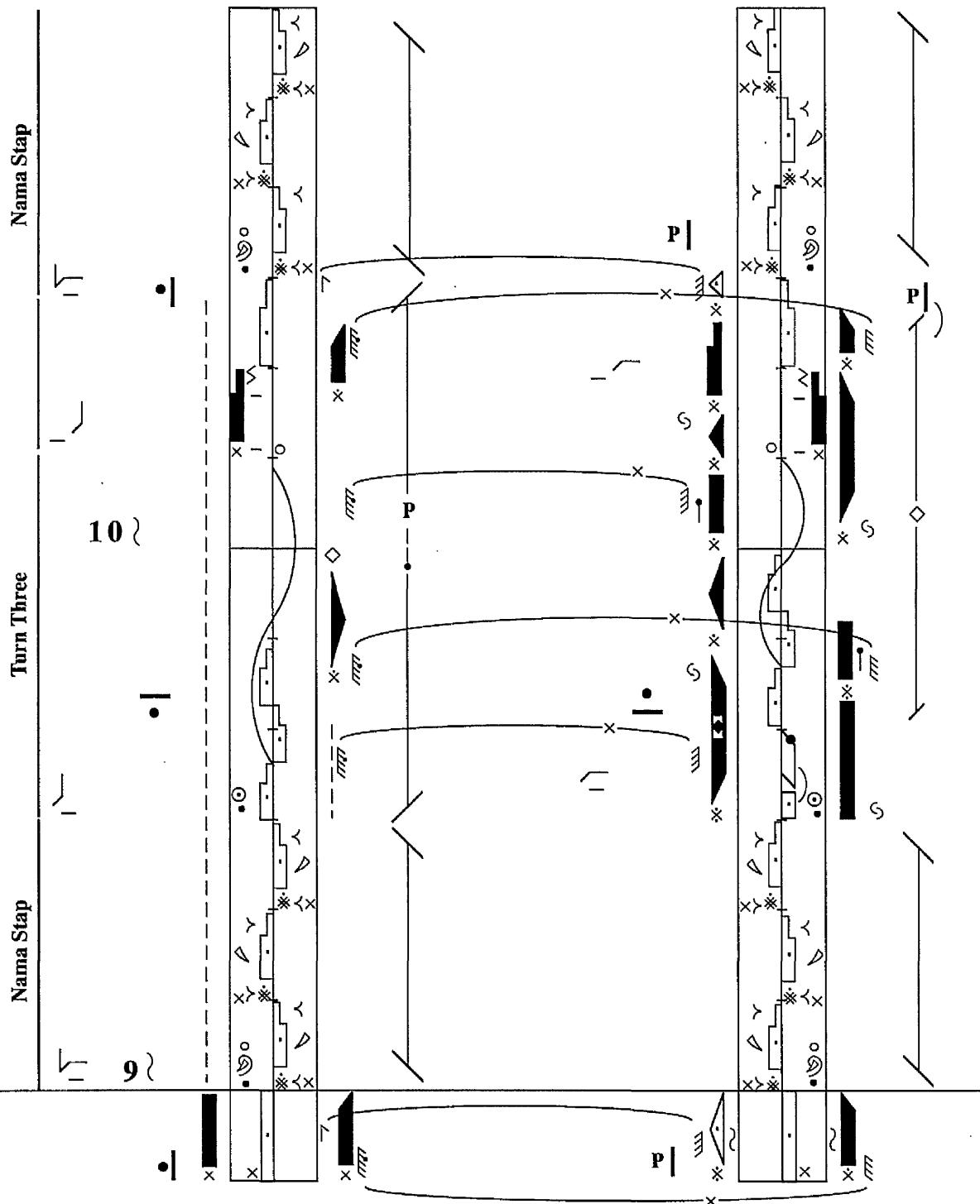


Bar 9 3-4

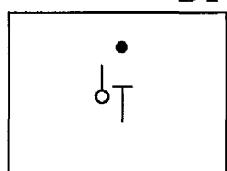


Bar 10

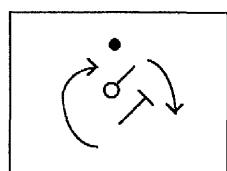
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One



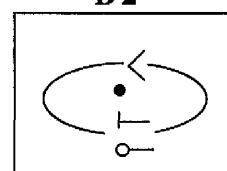
Bar 9¹⁻³



Bar 9⁴⁻⁵

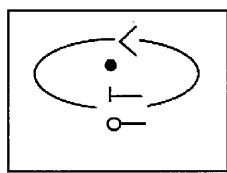
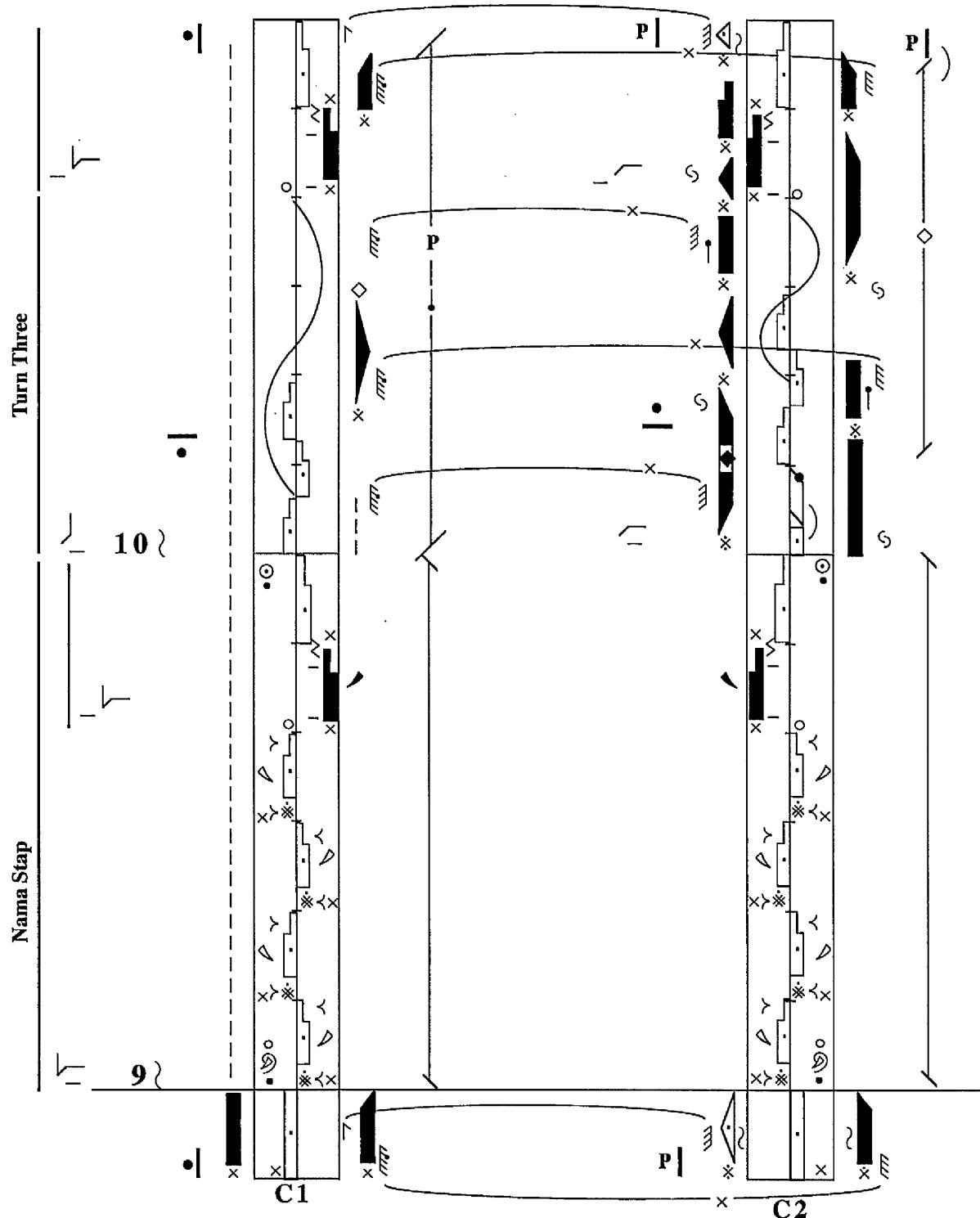


Bar 10¹⁻²

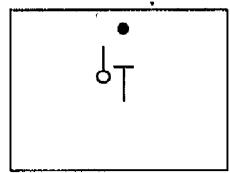


Bar 10³⁻⁶

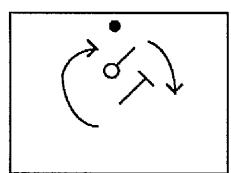
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
 Part One



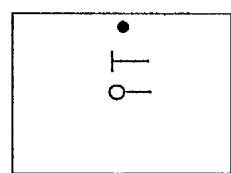
Bar 9



Bar 10¹⁻²



209
Bar 10³⁻⁴

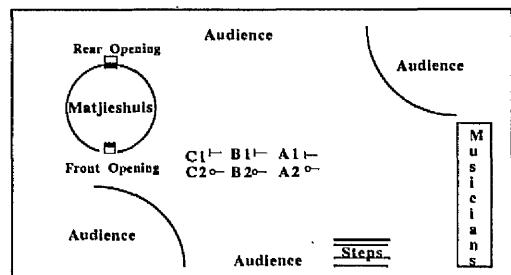


Bar 10⁵⁻⁶

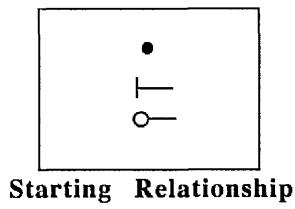
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One

Floor Plans Bars 9-10

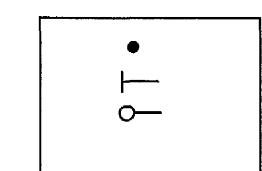
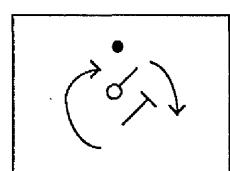
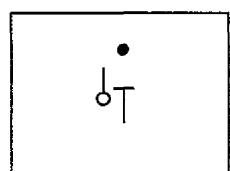
Performance Area



Turn Three: cannon form bars 9 - 10

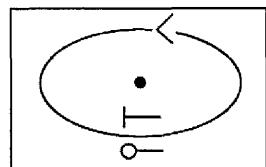


Starting Relationship



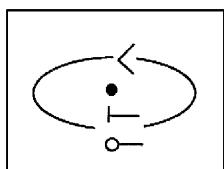
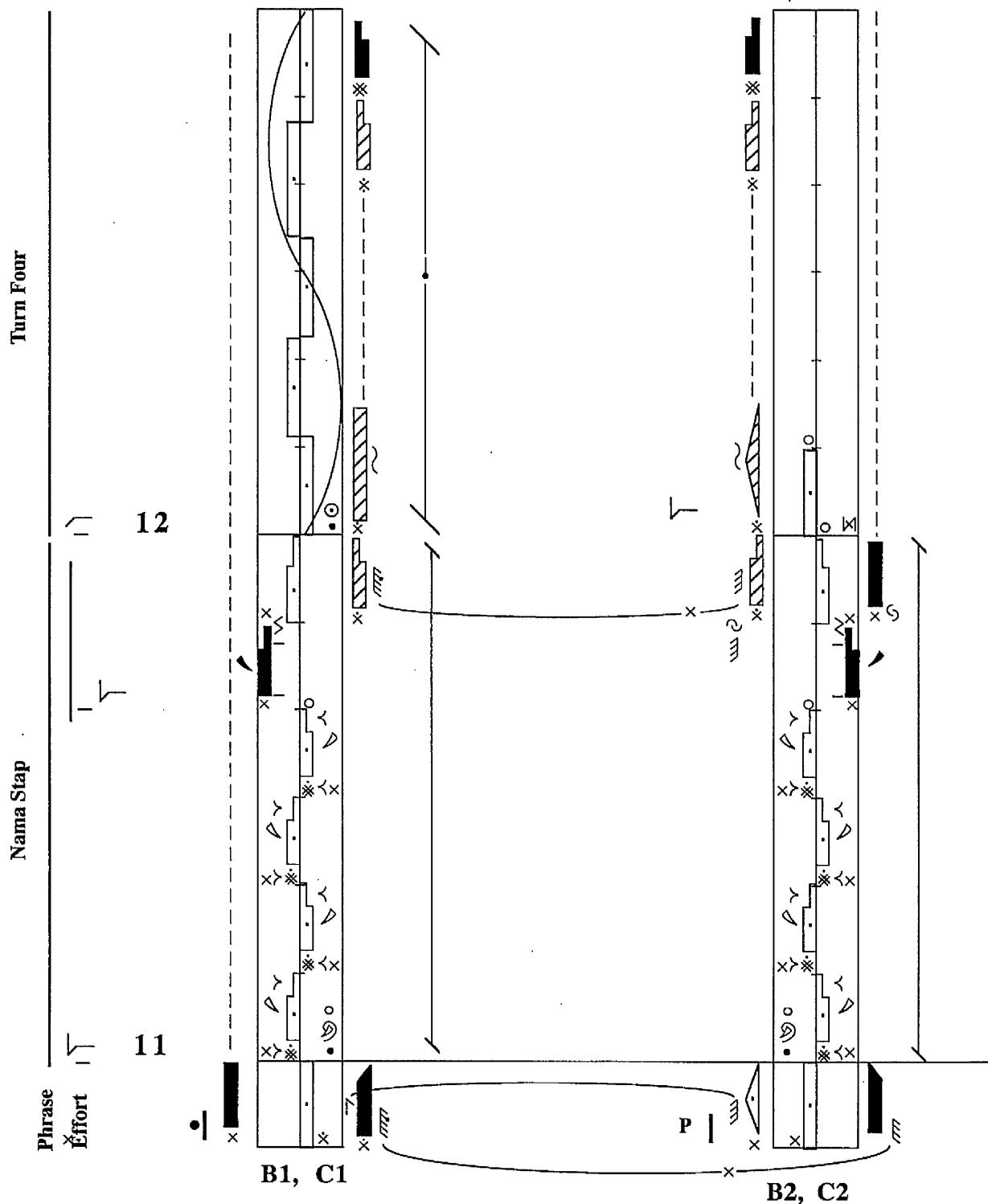
Ending Relationship

Movement Around the Circle in Cannon Form

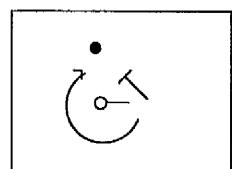


Bars 9 10

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version Part One



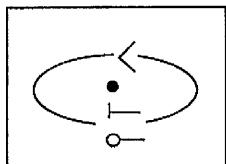
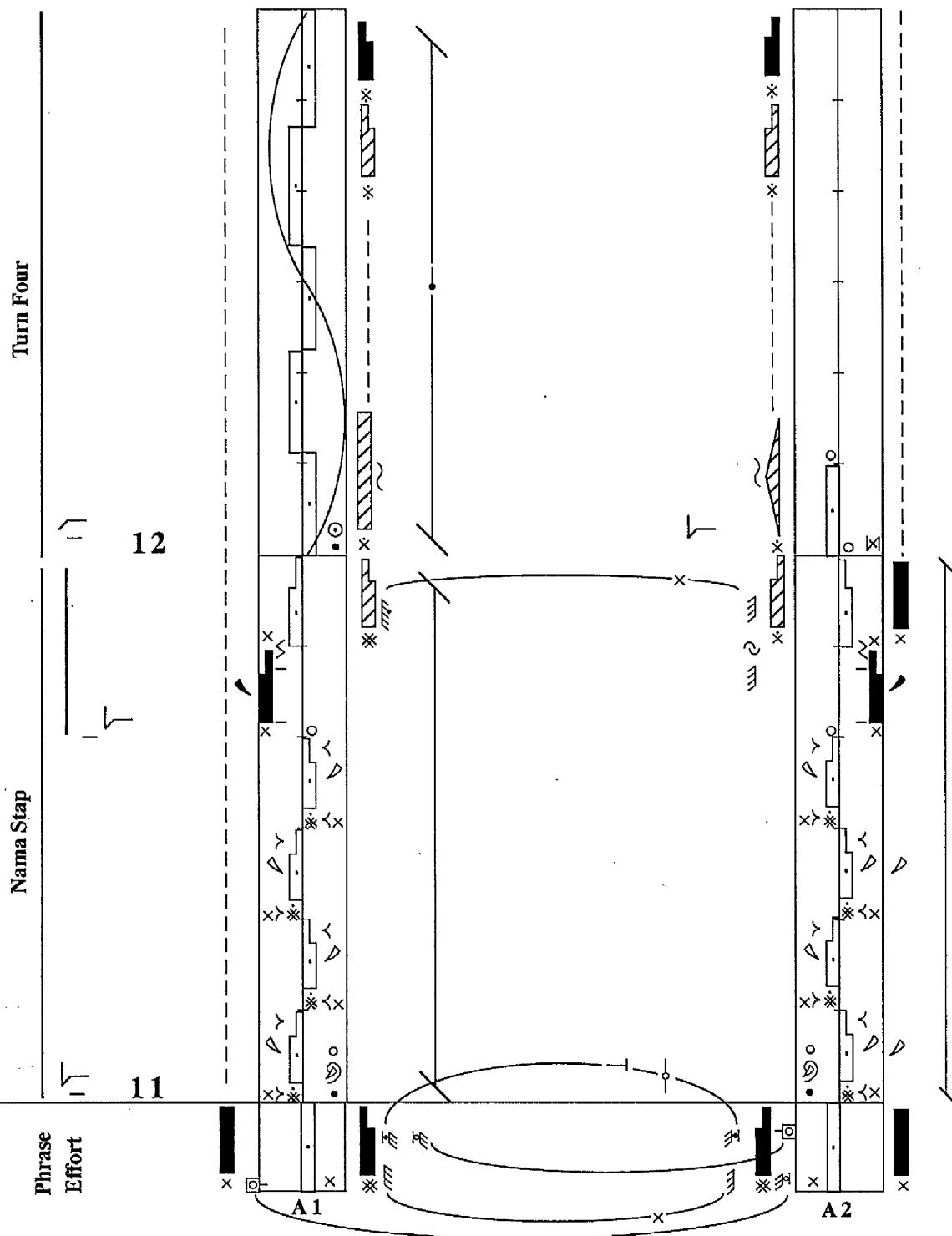
Bar 11



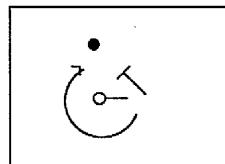
Bar 12

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One

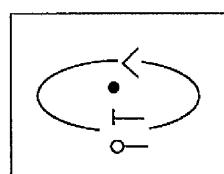
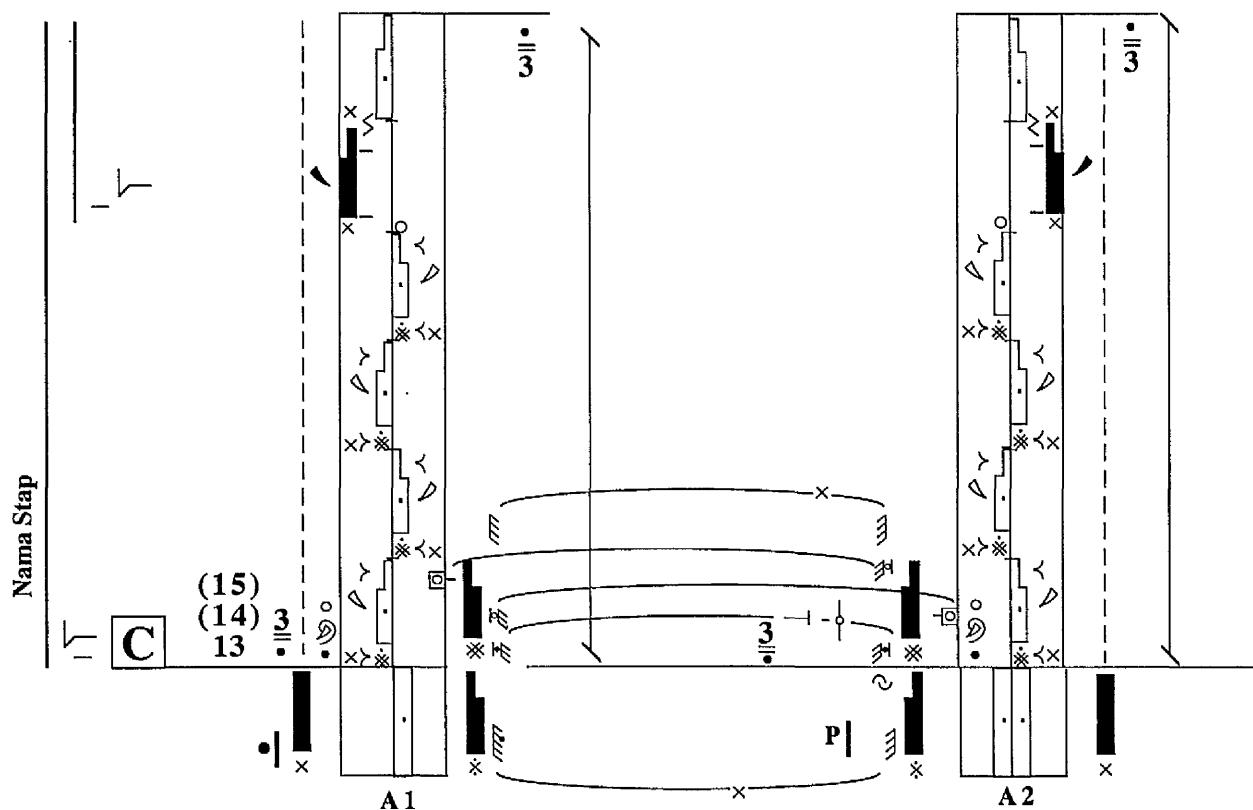


Bar 11



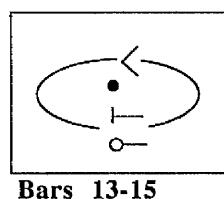
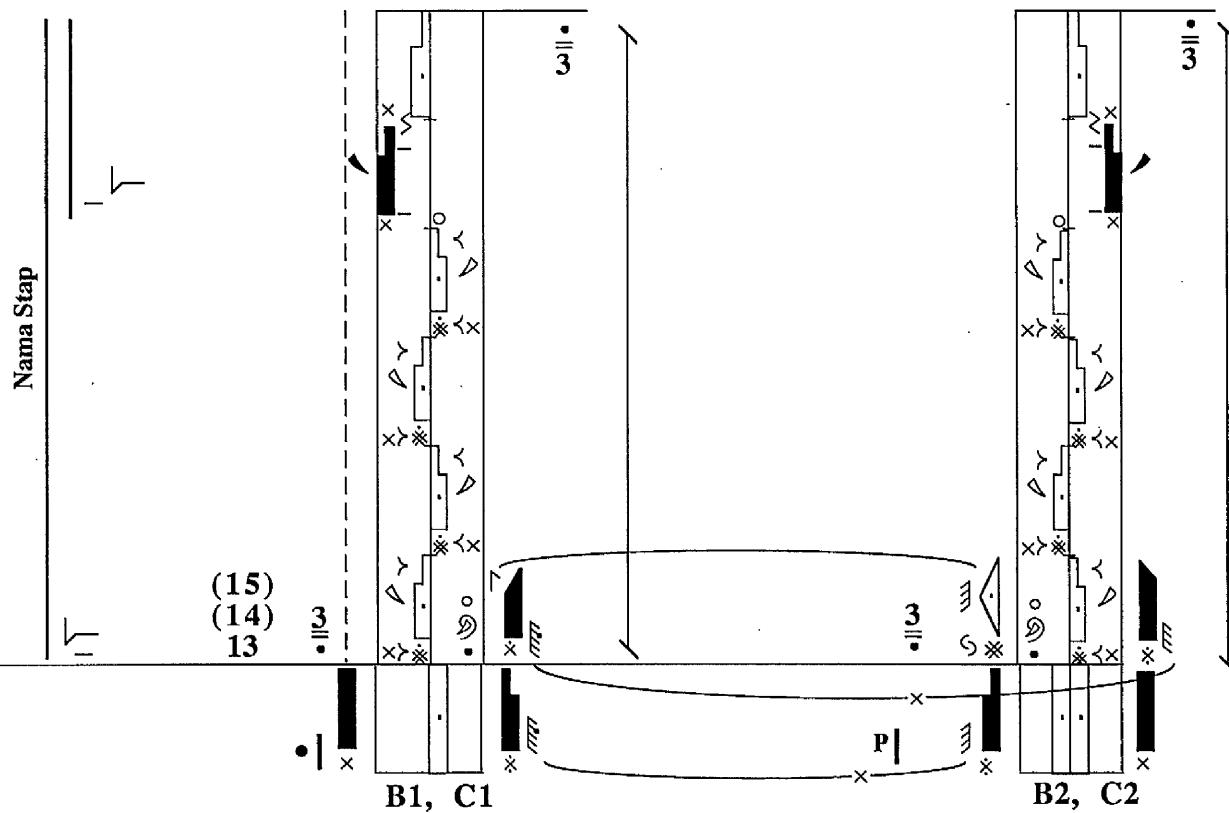
Bar 12

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One



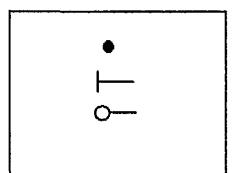
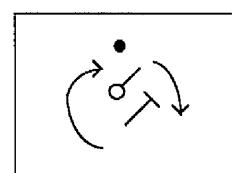
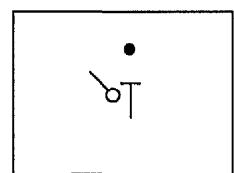
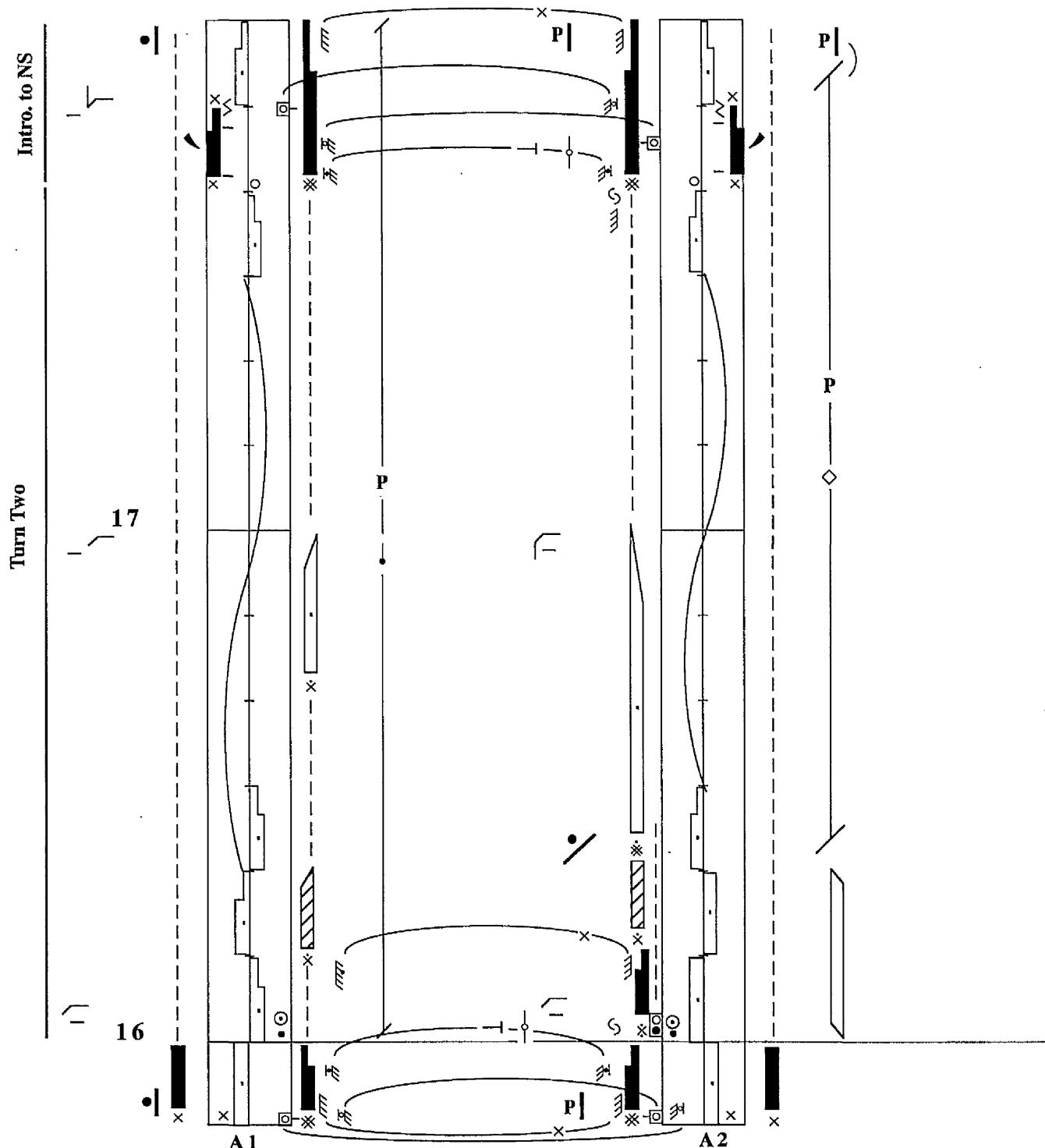
Bars 13-15

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One

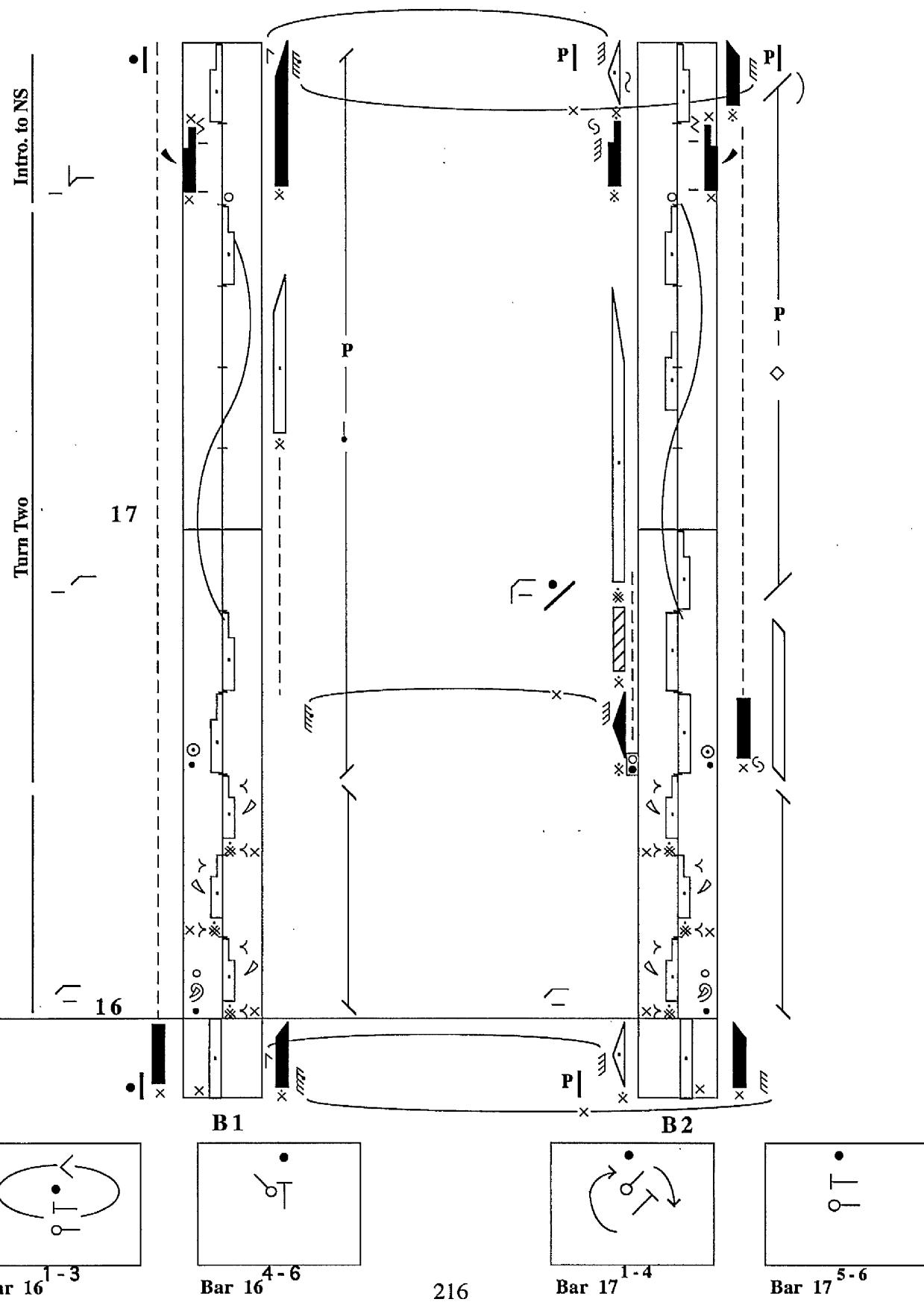


Bars 13-15

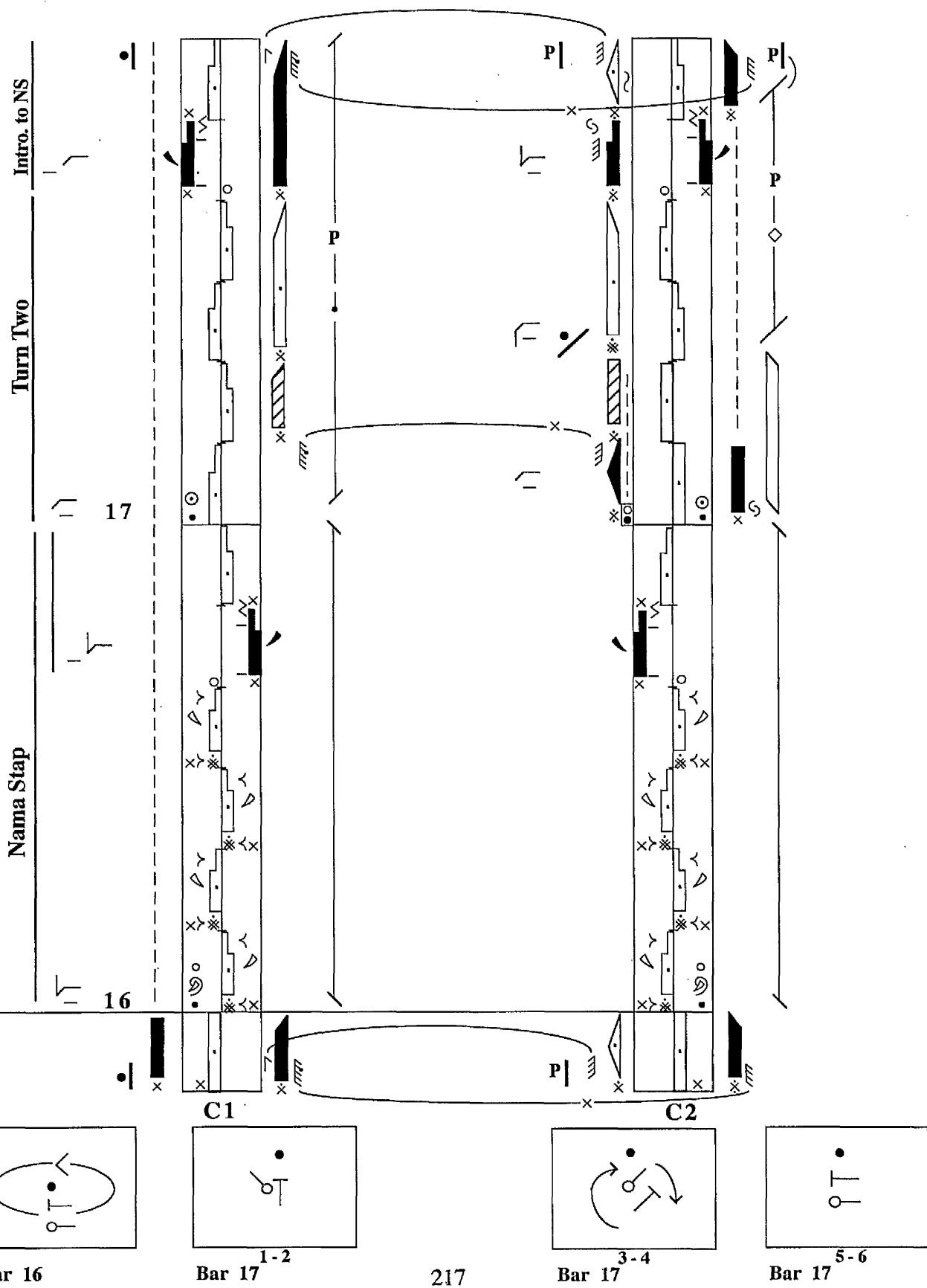
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One



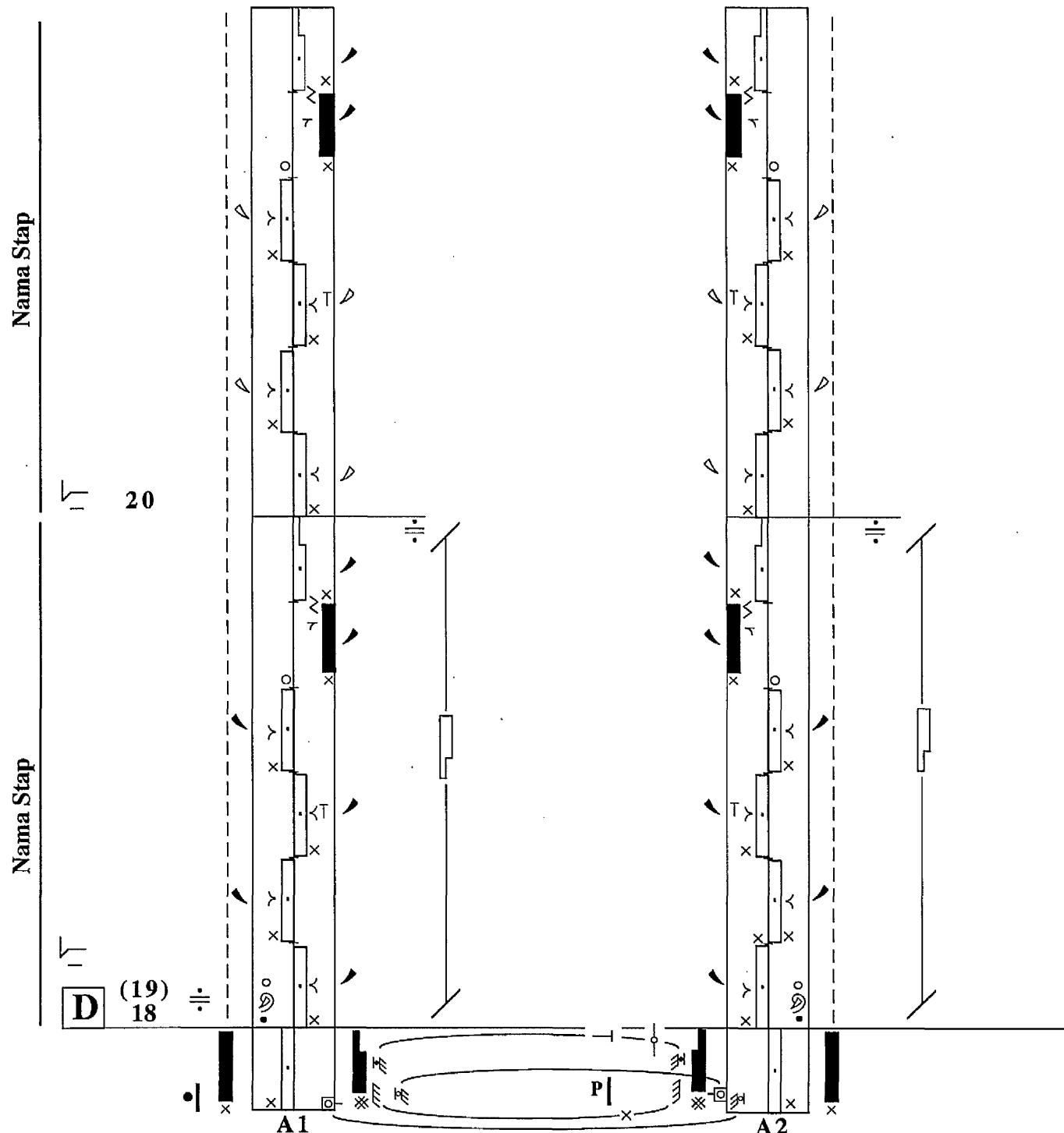
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
 Part One



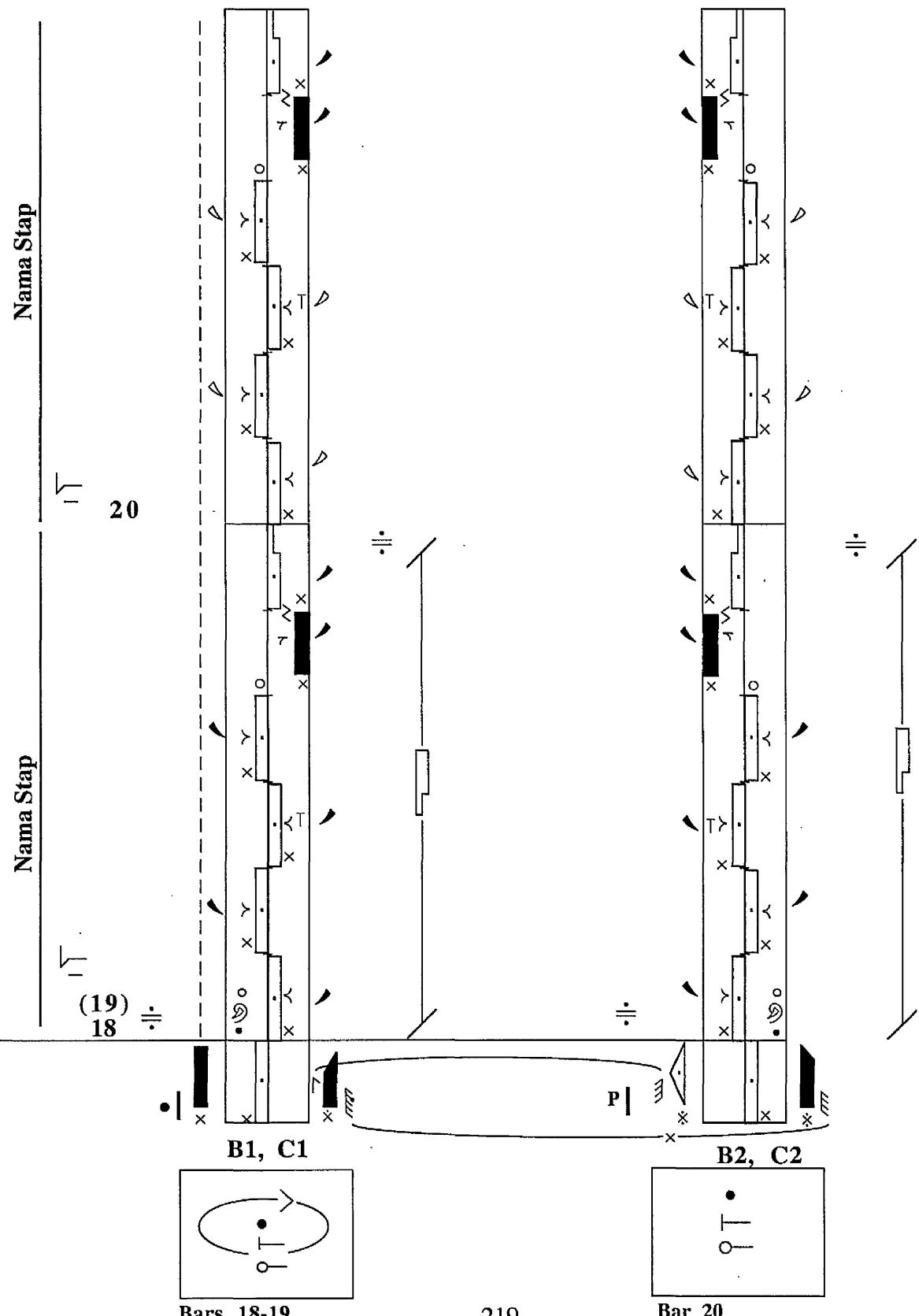
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version Part One



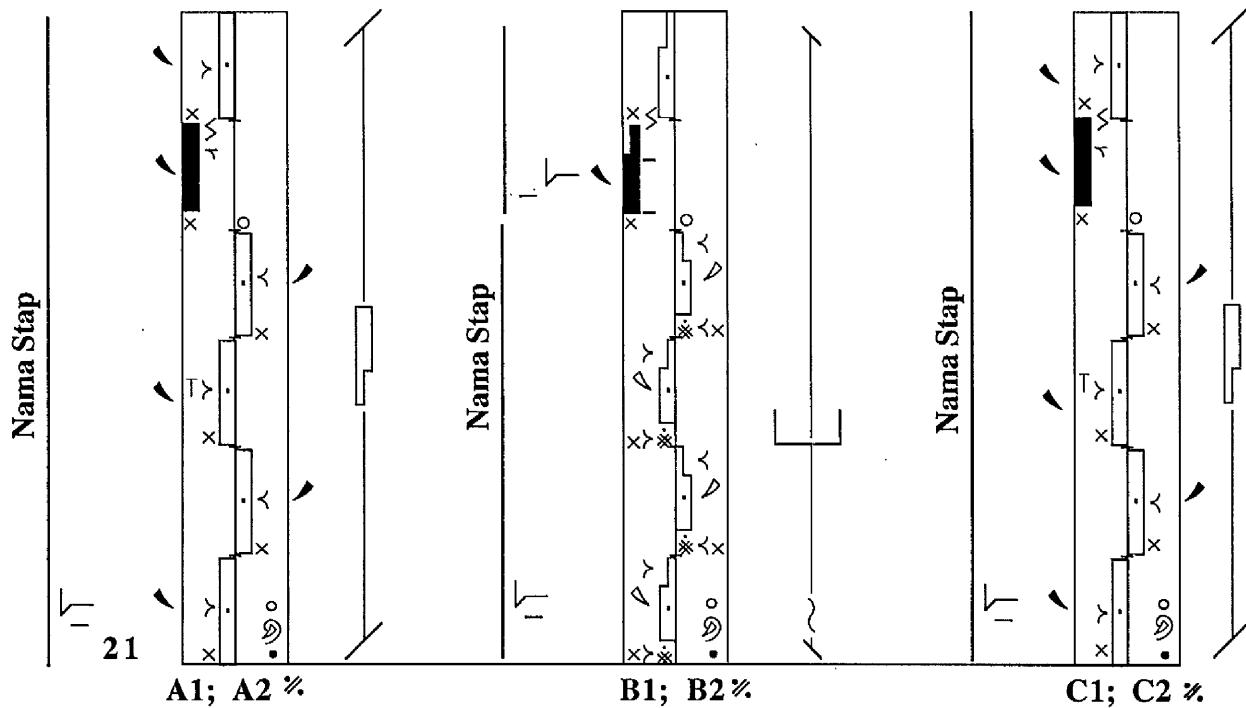
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One



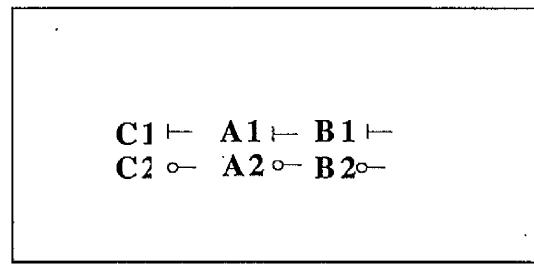
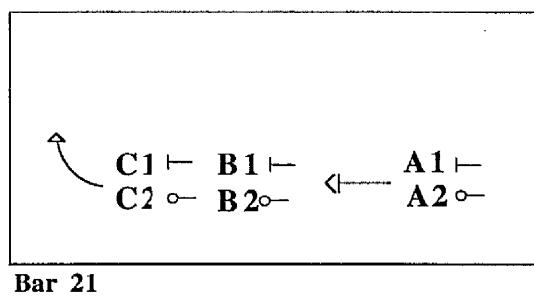
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One



Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One

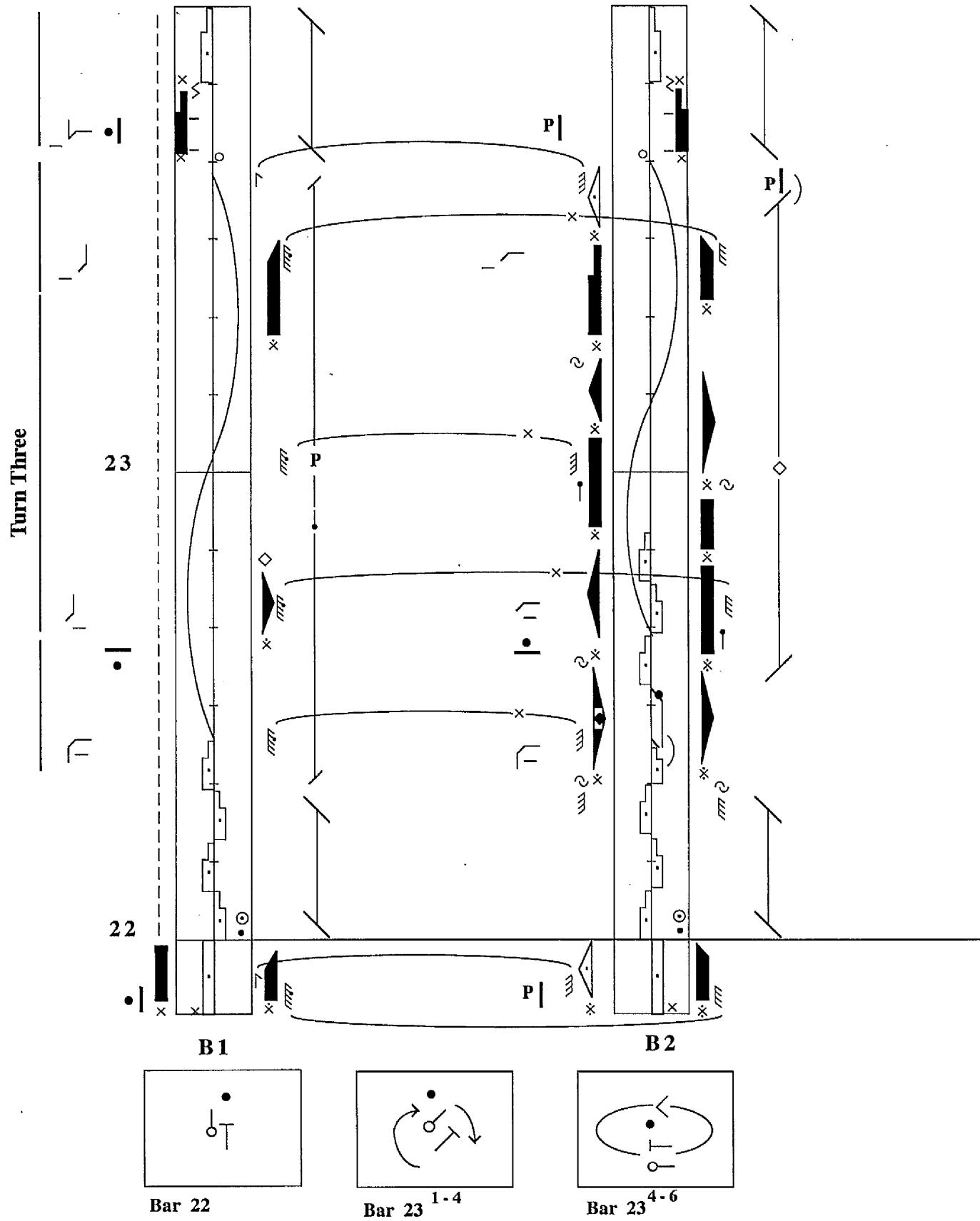


Enlargement of Bar 21

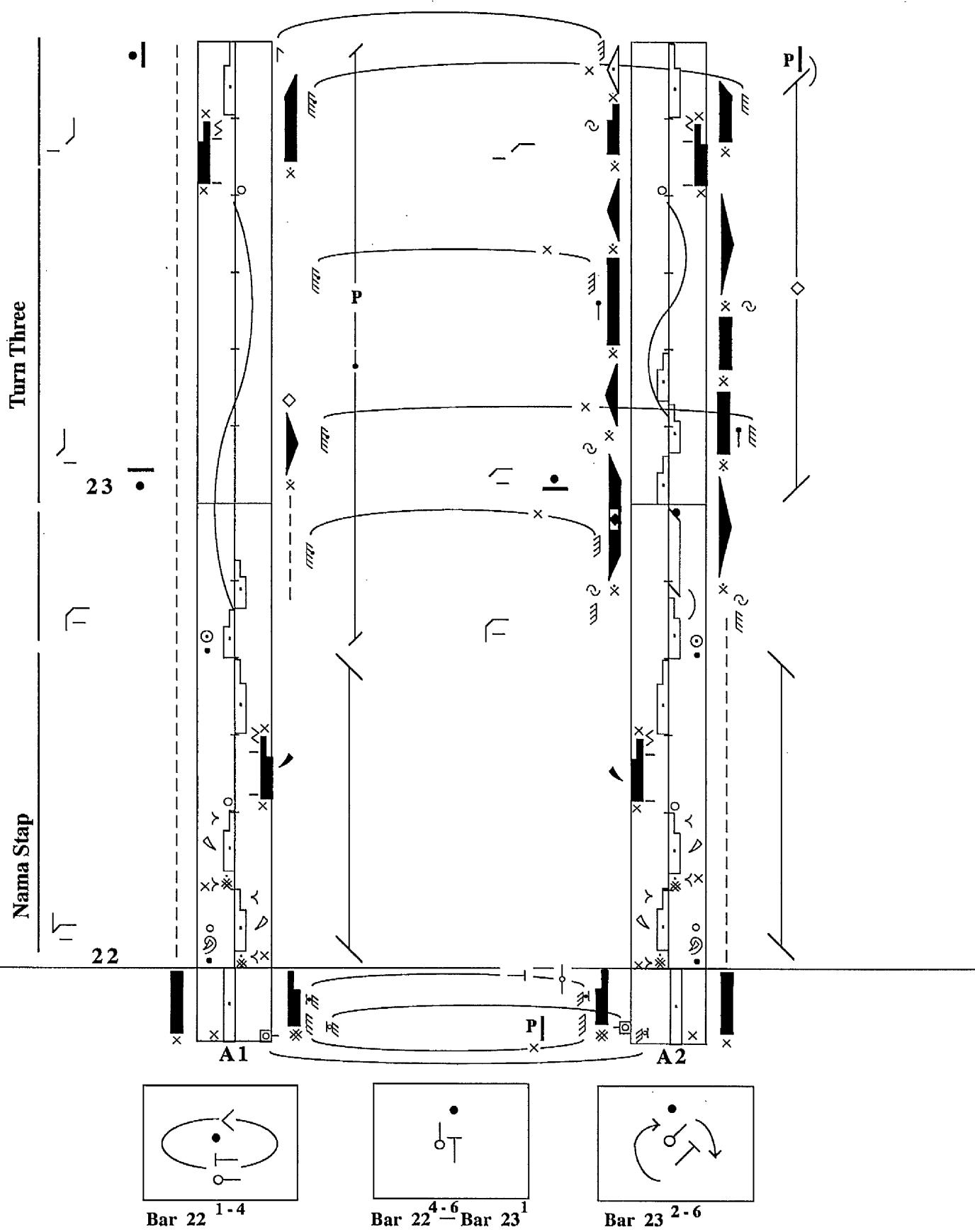


Relationship of dancers at the end of
Bar 21

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One

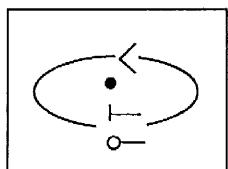
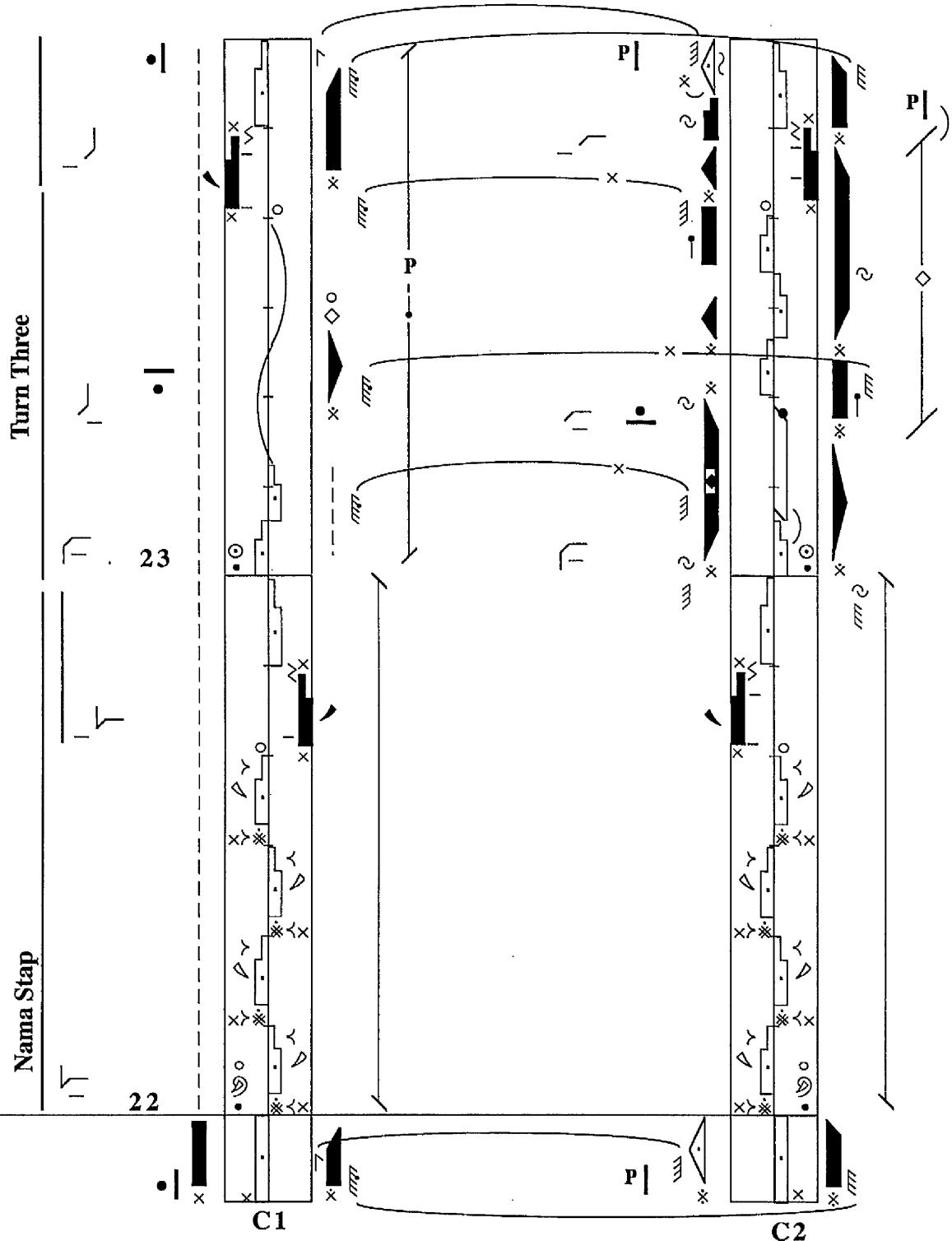


Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part One

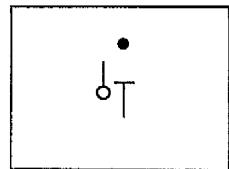


Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One

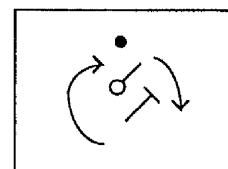


Bar 22



223

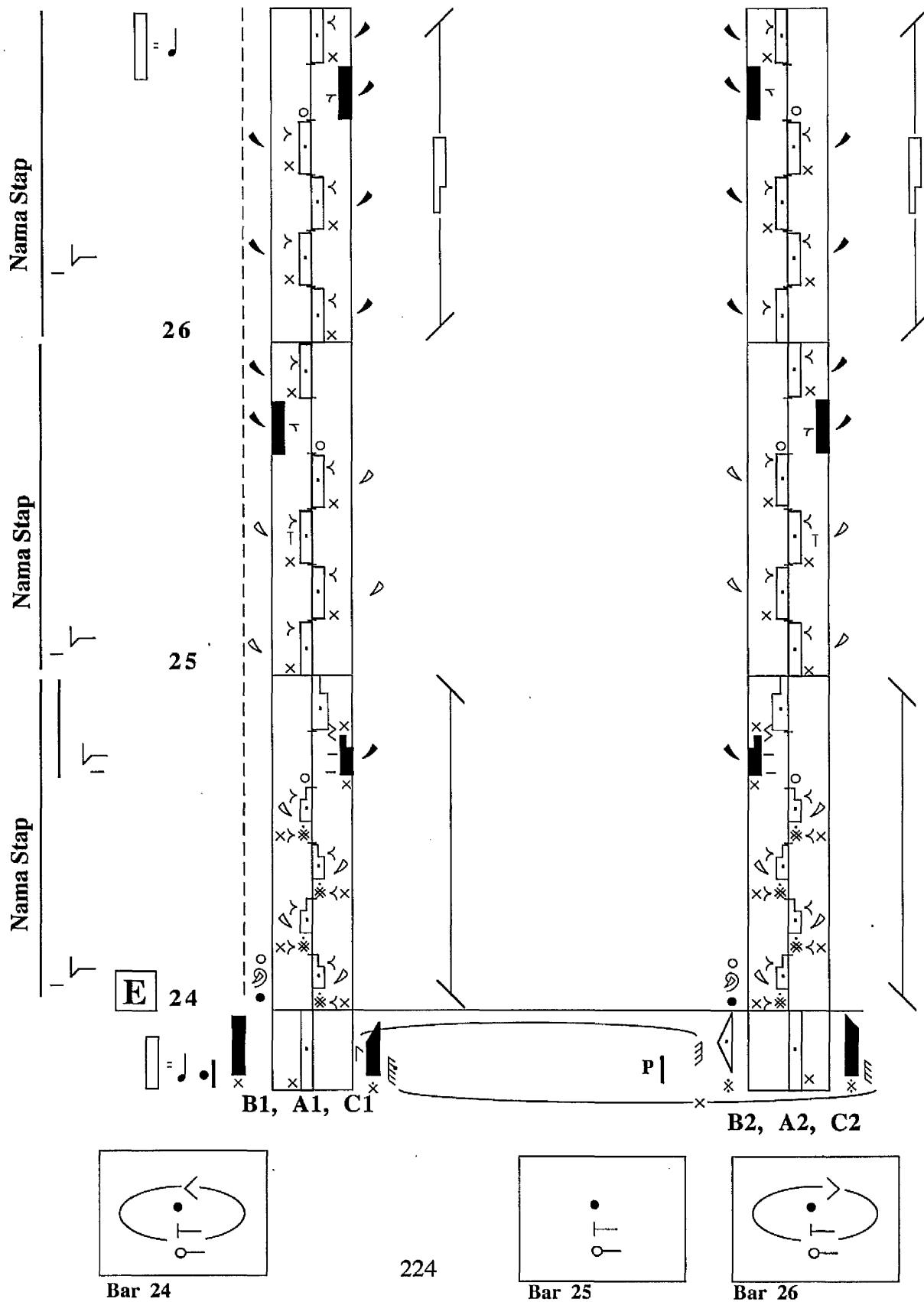
Bar 23¹⁻²



Bar 23⁴⁻⁶

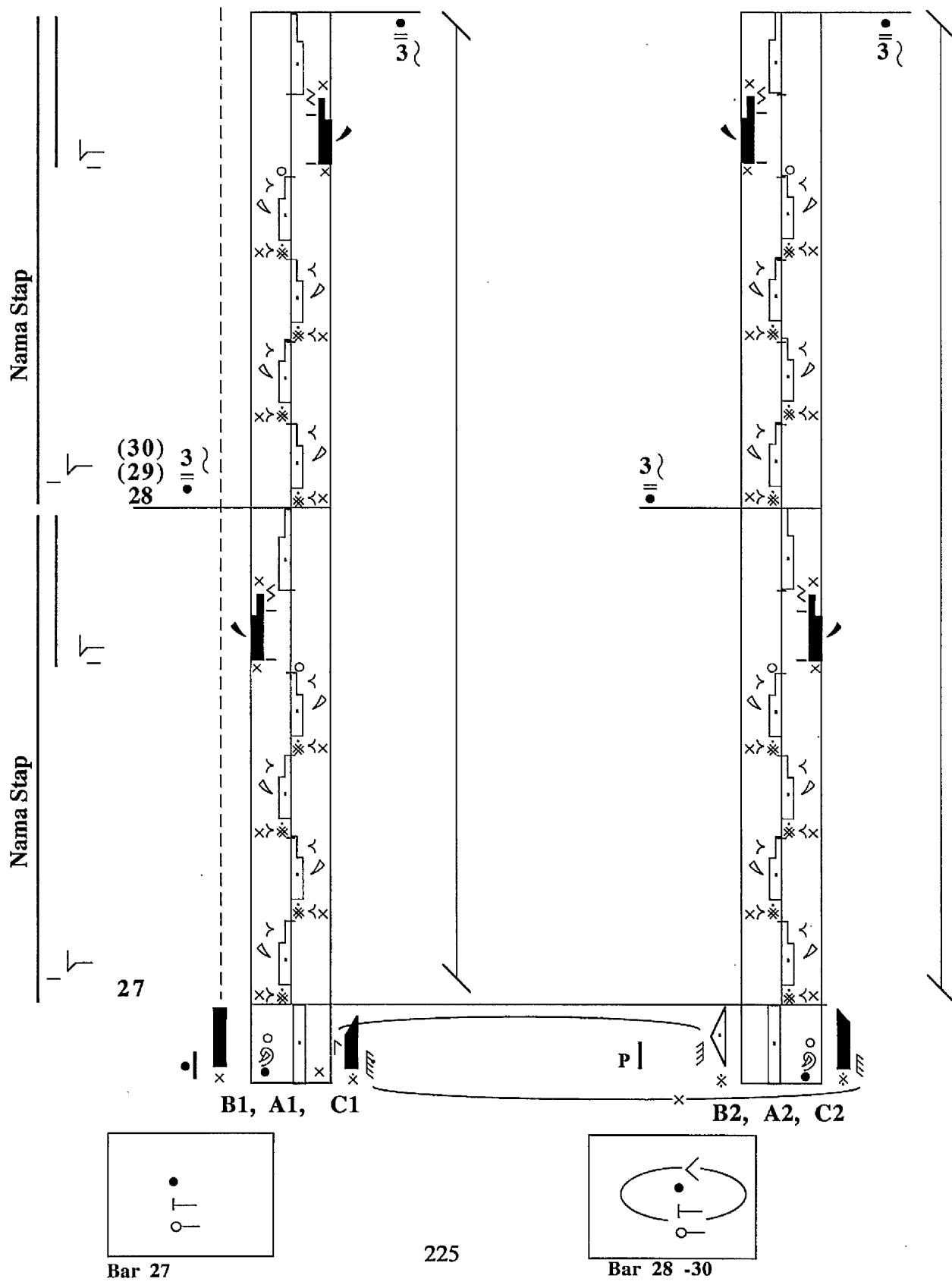
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One



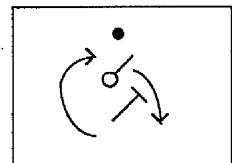
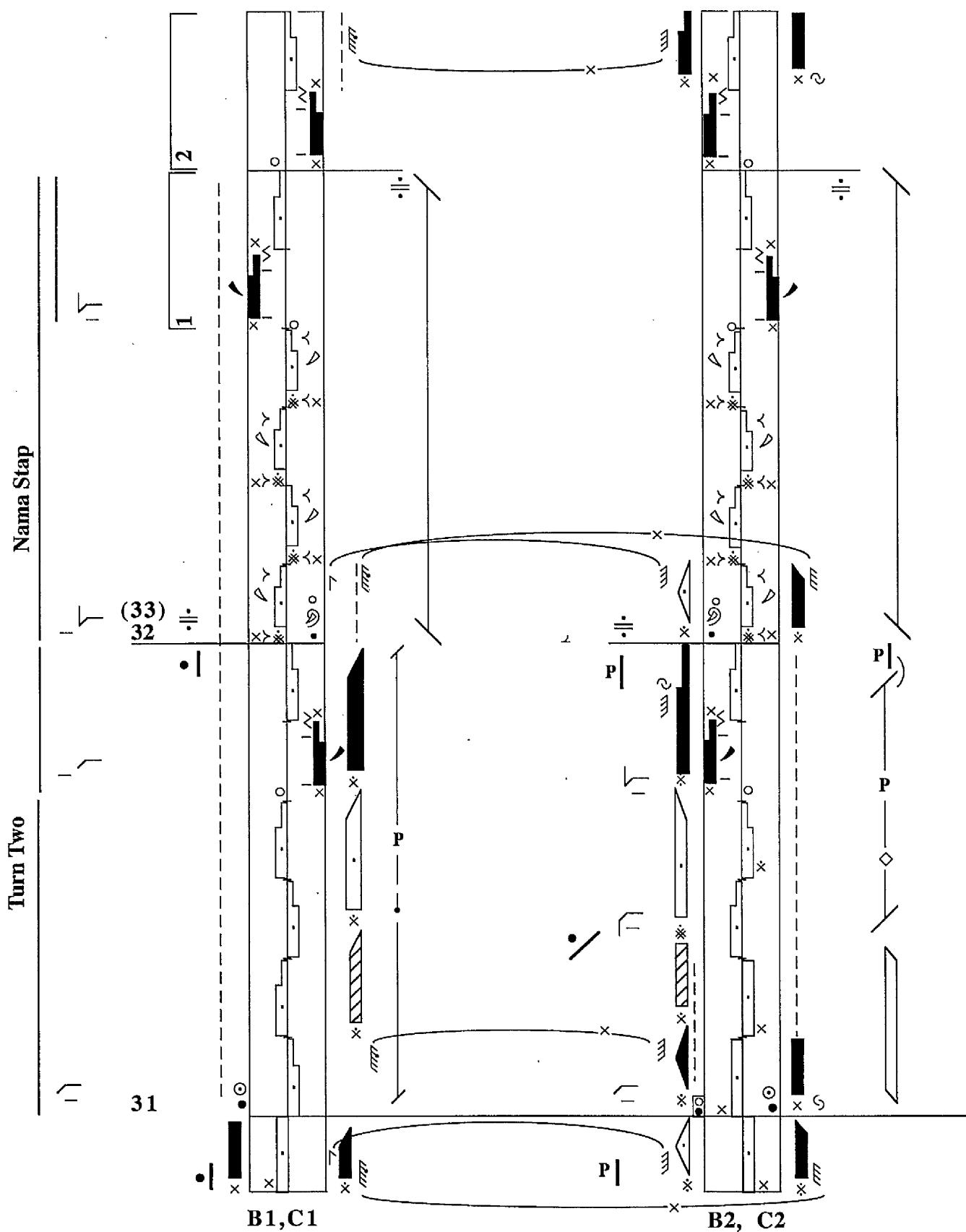
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One

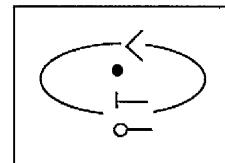


Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One



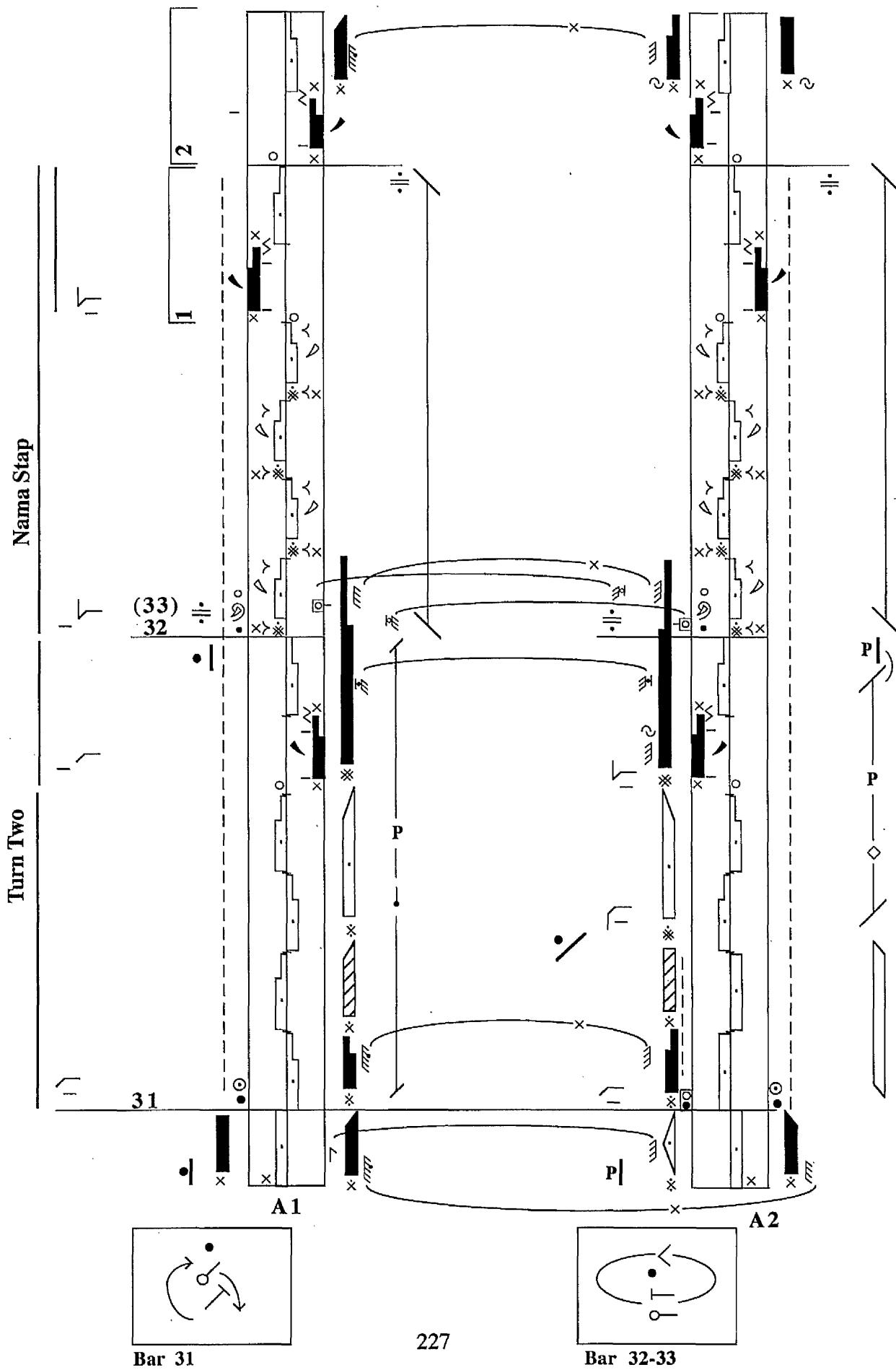
Bar 31



Bar 32-33

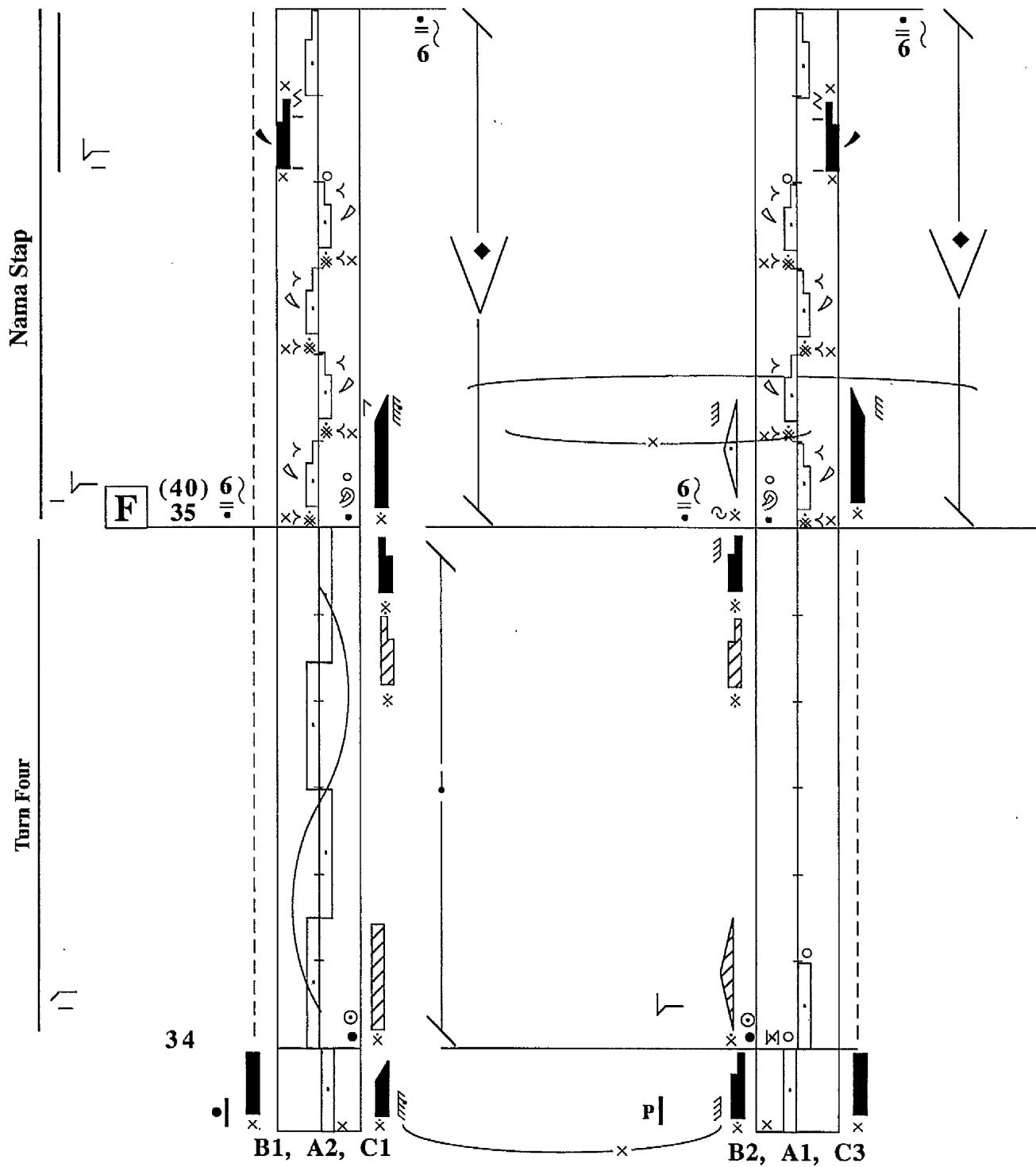
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One



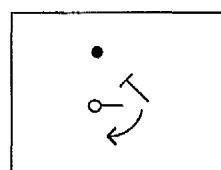
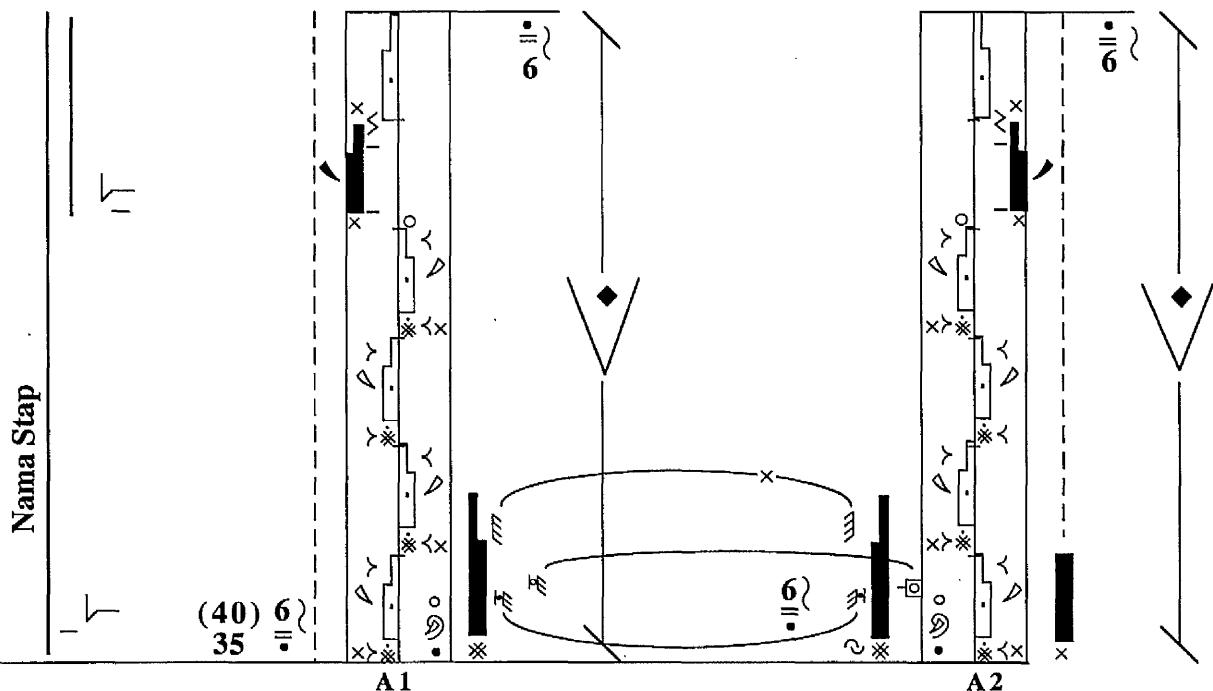
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One

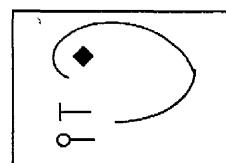


Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part One



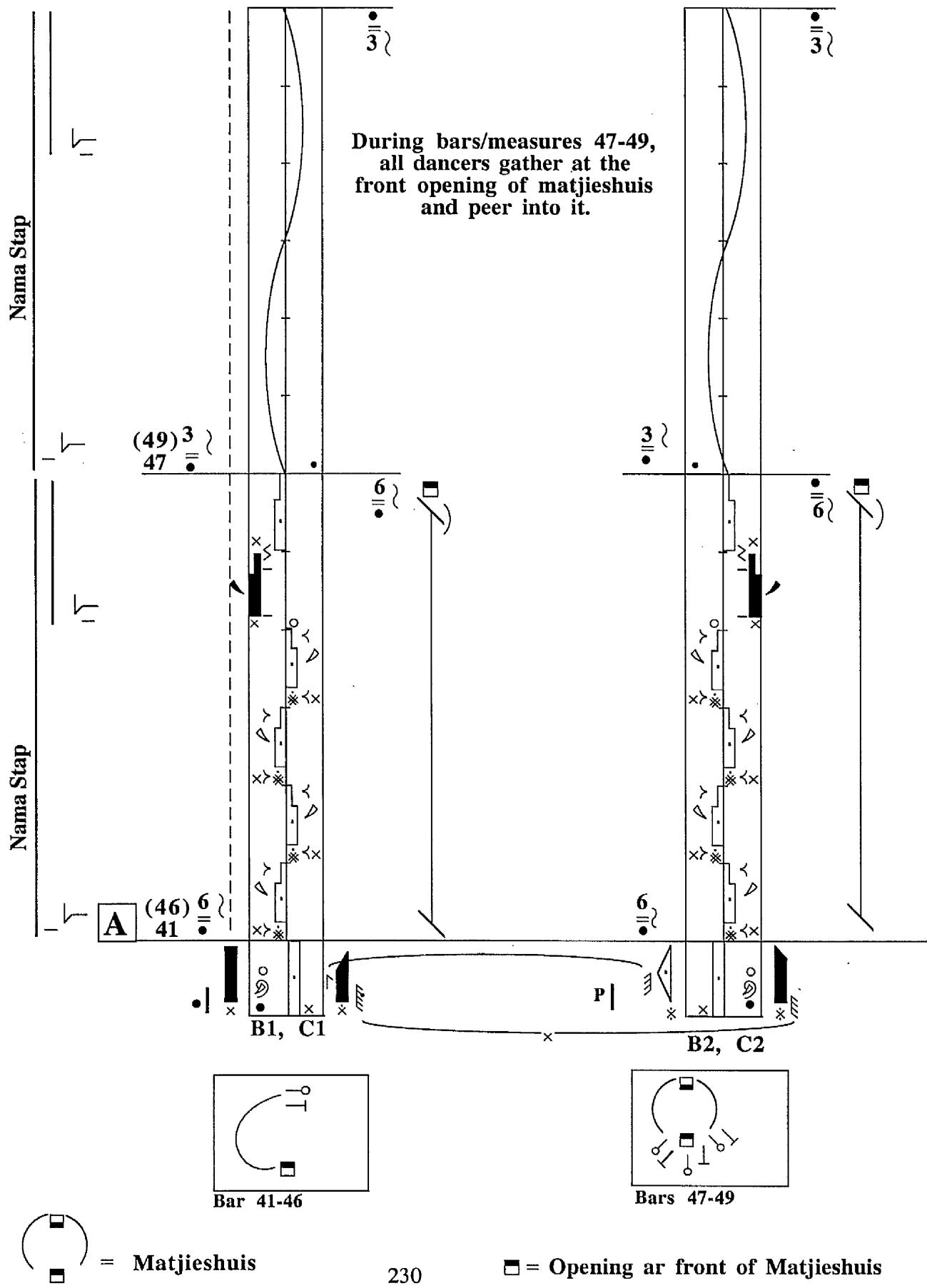
Bar 34



Bars 35-40

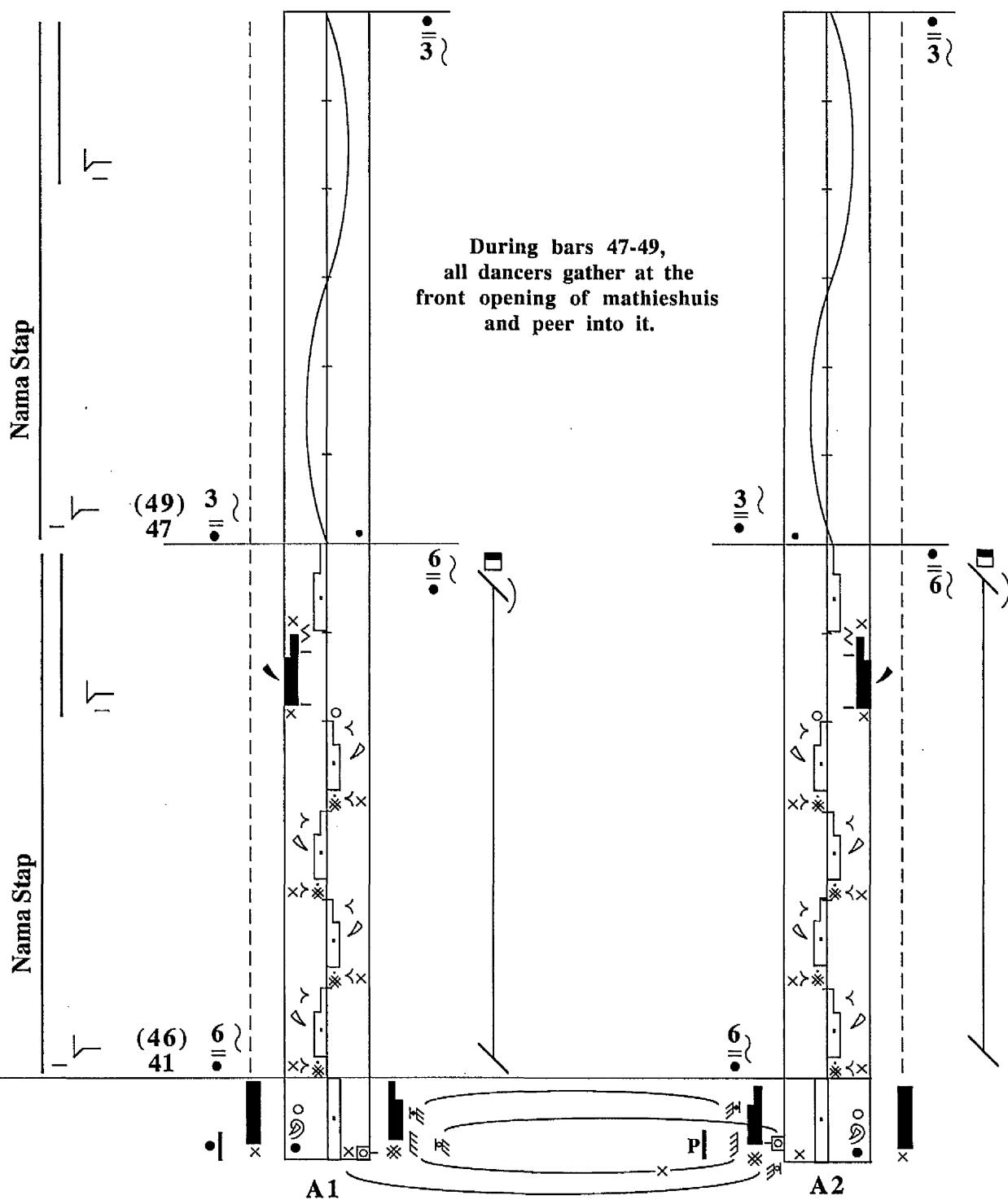
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part Two



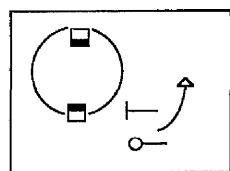
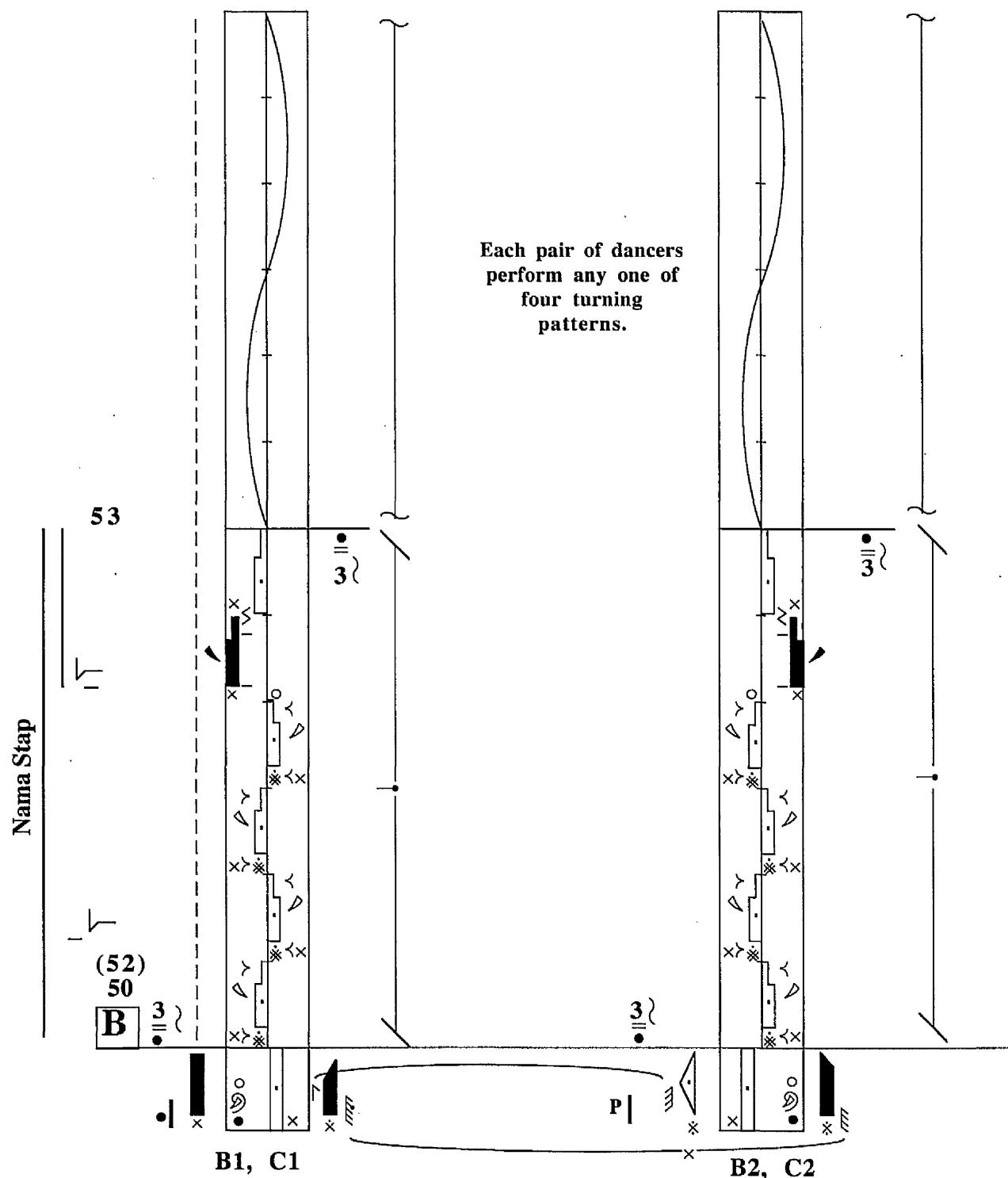
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part Two

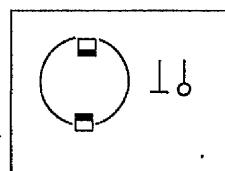


Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part Two



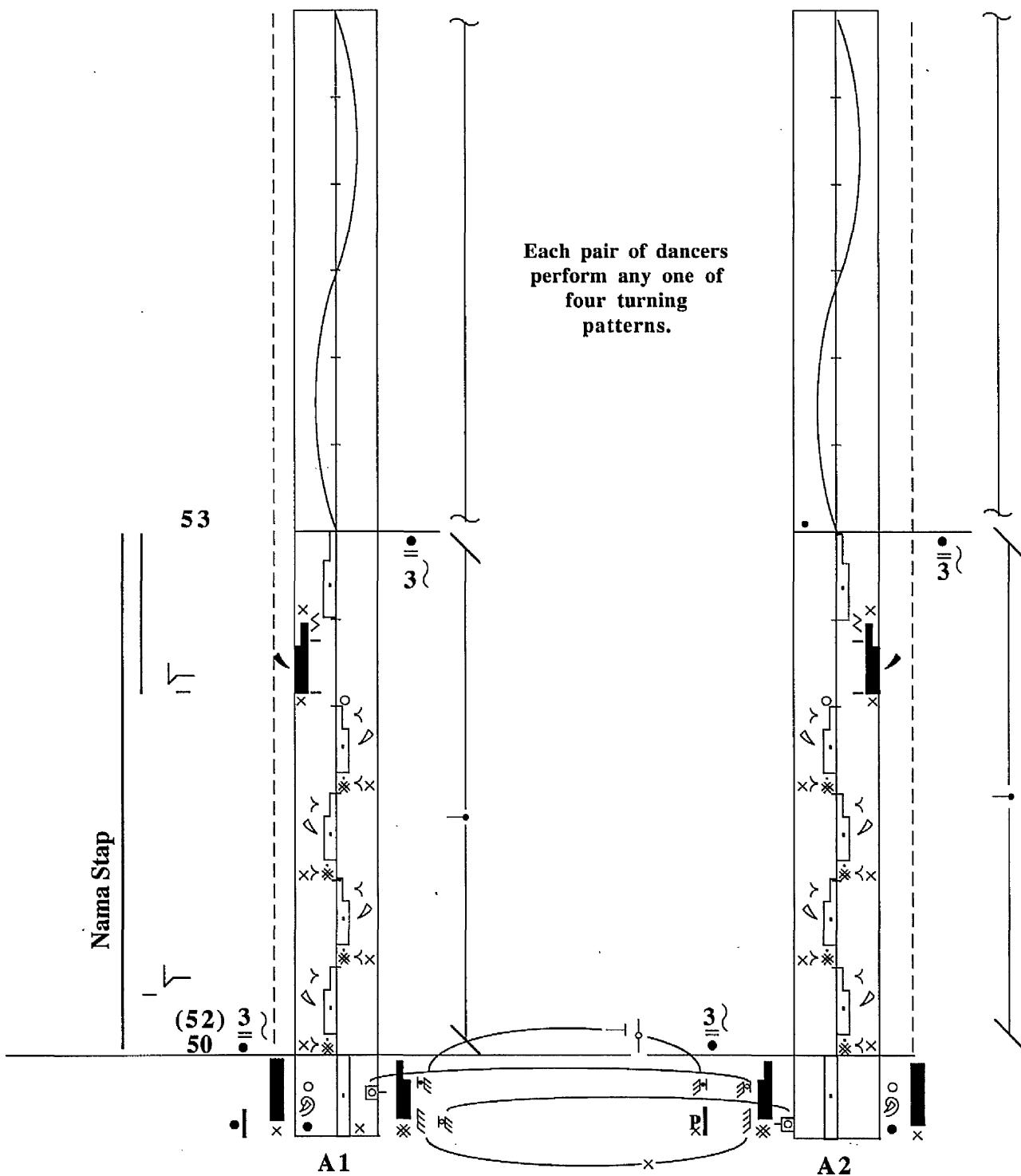
Bars 50-52



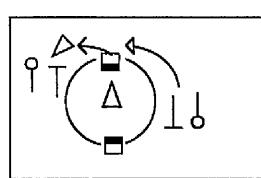
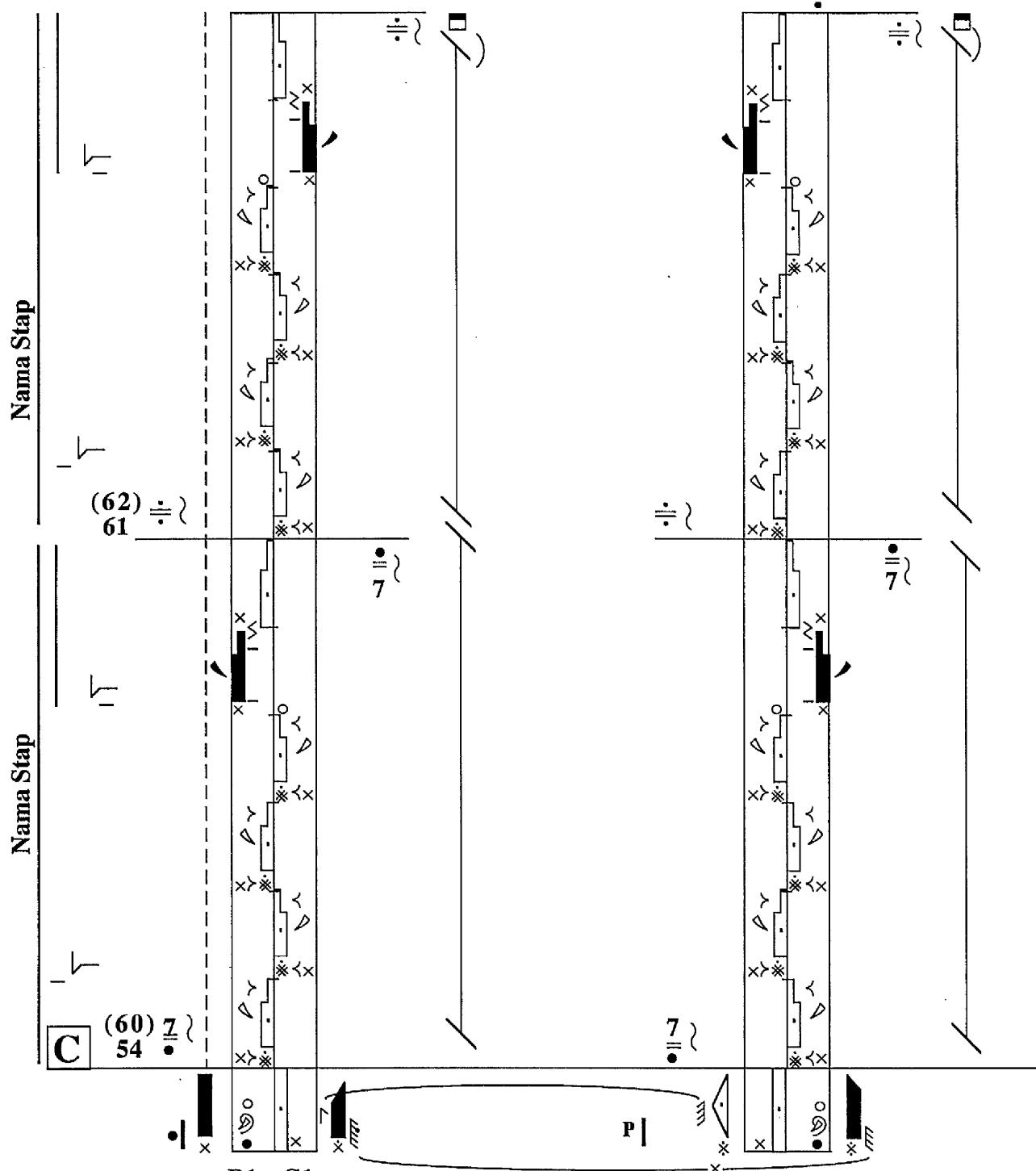
Bar 53

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part Two



Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version
Part Two

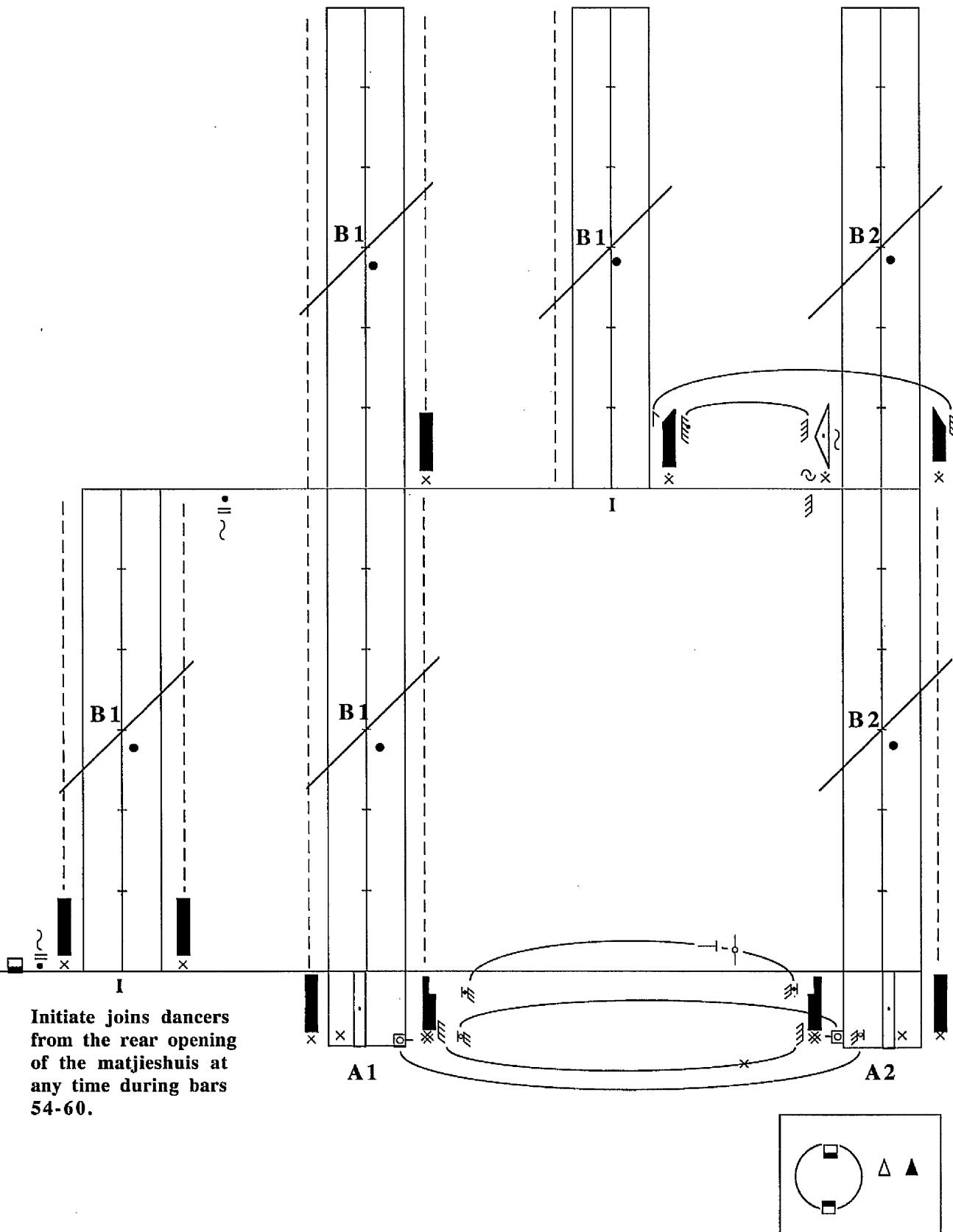


Bars 54-60

Δ = Initiate

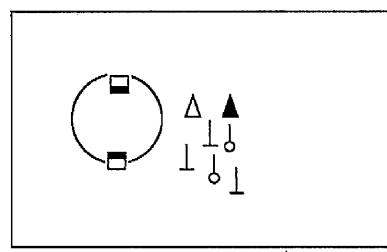
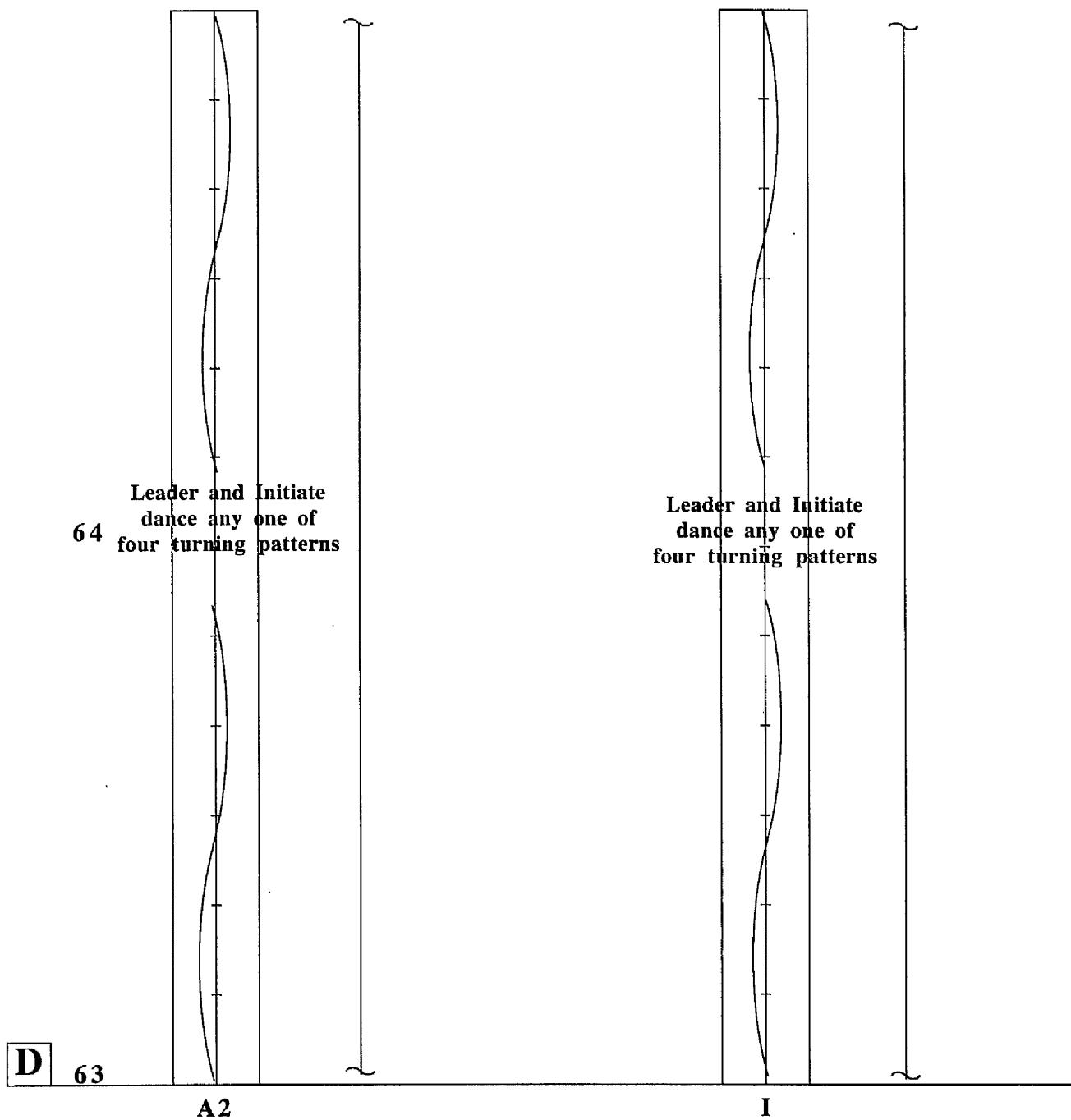
Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part Two



Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part Two



Bars 63-64

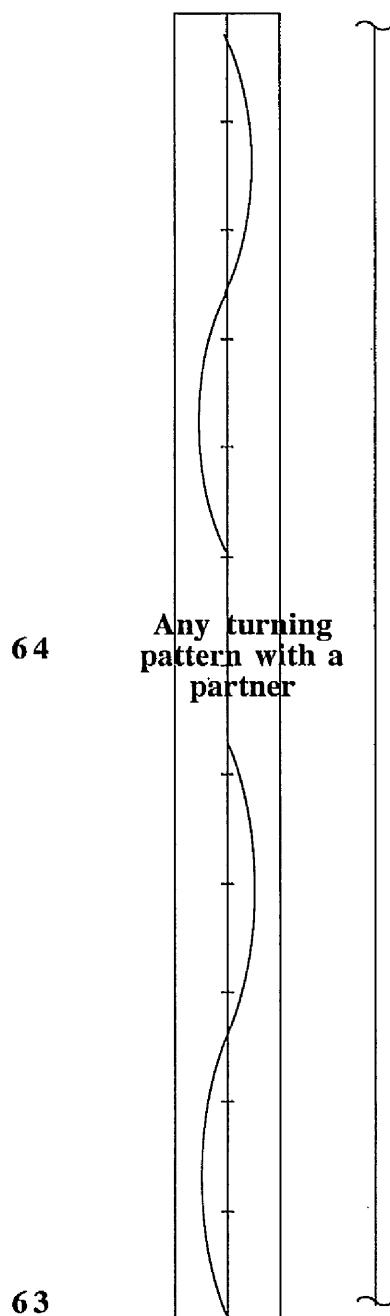
▲ = Leader (A2)

236

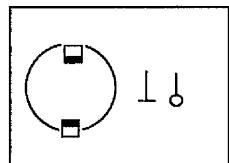
△ = Initiate

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

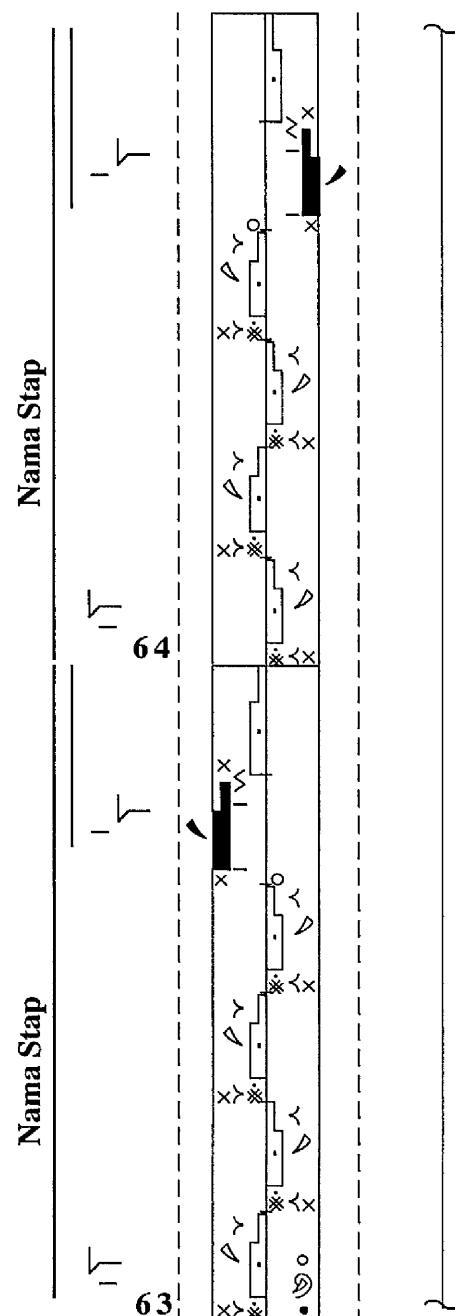
Part Two



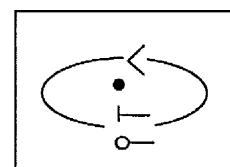
**All other dancers
Variation One**



**Bars 63-64;
Variation One**



**All other dancers
Variation Two**



**Bars 63-64;
Variation Two**

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

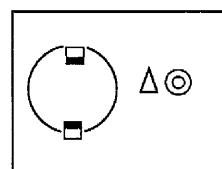
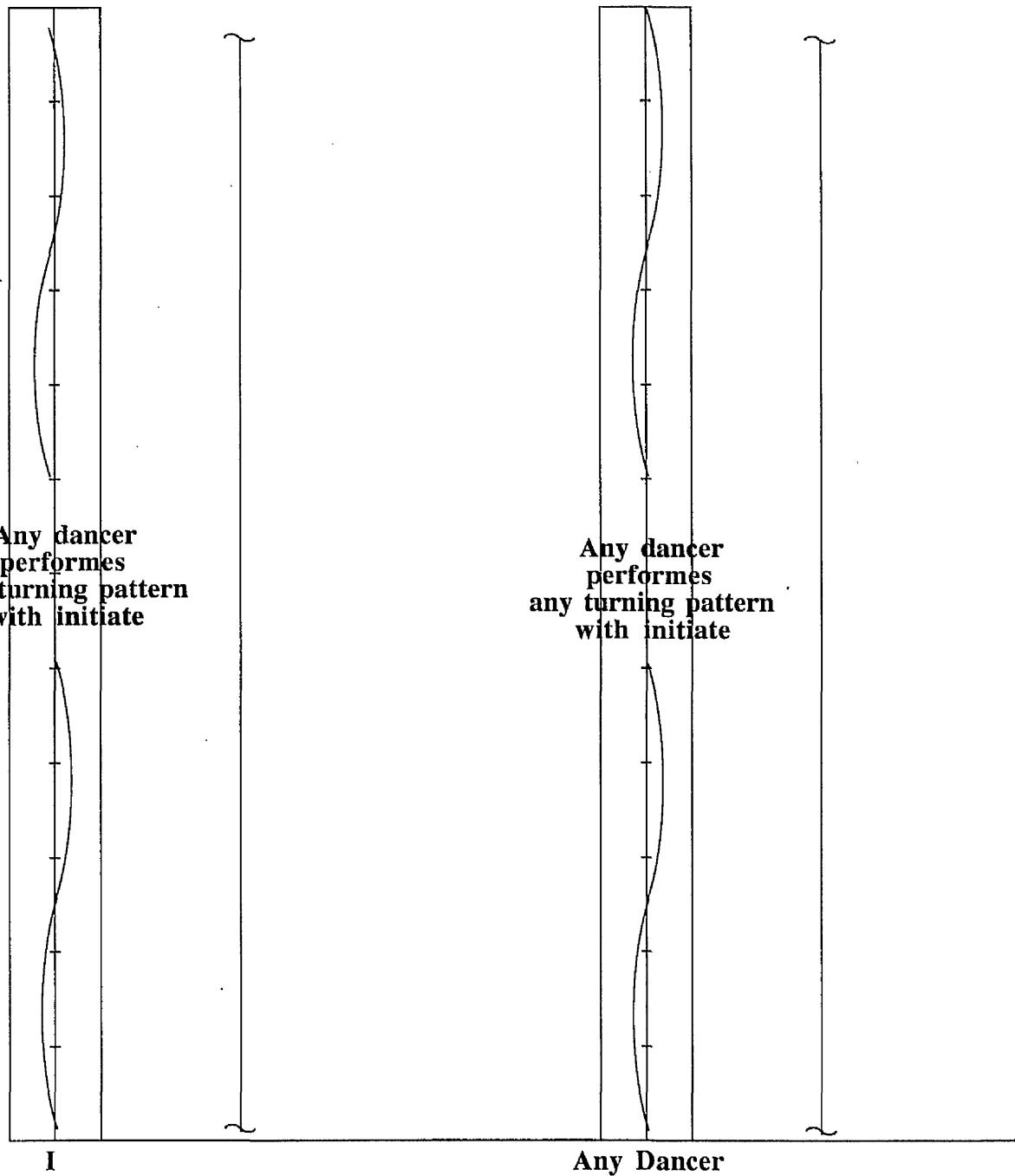
Part Two

66

Any dancer
performs
any turning pattern
with initiate

65

Any dancer
performs
any turning pattern
with initiate



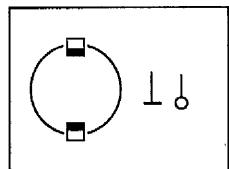
Bars 65-66

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part Two

65

All other dancers
Variation One



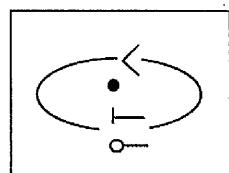
Bars 65-66;
Variation One

Any turning pattern with a partner

Nama Stap

65 66

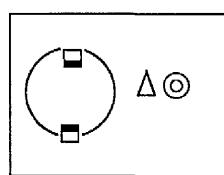
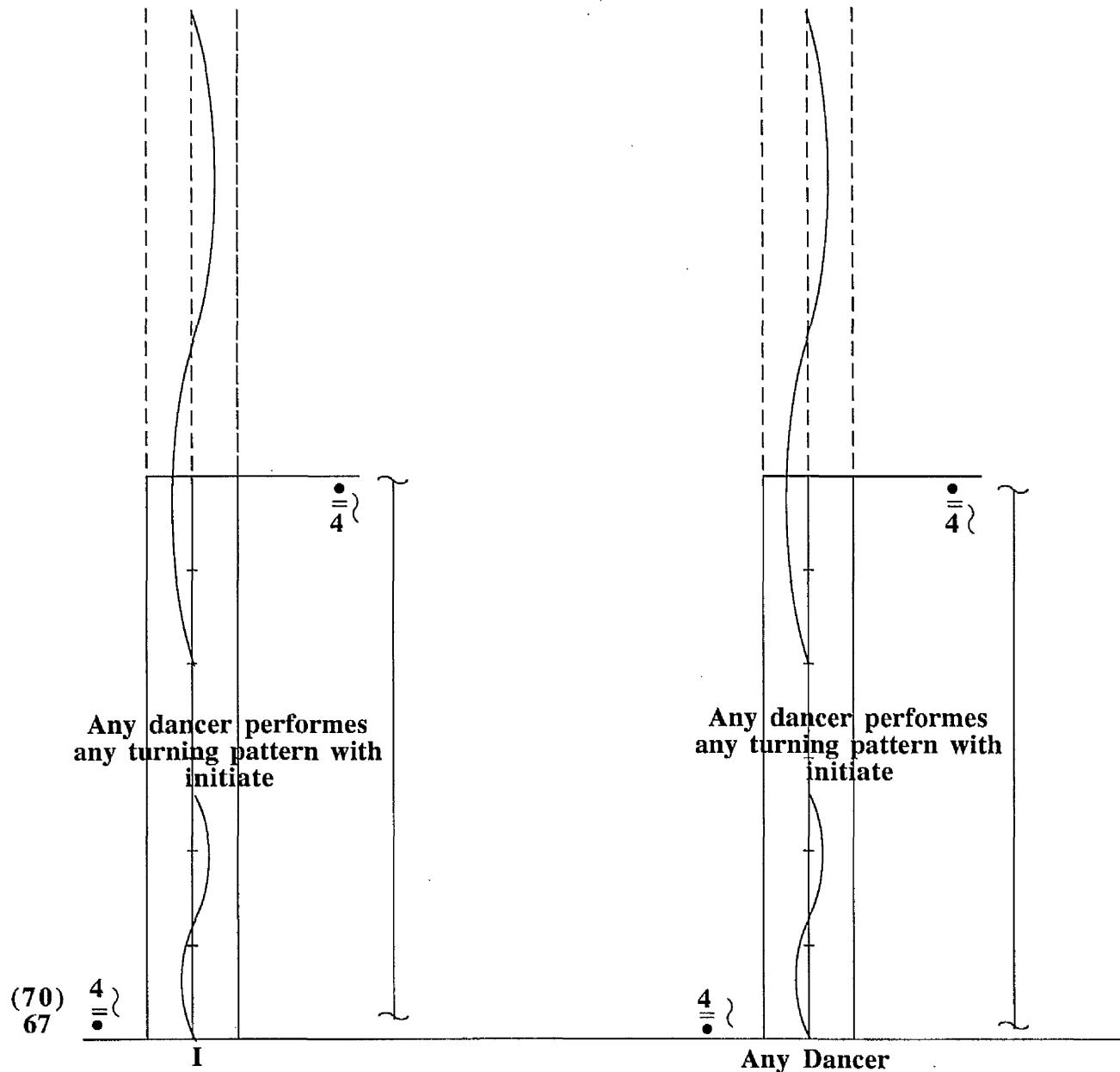
All other dancers
Variation Two



Bars 65-66;
Variation Two

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

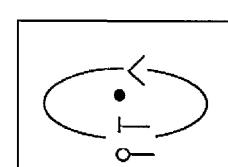
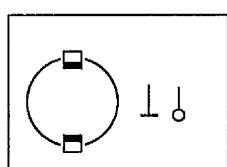
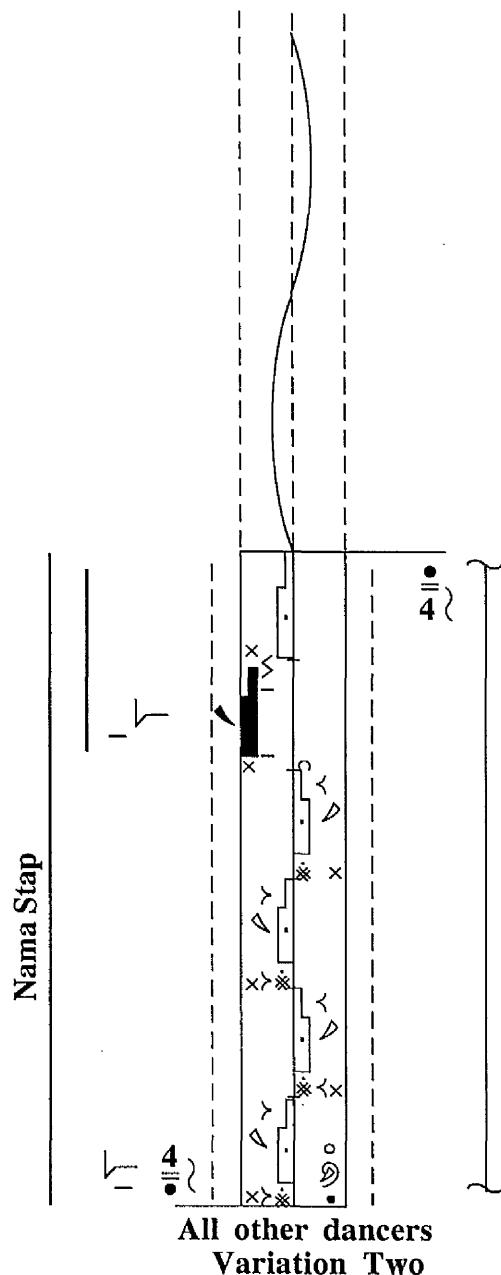
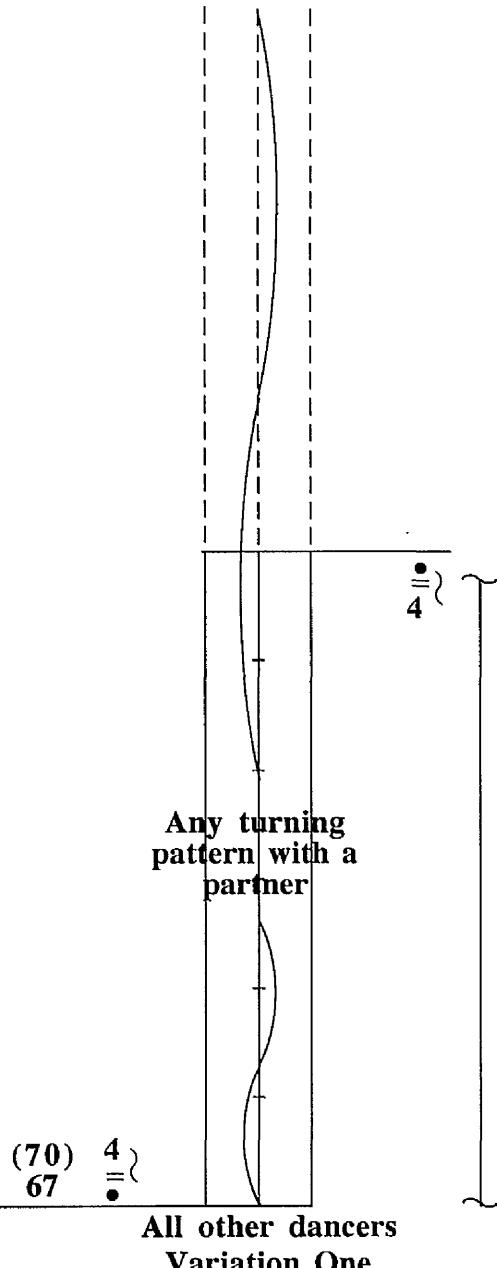
Part Two



Bars 67-70...

Nama Stap Dance - Female Puberty Version

Part Two



Chapter 6

An Analysis of The Nama Stap and The Nama Stap Dance

6.0. Introduction

The analysis that follows defines a spiral-like evaluation that progresses from a focus on a central theme, the Nama Stap, to a broader view of the Nama Stap in !Khubus. First, a movement analysis of the Nama Stap (NS), a major cultural symbol of the Nama people and principal motif of the Nama Stap Dance (NS/D) is undertaken; then an examination of the NS/D in the context of the traditional Nama female puberty ceremony (NS/P) is presented. Finally, a review of the dance as a whole is considered.

At the centre of the spiral, core characteristics of the Nama Stap are determined in order to shed light on those elements that contribute to the uniqueness of the Nama (of !Khubus) today. This phase of analysis utilises the full spectrum of the Laban system including Body, Effort, Shape, and Space (BESS) as well as its structured documentation, Labanotation (LN). The analysis draws attention to prominent features found in each of these areas. These are then discussed and further systematised through a compilation in chart form; a catalogue of the movement vocabulary that comprise the Nama Stap is included in the chart. Though comprehensive and the foundation on which subsequent discussion is based, the Labananalysis (BESS and LN) is but one part of a contemporary analysis that presents a snapshot of the Nama during the period of this research. Labananalysis provides the initial perspective for the examination of the Nama Stap in the context of the Nama Stap Dance. Other issues, such as historical and social contexts also contribute to an examination of both movement activities.

Progressing outward from the centre of the movement analysis, an examination of the Nama Stap Dance is carried out. Here, the dance analysis model developed by Adshead and others (Adshead 1988) complement the Laban perspective. Within this framework issues and questions such as components, form, interpretation, and evaluation of the dance are addressed. This level of analysis imposes yet another western perspective, the first being a Laban view, on structures of the dance that enable it to be appreciated by a broader audience.

The final stage of analysis will follow in Chapter Seven, and will address those points raised by Adrienne Kaeppler and referred to in an earlier part of this dissertation. Here, Kaeppler's anthropological perspective (1992a) on

movement/dance analysis advances the discussion from a focus on dancing to that of dancing as a community based movement system. Issues such as transmission (teaching and learning), and Nama and non-Nama perspectives are considered. It should be noted that some of Kaeppeler's concerns are addressed either in the BESS analysis, that is, Kinematic and Morphokinetic Analysis, or Dance Analysis models, that is, choreographic analysis. The analysis is based on data collected from distance and participatory observation and video footage recorded by the researcher; this material has then been transcribed into Labananalysis by the same researcher.

The use of Labananalysis scores as the source of analysis at this stage has a number of practical advantages. It allows, for example, both deep and surface structure analysis described by Adshead (1988) and Kaeppeler (1992a), permits the observation of movement and freeze-frame simultaneously, and the concurrent comparison of movement motifs and sequences is more readily accomplished than through the use of film or video. It is also significant to note that a number of the concerns regarding the analytic models mentioned previously are directly addressed through even a cursory reading of the Labanotated score. (Components of the dance, for example, are easily identified through a first reading of the Labanotated score.) In other words, the kind of analysis necessary to produce a Laban score simultaneously addresses (many) issues of dance analysis, and these have only to be extracted from the score for further consideration. An additional advantage over film/video is the ability to update the score as and when necessary. This might be appropriate, for example, when greater understanding of a movement or sequence motivates the notator to express it differently, or, as is often the case, the choreographer adds, removes or embellishes the dance's movement. What follows is an application of the principles of the system to actual case studies, the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance. A chart, detailing the movement vocabulary and predominant features concludes the analysis of each dance. Additionally, a glossary of Laban related term used throughout the discussion can be found in Appendix C.

6.1. The Nama Stap

For as long as they can remember, the Nama people have been dancing the NS. No one has been able to provide evidence of why or how it came into being. Very few Nama, if any, have no embodied knowledge of the NS. The Nama of today also do the NS/D; this is a dance that seems to have evolved from the NS and the

historic Nama female puberty ceremony. The NS seems to reflect more recent life experiences of the Nama.

What, then, is the Nama Stap and what is its importance to the Nama? Responses to these questions might elicit a verbal explanation of its history or a demonstration of it. A viewing of it via some form of electronic media would give an immediate visual picture of it, and physically embodying (learning) the sequence would provide yet another level of understanding. The teaching and learning of it is noteworthy as this process is underpinned by an analysis of the sequence of movements and other significant features that constitute it. The analytic process of someone who has learned the NS as part of her daily life experience (acquisition, similar to language learning) is different to that of someone who approaches this process as an outsider. I, for example, learned the NS through distance and participatory observation in a variety of contexts such as games with children and living in a Nama community. My analysis is influenced by those experiences. My response, therefore, to the question what is the Nama Stap will involve a detailed examination of it that will engage my skill and perspective as a Laban Movement Analysts/Labanotator and also my first hand (physical) experience of it. Such an analysis plays a major role in my construction of the significance of this sequence of movement to the Nama.

The NS can be considered from various different perspectives including the ethnographic where the dancing itself is the focus of attention or the anthropological where the culture as a whole is considered. It may also be viewed in terms of a detailed movement analysis and documentation of the content where the movement aspect of the dance is examined and thereby can provide an initial foundation for interpretation. Aspects of all of these views also inform my examination of both the NS and NS/D.

I have decided to begin my analysis from a movement perspective as, all things considered, I remain an 'outsider.' This perception is influenced by first hand experience but is, nonetheless, an outsider's view. The movement analysis has, therefore, served a number of purposes. Firstly, it has allowed me to document the NS, its variations and the NS/D by constructing a score or text of it in LN/LMA form (a surface analysis). Secondly, the analysis that underpins the construction of the score displays those elements and constellations that form the patterns constituting the NS (deep analysis). Third, recognition of patterns in the dance, kinemic and

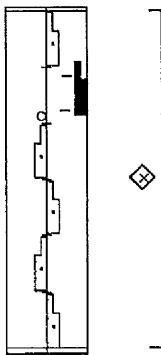
morphokines (see Chapter Seven for a discussion of these terms) enables interpretations, evaluations, and statements to be made regarding it. Finally, such an analysis enabled me to learn the NS more easily and quickly; the ability to demonstrate this favoured movement pattern of the Nama, to an acceptable level as judged by the people themselves, allowed me swift, albeit temporary, entry into the !Khubus community.

6.2. A Laban Movement Analysis of the Nama Stap

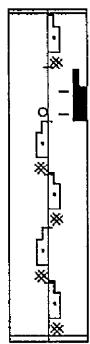
Due to the multiple layers of experience of the researcher in reference to this study, the analysis should be viewed as a construct rather than a verbatim recording of the sequence. Such a perspective may seem to imply that the analysis has been influenced, as acknowledged above, and therefore is not definitive. It is not possible to prove that there is a single version that is regarded as such by practitioners of the NS, nor is this a fundamental question of this research. Instead, I am using the term to acknowledge, firstly, the response of the sequence to environmental influences and to the passage of time, and secondly, to call attention to the fact that the notation process too is an interpretive one.

The notation score is a construct in the sense that the notator is constantly making choices as to what to document and how it is best recorded. In deciding what to record, the notator is making a judgment as to what is significant, what is the dance, and what is the dancer. The choice of how to record the selected movement(s) is also indicative of this process. This is because, similar to language, there are a number of ways of expressing a movement in Labanotation. The selection that is made indicates a notator's knowledge, understanding (or lack of understanding), and experience of the movement being transcribed into Labanotation form. This process is inescapable. The following examples use movement from the NS to illustrate this important point.

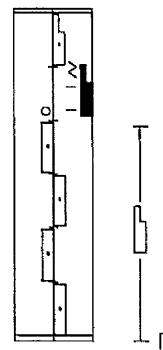
All three examples are possible recordings of the footwork of the NS. All of these, along with other aspects such as timing, record the fundamental theme of the pattern: the centre of gravity (COG) progresses forward through space and that this movement is spatially small. Each however, describes this action in a slightly different way; these subtle differences are indicative of the experience and understanding of the analyst.



Example 4



Example 5

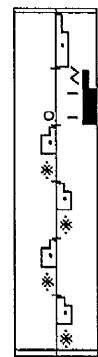


Example 6

Due to the manner in which it is recorded, example four focuses attention on the direction and level of supports/steps; the steps are modified by the indication to the right of the staff that informs the reader that the steps, or the pattern as a whole, is spatially small. This interpretation focuses attention on the amount of *space* the steps cover. Example five informs the reader that each forward step is very small. It may be reasonably argued that this method of recording will produce a similar movement to that of example four. The distinction however, is in the level of observation, appreciation, and experience of both the movement and the notator. Example five is a measure of each step, a *bodily* orientation, rather than a spatial one. It should also be noted that this example uses the general scale for measuring steps; a more specific scale could also be used without altering the fundamental nature of the recording.

Example six is the most expressive (in the context of the NS) of the three interpretations. This model indicates that the first four steps are taken on Place, directly below the centre of gravity (COG). These are further modified by a path sign to the right of the staff that instructs the dancer that while performing the steps on Place the COG moves forward along a straight path. This description is similar to the others in that the steps are taken in relation to Place and therefore only a small progression through space is possible. But, it differs from the others, in regard to these four steps, in respect of the *COG*. In this example, the steps maintain a vertical relationship to the COG throughout. In Examples four and five, each step moves away from the previous point of support as happens in a typical walking pattern. I have decided to record the NS as transcribed in example six as it comes the closest to my experience and understanding of it. However, even this recording could be notated in yet another way. Example seven indicates that the first four steps have been modified by an adverb-like indication (6° of contraction) that requires the performer

to take the smallest step possible; the smallest possible step in LN terms is a step on Place. Examples five and six will produce the same (or a very similar) action. Example seven expresses the degree of stepping and gives a visual picture of the COG moving away from Place when, in fact it does not. Finally, it should be noted that only the movement of beats one to four of the NS have been addressed throughout the above discussion, as these are sufficient for the argument under consideration.



Example 7

6.3. Surface Analysis

A surface analysis of the Nama Stap summarises it as a short movement sequence of six beats (Figure 16). The movement is characterised by small steps that progress forward and backwards through space by skimming across the floor with either a gliding or dabbing quality. As this level of analysis gives an overall picture or feel of the sequence, this is an initial, superficial or surface level of observation. Information such as frequency, beginning and ending, basic footwork, and dynamics are easily recognised at this stage. This is also the level of transmission of the NS to outsiders who are encouraged to 'have a go' at doing it at the opening and closure of NS/D performance events; on these occasions no judgements are made regarding the level of execution or performance.

According to Willem DeWet, a community leader in !Khubus, and host of one of the performances I observed, visitors can learn (this level of) the NS in a few hours. This is also the level of observation of the untrained or passive observer, audience member, or enthusiast. This level of interaction is not, however, irrelevant to the analysis process, as it is often judgments made at this point that spur further questions that lead to deeper examination. Deep analysis will reveal further details, excite even more questions and require a system of analysis that is capable of systematically revealing these details in a form that allows text-based and visual comparison.

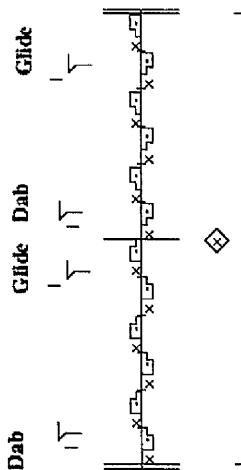


Figure 16.
Surface Analysis of Nama Stap

6.4. Deep Structure Analysis

Deep structure analysis is like the zoom lens of a camera. Here, specific questions are addressed, including points such as exactly what is moving, specific timing, relationship of body parts to each other in space and time, how space is used, relationship of people to each other (including viewers of the dance), constellations, and patterns. This level can also be compared to the human body; on the surface we observe an articulate, fluid body moving in space, but we do not see the anatomy and physiology that allows this activity to happen.

Body

Lower Body

As the primary action of the NS happens in the feet, the lower body, the area from waist to feet, is the key body area of the sequence. This is clearly seen in the notation text of the Nama Stap (Figure 17) where actions of the supports (feet) and gestures of the legs are prominently recorded while actions of the remainder of the body (arms and torso) are shown to move passively (broken lines) in response to these actions.

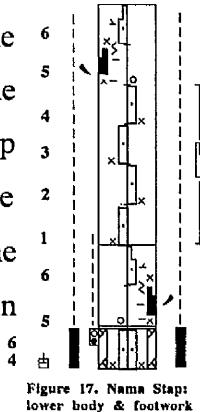


Figure 17. Nama Stap:
lower body & footwork

Footwork

Footwork is characterised spatially by a small to mid-reach kinesphere. Travelling supports and leg gestures are small and remain mainly on or close to Place. This close proximity to the centre of the body is echoed in the relationship of the supports to the floor/ground. Travelling steps either slide, maintaining contact with the ground, into the next support (Figure 17: beats 5-6), or they step on the spot in Place (Figure 17: beats 1-4). Rarely, except, perhaps, in performances by the youth of the village, is what might be considered a large kinesphere utilised.

Torso

The upper body does not move into directions in a specific or precise way, as does the lower body/feet; its actions, instead, respond to movement of the lower body. This is usually in the form of a deviation that moves from side to side. This action, though subtle, is distinctive in that it is initiated by a movement of the hip in the opposite direction to that of the supports; a detailed analysis of this action can be

found below (see Figure 20). A variation of this action of the torso was noted on occasions other than in the context of the NS/D (such as parties and other social occasions) and was highlighted by a consultant as a ‘typical Nama type’ dance movement. It was also noted as a larger movement when done in performance context by village youth.

Like the torso, the arms do not move into directions in a specific way but respond to movements of the lower body. This is usually in the form of a slight contraction and return to neutral. Neither the arms nor the legs are intentionally stretched. Passive weight, because of increased intensity of dynamics, frequently motivates the arms to swing into a forward and/or backward direction.

Effort

Effort intensity and range are features of the NS. Effort intensity noted in the Orange River version of the NS was mild to mid-range while the !Khubus version was mid-range with one occurrence of what might be judged as high intensity. The range of efforts utilised in both versions is between two similar effort drives, dab and glide. The overall quality of each is an easy, light, springiness that encourages buoyancy throughout the entire body.

The feet ‘pat’ the ground in a dabbing effort action (light, direct, quick) that is recorded in beats 1-4 in Figure 18. The dabbing action is counterbalanced with gliding (light, direct, sustained) recorded in beats 5-6. Individually, neither the dab nor glide is significant. However, in the context of the NS, the glide effort is distinctive in that the feet move smoothly along the ground creating an accent notable due to its position in time/rhythm, occurring on an up beat, typically, beats 5-6 of the previous bar.

The two effort drives of dab and glide differ in reference to the time effort element only; one accelerates while the other decelerates. This shift in time from one to the other is not particularly dramatic (due to its mild intensity) and is not easily observed or recorded in Labanotation alone; the distinction here is subtle. LN would record this action in quantitative terms thus yielding a precise amount of time within a specific time frame. What is expressed here is the dynamic of speeding up and

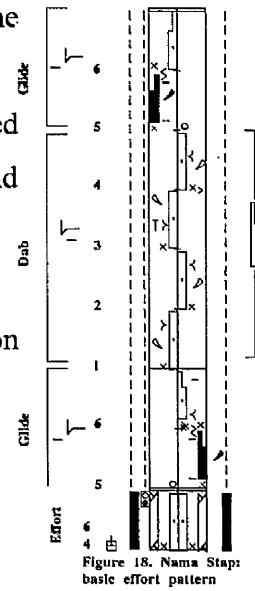


Figure 18. Name Stamp basic effort pattern

slowing down in a qualitative sense, the feeling of getting relatively slower or faster. Both LN and LMA are needed here to express this distinction. The other effort elements, light weight and direct space, remain consistent throughout. Dabbing and gliding characterise the effort constituents of the NS. Other effort configurations such as passive weight, primarily in the arms, and buoyant quality throughout the entire body are also present.

Shape

Shape does not play a key role in the Nama Stap performed by Mrs. Farmer and others observed during the course of this research. No particular shape changes, qualities or shaping are noted. The primary shape is that of a straight, pin-like line.

Space

Three aspects of space are dominant in the NS: the dimensional axes and the vertical and wheel planes. Movements up and down the vertical dimensional axis occur in the slight contraction and return to neutral in the arms, legs, and the centre of gravity (COG). A buoyant quality is clearly seen as the COG springs up and down the vertical centre line of the spine. This is particularly notable when the COG is travelling in the back direction (Figure 19: beats 4). The vertical or door plane is formed by deviation of the torso. This construction is interesting as it is the corners at, for example, right side low to left side high that are distinguished. These inclinations create a

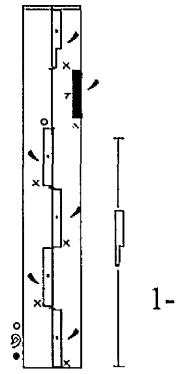


Figure 19. Nama Stap:
buoyant centre of gravity

diagonal line through the body from head to opposite hip (Figure 20).

In LMA the wheel plane is considered the plane of progression, of motion forward and backward. In agreement with this Laban based idea, the sequence travels spatially forward (and backward) through space while the limbs, and sometimes the torso, deviate into these directions as well. Movements are close to the body emphasizing, again, a close- to mid-reach kinesphere.

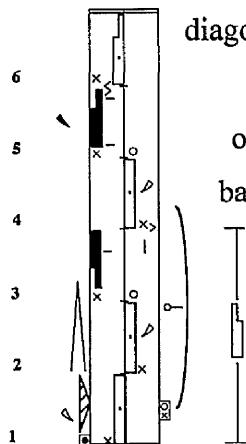


Figure 20. Nama Stap:
Torso Movement

Phrase

The organisation of movement into units or groups is known as phrase. A phrase is described here as an action or series of actions that form a movement sentence with a perceivable beginning, middle and end. It may be further characterised by an accent or series of accents occurring at its beginning, middle, end or some other point within it. A phrase, similar to a sentence, can convey one complete thought, or it can be compound with overlapping phrases where another phrase begins before the previous one is completed. The manner in which movement is phrased is significant in that a similar collection of movements will be expressed, and perceived, differently depending on where in the sequence of action phrase begins or ends. This sort of usage of phrase can be noted in language or music.

For example, in the sentence 'To Ellen Stuart was very attractive' the placement of a comma between the words Ellen and Stuart would not only clarify that two people are being referred to, but would also create two speech phrases rather than one. A similar usage is seen in the playing of wind instruments or the voice, in music; where the breath is taken will determine the flow and continuity of the sequence being played/sung. Compare, for instance, the interpretation of two singers performing the same music, and the use of phrase is sure to be one of the distinguishing features. The Nama Stap(s) observed consist of two movement phrases distinguished by movement that travels either forward or backward and the position of accents, in this case, at the beginning (impulsive phase) of the phrase (Figure 21). The forward action consists of overlapping phrases (Figure 21: bar 1). This phrase encloses a second phrase that begins at beat five and finishes at beat six. When travelling backwards (Figure 21: bar 2) on long phrase of six beats is created.

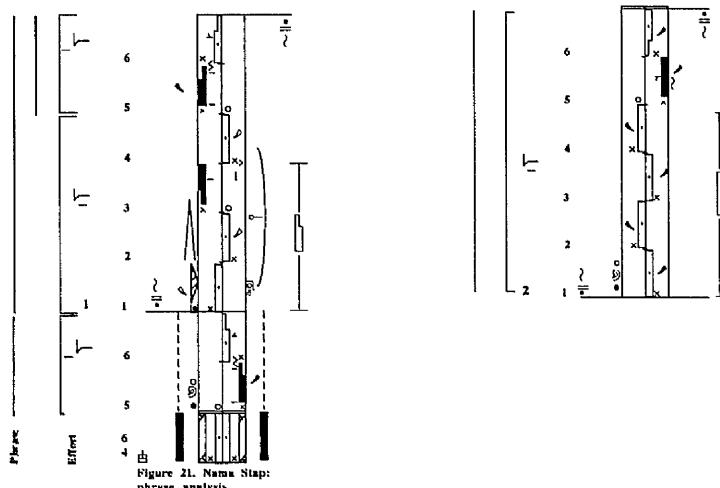


Figure 21. Nama Stap:
phrase analysis

6.5. A Movement Signature

Based on the Laban analysis presented, a movement signature for the NS can be constructed. ‘Movement signature’, in this context, is used to signify those movement phrases taken collectively to identify the NS as the NS and not, for example, a Xhosa Stap or a Pas de Chat. A movement signature is readily recognised by indigenous users of it, in this case the Nama, and by knowledgeable outsiders (Kaeppeler, 1992a). A movement signature, like a personal, hand drawn one, is not static but, instead, operates within a dynamic range of possibilities. These deviations do not change the fundamental signature itself but reflect responses to momentary internal and external activity. Response to the environment is what allows a movement signature to extend, over time, outside of a range and, ultimately, to develop and to change. The movement signature of the NS described below should be understood in this light. It represents a constructed movement signature of the Nama during the period of this research.

The NS analysed here is primarily a travelling movement which progresses forward and backward through space while the feet typically maintain a close relationship to Place. When the feet do move away from a central axis, rather than lifting away from the floor they maintain contact with it by sliding across its surface (Figure 22). These two features, along with the fact that the limbs are never stretched beyond neutral, ensure that it is small in respect of distance travelled and bodily kinesphere.

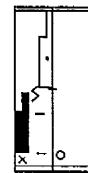


Figure 22. Sliding

An erect torso that is supported by a buoyant, springy action in the pelvis (\circlearrowright) typifies this NS. Rather than initiating its own directions in space, the torso responds to movements of other body parts, especially the feet and the pelvis. The movement of these parts causes the torso to tip or deviate on and off its central axis in a counter-balancing motion. Moving in response to the torso, the arms behave in a similar passive manner that sometimes develops into a swing type movement. Dynamically, two similar effort drives, dab and glide, are apparent. These efforts vary in time only—one accelerating while the other decelerates. Steps on Place dab (acceleration) while sliding steps glide (deceleration). These aspects of the NS are organised or phrased either in relatively shorter or longer units. Overlapping, impulsive phrases organise movement travelling forward while one long phrase structure movement that travels backward.

Those movement attributes that converge to create a 'signature' of the Nama Stap are readily assessed when viewed as a discrete movement sequence (Figure 23). However, the dynamism of the NS in the context of the NS/D is the focus of the discussion that follows. The analysis will draw attention to major features of the NS and other movement themes within the NS/D; these are then discussed and further systematised through compilation in chart form.

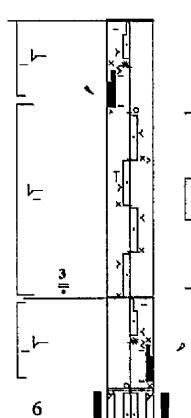
Nama Stap Movement Vocabulary and LMA Analysis of Core Features			
Vocabulary	LN/LMA	Body	
Steps on Place Travelling Forward & Backward		<p>Lower body: major action is in the feet.</p> <p>Supports: supports & leg gestures are small & remain mainly on or close to Place; travelling steps slide; rarely is a large kinesphere utilised.</p> <p>Upper body: responds to movement of the lower body; deviations side to side initiated by hip in opposite direction of supports.</p> <p>Arms: respond to movement of lower body in the form of a slight contraction; arms, like leg gestures, are rarely stretched; passive weight swing arms into forward/backward</p>	
		<p>Effort</p> <p>Intensity: mild- to mid-range intensity.</p> <p>Dab & Glide: two similar effort drives, dab and glide; the overall quality of each is an easy, light, springiness that encourages buoyancy throughout the entire body.</p>	
		<p>Shape</p> <p>Shape does not play a key role in this interpretation; no particular shape changes, qualities or shaping are noted.</p> <p>Pin-like: The primary shape is that of a straight, pin-like line.</p>	
		<p>Space</p> <p>Dimensional axis: movement up and down the vertical centre line of the spine; also noted in the contraction and return to neutral in the arms, legs, and COG; a buoyant quality throughout the entire body as the COG springs up and down dimensional axis.</p> <p>Vertical plane</p> <p>Wheel plane: sequence travels forward and backward through space.</p>	
		<p>Phrase</p> <p>Two movement phrases of six beats each distinguished by impulsive phrase as the movement travels forward and backward thorough space.</p>	

Figure 23. Nama Stap Movement Vocabulary and LMA Analysis of Chore Features

6.6. The Nama Stap Dance

Until relatively recently, mention of the NS and/or NSD in literature concerning the Khoisan people was sparse. Nowadays, a few carefully selected words keyed into the world wide web will provide, at least, a starting point for research concerning it. What is not apparent from electronic research, or even more traditional text-based investigation, is its affiliation with other activities or structured systems within a Nama community. Take, for example, the female puberty ceremony described by Hoff (in Barnard, 1992). In this account, no mention of the NS, NS/D, or reed-dance is recorded; nor is its association with marriage ceremonies, birthdays, popular dance, and so on, noted. Perhaps the NS and NS/D did not exist at the time of Hoff's research, or, possibly, the absence of the NS or NS/D in this description suggests the NS and certainly the NS/D may be products of the mid 20th century. There is no confident means of assessing the emergence of these. The NS/D is a dance, it is also a ceremony, or rather various ceremonies, a signifier, a popular dance, a dance event, a theatre dance and dance theatre. It is all of these, and because of its versatility, it is not easily classified.

This research has studied three generations of Nama who have body knowledge of the NS and/or NS/D. This represents an age span of, roughly, four years to eighty years. During the course of this research, I met no one in !Khubus, or its neighbouring villages, who was not familiar with it. Even outsiders, such as the head master of the local school and teachers who were not Nama, from !Khubus or any of the surrounding villages, had a good knowledge of it, could give a reasonable (surface analysis) demonstration of the NS, and could readily discuss the NS/D. Even those further a field, such as Betty Niewoudt at Trans Hex Diamond Mine, had a good understanding of it.

The NS/D, within the context of !Khubus village, is certainly a structured movement system. Adopting Kaeppeler's definition, structured movement systems are 'systems of knowledge which are socially constructed...they are created by, known, and agreed upon by a group of people and primarily preserved in memory.' (Kaeppeler, 1992a). The Nama Stap Dance is socially constructed. This means that, as with other aspects of society, members of the group motivate the creation, recreation, content, definition, and values of the dance. In an African dance context, Welsh notes,

Dance is traditionally a communal and social activity. Rituals and ceremonies are often centered on the dance. In this way, dance is more than entertainment: it is an integral part of the society's worldview...Dance is an expression. It expresses in movement and rhythm the aesthetic values of a society. The perception of one's environment and its relationship with nature is an important part of aesthetic. (Welsh, 2004, p. 20)

The NS/D most likely developed from the NS. In turn, the NS/D is performed in various different contexts as dictated by members themselves in accordance with the demands of the society. Although, in more recent times, the NS/D has been filmed, neither the NS nor the NS/D is passed on to members of the community via this method or other electronic media. First, it is acquired bodily though distance and participatory observation, typically, in early childhood. This understanding is then formalised as part of the academic education system of children in !Khubus where bodily transmission is the form of exchange.

The NS/D is performed in a variety of contexts. I experienced it in two performance related contexts and a number of informal situations, such as the front yard and the lounge of our residence, on the road, and in social dance gatherings. Firstly, I witnessed it as a dance event in which it formed an integral part of the traditional female puberty ceremony (NS/P). In this version, it is danced by pairs of mature women of the community who dance it prior to encouraging the young female initiate to emerge from the seclusion of the matjieshuis in order to join the community as an adult member. This version of the dance consists of a designated leader and is made up of three major dance motifs, a variation of the NS sequence detailed above, a series of partnered turning patterns, and contacting arm gestures. This puberty version has been notated in detail (Chapter Five) and is discussed further below and in Chapter Seven. A second version of the dance was observed as part of a government sponsored festival exhibiting Nama culture. This account of the dance was performed by the youth of the village aged roughly between seven to thirteen years. Similar to the NS/P of the mature women, this version has a designated leader and is performed on a counter-clockwise circular path in either single sex or mixed pairs; it should be noted that while there were single sex female pairs there were no single sexed male pairs in the performance observed.

This youthful version differs from that which accompanies the puberty ceremony in two distinct ways. First, the intent, purpose or function of the dance is

dissimilar. This more youthful version is in the nature of a challenge or competition dance. The concern here is on who can perform the best; the challenge is open to both male and female and younger and older school aged dancers. Secondly, as this is a challenge dance, the movement content is fresh and innovative. The best NS dancers are characterised by an ability to perform the NS sequence well and who also exhibit innovation, style, and energy. Those who are deemed to be good or the best Nama Stap dancer by the community carry this distinction into adulthood.

The versions of the NS/D observed during the course of this research seem to balance each other in respect of generations. At one end, there is an interpretation of the dance by mature women of the community. This version is a mixture of the Nama Stap and western style turning patterns with a traditional Khoekhoen rite of passage ceremony. Interestingly, this mixing of a traditional Nama rite of passage, and western style dance vocabulary with the NS is itself inventive. On the other end of the spectrum, is an interpretation of the dance by the youth of the village where innovation, improvisation, style and presentation are paramount. Both versions share some movement vocabulary, such as the NS, turning patterns, and spatial orientation; both also consist of movement expressions typical of their own story.

The dance analysis that follows examines the NS/D in the context of the Khoekhoen female puberty ceremony. This version is performed as a dance event by a group of mature women of the village. It is expressed as a dance event rather than a dance performance in order to emphasize the inclusive nature of it and its further connection to the traditional ceremony on which it is based.¹ Here, I not only analyse the dance itself, but the event as a whole, addressing those aspects of it that contribute to an interpretation and evaluation.

6.7. An Analysis of the Nama Stap Dance in the context of the traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony (NS/P)

On first viewing, the NS/P may appear to be a dance of few movement motifs and simple construction. Indeed, this dance event can be divided into three segments that comprise just three basic movement patterns, namely the NS, four sets of partnered turns, and three arm patterns. To interpret or evaluate the dance on these criteria only, however, would be to not only impose an alien set of values on it, but would also be indicative of a superficial and partial study. Further analysis is required

to understand and appreciate the significance of this dance in the lives of the Nama people.

Part One:

The first segment of the event is similar to that of a prologue found in some western theatre forms. In this introductory section, audience-participants—community members, performers, and visitors—socialise and dance together. Here, residents of !Khubus, including performers, interact with and guide children and visitors through the movement vocabulary of the NS. A story of the dance, the context, in this case the Nama female puberty ceremony, symbols used, and an introduction of the performers, all form part of this portion of the event. The overall atmosphere is overwhelmingly communal. Efforts are made to ensure everyone, especially visitors, feel included and a necessary part of the activities. There is also a sense of pride in being of Nama heritage. This part of the event is designed to impart ‘the dreams of the group’ (Moore and Yamamoto, 1988, p. 70) to its children through knowledge of the NS, NS/D, and its historical and cultural significance to Nama people.

Part one introduces the thematic movement of the dance: the NS, turning sequences, and arm patterns. In this context, the NS is more than its movement components as analysed previously. Within the dance its position and function are of equal value (this aspect is discussed further below). The first part of the dance also

introduces the leader of the group. This person directs the dancing and makes decisions, *in situ*, concerning the dance’s progression. The leader is someone who is considered by community members to be a good Nama Stap dancer, is experienced,

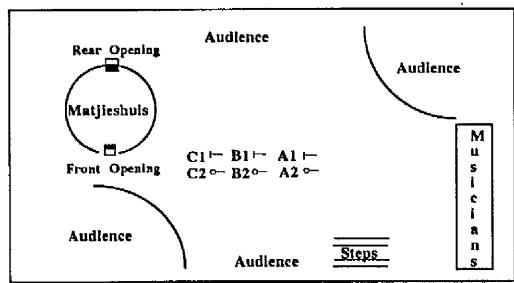


Figure 24. Starting Position

and knows the dance well. This may well be someone who has earned this distinction in her youth.

The central focus of the NS/P is the matjieshuis that is located in the up-stage right corner of the performance area. The paired dancers are situated in the centre of a well-defined space the shape of which is marked-out by the audience-participants that enclose it on nearly all sides (Figure 24). The dance is constructed of two main parts that are further divided and subdivided into sections linked together by means of the NS. Attention in part one is directed to the dancers situated in the middle of the

performance space while consideration in part two is centred on the matjieshuis. The entire dance is organised in canon and unison forms, performed on a counter-clockwise circular-type path, and facilitated by a dance leader who take decisions on the progression of the dance through time and space. This section comprises the dance material and is detailed further below.

Part Two:

Part two of the dance is directed towards the matjieshuis and its' content, the initiate. This portion of the dance extends the ongoing theme of relationship introduced in the first part by establishing a connection with the matjieshuis and the initiate. It is intertwined with symbolic aspects of the traditional Nama female puberty ceremony described in the introduction to this work. This linking of contemporary life experiences with early Nama history is an interesting relationship and will be discussed in the following chapter.

The final stage of the dance event is like an epilogue or closing statement. Here, a review of what has taken place is examined. Audience-participants are encouraged to ask questions and to make comments about the performance or other aspects of Nama culture. This is not unlike the question/answer secessions or workshops that have proceeded or concluded dance performances in England in recent years. Unlike a western context, however, a period of dancing and interaction with performers, community members, and other visitors follows this verbal exchange thus offering yet another opportunity to be guided through the detail of the NS, to engage with the cultural in which it lives, to dialogue with members of the community and other guests, and to complete the historic puberty ceremony in which members of the Nama community are encouraged to dance with the 'new woman'.

6.8. Labananalysis of the NS/P

The NS/P is performed in concert with traditional Nama guitar music; the music and dance share the same title, Nama Stap or Music of the Nama Stap. It is played on two or three guitars in 6/4 metre. This performance of the dance consists of approximately seventy bars of movement. An approximate figure is given here due to the fact that the structure of the dance is somewhat fluid and, at times, may be more or less than the seventy plus bars described herein. Part one of the dance comprise, roughly forty bars, while part two consists of about thirty bars.

The analysis will begin with an introduction of the leader of the dance. Next, a Labananalysis of turning patterns and Nama Stap in the context of the NSD/P is presented; here will be noted differences/variations in the NS apart from the NSD/P. The structural relationship of components to each other follows this. Finally, an examination of the dance as a whole concludes the chapter.

The Leader(s)

The movement of the leader of the group follows those of the other dancers. However, her actions are more idiosyncratic or stylised. Here, as in the version of the youth of the village, the leader(s) may improvise within the boundaries of the form. In the version under examination, two different performers acted as leader at different times during the course of the performance; the movement of each was different. The movement of the first leader, performer A2, included: rhythmic rotations of the head right and left (Figure 25: beats 1-6), of the torso forward and backward (beats 2-5), and of the centre of gravity up, down.

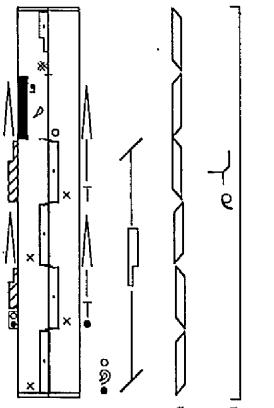


Figure 25.
Leader A2: movement motif featuring movements of the head, torso, and centre of gravity

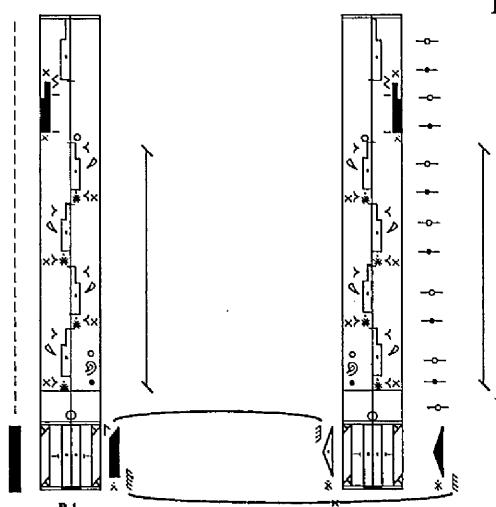


Figure 26.
Leader B2: movement motif featuring movements of the arm upward and downward

Performer B2, the second leader, distinguished her actions by rhythmic pumping of the arms upwards and downwards (Figure 26). As these actions may differ in each performance, they have not been recorded in the score. Instead, they have been catalogued in a glossary of movement vocabulary of the NS/P.

Turning Patterns

The dance begins with turn one where the dancers move in unison (Figure 27). This movement begins on an anacrusis, beat five of the previous bar; this starting point enables fluid entry to the canon form that starts,

approximately, at beat five of bar one. The movement at this beat (beat 5 bar 1) is also the introductory movement of the NS.

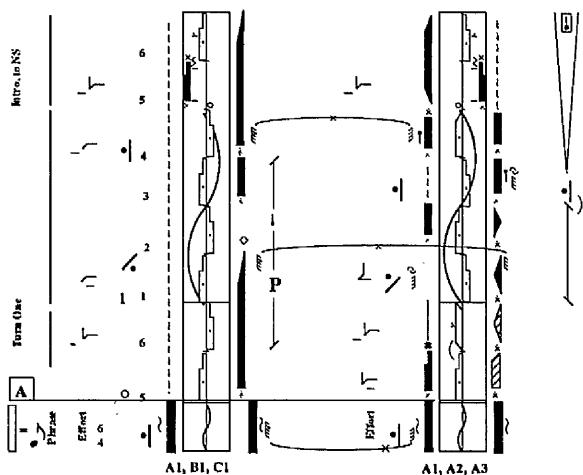


Figure 27.
Nama Step/Puberty: Turn One

Body: All turns

The body is used as an orchestrated whole in all four turning patterns: the body and its parts relate to the centre of the body rather than moving as individual units. The distinctions in these patterns are in the type of turning, relationship of partners to each other, and the contact of body parts between partners, especially the hands.

Upper and lower body are coordinated harmoniously through the centre of the body (pelvis). Arms, which are used extensively, and torso movements are balanced through the body centre with supports. Except for very brief moments in order to allow turning, dancers hold hands throughout part one. The holding pattern is unique in that one partner gently grasps the index finger of the other (this is discussed further below under holding patterns).

Effort – Turning Patterns

The four turns utilise a range of effort intensity from states (two simultaneous efforts) to drives (three simultaneous efforts). Efforts are closely related to phrase. First, I will examine effort and a discussion of phrase will follow.

Turns one and two are similar in that both begin on an upbeat (beat 5 of the previous bar) and are also dynamically similar. Both start with a glide dynamic (light, direct, sustained), move on to a dabbing quality (light, direct, quick), and finish the

turn in a remote state (bound flow and direct space). These dynamics give the turns a gradual build up in intensity in time (deceleration to acceleration), and tranquil decent (sustained to quick and careful and direct). This dynamic is similar to a crescendo – decrescendo phrase quality in music.

Each partner in turn three uses a different set of efforts. In this turn, one partner is stationary and maintains a rhythmic pulse in her body while her partner performs the turn. The stationary partner uses the effort qualities of time and weight (rhythm state) while the turning partner is rotating in a light, careful manner (dream state). In turn four, the dancers wrap around each other. This turn begins with a dynamic punching type action (strong, quick, direct) and follows through with alternating light and strong qualities accompanied by direct space (stable state).

Shape – Turning Patterns

Unlike the NS pattern, shape plays an active role in turning. While the torso does not especially exhibit shape flow (growing and shrinking), partners are close to each other and mould and guide (shaping) the body around each other in order to turn; this is especially notable in turn four which is described further below. Arc (curved) type paths of the torso and arms, rather than spoke (linear) paths, are used to move in and out of turns.

Space – Turning Patterns

Due to the close proximity of dancers to each other, the personal space of each pair overlaps the other to form a single, united kinesphere. A long reach gesture of the arm is sometimes necessary as an adjustment, as when a shorter dancer needs to extend her arm in order to allow a taller one access to turning space; this is, however, to facilitate the movement itself and is not part of choreography. The closeness of the dancers to each other gives these turns a feeling of intimacy.

All four turns rotate around a vertical axis on a counter-clockwise circular path; and all but one turn is in a clockwise direction. The size of the circular path is fluid and is determined by the size of the dance space; the paired dancers, regardless of the size of the space, remain close to each other. The turns do not, generally, progress along the circular path except for a final adjustment that is sometimes needed in order for the performer to move into position for the next movement. Following

the order in which they occur in the dance, I have labelled these turns one, two, three, and four.

Turn one produces concentric circles that are made by each pair; the smaller inner circle made by the dancers on the inside of the pair and the larger one by the dancer on the outer side of the circle. After an initial counter-clockwise change of front by the outer dancer, both dancers turn clockwise (Figure 28).

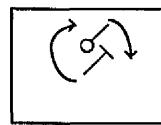


Figure 28.
NS/P: floor plan
for turns 1, 2, 4

Spatially, turns one and two are similar and have a similar floor pattern. The distinction between these is in the use of the arms. In turn one the arm is lifted in an arc type shape to allow partners to turn around each other. Turn two requires that each pair of dancers hold hands while one turns under the arm of the other. Here too, after an initial counter-clockwise change of front, pairs are turning in a clockwise direction.

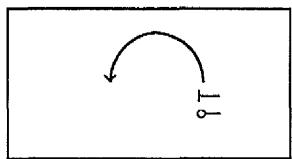


Figure 29.
NS/P: turn three
counter-clockwise turn

Turn three is the only one of the four in which a counter-clockwise turn is clearly stated. This turn is unlike the others in that while the outside dancers remains stationary, only the inside dancer turns. Therefore, only one circle is made in space (Figure 29).

Turn four follows the spatial design of turns one and two. Among the four, this turn features the closest proximity of the dancers to each other. Here, the dancers seem to shape or wrap themselves around each in order to accommodate the turning action. As with turns one and two, this turn is in a clockwise direction (Figure 28).

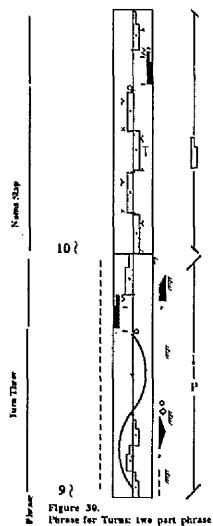


Figure 30.
Phrase for Turns: two part phrase

Phrase – Turning

Phrase for all four turns is flexible and is linked to what precedes and follows the turning action. If the turn follows a NS or leads into one, a two-part phrase is performed (Figure 30). If the turn is performed apart from the enclosure of the NS, as happens at the end of the dance, it is performed as one phrase of six beats (Figure 31).

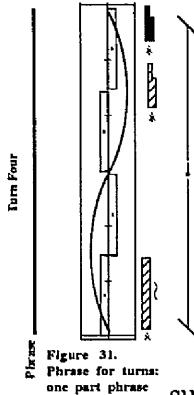


Figure 31.
Phrase for turns:
one part phrase

Four different turning patterns constitute nearly half of the movement vocabulary of the NS/P. These are all similar in that they are all paired turns, they do not travel along the line of direction, all four involve contact of partners with each other, and all but one, turn three, rotate in a clockwise fashion. The turns are particular to the NS/P not only in terms of their movement components, dynamics, spatial relationships and phrase, but also in terms of what they suggest concerning the social history of the Nama. This point is addressed below under Structural Relationship and a further discussion of it can be found in the following chapter. Next, an examination of the NS within the structure of the NS/P is undertaken that will address those aspects that distinguish it within this context.

6.9. Nama Stap in the context of the NS/P

The body in the NS/P is utilised in a similar fashion to that of the NS; the major action remains in the lower body, especially the feet. The distinction in the sequence noted within the dance is in the *nature* of the footwork. Within the framework of the NS/P, the feet slide along the floor (Figure 32). This is in contrast to the footwork of the NS independent of the NS/P where the feet lift from the floor (Figure 33).

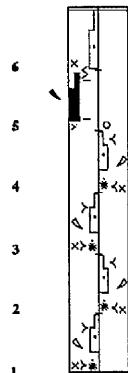


Figure 32. Nama Stap:
sliding supports

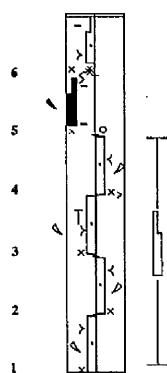


Figure 33. Nama Stap:
steps on Place

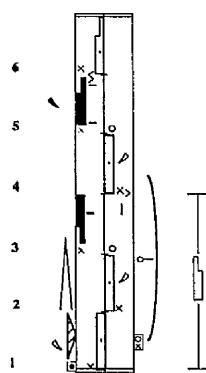


Figure 34. Nama Stap:
Torso Movement

Torso

The torso in this context is also notable; it does not perform the slight deviations into various different directions as in the NS (Figure 34). The torso, except that of the leader of the group and to accommodate turning, remains upright on the vertical axis.

It is not held rigidly, but is set in an easy upright fashion, which allows it to respond passively to movement of other parts of the body (Figure 35).

Effort

Except for the leader of the group, the effort range and intensity is minimal. The feet shuffle/slide along the ground in a light, direct manner (remote state); on the occasion when the feet do release from the floor (step), they dab the floor lightly (light, direct, quick). The overall dynamic is of sliding easily through space. The efforts exhibited by the group leader are similar to those noted in the NS above.

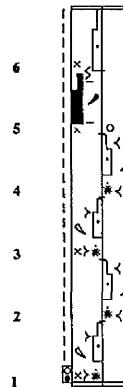


Figure 35. Nama Step:
torso movement
in the context of NS/P.

Shape, Space, and Phrase

As in the NS itself, shape does not play a major role in the actions of the NS within the dance, and the body remains in a soft, straight, pin-like form. The dancers remain in a unified kinesphere and move forward or backwards along a circular path. Due to the shuffling of the feet, the dancers progress less through space than in the NS where the feet release from the ground. Phrase too remains similar to that of the NS. Within the dance, however, depending on how it is used, a two beat phrase, occurring on beats five and six of the previous bar, is introduced.

Based on the above Labananalysis, the movement components, BESS and Phrase of the NS within the structure of the NS/P do not alter a great deal. Instead, it is the function and treatment of the NS within the dance, rather than its movement elements only, which are of significance. The following chart summarises the movement elements that distinguish the NS in this context (Figure 36).

Nama Stap Dance in the context of The Nama Female Puberty Ceremony Movement Vocabulary and LMA Analysis of Core Features					
Vocabulary	Body	Effort	Shape	Space	Phrase
Turn One	Arms, legs, and supports relate to the centre of the body; Partners hold hands through out.	Progression from glide to dab to remote state (bound-direct).	Arc like paths; Soft torso; Arms of partners guide each other.	Overlapping kinespheres; Clockwise rotation on counter clockwise path; Concentric circular path.	Either a one or two part phrase structure that is determined by context.
Turn Two	As for Turn One	As for Turn One	Arc like paths; Soft torso; Arms of partners guide each other.	Overlapping kinespheres; Clockwise rotation on counter clockwise path; Concentric circular paths.	
Turn Three	As for Turn One	Turning partner: dream state (weight-flow) Stationary partner: rhythm state (time-weight).	Arc like paths; Soft torso; Arms of partners guide each other.	Overlapping kinespheres; Counter-clock-wise rotation on counter clockwise path; a single circular path.	Overlapping kinespheres; Clockwise rotation on counter clockwise path.
Turn Four	As for Turn One	Punch (strong-quick-direct) to stable state (strong/light – direct).	Moulding, shaping around each other.	Overlapping kinespheres; Clockwise rotation on counter clockwise path.	
Nama Stap	Feet slide along the floor.	Remote State (light-direct) to dab (light-direct-quick); low- mid intensity.	As for NS; No major shape changes.	Overlapping kinespheres; less travelling through space than in NS due to shuffling steps.	As for NS; Two part phrase beginning on beats five and six of previous bar.
	Torso remains vertical; no deviations as in NS; Responds passively.	Leader: as for NS; mid range intensity.			
	Leader: Torso and hip tilt into side directions.				

Figure 36. Movement Vocabulary and LMA Analysis of Core Features of NS/P

6.10. Structural Relationships

The NS/D is versatile. It is used to enrich many different Nama activities and customs. As a result of its many applications, some elements within the dance, such as the NS and turning patterns, will remain constant. Others, like phrasing, sequencing, and timing, may change depending on the context in which it is performed. Additionally, new elements may be added such as the aerial embellishments observed in the version performed by local youth. The preceding analysis and the structural outline that follows pertain to the version of the dance recorded in the score in Chapter Five. Other versions of the dance may comprise a different, though related, content and structure. The version under discussion has been divided into two parts. The structural analysis that follows is directed toward part one, segment two, the dance portion of the event. The dance is examined in regard to its organization where points such as its construction in terms of the dance leader, division, and bars, are explained. Particular features are examined, including relationship of dancers to each other, spatial patterns, and the nature of contacting parts to each other. Due to the interdependence of movement components on each other, other considerations, for instance time and space, of necessity are also addressed.

The Leader

Because it is she who ultimately determines its structure, the leader is central to the NS/D, and any discussion of form should, therefore, commence with an understanding of the role of this significant constituent of it. The leader, in this version, is situated to the right of her partner at the front of the pairs of dancers; this position has been designated as dancer A2 in the score (Figure 37). From this position, she is able to monitor the space, other dancers, musicians, and audience-participants. These observations enable her to make decisions on the sequencing and progression of the performance.

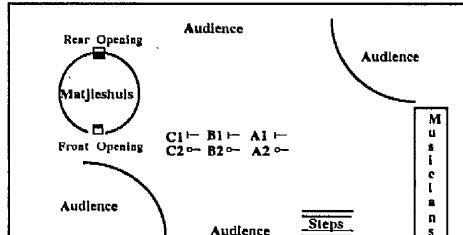


Figure 37. Floor Plan of Nama Srap Dance.
Puberty Version

Within the notated score, turns, for example, have been labelled in relation to when they occur in the dance; turn one is performed first, turn two second and so on. On other occasions, or with a different leader, these may happen in a different

ordering. What I have catalogued as turn one may become, for example, turn two. The NS sequence is also subject to the dictates of the leader. In this version, each turning pattern is separated by a series of NS patterns. But, the leader may (re)organise the dance in such a way that one turn may happen immediately after the other or, perhaps, two different turns may be taken in succession and then followed by one or a series of NS patterns. She may also introduce the NS anywhere within the sequence of movements that comprise it. The leader may, for example, begin on step three of the sequence or, perhaps, step four. Clearly, the ordering and sequencing of movement patterns within the dance is most certainly in the hands of the leader. Therefore, the performers, including musicians, must always be attuned to her and she to them

This interaction is not unlike the function of the ‘master drummer’ in some African dance forms such as Bata of Nigeria and Ewe dances of Ghana. In these forms, it is the lead drummer who, traditionally, dictates the sequencing of the dance. In these contexts, it is the ordering of sounds (the drum language) played by the drummer that informs the dancers what is to happen next. In the NS/P, it is the lead dancer, working from within the dance itself, who determines how the dance will progress.

Part One: Segment Two

The middle segment encompasses the dance material. Working within this analytic framework, it consists of approximately seventy-plus bars (measures) in 6/4 metre. The version of the dance notated is a documentation of the dance as it was structured during the course of my residency. While the notation score documents the particular organisation of that performance, it has also been customised, where possible, to take account of the choices of the dance leader in this performance situation while also allowing for other choices by a different leader on another occasion.

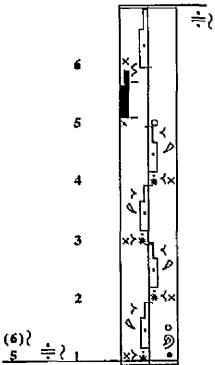


Figure 38. Nama Stapi repeat to the other side once or alternating repeats as many time as you wish.

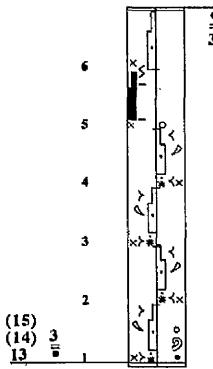


Figure 39. Nama Stapi: repeat sequence a total of three times alternating sides.

Figure 38 includes an ad-lib symbol ?, which has been placed next to repeat indications, \div , and bar numbers. When used in this way, it indicates that the movement has been notated as a repeat to the other side (the movement of bar five is to be repeated to the other side in bar six). However, the movement of bar five *may* be repeated, alternating sides, any number of times. Figure 39 records a specific number of repeats. It instructs the reader that the movement recorded in bar thirteen is to be performed a total of three times, alternating sides, on each repeat. What I want to state here is that in *this* performance the leader chose to do the movement two times alternating sides while at the same time indicating that this may change in subsequent performance.

Relation in Space: Counter-Clockwise Circle Path

The dance has been organised into two parts based on my interpretation of it. Part one is directed to three pairs of dancers in the centre of the performance space. This part of the dance is viewed as an introduction to part two and its content is seen as largely presentational. Part two fulfils the purpose of the dance, the induction of a young female to the rank of adulthood. Both parts are performed on a ‘degreeless’ counter-clockwise circular-type path. It is ‘degreeless’ in the sense that dancers are not required to adhere to a regulated portion of a circle, such as one-fourth or one-half, or to arrive at a specific location by a prescribed time. Instead, dancers constantly relate to the form of a circle itself rather than precise directions or areas of space. It is not necessary, therefore, to plot on a floor plan, as is typical, where a dancer is situated at a given moment in time; only her relationship to the circle need be indicated.

Relationship to time: Canon Form

The dance is characterised by frequent use of canon form. This follow-the-leader, domino-like kind of construction is appropriate for a type of dance, such as this, in which dancers must visually respond to the direction of a leader. The leader typically initiates the canon sequence, and each pair of dancers repeats the movement in turn. This canon form is particular in that the moment when dancers enter the sequence is flexible; that is, once a movement has been introduced the next couple in line may repeat the movement on the next beat, the second beat, and so on. The third pair of dancers will repeat the movement, at will, once the preceding set of dancers have started it. This type of canon entails a good deal of observation of pairs of dancers to each other, from the leader and other couples. The degreeless circular path allows dancers to adjust themselves as necessary in order to observe the movement of other performers, especially the leader, more clearly. Canon form also means, that there is a good deal of repeated material in the dance.

Relationship to Space: Turns

Turning is one of three movement features of the dance. Each pair of dancers performs four sets of turns. Three of these are done on the spot, in Place, while the dancers move around each other and create a clockwise circular path; the fourth is also performed on the spot but differs in that only one dancer turns around her own vertical axis while her partner remains stationary and guides her in turning. All but one turning pattern in this version is framed by a series of NS patterns.

Spatial/Physical relationship

Three kinds of relationships are notable in the dance: visual association, spatial proximity, and physical context. Dancers cannot be certain of how movement patterns will be sequenced—of what will come next—they must, therefore, maintain a constant visual alliance with each other in order to maintain flow and continuity of performance. This necessitates a simultaneous, three-way association among the dance leader, partners, and other couples. This is not a simple coalition as the more couples there are, the more demanding this visual relationship becomes. Spatial proximity of couples to each other and to other performers is also significant. Couples endeavour to maintain a close physical relationship with each other throughout the dance. Except to allow ease of turning, couples maintain physical contact with each

other by holding hands, touching part of the torso, usually the shoulder area, or sliding against each other in turning patterns. Three types of contacting/touching patterns are used.

Arm position one (Figure 40) is introduced at the start of the dance when all dancers use it. It reappears briefly at the end of part one when dancers A1, A2, C1 and C2 take it. Of the three arm positions it is used the least.



Figure 40.
Arm Position One: used the least

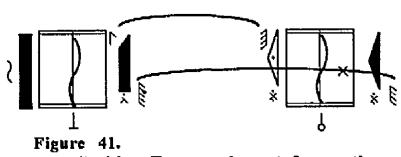


Figure 41.
Arm Position Two: used most frequently

Arm position two (Figure 41) is taken by all dancers and is used most frequently throughout both parts one and two the dance.

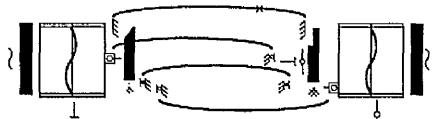


Figure 42.
Arm Position Three: used by A1 and A2 only

Arm position three (Figure 42) is an intertwining position used by the lead pair, dancers A1 and A2 only.

One contacting/touching pattern stands out from the others (Figure 43). In this

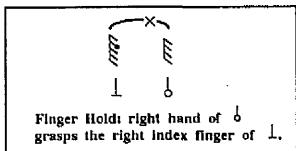


Figure 43.

grasping pattern, the right or left hand of her partner lightly grasps the right index finger of the partner on the inside of the circle.

Relationship in time: Unison Movement- Nama Stap

The NS, in the context of the NS/D, is used primarily as a unifying sequence. It occurs at the beginning or ending of each set of turns where it is used to allow dancers, who are moving in canon form, to ultimately come into uniform movement. Typically, the lead dancer will either NS on the spot (in place), thus allowing other dancers to either move forward or backward in order to (re)organise themselves in closer proximity to each other; or the step is used to progress the dance forward or backwards around the counter-clockwise circular path. As one of three movements that comprise the dance, it is used frequently. The NS is constructed of two sequences of movement. The similarities between the two will be examined first, and then their differences will be addressed.

Both sequences are composed of six beats; each is characterised by steps in which the supports remain close to the centre of gravity as it travels through space. The two consist of a series of either light or strong accents, and both use the final two beats in a distinctive manner. Depending on the context, the pair of sequences may be danced on the spot or travel forward or backward through space.

Sequence one typically begins with an upbeat on beat five of the previous bar. This two-beat introductory phrase consists of a sliding leg gesture that glides into the support that follows on the same foot as the gesturing leg. The sequence continues with beat one of the next bar that also marks the start of a new six beat phrase. The stepping pattern of the first four beats have a dab-like quality that is further emphasized by light accents on each step; beats five and six are a repeat of the introductory phrase.

The torso, which accompanies these steps, is used in a subtle but distinct way (Figure 44). Moving always on beat one of the bar, the pelvis tilts in opposition to the stepping support that occurs at the same moment—if the step is on the left support the pelvis will tilt right side high, if the step is on the right support, it will tilt left side high. The pelvic tilt initiates a deviation of the chest in the same direction as the pelvic tilt, either right or left. The movement looks as though the pelvis is pushing the chest off balance and gives the action a falling quality.

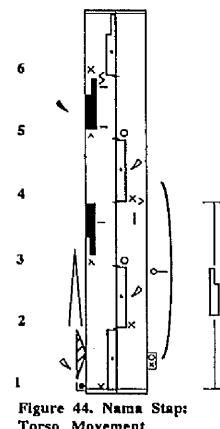


Figure 44. Nama Step: Torso Movement

Every beat of the second sequence is strongly accented (Figure 45). Each step has a dab-like dynamic that gives the phrase a rhythmic quality similar to western style tap

dancing. Beats five and six deviate spatially from the preceding four; the movement of beats one to four remain on the spot while beat five is a leg gesture Place low in which the heel taps the floor; beat six is a step backwards away from the previous point of support. Although small, this is the only travelling support that moves away from the centre of gravity in this manner. These six beats are further characterised by a light, rhythmic, buoyant quality within the body and throughout the phrase.

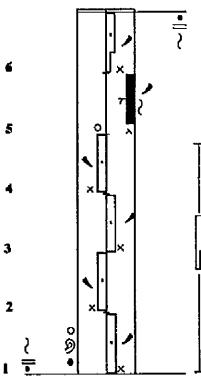


Figure 45.
Nama Step: sequence two

Relationship in time: Phrase

Phrase is, perhaps, the single most important movement component of the dance. It, more than any other constituent, is a determiner of other things. Where the phrase begins and ends in a sequence may distinguish or determine the placement of accent. The NS in the context of the NS/P, for example, frequently begins on an upbeat or anacrusis; this typically occurs on beat five of a preceding bar. When positioned thusly, it is also set apart by an accent at the start of the phrase (impulse type phrase). Alternatively, if the NS begins on beat one of a bar, which can happen as a result of the canon structure, an accent may occur with this beat.

6.11. Structure of the Dance As a Whole

Thus far, analyses of the various components that compose the NS and the NS/P have been presented. These, like the various anatomical systems of the body, must combine in a precise manner in order to produce the NS/P. The final part of this chapter will review the NS/P as a whole and, therefore, will consider the structure of the dance in terms of its form, how components are organised, sequencing and relationships.

The NS/D constructed here consists of approximately seventy bars of dancing that have been divided into two parts. Part one is approximately forty bars that have been split into three sections labelled sections one, two, and three. These are further divided into subsections: section one comprising subsections A and B, section two C and D, and section three E and F. Part two consist of thirty bars and has been similarly partitioned: section one include subsections A and B and section two subsections C and D. Commencing with part one, the structural significance of each section is summarised; a more detailed catalogue of each subsection follows. A statistical summary that organises this information in table form has been provided in order to allow direct access to the index of components and to track and calculate their occurrences throughout the dance. Finally, a chart that systematises the entire structure of the dance completes the enquiry.

Part One (Bars 1 – 40)

Section one (bars 1-12) introduces all of the thematic material of the dance, four turning patterns and the NS. Additionally, all but one of the three structural devices are utilised (canon and unison forms). Enclosure, a structure that places a NS before and after a turn, occurs later in the dance at bar 34. Through these basic movement patterns and sequencing methods, the significance of the NS is exemplified. In summary:

- the dance begins in unison with turn one (subsection A bars 1-4)
- this is immediately followed by turn two where canon form is introduced
- canon structure continues until bar four when all dancers are unified via a NS sequence that marks the end of subsection A.
- the significance of the NS is clearly illustrated in subsection B (bars 5-12).
- four sets of unison NS patterns introduce this subsection
- this also establishes the theme of NS as an introductory device to each subsection (bars 5-8)
- turn three, followed by a NS sequence, sees a return to canon form (bars 9-10)
- dancers are again unified via a NS at bar eleven
- turn four, taken in unison, concludes section one (bar 12).

Within the first twelve bars, the theme of NS as a unifying device (six sets of unison NS) in contrast to its use in canon form is recognised. Equally significant is its function as an introduction to each new subsection. Finally, each motif, turning pattern and NS, are performed within a six beats time cycle.

Section Two (Bars 13-23)

Section two continues the theme of NS as a unifying device. Turns, which are typically done in canon form, are repeated with a rhythm time variation that moves from a six beat cycle to a twelve beat one. In summary:

- Three sets of unison NS patterns introduce section two (bars 13-23)
- a variation of turn two in which a twelve beat time cycle in canon form is introduced

- this time cycle is a major feature of subsection C (bars 13-17)
- this is also the first of several repeats of turn two (turn two is repeated a total of three times).
- subsection D (bars 18-23) is a short section that is introduced by four sets of unison NS patterns
- turn three, in canon form, is repeated for the first time within a twelve beat time cycle.

Section Three (Bars 24-40)

Section three (bars 24-40) concludes part one. As in the other sections, the NS introduces each subsection. There are only two other motifs in the dance, so this usage of the NS is, therefore, also an introduction to each turning motif. In addition to this purpose, however, the NS is also used to enclose a turning sequence where it introduces and concludes turn four. A return to a six-beat time cycle for turning also takes place in this section. It is at this stage that the focus of the dance moves from the central performing area to the matjieshuis (MH) that is located in the up stage right corner of the performance space. In summary:

- seven sets of unison NS introduce subsection E (bars 24-34)
- this section sees a brief deviation of the NS from its function as indicator of a new subsection to one in which it is used to both introduce and mark the ending of turn four (bar 34).
- turn two is repeated for a third time while turn four is repeated for the first time
- this section also notes a return to a six beat time cycle for turns
- a further six sets of unison NS that moves towards the rear of the matjieshuis brings to a close the first half of the dance (bars 35-40)
- movement towards the MH also shifts attention, which until this point has been on the central performance area and the dancers, to the MH.

Part Two (Bars 41-70)

Section one (bars 41-53) is intended to direct attention to the matjieshuis. After a series of NS that brings the dancers back into view of the audience (right side of the matjieshuis), the importance of the matjieshuis is made clear through a short section of improvisational movement on the theme of looking into it. This is followed by a set of turns in which each pair of dancers selects her own turning

pattern. These are preceded, as is now expected, by a series of NS that introduce it.

In summary:

- six sets of unison NS bring the dancers to the front opening of the matjieshuis (subsection A, bars 41-46)
- new movement on the theme of looking into the matjieshuis is introduced (bars 47-49)
- this movement is improvisational and no set movement patterns are used.
- this is the first section in which no turning patterns are danced
- subsection B (bars 50-53) introduces the element of choice into the dance
- after three sets of unison NS patterns that take the dancers to the left side of the matjieshuis (bars 50-53), each pair of dancers performs any one of four turn introduced earlier in the dance

Section Two (Bars 54-70)

The final section of the dance sees the initiate emerge from the matjieshuis into the view of the audience. Introduced by the lead dancer, this section of the dance takes on a different feel due to a number of activities happening at the same time. While the lead dancer introduces the initiate to the community via a series of turning patterns, the other performers dance either NS or any one of four turning patterns. Following this, dancers take it in turn to dance with the initiate while the others perform either NS or turning pattern with each other. On a signal from the leader, she stops dancing and the dance comes to an end. In summary:

- subsection C (bars 54-62) introduces the object of the dance, the initiate
- the entire section consists of nine sets of unison NS that bring the performers from the left side of the MH fully around to its front opening area (bars 54-62)
- the initiate joins the other performers at some point during this series of NS. As there is a back exit from the MH she will surely join them at the point when they reach the rear exit of the hut
- she is positioned at the front of the group and to the left of the leader (dancer A2) when she appears for the first time

- The closing section of the dance (subsection D, bars 63-70) sees a departure from the established structural pattern of the dance thus far
- the leader via a series of turns introduces the initiate to the community while the others dance the NS together (bars 63-64)
- the introduction of the initiate is followed by other performers dancing with her through turning patterns while the others do the Nama Stap or one of four turning patterns (bars 65-70)
- here, unlike other sections of the dance, two sets of actions are happening simultaneously
- there is always someone dancing with the initiate while, at the same time, other pairs of dancers are either dancing the NS or a turning pattern
- also of significance is the point that each pair of dancers is independent; there is no consideration of unison or canon form
- this section is also flexible in terms of timing; the dancers begin and end each pattern at will
- the dance ends on the leader's signals; when she stops moving, the dance is finished.

The preceding analysis of the structure of the NS/P dance provides information that addresses how the components of the dance have been organised in order to construct the dance as a whole and to express a specific theme: the introduction and acceptance of an initiate as an equal member of the community. Like the pieces of a puzzle, these are arranged in a particular fashion within the dance. This systemization, like the constituents themselves, contributes to an interpretation of the dance, and this ordering must also be taken into account. As a quantitative type of analysis contributes to the construction and conceptualisation of the NS/P, a tabulation of movement components and the form they take has been compiled in chart form.

Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony Tabulation of Movement Components of NS/P		
Key: T = Turn		*Any turning pattern: not calculated
Part One		
Section One		
A: 1-4	Turn	Nama Stap
	T1 unison x 6 beats T2 canon x 6 beats	1 unison
B: 5-12	T3 canon x 6 beats T4 unison x 6 beats	5 unison
Section Two		
C: 13-17	Turn	Nama Stap
	T2 canon x 12 beats	3 unison
D: 18-23	T3 canon x 12 beats	4 unison
Section Three		
E: 24-34	Turn	Nama Stap
	T2 unison x 6 beats T4 unison x 6 beats	9 unison
F: 35-40		6 unison
Part Two		
Section One		
A: 41-49	Turn	Nama Stap
		6 unison
B: 50-53	*Any turning pattern x 6 beats x 1 bar	3 unison
Section Two		
C: 54-62	Turn	Nama Stap
		9 unison
D: 63-70	*Any turning pattern x 6 beats x 8 bars	8 variation

Figure 46. Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony
Tabulation of Movement Components of NS/P

Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony Statistical Analysis of Movement Components					
Nama Stap					
Part One	Total	Start of Subsection	Enclose a Turn	End of Subsection	Variation
	28	24	3	1	
Part Two	26	18			8
Total	54	42	3	1	8
Turns					
Part One	Turn 1	Turn 2	Turn 3	Turn 4	
	1u x 6 beats	1c x 6 beats	1c x 6 beats	1u x 6 beats	
		1c x 12 beats	1c x 12 beats		
		1u x 6 beats		1u x 6 beats	
Part Two					
Any Turning Pattern x 6 beats x 9 bars					
Total	1u x 6 beats	3: 1c x 6 beats 1c x 12 beats 1u x 6 beats	2: 1c x 6 beats 1c x 12 beats	2: 2u x 6 beats	
	One time only	Used the most; 2c; 1u;	Both c; 1 x 6; 1 x 12	Both u x 6	

Figure 47. Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony
Statistical Analysis of Movement Components

Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony Detailed Statistical Analysis - Part One	
Section One	
Section one consists of twelve bars comprising subsections A and B	
A: 4 bars (1-4)	
Turning	Nama Stap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features turning patterns 1 and 2 Turning patterns are of six beat each T1 in unison x 6 beats T2 in canon x 6 beats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NS is introduced in canon form
The section/dance begins with unison turning, turn one, that is immediately followed by T2 that introduces canon form; this structure continues until bar four when all dancers are unified via a NS sequence. All turns are of six beats each.	
B: 8 bars (5-12)	
Turning	Nama Stap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T3 in canon x 6 beats T4 in unison x 6 beats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 NS in unison as intro. 1 NS (B11) as separator
Four sets of unison NS patterns introduce subsection B (5-8). This is followed by T3 and then a NS sequence; both of these patterns are taken in canon form (9-10); dancers are unified via the NS at bar 11 and all perform T4 together at bar 12; this concludes section one. This section establishes the NS as a pattern that begins each section rather than concluding them.	
Section Two	
Section two consists of 11 bars comprising subsections C and D	
C: 5 bars (13-17)	
Turning	Nama Stap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T2 in canon form First repeat of T2 Intro. To 12 beat turning cycle Others are 8 beat and 6 beat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 unison NS as intro. to section
Three sets of unison NS patterns introduce this section. T2 is repeated for the first time and the 12 beat and 8 beat turning patterns are introduced.	
D: 6 bars (18-23)	
Turning	Nama Stap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T3 canon form 12 beat turn other turns are 8 beat and 6 beat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 unison NS as intro. to section A switches with B
A short section that is introduced by four sets of NS patterns; T3 is repeated for the first time and the 12 beat, 8 beat turning cycles are repeated. Dancers A2 and Be switch places.	
Section Three	
Section three consists of 17 bars comprising subsections E and F	
E: 11 bars (24-34)	
Turning	Nama Stap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T2 in unison T2 repeated for 3rd time Return to 6 beat time cycle for turns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 sets of unison NS intro. section
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T4 unison T4 repeated for the 1st time 6 beat time cycle for T4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 sets of unison NS intro. T4 at bars 32-33
Seven sets of unison NS introduce this subsection; NS is also used to introduce T4 at the end of the subsection. T2 is repeated for the third time while T4 is repeated for the first time; this also marks a return to six beat time cycle for turns.	
F: 6 bars (35-40)	
Turning	Nama Stap
None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 sets of unison NS that aim towards the back of the matjieshuis and end the section
Six sets of unison NS that moves towards the back of the matjieshuis concludes part one of the dance.	

Figure 48. Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony
Detailed Statistical Analysis - Part One

Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony Detailed Statistical Analysis - Part Two		
Section One		
Section one consists of 13 bars comprising subsections A and B A consist of 9 bars B consist of 4 bars		
A: 9 bars (41-49)		
Turning	Nama Stap	New Movement
NONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 unison bars of NS intro section. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 bars of improvisational movement on the theme of looking into matjieshuis
Six sets of unison NS bring the dancers to the front opening of the matjieshuis. New movement on the theme of looking into the matjieshuis is introduced; this movement is improvisational and no set pattern is used. No turning patterns are used.		
B: 4 bars (50-53)		
Turning	Nama Stap	New Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> each pair perform one of four turns; one set of 6 beats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 unison bars of NS intro. section 	None
Three sets of unison sets of NS patterns take dancers to the left side of the matjieshuis; each pair of dancers perform any of four turns...it is a choice.		
Section Two		
Section two consists of 17 bars comprising subsections C and D C consist of 9 bars D consist of 8 bars		
Section C (54-62)		
Turning	Nama Stap	New Movement
None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 sets of NS patterns initiate is introduced 	None
The entire section consists of 9 sets of unison NS that bring the performers from the left of the MH back to the front opening; this section is significant as the initiate is introduced during these NS; the exact moment when they round the right side of the MH is flexible.		
D: 8 bars (63-70)		
Conclusion		
Turning	Nama stap	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader dances any turning pattern with the initiate for any amount of time Any dancer dances any turning pattern with the initiate after the leader has danced/presented her. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NS performed in pairs by dancers not dancing with initiate. 	
The closing section of the dance. In this section, the initiate is introduced to the community; the leader, via a series of turns, introduces her while the others dance the NS and/or turning pattern together. The introduction of the initiate is followed by other dancers dancing with her through turning patters while the others Nama Stap. This section is flexible in terms of timing.		

**Figure 49. Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony
Detailed Statistical Analysis - Part Two**

6.12. Summary

This chapter has presented a description and analysis of two of the more prominent of Nama signifiers, the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance. The Nama Stap is performed frequently in social, formal and informal settings; the Nama Stap Dance, as has been demonstrated, is displayed at various select contexts. This research has considered the Nama Stap Dance in the context of the Nama female

puberty ceremony. Through the lens of movement analysis in the form of Laban Movement Analysis, Labanotation, Dance Analysis and contextual examination, a detailed study of the dance's components, relationships, and structure have revealed its intimate relationship to the people who have nurtured it previously and those who cultivate it now. The application of Labananalysis to a study of this nature has revealed its benefits over other tools of analysis and documentation, especially electronic, and also challenges to the system. On a practical level, its ability to allow simultaneous comparison of different sequences of actions and to revise passages of movement is commendable as is its ability to document and reveal both surface and deep analysis. Ironically, it is its capacity to favour precise detail, often perceived as one of its strengths, that is exposed in this study as one of its tests.

A question of this research is the value of the Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance to the Nama people. In order to shed light on this concern a multifaceted approach has been taken that has applied ethnographic, anthropological, historical, social and cultural perspectives and methods. These, combined with Labananalysis, have highlighted such issues as gender relations, the impact of Christianity, and profound colonial influences on the Nama; except for mining, the Nama live in one of the least productive and harshest environments in South Africa.

A good deal of discussion concerning the attitude of the researcher has been noted. This was necessary as a way of establishing the idea of 'construct' in relation to the research itself and especially the notated score. In this regard, I have drawn on the ideas of perception, notably the Nama perspective and that of the researcher; Moore's body knowledge/body prejudice; and, arguably, the subjective nature of documentation generally, and movement notation.² The construction of such a text has allowed for the perception, organisation, and management of elements and constellations—patterns—constituting the Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance puberty version. It was essential, therefore, to clarify the notator/researcher's perspective and to demonstrate how she obtained knowledge of the dance. This understanding is reflected in the construction of the score, and this in turn has provided a basis for evaluation and argument of the dance specifically. Such an approach may imply that the score is subjective and therefore a questionable record of the dance. There is no definitive version of the Nama Stap or Nama Stap Dance. Both are forceful artifacts of the Nama and the notation score is a model of this dynamism.

Historically, it would seem that both the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance are products of the mid 20th-century. The dance embodies and is used to exhibit traditional and contemporary Nama experience. This is clearly demonstrated in the !Khubus interpretation of the traditional Nama female puberty ceremony noted by Hoernlé and others. Despite its lack of documented origins, the Nama Stap Dance has evolved to signify the historical and contemporary values of the Nama, and it is used in a variety of different contexts to illustrate these. The Nama Stap is a motif in its own right; it is also an integral aspect of the Nama Stap Dance. In both contexts, it is seen as a movement signature both physically and ideologically.

The Nama Stap Dance based on the Nama female puberty ceremony is deceptive in its simplicity. The analysis herein has archived its major components and the significance of these to space and time. The study has revealed its structure and uncovered the two constituents that bind the dance together, the Nama Stap and the dance leader. The dance leader is an intriguing figure. Is she a metaphor for the abá tarás who took a similar leadership role in earlier times? The dance leader must blend in and at the same time display individuality, experience, innovation, and style. She is the person who makes decisions concerning when and if the dance progresses. As hunter-gathers and as herders, this kind of figure played a key role in Nama history.

Having examined the dance in these ways, it remains now to assimilate and interpret the various perspectives introduced in this chapter.

Notes

1. The notion of a dance event expresses the idea of taking whole events as the unit of analysis rather than individual dances (Peterson Royce, 2002, p 10; cf. also Keali'nohomoku, 1973, and Welsh Asante 1985a).
2. For a further discussion of the position of the ethnographer/researcher see Thomas, 2003a.

Chapter 7

An Interpretation of The Nama Stap, Nama Stap Dance, and Nama Stap Dance Female Puberty Ceremony

7.0. Introduction

I come now to a commentary concerning the NS, NS/D and NS/P. In this chapter I will propose an interpretation of these Nama artefacts. No single perspective provides the basis for this assessment; instead, the analyses presented in previous chapters have been assembled in order to construct an appreciation of this structured movement system. First, a (re)consideration of the position of the researcher is undertaken. At this final stage, an understanding of why and how decisions have been taken in order to assess the dance is necessary. Next, the NS as a complex signifier is examined. Following this, a classification of the NS/D into social or community-based, tourist and government-sponsored, and education categories is proposed. The thesis then returns to the ritual significance of the NS/P and considers the role of gender in the dance, particularly in relation to generational attitudes among the Nama. Finally, the thesis confronts the disappearing middle generation of the Nama and attempts to explain the impact of this missing group on traditional Nama heritage.

In coming to an understanding of the Nama the perspective of the observer intensifies. While the initial concerns are the theories, methods, and tools that have been employed to assemble the data, ultimately, statements are made and positions taken as a result of applying western methodologies to non-western dance forms. This has been and continues to be a concern of researchers such as Kaeppeler (1992a) from a dance perspective and Bohannan (1995) from an anthropological one more broadly; both have similar concerns. Kaeppeler, for example, states:

Important in the study of human movement systems is the study of movement theory and philosophy of movement from the point of view of the society in which the movement takes place. The use of Western dance theory for analysis of non-Western dance is inappropriate, and a researcher must attempt to discover indigenous theories about movement (Kaeppeler, 1992a, p. 155).

A question of this research is the application of LMA/LN to non-western dance forms generally and African dance especially. Chapter Two reviews research that applies Labananalysis in this context. These studies point to the Eurocentric perspective of the observer as well as the system of Laban analysis, and researchers have suggested

ways in which these biases may be considered in the observation/notation process. Hence, Chapters Five and Six give further application of the method, taking into consideration the ethnographer's bias.¹

The discussion of the NS as a complex signifier begins with an interpretation of the movement aspect of it. I start with dancing since, having examined the NS in various ways (contextual, physical, LN, E/S, text-based description), it has become evident that the NS is densely encoded. Insight into traditional and contemporary Nama values, ideology and symbols (as decoded from the dance) permeates this portion of the discussion. Traditions that have survived colonial incursion and a brutal apartheid government, such as the female puberty ceremony itself, the matjieshuis, the status of women and their relationship to each other, have been amassed in the dance and these become evident once the various indigenous and colonial attributes are recognised and taken into account in assembling a contemporary representation of the Nama.

7.1. Motif Analysis

The Nama Stap is the central motif of the Nama Stap Dance and other themed versions of it such as the NS/P. I have adopted Kaeppeler's perspective, in reference to motif:

Motifs are culturally grammatical sequences of movement made up of kinemes and morphokines. They are movement pieces that combine certain morphokines in characteristic ways and are verbalized and recognized as motifs by the people themselves. Motifs are ordered simultaneously and chronologically (choreographed) into grammatical sequences to form dances (Kaeppeler, 1992a, p. 154).

Kaeppeler's model starts with fundamental units of movement that have no meaning in themselves that are labelled as kinemes; these might be, for example, steps or a slide as seen in the NS. These fundamental movements are, however, essential as they are the elements from which (again in Kaeppeler's terms) a dance tradition is built. Within the NS this would include elements organised in the following table (Figure 50).

Nama Stap—Kinemes					
B=Body	E=Effort	S=Space	P=Phrase	T=Time	R= Relationship
Body					B1: Buoyant quality in the centre of gravity B2a: Gesturing limbs do not stretch beyond neutral B2b: Arms are forward low with three degrees of contraction; the hands form a soft fist shape. B3: Passive arms B4: Small bodily kinesphere B5: Torso deviates on and off its central axis in a counter-balancing motion B6: Parallel legs B7a: Contact of body parts arms B7b: Contact of body parts hands B7c: Contact of parts torso B7d: Contact of parts foot/feet B7e: Contact of legs in the air B8: Slightly bent (contracted) knees B9: Aerial movements B10: Improvisation
Effort					E1: Dab E2a: Glide E2b: Quick + Direct (awake state) E3: Steps on Place dab E4: Sliding steps glide E5a: Strong E5b: Strong accent on beat five of the bar E5c: Strong accent on beat 1 of the bar E6: Light
Space					S1: Dancers are in close proximity to each other throughout the dance S2: Centre of gravity (COG) progresses forward and backward through space S3: Feet maintain a relationship to Place S4: Feet slide across floor/ground S5: Feet release from the floor/ground when stepping S6: Counter clockwise circular path S7: Continuous movement through space S8: Pause in the motion of the centre of gravity S9: Turn around vertical axis S10: Performed out of doors S11: Audience-participants define the boundaries of the performance space S12: Distance travelled S13: Motif alternates sides
Phrase					P1a: Organised or phrased in shorter units P1b: Organised or phrased in longer units P2: Overlapping phrase organise movement travelling forward
Time					T1: Performed over a six-beat time cycle T2: Beats five and six of the bar are an introduction to the next NS motif T3a: NS begins on beat 1 of the bar T3b: Movement begins on beat 1 of the bar T4: Rhythmic variations of aerial leg gestures and supports
Relationship					R1: Female couples remain in contact with each other R2: Mixed couples (male/female) remain in contact with each other R3: Mixed trio (male/female) remain in contact with each other R4: Single file of females that do not contact each other R5: Solo dancers (male or female)

Figure 50. Nama Stap—Kinemes

A morphokine ‘is the smallest unit that has meaning as a movement.’ This perspective is founded on the idea that only certain combinations are meaningful and a number of kinemes often occur simultaneously to form a meaningful movement. (after Kaeppeler, 1992a, p.154). The NS in the context of the NS/P, for example, typically begins on the last two beats of the musical bar (Figure 51: bar 1, beats 5&6). When moving in the forward direction, this ‘unit’ of movement begins with beat 5 of the 6-beat bar. It consists of an accented, slightly contracted, sliding leg gesture that leads the body (without lifting the foot from the floor) into the forward shift of weight in beat 6. The shift of weight into the forward direction at beat 6 moves onto the ball of the foot and a slightly bent knee; the shifting movement is performed with a gliding (light, sustained, direct) dynamic. Additionally, this two beat unit is also characterised as a unit in terms of phrasing. Kinemes and morphokines, in turn, combine to form motifs. Adopting this perspective, clearly the NS, viewed in conjunction with its other components, is a motif. The Labananalysis recording illustrates the components of the NS effectively (Figure 51).

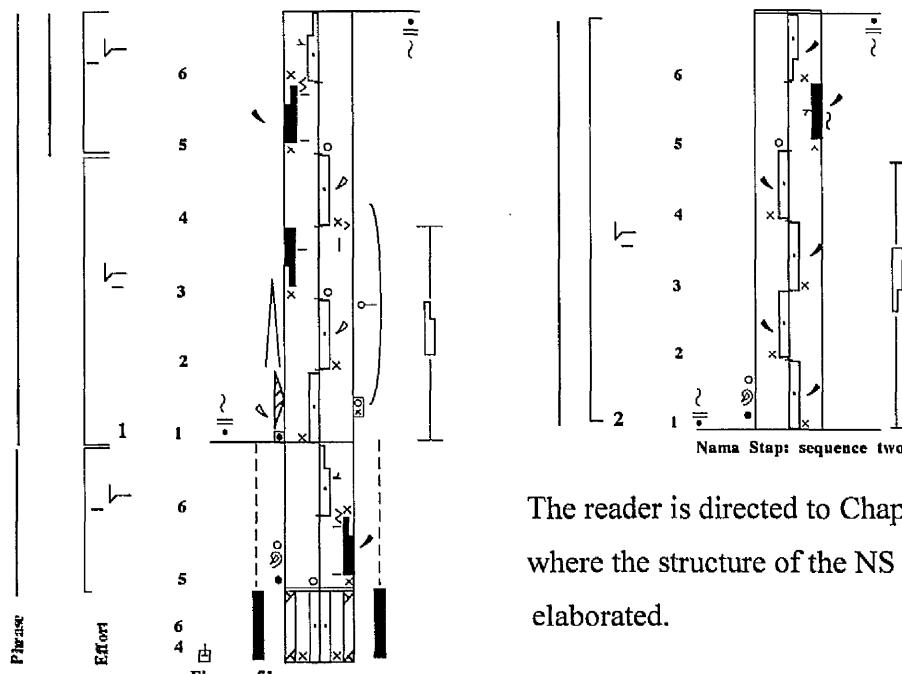


Figure 51.
Nama Stap: sequence one

The reader is directed to Chapter Six
where the structure of the NS has been
elaborated.

Kaeppeler’s model addresses not only the ‘grammatical’ structure of the movement, but also some of the concerns identified previously. Although a western methodology is employed to distinguish and organise movement observations, an indigenous outlook should also be brought to bear that should be primary to any interpretation or evaluation. In the case of this research, the

NS as the chief motif in all versions of the NS/D observed was confirmed by various different indigenous sources including the principal consultant and others in and outside of !Khubus.² This is further substantiated by the fact that, among other signifiers, it is the Nama Stap motif that distinguishes one Nama group from another. Some Nama groups, for example, typically slide the feet along the ground, and the youth in !Khubus punch the feet into the ground. While these differences, in the context of dancing, distinguish one Nama group from another, they also point to similarities between groups and the significance of the Nama Stap motif itself. These different performances of the Nama Stap may be perceived as ‘variations’ of the motif. A comparison of three variations of the NS will help to clarify the distinctions between groups.

7.1.1. Three Variations of the Nama Stap

First, a comparison between the motif performed by mature women (in the context of the NS/P) and youth in !Khubus (in the context of the NS/D) will be considered. These will be followed by a comparison of the motif by mature women of !Khubus with that performed by mature women in Nababeep, a neighbouring Nama village. Similarities between the motif performed by mature women and local youth in !Khubus will be charted first, and then a discussion of the differences between these two version will follow.

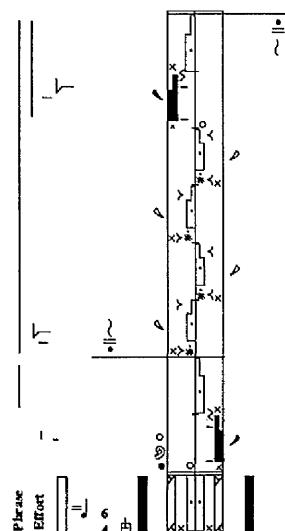


Figure 52
NS - !Khubus
Mature Women

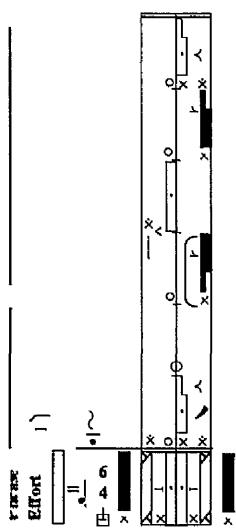


Figure 53
NS-Basic Motif
Youth in !Khubus

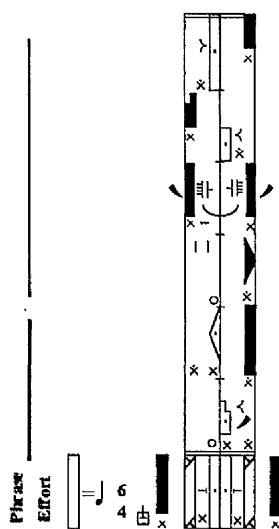


Figure 54
NS-Aerial
Youth in !Khubus

Nama Stap Motif – Chart of Comparisons Mature Women and Local Youth in !Khubus					
Similarities					
B=Body	E=Effort	S=Space	P=Phrase	T=Time	R= Relationship
Key Signature Body Attitude		B1: Buoyant quality in the centre of gravity B2a: Neutral arms B3: Passive arm gestures B6: Parallel legs B8: Slightly bent (contracted) knees			
Space		S2: Progresses forward though space with small steps S6: Counter clockwise circle S13: Motif alternates sides			
Time		T1: Performed over a six-beat time cycle T2: Beats five and six of the bar is an introduction to the next NS motif			
Effort		E1: Dab (light, quick, direct)			
Relationship		R1: Female couples that remain in contact with each other			
Nama Stap Motif – Differences					
B=Body	E=Effort	S=Space	P=Phrase	T=Time	R= Relationship
		Mature Women – !Khubus		Local Youth – !Grootfontein	
Body				B7d: Contact of foot B7e: Contact of legs B9: Aerial movements	
Space	S2: Forward steps are very small S4: Feet slide across floor/ground S7: Continuous movement through space			S2: Only two small steps progress though space S5: Feet release from the floor when stepping S8: Movement through space is not continuous	
Time	T2: Begins on an up-beat, beat 5 of previous bar			T3a: Begins on beat one of the bar T4: rhythmic variations of aerial leg gestures and supports	
Effort	E2a: Glide (light, sustained, direct) E5b: Strong accent on beat five of the bar E6: Light accent on steps that progress forward			E5c: Strong accent on beat 1 of the bar	
Phrase	P2: Overlapping phrase			P1a: Short phrase P1b: Longer phrase	
Relationship				R1: Female couples that remain in contact with each other R2: Mixed couples (male/female) that remain in contact with each other R3: Mixed trio (male/female) that remain in contact with each other	

Figure 55. Comparison of Nama Stap Motif Mature Women & Local Youth in !Khubus

A comparison of the two !Khubus versions (Figure 55) indicates that they share some fundamental movement elements. These include body attitude or key signature (B1, B2a, B3, B6, B8), progression forward through space (S2) on a counter-clockwise circular path (S6) over a six-beat time cycle (T1), and introduction of the NS motif at beat five of the bar (T2). In both versions, the pattern alternates sides (S13), dab dynamic is found in both (E1), and both groups consist of paired dancers who remain in contact with each other (R1).

These two groups differ in the use of the other movement elements. These distinctions or variations may be examined by a review of any of the movement categories (Body, Space, Time, Effort, Phrase, Relationship) listed in the 'differences' category above. An examination of *Space*, for example, reveals that the women travel through space by sliding the whole foot lightly across the ground (S4) while the youth release the feet from the ground in order to step (S5). The women move continuously through space over five beats (S7) whereas the youth travel over two beats only (S8). The two groups differ in *Time* in regard to where they begin the NS. The women begin on an up-beat (T2), whereas the youth begin on beat 1 of the bar (T3a). In addition to *dab* effort (E1) shared by both groups, the women also use glide effort (E2a) and both strong (E5b) and light (E6) efforts; on the other hand, the younger dancers highlight the start of the NS with a strong accent only (E5c). In regard to *Phrase*, the youth divide the NS into two parts, a short phrase (P1a) followed by a longer one (P1b); the women organise the motive in one long phrase that encloses a short phase towards the end of the sequence (P2). The groups differ in terms of relationship. The youth use a variety of relationships including female couples who remain in contact with each other (R1), mixed couples (male/female) who maintain contact throughout (R2), and mixed trio (male/female) who also remain in contact with each other (R3). The mature women maintain contact with each other and dance in female pairs only (R1).

These differences, when viewed as a whole would seem to indicate that the women's version is richer in movement content as it contains more movements as well as more variety of movement. The centre of gravity, for example, is in continuous motion for five beats of a six-beat phrase (S7) while the youth version moves on two beats of a six-beat bar (S8); there is more variety of effort in that the women's version consists of a range of dynamics including light (E6) and strong accents (E5b) as well as *dab* (E1) and *glide* (E2a) efforts; the youth version uses

strong (E5c) accent and dab (E1) dynamics only. The Youth demonstrate more variety in terms of relationship and also dance in mixed pairs (R1, R2, R3). Further, it should be taken into account that apart from the basic NS motif examined here, the youth also do another sequence of movements based on their version of the NS. This improvisational version is characterised by aerial movements (B9) that are accompanied by leg gestures that beat together while in the air (B7e), and rhythmic variations of aerial leg gestures and supports (T4) (Figure 54). We now turn to a comparison of the NS as performed by women in !Khubus with that of the women in Nababeep.

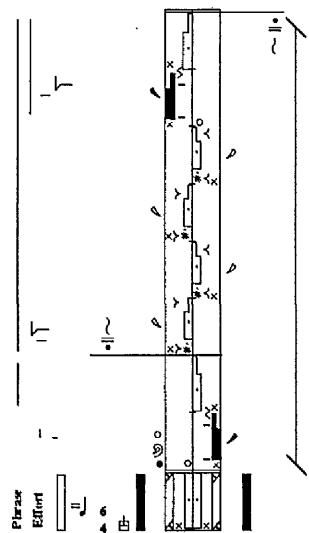


Figure 56
NS - !Khubus
Mature Women

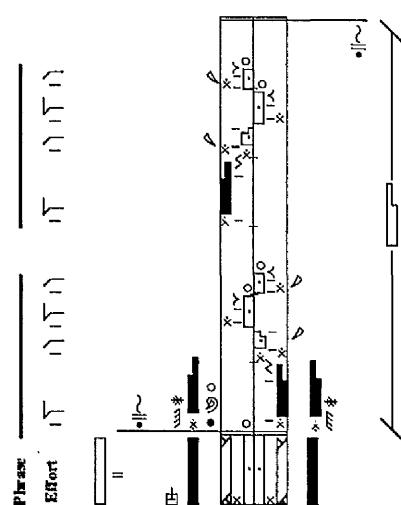


Figure 57
NS - Nababeep
Mature Women

Nama Stap Motif - Chart of Comparisons Women in !Khubus and Women in Nababeep Similarities					
B=Body	E=Effort	S=Space	P=Phrase	T=Time	R= Relationship
Key Signature Body Attitude	B1: Buoyant quality in the centre of gravity B6: Parallel legs B8: Slightly bent (contracted) knees				
Space	S2: Progresses forward though space with small steps S4: Feet sliding along the floor/ground S6: Counter clockwise circle S13: Motif alternates side				
Time	T1: Performed over a six-beat time cycle				
Effort	E1: Dab (light, quick, direct) E6: Light accent on steps that progress forward				
Nama Stap Motif – Differences					
B=Body	E=Effort	S=Space	P=Phrase	T=Time	R= Relationship
	Women in !Khubus		Women in Nababeep		
Key Signature Body Attitude	B2a: Neutral arms B3: Passive arm gestures		B2b: Arms in this variation are forward low with three degrees of contraction; the hands also form a soft fist shape.		
Space	S7: Continuous movement through space		S8: Pause in the motion of the COG		
Time	T2: Movement begins on an up-beat, beat 5 of previous bar		T3b: Movement begins on beat 1 of the bar		
Effort	E2a: Glide (light, sustained, direct) E5b: Strong accent on beat 5 of the bar		E2b: Quick + direct (awake state)		
Phrase	P2: Overlapping phrase		P1a: Phrased in shorter units		
Relationship	R1: Female couples who remain in contact with each other		R4: Single file of females who do not contact each other		

Figure 58. Comparison of NS Motif Mature Women - !Khubus and Mature Women - Nababeep

The comparison chart (Figure 58) indicates that within the Body Attitude grouping, the women share three elements—buoyant quality of the COG (B1), parallel legs (B6), and slightly bent (contracted) knees (B8). The women differ in this category in how they use the arms. The women in !Khubus use neutral arm gestures (B2a) with passive weight (B3), while the women in Nababeep were more active in their use of arm gestures that took a spatial direction—specifically, forward low (B2b). The women share other aspects of the NS. In terms of effort, both use dab effort (E1) and lightly accent steps that move forward through space (E6). Both groups progress through space with small steps (S2) that slide along the ground (S4);

both perform the pattern on a counter-clockwise circle (S6). Both maintained a six-beat beat time cycle (T1). Although the body attitude of the groups is similar and they use many of the same movement elements in their performance of the NS, the differences between each is readily observed.

One of the most obvious features of the two groups of women is continuity of movement. The !Khubus women glide (E2a) continuously through space over five beats of a six-beat phrase (S7). Due to the manner in which their sequence of gliding steps is phrased—as an overlapping phrase (P2)—the movement appears to move continuously over the six-beat sequence when, in fact, there is a pause on beat five. This is in contrast to the women in Nababeep, whose movement through space is punctuated by a series of accents (E2b), pauses (S8), and a division of the phrase into two parts (P1a). These women have partitioned the sequence of six beats into two phases of three beats each. Whereas the women in !Khubus take a full beat for each step, those in Nababeep take a half beat for some steps and a quarter beat for others. Further, the women in Nababeep perform a light accent on beats two and three, thus stressing these beats. The relative swiftness of the steps combined with the light accent, and the division of the phrase into two parts, breaks the continuity of their motion through space, and clearly differentiates the pattern from the !Khubus version. The women also organise themselves differently. Whereas the women in !Khubus dance in pairs and remain in contact with each other (R1), the women in Nababeep dance in single file and do not contact each other (R4).

The movement analysis of the three groups highlights continuities between all three groups, such as body attitude; there are more similarities between groups in this category than differences. Body attitude, as we have seen in Chapter Two, can be considered to form the basis of a ‘movement signature’ that can be used to characterise ‘style’ in dances. However, body attitude is only one aspect of a movement signature. These three groups also share other movement components that contribute to similarities between them. These include an alternating pattern that is performed on a counter clockwise circle, over a six-beat time cycle that travels a small degree through space and all groups use a dab effort. Based on the analysis of the three groups, these components, common to all groups, may suggest a ‘movement signature’ shared by them (Figure 59).

Nama Stap Motif – Comparison Chart Mature Women - Local Youth in !Khubus – Women in Nababeep Similarities between Groups					
B=Body	E=Effort	S=Space	P=Phrase	T=Time	R= Relationship
Key Signature	B1: Buoyant quality in the centre of gravity				
Body Attitude	B6: Parallel legs B8: Slightly bent (contracted) knees				
Space	S2: Progresses forward though space with small steps S6: Counter clockwise circle S13: Motif alternates sides				
Time	T1: Performed over a six-beat time cycle				
Effort	E1: Dab (light, quick, direct)				

Figure 59. Similarities Between Women and Youth in !Khubus and Women in Nababeep

However, each group also exhibit movement components typical of its group. Each group, for example, organises or ‘phrases’ the NS differently. The women in !Khubus use overlapping phrases, the youth combine long and short phrases, and the women in Nababeep use two phrases of equal length. The women in both villages slide the feet along the ground, while the youth release the feet from the ground. The !Khubus women, due to phrasing, move continuously through space, whereas the youth and women in Nababeep pause at various times during the sequence. The groups in !Khubus share relationship in terms of female pairs; neither of these groups share the relationship parameter with the women in Nababeep. The women in Nababeep are distinctive in that they dance in single file and do not contact each other. The youth are distinctive in that they form mixed couples and trios and also feature solo dancing. While the women may include an aspect of improvisation within the NS, it does not characterise their version of the motif. The youth version, on the other hand, is characterised by a high level of improvisation and the use of aerial movements with leg/foot embellishments. Figure 60 charts the differences described here.

Nama Stap Motif – Chart of Comparisons-
Mature Women - Local Youth in !Khubus – Women in Nababeep
Differences

B=Body	E=Effort	S=Space	P=Phrase	T=Time	R= Relationship
	Women in !Khubus	Nababeep		Youth in !Khubus	
Phrase	P2: Overlapping phrase	P1a: Phrased in shorter units: two phrases of equal length	P1a: Short phrase P1b: Longer phrase		
Space	S4: Feet sliding along the floor/ground S7: Continuous movement through space	S4: Feet sliding along the floor/ground S8: Pause in the motion of the COG	S5: Feet release from the floor/ground when stepping S8: Pause in the motion of the COG		
Aerial Forms	None Exhibited	None Exhibited		B9: Extensive use of aerial forms	
Relationship	R1: Female couples remain in contact with each other	R4: Single file of females who do not contact each other	R1: Female couples who remain in contact with each other R2: Mixed couples (male/female) who remain in contact with each other R3: Mixed trio (male/female) who remain in contact with each other R5: Solo dancers (male and female)		
Improvisation	Very little	Very little	B10: High level of improvisation		

Figure 60. Differences Between Women in !Khubus and Nababeep and Youth in !Khubus

7.2. A Complex Signifier

The NS motif, like all symbols, is a complex cultural signifier. It is for the Nama an historical link with Nama pre-colonial history (cf. Sharp and Boonzier below for a further discussion of this point). Though its origin cannot be verified via a western mode of validation such as through a linear chronology of its development, a link to the Nama reed-dance cited in various descriptions of the historic female puberty ceremony can be made.

7.2.1 Nama Reed-Flute Dances

Music scholar Percival Kirby (1933) examines a range of descriptions of South African reed-flute ensembles and the reed-dance that accompanied these. As

seen through the eyes of early travellers, missionaries, government officials, musicians, historian, and others between 1497 and 1932, this compilation of reports explains the context, composition of the ensembles, the reed-flutes themselves, type of music played, as well as reed-dances. Although the collection examines the reed-flute and reed-dances of a number of different South African peoples such as Bavenda, Transvaal Basotho, Ndebele and ‘Bushman’, the following discussion will focus particularly on the reed-dances performed by Nama people.³

The reed-dance or Nama reed-dance seems always to have been done in conjunction with reed-flute playing—the dance accompanied reed-flute music. Reed-flute playing and reed-dances (reed-flutes/dance) were performed on different occasions by different Nama groups. Although authors have reported different aspects of the reed-flute/dances among different Nama groups, nearly all agree on certain aspects of it. The reed-flute/dances were, for example, typically held outdoors in the late afternoon or evening; they lasted for varying lengths of time from all night, into the following day or for several days at a time. These social and/or religious gatherings had no fixed number of participants, and they could be rather large affairs with some observers reporting ‘hundreds’ of participants. Even though women took part in reed-flute dancing, only men played reed flutes, and there was always a leader or head musician. The reed-flute/dances were done in a circular formation in which the musicians faced the centre of the circle where the leader of the group stood; the women formed an outer ring around the musicians. Descriptions of the movement vocabulary of the reed-dance seems to indicate that while women participated in this activity, they were an accompaniment to it rather than a major component of it.

While dancing clearly formed part of the reed-flute performances, the dancing of men on these occasions has been described in greater detail than that of women. Women’s dance movements were typified by forming a circle around the reed-flute players while singing and clapping; ‘within the circular formation, they stamp their feet in time to the music of the reed-flutes and ‘chassez’ (sic) forward with small and graceful steps’ (Kirby, 1933, p.344). On the other hand, it has been noted by Kirby that, ‘only men are the performers at the dancing party’; that they make beautiful movement with their feet; that their dancing is characterised by ‘elaborate step-dancing’ (Kirby, 1933 p.316).

In examining descriptions of male ‘step-dancing’, two broad movement categories may be suggested. These include movements that remain on the spot and

those which travel through space. Both groups are characterised by the presence of a leader in the centre of the circle. Among other technical matters, such as tuning the flutes, it is his role to signal the start of the performance and to keep time. The flute players in both groups face the centre of the circle and direct their attention to the leader. The dancing/movements of both groups of men include stamping on the ground, jumping, leaping, violent shaking, small jumps close to the ground, and movement of the feet. Those groups who do travel move forward and backward through space. Alternatively, it is noted that only those who play flutes 'change their place while dancing'; the flute players move on the periphery of the circle while performing 'the most baroque and most marvellous springing and bowing of the upper part of their bodies' (Kirby, 1933, p.342).

From the description of the movements of the two groups, men and women, movements common to both groups emerge. These include the presence of a group leader, circular formation, movement on the spot (in place) and, for at least some groups, travelling forward and backward through space. A correlation between the movements of the reed-dance and the contemporary Nama Stap can be made.

Movement Components of the Reed-Dance and the contemporary Nama Stap		
Reed-Dance	NSD-Adult Version	NSD-Youth Version
Group Leader	Group Leader	Group Leader
Circular Formation	Circular Formation	Circular Formation
Stamping	-----	Stamping
Movement on the spot or in place	Movement on the spot or in place	Movement on the spot or in place
Travelling forward and backward	Travelling forward and backward	Travelling forward and backward
Aerial Forms: Jumping, leaping, jumps close to the floor, chasse	-----	Aerial Forms: Jumping, leaping, jumps close to the floor,
-----	-----	Aerial forms in which the legs and parts of the foot contact each other (Aerial embellishments)

Figure 61. Movement Components of the Reed-dance and Contemporary Nama Stap

The above comparison (Figure 61) indicates that similar movements components of the Nama reed-dance may be found in the Nama Stap dance performed by both mature women and youth in !Khubus. The youth version of the

Nama Stap dance exhibits all of the elements of the reed-dance listed in the chart. Further, within this version of the dance, a development of the reed-dance may be seen in the inclusion of girls as full partners and not merely ‘accompaniment’ to the boys, and complex aerial embellishments also differentiate this version from descriptions of the reed-dance. A comparison of the puberty version to that of the reed-dance demonstrates that with the exception of two movements, stamping and aerial forms, these two dances consists of similar movement vocabulary. Whereas stamping is noted in the reed-dance, the feet slide along the ground in the puberty version. The similarities of movement components between the Nama reed-dance and the Nama Stap Dance seems to indicate a relationship between the two. Other evidence of this relationship may be observed in terms of the function of the dance. The reed-dance has been recorded in association with the female puberty ceremony (Hoernlé 1918, Carstens 2007) and Nama marriage ceremony (Carstens 2007). Today, the Nama Stap Dance (rather than the reed-dance) is performed in connection with contemporary performances of both of these activities.

Despite a lack of documented evidence of its development thus far, the Nama acknowledge the NS as well as other ‘Nama symbols’ for what they represent for them. This is an indigenous perspective and is accepted by this researcher as well as other scholars who address issues of Nama identity. Anthropologists John Sharp and Emile Boonzaier (1994), for example, note the following in reference to ‘Nama Symbols’:

Outsiders...were confronted with a range of clear symbols of Nama ethnicity, the present of a Nama choir, the singing of Nama songs, the construction of a traditional Nama matjieshuis, staging of the marriage ritual for a Nama bride...The symbols gave...a glimpse of their heritage, an indication of who they were, and an insight into the responsibility they believe they bear as intermediaries between past and future generations...The signing ceremony [itself] was designed to highlight the inhabitants ethnic identity. By emphasizing their Nama identity at a public ceremony the people of the N.R. reserve stressed their conviction that there was continuity between themselves and the ‘first owners’ of the land (Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994, p.406).

The Nama sanction the NS as one of their cultural signifiers; as such, it serves a dual role. On one level, as noted by Sharp and Boonzaier above, it is used to represent the Nama as the decedents of the ‘original’ people of South Africa. This view presents a traditional view of the Nama as hunters and/or herders who live in a traditional manner in traditional matjieshuis, moving from place to place, and living

more or less off the veld. This perspective would not be entirely inaccurate as, during the course of this research, I met some Nama who continue to live semi-nomadically. This way of living, however, is no longer the norm. Sharp and Boonzaier, for example, note that ‘the people of the Richtersveld have no desire to dwell in matjieshuise, which in the context of everyday life, they associate with poverty and the inability to afford modern housing’ (Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994, p.409); my fieldwork in !Khubus (recorded in Chapters Three and Four) would support this position.

Alternatively, a structured improvisational section of punching feet, rhythmic embellishments of feet and legs, and the large spatial orientation demonstrated by Nama youth reveal contemporary influences and a more current representation of these descendants of the Khoekhoen. The NS/P, however, can also be seen as contemporary in the sense that it is a reinvention or contemporary rendering of the historical Nama female puberty ceremony. In this respect, the motif embodies colonial attitudes as well as the sentiment of the ‘new South Africa’.

7.2.2 Tourism: Township Tours and Cultural Village

The function of the dance is also changing. It is now performed in a number of different contexts such as South Africa’s tourism programme. Cultural tourism is a hotly discussed and often contentious issue. It has long been a part of our lives and there is good reason for it to command our attention.⁴ Advances in transportation and technology, for example, have created a new kind of tourism; one which has nothing to do with galleries and concert halls, but which allows us to mingle into the lives of people. In this age of ‘Big Brother’, technology makes it possible for a camera crew to follow a musician such as David Kramer, as he travels throughout Namaqualand interviewing local musicians and recording their music (Kramer, 2004). Of course, we can justify poking digital recording devices into every corner of the globe by claiming an interest in and, consequently, a broadening definition of humanity. It is fair to say that we are more likely to care about the condition of the world’s peoples if we are brought into their lives and made to see them concretely; enabled to see them as extensions of ourselves. Further, Kaeppeler suggests that ‘through tourism, individuals of different cultures are forced to deal with one another’ (Kaeppeler, 1988, p. xv). But

Europeans and Americans have a questionable track record with regard to respecting the folkways of the people whose homelands they visit.⁵

In an article entitled ‘Ethnic Identity as Performance: Lessons from Namaqualand’ (1994), Sharp and Boonzaier describe the manner in which European missionaries engineered the derogation of the indigenous Nama in the northwest Cape during the nineteenth century. Replacing the Nama in the regional hierarchy was an invented class of ‘Basters,’ people of mixed European and indigenous lineage, who the missionaries claimed to be more ‘trustworthy, hard-working and sober’ than their Nama compatriots, whom the westerners debased with the appellation ‘Hottentot.’ This social engineering had a lasting effect on cultural development in the region.

Since the advantages of being “Baster” were so obvious in the reserves, the missionaries precipitated a scramble amongst their charges to hide or shed traits that were penalised as being characteristic of the Nama (Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994, p.408).

Of course, the question of identity and the manner in which it is expressed has undergone a dramatic transformation in South Africa since the fall of apartheid. Still, practices and customs that attract positive interest, and even reward, from the outside world are likely to become something else under watchers’ eyes. Those of us who travel the world examining and learning from the cultural expression of others must consider the extent to which our interest is altering that which we observe. When does community-defining ritual become performance art? What happens when this transformation occurs?⁶

In western culture, there is a strong tradition of performance art. Gifted individuals work hard to develop their natural abilities and, eventually, perform for appreciative audiences. In other parts of the world traditions are different. In most non-urban African locations, for example, music and dances are learned as participant activities from childhood. True, some individuals undergo specialized training (in the drum and for dancing for instance), but this does not separate them from other members of the community, in fact, it may intensify their relationship with them. Those who are not specially trained are still an essential part of the music and dance which are used to celebrate marriages and births, to exhort animals to make themselves available to hunters, to greet the change of seasons, and so on. There are no bystanders, no onlookers. These rituals are a way of saying ‘this is who we are. Our music and our dancing express our common history and interest. We feel and

think as one about these things.' Is all of this changed if it is watched by outsiders? Filmed by them? What happens if, for the benefit of curious and appreciative camera crews, harvest dances are performed during the planting season? Will the unifying power of the ritual be reduced in the eyes of the community?⁷

Further, to what extent, if any, are community-binding rituals devalued or undermined if an industry develops which is dependent upon outsiders coming to witness them?⁸ We should also consider the effectiveness of otherwise statutory attempts to safeguard cultural heritage. In 1999, an act passed through the South African parliament that formed the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). SAHRA created responsibility for the 'identification, conservation, protection and promotion of heritage resources at a national level' (Sofeleng, 2008, p. 1). The Act also established agencies to manage heritage resources at the provincial and local levels. With the aim of preserving the intangible cultural heritage, the Act identifies as worthy of protection: 'places or objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage' (Sofeleng, 2008, p. 1). Living heritage, according to the National Heritage Resources Agency, refers to Cultural Tradition, Oral History, Performance, Rituals, Popular Memory, Skills and Techniques, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Holistic approach to Nature, Society and Social Relationships.⁹

Ethnomusicologist R. Anderson Sutton refers to rituals as '...culturally meaningful events symbolically utilizing image, space, sound, and movement in attempts to influence phenomena perceived to be beyond humans' ordinary abilities to understand and control' (Sutton, 1996, p.1). With regard to the transformation of ritual into art, Sutton explains:

Some of the arts of ritual have become separate arts in their own right, suitable for contests, academies, tourists and export, while others have retained their ritualistic meanings for a portion of society, while being viewed as objects of scholarship and/or industrial commoditization by others (Sutton, 1996, p.1).

Sutton is affirming that aspects of ritual ceremonies can be abstracted from their original context, examined and even commercialized without necessarily perverting their meaning. We can point to examples of this in western culture.

The Fisk Jubilee Singers first recorded the Negro spiritual 'Wade in the Water' in 1901. It had been sung as a part of African American church services for

perhaps a hundred years before that and since the turn of the 20th century it has been recorded by dozens of artists from the Edwin Hawkins Singers to Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass. Various renditions of the song have been privately played and publicly broadcast on a countless number of occasions the world over. ‘Wade in the Water’ was featured, for example, in dancer/choreographer Alvin Ailey’s signature work *Revelations* (1960). Few would complain that the song’s power to inspire and to uplift has been diminished because it is so often performed outside the context of a church service. At the same time, it remains a staple in African American churches. Along with the sermons, testimonies and other hymns, ‘Wade in the Water’ continues to connect worshippers with their faith and with the generations of faithful who sang it before them. Nor do we protest that the sacred music composed by Bach, Handel or Schubert loses its power when performed in contexts other than religious. We do not insist that the religiously-themed paintings of Raphael or Caravaggio should be displayed only in chapels. It would appear that affirming rituals are probably sufficiently resilient to survive examination by interested outsiders as long as it is respectfully done. It is unlikely that even the crassest of handling will destroy those cultural expressions that really mean something to people. Despite the fact that the Nama female puberty ceremony is no longer practiced, for example, the theme of the rite continues within the NS/P.¹⁰

The preservation of indigenous cultural expression commands attention in nearly every country in the world. In an age of globalization, when goods, services and ideas fly across international borders with, practically, the freedom of thought, the six billion of us who inhabit this planet are exposed to the same consumables and thoughts wherever we live. A United football team supporters’ ‘strip’ is almost as likely to be worn in Mogadishu as it is in Manchester. Young people in New York and Nicosia dance to the same music in clubs. In the world of today, there is decreasing opportunity for us to express our cultural uniqueness by what we wear, think and do. In this context, community-affirming rituals and practices are very worth recognizing. They are a means by which a people are reminded of what makes their practices distinct from those of others with whom they share the world.

Nearly every country in the world has statutory provisions for the preservation of indigenous cultural heritage. In 2005, the United Nations Education, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO) authored the Convention on the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression the purpose of which is to ‘...promote respect for the diversity of cultural expression and raise awareness of its value at the local, national and international levels and to reaffirm the link between culture and development for all countries...’ (www.unesco.org, accessed November 2008; note full reference in the bibliography). The UNESCO convention says that true cultural diversity ‘...presupposes a recognition of the equal dignity and respect for all cultures including cultures of minorities and indigenous peoples’ (www.unesco.org, accessed November 2008; note full reference in the bibliography). This is particularly important in a country like South Africa where colonial powers found advantage in distancing the indigenous people from the folkways, customs and thinking of their forebears. In such countries, support for the preservation of indigenous cultural expression is a matter of re-evaluating a cultural landscape that has been built upon by interests other than those of the indigenous population and its descendants. In such cases the upholding of indigenous cultural expression can be an act of liberation.

Tourism in post-apartheid South Africa is a major income generating activity. But tourism, especially in a country with a history such as South Africa’s, is not only a matter of economics. It also concerns culture and heritage and how these are represented, i.e. how they are ‘branded’, ‘themed’ or ‘imaged’. A central focus of South African tourism is the promotion of South Africa as ‘Africa’. But, the image of ‘Africa’ promoted by the tourist industry tends to be a colonial view of indigenous people who live in ‘tribal’ units and continue to follow a ‘traditional’ or ‘native’ lifestyle (Witz et al, 2001). This ‘tourist’ image of indigenous groups of people is not only directed towards international visitors to South Africa, but South Africans themselves who have been encouraged to learn more about their own cultural history and that of other people with whom they share a country.¹¹ Based on a view of ‘olde Africa’, and notions of ‘authenticity’, two programmes have been developed to support community tourism throughout South Africa: Township Tours and the Cultural Village schemes. Both programmes conform to an image of indigenous groups of people that are ‘frozen in time’. Township tours, for example, are found in urban areas where residents are paid to recreate township life for the benefit of foreign tourists. These re-enactments can include police abuse such as passbook checks and raids that were a part of the daily life for non-white South Africans until

barely a decade ago. The irony of people who lived through oppression having forcibly shaken it off after years of struggle and then being required to make a living by re-enacting it in front of an audience of tourists is close to the bone. In the mid 1990s, the 'Cultural Village' sprang up throughout South Africa.

Located in close proximity to tourist routes and trails in rural areas, each cultural village was based on a specific 'ethnic stereotype' and all professed to offer an experience of 'authentic' 'African' traditions. The activities offered by the various establishments were similar in content and 'rhythmic music and dance' were typically the high point of the visit.¹² Witz et al highlights, for example, an advertisement for a cultural village which read, 'Shangaan village where ethnic damsels show tourist their traditional African dancing skills' (Witz et al, 2001, p.279). Based on an understanding of the tourist industry as outlined above, it is unclear what 'traditional' or 'African' dance skills might mean in this context. Are these 'dancing skills' that are common to all African dancers or Shangaan dancers in particular? Are the dances to be performed 'Shangaan' dances or 'African' dances? Because this kind of tourism appears to be based not on decisions made by indigenous people themselves but on images of them created by others, the viewer, and especially the researcher, must question the performance and what it is they are observing. It would appear that these kinds of dances are prepared as entertainment for a tourist audience who have a preconceived view of what 'Africa/African' is and expects the performance to reflect that perception.¹³

To conclude that cultural tourism is, overall, either a positive or a negative force would be to oversimplify the issue(s); the world is far more complicated. While there are inherent dangers involved in the capturing of aspects of another people's culture, there are incredible benefits to be gained as well. Even though cultural tourism may certainly result from motives that are unwholesome, crass and exploitative, it can also spring from a respect for and a determination to affirm the equality and diversity of the world's cultures.¹⁴ South African musicians and dancers tour the world presenting an entirely different image of what cultural life is like in that country. The Soweto String Quartet, the Umkhonto Dancer Troupe, the Soweto Gospel Choir, the Acosa Ntombizodwa String Quartet and many others are international standard bearers of traditional and modern cultural expression in South Africa. The Nama Stap Dance is also an example of the merging of tradition and

modernity. Post-apartheid reconstruction and economic development (including tourism) in South Africa has necessitated a re-evaluation of ‘cultural artefacts’ that in the past have been situated by groups of people for reasons associated with their social structure and belief systems—the female rite of passage ceremony, for example, was performed at a particular time in the life of Nama females. Its contemporary development, the NS/P, however, does not adhere to such a cycle. The following section will examine the current organization of the NS/D in the Nama community of !Khubus.

7.3. The Nama Stap Dance: Classification

While the different variations of the NS may be recognised by their movement components as explained above, they may also be classified in relation to the activity in which they are performed. In her study of Warlpiri women’s dances, for example, Morais (1992) noted that similar movement was found in different dances. She notes how:

In the process of documenting Warlpiri dance, I was able to distinguish three broad categories of movement: 1) movements which occur in almost every dreaming complex, and which have a general meaning; 2) movements which occur in many, but not all, dreaming complexes and which have a general meaning as well as a specific meaning...3) movements which occur in only one dreaming complex and which have a specific meaning (Morais, 1992, p.140).

The NS/D is performed at various activities, such as birthdays, weddings, and tourist events. On these occasions the NS may be performed informally where the motif itself is featured and no other motifs systematically accompany it as in social dancing seen at the beginning and conclusion of the NS/P. When done in this way, other movement elements may be performed with it, but a systematic ordering of elements is not typical. At other times its usage is defined by the occasion it is used in conjunction with, such as government-sponsored or educational activities. This, suggested, organisation of the dance is outlined in Figure 62.

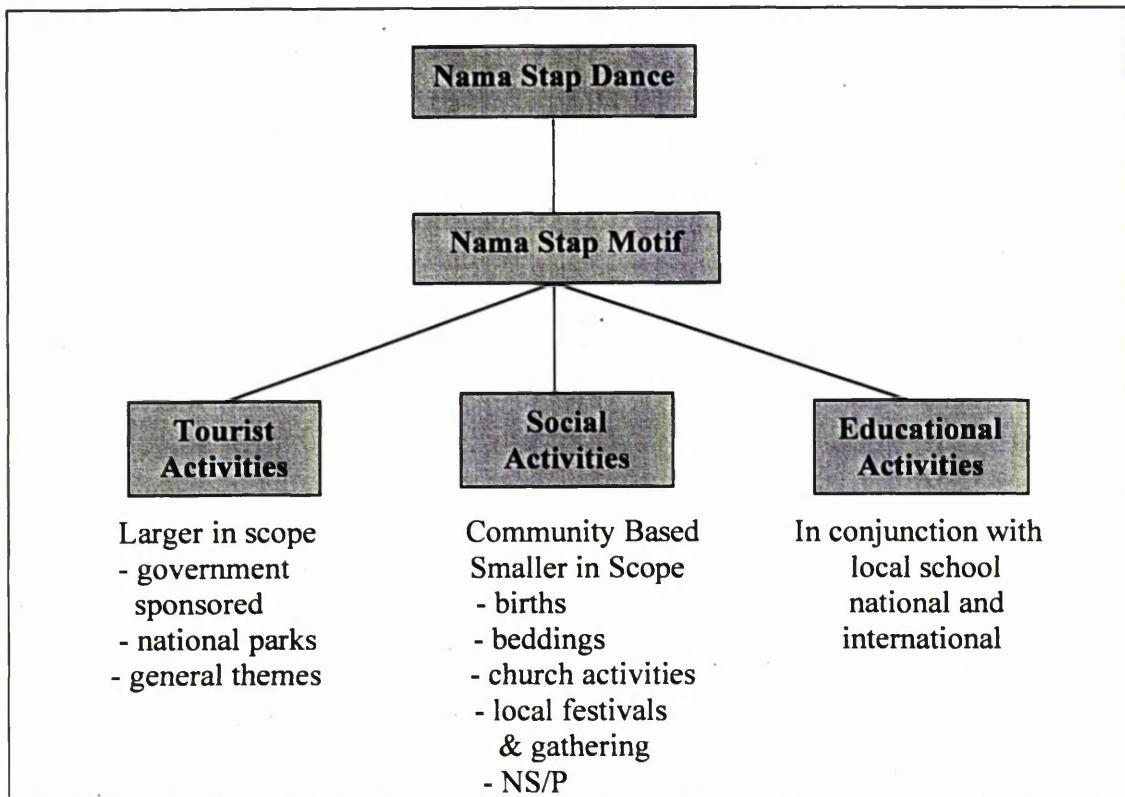


Figure 62. Organisational Chart of the Nama Stap Dance

I have organised the various versions of the Nama Stap Dance into three categories: tourist activities, that are typically occasions that are organised as requested by outside agencies or individuals; social activities, where the NS/D is performed locally in conjunction with smaller and more intimate activities; and educational activities, organised in conjunction with the local school. These groupings are distinguished by a number of factors but of significance in this research the dance is juxtaposed with the female puberty ceremony. It is not customary for this version of the dance to be performed outside of the village context. The NS and the NS/D youth version are the forms that are known and performed most frequently in South Africa and internationally; as a result, these are the versions of the dance that have come to symbolise the Nama people as a group.

Tourist performances are those that are done in response to requests made by various government bodies or other outside organisations for which the community may receive payment. These might include, for example, the extended borders celebration described earlier in this work or the opening ceremony for the Richtersveld National Park that took place in !Khubus in 1991(cf. Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994). These are relatively large affairs where other Nama signifiers such

as the matjieshuis and Nama guitars are on display. These performances typically feature the NS sequence and/or NS/D performed by local youth. These performances are in the nature of what Kaeppeler calls airport art dance:

...dance that is evolved from folk dance...but emphasizes changes in sentiment...usually choreographed and/or performed primarily by and for those who do not understand the language or culture (Kaeppeler, 1992a, p.155).

These tourist versions of the NS clearly demonstrated the importance of the motif in the life of the community, and members are happy to demonstrate and teach the pattern to observers. Of equal significance on these occasions are the turning patterns, rhythmic variation, interaction with partner(s), and expressions of individuality as exhibited in the youth version of the NS/D.

Social activities are community-based events that are organised by village residents themselves for the social or financial benefit of the community. This might be for itinerant researchers as noted earlier in this paper or as part of the developing tourism programme in !Khubus and other Nama villages. On these occasions, which are generally smaller and more intimate, either the NS or a themed version of the NS/D is performed.

Themed versions of the NS/D such as the puberty ceremony events are performed in association with the occasions they mark, by request or for organised community tourist activities. The puberty ceremony described here, for example, was done in association with a twenty-first birthday celebration and also as part of the village tourist's programme. These activities are planned and rehearsed in advance. The distinction between these two categories, tourist and community-based dance activities, is that themed activities are organised by community members and take place in the village. The NS and the NS/D performed for larger occasions and/or performed outside of the village offer insight into traditional Nama ideology, post-colonial and contemporary influences. The NS/P version, however, offers a view of a particular aspect of Nama culture—Nama women.

7.4. Evolved Traditional Dance

Although the NS/P is often referred to as 'traditional', 'traditional dance' typically refers to dances as they were performed prior to the arrival of Europeans. Evolved traditional dance, on the other hand, can be used to refer to dances that are

based on traditional ideas but have also developed new movement vocabulary that reflects new ideas (Kaeppeler, 1992a, p. 155; cf. Welsh Asante, 2000, p.14).

Early descriptions of the Nama female puberty ceremony on which the current NS/P is based do not refer to the ‘Nama Stap’ as part of the ritual. The inclusion of the NS appears to be a later development and may have evolved from the reed-dance. Historical aspects as described in the various accounts of the ceremony (Hoernlé 1918, Carstens 2007 and Vedder 1928) such as face painting, the dressing of an initiate in fine clothes, the slaughter of a goat in a prescribed manner, and senior female(s) in attendance to the initiate remain relatively intact. Other features noted in early records, such as the taboo in respect of cold water and the cleansing of the initiate in cow dung, were not part of the version observed during this research. Anthropologist Peter Carstens, who did fieldwork among the Khoekhoen between 1951 and 1960, notes the following in reference to the ceremony:

In the Richtersveld a modified form of the traditional Khoi Khoi girl’s initiation ceremony is still carried out, though the custom is fast disappearing. The purpose for which this ceremony is performed is to protect the girl physically in change to womanhood, since a girl during her first menstruation is believed to be prone to illness of various kinds. It is performed...to...instruct her in her proper duties as wife and mother (Carstens, 1966, p. 222).

However, an early version of the ceremony by anthropologist H. Vedder reads:

When at the age of 12-14 years the first menstruation sets in with adolescent girls, the whole family celebrates the occasion. In a corner of the hut which is separated from the rest of the room by means of a curtain, the girl is isolated and adorned with all sorts of ornaments by the feminine members of the family. A festival day is appointed, and in families where old customs are still adhered to the girl is given fresh cows-milk to drink. The milk must come from a cow that has its first calf. If the cow should die it is proof that this girl possesses special powers, and she dare not drink milk from the herd again during the days of menstruation least she imperil the herd. (Vedder, 1928, p. 136).

These accounts indicate that the rite of passage activity maintains its basic theme and some of the elements documented as early as 1913 by Hoernlé. But it has also adopted new movement elements. Kaeppeler’s evolved traditional dance grouping, therefore, is an appropriate category through which to translate the traditional and contemporary ideology symbolised and recorded in the NS/P.

7.5. Setting Traditional and Contemporary in a Colonial and Postcolonial Context

The NS/P may be viewed as a rubric, that is, an established custom or tradition that provides rules for conduct (following the definition given in Encarta World English Dictionary, 1999). The analysis of the NS/P presented in Chapters Five and Six suggests that it may be organised into two parts, and this partitioning is not merely structural. Part One suggests postcolonial influences and modes of behaviour while, at the same time, shadow movements reveal pre-colonial attitudes.¹⁵ Part Two is a testament to pre-colonial, traditional Nama ideology and consists also of elements from the first portion of the dance. The NS motif, however, permeates the dance as a whole and binds the parts together.

7.6 Part One: Postcolonial Influences

Part One commences with a statement of the Nama that is in response to colonisation. Western style dance vocabulary (such as turning patterns and arm gestures), spatial formation (dancers in pairs), and patchwork costume point to an acceptance or incorporation of rather than conformity to colonial authority. This merger is even more apparent when juxtaposed with part two of the dance, where traditional Nama values are displayed. The Nama Stap motif is used repeatedly throughout this portion of the dance and Nama guitar music is also part of Nama history. Most significant as signifiers of the tradition are the performers themselves since mature Nama women, rather than young females, do the dance. An examination of the position of women in Nama society and there relationship to each other will clarify the significance of the experience of this group of women.

7.6.1 Nama Females

Nama females have considerable power as adult members of the Nama community and this may be observed through an examination of a woman's role within the family. Women in pre-colonial Nama society had supreme authority within the homestead. The female puberty ceremony was a major rite of passage for young Nama females and it marked not only the transition from childhood to full adult membership, but also the division between males and females. Anthropologist Theophilus Hahn clarifies this point:

In every Khoikhoi's house the woman....is the *supreme ruler*; the husband has nothing at all to say. While in public the men take the prominent part, at home they have not so much power even as to take a mouthful of sour milk out of the tub, without the wife's permission. If a man should try to do it, his nearest *female* relations will put a fine on him, consisting in cows and sheep, which are added to the stock of the wife (Hahn, cited in Barnard, 1992, p. 185, italic added).

Male consultants in !Khubus noted that, 'women had privileges above men; women, for example, could not be punished; a husband or father was punished; women were not held accountable.' Carstens relates the status of Nama women to family structure:

...there is a measure of separation of the sexes in Richtersveld...girls often assist in herding...courting is not as strictly controlled in Richtersveld as it is in Steinkopf. That the status of women in Richtersveld is higher than in the other Reserves is born out also by the type of family groupings [extended family in !Khubus]...and by the fact that a female kaptein once ruled the community (Carstens, 1966, p. 212).

Vedder, however, notes the changing status of women:

The position of the woman among the Nama is by no means that of the devoted servant of the man. According to old custom the hut belongs to her and she disposes of everything within it. When in need of something the man has to approach his wife entreatingly and not imperiously. But since the old-fashioned huts [matjieshuis] which was covered with rushes by the women have more and more been displaced by the modern houses, which the man builds with material for which he has laboured, the woman is being pushed into the background. The abode now becomes the property of the man and there is danger that the consequence will be ill treatment of the women (Vedder, 1928, p. 135).

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, wealth was calculated in terms of how many cattle and sheep one owned and stock could be accumulated through service to others, raids, marriage, purchase, or inheritance. Various levels of governance of Nama communities were based on the accumulation of wealth so that large stockholders, for example, were regents. Nama women could inherit stock in their own right and maintain these distinct from male relations even after marriage. Through this system, women gained considerable power (and independence) and in historical times, some women even became regents or temporary chiefs (Vedder, cited in Barnard, 1992, p.185). Marriage, linked to direct authority of the household, could provide women with another avenue of financial independence via the acquisition of stock by means

of the 'fine' system as described by Hahn above. Equally notable is the fact that it was not the wife who levied such a fine, but the nearest female relative of the husband. This necessitated good relationships between female family members and between women in general. In !Khubus, for example, I noted that despite the opposition of members of the community, older females supported younger women in the opening of the Gastehuis in the central portion of the village, as well as a café. Maria Farmer and other mature women not only maintain the NS/P but also oversee the development of the NS/D performed by village youth.

7.7 Part Two: Traditional Nama Ideology

The second part of the dance, as a re-enactment, relates directly to the traditional puberty ceremony itself. The NS motif, turning patterns, and arm movements comprise the full movement vocabulary. This limited vocabulary is of little consequence as the dancing is to a degree secondary. The focus is on the performers themselves, especially the initiate, and the embodiment of the theme of the ritual.

Even though an elderly woman who had borne many children would once have attended the initiate, in this version six mature women attend her. There is no choreographic or historical reason for the increase in number; the dance, according to consultants, could be performed with fewer or more couples. The dance leader, however, can be seen to represent the elderly attendant, the *abá tarás*, of the historic version. The point of her presence is that adult women had rights, power, and influence and could also accumulate wealth within Nama society. These rights could be exercised directly and indirectly through the female line. Women, therefore, were reliant on each other. At the end of this section each performer dances with the initiate first, and then other members of the community are invited to join in. This portion of the dance demonstrates the acceptance of the initiate not only into the community as a whole but also into full partnership with Nama women.

This view of the dance favours an interpretation in which it is used to symbolise revalidation, not merely acceptance, of traditional Nama values and colonial mores especially in regard to Nama women. The story of the Nama women is told through dancing. While the NS motif may stand as a symbol of the Nama people more generally, the NS/P may be said to stand as a symbol of Nama women.

Although a few families still perform the NS/P as a kind of rite of passage for young women, nowadays the ceremony is (primarily) a re-enactment. Only mature women enact the ceremony and in this respect they are sentinels or guardians of it. These women, aged approximately sixty years or more, carry certain responsibilities in regard to the dance. They must maintain the ceremony in historical and performance order, clarify its codes, and interpret its significance for female Nama in the present day. Crucially, they have a duty to pass this embodied knowledge on to the next generation of Nama women. But this group is not present in !Khubus.

The absence of a middle generation in !Khubus, both men and women, will most certainly affect the community as a whole. There are, for example, economic and social issues surrounding the extended absence of parents from the community; equally disturbing is the concurrent absence of women of this age group and a shift of power from women to men. This transfer of power is indicative of the assimilation of western attitudes generally, and especially concerning women, into the way of life of the Nama of !Khubus as well as other indigenous populations throughout South Africa. As expressed by the principal of the local school:

!Khubus is an African community with western ideas...these are not mixing well. Traditionally the mother had most power...women had privileges above men; women [for example] could not be punished; ...husband or father was punished; women were not held accountablenow they have adopted western ideas; father is the figure...things have changed too suddenly (Thomas, principal of local school, July, 2003).

7.8. The Legacy: Lost Generation

The value of fieldwork as a research method has been argued earlier in this paper and its significance to this research has been clearly demonstrated. Although the field researcher typically goes into the field with a defined set of aims, objectives, itinerary and the like, it is not unusual to have to alter carefully constructed plans once in situ. Nor is it uncommon to be presented with something of relevance to the study that has not been anticipated or identified by previous researchers. Just such a situation presented itself in !Khubus. There is a group of people who are not present in the village; I have labelled this group 'lost generation'. I use this phrase to identify a generation of women and men who are roughly between the ages of thirty-to-fifty and who are not visible in the community. The absence of this cohort was not at first noticeable, at least not to me. It became more apparent when I began to interview

various people, especially the principal of the local school who was, in fact, the person who brought this dearth to my attention. According to him, the village school is attended by all school aged children who live in !Khubus; but he noted that for nearly fifty percent of these, grandparents were carrying out the duties of parents. This situation has developed from economic necessity.

!Khubus is sometimes labelled a sleeping town. This identifies a locale as well as a condition in which there is no paid work in the immediate vicinity. Residents must seek employment outside of the community and, where practical, return home to rest only. This condition was already apparent when Carstens did his research fifty years ago:

In Richtersveld (Kuboes village and environs) 22 percent of the population became migrant workers in 1960...In all these communities migratory labour has now been accepted as a economic necessity to supplement the low income derived from the local traditional economic systems which still operate though in a modified form....there is a suggestion that migratory labour is not only a function of increased poverty, but that it is stimulated also by greater intensity of interaction with the outside world through the advent of new internal institutions which reduce the former centripetal focus and the concomitant conservative attitudes within each community...Churches [for example] encourage their people to leave their communities as migrant workers to augment family income (from which the Churches may also benefit) (Carstens, 1966, p.211).

Carstens also noted that the majority of families in !Khubus are extended families.

Today, those who are employed further a-field such as in Port Nolloth, Springbok, or even Cape Town, do not return to the village on a regular basis but instead send money home. Grandmothers in small accommodation, as few as three rooms, may care for as many as three or four grandchildren. According to consultants, it is the case that some parents gradually cease to send money home or cease to return to the village for long periods of time. Although this has other profound social implications, in terms of Nama legacy as traced through the NS and the NS/D, without the intervention of the remaining middle-aged females and grandmothers in !Khubus, the legacy personified within the Nama female puberty ceremony, along with its (suggested) contemporary post-colonial statement might well follow the course of male puberty ceremonies. Barnard writes:

Unfortunately for us, Nama boys' ceremonies remain poorly recorded, as they disappeared before they could be studied by a competent ethnographer...The female puberty ceremony is better

described, and was quite elaborate in comparison to those of other Khoisan groups (Barnard, 1992, p.185).

The lost generation calls into question the future of the NS/P as without a generation of women to pass the dance to, it will surely cease to exist. The gradual demise of the ceremony in !Khubus however, is not an isolated occurrence; other groups of indigenous people have experienced similar erosion in reference to rite of passage ceremonies. Anthropologist Judith Brown (1963), for example, addresses two aspects of Nama culture that have a bearing on the continuation of female rite of passage ceremonies. These include: residency of women after marriage and the economic status of women within KhoeKhoen society.

According to Brown, female rite of passage ceremonies were celebrated in those societies where matrilocal residency was practiced—after marriage a woman will continue to live in the same village/location of her mother; this is typically the village/location where she grew up. Within this system, the puberty ceremony serves to notify members of the community of her change of status from that of a girl child to an adult woman. On the other hand, Brown notes that those societies in which patrilocal residency is the norm—after marriage a woman leaves her childhood home and resides in the location of her husband—a rite of passage ceremony may not be celebrated. Such an activity is not necessary as the new wife has not grown up in the community of the husband and therefore a ‘notice of change of status’ is not needed; the new community welcomes the new wife as an adult member from the outset (Brown, 1963, p. 841). The key point here is residency after marriage. However, residency after marriage in the case of the Nama is ambiguous. Nama literature suggests that matrilocal residency was practiced. However, Carstens notes that, uxorilocal residence—temporary residence in the village/location of the new wife—was typical among Nama people and residency in the village of the wife was often continued indefinitely (Carstens, 1982, p.512).

Indefinite uxorilocal residency, therefore, may be seen to strengthen the continuation of the female puberty ceremony and its purpose. However, related to the ceremony was an understanding of the role of Nama women in reference to ‘subsistence activities’ within the family/society. On this point, Brown comments that,

...only when women have real importance in the subsistence activities of society will female initiation rites be celebrated...This is because

within such societies women make a substantial contribution to subsistence activities (Brown, 1963, p.849).

From this ‘economic’ point of view, the ceremony also serves to ensure that a young woman understands her role as *manager* of the household, its significance in the Nama community, and to assure her of the support of her *Ouma* and other women of the community in this role.

As noted previously, the position of women in Nama society was high, and this standing was not dependent upon that of a man in the form of husband or male relative. When a women married, for example, she brought to the marriage her own things in the form of cooking utensils and the ‘house’ itself, which was constructed for her by *other women*, and an inheritance in her own right on the death of her parents (Carstens, 1983).¹⁶ In Nama society there was a separation of the sexes in which each operated independently of the other; neither dominated the other (Carstens, 2007).

The rite of passage ceremony served a number of functions. This ‘coming of age’ ceremony was also a proclamation of a young woman’s readiness for marriage; and the role of ‘married woman’ was a further elevation of her standing within Nama society. The status of ‘married woman’ was tied to the fact that as such, she had complete authority in all domestic spheres; this included control of the milk supply. The management of milk and milk products was significant as milk was a staple food of the Nama and it could be bought, sold, or traded; milk was highly valued by Nama people and its use was controlled by women.

The demise of the female puberty ceremony in !Khubus (and other Nama communities) may be linked to economic pressures especially as they apply to women. Carstens (2007) noted that due to the loss of large portions of their herds, Nama women sought employment as domestic servants, while men took jobs as migrant workers in the mines and on the farms of Europeans. Even within this economic system, however, women continued to manage the resources of the household. Carstens explains:

When husbands and sons went out as migrant workers, it was the women who insisted on receiving the remittances in the old roles as ‘supreme rulers’ of the home...when Nama men went to work, they did so for women who controlled the purse strings in much the same way as they had controlled the milk supply in the traditional society (Carstens, 1982, p.517).

This would seem to indicate that Nama women, despite a change in the ‘object’ of value from ‘milk’ to ‘currency’, maintained their status as ‘rulers’ of the household. My field research in 2003 saw a different situation. If, as suggested by Brown, the observance of the (Nama) female puberty ceremony is an indicator of the economic role of women and that the ceremony may cease to exist in those societies where women ‘do not contribute substantially to subsistence activities’, the circumstances I describe as ‘lost generation’ would support Brown’s argument. My observations indicate that the Nama female puberty ceremony described by Hoernlé and others is no longer celebrated in !Khubus, instead, the Nama Stap Dance is performed.

7.9. The Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance

The NS is part of the movement vocabulary of all residents of !Khubus from the very young pre-school child to the eldest grandparent. All members of the school’s Nama Stap Dance Group are skilful NS dancers; this level of expertise is acknowledged by members of the group themselves, dance leader, teachers, and members of the !Khubus community. The group encourages young dancers to formalise and develop their existing dance knowledge by organising it within a structure for performance both within and outside of the local social context. Participation within the group is accessible to all children, and members are valued for what they contribute to the group. This attitude of pride in one’s heritage is opposite of that of colonial views in which the Nama were considered as menial servants; the dance serves to inspire positive communal self-esteem damaged through colonial incursion and an apartheid government.

Creativity is a major facet of the NS/D performed by youth. This feature can be seen to support a foundation for the exploration of ideas not only in the context of the NS/D but in life more broadly. Young adults in !Khubus, for example, despite reservations expressed by some village elders, but with the assistance of others, have planned, opened and now manage a tourist office and guesthouse within the confines of the village. This youth based project is in addition to the matjieshuis campsite that is set apart from the village proper. Not only are the young dancers expected to contribute choreographically in order that the dance remains fresh and reflective of contemporary concerns, but they also compete for the title of best Nama Stap dancer. Through this device, a healthy understanding of the competitive nature of life more

generally is fostered. Finally, unlike the female puberty version, the NS and the NS/D are the forms that are embodied by all members of the community not only, as with the NS/P, a select group; these are the dances that are performed most frequently, recognised nationally, and have become representative of the Nama outside of South Africa. Perceived in this way, the NS and NS/D consist of a collection of qualities—adaptation, innovation, inclusive membership and competitive character. These qualities come together to ensure survival into the twenty-first century. These qualities, along with its formal characteristic outlined above, combine to indicate those aspects of performance that are valued by the performers and the community (Figure 63).

Aspects of Performance that are Valued by Performers and Community Members					
Nama Stap Motif					
Local Youth in !Khubus					
B=Body	E=Effort	S=Space	P=Phrase	T=Time	R= Relationship
Adaptation Competitive Inclusive membership Creativity—Choreography—Innovation All members are choreographers					
Key Signature Body Attitude	B1: Buoyant quality in the centre of gravity B2a: Neutral arms B3: Passive arm gestures B6: Parallel legs B8: Slightly bent (contracted) knees				
Body	B7d: Contact of foot B7e: Contact of legs B9: Aerial movements				
Space	S2: Progresses forward though space with small steps S6: Counter clockwise circle S5: Feet release from the floor when stepping S8: Movement through space is not continuous S13: Motif alternates sides				
Time	T1: Performed over a six-beat time cycle T2: Beats five and six of the bar is an introduction to the next NS Motif T3a: Begins on beat one of the bar T4: rhythmic variations of aerial leg gestures and supports				
Effort	E1: Dab (light, quick, direct) E5c: Strong accent on beat 1 of the bar				
Phrase	P1a: Short phrase P1b: Longer phrase				
Relationship	R1: Female couples that remain in contact with each other R2: Mixed couples that remain in contact with each other R3: Mixed trios that remain in contact with each other				

Figure 63. Aspects of Performance that are Valued by Performers and Community Members

Conversely, the longevity of the NS/P, the themes embedded in its, as well as the status of those who dance it, are far from certain. The NS/P has undergone modification. These adaptations have contributed to its persistence by altering portions of its content to take account of the Christian values of early missionaries. Some of its traditional symbology, for example, has been removed such as ‘...dabbing the testicles of each one [boy] with buchu, in order to prevent the acquisition of sexual disease’ (Barnard, 1992, p. 186), and animals are no longer slaughtered for this express purpose. Other symbology, such as the NS motif, has been developed. These changes have not, however, altered the basic structure and sentiment of the ritual; it remains a statement that delineates the status and rights of women and their bonds to each other in traditional and present day Nama society. Key components of the ceremony demonstrate this connection.

Firstly, the entire activity was, and remains, a ‘female’ affair—only females were involved in the ritual activities; female animals were slaughtered and women only were permitted to attend *kharú ≠ap*, the ‘Great Feast of Women’, in honour of the ‘new women’. Second, unlike other societies where groups of young women were initiated at the same time, Nama female initiation concentrated on a single girl.¹⁷ This focus on a single female ‘dramatised a women’s elevated position in Nama society’ and acknowledged her as an indispensable member of the Nama community (Carson, 1983, p.63). Finally, women were the managers of the rite and they made all decisions concerning the initiate and the progression of ritual activities, such as when the initiate was re-introduced to the community. Within the ceremony women are in-service to the initiate as teachers, carers, and mentors; and ultimately they become women of equal status in the community. The whole ceremony is ‘geared to the special position of women in Nama society’ (Carson, 1982, p. 513). The female initiation ritual allowed bonds between women to be formed, re-established, and strengthened. Nevertheless, the dance’s continued existence is under threat due to economic factors, the more recent adoption of western attitudes towards women and the fact that the dance is restricted to the confines of the village.

7.10. Summary

Based on the idea of the NS as a complex signifier, I have proposed an organisation in which the NS is the central motif of the various versions of the NS/D observed. Though often referred to as a traditional dance, I have adopted Kaeppeler’s

idea of an evolved traditional dance to classify and acknowledge the dance's ability to incorporate current environmental influences. Such adaptability has contributed to its survival. Insight into the historical and contemporary attitudes towards women in Nama society is told through dancing. The movement motifs along with the underlying ideology comprise the NS/P and constitute a structured movement system.

I have argued in this dissertation that many factors conspire to effect the demise of the NS/P. In conjunction with the village school these include the nurturing of the NS/D through a structured programme of technical development, choreography and performance targeted expressly for the youth of the village. The promotion of the NS/D, rather than the NS/P, locally and in conjunction with highly visible government-sponsored tourist programmes, hinders its growth. The exploitation of the NS/D nationally and internationally along with changing social attitudes and roles of men and women, also contribute to its vulnerability. But most critical to its continued existence is the absence of a generation of women to whom to pass on the knowledge of the NS/P. In light of these factors a gradual demise of the NS/P in !Khubus will not be surprising. Despite its ability to absorb and reflect cultural change thus far, the continuation of the NS/P is far from certain. Due to economic necessity, the absence of the generation of women to whom the dance is normally passed on and who, in turn, adapt it to reflect current generational values as they relate to women is a problem in !Khubus. The possible death of the dance marks not only the disappearance of the dance itself but also a decline in the historical role of Nama women and thus a decline in female solidarity, power, and influence.

Notes

1. For a further discussion of the significance of background information concerning the notator see Buckland, 2006b; Morais, 1992; Sklar, 1994, 2000; Thomas, 2003a;
2. John Blacking notes the following in reference to the analysis of dances: ...a way forward in the anthropology of dance lies not so much in developing a metalanguage for cross-cultural study, or analysing movements in terms of a standard set of parameters, as in asking dancers and spectators from the widest possible range of societies and social situations what they think *they* are doing and experiencing, and looking for patterns of coherence in their explanations (Blacking, 1985, p. 66).
3. Kirby notes the following in reference to the collection of this material: As the works to which reference has been made are in many instances difficult to obtain, and the references themselves are in many languages, I have considered it desirable to reproduce them in translation and in chronological order, so that a conspectus of the field, as complete as possible, may be available for future investigators. (Kirby, 1933,

p.313). Kirby also acknowledges the assistance of a number of translators who helped with the transcription of the material from different languages into English.

4. Dance scholar Paul Lane, in his study of the mask dances of Dogon noted in reference to tourism that studies address such issues as: ...the effects of tourism on local economies to its influence on indigenous values and artistic traditions. Most studies, he notes, perceive tourism as an agent of social change, but also consider such changes as detrimental (Lane, 2002, p.304). See also Kaeppeler, 1988, p, xiv-xv, Bendix 1989, and Buckland, 2006b.

5. Kaeppeler comments in reference to this point: There are...negative connotations about tourists and tourism: tourist hold stereotypes about the lands and people they visit, while individuals from areas that receive tourist form stereotypes about *them* (Kaeppeler, 1988, p. xiii). See also Buckland, 2006b.

6. Kaeppeler notes for example: music and dance can also be affected by tourism. The form, structure, style, and economic base, as well as cultural values, in which music and dance are embedded, can change drastically in a very short time (Kaeppeler, 1988, p. xv). See also Buckland, 2006b.

7. In her research of the *sinulog*, 'a dance practiced throughout the Central Philippines', dance scholar Sally Ann Ness notes the following in reference to this point: The *sinulog* dance was turning out to have quite a reputation around town as a cheap and phony tourist attraction that had been copied from another island's fiesta celebration...my...‘informants’ were telling me it was just a fake, another empty scheme employed to generate income for the city. The dancing that went on at the Santo Niño Church...was a farce as well. Nobody but a half-wit...could attach much significance to any of it. It was all *palabas*—all for show—a contrived illusion based on an archaic practice nobody really believed in anymore (Ness, 1992, p. 24). See also Lane, 2002, p. 306-307.

8. Kaeppeler suggests that tourism need not devalue practices. She comments that: Each group of people that welcomes visitors (for whatever reason) must define the image of themselves they want to project. Music and dance may be an important part of this image. Although music and dance can serve as entertainment for outsiders, the presentation of such entertainment can reap economic rewards, and at the same time promote positive reinforcement of cultural values. (Kaeppeler, 1988, p. xv). See also Ness, 1992, p. 181-182 and Lane, 2002, p. 307.

9. For a further discussion of Intangible Cultural Heritage see UNESCO Cultural Sector-Intangible Heritage, www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php

10. Despite the commercialization of the *sinulog* dance, Ness states: Through a complicated but conventional series of reinterpretations, the parade dances reconstructed an authenticated local identity, and they asserted, with varying degrees of persuasiveness, the genuineness of this distinctive regional image to locals, to nationals, and to the world at large. The parade *sinulog* dancing was thus a deliberate reinvention of tradition, done not to reenter the past but to reclaim its unique integrity

for contemporary purposes (Ness, 1992, p. 182). See also Lane, 2002, p.308 and Blacking, 1985.

11. In reference to domestic tourism, Witz et al comment: Visits to different cultural villages are presented as a way to know oneself, to learn about the ‘other,’ and to become a nation (Witz et al, 2001, p. 281).

12. Witz et al notes the following in reference to a visit to a cultural village: ...the visitor may savor ‘local cultural traditions’ in a momentary encounter or visit a ‘native village.’ The tourist thus steps into the imagined archaeological tracks of ‘early explores’ and ‘white pioneers’ in a well-rehearsed colonial encounter....[that] offer the tourist portable, snapshot histories—cultures at your fingertips—that give the illusion of knowing the whole (Witz et al, 2001, p. 278-279). See also Kaepller, 1988, p.xv.

13. Sharp and Boonzaier note the following in reference to preconceived images/notions of ‘African’: representatives from the media, the park Board, and the scientific community...were concerned about the fashionable issue of ‘cultural survival’. For them, the purpose of the park was to provide sanctuary not only for endangered flora and fauna, but also for a ‘traditional’ culture which they saw as ‘belonging’ to the people of the reserve, and as under threat from the influence of the modern world. The Northern Richtersveld people clearly do not believe that their culture—in the sense of their lived culture—is in any danger of extinction at all; nor do they wish to shut themselves off from the modern world in order to maintain their traditions. But they were prepared to indulge this audience partly...because they saw the economic possibilities of marketing ‘traditional culture’ to eco-tourists in the national park (Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994, pp. 409-410). See also Buckland, 200b, Lane, 2002, p. 306, and Kaepller, 1988, pxiii.

14. Dance scholar Paul Lane comments on the positive result of tourism in regard to Dogon:...there is a kind of youth subculture that represents itself as modern, not in the eyes of the world but in those of other Dogon...now that young men are in a position, through engagement in tourist-related activities, to control the content of specific representations of Dogon culture, they are also in a position to give new meanings to those representations. The content and effect of tourist dances and tourist artefacts should be seen not as evidence for diminishing beliefs but as a novel metaphor for the culture itself (Lane, 2002, p. 309).

15. Shadow movements may be defined as...secondary movements accompanying and intertwining with the forms (Bartenieff and Lewis, 1980, p.109).

16. In reference to the construction of the house, Carstens notes the following: Closer to the wedding day, the girl’s mother and a team of women helpers began the construction of the bridal hut. But there were times when the man’s mother and her team built the hut for her son to give to his wife (Carstens, 2007, p. 139). Carstens also notes that the house itself may be thought of as ‘female’. He comments: Each hut has to have eleven mats of different sizes and shapes, and each mat has a special female name. Every mat is a different ‘women’...[the mats are placed on the frame] in an established and particular order (Carstens, 2007, pp. 130-131).

17. Blacking noted, for example, that the Venda girls' initiation cycle could involve numerous initiates at the same time (Blacking, 1985).

Chapter 8

Conclusion

I have proposed a story of the Nama in which they are perceived through an appreciation of Nama dancing, especially the Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance. Researchers have found it problematic to identify the Nama precisely, and various methods—archaeological, anthropological, and historical—have been applied to assemble a history of the people we know today as the Khoisan. An inability to classify this group clearly, as well as other groups of indigenous peoples, is indicative of the legacy of a colonial tendency to group different people into a single category regardless of lineage. This research has considered the Nama as descendants of the Khoekhoen which is the classification acknowledged by contemporary Nama.

The investigation has drawn on various paradigms to generate a view of the Nama through which to situate the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance. Amongst these, Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis have played a key role in the transcription of the dances into a form through which they could be systematically examined. This application of Labananalysis, especially Labanotation, is not typical since it is seldom applied to traditional African Peoples' Dance forms. However, of the systems that have been explored, it was the most comprehensive in terms of movement analysis itself, its relationship to space, dynamic (effort) analysis and flexibility. Of the four expeditions to South Africa, the study details those that have involved direct interaction in Nama communities by the researcher. Field research, rather than textual or visual sources, provided the database for this study.

Although single performance trips to Turkey and the United States have been noted, neither the Nama Stap nor the Nama Stap Dance is typically performed outside of southern Africa. A number of historical and comparative descriptions of the dance ceremony are accessible and these have been referenced in this paper. However, before my work, there were no reliable accounts of the dance as it exists today; there has been no systematic ethnographic research or movement analysis of the NS, the NS/D or the NS/P. The social, political, and economic realities of contemporary Nama life have influenced the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance and, not least since some of these postdate the earlier documentation available, these developments have yet to be fully documented. A study of these dances can take place only in South

Africa or Greater Namaqualand in Namibia. This work, amongst all the resources that are available to researchers, is the first to foreground Nama dancing.

Through direct contact with various Nama communities, I documented a variety of different versions of the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance. These variations are distinguished by groups (!Khubus and Nababeep), age (youth in !Khubus) and gender (mature Nama women). The differences are both thematic and movement-related. The theme of the Nama Stap Dance remains basically one of unity. However, variations on the basic theme are distinguished according to who performs the dance. Performed and interpreted by young people, it is a dance that binds the group together through exhibition, innovation, and competition. When performed by different groups of Nama people, differences of movement elements, such as group formation, and purpose distinguish groups from one another. Danced by mature females, it reveals the story of the relationship between Nama women over time. Renderings of the different interpretations have been documented in Labananalysis and stand as a record of the variations observed during this research.

The Nama Dance Scores that comprise Chapter Five are the first translation and analyses of the dances into graphic form. The initial concerns regarding the ability of Labananalysis, especially Labanotation, to document African-derived dance forms effectively have proved to be irrelevant to this discussion. This is due largely to the fact that the Nama Stap Dance has adapted to colonial and contemporary western influences. The dance has absorbed European movement vocabulary (namely, turning patterns) and spatial orientation (namely, partnered females); and the costumes worn by both mature dancers and young performers also indicate an integration of western attire.

The recording of the dances into Labanotation has, nonetheless, raised certain issues. First, the score itself must be situated. The Labananalysis score must be viewed as yet another development, variation, or interpretation of the Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance. This position is based on the view that the documentation of the dances has included not only the recording of movement vocabulary, but also the affiliation of the movement with western dance vocabulary, its response to colonial, especially missionary influences, my experiences of the dance *in situ* and judgments made concerning the dance. These have most certainly influenced how I have chosen to represent the dance in notated form. The dance score is, therefore, a construction of the Nama Stap and Nama Stap Dance by the researcher, and in a sense, the score

might be thought of as *The Nama Stap Dance/JJJ*. To profess something more would, in my view, be questionable.

The strength of Labanotation is often perceived as its ability to analyse and record with accuracy the detail of movement. Although not obvious, the system relies on mathematical analysis. Motion in degrees of 45 and 30 as well as other non-specific units such as deviations are, as a result of the training methods utilised by notators, easily observed and recorded. However, the recording of actions that do not readily fit into such a mathematical formula or lack a *perceived* precision must be specifically constructed. Because the symbols of the system are used in a manner similar to the use of letters of the alphabet, movements that might be said to 'lack precision' are recorded by combining groups of symbols in atypical clusters. The very fact that a movement can be said to 'lack precision' immediately positions it, and perhaps its user, within a specialised perspective. The atypical clustering of symbols used in conjunction with the Nama dances has been recorded in the glossary of the scores.

Despite these issues, I conclude that Labananalysis was used with good results to examine the movement content of the NS, NS/D, NS/P, and the NS as performed by a second Nama community (Nababeep). Through the analytic perspective of Labananalysis, data that forms the substance of the dances was discerned. It includes:

- a catalogue of movement vocabulary
- an organisational structure of the NS/P
- a movement signature
- movement patterns
- distinctive movement patterns and body usage
- spatial orientation
- identification of key performer(s)
- statistical analysis
- relationship of performers to each other and the environment
- differences between Nama groups: age, gender (women), communities
- distinction between the NS, NS/D, and NS/P
- a graphic documentation of the dances as they were performed during the course of this research
- a transcription of the music into staff notation

This information was organised in both Labananalysis and tabular form in order to allow access to a greater number of users and to facilitate ease of use, and an *unedited* DVD of three different versions of the dance recorded during the course of field research has also been included.

The material of the dances, once recognised, organised, and assessed, revealed consistent patterns of movement (such as the NS), movement behaviour (through effort configurations), relationships (through proximity and physical contact), and dynamic organisation of movement sequences (phrasing). Viewed as a whole, this data suggested a movement signature of the dancing of the Nama of !Khubus. This information was coordinated with other data such as the theme and history of the dances, knowledge of aspects of Nama culture, and experience of living in Nama communities in order to propose a view of these dances as they are performed today.

My interpretation of Nama dancing considers both the theme and content of the three dances discussed throughout this research. An analysis of these positioned the NS as central to the NS/D and the NS/P. Without the NS movement motif, the NS/D and NS/P could not exist. While all three versions play a significant role in the Nama community of !Khubus, I perceived the NS/P to be most at risk. Similar to the Nama language spoken by (only) older members of the !Khubus community, the NS/P dance is performed only by a small group of mature women.¹

Although the Nama female puberty rite is no longer celebrated as described in literature and there are only a few older Nama women in !Khubus who have experienced some version of it, the NS/P dance, as a contemporary re-enactment of the ceremony, continues the theme of the traditional ceremony: the public declaration of unity and cooperation between Nama women. In spite of the gradual decline of the participation of younger women in the dance ceremony in more recent times, this theme remains a hallmark of the dance.

Due to economic necessity younger women and men leave !Khubus to find employment. Interaction with the wider world through tourism and better access to media has coincided with a change of status of women (and men); the dramatic change in the political infrastructure of South Africa from an apartheid government to a more democratic system must also be considered. These have all had a major influence on traditional social structures in !Khubus. Men have, for example, more authority in the household. As a result of these kinds of pressures, the future of the NS/P and its message is uncertain.

All this considered, what then is distinctive, innovative, or new about this work? What does this research contribute to an academic study of dancing that other dance research has not? Two aspects are significant: first, the fact of dancing among Nama people as a continuing cultural force and secondly, a reconsideration of the question of ‘African’ dance.

This work acknowledges Nama dancing as an artefact, comparable in value to other archaeological objects such as Nama beads, pottery, cave drawings, rock etchings, and even language. Dancing can catalogue social history in a manner similar to other tangible aspects of Nama culture and this work has demonstrated its endurance. The Nama Stap Dance dramatically begs the question: what is ‘African’ dance or what is meant by the expression ‘African dance’? Nama dancing has been so highly colonised that, except for the fact that the people who perform it are black and are known to be Nama, it could be mistaken for a European social dance transplanted to South Africa. Welsh Asante defines ‘African’ dance as,

...any dance that is contextually African and rhythmically African in that the dance almost always meets a prescribed set of characteristics. Compiled by various dance historians on just what constitutes African dance, some of the characteristics are: polycentrism, angularity, asymmetry, soft knee, ancestorism, ephebism, and isolations (Welsh Asante, 2000, p.11).

Based on this perspective, the Nama Stap is contextually and rhythmically African. The ‘prescribed set of characteristics’ by which African dances can be defined have been formulated by a number of scholars such as Thompson (1974), Gottschild (1998), and Welsh Asante (1985a), and these have been addressed in Chapter Two of this dissertation. To this list may be added the work of Marshall and Jean Stearns (1968) who defined ‘six characteristics of African dance...[that] can help...identify African influence in the United States’ (Sterns and Sterns, 1968, p. 14). These characteristics are listed in Figure 64.

Characteristics of African Dance			
Thompson (1974) Canon of Fine Form	Gottschild (1998) Africanist Aesthetic	Welsh Asante (1985a) Aesthetic Senses	Stearns and Stearns (1968) Characteristics of African Dance
Similarities			
Multiple Meter	Polyrhythm Polycentrism	Polyrhythm Polycentrism	Propulsive Rhythm
Ephebism	Ephebism	-----	-----
Coolness	Aesthetic of the Cool	-----	-----
Vividness cast into equilibrium	High-effect juxtaposition	-----	-----
Ancestorism	-----	Epic Memory	-----
Differences			
Simultaneous suspending and preserving of the beat	Embracing the Conflict	Repetition Dimensional Curvilinear Holism	Flat-footed Gliding, dragging, shuffling steps Performed from a crouch, knees flexed, body bent at waist Imitates Animals Improvisation & satire Freedom of expression Centrifugal, exploding outward from hips.
Get-down quality			
Call-and-response			
Looking Smart			
Correct Entrances & Exits			

Figure 64. Characteristics of African Dance

Welsh Asante further expands her ‘aesthetic senses’ to include, for example, the use of circular spatial formation—a form that is characteristic of many African dances and that she relates to call-and response singing. It should be noted that while scholars such as Thompson (1974) and Welsh Asante (1985a) recognise the ‘commonalities in African dance,’ they also acknowledge that there are also distinctions between the (dances of) various African societies.

Although the NS, NS/D, and the NS/P exhibit many of the ‘African’ characteristics noted by, especially, Welsh Asante, they are also characterised by sliding, gliding, steps on the whole foot, improvisation and freedom of expression catalogued by Stearns and Stearns. Ephebism, aesthetic of the cool, looking smart,

correct entrance and exit, circular spatial formation, and call-and-response (canon form) are also noted in these dances. However, the dances also include elements of western influence that are also a part of the dance (Figure 65). Dance scholar Francesca Castaldi refers to this mixing (or perhaps non-mixing) as the ‘Order of the Other’.²

From this perspective [Order of the Other], while “western” subjects can appropriate ideas, objects, aesthetics, and practices from other cultures without losing their westernness (in fact turning these items into western things themselves), Africans become less African whenever they do the same, supposedly having no power to Africanize what they appropriate (Castaldi, 2006, p. 67).

This perspective seems to suggest that the value system of, in this case, the western coloniser is superior to that of the colonised and that cultural influence happens in one direction—towards a western value system. In reference to the Nama, this one-way influence can be noted, for example, in language—the use of Afrikaans was encouraged and even rewarded; and Carstens (2007) reported that western-style dances were encouraged while Nama dancing was prohibited. These western practices did not complement the existing Nama customs; they replaced them. Further, while I would agree with Castaldi that there might be a tendency for ‘Africanisms’ to become westernised, this does not mean that they have not influenced western culture. Both Thompson (1974) and Gottschild (1998) point to African influences in the Americas. Gottschild notes, for example:

My purpose here is not to valorize Africanisms by comparing them with Europeanist phenomena, but to show that the latter are dependent upon the former, and that, overtly and subliminally, these invisibilized (sic) influences significantly shape European American experience (Gottschild, 1998, p. 2).

Although it may appear that Africanisms have been westernised, cultural exchange operates in both directions and may be observed in dance as well as other cultural practices.³ This blurring of dance forms is not peculiar to the Nama but is likely to be applicable to groups of people who have experienced similar colonial infringement of their cultural heritage.

The fact of colonial markings in the Nama Stap Dance has yet to be taken into account in debate about ‘African’ dance. Yet, these colonial etchings are now part of what makes ‘African’ dance what it is and therefore they need to be considered in any

definition, classification or attitude concerning this form. I would not suggest to the Nama that the Nama Stap dance is not an ‘African’ dance form. This research draws attention to the Nama Stap Dance as an evolved traditional dance—it acknowledges both traditional and post-colonial aspects of this ‘African’ dance. My contribution to Nama history and to dance research in this dissertation emerges from recognition of its movement patterns and structures that include tradition, colonial and, contemporary adaptations and transmission. Figure 65 relates the movement patterns of the NS to characteristics/aesthetics of African dance defined by various scholars.

Relationship of the Movement Patterns of the Nama Stap to Characteristics/Aesthetics of African Dance Defined by Various Scholars.	
Characteristics/Aesthetics of African Dance Defined by various scholars	NS, NS/D, NS/P
Contextually African	The NS/P continues the theme of the Nama female puberty ceremony; performed in the village context.
Rhythmically Africa	The music of the NS is not ‘polyrhythmic’; it is ‘Nama’ guitar music—music developed/composed by Nama peoples & recognised by Nama and others as distinctively ‘Nama’
Epic Memory	Nama female rite of passage ceremony on which the NS/P dance is based.
Sliding, Gliding Step on the Whole Foot	Characteristic of mature women in !Khubus and Nababeep
Circular Formation	Performed by all groups
Call-and-Response	Exhibited in canon form
Correct Entrance and Exit	Necessary for canon form; also seen in youth version
Repetition	A major component of all versions observed
Ephebism—Youthful Power	As exhibited in youth version of the dance and also by mature women in social dance context
Freedom of Expression	As exhibited in youth version of the dance
Improvisation	As exhibited in youth version of the dance May also be exhibited by dance leader in NS/P
Aesthetic of the Cool	As exhibited by mature women in NS/P Exhibited by youth especially the lead dancer
Looking Smart	Characteristic of youth
Holism	Characteristic of all version especially NS/P
Western Influence	
Contacting Partnered Pairs	
Turning Patterns	
Arm Gestures	
Costumes	

Figure 65. Relationship of the Movement Patterns of the Nama Stap to Characteristics/Aesthetics of African Dance Defined by Various Scholars.

At the root of this dissertation is the notated score that is the product of close analytical study. Labananalysis is characteristically used to illustrate short movement examples or dance phrases. Its most extensive application prior to this research has been its use (and examination) in a study directed by movement analysis/ethnographer Judy Van Zile in which aspects of the Indian form Mohiniyattam were examined (in Bartenieff et al, 1984). My study is the first to apply the method strategically to a full-length study of an ‘African’ dance form. Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis are not commonly used together for various reasons, not least because the system of reference of the two is different. Whereas Labanotation places its system of reference on each joint of the body, Laban Movement Analysis places it in the centre of the body, roughly in the pelvic area. On a qualitative level, Labanotation deals with a limited range of effort qualities directly, and others indirectly; LMA addresses these in a direct, sophisticated manner. Except for supports, LN typically describes actions in terms of transitions to positions; LMA is a movement-based system. Although training methods include aspects of the other, practitioners are trained through two distinct programmes. Labanotation allows movement to be recorded in such a way that performance-related interpretation is possible; LMA is able to record particular dynamic qualities and spatial configurations. Competence and experience in both systems allows an analysis and documentation of movement detail specific to groups of people. Therefore, the application of Labananalysis in this dissertation enabled an analysis of structure and form, and qualitative and spatial dynamics in a way that would not have been possible with either LN or LMA only.

The tactical application of Labananalysis to an African dance is unusual, as is the notation process and the score whose position in the body of the text in this dissertation asserts its application to an interpretation of African dance. The work of this analysis is thus distinguished by its methodology. The score takes account of not only the perspective of the key consultant, a local Nama Woman, but also draws upon a variety of other perspectives on the dance. These have been recorded in the score as specific versions as well as compiled into one statement (score) of the dancing. Significant to this selection of variations and compilation are judgments made by the researcher. The notation therefore brings together all sources of engagement. Ultimately, the score is a synthetic interpretation of my research experience, both in the field and in the library. The score is not merely a documentation of the movement vocabulary of the Nama Stap and the Nama Stap Dance. It is another cultural product.

This discussion also emphasizes the issue of text-based, live performance, and fieldwork approaches to dance research. These approaches to the study of dancing are not rivals; each serves a purpose and can be complimentary to each other. The dynamic nature of dancing is dramatically apparent in fieldwork; and analysis of the dynamic nature of dancing is not possible via examination from text based or video sources.

My research has sought to understand the dance as well as the dancing of the Nama via an appreciation of the Nama Stap, Nama Stap Dance and the people who do the dancing. Like the Nama history etched in stones and painted on cave walls, this research has provided a record, a documentation, and an interpretation of dancing that reveals and archives the changing role and status of Nama women during the period of my research. This dissertation constitutes, I hope, a fascinating story about women that is subtly revealed through dancing.

Notes

1. Blacking noted a similar situation in reference to Venda dances. He notes: In 1977, *tshigombela* was little danced, and then mostly by married women who had learnt it as girls, because the spread of school education had taken away the occasions for performance (Blacking, 1985, p.87).
2. For a fuller discussion of the Order of the Other, see Castaldi, 2006, p. 47-56.
3. Castaldi notes, among others, the research of Brenda Dixon Gottschild that seeks to expose the African influences on modern and post-modern dance in the United States (Castaldi, 2006, p.68). See also Gottschild, 1998.

APPENDIX A
Example of Choreometrics Coding Sheet

Self List #_____

Culture: _____

GP #: _____

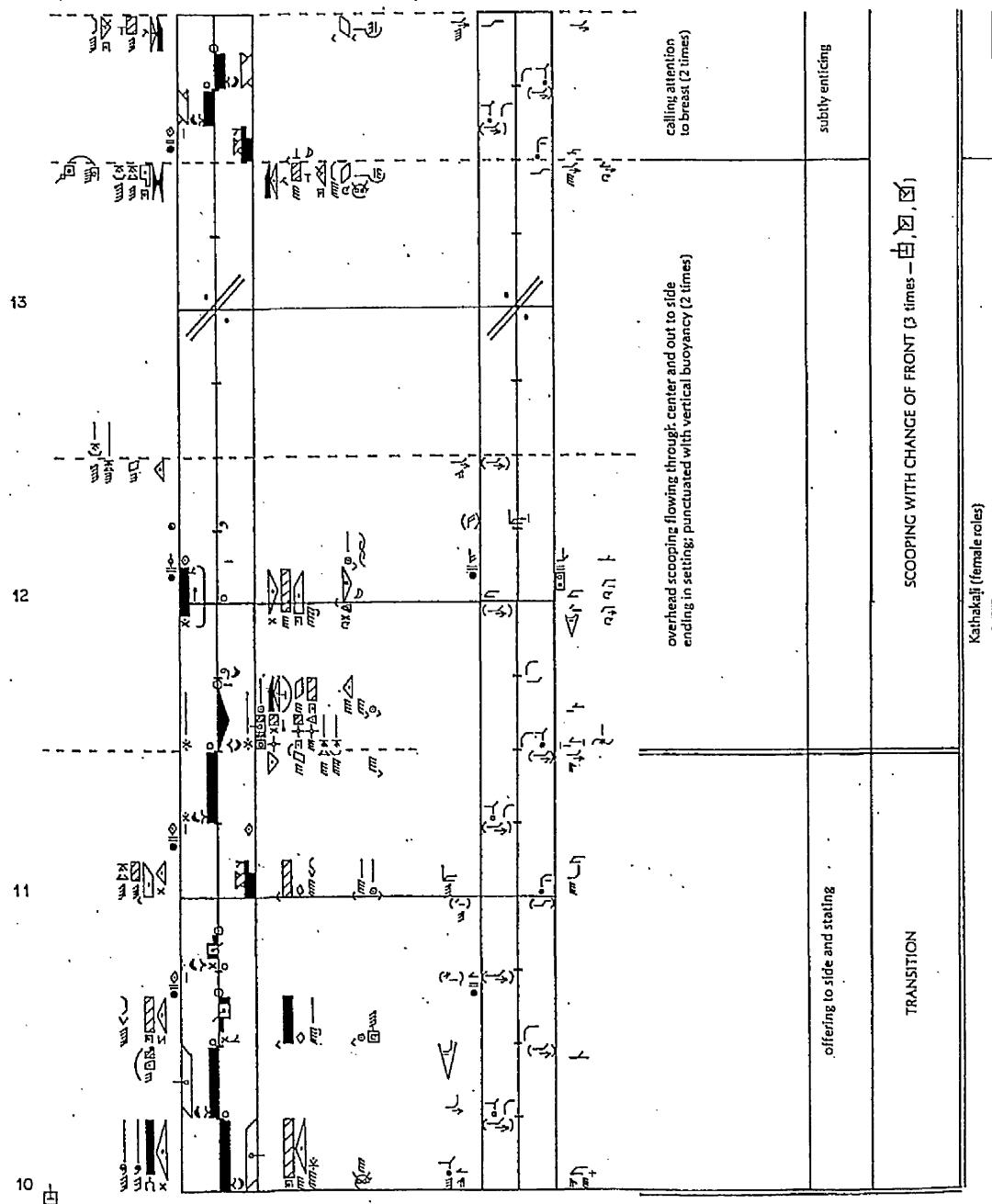
Area: _____ P.T5: _____ P.T8: _____

Name of Film: _____ Source: _____

Frames: _____

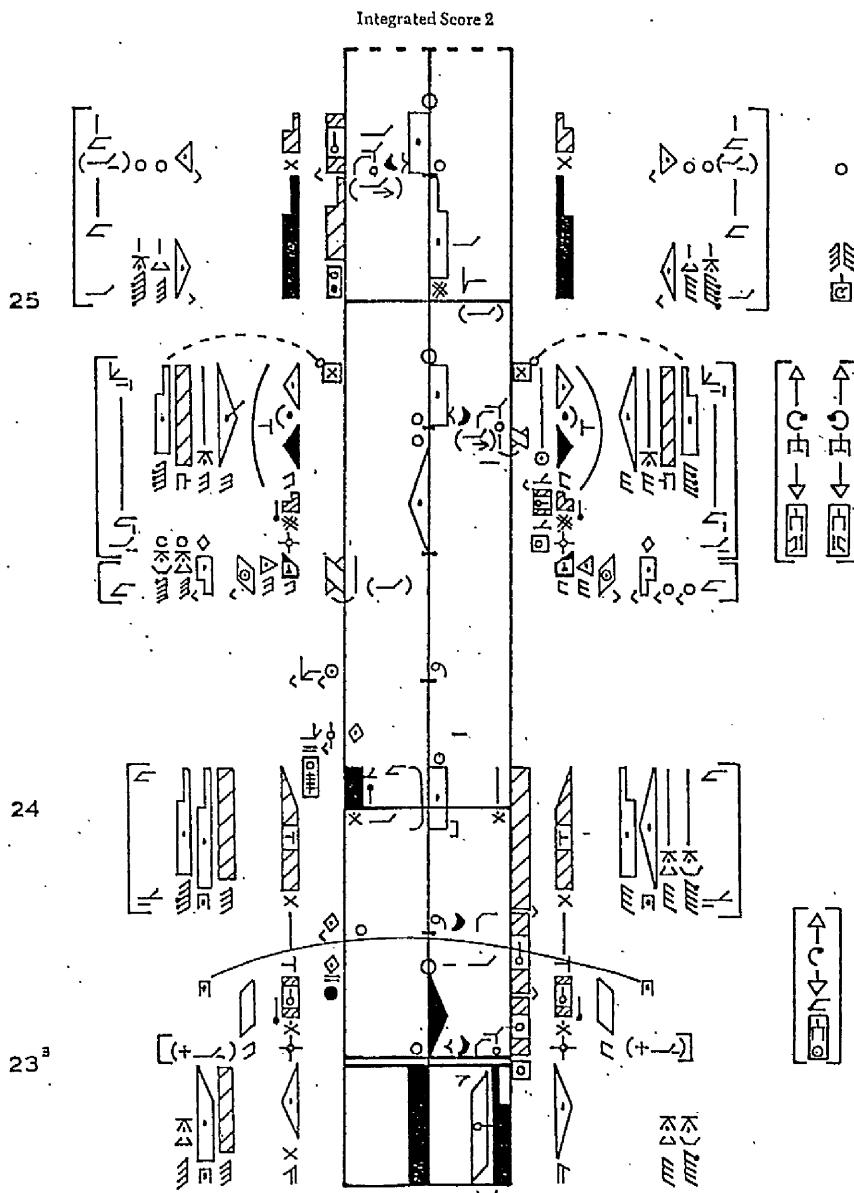
A. Use of Body											
Most Active Body Part											
Check as Many as Needed											
M	F		M	F		M	F		M	F	
		Head			Trunk			Whole Arm			Whole Leg
		Face			Shoulder s			Upper Arm			Upper Leg
		Mouth			Chest			Forearm			Lower Leg
		Eyes			Belly			Hands			Feet
					Pelvis			Fingers			Toes
B. Number of Parts Used											
M	F	Total number in film: add total from A above				M	F	Number per activity: mean number per scene.			
C Body Attitude											
Score only clear patterns, leave remainder blank											
Dominant								Secondary		Rare but important	
M	F							M	F	M	F
		1. One unit									
		2. Two plus units									
		3. Body axis held									
		4. Vertical held									
		5. Frontal R-L									
		6. Frontal – unilaterality not emphasized									
		7. Vertical – diagonal stress									
		8. Body axis spreading									
		9. Upper-lower – no twist									
		10. Upper-lower - twist									

APPENDIX B
Labananalysis Score



Bartenieff, I., Hackney, P., True Jones, B., Van Zile, J., Wolz, C. (1984). "The potential of movement analysis as a research tool: a preliminary analysis" in *Dance Research Journal*.

APPENDIX B
Integrated Score



Cholkeffu, measures 23³-25²

Bartenieff, I., Hackney, P., True Jones, B., Van Zile, J., Wolz, C. (1984) "The potential of movement analysis as a research tool: a preliminary analysis" in *Dance Research Journal*.

APPENDIX C

Glossary of Laban Movement Analysis Vocabulary

Action Drive: combinations of three effort elements of Space, Weight and Time produce inner drives of action which Laban identified as Basic Effort Actions: Punch, Float, Glide, Slash, Wring, Flick and Press. (Bartenieff and Lewis, 1980, p 57)

Dab Effort: basic effort Action Drive comprising: light (weight), quick (time), direct Space.

Dimensional Axes: an axes built around the axes of the three dimensions of the body: length, width and depth, and their corresponding axes in the space of the kinesphere: vertical, horizontal and sagittal. (Bartenieff and Lewis, 1980, p 29)

Effort Intensity: the relative amount of effort engaged numerically, as in states (combination of two efforts), drives (combination of three efforts) and full efforts (four efforts); or qualitatively as in an action moving from an increasing to decreasing or decreasing to increasing attitude.

Glide Effort: basic effort Action Drive comprising: light (weight), sustained (time), and direct (space).

Impulsive Phrase: a phrase with an accent at the start of the phrase unit.

Kinesphere: personal space; the kinesphere is the sphere around the body whose periphery can be reached by easily extended limbs without stepping away from that place which is the point of support when standing on one foot. (Laban, Choreutics, p 10)

Passive Movement: a movement that occurs as the result of another movement. An outer force, such as a partner, may be the initiator, or one part of the body may initiate a movement causing resultant motion in another part; in each case the part of the body that moves passively must allow the movement to occur. (Hutchinson, Labanotation, 1954, p 481)

Passive Weight: the body weight is unsupported and gives in to gravity. (Bartenieff in Eddy (Ed), 1990, I A 3.4)

Place: in Labanotation the idea of place for supports follows the basic law that place is directly related to the center of gravity of the performer. i.e. place is always directly below the COG. (Hutchinson, Labanotation, 1954, p 35)

Vertical or Door Plane: flat, two-dimensional plane ‘at right angles to the horizontal’; a rectangular plan that is shaped like a door—vertically taller than wider.

Sagittal or Wheel Plane: flat, two-dimensional rectangular shaped plane that is longer than taller and, similar to a wheel shape, stresses the forward/backward directions.

APPENDIX D
Transcription and Notes to Unedited DVD
Nama Stap Performances- Namaqualand South Africa
2001 – 2003 – 2006

1.0. Introduction to the DVD

The Nama Stap (NS) is a distinctive sequence of movement and is also a component of the Nama Stap Dance (NSD). During the course of field research, I witnessed and documented in Labanotation a variety of interpretations of this popular movement motif. These include versions by my cultural consultant Maria Farmer, local youth who comprise the Nama Stap Dance Group, an account that I have labelled as tourist version, and an interpretation of the NS performed by a group of mature Nama women of the village of Nababeep. In addition to the Labanotation scores, the dissertation includes an unedited DVD of a selection of interpretations of the Nama Stap recorded in the field. This includes: Nama Stap Dance Puberty Version (NS/P) performed by mature women in !Khubus (2001), NSD danced by youth in !Khubus (2003), and NS done by mature women of Nababeep (2006). These are the same dances that have been recorded in Labanotation in Chapter 5 of the dissertation; the DVD provides another form of documentation as well as a visual record of the dances. The NS/P and NSD performed in !Khubus were filmed by Jean Johnson Jones; the footage of the NS demonstrated in Nababeep was filmed by Ralph Bouwers, a local South African employed as research assistant for the project.

1.1. Translation Issues in Reference to the DVD

The reader is referred to Chapter 3 of the dissertation where a discussion of issues related to translation may be found. Here, I will highlight those points that relate directly to the transcription of the information that follows. Ethnographer Maria Birbili notes five factors that have a ‘qualitative’ effect on translation. Two of these: circumstances in which translation takes place—in the case of this research, transcription from film source on return from fieldwork and the nature of the translation, relate to the transcription of the NS/P event recorded below.

Transcription from film source

The film recording of the NS/P by mature women of !Khubus (2001) was recorded during a performance of the dance event. While filming live performance in a village setting, such as this one, has a number of benefits, such as: it may give the viewer a visual overview

of the performance, provide an image of the environment, a view of participants—performers, residents, audience, guests, and a sense of the occasion (celebration, funeral, high/low energy, clothing, and relationships for example), other features that may have a bearing on translation/transcription of the film, may not be recorded clearly. This might include, for example, inability to position camera(s) effectively, the need for multiple cameras, poor lighting, poor sound quality, response of audience to performance, or the nature of the performance itself (i.e. interactive performance in which there is impromptu interaction between performers and audience members; see also Hughes-Freeland, 1999 for a discussion of issues related to filming in a field situation). A number of these points apply to the filming of the NS/P event of 2001

As may be noted from the DVD, for example, the recording was made at night under low lighting conditions. Also, the sound quality is unclear at various points in the video. This means a ‘literal’ or ‘word-for-word’ translation is not possible (see also Birbili, Chapter 3 of this dissertation for a discussion of issues concerning ‘literal’ or ‘word-for-word’ translation).

Nature of the Translation

The translations in this work are based on a collaborative approach. The information gathered has been filtered, at least three times: once through my interpreter, Dave Halkett, a white South African who is not a dance specialist but a highly skilled and experienced archaeologist who is knowledgeable of the Nama and their culture; information was then translated by Halkett from Afrikaans into English; it was then interpreted, yet again, by me. Further, at a later stage in the research, material was translated once again by a black South African, Ralph Bouwers, who, though not Nama himself, had considerable knowledge of the Nama people and their customs. Additionally, the points above concerning the filming process must also be considered in the translation process.

Due to these issues, the translation is characteristic of what Birbili terms ‘free’ translation or an ‘edited’ version of the spoken text. While this may seem to indicate that such a translation may not be an accurate transcription of the material, Birbili has highlighted critical concerns of both literal and ‘free’ translation and these have been discussed in Chapter 3 of this work. Although researchers working in the area of translation have developed various techniques to deal with translation issues they also acknowledge that some translation issues ‘may not be completely overcome.’ One of the most important point

concerning the use of translators in field research is the acknowledgment by the researcher that translation related issues(s) exists, clarifying these and explaining how these have been addressed; each solution will be specific to the research and will require different tactics. As noted above (and elaborated in Chapter 3), a team approach was taken to the translation of this material.

1.2. Performances of the Nama Stap on the DVD

The DVD consists of three performances and/or interpretations of the Nama Stap by three different groups of performers. In the order in which they appear on the DVD, these includes:

1. Nama Stap Dance Puberty Version performed by mature women in !Khubus (2001)
Video recording: Jean Johnson Jones
Free translation: Ralph Bouwers, Dave Halkett, Jean Johnson Jones
2. Nama Stap Dance Youth Version performed by youth in !Khubus (2003)
Video recording: Jean Johnson Jones
3. Nama Stap performed by mature women of Nababeep (2006)
Video recording: Ralph Bouwers.

1.3 Introduction and Free Translation of Nama Stap Puberty Version as performed by Mature Women of !Khubus (2001)

Background Information on the Performance

The dance activities began in the early evening in the front yard of the home of one of the performers. A single pole-type lamp poured light onto the front steps where the speaker for the evening stood. The remainder of the yard, including the performance area, was in shadow. The dance event was in full swing when we arrived on the scene. Our host for the evening was Willem De Wet, one of the organisers of the event, a member of the !Khubus community, and a park ranger. Speaking in Afrikaans, our host acknowledged and welcomed visitors to !Khubus and also announced our presence. He gave a brief introduction of the Nama Stap Dance and of the women taking part in the performance (Kaaitjie Cloete, Ouma Hannis, Maria J. Farmer, Betjie Joseph, Fredrika Joshua, Anna Moos, Elizabeth Moos).

The dance company was composed of seven mature Nama women. The group was costumed in floor length full skirts and long sleeved blouses; they also wore a variety of accessories. The costumes were of patchwork design in blocks of solid colours, flower prints, and geometric shapes. The heads of the dancers were covered in either a scarf or head wrap

(doek). They wore soft-soled shoes of various types. A matjieshuis—domed shaped house, occupied one corner. The area left of the matjieshuis and continuing fully around the periphery of the space was active. Downstage right of the matjieshuis were about half a dozen chairs intended for us and other guests from the Richtersveld National Park; these were the people for whom the festivities had been arranged. There was much laughing and talking among this group that also included people from the village. To the right of the seating area were the front steps of the house, and next to these an electric keyboard. This area was thumping with the sound of music and the voices of young men. Completing the circle around to the front of the matjieshuis was another group of people. Here were men, women, and children moving, dancing, laughing, and talking with each other or dancing alone. The central area, the dancing space, remained relatively clear. The mood was festive, and people seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Organisation of the Dance Event and Free Translation

I have organised the dance event and the translation of it in the order in which key aspects of it occurred as follows:

1.3.1. Prologue: Introduction to the Event

First Speaker (Female): Ouma Hannis

Second Speaker (Female): Maria Farmer

Third Speaker (Male): Willem De Wet

1.3.2. Performance of the Nama Stap Dance Puberty Version

1.3.3. Epilogue: Questions and Answers and Nama Stap Dancing

Speakers: Willem De Wet and Maria Farmer

1.3.1. Prologue: Introduction to the Event

First Speaker: Ouma Hannis

Subject: Marriage

Nama people believe that if you want the hand of someone's daughter, you have no business approaching her, saying you love her; you must go to the mother and father and ask the parents. This is because in many days of nothing, in struggle, hardship, and poverty the mother and the father reared the child. No one can just take your child. When someone wants to marry, Ouma is very important [Ouma is like a grandmother figure]. Ouma must ask

[on behalf of the perspective husband] for the girl's hand in marriage. You must keep waiting until they give an answer; it is not like buying a horse; you keep coming back; you keep asking.

When 'yes', there is an expectation. 50/50 for the wedding feast. But it is more about the coming together; to be together than what you give; it is the joining that is important. It is also like a farewell; it is like the last supper of the individual. After that they are their own people, they will make their own decisions, they are like one. They are the main body. The meal is like the last supper. You are not two in the marriage; you are three—you, your spouse, and your God. God is the cornerstone.

Second Speaker: Maria Farmer

Subject: Nama Female Puberty Ceremony

The ceremony is about the first period, the first time you become a women in terms of your body. Let me be blunt, when you first see the red flag; the men will not know what we are talking about. When the girl first realises her period has come, she tells her best friend and then her mother. Her mother goes to the aunty. The mother gets the ceremonial women together and symbols and signs of nature. It is like worshiping the situation. [Prominent] Figures in the community and the family, close neighbour will take her into the hut; they will cover her face before she goes in. You stay in for 14 days. A goat is slaughtered, and the remains are prepared in such a way that the pelvis is removed; the bone must be broken in a particular way. In the hut her face is prepared; a mud type substance is spread on her face on the day she is to leave the hut. The meat of the goat is not supposed to be eaten by women who have their period; if you have lower back pain you are not supposed to eat at the same table as others.

When they take her out of the hut, the girl is covered with a blanket. They will dance around the hut and she will be delivered into the hands of the village. She is now old enough; she is ready for marriage.

The 14 days is a preparation period—mental preparation, physical preparation and she eats more than usual. She gets groomed, made ready for the eye of a man. The last night, they do the dance. She will remains in the hut that night. In the morning you walk the last mile. You take a branch and powder that you release on the earth. It is important because when she throws the powder if it is not done properly, any young man who is present may have problems with his testicles. Perhaps [they are] too big or [he is] not able to father

children. Then you go to the water and with the branch you splash the water so that it goes into your face. Then you step into the water. This is the end of the ceremony.

Third Speaker: Willem De Wet

Subject: Explanation of the use of electric keyboard for the performance.

The [Nama guitar] players are not available for the performance due to another engagement. We have modernisation in !Khubus—the use of electronic music! Nama music is difficult on electronic equipment/guitars.

For a detailed description of the traditional Nama Female Puberty Ceremony the reader is directed to the Introduction and Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

1.3.2. Performance of Nama Stap Dance Puberty Version

1.3.3. Epilogue: Questions and Answers and Nama Stap Dancing

Key Speakers: Willem De Wet and Maria Farmer

Question: Why only female performers?

Response: Willem De Wet

There are few men in the community. Also, men are no longer interested. So the women carried it thought [carried on with the dance]. They paired women with women in order to keep the tradition alive.

Question: Concerning marriage

Response: Willem De Wet

When a girl becomes a woman—after the puberty ceremony—the men will be interested. It is the duty of Ouma to protect her until she can find the right man; the man must come to Ouma. The girl cannot make the decision. The ritual [puberty ceremony] is the guarantee that she will be able to cope with adult life [married life]. The ceremony helps her to know that she will have control of her life. She has a say because of this ritual. Elders [such as Ouma] take a watchful eye over her.

Comment from Maria Farmer

After the ceremony, clothing is representative of Nama women. A girl must be properly attired—knees covered and she must sit in a proper way.

Question: Do the young people go through this or other Nama rituals?

Response: Willem De Wet

Children in the cultures do not go through these rituals. These rituals have died out. We are trying to uphold traditional rituals, but youth go to the cities. Outside influences are too strong.

They will show [demonstrate] the Nama Stap. Foreigners can learn it in a few hours.

1.4 Nama Stap Dance-Youth Version (2003)

This version of the Nama Stap Dance records the dance as it was performed by youth in !Khubus as part of the Extended Borders celebration held in !Khubus in 2003. The celebration marked the joining of South Africa's Richtersveld National Park with that of the Ai-Ais Game Park in Namibia. The dance was filmed by Jean Johnson Jones.

1.5 Nama Stap – Mature Women of Nababeep (2006)

This version of the Nama Stap was staged at the request of Ralph Bouwers who visited Nababeep in May 2006 as part of this research. The dance was also filmed by Bouwers.

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