Changing Pedagogical Approaches in *'Ori Tahiti*: "Traditional" Dance for a Non-traditional Generation

Jane Freeman Moulin

Abstract In the twenty-first century, dance education on the island of Tahiti is intricately tied to new ideas about movement, technical virtuosity, and access to dance training combined with the view of contemporary Tahitians that the classroom offers a superior venue for transmitting the traditional art of '*ori tahiti* (Tahitian-style dancing). This physical and conceptual transformation reflects a period of social and artistic change that began in the 1980s and 1990s, one that moved Tahitian society from the practice of learning traditional dance as an informal participatory group activity for a specific community event to the transformed notion of dance education as a product of teacher-based learning intended to fulfill individual goals. This chapter discusses a brief history of this transformation and contrasts traditional informal *'ite* (watch; know) learning with classroom training acquired through *ha'api'i* (formal education). Discussion then turns to private dance school instruction as one example of contemporary artistic training and considers Tahiti's response to the challenges posed by this pedagogical shift.

Keywords Pacific • Polynesia • Tahiti • Traditional dance • Artistic transmission • Dance schools • Conservatory • Dance education • *'ori tahiti*

1 Introduction

In mid-twentieth century French Polynesia, the purposeful linking of classroom pedagogy and Tahitian dance would have been a rather curious misfit. The Tahitian view of *'ori tahiti* (Tahitian style dancing)[1] was that it was a community affair—not the purview of specialised teachers and students. Instead, when a specific gathering called for dance, the community came together (whether as an ongoing dance troupe

[1] Dancing in a "Tahitian style" refers to characteristic leg and lower torso movements that are the foundation of traditional dance. See Moulin (1979, p. 28–33) for a complete description.

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L. Ashley, D. Lines (eds.), *Intersecting Cultures in Music and Dance Education*, Landscapes: the Arts, Aesthetics, and Education 19,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-28989-2_9

or an ad-hoc amateur village or district group) to rehearse a set of dances and songs that would animate the event and demonstrate the dynamism, competence, and vitality of the troupe and its performers. The focus was on the group's ability to relate a story through dance and the songs it accompanied, the coordination and ensemble of the troupe, choreography, and beauty of the presentation—not on the skill of the individual dancer.

Tahitians of this time assumed that *anyone* could dance. A person needed only to be where people were dancing and use ears and eyes to absorb the song texts, drum patterns, song melodies, and movements. Following what others were doing did not require any formalised pedagogical approach. A dancer would become as good as his/her observational skills allowed, and the main thing was to *do*, not to sit around talking about it abstractly or theorizing how best to transmit it.

Dance education on Tahiti today, however, is a vastly different story. In an intricate choreography of artistic transformation, new movements call for demanding techniques, increased stamina, and a focused, intensive study—all of which have multiple ramifications for traditional dance. Not surprisingly, this artistic development is intimately linked to concurrent social modifications in Tahitian society, the whole combining to create and sustain an ever-growing cadre of highly trained, virtuosic dancers who have an international presence as performers and teachers.

This chapter reviews a brief history of this transformation, stretching from the 1960s to a period of widespread change in the 1980s and 1990s. It delineates a binary approach to artistic pedagogy that developed as Tahitians moved from a view of learning traditional dance as an informal participatory group activity for a specific community event to the transformed notion of dance education as a product of teacher-based learning intended to fulfill individual goals. I use the term 'traditional dance' to refer to *'ori tahiti*, a style of dancing that Tahitians feel is their heritage. Importantly, Tahitians do not view this as an inflexible and unchanged link to the past, but rather a dance that may be updated and reconfigured to suit modern life and aesthetics.

Discussion then turns to the private dance school as one example of contemporary pedagogy in action and follows contemporary Tahitian usage by employing the term 'school' throughout to refer to the physical training studio, rather than an artistic movement or stylistic practice. Finally, it considers Tahiti's response to both the initial and the subsequent challenges posed by this pedagogical shift. I argue that the emergent pattern echoes developments in other parts of the Pacific (especially Hawai'i); that the change involves dancers, dancing, and the dance itself as well as associated social values; and that the phenomenon of formalised classroom instruction and the concurrent internationalisation of Tahitian dance raise issues regarding the commodification of culture and the spectre of potential challenges to cultural ownership and control.

2 Background: A Society in Transition

In the 1960s Tahiti was a culture in transition. The opening of the international airport in 1960 created a direct link to an outside world and offered the prospect of an expanded tourism industry. This focus on tourism also veiled the projected but unannounced French plans to turn French Polynesia into a site for nuclear experimentation. Eventual commencement of nuclear testing in 1966 brought both an influx of French military personnel and the need for an infrastructure to support the testing and its personnel, thereby creating numerous government and service-oriented jobs in a society in which many people were not that many years away from a reliance on subsistence and barter for basic needs. All combined to usher Tahiti swiftly into a new world of increased cultural interactions, global politics, urbanisation, and a growing wage economy.

The years of the 1970s arrived as Tahitians happily basked in the glow of an expanding economy in a time before notions of cultural identity began to resonate in the worlds and works of Tahiti's poets, choreographers, musicians and dancers. While ideas of a nostalgic past had existed long before this,[2] Tahitians in the 1970s did not spend a lot of time worrying about tradition or widespread disruption to their society. Caught up in an expanding economy that promised the newness and material comforts of modernity, many Tahitians readily embraced the changes.[3] As part of a newfound global access and the nascent tourism industry, opportunities for dancers to travel abroad and to entertain at home on a regular basis became well-established. In terms of the fundamental dance movements and choreography, however, Tahiti was only starting to gaze across the waters.

As a dancer in Tahiti's professional troupes during the mid 1970s,[4] I was fortunate to experience a Tahiti still attached to early- and mid-century practices and was

[2] Already as early as 1892, the official July celebrations (now known as Heiva) took on an aura of historic otherness when a competition was launched for "ancient costumes" (*Journal Officiel.* No. 29, 21 juillet 1892.)

[3] Despite the benefits of an expanded economy, challenging social issues also accompanied the rapid shift, including: a burgeoning immigrant population as job seekers moved from the outer islands to Tahiti, growing urbanisation and the appearance of slums in the capital, a population explosion that contributed to young male unemployment, and emerging fears over radiation-associated illness.

[4] I performed with the troupe TeMaeva (1973–1974) at Tahiti's hotels and danced with this award-winning group for the annual Tiurai competitions (now called Heiva i Tahiti) in 1974 and 1976. I also was a regular member of the professional troupe Tahiti Nui (1974–1976; billed abroad as The Royal Tahitian Dancers), with whom I went on tour to South America, participated in the 1975 Tiurai, and performed several times weekly at Tahiti's tourist hotels. My ongoing engagement with Tahitian music and dance has continued over the years, with return field trips in 1985, 1989, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2006, 2009, and 2012.

able later to contrast those with the artistic values of the following generation. One of the most significant contrasts revolved around transmission in the traditional arts, especially as late twentieth century alterations in pedagogical models prompted widespread transformations on many levels. Earlier education in dance and music was based on the principles of participatory learning. Those interested in acquiring a skill, whether canoe building or dancing, went to where people engaged in that activity; they observed, eventually joined in, and learned through actual embodied experience. In contrast, formal dance instruction, usually as private lessons given by well-known dancers in their homes, was for tourists and French residents who did not have access to the personal and community networks that facilitated participation in dance. Simply put, this was not a *Tahitian* way of learning dance.

3 Change in Pedagogical Models

A confluence of forces during the 1980s and 1990s brought modifications in the transmission model for music and dance (Moulin 2001). For dance, the change was early and especially dramatic, drawing particular stimulus from two fundamental sources. One was the global fitness craze of the mid-1980s, when Tahiti's fitness centres began to offer dance classes as physical activity for an increasingly sedentary population, something for which Tahiti's wage earners were prepared to pay. A second, highly significant phenomenon of this same period was the opening and subsequent growth of the Conservatoire Artistique, with its confirmation of Tahitian dance and music as worthy of intensive and systematic classroom instruction. By 1985, Conservatory dance instruction had evolved from travelling teachers who visited the public schools to classes housed in the new Conservatory buildings near the capitol, where staff began in earnest the process of developing a sequenced, multi-year curriculum. This physical move also expanded Conservatory classes beyond school-age children to include both adult learners and the very young.

The Conservatory is proud of its role in "democratising" the arts and making them available to all. Their website states: "The decision to teach 'Ori Tahiti' at the Artistic Conservatory of French Polynesia (Conservatoire Artistique de Polynésie Française) gives full recognition to this art form that is no longer considered to be 'reserved to a frivolous elite'" (CAPF website). Indeed, in 2014 CAPF enrolled approximately 1700 students regardless of ethnicity, age, physical appearance, previous experience or personal connections; over 600 were students in "traditional dance" (ibid.). Nevertheless, some Tahitians counter by complaining that spaces are limited and require a financial outlay not possible for many families, meaning that those who cannot afford the instructional fee, albeit very reasonable, are still marginalised (R. Peretia, personal communication, 28 July 2012).[5] The website's

[5]Yearly fees in 2014 were 36,000 CFP for children and 43,200 CFP for adults, roughly equivalent to US $382 and $457, respectively.

retrospective view of dance as the privilege of "a frivolous elite" undoubtedly refers to the selective professional groups, many of whom hand-picked dancers based on body type, height, weight, and physical attractiveness as well as dance skill.

The move to the CAFP (Conservatoire Artistique de Polynésie Française) validated the indigenous culture and placed Tahitian performative arts on the same level as those of the Western conservatory, deeming them worthy of focused study and granting government-recognised diplomas equivalent to those awarded in France. The changes that accompanied this seemingly simple establishment of sequential classroom learning, however, turned out to be profound. The dance taught at CAFP spurred radical change. Its classroom setting and practice of codifying dance steps and breaking down movement sequences to teach isolated, individual movements required new dance terminology for teachers who now needed a vocabulary for talking about dance. Its teachers created (in the view of some) or researched and revived (in the view of CAFP personnel) movements unknown to those involved in post-1950s Tahitian dance, as the classroom promoted a shift in instruction from what I have proposed as an informal *'ite* (watch; know) model to one that focuses on artistic knowledge acquired through *ha'api'i* (formal education) (Moulin 2001, p. 234–37). Classroom setting, standardised movements, verbalisation, and "research" into older ways of dancing all demand not only changes in pedagogy, but fundamental shifts in how people *think* about dance and conceptualise their understanding of it. The following chart summarises the contrasts between these two ways of transmitting dance knowledge (Fig. 1):

	INFORMAL, PARTICIPATORY DANCE GROUP LEARNING (*'ITE*)	FORMAL, CLASSROOM LEARNING (*HA'API'I*)
Orientation:	Group	Individual
Primary purpose:	Perform in public	Acquire technique & repertory
Leader:	Dance director, who conducts rehearsals of whole compositions	Teacher, who works on isolated movements & whole compositions
Dancers:	Usually teenagers & young adults	All ages
Methodology:	Observation & imitation	Explanation, demonstration, correction; movement drills
Amount of Verbalisation:	Low	High
Location:	Outdoor public places	Government institutions, Private dance schools
Financial outlay:	None	Yearly (CAPF) or monthly tuition

Fig. 1 Contrasting transmission models for Tahitian dance (Adapted from Moulin 2001, p. 235)

The effects of this change were relatively rapid, with 1990–1995 as a crucial period, and the resultant modifications reverberated throughout the dance community to create challenges for cultural officials, dance directors, and elders. The main actors encompassed three groups: CAPF dance teachers, headed by Louise Kimitete; directors of Tahiti's traditional dance groups (both professional and amateur), many of whom were dancers of the pre-1985 period; and dancers themselves, predominantly those in their teens and early twenties. Traditionally it was the dance directors who made the decisions about choreography, using the stage of the national competitions in July to present their grandest creations to the Tahitian public. These dance competitions, which date back to 1894 (*Journal Officiel*. No. 33, 181, 16 août 1894) and remain the highlight of the dance year, are now known as Heiva i Tahiti.[6] The Conservatory, however, did not participate in the Heiva competitions and, consequently, was neither subservient to nor controlled by the regulations and decisions of the artistic community of Heiva judges, cultural officials, and dance directors.[7] The youth wanted what was new and exciting, and the CAPF offered that. Importantly, because it functioned *outside* the realm of traditional cultural and artistic authority, this ended up temporarily relocating the nexus of dance power by moving the undeniable drive for change out of the hands of the directors and into the Conservatory with its young dancers.

By 1995, the dance community was experiencing a momentary but definite rupture as youth demanded the new movements taught by CAPF and as dancers of the previous generation, who were not trained in the new techniques, suddenly felt estranged from their own culture when criticised for only "doing the old things" (T. Robinson, personal communication, 24 July 1995; M. Lai, personal communication, 20 July 1995). Importantly, not only did movements of the dance change, but so did fundamental ideas about access to dance and who can participate in it. No longer restricted to the traditional age group between adolescence and marriage, the dance suddenly sparked issues of propriety. Elders found it shocking to see 3 and 4 year olds performing highly sexualised movements; moreover, a society that formerly viewed older dancers as humorous was now forced to accept that dancers of any age, including seniors, had a right to learn and perform. Indeed, the very locus of traditional authority and the power structures surrounding dance were in flux. The centre was now youth-driven, new, and creative rather than residing in the older knowledge of the elders and acknowledged dance troupe directors. There was also a conceptual shift in notions about the function of dance and the best way to learn it that defied earlier ideas of performance. As scores of highly trained dancers, with a virtuosity honed by years of dedicated and extended CAPF study, moved into the premier dance troupes during the latter half of the 1990s, the very look of the dance also changed, prompting some choreographers to start to explore the wide range of

[6] The Tahitian delight in *heiva*, meaning 'dance festival; entertainment', was noted by early European explorers. President Gaston Flosse applied the term to the July festivities in 1986 in an effort to resituate the event—moving the focus away from the July 14th celebration of the French *Fête Nationale* (Bastille Day) to a more Tahitian-centred celebration of tradition.

[7] CAPF, with its institutional structure, government support, publicly-funded salaries for teachers and accompanying musicians, permanent facility, and new curriculum also enjoys enviable benefits that set it apart from the typical dance group, fitness centre, or private dance school.

creative possibilities offered by the new movements and the highly trained youth who had been perfecting them for many years. This was a period when definitions of "tradition" were challenged repeatedly by these new productions, with Heiva judges finding it impossible to judge the "apples and oranges" of old and new approaches to performance. Temporarily dividing the competition into "traditional" and "creative" categories in 1998 proved awkward and unhelpful.

In the years following the turn of the century, the situation stabilised and calmed when dance directors began to embrace and become comfortable with the new styles represented by CAPF teaching and, importantly, gained a deeper appreciation for both the Conservatory-trained dancers and the work done by the CAPF staff. Although CAPF had played a *major* role in the changes that transpired, it was no longer the creative pulse of the community as dance directors eventually reclaimed their roles in guiding the choreography and dance presentations. In a typical path of innovation for any culture, yesterday's shockingly "new" became today's standard, and by 2012 many Tahitians viewed the CAPF as the "*berceau*" (cradle) of traditional dance rather than a vehicle of unbridled change. The classroom teaching it embraces, and which specifically necessitated some of the earlier departures from older approaches, is now firmly embedded in Tahitian society and accepted as the most effective way to learn. By 2014, CAPF enrolled 842 students in the traditional arts (dance for children, dance for adults, ukulele and guitar, percussion, and choral singing), and 623 of these were in dance (CAPF website). Emblematic of its earlier willingness to push boundaries and redefine traditions, however, CAPF still proclaims a stance of favouring creativity over replication:

> Traditional dance is above all "interpretation". It is undoubtedly linked to a certain period of time but it is also the reflection of a constantly evolving culture. Meeting the technical requirements based on the codification of dance steps and gestures, traditional dance also calls on the personality that it helps to reveal. It encourages creative movement and non-verbal communication. (ibid.)

The mention of personality, with its association of the individual is notable here, because one of the most fundamental transformations in the rising popularity of the classroom model was the confirmed move from dance as a collective art driven by community need to an individualistic one reliant on personal goals. Rather than focusing on learning complete dances as embodied practice, dance in the classroom favoured the abstraction of both practice and the ways in which the material is broken down and taught. Importantly, it also normalised the concept of acquiring dance technique and repertoire for individual purposes in a society where, earlier, group performance and cohesion had held the highest value.

4 Private Dance Schools

Dance is widely popular in twenty-first century Tahiti. In addition to the publicly-funded Conservatory, there are also private dance schools that focus specifically on *'ori tahiti* and play a major role in training. Some of these are operated by an older generation of former dancers in Tahiti's professional groups, and others now are

headed by young CAPF graduates. Although the latter receive formal diplomas and certifications, no umbrella organisation in French Polynesia certifies the schools or their teachers; in addition, there is no formal association that tracks the number of private schools or their enrollments. Notably, students at both CAPF and the private schools are overwhelmingly female; in fact, many of the private schools teach only female students.

Besides the stamp of authority granted by the French government and the official diploma desired by a new generation of students, there are some other differences between the two types of school. One is that the government-sponsored, non-commercially-based CAPF only accepts new students at the beginning of the school year. Also, attendance is mandatory. Student learning is impacted by non-attendance, but the class is also affected if the teacher is forced repeatedly to review material for newcomers. Conservatory teacher Louise Kimitete points to this enrollment and attendance policy as one of the main differences between the CAPF program and the private schools (L. Kimitete, personal communication, 24 July 1995).

CAPF embraces a set curriculum and spells out a 4-year dance sequence on its website. The first year stresses the development of listening skills and technical basics. The following years focus on expanding the set of dance steps with variations, endurance training, and deepening dance knowledge while broadening the dancer's understanding of oratory, music, and culture in general. An emphasis on originality permeates the curriculum and culminates in the final year with knowledge of thematic development and a choreographic creation that demonstrates both traditional and modern elements (CAPF website). In discussions, Kimitete (1995) stressed that each student must compose an *'ori tahiti* dance segment and perform this at the year-end juried exams. In her view, this sequenced, carefully-prepared curriculum with formal examinations is a distinguishing feature of CAPF training (ibid.).

In contrast, private dance schools neither offer a multi-year curriculum nor provide students a set, written plan of study with formal exams. This is, however, appropriate given the niche market they serve—the student not seeking intensive, extended study but looking for a certain amount of flexibility (to change schools, to attend all classes or not, to discontinue study for a month or two if need be, to start anytime throughout the school year). Importantly, however, the lack of a written curriculum does not imply that the teacher has no set goals or overall curricular plan for the classes.

There are multiple reasons for students to select the alternative of private dance school instruction. Those who cannot find a space at CAPF, who prefer a less rigorous approach to instruction, who have schedules that do not fit the CAPF courses, who require some flexibility in attendance, who do not desire an extended program or a formal certification, or who prefer the convenience of not going into town are all able to turn to one of the many private dance schools that have blossomed on the island. The differences between the two, public and private, reflect to a large extent the student's reasons for study. Those who truly seek to pursue professional careers in traditional dance overwhelmingly migrate to CAPF classes (although that is certainly not the only entry ticket). Others find a choice of possibilities in the private

sector; it is mainly a question of selecting a good "fit" on both practical and aesthetic grounds. Because some disposable income is necessary, most dance students are from middle or upper income families—families that also tend to embrace formal education. The private schools service a range of these students by offering classes that vary widely in their cost, intent, and purpose. The important point here, however, is that the consecutive development of the two types of formal education underscores the success of a pedagogical *model*, confirming that conceptual changes about arts pedagogy are now firmly engrained in the minds and practices of a new generation. The reasons for some of these conceptual transformations are detailed elsewhere (Moulin 2001, p. 239–40); my focus here is on the private dance school as a vehicle for delivering dance education.

In their modern classroom form, private dance schools have existed on Tahiti since the late-1980s, emerging at roughly the same time as CAPF was starting to expand its school programs. Makau Foster appears to have been the first to branch out of the fitness centres in 1988 and to establish her own private dance school, one that has been extremely successful throughout the last quarter century. Over the years, other well-known dancers, including Jeannine Maru, Coco Hotahota, Tumata Robinson, Moeata Laughlin, and Tiare Trompette have also started schools that grew into thriving training centres and commercial ventures. The evidence for the establishment of the dance school as a superior place to learn is now further underscored by the appearance of private schools on other islands of French Polynesia. On one hand this is expected, given Tahiti's role as the focal point of dance in French Polynesia and the consequent tendency for other islands to copy what Tahiti does. On the other hand, these outer islands represent the remaining bastions of traditional dance practice and life ways. Seen in this light, the change is monumental.

I first started examining classroom teaching for *'ori tahiti* in 1995 with a follow-up research trip in 1998 that included dance classes with Makau Foster. Then, in 2006 I studied in the district of Punaʻauia for 5 months (mid-March until mid-August) at Heiragi, a school founded in 2003 by former CAPF student Véro (Véronique) Clément.[8] Return fieldwork and continued study with Véro for 3 months in 2012 (mid-May until mid-August) provided many hours of classroom video that allowed me to document instruction more fully, chart the developments in that school over time, and track the dance school phenomenon in general.

[8] The conservatory was not a possible site for participatory fieldwork as it does not allow "casual" participants (less than one full academic year) or provide classes during the months of school holidays (mid-June through August). After observing instruction at different schools, several factors influenced my choice of École de Danse Heiragi in 2006: with 280 students, it was a large size school and thus a vibrant dance community; three levels of adult classes, in addition to five levels for children, afforded opportunities to observe a range of instruction; Heiragi offered both morning and evening classes that allowed me to dance four hours a day; tuition was reasonable; it was convenient to my home in Punaʻauia; the teacher's dance style suited both me and my dance background; and—most importantly—I view her pedagogical approach as both representative and effective.

Horaires danse Tahitienne 2015-2016.

A partir du 17 aout 2015

	Lundi	Mardi	Mercredi	Jeudi	Vendredi	Samedi
08h30 09h30	Débutantes	Débutantes		Débutantes		
09h30 10h30	Intermédiaires Confirmées	Intermédiaires Confirmées		Intermédiaires Confirmées		
13h15 14h15			Filles 5-6 ans		Filles 5-6 ans	
14h15 15h15			Filles 7-10 ans		Filles 7-10 ans	
15h15 16h00			Filles 3-4 ans		Filles 3-4 ans	
16h30 17h30	Débutantes	Débutantes	Ados 1	Débutantes	Ados 1	
17h30 18h30	Intermédiaires Confirmées	Intermédiaires Confirmées	Ados 2	Intermédiaires Confirmées	Ados 2	
18h30 19h30	Débutantes	Débutantes		Débutantes		

Fig. 2 Dance class schedule at Heiragi, 2015–2016. (École de Danse Heiragi 2015)

Heiragi maintains a year-round schedule. Many students sign up for classes in late August and continue through the normal Tahitian school year, which ends in June; others join as schedules allow. After June, many people in Tahiti leave for extended vacations in France and elsewhere. Since this travelling population aligns with those who can afford private dance instruction, the dance schools are all affected. Many close down for 2 months, but classes for adult women continue at Heiragi throughout the vacation months.

The dancers at Heiragi represent the long-term residents of a multi-cultural Tahiti (islanders from throughout French Polynesia,[9] Chinese, and French) as well as temporary residents, generally from France and the French colonies (particularly the Caribbean), and short-term visitors of different origins. During my periods of research there were occasional students from South America, New Zealand, Hawai'i and, in 2012, Japan. This last group is an especially interesting one that I will return to shortly. Given Heiragi's location across the road from a conclave of French military residences, it is not surprising that there are several military personnel and military wives in these classes. There is also, apparently, a turnover in students; in 2012 I did not find one adult student who was in the class in 2006.

Heiragi offers classes for both children and adult women. Although enrollments in 2014 reflected a drop due to the economic crisis in Tahiti, there were around 160 students in late 2014 (75 young children, 45 adolescents, and 40 adults) (V. Clément, personal communication, 22 November 2014). The schedule from 2015 to 2016 (Fig. 2) demonstrates a range of options, a feature typical of the larger dance schools.

[9]The five archipelagos of French Polynesia are the Society Islands (which includes Tahiti), Tuamotu Islands, Marquesas Islands, Gambier or Mangareva Islands, and Austral Islands.

In this particular school, paying for a class allows an adult student to attend all classes offered at that level, and many students opt to attend class two times per day. Others enjoy the flexibility of being able to choose class time based on their daily schedules, catching up with material during the evening class if the morning was busy with other commitments; still others sign up for more than one level in order to increase their practice time, and several students avail themselves of this added training. In 2015, classes cost 8000 CPF per month for each level (approximately US $72), which is a fairly standard fee.

Terminology for dance movements is a hallmark of the development in Tahitian dance pedagogy. In the early days of CAPF, a small group of Tahiti's top dance leaders (including Paulina Morgan, Coco Hotahota, Louise Kimitete and one other unknown person) gathered together to codify the known dance movements for both men and women (P. Gueret, personal communication, 12 July 1995). Whereas movements in the mid-1970s did not have specialised terms for the female lower torso movements critical to *'ori tahiti* and only limited vocabulary for the male leg movements (Moulin 1979, p. 21–31), new movements and their associated terminology were added in the early 1990s (M. Lai, personal communication, 20 July 1995), resulting in an official list of 19 movements for women and 23 movements for men (Maison de la Culture, 1998, annexe 2).

Despite the effort to standardise vocabulary, variations still exist, in the terms used as well as their interpretation in movement. The terminology used by Véro Clément reflects both her CAPF training and her personal Tuamotuan roots. As with other schools I have observed, it only partially aligns with the official list from the Heiva office.[10] These steps and their terminology are important signals of change in that they represent both the move to more verbalisation about dance movements and the classroom pattern of practicing isolated movements and techniques in class, hence the need for vocabulary to reference them. This is in strong contrast to earlier ways of learning dance by doing complete dances, without any attempt to remove movements from their choreographic context. The dance class, however, has the tendency to isolate, repeat, and perfect movements outside of that larger context.

The timing of my two study periods at Heiragi coincided with a special event held for the dance schools on Tahiti. Given the growing popularity of the dance schools and the desire to provide a venue for them to perform—whether a small or large group and with dancers of any age—the cultural office Te Fare Tauhiti Nui launched a non-competitive Heiva for the dance schools in 1994, at which time it featured three dance schools: CAPF, Makau Foster's dance school, and that of Moeata Laughlin (Maison de la Culture 2014, p. 16–17). Now held yearly in June to mark the end of the instructional year, this Heiva des Écoles de Danse allows participants, like dance students around the world, to present the results of their study. In one sense, it also functions to restore the traditional focus on event,

[10] The list distributed by Véro, unchanged from 2006 to 2012, includes the following:
āfata, amaha, 'ami, fa'arapu, hura, otamu, patia, rere, rere mahuta, tā'iri tāmau, tāmau, tāmau fa'atere, tāmau tahito, teki, tokarega, toro, tua ne'e, tui, ueue, and *varu.* Some of these are for hip movements; others are foot, torso, or locomotor movements.

ensuring that dance remains a performance art and not only a rehearsal art, and it does this in the very traditional Tahitian way of bringing multiple groups together. In 2014, the event featured over 2000 dancers from 35 dance schools, including six from the outer islands, and had expanded to seven nights of performances plus one full evening for the CAPF classes,[11] a gala that by itself features 600 or more students (*Tahiti Info* 2014). The immense popularity of the dance school Heiva and its continued growth over time stand as visible testament to both the development of the dance school as an institution for artistic training and the entrenchment of formalised learning in Tahitian society.[12]

A look at a typical Heiragi class during the month of July 2012 is revealing. In one sense, this post-Heiva time means the pressure of the Heiva is off and less class time is absorbed by the details of overall programming, formation changes, costumes, and logistics. Also, this year Véro combined her intermediate and advanced classes to offer a 2-h session twice a day (morning and evening). Morning and evening classes are not exact replicates, so there is variety for those who want to do both sessions. The following is a first person account that draws on my field notes of the morning class held on July 24, 2012.

A Typical Lesson: École de Danse Heiragi

I arrived at class early today in order to snag nearby parking…a big issue…and then chatted quietly with the other women as we waited for class to start. We all wear the requisite pareu *dance skirt, but length, color and way of tying it are left to personal preference. There are approximately 20 women at class today—the typical mix of ethnicities and ages. About half are in their late teens and twenties and half in their thirties and forties; there are only a couple of older dancers. A couple of young women from Martinique are new to the class today.*

We line up in lengthwise rows in a studio that can accommodate probably up to three rows of nine to ten dancers each,[13] *and we face the mirror that covers one full wall. Class starts with stretching exercises; many are the same ones I know from fitness classes in the United States. Then Véro performs various foot movements associated with* ‘aparima *(story-telling) dances, and we dance along with her. Occasionally she announces the sequence of steps beforehand; at other times, we simply follow her visual example. Today, she pays special attention to the step “*hura*” but incorporates other steps as well, eventually adding hand gestures to the foot and hip movements and varying the basic step in different ways.*

*Class then turns to the specific, isolated movements of ‘*ori tahiti*, and we devote about half of the two-hour class to an intense focus on these. It is clear that Véro is trying to build not only technique, but also stamina, encouraging students to push themselves in response to her shouts of “*Allez les filles!*” (Go girls!). Given Tahiti’s tropical climate, we are soaked with sweat in the crowded, non-air conditioned space; bringing a towel to class is de rigeur. We stop for occasional water breaks.*

[11] Fourteen schools presented more than 100 dancers, while 21 schools had smaller groups of less than 100 (*Tahiti Info* 2014).

[12] Those who cannot afford classroom instruction, still have possibilities to learn dance—mainly through participation in district or amateur groups or through school performances. In a climate of increasing dance virtuosity, however, such informal options provide less opportunity than the classes (either public or private) to practice and to “perfect” the dance.

[13] Heiragi reports that the studio can accommodate up thirty to forty dancers (V. Clément, personal communication, 22 November 2014).

Exercises move to the walls as Véro focuses on hip movements; she has us place one or both hands on the wall to ensure that all are maintaining an erect posture with shoulders absolutely still, an essential of 'ori tahiti. *Exercises move out onto the floor when Véro wants to work on traveling steps, with successive rows of dancers moving down the length of the room. She gives sporadic corrections as we dance to recorded music from a variety of sources—from Tahitian recordings to the pan-Polynesian fusion of Te Vaka to a banghra-inspired song and even a hiphop selection—knowing that each exercise will last at least 3:00-4:00 minutes.*

Véro then plays some recordings of short drumming selections and selects one. Although only about thirty seconds long, it is a complete musical composition. Going phrase by phrase, she encourages us to suggest a series of movements to dance to this pehe *(rhythmic pattern). Up until this point, this is the first time we are actually working on a "real" dance rather than exercises. The assignment is unique in that it is not the presentation of her own choreography; students seem to appreciate the departure from the norm and eagerly throw out names of movements to incorporate. I feel like I learned so much from watching her masterful shaping of each suggestion into a choreographed sequence.*

We then begin to practice the 'aparima *(story-telling dance) we started working on a couple of weeks ago. Since attendance by some is erratic, we have to spend time reviewing gestures already presented last week as Véro tries to contain the chaos and bring everyone on board. She presents the dance carefully, phrase by phase, going over the covered material several times and occasionally rotating the lines of dancers so that different students are in front. We neither receive copies of the associated song text nor spend time practicing the song itself. Some dancers sing along softly, but there is no requirement to participate vocally. Song no longer appears to be part of the training of the dancer.*

The four Japanese students who arrived a couple of weeks ago are still here. Well-trained and serious, almost driven, in their approach to dance study, they have come to spend one month (the limited time of their tourist visa) in Tahiti, taking dance classes and attending the Heiva i Tahiti competitions. A few weeks ago, I was surprised to see a well-known Japanese hula teacher appear at the door. I cannot help but think of Hawai'i and the unrelenting hula fad in Japan.

After a brief announcement, class ends rather abruptly and on time, without any cool down exercises. We pick up our things and, after quick good-bye kisses, head for our cars. We will be back in the studio in a few hours.

Some important points emerge from this account, specifically evidence of the ongoing processes of democratisation, individualism, commercialisation, pedagogical change, and internationalisation. Since these are emblematic of larger community-wide practices that lie well beyond Heiragi, they merit some exploration and analysis.

The value of increased access is evident in the wide age and ethnic range as well as the country origins of students. Access is, moreover, facilitated by allowing new students to join at any time of the year and any day they please. On one level, it may not be optimum for the teacher, but I am amazed at how women thrown into a class with little or no previous experience are able to pick up very quickly.

The highly individualistic approach to learning that is part of the classroom model shows clearly in the emphasis placed on developing individual skills rather than the coordination of group effort. Moreover—and in contrast to both earlier ways of learning and the rehearsals of professional and amateur dance troupes—the dance studio allows and even relies on the use of the mirror as a learning aid. At the outdoor rehearsals of Tahiti's dance troupes, dancers focus on what others are doing

and try to carefully coordinate their movements. The studio mirror, however, permits a student to watch closely what *she* is doing and this subtly shapes the dancer's perspective. For example, a reliance on the mirror changes the dancer's relationship with the dance, moving it to a visual, "outside" the body experience rather than knowing it foremost as a physical and embodied one. The use of the mirror also reinforces dance as *individual* actions to be critically observed and perfected rather than requiring a dancer to think of his/her place in the group and learn to judge and time movements accordingly.

The dance class is a paid activity—it is a cultural commodity packaged and shared for a fee by a teacher who, simultaneously, is a businessperson who needs to ensure a profit. Venue and parking become linked to profits for many schools that struggle with a shortage of available and suitable spaces, the high cost of location rental and utilities (the latter leading to non-air conditioned spaces), and a scarcity of parking to accommodate their clients. Whereas earlier communities did not mind the few hours of loud music that accompanied evening dance practices held in the open air 2 or 3 days a week, today's residents complain about dance rehearsals in their neighborhoods, leaving dancers to practice in gyms, on the wharfs or in abandoned lots and forcing dance classes out of residential areas into store fronts and other business spaces. In 2006, well-known dance director Coco Hotahota pushed to come up with a solution and implored district officials to create or designate special practice facilities for dance. To date, that has not happened. An underlying reason might be that so much of dance activity today is no longer communal, but commercial.

The revised pedagogical model first espoused by CAPF is apparent in Véro's teaching. She incorporates some exercises where students watch and copy, but she also has "listen and do" activities intended to build both a vocabulary for talking about dance and the ability to conceptualise movement from verbal cues. There are named steps, and movements are isolated, demonstrated, rehearsed, and corrected. Foot and lower torso movements may be separated from hand movements for learning purposes, and there is some effort to engage students in exploring the creativity of choreographing a sequence, at least on a group level. All of these are in strong contrast to pre-Conservatory ways of learning dance as complete compositions from beginning to end. The work on isolated movements brings to mind the practice in Hawaiian hula of commencing class with repetitions of named steps (e.g. *kāholo*, *ʻuwehe*, *ʻami*, *hela*, etc.), and I recall that Louise Kimitete, the guiding force behind CAPF efforts to standardise movements, lived in Hawaiʻi for many years of her adult life and was good friends with *hula* legend ʻIolani Luahine.[14] But this work session is considerably more sustained than the typical *hula* warm-up. Instead, teaching approaches the feeling of a ballet class.

[14] This connection undoubtedly also explains the presence of some shared terminology between Hawaiian *hula* vocabulary and the conservatory list of movements.

Other influences emanate from outside CAPF. The first year I saw warm up stretching exercises in the Tahitian dance classroom was in 2012. This appears to be something Véro has adopted from her own experiences in taking fitness classes, one that signals the physical training and even athleticism of contemporary dancers. The dance class has become an incredibly intense workout session; there are times when people simply must stop momentarily in the middle of an exercise to catch their breath and restore their courage to continue. I do not recall this level of intensity when dancing with the professional troupes of the 1970s, although such endurance training is certainly both a requisite of contemporary choreography and evident in the technical abilities of today's dancers.

The influence of technology on dancers is evident. Traditionally dancers were expected to sing—and to sing enthusiastically. Their voices contributed to the overall performance, and anything less than a 100 % effort would produce admonishing yells from the musicians. The norm for the private dance schools is to use recorded music, which removes any reliance on the dancers as singers.[15] Consequently, most dance teachers focus class time on the movements and give scant attention to the song text and its harmonisation. Even if live music is used for the Heiva des Écoles, the huge performing space of To'ata requires heavy amplification, placing the primary responsibility for vocal performance on the mic'ed musicians, not the dancers. Not surprisingly, many dancers do not even sing—a noticeable shift from older patterns of presentation and, importantly, basic notions of performance in most Polynesian islands.[16]

CAPF claims "more than 6000 foreign groups practice a form of Ori Tahiti" (CAPF website). Indeed, the internationalisation of Tahitian dance is now firmly established, with performing groups around the world and the largest concentrations in Hawai'i, Japan Mexico, and the west coast of the United States. The unexpected arrival of four Japanese students to the class, however, underscores something not part of the dance school in 2006. News of Heiragi has obviously hit Japan! These visiting students represent a new form of internationalisation. Whereas students far from Tahiti's shores—together with the festivals, competitions, and invited Tahitian teachers or judges—are numerous, imagining and promoting French Polynesia as a site for dance learning is a relatively recent phenomenon.

[15] At the 2013 Heiva des Écoles, several schools had live musical accompaniment, a definite departure from 2012 and earlier. Heiragi reports that Véro called on the musicians of Heikura Nui to accompany her performance in 2013 and 2014; Véro was able to do this in exchange for her choreographic help with Heikura Nui's dancers (V. Clément, personal communication, 22 November 2014). Both this and an increase in attention to, and money spent on, costumes signal a tendency of the dance schools to emulate performances of the regular Heiva i Tahiti troupes. Although not a competition in terms of prizes or judged honors, the dance schools at the Heiva des Écoles still vie to outdo the others, and teachers are well aware of the connection between a beautiful performance and class enrollments the following August.

[16] Hawai'i, where one or more non-dancers deliver the song text, is a notable exception to this larger Polynesian practice of viewing the dancer as a singer.

5 Responses to the Challenges of Pedagogical Change

When I did initial research on the dance schools in the 1990s, the most crucial issues surrounding artistic transmission were the redefinition of artistic teaching as salaried labour reliant on capitalistic relationships, the centralisation of dance authority in the Conservatory, a non-traditional separation of music and dance, and the privileging of individual goals above group effort (Moulin 2001, p. 243–44). The question of age appropriateness in movements and costuming[17] was also a concern.

By 2012, these issues were resolved for the most part. The commodification of dance training is accepted, with dance schools blossoming across Tahiti and beyond. The radically different ideas of dance transmitted in CAPF training are now normalised. As graduates established themselves as dancers and teachers across Tahiti and beyond, a corresponding shift in authority has returned the creative spotlight to the dance directors and teachers who embraced the changes. Dance education itself has become decentralised, moving away from CAPF to include numerous private dance schools in the community that now assume a major role in artistic transmission. Tahitians have opted for modernity, choosing the technology of the microphone and loudspeaker over the sound of dancers' voices and accepting that individual goals are an appropriate reason for dance study. Dancers and teachers no longer fret about age appropriateness, because they have figured out movements and costumes that are suitable for different groups of dancers.

In short, a multitude of changes have occurred, changes that initially encountered a reluctant society but eventually were adopted by it. Many of these required Tahitians to reconsider fundamental questions, such as the role of tradition in culture, what the dance should look like and who should perform it, and whether dance is an arena where individualistic goals trump communal needs. If the 1990s was a period when Tahitians tangled with these ideas, the early twenty-first century confirms their acceptance of the new values that surround the forces of modernity, democratisation, and individualism.

There are, however, lingering social concerns that beg resolution, namely the growing virtuosity demanded of dancers and the internationalisation of dance knowledge and practice, particularly as this relates to cultural commodification. Since these issues certainly are not restricted to Tahitian dance, they offer a peek into forces that have the potential to reshape the future of dance and dance instruction—in Tahiti as well as across the Pacific.

[17] Older women, whose performance would have called forth disparaging remarks in earlier years, are now deaf to any challenges regarding their claim to a place on the stage; young dancers are no longer overly sexualised, with some teachers sensitive to this and avoiding certain rhythmic patterns that some view as provocative. Before, dance was the realm of teenagers and young adults and cultural preferences favoured a display of their youthful bodies. Today costumes have expanded considerably beyond the traditional *more* ("grass" skirt) and *pāreu* (wrap-around cloth) to include long dresses as a convenient way to cover aging dancers or opulent bodies. In general, there is a much wider range of attire for dance—from simple island dresses in cotton fabrics to dressy fabrics and styles that emulate evening gowns.

When students start at 4 years old and dance several days a week for 12, 15, or more years they acquire not only proficiency in dance, but a virtuosity in movement that is not possible with less intensive training. The website for the Conservatory is clear about its role in developing this:

> Furthermore, the dance class…aims to train professional dancers. It links the acquisition of knowledge to the mastering of techniques and the individual practice to the collective practice. (CAPF website)

Clearly, CAPF has the goal of educating professional, not casual, dancers. On the economic level, this opens a welcomed market for the private dance schools; on a societal level, virtuosity creates a specialised class of performer—the professional. Despite any claims to democratisation, CAPF's very purpose is to train an elite corps of performers who will somehow take their highly specialised training back to the collectivity of community practice. In essence, one might ask what has happened to the folk in this former folk art. What role do those without professional aspirations or CAPF certificates play in the future of dance? It is also worth asking if the professional groups can absorb an ongoing, seemingly endless stream of new graduates. Some will use their CAPF diplomas to open their own dance studios, but even that option has a defined limit. Others, however, have no intention of assuming professional careers in dance. One acquaintance, a young lawyer with a well-paid government job, enrolled in CAPF classes merely because she thought she should have a paper to authenticate all the time invested in pursuing her passion for dance. This is modern Tahiti, with its increasingly well-educated youth who value the classroom as a place to learn, even when not for career purposes. Although Tahiti has long been proud of its tendency to resist outsider definitions of itself or its Polynesian roots, this mode of classroom learning and its resultant virtuosity are a strong contrast to other Pacific Islands. Tahiti stands out among its Polynesian neighbors as remarkable for its large, active corps of "professionals" in what is normally billed as traditional dance.[18]

If the dawn of tourism and the opportunity to tour abroad in the 1970s and early 1980s represented the beginning commercialisation of Tahitian dance, the schools mark the true commodification of dance knowledge, with information available to those who can pay and students who are able to "purchase" multiple sources of material simultaneously rather than relying on trusted personal connections. Since an established dance school can have 100–300 students, a serious teacher who can overcome the hurdles of venue and marketing has the opportunity to earn a substantial income (Moulin 2001, p. 238). There is, however, a significantly larger commodification of culture materialising on the horizon that revolves around the internationalisation of dance.

[18] Hawai'i, with its developed infrastructure for tourism and over eight million visitors per year (Hawai'i Tourism Authority 2014), has more opportunities for professional dancers to perform in the tourist hotels and at commercial *lu'au*s, but these performing groups do not rival the size of professional troupes in Tahiti. Often Hawaiian commercial performances utilise as few as one or two *hula* dancers and a trio of musicians.

Since Japan represents the most recent, and in many ways the most potent example of what this internationalisation might involve, I focus here on that population of dancers. What is important to realise is that my aforementioned comment of the appearance of Japanese dancers at Heiragi is not a unique event. It represents a new explosion of interest on the part of young Japanese females in learning Tahitian dance. Much of this traces to the 2006 release of the Japanese film *Hula Girls*, the real-life story of a small Japanese town that remade itself as a Polynesian centre in an effort to draw tourists to rescue its failing economy. Much of the dance featured in the film, however, was not Hawaiian *hula*, but rather a Japanese take-off on the iconic *'ori tahiti*. This film opened eyes to a style of Polynesian dance that was different from the Hawaiian hula that has become so prevalent in Japan since the 1980s. A momentary look at the issues surrounding Hawaiian dance in Japan helps in comprehending the vast intricacies and potential of this interest.[19]

> There's really no way to exaggerate the popularity of hula in Japan. These days there are halau [hula schools] from Beijing to Boston and everywhere in between, but Japan has embraced Hawai'i's indigenous dance traditions like nowhere else. … Lisette Marie Flanary, a Brooklyn-based filmmaker who is working on a documentary titled *Tokyo Hula*, estimates the number of hula dancers in Japan at 600,000…. (Boehm 2011, p. 2)

This phenomenon is not without its struggles, however. It has raised numerous challenges along the way for *hula* practitioners, including thorny questions surrounding cultural authority and who can teach, cultural control over who has the right to "sell" cultural knowledge or gain from the rich mine of associated profits, and the place of Japanese dancers in the homeland of *hula.*

Hula in Japan is a major business, and the question of who can and will profit from the immense cash potential is far from an inconsequential one. Many Hawaiian performers and teachers have moved to Japan, where they reap immense rewards and take on rock star popularity, but performance is not the only realm subject to commercial exploitation. There are also side markets of hula consumption in which predominantly Japanese entrepreneurs have profited, such as: workshops, festivals and competitions; the spin-off sales of *hula* skirts, implements, ornaments, and other accessories; or the profits reaped from organised cultural tourism tours to visit Hawai'i and fulfill the sought-after dream of dancing there. In addition, there are concerns about who profits from the *kumu hula*'s (*hula* master's) years of study and expertise in the culture. Is it the *kumu*, or primarily the Japanese dance teachers who align themselves in sister relationships with known Hawaiian masters?

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[19] *Hula* has a long history in Japan, largely due to the popularity of Hawaiian music and dance for a pre-World War II generation combined with interest fuelled by rising tourism to Hawai'i in the 1980s and 1990s, an insatiable *hula* boom in the Land of the Rising Sun that started in the 1980s and still continues today, and a now established pattern of young Japanese females coming to the islands to learn hula and returning home to teach it. In an amazing replication of the Japanese *iemoto* system of training in the traditional arts, Japanese dancers applied a hierarchical network of teachers and assistants to create *hula* studios all over Japan (Kurokawa 2004, p. 126–163).

Aside from the financial aspects, there are significant implications for culture in general when dancers from other countries want to participate in Hawai'i's own hula festivals. At what point do people in Hawai'i feel displaced by outsiders who claim their dance, are driven to excel in it, and would, apparently, be quite content to engulf it with little regard for cultural sensitivity or their role in all of this? Some performers in Hawai'i view those teaching abroad as selling—and selling out—their culture, prompting reflection on whether this is all just a tremendous capitalistic free-for-all where everyone should grab while the grabbing is good. That this issue is so strongly centered in East Asia has much to do with market size, patterns of East Asian consumerism, the extreme nature of the "difference" between Asian and Pacific cultures (the attraction of the Other), and the lure the South Seas dance promises to those who feel this allows them to transcend or enrich their everyday lives.

These same issues now loom on the Tahitian cultural horizon. Like their *hula* counterparts, some of the Japanese girls who arrived at Heiragi bore Polynesian names—this time, Tahitian ones. More than a schoolgirl desire to embrace a new culture, these names carry additional meaning in Japan. Part of the training in traditional Japanese arts involves the formal bestowing of a professional name to mark an important stage of learning—complete with a hefty fee to the teacher who confers it. The practice, now firmly entrenched in Japanese *hula* schools, may be spilling over to the realm of *'ori tahiti*. An overt form of dance commodification, earning a Polynesian name in Japan can cost a student hundreds of dollars, not to mention the fees invested in years of lessons.

In a premonition of the throngs of Japanese dancers who now attend the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival in Hilo, Hawai'i, the 2012 Heiva i Tahiti competitions were dotted with Japanese tourists and dancers. With Japanese tourists now commanding large blocks of the limited seats for the annual Merrie Monarch festival in Hawai'i, it is notoriously difficult for local people to secure places. It is not hard to envision a similar potential for the Heiva i Tahiti, although the factors of added distance from Japan, the high cost of visiting French Polynesia, and French language presently keep many dance tourists away.

It is obvious that some of the intensity of this very real invasion of culture can be managed in ways that do minimal damage to the culture bearers themselves rather than allowing excessive and uncontrolled exploitation or relinquishing control to outside interests. In a 2006 meeting with Heiva Nui officials Julien Mai and Tiare Trompette, they asked what I thought about developing an international dance festival in Tahiti where different groups would attend and present their own dances. I suggested, instead, a festival wherein Tahitian dancers and dance schools from around the world could attend and present their work. Besides the normal benefits of cultural tourism for the hotel, restaurant, and tourism industries, this would offer opportunities for local musicians, dance instructors, instrument makers, and costume suppliers to make contacts with these schools and establish direct working relationships with them. In 2007, Tahiti offered its first international Farereira'a, which is now an event that draws hundreds of participants from the international

'ori tahiti world, offering them the opportunity to dance in Tahiti without infringing on established Tahitian dance structures and dance events.[20]

The private dance schools have now begun to witness some of the external craving for dance instruction, and CAPF offers 1-week sessions that allow international students to study with CAPF personnel. When a Japanese tour operator pushed hard to have CAPF distribute diplomas at the end of the week (another requisite feature of Japanese instructional consumerism), CAPF officials refused, replying that "There is only one diploma offered and that is the result of many years of study" (H. Maamaatuiahutapu, personal communication, 23 March 2010). Instead, students receive a paper stating that they have completed the 1-week course. All students must start at Level 1; as of the end of 2012, 136 students had completed courses and passed one of the six levels of training (CAPF website). Of these, 87 (roughly 64 %) were Japanese. Even so, this number is insignificant considering the Japanese market for Polynesian dance. Despite a growing trend of inviting outstanding Tahitian dancers to give workshops in Japan, many Japanese teachers of *'ori tahiti* continue to learn—and teach—with little or no direct access to the dance tradition or Tahitian cultural practitioners (R. Perreira, personal communication, 29 May, 2015).

6 Conclusions

The move to formal education has involved an evolution of social and artistic thought that touches on new ways of conceptualising the functions and roles of dance in society, the foundational movements of the dance, access to dance knowledge, and the overall look of the presentation. It is a move that reflects the ideas and values of a new generation of Tahitians with increased income, education, and adoption of Western values. A relatively rapid late twentieth century development, it had its roots in pedagogical modifications, such as: the codification of dance movements, the increased verbalisation of dance instruction, and the notion of a sequenced curriculum. On one level, it represents a rupture with the previously embraced past, but it also represents an increased professionalism that is part of an older, ongoing story of dance and its transformation from the village celebration to the national and international stage.

Democracy in the arts is important to society if local troupes and large numbers of local dancers are to participate. Looking at the art as a whole, however, the actual dance of pre-Conservatory years was in many ways more inclusive than the virtuosic traditions coming out of CAPF today. Yes, the CAFP entrance point is democratic, but the final artistic product is far from that due to its formalised curricula,

[20] Tahitians are actively trying to protect their own performing spaces. The Heiva i Tahiti officials, for example, decided to limit the number of non-resident performers competing after finding that some groups recruited extensively in California to fill their ranks (H. Maamaatuiahutapu, personal communication, 22 May 2012).

dedicated terminology, virtuosic movements, specialised teachers, and required years of study. As Tahiti moves toward a global presence in dance education and performance, it copes with a nexus of reformed ideas concerning what excellence in dance entails, the value/role of formal education, views of the purpose/function of dance, and dance as a commodity of international importance. In short, changes in the pedagogical model impact dancers, the process of dancing, and the dance itself as well as the values of the people who produce it.

What is important in all of this is that Tahitians, who maintain an ethnic majority in their highly colonised space, have demonstrated that they will actively use Western paradigms of education to fulfill Islander needs. There are current moves to restore Tahitian ways of doing/seeing/being—in everything from birthing practices to religion—however, Tahitian youth, their parents, dance leaders, and cultural officials have clearly voiced their preference for this new model of dance learning along with the artistic results and the expanded economic opportunities it produces. The spread of dance schools to rural areas of Tahiti and other islands in French Polynesia signals both a maturity in the development of this model of dance education and its acceptance as a standard by which artistic transmission is delivered and judged throughout this island nation. The interest of *'ori tahiti* to a global world of dance is further evidence of that maturity, making the classroom not only a passive venue for transcending international boundaries but an actual facilitator of that step across oceans.

Tahitians have a long history of cultural preference for change over retention (Moulin 2007; Moulin 1996). Unfazed by insinuations, criticisms and even evidence that they are distancing themselves from their Pacific cousins and Polynesian roots, thousands of young French Polynesians enthusiastically embrace the new and delight in the expanded opportunities it affords those impassioned by the dance. From all appearances, there is little public discussion about notions of cultural ownership, the commodification of dance for personal or transnational corporate gain, or a possible need to protect the culture from exploitation. The unanswered question at this point is how Tahiti will deal with that potential and whether, especially in a phase of growing commercialism and tourism across Oceania, the dance classroom represents a uniquely Tahitian-Hawaiian form of modernisation or if it is a model that will be adopted, developed, and embraced by other Pacific cultures in the years to come.

Acknowledgements Fieldwork in Tahiti in 1995 and a follow-up research trip in 1998 were funded by grants from the NEH Endowment Fund and the Research Relations Fund of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am grateful for this funding support as well as the insights and thoughts shared by several of Tahiti's outstanding dancers and teachers. My sincere thanks goes to Véronique Clément for kindly allowing me to attend her classes and for providing me with valuable research material. I would also like to acknowledge several leaders in the dance field—especially Coco Hotahota, Marguerite Lai, Tumata Robinson, and Louise Kimitete—for assistance during the early stages of the research and for their input during discussions over the years. Heremoana Maamaatuiahutapu, former Director of Te Fare Tauhiti Nui (Maison de la Culture) and the Heiva Nui organisation, was instrumental in granting permission to document Heiva performances; his ongoing friendship and help with various projects is much appreciated. In my 2006

and 2012 research trips I met wonderful women at Heiragi who have enriched my life in many ways; I thank them for their smiles, encouragement, kindness, and friendship. My thanks as well to Aya Kimura and Allison Henward, fellow professors at the University of Hawai'i, who offered important suggestions during the preparation of the manuscript. To all, *māuruuru 'e māuruuru roa*.

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