

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Despite the passage of time since the age of discovery, 'Terra Australis' remains for most Europeans and North Americans a "remote area" (see Ardener, 1987). Likewise in the conceptual space of western academia, the study of dancing and human movement remains a rather remote area, existing where it does on the very fringes of concern. Anthropologists have traditionally focused their interests upon such remote areas, at least geographically, and at best with one eye open to the possibility of having established theoretical grounds wiped from under their feet. The discerning reader may discover that, in this masterly survey of Australian literature on dancing "... remote areas turn out to be like gangster hide-outs -- full of activity and half recognised faces" (Ardener, 1987).

The well chosen epigraph succinctly foregrounds the heart of Williams' concerns in the essay. The point is not the 'primitiveness' or otherwise of dancing in Australia, but the problematic nature of approaches to the understanding of that dancing. Williams continues to provide sound critical appraisal of the literature in question following the approach she established in her forthcoming book, 'Ten Lectures on Theories of the Dance' (Scarecrow Press). This is an article of special interest to anthropologists of human movement and the arts, but also to dance educators and those involved in higher education at an administrative level. It raises serious questions regarding the place of dance studies in a university setting. Is the performance of dancing necessary and sufficient for the inclusion of the subject at university level? What other kinds of knowledge about human movement systems are possible?

In view of the importance and length of Dr. Williams' essay, we decided to create this special issue of JASHM on the topic. The article is supplemented by two appendices. The first should be of special interest to anthropologists of art and dance educators concerned with levels of institutional recognition. The second is a reprint of Stephen Wild's excellent bibliography on Australian Aboriginal dance. This originally appeared in 'Theatrical Movement: A Bibliographic Anthology' (Ed. B. Fleshman, Scarecrow Press).

Editors

## REFERENCES CITED

- Ardener, E. 1987. 'Remote Areas: Some Theoretical Considerations'. In Anthropology at Home, ASA Monograph 25. Ed. A. Jackson. Tavistock Publications, London.