EXAMPLES OF MODELS USED IN DATA PRESENTATION

This paper presents examples of various models used by several different authors in the area of dance. The purpose of this essay is to examine the writer's use of models in his presentation of data. The following articles/books are cited: "Dance and Cultural Identity Among the Paiwan Tribe of Pingtung County, Taiwan" by Madeline Kwok, "Systemic Aesthetics: Kiowa-Apache Ritual" by John Beatty, "Play, Role Reversal and Humor: Symbolic Elements of a Tewa Pueblo Navaho Dance" by Jill Drayson Sweet, and Languages of Art by Nelson Goodman.

Kwok utilizes effort/shape movement analysis[1] as a model for movement characteristics of arm and leg gestures. She states:

> Gestures of the arms and legs seldom reach the edge of the individual's kinesphere[2]. Leg gestures are performed mostly in the near reach space (i.e., the area closest to the body) and intermediate reach space (i.e., the area approximately halfway between near reach space and far reach space. Far reach space is the area at the outer limits of the kinesphere.) Movements seldom venture into far reach space (1978:39).

Kwok has defined the meta-language of effort/shape which is vital to her explanation of gestures. Without her explanation, one wonders what an individual's 'kinesphere' is? The use of effort/shape language does aid in the discussion of the movement's relevance to space however, but because Kwok does not apply her analysis of the data to the people and culture of the Paiwan Tribe, her information is of less value than it might be. She does not tell us anything about the people or their culture beyond pure description of their movements. She gives no interpretation of these facts and why they are important.

Kwok also utilizes both a structural model[3] and a naive statistical model in the form of a diagram to break down the different dance types of the Paiwan Tribe, i.e. Drinking Dance, Ritual Dance, Historical Dance, Welcome Dance, and Improvisation (1978:38). She further divides the Tribe into villages and the number of dances in each and their estimated percentage, i.e. "the extent to which the data is representative of the repertoire of the entire village" (1978:38). This is a diagramatically illustrated proposition of dance types which I believe too neatly categorizes the dance of the Paiwan Tribe. In the words of John Beattie: "Such a structural statement does not tell us everything about the people in question and their culture...and very often the facts are by no means as formal and consistent as they are represented as being." He continues: "Essentially, the investigator's structural model should make sense of the data in terms of his interest in them, it should suggest new questions and problems, and it should make possible classification and comparison with other structures from elsewhere" (Beattie, 1964:62). Although Kwok's work shows a good effort, her methodological approach to the Paiwan Tribe is by far too simplistic as she presents us with fact after fact without any relationships to the culture in question.

John Beatty repeatedly uses a comparative model. In the context of a discussion of Kiowa-Apache ritual where he defends his point of view against that of McAllister (1937) and Bittle (1962), he says:

Beatty's study of Kiowa-Apache music implies that although the music is generally in a 'typical' Plains Indian style, it deviates occasionally into the musical style associated with linguistic relative... Although the Kiowa-Apache music is linked to the Southwest, Beatty only hinted that the structure of the Manatidie dance bore some similarities to the dances of the southwestern Apache...If we compare the dance as it exists now and assume the terms should read 'four chiefs and a runt', we can compare it to the dance of the Kiowa-Apaches' nearest neighbors, the Mescalero Apache, and find parallels...It appears that there is a great similarity between the Kiowa-Apache Manatidie and some of the southwestern Apache dances (1978:31,32).

In Other Cultures, John Beattie discusses this aspect of comparative analysis as one of social anthropology's most crucial problems. "This is the question of the difference between a particular social system or institution as the anthropologist represents it for analytic or comparative purposes, and the 'same' system or institution as it is seen by the members of the society themselves" (1964:62). This is relevant because it brings to point the true worth of comparative analysis. Can comparative analysis be helpful in the translation of culture? Does knowing about an aspect of some other culture clarify the translation of the culture in question? The answer lies in the investigator's use of the comparative data being presented.

Sweet establishes both a historical model and an ethnographic model as she summarizes these kinds of literature on "(1) general differences between Pueblo and Navajo culture, (2) Navajo/Pueblo culture contact, (3) the effects of the Spanish upon Pueblo/Navajo relations and (4) attitudes of Pueblos and Navajos towards each other" (1979:5). Sweet has organized her presentation following the historic and ethnographic models of Navajo Society, and she proceeds with clarity in her discussion of Navajo Dance as a symbolic system. Here is a real 'anthropology of the dance'. It is very well done, and one wishes that Kwok's and Beatty's work were of the same calibre.

In his discussion of a theory of symbols, Nelson Goodman uses Labanotation as a model for the study of notational systems. He briefly explains Laban's system of notation to illustrate the theoretical possibilities of this system of recording movement. Through his use of Labanotation as one example of a model for notational systems, Goodman concludes affirmatively that the use of Labanotation can be for human movement in general as well as dance (1976:218). The fact that Labanotation is (or can be) a viable script for the writing of movement means that it is a kind of international 'phonetic alphabet' of the medium of movement.

In conclusion, the use of models for generalizations and abstractions is a crucial element in the presentation and reporting of data.

> The critical questions are...what is the level of abstraction, and what are the kinds of theories involved?...Being explicit about such a matter in social anthropology is essential. One's commonsense notions about different cultures are often implicitly deduced from his own culture and can be seriously deceiving...This is why there is a special need for explicit theory in social anthropology, that is, for a systematic consideration of the kinds of questions which are to be asked (Beattie, 1964:41, 42).

Through the use of models, a writer can realistically come even closer to his theories about the people, culture, or symbols in question. A writer must also concern himself with theories of the people that they hold. The trick is to make these theories about and theories of match so that we have 'good' anthropology and a truthful representation of the people.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Briefly, this type of analysis is a systematic method for describing the essential character change in movement.

2. This refers to the reachable space (within the possibilities of the limbs) surrounding the body without changing one's place.

3. The structural model consisted of a typology of dances that related to the locations of villages in a diagrammatic form. This is, of course, the most primitive kind of 'structural' approach, but it is a beginning.

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