I think that we can develop … it is possible that I [might] create a new dance. You might find me as a trainee in a team [that is] a bit modern, that would give me the principles of ballet [classical] dance and impressionist dance. The thing has a relationship with the body -- flexibility, fitness, even aesthetics. This is a basic thing that I can study. I might take exercises in ballet dance, impressionist dance, sport, warm-ups, and such details. These issues developed in the world. Now they take the shape of dances, even the sport movements are taking the shape of dances. This is the matter. How much can I be intelligent and observant of the issue when I’m a trainee, at the beginning of my training - I do not want to say blindfolded, but thirsty for the knowledge of dance. I want to take everything. Okay, the issue is clear, that I want to dance popular dance, and northern dabke,1 and southern, the wahda wa-nus,2 and the things common to the culture, and in the consciousness, and even in words that are commonly used … [words] known to all, and of great simplicity. How much awareness do I have when I train on a team of my choice? A trainee enters the team; they give him basics, basics -- but on healthy basis so that he won’t harm his body while he is training …. Medical instructions, physical

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1 Dabke, literally “stamping feet,” is a popular folk dance and a form of line-dancing common at celebrations.
2 A kind a rhythm or drumbeat in Arab music.
instructions, that he might take while training. This is preparation. I might be in preparation.

I do not know. I started a bit on the details of how we are training. But how much impact does this have on my culture, as a trainee? Where should I go? One develops, one gets to the point where he can design a dance. For example, I can develop a dance -- am I developing it, or am I adding something to it to make it more beautiful … or to make it distorted? The conundrum is here. Therefore, the teams that train the upcoming generations have a responsibility that is not simple. I can train a child on a western basis, and start him a bit on popular dance. Now, I’m establishing in his mind that something is developing, although the subject has not really developed. Maybe I added something which might harm the Palestinian tradition itself. How much Palestinian identity do I have inside of me? How convinced am I? … and I see that my Palestinian popular dance is a tool of expression for me, but, I mean, as a message, a feeling, something I’m in love with. I love it very much. If I reached this stage I can preserve the tradition in the right way.
**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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