

ETHNOCHOREOLOGY IN PRACTICE The need to apply ethnochoreology to folk-dance pedagogy in folklore movement practice

KATARINA BABČÁKOVÁ, Bratislava

Abstrakt

Príspevok sa venuje tanečnej antropológii – etnochoreologickej vednej disciplíne, ktorá analyzuje tradičný ľudový tanec v jeho širších antropologických, historicko-geografických, kultúrno-spoločenských, psychologických a symbolických kontextoch. Kontexty ľudového tanca, implicitne i explicitne reflektované v jeho interpretačných prejavoch (tanečný materiál, odev, náradie, tanečné príležitosti, spoločensko-kultúrne prostredie), sú analyzované z hľadiska ich potreby v pedagogike ľudového tanca. Príspevok identifikuje nevyhnutnosť etnologických a etnochoreologických vedomostí tanečného pedagóga v pedagogickom procese vyučovania ľudového tanca, ktorého cieľom je získanie a interiorizácia komplexných tanečných zručností (kompetencií) interpreta.

Príučové slová: ľudový tanec, etnochoreológia, etnológia, tanečná pedagogika, tradičná kultúra, context

Abstract

This paper identifies the need to perceive traditional folk dance in its ethnological and ethnochoreological contexts within the educational process of teaching folk dance which aims to obtain and acquire an artist's complex dance skills (competences). This paper deals with dance anthropology and ecology, which are ethnochoreological disciplines that analyse traditional folk dance in its anthropological, historical, geographic, socio-cultural, psychological and symbolic contexts, and its role in pedagogy and the staging of folk dance in the practice of the folklorism movement. Selected anthropological and ecological contexts of folk dance¹ (dance material, clothing, tools, dance opportunities and the socio-cultural environment) are theoretically analysed in terms of their needs in pedagogy and the scenic presentation of folk dance with brief examples.

¹ In the context of this article, this term refers to traditional folk dance (defined below).

Key words: folk dance, ethnochoreology, ethnology, dance pedagogy, traditional culture, context

Introduction

This article responds to current issues concerning the implementation of the core ethnochoreological knowledge of folk dance and its relationship to the complex system of traditional culture in pedagogy and the practical staging of folk dance in the folklorism movement. It outlines the historical, anthropological and ecological factors determining individual dance expression. Comprehensive information about such matters in folk dance education literature² is often absent.³

² Žitňanová, H. 1970. *Hudobno – pohybová rytmika*. Bratislava : OÚ; Žitňanová, H. 1980. *Metodika vyučovania pre prípravné štúdium 1. stupňa tanečného odboru ZUŠ*. Bratislava : SPN; Žitňanová, H. 1981. *Metodika vyučovania pre 1. ročník 1. stupňa tanečného odboru ZUŠ*. Bratislava : SPN; Žitňanová, H. – Jurasovová, E. – Puobišová, D. 1982. *Metodika vyučovania pre 2. ročník 1. stupňa tanečného odboru ZUŠ*. Bratislava : SPN; Žitňanová, H. 1984. *Metodika vyučovania pre 3. ročník 1. stupňa tanečného odboru ZUŠ*. Bratislava : SPN; Žitňanová, H. – Puobišová, D. 1992. *Hudobno-pohybová rytmika*. Bratislava : NOC; Žitňanová, H. 1992. *Dejiny tanca pre tanečný odbor ZUŠ*. Bratislava : SPN; Žitňanová, H. 2005. *Metodika vyučovania pre prípravné štúdium tanečného odboru 1. stupňa základného štúdia základných umeleckých škôl: prípravné štúdium 2*. Bratislava : MŠ SR; Žitňanová, H. – Puobišová, D. 2005. *Metodika vyučovania pre 1. ročník tanečného odboru 1. stupňa základného štúdia základných umeleckých škôl*. Bratislava : MŠ SR; Mázorová, M. – Šimoneková, H. 1965. *Tanečná výchova detí*. Bratislava : OÚ; Mázorová, M. – Šimoneková, H. 1967. *Technika pohybu a hudobno-pohybová rytmika*. Bratislava : OÚ; Medvecká, E. – Šimoneková, H. – Ondrejka, K. 1971. *Rytmika a ľudové tance pre 1. – 5. ročník ZDŠ*. Bratislava : SPN; *Rytmika a ľudové tance*. 1973. Bratislava : SPN; Mázorová, M. – Ondrejka, K. 1991. *Slovenské ľudové tance*. Bratislava : SPN; Šimoneková, H. – Zálešák, C. 1962. *Rytmika a ľudové tance: metodická príručka k učeb. osnovám teles. výchovy pre 6.-9. roč. ZDŠ a pre školy 2. cyklu*. Bratislava : SPN; Šimoneková, H. – Oravcová, M. 1966. *Rytmika, ľudové tance, umelecká gymnastika*. Bratislava : FTVŠ UK; Šimoneková, H. 1978. *Ľudové tance*. Bratislava : FTVŠ UK; Trunečková, E. 1976. *Hudobno – pohybová výchova žiakov mladšieho školského veku ZDŠ s využitím prostriedkov rytmiky, ľudových tancov a hier v školskej telesnej výchove*. Bratislava : FTVŠ UK; Jeřábková, J. 1968. *Detské tanečné motívy*. Bratislava : OÚ; Jurasovová, E. 1973. *Tanečno-hudobná príprava detí*. Bratislava : OÚ; Medvecká, E. 1997. *Detské hry a tance*. Bratislava : ASCO; Ondrejka, K. 1973. *Metodika nácviku slovenských ľudových tancov*. In: *Zborník štúdií a úvah o tanečnej a súborovej problematike*. Bratislava : OÚ; Palovičová, J. 2006. *Rozvoj hudobno-pohybových schopností prostredníctvom rytmickej gymnastiky a ľudových tancov*. Banská Bystrica : FHV UMB; Blaho, J. 2009. *Aplikácia autentických štýlotvorných prvkov ľudového tanca v interpretácii a tvorbe*. In: *Zborník habilitačných a inauguračných prednášok: pedagógovia Hudobnej a tanečnej fakulty VŠMU v Bratislave*. Bratislava : VŠMU, pp. 128-133; Marišler, S. 2013. *Dva metodické prístupy k výučbe improvizácie v ľudovom tanci*. Bratislava : VŠMU.

³ Dance education literature specializes in teaching dance motifs from various regions, the interiorization of the tempo and rhythmic competences, correct dance techniques and the

The paper characterizes dance anthropology as a scientific discipline; it defines folk dance and the difference between its scenic presentation and interpretation in traditional settings, and identifies the context that functionally and syncretically influences the resulting dance expression.⁴ The aim of this article is not a comprehensive proposal of educational training modules (a training plan); it is rather a probe into the current problems of the frequent absence of teaching folk dance in context, respecting the processes of tradition, collective norms and invariants in the collective memory. Therefore, the paper essentially seeks to identify and explain the need for basic ethnochoreological knowledge in the field of dance anthropology and ecology in pedagogy and the staging of folk dance. The characteristics of the determinant contexts of folk dance with specific examples form the article's foundation.⁵ They point to problems in the absence of knowledge concerning dance anthropology and ecology in the pedagogy of folk dance, its interiorization and stylish interpretation: "Static formal descriptions and analysis of the material cannot reveal the specificity of folk creation, as it neglects the extraordinary complexity which consists in the mutual integration of folklore traditions. The specificity of the existence of the traditional material which we deal with, the variety of functions, the psychology of the tradition bearers and the brief mention of the whole mechanism of the processes of tradition all recede into the background. It is unusual also due to the fact that such a view forms the basis for further manipulation with folklore" (Důžek, 1969, 3).

appropriate physical preparation of an artist; it identifies the importance of dance movement training to develop physical competence and characterizes the effective didactic methods. The comprehensive ethnochoreological study of dance with implications for dance pedagogy is a relatively new professional approach based on a new methodological approach from abroad. Its aim is to change perceptions of folk dance as exclusively a means of expression or dance technique and to present knowledge about the context of this phenomenon of cultural heritage in a didactic approach.

⁴ The aim of the article is not to give a sample of a folk dance lesson or an example of a temporal or thematic programme of training in a folk-dance ensemble. Rather, the intention is the identification of the complementary aspects determining folk dance, the knowledge of which is necessary for the creation of these curricula.

⁵ For organizational reasons, the article does not contain any audiovisual appendices presenting specific examples of issues of interdependence in folk dance anthropology, ecology or folk dance pedagogy.

Dance anthropology

Ethnochoreology examines and analyses traditional dance forms. A syncretic view of the study of folk dance in its socio-cultural and historical contexts requires a combination of cultural-historical and cultural anthropological study (Stavělová, 2001). According to G. Prokosch Kurath (Prokosch Kurath, 1960), ethnochoreology is a part of ethnochoreological studies and research into social relations that determine dance and are a consequence of it. Dance anthropology,⁶ a relatively new interdisciplinary part of ethnochoreological science, examines dance from the anthropological, contextual, communication, environmental and symbolic points of view. It complements the structural analysis of dance with an analysis of socio-cultural, gender, psychobiological and ethnic identifying contexts of dance, while also analysing its cognitive and emotional determinants and functional aspects (Prokosch Kurath, 1960).

The birth of dance anthropology⁷ is associated with the specialized institutionalization of dance research. The impulse for its establishment was the effort to establish a uniform system of dance notation, terminology and typology. In the mid-20th century this was initiated by ethnochoreologists in Central European countries. These efforts resulted in the creation of the International Folk Music Council (IFMC) in 1937 in England.⁸ In 1960 the Folk Dance Commission was founded,⁹ which has operated as the Study Group on Ethnochoreology since 1978. The aims of this group have been to clarify the status of traditional dance in society, characterize the situation in dance research in different countries, publish a dance bibliography, create an international dance archive, organize the Folk Dance Terminology Working Group which

⁶ The methodological approach of dance anthropology is still rare in ethnochoreological studies (Důžek, 1969; Důžek – Garaj, 2001).

⁷ The notion of dance anthropology has been specifically extended to mark this scientific discipline in European ethnochoreology; American ethnochoreology uses the term “dance ethnology” (Grau, 1993). However, the subject of the studies and the methodology are identical.

⁸ The initial aims of the organization were to organize conferences and festivals, publish national recording catalogues, mediate archival sources and create a universal dance notation and music classification system.

⁹ The members were G. Martin and E. Pesovár (Hungary), H. Laudová and E. Kröschlová (Czech Republic), and A. Giurchescu and V. Why-Ciortea (Romania). Later on there were also experts from the GDR (K. Petermann), Bulgaria (R. Katzarova) and Poland (G. Dąbrowska).

addressed the question of terminology, and create a system of structural analysis of dance.¹⁰

The German ethnochoreologist Prokosch Kurath defines dance anthropology as “*the scientific study of ethnic dances in all their cultural significance, religious function or symbolism, or social place*” (Prokosch Kurath, 1960, 235). The discipline has various names in different countries, depending on the research focus and direction of scientific discourse.¹¹ It is an interdisciplinary science which forms intersections with four scientific disciplines: ethnology (research communication, cognitive processes and dance ecology), linguistics¹² (examining dance as a system of language with vocabulary, grammar and syntax), physical anthropology and archaeology¹³ (Hanna, 1979). The current topic of dance anthropology include concepts of content movement; socio-cultural, gender, political and ethnic identity concepts; the context of dance; research into communication and emotions; and research into psychobiological factors that differ from the human-like “dance” of some animal species (Hanna, 1979). The anthropological approach to the study of dance thus allows one to characterize folk dance in the context of traditional culture and reveal its social, cognitive and symbolic aspects.

¹⁰ The focus of studies on the structural analysis of dance has borne fruit in the form of manuals such as *Syllabus for Folk Dance Analysis* in 1965 and subsequent anthology studies on the structural analysis of dance types, which in the last thirty years have been written by ethnochoreologists from IFMC member countries based on the pioneering work of analysing dance structure by O. Szentpálová, H. Podešvová, G. Martin and E. Pesovár. The first initiative to analyse the form of dance was born in the 1950s among experts from the “Eastern Bloc” (Hungary, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, the former Czechoslovakia and East Germany) thanks to a relatively lively dance tradition, a number of ethnographic studies, the first audiovisual documentation and support for political and social reasons (Giurchescu – Kröschlová, 2007). In 1969 the *Yearbook of the IFMC*, an annual publication of international ethnochoreological and ethnomusicological studies, began publication.

¹¹ Theoretical approaches include functionalist, structuralist, comparative and gender studies (Hanna, 1988). The main difference is the focus of European ethnochoreology on Saussure’s *parole* (types of dance in its variants), while American ethnochoreology focuses on the *langue* (invariant dance types) (Grau, 1993).

¹² In the 1970s, the paradigm of structural linguistics and semiotics affected ethnochoreological works in particular through the work of the American anthropologist A. L. Kaeppler.

¹³ Currently there are specialized university departments in the United States, Hungary, Czech Republic and England; there are also various periodicals (*Dance Research Journal*, *Current Anthropology* and *Yearbook of the ICTM*).

Folk dance in traditional and scenic form

Folk art (folklore)¹⁴ is functionally connected with material, mental and social culture. Folk dance¹⁵ is therefore an integral part of a complex system of traditional culture, defined as “culture inherited from the past, the core of traditional culture. It forms a relatively closed structural phenomena incorporated into the cultural values that the relevant community at a given time and space recognizes and considers to be typical for itself. These cultural events are in their content, form and function more or less stable ... The determining factor was the method, which corresponds to material culture; the way of life of the popular classes corresponds to common culture, the level of awareness and the knowledge of mental culture and artistic creation” (Luther, 1995, 263). Traditional folk dance is currently performed mainly in the form of scenic presentations and the phenomenon of folklorism.¹⁶ Applying the theoretical principles of folkloristics (Leščák

¹⁴ “The collection of cultural phenomena realized in the form of speech, games, dance, drama and music – singing, contact and communication. These cultural phenomena are implemented in many types and variations. The timing of persistence in the tradition depends on their persistence in the collective memory. Folklore is subject to the collective norms of a particular local community or social group. It reflects the social and cultural relationships in the environment, its ethical and aesthetic views, and thus becomes the expression of a particular social group or ideology. In addition to the identification function, it also satisfies cognitive, ceremonial, entertainment and educational functions. Folklore has significant ethnic characters” (Leščák, 1995, 139-140). In our environment, traditional folk culture is the subject of special conservation measures and legislative documents (the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Declaration of the National Council for the Protection of Cultural Heritage 91/2001, Act 61/2000 on Public Education, as amended, Act 416/2001, and the Concept of Care for Traditional Folk Culture).

¹⁵ Defined as “movement and musical rural art as well as urban art. In the past, farmers, herders and artisans in particular, as well as dance expressions taken from different cultural and ethnic environments, adapted to local conditions. It has a syncretic character, and besides the song and music – the most important components of dances – it is associated with other manifestations of folk culture (especially customs, etiquette, games, folk theatre and clothing, etc.)”. Taking into account the historical, developmental, morphological, formal, gender and functional aspects, the dance repertoire can be divided differently. From a functional point of view, dances can be divided into ritual, ceremonial, entertaining and intermediate stages (Důžek, 1995, 248-249).

¹⁶ Defined as “the use or imitation of folk culture phenomena outside their authentic environment, often regardless of their original function. Folklorism is a historically long process of mutual influence of artistic manifestations of so-called ‘popular’ and ‘high’ cultural origin. Folklorism also denotes the second existence of folklore; it refers to mediated events of folk culture experienced second-hand. Currently, folklorism is usually examined in two dimensions, which nonetheless overlap and cannot be strictly separated. The outer line consists of the use of folk culture phenomena in the field of commercial interests such as tourism. The internal line

– Sirovátka, 1982), we can characterize fundamental differences, differentiating dance expression in a traditional setting and its folklorized interpretation:

- dissemination handed down from generation to generation in direct contact with a local environment in the case of traditional forms (“dance socialization”)/dissemination through education (foreign environment and foreign teachers);
- direct communication of dancers in a traditional setting and traditional dance occasion/spread indirectly by the mass media;
- the anonymity of creators (excluding exceptional dancers)/authorship choreography in folklorized forms;
- respect for collective norms of the local community in traditional forms/priority respect for scenic principles;
- traditional local community members are “performers and spectators at the same time”; in folklorized forms there is a clear dichotomy of performer/spectator;
- In a traditional setting, only elements or phenomena that are compatible with community standards are handed down. Folklorized forms are characterized by selecting the “exotic” elements, often failing to respect the traditional context and system;
- Traditional forms existed in thousands of improvised interpretive variants through a commonly traded invariant in the collective memory, whereas folklorized forms are characterized by unification, levelling and stereotyping;
- Traditional forms respected the standards and style of the community, traditional etiquette and traditional ethical principles of the community; folklorized forms respect the principles of stage aesthetics and are characterized by theatricality.

The presentation of scenic forms of folk dance, currently the primary form of its secondary existence, is ideally developed by the constructive cooperation

consists of various interest groups and individuals for the purposeful preservation, protection and development of folk traditions. With regard to different genres of folk art, folklorism is divided into music (the use and imitation of folk music), literature (the use and imitation of oral folklore), dance (the use and imitation of dance folklore), stage (along with application of the phenomena of folk culture on the stage) and art (imitation and use of folk fine art outside its authentic environment)” (see <http://www.ludovakultura.sk/index.php?id=5061>). The reverse process is folklorization, defined as “the process by which initially non-folk phenomena gain the features and functions of folklore phenomena and are sanctioned by collective norms” (Leščák, 1995: 140). At present, the “dance-house movement” can be considered a relatively new phenomenon of folklorization (events through which folk dance enters live contemporary dance repertoire).

of ethnochoreologists, dance teachers and choreographers. The structural and anthropological analysis of folk dances made by ethnochoreologists is transformed into suitable teaching methods by erudite dance teachers. In this way, the artist (dancer) obtains and acquires exercise habits, and internalizes the structure, style and function of this type of dance to achieve the skills of improvisation with maintaining its functional and structural patterns and characters. The choreographer stages the dance and musical (in this case, folklore) material during the creative process. In the practice of the amateur folk movement,¹⁷ we usually witness the “unification” of the above three complementary professions.¹⁸ Education should therefore be a complex combination of knowledge of dance pedagogy (didactics and methodology), ethnochoreology and choreography.¹⁹

Determinants of folk dance expression

Folk dance is a complex phenomenon. In addition to the interpretive movement and mental skills of dancers and their specific temperament, individual dance expression is further determined by the following mutually influencing components:²⁰

- dance material
- music or lyrics²¹

¹⁷ The amateur folklore movement in Slovakia currently includes about 420 children’s folklore ensembles, 400 folk groups and nearly 180 folklore ensembles. In addition, there are dozens of solo dancers and hundreds of folk music and singing groups. This totals around fifty thousand active dancers (when ignoring several generations of former members). In addition to the amateur folk movement, there exist professional ensembles (US Lúčnica, SEUK, Ifjú Szívek and PULS).

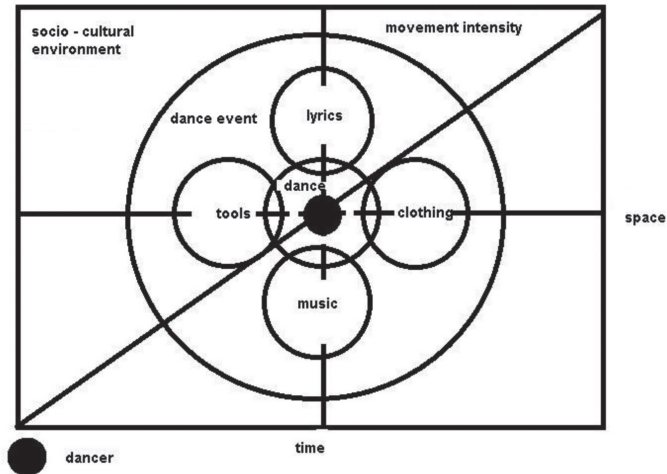
¹⁸ In practice, the frequent model of the training process (three times a week for two to three hours), comprising technical preparation and repetition of the repertoire, and often also the creation and training of new choreography, is usually facilitated by one or two people. The interiorization of the customary motions and ideally the ownership of the structure and the understanding and interiorization of the functional principles and ecological factors of the dance type is often a luxury in terms of time, financial resources and professional erudition that is out of reach of the group leader.

¹⁹ See Nosál, 1984: 16-138.

²⁰ For reasons of scope, I will give priority to the selected components.

²¹ A comprehensive analysis of the interdependencies of traditional music (vocal and instrumental) and dance material using current theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of dance should be the subject of cooperation between ethnochoreology and ethnomusicology in the near future, using the information from research aimed at rescuing folk dance ecology.

- tools and clothing
- dance occasions
- the socio-cultural environment²²



Dance material and its application

Centuries of dance development in the historical, geographical, cultural, social, ethnic and confessional European context have formed the framework for the creation and dating back of hundreds of local variations of dance types, new imports and foreign dance forms and forms of syncretism as well as their copying or disappearance. As live historical organisms, these syncretic processes allowed for the maintaining of a great dance repertoire up to the 1930s.²³

The international typology of ICTM, which has formal classification principles, recognizes several dance types that existed in the traditional environment

²² See Felföldi, 2005: 25.

²³ The most recently published information on the contemporary dance tradition has been provided in the findings of the Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which undertook research in 41 municipalities in the years 1991 and 1992 in the framework of the Slovak Folk Dance Music project (Důžek – Garaj, 2001). The research showed that male and female dances have less than a third of their contemporary dance repertoire dominated by “mating” dances. Dancing with functional links to rites and customs is about 10% of the repertoire, with about three quarters of this being attached to rites and customs of marriage. Dance repertoires involving Shrovetide dominate the calendar of ceremonies.

of hundreds of local (micro-regional) variants (Martin, 1979). The implication of this typology for our dance material (Martin, 1981) allows us to reflect on the historical development of dance in the context of the European dance culture that significantly determined it, identify the areas of different dance dialects (“dance circles” with an extended variant of a dance type) and identify and classify the width of the dance material. Its thorough knowledge and understanding of the cultural and historical context is fundamental for understanding the functions and formal characters of dance. They are the subject of the ethnochoreological analysis of the dance material.²⁴

Ethnochoreological research is based on a formal, structural, comparative, contextual and functional analysis of the source material. Given that the traditional forms of dance types (except for some folklorized dances) in different regions were maintained at the most to the middle of the 20th century, the analysis of source material (videos from earlier field research, documentation and film documentaries, and written primary and secondary sources) is the primary methodological approach in the study of traditional forms of folk dance. Material analysis requires a thorough knowledge of the methodological approaches of ethnology (ethnochoreology), which examines the source material (archival or field) and uses the principles of its critical analysis and evaluation. In ethnochoreological practice, this means the following:

- a structural analysis (Dabrowska – Petermann, 1983; Torp, 2007; Giurchescu – Kröschlová, 2007; Felföldi, 2007; Krausová, 2014) of all available and relevant film documents
- a comparative analysis of audiovisual and written (primary and secondary) sources
- a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the results of field research (nowadays in the alarming form of “rescue research”), which may be supplemented by knowledge of the ecology and function of dance expression as well as formal specification characters.

Working with audiovisual (film) source material requires a knowledge of methodological approaches of ethnology (ethnochoreology) used in structural analysis and a theoretical and methodological knowledge of evaluating the relevance of sources. Analysing a dance from the source material does not mean the “copying” or description of movement in the complete dance sequence of one sole dancer (the dance informant). It denotes the structural analysis of the various dance sequences of all dancers (their interpretative variants) and their comparative analysis in order to identify the invariant which is commonly traded

²⁴ See Dabrowska – Petermann, 1983; Krausová, 2014.

in the collective memory. Structural analysis identifies the internal structure of a particular variant of the dance type: the form, frequency and function of the motifs, and the variants and structure of the motif series and chains (dance sequences):²⁵ “Existing in memory and recalled as movement motifs, as imagery, and as a system, movements are used to create compositions that produce social and cultural meaning in performance. Such analyses involve deconstructing the movements into culturally recognized pieces [...]” (Kaeppler, 2000, 119).

The subsequent comparative analysis aims to identify the basic structural, functional and style-making features of a particular type of dance in a locality. An exact comparison of all available analysed dance sequences of all informants (dancers) can detect common features that characterize this unwritten invariant, handed down as a dance language.²⁶ This comparison allows for the identification of dynamic, rhythmic and plastic variants of these motifs (“words” in the common movement inventory of the community), to recognize the logic and function of the motif lines and chain-sequencing (the “grammar” of the dance language), and in such a way understand how it is possible to “talk by movement”. This does not just mean the imitation of one dance sequence by one single dancer (reciting a poem in a foreign language without understanding the meaning or saying foreign words without understanding the grammar). Through the analysis of individual “dance narratives” (*paroles*)²⁷ of the largest number of artists possible, we are looking for the invariant of the dance type handed down by generations as an unwritten “language”.

An analysis of source film material then requires comparisons with written (primary or secondary) sources. Descriptions of dance can add information about the course of a dance (its introduction, conclusion and performances), its function and partly²⁸ even its form. This information forms part of the ecology of dance. As one of the current ethnochoreological approaches to the study of dance, dance ecology explores the environment, place, time and participants in the dance, their inclusion in the proceedings of the dance occasion, the impact of clothing and footwear, and historical, geographical, ethnic, confessional, age,

²⁵ Many ethnochoreologists have undertaken structural analyses since the 1960s (e.g. O. Szentpálová, E. Pesovár, G. Martin, K. Petermann, J Kröschlová, G. Prokosch Kurath, A. Giurchescu, J. L. Kaeppler and L. Felföldi). This was one of the primary tasks of the ICTM Study Group for Ethnochoreology.

²⁶ Dance is a “silent language” (Arbeau, 1589).

²⁷ A child learns language in a natural environment in the process of socialization. Words and grammatical rules, and the subsequent function and correct classification of sentences are acquired and internalized so that the child is able to understand speech and talk.

²⁸ Audiovisual documentation is very often short, faded, silent and not technically assessed. Recordings were often made with the intervention of the director or creator (staged forms).

gender, status and other factors determining dance expression. The inadequate film recordings of dance should be completed and clarified by information from field research and information about the circumstances of particular recording situations. Field research is done partly as a means of a triangulation analysis of the record. For the implementation of the qualitative analysis of the information collected,²⁹ it is necessary to control the theoretical and methodological principles of ethnological research and maintain the ethnochoreological knowledge and understanding of dance history.

A comprehensive analysis of source (audiovisual and written) material and information from field research can define and identify the formal, structural and functional style-making characteristics of the local dance-type variant. Following appropriate teaching methods, the dance teacher can prepare future dance artists (performers). In addition to developing the required skills,³⁰ the folk-dance artist can develop the competences of the interiorization of the dance motifs (in the plastic, dynamic and rhythmic variants), the motif rankings, motif chains and dance sequences. This allows for an efficient training system of interiorization modules³¹ which develops competence in improvisation.³²

The absence of these competences for dance teachers and choreographers may be the cause of the spread of a fragmented picture of the diversity of folk

²⁹ Among other things, dance fieldwork requires synchronous analysis (the dancing age of the informant and research time), an assessment of the informant (age, background, education, confession, employment and social status) and a critical analysis of the effects of folklorism in the locality. It requires obtaining relevant information about the dance repertoire and dance culture in the region as well as its synchronic and diachronic transformations. An audiovisual recording of the dance (if this can be done) must complete the description of the dance (e.g. its external form, internal structure, introduction, conclusion, response to music, singing, calling and breaking with a partner, and use of props) and comprehensive information on the ecology of dance. This information should be gleaned from the relevant number of informants for verification and the information must be subsequently critically evaluated.

³⁰ For instance, muscle development, the development of the range of movements, fitness exercises, tempo and rhythm exercises, contact exercises, the competence of development in dynamics, coordination, cooperation, couple communication, the perception of space and the development of dance memory.

³¹ This is based on the education methods of I. Molnar. The system of interiorization of movement skills and competences was developed by P. Lévai, a dance teacher at the Academy of Dance Arts in Budapest.

³² As one of the most characteristic features of folk dance in the Central European cultural space, “improvisation” is defined as “a process of interpretation which is based on the individual ability to promptly amend the form of folk art while preserving its basic expression and meaning. This is part of the creative process of folklore interpretations. An artist can reword the meaning and expression as well as the stylish means of the piece while not disrupting the principles defined by the community” (Ondrejka – Leščák, 1995, 204).

dance expression as part of cultural heritage: “The traditional content (of dance in the folklorism movement) is being replaced more and more by a new one with different origins. According to foreign models, it is being replaced quickly in a foreign and chaotic way. In particular, big ensembles, which are continuing in the direction and style of the period of the ‘flowering of socialist realism’, are completely losing their national wealth of content. They are ignoring the names of the dance types. In presenting dances from different regions, they combine them to form images of some ‘units’ (called ‘suites’) and give them names according to a region, such as the ‘Silesian’, ‘Rzeszow’ and ‘Lublin’ dances. For some time they will create the compositions of ‘Polish dance’ or even ‘European dance’” (Dabrowska, 2005, 97).

Tools (“props”)³³ and clothing

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the development of traditional clothing, influenced by cultural and social developments and geo-economic factors (the clothing and footwear of the Carpathian mountain pastoral area, and the clothing and footwear of the Danube lowland peasant areas) resulted in a remarkable diversity of clothing culture in Slovakia.³⁴ The primary functions of folk costumes were protective, aesthetic and representative, and they also had an important symbolic function. As a means of nonverbal communication, clothing presented the age, condition, status, confession, ethnicity and profession of the wearer as well as the type of occasion (e.g. ceremonial, festive and work clothing).

Performers of a folk dance should know and understand traditional clothing as well as its form, function and symbolism. It is necessary for them to “be able to wear” traditional dress and “identify themselves” with this type of clothing even during training. Traditional clothing and footwear significantly determined dance styles as they existed in a functional symbiosis resulting from the aforementioned historical, geographic, ethnic, confessional and social factors. It is probably no coincidence that the area of the spread of Baroque clothing (a wide skirt with lots of petticoats, strongly ruffled sleeves, a broken-down upper bodice and skirt with rich decorativeness) near large central cities coincides with

³³ I prefer the term “tools”, as the term “prop” refers to the tools and objects used in theatrical presentation. In the traditional environment, dancers used various forms of tools (e.g. a hatchet, stick, scarf, hat and bottle).

³⁴ Experts in traditional apparel culture have identified more than 60 clothing areas in Slovakia. The residues of historical clothing styles are preserved in traditional clothing.

the spread of dance types of a new style (*čardáš*), while areas with a widespread occurrence of older Renaissance clothing (*vist* – a lace-up bodice coupled with a longer skirt with a narrow silhouette of simple ornamentation, embroidery and an archaic form of *parta*) in northern areas of the Carpathian arch are regions with an older preserved dance culture (e.g. old turning-couple dances).

Analogously, many imaginary “movement-style making characters” are actually naturally determined by clothing. For example, the often incorrectly interpreted movement of the pelvis imitating the “breathing wheel” or “horizontal movement of women” in the round dances is just the natural effect of wearing a certain number of starched petticoats, whose movement reflects the natural movement of the body while walking; isolated movements of the pelvis are not typical for traditional female dance expressions in Slovakia. Similarly, the *čapáše* fancy male motifs are spread in areas where the wearing of boots dominates. The “stately” character of the bridal dance during weddings and the choice of older couple dance types are the subject of a solemn and pretentious variant of festive clothing and headgear, and a collective norm that requires archaic forms (of material, mental, social and artistic culture) during the rite of passage.

In the educational process, the use and knowledge of traditional clothing (and its components) is very important in the internalization of the habits of movement in order to achieve the stylish interpretation of folk dance. Use of the traditional type of footwear helps the internalization of the competences of the correct carrying weight and correct vertical movement; respecting the amount and material of the underskirt facilitates the internalization of the correct vertical and horizontal movements of the dance partner. The use of male headwear and scarves in the hand of a woman during the educational process is a means of obtaining the correct movement habit and learning the gestures of the dance-type variant.

With insufficient knowledge of its form, functional variants and symbolic value, traditional clothing becomes scenic costume: stage clothing without any aesthetic or symbolic value which the performer has a neutral relationship to (he cannot “wear it” nor “take care of it”). Even the performance is distorted in the case of using a “costume”,³⁵ disregarding the period of the spreading of the type of dance and its associated forms of traditional clothing.

In addition to traditional clothing, dancing tools deserves a separate study. The basic principle is, however, the knowledge of the traditional practical and symbolic functions and values of these objects in everyday life as well as in dance. A scarf in the hands of a woman, for example, was a symbol and non-verbal means of expressing affection, and has been frequently represented in

³⁵ In an experimental scenic design (the highest level of stylization), a certain shift is obvious and necessary; clothing can be part of the range of means of expression.

family (even calendar) rituals. In the course of history, this symbolism has been transferred into dance culture (dances with the choice of partner, which are relics of syncretism of early couple dances from the Renaissance [*gaillarde*] and folklorized dances). Tools used in shepherd dances are instruments traditionally used for the protection of animals against wild predators, defence (*hajduši*) or work in the forest. These physically difficult dance types, used for defence against enemies and wild predators, or in defence of the flock, can be called “medieval *calocagathia*”. The movement analysis of gestures with tools would prove that they were defence or martial gestures, as is the case of almost all the pastoral farming and ethnic groups (Sachs, 1963). In ignorance of the function of the tools, we can identify the same advancement as in the case of clothing: traditional dress/scenic costume and tool/prop.

The dance event

Dance ecology and anthropology also explores dance in relation to dance events: entertainment, rituals and ceremonial occasions in the family or calendar ritual cycle, the cycle of agricultural work and events associated with customary law. Depending on the dance occasion, the local variant of dance type can have a ritual, festive/ceremonial or entertainment function (Důžek, 1995, 249).

Applying the knowledge of various traditional dance types, completed by knowledge of the way of life of the local community, its feast calendar, the family ceremonial cycle and work cycle, and knowledge of the ethical and aesthetic norms of the community, it is possible to identify a correlation between dance types and dancing occasions, and define its formal and functional changes. For performers, these metamorphoses allow for complex knowledge about traditional dances and the possibility to hone their stylish interpretation.³⁶

At best this implies a thorough knowledge of regional variants of dance event terms and the relevant repertoire. Different dance events were organized in individual territories (Carnival, feasts, the feasts of St Catherine and St Steven, Easter, the May feast, the “harvest home” and recruitment feasts with an entertaining dance repertoire: bachelor jumping dances, women’s circle dances, old turning couple dances, the *verbunk*, *čardáš* and folklorized dances). It is also necessary to know the terms, forms and symbolic factors of the feast system in the community, which also determines the appropriate dance repertoire. The

³⁶ It also provides a creator with a significant range of new tools and inspirations: a diversity of dance occasions and variants of dance types is the natural “field” of relationships, links and contrasts taking place in the background of dance performances and life situations.

feasts of the calendar ceremonial cycle are associated with entertainment and a ceremonial and ritual dance repertoire; occasions in the family ceremonial cycle are characterized by the use of an entertainment and ritual dance repertoire, and occasions tied to the work cycle mainly use an entertainment and ceremonial dance repertoire. Knowledge of the terms of the parties and ritual occasions is not enough. To understand the dance context and the function, form and semiotic features of dance occasions, gender relations and community norms determining the dance should be known.

The collective norm attributed a high degree of normativity, for example, to compliance with the archaic structure of weddings (Jakubíková 1995). Important ritual situations of status-intended standards of behaviour, minimal dance expression and the dominance of symbolic acts of ritual and verbal expressions had their place, as did gender-disaggregated rituals with the erotic symbolism of fertility and prosperity³⁷ and forms of entertainment with dance and a playful repertoire. Even ritual dance forms with important symbolic meanings have their place in the wedding repertoire: e.g. the round dance with the bride, which is interrupted by the elder woman, who takes the bride through this “interrupted gate” to the pantry for the *čepčenie* rite of passage. After this ritual, the bride participates in the round circle dance of married women in a symbolic act of adoption in the new status group. Before this, the groomsman takes off the bride’s *parta*, her symbol of virginity. This act is made with tools with a phallic symbolism, and a part of this ritual is a dance form with strong vertical movement and a relic of the old shepherd’s dance with weapons as symbols of male individuality, strength and fighting in a rite of passage.

Research into dance functions is related to dance occasions. The various dance types in the course of historical development held various roles and had ritual (therapeutic, fertile, prosperous, protective, initiative, reception and lustration), ceremonial³⁸ and entertaining characteristics as a means of a non-verbal symbolic communication system of the community. Dance was a language of movement, interiorized in the socialization processes; dance was observed and learned during dance parties, weddings and other entertaining, ritual or ceremonial occasions.

³⁷ In the wedding repertoire, there are entertaining dances (e.g. *káčeroví*, *metloví*, dance games and entertaining practices such as “women shoeing”), ritual dances (e.g. the wedding *chorovod*, round dances – *sviečkoví*, *partovaňec*, *bieli taňec*, a maiden farewell dance, admission to the female wheel dance, the groomsman dance and *redoví*)

³⁸ According to a concept by V. Turner (Turner, 2004), we call this ceremony a profane type of ritual which lacks a religious basis. However, its importance, solemnity, archaic features and anticipated initial religious focus has sacred features.

Children's games were a kind of "traditional *calocagathia*"; they served as temporal and rhythmic exercises and couple communication exercises. They allowed muscular development, the acquisition of spin and jump habits, orientation in space, cooperation, communication and coordination. They were a means of socialization, the interiorization of local aesthetics and social norms; in this way they prepared children for everyday life, working, ceremonies, entertainment and dancing.

Dance was also used in initiation rites. In a traditional community, the "dancing illiteracy" of maidens or young men was unacceptable. The interiorized competence of local forms of dancing and singing was one of the conditions for admission into maiden or bachelor groups, as well as participation in the dance events, and it was a "matter of honour" for parents. Competence in dancing was as required as knowledge of language. It required the cognitive process of learning the shared rules of the specific dance tradition (Saussure's *langue*) with the ability to use the interiorized rules in dance – to "speak" one's own dance (Saussure's *parole*). It meant not only knowing the "words" but also the rules of grammar, syntax and the cultural and philosophical context of their use. Their knowledge and understanding helps create a credible and interiorized interpretation: "Movements in dance become standardized, patterned symbols understood by members of a society to express and communicate experiences in the external and psychic world" (Hanna, 1979, 319).

The "spectators" – in this case the members of the local community – had the interiorized competence to understand this language of movement in both its manifest and symbolic forms: "Dance expression as a means of nonverbal communication can help decipher or better understand many crucial social processes" (Stavělová, 2003, 67). Ethnological and ethnochoreological knowledge also allows the use of these preserved ritual practices with a high degree of normativity as an important means of expression for the scenic presentation,³⁹

³⁹ Insufficient knowledge of traditional feast occasions and norms of behaviour in the context of ritual, ceremonial and entertaining occasions can bring forth phrasal expressions of the "appropriateness" of some types of folklore material for staged presentation. For example, use of song material with erotic overtones during the christening festivities was a ritual fertility and prosperity practice. If this practice had been ignored, according to traditional visions, it would have had a negative effect on the young family. Similarly, playful behaviour, the consumption of a large amount of alcohol and dance forms with erotic hints (e.g. wallowing with the housekeeper on the ground and the use of masks as phallic symbols during Carnival) was a ritual practice of fertility, prosperity and protection during Shrovetide, and joined older Slavic agrarian visions with an ancient calendar of feasts and the European tradition of Carnival. Victory over winter, trying to survive the spring with limited supplies and the defeat of the negative forces of winter, and waking up to spring's regenerative power were reflected in fertility and prosperity rituals,

respecting the traditional framework of the occasion that determined and created the dance. It also allows for the use of ritual, ceremonial, entertaining or working occasions as a means of expression, theme or scenic principle.

The socio-cultural environment

Diverse ethnic and confessional influences given by the different stages of the colonization of Slovakia, and historical and geographical factors determining the overall way of life, employment, customs and norms influenced (and often determined) the development of dance repertoire and expression (Martin, 1985; Důžek, 1995). Geography and historical development shaped the framework of the impact of foreign ethnic groups, urban culture and cultural exchanges: “[...] in each specific dance zone on the continent, [European dance forms] dominated the other dance genres. Deep research proves that all these dance genres were a part of a general European dance history during various periods” (Martin, 1985, 118). For example, “country dances” in Western Europe (a combination of couple and group dances with simple motifs and complex spatial forms as a reflection of the organized dancing life of the contemporary society)⁴⁰ were the result of social development, which was delayed in the peripheral European regions of Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe due to the political regime. Due to this, the older Renaissance male dance types and Renaissance couple dance types remained dominant in Central and East Central Europe.⁴¹ By analogy, the dance culture of south-western Slovakia near Vienna and Budapest is characteristic for its later Baroque repertoire of new dance styles (*verbunk* and *čardáš*) and the amount of folklorized dances. The dance culture of the northern and eastern regions is characterized by relics of the archaic Renaissance and medieval dance repertoire (old couple dances, jumping bachelor dances, shepherd’s dances and round and chain dance forms). Reflections of the ethnic influence can be seen, for example, in the profusion of folklorized dance forms in remote locations with an older Swabian settlement (e.g. Turček, Rejdová and Chmeľnica).

including the ceremonial dances of medieval guilds in which phallic symbolism (the sabre and hole) was associated with male strength and cohesion.

⁴⁰ Pulling apart and approaching lines, exchanging places, bows, compliments, applause and couples turning while being held above the elbows formed a relatively simple and stable structure. The heterogeneous population quickly and easily memorized and embraced these simple forms, and it quickly spread thanks to the unprecedented mobility of the population throughout Europe during the 19th century.

⁴¹ The historical development of the Balkans under the Turks provides the framework for preserving the oldest round and chain dance forms (Martin, 1985).

Knowledge of the forms and structures of the dance types from different localities and regions should therefore be accompanied by a complex ethnochoreological knowledge of socio-cultural determinants of contemporary dance. Successively, it should be resized to the performance through the appropriate teaching methods of interiorization and understanding.

Dance etiquette and behaviour standards are among the most important factors that influence dance form and function. The strict division of the norms of behaviour of men and women, handed down from generation to generation, is very significantly manifested in dance etiquette as well as in dance forms and styles of expression (in folkloristic practice often omitting the diversity of male and female motifs and gestures).⁴²

Using the example of the spring *chorovody*,⁴³ we can show that the functional and symbolic features influenced the form, ecology, style and existence of this dance expression. Archaic cosmogonic and cosmological ideas practiced in a process of historical development in ceremonies with solar symbolism were important semiotic foundations. With regard to changing the way of life and ideological paradigm, they were replaced by agrarian and prosperity rites. In Romanticism, the period of transformation of traditional ideas, the agrarian and prosperity function was changed into a fertile presentation and aesthetic communication. They were always carried out in the same specified period of the year⁴⁴ in a specific area.⁴⁵ Its specific archaic form⁴⁶ and metaphorical and

⁴² Ballroom dancing “paired” genders; dances with the highest rate of ceremony segregate them into separate lines (Prokosch – Kurath, 1960).

⁴³ This analysis is based on the results of archival research of these dance forms in the first and second thirds of the 20th century and is complemented by the information from qualitative field research from 2011 to 2014 which focused on their ecology and symbolic, anthropological and functional aspects.

⁴⁴ Committed to the calendar ritual cycle, they were carried out only in spring during the festive dates of Palm Sunday, Easter and Pentecost, but these specific Christian feast terms are secondary assignments. Their primary semiotic basis was the spring season of fertility, rebirth and the beginning of the matrimonial cycle.

⁴⁵ The place they were conducted in was related to their function. The oldest types of rites with a symbolic solar function were carried out in cemeteries, outside churches, on bridges and in groves; *chorovody* with an agrarian and prosperity function were carried out in fields and near churches. The most frequented place in localities was the village street, especially when changing functions into presentations of fertility and social communication. Older parts of these cycles were carried out on bridges, at crossroads and near churches in this case.

⁴⁶ Their spatial formations are based on the forms of the line and the ring. Some formations are affected by the forms of late Medieval and Renaissance dances with pantomime gestures and the *contre danses* from the group of folklorized dances from the period of Romanticism. One of the most frequented motifs in *chorovod* cycles is the crossing of a bridge or passing under a gate and was expressed in texts and spatial formations. In diachronic terms, it hinders

symbolic texts⁴⁷ were presented by performers with a specific status – the fertile *communitas* of the local society, who during the existence of the traditional functions were exclusively young unmarried girls.

The continuously flowing energy of the dancers' chains was an analogy for spring growth in nature and the awakening of new life in young women after reaching sexual maturity.⁴⁸ Participation in the cycle of *chorovody* was a form of initiation rite which had the aim of allowing entry into the group of maidens: “[W]omen and youth use stylization in the spheres of event, body, performance, and specific movements to convey an attitude of respect toward the ‘life-charged’ ... Posture is forward-oriented; focus is most commonly downward; movement appears to receive vitality from the earth and in turn to nourish it” (Hanna, 1979, 322). In their basic components (archaic spatial formations, simple step motifs, turning in a clockwise direction, pulsing, a perpetual dance cycle reflecting a substantial idea of continuously flowing energy, gender uniformity and vocal accompaniment), these formally simple dance types are relics of the oldest dance types.⁴⁹

In the traditional environment, the woman was seen as a symbol of stability and her biological and social role was to give and protect life. Analogously, the female round and chain dances have quite uniform movement forms (with

the passage of two key biological periods of the year. The circle is a symbol of periodically repeating solar and lunar movements that in a figurative sense symbolizes the eternal cycle of immortality and infinity. The circular form in dance is also an archaic and symbolic form. It is the most natural, easiest and most cost-effective spatial form. It guarantees the equality of the dancers, regardless of the social hierarchy (there is no “leader”). Ceremonial dances in this form are used as a manifestation of infinity, consistency and the continuity of life, the definition of “their” protected area or sacred space. Research into older types of dance shows that the priority direction of movement of circle dances is the direction consistent with the direction of the movement of the sun. By analogical thinking, the movement of the sun and the planets evokes a harmonization with movement in nature and is in compliance with the “normal” course of the universe and the world. This direction prevails in round and circle dances (parts of the analysed cycles of *chorovody*).

⁴⁷ In the texts, metaphors with symbolism of numbers, colours, transition and wedding symbolism were frequent, as were lyrical themes and motifs with a historical and solar symbolism and the symbolism of virginity.

⁴⁸ Maidenhood was symbolically presented during the festive events of the ritual calendar cycle (Easter Sunday, Pentecost, Christmas Day, the New Year's feast and church feasts) and ritual family cycle (weddings). Maidens wore archaic headgear (*parta*) which in this liminal stage between childhood and womanhood explicitly differentiated her from girls and other young women.

⁴⁹ Nowadays, with the near extinction of improvisational dance knowledge, we are witnessing a revitalization of round, circle and simple chain dance forms (Martin, 1979; the “circle *čardáš*” and “snakes” at weddings or entertaining occasions).

almost no vertical movement) presenting stability.⁵⁰ Specific characteristics of movement and style exclude the participation of men: firmly holding each other relatively close and synchronous movement without the possibility of individual soloist expression are unacceptable for the male, who prefers improvisational solo dance expression. Compared to solo improvising dances, the dominant feature in this dance form is a ritual that requires the unity of participants, time and space at the expense of their own individuality. Their formal monotony is significantly different from the form of shepherd's dances with tools and jumping bachelor's dances in which men demonstrate their force, individuality, skill and excellence.

In the traditional environment, dance expression (as an individual, couple or group) was not only evaluated by the local community from the site of compliance with the structure of the dance type and its "technical interpretation"; it was also considered valuable when it reflected the socio-cultural context (e.g. the dance occasion, social aesthetics, ethical norms, respect for the relevant dance occasion and the status of the dancers). The solemn dancer was evaluated not only in terms of his interpretation but also in terms of his status in the community: "In traditional communities, the criterion of 'best dancer' is often the combination of aesthetic criteria (dance interpretation) with moral, social and psychological criteria – the best dancer has a complex personality and is the leader of the dance, a member of certain social and age groups and the leader of community events" (Giurchescu, 2003, 166).⁵¹

In traditional communities, an important gender stratification of behaviour norms and etiquette existed (significantly also reflected on in couple dances as a kind of "patriarchy of the dance couple"). Stratification criteria also included age and status (who, where, with whom, and how one can/should/must not dance). Traditional etiquette, for example, would not tolerate the provocative behaviour of married women and maidens.⁵² Maidens went to dance parties

⁵⁰ Male dance expression is individual with significant changes in tempo and vertical dynamics. In a traditional setting, male dance expression is an expression of personality, individuality and the disruption of stability.

⁵¹ An aesthetic sense of the local society is objectively impossible to understand from the position of an "etic"; only members of that community deeply understand the assessment criteria (Kaeppler, 2005; Giurchescu, 2003). From the semiotic point of view, an artistic object (in this case, dance expression) is a sign or symbol, the design of which is its value. An aesthetic sign (an object or process) has two reference frames: its own code (structure and rules) and context (social reality) (Giurchescu, 2003).

⁵² Information from field research in dance ecology from 2000 to 2014 in the areas of Lom nad Rimavicou, Kokava nad Rimavicou, Rejdová, Zamutov, Olšavica, Torysky, Kojšov, Kyjov, Važec, Turček, Dubové, Podhradie and Hvozdnica – Štiavnik.

accompanied by other maidens or older women; it was unacceptable for a married couple to come to a dance event together, holding hands or presenting their feelings publicly. A certain restraint and dignity to the dancers is apparent even when viewing archived records. This reflects the desired prototype of a patriarchal Christian morality, which was also reflected in the dances. If this morality was not respected, a person became the subject of various forms of non-physical sanction (in serious cases this could result in exclusion from the local community or a certain social group). The exceptions to this were the ritual occasions with fertility and prosperity functions (a christening, wedding, feast of St John and carnivals), where an erotic undertone and hilarity were the important ritual means ensuring fertility and prosperity.

In turn, old couple dances reflected the medieval forms of gallantry (according to contemporary descriptions of a dancing woman as a quail who attracts a man who dances around her like a hawk), and then reflected contemporary humanistic changes in understanding morality in relation to the body (the first couple dances where partners held each other appeared in the Renaissance). At the same time, old couple dances reflected the patriarchal model of the traditional rural community: the man “leads” the dance and a valuable aspect here was the women’s ability to adapt to him so that the dancing seemed fluent. On the contrary, folklorized dances reflected the changes in the gender inequality paradigm: the symbolic status of men and women and their change in dance expression; dance figures and the male and female motifs were almost uniform in terms of gender and the couple’s roles could even be swapped (a number of these relics were therefore syncretically merged with the repertoire of gender-specific *chorovod* games and circles).⁵³

We are currently witnessing of a sort of gender uniformity in dance repertoire.⁵⁴ The reason is probably the fact that the function of dance as an exclusive means and occasion for closer social and physical contact between a man and a woman has lost its meaning: close social and physical contact is tolerated, the community’s social control in an urban or village environment disappears, and even the norms of behaviour and etiquette are changed.⁵⁵ To

⁵³ Female *chorovod* games from Rejdová, Východná and elsewhere.

⁵⁴ Modern dance (hip-hop, disco and techno) is not gender-specific. The same figures and motifs and the same role in dance can be used by a man or a woman depending on his or her physical abilities (Smith – Beer, 2012).

⁵⁵ The current “dance gender neutrality” in the symbolic plane has also other causes. Gender stratification, closely related to the concept of biological acts, cosmic events and changes in the nature of the current cultural context, loses its important function as an essential complement of binary opposition which it had over a millennium of human community development.

identify these changes in the records also requires a level of ethnochoreological and ethnological knowledge as well as an understanding of dance history.

The important changes in the current way of life, a significant paradigm shift in the perceptions of gender roles and aesthetic and ethical standards, and the overall socio-cultural situation in the context of the development of human society form other reasons for the need to analyse traditional folk dance and teach folk dance with knowledge of the context in which it was born and practised.

Particular importance within ethnochoreology is devoted to the functions of folk dances and their changes since the second half of the 20th century. It is these functional changes that have largely influenced the form, style-making characteristics and particularly the ecology of specific dance performances. In the case of ritual dance types, we can identify the changing of functions into ceremonial and subsequent entertainment functions since the 1930s. These changes caused the release of normative factors determining the traditional form of dance (e.g. the types of dances, spatial formations, strict stratification of the participants, functionally linked songs, and the existence or absence of the musical accompaniment). Respecting the traditional context and ecology of traditional dances was important even in terms of the integrational function of the dance.⁵⁶ Deep knowledge and implementation of the sophisticated dance structures practised in the collective memory, while respecting their traditional socio-cultural context, meant a strengthening of identity for community members: “Dance as a ritualized speech does not have to transmit information but bond with feelings and activate the collective emotions strengthening the collective identity. The purpose of this communication is not to communicate something to the others but to strengthen the relationships between the people who understand, and that can strengthen the relationships of solidarity and identification with a group of people” (Stavělová, 2010, 40). Comprehensive knowledge of the ecological and anthropological contexts of traditional folk dances is needed in order to understand and appropriate this imaginary “unity”, allowing the achievement of a feeling of understanding and solidarity in sharing an artistic expression in the educational process.

⁵⁶ The socially integrating and ethnically identifying functions of dance (dance interpretation as an expression of belonging to the same community) comes to the fore in particular in the folklorism environment and the revitalization of traditional forms by the younger generation (Stavělová, 2005; Bakka, 2012; Torp, 2012; Kurtisöglu, 2012).

Conclusion

Currently traditional folk dance exists primarily in manifestations of folklorism. Recently, the method of teaching and staging folk dance has been one of the most frequent topics discussed in forums at conferences, workshops and seminars at regional and national folk dance competitions.

The diversity of approaches in the teaching and staging of traditional folklore material is a matter of the author's choreographic work,⁵⁷ which is (or should be) "the cream of the crop" when presenting folkloristic forms of traditional art. When paraphrasing many authors, its aim is (or should be) to "elevate the traditional form". Elevating the original, however, presupposes the original being consistently known, mastered and understood. Dance is not just a system of motifs and gestures; as a meta-language, dance encodes aesthetics as well as the cultural norms of the community. Dance as a structured movement system is a system of knowledge that is socially and culturally constructed: being created, adopted and interiorized by a group of people and primarily stored in their memory. It is a "system of signs, symbolic action, and shared reality, with its own internal contradictions and pace of change" (Hanna, 1979, 319). Movement systems with a structured content may therefore be a visual manifestation of social relations and the subjects of a sophisticated aesthetic system; they can assist in understanding the depth of cultural values and community structure (Kaepler, 2000).

Folk dance in its traditional form was born, existed and changed depending on the socio-economic, geographical, economic, ethnic, confessional and social contexts of traditional settings. These contexts are examined by ethnochoreology in various specialized areas (dance ecology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, structural analysis, classification and others). The implication of this scientific disciplinary knowledge in education and the staging of folk dances is essential to spreading the true picture of its diversified forms and functions. A specific interpretive manifestation is a form of syncretism of several interdetermined factors: dance material, musical/vocal accompaniment, used tools, clothing and footwear, dancing opportunities and the socio-cultural environment. Their thorough knowledge and presentation in teaching methods, with a view to the interiorization of a particular dance type in context, requires teachers with

⁵⁷ "Today the notion of choreography signifies the creative process, the art of creating and the composition of a dance work. It combines art and the performing arts; it relies on dramaturgy, music, the visual side and performers ... Choreography is a sequence of dance patterns (motifs) in theatrical production (performance) or the art of creating and organizing dances for theatrical performance" (Nosál, 1984, 16).

a fundamental ethnomusicological and ethnochoreological knowledge and understanding of dance history, typology, the methodology of archival and field research and an understanding of the environmental and anthropological context of traditional folk dance.⁵⁸

The understanding and consideration of the above context of folk dance aims to achieve the interiorization of stylish folk-dance interpretation competitions instead of the repetition of one single variant from one single dance tradition bearer or the repeating of a teacher's movement patterns. It allows for the internalized recognition, understanding and experience of dance (as was advocated by I. Duncan in the modernist dance genre more than 100 years ago).

The scholastic didactic method of mimetic imitation without a deeper understanding is mainly a means of ensuring the further life of one dance performance. The current teaching methods of helical threading, resulting in interiorization and improvisation (understanding and use),⁵⁹ and supplemented with a comprehensive knowledge of folk dance as an integral part of traditional culture system and our cultural heritage, pave the way for the further existence of folk dance.

⁵⁸ The violation of stylistic characteristics, aesthetic and ethical norms that determined the development of traditional folk dance can lead to misinterpretation, ignorance, misunderstanding and the subsequent scenic expression of "entertainer aesthetics" (superficiality, patheticism, parody, and the vulgarization of different folk forms and manifestations). However, if staged folklore (currently an important means of communication for disseminating information about traditional Slovak art in its folklorized forms) is to have an instructive and presentational function, in addition to an entertaining one, knowledge and respect of its form and context is essential: "*When dancing is the way it should be, do not give it any extra movement*" (F. Astaire).

⁵⁹ In addition to developing cognitive aspects, they aim to develop the sensorimotor and non-cognitive features of the personality (Petlák 2004).

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