

Ukrainian Dance

A Cross-Cultural Approach



Andriy Nahachewsky

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ANDRIY NAHACHEWSKY



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Front cover image: Dancers Ben Shank and John Onyschuk,
Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company, Edmonton, Alberta,
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Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vi
<i>Preface</i>	1
1. Basic Concepts	5
2. Purposes for Dancing	14
3. Ethnic Dance	24
4. Peasants Dancing	40
5. Geographic Zones	53
6. Historical Zones	67
7. Improvisation	73
8. Vival and Reflective Communities	83
9. National Dance Traditions	90
10. Typical Characteristics of National Dance	101
11. Variations in the National Paradigm	111
12. Recreational and Educational Dance	124
13. Spectacular Dance	143
14. Ballet and the Proscenium	157
15. Theatricalizing a Dance	168
16. Three Principles of Staging	192
17. Moiseyev and Virsky	202
18. First Versus Third Principles of Staging	213
19. Expanding Perspectives	224
<i>Notes</i>	233
<i>Bibliography</i>	245
<i>Index</i>	259

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Preface

The rise of folk dance and modern dance are the two major events in 20th century dance in worldwide perspective. — Alkis Raftis, 2000, UNESCO International Dance Council

The terms “ethnic dance,” “folk dance,” “national dance,” and “character dance” are associated with a range of exciting, colorful, and popular dance activities. These words are used for dance activities that vary greatly in many aspects, but are all recognized as making reference to some specific culture in one way or another.

Writing on modern dance rightfully reflects the many new ideas on culture and society that have arisen over the last century. The writing on folk dance however, remains relatively weak and fragmented. Earlier writers devoted to the elite Western theatrical traditions sometimes include a chapter on “primitive” or “folk” dance in their surveys of dance history. In these chapters however, they tend to marginalize the phenomena as “crude,” “simple,” “exotic” and “art-less”—often simply an evolutionary starting point which was left far behind when “real,” “important,” “beautiful” dance (usually meaning ballet and contemporary) progressed to its lofty heights. The hundreds of folk dance repertoire books scarcely challenge these views. Folk dance has inspired less contemporary theorizing. Though there has been a tremendous increase in writing with a stronger cross-cultural perspective in the past several decades, it has generally not had powerful resonance with people who actually perform “folk,” “ethnic,” “national” and “character” dances today.

Ukrainian dance is a visible and successful example of folk and ethnic dance, in Ukraine itself as well as in many other parts of the world. The dance is widely appreciated for its color and high energy. Ukrainian dance includes both the traditional dance heritage as well as many more recent, urban, and spectacular idioms with an ethnic element. Encompassing such a large variety of dance activity, Ukrainian dance is a fascinating phenomenon in its own right, and an excellent case study of broader issues in folk/ethnic/national dance. Ukrainian culture is clearly European and is part of Western culture in the broad sense, but is marginal in several respects: Ukraine has been isolated behind the Iron Curtain for much of the twentieth century and continues to have strong symbolic connections with peasantry. Many pre-modern traditions are still alive. Ukrainian dance is perhaps exotic enough for readers to see with fresh eyes, but familiar enough for many to identify with.

The literature on Ukrainian dance can generally be divided into two main groups. Studies of traditional Ukrainian village dance are primarily descriptive, concentrating on the generic forms of selected dances and, to a lesser degree, on their contexts (Harasymchuk 1939; Humeniuk 1963; Nahachewsky 2008). Publications on Ukrainian stage dance are primarily prescriptive rather than descriptive: instructions for reproducing specific choreographies, or advice on how to lead organized dance groups (Avramenko 1947; Bondarenko

1966). This second type of publication is generally a-historical, and both of these branches of the literature tend to be non-comparative. Occasional studies of the historical context attempt to emphasize continuity and antiquity according to Romantic, nationalist, and Soviet preconceptions. A minority of publications attempt to bridge the two groups, engaging both with traditional social and ritual dance on the one hand, and stage activity on the other (V. Verkhovynets' 1968 [1920]; Humeniuk 1969 [1962]; Harasymchuk 2008). In some cases, these publications give an impression that the staged performances are directly continuing the village traditions, or that the traditional rural dances are somehow primitive stage compositions. Either way, the result is quite unsatisfactory. Unfortunately, the literature on Ukrainian dance illustrates the fragmentary nature of folk dance studies, and disconnection from broader contemporary perspectives. This problem is exacerbated by the scarcity of publications in English: Researchers, writers and dancers in most Western countries have little or no access to the many materials in Ukrainian.

The purpose of this study is to provide a broad framework for understanding Ukrainian dance. Since two of the key characteristics of Ukrainian dance are its legacy of peasant tradition and the power of stage dances derived from this peasantry, one main conceptual focus is along this axis. I use the terms "vival dance" and "reflective dance" to engage with this topic. Reflective dances are different from vival dances in that the participants are self-conscious about connecting with the past; they think of the dance as "heritage." Secondly, reflective dance traditions are quite diverse. The book explores how reflective traditions motivated by expressing national identity are different from reflective traditions geared for recreation. These are different again from those reflective traditions oriented to artistic spectacle. Each of these three main motives for performing reflective Ukrainian dance can produce very different performances.

This book does not attempt a comprehensive catalogue of traditional Ukrainian dance forms, nor is it a history. Rather it attempts to survey *approaches* to dancing, exploring the range of possibilities. It is hoped that such a strategy will allow a broad perspective, help untangle problematic definitions, and allow us to identify important trends and explain change.

The project is cross-cultural and comparative in several respects. On the one hand, the book can be seen as contributing to information about how Ukrainian culture relates to a larger cultural zone called "Western culture."¹ This book deals with many cultural processes shared within Western culture, including the fundamental significance of romantic nationalism, secularization, folk revivals, the intense rise of technology and communication, as well as increased reflexivity. The book is also cross-cultural because many concepts are illustrated by non-Ukrainian examples. Ukrainian ethnochoreology has its own profile, including an emphasis on certain issues, and a lack of emphasis on others. Good material related to neighboring traditions is very useful in illuminating points that are hard to explain using solely Ukrainian resources.

On one hand, I hope this book will be seen as compatible with contemporary anthropological perspectives. It contains numerous ethnographic descriptions, where I relate first-hand experiences with dance in cultures other than the dominant West. In these passages, I attempt to reflect the worldview and the intentions of the people whose culture was being studied. I try not to foreground my value judgments in most ethnographic examples, rather observing the various qualities of the diverse activities themselves.

Like many contemporary scholars of culture, I distain the lingering perception of non-dominant genres of dancing as a "monolith" of primordial human activity that is timeless, changeless, faceless, and uninteresting except as a foil against which to contrast the "more

contemporary” and “higher” art dances that have sprung from it (Williams 1991: 110–1, 120–2). “Non-elite” and “non-Western” dancing continues to be quantitatively far more frequent in human experience than Western elite dance. It is fantastically diverse, changing in many dimensions across time, space and setting. The people involved in these types of dance can be as intensely creative and expressive as the most famous *prima ballerinas*. Their dance experiences can be as complex, subtle, profound and rich as those in the elite West, and often more so, in a surprising number of ways. The problem generally lies in our inability to access this richness.

I hope this book will be useful for ethnochoreologists, musicologists, anthropologists, folklorists, cultural theorists and other thinkers whose attention turns to the topic of dance in cross-cultural perspective. We will explore the intersections between Western “art dance” with “non-western” and “non-art” dance. A major focus is directed to trends in folk/ethnic dance recontextualizations. I hope that it will be possible for most of these readers to connect the concepts presented with the specific culture and community with which they are most engaged.

A broad familiarity with dance in its cultural context is a key requirement for realizing the fullest potential of all dancers, choreographers, producers, and dance critics. I hope the text will be specifically useful for enthusiasts of ethnic, folk, national and character dance in their many guises in the Western world, ranging from teachers of elementary school students to professional theater artists to middle-aged “folkies” in their local folkdance club. Character dancers are a key readership for this text, people who are strongly connected with the official world of art dance in Western society, and who often deal with issues of cultural representation and performed identity. I am writing to encourage people associated with dance to think more about what they do, and thus come to understand their own dance more richly.

Book Structure

In the first three chapters, I propose several definitions related to dance, as a base for looking at Ukrainian dance from a cross-cultural perspective. I argue that it can be very useful to think about dances in terms of the purpose for dancing — “why” they are danced. The reasons for dancing can vary quite greatly. In Chapter 3, I introduce a key concept by differentiating “vival” dance (“living” dance where the participants are focused on the experience at that very moment) and “reflective” dance (dance in which the participants actively link their current activity with dancing from the past).

In chapters 4 to 7, we explore the world of “vival” dance, looking primarily at Ukrainian peasant dances in their traditional village contexts. Such dances are commonly used as source dances for a variety of twentieth century Ukrainian dance compositions. Key components in this discussion are a look at how peasant dance traditions vary across space and over time, as well as how improvisation works to make each dance change even from one performance to the next.

The remainder of the monograph deals with different specializations of “reflective” dance. Chapters 8 through 11 identify *national dance* as one of the earliest and still one of the most important sub-categories of reflective folk dance movements around the world. The perception of a dance as a national symbol affects the way the participants look at it, and affects the form of the dances themselves in many important ways.

In Chapter 12, we deal with the widespread phenomena of *recreational* and *educational* folk dance. These reflective movements are looked at historically and also in terms of how the participants' motivations tend to affect the form of the dance. The recreational folk dance movement in North America is quite separate from Ukrainian dance on this continent.

In the most extensive section of the book, chapters 13 to 18, we focus on *spectacular* dance. When a dance is performed primarily as spectacle for an audience, certain characteristic features tend to be engaged. The history of western proscenium theater, ballet in particular, is significant. We identify its numerous conventions and standards. Since vival folk dances are often participatory in nature, they often become theatricalized as they are revived. That theatricalization very often occurs according to the conventions of ballet. Choreographers of staged folk dance have tended to work in a variety of different styles, described here as "three principles of staging."

Concluding Chapter 19 contains several key points that strive to consolidate an expanded perspective on Ukrainian dance.

I come to this field from a personal background in western Canada, a part of the world which has been rich in ethnic dance activity over many decades. I grew up in a family that was involved in the Ukrainian community in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Ukrainian dance was an important part of my life since I was six and even earlier. I enjoyed dancing and soon joined the ranks of the Yevshan Ukrainian Folk Ballet Ensemble, an amateur stage dance group. I became a teacher and a choreographer quite early, and spent most of my high school and university years dancing or teaching five or six nights a week. After Yevshan, I danced with the performing ensemble of the Kyiv Institute of Culture, the Ukrainian Festival Dance Company in Toronto, the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company and the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers in Edmonton. I have created a variety of choreographic works, performed on tour in several countries, and served as an adjudicator for the growing number of festivals and competitions. I eventually expanded beyond Ukrainian dance, and gained experiences in ballet, contemporary dance, international folk dance, and other genres. As a dance performer, choreographer and critic, I learned to be very concerned with the "text" — with the form of the dance, the human bodies actually moving in time and space.

My formal academic training is primarily in the fields of dance and folklore. I have conducted fieldwork research and attended traditional and staged Ukrainian dance events in Ukraine, as well as in Canada, Bosnia, Brazil, the Czech Republic, France, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and the United States. A reliance on ethnographic fieldwork is shared between folklore and anthropology, though the folkloristic approach tends to focus on one genre of cultural activity across a variety of communities.² Folklore is very interdisciplinary, and tends to straddle the humanities and the social sciences. I hope to use this characteristic as a strength. I completed a bachelor of fine arts in dance (ballet, dance history, and teaching) at York University, and studied in Ukraine (then still part of the Soviet Union) and other parts of Europe as a dancer. I have steered my formal education in Canada, Ukraine, and on the island of Jersey in a way to continue feeding my passion for dance. My master's thesis and doctoral dissertations dealt with Ukrainian dance in Canada (Nahachewsky 1985, 1991). I presently work as a professor and director of the Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore at the University of Alberta. I feel lucky in that I can continue to incorporate thinking about dance and about cultural identity into my daily work.

Chapter 1

Basic Concepts

When people first think of *kinds* of “ethnic” dance, they most often group them by country, thinking that Polish dance is different from Mexican dance, for example, and Italian dance from Swedish. These simple categories are reinforced in many books with titles such as *Folk-Dances from Old Homelands* (Burchenal 1922) or *Forty Favorite Dances*. In such books, any given culture might be represented by one dance, perhaps described in two pages. It is obvious that those descriptions are extremely simplified. They reduce the whole complex variety of human movement experiences of millions of people into one quick “emblem.”

The Richness of “Ethnic” Dance

In such publications, people present “Ukrainian dances” in some ways as one “kind” of dancing. They are fit into one group and assumed to be “the same” in some important respect. Dances certainly do differ from one country to another. On the other hand, it is also clear that the rich diversity of human movement experience is far from fully explained by this categorization alone. Ukrainians in western Ukraine dance differently than those in the east. It is also clear that young Ukrainians tend to dance differently than elderly ones. Males dance differently than females. The dances of rich people sometimes contrast with those of the poor. Similarly, skilled performers dance differently than unskilled ones, and even the mood of specific dancers affects the dance for each different performance.

All of the examples above focus on the question of *who* is dancing. Questions of *what*, *why*, *when*, *where* and *how* may be equally significant when considering the wide variety of dance on our planet. Any given culture has a variety in its repertoire, and thus it is important to know *what* dance is being performed. *Where*? In the kitchen? In a yard? At a festival? On a stage? At a crossroads in town? In a discotheque? *Why* are they dancing? Is this a part of the grandstand performance for a national holiday planned months in advance by government officials? Is it some type of spontaneous dance when there’s good music at a party? *When*? Is this a holiday? Sunday afternoon? What season? What generation? What decade? What century? *How*? Dancers vary greatly in terms of their skill, but also in their emotional state for this particular performance. Just think of a young woman dancing a slow waltz with her elderly uncle. Then think of her dancing that same waltz with her sweetheart (can we call it “the same” waltz at all?).

Taking all of these factors into consideration, we can argue that every single dance performance in the world is unique and contrasts with all others. No two dance performances

can be described by answering all these questions identically. Heracleitos' observation comes to mind, "You can never step twice into the same river." The water is flowing. Even two seconds later, the water molecules, the waves and the fish have already moved. It is never repeated and never repeatable. It is a different river. The same can be said for dances. You can never step twice into the same dance.

When we speak of any categories of dance, we have to remember that they are generalizations, abstractions, simplifications that we make for our own convenience. Considering the millions and millions of dances ever performed on earth, it is important that we *do* make generalizations and use categories. Otherwise we would be helpless in trying to make sense of the universe and in communicating with others. In the pages ahead, I try to organize the complexity of danced experience into useful categories — categories based more on the dance events themselves rather than preconceived notions, assumptions and outdated hegemonic clichés.

Examples

Let's consider seven specific dances. They are all Ukrainian dances, so in some senses they are the "same" thing. But it will become clear that they are actually very different from each other as well. They are presented in no particular order. Many dances described in this book can be viewed on the internet at <http://www.ukrdance.ca>.

The first dance is a *Hopak*, choreographed by Pavlo Virsky around 1960. The Virsky State Folk Dance Ensemble performs it, based in Kyiv, Ukraine. This troupe has been presenting spectacular folk dance on stages around the world since its inception in 1937. This professional ensemble is renowned for its high artistic standards (see Oleksiuk-Baker 1998). Most of the dancers are trained in ballet schools and in the group's own studio in Kyiv. The *Hopak* is traditionally performed at the end of each concert, and is often called the national folk dance of Ukraine. As always, this dance involves a large mixed group of performers and features bright costumes, sweeping group formations, enormous energy, athleticism and technical virtuosity in the acrobatic solo steps, and unison in the corps sections.

We can imagine a second Ukrainian dance, a *hutsulka* performed at a wedding in the village of Molodiatyne near Kolomyia in western Ukraine, 1992. Weddings in Ukrainian villages tend to be large celebrations. Dance is a major part of the elaborate proceedings



Figure 1. Split jump by soloist Ben Shank during *Velykyi Hopak*, performed by the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company, Edmonton, Canada, 2005. Choreography by Mykola Kanevets (courtesy Ukrainian Cheremosh Society).

over several days. This dance took place in the specially built wedding tent in the bride's parents' yard. Guests at the wedding perform the dances casually whenever they are inclined to participate. Near midnight, a number of women who had been helping prepare food took some time off to enjoy themselves. One of several dances in their repertoire, the *hutsulka* was performed in improvised circles and couples.

Metelytsia viucha was choreographed by Vasile Avramenko and performed by a combined ensemble at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1931. This dance was part of the largest and most prestigious Ukrainian dance concert in North America up to that time. The evening concert was organized to raise the profile of Ukraine and the Ukrainian community in the United States. Several hundred dancers, brought together from a number of cities, rehearsed the specific steps, formations, and sequences formally. The concert was carefully planned for maximum effect from the vantage point of audience. The dances were symbolic of Ukrainian identity, pride in cultural heritage, and the conviction that an increased international profile might influence Ukraine's chances for political independence from the Soviet Union. The *Metelytsia viucha* consisted mostly of two long lines of dancers following a winding path across the stage, repeating a basic step. It functioned partially as an entry dance, setting the dancers on stage to serve as a backdrop for other smaller numbers that followed.

A *kolomyika* was performed at the Zinchuk-Romaniuk wedding in Edmonton, Canada, 1988. Ukrainian weddings in western Canada are often large celebrations, featuring a dinner and dance on Saturday evening, after the marriage ceremony. The dancing at such weddings consists mostly of polkas, waltzes, two-steps and rock 'n' roll. It often includes a *kolomyika*, typically performed around midnight when the energy level is high. Because the bride was a member of a folk stage dance group, she was particularly eager that this *kolomyika* be a good one. This particular dance lasted for about half an hour. After the short introductory section danced in a circle, the remainder of the dance consisted of various acrobatic "solo steps" and combinations performed by willing individuals and small groups, surrounded by clapping onlookers.

The next example is a *kadryl'* (quadrille), performed by people in the village of Dibrovo-Lenino near Borodiany in central Ukraine. Oleksandr Spinatov and Andrii Humeniuk recorded the dance as part of their field expeditions documenting traditional dance for the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine between 1955 and 1959. The dance was filmed as part of that village's regular social repertoire in that period. This *kadryl'* is one of many quadrille forms popular throughout Europe in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century. The villagers performed this dance in the afternoon specifically for the visiting camera crew (Humeniuk and Spinatov 1955–1959).

Tetiana Borovyk and Victor Yaremenko, two Ukrainian soloists from the Taras Shevchenko State Opera and Ballet in Kyiv, Ukraine, performed a *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake*. The composer of the music was Peter Tchaikovsky, living in Russia in the nineteenth century, but of Ukrainian Cossack ancestry. The choreographer was the well-known Kyiv artist Victor Litvinov. As we see, the dance was very Ukrainian indeed.

Iz syrom pyrohy [Perogies with cheese], was choreographed by Ken Kachmar and performed by the hometown Sopilka Dancers at the Vegreville Ukrainian Festival (BMUFA 1998.023.v1043). The Vegreville Ukrainian festival has been an annual celebration of Ukrainian Canadian culture since 1974. Besides the many displays, exhibits, competitions and parties, the Festival features grandstand performances several times per day. The grandstand shows include many guest performers from across North America and Ukraine, as well as

local talent such as the Sopilka Dancers. This dance was a humorous and creative number, loosely reflecting the text of the accompanying folk song about Ukrainian dumplings. One of the dancers was dressed as a giant stuffed dumpling, while two others wore silver costumes with headpieces to make them look like a fork and a knife.

These dances suggest that the category “Ukrainian Dance” is so broad and diverse that those words really don’t tell much about the specifics of the dance at all. The same, obviously, could be said about “Danish dance,” “Brazilian dance,” “American dance” or the dance of any other country. Joann Wheeler-Kealiinohomoku presents an impression of the diversity of “folk” dance in the United States (1972: 392–397). She alludes to recreational folk dance groups on university colleges, dancing at Armenian weddings, Polish heritage dance groups, Israeli dance at a Jewish Community Center, neighborhood street dances in Milwaukee, Philadelphia’s annual New Year’s Day Mummers’ Parade, Mardi Gras, Appalachian folk dance, funeral processions with dance in the south, the Green Corn Dance of the Santa Domingo Pueblo Indians in New Mexico, square dancing, a *Hoolaulea* in Waikiki, *Bon Odori* dances to honor ancestors in Buddhist communities, dragon and lion dances at Chinese New Years, Holy Rollers, dances performed by witch covens, the Shakers, dancing on television during the “Ed Sullivan Show,” “American Bandstand,” and many other traditions. It is often difficult to make sense of the incredibly broad variety of phenomena that can be called “folk,” “ethnic,” “national” or “character” dance, and to be able to situate specific dances usefully within the overall range.

A Cross-Cultural Perspective

This book is committed to a cross-cultural stance, with its numerous implications and assumptions. They form part of the basic concepts upon which the arguments and ideas are founded, and should be spelled out explicitly.

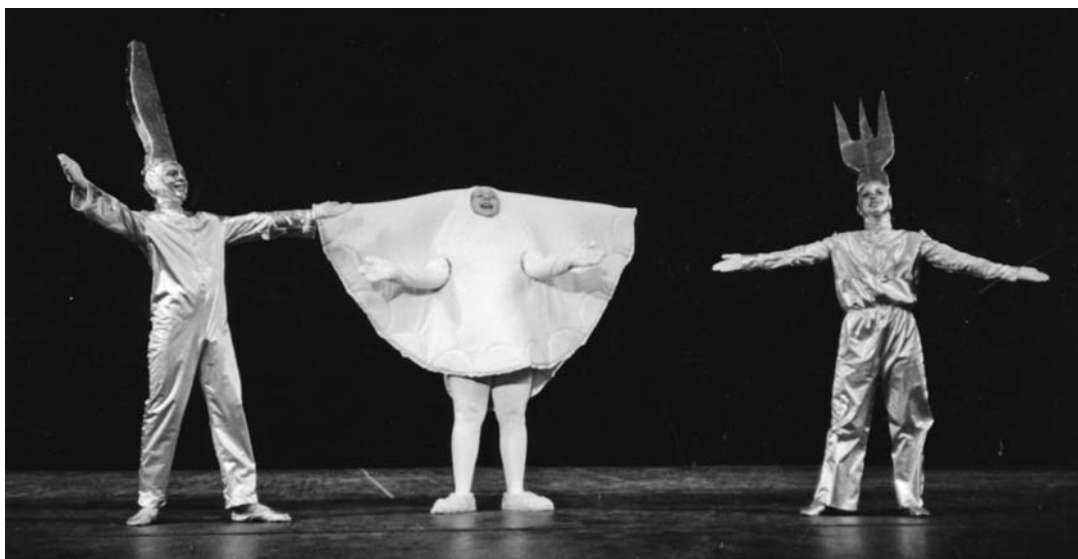


Figure 2. *Iz syrom pyroby* [Perogies with cheese], performed by John Michael Palahniuk, Terry Baydala and Gail Stepanick of the Sopilka Ukrainian Dancers of Vegreville, Canada (photograph by Orest Choban, courtesy Sopilka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble).

I understand that all humans are born equal in principle. All people, past and present, can be intelligent, creative, expressive and interesting. They are normally active problem solvers committed to making a better life for themselves and their loved ones. They all have the capacity and the potential to experience love, beauty and happiness, though these values may be experienced and imagined in culturally specific ways. All humans and all cultures have the right to dignity, self-esteem, and choice in the way they live, provided they respect these similar rights in others. Cultures can differ from each other in profound ways, but none are intrinsically “higher” or “lower,” “better” or “worse,” more or less valid than any others. They all have a right to exist, insofar as they do not infringe on the similar rights of others. We are all generally most attached to our own culture and its values because they are *ours*. However, it is possible and often desirable to empathize with others. It is particularly important when we come face to face with “the other” and want to understand these interactions. Diversity is good. In an era of rising cultural contact and communication, cross-cultural understanding is increasingly essential to the quality of human life worldwide.

One of the features of the post-modern world is increasing *reflexivity*—a tendency to see oneself and one’s culture in historical and cross-cultural context, to think about one’s own cultural biases and positioning in the world.

I recognize that colonialism was a fact in world relations in the recent past. Many political empires were dismantled in the twentieth century, though hegemony continues, and is expressed militarily, politically, economically, culturally, ideologically and in other ways. The dominant Western culture currently enjoys a great deal of power and wealth and influence in relation to other cultures in the world.

Cultures change over time. History does not necessarily “progress” in a fixed direction, but people and groups have agency to significantly influence what happens. Changes in technology, communication and transportation over the last several centuries have brought the different parts of the world closer together in many ways, resulting in an unprecedented level of intense and extended intercultural contact, with its resultant friction as well as creative opportunity. The process of *globalization* is a powerful force in contemporary human experience, but is very far from being absolute. Indeed, I doubt it will ever be consummated, as many other powerful forces in the world simultaneously differentiate people from each other in important ways. In many respects, cultural diversity in the world is a positive characteristic. In spite of the ideal of “global citizenship,” all people continue to live within specific cultures. Our beliefs, values, assumptions, desires and activities are largely learned in concrete cultural contexts.

Most of these ideas are widespread in Western popular culture today, though different people may visualize their implications quite differently. Most participants in “folk,” “ethnic,” and “character” dance tend to be open to such views. They understand the concept of “ethnocentricity” and do not want to be ethnocentric. Culturally engaged dance is often a physical vehicle for expressing or developing greater cross-cultural understanding.¹

What Is Dance?

A consensus on commonly used words in the world of “ethnic” and “folk” dance is a basic requirement for our goals. The challenge is to settle on definitions that can be useful not only in our culture, but cross-culturally as well. For this reason, we will lean towards social science writers’ perspectives, particularly those of dance anthropologists and dance ethnologists. The first task is to find a cross-culturally valid definition of “dance” itself.

Joann Kealiinohomoku's article "Folk Dance" proposes a cross-cultural definition of dance. It includes three main points relevant for our purposes (1972: 387; see also Kraus 1969: 4–14; Royce 1980 [1977]: 3–5; Kurath 1986c [1960]: 16–17; Hanna 1987 [1979]: 17–46; Kealiinohomoku 2001a [1970]: 38).

1. Dance is human motor behavior.
2. Dance is a mode of expression in time and space, it occurs through purposefully selected, controlled, redundant rhythmic patterns.
3. Dance is recognized as such both by the performer and observing members of a given group.

These points make it clear that dance excludes the movement of various animal species, and that the medium of dance is the human body itself. Dance is an expressive activity, as opposed to a narrowly utilitarian one. Utilitarian movements avoid "redundancy" and try to accomplish a set task as efficiently as possible, using a minimum of energy, space and time. On the other hand, expressive activities such as dance often involve much more than the minimums "to get the job done." Some sort of rhythm is involved, often in relation to music. The rhythm may be very simple or may be very complex and irregular. Others add that dancing is *symbolic* movement: Each culture's dance traditions can be seen as human movement systems — "body languages" that have the potential to communicate diverse and powerful messages (Giurchescu 1983: 25–6; Hanna 1987 [1979]: 25–7, ff.; Williams 1991: 178–207).

The requirement that the participants perceive the activity as dance is also important. Consideration of the participants' views is particularly relevant, since the conceptualizations of "what dance is" may differ widely among the various people involved.

Let us take some examples of culturally relevant definitions of dance that may not correspond to definitions of dance derived from a basically Western point of view. In speaking of the Australian aborigines of northeastern Arnhem Land, Waterman tells us that the word which comes closest to our word "dance" is *bongol* but that this includes music as well as dance...

The opposite kind of use also occurs, where "dance" is used in a more exclusive sense than we might wish to define it. Generally this takes the form of more than one term for the activities we might classify simply as "dance." Frequently the several terms describe the different contexts of the dance. Spanish, for example, has two words for dance, *danza* and *baile*, which refer to dance as a ritual activity (*danza*) and secular dance (*baile*). Italian makes the same distinction with *danza* and *ballo*. In the classical dance traditions of India, a distinction is made between *nrtta*, "pure dance," and *nrtya*, "pantomimic dance" [Royce 1980 (1977): 9–10; see also Hanna 1987 (1979): 18–19; Kaepler 1997 (1985): 88–90].

The idea that "dance" is understood differently in various cultures may seem less surprising if we stop to consider that people understand it in different ways even within one particular culture. Sandra Francis conducted a very interesting experiment, which resulted in an article, "Exploring Dance as a Concept" (1996). She compiled a video of ten diverse dance-like activities — "patterned human actions" including ballet, tap dance, rock/rap, ice-skating, cheerleading, aerobics, a marching band, jumping rope, wrestling, and fire fighting. She showed it to a number of people in her community in Ohio and asked, "is this dance?" for each of the activities. The answers were far from unanimous. Only one of the ten activities received 100% recognition as dance, and yet none of the activities was unanimously rejected. In the opinion of her interviewees, some of these things were "dance," some were

“kind of dance,” some were “not really dance.” Some people looked at the ice dancing, for example, and agreed that it was dance. Others looked at the same video and were convinced that it was not. The two main criteria used by her sample population for deciding if some action was dance were the *purpose* of the activity and the *quality of the movement*.

All of this makes it quite clear that the popular North American understanding of dance and its subcategories is really a culturally specific construct, and operates with “fuzzy boundaries.” The boundaries of these concepts are not natural or absolute, but are culturally defined and learned in each case. The popular definitions in our culture are not more valid than the definitions used in other cultures — they are simply most important to us because they are ours.

Form, Meaning and Context

One of the strategies that allows for better cross-cultural discussion of dance is to open up considerations wider than the movement patterns themselves, and to include the entire “dance event” (see Royce 1980 [1977]: 10; Torp 1989).

A Saturday evening a few years ago, in a small town in northern Sweden, I happened to watch a group of teenagers hanging around the entrance of the local disco club. The girls arrived and disappeared into the building at about eight o'clock, but the boys remained outside all night, drinking, talking and laughing. A few days later, in the school where I and a couple of colleagues were teaching music and dance, I met some of these teenagers again and I asked them what they all had been doing. The girls told me that they had been dancing “disco-dances,” laughing and chatting. But the boys, what had they been doing? “We were out dancing” they answered. But then, did they dance at all? “No, we never dance when we are out dancing” they answered. Most of the boys danced only when forced to do it, by the teacher of gymnastics, or by such activists as myself [Ronström 1989: 21; see also Royce 1980 (1977): 10].

The boys went out dancing, but they didn't do any of the physical movement of the dancing. This idea of dance as something that extends beyond the physical movement will have significant implications for us as we continue.

Included in a broader conceptualization of dance are the form, context, and meaning of the activity. From an anthropological viewpoint, all three are essential. When many people consider “a dance,” they often think only of the form: a certain number of people moving a certain number of body parts in a certain rhythm. As the Swedish boys demonstrated in the example above, the context is as much part of the dancing as the movement. Descriptions of context (or setting) answer the questions “where?” “when?” and “who?” For our purposes, the meaning of the dance to its various participants is just as important. Issues of the meaning (purpose, reason, function) are connected with the question “why?” Form, context and meaning are closely interconnected. If any one of the form, context or meaning of a dance changes from one performance to the next, the others are affected as well.

One of the two main criteria used for identifying dance by Sandra Francis' subjects was the form of the activity (expressed there as “quality of movement”). A strong bias to think about dance primarily in terms of its form is evident in contemporary western popular culture (Royce 1980 [1977]: 10). The more seriously a person commits her career to dancing in North America, the greater chance that she will spend much time in front of a mirror concerned with how the movement *looks*. When choreographers want their dances to be

copyrighted, they hire a notator or a video camera operator to document the form of the dance, and that becomes the legal entity representing the dance (Warner 1984: 2 ff.). The meaning and the context are not copyrighted. In our society, it is not unusual to de-emphasize, or even deny aspects of the dance experience other than the form. We might think of the case of a stage dancer with shin splints, but who continues to perform the dance in a concert. The injured dancer may still try to jump as high as when he was healthy. Given our broader perspective, we will want to remain aware of the dancer's hidden pain as an important part of the whole dance event.

The bias towards form in Western popular culture is not a bad thing. Bias — a specific cultural perspective — is part of all people's life. In the discussions that follow, we are not particularly trying to "correct" all biases, but rather to become conscious of them. People in certain other cultures share our culture's bias towards the form of the dance. But this is not always the case. For example, the dance tradition of the whirling dervishes is connected with a religious rite. The dancers are monks who spin for extended periods of time as they try to make a connection with the supernatural. We can imagine that these dancers are quite conscious of technique, but it is also clear that they are primarily interested in the *meaning* of this dance experience — the way it connects them with God (And 1976: 40–3).

A bride and groom dancing the first waltz at their Ukrainian wedding in western Canada may care somewhat about what the dance looks like. After all, the wedding guests are standing all around, focusing on them. But typically the most important part of that



Figure 3. A wedding waltz in Dauphin, Manitoba, 1994 (BMUFA 1994.038.p0206) (photograph by the author).

particular dance is the *context*: This is the first dance on their wedding day. That's the major significance of this performance.

The elaboration of dance into form, context and meaning is a conceptual metaphor, and not the only one that can be used to evoke a holistic perception of a dance event. Other theoretical models may be suggested as well.² One key to their usefulness is whether they explore answers to all of the questions — who? what? where? why? when? how?

Chapter 2

Purposes for Dancing

In this chapter, we will discuss examples of dance terms that are intended to identify kinds of dancing which differ according to the *meaning*, the *purpose* for dancing. I believe that categories of dance based on the purpose for dancing are among the most useful terms for a basic understanding the world of dance. Much of this book is organized on this basis.

There are many ways to describe the diverse purposes for dancing, and listings of dance purposes have been published on many occasions (Kurath 1984 [1949]: 277–283; Kraus 1969: 12; Parsons in Royce 1980 [1977]: 83). This is particularly true of publications in the social sciences, where a functionalist approach was dominant for a number of decades of the twentieth century.¹

Anthony Shay's listing of six generalized functions for dance may serve as a good introduction to the possibilities that exist:

1. Dance as a reflection and validation of social organization,
2. Dance as a vehicle of secular and religious ritual expression,
3. Dance as a social diversion or recreational activity,
4. Dance as a psychological outlet and release,
5. Dance as a reflection of aesthetic values or as an aesthetic activity in itself, and
6. Dance as a reflection of economic subsistence patterns, or an economic activity in itself (1971: 19, also quoted in Royce 1980 [1977]: 79).

The main purposes for dancing discussed below are related to Shay's list, but reduced to four: "ritual dance," "recreational/social dance," "art dance" and "ethnic/national dance." These reasons for dancing can be relevant cross culturally, though each example will be related to Ukrainian dance.

Ritual Dance

Victor Turner defines ritual as "prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to [religious or magical] beliefs" (1982: 79).² For Turner, *rituals* involve a sacred aspect, one that transcends regular experience on the physical plane of reality; *ceremonies* are ritual-like activities that are more secular: They do not involve the liminal, sacred aspect (1982: 80). Rituals involve a particular sequence of events, and are often ordered into a dramatic structure. During rituals, many performance genres are involved, creating a rich cultural texture. Dance is often an important element in rituals, ceremonies and celebrations. Turner emphasizes the importance of performance

and enactment of rituals, rather than just their rules and prescriptions. Rituals can be transforming for the individual and for the whole society (1982: 79–82). Indeed, “rites of passage” is a term used specifically to identify those ritualistic activities that “accompany a passage from one situation to another and from one cosmic or social world to another” (Van Gennep 1960 [1908]: 10).

Ritual is formal behavior, an act and a statement of truth, delivering a moral critique of society and presenting an understanding of what ought to be. Play and celebration, its complementary opposites, are acts and statements of pretending. They deliver an understanding of what *can* be (Handelman 1977, cited in Manning 1983: 22). They can all transform a society by highlighting its structures, exaggerating them, or inverting them. They reveal the ambivalence of society and allow it to be remade by juxtaposing opposites such as morality and license, “script and improvisation, ... aesthetics and vulgarity, discipline and abandonment, portrayal and parody, acrobatics and clodhopping” (Turner 1983: 188; see de Coppet 1992: 2–3; Manning 1983: 20–30).

For our purposes, “ritual dance” refers to dance performed as part of a ritual, ceremony or celebration, marking a profound event, time, place, identity or relationship. The relationship may be among individuals, among groups, or between people and the supernatural.

Our first example of a ritual dance is called *chardash* from a wedding that took place in the village of Ruski Krstur, Voivodina, Yugoslavia, in 1987. This is a village of approximately 5000 people, mostly of Rusyn identity. The Rusyns (Ruthenians) migrated from the north and east nearer the Carpathian Mountains in the late 1700s, about twelve generations ago. They are often understood to be a part of the Ukrainian people.³

Each of several hundred guests at the wedding was given an embroidered cloth called a *rushnyk* to wear across one shoulder during the wedding celebration. After the official marriage ceremonies at the government office and the church, the guests gathered at the village hall for a meal and to dance. About one o'clock in the morning, the groom left the room and the musicians played the *chardash*. The bride started dancing the *chardash* with someone in her family, perhaps her brother the best man. Then someone from the groom's family literally bought the right to dance with her and stepped in as her partner. A special announcer stood near a microphone and held a large bowl. She placed the money in the bowl and announced the name of the next dancer. Someone from bride's family quickly “bought her” back again. Someone from the groom's family, then her family, then his family repeatedly bought the bride in a ritualized competition for her. Persons wanting to dance with the bride lined up to pay for the privilege. Each partner's turn with the bride lasted perhaps 10 or 20 seconds.⁴

The end of the dance was marked with a clear refocus onto its ritual meaning as the groom returned to the room. Conspicuously, he placed the largest sum of money into the bowl, and the musicians began a large crescendo to accent his contribution. When he reached her in the center of the hall, rather than dance, he physically picked her up and carried her right out of the building. The guests applauded. At that point, the formal part of the wedding was over. The guests continued to dance and celebrate, but they took off their *rushnyky* to mark the informality of the rest of the evening. The bride and groom came back a couple of hours later. She was no longer wearing her wedding dress, but a bright red dress signifying her new status as a married woman.

This dance is a potent example of a ritual dance. It represents and effects a profound change in the status of a person within her community. A wedding is a rite of passage in

the community, particularly for the bride. In some respects, the bride is being symbolically transferred from her family, from her clan, to become a part of the extended family of the groom. That transference is being enacted (and contested) symbolically. The transference of the bride is often a literal and physical move in many peasant cultures around the world. She often actually lives in the groom's family's house after the wedding. In Ruski Krstur, the sense of the bride's transference to the groom's family remains quite tangible.

A secondary purpose for dancing the *chardash* is connected with fundraising. A fairly large sum of money was collected in the bowl, and was used to help the new family establish itself.

Our second example of a ritual dance took place on the feast of *Malanka* (13 January, New Year's Eve), in Vegreville, Canada, 1993.⁵ The community dance was sponsored by the youth organization of the Ukrainian Orthodox church in that town. Vegreville is a county center in east-central Alberta in an area settled 100 years ago by a large number of Ukrainians. The local economy is largely based on grain farming. The *Malanka* celebration involved a community meal for some 200 people followed by a dance, with a formal performance approximately 10 o'clock in the evening.

In the first segment of the *Malanka* performance, some fifteen young people appeared in the open central area of the hall, dressed as mummers in a variety of costumes. The Master of Ceremonies introduced each character in turn: *Malanka* (a local boy *en travestie*, the comical central character of the evening; "she" is named after St. Melania, whose feast day falls on January 13), *Vasyl'* (another local youth, dressed in Ukrainian national costume, inspired very loosely by Saint Basil, whose feast day is January 14), grandfather and grandmother, a goat, a bear, a horse, a policeman, a devil, and others. Each performer paraded around the hall, interacting with the dinner guests in character as he or she was introduced. The mummers (almost all members of the local Ukrainian dance group) then performed a lively dance recognizable as a *hopak* in the tradition of staged Ukrainian dance in the community. The third segment of the performance involved the mummers each choosing a person from the audience and dancing a polka with them. This linked the formal performance with the social dancing that continued throughout the rest of the evening.

The first section of the *Malanka* performance was quite explicitly ritualistic, beginning with candles in the dimmed lights, with frequent references to religious and secular traditions, identifying the profound moment of the change to a new year. Some of the mummers' expressive movements can be characterized as pantomime, rather than dance *per se*, though other elements were very dance-like. The narrator's commentary and the mummers' actions were sometimes lighthearted, though most of the script focused reverently on the symbolism of various traditional elements. The second and third segments of the performance were more theatrical and recreational, respectively, but their significance as a contemporary ritual was very clear. They, too, communicated a profound aspect of the identity of the performers (as residents of the Vegreville locality and as members of the Ukrainian community), and strengthened the bonds within this very close-knit religious, ethnic, and local community in the hall that evening.⁶

Recreational Dance

The second major reason for dancing is recreational. "Recreational dance" or "social dance" includes any dance performed primarily for the pleasure and benefit of the dancing

participants themselves, rather than for an outside audience. Recreational or social dance is described as dance done for *fun*. Sometimes people express the desire for *physical* or *psychological release* after a period of stress. Sometimes recreational dance is done as *personal expression*, as when a person wants to communicate good feelings in a physical way. Courtship is an important aspect of many recreational dances.

A waltz, performed at a dance that was organized as part of the North Dakota Ukrainian Festival in 1998 can serve as an example of a recreational dance. The waltz has been very common as a social dance throughout most of North America, Europe and other parts of the world during the twentieth century. In this case, as in thousands of other waltzes, couples at a celebratory event step onto the dance floor to interact with each other and with the music in a relaxed, pleasurable way.

We can also imagine young people at a discotheque in western Ukraine as another example of recreational Ukrainian dance. In the village of Ruski Banyliv, Chernivtsi oblast' (province) in July of 1995, the dancers moved enthusiastically to techno music, Russian rock, and selected western hit songs. They danced energetically, usually forming a circular group. Sometimes, they joined each other and ran quickly around a circle, somewhat reminiscent of the Molodiatyne *hutsulka* described above. Couples in tight embraces performed slow dances.

Art Dance

A third major purpose for dancing is connected with aesthetics. "Art dance" includes any dance during which the performers and spectators are focused primarily on aesthetics and beauty. The term "art dance" is quite familiar to most Western readers on dance because this is the most explicit purpose of elite genres of dance such as ballet and contemporary theatrical dance. This purpose for dancing attracts the most attention in dance writing. In this book however, we maintain no allegiance to the ethnocentric cliché that ballet and contemporary theatrical dance are "art forms," while other kinds of dancing are not. On the contrary, a very many kinds of dance activities in many cultures around the world involve a focus on aesthetic expressiveness and beauty.

Over time, across cultures, and in different contexts, beauty has been understood in many different ways, and a great range of aesthetic theories has been developed. Within Western culture itself, there are many different theories about what is beautiful. Richard Anderson speaks of four groups of aesthetic theories that have been prominent in Western culture: mimetic theories, pragmatic theories, emotionalist theories and formalist theories (1990: 199–220). Mimetic theories place aesthetic value where art represents and conveys some concrete, specific subject matter from the "real" outside world. This aesthetic is easy to see in paintings, for example, where the artist attempts to create an illusion that the viewer is looking through a window at a three dimensional vase of flowers or a mountain scene. Many Romantic ballets such as *Giselle* have mimetic elements, where the movements, props, scenery and costumes are used to convincingly communicate a story. In Chapter 15, we'll discuss a traditional Ukrainian dance called *shevchyky* [shoemakers], in which the dancer pantomimes the construction of a pair of boots, sewing the leather, pounding nails into the soles, and polishing the finished product. This dance can be described as having a mimetic aesthetic, insofar as the participants (including audience members) appreciate when the performer mimes the processes convincingly. Pragmatic theories "are based on the

assumption that art should do something worthwhile for the members of the community that produces the art. Specifically, art should pave the way to a world that is socially, politically, or ... spiritually better" (1990: 208). Religious and political art are very common in Western culture. Some dances are considered to be very beautiful as they bring the dancers or audiences closer to God. Other pragmatic choreographies have been performed specifically to protest against social inequality or to rally people against the horrors of war, for example. Ukrainian dances are often performed to express religious or political purposes. Emotionalist aesthetic theories are evident when the artist attempts to stir a profound personal response in the viewer, or when the artist expresses his or her intense feelings. Martha Graham's famous *Lamentations* and other choreographies focus on emotion. Fourthly, formalist theories have also been important in Western art, particularly in the twentieth century. They relate to the conviction that beauty should lie in the physical form of the art object. Line, shape, texture, balance, color, and composition are among the artists' prime concerns here. Many twentieth century choreographers, including George Balanchine and Merce Cunningham have clearly worked with formalist aesthetics in mind. A great deal of Ukrainian dance is strongly motivated by formalist aesthetics as well.

Of course, these four aesthetic theories do not cover the full range of possibilities. They are all theories common in the West, but aesthetics can also be thought of in cross-cultural perspective. In the same study, R. Anderson looks at nine other cultures and their aesthetic philosophies to suggest a rich range of potential artistic ideals (1990). In cross-cultural perspective, art can be thought of very broadly, and many different expressive values can be deemed as desirable. In some cases, beauty is connected with novelty and innovation, while in others it is associated with tradition and set forms. Some artistic expression aims to evoke goodness, holiness, purity, honor, virtuosity, simplicity, economic worth, transience, nostalgia, sentimentality, politeness, scandal, patriotism, anger, arousal, sublime detachment or a host of other aesthetic values in combinations that may be strikingly different for artists around the world. Given our definition of dance as "a mode of expression" we can recognize that all dance activity has at least some element of artistry and aesthetic expression in it. Art dance is an appropriate term for dances in which some type of aesthetic concern is dominant.

Our first example of Ukrainian art dance is the segment of *Swan Lake* we considered above. Ukraine has a very long and strong history of ballet, connected in part with its inclusion in the Russian Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in the Soviet Union through most of the twentieth (Stanishevs'kyi 1969: 27–58). The ballet aesthetic is very deeply integrated into some spheres of Ukrainian culture. If one wishes to apply Richard Anderson's Western theories of aesthetics, this performance focuses primarily on formalist aesthetics, with some elements of emotionalist aesthetics because of the theme of unsuccessful love that permeates the story, and in a second way perhaps because of the nostalgia connected with the history of the *Swan Lake* ballet itself.

A second example of a Ukrainian art dance is clearly concerned with aesthetics as well, but of a different kind. The dance was part of a concert organized in a large Ukrainian community in South America. A small group of children performed as part of a concert dedicated to St. Nicholas. The performance was extremely successful, as evidenced by the tremendous clapping and whistling, both very positive reactions from the audience. However, judging by the way the dancers perform their steps off time to the music, are late with their cues, and are unable to arrange themselves in straight lines, we come to recognize that this audience was not primarily interested in aesthetics in a narrow formalist sense. Aspects of emotionalism

and nostalgia were much stronger. The family members of these young dancers were celebrating the children's status as performers in the community. "Hey! That's my grandson dancing there!" The "cuteness factor" clearly contributed to the powerful responses during the dance, as the loudest reactions were reserved for the youngest dancers. This is also an aesthetic value in cross-cultural perspective. By dancing on this stage, the children are sending a message to the community that was well received indeed.

This performance raises the issue of the quality of art. Sometimes, haughty critics of an art dance exclaim, "that's not art!" This is a rhetorical device that tries to foreground and naturalize the difference between what they like and what they don't like. What they really mean is "that's not [good] art! [according to my aesthetic values]" In our deliberations, we will try to separate our personal evaluations of the aesthetic effectiveness of a dance (or of a style or a tradition) from the purpose motivating the participants. If the dancers and the audience engage in dancing for the purpose of making an aesthetic statement, it qualifies as "art dance," no matter if any of us (or any of them) is left dissatisfied in this attempt.

National Dance

"National dance" is dance performed primarily as an expression of allegiance to a state or a potential state. National dance is clearly indicated when, for example, the Ukrainian State Folk Dance Ensemble performs a *hopak* at a gala concert in the capital city of Kyiv on August 24, Independence Day in Ukraine. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian dances have been performed outside Ukraine at concerts dedicated to boosting the morale of Ukrainian patriotic audiences and supporting Ukraine as a potential nation-state in opposition of its status within the Soviet Union throughout most of the twentieth century.

Dance can be associated with a very overt and explicit political intent. The film *Zolote pereveslo* [Golden yoke] was produced in Kyiv in 1983 following the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Iu. Tkachenko 1983). The production featured a great deal of dance, combined in a montage from performances in a theater, on a street, and in a large sports stadium. This dancing was overtly political in several ways. A large number "60" was suspended from the back curtain on the stage, making explicit reference to the purpose of the recorded concert. This symbolism is striking for most North American viewers because most would have disapproved of it.

Political messages are evident in the choreography and movements as well. In the early segments of the montage, we see dancers on a stage wearing costumes and performing steps that symbolize the different regions of Ukraine, emphasizing unity of the diverse parts of the Republic. The metaphor suggests a happy family from border to border within Ukraine. In other segments of the film montage, the metaphor is extended and dancers representing different republics of the Soviet Union — Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Georgians, Kazakhs, Russians and others — all dance and march happily together in the stadium. The choreography at this point celebrates the big happy Soviet family (under Russian leadership).⁷ The *Zolote pereveslo* performances can be called "national dance," with the "nation" being the Soviet Union in this case.

The core of national dance activity is connected with political power and statehood. The term "national dance" is most obvious when "the nation" — the people — is seen as being represented by a state and a government.⁸ Venezuelan dance represents Venezuela, and Danish dance represents Denmark. In reality, however, political power and political boundaries

almost never fit perfectly with cultural identity. Dances representing Chiapas, Chechen or Basque culture (minority populations with separatist sympathies who don't necessarily want to identify with Mexico, Russia or Spain respectively) should also be called "national dances" when they are meant to symbolize those potential independent states. Dance has been used as a political symbol in many ways (see Loutzaki 1994b: 15–114).

More broadly, "national dance" is dance performed as a positive symbol of a people. This broader use of the term includes dance events that involve minimal political focus, but rather emphasize the cultural heritage of the given cultural group. The purposes of the South American concert and the Vegreville Malanka program overlap with the concept of "national dance" since they contain a message of Ukrainian cultural identity, "My grand-daughter knows about her heritage and we love her for it!"⁹ Insofar as the main purpose of the event was to reflect Ukrainian identity, then that dance can be called a national dance. The Ukrainian communities in South America and western Canada however, are large and quite well settled in, migrating there mostly before World War I and thus into their third and fourth generations (see Pawliczko 1994: 327–357, 443–454). The main purpose of such dancing for most participants is to celebrate their heritage and culture, rather than make a statement about Ukraine's politics or international affairs.¹⁰ Many kinds of dance are a-political like this, and fall only into this broader interpretation of the term "national dance."

Theater-Centered Biases

The cultural biases in dance literature mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter 1 are often manifested in values applied to dances. Some of these biases are connected with the idea of social evolution:

Some of the more embarrassing skeletons in cultural anthropology's closet are the evolutionary theories that were constructed by the discipline's first generation of scholars in the late 19th century. At their worst, those writers assumed that the institutions found in the complex, industrial civilizations of their day were perched atop an evolutionary ladder and that the practices found in other societies could legitimately be assigned to lower rungs, representing stages through which the more "advanced" institutions had passed.

The notion that the institutions of the West are always more advanced (in the sense of being better) than those found elsewhere is now rejected as an ethnocentrism with racist ramifications; and the labors of several generations of careful fieldworkers have forced us to appreciate the subtle complexity and functional suitability of alien customs [R. Anderson 1990: 224].

Though the idea of social evolution had fallen out of currency in the social sciences by early in the twentieth century, many authors of "world history of dance" surveys continued to support the theory explicitly (Kinney and Kinney 1936 [1914]: 3; Sachs 1937 [1934]: 207–36; Cass 1993: 21) or implicitly (Kirstein 1969 [1935]: 5; Terry 1956: 3, 12–16; Haskell 1960: 18–22, 50–1; de Mille 1963: 29, 32; Sorell 1967: 72) right up to the present. The theory is supported implicitly by the use of terms such as "primitive" and "savage," versus "civilized" and "cultivated." The dances are described as "frenzied," "convulsive," "wild," "natural," "obscene," "simple," "unstructured," "unchanging," as opposed to "refined," "artistic," "controlled," "complex," "structured," "expressive" and "developed" in the second case. The structure of the books also reveals this perspective, with primitive and ritual dance being treated first, Oriental traditions next (if at all), followed by peasant and recreational dances,

and leading to a treatment of Western spectacular dance at the end (and normally occupying most of the pages of the book). The implication does not just proceed from “theirs” to “ours,” but also moves from past to present, from lower to higher, from worse to better.¹¹

The “world history of dance” authors had several reasons for supporting the social evolutionist theory, even after it was outdated in anthropology and other disciplines: Some of the most extensive and scholarly-sounding writing on dance up to that time was written by the nineteenth century social evolutionists.¹² Furthermore, the theory was flattering and allowed these authors to justify their deep personal commitment to ballet and contemporary Western theatrical dance in an authoritative “scientific” voice. In this framework, they could comfortably see themselves as personally connected with the very best dancing in the world. A third reason that the evolutionist mode persists so long is simply by default — no alternative perspective has caught the popular imagination.¹³

Margaret H'Doubler follows an evolutionist scheme in “A Cultural Survey of Dance,” the first chapter of her book *Dance: A Creative Art Experience* (1957 [1940]: 3–26). Connected with this is a subjective evaluation of the *purposes* for dancing. She speaks of ritual, recreational, theatrical dance as a part of the evolutionary process. In this view, ritual dance is the oldest and crudest category, recreational dance is intermediate, and theatrical dance is the most refined and the best — the fruit of later civilization. She establishes a hierarchical pyramid, with theater dance at the pinnacle.

This theater-centric view is not compatible with the cross-cultural perspective that is fundamental to this book. H'Doubler's three different purposes for dancing are not evolutionary stages, and are not necessarily even chronologically successive, as we shall see.

Whether we recognize three purposes for dancing as H'Doubler does, six as Shay establishes, fourteen as identified by Kurath, or four as described in this chapter, they are better represented as parts of a circular shaped diagram or perhaps in some horizontal relationship, rather than within a hierarchical pyramid. In the second model, none of the categories are presented as privileged; rather they are all equal in this regard. The circle can rotate, with no particular section reserving a higher or lower position. The sequence of the different purposes drawn is not significant in the diagram.

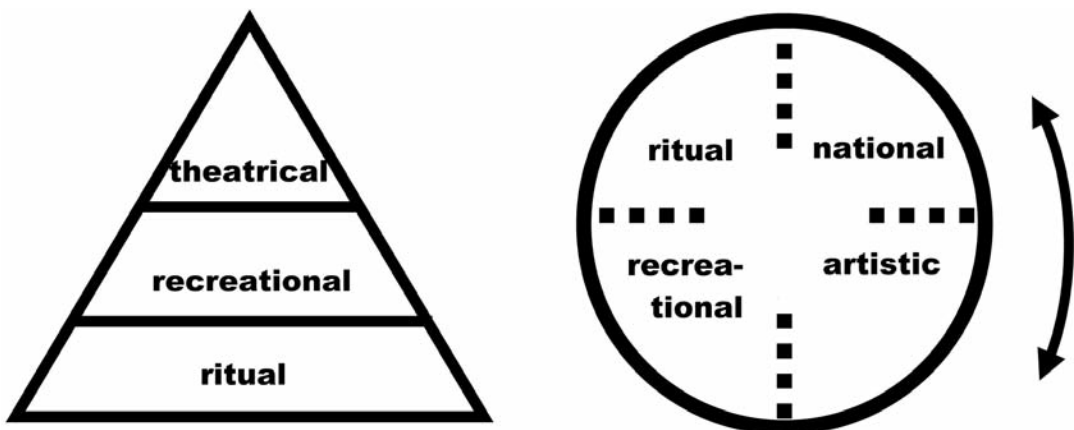


Figure 4. The “old school” hierarchical image to represent ritual, recreational and theatrical dance contrasted with a circle metaphor for dance with ritual, recreational, artistic and national purposes.

Shades of Meaning

As we have already seen in several of the examples above, the different purposes for dancing do not produce discrete categories, but can easily overlap with any of the others. This idea is represented in the circular diagram by the dotted lines, rather than solid lines between them. The overlapping occurs in two ways: Firstly, some of the specific purposes for dancing are transitional between the larger categories. Recreational dance that expresses community cohesion can be conceptualized as the same as ritual dance that communicates profound identity within that community. Similarly, theatrical dance that deals with status in a community can also be understood as a type of ritual dance. Our broad cross-cultural conceptualization of aesthetics implies a great deal of such crossover. Similarly, contemporary understandings of ritual and ceremony also are very broad. Much of what we do in life is ritualistic, including our recreation and our art.

A second aspect of the interconnection between the four major purposes for dance is that any one dance event may have multiple purposes. Indeed, “a multiplicity of functions tends to be the rule rather than the exception” (Royce 1980 [1977]: 84). The *kolomyika* described in the Chapter 1 can serve as an example of a dance that is ritual, recreational, aesthetic and national all at the same time. It is a ritual dance in that it takes place during a wedding, and contributes to the community’s witnessing of the profound relationship between the bride and groom. A wedding with a long and energetic *kolomyika* is seen as a good wedding. Community members are also explicitly declaring themselves and strengthening their bonds through their participation. The *kolomyika* is a recreational dance because the participants are certainly having fun, taking the opportunity for personal expression, perhaps with an element of courtship. The *kolomyika* can also be seen as an art dance, where the soloists in the center of the circle strive for recognition as good dancers and try to impress the surrounding spectators with their skill and prowess. It also expresses cultural identity in that it is the one dance in these peoples’ social dance repertoire that is clearly marked as Ukrainian. It is presented as such to themselves and to outsiders.

Each of these purposes for dancing the *kolomyika* (or for any dance) does not stand in the way of the other purposes. An increase in the significance of the recreational aspect (if the participants are having an unusually good time) does not necessarily cause the ethnic or the ritual aspect to decrease. Indeed, they may stimulate each other. For this *kolomyika*, it is difficult to identify which is the most important purpose. The purposes for dancing perhaps do not really produce “categories” of dances, but rather identify “qualities” present in any dance. It is important to note in retrospect that most of the definitions established earlier in this chapter include the qualifier “primarily for.” Each term: “ritual dance,” “recreational dance,” “art dance” and “national dance” is most obviously appropriate when it is the *dominant* purpose for the dance event.

Complicating the whole matter further, each individual participant in the dance event may tend towards one reason or another in his or her own personal set of priorities. For example, one dancer may participate in a *kolomyika* actively so as to be noticed by a girl he likes. Another dancer might think specially about doing her best to honor the bride and groom. A third might be swept into the fun of the dance primarily because of the music, the camaraderie and the alcohol.

Since these four categories are related to the question “why are you dancing?” the question itself is a good tool for learning about the reasons from their perspective. People will usually answer that question in a way that indicates the dominant meaning for them: “When

I hear that music, I just can't keep my feet from moving"; or alternately, "I've got to dance, it's my cousin's wedding!" "I want to show off this great new jumping step I've been working on. Nobody can do this one." The dominant reason for dancing comes out in brief responses. Secondary ones are typically verbalized later as the dancer gives more detail. Some reasons for dancing are quite explicit, while others are implicit or even covert. Dance has great potential as a means to communicate messages that are not appropriate, not safe, or not possible in words (Williams 1991: 124). "If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it" (Isadora Duncan).

It is important to try to keep in mind the actual purposes for the dancing for the participants. It is sometimes possible to be fooled by a name or stereotype that is associated with a particular kind of dancing. "Ballroom dancing" may sound like a type of recreational dancing, but in some contexts (on TV, in a competition and on stage) it has developed into an idiom that is really an artistic display. Similarly, the "national dance" component of the Royal Academy of Dance Syllabus, with its *tarantella*, *fandango*, and *polonaise* might be assumed to fall into the "national" purposes, but its participants are typically much more concerned with aesthetics and technique within the context of their ballet training than they are thinking about representing the cultures symbolized by the *études*.

All the definitions provided up to this point have been "fuzzy categories." We have seen that the concept of dance itself has many gray areas, and none of the terms are black and white when put to practice. I argue that the fuzziness of the categories does not result from our selection of weak criteria, but from the complex multidimensional reality of human cultural experience, and the place of dance within it.

Chapter 3

Ethnic Dance

The categories of dancing described in the previous chapter are based on the purpose for the activity, and answer the question “why?” Two new terms, “vival dance” and “reflective” dance, are also related to the meaning of the dance. Other key terms explored in this chapter are “peasant dance,” “folk dance,” “ethnic dance,” and “character dance.”

Vival Dance and Reflective Dance

It will be useful in our deliberations throughout the book to differentiate between those dance traditions with a focus solely on the present, as opposed to those dance traditions that involve some active reflection on the past. This latter situation will be called “reflective dance.” “Vival” dance will be used to denote any dance in which the participants are fully engaged with the present flow of experience while dancing.

The term “vival” is an old English adjective with the same roots as “vivacious” and “vital.” It is not meant to suggest that all vival dances involve high energy, but rather that people can be caught up in the flow of the activity and are “alive to the moment.”

Many writers have written about how dance can be a holistic activity, engaging the body, mind and spirit of the participants (Giurchescu 1974: 176; Giurchescu 1983: 21).

The waltz, it seems, not only made it possible to lose consciousness of time and space, but ... it also succeeded in providing the “desert island” to which one might escape. In this sense the waltz may have represented a world in which only the senses were operative, a world which was void of responsibility, and experience of self and self-involvement, an escape from reality and a surrender to the moment which can best be understood when contrasted with the element of objectivity and detachment so essential in the execution of the minuet [Katz 1980: 279–280].

Holistic experiences associated with the idea of vival dance are often participatory, as in the example above, but can also be associated with presentational dance:

It is my contention that when the dance artist realizes that each class, each rehearsal period and each performance can be a journey for meaning, she or he begins a similar personal spiritual journey that involves an ever-increasing conscious participation in the mind-body....

If we look at meditation as a form of deep and continuous concentration or focus on a single sound, image or idea, the dancer, like the religious person, can approach a meditative state both in class and in performance....

Although all artists utilize instruments to varying degrees to practice their art ... the

total body is the instrument for a dancer's movement and the fertile medium within which the meditation can deepen. The potential for one's true wholeness of body-mind-spirit then, is very strong in this fully embodied art form....

When you are totally immersed in watching a dance work, time will seem to disappear or stop. You will have lost sensation of the place where you are sitting and not be aware of how you feel. But you *will* feel, and later you will be aware of those feelings [Nadel 2003: 140–141, 145].

Vival dance experiences can be associated with any culture. The intensified experience is sometimes described as “transformation.”

a definition of “dance” proposed by Franziska Boas ... may appeal to some dancers: “ordinary gestures and actions can become dance if a transformation takes place within the person; a transformation which takes him out of the ordinary world and places him in a world of heightened sensitivity” [Spencer 1985: 2].

the dancer himself must feel within himself.... His conceptualization of change must happen through transformation, through physically experiencing another level of consciousness. This prime transformation will encourage a similar experience for the observers. Shades of this have entered into our society, where we speak of the “magic” of the theatre or say that the audience is “transported” [Snyder 1974: 221–222].

Vival dance traditions can involve the experience of “flow,” described for a variety of play and sport activities by Mihaly Csikszentmihaly and John MacAloon. Flow is “the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement” (quoted in Turner 1982: 55). Csikszentmihaly identifies several distinctive features of the flow experience. Action and awareness are merged, and the actor is un-self-conscious.

This is made possible by a *centering of attention* on a limited stimulus field. Consciousness must be narrowed, intensified, beamed in on a limited focus of attention. “Past and future must be given up” — only *now* matters.... Our minds and our will are disencumbered from irrelevances and sharply focused in certain known directions [Turner 1982: 56–57].

Flow is described as a pleasurable state. The experience of flow is contrasted with situations of reflexivity and retrospection. “While an actor may be aware of what he is doing [during flow], he cannot be aware that he is aware — if he does, there is a rhythmic behavioral or cognitive break. Self-consciousness makes him stumble” (Turner 1982: 56). Reflexivity tends to inhibit flow, for it articulates experience rather than allowing immersion in it (Turner 1982: 76).

Victor Turner's concept of “communitas” is related to “flow” in several ways, but associated with group behavior rather than an individual's experience (Turner 1982: 58). Spontaneous communitas is described as a direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities. It is a deep style of personal interaction. Individuals who interact with one another in the mode of spontaneous communitas become absorbed into a single synchronized, fluid event (Turner 1982: 47–48).

It is not just that dancing is a highly social and leveling activity that draws people together in solidarity.... It contrasts with normal everyday life, taking the dancers out of their structured routine and into a realm of timeless charm. In their *ecstasy* they literally *stand outside* [Spencer 1985: 28].

Like other play, art and sport activities, many kinds of dancing are strongly conducive to this mode of consciousness. Experiences of “flow” or “communitas” in dance are not

always fully intense, but may be milder on some occasions than others. Extending this idea, some dance traditions are likely more attuned to generating flow experiences, whereas others are less so.

However, not all dance activities are exclusively engaged with the present. “Reflective” dance is any dance in which the participants make conscious references to their tradition’s past in current performances.

As Lowenthal (1985, 1998) and others have persuasively argued, people in western culture and worldwide have been quite preoccupied with the past in many of their activities and expressions. Concern with preserving and reconstructing past dances is increasing in the world of dance research and dance history (H. Thomas 2004: 34–36), and also in dance practice. A great deal of dance has this retrospective or reflexive dimension to it, and is concerned with the past in one aspect or another. We will see, in the pages that follow, that this concern with the past may be manifest in various ways and by different participants in the dance event. The degree of intensity of engagement with the past can vary greatly, from a fleeting hint to profound commitment. Turner and Csikszentmihaly suggest above that reflexivity tends to inhibit flow. The same seems true for reflectiveness. One cannot be fully engaged with the present and be simultaneously thinking about the past. Reflective dance, then, exists in some tension with vival dance. However, it seems to me that dancing always involves some involvement with the present, and therefore always has potential for at least limited flow. The reflective aspect of the dance occurring in some situations is therefore better conceived as an overlay or addition onto the basic dance experience in the present.

Many different words have been used to identify dance activity with a concern for the past: adaptation, appropriation, arrangement, co-authorship, cultivation, invention, invocation, preservation, reconstruction, recontextualization, re-creation, re-invention, remembering, representation, revitalization, revival, theatricalization, and others. Such activity has been called “dancing in a second existence,” folklore, fakelore and folklorism.¹ Each of these terms can be thought of with positive, negative or neutral connotations in different peoples’ perspectives (see Dunin and Zebec 2001: 268–271; H. Thomas 2004: 36–39). I

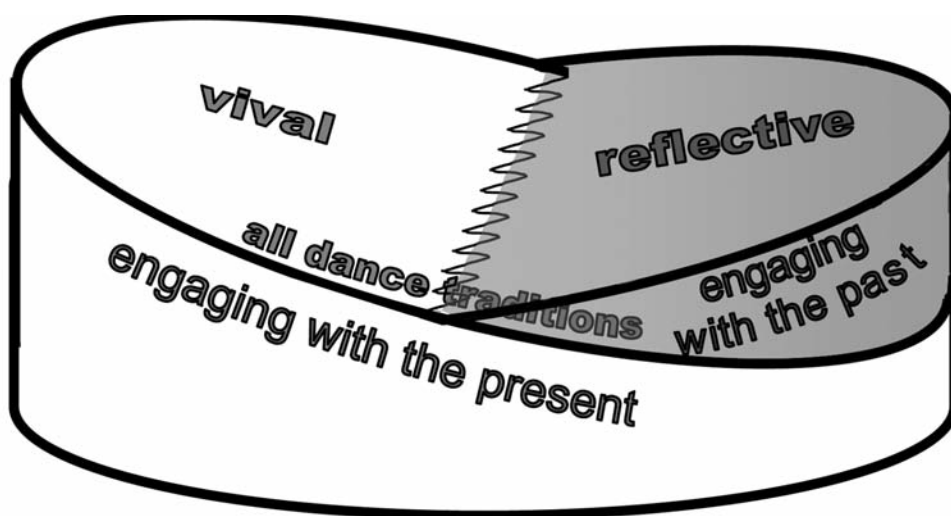


Figure 5. All dances are engaged with the present to some degree. Some dances involve an additional engagement with the past. These will be called “reflective” dances.

propose to use “reflective dance” as a broad umbrella term to embrace this whole large constellation of activities. One advantage of this term is that, as a neologism, it hopefully avoids the preconceptions and subjective implications of terms used by different dance writers.² For me, “reflective” dance evokes an image of the participants in a dance tradition metaphorically looking into a mirror to see their reflection, and their past. The term is etymologically and conceptually related to “reflexivity.”

The literature on dance history is quite large and growing, focusing primarily on elite western theatrical dance traditions. More recent dance history studies engage broadly with culture studies and cultural context in general (see for examples, Adshead and Layson 1983; Carter 2004; Dils and Albright 2001; Buckland 2006).

Discussions of reflective dance (under whatever name), where participants within the tradition think about the past as they dance, appear somewhat rarely in the general dance literature, though as “reconstruction” it is central to the work of many people interested in historical dance (see for example, Collen and Kennedy 1998). This topic is more significant in publications dealing with traditional dance in Europe (see, for examples, Ivančan 1971; Důžek 1973; Nosál 1983; Vasylenko 1983; Smirnov 1986; and others). Elsie Ivancich Dunin and Tvrtko Zebec edited a collection of articles resulting from an international symposium on “revival” (2001: 133–271). A review of recent dance research periodicals and graduate student research in North America suggests that the study of reflective dance traditions is becoming more common. I believe that the connections between dancing and reflecting the past are more common and more significant than the dance literature suggests, particularly in Western culture, where the heritage of Romanticism and its related complex of ideas have been so very influential (see Lowenthal 1985; 1998). Numerous cultural theorists have argued that reflexivity is increasingly prevalent in modern Western culture.

The idea of participants in a tradition being concerned with the past is sometimes quite controversial, and not all folklorists or ethnochoreologists are eager to deal with it. Some folklorists have been uncomfortable because they see “reflectiveness” as incompatible with their concept of authenticity. (We will see below that Romantic folklorists typically defined their subject matter as being part of “unselfconscious” tradition, and reflectiveness implies some degree of self-consciousness.) Many revivalist performers feel this discomfort very strongly if they idealize the notion of unselfconscious “natural” expression (Rosenberg 1996: 623). I hope that readers of this book will come to share the view that thinking about the past does not need to have this negative connotation.

A second challenge with the concept of reflective dance is that various people may view the same cultural activity in different ways. I acknowledge that the concern with the past is not necessarily foremost in the mind of every participant at every moment of a reflective dance event. Indeed, from the participants’ perspective, reflective dance activities can be also quite engaging in the present moment. Rather the interest in the past is clearest when observing the overall character of the community’s tradition from a bit of a distance.³

Previous dance writers have cautioned against the danger of imagining an absolute dichotomy between reflective dance traditions and the vital traditions that they remember (Buckland 1994: 47; Dunin and Zebec 2001: 268–269). Cynthia Sughrue, thinking about ceremonial English dance, calls this the “tradition versus revival debate” and gives evidence that “traditional” English longsword teams actually share much in common with the “revival” teams around them (1988: 185–189). In particular, she argues against the assumed connection between “tradition,” stability and permanent locality, in contrast to the association of “revival” with change.

“Traditional” and “revival” need not, indeed should not, be seen in opposition. If a tradition, such as longsword dancing, is faced with varying social, economic, and even cultural contexts, it will inevitably experience some sense of decline during the periods of change and subsequent revival if it proves to be adaptable. “Revival,” therefore, “is not the opposite of tradition but part of its essential nature”⁴ [1988: 185].

I agree. As I argue in Chapter 19, vival and reflective dance do not constitute a strict dichotomy, but can often be seen as two modes related in a subtle cyclical process. Sometimes the participants in a tradition are mostly interested in the current moment, then sometimes they may become more engaged with thinking about the past, and then later they may be fully immersed in the present again. Influenced by many factors, dance communities might tend to lean to one mode or another. Phenomena related to reflectivity should be seen more as tendencies or processes, rather than fixed categories (see Dunin and Zebec 2001: 268).

Both vival and reflective activities can be called traditions. “Traditions” are identifiable complexes of activities that are repeated many times, transmitted through generations, somewhat stable, normalized, yet fluid and responsive to their context. Both vival and reflective dancing can be traditional activities that are richly expressive, profoundly manifesting the inner life of the people who dance. Both are the rightful subjects of ethnochoreological study.

The Imputed Setting

Reflectiveness suggests that the participants associate the dancing with two contexts: the “actual setting” in which the dance is presently being performed, and the “imputed setting” which is being referred to or suggested by the performance (Nahachewsky 2009). The imputed setting is where and when the dancers are “pretending” to be. For example, one good example of a reflective dance is the ballet *Swan Lake*. If you attended a performance of *Swan Lake* by the Kyiv Ballet in the Shevchenko Opera Theater at 8:00 P.M. on November 7, 2009, then this was the actual setting for the dance. The imputed setting is a palace garden, then a magical forest clearing near a lake in princely times somewhere in Europe. The names Siegfried (the hero), Wolfgang (his tutor) and Von Rothbart (the evil enchanter), as well as other elements suggest a Germanic area. In other ballets and theatrical dance productions, the imputed setting has been an ancient Greek temple, a camel caravan, a dark coalmine, a corporate boardroom or a spaceship on Mars. The imputed setting for reflective dance can be fictional, non-fictional, or mythic. It can be quite imaginary and quite flexible in space, time and character. Indeed, Lowenthal argues that all pasts are imaginary (1985).

In folk and most ethnic dance, the imputed setting is non-fictional, set in the past, and associated with a particular cultural group. The stage in Figure 6 was photographed in conjunction with a Ukrainian dance concert performed in Edmonton, Canada in the 1990s. This is the actual setting of the dance. For this performance, props and a stage set were made to suggest a peasant village setting: a plastered house with a thatched roof, the woven wooden fence and sunflowers. In many other Ukrainian dance performances throughout the twentieth century, the backdrop and wings were painted to portray an idyllic village with large trees and a church. The dancers are wearing costumes that are imitations of central Ukrainian peasant dress from the nineteenth century. This is the imputed setting.

The imputed setting can be communicated in a large variety of ways. In some dance events, all the participants know the imputed setting well before the performance begins. In others, it can be identified to the spectators by the backdrop or other scenic effects, by



Figure 6. Ukrainian dance *Iak zhinky cholovikiv prodavaly* [A Lesson Learned] performed by Shawn Owchar and Sherri Harach of the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company, Edmonton, Canada, 1999. Choreography by Mykola Kanevets. The stage set, props and costumes strongly suggest a peasant setting (courtesy Ukrainian Cheremosh Society).

the movements themselves, the music, the costumes, the lighting, the props, by the very name of the dance, through printed program notes or announcements. In some cases, the dancers and organizers of the dance event devote a great deal of attention to intensifying the illusion and mentally transporting themselves and the spectators to the imputed setting. In other cases, the imputed setting is only vaguely suggested by a few subtle details, or is implicit altogether. Part of the beauty and the potency of dance as an expressive medium is that it can carry people away to an imputed setting so effectively and so often.

The concept of imputed setting is a characteristic specifically related to reflective dance. By definition, vital dance cannot suggest an imputed setting.

Authenticity

The term “authentic” generally carries the sense of something being real or genuine. Sarah Rubidge surveys several conceptualizations of “authenticity” in connection with performing arts. Some people strive for authenticity by attempting to reconstruct or physically replicate the *form* of the earliest performance. Others understand the goal of authenticity

as reconstructing the first creator's *idea* of an ideal performance. Others see the goal of authenticity differently again, and seek to produce performances that reveal the *original values*, vitality and qualities as vividly as possible. These latter groups understand that producing an authentic event may invoke changes in form as the performance adapts to contemporary settings, incorporates contemporary technology, is received by contemporary audiences, and as different values are selected as essential (Rubidge 1996). No matter which of these three definitions are used, it may be impossible to have a completely authentic dance; nothing can be a perfectly accurate replication of something that has happened before. Authenticity is a matter of degree.

If we accept the definition of the term "authentic dance" as a dance that accurately reflects an original in any of these ways, then we obviously need to know what that original is. I propose that this is the "imputed setting" which we identified above, and which should be explicit in conversations about authenticity. "Authentic dance" is a performance that effectively transports the participants to the imputed setting in their imagination. According to this meaning, authenticity is a comparative term, and only applies to dances with some element of reflectiveness.

An inauthentic dance experience, then, occurs when the participants are not transported to the imputed setting in their imagination. Dancers, instructors, spectators or critics who think a dance is not authentic did not "travel" in time or space: Perhaps the dance did not resemble the form of the earlier dance according to their understanding. Maybe the context was too different, maybe the meaning of the dance was unlike what they had anticipated, or maybe they were simply not in the right frame of mind.

Because of its connection with the imputed setting, the concept of authenticity in this study is also restricted to reflective dance. In this study, the word is irrelevant to vival dance experiences.

Peasant Dance

Peasants are a sociological category of people. Peasant societies can be contrasted with other major categories of societies, those of hunter-gatherers, nomads and city dwellers. Teodor Shanin proposed a list of main characteristics of peasant societies: peasants are family-based agriculturalists using relatively low technology. They tend to participate in cultures that are quite complex, with many beliefs and involved traditions. Peasant societies are generally in an underdog position in relation to the elite and urban societies near them (Shanin 1987 [1971]: 2–5). Agriculture developed some 10,000 years ago in human history, and has occupied the majority of this planet's population for much of the time since then. Peasant dances are, simply, dances actually performed by peasants.

Because of the specific features of peasant societies, several particular characteristics tend to be common in peasant dance. Firstly, since peasants typically live in low technology cultures, their music and their dance is correspondingly low-tech. They characteristically dance by interacting with live musicians, rather than using pre-recorded sound. Their expressive arts, much like their material culture, tend not to be mass-produced and standardized, but are hand made locally, and thus vary from item to item, from performance to performance. Peasants tend to learn their dances, like other aspects of their culture, directly by word of mouth and by imitation in context, rather than by studying them in special classes, rehearsals or from books. Compared to contemporary western secular society, peasant cul-

tures tend to be more actively engaged with religion and spirituality, and thus dance activities are quite integrated with their elaborate ritual world.

Peasant dance is a very important category for consideration of Ukrainian dance. A great proportion of people living Ukrainian culture throughout history have been peasants. Perhaps just as importantly, as we'll see, peasant dance has been extremely important in inspiring Ukrainian dance performed by non-peasants as well. In these cases, the peasant world is not the actual setting, but it is the imputed setting, and remains relevant nonetheless.

Folk Dance

The term "folk dance" is a prime example of how certain words have developed a multitude of definitions over time in the English language. The multiplicity of meanings and cultural baggage connected with many of the definitions causes significant confusion in thinking and writing about folk dance.⁵

Some dance scholars advise against the use of the term "folk dance" almost entirely, as it has become too vague or too bound up with old biases to be useful (Freidland 1998: 32). In her article, "Folk Dance," Joann Kealiinohomoku explores a variety of descriptions and definitions of the term published in the general surveys of dance history, then observes wryly:

We can summarize our findings by saying that, variously, folk dance is traditional, but that not all traditional forms are folk dance; we learn that it is nonvocational, but that sometimes it is vocational; we realize that it is communal, but that this is not always so; we are instructed that it is and that it is not ritually based. We have seen that the most widespread form of recreational dance in the United States — modern popular dance — fulfills all the basic criteria, only it is not considered folk dance. Strangely, in the United States, it *is* considered folk dance if a group of people perform the dances of some group other than their own, which eliminates the criterion of "national" or "racial." Also, we cannot consider the degree of competence to distinguish folk dance from some other dance form, because many folk dances are difficult to do, may require much rehearsing, and there are gifted folk dance performers who qualify as artists.

By this time we might well wash our hands of the whole affair, and say that if no one can agree on what constitutes folk dance, maybe the phenomenon is but an illusion and does not really exist [Kealiinohomoku 1972: 385].

The truth of the matter however, is that the term "folk dance" is used very widely in popular speech, as well as by many dancers who claim to perform it. I propose that it is still useful to explore meanings of the term. In general, the many notions of "folk dance" can be organized into three or four main groupings. Older definitions tend to be narrower, connected with European peasantry. The scope of the term "folk dance" has progressively expanded over the twentieth century to include more and more types of dancing. We will look at three definitions in turn.

The first definition asserts that "folk dances" are the dances performed by peasants. This conceptualization of "folk dance" is relatively common in the older dance history surveys (Kirstein 1969 [1935]: 115, 140, 176, 258; H'Doubler 1957 [1940]: 17, 22; de Mille 1963: 46–7; Raffé 1964: 185–6; Sorell 1967: 45; Sorell 1981: 36).

Early notions of "folk dance" were connected specifically with European peasants. In the period of Romanticism (in the late 1700s and early 1800s in Europe) peasants were called

the “folk.” The lore of the folk was seen as natural, ancient, rooted in the land, and true to the national spirit of the people. For Romantic intellectuals, these were all positive qualities. For this reason they were very interested in peasant culture. In Europe and beyond, organized dance movements and national dance traditions were based on peasant dance as the model.

“Folk dance,” according to this definition, is roughly parallel to “folk song,” “folk medicine,” “folk art,” “folk architecture” and many other genres of folklore in that discipline’s original conceptualization (for example, see Dorson 1972: 1–5 ff).⁶ The discipline of folklore originated in the nineteenth century primarily as the study of peasant culture and “popular antiquities” of the lower classes in Europe. In this early conceptualization of folklorists, the lore of the folk was seen as very old. They assumed that folklore texts didn’t change over time, or at least changed very slowly.⁷ They believed that folklore texts were *communally created* and *communally held*, belonging to the whole group rather than any individual. They understood that folklore was *transmitted directly* and unselfconsciously from one generation to the next by direct observation and imitation. The early folklorists recognized that folklore texts *existed in variants* rather than one authoritative, set form (Oring 1986: 1–22). It was assumed that folk dances shared all the above features with the other genres of folklore (Freidland 1998: 29–32).

This conceptualization of “folk dance” was an equivalent to “peasant dance” in the early understandings of both terms. Both concepts have been re-thought over the years however, and they have been growing apart in meaning. Theories about archaic origins, national purity, longevity, communal creation, communal ownership and direct transmission in traditional peasant culture have all been challenged (Oring 1986: 7–15). It is increasingly recognized that peasants engaged and engage in a wide variety of new and non-indigenous dance forms. Furthermore, folklorists do not limit themselves to studying peasants any more, and the lore of many other societal formations is seen as folklore (see the third folklore definition below). Nonetheless, this connection between peasants and folklore retains a certain resonance in common knowledge and public understanding, as well as in some scholarly activity.

A second definition has it that “folk dances” include dances performed by peasants *plus* reflective dances derived from them. This usage of “folk dance” is expressed or implied in numerous publications (Kinney and Kinney 1936 [1914]: 164–5; J. Martin 1965 [1939]: 167; H’Doubler 1957 [1940]: 24–26; Terry 1956: 214–5; de Mille 1963: 166–72; Clarke and Vaughan 1977: 144; Sorell 1981: 255, 397; Cass 1993: 43; and literally hundreds of “folk dance” manuals for teachers.) This second definition for “folk dance” expands upon the first one, and adds peasant-inspired dances, even if performed in cities and by non-peasants. We will see throughout the remainder of this study that a great diversity of reflective dance activity is inspired by peasant dance. Starting in the late 1800s, activists in Europe started to learn peasant dance forms and imitate them in new contexts, motivated by the goals of preserving these dances and promoting them among urban populations. In many cases, the original peasant dances seemed to be dying away, and the activists felt it was important to try to preserve them from extinction. From that time, folk dance preservation movements have been organized in practically all countries across Europe, North America and other continents (see Lange 1980; Freidland 1998: 32–36; and Chapter 9 below). Since these people wanted to emphasize the continuity between their activities and those of the peasants, they used the same term to refer to the original traditions and their revivals. This was all “folk dance.”

This second definition for “folk dance,” with a strong emphasis on the organized reflective activity, is implied in the epithet to this book, the pronouncement of the International Dance Council that the emergence of folk dance is one of the two major events in twentieth century dance.⁸

For the remainder of this book, we will use the term “folk dance” according to this second definition. “Folk dances” are peasant dances plus their derivatives. Common popular usage often reflects this definition. I agree with LeeEllen Freidland that

[t]he term *folk dance* ... is inextricably tied to the nineteenth-century view of the folk as guardians of the pure national soul and folk culture as the repository of customs descended from ancient religious ritual.... Folk dance is that subset of dance forms and customs that can be traced to folk [peasant] communities and repertoires so defined by nineteenth-century concepts; it is a historical term that refers to a particular interpretation of the history of human culture and expression [1998: 32].

The adoption of definition two for “folk dance” in the present work is not made to suggest that peasant dances are somehow essentially different than all others, or that nineteenth century concepts should remain intact, or that folklorists should limit themselves to peasant-based culture. On the contrary, the contemporary broader scope of interest for many contemporary folklorists is quite valid and important (see the third definition of “folk dance” and the discussion of “vernacular dance” below). It is also important that the connection with peasantry should be purged of its old connotations of backwardness, inferiority or artlessness. If we accept these reservations, I argue that the idea of folk dance remains very useful and relevant.

Many reflective ethnic dance traditions have imputed settings in hunter-gatherer, nomadic or urban societies, rather than peasant cultures. Though they are technically excluded from the definition of “folk dances” in the current study, I would argue that many of the concepts, processes and patterns described in this book still apply to reflective traditions that grow out of them. For our purposes, a narrower concentration on peasant-based vival and reflective dance will add to the clarity of focus.

Some commentators propose a third definition for “folk dance”—the dance of *any* cultural group. This third definition is broadest of the three. It results from reconceptualizations in folklore studies that have taken place through the twentieth century, particularly in North America. Alan Dundes famously declared that “the folk” includes “any group of people whatsoever who share at least one cultural factor” (Dundes 1965: 2; Dundes 1980 [1977]: 1–19; see Kealiinohomoku 1972: 381). Many folklorists came to recognize that peasants were not the only groups with interesting local expressive traditions that are informal and passed on from person to person through direct contact. These scholars now include quite broad and flexible criteria for identifying the cultural groupings that they study. Cultural groups can be defined by any of a variety of common factors: location, history, shared experiences, ancestry, age, class, religion, customs, language, occupation, interests, habits, health conditions, gender, ideology, hobbies and others. Some of these “cultural groups” may also be considered “subgroups” or “communities.” Many have distinct and interesting traditions. The key is that the members of the group and/or outsiders perceive the group’s existence. Such cultural groups may be large or small, compact or geographically dispersed, intensely integrated or linked by relatively few shared factors (Dundes 1980 [1970]: 1–19; Oring 1986: 1; Georges and Jones 1995: 171).

Since all dances are performed by groups of people who share at least that particular

dance, then it follows that there is no dance that isn't folk dance. This third definition then, shifts to describe the researcher's approach more than the features of any dance. For that reason, it is less useful for our purposes.⁹

Vernacular Dance

The term "vernacular dance" represents a useful concept that some folklorists recommend as a more equitable and open replacement for "folk dance." Vernacular dance is dance that is actually performed by the general population of a certain locality on a normal and informal basis, in contrast to the more formally recognized styles of elite and official culture.

The term "vernacular" has Latin roots (*vernaculus*—home born, native). The word has traditionally been used in connection with language: "using a language or dialect native to a region or country, rather than a literary, cultured or foreign language" (Webster's, 3rd edition). The adjective has also been commonly adopted in the field of architecture (Oliver 1997) and numerous other spheres of culture, including dance (Stearns and Stearns 1964: xiv; see Freidland 1987: 214–215). Vernacular dance implies "the local tradition." Vernacular culture is "native" in that it either actually originates with the culture or has become well internalized. Vernacular dance is "integral to the everyday life and beliefs of a given group of people" (Freidland 1987: 215). It refers to common types of dancing in a specific local culture, in a particular place and time. These groups may be peasants, or they may be urbanites. For that matter, they may be groupings defined by ethnicity, occupation, age group or other characteristics. From the perspective of insiders to this culture, this type of dancing is seen as "normal," "natural," "unmarked," and "unremarkable." The concept of vernacular dance is very useful for the purposes of this study.

Ethnic Dance

The concept of "ethnic dance" is central to the subject matter of this book. Like "folk dance," different people understand the term "ethnic dance" variously.¹⁰ Indeed, many people casually perceive the two terms to be synonymous or nearly so.¹¹ In our usage, there will be a strong overlap among activities that are called "folk dance" and activities that are called "ethnic dance." The concepts behind the two terms are based on different foundations however, and the overlap is only partial.

A key to defining "ethnic dance" for our purposes is to connect it to the concept of "ethnicity" in general. A specialization has evolved in the social sciences since the midpoint of the twentieth century, called "ethnic studies," which has produced a large literature on the topic. There is no absolute consensus on the definition of ethnicity, but the core of meaning is fairly established. An *ethnic group* is generally acknowledged to be a group of people, who think of themselves as a cultural group and perceive a shared ancestry, shared homeland, shared history and shared culture. The shared culture typically emphasizes language, religion and/or traditions (see Schermerhorn 1970: 12, cited in Sollors 1996: xii; Isajiw 1985 [1974]; Parsons 1975: 53–63; Driedger 1996: 2–24).¹² Ethnic dance is the dance component of these shared cultural traditions.

Ethnic groups then, are a specific subset of the "cultures" that we have been speaking

of to this point. Some ethnic groups are small, whereas others are large, some are relatively discrete and isolated, whereas others exist in close contact with neighbors. Some of those neighbors live in adjacent homelands, and while others might share the very same space, so that their populations intermingle geographically. The populations of some ethnic groups live in their homeland, while others have moved away and thus live in a *diaspora*.

Since all humans are part of one culture or another, then according to this definition, *all* dance is ethnic dance. This is precisely the point of Joan Kealiinohomoku's famous and controversial article "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance" (2001a [1970]). She argues that ballet belongs primarily to Western culture, and since Western culture is an ethnicity — a specific cultural group based on elements of shared ancestry, homeland, history and culture — then ballet is ethnic dance.

Consider for example, how Western is the tradition of the proscenium stage, the usual three part performance which lasts for about two hours, our star system, our use of curtain calls and applause, and our usage of French terminology. Think how culturally revealing it is to see the stylized Western customs enacted on the stage, such as the mannerisms from the age of chivalry, courting, weddings, christenings, burial and mourning customs....

Our aesthetic values are shown in the long line of lifted, extended bodies, in the total revealing of legs, of small heads and tiny feet for women, in slender bodies for both sexes, and in the coveted airy quality which is best shown in the lifts and carryings of the female....

The ethnicity of ballet is revealed also in the kinds of flora and fauna which appear regularly. Horses and swans are esteemed fauna. In contrast we have no tradition of esteeming for theatrical purposes pigs, sharks, eagles, buffalo or crocodiles even though these are indeed highly esteemed animals used in dance themes elsewhere in the world....

The question is not whether ballet reflects its own heritage. The question is why we seem to need to believe that ballet has somehow become a-cultural. Why are we afraid to call it an ethnic form? [Kealiinohomoku 2001a (1970): 40–41].

The ballet community, however, has generally been very uncomfortable with being described as "ethnic." The answer to her rhetorical last question is that ethnicity has long been associated with lower status. "Dominant groups rarely define themselves as ethnics" (Royce 1982: 3; Sollors 1996: xiv). Kealiinohomoku actively challenges the hegemony of ballet with her question.

I share Kealiinohomoku's cross-cultural anthropological perspective, though for purposes of this study, I continue to strive for a conceptualization of "ethnic dance" that allows us to usefully differentiate certain dance activities from others. An answer lies in additional insights from ethnic studies. Earlier scholars of ethnicity concentrated mostly on the actual cultural content that was shared by the members of any given cultural group. Increasingly since the 1960s however, scholars have appreciated the fact that the *perception* of shared culture is at least as important for uniting groups as the actual shared cultural forms. Typically only a few elements of cultural content are selected from the entire cultural repertoire of a group to become *symbols* of intra-group unity and inter-group differentiation. Furthermore, these symbols can and do change from time to time. Fredrik Barth, in a very influential article, observed that the perceived cultural *boundaries* between ethnic groups in contact are sometimes more important for defining them than actual cultural content. Though the actual similarities and differences may shift as the cultures change, as long as they continue to maintain symbolic boundaries between themselves, the two cultural identities will remain distinct and their ethnicity will remain salient (Barth 1969; see also Sollors 1996: xxi–xxv).

Barth's concern for boundaries is particularly relevant in the many spheres of dance

activity that communicate identity among people of different groups. Indeed, this is the key to the definition of ethnic dance proposed for this study. For our purposes, “ethnic dance” is dance that makes explicit reference to any specific culture in a cross-cultural situation. Ethnic dance is dance that engages cultural boundaries.

The focus on symbolic cultural boundaries is particularly relevant to dance because the actual content of dance traditions changes so readily, and since dance is so notoriously ephemeral. The proposed definition is very inclusive, and a huge variety of dancing can be called “ethnic dance.” Note that the concept of “ethnic dance” does not make reference to peasantry.¹³ Also, this definition specifically avoids any implications of high status or low status, and allows for great variety, as we will see.

Ethnic Salience

Though much dance in the West is associated with reflecting a specific culture in a cross-cultural context, certain dancing activities are engaged more centrally with this issue than others. Also, they may be engaged with cross-cultural issues in very different ways. In our usage, “ethnic dance” is a matter of degree, rather than a discrete category. The degree of importance of this factor can be called the “ethnic salience” of the dance experience.

In order to imagine the different ways a dance can be ethnically salient, we might proceed by imagining the opposite: a dance that makes as few references to cultural boundaries as possible. This would have to be a dance event in which all aspects and references are contained within one particular culture. George Balanchine’s *Agon* might be proposed as an example, performed by the New York City Ballet at the Lincoln Center. The dance can arguably be described as experienced entirely within dominant Western culture in its contemporary American variant. “It is a plotless exploration of the musical structure created by Stravinsky. In it we see one of the truest images of the classic academic dance in the later half of our century ... it belongs, essentially, to New York itself” (Clarke and Crisp 1981: 67). The dance content focuses on the beauty of abstract line, shape and rhythm.¹⁴ We can imagine that this dance is part of an indigenous artistic style of Western culture, performed by dancers trained inside this same culture, watched by spectators who are also insiders, and reviewed by later analysts who are likewise comfortably and unselfconsciously situated inside Western culture. When performed in this situation, *Agon* is not ethnically salient.

Much Western elite dance, however, does make specific references to some other culture, whether its imputed setting is ancient Greece as in Martha Graham’s *Night Journey*, Renaissance Verona in *Romeo and Juliette* or a Polovtsian camp on the steppes of Central Asia in Fokine’s *Prince Igor*. This type of reference in the dance performance pushes the dance event somewhat into the realm of ethnic dance, even if the dancers, spectators and later analysts are all still Western insiders.

In the same vein, if guest artists from a ballet company from China perform *Agon* at the Lincoln Center, the dance experience would feature a different flavor and interest that increases its ethnic salience. Again, if the New York City Ballet performed the same choreography, but while on a tour to Nairobi, cross-cultural issues would come into play again. The purpose for dancing, the dance type, the cultural identity of the performers, the cultural identity of the spectators, and even the identity of later analysts can become the source of ethnic salience if they introduce a cultural difference to the dance event. Figure 7 graphically represents the various factors that may intensify the ethnic salience of a dance event.

Though the examples above focus on one factor at a time, in reality, each factor operates

independently and a more typical scenario would include some combination of two, three or more factors that make the dance more or less ethnically salient. Furthermore, each factor operates as a continuum with multiple intermediary stages between the two extremes. For example, a fraction of the spectators may be outsiders, while the rest are watching a dance within their own culture. Meanwhile, symbolizing national identity might be a secondary purpose rather than a dominant one, and so on. The most intensely ethnically salient dance events are potent sites of interaction involving two or several different cultures. Such situations do not require all six factors to be engaged, but often two or three, far down the continuum into cross-cultural territory.

Other examples of ethnic dance in Western culture include a wedding dance in Chicago where the Greek American celebrants engage in certain symbolic actions (including dances) specifically intended to mark their particular identity to themselves and their non-Greek guests. The Chinese dance in the *Nutcracker* ballet is clearly an ethnic dance because the choreographers, performers and audience all agree that the dance represents a distant cultural group (albeit in a very stylized way). The same is true when the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico performs for foreign tourists in Mexico City, though it may be that many of the participants think that the audience is distant and exotic, rather than the dance.

The concept of ethnic salience is not restricted to dominant Western cultural contexts, but can operate in either direction. The wedding *chardash* performed in the village of Ruski Krstur is normally not ethnically salient. It is generally experienced entirely within the single culture of this particular community. The various participants do not think about reflecting or representing their culture as they dance. They think about the bride and how it is good to dance with her on this important day. They pay their respects and are seen dancing with her. They think about her new life as a married woman. They joke and have fun. They do not think about representing their culture to outsiders. It is only because I, a foreigner, attended one wedding with my video camera, and especially because I described this dance in this text, that it *now* becomes part of a cross-cultural experience. The dance event itself is not so much ethnic as *our perspective* is ethnicizing. We bring the ethnic salience to our

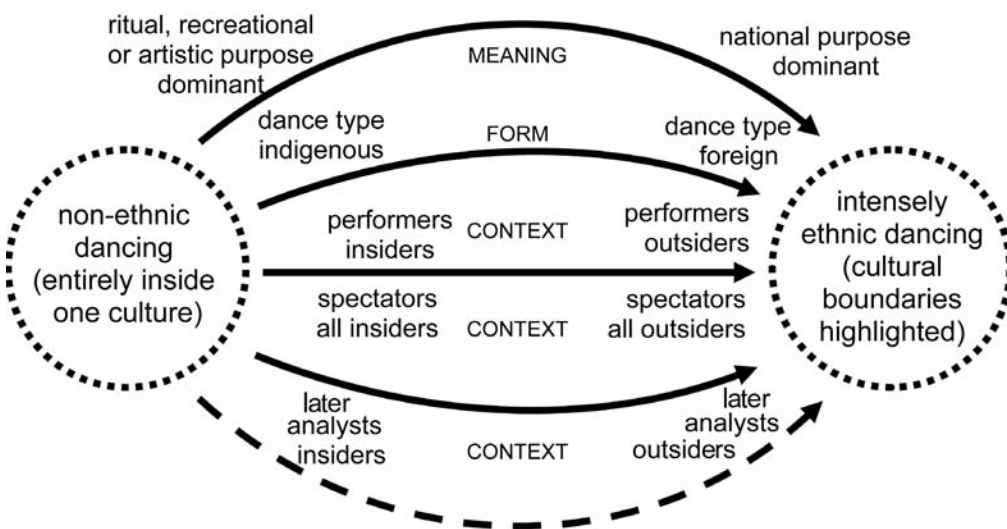


Figure 7. Factors intensifying the salience of ethnicity.

discussion of the dance because of our position as later analysts from the outside. In cases like this, ethnic salience is clearly “in the eye of the beholder.”

If the world’s populations lived in isolated cultures that rarely interacted, then it would be easy to imagine that ethnic dance would be a minor concern. However, since cultural contact has been very prevalent on our planet and continues to intensify in frequency and intensity, it can be argued that ethnic dance is becoming increasingly important in our world.

The increasing significance of ethnic dance and sensitivity to cultural differences is also connected to the rise of reflexivity in contemporary Western cultural analysis. “Reflexivity” implies the self-conscious consideration by the analyst of his or her positioning, biases and perspectives whenever commenting on human activity. Many scholars wish to distance themselves from colonialism and other forms of dominance or hegemony, and see a greater understanding of their own position in the world’s cultural economy as necessary for that goal (this attitude is evident in *During 1993*: 1–7, for example). Anthropologists have been called “professional strangers” whose very discipline is based on looking at culture from an outside vantage point (Agar 1980). Not only anthropologists, but also other social scientists, scholars in the humanities, and diverse thinkers are becoming increasingly retrospective — reflexive — about our culture’s assumptions, values and practices. This too, increases the need to understand comparative cultural references in dance.

Character Dance

“Character dance” is a term that is used in some circles in connection to folk and ethnic dance (Kinney and Kinney 1936 [1914]: 53, 121, 165, 171, 173–4; Kirstein 1969 [1935]: 240, 256–257, 277–278; Raffé 1964: 99–100; Chujoy and Manchester 1967: 191–192; Sorell 1981: 255; Pagels 1984: 1–4). “Character dance” is a category of dance within the ballet tradition that contrasts with the noble style. It has been used to denote the stylized dances representing the “character” of various nations within Western theatrical dance.

Throughout its entire history, from the French courts to the stages of Europe and beyond, ballet has included roles that are elegant, uplifted and noble, as well as roles that are comical, exotic, negative or otherwise contrastive to the noble heroes (Hilton 1981: 35–39; Slonimskii 1939). Some of these “character” roles called on the dancer to perform a representation of people from distant lands. Other roles depicted peasants or other members of the local lower classes, or perhaps animals, inanimate objects, and even abstract concepts.

In some ballet choreographies and in some styles, the character roles tend to be secondary and supportive, such as the father of the heroine, the shoemaker, or the antagonist’s assistant. These may require more acting prowess and perhaps less technical ability than the principal dancers. Therefore, older dancers often perform these roles. In other cases, character roles may be spotlighted and require great skill and technique.

Character dancing was particularly well developed in the Romantic ballet. Character dance is related to the discipline of “National dance” in the Royal Academy of Dance.¹⁵ In the Russian Empire and later in the Soviet Union, character dance was also highly developed. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it grew into a highly specialized technical tradition, including its own specific exercises, levels of expertise, and specialists. In Eastern Europe the term “character dance” continues to be used in the context of classical ballet

productions, while a variant called “folk staged dance” has evolved into a semi-independent genre. In folk staged dance, practically all the roles in a given concert represent characters from one specific folk culture or another (Slonimskii 1939: 20–32).

According to definitions established for this study, a great deal of character dance can be subsumed within the concept of “ethnic dance.” Much of it is very ethnically salient indeed. Also, many character dances make reference to peasantry, and those particular dances also fit within our conceptualization of “folk dance.”

Traditional Dance and Good Dance

The terms “traditional dance” and “good dance” are subjective and lie “in the eye of the beholder” more than being situated objectively in the dancing activity itself. What is “traditional dance” for one person may not be for another, and what one person loves as good dance may not be as pleasing for everyone.

The concept of “tradition” places emphasis on continuity and the passing of experience from generation to generation. Haskell claims that the east European *kolo* tradition is 3,000 years old (1960: 30). The “tradition of ballet” can be described as nearly 500 years old. One can also speak of the “tradition of modern dance,” though its roots extend barely one century. However, great antiquity is not essential and we can also speak about the “tradition of shows based on *Riverdance*”¹⁶ or the “tradition of moshing”¹⁷ as well.

In the literature on dance history, the word “traditional” is often used to contrast with “creative” or “art dance.” In this sense, “traditional dance” is sometimes used as another euphemism for *their* dance as opposed to *ours* (often again implying inferiority).¹⁸ In reality however, both “traditional” and “creative” dance activities involve elements of continuity and elements of change.

“Traditional dance” is a very elastic term. If on the one hand, we accept the position that every single dance performed is a unique event in time and space, then we can come to the extreme conclusion that *no dance is entirely traditional*. On the other hand, we could start from the opposite assertion that nothing grows out of a vacuum. Even the most radically creative improvisation references something that came before (see Giurchescu 1983:39–46). In that case, we can take the opposite position that *all dance is traditional*, or at least partially so.

Use of the term “traditional dance” is a matter of emphasis and perspective of the speaker, rather than a case of presence or absence of this characteristic in a dance performance itself. When someone says that a dance is traditional, he indicates that he wants to emphasize continuity rather than change. Because the word “tradition” is often very value laden, the speaker who uses it may be approving or disapproving of the performance.

The idea of “good” dance is relative as well. Imagine two sweethearts embracing tightly, standing almost motionless in the middle of a dark dance floor during a slow love song at a High School graduation dance in the mid-west United States. This dance may be a very powerful and positive experience for them, but very unsettling for a nervous parent who may be present. Any particular dance may be a good dance and a bad dance at the same time, depending on the various participants’ criteria for measuring its quality.

Chapter 4

Peasants Dancing

Folk dance, as we have defined it, is connected with peasantry in one of two ways. Firstly, we have the dances performed by peasants themselves. Most Ukrainians for the past several thousand years have been peasants. Most dancing by these peasants has been vival dancing. Secondly, our understanding of folk dance also includes the reflective dances performed by non-peasants, but using peasant dance as an inspiration. In the second case, the peasant world is the imputed setting, rather than the actual setting for the dance performance. We will see that a great deal of Ukrainian dance over the past two centuries fits this second category of folk dance. In any event, both sides of the folk dance equation require a closer look at peasant vival dancing.

It would be impossible to identify, much less to describe all the specific dance events ever celebrated by Ukrainian peasant communities; there are so many of them, the traditions are so diverse, and so many have passed without being documented. Each region, perhaps each cluster of villages may celebrate different dances and different dance occasions than their neighbors. A survey of one particular traditional culture can serve to provide an impression of the dance occasions in peasant societies, and can later be used for comparison with others. In this section, we will survey briefly the traditions that provide occasions for dance in the Hutsul region, in the Carpathian Mountains (Hoshko 1987: 24–7). The description is based on an extensive ethnographic description of these traditions at the beginning of the twentieth century published in five volumes by Volodymyr Shukhevych (1899–1908) and by numerous other descriptions since that time, particularly Harasymchuk (1956; 2008; Stas'ko and Marusyk 2010).

In the nineteenth century, the Hutsul region was located within the Hapsburg Empire, distant from its great capital city Vienna. The Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches were dominant in this area. The Hutsuls lived in close proximity to Romanians, Hungarians, Wallacians and other linguistic/national groups. Living in the highest reaches of the Carpathian mountains, the land was more conducive to lumbering and animal husbandry than agriculture. The Hutsuls were renowned for their arts and crafts, a reputation that continues until today.

Peasant dances contain elements of ritual, recreational, artistic and, rarely, national purposes. When surveying peasant dance occasions, it is useful to use their connection with the major ritual cycles as an organizing principle. Even if the dances themselves seem to be explicitly recreational or artistic, the setting usually is related in some way with the demarcation of a special time, place, action, or person within their society. The many different occasions for dancing can be organized into three major categories: life cycle events, calendar cycle events, and other occasions. The various occasions for dancing among the Hutsuls,



Figure 8. Map of Ukraine and its ethnographic regions (see Nahachewsky 2008b: 8–9) (courtesy Serhij Koroliuk).

and particularly the larger ritual complexes, were saturated with expressive and significant movement activities.

Life Cycle

The first celebration that involved dance in the Hutsul peasant tradition was generally the baptism and the naming of the child, which occurred soon after birth. Soon after the ritual of the purification of the mother, forty days after the birth, the parents organized a second celebration called the *kalachyny* where family members, the godparents, and guests toasted the health of the child, ate, and danced (Shukhevych 1902: 5–7; Domashevsky 1975: 108–10; Siavavko 1987: 305).

Hutsul children were present at dance events attended by their parents. Though taught to stay out of the way of adults, they certainly learned much about the traditions as they played nearby. At a certain age, after puberty, the young adults participated more actively in the dances. As they grew up, they played various dance-like games and imitated adult dancing. The next event, and perhaps the most important life cycle celebration that involved dance, was the wedding.

Dance is an essential component of the wedding ritual. It plays a dual role: recreational and ritual ... dance united each ceremonial stage of the wedding drama.

[Ethnographic] materials indicate that dance retained its old ritual meanings in the Hutsul region at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Each larger and smaller section of the wedding tradition was concluded with dancing. Particularly in the section of the wedding called the “*vesillia*,” the people danced continuously, including during the ritual actions.... Of the twenty separate sections of the Hutsul wedding, the people dance during seventeen of them [Harasymchuk 1956: 101–2].

Sometimes the young man and woman felt attracted to each other and were the main initiators of a particular match. On the other hand, parents and other relatives typically had an important say in the choice of marriage partners. People were married quite young, especially females.

The traditional Hutsul wedding started with an initial viewing during which time the prospective groom and bride learned of each other's willingness to be married and obtained their parents' initial consent. During the engagement rituals [*svatannia* and *zaruchyny*], the prospective groom and matchmakers visited the prospective bride's parents in the evening, formalized the commitment, discussed the dowry contributions from both families, drank a toast and exchanged gifts. Relatives, neighbors, and musicians soon arrived to sing and dance. The next day, they went to the local priest to prepare the formal documents and ask him to announce the wedding banns.

When the time came, a complete wedding proceeded over a period of some five days. On the first day, ceremonies of blessing [*blahoslovennia* and *proshcha*] took place. The bride's guests gathered at the bride's home and the groom's guests assembled at the home of the groom. In each house, the guests sang special songs and wove wreaths of periwinkle for the marriage ceremony. The parents and "ritual parents"¹ blessed the bride and groom and forgave them their faults prior to this upcoming event. The bride and groom, each with their own bridal party, traveled around the village ritually inviting the guests to their respective wedding celebrations, beginning later that evening. While the invitations were being extended [*zaprosyny*], family members at the bride's home and at the groom's home cut and decorated a small spruce tree [*ubyranntia derevtsia*], which was implanted into a large bread as a wedding symbol. The beginning of the wedding proper [*zachynannia*] took place that evening as the guests arrived, and continued throughout the night with music, food and dance (Shukhevych 1902: 11–68; see also Harasymchuk 1956: 101–16; Domashevsky 1975: 114–67; Siavavko 1987: 305–14).

The next morning, the bride got specially dressed and was ceremonially led to sit on the bench behind the table in her parents' house, where the *derevtse* had been placed the previous evening. The bride and each guest drank toasts to each other, and the guests presented her with coins. A similar toasting ceremony [*povnytsia*] took place simultaneously with the groom at his house. The groom sent special breads, spirits, a head cloth, a red kerchief and boots as gifts to the bride. She received his ambassadors ceremoniously and gave gifts for him in return: an embroidered shirt, breads and more spirits. At each house, the hosts fed their guests, and musicians played music for dancing until late [*zavodynny*].

Early on the third day, the bride and the groom each woke early and dressed for the marriage ceremony itself, wearing the garments they had received as gifts the day before. The bride's parents blessed her and sent her off to the church. The bride's entourage consisted of a man with the *derevtse*, followed by the musicians, the bride riding a horse, then her bridesmaids, followed by a number of the guests. The groom's entourage was similar, traveling along its own route from his home to the church. In some cases, the distance was quite substantial; Hutsul villages tend to be spread over large areas along the mountain valleys. After the marriage service in the church, the guests took some food and drink in the churchyard, and each group returned to the wedding house from which they came. Each set of parents welcomed the entourage and additional guests at the gates to the yard. The bride, bridesmaids and most important guests ate their meal first, and others took their turns behind the table when space was available (again, the same procedure applied at the groom's

home). The bride's musicians and the groom's musicians each played for the wedding songs and for dancing at their respective houses until morning [*vesillie*].

On the fourth day, after continued music, dance, food, drink, and visiting, the groom collected his groomsmen and traveled to the home of the bride. Upon arrival, the groom continued to wait beyond the gate on his horse, while the groomsmen entered to exchange gifts, then dance with the bridesmaids. More gifts were exchanged and the groom entered the house. He "bought" his bride from her siblings and sat with her behind the table. The group ate the food that the groomsmen had brought. The guests ceremonially approached and drank toasts to the bride in sequence, and presented her with money. After this, the bride and groom were led out from behind the table onto the dance area (either in the central entryway of the house or in the yard) to dance. All the while, music and dancing continued. Perhaps late at night, the bride and groom were ceremoniously prepared for the journey to the groom's home, taking her dowry and many of the wedding guests with them. After this point, the wedding at the bride's home gradually diminished while the center of attention shifted to the celebration at the groom's home. The parents of the groom greeted the procession; gifts and toasts were exchanged again. The music and dancing continued on until morning [*provodyny*].

On the fifth day, the groom and his groomsmen invited their families to the concluding party [*propii vesivnyi* and *s'miieny*], as did the bride and her bridesmaids. Together at the couple's new home (typically the house in which his parents lived), the guests ate, sang, danced and visited as long as they wished.² The wedding proceedings could be extended, or contracted to less than five days, depending on the resources of the hosts. A final celebration called the *kolachyny* took place at the home of the newlywed couple about a month after the wedding, again complete with music, dancing, song, toasts, food and further gift exchanges.

In certain peasant cultures, people tended to stop dancing after marriage. Among the Hutsuls however, they tended to continue to dance in this stage of their life cycle and well into older age.

In the Hutsul region, more often than in other areas of western Ukraine, one can see the dancing of elderly "*gazdy*" [heads of households] and women older than 60 years. In the 1880s elderly Hutsuls danced separately, and the youth danced separately. This was observable in some places until 1914.... Now [1950s] the dancing of elderly Hutsuls is most frequent in the early hours of a wedding and during work-bees, though in general they dance at the same time as the younger people [Harasymchuk 1956: 87].

The next significant ritual in the life cycle, which might be marked by dance-like activity, was after a person died. In the Hutsul region in the early 1900s, a number of very active and lively games were played during the rituals after death (Shukhevych 1902: 243–8), though no dances-proper were performed. Dances were performed as part of the calendar cycle rituals connected with remembering the dead, particularly *provody* on the Sunday following Easter. Dance at funerals is more extensive in other nearby cultures (see Giurchescu and Bloland 1995: 24–25; Kaposi and Pesovár 1985: 10–11; and others).

Calendar Cycle

The calendar cycle is the other major cycle in the peasant ritual world. In our Western culture, it is perceived more cyclically than the life cycle; so choosing the beginning point is an arbitrary decision. Surveys often start with winter.

The season just before Christmas is a fasting period, marked by the abstinence from music and dance. Christmas itself is a happy celebration, and from that point on, dancing and music can take place. In Hutsul tradition at the beginning of the twentieth century, the first opportunities to dance were connected with Christmas caroling. From Christmas day, on January 7, and until the Feast of Jordan on January 19, male groups of carolers (singers, dancers and musicians) visited each house. They danced the special ritual dances *plies* and *kruhliak*, as well as the regular dance repertoire together with the women who lived in that home. Groups of mummers/carolers performed a special *Malanka* ritual as they visited houses on New Year's Eve (January 13). This visitation also involved a variety of ritual gestures, music and dancing (Shukhevych 1904: 180–202; Harasymchuk 1956: 116–39, 391–8; Kutel'makh 1987).

The period between the feast of Jordan (January 19) and the beginning of the Easter fast was a wedding season, and therefore might have provided a number of dancing occasions in a given village in any particular year. A special dance *pushchenie* was held prior to the beginning of the fast. *Pushchenie*, or *miasnytsi* as it is called in other regions of Ukraine, corresponds with the widespread carnival and Mardi Gras celebrations in many Christian cultures throughout the world.

During the forty days of fasting before Easter, dancing was forbidden. Easter Sunday, Monday and Tuesday were major holidays, and were celebrated by church services, blessing of baskets of food, visitations, music and dance. Boys in certain villages of the Hutsul region played special physical games (Shukhevych 1902: 238–240). In several areas again, *kocheli* [dances high in the mountains attended by people from several villages] took place on these days, as well as during *provody*, the Sunday after Easter. *Haivky*, spring dance-like games, were a highlight of Easter celebrations, usually performed and sung by young girls near the church.

The period immediately following Easter was again a wedding season, with its related opportunities for dancing. Other important holidays with annual dancing included the feasts of St. George (May 6) Pentecost [*"Zeleni sviata"*] (fifty days after Easter), St. John the Baptist [*"Kupalo"*] (July 7), Sts. Peter and Paul (July 12) and the Dormition of the Mother of God [*"Persha Bohorodytsia"*] (August 28). The most important wedding season took place in the fall, after harvest and before the pre-Christmas Lenten fast.

At least one additional annual holiday was very important in Hutsul villages, though its date differed from parish to parish. This was the annual church *khram*, the celebration of the feast of the patron saint of their local parish. That feast day was often chosen so that it did not take place during a Lenten period, and it was typically a major celebration in that community (Harasymchuk 1956: 139).

The calendar cycle can be seen as a series of oscillations, shifting from periods of abstinence and hard work to periods of quite active and intense celebration.

The pattern of calendar cycle celebrations varied somewhat in the different localities within the Hutsul region, and differed again throughout the numerous other ethnographic zones of Ukraine (compare Kuzelia 1963: 320–333; Kurochkin 1994; Zdoroveha 1983: 232–8; as well as Borysenko 2000: 13–100; Kravtsiv 2007; Voropai 1958, 1966). The emphasis on certain holy days rather than others, the themes central to the holiday, the prescribed rituals and the significance of dancing differed from locality to locality. These differences tend to increase as one travels to more distant nations across Europe and beyond (see Giurchescu and Bloland 1995: 26–45; Raftis 1987: 38–43, 50–51; Hunt 1996: 47–64; Ivančan 1996: 103–123; Zebec 2005: 145–212, and many others). The calendar cycle can be expected



Figure 9. *Vechornytsi* [evening house party], 1881, a painting by Illia Repin.

to differ quite significantly among communities based on Christian traditions, in contrast to Jewish, Islamic and other major religions. On the other hand, significant similarities can also be discerned.

The basic structure of peasant calendar cycles can be seen as originating in several layers. On the one hand, some of the oldest elements of the calendar cycle are connected with seasonal rhythms, which were established beyond the horizon of historical records. Spiritual aspects of the early layers are often called the “pagan roots” of the customs, and have attracted a great deal of attention in some circles.³ The layer of “official religion,” clothed in the specifics of Eastern Christianity in our case, is overlaid and intertwined with this.

A third, generally more recent, layer in the calendar cycle in peasant societies is more secular and generally associated with political structures in each country. Celebrations such as “Independence Day,” the birthday of the first president or the queen, commemoration of other important national leaders, days set aside for remembrance, thanksgiving and other themes are often designated on a national scale and marked with ceremonies including dance. Other secular holidays may be organized on sub-national or local basis (Manning 1983: 8–11, 33–64). This secular calendar cycle is somewhat less important in the peasant world than it is in urban technological society, though there is little doubt that it is influential in villages around the world, and increasingly so.

Other Occasions

Other occasions for dance in peasant society are not specifically connected with either the life cycle or the calendar cycle, and are grouped here into a miscellaneous category.



Figure 10. Dancing in a tavern near Chortkiv, western Ukraine. Woodcut by Šimek (Golovatskii 1878: 2: after 738).

The weekly cycle is important in the Western world, and has been so for a long time. Sundays were traditionally an important day for dancing in Hutsul tradition (Harasymchuk 1956: 139), and also in other peasant traditions across Ukraine. Except during the Lenten periods, villagers regularly got together on Sunday afternoons to dance. Christian doctrine designated Sundays for rest from agricultural work.⁴ Since they could do only necessary chores, these days were set aside for going to church in the morning, for visiting and socializing, for dancing, and perhaps for returning to church for evening vespers before going home to do evening chores and to prepare for Monday's return to work. The dances then, would proceed from mid-day until time for vespers or the evening meal.

Typical Sundays then, involved afternoon dances in the village common, in the churchyard, or perhaps at a large convenient street intersection. In some villages, these dances took place at a certain family homes, either in the yard or in the house itself, if it was large enough. Granaries were also sometimes used for dance, and threshing floors were also convenient. In some villages, tavern keepers hired musicians, and dancing would normally take place in the tavern or outside in its yard (Harasymchuk 1956: 97–9, 136–7; see also Nahachewsky 1985: 59–68).

Occasions for dancing were also sometimes connected with certain community tasks. In the many areas in the Hutsul region, a dance celebration took place in the high mountains pastures following the feast of St. George. The animals of the whole village spent the summer grazing together in these pastures, under the watchful eyes of specialist shepherds. Similarly, at the end of the season, the cattle-herds, sheep-herds, and their leaders danced with the men and women who had come up to retrieve their animals.

Dancing was very widespread in association with work-bees [*“toloka”*] ...such as scything, gathering and transporting hay, sowing, hoeing and digging potatoes, hauling fertilizer, wood, hoeing corn, and other tasks. Various dances were performed, usually, after hosting the workers with food.

Such dance events also took place while building houses and other buildings, after completing a house construction, ... and upon moving into the house....

It was common practice to organize dances on Sundays and holidays during the season for picking blueberries, raspberries and others.... At that time, young and old people from several neighboring villages as well as musicians met up in the mountains. Sometimes 100–200 people joined in a large circle to dance a *kolomyika*-type dance, played by a large orchestra of varied instruments [Harasymchuk 1956: 97–9].

Another category of dance occasion is connected with military life. The *csárdás* and *verbunk* dances are famous for their connection with recruiting to the Austro-Hungarian army in the nineteenth century (Kaposi and Pesovár 1985: 22). These dances are not specifically documented in connection with the Hutsuls, however they did take place in nearby regions. Starting in 1930 however, in several Hutsul villages, it became traditional to organize a dance to send off young men who had been conscripted to the army (Harasymchuk 1956: 101). This type of event played a significant role in many peasant societies across Europe and beyond.

Still other categories of dance events were connected with specific occupations. In the quoted passage above, mention was made of specific dances connected with Hutsul herdsmen and with house builders. In other cultures, other occupational groups had their own specific rituals, some of which included music and dance.

Priorities of Peasants as They Dance

Historic documentations of peasant dance traditions are very valuable because they can provide us with information about communities that were not as integrated into globalized trends as they are today. They often exhibit more local and culturally specific characteristics. Descriptions of the Hutsul dance traditions reveal a very rich dance culture with unique dance forms and dance occasions.

Contemporary observations of Ukrainian peasant dance may not always show such elaborate locally specific traditions, but they have several advantages of their own. In particular, historic sources rarely give us much insight into the motivations and the aesthetic values of people who dance (historically, folklorists simply weren't very interested in these issues, and didn't bother to document them). A look at a more recent wedding in a Ukrainian village, focusing on aesthetic priorities and values, can reveal several important additional typical characteristics of peasant vival dance. I attended the wedding of Vasyl' Ilashchuk and Svitlana Rusnak in the village of Toporivtsi in 1995. It was a large and elaborate event. I tried to get to know the people at the wedding and to understand their motivations for acting as they did.

Toporivtsi is in the ethnographic region of Bukovyna, just east of the Hutsuls and the Carpathian mountains. The wedding took place mainly over two days, but otherwise the overall structure and many specific elements were quite similar to that described above for the Hutsul area in 1902. Most events took place next to the Ilashchuk and the Rusnak homes. Vasyl' and Svitlana's families don't live in a classical peasant society any more, but much in their community still matches that model. The wedding illustrates how marriage



Figure 11. Svitlana Rusnak, the bride, dancing with her brother in the centre of a *molodizhna rus'ka* dance at the beginning of the Toporivtsi wedding (BMUFA 1995.032.p2722) (photograph by the author).

remains significant not only to the young couple, but is clearly important for the extended family and the larger community. The many ceremonies in the wedding illustrate how a “specific traditional culture” operated in this context.

Vasyl’ and Svitlana’s wedding was striking for how dance was integrated in the many ceremonies that punctuated the event. On Saturday they performed a special dance to mark the beginning of the celebrations after the bride was dressed; when the groom’s guests arrived at his home; en route to the “wedding parents” home; at the “wedding parents” home; and during the exchange of gifts between the bride and groom. On Sunday, they danced ritually when delivering the groom’s jacket and corsage; when presenting the bride with her veil; when her godparents presented special gifts of bread; when the groomsman arrived at the bride’s home before the groom came; when welcoming the groom’s guests after they arrived at the bride’s home that evening; when the gifts had been presented to the couple; before removing the bride’s veil; and at other special moments. In the process, one band at Vasyl’s house and another at Svitlana’s house played a combined total of more than 48 hours of dance music in the two days.

From the perspective of popular culture in North America, the Toporivtsi wedding tradition is very exotic and bound with tradition. Indeed, the Rusnak and Ilashchuk families

valued tradition. Participating in this heritage helped solidify them as insiders in their home community. They felt that their tradition was beautiful. They felt that they had rich customs that the neighboring villages didn't have.⁵ The Toporivtsi wedding tradition was more elaborate than average in Western Ukraine in 1995.⁶ I believe that villagers here had a stronger sense of heritage than in most villages. This sense of a unique and rich heritage was probably due to a number of factors, perhaps including the proximity of the village to the large city of Chernivtsi (only 14 kilometers). Also, Toporivtsi had a very successful amateur folk-staged dance group for many decades. In the 1950s, the ensemble's director Todor Podorozhnyi choreographed a "Toporivtsi wedding suite" which gained regional and national attention, bringing numerous benefits to the village. It was recorded for a popular documentary film *Ukraino, pisnia moia* [Ukraine, my song] (Storozhenko and Foshchenko 1968).⁷

It is important to note that the staged dance group, the film, and the heightened reflexivity of the Toporivtsi residents are not typical of classical peasant communities, but are rather parts of the more recent "post-peasant" experience.⁸ We should not fall into the trap of thinking that these wedding customs were "frozen in time" and unchanged for centuries. Neither should we believe these people had no choice but to follow tradition, or that they valued tradition above all else. Indeed, experiences at the wedding made it very clear that none of these clichés was true.

First of all, there is clear evidence that the Toporivtsi wedding tradition has changed over the twentieth century. Interviews with elderly residents and other sources suggest that numerous traditional elements have been dropped from active use, while others have become more elaborate or changed in form (BMUFA 1995.032). Changes are clear when looking at the dance activity. The repertoire of dances performed at this wedding was fairly limited, and consisted mostly of newer dance forms.⁹ Interviews with elderly people in the village resulted in the identification of eight or ten local dances that were performed in the 1950s and earlier.¹⁰ Few of these dances, however, were performed at Svitlana and Vasyl's wedding.¹¹ The villagers' sense of aesthetics and honor were such that older people did not dance much. Almost all the dancers recorded on ten hours of video were young people. Neither the younger people nor the musicians were particularly interested in performing the older dances. For the most part, the young people were interested in dancing what was currently popular and seen as fun. They were attracted by the musicians' repertoire of good contemporary popular music.

Eight different dances were performed at the wedding. The most traditional dance in their repertoire was called "*rus'ka*" [the Rusyn one — the Ruthenian one — the Ukrainian one (as opposed to the Moldovan one or the Romanian one)] in several variants. The "*formal rus'ka*" has had a relatively stable form since at least the beginning of the twentieth century.¹² The key players performed it at certain moments in the wedding: the bride and grooms' parents; the "wedding father" and "wedding mother;" as well as the bride and groom. Significant aspects of the dance included the prescribed matching of partners: The bride's mother and the "wedding mother" needed to dance with each other as the leading couple at one point. The groom needed to dance with the "wedding mother" while the bride was to dance with the "wedding father" at another point. The dance was performed staidly and elegantly. Couples followed a leading pair in a circle counter clockwise. In the first figure, they positioned themselves side by side and traveled forwards, while in the second figure they faced each other, held both hands lightly, and turned in a small circle around their partner.

When there was call for *rus'ka* to be performed by the younger generation alone, a dif-

ferent set of movements were associated with the same melodies. The dancers did not form couples, but all held hands in a closed circle. They traveled slightly counterclockwise as they twisted their upper bodies left and right. Footwork was loose, most often stepping in a rhythm of two eighth notes and a quarter. Wedding guests described this as a new form of the dance, and called it *molodizhna* [literally “the youthful one”]. The *molodizhna rus’ka* was danced during specific ceremonial moments, including the first dance at both houses; the dance of the *svashky* at the home of the “wedding parents”; dancing with the pillow and jacket of the groom; dancing with the pillow and the bride’s veil, and at other times. The dance was also performed by guests in general fairly often throughout the social dancing at the wedding.

A third variant of *rus’ka* was similar to the previously described *molodizhna* form, but with one or two people dancing in the prominent location at the center of the circle. The bride often danced in the center of the *molodizhna rus’ka*, either alone or with a partner.

Whenever the wedding ceremonies called specifically for ritual dance, the people performed a *rus’ka* in one of its variations. Other dances were reserved for the more recreational dancing. The most common dances performed at the wedding didn’t really have names in the community. One was sometimes called *modernyi* [the modern dance], or *sheik* [literally from the English, “shake”]. *Modernyi* was performed in a large circle. Among the couple dances, two can be called the “one-step” and the *shimi*, [shimmy]. The well-known polka and waltz were also sometimes performed.

Other than the *rus’ka*, none of these dances has a particularly long history in Toporivtsi. The waltz and polka have been performed here for about a century. The one step and *shimi*



Figure 12. Sunday afternoon dancing at the bride’s house, at the Toporivtsi wedding (BMUFA 1995.032.p2901) (photograph by the author).

arrived around 1918, and *modernyi* sometime after 1945. When choosing their dances, the musicians and the dancers were not primarily motivated by replicating old traditions, but by other factors.

Svitlana, Vasył', their families, and the wedding guests showed that they are creative and expressive thinkers using diverse strategies to achieve their personal and community goals. They valued "tradition" as a way to reach some of their goals, but their performance of the traditions can be seen as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. As I understand it, the single most important reason that they dedicated so much effort and so many valuable resources to the wedding was their sense of *pride*. They called it *gonor* [honor]. Most certainly, the Toporivtsi villagers discussed the bride, the groom, family members, guests, food and many other topics in great detail before, during and after the event. Many people scrutinized what happened at the wedding, what didn't happen, and how this compared to other weddings in the village. This was an important moment of evaluation of the family in their community. They could gain or lose status because of the way they conducted themselves. The villagers' sense of honor was very palpable for an outsider such as myself.

When following tradition was seen as increasing honor, then the family followed tradition firmly. When making a change was seen as honorable, then the family made the change. Svitlana, for example, took great care with her appearance in the traditional clothing and headpiece on Saturday. She was equally eager to wear a stylish imported white wedding dress on Sunday. This dual strategy in wedding clothing has become traditional in itself.

A "good" wedding was understood as rich and elaborate. Certainly, honor was connected partially with wealth. The bride's family could afford a larger wedding than others, and wanted their neighbors to see this. Svitlana's father had recently made a good income installing natural gas pipelines. If the family made their wedding smaller than others, it would have lost some potential honor. This was one of the biggest weddings the village had seen in years, with over 600 people invited on Svitlana's side (plus somewhat fewer on Vasył's side). The overall cost was likely the equivalent of several full years' wages.

Status and honor were also recognized in terms of support from family members and neighbors. Preparing elaborate and tasty food, serving over two thousand elaborate meals over 48 hours, making attractive decorations, and many other tasks required the ability to muster a great deal of volunteer assistance. Neighbors, family members and friends were generally willing to help on a reciprocal basis, depending on how the wedding family had helped them in the past, or had potential to help in the future. The volunteers gained honor for themselves by helping in the community.

The families and the couple gained honor by doing things right. Aesthetics and practicality were often as important as tradition, or even more so. For example, a refrigeration trailer parked outside Svitlana's parents' gate for four or five days was a very recent innovation in the village's weddings, but was desirable because it allowed the cooks to serve better and safer food. A novelty in refrigeration technology helped raise the family's honor.

The musicians who played for the bride's family's celebrations were not the most traditional band that could have been hired. On the contrary, they occasionally needed specific instructions during the ritual ceremonies (though they did know the appropriate melodies and had a general sense of the expectations). They were hired to play for the wedding because they were quite popular locally for their modern repertoire. This was important to the Rusnak family, as the popularity of the musicians significantly influenced the success of the celebrations. Most of the dancers at weddings were unmarried young people. Girls generally stayed at one wedding, while boys typically traveled in groups from one wedding to

the next, looking for the one that appealed to them the most. Since there were three weddings that weekend in Toporivtsi (thus potentially six dances), the music, the girls, the food and the drink might attract the boys to one wedding rather than another. The Rusnaks hoped that their yard would be the most popular.

The family and the village also probably gained honor in some peoples' minds because a folklorist from far away North America came to record their wedding as a significant and beautiful event. My presence may have influenced the elaborateness of the wedding slightly, but since I arrived unexpectedly, these influences were likely minor.¹³ The bride was very camera conscious and loved to pose and smile for my video.

Another stereotype about peasants is that they are patriotic and motivated to preserve their traditions as part of their national identity. This is not borne out by most ethnographic studies, or in our example. Indeed, since peasants typically have narrow geographic, political and historical horizons, they are typically quite passive in terms of national identity. The villagers of Toporivtsi were more politically and nationally conscious in 1995 than classical peasants would have been, but still they were very little motivated by such factors.

Toporivtsi happens to be located in an ethnic transition zone, not far from the Romanian/Ukrainian border, with Ukrainians, Moldovans and Romanians all living in close proximity. Both wedding families in our case study considered themselves Ukrainian, while most of the musicians and some of the guests considered themselves Moldovan. Certainly many considered themselves to be of mixed ancestry. The language of the wedding families and the guests was normally Ukrainian, though it contained a great many Romanian and Moldovan influences.¹⁴ They did not find it peculiar that "Moldovan" musicians could play for a "Ukrainian" wedding, and the musicians alternated singing in Ukrainian, Romanian and Russian for various popular songs. None of the dances, not even the one called *rus'ka*, seemed ethnically salient at all. Several of the wedding guests mentioned to me that Moldovan weddings in the area would have included the dancing of *serba*, and other specific differences.¹⁵ However, hardly any elements of their lives and their wedding traditions seemed to be marked with ethnic/national specificity. Blending and sharing was much more the norm. Their general sense of cultural identity seemed as much based on locality as ethnicity.

I believe that the Ilashchuk-Rusnak wedding in Toporivtsi is quite instructive of peasant dance in several important ways. Unlike some beliefs about peasant dance, it is not normally motivated by national consciousness, nor by a blind commitment to maintenance of tradition. Peasants, from among various options, have chosen rather traditional behaviors because they help satisfy their goals and desires. Indeed, as we will see, the transition from vival to reflective dance is a process of "ethnicization," increasing ethnic salience. It is also a process of "heritage-ization" taking a vernacular dance and marking it as a symbol of the past. In the next chapters, we will explore other key characteristics of peasant dance.

Chapter 5

Geographic Zones

Most ethnic dance is associated with a specific location somewhere on earth. The *hopak* is described as being “from Ukraine,” the *huapango* is said to be “from Mexico,” and the *tarantella* is introduced as coming “from Italy.” In these examples and many others, the dances are identified with *countries* and their political borders. This association may provide a useful orientation for novices, and connects the speaker with the general perspective of Romantic nationalism, which has been very influential in Western worldviews (see Chapter 9). However, it often provides a poor description of the actual location or origin of a particular type of dance activity. The connection between the actual range of vival dance types and national boundaries is just a cliché in most cases.

Vival dances certainly have a specific geographic distribution at any given point in time. Their geographic ranges however, do not primarily coincide with the political territories of countries. One of the typical characteristics of peasantry is a relative lack of involvement with politics and nationalism. Their cultural horizons are less connected with the “imagined communities” of nationalist discourse (see B. Anderson 1991 [1983]), and more connected with the real communities directly experienced in their particular village or local region. Specific peasant cultures, as well as their dance repertoires, tend to be quite localized. None of the dances in the repertoire of Toporivtsi, for example, had a geographic range that resembled the boundaries of Ukraine at all. The newer dances in the repertoire (the polka, waltz, shimmy, *modernyi*, one step) were part of a tradition that had spread over a region far beyond Europe. The older dances, *rus’ka*, had a much smaller geographic distribution in central Bukovyna (and this zone possibly crossed the current political boundary into nearby Romania). In any event, discussions of the connection between traditional dance and national boundaries have to take into consideration the great instability of political boundaries. In the past century, the village of Toporivtsi has been located in the southeast corner of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1774–1914), very briefly the Western Ukrainian National Republic (1918), the northern borderland of Romania (1918–1940 and again 1941–1944), then the extreme southwest part of the Soviet Union (1940–1941 and 1944–1991), and now in an independent Ukraine (1991 to the present) (see Subtelny 1996 [1988]: 385–386, 464–5, 513–514, 517–519, 617–625, 636–637; Kvitkovsky, Bryndzan and Zukovsky 1956: 204–420; Magocsi 1985: maps 14, 17–24).

Dance Zones and *Isochors*

The first stage in establishing a serious understanding of the geographic range of a dance type is to make direct observations of the dance in its context. Empirical evidence

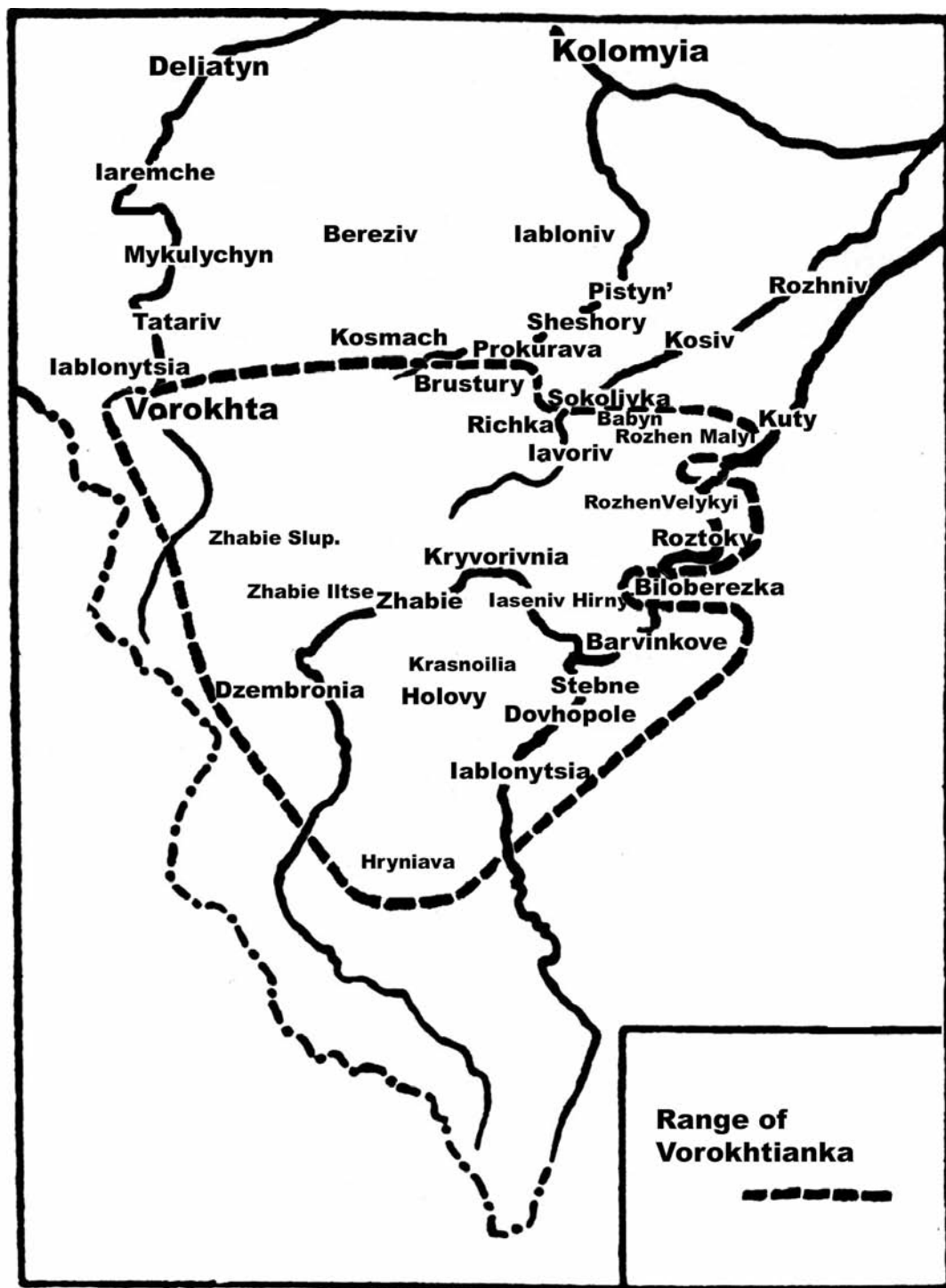


Figure 13. Geographic distribution of the dance *vorokhtianka* [*worochk'enska*] in the Hutsul region from 1931 to 1933 (adapted from Harasymchuk 1939: 147, map 15).

must be collected to observe the places where it is danced and identify where it is not danced. In Europe, in fact, a great deal of research has been conducted to do exactly that.

Roman Harasymchuk [Harasymczuk in Polish], for example, traveled to 39 villages in the Hutsul region in 1931 and 1933, observing dance events and documenting them through film, photography and field notes, as well as conducting interviews with local residents (1939: 6–10). He documented some 65 dances and many variants. In his publication *Tańce huculskie* [Hutsul dances] (1939), he published maps of the geographic distribution of many of the forms, including *vorokhtianka* [*worochk'enka*]. Figure 13 illustrates that the dance was part of the repertoire of almost all villages in the southern part of this region, including Vorokhta [Worochta], the village after which the dance was named. In the northern part of the Hutsul region, *vorokhtianka* was not danced.

Not much research of this kind has been conducted for Ukrainian dance. Harasymchuk concentrated on the Hutsul area and several other regions in western Ukraine, and collected much information useful for a study of geographic distribution (1939; 1956; 1959; 1960; 1962; 2008; Stas'ko and Marusyk 2010). Andrii Humeniuk traveled more widely across Ukraine from 1955 to 1959, though his survey was very rushed, and did not work systematically from village to village (see Humeniuk and Spinar'ov 1955–1959). He tried to delineate ethnographic dance regions for Ukraine (Humeniuk 1963: 45–51; see also Shatul'sky 1980: x–xi; Major 1991: 52). Serhij Koroliuk produced a map more recently (Nahachewsky 2008b: 8–9, see Figure 8). Geographic distributions of linguistic dialects, music and some rituals have been better documented (Gavriliuk 1981; Matvias 1984–1988). We turn to examples from neighboring countries to explore geographic distribution of dance and its documentation.

The methodology for studying geographic distribution of cultural traits has been well developed in Europe through the nineteenth and twentieth century, particularly in linguistic research with dialects. Most countries in Europe have systematically researched specific questions within their borders and have published linguistic and ethnographic atlases. Research on a Slovak ethnographic atlas, for example, was undertaken from 1971 to 1975, and involved many researchers (Dúžek 1991: 285). The project coordinators developed a large questionnaire covering 140 themes in traditional culture, and sent their researchers to 250 pre-selected settlements across the country (at that time part of Czechoslovakia). Slovakia has approximately 3090 villages, towns and cities, so the sample of 250 involved some 8 percent of the actual settlements. They asked the same questions in each village or town, and thus came up with comparable information on each topic, including the dances.

The ethnographic atlas of Slovakia includes dance among its many subjects. Stanislav Dúžek coordinated the research on the theme of dance (1990: 94–98). Figure 14 illustrates the incidence of *chorovody* (spring song-dances) and *kolesá* (maidens' round dances) in Slovakia. White areas of the map indicate no tradition of these dance types after World War II. Some areas, particularly in the east of Slovakia, reported continuation of either *chorovody* or *kolesá* traditions after the war, and sometimes into the 1970s, when the research was carried out.

Serious research into the geographic distribution of peasant dance has been conducted in Hungary (see G. Martin 1974: 44–75; Felföldi 1999: 59–60) and in other countries.

Geographical perspectives have long been pursued in Hungarian [dance] research. They were integral to the “language atlas” and “ethnographic atlas” programmes throughout Europe and of the Finnish geographical-historical school. They were introduced into folk dance research in 1947 when researchers established a programme to publish a Hungarian

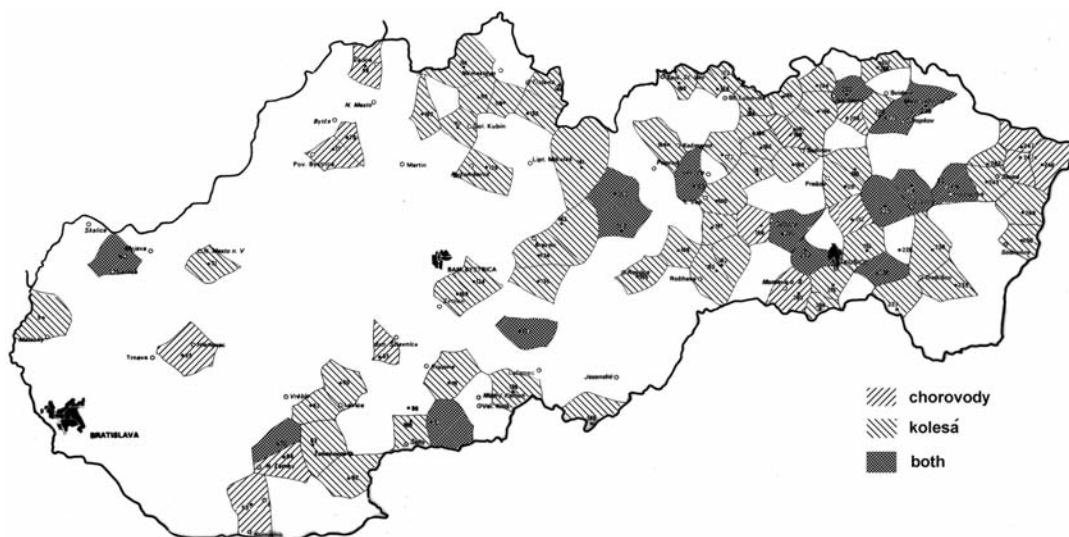


Figure 14. Map of *chorovody* [spring song-dances] and *kolesá* [maidens' round dances] in Slovakia after World War II (created by the author from data in Dúžek 1990: 94).

dance atlas. The essence of the geographical approach is to collect standard information from a given geographical region, ethnic territory and frequently a language territory of a nation in order to define the geographic distribution of a folk dance culture. This facilitates researchers in determining the regional variance of the elements of a dance tradition synchronically, to investigate the diffusion of elements diachronically and to make predictions about future dissemination [Felföldi 1999: 59].

Much research was completed on the atlas project during the 1950s, and excellent detailed information was collected.

Unfortunately, this work was not integrated with the Hungarian ethnographic atlas with the result that folk dance as a research topic was neglected (in contrast to Slovakia and some other places in Europe) in this comprehensive survey of folk culture [Felföldi 1999: 60].

Meteorologists draw lines — called *isobars* — on maps, connecting places that have the same average atmospheric pressure at a certain time. High and low pressure zones are significant for describing weather patterns. Lines mapped like this are also quite common in linguistic studies of dialects. Such lines are used to indicate areas where one variant of the language is found, as opposed to where it is not found. Linguists call these lines *isoglosses*. Norwegian ethnochoreologists have invented the term *isochor* for similar lines on their dance maps.¹

Egil Bakka, Bjorn Aksdal and Erling Flem published a study reporting on a research project, which documents the geographic distribution of the dances *springar* and *pols* in Norway (1995). They included maps that show numerous features of these dances. One line on a map shows the boundary between areas where the *springar* and *pols* dancers use triple meter steps, as opposed to those that do not. Another map indicates areas where different names are used for the same kind of movement. North of one line, the word “*pols*” is used as a stemword. South of the line, the word “*springar*” is used. Other lines on this map show specific areas associated with two-hand fastening during the dances, and the popularity of different kinds of turning (Bakka, Aksdal and Flem 1995: 28).

The Norwegian research illustrates that many detailed aspects of the dance tradition can be plotted independently. In some cases, the isochors for a number of important features of the dancing may coincide with each other and thus form clear regional patterns. In other cases, however, each variable studied seems to act independently and spreads over a unique area. As the researcher travels from village to village, the characteristics of the dance tradition appear to change incrementally, blending and merging with the traditions of adjacent areas in a complex way. All these details of distribution of dance traits are of interest to specialists, but can be quite overwhelming for people with a more general interest. Indeed, accuracy is usually achieved at the cost of accessibility.

In any event, the object of most of this painstaking research is to discover larger patterns as they actually exist on the ground, and perhaps to identify choreographic regions or zones. A much more generalized presentation can be found, for example, in a map of Poland published by Grażyna Dąbrowska in *Tańcujże dobrze!* [Dance well!] (1991). The map is not presented as the direct result of specific fieldwork, but rather attempts to present a cumulative summary or shorthand of the main choreographic zones of Polish peasant dance. The specific differences between the zones are not identified in this publication, except indirectly through the examples of dances described for each region to provide repertoire for dancers in reflective contexts. Presumably, the boundaries between the regions correspond to the isochors for dance types as well as other factors.

Five choreographic regions are identified, each bounded by a thick gray line. Though these lines are consistent in their width and shading on the map, it is doubtful that the regional boundaries are as consistent as this on the ground. Surely some of the regional boundaries are quite discrete, representing many significant isochors coinciding or grouped very near each other. In these cases, the different dance regions are clear. In many other places however, the actual regional boundaries are likely much more gradual and indistinct, with broad transitional zones. Important isochors in the actual dance activity may well not overlap along one convenient line. The simplicity and clarity of the map is probably achieved at the cost of accuracy. This is the perpetual dilemma of all generalization.

Given that ethnic dances are so often identified with the geographic territory of countries, it is quite remarkable that none of the isochors presented in the maps in this chapter so far coincide with national boundaries (except where they stop at a large body of water). Indeed, the Slovak, Norwegian and Polish maps each describe the situation up to the national borders, but not beyond.² In order to show an isochor, of course, the researcher needs to know the relevant characteristics of the dance tradition on both sides of the line. I suspect that villagers on the Swedish side of the border also danced the *pols* and/or *springar*, for example. Similarly, the mountain villages at the southern edge of Poland likely share many elements of their dance culture with their neighbors just on the Slovak side of the border.³

Especially because the political borders have changed over time, they cannot be assumed to coincide with the isochors in traditional dance culture. Single-nation atlases and studies of peasant dance are appropriate for finding intra-national clusters of isochors, but not for finding those that differentiate one nation's dances from another's. In this respect, the research done by ethnochoreologists is not well connected with the national stereotypes and assumptions of most revivalists. The fact that the majority of geographic studies is limited to the boundaries of one country probably reflects practical issues of research funding, institutional mandates, government agendas and nationalist biases more than researchers' interests in broad knowledge of traditional dance.

Lisbet Torp conducted a research project documenting 1285 chain and round dances

from across most of Europe. This research may shed light on the dissemination of certain dance patterns over a much larger geographic zone (1990). Figure 15 represents the distribution of chain and round dances in Europe performed after World War II. The focus of this study is structural analysis of foot patterns of the dances, and the published information includes detailed catalogues of the locations of each dance. Correlation of foot patterns and location are not presented cartographically, but do illustrate that certain patterns tend to be found in specific zones. Common patterns were distributed over very large ranges, or groups of ranges. Given that chain and round dances are generally decreasing in Europe, these ranges were likely larger in the past. We have not known about these ranges in great detail before, since good empirical research had not been done at this level. Torp's project is unique and valuable.

Encompassing most of a continent, Lisbet Torp's map certainly makes generalizations. One of these is her frequent graphic representation showing circle and chain dance areas connected with political borders. It is interesting to compare Torp's general treatment of Slovakia with Dúžek's in the Slovak ethnographic atlas. Torp's map suggests that chain and round dances were performed in living memory across Slovakia.

Torp's database includes 17 different villages in Slovakia (59 dances) (1990: 2: 38–9). She obviously generalizes when she uses this information and decides to shade in the entire country. Dúžek's much more detailed survey documented 36 settlements with *chorovody* after World War II. Just as importantly, he documents 32 settlements where *chorovody* were danced only before World War II and another 182 settlements where researchers found no twentieth century *chorovody*.⁴ The numbers for *kolesá* are somewhat similar. Only 88 of 250 areas, about one third of Slovakia, reported either chain or round dances, or both, in the vernacular culture in the period Torp is researching. Torp's marking of Slovakia as a solid area of chain and round dances can be seen as sacrificing accuracy for breadth. Perhaps Torp knew little of villages that had no *chorovody* or *kolesá*. She was too busy searching for ones that *did*, as well as trying to cover a whole continent. She couldn't possibly have researched 8 percent of all the villages across Europe for her project, since that would take much more than a lifetime. She was dependent on secondary sources. Conversely, Dúžek had to sacrifice breadth for accuracy and depth. It is instructive to note that Torp's practice of generalization, as in many other cases, tends to shift the results to strengthen stereotypes of national unity.

Dance Diffusion in Peasant Contexts

The observation that vival dance traditions and their components in peasant contexts have a specific geographic range raises the question of how those elements of culture came to be practiced there. Historic debates about polygenesis and monogenesis⁵ have generally been resolved with the consensus that complex activities (such as a specific dance and its music) likely originated in one time and place, and expanded to their later geographic range (see Georges and Jones 1995: 52–55, 132–44). Dances and other elements of dance traditions in the European peasant context spread in a variety of ways.

The spread of a new dance to new villages is illustrated in map 26 in Harasymchuk's [Harasymczuk] *Tańce huculskie* (1939). This map also deals with the dance *vorokhtianka*, but more in terms of the process of its diffusion. *Vorokhtianka* is described as a dance developing in the second decade of the twentieth century as a local variant of established *kolomyika-kozachok* forms in the region. It was named after its village of origin. The thin



Figure 15. Map of chain and round dances in Europe remembered after World War II (Torp 1990: 3: 118) (courtesy Lisbet Torp).

arrows on the map represent the diffusion of *vorokhtianka*. Harasymchuk was able to document how people in some villages learned the *vorokhtianka* directly from Vorokhta, whereas others learned it through intermediary villages. People in Dzembronia and Zhabie Slupeika learned the dance from villagers in Zhabie Il'tsia. People in Holovy, Krasnoila, Iaseniv Hirny, and Kryvorivnia learned it from Zhabie Slupeika. Up to this point, the dance seemed to be spreading southeast. The villagers of Iavoriv north of the expanded zone then adopted it from Iaseniv Hirny, and later passed it on further to a series of villages in their vicinity.

Aside from illustrating the intra-Hutsul diffusion of this dance, the map also indicates the spread of numerous dances into the Hutsul area from beyond its borders. About half of the dances documented in his research entered the Hutsul area by diffusion from other geographical regions. The wide black arrows represent Harasymchuk's observations that eight dances came from the area of Kolomyia to the north, three different dances came to this territory from Podillia in the northeast. Three others came from the region around the town of Sniatyn. Sixteen were adopted from Bukovyna across the river to the southeast. Three others spread from the southwest and became incorporated into the Hutsul repertoire.⁶

The speed of intra-Hutsul diffusion of the *vorokhtianka* and the number of dances introduced to this area indicates that the change in dance distribution was very significant in that culture in the first part of the twentieth century. Within a single generation, the repertoire changed in many ways. In spite of this, Harasymchuk characterizes the Hutsuls as "quite conservative people, little affected by foreign influences ... rather reworking their own older dances, creating by this method [new] dances to contrast with the old ones" (1939: 143). Changes in "less conservative" areas must have been even more striking.

Dances and dance elements diffuse in a variety of specific ways. One simple way suggested by Harasymchuk's map is creeping gradually from village to village as the dancers travel. Villagers might go to a neighboring village for a wedding or a holy day, a Parish feast or to the market. They may see a new dance or a dance done differently there. If they like it, they may try to dance it next week at home. On the other hand, the villagers who travel may also be carriers of the innovation. While away from home, they may well show off some new dance or variation that the neighboring village dancers like and then try to copy. Such direct diffusion has probably always been quite common. Most vival dances are learned when people watch other dancers in action.

An important variant of this process occurs when the musicians travel, rather than the dancers themselves. Musicians are often essential in retaining any modification in the dance, especially if it involves a new melody, rhythm or interaction between the musicians and the dancers. As specialized, skilled participants in the dancing, musicians are more likely to go several villages away to perform. Their geographic range tends to be larger than the agriculturalists for whom they play. In my fieldwork in western Ukraine in 1995, most villagers described traveling perhaps two villages away in their normal routines, whereas musicians would quite frequently travel much further.

Another variation in this diffusion occurs when special travelers were involved. In the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires in the nineteenth century, for example, the Imperial armies were maintained in large part by conscripting young village men. As soldiers, they would typically travel great distances. The Austro-Hungarian Empire included parts of contemporary Ukraine, Poland, Austria, Italy, the former Yugoslavia and other countries. A soldier might serve some time in any or all of these areas, and participate in dance events while he was there. When he came home after his military service was completed, having learned a number of dances from his travels, he sometimes taught these dances to his fellow villagers and they became incorporated into the home location. This was an important means of dance diffusion in central Europe in the 1800s (see Shukhevych 1902: 80). Ethnic minorities such as gypsies were key participants in the process of dance diffusion in some areas. Migrant workers also served as potential vehicles of dance diffusion. In these cases, dances may have "jumped" from one area to another, leaving the intermediate territory unaffected, rather than "creeping" from one village to adjacent ones in a contiguous range.

Exposure to a novel dance or dance element is not enough to cause its spread, since

the innovation must also be perceived as positive and desirable by the newly exposed individuals and the communities. This positive evaluation may result from some kinetic feature of the dance. Harasymchuk noted that the *vorokhtianka* involved unusually fast spinning in couples during the second figure, a feature that seems to have contributed to its popularity and spread between 1910 and 1933 (1939: 148). The positive perception of the dance may also be related to the status of the person or group from which the innovation is learned. Many elements of peasant culture entered into their traditions from towns and from the upper classes because of the high status associated with those populations.

Diffusion from the upper classes down to the lower classes has a number of variations given the political and social stratification that existed in different societies and in different periods. In central Europe in the nineteenth century, for example, wealthy landlords sometimes lived on estates close to their enserfed peasant villagers. The nobleman's family tended to travel and connect themselves with international elite fashions. When they hosted balls at the estate, peasant servants would be able to see what they were dancing and could try to emulate them later in their own setting. The polka, waltz and many other dances spread like wildfire across the Western world and beyond in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, partly in this manner.

Specialist dance teachers form another important conduit for dance diffusion. They instructed their students in etiquette, deportment, and dance styles modeled from the greater cultural centers. This kind of process, with variations, affected dance in many parts of Europe and elsewhere for hundreds of years. Phonograph records, radio, television and many other technological media come into play in the diffusion of dance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, both among peasants and non-peasants alike.

Barriers to diffusion balance the factors that facilitate diffusion of dance in traditional peasant societies. Peasant dance traditions have often remained quite varied and geographically distinct over time, even to the present in some areas. The relative isolation of peasant societies certainly contributes to the slowing of diffusion. Also, the general conservatism of peasants worked and works as a deterrent to dance diffusion. They may disapprove of a particular novelty, and not try to emulate it. A new type of dance or style of dancing may be seen as irrelevant or unattractive for various reasons.

Natural barriers can sometimes be significant in blocking diffusion of dance elements in peasant societies. Sometimes, for example, people aren't easily able to cross a wide river, and therefore the dance traditions on either side of it develop somewhat in isolation from each other. Mountains and other natural obstacles also reinforce isolation in specific directions.

Language barriers tend *not* to be very significant in restricting the spread of dance forms and dance styles in European peasant culture. On the one hand, dance is not primarily communicated linguistically. Secondly, bilingualism and multilingualism have long been common in areas of cultural contact. Indeed dances and dance songs frequently exist in numerous language variants.

Political boundaries are a relevant factor here too. If a border between two countries is difficult to cross, then villages on either side of this border tend to have less contact and therefore tend to develop somewhat different dance cultures. This is one situation where the isochors of traditional dance might actually coincide with national boundaries. This circumstance is really the minority situation however, and political borders tend to be very permeable boundaries. Dance traditions tend to pass across them very easily. This is true unless the border is aggressively closed with barbed wire, and remains so for a long time.

Non-Peasant Vival Dance and Geography

Of course, a great deal of vival dance was and is performed outside traditional peasant societies. For our purposes, the two most significant cultural formations are those of the elites who contrasted themselves with the peasants throughout much of European history, and the urbanites living in industrial and post-industrial settings.

Members of the upper classes have been much more mobile than peasants in European history at least since the Renaissance, and before that as well. The population density of the nobility and the rich was always much lower than the peasant and worker class and only a small percentage of any area's population were wealthy. It was very desirable to associate primarily with people of one's own class, and so members of the elite tended to travel. Relative to the other classes, they had the time and the money and the reason to travel. They also had the time, the money, and the reason to engage intensively in expressive culture. The culture of the elites is characterized by the use of cultural symbols to mark their status, distance themselves from the less fortunate, and unite themselves with other members of their own class. These symbols can include dance. For this reason, there has been a strong tendency towards an internationalized elite culture in Europe and in other parts of the world for hundreds of years. Upper class culture, including upper class dance, has tended to be a much more geographically diffused layer than its lower class counterpart.⁸

Many of the interpersonal processes of diffusion active in the peasant context also applied and apply to elite dance transmission. Innovations in dance spread as people observed others perform them, approved, and adopted them. Specialized dance teachers — dancing masters — were significant in creating innovations in dance among the courts of Europe, and in spreading them (see Mikhnevich 1882; Leggette 1979; Hilton 1981: 3–22, 45–55; Sorell 1981: 36–43 ff).

Industrial and post-industrial societies differ from traditional peasant societies because of their increased capacity for production of objects as well as for their increased capacity for travel and dissemination. This includes woven textiles and steel plowshares, but it also includes more ephemeral cultural products such as ideas, songs and dances. Given the technology of industrial and post-industrial times, steel, textiles, ideas and dances travel farther and faster than ever before. Industrial and post-industrial dance diffusion shares basic characteristics with that of peasant context, though it involves huge changes in scale; in the distance the dances can travel and the time it takes to get there.

People tend to travel further in post-peasant cultures. Workers might travel hundreds or thousands of miles to their jobs, and move from one place to another much more frequently than in peasant societies. Professionals also travel a great deal more. More people work as specialist travelers. If a peasant musician is somewhat of a traveler in comparison to his or her fellow peasants, in urban technological societies musicians regularly perform national or continental or global tours, perhaps spreading a newly popularized dance form across the world as they go. Students, soldiers, salespeople and many others travel a lot more in our society now than in peasant cultures.

Similar to the situation in peasant communities, dances and dance elements are spread if they are perceived desirable for one or another reason. Again, the desirability might be associated with kinetic or with social features of the dance. Lower and middle class people tend to emulate the upper classes. Elite dances and styles have high status and are seen as symbols of wealth, beauty, sexiness and youth. The identity of the various classes in contemporary Western culture however, is much less clear than in traditional peasant contexts.

Classes are much less hereditary groupings, and are based more on individual characteristics and accomplishments. Status continues to be manipulated by those who have it, and is now strongly influenced by large industries dealing with marketing, fashion, stardom and fame.

Contemporary Western urban societies share with the old elites an increase in the role of specialized teachers as the disseminators of dance, relative to peasant culture. In any city and town in North America, for example, you can enroll in dance lessons for many kinds of dance, from Arthur Murray's ballroom stylings to reggae to swing to *Latino* to ballet to square dancing. Specialist teachers are more common among contemporary urban working class people than in peasant societies.

Technology is perhaps the most significant factor to consider for understanding dance dissemination in post-peasant communities. We have not only music scores which have been distributed for centuries, but we have phonograph records, cassettes, CDs, mp3 players, cell phones and other media for digital recordings. Musical compositions are broadcast over radio waves to reach millions of listeners everyday, and most people are bombarded with the sound of professionally performed music at home, at work, in public and commercial buildings, and while in transit. Perhaps particularly important for the dissemination of dance is television and cinema, where we also see the performers moving their bodies. The internet continues to increase in its significance among a growing percentage of the world's population.

A frequent turnover in repertoire is an essential component of commercialized popular culture. For example, the *Macarena* became a very popular dance in 1996 all across the West, and then faded quickly. In post-peasant societies, the technologies for dissemination have accelerated and become more powerful, though the basic processes are similar to the ones that we saw operating in peasant societies.

Though the dissemination of dance-related culture is increasing in many respects, barriers to their spread are also significant. Many factors still act to produce cultural boundaries, to continue to produce isochors in dance traditions of all kinds. Those factors include economic inequality in the world, for example. In spite of (or because of) the increased movement of wealth around the world today, money is not tending to spread equally. On the contrary, it is tending to congregate in certain areas while others remain chronically poor. Many elements of culture operate in this manner as well. Political factors continue to tend to make the distribution of commodities uneven around the globe, and absent in certain areas. Ideological and religious boundaries often retain their saliency, and in some contexts becoming increasingly important in separating different populations from each other. Mickey Mouse is certainly marketed worldwide, but he is not necessarily understood and interpreted the same way in all these places. Cultural elements are typically adapted as they travel to different cultural contexts. Forms and meanings may mutate as they travel (Tomlinson 1991: 41–64).

A small example of this process can be found in the “shake” [rock 'n' roll] dancing at the wedding in Toporivtsi. In that village, the young people are familiar with heavy metal, break dancing, punk, techno and other kinds of contemporary music and dance. They adopt some of them in certain contexts, but they can manipulate them in certain ways in the process. They use them when, where and how they want to. Rock 'n' roll spread to Europe primarily as a dance for couples. At weddings in Toporivtsi, however, rock 'n' roll dancing is done exclusively as a group circle dance.⁹ Rock 'n' roll in that particular community has certainly retained the connotation of modernity, as it is performed by younger

people, but not their grandparents. It also has the quality of a relatively more democratic genre in their repertoire.

The democratic nature of rock 'n' roll is very significant in this village for both boys and girls, where the gender relations are otherwise quite ritualized. The wedding dance space generally has the form of a doughnut. The boys stand in a group in the center of the dance area, while the girls stand in a long single arc along its circumference. In general, the boys can stand and talk and joke and drink and travel from one wedding to the next, while the girls normally stand in one place. Also, the girls tend to want to dance more than the boys. For the couple dances, it is the boy's prerogative to ask a girl to dance, and he must cross the open area of the dance floor in order to do so. This can be quite stressful for the girl, since she is standing next to other girls, and she might not know whether the approaching boy is thinking of her or her neighbors. It may also be stressful for the boy because everyone will see his humiliation if he is refused.

In the *modernyi* dance, everyone can join if they want to, regardless if they have a specific partner. Often, three quarters of the people dancing in the *modernyi* circle at the Rusnak and Ilashchuk wedding were girls. These girls wanted to dance, but perhaps did not have an opportunity to participate in the couple dances because the boys didn't ask them. Conversely, if a boy was too shy to ask a particular girl to dance, he can still dance the *modernyi* somewhere nearby her without actually having to ask her in front of the whole village. If a boy is too shy, or if he does not want the whole village to know that he likes a particular girl, rock 'n' roll is a good option for him. The same is true if the boy or the girl is not a confident dancer. They perform the movements with very little footwork, mostly undulating their spine gently, twisting slightly from side to side, and moving their arms loosely. Skill requirements for participation are very low. The people of Toporivtsi have adopted rock 'n' roll and use it very effectively, but not in the same way as it is used in the cultures where rock 'n' roll originated.

Migration and Dance

Migration affects the geographic distribution of dances and dance styles on earth. Human beings have been migrating ever since the beginning of human time. Clearly however, migration has increased in the last little while in human history, and the twentieth century has witnessed unprecedented human resettlement.

Many dances have been transported to the new world from Europe, Africa and Asia Minor over the past 500 years. Dances from the Spanish conquistadores certainly influence Mexican dance culture, and historians of Mexican dance have described them as a historical layer in these traditions (Forrest 1984; Kurath 1986b [1949]; see Kurath 1986a [1956]). American dance scholars have recently become much more conscious about how African dance and movement cultures have influenced jazz, tap, rock 'n' roll and many other traditions of movement that are perceived as American (Glass 2007). There is evidence of how important elements of these traditions earlier traveled across the Atlantic with the slaves. Square dances originally have their roots in the quadrilles, and also to some degree in the minuets and cotillions and reels of the European immigrants to the eastern United States. Also, many more recent immigrants have brought their dance repertoires, such as polkas, that have become part of American culture (Quigley 1996). Over thirty dances from western Ukraine have been documented as vival dances in western Canada (Nahachewsky 1985;

2001b). All these migrant dance forms existed at least in two continents, so a person would need a very large map to plot their overall geographic range.

Subcultures

As diffusion of cultures and their traits increases in late modernity, it becomes less and less possible to associate specific geographic locations with single discrete cultures. Single cultures are more frequently being associated with more than one area, described as “global ethnoscares” by Arjun Appadurai (1991). Conversely, it is becoming increasingly typical to witness more than one culture sharing the same physical area. This situation often results in the blending of cultures in contact, but not immediately and not always. Subcultures are an increasingly salient element of modern experience.

The significance of subcultures is related to dance cultures as well. A Ukrainian dance performed in Chicago is performed by members of the Ukrainian ethnic subculture there, but likely not by everyone in Chicago. The *Latino* dances of the Puerto Rican migrants to New York also remained within their ethnic community for a period. In a significant move, however, they left their particular subculture and spread into general popular culture there. This diffusion was not a “horizontal” geographic one into new territory, but took place “vertically” from one stratum to another in the same location.

Furthermore, subcultures are not simply the result of earlier cultures coming into contact, but new subcultures are generated within the context of modern urban life. A single apartment building in any contemporary Western city may house punk rockers, urban cowboys, competitive ballroom dancers, swing enthusiasts and Ukrainian dance fanatics. They all might participate intensely in their rich dance tradition and share it with other members of the subculture, while barely being aware of the equally rich dance worlds of their immediate neighbors.

This additional dimension of dance distribution is complicating geographic zones even more. Sub-cultural boundaries — isochors on the sub-cultural level — are becoming more and more important when we are trying to understand a dance or a dance style.

Chapter 6

Historical Zones

When many reflective folk dance enthusiasts look at traditional dance or peasant dance, they have the impression that it lies in a different kind of world than our own. Today's world is one of progress and fashion and change, but the imagined world of "the folk" is seen as calm and timeless. (Indeed, this may be one of the reasons that some people are attracted to folk dance revival activities!) Many people imagine that peasant dances come from "time immemorial," were created in the hazy mist of prehistory, and are passed down intact from generation to generation. In this chapter however, we explore evidence that vival dances change over time as well, both in peasant communities as well as in other settings.

If consideration of the geographic range for a dance is often dismissed with an assumption that it matches the territory of a country, then the chronological range of a given dance is also treated superficially. In many simple descriptions of traditional peasant dance, the chronological aspect is simply ignored. This is typical of hundreds of publications in English describing "folk dances from many lands."

Historical Layers

While most popular books in English have avoided treatment of historical change in peasant dance, some dance researchers, particularly in Europe, have attempted to uncover the age of traditional dance elements in peasant culture. Studies of historical layers are often connected with geographic diffusion.¹ Indeed, the Hutsul, Norwegian and Slovak geographic studies discussed in the preceding chapter were connected with research goals of establishing historical layering of the dance material. Diffusion, after all, is really about change in space over time, so it involves both factors.

Given that dance is an ephemeral phenomenon that exists only in the place and time of its performance, and then vanishes almost without a trace, it is not as easy to conduct historical research in dance as it is for painting, architecture or literature. In material culture studies, hundreds of real physical examples of the subject may have survived from different the past. Researchers can often look directly at the expressive objects themselves.

In the research of dance history, we can know about dance in earlier times only from indirect evidence, because the primary data — the performance — no longer exists. Indirect evidence is of two different categories.² On the one hand, we may come across verbal descriptions, drawings or other graphic evidence of dance from a given period. Such information may be augmented by physical objects from the period, such as musical instruments, clothing

or a building in which the dancing took place. This type of evidence is valuable because it can provide a great deal of information from distant times. Such information is not always available, however, and also presents its own specific challenges.³

The second category of indirect evidence includes existing contemporary performances connected with the tradition. Many dance movements are echoes of earlier dance movements performed by the dancer or learned by her as she watched/listened/felt other dancers perform. The patterns of movement in recent performances may well be quite traditional and reflect what was done long ago. The difficulty lies in knowing with any certainty which movements are echoes of historical patterns in a given context, which reflect change, and what those changes were.

The process of reproduction of earlier patterns in dance might be illustrated by an analogy with a photocopy machine. Even with a machine designed to produce accurate duplicates, we can anticipate a variety of changes by the tenth generation copy (the tenth performance). The traditional children's game of "telephone" may serve as an alternate analogy. In this game, many people sit in a circle. One person thinks of a sentence and whispers it to his neighbor. That person then whispers what she heard to the third child, and so on. At the end of the game and perhaps twenty repetitions of the sentence, the last child and the first repeat the sentence out loud. The game is fun because the two utterances are often very different.

Neither of these two analogies is complete because both the photocopier and the children in the game have been designed or instructed specifically to try replicating the original as faithfully as possible. While dancing, the performers may also intend to reproduce the prescribed model for the dance, but their movements during any specific performance may also be affected by other considerations, such as adapting to the specific environment (perhaps the musicians play fast, the ground is uneven or the dancers have been drinking more than usual), or expressing particular feelings (perhaps they have just finished a major project in the community and are proud of it, perhaps there is a quarrel among members of the group, etc). Expressive performances are affected by strategies of the performers and the use of the performance as a personal resource (see Georges and Jones 1995: 269–312).

A third analogy for the transmission of traditional dance movement is to compare it with a fisher's story about the fish he almost caught. The fisher's stories might provide good evidence of the earlier situation if the researcher pays attention to specific interests of the storyteller and therefore the biases or "filters" that are likely to have influenced his story. Certain biases will tend to change the description in one particular direction, but not likely in others. (A boastful fisher will likely tell of a larger fish than the actual one, but probably not smaller, for example.) Sometimes changes in a tradition are active, other times they occur without the conscious intent of the participants. Similarly, some elements may be retained actively and intentionally, whereas other times elements are preserved passively, by inertia.

Historical Layers in European Peasant Dance

In spite of the many challenges of knowing what dancing was like in earlier centuries in the European peasant context, some general patterns have been suggested. Hungarian dance scholars may well have developed the most extensive scholarship on the history of peasant dance in Europe. They have a long and proud tradition of research since the times

of Bela Bartok and Zoltan Kodaly at the beginning of the twentieth century. The work continues today in the Folk Dance Department of the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Over 100,000 meters of ethnographic film on dance were archived by the 1970s and the current collection continues to grow in size and significance (G. Martin 1974: 11; Felföldi 1999: 66). Numerous publications communicate the findings of research as historical studies.⁴ The book *Hungarian Folk Dances*, by György Martin, one of the most prominent Hungarian dance researchers, was published in English in 1974. It contains a brief survey of his understanding of the major historical trends across Europe, starting from the late Middle Ages.

The appearance and spread of various kinds of dances in Europe was linked to the fashions of various periods. The oldest chain and round dances, the unregulated male and couple dances and the regularly structured couple dances are three basic formal groups that played a dominating role in different periods of history. They are now part of the national heritage of many nations in Europe, and determine the major European dance dialects [Martin 1974: 12].

Martin argues that the different basic groups of dance are all strongly rooted in the customs, tastes and values of each historical period. The Middle Ages, the first major era that he can identify, emphasized communal life and did not offer much opportunity for individual creativity. Circle and chain dances matched this quality in that they highlight togetherness and collectivity, rather than personal initiative.

During the second era, the early modern period, cultural trends shifted to emphasize personal creativity and liberation. The dance forms of this time matched this spirit in their lack of regulation, their focus on individual initiative and improvisation. “Dancers and couples, barely adjusting to each other, stamped their dances absorbed in themselves and in each other, each according to his or her own talent and mood” (13).

The third era, starting around 1800, was affected by the growing urban middle class of that period, which was engaged in increasingly regulated and formalized town and court life. The earlier emphasis on freedom became overshadowed by a larger community consciousness. Dances became more rigid and regulated, with a focus on structure, interrelationships and communal spirit again.

This third era was clearly initiated in the upper classes and filtered down to the peasantry over time. Anca Giurchescu writes on the motivations for increasing regulation among the urban and upper classes:

Era	Time	Quality	Dominant Dance Forms
1st identifiable era	medieval +	communal	chain and round dances
2nd	renaissance +	individualistic	unregulated male and couple dances
3rd	1800s +	regulated	regulated couple dances

Figure 17. G. Martin's general European scheme of peasant dance eras.

The increasing social division between the upper classes (nobility, high *bourgeoisie*) and the lower classes (peasantry) of Western Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries resulted in a delineation of two divergent streams of culture.... In the sphere of dance one significant difference is the degree of freedom of improvisation. Within the nobility, and later bourgeois society, the dance functioned as a symbol for the established social relationships expressed in the ceremonial or formal relations between the partners, following strict rules of etiquette and respect for hierarchy. From the end of the 16th century, dance teachers contribute to stabilise dances in set forms by recording movement patterns, spacial design and melodies. A corresponding artistic taste and criteria of evaluation [encouraging regulation and eschewing improvisation] were developed in time [1983: 48–9].

It must be remembered that these descriptions are very broad generalizations. Martin, Giurchescu and others remind us that they are simply hypotheses, and great care should be taken when applying this model to specific cases.

Martin elaborates on six major types of peasant dances in Hungary and groups them into Old-style and New-style dances (16–44). Old-style dance types include the maidens' round dances (typically simple dances performed while singing songs in a closed circle during lent, this type also includes some mixed circle dances). These seem to fit the description of the general European communal era with chain and round dances.

Martin's Old-style forms also include herdsmen's dances (including weapon and stick dances as well as the "swineherds' dances" circling and jumping over an object on the ground), leaping and lads' dances (related to the herdsmen's dance but without instruments such as the sticks, often featuring improvisation), and old couple dances (often based on late Medieval and Renaissance Western couple dances). These seem to be part of the second European era in the previous chart. These dances generally feature individualistic and unregulated qualities. Some of the old couple dances seem to fit with the second era with individualistic freedom, while others seem more characteristic of the third era with stronger group regulation.

New-style dances became significant from approximately 1800 and fit into the third European era described above. They are more uniformly spread across Hungary and more integrated into general European trends. They are characterized by a new style of musical accompaniment as well. Their two main types include the *verbunkos* (recruiting dances, danced by individuals or in organized groups), and the *csárdás* (a couple dance that has incorporated many elements of the older couple dances and reworked them to acquire dominance in popular dancing in Hungary).

In general, Martin characterizes Hungary's dance culture as dominated by the second-era quality:

The most important stylistic feature of the dance within the Carpathians [including Hungary] is ... the unusually large amount of personal improvisation. Hence its extraordinary richness in spite of the small number of types of dances, and hence its own particular hue in the European context, distinguishing it from the dance world of Western Europe and of the Balkans....

Observers from home and abroad have never failed to notice the individual nature of the Hungarian dance for almost two centuries now.... Folk-dance research of recent decades has shown that ... these are genuine features, and not new ones either. Most of Hungarian folk dancing appears as individual to such an extent that it is often difficult for scholars to establish the communal laws regulating individual creative and improvising activity [1974: 15].

All six types of dance were performed in Hungary into the twentieth century, though

Martin is convinced that the old-style dances originated much sooner. The repertoire of any given locality then, can be seen as the result of a historical layering process. When the newer types of dance emerged, the dance repertoire in any given village or region adjusted to them. In some cases, the newer types of dance replaced the old forms, which then became defunct. In other cases, the newer types were added to the repertoire alongside the old types, each remaining distinct. In yet other cases, the newer types integrated into the older types, merging and creating hybrids with qualities of each. The same options were available again with each new wave of influence.

Martin did not include dance forms like rock 'n' roll in his charting of traditional dance, but if he did, I suspect he would agree that these materials constitute a substantially new, fourth era, featuring (again) the quality of individualism and deregulation. The decrease in physical contact with a partner and the unstructured prescriptions for movement are consistent with this quality.

We are witnessing ... a striking change in this old order. Especially after World War II, the social dances of the urban environment became increasingly a medium for the individual's emotional outlet, for an explosive release of energy and movement imagination. Compared to these, the old folk dances appear more regulated and limited by way of traditional rules [Giurchescu 1983: 50].

European Variations

The present geographical distribution of types and their historical fashions are, of course, interconnected. It would appear that peasant dancing in various parts of Europe has preserved stages from various periods in the history of dancing, owing to the varying rate of development and to uneven social and historical progress. Dance types that dominated in particular ages have survived in particular territories with certain distortions and determined the way the peasantry danced almost to our own days. The nations of the Balkan Peninsula have preserved medieval chain and round dances and developed them to a high degree. The peasantry of Western and Central Europe, fast acquiring urban habits, has submitted to the fashion of regulated couple dances, country dances and space-confined processional dances. The East-European dance dialect, on the other hand, has placed itself on the marches dividing these two styles or periods, and displays mainly the free dance forms that were taking shape early in the Modern Age.

This simple picture is much more complex in reality, since types characteristic of a particular age and area can now be found together in most places.... There are no periods, nations or dialects in Europe where one type of dance holds exclusive sway, but the principal trends basically characteristic of the dances of a given period or nation can be inferred from the dominating types [G. Martin 1974: 13–4].

Martin's observations about the Balkans are consistent with Torp's research on chain and round dances in Europe. Chain and round dances are generally much more prominent in the Balkans than in other parts of Europe.

Ukrainian ethnochoreologists have not explored historical zones with the same rigor as their Hungarian colleagues. Ukrainian dance history, however, seems to be consistent with these hypotheses. Circle and chain dances, mainly *haivky* (*vesnianky*, *khorovody*) performed in springtime may survive as remnants of the early era in Martin's chart. The second era, with its focus on improvisation, may well be dominant in peasant dance in Ukraine, just as it is in Hungary. Many Ukrainian dances, from *hopak* to *hutsulka*, involve a great deal of improvisation in their vival context. The third major era, with regulated polkas,

waltzes and quadrilles, is also well represented.

Before we leave the issue of historical layers, we should remember that historical layerings apply not only to dance repertoire and movement styles. Musical melodies, instrumentation, dance settings, dress, and many other factors change over time, and all influence the dance.

Perspectives of the Dancers

After concentrating on academic hypotheses, it is valuable to remind ourselves about the perspective of the dancers themselves. If dance researchers look at a chain dance performed at a Bulgarian wedding celebration near Sophia or near a Ukrainian church at Easter, they may focus on the idea that this dance represents a very old historical layer in European culture. Its historical features may also fascinate folk dancers in reflective communities. However, from the perspective of the people who are celebrating the wedding, it is a new dance that started just five minutes ago! It is not an object in a layer in a scholar's chart or in a museum, but it is the sound, touch, sight and feel of movement surrounding them as they mark this important celebration. Every dance experience exists in its own time and space. This sense of "flow" is characteristic of vival dance events in all settings.

When interrupted from the flow of activity, and asked about the history of the dance, individuals can generally remember that they learned it as a child, or perhaps learned it from some friends. They may know that their parents have been dancing it since they were children, or that it is a novelty brought from some other place. They may also be aware that it is or is not danced the same way in villages to the west, or some distant city. In most cases, this knowledge includes their own experiences plus information they learned from conversations with others. But these reflective comments are not part of the normal experience of the dancing, and are not typically among the significant purposes for dancing, and are not on their minds during the experience of the dance.

In the next chapter, we focus on improvisation and composition, a third issue, which is often misunderstood in Western popular notions about vival dance.

Chapter 7

Improvisation

Improvisation has been described in Chapter 6 as a key feature of the second and the fourth major historical eras of traditional European dance culture. Giurchescu generalizes “two main streams [of dance aesthetics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries], the folk culture characterized by the more or less free, improvised style, and the upper class culture marked by regulated, homogeneous style” (1983: 50). Much description of peasant vival dance therefore consists of educated Western writers commenting as if it was disorganized, structure-less, almost content-less, and chaotic. Often, this cultural gap is expressed negatively, and the educated writer uses the improvisatory nature of the village dancing to “prove” that the villagers are less cultured and less civilized. For a minority of other authors, the greater degree of improvisation is romanticized as great freedom and opportunity for expressiveness. The following two descriptions of *kolomyiky* illustrate some of these tendencies:

Young married and unmarried women arrange themselves in a circle. They begin dancing quietly, lightly, and later more quickly and energetically, constantly interweaving. The bustle suddenly spills over into chaos among the dancers [Wahylewič 1839: 46].

The tones break passionately into the enchanting melody. Unexpectedly, the lad throws up his head and shouts with the voice of a hunter, the voice of an eagle as it throws itself upon its prey. He lifts his shoulders and begins to dance. A wondrous sight! Now he is a child, who plays and starts, now an acrobat, now again he is a wild animal, carrying himself after a mate. His eye never leaves her. Every step, every movement of his body refers to her. She gazes coldly at the man, and weaves away from him....

The choir of instruments grows wilder and wilder. With one jump he is at her side. He lifts his hand to her shoulder, but in that same instant she has already broken away, defiantly, with a smirk. Alluringly, she places her hands on her hips, now at the other side of the circle.... Teasingly, she dances around him, like a mosquito around a light. And he falls to the ground like a corpse, squats, but then bounds up quickly, embraces her as if with a rope, and she embraces him.

Now they dance together, the fiddle croons happily, the *tsymbaly* ring merrily, and the dance becomes a nuptial ring [Sacher-Masoch 1880 (1852): 300].

Certainly, the formal ballroom dances that Sacher-Masoch was used to in his more elite circles were not experienced as intensely or expressively as what he described in this village setting. Indeed, he and almost all writers on traditional dance of that time avoided describing the specific movements because he simply didn't have the words (nor the eyes and legs) to deal with them. The same two attitudes, revulsion and idealization, are evident in most descriptions of non-Western dance as well as recent vival dancing of the fourth era, including rock 'n' roll and its related styles.

In fact, however, it *is* possible to understand many aspects of improvisation, as has been accomplished with music and epic poetry (Lord 1960: 3–138). Improvised dance is not really structure-less and disorganized, but rather structured *in different ways* than fixed-form dance. A closer look at improvisation in dance reveals a number of different possibilities for understanding and discussing this phenomenon.

Improvisation is a key element of vival dance in Hungary, as was noted in the previous chapter. Hungarian folk dance scholarship is perhaps the most developed in terms of documenting and studying this phenomenon (see G. Martin 1980; G. Martin 1982: 25; Reynolds 1989). Anca Giurchescu's article "The Process of Improvisation in Folk Dance" (1983) presents numerous examples from nearby Romania, and presents concepts relevant to a broad range of contexts. Topics useful here include her discussion of the internal circuit of communication in dance, dance competence, and "degrees" of improvisation.

Internal Communication Circuit

The first basic idea reviewed in Giurchescu's article is that dance involves a person's whole being, including her mind and her body.

The dance — with its rhythmically organized movements, is one of the most generally used and most profound means of human expression. Because of the inexorable connection between "bios" and "ethos," between the visible movements, inscribed in time and space, and the hidden world of sensations and feelings, dance serves ... man's need for emotional release. The change of emotion and the tension of feelings increase the commitment to action. This intimate relationship between feelings and action, where each of the two means are simultaneous and reciprocal, cause and effect, creates a very special psycho-physical state, which may be called "the state of dancing" [21–2].

We can imagine a circuit of communication within the person during this "state of dancing," as in Figure 18.

Actually, the diagram may be even more appropriate if the circuit was drawn as a spiral rather than a circular shape, because each feeling may generate new and different movements rather than only the repetition of previous ones. Likewise, each physical movement may intensify the previous feelings and ideas, or it may well produce new mental experiences. The discipline of dance therapy is based on this premise that new movement experiences can lead to new mental processes, and involves the use of expressive movement in an effort to promote psychological healing and development. Dance therapy has been used with both "normal" and mentally challenged subjects (Levy 2005 [1988]: 1; Payne 2006 [1992]: 2–3). The internal communication circuit involving a dancer's body and her mind is most relevant in the discussion of improvisation.

The Model or "Prescription" for a Dance

The participation of the mind in dance can be further differentiated into two categories. On the one hand, some mental activities relate specifically to the state of dancing, and take place specifically at the moment of performing. On the other hand, the dancer must also retain a memory of "how to dance" even when she is not dancing, ready for re-activation at her next performance.

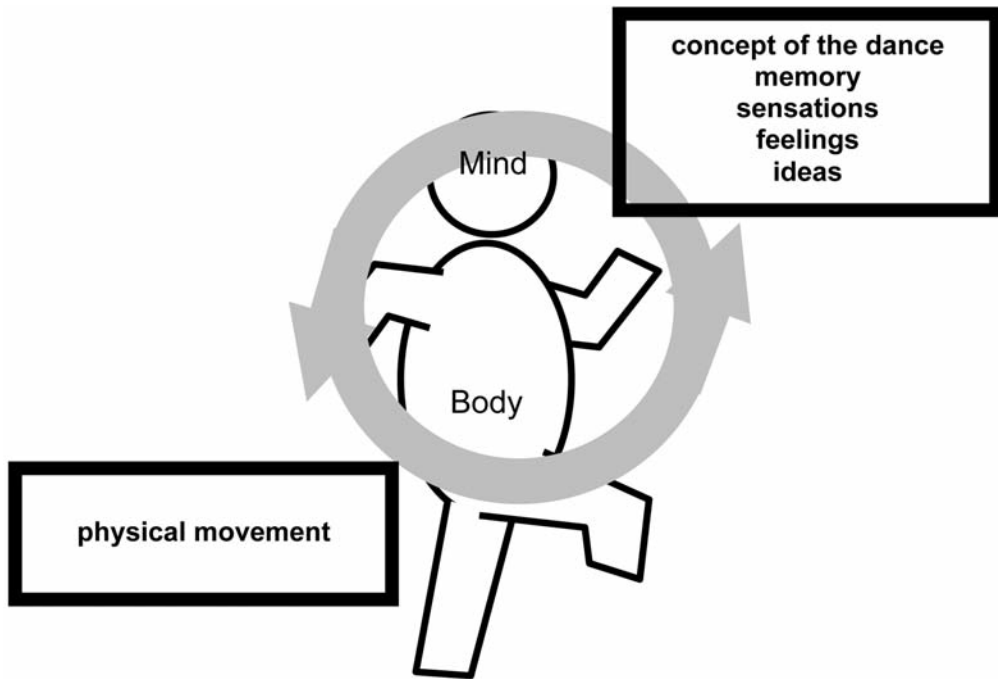


Figure 18. Internal circuit of communication in a dancer.

Being a temporal art and directly transmitted ... dance exists as such only if it materialises in a certain social context and only as long as its enactment lasts. Until it is enacted, a dance exists in the mind and body of the dancer as a holistic representation, which includes mental, emotional and kinaesthetic images in the form of generalised patterns of all his previous experiences [Giurchescu 1983: 23].

The model for a dance is relatively permanent in the person's mind, and also in her body in the form of kinesthetic memory. This more-or-less stable model can be called the *prescription* for the dance. The prescription for the dance consists of a series of instructions or rules that are required for a successful performance. The prescription includes a formula for each of the actions that the person's body must execute in order for the dance to be successful. Of course, the prescription for a dance does not operate on the level of each required muscular contraction. This would involve hundreds of thousands of specific instructions, and wouldn't allow the dancer to adapt in case the situation changed from performance to performance. Rather, the prescription is encoded in a series of "shorthand" rules and patterns. Some of these prescriptions deal with specific movements and types of movements that are appropriate, and others deal with how these are combined to structure the dance.¹ In Chapter 15, we'll look specifically at a sample prescription for a vival dance.

The concept of a prescription for the dance is closely related to the term "choreography." In fact, a "choreography" is a detailed plan or a mental model for a dance performance. Given this understanding of the terms, all dances are choreographed. Some dances are choreographed prior to the commencement of the performance, while others are choreographed by the dancer "in the flow" during the moment of performing itself. This latter situation is called improvising.

Whenever a dance is enacted, the performer utilizes her knowledge of the rules and

patterns for the dance (the prescription) and combines or interprets them in her body, adapting them to the immediate situation. This adaptation occurs on many different levels, including information that flows along the internal circuit (the dancer's emotional state, physical sensations, etc.) as well as interaction between herself and the environment (a slippery floor, a hot night, a low roof, an important ritual), between herself and fellow dancers, between herself and spectators in a myriad of ways. On this level, the act of dancing is always an actively creative activity.

The specific content of a dance prescription is coded and organized differently in different dance traditions, varying from dance type to dance type, as well as from culture to culture. In some cases, the dance prescription is quite inclusive, establishing fairly exacting rules for the dance form with minimal room for variation as the dancer enacts them. In other cases, the prescription allows the dancer a greater number of options in a larger number of aspects of the dancing. Indeed, some dance idioms highlight these options as a desirable central feature of the performance. These options provide the context for improvisation.

Competence

A person is "competent" in a dance tradition when her prescription for the dance is consistent with the mental models of other people in her cultural community, and when she can convert that mental model into appropriate physical movement. She "knows" how to dance.

Within tight-knit small communities such as typical traditional peasant villages, almost everyone is competent in the dance traditions. Little children are not born competent, but insofar as they are allowed to be present at the dance events, they learn the rules informally at an early age as they see, hear and feel the dances performed. In many peasant societies, the children play at dancing, practicing the movements and the general prescription in the corner as much as they can and want to. By the time they become old enough to physically participate in the dancing, perhaps after puberty, they are already competent dancers. Normal adults are often all competent in the local dances appropriate for their gender and social role (perhaps only disabled people are not). Older members of the community are often mentally competent but physically incompetent. They are certainly still insiders in the tradition and they understand it quite clearly. They are often quite interested in watching the dances of the younger people who are performing, often participating as critics and expressing opinions about what is good and bad.²

Favourable cultural conditions, a rich and sustained dance activity within the community, an individual's personal, accumulated dance experience, and an innate capacity for assimilation and memorisation, are determining factors in the quality of dance competence.... Improvisation is directly dependent on the dancer's competence.

[A dancer's] ability ... implies the faculty to recall, evaluate and select nearly simultaneously the pre-existent dance stereotypes, according to all the objective and subjective conditions which determine a given performance. It also involves the technical skill and quality of the dancer's movements. Thus the community judges a dancer's performance, and especially an improvised one, in terms of: originality, technical brilliance, vigour or refinement, with reference to the dancer's ability [Giurchescu 1983: 28].

Highly competent and gifted dancers are recognized in typical peasant settings, and accorded status for their talent.

A participant can acquire prestige through knowledge of the dance repertoire, the dance etiquette, as well as his personal skill and talent in performance. Once acquired, this artistic prestige may greatly influence the dancer's general ranking or status within the community; a good dancer could very likely develop into a leader amongst his or her peers with the ability to influence them in matters even beyond the realm of dance [Giurchescu and Boland 1995: 59].

These individuals are the most likely to improvise most expressively. In some cases, a highly competent dance performer arrives at a point where she experiences feelings and ideas that go beyond the normal experience of that dance, and might express them in movements that have never been seen before, and are beyond the range of the norm. These innovations/deviations are somehow consistent with the aesthetics of the tradition, but they are recognizably outside the normal boundaries. Sometimes these innovations are noticed, and are perhaps talked about by the people in the community. They may be rejected as undesirable or inconsequential, but on the other hand, they may also be appreciated, accepted and incorporated into the norm for this dance from then on. They get incorporated mentally into the model for the dance, and they get incorporated physically as that person repeats the particular movements and as others emulate her.

There is no doubt that composition and improvisation are intimately related, and that improvisation is "a rich source of new compositional material" (Lange 1975: 103). There are numerous examples of improvised dance units which, by virtue of their artistic attractiveness, are constantly being repeated. They receive in time a social acceptance, and become part of a new and autonomous dance variant, which is integrated into the local repertoire [Giurchescu 1983: 27].

Martina Pavlicová (1998) describes Josef Bazala and Marie Jezková, two very gifted performers in south and east Moravia, and how their own innovative personal style of performance eventually influenced the local folk dance tradition. György Martin worked very extensively with talented and influential dancer Mátyás István "Mundruc" in Hungary (G. Martin 2004; see also G. Martin 1982: 14, 22, 28). Certainly, similar processes are relevant in Ukrainian dance.

On the other side of a continuum, we can consider "incompetence." Certainly, it is possible to consider degrees of competence, ability and talent in a traditional community. A clearly incompetent dancer is relatively rare among insiders in such settings. The issue of incompetence becomes much more relevant in situations of cultural contact. In such situations, an outsider may enter a community and try to participate in dances different than the ones in his own vernacular. This outsider may or may not be skilled in his own tradition, and that competence may or may not assist him in forming a useful mental model of this particular tradition quickly. In many European peasant cultures, traditions of hospitality as well as the relatively accessible prescriptions for dances allow outsiders to attain a level of basic competence in most dance idioms quickly if they try.

Cultural contact is much more prevalent in heterogeneous urban environments, where persons growing up and being competent in one subculture's traditions may have occasion to attend a dance event from another subculture in close geographic proximity. Kealiinohomoku invites her readers to go "to a German, Bavarian, Polish, Russian, Croatian, Greek, Italian or Armenian wedding here in the United States, and you will find folk dances to keep your feet tapping late into the night" (1972: 392). Many other examples could be listed, some connected with immigrant groups as above, though not necessarily so. A person from outside any community and attending for the first time would likely be incompetent

in the dance forms. He may grow in competence as he continues his exposure to the tradition.

Degrees of Improvisation

As noted above, different dance types involve different prescriptions, which in turn may affect the potential role of improvisation. Giurchescu lists a range of situations in Romanian and other peasant dance traditions, organizing them into increasing “degrees of improvisation.” Many dance repertoires include dances that are stable and set, and exclude the possibility of improvisation almost completely. All the dancers try to move according to a single clear prescription with few acceptable options.

By means of homogeneous execution of the dance the individual is totally integrated into the group. It is this feeling of community and of tight interdependency among the participants, which gives to these dances specific substance and meaning. Therefore, any significant change (in the dance structure or mode of execution) will be considered a “mistake,” a “deviation” from the set model [Giurchescu 1983: 29].

Giurchescu calls these examples “dances with zero degrees of improvisation.” On the other hand, even within such dances, we do not find robotic uniformity. The personality of the dancer can be expressed in certain ways. The dancer might find an individual way of varying the style of the prescribed movements, spatial designs, body posture, facial expressions, hand pressures, or perhaps in the shouts that emphasize moments of higher intensity (1983: 29–30).

Dances involving the “first degree of improvisation” are somewhat related to the above situation, though they offer a number of additional options for at least the leader of the dance. These options are typically connected with the sequence and number of repetitions of the dance elements.

In this case, the “liberty” for improvisation is confined to the dance leader (or the leading couple) only. He is free to select those he likes best from a limited number of known dance sequences, and to indicate their succession or number of repetitions, without changing the inner structure. The leader then expresses his choice either by commands (shouts, yells, signals), or by dancing “in front.”

The open circle is the most convenient dance form for the improvised succession of sequences....

Though limited by the fixed dance frame, the “callers” of the North American square dances develop, in some cases, a rich improvisatorial style. A creative “caller” uses the pre-existent dance patterns contriving repeatedly new combinations. He moves the couples through space, dispersing and bringing them together in the most unexpected ways, and still keeping the obligatory concordant relationship with the melody [30–1].

A number of Ukrainian vival dances fit this description, and can be thought of as dances with a first degree of improvisation. These include the *arkan*, *holubka*, *resheto* and others with leaders shouting commands.

Giurchescu’s terminology can be extended to identify the next group of dances as featuring a “second degree of improvisation.” These are connected with linked chain dances. The model for many of these dances involves the performance of specific motifs or phrases repeated indefinitely for the duration of the dance. In Romania and other areas, competent dancers are allowed and even encouraged to perform footwork variations and “counterpoint”

to this basic pattern to create a more complex poly-kinetic performance. In some cases, improvisation takes place mostly in the central part of each dance phrase, with greater group unison in the introductory and the final motifs of each phrase (1983: 32).

Paradoxically, the chain dances with a very simple structure — those virtually comprising of only a single motif ... identically repeated an unlimited number of times, offer the greatest liberty for improvisation. In fact it is the very simplicity and the high degree of *redundancy* that enhance improvisation. According to their own competence and skill, most of the dancers start from this single theme and gradually develop it, combining it with other themes, but still keeping the frames set by the dance type and the group formation.... The improvisation occurs not only as a result of the collectively shared commitment to dance and the involvement of interplay with the musical accompaniment, but also as the expression of a form of individual competition to achieve artistic acclaim [33].

A “third degree of improvisation” might be connected with some scattered couple dances. Giurchescu describes these as dances “which exist potentially only at the level of models.... The enactment of a socially accepted, and a true variant, implies improvisation as a necessary condition” (34). In scattered couple dances, each couple functions as an individual formation, with limited relations with the others. The partners’ interaction limits the possibilities for improvisation, demanding expressive collaboration, reciprocal understanding, flexibility and sensitivity to the other partner’s creative intentions. It is almost always the man who has the creative initiative in the improvisation. He leads the woman, constructs the sequences of motifs and signals their succession by using a commonly accepted code (35).

Dances with a “fourth degree of improvisation” take the form of free solo dances. Giurchescu speaks of the dynamics of a particular Romanian dance performance called “*De unul singur*.” The person has a great degree of freedom to choose the structure of the whole performance as well as the composition of smaller parts of the dance. He may choose from a repertoire of established dance motifs, or can create his own. He chooses floor pattern, dynamics, relationship with the music, etc.

The Ukrainian *hopak* is often described as a wild and free improvisation in its early contexts among the Cossacks of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Dancers were performed as solos or in pairs, and descriptions give a strong impression of a “fourth degree of improvisation.” Various jumps, squats, spins and untold other moves seemed to be common motifs in that context.

“The Cossacks were especially merry as they returned from their military campaigns. When they returned to their base at Sich, they walked around the streets for several days, enjoying endless cannon and musket blasts, dancing and singing happily, leading a throng of musicians and singers, everywhere telling stories of their military feats and prowess, and endlessly dancing — and in those dances performing all kinds of figures” [Evarnitskii 1892: 295].... And they danced like no one else on earth: all day the music would play, and all day they’d dance, and urge the musicians on:

Play [musicians] play! See, I’ll throw my feet up way behind my back
So the world will be amazed at what a Cossack I am [Humeniuk 1963: 93–94].

Describing the various alternatives for improvisation in traditional dance as a series of “degrees” is a useful tool, though it certainly does not capture the entire range of possibilities. For example, in some couple dances in Ukrainian communities (which might be glossed generally as featuring a third degree of improvisation), the emphasis for improvisation may not lie in selection of motifs, but rather in the direction and speed of travel, and the intensity

of the couples' whirling. In other such dances, the participants tend to stay on one spot, each improvising quite individually from a variety of motifs. In yet other couple dances, focus is maintained more on the interactions between the partners.

A description of a *kolomyika* by Oskar Kolberg in 1888 suggests other possibilities and combinations for improvisation.

Having gathered together in the designated place for the dance, as it starts, the young men circle around the area prepared for the activities. They travel around the musicians, who sit on a bench in the middle of the dance area. The men each sing short songs, which is called "to bring in the dance" [*zavodyty tanets*']. This is the introduction.

The girls and young married women stand at the side, near a wall or a fence, even if this might be somewhat of a distance from the dance area itself. If the dance area is next to the church cemetery, they may sit nearby on the grass. They wait until the boys ask them to dance individually. The boys call them, "Hafia, come!," then "Paraska, come" and so on, one at a time. As the selected girls arrive, they take the boy's extended hand, and walk in pairs into the circle. Thus the girls form a circle around the outside, since they generally travel around the circle to the right. After all the boys have brought a girl into the circle, and after they have gone around the circle a couple of times, then the girls stand facing their boys, and the more lively dancing starts. The male dancer places his hands on the girl's waist, and she places her hands on his shoulders. This is the actual *kolomyika*, the first part of a larger dance cycle. In this part of the dance, the couples spin at a moderate tempo on the spot, or moving slowly forward along the circle. The boy and the girl, holding each other, stamp to themselves together, to a three-part measure (left-right-left, or right-left-right), to the rhythm of two eighth notes and a quarter note. They dance until the fiddler stops playing. The pause is not long, however, because a few minutes later, as the girls step aside, the second part of the dance begins.

The second part of the dance, normally called "*peredok*," is performed not very quickly by the dancers, perhaps even slowly, as they re-gather their energy for what comes next. As the women move off the dance area (all the way to the fence or wall of the house), the men step up to the *peredok* in twos, facing each other, or in threes (with perhaps two standing opposite of the third). Holding their hands on their hips, they squat down into *prysiadky* or stamp their feet as in the *kozachok*, sometimes jumping then stamping one foot and the other, sometimes rising up and spinning, sometimes finally grasping each others' hands and walking around the circle, for a little rest. Sometimes they go four or five in one row, holding on by their shoulders, by the neck or by the waist, and often collecting together in a huddle and separating again.

Dancing in this way for some time, they call their partners again, one at a time. The women and girls assemble in one area, and the males dance with them in the same way they had just danced alone. The men move towards them, then backwards, making bold turns and *prysiadky*, while the women stamp more restrained figures....

The third part of the dance is called "*z hory*," and is the fastest. Sometimes the men start this part of the dance alone again, but more often they take the women immediately by the waist with their right hand (less often their left), and they start turning as they had done in the first section of the dance. During this part of the dance, they do not spin on the spot, but move forward along the circle, as in a waltz or an *obertas*, to the right (less often to the left). The couples run like lightning, and the red skirts (*zapasky*) of the Pokutian girls flash like lightning as one or another of the boys lifts his partner up into the air. If she senses his intention, she often jumps up herself, or tucks her feet under herself to appear lifted all the higher.... That's how I've seen them dance in Chortovtsi near Oberytn.

This description suggests a variety of different improvisation situations within one dance. One can sense more opportunity for individual expression during the male intro-



Figure 19. *Kolomyika*, the beginning of the dance with the women. Illustration to accompany Oskar Kolberg's description of the dance in Chortovtsi, Pokuttia (Kolberg 1962 [1888]: xiii).

ductory section of the dance, then somewhat more group cohesion in the first couple section (or at least a shift from individualistic expression to coordination with a partner). Improvisation becomes more pronounced again during the second part of the dance, as the men choose their movements as well as shifting connections with each other. In the third part of the dance, when the couples spin and move forward quickly along the circle, it seems clear that there is less improvisation regarding motifs and floor pattern, but each pair must conform to the general pattern and speed set by the others. Improvisation is allowed, however, in other aspects of the dance, such as lifting the girls into the air (and jumping on her part). In general, the male dancers seem to have more options for improvisation more often. In examples such as this *kolomyika*, it is clear that categorization into specific "degrees of improvisation" is only an approximate tool.

It is also important to note that Giurchescu's range of improvisation in traditional dance does not extend from an absolute zero to absolute improvisation. Even the dances that she labels "zero degrees of improvisation" have some possibility for personal expression by the performers, be it a wink to their neighbor, a louder stamp of the feet, or some other small movement. It would not be possible to establish a prescription for a dance that covers absolutely all aspects of the moving human body. On the other hand, it is also clear that in the wildest improvisations of a dance with "fourth degree of improvisation," the performer is always improvising within cultural norms for improvisation.³ A Romanian soloist in one "fourth degree" dance analyzed by Giurchescu performed 80 percent motifs connected specifically with this one dance type, 10 percent from other dance categories in that region, and the remaining 10 percent which "may be interpreted as 'personal creations.'" Even these newly created motifs contained a nucleus that related them to familiar dance types (1983: 40–1). The Romanian dancer would not likely improvise a ballet *arabesque*, a breakdancer's

head spin, or an Irish “butterfly” (see F. Hall 2000: 291) because these poses and movements are simply not within his cultural realm of possibility.

Giurchescu’s examples are related to Romanian peasant dance, though they can be adapted for use when considering dances from other cultural contexts. In any event, no dance is entirely without the opportunity for personal expression, and conversely, no dance is without some cultural constraint. From the perspective of contemporary Western urbanites, whether they are writers or choreographers, much vival dance appears chaotic and structure-less. This bias is partially due to the significance of improvisation that is common in vival contexts. In European peasant societies, creativity is generally recognized and valued highly. In the next chapter, we move from examination of vival traditions to an exploration of reflective dance.

Chapter 8

Vival and Reflective Communities

We now begin our deliberations on reflective dance, which will occupy us for most of the rest of the monograph. Reflective dances are those in which the participants make an explicit reference to a specific precedent.

In the present chapter, we look at two articles that describe contrasts between vival and reflective dance, as they are experienced. We then elaborate on the most important motivations for reflective dance in Western culture. *National* dance traditions, *recreational* and *educational* dance traditions, as well as *spectacular* dance traditions tend to stand apart from each other as a result of their different motivations.

Contrasts Between Vival and Reflective Experiences

The concepts of vival and reflective dance traditions allow for the possibility that almost any dance may be performed as part of a present-minded or a past-oriented community at certain time(s) through the progressive stages of its history. A surprisingly few publications juxtapose these two contexts in relation to any particular dance tradition. Perhaps most revivalists simply “squint their eyes” and hope their dancing is authentic. This is certainly true in the literature on Ukrainian dance. Most publications deal with vival dance or reflective dance, but not both. When they do engage with both, they tend to treat the issue lightly, emphasizing only continuity (Harasymchuk 2008: 80, 84–90, 93–105 ff; Humeniuk 1963: 185–222; Humeniuk 1969: 25–30 ff).¹ The few exceptions are mostly recent and produced outside of Ukraine (Nahachewsky 1991; Nahachewsky 2001a; Nahachewsky 2003; Nahachewsky 2009; Rees 2008; but see Vasylenko 1983). I will argue that an understanding of differences between vival and reflective dance are essential to an understanding of this field. We’ll turn to comparative examples to explore the issues.

Roderyk Lange’s “On Differences Between the Rural and the Urban: Traditional Polish Peasant Dancing” (1974) and Miriam Phillips’ “Where the Spirit Roams: Toward an Understanding of ‘Duende’ in Two Flamenco Dance Contexts” (1987) are interesting for our purposes because they actively address this issue. They describe the *kujawiak* and flamenco respectively, noting differences in the dances across the vival/reflective divide. In both cases, the author is very familiar with his or her kind of dancing from both sides. Each makes the point that the dances are quite different entities in each of their respective contexts. The reflective dance is quite different from its vival inspiration. Any revival or recontextualization of a dance changes the tradition in important ways. In this regard, revivals can never be fully successful; they aren’t exactly bringing the original back to life, but rather are *new creations* to a certain degree in each case.²

In the context of his article, Roderyk Lange's contrast between "rural" and "urban" dance traditions corresponds relatively closely with our concepts of vival and reflective dance. He focuses his attention primarily on the form of the *kujawiak* and how it changes during the transition to reflective mode. He speaks at greatest length about the metrical/rhythmic aspect of the performance. The *kujawiak* rhythm in the vival tradition is the focus for improvisation.

It is the normal thing for the dancer to appear in front of the musicians and to sing them a dance tune of his own choice, very often composed on the spot. After that the musicians take this melody from the dancer and often vary it in the process of playing. However, the musicians have to follow the intentions of the improvising dancers. From their movements they recognize the changes in tempo and the changing rhythmical pattern as introduced by the dancers [1974: 45].

Lange writes about one occasion, when he tried using music recorded on one day for an interview and demonstration with the same interviewees the next day. The villagers could not perform, explaining that the taped music was not following their lead.

Because of the above mentioned features of rural dance activities there is no possibility of finding one definite way of dancing a *kujawiak* in the village version. Moreover the same element is varied rhythmically in the course of dancing even by the same person. As a result, during my research I was led to establish a *scale* of possible variations of the same "step" [1974: 47].

Lange illustrates the character of the village music with a notated example. The rhythm of the performance involved the extensive use of *rubato*, and was transcribed on the basis of a 5/16 meter, though the actual rhythm didn't entirely fit into any regular meter. The movement of village dancers featured a hesitant type of stride with "an inner vibration in the upper part of the body resulting from the intricate change of weight in the feet" (47).

Figure 20 is a synoptic table of the urban and the rural *kujawiak*. It consists of five numbered rows (1-5) showing musical notation and dance steps. Row 1 is a single melodic line in 3/8 time. Row 2 shows a sequence of dance steps with arrows indicating direction. Row 3 is a melodic line with lyrics in Ukrainian. Row 4 is another melodic line. Row 5 shows a sequence of dance steps with arrows indicating direction.

Figure 20. Synoptic table of the urban and the rural *kujawiak* (Lange 1975: 34) (courtesy Roderyk Lange).

The *kujawiak* was adopted in the early nineteenth century by townspeople and landed gentry and it spread all over the country to become one of the Polish “national dances.” Taken away from its original surroundings it changed considerably.

The change is striking. Rhythmically it keeps evenly to the 3-beat. Choreotechnically it becomes a smoothed out and simplified version of its peasant original, acquiring an entirely different character. In this version it is being taught at dance schools in the country and abroad [Lange 1974: 45–6].

Lange noted during his fieldwork after World War II that the village traditions were dying out, and it was less and less possible to find dancers and musicians who performed in the traditional way. He discusses his own activities associated with reviving the dance. He notes that numerous attempts have been made to keep the peasant version of *kujawiak* alive, but that this goal has never really been possible.

Even the “regional” dance groups that try to retain the dance heritage consist in many cases of young people who are already at a distance from the old ways of life.³ For them the musicians have to play a set version of dance melodies instead of improvising. The spell arising out of improvisation and the interaction between the musicians and the dancer has been broken....

Having myself collected substantial material concerning dance activities in several areas of Poland, I attempted in turn to reconstruct these dances both for specialist study and also for recreational purposes during our open-air museum demonstrations. This was during the course of my work at the Ethnographic Museum in Toruń (1954–66). We also established a specialised dance group of students to help me recreate the rural version of *kujawiak*. But even though village musicians were sometimes brought into the museum to participate in the display, we were at best only able to reach a shadow of the true aura of these dances.

I think the reason for this was that we were simply not the peasants themselves, even if we did succeed in improvising and dancing in close contact with our village musicians. These dances definitely belonged to a different place and period and were the property of people living in entirely different conditions, where this form of dancing was a part of life [50–1].

Miriam Phillips does not focus much on the form of her dances, but rather comments on what she perceives as their essence, the *duende*; the “spirit” of flamenco. *Duende* is an elusive but extremely desirable quality in art and in life. She contrasts the experience of flamenco dancing at a *juerga* (a traditional party and “flamenco jam session”) with dancing on stage and in *tablaos* (night clubs). Performances in the *juerga* setting correspond roughly with our vival context, while dancing in the *tablado* correlates generally with flamenco in its reflective mode. Phillips describes the longstanding debate among flamenco artists and aficionados about where “true” *duende* can occur (see also Heffner 1997: 24–5).

When I lived in Seville my Gypsy teacher told me that many Gypsies say: “You can’t dance flamenco unless you are born in Triana” (a Gypsy suburb of Seville). Others are adamant that the *duende* can never occur on the stage, only in *juerga* and that what is done in the *tablaos* is not really flamenco anyway. Over the years of being involved with flamenco, I have never heard as many disputes over one word as I have with the word *duende*....

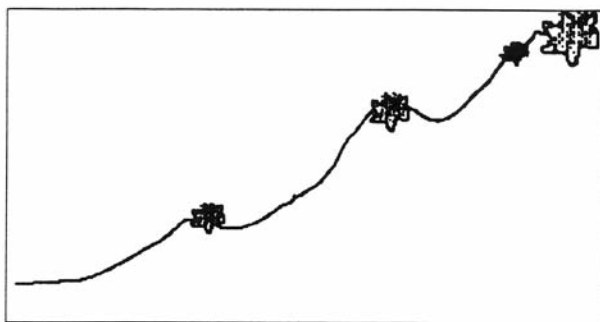
I have heard these discussions for a long time and at some point I began to have the sense that these arguments were all for naught. I had the hunch that these two, the flamenco in the *juergas* done by the Gypsies, and the flamenco done in the theatres and

tablaos, were two really very separate entities. I started to believe that *duende* occurred both in the *juerga* as well as in the theatre, only they were very different in nature, and served almost two entirely different functions [50].

She interviewed three flamenco performers with experience in both contexts, attempting to pull from them a sense of the elusive concept of *duende*.

these artists all recognized that *duende* occurs on the stage as well as in *juerga*, only that it has distinctive qualities, different dimensions so to speak, according to each setting. At the same time, we can identify certain like qualities between the *duende* in both situations. *Duende* is a spontaneous intense kind of coming together of several factors. It is a highly charged, or heightened emotional state, however long or short it may be. *Duende* is the coalescing point in a performance (whether it be a public spectacle or private gathering). It is the moment where all the separate entities within the environment and the individuals come together. The body, mind, and emotions of an individual performer become harmonized; the individual unites to fellow group members; all parts of the group (guitarist, singer, dancer, hand-clappers) become joined; the group merges with the environment or atmosphere (whether the excitement of a large stage and expectant audience, or in a dimly lit room inside a bar filled with friends and family, cigarette smoke and wine).

Duende on Stage (in a Tablao)



Duende in Juerga (or Fiesta)

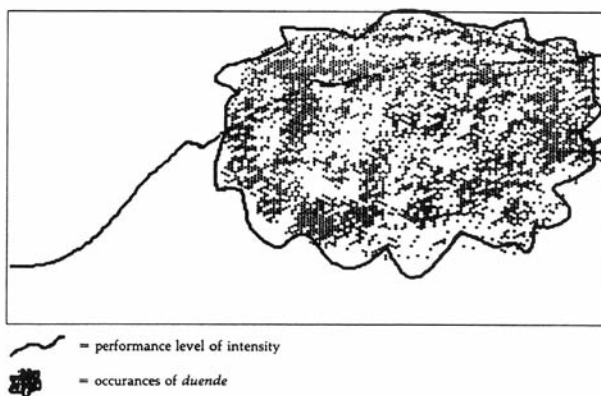


Figure 21. Graphs representing *duende* experience in two contexts (Phillips 1987: 59) (courtesy of Miriam Phillips).

The difference between *duende* in each context seems to lie in the degree of intensity, and in where or how the *duende* is directed. On stage, the *duende* is the culminating point in a dance or song. It is a momentary flash that happens in spurts. In *juerga* this momentary flash becomes prolonged, expanded; it has more density. (See graph.) In this context it can become an altered state of consciousness, a trance state. On stage the *duende* is harnessed, controlled, it is mustered up inside the performer to give to his audience. In *juerga* the *duende* is uncontrolled, untamed, sustained; it emerges from inside the performer and seeps over onto fellow participants. (See chart II.) *Duende* on the stage serves to excite the audience and bring a reputation to the performer. In *juerga* it serves as an emotional catharsis for the participants, and as a means of establishing the individuals belonging to the group....

It is my belief that flamenco is “real” wherever it is.... These contexts cannot be weighed against each other, they must be regarded differently. Thus, the *duende* can occur in both contexts [1987: 58].

Both Lange and Phillips argue that reflective dance is a positive, valid and potent activity, though they both come to the conclusion that the full richness of the aspect they are studying is best available in dance in its vival mode. Lange admits that in spite of the closeness between the Ethnographic Museum and the villages, and in spite of their concerted efforts, his reflective group failed to bring the *kujawiak* completely to life. Phillips speaks of a deeper, richer, thicker *duende* experience in the vival *juergas*. This sense of longing for a kind of lost magic in an “authentic” dance experience pervades a great deal of reflective dance activity. As a counterbalance, we will see that many other dance writers show greater sensitivity to the richness of reflective dance.

These two articles reinforce the suggestion that the vival and reflective manifestations of the “same” dance can be quite different. Unlike these two authors, a great many dancers in many ethnic dance traditions do not have the benefit of the comparative experience. Since appreciation of the richness of any dance experience is generally connected with competence and familiarity with the tradition, vival dancers are likely to see vival dance as richest, and conversely people in reflective movements most probably see reflective dance as the most fulfilling. The transition from vival to reflective dance itself can be understood as a cross-cultural situation.⁴

One cannot say objectively that vival dances are better or reflective dance is best, since these are attitudes that result from the cultural positioning and personal experience of the speaker, rather than any intrinsic quality of the dancing. As Lange and Phillips both conclude, each dance type is valid on its own terms and in its own cultural setting.

Motivations for Reflective Dance

In Chapter 2 we looked at four important purposes for dancing: ritual, recreation, aesthetics, and communicating national identity. We noted that these purposes often overlap, and indeed any particular dance event may involve a greater or lesser engagement with all of these purposes. Our example at that point was a recent social *kolomyika* in Edmonton. The *rus'ka* in the village of Toporivtsi, as a second example, had a clear ritual purpose at the wedding, but was also recreational. The villagers were keen to comment on aesthetic aspects of its performance, and took great care to dance it with honor. (Even though the name of the dance suggested an ethnic affiliation, the goal of national identification was the least prevalent of the four purposes there.) Indeed, many vival dances are intrinsically multi-

purposeful (see Royce 1980 [1977]: 76–85). This quality is particularly characteristic of dance in traditional peasant cultures, which are more integrated and close-knit than urban technological societies in many ways.

When dealing with reflective dance traditions in Western culture, we can generally observe a greater specialization and differentiation in their motivations. Particular dance traditions are more often developed for narrower and more specific reasons. These motivations for dancing are related to the purposes outlined in Chapter 2, though a slightly modified list is appropriate to explore the most important trends. For our purposes, the most important motivations for reflective dance in the West will be identified as “national,” “recreational/educational” and “spectacular.”

National dances in reflective contexts match closely with the definition established in Chapter 2 for national dance in general. This category includes dance performed primarily as an expression of allegiance to a state or potential state. More loosely, national dance is that dance performed as a positive symbol of a people. Vival dance is rarely danced specifically for this purpose, and most national dance is associated with reflective contexts. Since this book is dedicated to dances that refer to specific cultures — dances with some ethnic salience — all of the reflective dance categories described below will necessarily “symbolize a people” to some degree, even if this motivation is secondary. In many cases however, it is the primary motivation. Ukrainian dance has a long and strong history of connection with national motivations. The history and range of characteristics of national dance traditions are outlined below.

Recreational reflective dance also matches well with the general definition for recreational dance from Chapter 2. People participate in this type of dancing because it’s fun, good physical exercise, and healthy. Social and psychological motivations are both important. Recreational dance is frequently found in vival contexts as well as in reflective ones. Dances with recreational motivations dominant are generally not performed on stage. International folk dance participatory traditions are clear examples of reflective recreational dance. Educational dance here refers to ethnically salient dancing taught to schoolchildren for the various benefits that it can bring them. Educational dance is closely related to recreational dance in that its teachers generally also encourage the dancers to have fun. Vival dance is only passively educational as a rule, and therefore most dances that are concertedly educational belong to reflective situations. Recreational and educational dance traditions are explored specifically in Chapter 12.

Spectacular dance traditions that are also reflective ethnic dance are a component of “art dance” described in Chapter 2. In these activities, the dancers and spectators are focused primarily on aesthetics and beauty. In general, spectacular dance traditions involve a stage (or some other dedicated performing space) and expectations of special skill on the part of the performers. Novelty, creativity and virtuosity are very much appreciated in Western aesthetics at the present, and ethnically salient dance traditions in this part of the world are often strongly affected by these values. For this reason, reflective spectacular dancing is a very important and active category. Chapters 13 to 18 deal with spectacular dance, the largest section in this study.

I argue that the three motivations listed above influence the main characteristics of most reflective dance in Western culture, though they are not the only possibilities. Other motivations occasionally dominate as the primary impetus for a dance tradition, though more typically they serve as secondary values to the activity.

Some reflective dance is performed as a spiritual activity. The main purpose of many

dance activities in many cultures is to bring on a paranormal experience, to come closer to the supernatural (see Wosien 1974). Most of this activity is focused on the present, and fits better with our concept of vival dance. In some cases however, there is a strong conscious effort in the community to maintain the tradition of the past, or to resuscitate one from the past. Reflective performance traditions of the dances of the Shakers, whirling dervishes, ancient Druids (Severy 1977; see A. Herman 1979: 201) and Morris as a pagan fertility rite (Greenhill 1994: 85) can serve as examples. Numerous aboriginal cultures of North America are involved in reflective performance traditions of dance with this goal as well. Some women's solo improvisational dancing from the Middle East can be described as spiritual. Dancers in many religions, including groups within Christianity, Judaism and Islam, engage in this activity as a religious artifact, using dances for facilitating some connection with the mystical power of God. Many of these use dance performances from the past as inspiration, and thus can be seen as reflective movements (see, for example, De Sola 1977: 115–6).

Some reflective dance is undertaken for academic reasons, as a part of the scholarly study of the past of a particular culture. Lange's museum dance group had an element of this motivation (1974: 51). North American and European university courses in ethnic and folk dance, when they include reconstructions, also serve as contexts for dancing in this category.

Middle Eastern women's solo improvisational dance, sometimes called belly dancing, suggests another motivation for reflective dance. Some people participate in belly dancing or other dance traditions as a vehicle for erotic arousal. Belly dance culture is typically quite reflective, being connected with a long and rich tradition.

Economic motivations are significant for certain reflective dance situations. Coercion can also be a motivation, as when parents insist their child attend dance lessons. Various other motivations play a role in particular circumstances. These latter motivations for reflective ethnic dance normally do not form the basis of entire stable dance communities. At most, they may be dominant functions only for particular individuals or at particular moments.

More specialized than vival dance communities, reflective dance communities often have one clearly dominant motivation. Secondary motives may increase or decrease in importance from time to time, from place to place, from group to group, from individual to individual, and even from performance to performance. Nonetheless, the one primary motivation tends to affect the choice of setting, the participants, and the way they react to innovation. One of the main objectives of the chapters that follow is to demonstrate that the dominant motivation for the reflective dance tradition affects the values, priorities and form of the dancing itself. The dancers' priorities often translate into conventions and norms that impact powerfully on the experience of dancing.

Chapter 9

National Dance Traditions

National dance traditions have been actively cultivated in Europe since the end of the 1800s, and have formed the central core of reflective ethnic dance movements after that time. They have been very significant in North America as well. As indicated in Chapter 3, “folk dances” became associated with specific nations/countries, and remain connected with this idea in the popular imagination until today. This association is based on concepts of cultural nationalism, and Romantic nationalism in particular.

In the present chapter, we explore the basic tenets of Romantic nationalism and how reflective folk dance traditions resulted directly from the rise of national movements in Europe. Contemporary historical and political views suggest that nationalism is a recent phenomenon, developing as an ideology since the 1700s. Given this perspective, we look at national culture and national dance as *created* phenomenon rather than simply inherited. We examine the processes of this creation and the factors that influence it. Finally, I offer a suggestion to help reconcile the cross-cultural perspective that is fundamental to this book with the nationalist perspectives that motivate many ethnic dance enthusiasts.

Romantic Nationalism

The “nation” is a cultural term referring to a body of people united by a sense of common identity, shared values and shared culture (including group history, homeland, language, religion and/or customs).¹ A “state” is a political-legal entity claiming legitimate power, sovereignty, and a defined territory. A “nation-state” suggests the convergence of both elements within the same boundaries (see Motyl “State” 2001). The idea of the nation-state gained ascendancy largely in connection with the period of Romanticism in Europe in the 1800s, and it remains the most important of all political institutions today (Breuilly 2001: 790–1).²

Romantic nationalists in the 1800s imagined the world’s population as consisting of a finite number of discrete primordial human groups — races or nations. Races were seen as biologically specific. Each race was perceived ideally as living in its home territory and having a specific culture. In theory, each race had its own unique national spirit and particular national character that were expressed in their own unique culture. This culture was manifested in their language, beliefs, stories, occupations, dress, ethics, art, dances, and in other ways (see Cocchiara 1981 [1952]: 164–178). If the world was perfect, each race was a potential country. In practice, however, this model was complicated because these different races or nations did not live in complete isolation. They often came into contact with each other.

They influenced each other and sometimes came into conflict. When they did come into conflict, sometimes one dominated another. The purity of these cultures was generally compromised because foreign elements from one race would enter the cultural sphere of the other, either accidentally or by design. Contamination of cultural practices with elements from another culture was a negative process, since it interfered with the flourishing of the national character and thwarted its natural expressions. Romantic nationalists generally believed that in their time, cultural purity was already very rare, and all sorts of contamination of cultures were evident. It was very difficult to see the pure national spirit of any culture anymore (Cocchiara 1981 [1952]: 116–124; Motyl, “Herder” 2001; Motyl, “Romanticism” 2001).

Most Romantic nationalists were intellectuals from noble and upper class families. They perceived that their own upper class culture was badly contaminated with foreign elements of all kinds. Indeed, it had really lost touch with its own national spirit because of all the foreign elements that had become fashionable.³ This problem extended beyond the upper classes into the urbanized working classes as well. Cities were growing quickly at that time, largely connected with industrialization and capitalism. The lives of the urban workers and the upper classes were changing quite quickly, and cultural practices were becoming quite similar from one city to the next. The romantics associated many cultural and social problems with these processes of internationalization, urbanization and change. Romanticism was also connected with a reaction against excessive rationalism, and they were very interested in the non-rational aspects of human experience. Their angst and depression about society made them long for a better and simpler time. Most people were poor, crime was rampant, illness was frequent, and people seemed unhappy. The Romantic nationalists longed for “the good old days.”

The Romantics looked at the peasants however, and noted how their lives seemed immune to the changes and the troubles of the industrialized sectors of European population. The peasant’s world appeared to them not to change as time went by. The Romantics noticed that the peasants’ lives were full of customs and rituals that originated in the past beyond memory. They appreciated the non-rational character of the traditions. They further noticed that the peasants’ traditions and languages varied from area to area. A key assumption of Romantic nationalism was that, because of their isolation, the peasants’ cultures still reflected that wholesome primordial national spirit that had been lost in the cities and manor houses.

This perspective was an interesting reversal in class attitudes because, up to that time, the upper classes had usually disdained the peasants. Peasants were seen as living on the bottom of the social ladder and having nothing positive to contribute to society’s culture. With Romanticism however, the upper class intellectuals were suddenly saying that peasant life was good and interesting and valuable. In fact, Romantics idealized peasant culture.

The period of Romanticism saw the establishment of folklore studies. Peasant culture — “folk” culture — was documented extensively in that period as evidence of ancient ways of life and of the pure national character of the various peoples.⁴ This interest had many implications on the understanding of culture.⁵

Romanticism and the interest in peasant culture had political implications as well. Large empires, controlled by the British, Spanish, French, Portuguese and others, dominated political maps in the nineteenth century. In Europe itself, the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires controlled vast regions. Folkloric and ethno-linguistic materials were used for defining different groups as nations. If a population could be demonstrated to be different than another, then the political argument could be made that it was a nation and

should have the right to rule itself. A nation was not “free” if it was ruled by an imperial government whose laws reflected another nation’s character. Freedom became treasured for nations and on the individual level as well.⁶ The second half of the nineteenth century saw the establishment of a number of newly independent countries in Europe, and this process has continued around the world throughout the twentieth century and until today.

Cultural nationalism continues to influence many people’s thinking profoundly today (Motyl “Cultural nationalism” 2001). Ideas about culture and about nationalism have changed since the nineteenth century however. Most serious thinkers in these fields no longer generally accept certain views of the Romantic nationalists. In particular, western academia has generally ceased to support the idea that nations are distinct, natural, primordial groups with definite cultures. Nations and ethnic groups are more commonly seen as “imagined communities” resulting from a convergence of historical factors and ideas since the mid-eighteenth century (B. Anderson 1991 [1983]: 4).

This change in the perception of nations and ethnic groups influences our understanding of the other tenets of Romantic nationalism. The whole idea of “purity” versus “contamination” loses its salience if the “national character” is a set of continuously re-negotiated symbols rather than a primordial predisposition.⁷ Perhaps there never was a moment of purity before contact. Cultural contact itself is essential to self-identification and group formation.

Dance and Cultural Nationalism

The history of reflective folk dance movements is strongly connected with the developments of Romantic nationalism and the rise of folklore studies in Europe. Dance, as we have seen, was an integral part of the peasant culture. Early folklorists, such as the Grimm brothers, collected mostly folk tales and folk songs. As studies of peasant culture progressed, they expanded and became more inclusive. Folklorists began documenting peasant customs, beliefs, music, clothing, food lore, local architecture and occupational skills, decorative arts and many other genres (Toelken 1996: 1–4). Dance activities as such began to be documented as well, though generally somewhat later and less often (Kurath 1986c [1960]: 15–16; Lange 1980: 4; Freidland 1998: 30–32).

The documentation of dance events and dance forms was sometimes the first stage of this process, though in time the nation builders saw that actually performing the dances could be a powerful tool for raising national consciousness of the dancers and other members of the nation, as well as for audiences beyond. This type of activity often began in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Cultural nationalism then, was a seminal force in the birth of reflective folk dance movements, as well as dance research across Europe and the West.

The histories of organized folk dance activities in many countries confirm this tendency. The example of Norway is illustrative:

About 1900 the organized folk dance re-vival began to take shape. It was in many ways an expression of the numerous efforts to build up a national identity and to obtain cultural and political independence. Norway had been ruled by Denmark for several hundred years and was deeply affected by this even after 1814, when we obtained our own constitution and were joined in union with Sweden. For example, Danish was the only written language in the 1850’s, when Ivar Aasen constructed a written language (later called New

Norwegian) based on Norwegian spoken dialects. The folk dance re-vival was to a large degree associated with the struggle to further a purely Norwegian written language, Norwegian culture and the political independence that we finally obtained in 1905 [Bakka 1981: 23].

The Ukrainian dance movement has much in common with the Norwegian experience. The history of reflective Ukrainian dance is also tied closely with the growth of a movement to recognize Ukrainian culture as unique and legitimate, and eventually to establish an independent state. (In Ukraine's case, however, sovereignty was claimed for only a very brief period from 1917 to 1922, after which the country was submerged again, this time mostly under the Soviet Union. It declared independence again only in 1991). Ukraine's national consciousness movement in the nineteenth century took place mostly within the Russian Empire, whose tsar and government actively fought against it. The Ukrainian language was censored and banned, and public gatherings with a Ukrainian character were suppressed. Theater however, developed as a loophole, and dramatic productions served as key focal point for national expression.

The earliest reflective Ukrainian folk dances were performed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Shatul'sky 1980: 46–47; Zerebecky 1985: 21–25). The first successful staging of the play *Natalka Poltavka* in 1819 was an important event in this history. This melodrama was set in a village, with a Ukrainian peasant heroine. Natalka (the girl from Poltava), her family, and her sweetheart Petro overcome numerous obstacles during the course of the performance (poverty, and especially the unwanted advances on Natalka by a relatively wealthy government official). In the end, Natalka and Petro's love triumphs. The play contains many songs and several dances. Many other plays were written throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, following the general model of *Natalka Poltavka*, and being performed thousands of times. Most were "ethnographic theater" productions set in idealized villages, populated with exaggerated characters singing, dancing, falling in love, drinking and fighting, laughing and crying. They served as a popular context for an ever-increasing repertoire of staged songs and dances (Antonovych 1925: 53–122; Kysil' 1925: 56–80; Humeniuk 1963: 200–203; Ryl's'kyi 1967: 63–121; Boryms'ka 1974: 12–13). Professional theater companies developed, especially after a softening of censorship for theater in 1881. Plays set in Ukrainian peasant settings grew in popularity all around the Russian Empire.

Theater historians describe a "*hopak-horilka*" [hopak and whiskey] tendency in Ukrainian drama at this time. Performances that featured song and dance seem to have been quite popular with audiences, but not always with the theater reviewers:

The repertoire of plays, *Natalka Poltavka*, *Shel'menko-Denshchyk*, *Zaporozhets' za Dunaïem*, ... is strongly edited by the entrepreneur himself. These writings by Leonidov are examples of poverty and illiteracy.... The *Hopak* in Leonidov's company, however, takes the pride of place. They dance it from the first act until the last.... There isn't a single good actor in the troupe. They spin in circles around the stage, and that's how the company entertains [their audience] [Shchyryi 1910: 3, quoted in Humeniuk 1963: 204].

Performers in this and other troupes were hired because they were good dancers, and in spite of their poor acting skills. Critics of the "cult of the *hopak*" within the Ukrainian national movement complained that it was promoting an image of Ukrainians that was associated with low class and low status; an image that was obviously missing many qualities needed to justify forming its own country. They had to admit, however, that these staged

folk dances were extremely popular, and were repeatedly reinforcing the fact that Ukraine existed as a recognizable culture. The popularity of the *hopak* and other dances clearly indicates the successful establishment of reflective folk dance in Ukraine. As the dance style evolved, it tended to lose much of its low-class association, and develop an ever-growing reputation as an energetic, colorful and positive symbol of the nation. Staged folk dance continued to serve as an important national symbol on many occasions throughout later Ukrainian history. As we will see, the national symbolism of Ukrainian staged dance was relatively subdued in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, though it flourished in the large and active diaspora communities around the world.

The Norwegian and Ukrainian folk dance movements are not unusual, but actually quite characteristic. This is evident in numerous surveys of the reflective folk dance movements in different European countries (see Karpeles 1967: 25–26 ff; Emmerson 1972: 241 ff; Héra 1986: 81; G. Martin 1982: 9–10; Ribas 1987: 94–5; Sjöndin 1987: 132; Öztürkmen 1994; Foley 2000: 47–9 and others). The very fact that almost all histories of reflective folk dance movements are organized along national lines underscores the continuing strong connection between folk dance and cultural nationalism. Nationalism became a fundamental framing device for the way reflective folk dance (and even most vival peasant dancing) has been perceived in the urban West since that time.⁸

Creating National Dance Traditions

Studies describing the active development or elaboration of national dance traditions remain relatively rare since insiders may see this very concept as scandalous. They generally prefer to think of their national dances as natural, authentic and rooted deeply in history.⁹ A number of such studies have been published however, including Arzu Öztürkmen's "Folk Dance and Nationalism in Turkey" (1994) and Lisbet Torp's "'It's All Greek to Me': The Invention of Pan-Hellenic Dances — And Other National Stories" (1993). The intent of the discussion below is to explore national dance traditions as creative processes.

Arzu Öztürkmen's short article shows very clearly the processes involved as vival dances became developed into national dances. She reports that early attempts to document local dances began in Turkey under the *Halkevleri* [People's Houses], a network of local institutions founded in 1932, which encouraged a variety of cultural research by the local people themselves.

Until then the local dances were merely performed at such festive events as weddings, circumcision ceremonies, religious or seasonal festivals. Dance genres varied from town to town or village to village, and they were mostly performed within their own native boundaries without being exposed to each other....

This was an important shift in the nature of the dance performances. First, the native dances were systematized to be represented to an audience on stage, rather than being performed in an informal setting like weddings. Second, with the exchange between different regional troupes, various dance traditions began to be exposed to each other for the first time. During the 1940s, for instance, the celebration of the People's Houses anniversary, held in Ankara, the capital city, witnessed the meeting of the various dance traditions on the same stage, at the same occasion. Such nationwide folk dance festivals, and later the folk dance competitions, helped the formation of a certain sense of what the Turkish "national" dance spectrum was like, in the eye of the audiences in big cities [84].

In the 1950s, this process moved to its second phase. The People's Houses were closed but the dances came to be performed in different contexts. Most notably, they were increasingly performed in the large cities of Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara. Private urban folk dance clubs became popular, as did extracurricular high school and university folk dance clubs. Nationwide folk dance competitions were also established.

different local dances coming from all over the country, have been centralized and named as "Turkish folk dances."

the native dances were being staged with some floor patterns, that is, with the representation of such geometrical shapes as circles, crosses, diagonal lines, straight lines, and so forth. Since these shapes were applied to each dance genre to be put on stage, the generic distinctions between the various dance traditions began to be overshadowed....

The floor patterning mainly led those separate dance traditions toward a certain uniformization, by simply calling them the "Turkish folk dances." A similar uniformization could be seen in musical accompaniment and costume design as well [84–5].

As particular dances became performed all over Turkey, they lost the connection with their original locality except symbolically. Dances that were once narrowly localized became performed by people who were not from that place, but from other areas of Turkey. The concept of shared identity grew. As such, all Turkish people could legitimately perform them and symbolize their Turkish identity by means of them. This process describes the growth of national consciousness, and folk dance serving as a vehicle for its spread.

With this legitimized socialization process, the young generations display, in a sense, one of the basic goals that the Republican ideology wanted to mediate and to standardize in Turkey: a secular and "modernized" image of the Turkish nation, as opposed to the traditional Muslim-Ottoman identity.... The folk dance experience throughout this period of seven decades gives us clues to some of the devices which illustrated "the modern" in contrast to, but also in cooperation with, "the traditional".... The folk dance movement thus shows us how traditional forms have provided the Turkish State with abundant facilities to regenerate some new cultural forms, as "the invented traditions" of the new regime [86].

Lisbet Torp speaks of very similar processes taking place in Greece (1993; see also Loutzaki 1994a; Rombos-Levides 1994; Tyrovola 1994). She focuses on two dances, *kalamatianos* and *tsamikos*, and how they started in the southern Greek mainland and then became elevated to national dance status. They became known as pan-Hellenic, or "all-Greek" dances. Eventually, they spread literally all over Greece, so that by now practically every village in Greece knows those two dances. It's interesting to notice that their ideological connection with Greek nationhood *preceded* and *instigated* their physical spread to pan-Hellenic status.

Whereas Öztürkmen writes of government initiatives and "People's Houses" as the vehicles for the spread of the national dance repertoire tradition, Torp emphasizes different factors in the process. In Greece, the dances became part of the mandatory school curriculum, and were taught to literally millions of children from one end of the country to the other. She also describes the influence of another factor that is often ignored in the history of traditional dance forms, particularly the early recording industry. Commercial recordings both *reflected* what dances were popular, as well as *created* what was popular. Phonograph technology was widespread in the 1920s, even in many remote villages. It was much more influential in shaping tradition than many enthusiasts of reflective folk dance imagine.

National dance traditions then, are the products of specific processes, influenced by a variety of factors. Anthony Shay, in his *Choreographic Politics* (2002), amply illustrates these

factors as he details the history and character of six diverse national folk dance companies. The first requirement for the elaboration of a national dance tradition is the *existence of source material*, typically peasant dance traditions upon which to base the national repertoire.¹⁰ In the cases of both Turkey and Greece, the rural vival dance activity was very diverse and elaborate, providing good “raw material” for the national tradition. Given the changes that occur in these vival traditions, the relative timing of the nation-building process affects what dances are being performed and are available for use.

In some parts of Europe, with early industrial development and advanced urbanization, [older layers of] rural dances disappeared relatively early, few links could be found with the living peasant dance and, in some cases, it was not possible at all. This gave rise to different folk dance re-vivals at the beginning of this [20th] century [Lange 1980: 6].

Secondly, the source material needs to be *documented* and made available to the activists in the nation-building project. Some descriptions may be found in earlier folkloric or travelers’ records, though they are usually incomplete. Typically, the nationally motivated activists “collect” the dances themselves.¹¹ Particular dance types that were better documented likely played a more central role in the emerging national traditions than other, equally eligible dances that were not as well documented. Similarly, particular regions that had available resources tended to become overrepresented at the expense of regions whose dances were not as accessible. This is the case in Ukrainian national dance, for example, where most of the national dance images represent the Poltava region rather than any of the numerous others that exist. As we have seen in our discussion of *Natalka Poltavka*, dances representing the culture of Poltava were popularized early on the stage as parts of the nineteenth century theater movement. Thus they were the most readily available (Nahachewsky 1991: 141–2). The Poltava dance repertoire, the Poltava folk costume, as well as the Poltava dialect in the language have sustained a central position in Ukrainian national symbolism until today, nearly two centuries after the first performance of the play.

Politics are clearly an important factor in the development of a national dance culture, whether it is being formed within its own established state or as part of a struggle for national independence that would require political upheaval. Öztürkmen describes the support of the Turkish Republican People’s Party in the 1930s, then the Democratic Party after 1950 as essential to the development of the Turkish national dance tradition. Irene Loutzaki’s article “Folk Dance in ‘Political’ Rhythms” (1994a) deals with the specific relationships between the Greek national dance tradition and government influence in several contrasting political periods. The Greek, Turkish, and other examples illustrate that political policies can support or suppress organized ethnic dance activity, and they can also alter its character and form strongly (see numerous examples in Loutzaki 1994b and Shay 2002).

The development of a national dance tradition is also strongly influenced by the *international context* in which it exists. National traditions serve to inculcate the desired identity of the local population, but they also serve as symbols of that nation externally to the rest of the world. The political, aesthetic and moral priorities of the international community, as perceived by the nation-building activists, influence the way in which they see themselves and wish to be seen. These attitudes affect strategic choices for the dance leaders.

Technology is also an important factor in the creation of national dance culture. Technology may be significant for documenting the source dance traditions, and especially for “re-packaging,” communicating, disseminating and popularizing the national dance material. Torp illustrates the significance of phonograph records in popularizing certain types of

dance music as opposed to others. Books, paintings, audio tapes, radio, television, video all play their role in entrenching the national tradition as applied through government organizations, educational institutions, corporations, community clubs and individual activists.

Finally, *serendipity* must also be recognized as a factor that affects the creation of national dance traditions. The choices that are made in the complex processes of the development of national cultural standards may be influenced by coincidence or accident. The charisma, talent and personality of one key leader in the dance community, for example, may strongly impact the direction, repertoire and vision of its national dance. Igor Moiseyev, Amalia Hernandez and Dora Stratou serve as striking examples of such leaders in Russian, Mexican and Greek national dance (Shay 2002: 66–75, 83–93, 179–184). These coincidences may occur in relation to the original sources, the availability of resources on these materials, to internal or external politics, technology, or other factors that influence the process.

Kolomyika in Two Couples

The dance *Kolomyika in Two Couples* is a strong example of a national dance. It can help us develop an impression of how the qualities identified above work themselves out in practice. The *kolomyika* was a common dance genre in western Ukraine at the beginning of the twentieth century (Humeniuk 1963: 113–115; Harasymchuk 2008: 45–72). It was a common vival dance in the village of Luhy, in the county of Dolyna, then on the eastern edge of the vast Austro-Hungarian Empire (now in the L'viv oblast' in western Ukraine). Most everyone in the village knew the dance, including one young man, Osyp Kravchuk, who has a special role in this story.

World War I broke out in 1914 when Osyp was a young man. The battlefield crossed this area numerous times during the war. At first the fighting was between the Austrian Empire and the Russian Empire, whose borders were near Luhy. The local population was neither Austrian nor Russian ethnically, but was mostly Ukrainian and Polish. One army or the other conscripted men, depending on who got to them first. The women and children who weren't fighting often ended up feeding the soldiers of whichever army was in control at the moment. As the Austrian and Russian Empires each collapsed near the end of the war, the Poles and the Ukrainians each declared independent states. They continued to fight, now against each other because their newly independent countries each claimed the same territory. They also found themselves at war with the new Soviet Red Army, which also wanted control.

Osyp Kravchuk was a nationally conscious Ukrainian and served as a soldier in the Ukrainian National Army. The fighting between Ukrainians and Poles ended with the Poles taking the area around Luhy and a large portion of what Ukrainians claimed was western Ukraine. Fighting with the Russians continued until 1921, when the Red Army advanced up to the new Polish border and squeezed the Ukrainian army completely out of territory. Osyp and many other soldiers of the Ukrainian National Army found themselves in a Polish Detention camp, which was preferable to capture by the Soviets.

There, he met another strong nationalist, Vasile Avramenko. Avramenko had a slightly different history (Knysh 1966; Pihuliak 1979; Balan 2006). He had not been a regular soldier, but had gone to theater school and was working through the wartime as an actor in a theater company. His troupe worked behind the front, performing before soldiers and civilians,

raising their morale and reinforcing their national consciousness. In 1921, the theater company was disbanded and the actors were placed in the detention camps because they were equally undesirable for the young Polish nation.

Avramenko, however, was not one to sit still and behave like a prisoner. He realized that he couldn't make a living as an actor, because the theater group was disbanded and options for solo theater were very limited. He decided, then, to exploit the dancing skills that he had developed in connection with his acting career. As we have seen, dancing, singing and play fighting were often part of the plays that played a powerful role in the Ukrainian national movement up to that time. Even without the rest of his actor colleagues, Avramenko could teach dancing to whoever wanted to learn. He and his students could then perform them at suitable occasions. The soldiers in the detention camp in Kalisz were his first students, and they participated eagerly because of the patriotic overtones of the activity (and also probably because there was little else to do in the camps). Osyk Kravchuk was one of these dance students. Of course, the camp directors were not particularly pleased with intense expressions of Ukrainian nationalism by their internees, but didn't exercise absolute control over them. After all, they hoped that the tensions would subside, and the inmates would eventually become normalized citizens of Poland.

After several successes with his cultural activities, Avramenko had to leave the camps, because he was simply causing too much trouble in the eyes of the camp directors. Before he left however, he had convinced himself that dance could be a viable independent performance genre and powerful political tool. He had found a new career.

In order to make this career successful, Avramenko knew he needed to develop a solid repertoire. He had learned a number of usable stage dances from his old theater teachers, and he had enough experience to create dances to fill out his various acting roles. He decided however, that he needed more village-based material, especially from western Ukraine, because those were the people he would be teaching from now on. (He knew that he had no chance to work in the central or eastern parts of Ukraine controlled by the Soviets, as they would be much less tolerant and he was strongly anti-communist.) Avramenko asked his students to tell him about the dances they knew. He showed them how to write out the dances, using his own theatrical dance notations as a model. Osyk Kravchuk was one of those who agreed. He wrote out a dance called *kolomyika* for Avramenko. This dance later became known as *Kolomyika u dvi pari* [*Kolomyika in Two Couples*].

Fortunately, that piece of paper from 1921 still exists in Avramenko's Archive in the National Archive of Canada (MG.31 D87 vol. 17.27). We can see Kravchuk's handwriting, and that he has theatricalized the dance according to Avramenko's stage specifications. He portrayed the dancers entering and exiting the dance area as if it was a stage, and he composed the elements of the dance in a sequence of different steps and formations.

We also have a 1921 manuscript where Avramenko rewrites the *kolomyika*, adapting it slightly. The Avramenko rewrite must have been made within a few months of Kravchuk's original. We also have numerous programs for Avramenko's shows in that camp and around central Europe for the next four years and in North America for several decades after that. We know that this *kolomyika* was a regular piece in Avramenko's concerts right from the beginnings of his career as a dance teacher. It was performed thousands of times from 1921 on. At first, Kravchuk is credited as the choreographer of the dance, though his name disappears from later program sheets. The *Kolomyika in Two Couples* appears as a regular part of Avramenko's repertoire. Avramenko himself used the term "Ukrainian national dance" to describe this activity.

We have at least six different documents describing details of the form of the dance (from 1921, 1921, 1926, 1928, 1931, 1942). Two of these are filmed performances of *Kolomyika in Two Couples*: at the Metropolitan Opera House (Avramenko 1931), and apparently during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada in Mundare, Alberta, 1942 (Avramenko [1956]).

These documents and other evidence suggest that the dance form was a bit fluid at first, but established a set shape by the end of 1921, then remained largely stable for several decades thereafter. Each of the six dance descriptions features four core sections of the dance that are practically identical. One of these sections involves the couples traveling towards each other from the sides of the stage, and then moving apart backwards. A second section consists of couple spins followed by the males performing a squatting step, followed by couple spins again. A third core section that appears in all descriptions is a second male squatting step performed as the females move sideways, each time with one hand held behind the nape of her neck. The fourth common section involves the dancers coming together into a tight closed circle of four dancers, then spinning to the left and to the right. The most fluid sections in the six different descriptions are the opening and the closing figures.

The dance continued to be performed in Europe after Avramenko left in 1925, though only a few teachers in Poland and Czechoslovakia continued to use it because such activity was too political. It was not likely safe to perform this dance after 1939 when the Red Army invaded and took control of eastern Poland. It was likewise rarely if ever performed in the Nazi period during World War II nor in Soviet Ukraine thereafter.¹²

In Canada, the United States, parts of Czechoslovakia, Brazil and other countries where Ukrainians had migrated, this national dance tradition lasted quite a bit longer. The *Kolomyika in Two Couples* was performed thousands of times across western Canada, for example, until at least the 1960s, when Avramenko's national dance repertoire was eclipsed by a newer style of reflective Ukrainian dance activity.

As is evident, the *Kolomyika in Two Couples* became part of the Ukrainian national dance repertoire because, firstly, it existed as a vernacular dance in the Dolyna region, and because Osyp Kravchuk made it available as source material for Vasile Avramenko, a leader of the national movement. The political context of intense competition for Ukrainian territories by the governments of Poland, Ukraine, the Soviet Army and others encouraged nationally conscious Ukrainians to create and reproduce symbols for rallying support for their cause. Dances such as this were very popular and meaningful among the dancers and nationally conscious spectators. The political and social context was fertile. The technological requirements for the development and propagation of this dance were not particularly significant. The particular choices made by Avramenko and numerous others enshrined this particular dance among numerous other possibilities for the national movement.

Reconciling Cross-Cultural and National Perspectives

The foregoing description of national dance traditions suggests a substantial divergence between the perspective of a person engaged in a nation-building movement and a cross-cultural perspective. National patriotism is an ideology to a certain extent, and demands belief and commitment. Indeed, part of the validity of the activity, part of the reason so many people give so much of their heart and soul for their national culture, part of the

reason soldiers are literally willing to give their lives for their nation, is because they really do believe in its continuity, validity, consistency and value. Typically, this has implied belief in the authenticity of form for their national dance traditions. This is not a casual commitment to be taken lightly.¹³ In this chapter however, arguments have been made that national dance traditions do not reproduce the vital dance traditions exactly as they were performed by peasants 100 or more years ago. Indeed, the main thrust of the argument is that national dance traditions are new creations.

I think that one way to reconcile the two perspectives is to allow the possibility that the national spirit is exactly that, a spirit, an idea, and a consciousness. As Benedict Anderson maintains, one does not need to associate “invention” of a culture with “fabrication” and “falsity,” but rather to the positive active aspects of “imagining” and “creating” (1991 [1983]: 6). We noted in Chapter 3 that ethnic groups do not need to be defined exclusively by the unchanging content of their cultural inheritance. On the contrary, the content of their cultural traditions can and should change in response to their environment, technology, and ongoing cultural contact. The truth and power of a national dance tradition perhaps lies less in whether the dancers move their knees and ankles the way somebody once did in a village, but more in its potency to raise consciousness, to increase quality of life, and its effectiveness in spreading the idea of the people’s existence. The truth of national dance is not entirely in its form, but perhaps most fundamentally in its meaning. Changes may be such that they actually increase the effectiveness, communicability, and the potency of the national idea.

Chapter 10

Typical Characteristics of National Dance

The history and the form of *Kolomyika in Two Couples* suggests many of the processes which take place in the development of national dance traditions. Indeed, national dance traditions tend to share certain key features from country to country. National dance traditions tend to be objectified, symbolic, pure, and cosmopolitan. These qualities result from the logic of their creation and continue due to the ongoing intentions of the performers.

Objectified

As a particular dance or dance element is selected to serve as part of the national tradition, it becomes thought of more clearly as a discrete object. The dance becomes conceived as a series of specific movements, commodified as a “thing” which can be lost, preserved, manipulated, appreciated, etc. Whereas vival dances are experienced most as *processes* integrated with their contexts, reflective national dances are more characteristically understood as *products*, relatively independent of the settings in which they are performed. Focus correspondingly shifts to the form of the dance. The specific movements, steps, formations, costumes, the music are documented, recorded, and fixed. Once the rules are in place, national dances tend to be identified and evaluated according to their form. *Kolomyika in Two Couples*, for example, was objectified when Kravchuk and Avramenko considered its existence and wrote “it” down. It was also objectified when teachers described it to their students and taught it to them step by step. It was also a “thing” when it was an “item” in concert programs.

Not only is a national dance objectified in contrast to its vival precedents, it becomes much more *consciously valued*. Vival dancing in a village is valued in conjunction with the whole complex of relations and activities in which it is embedded, but not so much as an independent objectified entity. In comparison, people in the national dance tradition tend to think of the dance itself as something good, something of value, something that may merit great effort to preserve and present. Avramenko, his fellow detainees, the dancers, the audiences and even the disgruntled camp guards all agreed that *Kolomyika in Two Couples* had value in 1921. (The camp directors may have described this value in a way that contrasted with Avramenko, but they all agreed it was powerful.) As a tool for the moral uplifting of the people and the development of national consciousness, a national dance is often the object of large investment. Governments, organizers, teachers, performers and audience

members may devote a great deal of time and money to sponsor, learn or watch a national dance performance. It is a “value-added” dance.

The difference between a vival dance and its nationally motivated reflective counterpart is somewhat like the difference between an old piece of furniture and an antique. An old chest of drawers may be valued because its owners store clothing in it and perhaps use it as a television stand. It may also be appreciated as well made or handsome to some degree, but these are generally secondary considerations. Its age is not of much consequence unless the surfaces, boards or joints are deteriorating, or unless a new and better one replaces it. When “discovered” as an antique however, often by a different person or group, its age becomes a strongly positive feature. Its market value can jump tenfold because of its added value as a symbol of heritage and its status as an aesthetic object. Like antique furniture, national dances are often modified in the transition to their new status.¹

National dances also tend to differ from their vival precedents in that they are *formally transmitted*. Vival dances are typically learned directly through observation and repetition during actual dance events, often from childhood. In many traditions, all normal members of a community can dance. They tacitly know the general flavor and style of the dance, perhaps experiencing only minor technical challenges once they are old enough to participate fully. Specialist teachers, by contrast, much more typically teach national dance in formal settings. Only a subset of the community takes lessons and attends rehearsals. It is notable that Torp focuses on the key role of education and teachers in the process of establishing the Greek national dance tradition. While Greeks learn their local vival dances by participation, they have to take lessons to learn the official “true” Greek dances (Torp 1993: 83–284; Petrides 1989: 152–153).² The same was true in Ukrainian Canadian national dance traditions (Kostash 1977: 180; Nahachewsky 1991: 138–144), and for many other national groups as well. Dancers first learn the steps, then the formations and eventually master the overall dance style. Improvisation is often minimal or absent.

Symbolic

When a dance is taken up into a national dance repertoire, it comes to operate as a *symbol* of its own earlier vival context. Perhaps more importantly, it signifies “Greekness” or “Ukrainianness” or whatever nation it is designed for. This focused symbolic national potency is a new characteristic of the dance, and had not typically applied in its vival manifestation. In one town in western Ukraine for example, interviewees explained that the interwar population included many Ukrainian and Polish families living together. This area was within the boundaries of the Polish state between 1921 and 1939. The vival dance repertoire consisted of polkas, waltzes, *krakowiaks*, *kozachoks* and numerous other dances. In the 1930s, ethnic tensions rose markedly, and the Ukrainian and Polish sub-communities grew apart. Each built its own community hall, and “trespassing” from one ethnic group at the other’s hall during social dance events would often result in violence and grief. On the stages, in the national tradition, the *kozachok* served as an unequivocal marker of Ukrainianness, and only Poles correspondingly danced the *krakowiak*. The repertoire of social dances at each hall however, continued as before, with Poles happily dancing the *kozachok* and Ukrainians enjoying the *krakowiak* regularly (Nahachewsky 1995 field notebook). Vival dance does not normally have a strong national symbolism.

The danced message in reflective national dance traditions is aimed beyond the dancing

community and functions in a larger context, which theoretically includes all citizens of that nation. The symbol is performed to rally the members of the nation to greater national consciousness. In fact, the symbols are typically projected even farther than this: They are also performed for the people of all other nations. This broadest third audience is told or reminded that this particular nation exists and has admirable qualities. As symbols of cultural identity, national dances are selected, standardized, representative, and ideological.

Only a tiny percentage of the vival dance repertoire is *selected* for preservation as a national symbol. Ukraine for example, had some 25,000 villages at the start of the twentieth century. If each village had between four and twenty-three dances (see Harasymchuk 1939: 257; and comparatively G. Martin 1968: 60; Giurchescu 1983: 2–6), even if each dance was known in an average of twenty villages, then Ukraine had perhaps 16,000 vival dances or variants at that time. If one included the dances of previous generations, (which the national dance leaders would have considered even more valuable), the number of dances in the source culture was enormous. It is striking then, that Avramenko's national dance repertoire included some eighteen dances at most, and only ten or twelve were commonly performed. The vast majority of vival dance forms, perhaps 99.9 percent, did not make this transition. The tiny minority of dances that did become converted into a national dance was granted an "additional life" so to speak, received a great deal of care and attention, and became repeated many times over.

This small number of dances gained a hugely disproportional reputation and influence. *Kolomyika in Two Couples* for example, was the only dance inspired from the village of Luhv and the only dance from the whole Boiko region that was included in the Ukrainian national dance repertoire. Furthermore, *Kolomyika in Two Couples* inspired the creation of a derivative *Kolomyika for One Couple*. Together, they affected the perception of what a *kolomyika* should be like for several generations and hundreds of thousands of new people.

Nation builders might vociferously proclaim their commitment to save all traditional forms from demise, and may lament the passing of any particular one. However, the fact is that traditional vival dances (as well as songs, tales, customs and other folklore genres) constantly come into and fade out of active use, experiencing a shorter or longer "lifespan." In reality, it would be quite impossible and even undesirable to freeze the entire vival repertoire permanently. The object for the architects of a national dance tradition is not to "save" the entire corpus of traditional dances, but rather to promote a selected few to serve as symbols of the rest. In this respect, national dances function somewhat like commercial logos.

IBM, McDonald's, Coca-Cola and other corporations carefully select one or two graphic symbols among many possibilities to signify their identity to their audiences. The corporations benefit when these logos become well known because they can quickly and inexpensively re-project themselves into the minds of their potential consumers, engender the desired attitudes, and make more sales. This works most effectively when the logo is repeated consistently and frequently. Large companies devote a great deal of energy and resources developing their logos, disseminating them, and defending them against competitors' copyright infringements. National dance traditions operate in much the same way, but somewhat less explicitly and legalistically. For example, the Ukrainian national movement has claimed the *hopak* as a Ukrainian national dance. Certainly, Ukrainian patriots and the Ukrainian government benefit when the *hopak* becomes known and admired around the world. It is not surprising if they object when the *hopak* is called *gopak* and presented as a Russian dance. Conversely, Hungarians and Polish patriots may be uncomfortable when a *chardash* (*csárdás*) is performed as a Ukrainian Transcarpathian dance, or a *mazurka* is

performed to represent Ukrainian Polissia. The Hungarian and Polish national movements claim the *csárdás* and *mazurka* respectively. This is all true in spite of the ethnographic fact that the vival *hopak*, *chardash*, and *mazurka* have all been enjoyed as vival dances in villages on both sides of the respective borders and by dancers of more than one ethnolinguistic group (see Saban 1991).

The processes mentioned in Chapter 9 influence the selection of specific dances for elevation to the status of national symbols. Many thousands of potential source dances are never documented. Others might be seen as not old enough, not pure enough, not typical enough, not interesting enough or not beautiful enough to the intellectuals developing the national symbols. Nation builders in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Western culture tended to filter out explicit references to sex and sexuality,³ non-dominant religions,⁴ gender inequality, domestic violence, alcohol abuse and any other characteristic that sometimes existed in the source culture but was not seen as positive for advertising purposes.

National dances are *standardized* so that they can most effectively serve as symbols. Just as corporations want to be consistent in their use of logos so that they can achieve maximum recognition by their customers, so too, leaders of national dance traditions tend to select and repeat a limited number of widely recognized forms in their repertoire. If each national identity is to project symbolic boundaries that are as effective as possible, it must be internally consistent.

Avramenko purposely taught his limited repertoire Ukrainian national dances everywhere he went, from Europe to North America and from Argentina to Australia. He insisted his students reproduce these same dances as accurately and consistently as possible. We have seen that *Kolomyika in Two Couples* was performed in a strikingly standard manner for thousands of performances. The same general pattern of stability can be observed for all his other dances. Avramenko spent much of his life traveling and teaching his dances to Ukrainian diaspora communities everywhere they formed. He dreamed that a Ukrainian from Winnipeg who met a Ukrainian from Toronto, Melbourne, Curitiba or New York should be able to dance the same dances together⁵; Ukrainians were one people and Ukrainian culture should be one. In terms of standardization, national dances contrast markedly with vival traditions, where considerable diversity is the norm, and dance forms vary or overlap loosely from locality to locality and from time to time. Vival traditions are not normally subject to formal controls for standardization — national dances often are.

The pan-Hellenic *kalamatianos* and *tsamikos* are very strong examples of standardization in national dance repertoire. The Greek national dance movement is successful, and it has become practically unthinkable for a nationally conscious Greek person to say that these dances are not his or her dances, no matter where he or she lives. In this particular case, because of the intensity of the national movement and its use of standardized school curricula, the dances have actually physically become spread to all areas of present-day Greece, perhaps even to every village. In many other countries however, this nationalization process has not been carried out so extensively or intensively. People's claims that a national dance is part of their heritage are more often true on a symbolic, rather than a literal level. Surely, not every citizen of Ukraine has ever danced a *hopak* or a *kolomyika*. The dances represent all members of the national group even if not all of them know the dances personally or have ancestors who performed them.

Connected with the process of selection and standardization in the formation of national dance traditions, the national story is normally *simplified*. The patriotic message is more effective for most audiences if the world is portrayed in black and white contrasts. For exam-

ple, the entire Ottoman period in Greek history is presented as a bad time, as Torp tells us, a negative foundation from which the positive Greek struggle for freedom drew its strength. This black-and-white representation, however, is certainly a strong simplification.

... the focus has always been on the periods of disintegration of the Ottoman Empire with its sad examples of high-handed and oppressive rule by local governors, whereas little is heard of the conditions under which the peasants lived in this region before the Ottoman removal of the local upper classes [here we are to understand that the peasants had a very tough life before the Ottomans came in the first place. Perhaps the Greek upper class before the Ottomans weren't exactly making life easy for them]. Nor are we usually informed about the progressive administration, the comparatively low taxation, the high degree of autonomy, and the freedom of conscience and language that were characteristic of the early Ottoman Empire because these aspects do not fit into the black-and-white picture created for the sake of shaping a national identity [Torp 1993: 276].

The same strategy can easily be documented in Ukrainian cultural history and in many other national movements as well. Much of Ukrainian national history at a basic level consists of distancing Ukrainians from Russians, Poles, Ottomans and others. Simplification occurs not only in the presentation of history, but also in the repertoire of dances, the movements chosen, the music, costume, instrumentation, and in other elements of the tradition.

The standardization and simplification of the national dance repertoire at the basic level stands in striking contrast to the diversity in most countries' vival dance traditions. Partly to ease the tension between these two contrasting paradigms and partially to allow for a richer content within the national tradition, many countries develop a larger repertoire of "regional" dance material as a second level to their national dance tradition (see Lubinová 1949: 6, 13–14; Ivančan 1996: 87–101; Humeniuk 1963: 45–51; Dąbrowska 1991: 14–88; and others). The regional repertoires reflect the actual distributions of peasant dance traditions, territories of ethnolinguistic dialects, or other historical or political criteria. They tend to share in the characteristic processes of objectification, symbolization and purification with the rest of the national dance repertoire.

In Ukrainian dance, as described above, the standard stage symbols were based on the region of Poltava in Central Ukraine, which was the core area for the development of the national drama repertoire, such as *Natalka Poltavka*. A second region was also portrayed on stage early in the history of the national movement. This was the Hutsul area in the Carpathians, in western Ukraine, which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled from Vienna. The Hutsuls were singled out as a very colorful and traditional people, and their traditions, songs, music and dance became popular on stages (Boryms'ka 1974: 14; Ryl's'kyi 1967: 436–438). These two styles dominated in Ukrainian staged dance for some time, and other regional styles were developed later.

Regional dance repertoires develop with a certain tension in their relationship with the core national dances. On the one hand, regional items are considered assets to national dance repertoires because they explicitly include the various geographic areas within the boundaries of the state. For insider audiences, regional variants elaborate on the richness of the culture and provide theatrical diversity in costuming, music and movement. On the other hand, too many variants can also dilute the potency of the main symbol as a logo. Regional variation must be strictly subordinated to the pan-national symbols. They must not be allowed to undermine the message of national unity that is essential to the nation building movement. Regional styles, then, are typically described as local surface variations in a deeply unified single national style.

in addition to the undoubted common ground of “Greekness” one finds a multiplicity, a social and cultural multiplicity, explained by the local peculiarities of the islands and the coasts, as well as by communication and interchange with other geographical areas with different traditions, accounting for the cultural richness of the Aegean. Superficially, one might remark that there is not one Aegean, but many. Below the surface, however, one soon discovers the unity and continuity in both time and space, of its Greekness [Torp 1993: 278, quoting a nation-building professor].

Very similar sentiments are expressed regarding Ukrainian cultural diversity. For the first five decades of this staged tradition however, only the Poltava and Hutsul regions were normally staged. Poltava, and to a lesser degree the Hutsul region, was considered to represent the national whole. Only after the Ukrainian Canadian community was confident in its acceptance by the broader Canadian audience could it afford to diversify and risk diluting the strong Poltava and Hutsul logo-istic styles. In the 1980s and 1990s, dances representing the regions of Volyn’, Transcarpathia, Bukovyna, Podillia and other areas became popular. Programs of major Ukrainian dance groups in Canada now typically present seven or eight regional dances, complete with their special movement styles, repertoire and costumes.

Since reflective dances are selected symbols of national identity, it follows that they are intended to be *representative* of their nation. This is an important function that is new in this context, since it is not a normal part of vival dance traditions. They are now considered to come from their homeland in a generalized way. Whether they represent the most general national symbol or a regional variant, they come to serve as a representative sampling of the national culture. They are performed by patriotic citizens to solidify the strength of the imagined community for each other, to reinforce group unity and boost morale. The dances are also performed for outsiders from around the whole world, to teach them about the existence of the nation and its beautiful culture.

Whereas peasant vival dance traditions tend to be grounded to the specific place, time and culture in which they are performed, national dance traditions are much more *portable*. They can be performed at special new community events for the uplifting and energizing of the original community. Just as easily, they can be transported to big stages in the capital city for the leaders of the government or for large rallies. Almost as easily, they can be performed anywhere in the world for the entertainment and education of foreigners. The timing of the performances of these dances tends to be disassociated from the traditional calendar cycle of the source community, but now relates more to the new national holidays and other rhythms of the nation building process. Numerous examples of this portability in space and time are described in the Torp and Öztürkmen articles (Torp 1993: 280–281; Öztürkmen 1994: 84; Öztürkmen 1995: 129, 130).

When it became part of the Ukrainian national dance repertoire, *Kolomyika in Two Couples* ceased being associated with its originating village of Luhy. Indeed, the vast majority of people who ever danced or watched it were not aware of the specific village from which it was inspired. They thought of it as being inspired by “the Ukrainian people” in general. Luhy is situated in the Boiko ethnographic region, but for most of its stage history the national dance was typically performed in Hutsul regional costumes. The dance was clearly de-localized in the national tradition. Furthermore, the dance was just as powerful a symbol when it was performed in Lviv (the major city of western Ukraine), New York or in the town of Prudentopolis, Brazil.

Again in contrast with participatory dance traditions, national dances are clearly engaged with *ideological* contests. Avramenko’s clearly held a Ukrainian nationalist ideology.

This political perspective was pervasive during rehearsals and performances that he organized. He gave long speeches at nearly every concert and other public event, expounding a strong pan-Ukrainianist stance.⁶ He also expressed clear anti-communist and anti-Polish attitudes. He emphasized the necessity to remember Ukraine, to love and serve her above all else. Though Avramenko's own ideology was indisputable, it is also quite evident that the physical dance forms themselves did not contain any particular ideological content. They could serve as equally useful tools for a variety of different political positions. Indeed, in Canada, practically the same repertoire of dances was later exploited for its own purposes by the Orthodox Canadian Ukrainian Youth Association (SUMK), the nationalist Ukrainian National Youth Federation (MUNO), the pro-Soviet Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA) and other Ukrainian organizations with various ideological positions (Nahachewsky 2003: 39–40).⁷

Pure and Unique

National dance movements aspire to national *purity* and *uniqueness*. They avoid explicit commonalities or borrowings from other nations' cultures. As we have seen in Chapter 9, one of the basic tenets of Romantic nationalism is that all of the people on earth can be divided into primordial races (peoples, nations). Originally, these nations were discrete and pure, each with their own national spirit, national characteristics and homeland. Clarity of these national differences was seen as desirable, and the intermixing of non-national elements, often described as "foreign intrusion" or "contamination," was undesirable.

The tendency for purity and uniqueness stands again in striking contrast to vival dance traditions. Village repertoires are generally fluid, flexible and unselfconscious. Many of the dances seem to be indigenous. On the other hand, dances can easily diffuse from one area to the next, and many forms are incorporated from adjacent areas, regardless of whether they cross a political or cultural boundary. Each generation tends to inherit many dance forms from their parents, but also to integrate new ones. Since the dances do not normally symbolize ethnic identity, the dancers generally think of specific forms as "newer" or "older," rather than "national" versus "foreign." All dances are considered "ours" by the simple fact that "we" dance them.

Purity of national symbols is politically important in a national dance tradition, since "foreign elements" could be used as evidence against the claim to national sovereignty. Lisbet Torp writes of the *rebetika* dance style that was adopted by an increasing number of urban and upper class citizens of Greece in the 1930s and 1940s. Politicians came to see this style as too oriental, and therefore not purely Greek enough. The Greek government actively discouraged it (Torp 1993: 287; see also Petrides 1989: 154–155; Loutzaki 1994a: 70). Similarly, the Ukrainian national dance repertoire is designed to demonstrate uniqueness and to contrast with Russian, Polish, Hungarian and other national dance repertoires. If any element of music or costume or movement is derived from or claimed by another nation, then it will likely be purged or contested.

The analogy of corporate logos is illustrative again. Each corporation wants one or more logos to be able to present itself quickly and clearly to its clientele. Companies establish their logos, register them as trademarks and often defend their copyright vigilantly. They sometimes invest great sums of money protecting their symbols from competitors who would use them. They realize that these symbols have a great value in giving them a profile in the

larger world. Corporations need a public profile in order to succeed in their goals. Nations need a profile in the larger world as well, in order for them to function normally. National dances can serve as such logos.

The choreographic world however, is not patrolled as vigilantly as corporate imagery or national borders, and disputes are not typically settled by legal or military process. A vivid example of this process of the negotiation of unique choreographic symbols in national dance is connected with *prysiadky* [squatting steps] used in Ukrainian dance.

Squatting steps seem to have been fairly common in Central and Eastern European vival dance, as well as in neighboring regions (see for example, And 1976: 87, 99, 117; Klimov 1981: 93; Dąbrowska 1991: 251, 275–277; Nosál' 1983: 253, 259). Males generally performed them as accenting and virtuosic display movements. They became very popular on stage in Ukrainian ethnographic theatrical productions during Ukraine's nation building era in the late 1800s. Because they were theatrically interesting and often provoked positive reactions from audiences, *prysiadky* became very popular. They became an important symbol of Cossack and peasant dancing in that culture. These motifs shifted from serving as an accent at the end of a phrase to becoming the dominant motif in many cases. *Prysiadky* were often repeated continuously for 8 or even 16 measure dance phrases. This symbolic value of the *prysiadka* became strengthened as the performing tradition linked itself with the growing national independence movement. Squatting steps became a symbol of Ukrainianness. At that point, adding to the number of *prysiadky* in the choreography could increase the ethnic salience of a dance. At its extreme, some national dance compositions consist of *prysiadky* above all else. Such is Avramenko's dance *Zaporozhs'kyi herts'*, for example (Avramenko 1931), and Pavlo Virsky's famous *Povzunets'*.

Though Polish, Hungarian and Slovak peasant dance also included such squatting accents, this type of movement was being claimed as a national symbol by Ukrainians. It was perhaps then strategically inappropriate to claim them as a symbol of Polishness in Polish national dance, or Hungarianness in Hungarian national dance. This description is surely very simplified, but such squatting steps remain much less often highlighted in the national dance traditions of those countries.

This phenomenon can perhaps be seen at its extreme in western Canada in the 1960s and 1970s, where Ukrainian dances with many *prysiadky* were very popular. The director of Polonez, the Polish dance group in Edmonton has been known to complain "every time he includes squatting steps in his dance compositions, someone in the audience asks him why he keeps borrowing movements from the Ukrainians" (personal communication, Anna Koziak).

On the other hand, the situation with *prysiadky* and Russian national dance symbols has worked out quite differently. At the time when Ukrainian staged dance was developing its standards in the late 1800s, Poltava and most of the territory of Ukraine was politically part of the Russian Empire. Many perceived that this was a natural situation and that Ukrainians were simply southern Russians. (It was in opposition to this attitude that the Ukrainian national movement was growing.) When Russian staged folk dance was developing its own standards and national symbols, there was no perceived problem in using the *prysiadky* that were so popular in Ukrainian dance. From a Russian perspective, the *prysiadky* were a legitimate part of Russian dance just as Ukraine was a legitimate part of Russia. Dances that symbolize Russia today include frequent use of squatting steps (Lopoukov, Shiryayev and Bocharov 1986 [1939]: 61). There is a sense in many diaspora Ukrainian dance communities that "the Russians stole our *prysiadky*." Ethnographically, of course, the truth

is not so black and white. Squatting steps were and still are quite widespread in vival dance of that part of the world generally. The fact remains that a struggle does exist for the rights to use this national dance symbol, and the struggle is ultimately political in nature. Such conflict over who has the rights to use certain movements can be found in other national dance traditions as well.

The positive valuation of *antiquity* is connected with the concept of purity for national dance. As Romantic nationalism had postulated primordial nations and national cultures, the leaders of national movements throughout Europe and the world tried hard to demonstrate that their nation was ancient. Given that frame of reference, a people whose culture could prove only a few hundred years of history could not claim to rank among the “true” primordial nations. Lisbet Torp notes how very important it was for the builders of the national dance tradition to connect it strongly with ancient Greek dance (1993: 283–284). She notes that books written on Greek dance typically include a leading chapter describing ancient Greek choreography and emphasizing similarities between that and contemporary traditions.⁸ The Greeks may be seen as the European nation with the best antique resources for building such an argument.

Builders of other national dance traditions also try hard to make connections between the current folk traditions and any evidence of very old dance in that territory. They typically show great interest in archaeological discoveries that show human bodies in active poses, and often postulate that the figures represent dancers.

Vasile Avramenko's program notes connecting his Ukrainian *arkan* with the ancient Scythians were consistent with the positive valuation of antiquity, though his claims may not be historically supportable.⁹ Similarly, Avramenko's publications make explicit connections between nineteenth century *haivky* [spring songs], pre-Christian and ancient classical culture.

Countries that cannot boast a heritage as old as Greece tend to refer to the most distant historical layers to which they have access. In the United States for example, when legislation was proposed to designate square dance as the national folk dance for that country, the testimony supporting the legislation emphasized the antiquity of the tradition: “This form of dance alone can claim a development from the earliest days of our Nation” (Quigley 2001 [1994]: 148).

Conversely, the creators of the national repertoire often see problems with recognizably younger dance forms. One strategy is to avoid such dances altogether. By Avramenko's time, for example polkas, waltzes, fox-trots, tango and other dance forms were becoming quite common in Ukrainian villages, though they were quite scrupulously avoided in his national forms.¹⁰ Avramenko explicitly campaigned against the “spreading disease of unhealthy and immoral dances such as the shimmy, fox-trot, charleston and others of their kind” performed in any context (1947: 10). Though not all national dance traditions are as conservative as the Ukrainian example in this regard, almost all avoid the most recent layers such as rock 'n' roll.

A second strategy to deal with moderately young elements in a national dance repertoire is to emphasize the uniqueness of the local variants. When quadrilles, whirling couple dances, or other more recent forms do find their way into the national dance repertoire of countries beyond their places of origin, community leaders make a point of underlining that “when this dance entered into our people's repertoire, it was adapted to the special sensibilities of our people and it took on our national character. Our people modified it and made it uniquely our own” (see for example, Flett and Flett 1966: 4; Klimov 1981: 126).

This rhetorical device allows them to claim that the dances are at least partially connected with the pure and ancient national spirit.

In the national paradigm, dances should not only be ancient, but they should be *timeless* and permanent. If the national spirit is understood as essential, changeless and eternal, then it follows that the associated dance forms should also never change. Thus, for example in the Scottish dance traditions, the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing and the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and community authorities have gone to considerable lengths to preserve the dances from change: to “freeze” them permanently. This is a colossal and difficult project, and their efforts have been very impressive (see Emmerson 1972: 168 ff, 297–301). The same process, not always as strongly institutionalized, occurs in many national dance traditions.

The idea of the dance being pure and eternal manifests itself in the opinion held by Avramenko that *Kolomyika in Two Couples* and his other dances should never change. He allowed a certain flexibility given different performance situations and practicalities for casting, but insisted all his life that the core of the dance forms should be performed the way he made them and published them (1928; 1947). He hoped that the dances would be performed the same way from 1921, when he first staged them, till he died in 1981, and on indefinitely in the future. These dances represented Ukraine to him, and he hoped that they would live forever, just like his beloved homeland. In the later years of his life, when Avramenko saw new Ukrainian Canadian dance groups, he made it clear that he disapproved when they performed dances other than his (author’s personal experience). Given our cross-cultural perspective and our appreciation of the significance of context, we can see that the desire for absolute permanency is not very likely in changing environments.

Cosmopolitan

National dance traditions must be cosmopolitan to a certain extent to be effective, though a strong tension exists between this goal and the ideal of purity. One of the priorities of every national dance movement is to raise the profile and status of the nation. Since many of the audience members are also exposed to other national dance cultures, it is clear that the dances of this nation should be at least as beautiful the others’. In this sense, national dance traditions each compete, and are judged in the arena of international theater standards of the day. Leaders of national dance traditions therefore tend to observe other dance performances and quietly incorporate the features they feel would improve their own project. In most cases in the national paradigm, the tension between purity and cosmopolitanism is dominated by a preference for purity. The cosmopolitan features of the dance tradition tend to be implicit and discrete and perhaps even covert.

The issue of being cosmopolitan also applies in a different way. Participants in national dance movements tend to be very eager for praise in international contexts. National dance ensembles often perform specifically in contexts where they are likely to be seen by tourists, or travel the world to advertise their homeland abroad (see many examples in Shay 2002). Positive reviews by foreigners are often particularly valued.

Chapter 11

Variations in the National Paradigm

The discussion in the last several chapters dealt with the national dance paradigm in relatively pure forms. The category “national dance” however, is related to a great diversity of activities, each affected by a concern with nationhood in different ways. This chapter touches on issues of official state culture versus the culture of minorities, homeland and diaspora, multiple and interacting identities of the participants, and the effects of these “softer” national contexts on the dance activities themselves.

Nation Building

It is interesting to consider that the *Kolomyika in Two Couples* described in Chapter 9 was performed thousands of times over six decades, but perhaps never by people who were citizens of Ukraine. Avramenko’s dances were performed in the parts of western Ukraine under Polish and Czechoslovakian governance in the interwar period (with a separatist connotation), but were banned when the Soviets took control there in 1939 and 1945. Avramenko’s dance legacy was not repatriated until 1995 with his ashes. By that time, his style of choreography was obsolete. His dances were danced from 1925 until the 1970s, and occasionally until today in the large Ukrainian communities in Canada, the USA, Brazil, Argentina, Yugoslavia, Australia, and other places. The vast majority of these diaspora performers believed that Ukraine did not exist as a nation-state. The Ukrainian National Republic established after the fall of the Tsarist Russian Empire in 1917 had fallen by 1921, and most diaspora Ukrainians saw the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as a puppet of the Moscow regime. Avramenko’s dances were performed in reference to some country that *might* exist, or *should* exist in the minds of the people involved. Ukraine became independent again only in 1991, and it can be described as struggling through a nation-building process for some 150 years.

This situation is probably not coincidental. Perhaps the national dance paradigm is manifested most clearly in situations where the nation building process is active and under pressure. Nation builders may be most strongly motivated and feel the greatest sense of urgency in propagating symbols of their nation inwardly and outwardly. These are dancers with a mission, and the political goals of their activities tend to be foregrounded. Many cultural groups are struggling to become nations around the world today. Members of these groups can be called nation-builders, freedom fighters or rebel separatists, depending on the perspective of their various audiences.

Nation building movements, if they are significant, have grass roots support within

their constituency, and thus can rely on volunteer enthusiasm and belief in the good of this cause. Since the national tradition is not yet established, the features described in Chapter 9 may be observable as emerging processes. These activities may be tolerated to a degree by the pre-existing power structures, but more often they are actively opposed, especially as they build momentum. The nation builders may be forced to operate covertly, in marginal areas, or in the diaspora. For these reasons, national dance traditions related to nation building movements are rarely permanent or stable. The Ukrainian example is unusual for its longevity.

The ideology of nation-building and the intensity of the national dance paradigm sometimes persist in newly established countries as well as in countries whose people feel threatened or in need of stronger national symbols.¹

Established State Culture

Established, secure and affluent nation-states sometimes have more leisure and more resources to devote to national dance traditions than the emerging or stressed governments described above. The political apparatus of the government can support the national dance activity, often through a Ministry of Culture. Some governments subsidize national dance activity generously, sponsoring festivals and competitions, building performing spaces, paying teachers, funding institutions, developing school curricula, honoring accomplished dancers, and in other ways. In many countries, this support also extends to underwriting entire professional folk dance ensembles and sponsoring their international travel (Shay 2002).

The Soviet Union, and Soviet Ukraine in particular, were such states. Particularly after World War II, the USSR sponsored staged folk dance very strongly. A large industry developed in Ukraine, with thousands of professionals and hundreds of thousands of amateur participants. Almost all of the 25 *oblasti* [provinces] of Ukraine had their own professional staged folk dance ensemble, and several other professional groups existed as well.

As we will see, the character of the national dance tends to change once it receives state support. In the first place, the profile of these dance activities may rise. State supported dance communities can become quite institutionalized, with national and regional directors, accredited teachers, professional training programs, community resource officers, curriculum experts, grants administrators and professionals in various other related specializations. In the Soviet republics and certain other settings, national dance eventually became a genre of privilege, with its own established elite.² The national dance tradition in established and secure countries sometimes grows with direct institutional links to other high status performing arts such as ballet. In the Soviet Union, national dance institutions were focused on the reflective activity exclusively. In some other countries by contrast, state support included funding for researchers and archives interested in documenting vital activity as well.

The money, attention, status and recognition resulting from state support of national dance bring many advantages, and thus there is a tendency for many dance enthusiasts to argue aggressively for such support. State supported national dance institutions, however, may be seen as having negative aspects as well. Some critics deplore the time and energy that goes into administration rather than dancing itself. Many others perceive that government support invariably also means government influence, so the people and institutions

must remain politically correct to retain their privileges. In some instances, governmental programs are organized in a way to allow for a significant deal of artistic autonomy, though in other cases the creative forces may feel controlled by the bureaucrats. Government control can be exerted by issuing policy directives, by spending or withholding money, through hiring people who are politically in favor and even through political assassination.³ More subtle means of control may be exerted as touring opportunities and financial support are directed to specific ensembles or selected genres of dance, through fine adjustments to granting programs, supporting certain choreographies but not others, and by other means.

In contrast to nation building situations, national dance movements in established countries tend to have a softer nationalist edge to them. This is because the tradition becomes bureaucratized — its diverse participants have the breadth of interest (and the luxury) to dilute the nationalistic message with other concerns: perhaps supporting public education, physical fitness, promoting art in general, or producing high-status spectacle.

Most governments in central and eastern Europe have been particularly active in supporting national dance traditions. The Soviet Union was one of the largest sponsors of folk dance ensembles in the world through the second half of the twentieth century. Many countries beyond the Soviet bloc can be named as well, from China to Mexico to Ghana and beyond. On the other hand, many other governments and national elites make an explicit policy not to be directly involved in national dance. The latter policies tend to be associated with countries that do not fit the nation-state model, though this is not always the case. Government policies of non-support affect national dance activities as well. In these cases for example, the national dance traditions tend to grow more as grass roots movements and private initiatives.

Loyal Minorities and Diaspora Groups

The definition of national dance proposed in Chapter 2 was “dance performed primarily as an expression of allegiance to a state or potential state. More broadly ... dance performed as a positive symbol of a people.” We now move further into that broader meaning for national dance. A great many cultural groups — peoples — have no state of their own. These peoples are often called “cultural minorities” in the countries in which they reside.

Members of minority groups may have numerous reasons, other than political independence, to express themselves specifically as members of this minority culture in a given country. They may wish to express that identity to each other to help develop group cohesion and to celebrate their cultural heritage. When expressing themselves to outsiders, they may aspire to win recognition and respect, as well as to gain or defend certain rights or privileges that they feel are legitimate. Dance can be an effective vehicle for communicating such ideas.

Cultural minorities are very diverse in origin, and include both indigenous and immigrant groups.⁴ Many immigrants have effectively disassociated themselves with the identity of the earlier homeland, and perceive themselves simply as citizens of the host country. In many other cases however, these people retain a variety of connections with the land and identity of their ancestors.⁵ People may retain connections with their homeland for a variety of powerful reasons. These reasons may be salient to both the immigrant and to later generations. Homeland is a separate entity for these people, and is different than their current host country. Groups of people who live outside their homeland are called *diaspora* communities.

Just as the histories of cultural minority groups are very diverse, so are their attitudes towards the countries in which they reside. A broad continuum can be identified, ranging from anti-government freedom fighters we referred to above, to groups living contentedly in the midst of larger national traditions. They may live as isolationist enclaves or their members might engage wholeheartedly in the public life of their current surroundings.

Conversely, national regimes can demonstrate a variety of relationships with the cultural minorities among their populace. Most states, obviously, do not support separatists within their borders, and many are wary of almost any expressions of diversity. Governments may identify equality of their citizens with uniformity, which they see as more expedient for administrative or ideological purposes. On the other hand, many countries tolerate and even promote loyal cultural minority communities. They may see these minority cultural groups as strategic assets internally and internationally. Switzerland's affirmation of its cultural diversity and Canada's multiculturalism are cases in point.

One can also consider a range of possible relationships between national regimes and their diaspora communities. Some countries give concerted support to enhance the cultural life of their diaspora communities. Thus, for example, the Scottish Highland Dance association has a wide network of subgroups all around the world. Greek, Polish, and many other national dance institutions keep in contact with their kinsmen wherever they live.

Diaspora communities often share in the national dance culture of their old homeland, as in the example of the Scottish communities all around the world. They can share the same canon of repertoire, the same symbols, the same values and community conventions. Under normal circumstances, the homeland is seen as the source of the tradition and the obvious authority in its maintenance. The greater population size and resources in the homeland reinforce this natural hierarchy.

On the other hand, certain realities of life in a diaspora community may affect the dance traditions in specific ways differently than in the home country. Since emigrants tend to remember the homeland from the time of their departure, and since they are not present as later developments affect the national tradition, older diaspora communities tend to cling to older national symbols and adopt innovations in the national culture more slowly than in the homeland itself. Secondly, since all national dance communities tend to be cosmopolitan, they are responsive to specific trends and values of their cultural neighbors. Different neighbors may influence diaspora dance leaders than their homeland colleagues, and therefore the diaspora leaders may make different choices as they strive to steer their local community's activities to best advantage. Both of these factors tend to increase over time unless strong communication with the homeland counteracts them.

The fact that the majority of Ukrainians in Canada did not support the Soviet regime isolated most Ukrainian Canadian dancers from the official national culture in the homeland for much of the twentieth century. Soviet Ukrainian national tendencies in dance existed to the point of symbolizing Ukrainianness, though this was strictly linked to Soviet nationhood and Soviet state building. Ukrainians simply represented a regional variant of "Soviet Man." It was generally understood that Russia and Russian culture were central. The "younger" cultures in the union should follow the Russian lead.

By contrast, the Ukrainian national dance tradition in the diaspora was aimed at supporting a sovereign Ukraine, contrasting with Russian culture. Relatively speaking therefore, the diaspora was left to develop its own traditions. The two different national dance traditions developed in relative isolation for much of the twentieth century. One was a spectacular

Moiseyev-style tradition in Ukraine itself (see Chapter 17), and the other was a somewhat more conservative national Avramenko-based tradition in Canada.

Ukrainian Canadian dance groups, then, tended to use a different repertoire, different costume standards, terminology for dance steps, attitudes to authenticity and sense of purity. Any element from Soviet Ukrainian dance groups tended to be treated with suspicion.

The Soviet Ukrainians maintained closer contact with the minority pro-Soviet Ukrainian organization in Canada, the Association of United Ukrainians in Canada (AUUC). After 1945, several dance groups affiliated with this political organization engaged in subsidized tours and dance seminars in Ukraine, workshops with visiting choreographers, access to publications and other substantial contacts. The AUUC groups became integrated with the conventions of staged dance from Ukraine and began performing some of that repertoire. They served a significant mediating function through which the remaining majority Ukrainian Canadian dancers were gradually exposed to Soviet Ukrainian dance even though they had hardly any direct contact with Soviet Ukraine themselves. North American tours of several professional Soviet ensembles in the 1960s and 1970s increased the exposure.

By the 1980s and now that Ukraine has become an independent country, there has been an increased tendency to integrate the folk-staged dance activity in Ukraine and in the entire diaspora community. Communication and travel in both directions has increased dramatically. This process is causing major changes in Ukrainian Canadian dance (Nahachewsky 2003; Nahachewsky 2006).

Interacting Identities for Spectators

Performing a dance that symbolizes a cultural identity for spectators within that culture is different than performing for outsiders. Performing a cultural identity for insiders can be seen as a matter of strengthening national consciousness and solidifying group membership. When performing a cultural identity in front of foreigners, a dancer acts more like an educator, a diplomat or, in some cases, a missionary. Dances for these situations tend to be affected by the differences in cultural knowledge brought to the event by the spectators.⁶

People who are part of a cultural group are initiated into the national symbols and may have been exposed to them many times over their lives. In the homeland, thousands or perhaps millions of citizens live in constant contact with the culture and share in-depth knowledge of many historical and regional details about the culture. These symbols may have been part of their grade school education and evident in the newspapers and television programs they see daily. When they watch their own nation's national dance performances, they bring their ambient cultural awareness to the performance, and they can engage richly with many subtle variations in the symbols. Indeed (in spite of the general goal for purity and antiquity characteristic of national dance traditions described in Chapter 10), performers of national dances for insider audiences may be more successful if they present the national symbols in slightly innovative ways. The performers in these contexts have the luxury to explore regional variations or historical periods, to connect the national symbols with other ideas that might elaborate on the nation's image as rich, beautiful, virtuous, noble, passionate, contemporary, or otherwise worthy of pride. The audiences can be expected to follow the nuances, understand and appreciate the ideas.

Dance events performed for outsider audiences must generally limit themselves to communicating basic and core national symbols. In some cases, the spectator may have never

even heard of the culture before. In these cases, the national dance may accomplish its function if the spectator simply remembers that such a culture exists. This basic message — that the culture exists, it is unique and respectable — should be repeated over and over again until the newcomer internalizes it.

This point can be illustrated by imagining the spectators visiting a multicultural heritage festival in Canada, for example. These festivals are very popular and take place annually in many North American cities (see Shay 2006: 155–220). Each participating ethnic minority group sets up a pavilion around the perimeter of a large park (as during Heritage Days in Edmonton) or dispersed across the city (as at the Caravan Festival in Toronto). Festival participants walk or drive among the various pavilions to browse on the ethnic fare they are offered. In each pavilion, the organizers tend to present food, crafts, costumes, music and dance. We can imagine that a family of festivalgoers visits ten pavilions representing as many different ethnic groups in one day. They may collect stamps in each pavilion for their souvenir festival passports. The younger family members might leave with an impression that all the groups are happy and lively and colorful, but may have difficulty remembering anything significant or unique about the Poles or Greeks or Spaniards or Filipinos or Argentineans or Swedes or Ukrainians or Jamaicans or Icelanders at all. Often, the memories will be anecdotal, “that’s where my ice-cream fell on the sidewalk,” or “that’s where the three little girls in blue dresses were dancing,” or “that’s the pavilion with good air conditioning,” as much as those with any substantial information specifically connected with the national group. Efforts on the part of the Swedes to display a complete set of regional costumes or the Jamaicans to illustrate the indigenous variations of popular musical styles will likely be lost upon these visitors. The more detailed the displays, the worse the information overload and ironically, the less the visitors will remember. Only after numerous repetitions will a casual observer likely connect any substantial image with a specific group and retain the connection in other contexts. For this reason, repetition of only the core national symbols may be most effective.

Similarly, printed concert programs designed for uninitiated audience typically present the very basic facts of identification plus one cliché about geography or the beauty of the costume or the hospitality of the people. Such information is effective and sufficient for first impressions, but is likely unsatisfactory for programs designed for in-community audiences. They already know the basic facts and will be more effectively and positively stimulated if they see more subtle or elaborate messages about the performance.

Most spectators for national dance performances fall between the two extremes presented above. Diaspora communities, for example, can be generally visualized as intermediate. Some members of these groups may be nationally conscious and identify with the culture, so they know the national symbols and values communicated in the dances. They may not be as intensely involved in this culture, however, since the environment that immediately surrounds them in the host country differs. They may be strongly tied to the homeland identity emotionally, but they eventually become less and less in touch with the details and subtleties of life in the old country and thus might not relate to its full range of contemporary national symbols.

The Aleksandrov Red Army Chorus from Moscow performed a successful dance representing the Zaporozhian Cossacks of Ukraine (Aleksandrov [n.d.]). The dance was inspired by a famous painting by Illia Repin in the late 1800s, which portrays the Cossacks rudely rejecting an offer to surrender and/or join forces with the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul. One small movement episode illustrates differences in reception by audiences with different cultural understandings.



Figure 22. *The Zaporozhian Cossacks Write a Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, painting by Illia Repin, 1880–1891 (see Sternin 1985: plate 59).

The Cossacks are celebrating in their camp, laughing and dancing as the scribe composes the scandalous text. At a certain point in the choreography, one of the performers puts on a Tatar hat and dances about comically to an oriental theme in the music. The Crimean Tatars were allies of the Ottoman Sultanate living adjacent to the Zaporozhian Cossacks. He folds his hands piously, and then extends them up as if in prayer to Allah. He parodies movement symbols that he is a devout Muslim. The Cossacks make fun of him and poke at him. One Cossack lifts a wineskin of alcohol above the “Turk’s” head. As soon as he sees the wineskin, the Oriental character lunges for it and thus moves off center stage. His piety is exposed as hypocritical, as it does not extend to the traditional Islamic ban on alcohol. The Cossacks therefore have a laugh at the expense of their “enemy.”

Russian and Ukrainian spectators in the Soviet Union tended to know the historical letter to the Sultan and were aware that the original text was very blunt and disrespectful and scandalous. The Islamic proscription against alcohol was a symbol of the cultural contrast between the mostly Orthodox Cossacks and the Muslim Tatars. This section of the choreography then, reflected the content and style of the original letter quite faithfully. This segment was also quite politically acceptable in the Soviet context. Turkey was not a member of the Soviet bloc, so there was a good deal of political distance between them. Furthermore, ridiculing religious piety was appropriate for the atheist Soviet regime. Most Soviet spectators would have found this passage clear, entertaining and culturally unproblematic.

Several versions of this dance have been set on Canadian Ukrainian dance groups, reconstructed from videos. Some renditions are more faithful to the Aleksandrov Ensemble choreography than others. This particular segment however, is often omitted from Canadian

productions. When this segment is retained, audience reaction has been noncommittal. I believe that Canadian audiences and dancers often miss the full meaning of this episode. On the one hand, the Canadian Ukrainians are more aware that the Cossacks fought against the Russians and the Poles rather than the Tatars to the south. Repin's painting itself is quite famous, but most probably don't know much about the contents of the letter. Furthermore, many Ukrainian Canadians are not aware of the Islamic proscription against alcohol and its symbolic significance in the seventeenth century as well as in Soviet times. Even if they are aware of these cultural stereotypes, some Canadian choreographers and audiences may well be uncomfortable with making such a statement about another cultural or religious group today.

This tiny example takes place in a few seconds in one particular dance, but it is a good illustration that the political and cultural subtexts operate quite differently depending on the cultural background of the spectators. Context can impact upon the form of a dance.

Interacting Identities of the Performers

The paragraphs above concentrate on diverse identities of the spectators for national dance and their impact on the dance tradition. Up to now, one may have assumed that the performers themselves were members of the cultural group in question. In these cases, the actual cultural identity of the performer is related to his or her imputed identity while performing. This situation however, is not always the case. Indeed, many people perform ethnic dances which involve "putting on" a cultural identity only for the duration of the dance. Any international dance performance in which the performers change costumes for a Portuguese, then a Dutch, then a Ukrainian dance can serve as an example.

We have seen that national dances are sometimes performed with serious political meaning with serious reference to the political power structure. On the other hand, many others are performed simply as a pleasant token of cultural recognition. Often, dances executed by people whose personal identity differs from the imputed identity have only this lighter, softer national function. Indeed, the dancers themselves may have little cultural knowledge about the symbolized people, and operate much as the foreign spectators do, responding best to simple repetition of the most common national symbols. These dances can still be called national dances when their primary purpose is to symbolize a given cultural group.

Further complexity and richness arises in national dance events because of the fact that any participant may have more than one identity, and may actively engage them if the situation requires this. Examples from Tamara Gilbert's article "Urban Powwows: Form and Meaning" (1991) suggest the complex overlaying of identities that take place within that powwow tradition. Different tribes with diverse dance heritage sometimes participate together at powwows. Though many contemporary dances serve as pan-Indian symbols, mixed powwows tend to reflect tribal specificity in the performance styles of individual dancers or in certain parts of the repertoire. The urban powwows Gilbert describes include a "flag song" at the beginning, paying "tribute to the American flag and to those who have fought to defend it" (80). She mentions that American Military veterans are also highlighted at the closure of the powwow with special songs and dance. At given points at the powwow then, a given dancer may perform his or her identity as a member of a specific tribe, as a Native American, and also as an American citizen. Furthermore, non-national identities

can all also come into play. These might include being a member of a particular drum, a particular family, a member of the hosting club, a champion dancer, perhaps as a Christian or as a supporter of traditional spiritualism. At any given powwow, one or all of these different identity layers may or may not be consistent with the other ones, and may or may not be reflected by some kind of specific message communicated in movement. In the process of actual dancing, a person who knows all of these things may understand a variety of messages as one or the other is highlighted. Any given dance event, and through them any given dance tradition, can develop as a vehicle to express these various relevant levels of identity (see Grau 1994 for another interesting example of selecting among multiple identities).

Other examples of layered identity can include a person with mixed Ukrainian/French heritage performing a Ukrainian dance. Another person may learn a Ukrainian dance while living in that country for several years during their university education. A third person may engage with Ukrainian dance from childhood after accompanying their best friend and neighbor to dance classes. Clearly, individuals at dance events can choose to foreground one particular identity among a number of possible options.

Particular dance traditions may also have complex relationships with cultural identity. One dance tradition may come to be associated with more than one identity. Five examples of dance traditions that have crossed the Atlantic into North America can illustrate this phenomenon. Careful study of the history of each could demonstrate that the tradition is influenced by many factors in each context throughout its history. Some of these identities are highlighted more than others. In each of these cases, the participants exercise options to emphasize the old world roots of the tradition, the new world history, both, or neither.

Imagine the Acropolis restaurant in Chicago, where the hosts and the guests are dancing late Saturday night in a long line to *syrta*ki music, winding around the tables and through the kitchen. Some of the dancers are recent immigrants from Greece, others are 3rd generation Greek-Americans, and others are Americans of other heritages. This type of dance has been performed in the United States for a long time, though “Greekness” remains the dominant identity that is expressed.

The polka has likewise been performed countless times for several generations in North America. It is sometimes perceived as an “old country” dance, a Slovak, Scandinavian, Polish, Ukrainian or German dance form, depending on the immigration history of any particular community. In Minnesota, Michigan and other areas however, many other people who dance the polka aren’t thinking about it as an ethnic dance, but just as a lively, fun social dance that “everybody does around here.” It has become part of the vernacular dance tradition. In their minds, it’s a local dance, not a European dance any more (see Keil, Keil and Blau 1992).

The dance of the *matachini* in the Yaqui Easter celebration (Kurath 1986b [1949]; Forrest 1984; Snyder 1989) is more strongly associated with its new context than the Greek dance or the polka. It is not performed as a symbol of the Spanish *morisca* tradition brought from across the Atlantic (though historians can demonstrate the *morisca* was fundamental in the origins of the *matachini* tradition). As an ethnic dance, the *matachini* symbolizes the Yaqui people in the southwest United States rather than any other people.

In the examples above, options about the identity of the dance tradition are not consciously chosen by the dancers, but are inherited somewhat uncritically. In the next two examples, however, certain participants actively work to promote one particular identity rather than others.

Square dance is very popular in the United States, and many people associate it with

cowboys and the culture of the American west. Indeed, a formal movement was mounted to have the square dance officially declared as the national dance of the United States (Quigley 2001 [1994]). In a petition that was delivered to the government for this purpose, the argument was put forward that it was born of the United States, and it is perhaps the only dance that truly reflects the American spirit, and it is unique to the United States. The petitioners actively downplayed the European origins of that tradition, wanting to institutionalize their preferred interpretation of the dance tradition's identity as indigenous.

Conversely, "black dance" in the United States was generally perceived to be a new world phenomenon for many decades, but is now more correctly called "African-American dance" to reflect the increasing consciousness of its deeper historic roots from across the Atlantic (see Glass 2007).

Staged Ukrainian dance is very popular in some areas of North America, and an estimated 350 groups, with over 10,000 participants, are dedicated to performing this type of dance. This staged tradition has 85 years of history in North America. There is no doubt that Ukrainian dances in North America has many features that are particular to the new world context in which they are actually performed. In terms of their symbolic identification however, Ukrainian dances are almost always identified with the source country identity, rather than their new world reality. The imputed setting for Ukrainian dances almost always is Ukraine itself. In this regard, Ukrainian dance (and reflective folk dance organized by many other ethnic communities in North America) is most similar to the Greek dance example presented above, and quite different from the *matachini*, square dance and African-American examples.

Characteristics of Softer National Dance Activities

In Chapter 10, we observed that strongly national dance traditions tend to be objectified, symbolic, unique and cosmopolitan. In softer national dance situations, these typical characteristics tend to apply as well, but perhaps somewhat differently. More specifically, softer national dance traditions tend to be multi-cultural, iconic, based on secondary resources, and involve hybrid motivations.

Multi-Cultural

If the main reason a group of people dances is to express their own national identity, then they are normally interested only in dances representing that one particular culture. This is indeed what we find in the more purely focused national dance traditions. The Western world has a great many Mexican, Ukrainian, Scottish, Pilipino, Italian, Chinese and other ethnic dance groups whose main function is to represent their particular ethnic heritage, and whose repertoire reflects that one national group exclusively.

On the other hand, if a commitment to expressing one's own identity is not the main concern, and the dancers are "putting on" other people's identities, then a whole variety of softer national dances might be equally attractive. It may be quite normal for such dance communities to perform dances representing many different cultures. We see this often in grade school dance groups, in character dance ensembles and in many other types of organizations. One dancer may be expected to perform many different identities in one dance session.

Iconic

The characteristic of being iconic is strongly related to the terms “symbolic” and “objectified” from the previous chapter. It constitutes an intensification of both of these earlier characteristics. If, in standard national dance traditions, a dance may serve as a symbol of the vival dance tradition it imitates, a specific period or region, the historic struggles of the people or their aspirations for the future, then in the softer national dance traditions the dance tends to become a more vague and abstract icon of that people in general. The message tends to be simply that they exist and are colorful. The dance is a simple icon or a logo of the imputed culture.

The less knowledgeable the spectators, the more the dances tend to be logo-ized. Likewise, the less knowledgeable the performers, the more the dances serve as simple icons. If someone learns dances symbolizing ten different countries for a performance, then it is not surprising if his or her depth of cultural knowledge for any one of them is shallow. Another dancer who spends an equal amount of time focusing on the dance culture of only one people will have a much richer sense of that nation. In softer national dance traditions that involve multiple cultures, it is typical for the directors and the dancers to focus on fewer features of any original culture and thus possess only a generic impression of each.

Furthermore, at multi-cultural dance events, the imputed settings and imputed identities tend to separate the dances from each other, but the shared actual setting and the actual identities of the dancers tend to blur these differences. The actual number, age and experience of the participants, the skill of the dance leader, the slipperiness of the floor, the availability of refreshments, and other concrete factors all affect the dance event as an ever-present foundation, regardless of whether the dancers are temporarily imagining themselves in a Ukrainian village, at a Flamenco *juerga*, a Zimbabwean ceremony, or an Appalachian hoe-down. In the case of a theatrical event, all the dances are similarly influenced by the size of the stage, the training of the dancers, the mood of the audience, the timing of costume changes, the plots and cues of the lighting technicians as well as the goals of the show’s producer. In practice, the differences between imputed cultures tend to slide into differences in costume, music and steps. The degree of this “slippage” of course, depends on the skills of the performers, imagination, the objectives of the directors, and other factors.

Based on Secondary Resources

People who participate in softer national dance traditions have a much less chance of having direct and primary experience with the initiating vival tradition than people in more intense national traditions. Usually, they have only indirect knowledge of the imputed dance, typically basing their work on some other performance, publication or workshop within the reflective tradition. The information in these resources is already filtered through the interests of the earlier revivalists, and now it becomes filtered a second, third or fourth time.

Hybridized

Many of the examples of dance traditions in this chapter have actually been hybrid traditions, in which the participants’ national motivations are coupled with educational, recreational, spectacular or other goals.⁷

In Arzū Öztürkmen’s article on Turkish national dance, it is clear that the political

motivations of the government and some of the organizers are different than those of the dancers themselves.

it would be really hard to claim that today's young performer's attachment to this activity is due to her/his national feelings. Rather, the actual folk dancing activities in Turkey should be perceived as a social phenomenon that reflects certain national traditions that have emerged throughout the Republican era. First of all, as a youth activity, folk dancing has been for many years one of the very few social gathering occasions that the central government approved. Gatherings of other student associations, such as political or literary discussion groups have usually been under supervision and control. Secondly, within the conservative family structure, folk dancing has been the unique legitimate dance activity for those parents who would hesitate at sending their children to ballet schools or discotheques. And finally, within the folk dance club frame, young performers find a neutral and legitimate ground on which they can socialize with each other in a comfortable and "approved" way. In that sense, these folk dance clubs serve more as "socialization centers" where dance operates only as a medium for legitimate social relations. There is no pressure for work out costume, girls and boys can hold hands, and engage into a dancing easily learned and performed [Öztürkmen 1994: 85–6].

For most of these dancers then, Turkish dance is also a social activity.

A similar phenomenon occurred for Ukrainian dance in Canada. In Sylvia Shaw's doctoral dissertation, she found that nationalism has become very low in the priorities of participants in Ukrainian dance groups in Edmonton (1988: 85–100). Indeed, many respondents expressed disapproval of politics being brought into the dance classes. There was a much greater support for a de-politicized identity being expressed by dancing — an interest in cultural heritage. This can be described as a softer national motivation.

In spite of the name, "national dance" in the Royal Academy of Dance ballet syllabus is clearly another hybrid tradition of dance. Though the dances clearly symbolize the countries for which they are named on one level, most students who learn them are more interested in developing their ballet technique and artistry than they are in representing a nation from around the world.

Global Relations

A final example of hybridized motivations has a slightly different character. Particularly since the 1960s in Western culture, I believe that significant numbers of international folk dance enthusiasts and "worldance" performers use ethnic dance to express their post-modern identity as global citizens. National dances are juxtaposed with post-national or super-national identity in these cases. Cultural identities are proclaimed specifically in order to have them submerged later under a larger identity.

June Adler Vail describes a Balkan dance group in the United States with one type of post-national identity.

Unlike indigenous or professional Balkan troupes that intentionally represent "the national," the group could more accurately be said to have represented "like-minded, racially homogenous community" or "back-to-the-land values." As one member put it, "we are authentic Americans dancing in the style of the Balkans" [1996: 311].

Fund-raising concerts for global ecology, AIDS awareness rallies, dance festivals organized by anti-poverty activists and peace demonstrations are all prime sites for such hybrid motivations. At a most simple level, the dances are performed to symbolize that people

from many countries support the cause. At other levels, the national identity becomes problematized in some way. Post-modern references to national dance may be found in any contemporary Western art form.

Echoes of the National Paradigm

In both the Turkish and Ukrainian Canadian examples above, it is likely that the dance tradition was more seriously nationalistic in its formative stages, but as it became successful and established, the intensity of this motivation tended to decrease. During this process of “softening,” it is likely that the national motivation remained strong for some individuals, while different motivations became more important for others. In these particular cases, many characteristics of a more intense national dance tradition remain, in spite of the fact that many dancers have more recreational or artistic interests. For example, the Turkish and Ukrainian Canadian dance groups tend to retain the national bias to perform only dances of their one national identity. They continue to value authenticity and preservation, they continue to search for the national spirit, the traditions continue to be standardized and made uniform throughout the country, even though such features are not key to the dances’ increasing social or spectacular functions.

It is not unusual for the national motivation to continue softening as time goes on. Whether the context for the dance tradition changes gradually or abruptly, after several shifts in the tradition, many dances can be seen as having only vestiges of their previous national characteristics. Indeed, in some cases, this process ends with no trace of the national paradigm. In many others, the name of a dance, a step or an arm position remains as a final clue of the significance of symbolizing a national culture some time in the past. These echoes exist in recreational dance, ethnic dance, and art dance. The *schottische*, for example, is a social dance that is quite common in many parts of the world. It exists in many variants, and sometimes the relationships between these variations are hardly recognizable. What they do have in common is the name, which means “the Scottish one” through German. At some time, in a German-speaking context, the dance symbolized Scottish culture in one way or another. The “varsoviennne” position is common in international folk dance and ballroom terminology.⁸ This word is of French origin and makes reference to the city of Warsaw. This once was “the Warsaw position” for dance couples. A folk dance called Cherkassiya is named after the area in Central Asia from which many people emigrated to Israel. The dance was apparently once specific to their repertoire, but has become much more widespread. In international folk dance circles, it now symbolizes Israel. The name of a traditional English square dance called “La Russe” (“the Russian one” in French) hints at influence of a minimum of three different national identities over its history.

Ballet terminology includes numerous remnants of references to national culture. The names *pas de basques* and *saut de basques* contain references to the Basque culture in France and Spain. These movements today give little or no information about Basque culture, though apparently they once were seen as illustrating the Basque style.

According to the definitions for national and ethnic dance established in Chapters 2 and 3, any dance that is ethnically salient has at least a trace of national symbolism. The examples above illustrate that these traces vary a great deal in intensity. The category “national dance” has very broad fuzzy edges. We will see in the next several chapters that other paradigms are often dominant and can influence the dance tradition strongly in their own ways.

Chapter 12

Recreational and Educational Dance

Recreational and educational dance are somewhat different from each other, but they also have many similarities, so we will treat them together. Recreational and educational dance boast probably the largest number of publications in comparison to any other kind of ethnic dance. The majority of these books are handbooks describing how to perform the dances; “cookbooks” as Joann Kealiinohomoku calls them (1972: 398). Their primary content is usually a description of the dance form in words, so that teachers of folk dance can reconstruct them and add them to the repertoire of dances for their schools or folk dance clubs. Of course, these books vary in scope, intended readership, repertoire and quality.

In this chapter, we will look briefly at the history of recreational folk dance in Ukraine and in the United States. We will then compare and contrast adult recreational folk dance groups with children’s educational folk dance in schools. Ukrainian dance is represented unevenly in the range of recreational and educational dance in the Western world.

Recreational and Educational Folk Dance in Ukraine

Whereas reflective folk dance for national purposes is documented in Ukraine since the eighteenth century, educationally motivated recontextualizations of peasant dance seem to be more recent.

Vasyl’ Verkhovynets’ published a large collection of games and dances for young children, *Vesnianochka* [Spring song], in 1925. In a previous book, *Teoriia ukrains’koho narodnoho tanka* [Theory of Ukrainian folk dance] (1968 [1920]), he was very concerned with documenting vival dances and presenting reflective dances that portrayed peasant dance authentically on stage. His primary reputation among his peers was as one that knew and cared and fought for stronger connections with the imputed source. In *Vesnianochka*, he presents 156 little dances/games. Knowing his reputation, we may not be surprised to note that he includes information on the origins of each dance. However, it may be quite interesting to find that he invented about half of the children’s dances and melodies himself, and published them right alongside other dances documented from villages (V. Verkhovynets’ 1989 [1925]). The reason for this contrast between Verkhovynets’ two books is clear. At a 1921 conference of kindergarten teachers in the Poltava area, V. Verkhovynets’ explained that the materials were developed “for the holistic education of the child’s young body and mind, to develop her individual abilities” (quoted in Ia. Verkhovynets’ 1989: 5). His primary task in the children’s book is to present a large and varied repertoire for the children to dance in schools and playgroups. He wants to present resources for teachers. In this project, he is concerned

about the character and the spirit of the compositions. Given these goals, he does not want to limit himself to materials of only one origin. This strategy is characteristic not only of Ukrainian dance activists, but also of a great many educational dance writers.

Each dance/game in *Vesnianochka* is adapted for a specific age group, and identified as such (V. Verkhovynets' 1989 [1925]: 25). The author's introduction deals explicitly with advice on how to select the dances, how to present them, and suggestions for leading successful children's classes. He takes care to discuss a number of preliminary skills that the children must master before they can perform the dances or games successfully, and considers how simpler materials build up to the more complicated items in his repertoire. He proposes how the dances connect with various topics, and can reinforce other subjects in school such as music and mathematics (28–37). Verkhovynets' obvious concern with pedagogical matters is only one early example of a serious focus on folk dance as an educational activity. Soviet and specifically Soviet Ukrainian literature on folk dance for children is extensive (see Bondarenko 1966; Kuklovs'ka and Khaimovych 1968; Berezova 1982 and many others). Qualified kindergarten and schoolteachers developed materials and taught them widely in schools across the republic.

The repertoire and style of children's educational dance has been different in Ukraine and in North America over the twentieth century. Verkhovynets' *Vesnianochka* shows some interest in helping teachers prepare staged presentations of his children's games and dances, and this theatrical application of the activities remains an important dimension of educational dance in Ukraine throughout the twentieth century. Perhaps this dimension of children's dance can be understood in context of the large spectacular folk dance tradition in this part of the world. Both Ukrainian and American educational folk dance engage national issues, but with a different flavor, as we will see. In the American context, folk dancers more often perform identities other than their own. Both Ukrainian and American educational dance are concerned with childhood development, pedagogy, health, wellness and skill development. American educational folk dance has perhaps focused on motor development, individual expressive capabilities, and recreational values more than on theatrical presentation (Andrews Fleming 1976; Preston-Dunlop 1980 and many others). Adult recreational folk dance in the United States differs quite strongly from activity in Ukraine. This sphere of folk dance activity has a unique history and character in America (see Casey 1981; Shay 2006; Shay 2008).

Recreational Folk Dance in the United States

We have seen that the reflective folk dance activities in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century were mostly connected with the nation building process. People involved in these dance revivals were interested in preserving and promoting dances to strengthen their own specific national culture. Such activity continued among the various populations that migrated to the United States and Canada (Casey 1981: 6; Howard 1981: 22). In North America, where the mainstream culture is rooted in immigration from diverse sources, folk dance was also used for social development, but in a somewhat different way (Casey 1981: 6–36, 99–100; Tomko 1999; Shay 2006). Several cultural issues emerging in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century affected the beginning of interest in folk dance.

Firstly, there was a clear sense of nation building and national consciousness in America.

Patriotic Americans wanted to build an ever better and more prosperous and greater country. Secondly, this was a time when many people interested in improving the quality of life of Americans were developing new ideas about *leisure* and *recreation*, and how these should be a part of the life of the whole population, not just the upper classes. The “Physical Education Movement,” the “Organized Leisure Movement,” and the “Playground Movement” were being organized. The people who were swept up in these movements developed new perceptions of how people should live in U.S. cities. Thirdly, this was a period of huge urban growth fuelled by a large influx of immigrants from Europe and other parts of the world.

These three issues were interconnected. The recent immigrants generally entered into American society into the lower classes in the big cities. Many worked in factories. They tended to settle in clustered neighborhoods, sometimes called ghettos, because of their common working situations and because people in such communities could more easily support each other. This was especially true if they didn’t know English and came from cultural contexts different than the ones they experienced in the United States. Many cities were seen as increasingly divided into ethnic subcultures. “Settlement houses” were established to improve the life of the multicultural communities in their midst. Dance, and specifically folk dance, was quite frequently part of the program of these houses.

Many of the people interested in building a stronger America through physical education and organized play were established Americans (as opposed to the recent immigrants). They were usually well off, sometimes the company owners for whom the immigrants worked. They were not particularly comfortable with the ethnic ghettos, the quality of life there, and the way these supported the maintenance of “foreign” languages and ways of life. They wanted the immigrants to relate more strongly to *American* culture, to integrate and develop loyalty to the more established American mainstream. These social reformers also saw that the poor immigrant children were living in an unwholesome environment, hanging around the streets, gambling, standing around bonfires, chasing fire engines and often getting into trouble. This situation is portrayed quite clearly in Cary Goodman’s *Choosing Sides*, a book about Jewish communities in New York City and the Organized Play movement (1979).

Give them a chance for innocent sports,
Give them a change for fun,
Better a playground plot than a court
And a jail when the harm is done.
Give them a chance — if you stunt them now,
Tomorrow you’ll have to pay
A larger bill for a darker ill
So give them a place to play.

— Denis A. McCarthy [*The Playground* 3,
June 1909, cited in Goodman 1979: 60].

Organized sports and other playground activities were presented as healthy, connected with physical development, coordination, strength, discipline, skill, teamwork and cooperation. They were also seen as connected with personal stability and mental health. These people were clearly interested in making the immigrant families’ world a better place. This was an essential way in which participants in these movements felt they needed to build America.

In 1905, the same year as the founding of the Playground Association of America, Elizabeth Burchenal established a folk dance component within that organization. She was a

teacher and was used to conducting physical activities with large groups of children and adults (Tomko 1999: 191–195). She and others published a number of books in this spirit. They had a fair degree of success in popularizing folk dance as an organized recreational activity.

The movement for folk-dancing in America is far more significant and complex than appears at first sight. There is the love of beauty and rhythm, for which modern life seems to afford little opportunity, which expresses itself spontaneously in folk-dances containing the emotional experiences of the race. There is connected with the folk-dance a love of the open, of the vigor and joy of activity for its own sake, of co-operation with others in exercises of rhythmical beauty. There is the sense of balance and proportion that is related to all real art. More people can express themselves aesthetically through dancing than through any of the other arts....

But it has a meaning with reference to American life that is still deeper. We in America have recognized the value of the labor which the immigrants have brought to us, but we have not appreciated the wealth of tradition and experience which is embodied in the race-history of our immigrants; yet the great social composite that is developing in America not only is an embodiment of the physical abilities of the old countries, but also includes strands of their rich aesthetic life [Gulick: 1933 (1909): v].

In her book on this period, Linda Tomko notes that dance was introduced into the curricula of many settlement houses as a vehicle for social interaction, as a way to encourage children to respect their parents' cultures, as recreation, as an aesthetic activity, and as relief from the deadening impact of monotonous and repetitive industrial labor (Tomko 1999: 138).

[Numerous activists] promulgated folk dancing as civic recreation ... folk dance work thrived because it performed cultural work on the thorny issue of immigration. In the settlement's view, the dancing, music, choruses, and national songs at that event "lifted all up above their little patriotism and blended all hearts in the neighborly spirit or our American international citizenship...." Seen in this light, folk dancing could be considered superior "performative activity" because references to distinctive traditional or national identities that inhered in the movement material itself could be mediated by the way in which folk dancing was staged.... The potential for "Americanizing" immigrants was also seen to operate in folk dancing that immigrant neighbors themselves initiated within the settlement frame [Tomko 1999: 170, see also 138, 168].

Tomko's last point is striking. The sponsors of folk dance activities in the settlement houses appreciated the folk dances as serving to reinforce American identity, even when the immigrants themselves organized them and even when the explicit content of the dances was connected with their old homelands. The fact that the dance events were framed positively in the adopted homeland made it a pro-American activity on an important level. In comparison with the situation in Europe, this is a significant innovation to the national function of the reflective folk dance. The following quote by Elizabeth Burchenal indicates that the supporters of this movement saw the folk dancing as valuable not only in bringing immigrants to appreciate their adopted American homeland more, but also in bringing Americans to appreciate their new neighbors better.

The folk-dancing of a people expresses their spirit and character as no words could, and in such a vivid, human and universally comprehensible way that it has an educative value for the general public, whose knowledge of the newer Americans is woefully meager [Burchenal 1922: ix–x].

The international folk dance movement spread across the United States. The American Folk-Dance Society was established in 1916 to study, teach, preserve and popularize folk-dances in America (Burchenal 1922: x).

Elizabeth Burchenal had information on folk dance from a variety of sources. She traveled to Europe on numerous occasions and was familiar with people in the folk dance movements in a variety of countries in Europe. She was in regular contact with many of them. From them she got books and personal instruction on the national dance repertoires in these countries. She also published dance descriptions from dances that she herself saw performed, both from reflective groups and apparently, from some vival dance events. She also acquired dances for her repertoire from immigrant communities in the United States, again likely through teachers in the reflective performance contexts as well as from direct observation of vival dance events.

We see that Burchenal did not get all her material from a single type of source. Except for noting the country to which a dance should be ascribed, the context at which she learned a new dance was not particularly important for Burchenal. What was much more important was the usefulness of the dance for her teaching. She did take care, when teaching and publishing, to consider the difficulty of each dance, the requirements in terms of space, floor type, skill level and age of the dancers, etc. In *Folk Dances from Old Homelands*, besides the alphabetical index, she includes an index based on country of origin as well as a classified index identifying dances and singing games suitable for small children, for older boys and girls, and for adults. Her focus in this publication is clearly in the teaching application of these dances. In all these regards, her work and Verkhovynets' is practically identical.

Burchenal, and many other leaders in the recreational folk dance movement, could teach a whole variety of physical activities. Folk dance for them was one option in their physical education repertoire. It was a novel form of physical exercise. It was probably most often taught as an extracurricular activity in schools and as part of the physical education program. Eventually, it was taught in community centers and in a wide variety of summer camps for children across the United States. As one form of physical education activity, folk dance was often compared to other such activities. In their book *The Teaching of Folk Dance*, Duggan, Schlottmann and Rutledge make a point of emphasizing that folk dance needs no special equipment and therefore has some advantages over other physical education activities. Folk dance can be conducted indoors or outdoors, and therefore is quite flexible, and that a variety of musical accompaniment are appropriate, "including children singing for themselves, perhaps various musical instruments, or even records." Furthermore, "Folk dance is also an excellent introduction to a broader rhythmic program for boys and men in that it is a form of dance traditionally associated with them and, therefore, not characterized by effeminacy in their regard" (Duggan, Schlottmann and Rutledge 1948: 32).

Social, Physical and Cultural Values

The popularity of this activity in the first half of the century was due to the efforts and talents of Elizabeth Burchenal and many other leaders like her (Casey 1981: 6–65). It was also due to the power of dance and how it offers many positive values and qualities to the participants in these traditions.

We have seen in Burchenal's 1922 preface that she ascribes numerous positive qualities to folk dance. Later teachers and writers continued to elaborate on benefits of folk dancing.

Below is a list adapted from the chapter “Objectives for Teaching Folk Dance” in *The Teaching of Folk Dance* by Duggan, Schlottmann and Rutledge (1948).

Folk dance’s values can be grouped into broad social, physical and cultural categories.

SOCIAL VALUES

1. Allows dancers to find *satisfaction* in performing, both alone and in a group
2. Allows dancers to experience positive feelings about practicing and perfecting a skill
3. Develops attitudes of cooperation among participants
4. Develops a sense of responsibility, particularly connected with contributing to making a group dance work. If you don’t follow through on your responsibility as a participant, it affects what the other participants can enjoy.

PHYSICAL VALUES

1. Teaches dancers to master the physical techniques in the dance — involving performing step patterns and combinations and sequences accurately
2. Teaches dancers to execute floor patterns accurately
3. Develops a range of bodily movement in terms of flexibility, ease, effort qualities
4. Teaches dancers to perform fluidly and smoothly, connecting the parts of the sequence from the beginning to the end of the activity
5. Teaches the dancers about recreating the *spirit* of the differing dances and the spirit of the different peoples¹
6. Develops rhythm and musicality including refined senses of tempo, phrasing, dynamics, accent

CULTURAL VALUES

1. Teaches knowledge about different countries in the world, including their geography, history and social life
2. Facilitates learning about other aspects of culture in these various countries, including their songs, music, instruments, folk arts, folk crafts, legends, costumes, festivals, etc.
3. Teaches ideas about the temperament of the different peoples.²
4. Facilitates learning about dance in general, including theatrical and art dance.³
5. Promotes an appreciation of the diversity of culture in the world. It makes for better citizens of our planet, people of the global village.
6. Promotes an appreciation of the ethnic groups that contributed to the heritage of the United States.
7. Promotes an understanding among peoples of the world. As a Scot once said: “Ye canna fight a man ye’ve danced wi’.” (28)

People continued to support recreational folk dance based on the perception that benefits accrue not only for the direct participants, but also for society as a whole. Happier, healthier, more involved, less provincial people make wholesome, stable, productive, good citizens of America. This sense of social control or social engineering was explicit, for example, in New York in the earliest years of the movement, where multicultural dances were consciously used as a tool to promote interaction and get immigrants to ease into American culture. Elements from their own cultures and their own identities were used to try tease them out of their own insular communities.

Adult Recreational Dance Clubs

From this point on in the discussion, we differentiate two major trends in this type of dancing. "Recreational folk dance" is a movement mostly for adults. "Children's educational dance" takes place mostly in schools.

Michael Herman documents the international folk dance scene in New York in the 1940s in his newsletter *The Folk Dancer* (1942). It can serve to give us a flavor of the movement. The folk dance movement in New York area seems to have grown during the period prior to World War II. Herman notes that numerous ethnic folk groups (groups engaged with dances of one particular nation) had been active for some time in the city. A "Folk Festival Council" was organized in 1931 to encourage these ethnic groups to interact and teach each other their dances. Outdoor and indoor ethnic festivals also stimulated interest. The New York World's Fair of 1939–1940 was a large international festival that involved folk dance exhibitions in connection with "Nationality Days" at various pavilions. The World's Fair had a "Common" area that was used to host frequent evenings of square dancing and participatory folk dance from many countries. "By the time the Fair was over thousands of people had learned the rudiments of folk dancing and were rarin' to learn more" (M. Herman 1942: 1). Michael Herman led in the organization of the "Community Folk Dance Center" which held weekly folk dance evenings. In the first year of operations, the Center organized folk dance parties and attracted up to 150 participants per week. "Each dance was taught to everyone. Nobody sat around." Some 75 "regulars" attended weekly, and several thousand came to try out the folk dance events. The activities were advertised in numerous media, including Herman's own newsletter *The Folk Dancer*, and sometimes the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. Existing folk dance groups came to demonstrate their dances and costumes, and to serve as guest teachers of new material. Estonian, Ukrainian, Danish, Czechoslovak, Finnish, Hungarian, Norwegian, Swedish, Hawaiian, Polish, Lithuanian, French groups participated in this way in the first year, as well as Square and Contra dancers. Numerous other folk dance groups were established soon thereafter in the New York area, based on this model (M. Herman 1942: 1, 6).

The international folk dance movement in the United States in general seems to have peaked around 1974 (Houston 1999: 7). It was popular in different areas of the United States at that time, and folk dance federations structured the activities in whole regions (Beliajus 1981: 100; Houston 1999: 2–3). The Folk Dance Federation of California, for example, had a large organizational influence (Casey 1981: 39–65).

A typical club in the international folk dance scene might meet once per week. A teacher who earns a small income from his expertise in folk dance usually runs the club. In some cases, a separate person plays the role of promoter/administrator. People arrive at a certain time in the evening. The leader starts with simple dances, teaching slowly step-by-step for novices who don't know how to dance well. Then, when they are ready, he plays the music and everyone performs the dance. In a minority of cases, a live performer plays the music. The technologies of variable speed phonographs, cassette players and digital equipment have been appreciated since they became available, as slower music is sometimes useful for learning. Depending on who is present that evening, the teacher gets the people involved in more complex dances. A good teacher has a large repertoire available at his fingertips in order to adapt the flow of the evening to the interests and abilities of the club members. This repertoire is learned from camps, from books, and from other teachers (Casey 1981: 39–65, 81–95).

A vibrant subculture of folk dance camps developed in North America and in other

countries. Traveling dance leaders form part of this circuit of international folk dance. Often these people are specialists in one particular region for folk dance — the Balkans, Turkey, Scandinavia, or elsewhere. These people may well have personal connections with that particular part of the world in which they are experts. Some of them were born in those countries. Others are American-born dancers who developed a serious interest in a particular area, perhaps traveling there on numerous occasions, learning the language, and immersing themselves deeply in the culture.

Besides their weekly dance evenings, folk dance club members or leaders may organize additional events such as costume displays, special workshops with guest teachers, potluck dinners, etc. The intent is to involve club members in as many ways as possible so that they feel part of a multifaceted community. Of course the teachers try to make the evening as fun as possible, to develop a sense of interest and involvement. Enjoyment increases the commitment of regular dancers and hopefully builds a reputation that attracts newcomers and entices casual attendees to return.

A successful teacher has a large and varied repertoire and can teach the dances quickly, clearly, concisely and effectively. She is probably also a bit of an entertainer, so the people have fun while they were learning. In any event, she definitely needs a fine tuned sensitivity to the mood of the crowd. She needs to know when to pick up the pace and stir up some excitement, and when to let people cool down. The pacing and rhythm of the evening's dances are essential for the success of the event. At the same time, she has to juggle the needs of the slow-learning novices while keeping the skilled regulars motivated as well. This role certainly requires special skill.

Children's Educational Dance

Children's educational folk dance in a school setting has many characteristics in common with adult recreational dance. As we have suggested, folk dance has been taught in schools in North America for over a century. It has often been taught as an extra-curricular activity or as part of the physical education program. Not just folk dance, but all dance has had a marginal status in school curricula in the United States and Canada, perhaps with a little stronger support in Great Britain. Dance has not been a traditional core school subject through much of the last several centuries in the western world, and introducing it into school curricula in the twentieth century has often been an uphill battle. From the school administrators' point of view, the decision to add dance generally requires cutting some hours from another subject that is more established. Generally, arguments about the values of dance, and perhaps folk dance specifically, are most successful when there is a committed, energetic and talented individual active in a given constituency. The successes of such groups of dance supporters and lobbyists are rarely permanent however. When the key motivators leave the scene, it is not uncommon for dance to be dropped again. In the United States, Canada, Great Britain and in other countries, organizations of dance teachers have been formed to promote dance in schools.

When dance is included in school curricula, the actual availability of qualified teachers is often a major factor in determining the type of dance taught, the energy, and the viability of the program. Many examples can be mentioned of great successes in one genre of dance or another, based on the skill, determination, and energy of one gifted person who worked specifically in that community.

As we have mentioned, dance classes, including folk dance classes, are also often organized for children outside of schools, at private dance clubs, in community leagues, and at summer camps.

Perhaps the biggest difference between dance for adults and dance for children is that adult dance activities are almost always voluntary in nature, and therefore are truly geared for recreation. They must truly be fun or the adult will choose a different dance club or different recreational activity next time. Values such as developing physical fitness or cultural awareness may be a factor in these clubs, but this is normally because the clientele already wants those things. They are present as a reaction to the interests of the participants.

Children's dance activities, however, are much more often organized as a compulsory activity for a captive audience. Children, after all, do not have much choice to attend school, nor in the content of the curriculum. The element of enjoyment is often a major factor here, though the agenda of the organizers may include other factors as well: developing social skills, physical fitness, cultural awareness, for example. In children's folk dance activities, the difference between the motivations of the organizers and the motives of the dancers may be greater.

Recreational and educational dance communities tend to have a number of typical characteristics. Leaders of recreational and educational dance tend to be concerned with authenticity in particular ways. They may have a specific type of interest in cultural context. Discipline and unison are often lower priorities than in national dance communities or, as we will see later, in spectacular dance communities. Recreational and educational dance leaders are often quite concerned with the *form* of the dances, and in particular, are interested in developing a repertoire that engages with a broad diversity of forms.

Ukrainian Dance Within the International Folk Dance Movement

Michael Herman and his wife Mary Ann were important figures in the international folk dance scene on the east coast of the United States (M.A. Herman 1961: 24; Howard 1981). They were unusual in this movement in that they had previous knowledge of Ukrainian dance, and incorporated that knowledge into the international folk dance sessions that they led. In general however, Ukrainian dance is strongly underrepresented in the activities of the international folk dance movement, and the two folk dance subcultures are quite isolated (see Pankiowskyj 1961).

There seems to be many reasons why one does not find Ukrainian dance groups formed for such a recreational purpose. Most of the dances available to Ukrainian groups are, in the first place, specifically arranged for stage presentation. Such features as facing in one direction instead of toward one's partner, or requiring a large area for any particular step, look good on the stage yet make these dances unsuitable for recreational purposes. In addition to this, many Ukrainian dances are set into a complex, fixed sequence that, unless one dances them often, is easily forgotten. The steps themselves, too, are strenuous: fifteen minutes of Ukrainian dances, one after another, will leave the best of dancers panting. No such thing needs to happen at recreational dance sessions [Pankiowskyj 1961: 50–51].

"Somewhere in all this flurry of folk dance performances, Ukrainian folk dancing in this country ... seems to be a performing rather than a recreational activity" (M.A. Herman 1961: 22). The first eight volumes of *Folk Dances from Near and Far* by the Folk Dance Fed-

eration of California include 190 dance descriptions (1946–1957). One is identified as Ukrainian (*Katerina*, vol. 5), and a *Hopak* is identified as Russian (vol. 2). A combined list of 365 dances in the “Dance Selection Tool” of the Ontario Folk Dance Association includes 75 Bulgarian dances, 17 Armenian, 5 French, 9 Russian and one Ukrainian dance, *Arkan* (Ontario Folk Dance Association 2006). If there are some 203 countries in the world, the international folk dance repertoire in North America does not approach proportional representation of them all. Rather a few dozen countries are represented widely in this movement, and a large number of others are invoked rarely or never. The fact that Ukrainian dance is marginal in the international folk dance movement is not striking on its own, but it is notable only because of the great popularity of reflective Ukrainian dance in other settings on the continent. An estimated 10,000 members of Ukrainian dance groups participate in over 300 Ukrainian dance groups and schools across Canada and the United States, and perhaps tens of thousands of international folk dancers perform in many of the same cities and towns (M. Herman 1947: viii; Houston 1999: 6). The two communities however, rarely overlap.

The selection of Ukrainian dances that can be found in international folk dance publications sheds some light on the path followed by dances as they entered the repertoire. Books designed for adult recreational dance groups and for children’s educational dance overlap to some degree. Michael and Mary Ann Herman had experience in vival dance in the large Ukrainian communities of New York (M.A. Herman 1961: 16–17). They also learned the Avramenko national dance repertoire (ibid., 17–22). Their contributions to the international folk dance repertoire seem to be derived both from those vival experiences (*Korobushka*, *Karapyet*, *Kokhanochka*, *Polka koketka*, *Ohorodnik*), as well as from Avramenko’s dances (M. Herman 1947: 70–72).⁴ Richard Hladio’s Ukrainian compositions for participatory recreational folk dance, introduced much later, also seem to have some vival source material.

Almost all other Ukrainian dances in the international folk dance repertoire were learned indirectly via other reflective Ukrainian dance sources, rather than directly from access to vival traditions. Some years prior to the Hermans’ contributions, Mary Effie Shambaugh had introduced twelve Ukrainian dances into the international folk dance repertoire, publishing them in *Folk Dances for Boys and Girls* (1932 [1929]). Shambaugh had traveled to Europe and interviewed a retired Ukrainian actor and theater director, “Nicholas Sodosky” [Mykola Sadovs’kyi], who was living in Podebrady, Czechoslovakia, at the time (Shambaugh 1932 [1929]: 8). Her dances were not learned from vival sources then, but from a theater director whose own choreographic knowledge came from the reflective national movement on stage. In this sense, her dances in 1929 were already “revivals of revivals.” (Mykola Sadovs’kyi was one of Avramenko’s teachers and directors, so it is no surprise that his repertoire and Avramenko’s overlap significantly.)⁵ Walter Evanchuk was a folk dance enthusiast and teacher in California. His Ukrainian dance material was developed from the Avramenko repertoire. A dance *Katerynal Katerina* is published in a few variants in international folk dance sources (Folk Dance Federation of California, vol. 5, 1950: 13–16; *Folk Dance* [n.d.]: 18). *Kateryna* is definitely not documented directly from any vival source, but is named after a Ukrainian dance taught via Avramenko or Shambaugh (Avramenko 1928: 35–38; Shambaugh 1932: 78–81; Avramenko 1947: 36–38, 60). The leaders of the national movement, a generation before Avramenko, had actually developed this dance for the stage. It is not named after any vival dance, but after the opera *Kateryna* in which this choreography was performed.⁶ Avramenko’s *Hopak kolom* [Hopak-in-a-circle] is fairly unique in form

and name, so it is easy to see when it is used as a model for an international folk dance description. This is the case for Richard Kraus' "*Circle Hopak* (American-Ukrainian)," for example (1962: 123). Numerous other *Hopak* descriptions in this literature seem to derive from later performances of *Hopak* on stage by North American Ukrainian groups, or possibly Soviet ensembles (Folk Dance Federation of California, vol. 2, 1946: 17; J. Hall 1963: 125–127; Jensen and Jensen 1966: 88–91). Joan Lawson translated a *Metelytsia* and a *Gopak* from Tamara Tkachenko's important Soviet publication *Narodnyi tanets* [Folk dance] (T. Tkachenko 1954; T. Tkachenko 1964: 28–32; T. Tkachenko 1965: 46–54). In all cases, these compositions clearly do not result directly from observation of vival events.

Korobushka and *Karapyet* (if occasionally associated with the Ukrainian community) as well as *Ohorodnik* are typically described as "easy" or "moderate" in difficulty (Folk Dance Federation of California 1960: 19; M. Herman 1947: ix, 70–72; Mynatt and Kaiman 1975: 73, 93; Ontario Folk Dance Association 2006). According to the Hermans, these dances had been converted to reflective folk dances fairly directly from their vival forms. However, most other Ukrainian dances tend to be categorized as difficult and advanced dances for international dancers (e.g., Shambaugh 1932: 15; Jensen and Jensen 1966: 38–40). This restricted their popularity and longevity in folk dance circles, since the easiest dances were taught most often, and to the largest number of dancers. I will argue below that their complexity did not arise because Ukrainian dances are unusually complex among traditional dance repertoires around the world, but rather because they are adapted from the stage dance sources. In the pages that follow, we will see a general pattern that staged folk dance traditions tend to be more complex than recreational dances.

One other factor seems to have contributed to the relative disjoint between the Ukrainian dance communities and the international folk dance communities in North America. It is connected with the soft national purpose of the international folk dance movement. The fact of the matter is that during most of the twentieth century, over most of the history of the international folk dance movement, Ukraine simply did not exist as a country. Since many folk dance leaders were comfortable quickly associating their dances with a country, they had a problem when confronted with a Ukrainian dance. In many cases, with little specific knowledge of eastern Europe, they connected the dance with Russia (Folk Dance Federation of California, vol. 2, 1946: 17; J. Hall 1963: 125; Burchenal 1922: 27 and others). Ukraine had largely belonged in the Russian Empire until 1917, and the Soviet Union was often casually referred to as "Russia" in the west (supporting its imperial hegemony and reinforcing the submersion of the other 14 republics and many nationalities within the "union").⁷ The description of *Kateryna* as a Russian dance in *Folk Dance* is particularly ironic, since it was composed and performed as part of the Ukrainian dramatic tradition that was actively trying to gain recognition of Ukraine as a nation distinct from Russia.

Concern with Authenticity

In recreational and educational folk dance, authenticity is generally perceived as a positive value. This reference to some imputed original after all, is what differentiates folk dance as a genre from creative dance or social dance. If a person or group chooses to participate in ethnic dance at all, then at least a minimum relationship with some vival dance and imputed setting is implied.

On the other hand, a concern with authenticity tends not to be the predominant focus

during recreational and educational folk dance. It is generally subordinate to other issues such as enjoyment, developing social skills, musicality, physical skills, or facilitating the learning of cultural concepts. The organizers tend to be interested in the *present* activity as much or more than the imputed original. In recreational and educational folk dance, the *actual* setting generally remains foregrounded in people's minds (see Casey 1981: 100–102; Tomko 1999: 202–203). This contrasts with the ideals of some national dance traditions, where the primary concentration typically rests more on the *imputed* setting and identity. In recreational and educational dance, the reflective aspect may be “thinner” and the vival impetus—dance in the present moment—is always near the surface (see Figure 5).

Because of this set of priorities, the exact sources for a given dance may or may not be very important to the teachers or the dancers. We have seen that, when they were building their repertoire of dances for educational use, neither Vasyľ Verkhovynets' nor Elizabeth Burchenal differentiated between those dances that were based on vival sources as opposed to those developed from reflective sources. They were all potentially equally useful, depending on the physical qualities of the dance form. What *was* essential for them was whether the movement activity would be usable in the particular educational and recreational setting (Burchenal did identify a country of origin, name and music, but the vival source was clearly a secondary priority in this project) (see Tomko 1999: 203). Burchenal and Verkhovynets' were not unusual in this regard, but this was and is normal practice for educational and recreational folk dance.

The issues for documenting sources in the literature for recreational and educational folk dance are slightly different than for other kinds of dance. In practice, especially when taught by paid dance teachers, recreational folk dances exist somewhere in a transitional field between “folk art” (perceived to be anonymous, belonging to everyone in the culture and beyond), and “professional art” (in our culture, connected with concepts of individual creativity, intellectual property, and copyright). Sometimes people claim a sort of “ownership” or “copyright” on specific folk dance choreographies.

When a particular instructor or group introduces a dance into the recreational folk dance community's repertoire, there are two possible attitudes toward its further spread to other groups. On one hand, some instructors are happy when other teachers learn the dance and in turn pass it on to make it popular. They feel that “imitation is the greatest form of flattery.” In some senses, the original instructor gains status from this process, especially if he or she is credited as the originator of the dance. In fact, some teachers actually publish their dances so that they spread as broadly as possible. In other cases, it's the club or the federation that wants to disseminate this information as broadly as possible, to increase the accuracy of future performances and to promote international folk dance in general.

Contrasting priorities are expressed by those dance teachers who do not want other groups to copy their dances without them. These instructors are more concerned with direct returns for their investment in bringing a dance in from outside. Perhaps they traveled half way around the world and spent a lot of money to learn this material. Now they are concerned with the prospect of other people making little investment but able to capitalize on their knowledge of the dance easily. They may see the issue the same way as brand name pharmaceutical companies regard producers of generic drugs. They may take the position that other dance club leaders or workshop instructors should not benefit from “their” dances. This is especially true perhaps, when the teachers are trying to make a living in a competitive market.

These factors played out, for example, in the publications of the Folk Dance Federation of California. For several years, the Federation organized conferences and brought in expert teachers to disseminate new material for club members. The workshop organizers requested that each instructor write down the dances they taught so that they could all be published at the end of the workshop.

The Folk Dance Federation ... set up its Research Committee at its inception in 1942. Their objectives are to: (1) go to the original sources as far as possible to determine authentic forms of dances that are of interest to the Federation; (2) to furnish material which will aid in teaching the dances and give assistance to those wishing to learn them. (3) to provide descriptions of dances popular with the Federation's membership so that some uniformity in the performance of the dances might be attained at the Folk Dance Festivals [Folk Dance Federation of California, vol. A-1, 1960: viii].

We see the interest in disseminating the repertoire here represented by the Federation. The instructors were also asked to supply information as to the source of the dances. Likely, different teachers were more or less enthusiastic about preparing this information for publication. Part of the difficulty might have been related to the extra work involved, but I suspect that some may have also had reservations about sharing their "secrets." Though the Federation's goals were to engage "with the original sources as far as possible," it is interesting to note that the instructors sometimes focused on the immediate source — the person or context from which they learned it "[Croatian Waltz] a Croatian dance introduced at Folk Dance Camp, Stockton, California by Morrie Gelman. This dance was performed by the Croatian Dancers from Milwaukee at the National Folk Festival in St. Louis, 1950" (Folk Dance Federation of California 1951: 12). In other cases, they choose to speak about the original source, the vival context in which the dance was performed, [*Ländler*] "This dance comes directly from Switzerland where it is danced today" (Folk Dance Federation of California 1951: 18).

It is important to note that dances taught for recreational or educational dance are quite rarely taught directly from vival sources. Most often they are passed on through intermediary teachers and intermediary traditions once, twice, or more times before arriving at a particular recreational dance club on a Friday night. Just as vival dances may well change as they are passed on from generation to generation, so too reflective dances can change from generation to generation.⁸ "Since folk dancing is a living human activity, changes and variations in the spirit and pattern of the dances occur as they are performed ... far from the homelands from which they originated" (Folk Dance Federation of California, vol. A-1, 1960: viii). We may see change when a reflective dance is taken from one community to the next because there might be fewer points of contact between a traveling teacher and her students in the urban American contexts. There might also be less reinforcement by repetition than in a peasant village. Furthermore, the function of the dance may change from generation to generation (group to group) more than in earlier contexts.

Not many studies have been conducted on how reflective recreational/educational dances change through time, but issues of variation sometimes come up in discussions by folk dance enthusiasts. They learned the same dance in two different ways from two different workshops, and they want to know which variant is older, which one is associated with which teacher, and which one is the "right" one.

Given the situation that most recreational folk dances and most folk dancers are several generations away from the original vival dance, it is usually very difficult to check on similarity with the vival dance form (besides, as we know, the vival form itself is not always

fixed or stable). The culture and experiential world of the dancers is so distant from the original dance that “authenticity” is usually impossible to verify. In these cases, the role of their teachers increases as arbiters of authenticity. Decisions on the “authenticity” of a dance are often based on popularity of the dance or on local authority and respect for a particular leader who gives one specific variant a stamp of approval (Casey 1981: 100–101). We saw a somewhat similar process happening when we discussed changes in vival dance, and in our discussion of national dance.

Interest in Cultural Context

Interest in cultural context varies in recreational dance activity, perhaps at least as much as concern with authenticity. If a dance club leader simply wants a slow group dance to give his dancers a rest after an exhausting episode, then any slow group dance will serve the purpose. The original cultural context in Africa or in Austria or in the Appalachians, whether it was once a wedding dance or a midwinter celebration, is all quite irrelevant as long as tonight’s group gets their rest. In these cases, the form of the dance is almost the only element that matters, and significance of the earlier cultural context is very thin.

On the other hand, members of recreational folk dance clubs may be interested in ethnic dance as just one facet of their general interest in ritual and in traditional culture as a whole. In that case, we see a much greater interest in the cultural context. The dancers and instructors may well spend great time and energy discussing and experimenting with traditional clothing, musical production, food and other aspects of the imputed cultural context. Those other explorations may be related directly to the dance movements, or may be quite separate.

We can also expect variety in the degree of interest in cultural context in educational dance activities in schools. If the dance is taught as part of the music curriculum so that children feel the difference between 3/4 time and 6/8 meter, then the teacher might not spend a lot of time dealing with the cultural origins of the movement. These are unnecessary to fulfill the objectives of the lesson. If, on the other hand, the dance is taught as part of a social studies unit on wedding rites around the world, then we should expect a fuller and more focused attention on the original imputed context, and the meaning of the dance there.

Discipline and Unison

Voluntary and recreational dance clubs must place high priority on being an *inclusive* activity, to allow newcomers to feel welcome and feel the pleasure of becoming a competent participant as soon as possible. If the main function of the activity is to invite rewarding participation and to encourage the dancers to have fun, then it is no surprise if the dance leaders are as positive, supportive, encouraging and accepting as possible. Therefore great tolerance of different skill levels and variety in technique is common. Indeed, everything is acceptable, as much as possible, unless the dance physically falls apart. Different dances require a different degree of technical unison. In improvised non-contact forms, such as some traditions of step dancing, there is a great room for variety among the dancers, and between a good dancer and a poor one, but there is almost no point at which an incompetent

dancer causes the dance to fall apart. Unless he knocks over the musicians or steps on the other dancers, the dance can continue as long as he or she is willing to participate.

In recreational dance contexts, the tendency is to encourage all willing people to participate and underplay judgments of technical quality. Some dances have a structure in which dancers impinge on each other minimally. In these cases, even if a dancer is incompetent, he or she may have fun and the dance can be considered successful. Since the activity is generally voluntary, a person not enjoying himself will simply stop dancing. Basically all such dances that are actually performed to their conclusion are good performances.

Other types of dance however, require a greater degree of competence for the dance to be successful. For example, in a *schottische* for four people, it is important that the dancers stay together in rhythm, and if one of the dancers can't follow the musical beat, the other dancers' participation is strongly affected. In dances with close contact or with complex floor plans, the required level of competence for a successful performance increases proportionately. Indeed, this may be a big part of the attraction of square dances, longways and other forms with elaborate cooperative group elements. Somebody stepping on his or her neighbor's toe may cause serious difficulty. In more extreme cases such as the Filipino *tinikling*, where the dancers jump in and out of clapping bamboo poles, a misstep might mean a badly bruised ankle. Dances such as this, and clashing sword dances, therefore tend not to be very common in recreational folk dance groups catering to novices.

Of course, we will find exceptions to this rule. Morris Dancing, for example, tends to be quite difficult, and involves swords or sticks, even though the explicit reason for dancing is usually recreational. A high threshold of competence is required before a person can participate effectively. Many people remember bloodied fingers or welts on their heads from participation in this "recreational" activity.⁹

The last example brings us to the important point that for many participants, the feeling of satisfaction from having mastered a quite difficult, even dangerous skill is a great source of pleasure in dance. A sense of accomplishment and success is indeed an important fact, and many people would enjoy participating in the previously mentioned step dancing session a lot less if the person dancing next to them is a very bad dancer. This tension between being as inclusive as possible on the one hand, and giving pleasure in mastering a skill on the other, is constantly present in recreational dance. The dance leaders must deal with it strategically. In some cities where there are three or four different recreational folk dance clubs to choose from, they may each purposely develop their own profile in this respect. One club might have the reputation of being very open and friendly to novices, while another might be seen as more closed or more cliquish and most available for skilled insiders. Each of these strategies, of course, has its advantages and its drawbacks.

In children's educational dance in schools, where the participation of the dancers is not necessarily voluntary, the issue of discipline and unison is sometimes quite different. Though most children can quite successfully participate in dance activities geared for them, we more frequently meet with a situation where a dancer really has an underdeveloped sense of musical rhythm or really does not want to participate. Here, as in the recreational clubs, each teacher must choose a strategy, negotiating between the benefits of striving for inclusivity versus striving for accomplishment and skill at a higher level. These decisions must obviously be based on the circumstances and the objectives of each dance program.

If the program's primary objective is to have the students all experience the feeling of cooperative movement, or for everyone to have the experience of a tightly knit interdependent community, then there would likely be a very inclusive attitude for measuring

success, and the teacher might be wise to choose dances with a low threshold of technical skill.

On the other hand, the issue of evaluation plays a much more formal role in school curricula as compared to voluntary recreational groups. If a teacher is expected to grade the students on their dancing activities, he or she may well have concrete ways of measuring dancing ability: in terms of unison, musicality and technique beyond that minimum required for the simple physical completion of the dance. This “extra pressure to participate” is related to performing this dance in front of the teacher who is giving the marks or in front of family and friends during a school concert.

Concern with the Dance Forms

We now come to a discussion of the actual forms of recreational and educational dances. Whereas we saw that dances were *objectified* in national dance traditions — understood as discrete movement objects — they tend to be objectified even more in recreational and educational dance situations. This is partly due to the tendency for greater cultural distance from the vival dancing activities on the one hand, but also due to the specific physical goals of the dance activities.

In introducing dances to people who didn’t grow up in the culture, educators tend to be quite concerned with how to teach that dance most effectively. The dance is generally broken down into movement sections — often in western civilization, these are conceived as “steps.”¹⁰ The simplest elements are first mastered individually, then in combination. Smaller, simpler pieces are connected together until the whole dance can be performed with flow and continuity. In recreational and educational dance, there is a serious concern with the teaching process, with the relevant movement components, and the appropriateness of any given dance project for the age group and skill level of the intended dancers. Success of these activities, after all, is threatened if the leader does not teach them effectively and if the dancers get frustrated or bored.

Recreational dance leaders must have a very refined sense and a developed skill for teaching dances effectively. It’s a matter of survival in this field. If they can’t do it well, the people learning the dance won’t enjoy it. They’ll stand there confused and uncomfortable, and they won’t come back. Recreational folk dance publications, however, tend not to deal with these issues explicitly. It’s expected that good folk dance teachers will be able to break down the dances themselves.

On the other hand, writers for educational dance tend to write most prolifically and explicitly about *how* to teach things. These authors are often teachers, and aspire to professional standards in methodology. Emil Rath’s description of how instructors should teach a polka may serve as an example of this concern. He explains his teaching technique in great detail over several pages of text. He suggests all dance skills should be taught in three steps: explanation and demonstration; trial and discussion; and drills (1943 [1939]: 13–14).

Diversity in Form

Generally speaking, the form of recreational and educational dances tends to be quite simple. We will see that many vival dance forms are also simple, because they serve to

facilitate microscopic levels of communication and close physical involvement (see Chapter 15). This is perhaps one of the main reasons why folk dance is a popular and effective kind of dancing at the introductory level for young children as well as for adults. The form of the dance tends to get more complex and more difficult to learn as the dancers' skill level increases. However, not all vival dances are simple or easy. Complex vival dances tend not to be selected for recreational or educational folk dance. If they are selected, then their forms are simplified and standardized as required.

In connection with the contemporary western perception of recreation, most folk dance teachers place a relatively high value on diversity. This diversity is perhaps the most significant feature of a repertoire of dances. Teachers and students alike remember the different dances by contrasts in their form: "yes, that's the trio dance," or "the slow one," or "the one where we use our elbows like this...."

The present task is not to go into detail about all the possible forms of dances, but simply to list various elements of the dance which may be considered by a dance educator and which may involve contrast from one dance to another.

The Participants

First we look at contrasts in the dances in terms of their *participants*:

Age Categories. As Burchenal noted in her early books, certain dances are appropriate for children, while others are better for adults, either because of their difficulty or because of some other aspect of their content.

Gender Specific Dances. In many traditions, males perform some dances, while others are performed by females and still others are danced in mixed groups. Most often, in vival contexts, these rules were quite strictly adhered to because they implicated gender identity and gender roles in real life. In reflective contexts, however, the gender boundaries in the imputed cultures are not as relevant, and often both sexes are invited to perform in dances that were once gender specific. In Morris dance, for example, this is a lively and controversial issue (Greenhill 1994: 99–113). The *arkan* is a Ukrainian dance performed by males in its vival context. In staged national dance contexts, it remains a male dance in principle. In recreational and educational situations however, males and females commonly dance it together.

Gender Differentiation. Some folk dances involve certain movements for males and others for females. In other dances, all participants dance the same way.

Couple Dances. Folk dances for couples are very numerous. This has many implications for educational and recreational folk dance events. Dance leaders typically strive for a balance between couple dances and those that do not have this requirement. In North America, there is a tendency for more women to be involved in dance, and the shortage of males is often an issue. In cases of uneven participation by the genders, in our society there is also a big difference when two females are asked to dance together, in comparison to when two males are asked to do so. In the vival context, of course, this was a different type of problem, because someone who didn't have a partner or didn't want to dance with one simply didn't dance. In reflective situations, this may continue to be true, but often the dance leader is hoping for maximum participation and may assist some of his or her dancers by assigning them a partner. Many come to recreational folk dance events specifically to find a partner.

Skill Level. Unskilled participants can perform some dances, whereas other dances

require more advanced experience, rhythm, and coordination. We have dealt with this issue above.

The Formations

In recreational and educational dance contexts, the dances of a particular group tend to display a great diversity in terms of the formations involved. Some dances are designated for solo performance. Others are done in shapeless groups (where each participant chooses his or her own space and does not relate to the others specifically). Other dances have more defined formations. Circle dances are very common, and include numerous variations; closed or open circles, multiple circle adjacent to each other, or concentric. Line dances can involve a single line or multiple rows of dancers. Double-line dances sometimes involve a sort of physical dialogue between the two opposing groups. Chain dances are a variant of the line where the dancers are physically connected with each other and progress along a path chosen by the leader at one end. Couple and trio dances are numerous. Some dances are designed for a determined number of participants: For example, longways dances need an even number of performers, and square dances require eight. Other dances can be performed by any number of participants, and work just as well if there are five people or fifty dancing together. Mixers are a particular subgroup of couple and trio dancers, where one of the partners in each grouping periodically moves to another grouping. These “partner-changing” dances are strategically used by folk dance teachers to help their dancers get to know each other and socialize. In the many hundreds of folk dances used for recreational and educational dance, dances often use transitional or compound formations, combining any of the above formations in more complex floor plans either simultaneously or sequentially.

The Dance Compositions

Recreational and educational dances differ from each other in terms of their *composition* or structure. There several possible systems of listing dance composition, and this subject is probably better developed in musicology than choreology, but a simple sampling will suffice here (International Folk Music Council 1974: 119–132).

Grouped Structures. Group structures are composed of a fixed number of parts balanced with each other. The compositions become larger or smaller depending on the size of each part.

Binary grouped structure: A B (where one segment of the dance is called A and it is performed before contrasting segment B. Contrasts may be in any of the features discussed as part of the diversity of dance forms)

Ternary grouped structure: A B A or A B C

Linked Structures. Linked forms consist of an expandable composition with parts linked in sequence and an indefinite number of repetitions. The possibility of linking additional segments is represented by an ellipsis (...)

Simple linked structure: aaaaaa...

Binary linked structure: abababab...

Rondo structure: abacadaeaf...

Chain structure: abcdefg...

Complex Structures. Of course, folk dances often involve complex forms where the above simple models are combined into more elaborate structures and substructures.

Complex form example:

$$A_1 + B + A_2$$

$$(aba) + (cdefcdef...) + (aga)$$

A_1 —grouped form balancing three parts

B —linked form with four segments

A_2 —grouped form resembling the opening but with segment “g” replacing segment “b.”

Other Factors

We can also consider a host of other factors by which two ethnic dances or their subunits can contrast with one another.

Contact. Some dances involve physical contact between the dancers, either for part of the dance or throughout. The linkages may differ from dance to dance (holding hands, holding shoulders, holding the neighbors’ belts, closed polka position, etc.) Other dances involve no contact at all.

Travel. Some dances involve progression, where the group travels in certain directions. Other dances contain figures where certain performers change relationships within the grouping. Still others are performed on one spot.

Uniformity/Polykiny. In some dances, everyone performs the same movements at the same time. Other dances are “polykinetic,” wherein participants are subdivided into groups (by gender, location in the dance area, or by other factors) and are assigned different movements for any one moment in the dance.

Highlighted Body Parts. The body parts that are highlighted during their performance often contrast folk dances. Some dances are based on footwork, whereas other dances require special focus on movements of the spine, torso, head, fingers, etc.

Musical Qualities. Folk dance music is very diverse in terms of the meter, tempo, phrasing, dynamic range and other qualities of particular selections.

Music-Movement Relations. In some dances, the movement phrasing is synchronized very closely with the musical phrasing. Other times however, the phrasing may not be specifically matched.

Energy Levels/Dynamics. Dances can be contrasted in terms of the energy expenditure needed to perform them. High-energy dances attract certain dancers, while others prefer slow and gentle forms. For example, a folk dance repertoire specifically designed for senior citizens may take this factor into serious consideration. In some dances, one level of energy use is maintained throughout, whereas in other dances, different sections contrast with each other in this regard.

Effort Shapes. “Effort shapes” are a system of specific terms used to describe movement quality. Dance movements can be contrasted in terms of their use of weight (heavy or light), space (direct or flexible) and time (sudden or sustained) and combinations thereof (Laban 1963 [1948]).

Use Of Voice. Some dances are notable because of their use of shouts or song elements.

Props. Some dances involve the use of physical objects in various ways. These may include balancing a bottle on one’s head, sticks, sombreros, kerchiefs and bamboo poles.

Other Factors. A great number of other contrasts might also be employed to engage the focus of the dancers and give each dance its unique and concrete form.

Chapter 13

Spectacular Dance

Spectacle

The Random House Dictionary defines *spectacle* as “Anything presented to the sight or view, especially something of a striking or impressive kind. 2. A public show or display, especially on a large scale.” The word has a Latin root which is connected with the idea of “to look, to regard.” Related words are *spectacles* [eyeglasses] and *spectator*.

In *The Dance: An Historical Survey of Dancing in Europe* (1924), Cecil Sharp and A.P. Oppé divide their description of European dance history into two main parts, social dance and spectacular dance. They offer no concise definition of what they mean by spectacular dance, but under this title they discuss the history of ballet. In their introductory paragraph, they make it clear that spectacular dance is intended for non-dancing participants who are watching the performers.

Lois Ellfeldt’s *Dance: From Magic to Art* (1976), includes an explicit definition for spectacular dance:

Essentially performance oriented, this dance form deals with a movement spectacle or extravaganza designed to captivate, entertain, or bedazzle an audience with the dancer’s technical virtuosity, the flamboyance of sets and costumes, volume of musical accompaniment, and personality and appeal of the performers. Whether done in a night club, a variety stage show, a circus arena, on a television sound stage, or as a part of a community gathering, the dancer is trying to catch the attention of the spectator and either entertain, delight, amuse, or arouse him.

The movement performed may be adapted from any of the other dance forms, or it may seem little more than a parade of beautiful girls, a display of erotic charms, or a series of precision leg kicks. Sometimes the performer combines singing, jokes, juggling, and narration with the action. The only criterion for what will be included in such a display is the reaction of the audience. The act has been successful if the audience claps and roars its approval.

Some of the popular display forms have included acrobatic dancing, tap dancing, and jazz, with an occasional bit of folk dance, ethnic dance, and social dance mixed in [129].

Both definitions present a clear sense of discrete spectators. Ellfeldt adds additional emphasis on the quality of being impressive, large and elaborate. It is interesting to note that, whereas Sharp and Oppé emphasize ballet as a major example of spectacular dance, Ellfeldt omits ballet and modern dance completely among her examples. She defines them each separately in other parts of the book. She seems to be thinking of a narrower range of specific performances under “spectacular dance,” and she attaches a rather negative tone to the term. Our use of the term will be more general, more similar to Sharp and Oppé. For

us, spectacular dance does include ballet and modern dance. We make most frequent reference to classical ballet in the first two Chapters in this section of the text, where we establish the main characteristics of Western spectacular dance in general. Many different genres of spectacular ethnic dance in the West are heavily influenced by it. This is particularly true of Ukrainian dance.

The major theme of this chapter is a consideration of three characteristic features of spectacular dance: a performer/spectator distinction; skill and practice; and specialization in related genres. In each case, we will try to compare spectacular dance traditions with non-spectacular ones. In some cases the differences are very clear. In many others however, we can see each characteristic of spectacular dance as it exists on a large continuum.

A Distinction Between Performers and Spectators

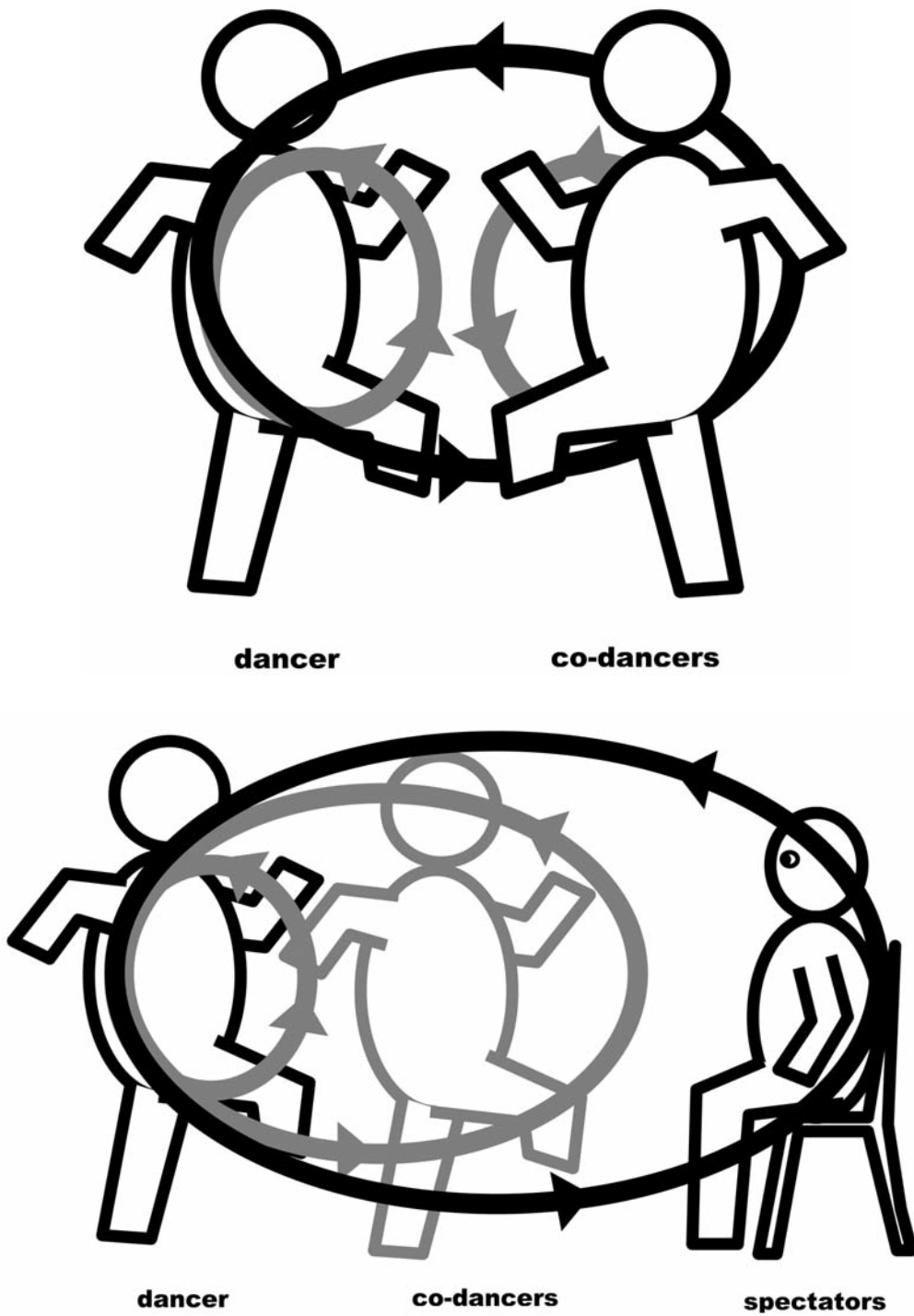
The various major categories of dancing that we have discussed up to this point all allow for the possibility that everyone at a dance event participates fully in the dance experience. We have many such examples from vival dance and from recreational/educational revivals. (Ukrainian national dance examples have mostly been in staged contexts, but Israeli, Norwegian and many others illustrate that national dances can be performed in participatory traditions as well.) In spectacular dance on the other hand, that possibility is excluded by definition. Spectacular dance implies *spectators*; some of the participants who are involved in the dance event but who themselves are not dancing. The dancers perform not just for themselves, but also primarily for these spectators. We will consider spectators as participants in the dance event, though they are not physically dancing themselves.

In Chapter 7, we spoke briefly about dance as a communications system. We focused on an internal communications circuit where the dancer's body and mind each send and receive stimuli related to the dancing. Kinesthetic sense is important here, the consciousness of one's own body moving in various ways (Hayes 1955: 22–3; J. Anderson 1974: 9).

When dealing with group dances, the shorter circuit remains relevant and active for each dancer, but we add a new, longer circuit involving the person's fellow dancers. These communications are tactile, kinetic, visual, aural and sometimes olfactory. In participatory dancing, these complicated networking connections form the main avenues of the dance experience. We have seen, and will see again, that there is plenty of opportunity for intense and profound experiences within such a system of communication.

In spectacular dance however, all of these complex circuits become eclipsed by another, still longer circuit. Communication between the dancers and a group of non-dancers is the focus of the activity here. This third circuit is normally physically more distant than the second circuit, and it is qualitatively different as well. Different senses become dominant in the communication process.

Hearing remains as important as it is in the smaller circuits, as both the dancers and the audience normally hear the music and each other. The sense of touch is less important for the spectator than the dancers. In most Western traditions, where the audience members are expected to sit still in their seats in an auditorium — they do not engage in this kinesthetic experience as the dancers do. On the other hand, the kinesthetic sense is not absent from the spectators' experience entirely. They feel what is called *kinesthetic empathy* (cf. "Watching Dance"). Kinesthetic empathy occurs when someone is just watching or imagining another person's movement sensations and experiences a physiological reaction. Kinesthetic empathy



Top: Figure 23. Group dance communication circuits. *Bottom:* Figure 24. Communication circuit between dancers and spectators.

is very clear when we see someone hit their finger with a hammer, then pull our own hand in to our body and say “ouch.” This is the mechanism by which slapstick comedy like *The Three Stooges* works. Our own nerve endings are being stimulated every time Larry whacks Curly Joe on the forehead. Not only our muscles, but also our emotions and our imagery are affected as we respond to other people’s movement experiences. Kinesthetic empathy also works when a ballerina seems to float effortlessly through the air and when a group of skilled folk staged dancers communicate a close community feel through a perfectly synchronized series of movements. Kinesthetic empathy is one of the very important mechanisms by which dance functions as a spectacular art form. Many spectators find it hard to sit through two hours of dance.

Sight, of course, is another essential sensory channel for spectacular dance. The very words *spectators* and *spectacular* imply a focus on sight.¹ Sight is not particularly important in the internal short circuit of communication when someone is dancing. Indeed, in some dancing situations where this short circuit is foregrounded, dancers even close their eyes to focus more intently on their internal kinesthetic experience. Children spinning around and around, or a prayerful movement in a southern Baptist church may also illustrate this phenomenon. If your waltz partner has to look down to make sure he is performing the “one-two-three” footwork properly, then he is not yet competent in that tradition.

When dealing with the longer circuit between a dancer and spectator, however, the visual connection becomes the dominant vehicle for communication. Think of a ballet class and the standard practice of having mirrors on the front wall so that the dancers can be more aware of how they look from a distance — from the perspective of the spectator.

The distance between performer and spectator can be measured in ways other than physical space. Another important aspect of this distinction involves the cultural distance between the dance tradition and the spectator. A spectator who knows the dance tradition well will be involved in a different communication experience than a spectator from a distant culture. The effectiveness of the long circuit of communication is based on the assumption that all parties understand the danced messages. Judith Lynne Hanna wrote a book about the *Performer-Audience Connection* (1983) in order to investigate whether the spectators experience the dances in the way that the performers want them to. She concluded that this is not always so. Adrienne Kaeppler deals with ranges of cultural distance between dancers and audience:

The movement dimension of a Balinese religious festival communicates to specific supernatural beings that the ritual is being carried out in order to obtain specific ends. The same group of movement sequences performed on a secular stage will communicate different information to a human audience, and this information will vary depending on whether the viewer is from the dancer’s own village, a Balinese from a different village, an Indonesian who is not Balinese, a non-Indonesian who understands the specific cultural form through study or participation, or a non-Indonesian who knows little or nothing about this cultural form [1989: 451].

This description elaborates more subtle layers, but is otherwise very compatible to our discussion of interacting with identities for spectators in Chapter 11. Joann Kealiinohomoku describes several examples of “high context” dance communications, where comprehension of the dance event requires extensive cultural knowledge, as opposed to “low context” events, readily understood by a much broader and diverse outside audience (2001b: 197–201). The concepts of “low context” and “high context” are taken from Edward T. Hall (1989 [1976]).

This perspective is incompatible with the cliché that “dance is a universal language” (Kaeppler 1989: 451; Hanna 1987 [1979]: 30–31; Williams 1991: 34–5, 330–1). In the ballet *Giselle*, when Albrecht places his palms on top of each other on the left side of his chest, then extends his right hand out with the pointer and middle finger stretched upwards in front of himself, it is certainly not “natural” or “obvious” to a Chilean village potter or a Hindu monk that he is pledging an oath of love. Similarly, a Bharata Natyam dancer may make a gesture with her left thumb extended upward while the other fingers of that hand are clenched. In combination with other gestures, it is clear to insider audiences that this is a *hasta-mudra* called *shikhara* and represents the concept “Madana — God of Love” (Rao and Devi 1993: 166). A first-time viewer in Oklahoma wouldn’t necessarily understand, but might think of a hitchhiker or a signal that “all is well.” These two examples are gestures, a special category of movement that is clearly culturally based, though all kinds of movements can be culturally specific.

Telephone conversations are restricted to auditory signals because of the limits of that particular technology. A phone call between two people who do not share a common language will probably end up in frustration quite quickly. A dance event shared among people of differing cultures, on the other hand, operates in more communicative channels, and has a lot more potential. Humans all share similar bodies. Some of the intended messages may well get through to the spectators because some of the gestures or other elements may be intercultural enough to be shared. Cultures are not entirely isolated and discrete. Each forms a part of larger culture complexes, which themselves interact. Certain elements of the larger overarching cultural sphere are shared by its various subgroups. Many non-westerners in the second half of the twentieth century will indeed understand Albrecht’s gestured promise, for example. Traditions of Western spectacular dance (and Western culture in general) are quite widespread. Applause may not be universally equivalent everywhere, and acceptable norms for when, where and how to applaud can vary, but its basic meaning is widely shared. By contrast, whistling indicates strong approval in some cultural contexts, but elsewhere indicates its opposite.

Two additional communications circuits in dance events deserve mention. The communications link between the dancers and the musicians is very special and essential in most dance idioms around the world.² We have noted earlier in Roderik Lange’s article on rural dance in Cuiavia that the musicians first take signals from the song and movement of the lead dancer, then respond to that lead with their playing (Lange 1974: 45). In Morris dance, the goal seems to be an equal interaction with both musicians and dancers sharing the lead, adapting and feeding from each other’s energy (Elliott 1995). More typical in Western culture would be a musician-dancers circuit where the musician establishes the genre, tempo and rhythm of the dance, with a continued lively feedback, based on the dancers listening and the musicians watching. The musicians may play faster, slower, louder, more passionately or change dances as motivated by the dancers’ behavior. The relationships can vary in several ways (Dąbrowska and Bielawski 1995: 143–246). In some senses, the musicians’ circuits of communication are short, immediate and close to the dancers’ circuits, though in other respects the musicians’ experience is unique.

The practice of dancing to recorded music becomes noteworthy in this respect. Though the person who controls the tape machine or CD takes on some of the communicative power of the musicians, normally by choosing the recording to play, deciding when to start playing it, and adjusting the volume. The dancers’ actual opportunity for two-way communication with the musicians becomes very limited. The musicians express themselves very carefully

while preparing the recording, but can react to the dancers only in a very indirect mediated way. The performance is mechanically identical from one event to the next.³ The communication circuit between the distant musicians and the dancers here is much longer than any of the circuits we've looked at up to this point, involving additional circuits between the dancers and the recording industry, recording studio, publicist and retailer of the audio recording.

Ukrainian dances were first recorded on phonograph records around 1930, with a many of Avramenko arrangements being made available by the Columbia label for use in dance rehearsals and performances (Cherwick 1999: 70–73). This technology apparently became available in North America sooner than in Ukraine itself. Dance activities in Ukraine continue to be accompanied by live musicians much more frequently than in North America, where pre-recorded music has been the norm for many decades.

The relationship between the dancer and a supernatural entity, understood as a participant or observer, can also be significant in dance. In those traditions where the supernatural entity takes an active role in the experience, the dancers may be literally “moved by the spirit,” possessed or “opened up” to the transcendent (see Royce 2004: 214–226). Non-dancers may also be aware of the active participation of the supernatural entity and may be able to interpret some information from the events that occur. In some traditions the dance movements, as well as perhaps music and words and other actions (sacrifices, food consumed, clothing, worn masks, taboos adhered to etc.) are understood as very literal and specific communication with the supernatural. In other cases, the danced message is more general and abstract (Dąbrowska and Bielawski 1995: 19–140).

In any given performance each of these communication pathways can and do operate simultaneously. No wonder that the dance experience can be so diverse and so powerful.

Returning to our main topic of defining the performer — spectator distinction, we can conclude that, in spectacular dance as we define it, the main focus is on these longer circuits of communication, while the essential shorter circuits within each dancer or between dancers tend to be de-emphasized and downplayed. This is consistent with the example of a ballerina who has a sore ankle and just had an argument with her ex-boyfriend who is also her partner in the dance. In non-spectacular traditions, the shorter circuits might dominate and she would not dance with him at all. In a spectacular tradition, however, she must continue to smile and dance lightly with him. In this case, she is behaving properly in a tradition that dictates that her own internal messages (pain) and inter-dancer thoughts (anger perhaps) must be subordinated to the larger communications circuit — the appearance of the dance for the spectators. In Western spectacular dance traditions, as they say, “the show must go on!”

Skill and Practice

When considering the role of skill and practice in ethnic dance, we see a wide range between those traditions that demand a high level of skill and those that do not. Ukrainian vival dance often involves dances that are not technically difficult. There are many cases however, where a great deal of skill is involved. Indeed, researchers have documented cases in traditional peasant societies where people actually rehearse difficult moves outside the dancing contexts so that they can perform them competently at the dance event itself. Cer-

tainly, there is great opportunity to show the difference between minimal competence, good skill, and virtuosity. These differences are often very important, and certain individuals will be recognized as better dancers, and may well benefit significantly from that status in their lives (Giurchescu and Bloland 1995: 59).

We have noted already that recreational and educational dance traditions tend to involve a low threshold of skill, so that a maximum number of people can quickly join in and share the experience. In spectacular dance, however, the importance of skill and practice tends to move to the other end of that continuum. The distinction between minority dancer specialists and majority spectators is normally associated with expectations of a high level of skill on the part of the dancers. In fact, much of the focus in Western spectacular dance traditions and in other dance idioms is on virtuosity. The dancers are able, and are expected, to perform movements that are well beyond the physical capability of the average person in that society. In fact, this sometimes becomes the dominant focus of the spectacle. This is often a key focus of circus performance, for example. How many times has an appreciative spectator commented, "Wow, she was great, I could never do that" or "Amazing! How do they kick their legs so high?" Indeed, there has been a tendency in some spectacular dance traditions to focus on technique for technique's sake. Technical execution becomes important practically above all else.

In many cases, the performers in spectacular dance traditions are *specialists*. In some cases they are specialists to the point of full time commitment to the dance activity. They become professional dancers. This is possible when they are afforded support in their society for this commitment. Historically in Western culture, the support has often taken the form of patronage from the nobility, sponsorship by a business corporation, or in terms of money generated when spectators pay for the privilege of watching or (more often in other parts of the world) as status in a religious institution.

The flip side of this specialization implies that the majority population in the culture *does not* and *cannot* dance in this tradition to the same degree. Non-dancers do not know the details of the dance tradition. The dancers become a sort of subculture within their larger culture. As a subculture, their interests, values and symbols may be somewhat different from the main stream of the population. Indeed, their artistic tastes may or may not coincide with the general population in their society.

The expectations for very advanced skill levels among the specialist population that performs spectacular dance leads us to another issue that is somewhat peculiar to spectacular dance traditions. This is the issue of *training* and *rehearsal*. As we have noted above, peasant dancers have been known occasionally to rehearse the movements for dance outside of the regular dance event, and we have also seen that recreational and educational dancers devote some time specifically to learning the dances. This learning activity is understood to be somehow different than the actual *performance* of the dance. In the world of spectacular dance, however, the significance of rehearsals skyrockets to become very central to the tradition itself. Dancers in spectacular traditions tend to spend much more time in rehearsals than in actual performances. In some traditions, a young dancer will spend many years rehearsing before she or he will be recognized as a performer. Even accomplished masters of the dance tradition normally spend more time in rehearsal rooms than on stage. The culture of dance rehearsals is often highly specialized and highly unique, with its own sub-cultural rules, limits and freedoms (Adler Vail 1996: 313–4; Greenhill 1994: 70 ff.).

Specializations of Teacher, Rehearsal Director and Choreographer

The issue of rehearsal leads us to the next main characteristic of spectacular dance, the frequent involvement of specialists in related genres. Here we consider two specialists associated directly with the dancing; the dance teacher and choreographer.

Dance Teacher

The first of these is the *dance teacher*. In ballet and modern dance, and perhaps in most spectacular dance traditions around the world, the dance teacher is often a senior performer or a retired performer within the tradition. More institutionalized and highly formalized spectacular dance traditions often involve an explicit and conscious pedagogical procedure. Sometimes these procedures include a fixed syllabus and curriculum, which the novice must pass through as a stage in their training. Spectacular dance pedagogy has become a significant industry in ballet, jazz, tap, modern dance, and to a degree, in character dance training in North America. The industry includes university programs, private schools, specialized books and videos, all specifically for teachers of dance rather than dancers themselves. Careers are made in the field of dance training. The teacher, then, needs to know more than just to dance. She needs to have additional pedagogical skills.

This topic connects issues from the previous section on educational dance. In that discussion, however, I presented examples related to dance in American elementary and high school contexts. The educational goals of training professional spectacular dancers are different than the goals for enriching the experience and growth of a general population. The very specialized goals affect the content and methods significantly. We can obviously see the specifics of the spectacular dance tradition in the movement vocabulary and technique of the dance training system. If we look closely, we can also see other elements of that tradition communicated to the students; sense of body carriage, aesthetics, perceptions of composition; understandings of propriety, gender roles, body image, issues of authority, discipline, career strategies, and social structure as reflected in the training program. All of these aspects of preparing professional dancers are related to developing a cadre of professional Ukrainian dancers in the Soviet Union. With hundreds or thousands of professional performing positions to be filled, and literally hundreds of thousands of amateur dancers being trained, the folk staged dance industry engaged thousands of teachers dedicated to producing the next generation of performers.

Teaching styles and program content have been a salient issue in discussions around teaching children Ukrainian dance in western Canada in recent decades. Certainly, Ukrainian stage dance in Canada is partially a spectacular dance tradition. A debate exists between teachers who are primarily interested in producing spectacular dancers, and others who wish to focus on national or recreational aspects of the activity. The teachers focused on spectacular dance are very interested in technique, and committed to develop a “professional” and serious work ethic. Other teachers are more interested in developing the national dance aspect of this community. They don’t necessarily push to develop such strong technique in the children, but they are more interested in inculcating the general cultural awareness and identity. Still others teaching Ukrainian dance in the community are most interested in giving the children a healthy, friendly, fun physical activity. They are interested neither in exceptional technique nor elaborate cultural background, but focus on helping to nurture

happy, expressive, growing members of the community with high self-esteem. The different motivations of teachers affect their class content greatly. In a school that is designed specifically to produce future performers in a spectacular dance tradition, the dance teacher will tailor many aspects of their training system to that concrete goal. They have committed themselves to developing integrated syllabi for multi-year technical training, and many other tools for dancer education. They are most likely to integrate serious ballet elements into their classes, standard dress codes, and tools to enforce attendance, skill testing, and explicit goals at competitions.

A second specialized role in spectacular traditions is the *rehearsal director*. In some traditions, the role of the rehearsal director may be subsumed within the general responsibilities of the dance teacher, but in others, the rehearsal director is a separate specialist in charge of teaching and polishing specific performance pieces. The successful rehearsal director must have intimate knowledge of the choreography to be performed, an ability to demonstrate and communicate the required movements, and a sharp eye to judge whether the performers are accurately reproducing the prescribed movements. He or she must be able to marshal the dancers to establish unison or accuracy sufficient for the standards in that tradition. In many spectacular dance traditions, the demands for technical polish are very great indeed. In the Soviet period, post-secondary educational institutions in Ukraine recognized separate specializations for artistic directors, choreographers, rehearsal directors (*repetitors*), and other dance leaders.

Choreographer

The role of *choreographer* is an important key to spectacular dance traditions, including Ukrainian dance. This person or team takes on the main responsibility for a performing group's creative output. The choreographer is often accorded very high status in Western spectacular dance traditions. Most books on choreography in English deal with Western spectacular dance traditions and educational dance (see Hayes 1955; Smith-Autard 2000 [1976]; Blom and Chaplin: 1982).

Like most other specializations, the role of the choreographer can be seen as existing on a continuum across various dance traditions. In others, the tasks of a specialist choreographer — planning the specific movement of the performance — are not relevant: the prescription for the dance is common knowledge within a community and each dancer choreographs the details at the moment of performance (improvised, see Chapter 7). These idioms are generally participatory in nature and include a large part of vival dancing.

The dance leader in genres that correspond to Giurchescu's "first degree of improvisation" can be seen as displacing some of the individual dancers' prerogative of improvising their own dance. In these cases, he (rarely she) shouts out commands that indicate specific motifs to be performed at that time. This person may be a leader among the performers (such as the head of a line [Giurchescu and Bloland 1995: 85]), or a separate individual, such as a square dance caller. Ukrainian examples such as *arkan*, *holubka* and *resheto* fit this pattern. Many social dances involve occasional instructions cued by musicians or other participants at the event (see Nahachewsky 1985: 176–8). Couple dances with improvisation of various kinds also involve some of the dancers giving up part of their autonomy in deciding dance movements. For example, this is typical in the European tradition when male dancers "lead" their female partners (see Giurchescu and Bloland 1995: 60). The process of "choreographing-on-the-fly" can be very significant in improvisatory genres.

Sometimes the name of a particularly creative person will be preserved in local memory for some time (see Bogdani and Alla 2001: 219–20). In these senses then, we can speak of “choreographers” in vival dance traditions, but all of this is quite different from the role of choreographer in spectacular dance traditions.

A recognition choreographic leadership often increases for those dance idioms that have greater presentational or ritual focus. In Romanian *căluș* traditions, the leader of the group is called a *vataf* and has some authority on the form of the dance (Giurchescu and Bloland 1995: 28, 37). Kealiinohomoku (2001a [1970]: 36) and others describe leaders in aboriginal dance in North America. Anya Peterson Royce gives an example of negotiations for the choreography of a dance event of the Isthmus Zapotec of Mexico (1980 [1977]: 27–31). In some traditions, the choreographer is understood to be a distant historical or even mythical character.

In national dance traditions with an actual and an imputed setting, a variety of possibilities exist for recognizing choreographers. Members of communities which foreground the imputed setting tend to recognize that the dance was created in that earlier setting. They often acknowledge “the nation” or “the folk” or a historical figure as the creative genius. In this light, the person who stages a reflective dance for any particular performance is not really a choreographer, but perhaps a “dance leader” or an “arranger.” In other ethnic dance traditions however, the current actual leader of the dance is credited as an artist and choreographer. In these cases, we can recognize the increasing conformity with the values of the dominant Western spectacular art traditions.

This is the case in Ukrainian national dance history, as we have seen in Chapter 9. In spite of his insistence that the dances were authentic and deeply rooted in the national character, Vasile Avramenko called himself an artist and the choreographer. He called this activity both “Ukrainian national dance” as well as “Ukrainian folk ballet” (Avramenko 1928, 1947). The “*maestro*,” as he liked to be called, needed a strong reputation to succeed in his career devoted to this dance. This tension between crediting the imputed culture-bearers versus the immediately present dance teacher is present in most recreational and educational dance contexts as well (see Chapter 12).

As we approach traditions that are more dedicatedly spectacular, a few choreographers allow their dancers certain input into the dance form in rehearsal or on stage itself. In other cases, the choreographer attempts to control all significant aspects of the dancers’ movements in the dance performance (Farjeon 1998; Cunningham and Lesschaeve 1998). In genres such as contact improvisation, which also operates as a kind of spectacular dance in some settings, this rule is actively stretched the other way, so that the dancers are allowed an unusually high degree of input into the structure of the movement that is performed (Novack 1990; Pallant 2006). This is the famous “exception that proves the rule,” since the vast majority of spectacular dance traditions in the Western world involve what Giurchescu calls “zero degrees of improvisation” (1983: 29–30). This is by far the most common situation for staged Ukrainian folk dance.

Choreographic specialization implies the displacement of the creative input on the form of the dance away from the dancers themselves. The dancers are still contributors to the creative process, but now mostly insofar as they interpret the detailed prescriptions of the choreographer. In some spectacular traditions, they are allowed some leeway in the performance of certain elements. In classical ballet and in staged Ukrainian dance, that often includes aspects of pantomime, and certain elements of microstructure. The principal dancers are generally allowed more input into the dance’s choreography in their solos and

duets than the *corps de ballet* (Farjeon 1998: 25). These elements (perhaps fluidity, line, breath, expression of emotion) can be called the qualitative *style* of the performance rather than parts of the measurable *structure* of the dance.⁴ Imagine a ballet company performing *Romeo and Juliette* for four consecutive nights in one theater during a tour. Two ballerinas may alternate dancing Juliette. They will likely be seen as performing the same choreography — the same dance structure — but they may also be seen as differing in their style.

Specialization in Related Fields

As Sharp and Oppé note in their definition of spectacular dance, this kind of activity is closely tied, indeed dependent, on other specialists as well.

throughout the whole of its history dancing has also been used in combination and partnership with other arts, as one of the elements of a composite form of entertainment known variously as mummings, disguisings, revels, masquerades, or masques and, ultimately, as the ballet or ballet *d'action* [1924: 35].

Musicians are generally very important to spectacular dancers and non-spectacular dancers alike. Other specialist groups, however, those concerned with costume, lighting, sets, properties, stage management, production and promotion, tend to play a more important role in spectacular dance than in the others. These specialized activities are normally well integrated into the overall theater traditions in the larger cultural spheres in which the spectacular dance participates. Here we will focus briefly on a comparison of the situation in spectacular dance traditions in contrast with non-spectacular dance.

Costumes

Vival dancers tend to wear clothing that is normal in their culture, often “dressing up” — wearing their better, fancier clothing — for special events that include dancing.⁵ Certain reflective dance traditions, such as recreational dance clubs and some national dance communities also require no special dance clothing. As long as it’s comfortable and allows for the required movement, then the dancers’ “street clothes” are perfectly acceptable. Much reflective ethnic dance however, involves the use of special garments to symbolize the imputed identity of performers and to mark the culture being represented. Clothing put on especially for the performance is called a *costume*. The use of costumes is particularly typical of dance that involves performance before an audience. This is consistent with the idea that spectacular dance places an increased emphasis on the visual aspect of the event. In Ukrainian reflective folk dance then, the typical costume imitates the “Sunday clothing” worn for special occasions by peasants in the Poltava region at the end of the nineteenth century.

In some cases, the costume worn by the spectacular dancers consists of actual clothing preserved and transported from the imputed setting. The Dora Stratou Theater, which performs near the Acropolis in Athens, for example, owns and sometimes performs in nineteenth century garments from the areas that are being represented in each dance (Raftis personal communication; Shay 2002: 180). People associated with Dora Stratou Theater mentioned problems with washing the precious old fabrics when they get sweaty or soiled. Indeed, dancing in these garments is quite contrary to the collectors’ museological priorities. In

other cases, therefore, replicas of the old garments are used for performance situations. The replicas of the old clothing may be produced with an extreme concern for accuracy in cut, weight, color and other factors.

In the majority of reflective dance communities however, the replicas used in reflective dance activities are less than 100 percent accurate reconstructions. In some of these cases, the differences result from a lack of ability to replicate the original forms, since certain textiles and jewelry, for example, are not produced today. In other cases the changes from the imputed dress and the reflective costume arise because of lack of knowledge, in spite of the best intentions of the costume producer. In still other cases, and these are very common, the costume designer makes changes on purpose. After all, the costume needs only to *refer to*, or *symbolize* the imputed setting and the imputed identity of the dancers.

Differences between costumes and the clothing they imitate are rarely random, but are strongly tied to a number of factors. Often, changes are intended to improve comfort and flexibility for dance movement: As we will see, the spectacular version of the dance may involve larger movement shapes and more energetic effort than the original. The materials and techniques for costume production that are available in the actual cultural context of the performance often affect costumes. If the imputed setting is distant in time or in available technology, the materials and techniques may differ greatly. Sheepskin jackets may be replaced with cloth imitations. Hand-woven patterns will be substituted by commercially available prints that resemble them to some degree. Costumes may also involve simplification to reduce the cost or time for their production. Furthermore, costumes may involve exaggeration of particular symbolic details to facilitate the costume's function as an icon of a distinct culture, and also to increase the chances of being recognized by the spectators. In Ukrainian dance for example, embroidery on blouses and the size of the flowered wreaths worn by women are much larger than in the peasant world. Costumes are also often modified from the original clothing to emulate ballet and contemporary dance standards. Skirts may be shortened to reveal more of the female dancers' legs, and bodices may be made more tight fitting, for example. This strategy is intended to link the reflective folk dance with the higher-status spectacular genres in the larger cultural milieu. Finally, each reflective dance tradition develops its own theatrical styles—costume fashions come and go from time to time. Stage fashion is more important than most people think. Many folk-staged dance communities have developed clear and definite standards for stage costumes that have become traditions in their own right.

The use of costumes in reflective dance is more complicated in those situations when the vival tradition itself involves special costumes. This is most common in European peasant contexts during ritual and ceremonial events. Mumming at midwinter in many European peasant cultures, the hobbyhorse tradition, Morris dancing, *căluș* in Romania, and many other vival dance events involve masks, costumes and disguises.

In these cases, we are dealing with costumes of costumes. We have already seen this type of multiple filtering, and we will come across it again in spectacular dance traditions that refer to specific cultures. An analogy can be made with looking at an object through a mirror into another mirror. In these cases, however, we can imagine that the glass is textured and contoured so that each reflection changes the image. The more mirrors we add, the greater the probability and degree of change in the reflected image. Indeed, the filters may be powerful when one culture's clothing becomes another culture's costume. The new patterns and images may be interpreted positively as creativity or negatively as distortion and in-authenticity.



Figure 25. Ukrainian *Malanka* scene, performed by Lori Sulyma and others in the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers of Edmonton, Canada. The dancers representing a goat, horse, bear and crane are wearing costumes representing the costumes worn by nineteenth century villagers during the peasant tradition (see Major 1991: 21) (courtesy Ukrainian Shumka Dancers).

Props, Lighting, Stage Management, Production, Promotion

The use of property managers, lighting specialists, stage managers, producers and promoters tends to be minimal and implicit in many vival dance traditions, or absent altogether. This is not always true however. For example, in some villages in Ukraine, and in other peasant cultures, one individual or group is designated to arrange for the place, attendance,

time, musicians, food, etc. In certain customs, a particular individual is assigned the task of collecting the gifts presented by the people whose houses have been visited. Numerous traditional behaviors are connected with ceremonial invitations to dance events and sometimes even removal from the event (Giurchescu and Bloland 1995: 60). When dance events take place at night, they are sometimes illuminated by lamps. In a village tavern or home, the furniture might all be specially removed to make room for the dancing.

Promotion occurs very differently in small, integrated communities than in large, more fragmented societies. The *călușari* of Romania are costumed, specialized virtuosic ritual dancers. They are clearly differentiated from non-dancers, and are actually initiated into a special society. They rehearse their dances, and perform in designated times and places. In this context, *Căluș* can certainly be seen as spectacular dance tradition. However, their need to engage in promotional activities is almost nonexistent. The place and time of the performance is common knowledge in their village, and is passed around by word of mouth. Often, just beginning the dance ritual is a call for people to come and watch. Since the event is a key highlight in the annual cycle of community life, the people's interest in it is not in doubt.

The situation is very different, of course, in heterogeneous settings such as American cities today where any given dance tradition may well be familiar to many but totally foreign to many others. Here the relevance and interest of the performance must be argued in the light of many alternate events within reach of the potential spectators. Active promotion of the event becomes essential. Professional specialists develop the skills, networking and experience to undertake these promotional challenges effectively.

Chapter 14

Ballet and the Proscenium

Ballet History

Ballet is *the* classical and institutionalized spectacular dance tradition of western culture. Contemporary dance has also risen to great significance and status in the west in the last century, though its influence on Ukrainian dance is not nearly as great. Much has been written about ballet and ballet history. This review does not contribute new primary research into the subject, though I want to mention just a few of the milestones of ballet history, selected as an introduction to the topic and to provide the background for several observations about its cultural characteristics.

Ballet was born in the Renaissance courts of western Europe, particularly in France and in Italy. It grew from various sources, including the social dances of the courts, various spectacles and entertainment. Social dances of the courts were becoming distinct from social dance of the lower classes, though the latter are also significant. These three main sources for ballet; court social dance, theatrical entertainments, and dance of lower classes, continued to feed and inspire ballet for a very long time.

One of the key moments in the early history of ballet is undoubtedly the performance of the *Ballet comique de la Reine*, performed in the French court in 1581. It has been called “the summation of all developments up to that time” and was one of the first spectacles to unite its many segments under its overall theme, that of the Roman goddess Circe. Its general choreographer was Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx and its main sponsor was the famous Queen Catherine de Medici.

The reign of French King Louis XIV in the 1600s was a key period in ballet history. The king himself performed on some 29 occasions and dance became a major activity in the court. Court balls were both participatory ballroom dances of a sort, as well as spectacular events, since the schedule of who danced what with whom was preset, and everyone’s eyes, including those of the king, were attuned very closely to how each dance was performed. Though this has been called “the first ballet” it certainly looked a lot different than what we are used to today. Members of the court were both audience and performers, and dance was only one aspect of the entire spectacle. The performance lasted many hours, and included food and numerous other activities.

Masquerades are a key element in the early history of ballet because they are also an intermediary form between social dance and spectacular dance. The performers are both entertaining themselves as well as the onlookers. This dual participatory and presentational quality of early ballet events lasts for a long time. Masks remained a normal part of spectacular dance events well into the 1700s.

Louis XIV established the “*Academie Royale de Danse*” [Royal Academy of Dance] in 1661. By this time, the distinction between balls and ballets was growing more and more clear. The ladies and gentlemen of the court performed balls, and ballets were performed more by professional dancers who had better training and skill, but who were not themselves courtiers. The repertoire for social and the theatrical contexts was also diverging. These professionals were trained in the context of the *Academie de Danse*. Balletmaster Charles Louis Beauchamp established the famous five foot positions for ballet in the Academie, and it is here that the persistent tradition of using the French language for ballet terminology took root.

About a century later, other changes take place that continue to make ballet more like what we know today. Jean-Georges Noverre, an innovative choreographer, mounted his first *ballet d'action* called *Médée et Jason* in 1775. The popularity of ballet was rising. The *ballet d'action* relied primarily on mime and dance together to carry the drama of a story that lasted throughout the performance. It was at this time that ballet dancers take the masks off their faces and reduce their voluminous court clothes.

The reduction of the cumbersome clothing for the stage was part of a larger issue of exposing the human body. It also freed the performers for much larger and more acrobatic movement. Eventually tights and tutus were almost all that remained. Music, storyline, stage scene and set and dance became much more harmonized to produce a consistent theatrical effect and focused production. Dance technique became increasingly important and the physically liberated dancers continued to accomplish new technical feats. In the 1780s, connected with Carlo Blasis, we see the first formal recognition of the ideal of the 180-degree turn out. In the 1830s ballerinas start dancing *en pointe*—on the tips of their toes in block slippers. The ballerina as a star was well established by this time.

By the end of the 1800s, the center of gravity for ballet shifted in some ways to Russia. In St. Petersburg and Moscow into the beginning of the twentieth century, Romantic ballet flowered. Numerous artistic revolutions took place in the early twentieth century with talents such as Michael Fokine and Sergei Diaghilev. Ballet experienced significant growth in this period. Most of Ukraine was part of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and ballet expanded into Ukrainian territories at this time as well (Turkevych 1999; Stanishevs'kyi 1969: 50–58).

It is also at this time that ballet spread most widely around the world. “Modern dance” was also born in this period, both an outgrowth as well as a reaction against ballet. Modern dance inherited many aspects of its overall dance culture from ballet. Our brief historical survey ends here, though the tradition of ballet undergoes a great many profound changes through the twentieth century. The classical ballet tradition up to the first part of the twentieth century is most influential on the development and character of spectacular Ukrainian dance.

Four characteristics of ballet are significant for the purposes of understanding its relationship with spectacular ethnic dance. Firstly, ballet developed in a specific cultural context. Secondly, ballet tradition has tended to be expansive and inclusive. Thirdly, both the noble style and the low style have been fundamental to ballet since its beginnings, and fourthly, ballet is connected with the development of the proscenium stage.

For our purposes, it is important to appreciate that ballet is set in its own cultural context, developed over a specific time period in specific locations. It existed in different variants in specific times and places, though these variants remain closely related, and ballet is strongly connected to Western culture (Kealiinohomoku 2001a [1970]: 40–42).

Part of the reason that ballet was closely networked over much of Europe is because that was the range of circulation of the courts of the kings and queens of Europe with whom this tradition is tightly bound. The elitist bias of ballet is very clear from its birth in connection with court balls, right up to the continued interest in princes and princesses as the heroes and heroines of the stories into the twenty-first century. At the beginning, the elite were the performers themselves. Later, they engaged non-elite professional performers, and themselves became primarily the spectators. Still however, they remained key participants in the event and ballet developed in the context of entertainment for the courts. This remained true from ballet's beginnings until just recently, perhaps. Lower class elements were often incorporated into ballets to be sure, but always only after being thoroughly "scrubbed, washed and perfumed" to fit upper class aesthetics and taste. Ballet is clearly connected with the elite class.

Ballet's integration with its specific its cultural context is also verified by its constant evolution throughout history. As the life of the elite changed, so did the face of ballet. Moving through the Renaissance, the Baroque, Romanticism, Realism and Modernism in European cultural history, ballet is deeply influenced by each cultural period and transforms itself readily with each new change in artistic spirit (Sorell 1981). If they were to be magically transported to a ballet performance 400, 300, 200 and even 100 years ago, contemporary ballet audiences may be surprised to see many important and obvious differences.

A second key characteristic of ballet is that it is an expansive tradition — readily incorporating select input from many other traditions with which it comes in contact. The brief sketch of ballet history above suggests that ballet developed by combining features from upper class social dance, court spectacles, and peasant dances of the time. This tendency of absorbing elements from a variety of related activities continued on throughout ballet history and continues to characterize the art form today. The influences of masques and masquerades, scenic theater spectacle, the *Commedia dell'Arte*, later peasant dances, and other traditions are all discernable.

The third point that's significant for our later discussions is the fact that ballet has involved both noble and low styles and characters throughout its history. Character dance is not an invention of the twentieth century, but is as old as ballet itself. The scenario of the *Ballet comique de la Reine* in 1581 illustrates that the performers in early ballet included all kinds of characters. The performance started out with an escaped prisoner, performing mostly a speaking role. Next, the audience was presented the character of the king seated on his throne (played by the king himself). As the ballet continued the audience was introduced to a number of characters from ancient Greek mythology: Circe (a goddess), three sirens (lower deities and enchantresses), and Triton (an undersea god). Twelve naiads (ancient Greek river nymphs) were played by the queen and ladies of the court, and probably had an elegant, noble movement style. Peleus and Thetis were two heroic characters in the story that sang, but probably did not dance. A choir sang somewhere beyond sight of the audience. Twelve pages and twelve naiads danced the next section of the performance. The god Mercury then appeared, and the spectators saw a stag, a dog, an elephant and a lion. If human beings performed these, then clearly they would have been moving in a style that contrasted with the noble characters. Eight satyrs (lecherous wood deities) next came into view, playing music, singing, and dancing. A maiden singer then took the focus of the performance, followed by Pan (another underworld god). A nymph Opis sang a song; the goddess Minerva delivered a speech, all followed by the appearance of the god Jupiter (Kirstein 1969 [1935]: 153–156).

This listing of the characters indicates that some of them had noble and godlike roles, while others had lower status and a ruder style. The movement styles of each of these performers reflected his or her status. The separation between noble and character roles was not always perfectly clear in the performance, especially as all of the characters came together to perform the large figure dance at the Grand Ballet at the end of the spectacle. The movement style of the Queen and ladies of the court (the naiads) was likely decorous and respectful the whole time. On the other hand, performers such as the animals and satyrs (probably not performed by members of the court) danced with a different movement style.

At the time of Louis XIV, the various members of the court performed in many ballets (Hilton 1981: 4–7). The king was nicknamed “the Sun King” after one of his five roles in *Ballet de la Nuit* in 1653. At that time, the dancing was seen as symbolically connected to the off-stage persona, and you can be sure the king himself played the most noble, most elegant, most desirable roles. Most other members of the court would want noble roles to dance as well, and it was most likely junior members of the court, members with a good sense of humor, members in the king’s disfavor, or simply professional commoners that played the low characters in the ballets.

The style of body carriage and elegant movement appropriate for a noble character was clearly defined by this period. After all, the dancing masters who were in charge of preparing people for the ballets were also in charge of teaching etiquette, manners, deportment, grace and the skills of social dance to the courtiers. The movement style for the courtier and the movement style for the noble dance role were one and the same. The movement styles for the low roles were in some respects caricatures of the noble, intended to contrast with the noble and to heighten the impressive impact of the noble roles by contrast.

Though character movement styles did not crystallize as much as the noble style, the numerical majority of actual performers in most ballets were likely character roles or intermediate ones, at least until the period of Romanticism. This noble style changed somewhat over the 400 years of ballet history, but on the other hand, it may also be seen as one of the most pervasive, stable and consistent features of ballet history. Clearly it remains deeply engrained in ballet today. Noble roles generally represented kings, queens, princes, princesses, gods, or allegorical figures such as “virtue,” “hope,” “love.” Character roles came from a wide variety of sources, either from mortal commoners of various occupations, comical, grotesque or evil figures in the stories, perhaps minor deities (Pan, satyrs), animals, inanimate objects, negative allegorical figures (such as “jealousy,” “deceit” or “gluttony”) or exotic people from distant lands.

This last group includes the most relevant characters for our study of ethnic dance and cross-cultural representation. In different times and places, representatives of various ethnic “others” were fashionable and popular (see Arkin and Smith 1997). For the courtiers who were members of the audience however, even the depictions of local peasants and craftsmen were also characters that came from a different cultural community. These people were dancing across cultures. Indeed all the low style roles have some relevance to the study of character dance.

Ballet Conventions

Ballet has developed a number of very distinct conventions in Western culture. These conventions might be surprisingly specific. We will discuss the social frame, artist status,

suspension of disbelief, frontal orientation, monumentality, expansion and exaggeration, control of focus and thematic development.

Social Frame

The social frame of ballet performances is related to general theater culture in the West. Ballet performances tend to take place in the evening, preferably on weekends, or in afternoon “matinees.” They tend to last approximately two hours with one or two intermissions. They generally occur in closed off areas (often beautiful, purpose-built theaters), and spectators pay for expensive tickets to be admitted into the auditorium. Theatergoers tend to dress up for the occasion. They make a special evening of it, perhaps preceding the performance with a dinner with key friends, having a drink during the intermission and perhaps also after the performance. During the show, they are not allowed to eat or drink. They are required to sit still and quietly in their seats, except for the practice of striking their palms noisily against each other to signify approval at conventional moments in the program.

This general pattern fits much of the heritage of ballet that we have just looked at. The spectators dress up for the event somewhat like the courtiers did for their balls several centuries ago. Socializing and “being seen” at the event have been a part of the tradition of western spectacular dance for hundreds of years. On the other hand, spectacular dance does not always have to be performed in this social frame. The *Ballet comique de la Reine*, for example, lasted for some five hours and the *Ballet de la nuit* continued for thirteen (Kirstein 1969 [1935]: 155, 179). They involved various courtly ceremonials, refreshments, and participatory dancing by the audience during the intervals and at the end. Apparently the *Ballet de la nuit* finished at about three in the morning. Spectacular dance in other cultures may have very different social frames.

Artist Status

The cultural separation between the performers and the audience may vary in different situations, but in professional spectacular dance in Western culture, the audience tends not to know the performers personally. Professional performers travel widely to reach a maximum audience.¹ Ballet soloists often have very high status. This was true right from the time of Louis XIV, but definitely through the times of Noverre in the late 1700s, during the Romantic ballet, and until today. The celebrity status of the superstars is very high indeed.²

Certain standards are common in ballet regarding the recognition of the artists and the choreography. The choreographer is generally featured as a key figure in the dance event. Credits are formally made to recognize her or his contribution, as well as the other key individuals such as the star dancers, the teacher, company director, stage manager, costume designer, composer, set designer, lighting designer, producer, sponsors, and the individual dancers and musicians.

The choreography is seen as a unique and discrete entity, something that is owned (usually by the choreographer or by the dance company) and can be copyrighted. Photos and other forms of documentation in the theater are disallowed, though both copyright and documentation rules may be relaxed for local community events. The producer or director often makes the selection of dances. The selection of repertoire tends to vary greatly. It often has little to do with specific current events in the outside world. In ballet convention,

the performance is generally perceived to be a work of art. In Western civilization, this tends to mean a secular, but still moving or profound experience that educates, glorifies or gives pleasure to the audience.³

Suspension of Disbelief

A picture frame separates a painter's canvas from the wall in a room, and allows the viewer to expect different laws of reality inside the frame as compared to those outside. The viewer, for example, is encouraged to imagine that the two dimensional surface partakes of the third dimension, involves movement, and engages other sensations. So too, the "picture frame" of the proscenium theater separates two worlds for the audience, the mundane world on the spectators' side, and a different, magical reality on the stage.⁴ On that stage, during the performance, the audience is encouraged to imagine that the laws of physics no longer necessarily apply, that time and space are no longer connected to those in the mundane world outside. Much of the history of theater has been engaged with an exploration of the physical, acoustic, verbal and movement devices that manipulate the reality that is imagined on the stage. Stanislavsky, Brecht, Bakhtin, and film directors in our time have developed sophisticated ideas and philosophies regarding the most effective ways for providing the spectator with a profound experience of that alternate reality.

Although a variety of attitudes have been expressed towards that cliché phrase "suspension of disbelief," the stage remains a magical space where audience members come to allow the images, suggestions and illusions of the theater to move them. Much of western spectacular dance operates in a fairly straightforward sense of this process of "transporting the audience into a different reality," the "imputed setting." At many spectacular dance events, the imputed space, time and rules may well change from piece to piece, from act to act, or from scene to scene. The audience is toured through a series of imaginary realities. As we will see in subsequent sessions, the degree of concern with creating a serious illusion, and strategies for attaining desired effects vary.⁵

Some degree of suspension of disbelief, and transporting the participants away, exists in all dances that actively reflect another culture. Also, some degree of "framing" comes into play in all dance activity, whether it is spectacular ethnic dance or not. Culturally competent people can recognize cues that help us shift our perceptions and expectations from non-dance activity to dance activity and back again. In western spectacular dance traditions, these shifts are prominent and conventionalized in their own ways. The idea of "framing" dance activity can be conceived in terms of *time* as well as *space*. The time for the dance reality is framed between the moment the curtain opens and the moment it closes again.

Frontal Orientation

The proscenium stage impacts spectacular dance in Western culture. A wall now typically separates the stage and the auditorium with a large opening in it. This opening can be screened with a large curtain, but the curtain can also be drawn open to expose the performers and the spectators to each other. The word "pro-scenium" used to refer to the part of the performing space *in front* of the area with the scenic structures. In Greek and Roman theaters, in Medieval booth stages, in Elizabethan playhouses where Shakespeare played, and even in the seventeenth century, the actors generally performed on this frontal area, between the curtained stage and the spectators. In what we call the proscenium stage today

however, only a small part of the performance normally occurs in front of the curtain line, and this area is called the forestage or the apron. Most of the activity occurs behind the curtain line and inside the area that houses the wings and the various scenic effects. The proscenium is generally understood to be the vertical plane including the curtain line and its surrounding wall.

The history of theaters in western civilization includes theater in the round, multiple stage theater, thrust stages and many other arrangements that affect the relationship between performer and spectator (Mitchley and Spalding 1982). In general, we can imagine a gradual historical progression from the audience surrounding the performers (as in the simplest performing situation), to the audience located on three sides, and gradually shifting so that the audience is gathered all in one direction in relationship to the performers. That direction is called “the front” — normally the direction the performers face as they try to communicate their messages. The picture-frame proscenium stage remains the standard format for ballet in the last two centuries and can also be called the standard model for most kinds of spectacular ethnic dance. This situation has very significant implications for the performer and for the audience. The consciousness of frontal orientation is deeply engrained into the psyche and into the very bodies of dancers working in spectacular tradition.

A frontal orientation, of course, contrasts very strongly with the situation for participatory dance situations, where there is often no need to concern oneself with the view of non-dancers at all. Much vival dance is exactly of this kind, and is performed in closed circles facing inside, or randomly moving lines or couples depending on the available performing space. There is, however sometimes a limited sense of directional orientation, even in vival dance. The privileged situation is sometimes identified as the center of a circle, to which all the participants turn. Another directional orientation is “towards the musicians” who play in a space adjacent to the dance area. The assignment of a place of priority in front of the musicians is an acknowledgement of the very important communications circuit between dancers and musicians. Many community traditions in central Europe, including the Cuiavia tradition we read about in Lange’s article, involve the lead dancer or couple starting the dance in front of the musicians. In quadrilles and some kinds of contra dance forms, the direction towards the musicians is designated as the *top* of the set, and the direction away from the musicians is “the bottom.” The leading couple starts at the top.

Theatrical settings such as open stages or thrust stages also contrast somewhat with the situation with a proscenium stage. In these cases, the spectators’ visual access to the movement needs to be available from several directions around the performers. In these cases, the privileged position is neither the center of the circle or in front of the musicians, but rather the opposite. Now the *outside* of the circle becomes, by definition, the position of privilege. The musicians are typically moved off to one side so as not to interfere with the sight lines of the spectators.

Vertical orientation is also important in proscenium theaters. The fact that most humans are approximately the same height means that spectators may well interfere with the visibility of the dance for other spectators behind them. Likewise, the front row of dancers will block the view of any other performers behind them. In participatory dances this issue is generally ignored. In small scale theatrical situations, where it is quite important to see the performers, the dance and other actions may take place in a special location, often separating the spectators by some distance and giving more people a better view (see Figure 2, for example). In more formally theatrical traditions, this problem is solved in various ways. On the one hand, the visibility of the performance is much enhanced by raising the performers onto a

platform (stage) and angling the sight lines up for each spectator. This works very well for shallow stages, since the spectators can now more easily look past the person in front of them. However, if the performance involves larger groups and some performers are arranged behind others, only those in the front row will be seen well by the spectators, and the elevated stage actually interferes with the sight lines to the second performer. For large groups of performers, such as in some big spectacular performances, this is a serious problem.

One strategy for dealing with this situation in Western theater is to angle the stage floor, and literally raising the performers in the back of the performing space. That indeed was very common practice in Western theaters in varying historical periods. This is where the terminology “upstage” and “downstage” was developed. Raking the stage improved the sight lines for the audiences tremendously, and was widely used for many theatrical venues. On the other hand, this strategy created a new problem for dancers in particular, connected with an uneven and angled stage floor. The other solution, of course, is to rake the *auditorium* rather than the stage. Raking the auditorium has been a primary solution to theatrical sight lines in Western culture from the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans and earlier. They had the engineering skill and the willingness to build their theaters in this way. This strategy remains dominant through early staged dance and theater up to our times.

Balconies are a variation on theater architecture that offers good sight lines. They were frequently built around ballrooms in the early history of court dance, spectacle and ballet. They have remained perennially prominent in theater construction.

Much spectacular dance is choreographed and performed with a vantage point from forward and up in mind. Much of the effect of circles, columns of dancers, “V” shapes, and many other formations in spectacular group dances would not be nearly as effective if not for viewing from in front and above the dancers.

Monumentality

Spectacular dance traditions in Western culture tend to allow for large numbers of participants. In Western spectacular dance, the idea is often to allow a large number of people, perhaps two thousand or more, to have a good view of the performers all at the same time. This is made possible by building a theater with due concern for vertical and horizontal sight lines, but needless to say, some of the audience is going to have to sit far from the stage. In order for them to also partake of the performance, it is essential for the performed messages to be communicated and projected as far as possible.⁶ The ancient Greeks accomplished much of this projection for sound by building acoustically efficient theaters. The ancient Romans improved upon the Greek practice of building masks that worked somewhat like megaphones, projecting the actor’s voice in the intended directions. Modern technology allows us to amplify sound electronically.

Lighting, props and other devices are used to make things appear larger than in real life, to be better visible from afar. Many spectacular dance traditions amplify the performers very effectively by utilizing large costumes and masks. Many dance performances use oversized props, such as the spoon and the sunflowers in Figure 5, to communicate well over a larger distance. We can see a bit of this device in the large wigs and huge dresses of the Baroque courts, but for most of ballet history, a second strategy has tended to dominate, involving a *reduction* of the bulk of a costume rather than an increase. This tendency allows for a larger movements, which themselves can be seen well from afar.

Ballet line, particularly in the noble style, involves stretching the spine and the extremities to make the largest shapes possible. Character dance styles on the ballet stage, with their frequent flexed shapes, operate as a contrast to the stretched model of the noble style. This is just on one level however, and we will certainly see that expansion and stretching of the movements are almost absolute laws when a dance is taken from vival to a reflective spectacular tradition from some other source. The same law applies to facial features (aided by the skillful use of make up), costume elements, props, brightness of lighting, and other elements of the theatrical event.

Since we can't really make the human body much bigger, then, another important strategy to amplify the movement has been to multiply the number of moving bodies. One of the very striking characteristics of ballet and other dance traditions is to arrange for large groups of dancers to perform the movements in unison. This activity can be seen much more clearly than a single dancer from a distance. This technique is a key to the concept of monumentality in Western spectacular dance.

Of course, the strategy of increasing the number of dancers doesn't really work if they are all doing different things. Similarly, if a large group of musicians are playing different, unrelated notes, the result is chaos and little expressive intent is communicated. On the other hand, if all the musicians play one note (or one chord), then the sound can project loudly, clearly and expressively. So also with movement and dance. In order for the multiplication of dancing bodies to project clear and distinct messages, the dancers need to perform in unison (or at least movements in carefully considered relationships). The effect that is achieved by 24 ballerinas, or 60 Radio City Music Hall Rockettes, performing exactly the same step at exactly the same time, can be called *monumentality* and is a cornerstone of ballet conventions.

This device is very often used in spectacular ethnic dance as well. We will see that the ideal of choreographic unison affects the form of these dances very profoundly.

Control of Focus

When discussing monumentality, we suggested that spectacular dance often involves large numbers of participants. Of course, one could also imagine 2000 people in a huge participatory ballroom dance. Indeed, a comparison of these two events might be instructive. One of the key contrasts would be a difference in focus, with spectacular dance events geared for more concentrated and controlled attention. Control of focus is related to the very construction of the theater. All the audience seats, for example are arranged specifically to face the stage. It is a convention, furthermore, to often focus the spectators' attention on *one element* within the stage action. Spotlights, costume, makeup and choreography assist in controlling focus. Choreographic unison or polykiny may be manipulated to produce the desired effects of concentrated focus, diffuse focus, or split focus as desired by the director for any given moment in the performance. In theater jargon, one tries to avoid situations when the main focal activity is "upstaged." This term makes reference to some other action upstage (generally understood as a weaker location, where important actions rarely occur) that distracts the audience from the main intended focus.

The issue of focus is also connected with the contemporary convention that the audience sits still and the lights are turned off in the auditorium. This strong singular focus is seen as a cultural convention when you contrast it with the hustle and bustle in the audience in earlier Western performance settings. It also contrasts with conventional audience behavior



Figure 26. Women of the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company in *Women's Lyrical Dance*, Edmonton, Canada, illustrating the power of numbers in creating a monumental image on stage. Choreography by Mykola Kanevets, (courtesy Ukrainian Cheremosh Society).

in some non-Western spectacular dance traditions, where the audience may be eating, talking or engaged in other activities during the performance.

Thematic Development

The last theme in our survey of ballet conventions deals with thematic development. Dramas and stories have been portrayed in the ballet ever since the *Ballet comique de la Reine* in 1581 and even earlier. Noverre strengthened this tendency significantly with the development of the *ballet d'action*. Mime is the traditional complement to more abstract dance movements in ballet. The tradition of pantomime has a set repertoire of somewhat conventional gestures that ballet audiences understand. Of course, the thematic development in ballet is less intricate than in traditions such as opera and theater, which involve additional powerful words, sung or spoken to convey complex literal messages. Ballet dancers rarely ever speak. Ballet is more abstract, and isn't as focused on thematic development as these genres, but the significance of story telling in ballet history is indisputable nonetheless.⁷

Spectacular ethnic dance, of course, has at least some thematic element in it by definition, related to identifying the imputed setting and culture. No dance can be simultaneously ethnically salient and entirely abstract. If we compare the vival repertoire of a given culture and that "same" cultural repertoire as it is transferred into spectacular stage, we

often see a marked increase in the use of mime and in the quantity and complexity of thematic elements. This is an influence of the ballet convention on the dances. Indeed, some folk-staged dance productions consist of full two-hour dramatic story lines developed using special characters, dance, and mime very reminiscent of the ballet format. This is fairly common in Ukrainian Canadian dance since the 1970s and the performances are indeed sometimes called “folk ballets.”

Chapter 15

Theatricalizing a Dance

We now begin a closer focus on the forms of Ukrainian dances in the spectacular paradigm. One of the most striking contrasts between vival folk dances and their reflective spectacular counterparts is that the earlier dance events most often occur in social settings, whereas the reflective activities are typically danced on stage. The process of reviving, therefore, implies the process of theatricalization. In this chapter, we compare two pairs of dances to see how this process affects their form.¹ This concrete analysis will bring out some of the qualities identified in the last several chapters.

Participatory Versus Presentational Dance

“Participatory dances” are the same as “recreational dances” as defined in Chapter 2; dances performed for the benefit of the dancers themselves, focusing on the shorter circuits of communication within each dancer, as well as among co-dancers. Most vival dances in Western cultures, including Ukrainian culture, are participatory.² “Presentational dances” are dances that are done mostly for the benefit of the spectators, focusing on the longer circuits of communication. Presentational dance obviously includes all spectacular dance, as well as a great deal of national dance and others. For the purposes of clarity in this chapter, we will present the contrast between participatory and presentational dance as a simple binary opposition. Closer observation however, reveals that it is really better imagined as a continuum, with a range of intermediate possibilities. This is clear when considering the village version of the *shevchyk* dance below (Nahachewsky 2001b: 232–233). This and many other vival dances in diverse cultures have clear presentational elements. The tendency for reflective dances to be more theatrical remains clear.

Several conceptual tools are needed to follow our comparison of the sample participatory and presentational dances. Firstly, the dance forms are presented in dance notation, which allows for careful observation. Kinetography Laban or Labanotation is one of several established systems of movement notation. As a system of symbols used to fix movement on paper, it functions much the same as music notation fixes sound on paper (Hutchinson Guest 2005 [1954]; Preston-Dunlop 1969; Knust 1997 [1979]; Kipling Brown 1984; Lange 1985). The notations presented below can assist in communicating the key ideas of this chapter even for people who have no previous exposure to Labanotation. Though Labanotation is elaborate enough to notate subtle aspects of complex movement activity, its basic concepts can be learned in a few minutes.

The movements of each person is noted on a staff, which works very much like a

musical staff, often divided into measures, and marking the passage of time as the reader moves along the page. In movement notation however, the music staff is turned on its side, and we read the movements traveling upwards from the bottom. Each movement is notated with a special “movement sign” that contains a variety of information based on its length, shape, shading and location. The length of the symbol and its location along the timeline express the duration and timing of each movement.

A direction sign shows the direction of any specific movement. Different arrow-like shapes are used to symbolize each horizontal direction: in place, forward, forward-side, side, side-back, and back. Information on vertical aspects of each movement direction (high, middle and low) is added to these signs by the different shading of the symbols. Thus twenty seven direction signs identify each of the basic directions for movement in three dimensions.

The body part making the movement is identified by the placement of the direction sign in different columns in the staff. Stepping movements of the feet are normally represented in the two center columns (support columns), one for the left foot, and the other for the right. Leg gestures (leg movements when not bearing weight) are noted in the adjacent

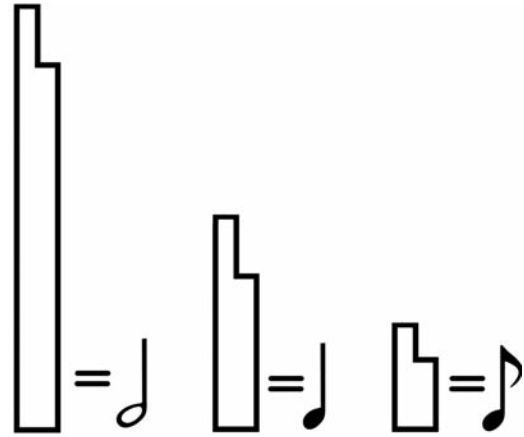


Figure 27. The vertical length of a sign indicates its duration in Labanotation. A movement that occurs over a half note is drawn twice as tall as a movement that occurs for a quarter note (see Hutchinson 2005 [1954] and others).

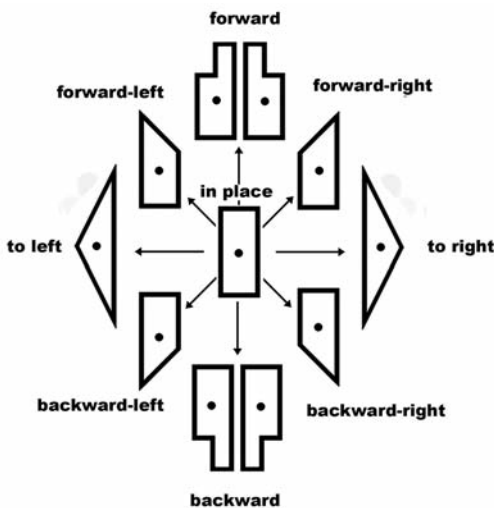


Figure 28. Nine sign shapes indicating directions in Labanotation.

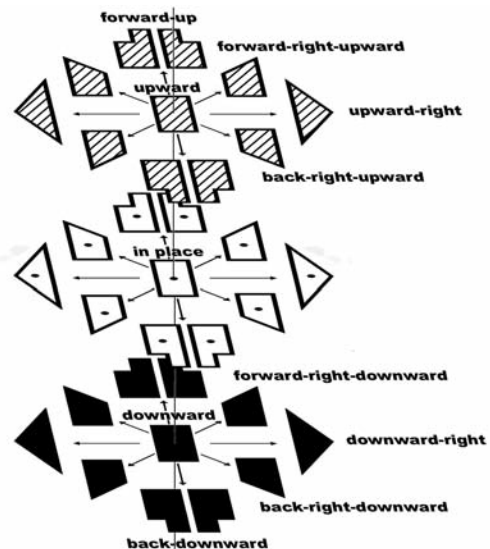


Figure 29. The shading of the direction signs indicates vertical levels, establishing 27 main directions for movements in Labanotation.

columns to the left and right of the support columns. Arm movements are usually notated by symbols in the columns to the outside of the staff. All other specific body parts can be identified by special signs added below the movement sign, and located in additional columns to the right and left of the staff.

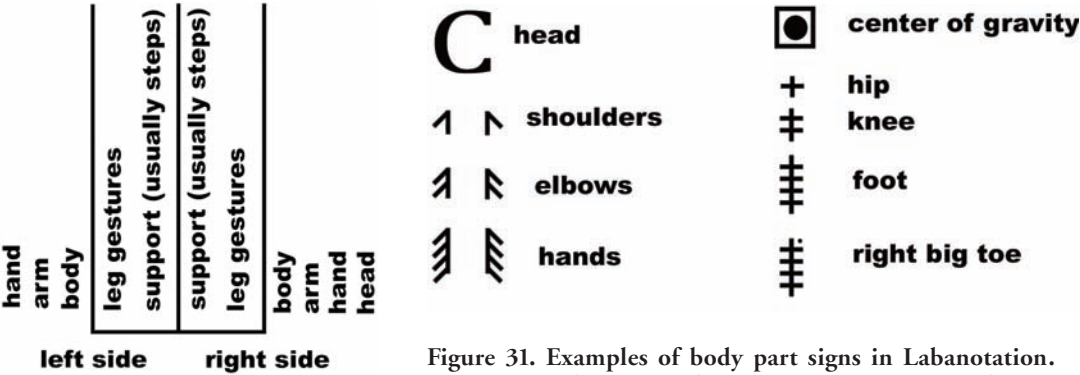


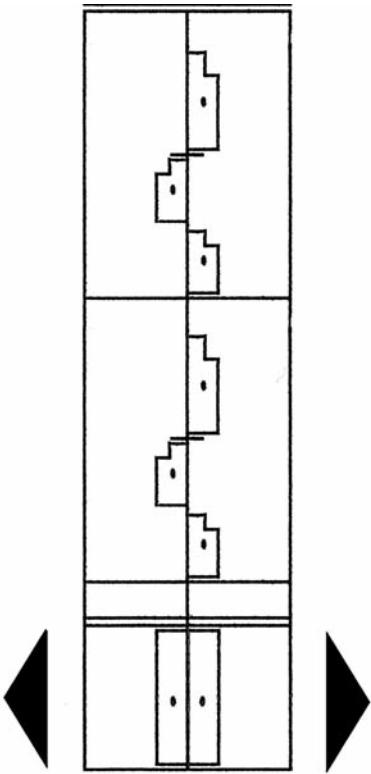
Figure 30. In Labanotation, columns in a movement staff indicate the particular body part that performs the movement.

Figure 31. Examples of body part signs in Labanotation. Movements of very specific body parts can be identified by a pre-sign below the direction sign.

Notation is a very useful tool for recording dance and many people use their own little signs and marks to help them remember dance movements. Labanotation has many advantages that make it a valuable tool for dedicated dance researchers. Firstly, it is clear, definite and standardized. It can become very precise, documenting the angle of each joint in a finger, or the flutter of an eyelash if necessary. It does not need to be as detailed however, and the key features of a movement sequence can often be sketched out and read quickly using a relatively few signs. Perhaps its greatest value is that it is standardized and can be read consistently by thousands of people around the world.

With this basic information, we can see that the notation in Figure 32 shows a person traveling forward, stepping in a rhythm of 1/8, 1/8, 1/4, (♩) and using their Right Left Right foot in the first measure, and L R L in the second. The small space in the anacrusis prior to the beginning of the measure, with weight indicated on neither leg, indicates a small jump. The starting position in the block at the bottom of the notation, below the double line, indicates that the arms are held at an angle downwards and to the side.

A second concept necessary for our comparison of participatory and presentational dances is the differentiation between *prescriptions* for dances versus *descriptions*. A related idea was raised in Chapter 7, when we spoke of a



Left: Figure 32. Laban notation of a simple step.

competent dancer's mental image of the dance in contrast to its physical realization in his body. A "prescription" is the pattern of the dance as it exists in the dancer's mind before he starts dancing. It is like a formula or a set of rules that define the ideal dance. In contrast, a "description" documents what was actually performed by the bodies moving in time and space. The description is connected to what can be seen on a video recording of a dance. It may or may not fit within the parameters of the prescription exactly. The differences between prescription and description are sometimes very important. Both prescriptions and descriptions can be notated as such.

The third concept is related to structural analysis of dance. Analyses of dance forms typically organize the movement into a hierarchy of units, ranging from the largest parts right down to its tiniest atomic elements. The International Folk Music Council Study Group for Folk Dance Terminology published one system of hierarchical terms (1974). The "Syllabus," as this publication is often called, proposes the following structural levels:

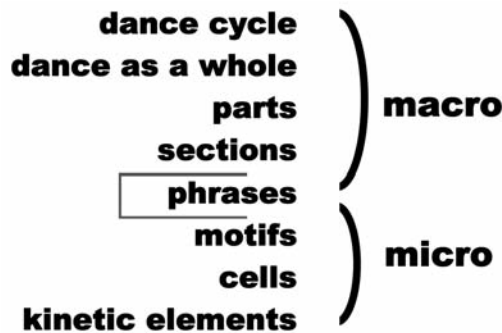


Figure 33. Dance structure terminology as established by the "Syllabus" (International Folk Music Council Study Group for Folk Dance Terminology 1974).

Dances are sometimes combined into dance cycles, but generally the largest unit of structural analysis is the "dance as a whole." The dance can be seen as consisting of one or more "parts," which are in turn composed of "sections." Sections, in their turn, can be seen as consisting of one or more "phrases," which are themselves built of "motifs." Formations in a dance are related to phrases or sections, and are considered part of the macrostructure. "Motifs" can be broken down by analysts into "cells," and then further into simple "kinetic elements."

It is generally understood that motifs (often informally called "dance steps")³ are the keys to understanding dance structures. Those segments larger than motifs can be called the macrostructural units in a dance. The segments smaller than motifs can be called the microstructural units.

Two Kolomyiky

To bring out contrasts between participatory and presentational dance as clearly as possible, two dances have been chosen that contrast in this respect, but are very similar otherwise. The dances are historically related, and both are called *kolomyika*, originating in western Ukraine (but danced in the diaspora in each case). Each dance involves four performers.

The first *kolomyika*—a vival participatory dance, was performed in 1987 in the town of Prnjavor in Bosnia, then still part of Yugoslavia. The participants were part of the Ukrainian community there, a fairly substantial ethnic minority in that area. They were celebrating the construction of their new parish hall/monastery, built with community resources directly behind the church. The *kolomyika* was common in their social dance repertoire. The second dance is Vasile Avramenko's *Kolomyika in Two Couples*, discussed in Chapter 9. This performance was apparently recorded at the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, in 1942, in Mundare, Alberta.

We might note immediately that the participatory dance is quite simple in its macrostructure. The dancers circle left, then circle right, then dance on the spot for a while, either resting or showing off a display step. After a while, they repeat these three segments again. There's only one formation in the whole dance, a closed circle. The presentational dance, on the other hand, has a much more complicated macrostructure. It involves some twelve different formations and seventeen figures, each of which must be memorized by the dancers before the dance can be performed successfully.

A more detailed way to observe the differing complexity of dance macrostructures is through their notations. The prescription for the participatory *kolomyika* can be expressed as in Figure 34 on page 173. The prescription is quite formulaic, is composed of some 375 notational signs, and can fit comfortably onto one page. This notation is valid whether the actual performance lasts two minutes or twenty.

The equivalent notation for the presentational dance, Figure 35 occupies five pages (beginning on page 174) in the same sizing, and involves some 930 symbols. The prescription for this and many other presentational dances is less formulaic and more specific, itemizing each specific movement, disallowing improvisation or options for repetition, and rarely repeating phrases identically. Some spectacular dance notations involve dozens of formations and hundreds of motifs, occupying hundreds of pages.⁴

Prescriptive notations such as these are best at showing the macrostructure. The motifs are easily identifiable and it is possible to see how they are combined into larger units. On the other hand, microstructures tend to be most visible when looking at a detailed descriptive notation of the movement. We will look only at one short segment, focusing on the moment when the dancers join together and start spinning clockwise in a closed circle. This brief moment occurs in both dances.

Since the prescription was a condensed formula for the participatory dance, the descriptive notation looks quite different. The microscopic picture reveals itself to be very complicated. Various people perform different footwork and move their arms individually at any given time. The woman with the red sweater, notated in the first staff, wants to start spinning, and signals this to her co-dancers nonverbally by releasing their hands (point A in Figure 36), stretching her arms wider to the sides to go around her neighbors' backs (point B), and visibly changing her footwork (point C). The other dancers react more or less cooperatively and the circle gradually begins to rotate (point D). This takes some time, however and contrasts sharply with the presentational performers, who accelerated to almost full speed within two measures (point E in Figure 37). The microstructure clearly is a field in which the participatory dancers engage in kinetic communication and negotiation as the dance progresses.⁵

In contrast, the presentational dance is very simple and very regular on the microscopic levels. The descriptive notation is almost identical to the prescription. The dancers perform almost in perfect unison, taking into consideration slight differences prescribed for each

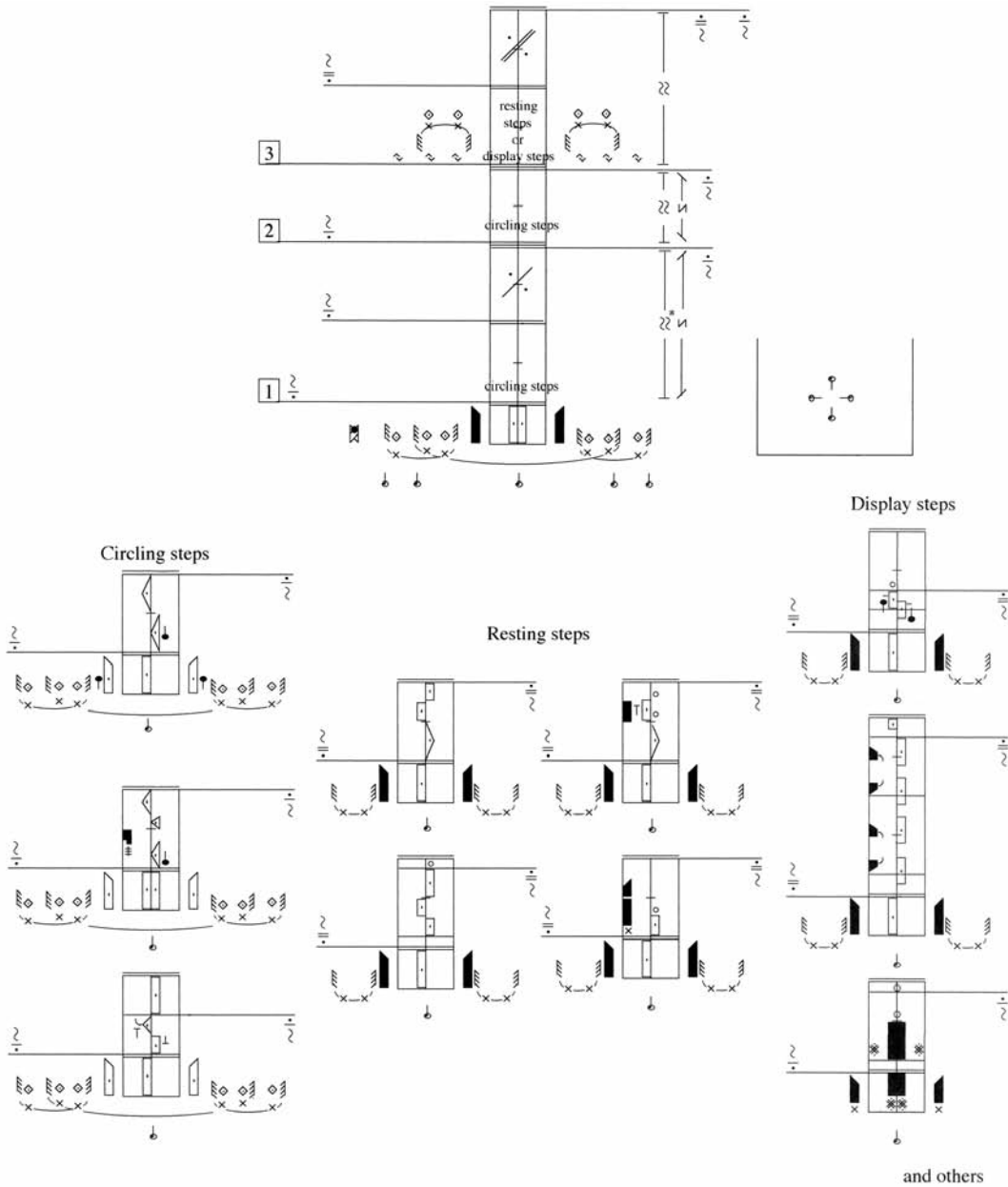


Figure 34. Prescription for the participatory *Kolomyika* in Prnjavor, 1987 (Nahachewsky 1995: 7).

gender. The boys lift their arms at a different time than the girls, and lift their knees higher in the hopping cells of each step. Otherwise, every foot and every arm is moved exactly in the same way as the other dancers.

From a stage dance perspective, one could say that the dance is quite well rehearsed. The only difference that I could find was at one point when the girls' hands didn't join as they were supposed to. They probably weren't used to rehearsing with the boys' jackets, and

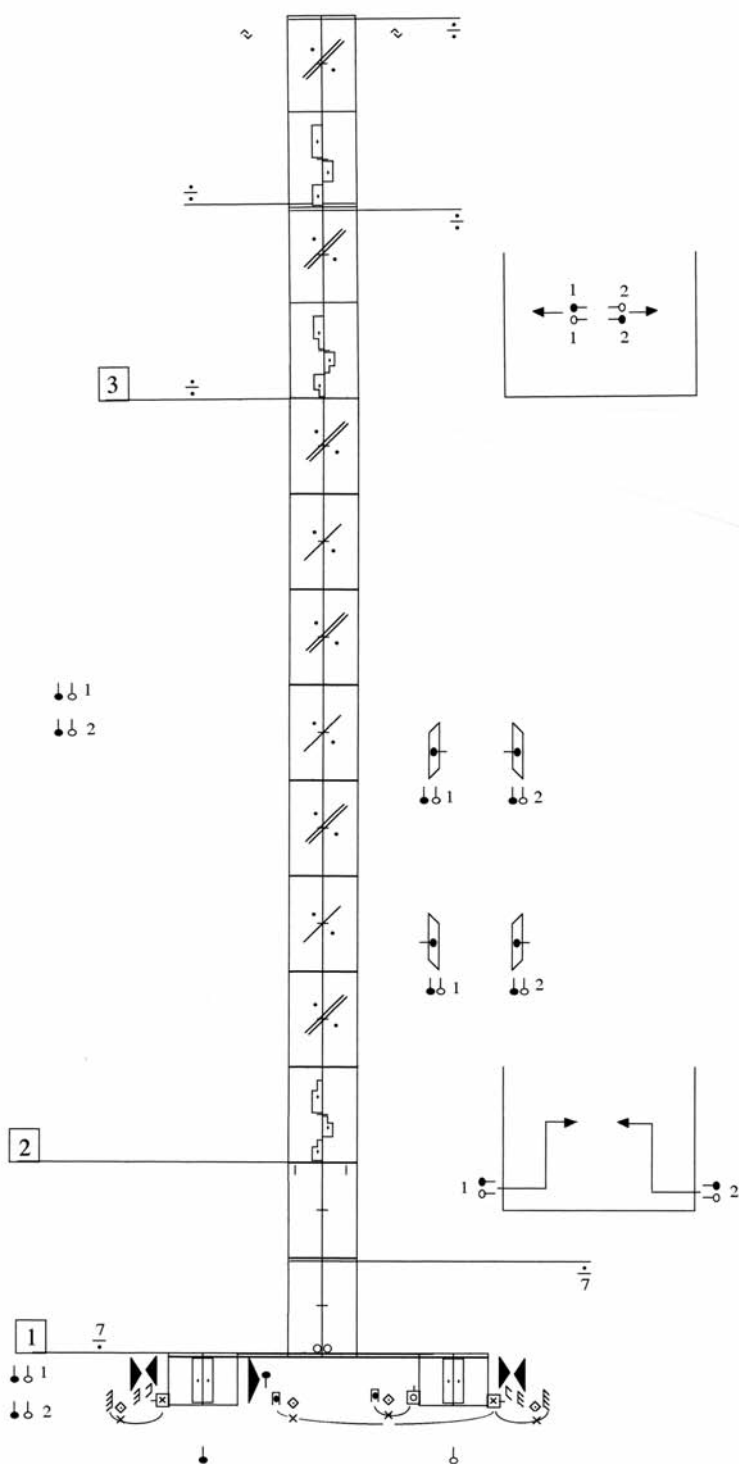
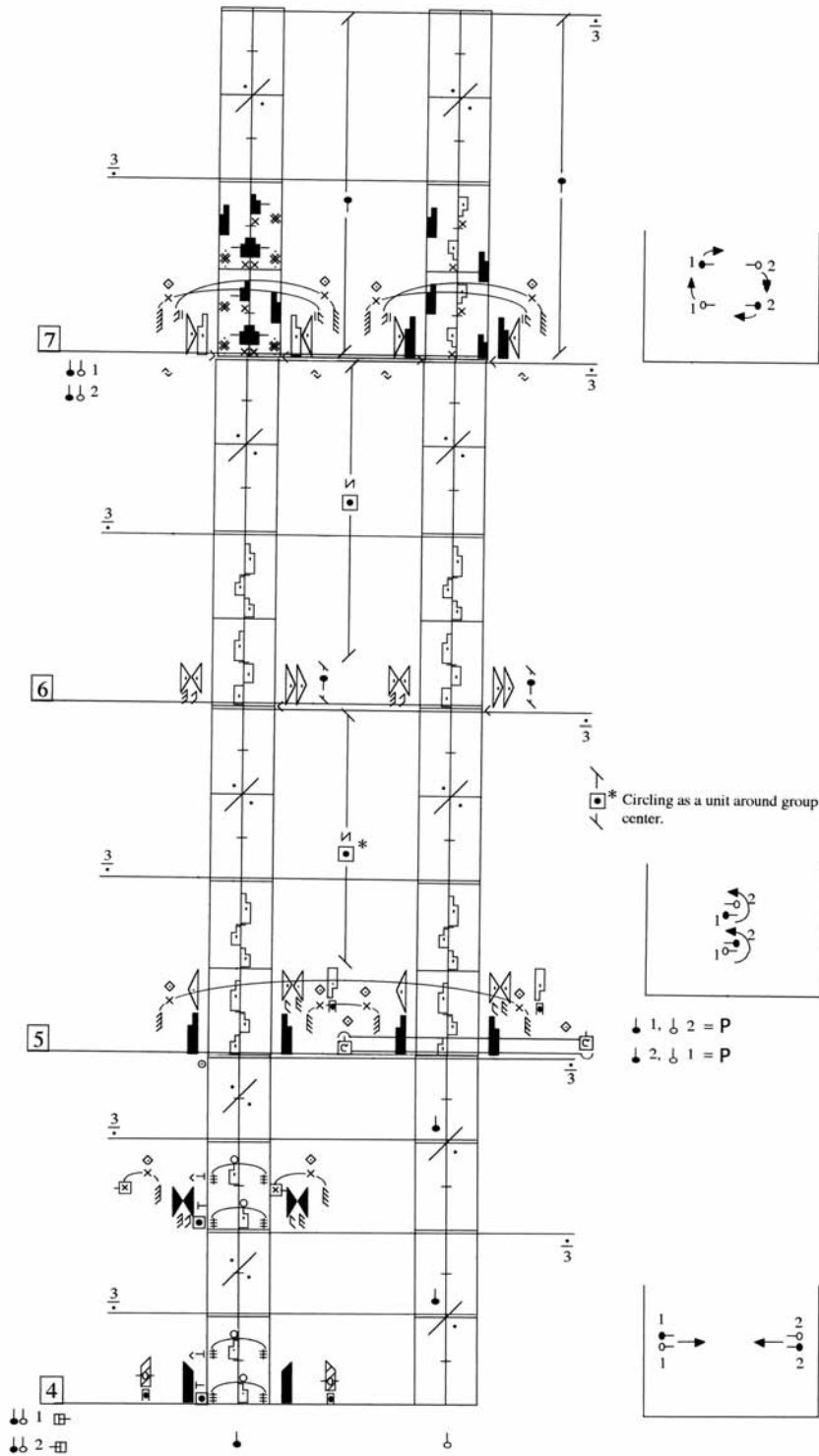
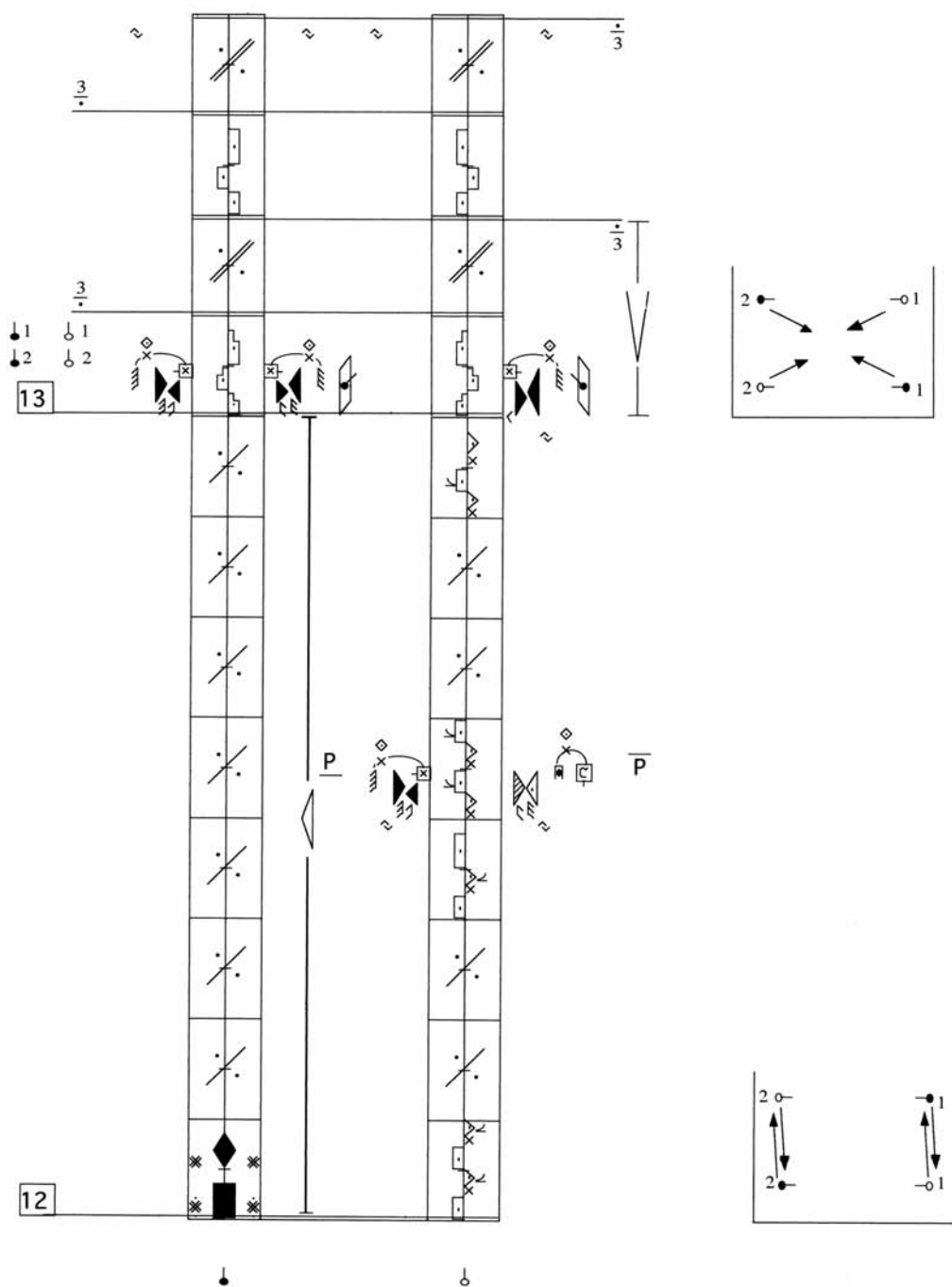


Figure 35 (this page and the following four pages). Prescription of the presentational *Kolomyika* in Mundare, 1942 (Nahachewsky 1995: 8–10).





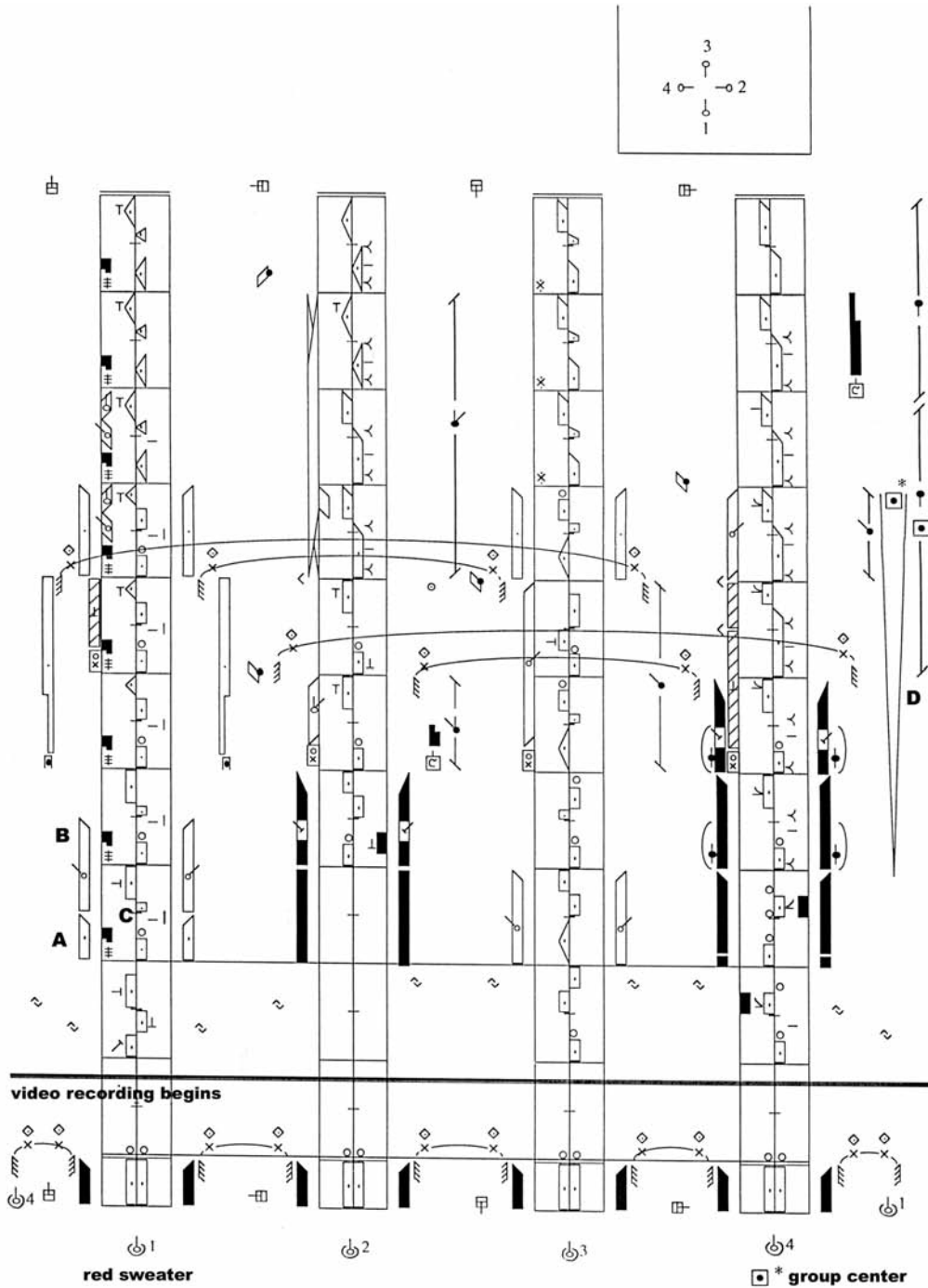
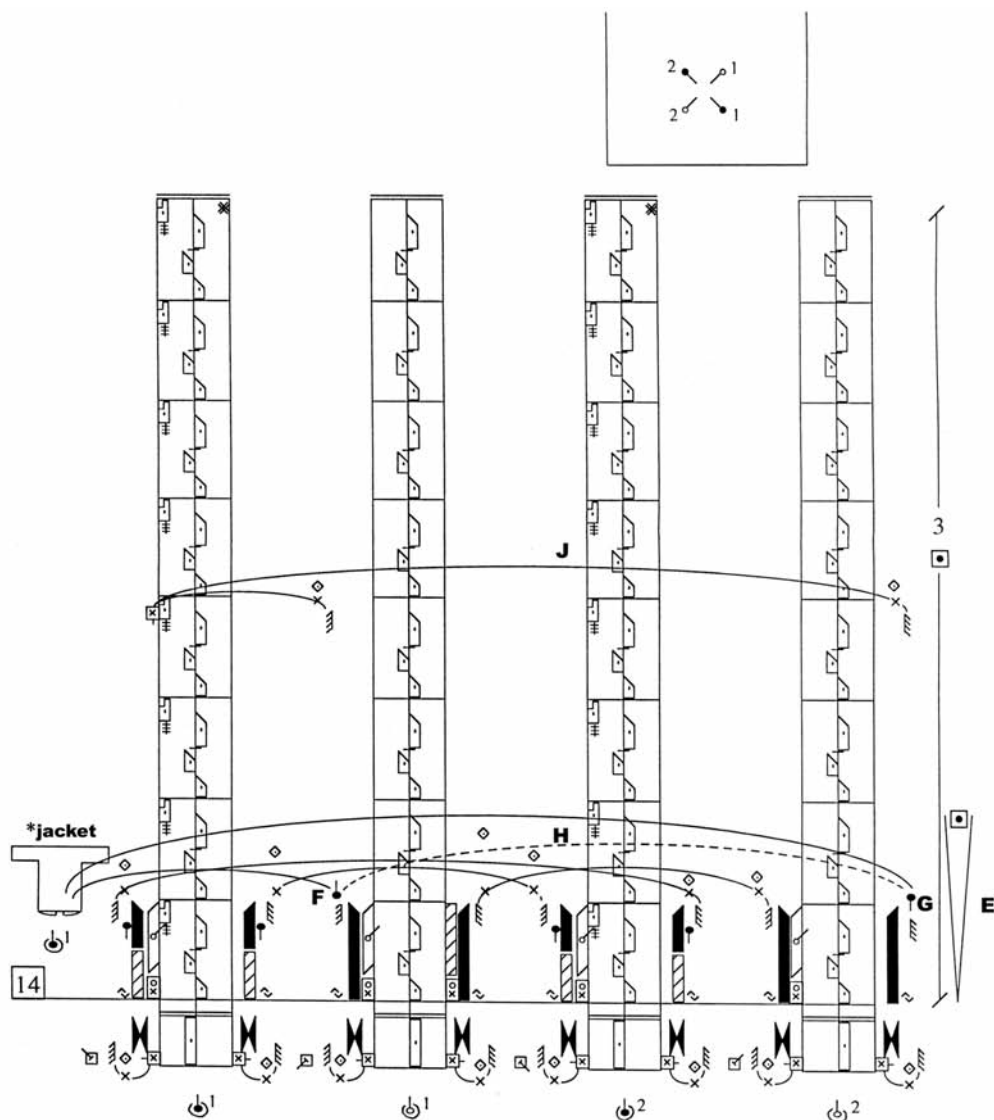


Figure 36. Descriptive notation of the Prnjavor *kolomyika*, where the dancers clasp hands and start spinning in a circle (adapted from Nahachewsky 1995: 11).



* Each dancer wears a jacket [serdak]. Hands are normally clasped behind the back of each neighbor, under the jacket. Woman 1, however gets her hand caught on top of man 1's jacket and is unable to clasp the hand of woman 2.

Figure 37. Descriptive notation of the Mundare *kolomyika*, where the dancers clasp hands and start spinning in a circle (adapted from Nahachewsky 1995: 12).

when they tried to clasp their hands behind the boys' backs, one jacket got in the way. That moment is visible in the notation: The symbols at point F indicate one girl's hand inside the jacket. The symbols at point G show that the other girl's hand is located outside. The dotted bow at point H is used to indicate the hands "almost touching" each other. The girls fix the problem discretely on the fourth measure and thereafter their hands do clasp. This is indicated with the solid bow at point J.

The unison on the microscopic level can be understood as simplicity because almost all the communicative little movements we saw in the participatory dance have been rehearsed out of the performance. The dancers communicate relatively little to each other on that inter-dancer circuit.

	participatory	presentational
macro	simple	complex
micro	complex	simple

Figure 38. Chart comparing complexity of participatory and presentational dances.

Our example suggests that participatory dances tend to simplicity on the macro level but complexity on the micro levels. The complex micro levels are the most active in carrying communicative content in the dance. Presentational dances however, tend to display the reverse characteristics. These tend to be simple on the microstructural levels as they become standardized during rehearsals to attain unison. Complexity and focus shifts to the macro levels. These macro levels are the main avenues for communicating content in presentational settings, and can be seen best by the spectators who are watching at a distance.

The simplification in microstructure is not random, but is generally consistent with the stage dance conventions described in the preceding chapter. Simplification is related to standardization and unification as stage conventions. It is also connected with the tendency towards monumentalism and expansion. As we note later in this chapter, steps tend to be performed using larger movement shapes on stage than in vival contexts. This contrast is clearly visible in the extension of the arms and feet in Figures 39 and 40.

Likewise, the creation of greater complexity in macrostructures tends to conform to specific patterns in much of Western theatrical ethnic dance. One of the ways in which the macrostructure is made more complex is by the use of an increased variety of formations-geometrical group shapes in the floor plan. Spectacular dances tend to shift frequently from circles to lines to columns to diagonals and many other formations. A second device is prescribing an increased density in the composition. The dancers are instructed to change phrases, sections and parts of the dance with much greater frequency than would have been typical for the vival version of the dance. The overall composition for theatricalized dances tends strongly towards a long complex chain of macrostructural units (A+B+C+D+E...) as opposed to a rondo form or any other composition.

Though this model applies to different folk dance traditions to greater or lesser degrees,

I argue that looking at dances this way can be useful. Many of the problems and debates involved in presenting folk dance on stage arise from this transition from participatory to presentational contexts. These changes appear a thousand times over in the world of reflective theatrical folk dance.



Figure 39. Participatory dancers from a nineteenth century woodcut by I. Sokolov, illustrating typical arm and foot positions (Belichko and V'iunyk 1970: figure 76).

Dance Motifs

If reflective theatricalized dances tend to change a great deal in their macrostructures as well as in their microstructures, then some observers might expect that at least the dance motifs might remain constant through the transition from vival to reflective mode. Indeed, in many folk dance revival communities, the dance motifs are perceived as the most essential when assessing the authenticity of a dance. As long as the steps are correct, then the dance is seen as authentic. Together with costumes, music and program notes, the dance motifs are often understood as one of the key elements that differentiate a Russian dance from an Argentinean, a Danish dance from a Ukrainian one on stage.

Indeed, the core motifs may remain intact through the transition from vival to reflective mode, particularly where improvisation had not been a focus in the vival precedent, or where rhythms are a key feature of the dance. In many other instances, reality is not nearly as simple as these reflective dancers may hope. The motif vocabularies of vival and reflective versions of the “same” dance often differ because the motifs themselves become more objectified and fixed in the theatrical context, because many motifs from the vival tradition are not taken up into the reflective tradition, and because new motifs are often developed within the reflective contexts.



Figure 40. “Over the years, Shumka has deliberately worked to acquire the techniques of ballet and other dance forms to enhance the presentation of traditional Ukrainian movements. The elegance of dancers like Terry Mucha demonstrates the impact of this development on a step from *hopak*” (Major 1991: 75) (courtesy Ukrainian Shumka Dancers).

Published lists of dance steps serve as an indication that many people in the reflective dance world are very concerned with the motifs as a core of the dance traditions. Vasyl' Verkhovynets' compiled one of the earliest published lists for Ukrainian dance in 1920 as part of his book *Teoriia ukrains'koho narodnoho tantsiu* [Theory of Ukrainian folk dance]. Verkhovynets' published prescriptions for 42 dance steps plus numerous variations there (1968 [1920]: 19–93).

In this small work, my goal is to describe as exactly as possible those steps and figures of our dance that are used by our people in the village. So far, observation of this branch of folk creativity has given me the opportunity to collect only a small amount of dance material, though I hope that lovers of Ukrainian dance will respond to my call and wish to expand my work, or they will help me with their own materials, comments and descriptions.

One very important missing element in this work has been filled in by me up to this point: that is to give names to all the steps, so that they could be more quickly and easily remembered and learned. Other than the names “*dorizhka*,” “*prysidy*,” “*navprysidky*,” “*vykhyliasy*,” “*bach iak zapliv*,” “*ot zavernuv*,” “*ot zahriba*,” and “*plazunets*,” I have not heard other names of specific steps [V. Verkhovynets' 1968 (1920): 7].

It is significant that the villagers with whom he worked did not give many names for the individual steps, and that Verkhovynets' himself assigned names to the rest of them. He could not publish the steps or describe the dances without step names. Verkhovynets' work was not exhaustive, and people working in other parts of Ukraine came up with names other than his eight, but all other lists based on vival dancing are consistent with the idea that the steps tend not to be objectified in vival dance. Particularly in traditions with active improvisation, motifs can be frequently built and re-built from a multitude of kinetic elements (Giurchescu 1983: 32–34, 40–41; G. Martin and Pesovár 1963). They don't exist clearly as discrete objects, but appear and disappear as part of the process of dancing.

Reflective Motifs Objectified

Reflective dance motifs are typically more fixed and more concrete than their vival counterparts, existing clearly in the minds of the participants as independent entities. This compliments our observation in Chapter 10 that reflective dances tend to be more *objectified* than their vival counterparts.

I compared the structure of vival dances and reflective dances when I was writing my doctoral dissertation on *kolomyiky* (1991), and part of that project involved compiling a “dictionary” of dance motifs. One of the problems I had in establishing this dictionary of motifs was that only a few of the steps existed clearly in the minds of the vival *kolomyika* dancers. None of their steps had names. The dancers were not able to talk about them easily, even though some could readily show them in context. This problem certainly was not encountered when speaking with dancers or choreographers in the spectacular dance tradition. They were very explicit and precise about their dance steps, and many of the motifs had names.⁶

Of course, the degree of naming and conscious treatment of motifs in vival dance varies greatly from tradition to tradition and from dance to dance. Examples of European village dancers who actually practiced performing the steps have been documented, and some are able to talk about them quite explicitly. In the *kolomyika* tradition, however, this was not the case.

It may be illuminating to take up the example of a motif that makes the transition from vival to reflective context, but undergoes change in the process. One particular step, more or less, is performed in both the Prnjavor participatory *kolomyika* and the presentational *kolomyika* we looked at above. This motif is also common in the documentation of some earlier vival *kolomyiky* as well as later spectacular dance tradition.

I will call this motif—*vysoka* [the high one]. It can be contrasted with another core step—*rivna* [the even one] (Harasymchuk 2008: 49–56). These two names refer to the fact that the dancers make a hop (actually leaving the ground) and raise their center of gravity in *vysoka*, but not in *rivna*. *Vysoka* and *rivna* are two basic steps used for traveling in a circle in *kolomyika*-type dances. We see them notated several times in Figure 36 above. *Vysoka* is a basic traveling step in the Prnjavor *kolomyika*. The woman in the red sweater uses it as part of her signal that she wants to get the group moving.

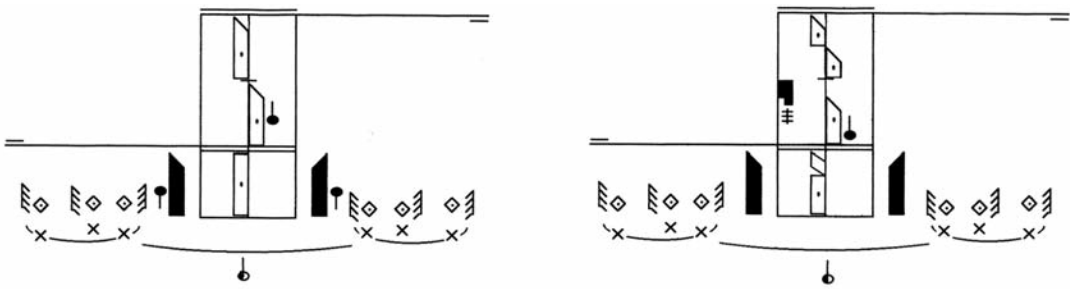


Figure 41. *Rivna* and *vysoka* kinetograms.

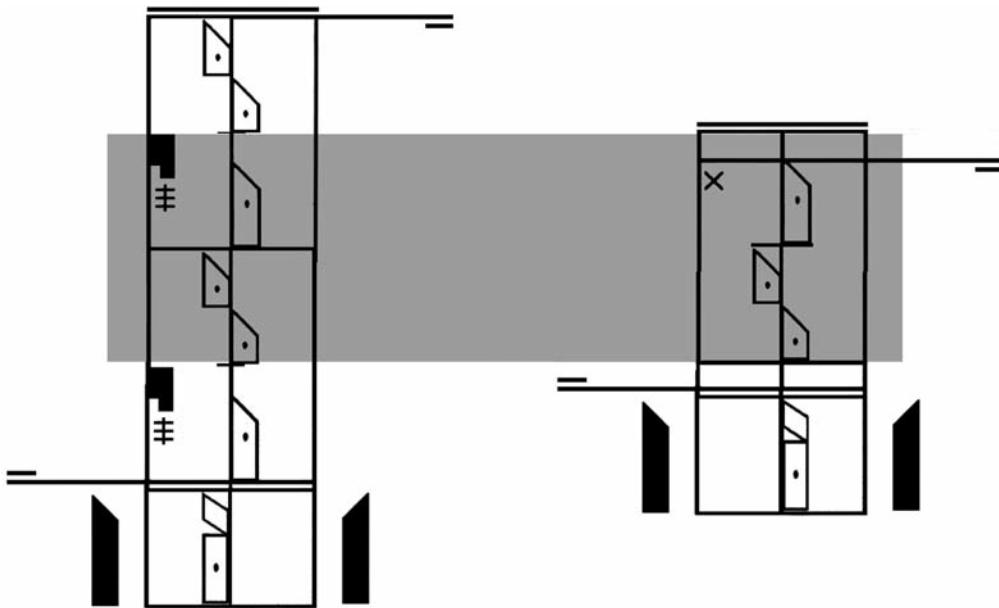


Figure 42. Two measures of *vysoka* juxtaposed with *kolomyikovyi pidskok* to illustrate the similarity of the stage step, but with a musical displacement.

At one point, all four of the women are performing the step together and the circle rotates quickly and smoothly. As they are slowing down, we notice that at least one of the dancers makes smaller and smaller hops, until the hop disappears altogether, and she is performing just the crossing step *rivna*, even while the other dancers are still doing *vysoka*. That's her signal to them that she is tired and wants to slow down. Given that the basic strong crossing movement with the trailing leg (the right leg when they are traveling to the left) occurs on the main beat of the music in both *rivna* and *vysoka*, it is in fact possible for different people in the same circle to perform the two steps simultaneously. We can see that *rivna* and *vysoka* are two closely related steps, almost synonymous as the dancers travel along the circle. *Vysoka* is most effective when accelerating and traveling fast, since the extra hop allows the dancer to cover more ground per measure of music. *Rivna* is more useful when trying to slow down, when moving slowly, and when tired. A dancer can cover less ground per measure when performing *rivna*, and it involves less energy. We can visualize how *vysoka* "grows" incrementally from *rivna* to facilitate the faster spinning and an increase in energy. Then when the extra hop is not needed, it fades organically away again.

In the staged *kolomyika*, the analogous step is called *kolomyikovyi pidskok* [literally, the *kolomyika* hop]. In this context, the step is not identical to the *vysoka* we have been describing. The free leg is lifted forward during the hop in the stage performance, and the male dancers lift that knee quite high. In the vival context, the free leg tends to remain quite low, and often the free foot circles slightly to the back, away from the center of the circle. Another difference is the relationship of the step to the musical beat. In the vival tradition, the strong crossing step with the trailing foot occurs on the first beat of the measure. Thus the rhythm of footfalls for *vysoka* during a 2/4 measure is 1/4, 1/8, 1/8 (♩♩). In the staged performance of the step, it is displaced by half a measure, so the step seems to be performed on the "off-beat." The rhythm for each measure therefore is 1/8, 1/8, 1/4 (♩♩).⁷ Still, however, the physical resemblance between the *vysoka* and the *kolomyikovyi pidskok* is strong, and Ukrainian dancers would generally recognize them as "the same step."

When we look at the use of the step during the dance, we note that it is used for the fast circling in both cases. However, we see additional subtle differences in this respect. In the stage context, unlike the vival situation, the hopping element is no longer primarily a practical modification to facilitate speed. *Kolomyikovyi pidskok* does not function here as an energetic variation of *rivna* in this dance. In fact, we never see the step *rivna* in Avramenko's repertoire. When the traveling slows down, the dancers continue to hop and to lift their knees high in the air. As a matter of fact, after the circle stops spinning, *kolomyikovyi pidskok* is used even for dancing on the spot and traveling backwards. This is anything but practical or energy efficient, and contrasts with the step's usage in the vival dance. In the stage dance, efficiency is not a concern, but maintenance of a high-energy presentation is desirable. These are new utilizations of the step, and it is clear that the hopping cell has become a concrete entity in itself.

Indeed, once objectified for the reflective tradition, *kolomyikovyi pidskok* has established a life of its own, with a strong ornamental value. It becomes less flexible and fluid as a traveling step in contrast to *vysoka*. On the other hand, new variations of it are formed as the choreographer uses it in new situations (traveling in a circle, on the spot, backwards, sideways along a line). Other motifs in other traditions surely mutate in similar as well as different ways as they move from vival to reflective contexts.

Changing Motif Vocabularies

In my dissertation project data sample, I documented 47 different dance motifs in the vival *kolomyiky* in my data sample, and 155 in the spectacular *kolomyiky*. The large number of motifs in the stage dances reflects the fact that the spectacular dances tend to have complex and dense compositional structures with a tendency not to repeat phrases and not to repeat dance motifs very often. The most surprising fact for me however, is that of all 47 motifs in the early social *kolomyiky*, only five of these reappeared in the spectacular *kolomyiky*. Eighty percent of the vival dance steps did not make it into this stage tradition. Conversely, a full 95 percent of the motifs in my spectacular *kolomyiky* were *not* found in my vival data sample. Even allowing for the small data sample and other methodological concerns, these statistics are striking.⁸ My own familiarity with other *kolomyiky* and with other Ukrainian dances, as well as my impressions from viewing dances of other cultures suggest that this disjuncture of motif vocabularies between vival dances and their reflective counterparts is a relatively widespread phenomenon.

Kim Vasylenko published a book on the motif vocabulary for Soviet Ukrainian folk-staged dance (1996 [1971]). His 1971 edition describes an impressive 609 motifs, by far the largest listing of Ukrainian dance steps ever published. The 1996 edition then increased this number to 1067. Vasylenko writes a long chapter on the process of development of new steps in folk-staged dance and identifies a variety of sources for them (1996: 64–76). In the first place, he states that many motifs for use on the stage are developed by revitalizing village dance steps. He notes that both widespread, common motifs, as well as local, more idiosyncratic movements may be “raised” from the village common to the stage. He describes influences of dance from other national cultures, including Russian, Slovak, Hungarian and Romanian. He also speaks of the enrichment of folk dance through influences directly from classical ballet, as well as the influence of elements from non-dance performance traditions — sports and acrobatics. These diverse sources provide the raw materials and the ideas that are formalized and coalesce into folk stage dance motifs.

Vasylenko’s approach is consistent with a creative theatrical perspective (called the third principle of staging in the next chapter). Participants in other reflective traditions may be uncomfortable with the wide range of sources that Vasylenko allows, and with his apparent disregard for authenticity and national purity. Vasile Avramenko, for example, founder of the Ukrainian national dance movement in North America, would have been disturbed by Vasylenko’s openness to non-vival and non-Ukrainian sources. Ukrainian dance has the peculiar characteristic that two isolated national dance traditions developed simultaneously on different continents in the first half of the twentieth century. On the one hand, as a strong anti-communist, Avramenko would never have allowed Soviet Ukrainian materials to be incorporated into his dances. On the other hand, after western Ukraine came under the control of the Soviets in 1945, Avramenko was black-listed as a *persona non grata*, and his influences on any stage dance activities there were removed or denied. It is interesting to compare the similarities and differences in the motif vocabularies for each tradition.

Consistent with his nationalist values, Avramenko prided himself on the purity of the dance materials that he and his students taught. Avramenko compiled several manuscript lists of steps starting in 1921, and published over two hundred Ukrainian dance motifs (Avramenko 1947: 19–26). He did not describe their sources except for insisting that they are the true and essential/absolute/unequivocal Ukrainian dance steps that every Ukrainian

should know. Archival research and careful observation can provide us with some indications of the sources for his vocabulary.

Avramenko's first source of Ukrainian dance steps was the theater tradition in which he worked from 1917 to 1921. He studied under Vasyl' Verkhovynets' and worked with him in a theater group. He owned a copy of Verkhovynets' 1920 *Teoriia ukrains'koho narodnoho tantsiu* with its listing of steps. A step called "*pidskok Sadovs'koho*" [Sadovs'kyi's hop] and several others show that Avramenko learned dances and steps from the previous generation of actors and directors in the Ukrainian theater movement. Mykola Sadovs'kyi was renowned in his time as a dancer, and perhaps this step had been a personal signature move. Avramenko's repertoire included at least one dance originally staged by Mykhailo Kropyvnyt-s'kyi — "*Kateryna (Khersonka)*." *Chumak*, *Gonta* and *Kozachok Podil's'kyi* are also likely pulled from the repertoire of dances performed in plays a generation before Avramenko.

Particularly after he began to specialize in dance after 1921, Avramenko also collected steps and other dance information from village dancers directly, or at least from former village dancers. We have seen this in the case of his relation to Osyp Kravchuk in Chapter 9, and his archives contain other such pages, describing materials from various parts of western Ukraine (National Archives of Canada, MG 31 D87). It is not yet known whether he learned *kolomyikovyi pidskok* from his teachers before 1921, specifically from Kravchuk, or from watching vival dancing himself.

A third, smaller category of steps in Avramenko's vocabulary is motifs and combinations that he actually made up himself. Some of his manuscript lists of dance steps include notations that he made this step up, and even on what date. On at least one occasion, he recorded a step composed by a student.

The history of split jumps in Ukrainian staged dance is interesting, because they have come to be a strong symbol of Ukrainianness in dance internationally. In spite of numerous recent suggestions of split jumps occurring in Cossack times (see Pylat 1999: 187–192), it is not clear from ethnographic sources whether split jumps were ever done in Cossack or peasant dances in Ukraine. Avramenko's written motif lists and film heritage do not include split jumps. It is possible that they entered Canadian Ukrainian dance from ballet via Soviet character dance. The first split jump in a Ukrainian dance in Canada may have been performed in 1946, when the Black Sea Cossacks toured North America (Myron Shatulsky, personal communication).

Ukrainian Dance Steps — Made in Canada

In the Ukrainian dance community in Canada, the vocabulary of motifs established by Avramenko and his students remained strongly entrenched for four or five decades after 1925. This was consistent with the values of purity, timelessness and standardization in this national dance tradition. By the 1960s, however, the national dance tradition was being strongly influenced by spectacular dance values, and the vocabulary of motifs began showing this change clearly.

While we felt we were vigilant about national purity and carefully scrutinized any outside sources for Russian or other influences, we were not uncomfortable making Ukrainian dance steps up ourselves. As a teenager dancing in the Yevshan Ukrainian Folk Ballet Ensemble in Saskatoon, I remember special times during dance practices that were set aside for boys to make up interesting steps and combinations. We made up many, and performed selected ones on stage. Some of these stuck and became traditional.

A male squatting step, the “Two Hills Step,” was familiar to Ukrainian dancers in Saskatchewan in the 1970s and 1980s. Paul Kowal, a local dancer who went to college in Alberta for two years, brought this step to Saskatchewan. He took a job teaching in rural Alberta to earn money while in college, and saw this step performed by one of his students in the town of Two Hills. He liked this movement and brought it home when he finished college, and it became incorporated into much choreography in Saskatchewan thereafter.

In the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers of Edmonton, one of the male solo steps is called “Manastyrskys.” Roman Manastyrsky, one of their dancers, apparently made up a step, and it was thereafter named after him. In Saskatchewan, another long-standing solo step was referred to as “Mykhailos” [Michael’s], named after a virtuosic performer from the Kyiv Cabaret from New York. When the cabaret group performed at the Dauphin Ukrainian Festival in western Canada in the early 1970s, the Saskatchewan dancers saw this step and determined to learn it. The step is performed in a deep squatting position. The male dancer first squats on the balls of his feet, then kicks both legs out straight forward and lets his weight fall back onto his palms. He then returns his feet under himself and lifts his arms forward and to the side. This quick alternation continues indefinitely while performing the step. In Alberta, this same step is named more descriptively, “fish-flops.”

The boys of the Dunai Ukrainian dancers in Edmonton in the mid-1990s were very creative and innovative when collectively planning new moves to try at the upcoming *kolomyika* at the next wedding or dance party in their community. In some cases, these creations eventually ended up on stage. In other situations, a group’s choreographer himself or herself would work up a new step destined for a specific choreography.

Some of these innovations were composed mostly by recombining cells and kinetic elements that were familiar from other Ukrainian dance motifs. Many could be described as variants or combinations of existing steps. As we will see, these novel dance motifs were appropriate for dances choreographed according to the second principle of staging (see Chapter 16). When planning the movements for a dance according to the third principle of staging, the tendency to make up new steps was even greater, and the sources for inspiration could be very diverse indeed.

One can say that a step becomes “traditional” at the point where it is generally known in the community and has been passed on from generation to generation, and the original creator of the step is not known by the majority of its performers. In Saskatchewan, “Mykhailos” and the “Two Hills Step,” as well as the girls’ “Hungarian turns” and many others were traditional by that definition.

The diversity of sources for motifs is somewhat narrower in the national dance context than for spectacular dance. Even in the national dance paradigm, however, the motifs did not all come directly from the imputed village setting. Particularly in the spectacular traditions, the motif vocabulary tends to evolve and develop (or, as some might say, to become further debased). This is clear if one studies filmed Ukrainian dances from the 1930s, 1950s, 1970s, 1990s and today. The motif vocabulary changes in each period and new layers are constantly forming to add to older ones still in circulation. Furthermore, the specific changes in Ukrainian stage dance motifs in Canada are quite culturally specific, indeed community-specific and sometimes even group-specific within a very narrow time frame. Each motif or cluster of vocabulary can be studied in its geographic and historical zones.⁹

Spectacular dance traditions representing other cultures may have quite different layering, and different sources might play more important or more peripheral roles in each

case. I do suspect, however, that Ukrainian spectacular dance is not unusual, and a complex layering process is normal.

Two Shoemakers Dances

A second pair of dances is interesting because they also represent the “same” dance before and after a reflective theatricalization. In this pairing, both the vival and the reflective dance are more presentational and spectacular than the *kolomyika* examples we have observed up to now. Even in its village context, the shoemaker dance involves a strong element of presentation. It is performed by particular men in the village, and intended quite clearly for the enjoyment of the spectators, who would normally be other villagers. The reflective dance is more clearly spectacular than the staged *kolomyika* in the first pairing. This contrasting pair of dances is rather more an illustration of the difference between a presentational dance in an informal intimate setting versus a presentational dance on a large proscenium stage. A process of increased theatricalization is clearly involved. This second pair of dances allows us to see that the participatory — presentational contrast should be conceived as a broad continuum, rather than a simple binary opposition.

In the case of the shoemakers dances, we are lucky to actually be able to trace the specific roots of a spectacular dance. We have film evidence of specific key performances “before” and “after” the theatricalization process. Andrii Humeniuk and Oleksandr Spinat’ov recorded a performance of this dance on film in 1957 in the village of Kropyvnia, not far from Kyiv. Humeniuk and Spinat’ov also recorded a second variant in a different village, and this dance type is documented in other sources as well (Humeniuk 1969: 372–382, 612; Humeniuk 1972: 281–282; Dei, Marchenko and Humeniuk 1970: 466–468, 725). The Kropyvnia film shows two men dancing on the grass with a group of villagers behind them. They illustrate several stages in the process of making boots, and then revel in the beauty of their creations. In the second part of the dance, each demonstrates in turn how the boots are good for dancing, but soon finds that a sole has torn loose. They exit the dance space humorously, hopping on one leg, each holding his partner’s foot and miming that he is repairing the other’s broken boot.

Pavlo Virsky, choreographer of the second dance, saw the film and was inspired by it to create his own more spectacular version. One of the filmed villagers, Ivan Korenivs’kyi, was invited to Kyiv, into the studios of the performing ensemble, to show the city people his dance. In some of the earlier concert programs listing this dance, the dance is described as coming from the village of Kropyvnia.

At first, this was a piece for two soloists of the ensemble. Eventually, on this basis, Virsky created a group male dance, giving it characteristics of our contemporary world. Not only the layout of the dance was changed, not only the manner of execution, but the whole theatrical form of the composition [Boryms’ka 1974: 77].

Virsky’s dance composition involves two parts: The first part introduces the boot makers and their work. Six apprentices enter the stage and establish the workspace, bringing in benches and preparing their tools. Once they are ready, the master shoemaker arrives, checks his apprentices. The chiming of a clock indicates that the work begins. The shoemakers are focused and attentive, engrossed in their work. The students attend to their master diligently, and he teaches them well.

Each performer recreates the entire process of sewing footwear with gestures and movements; stretching and coating the strong thread, winding it between his elbow and thumb, trimming it, hammering the nails, sewing on the soles, and cleaning the finished boot....

The choreographer communicates a subtle mastery of the national style.... His primary assignment is to maximally reveal the essence and poetic world of the dance, and also to demonstrate the perspective of the Soviet people to the events described in this ancient folk song. Based on this goal, the balletmaster substantially expands the choreographic role of the master shoemaker, foregrounding him strongly. V. Akaiev, a soloist of the ensemble, creates an image of the master boot maker full of humor and soul.

The second part of the piece — is the dance itself. Each dancer performs typical and characteristic movements of boot makers [Boryms'ka 1974: 77–78].

As we see, the overall composition of the dance retains its two major parts in both performances, constructing the boots and then dancing with them. The Virsky choreography expands on both parts, taking five and a half minutes, while the recorded village performance took less than two. The seven stage artists perform a number of the original pantomimic moves in the boot making process and several of the same steps and stamping rhythms in the second part. Many additional rhythms and sequences are added. The unison sections are technically crisp and accurate, and contrast strongly with the solo sections. Each dancer's pantomime, poses, and upper body gestures are somewhat individualistic, but one can see that they have each been meticulously set and rehearsed by the balletmaster to develop each performer's specific character. A variation of the final amusing motif is retained, where each dancer holds the foot of another and works on that boot, while simultaneously hopping forward on his free leg. In Virsky's politically correct Socialist Realist staging, however, the "Soviet made" boots cannot fall apart soon after they are made. Instead, each dancer simply polishes his comrade's fine boot (Nahachewsky 2001b: 231–233).

The macrostructure and microstructure of the shoemakers dances show a pattern similar to that of the *kolomyiky* above, though maybe not as obviously. The vival version of the dance has a simpler macrostructure, and the staged version of the dance is more complex. Both dances are more complex in their microstructures than the *kolomyika*, because both dances involve individual performers dancing their own movements, different than their colleagues. In both cases, the emphasis of communication is on the longer circuit, between the performers and their audience.

In the next chapter, we will look at a variety of strategies available to choreographers as they create theatrical ethnic dances. We will call them three "principles of staging."

Chapter 16

Three Principles of Staging

In the last chapter we looked at two different pairs of dances, contrasting them before and after being adapted for theatrical performance. In this chapter, we look at other examples which illustrate that the process of theatricalization can itself be differentiated into several different approaches; several different strategies that choreographers can use in order to stage a dance.

The literature specifically elaborating on strategies of theatricalization for folk dance is not extensive in English (but see Crum 1961; Lange 1974; La Meri 1977: 3–7; Murillo 1983; Nahachewsky 1991; Nahachewsky 1997; Nahachewsky 2001c; Shay 1999; Shay 2002; Shay 2006). Much scholarly work done related to this topic has been based in central and eastern Europe (cf. Ivančan 1971; Důžek 1973; Nosál' 1983; Vasylenko 1983; Smirnov 1986; Rees 2008, and numerous others). The writing of Kim Vasylenko can serve as a starting point for our exploration of this issue (Vasylenko 1976; 1983). When describing Ukrainian folk-staged dance, he delineates three “principles of theatricalization” available to choreographers, ranging from greater authenticity in form to greater creative license for the choreographer. We will refer to them as three “principles of staging.”

First Principle of Staging

Dances composed according to the first principle of theatricalization involve the most serious efforts at preservation of the original form:

It is necessary to deal carefully with folkloric dance material and to treat it like a valuable treasure. It is necessary to respect the genius of the folk. And maybe it is best not to meddle with them at all and to leave them in the state in which we found them. This is the responsibility of folkloric groups.¹ In collecting and retaining the primal forms, they are performing a very important and valuable service.

... but even [folkloric groups involved in this type of theatricalization] ... are involved in some minimal stage adaptation of the folkloric dances. The most interesting figures of the dance, the most characteristic mannerisms, the main idea of the dance are selected and brought out [Vasylenko 1976: 73–74].

Vasylenko notes that choreographers typically use a certain choreographic figure only once when they mount the dance for the stage. Repetitions are often presented in variant forms. Stage performances on dance are condensed, so that they take less time to perform than their recreational prototypes. Dances composed for stage are also more clearly opened up to the audience (circles are often changed into semicircles, and vertical lines are changed

to horizontal rows so that spectators can see the movements better). Vasylenko also notes that the dancers themselves choose their partners in vival couple dances, whereas the balletmaster chooses the partners when designing the dance for the stage. Likewise, improvisation is eliminated, and perhaps only an illusion of improvisation is presented to the spectators. In dances arranged according to the first principle, choreographers should search for the most authentic costumes, perhaps clothing such as that found in an ethnographic museum (Vasylenko 1976: 74–75).

For the most part, changes in the dance's form are not considered desirable in themselves, but are tolerated to successfully translate the dance to a presentational context. This perspective is common in many ethnic dance communities and is taken for granted by many casual observers when they think of reflective folk dance movements.

The village of Ruski Krstur in Voivodina, in the northeast of the former Yugoslavia, has a predominantly Rusyn (Ruthenian) population. One afternoon in 1987, a number of local seniors agreed to demonstrate the dances of their youth, circa the 1920s.² Several of the women came dressed in their old clothing from that time. One man played an accordion, while the others tried to remember the names and movements of numerous dances. Since they had not performed many of the dances for fifty years, some of their efforts were more successful than others. Two fragments of the video recording document the dances *govlia* and *shcha ia tebe dam*.³

Ruski Krstur is a regional center of Rusyn cultural activity, and boasted an active *Ansambl narodnikh pesama i igara* [Ensemble of folk songs and dances] based in the Culture Hall. Prior to the recent war, the *Ansambl*'s extensive repertoire included Rusyn, Ukrainian and other dances in various styles. Several independent dances and a suite entitled *Spliet rusinskikh igara* [Wreath of Rusyn dances] represented their own "old time" dances revived for the stage. This choreography, by artistic director Nikola Gubosh, was recorded in a video *Rusinske i Ukrajinske Igre* [Rusyn and Ukrainian dances] (Karol' 1990). The melody and movements of *govlia* constitute the introduction to this suite, and *shcha ia tebe dam* is performed as the fourth of six sections.

This is a good example of the first principle of staging. Characteristically here, the performers or at least the choreographer have had direct contact with the dances in their earlier vival context. They have a clear and accurate image of the dance as well as the whole environment of the vival setting. The film director chose to record the *Ansambl* outside on a level grassy area near the centre of Ruski Krstur, with the church bell tower and village landscape visible in many of the shots. This is consistent with the first principle objective of striving to evoke the earlier environment.⁴ First principle stagings of dances are identified specifically with the imputed vival locality, often with the specific village. Frequently, but not always, first principle reflective dances are actually performed in this area as well.

Here, as in other stagings according to the first principle, the macrostructure of the dances are condensed. The practice of stringing together a number of participatory dances into a "suite" is a common strategy in dances arranged by the first principle. This is especially true if the original dances had simple structures. *Govlia*, *shcha ia tebe dam*, and most others in the suite can be seen as binary linked forms: ABABAB.... *Govlia*'s two short figures are repeated four times each over a period of thirty seconds. The slightly longer figures of *shcha ia tebe dam* alternate three times each over sixty seconds. Each of the other dances that comprise sections of the suite is treated in a similar way, and the structure of the suite contains variety as a result (ABABABABCD CDCDCDEF EF EF...). This strategy is slightly different than the one described by Vasylenko, where the choreographer actively varies each

figure for each repetition (perhaps such as $A_1B_1A_2B_2A_3B_3C_1D_1C_2D_2\dots$). However, the result is similar in terms of instituting frequent changes for the performers and the spectators.

Gubosh's suite introduces a common compositional device that would not have been apparent in the vival dances in the same way. He structures the suite so that it gradually builds in energy and kinetic interest throughout the dance. This is one type of compositional structure that is understood as aesthetically pleasing in Western sensibility.

Six couples, arranged in a large circle that sometimes unfolds into a straight line, perform the reflective dance suite. Whereas closed circles are often opened into semicircles facing the audience in first principle stagings, the circle remains closed throughout the *shcha ia tebe dam* section in the suite. Gubosh may have decided to retain the circle because the dancers turn from side to side to clap each other's hands during the second figure. This movement allows the audience an interesting view and would have created a logistical problem if the circle were to be broken. Furthermore, the camera itself occasionally enters the circle to record close-ups of several dancers.⁵

Within each dance figure, the motifs performed by the *Ansambl* members are practically identical with those remembered by the original dancers. The *Ansambl* performers maintained an erect posture, a relaxed smile, and an emphatically pleasant manner in their movements. Their physical carriage contrasts with that of the seniors, even though the latter had also been genuinely enjoying themselves. The *Ansambl* dancers' movements are more standardized than those in the fieldwork recording, with each dancer stepping onto the same foot at the right time, and with the movements relatively large and clear in each case. Unison for the *Ansambl* dancers is soft, using relaxed ankles and feet. Every dancer is allowed to show their personality and demonstrate their own personal style during the performance to a certain degree. These two dances were generally performed in unison even in their earlier vival contexts, as the short dance figures are tied to particular musical phrases. The clapping section in *shcha ia tebe dam* needs to be synchronized with one's partner or it won't work.

The elderly dancers in the fieldwork recording improvised variants to the basic steps on occasion. For example, once she was confident of the figure, one woman inserted a swirl into the first figure of *shcha ia tebe dam*. Even though they were obviously much more confident in general, the younger dancers in the *Ansambl* did not improvise. Their performance emphasized calm unison and discipline.

The dancers and musicians in the *Ansambl* wore clothing collected from earlier generations in the village, or perhaps careful replicas. The dress differed slightly in color and cut from dancer to dancer, reflecting individual peculiarities that would have been normal in the earlier context. Related elements from the earlier setting such as the melody are retained for the reflective staging. In this case the instrumentation changed somewhat to enlarge the musical ensemble. The instruments used in the earlier setting also varied to some degree from event to event.

Second Principle of Staging

In first principle stagings, accommodations are made grudgingly to the stage, the choreographer wishing to remain faithful to the imputed form of the dance unless forced to deviate by the new context for the reflective dance. Dances arranged according to the second principle however, are less rigorously faithful to the participatory vival dance prototypes. For second principle compositions, the choreographer is no longer apologetic about his the-

atricalization and the staged dances can be seen as being “more comfortable” in their newer home on the stage platform.

It is not a matter of gathering old folk dances and mounting them on pins like dead insects, or preserving them in museum fashion; rather one must take the national forms which have been handed down, fill them with new life, and pattern them to the new spirit and life-rhythm of the times [Moiseyev 1951: 14, quoted in Crum 1961: 10].

The Brigham Young University International Folk Dance Ensemble has been performing and touring internationally since 1964 (Casey 1981: 70–71; Brigham Young University International Folk Dance Alumni 2010). Their repertoire includes many clear examples of folk dances arranged according to the second principle of staging. In their very first international tour, led by Mary Bee Jensen, the BYU folk dance team saw the Kyiv Ballet perform a *Hopak* at a festival in Denmark (Floyd [n.d.]: 9). Perhaps inspired by this performance, they have performed *Hopak* choreographies quite regularly since that time. A Ukrainian *Hopak*, choreographed by Colleen West and Edwin Austin, and a Filipino dance *Tinikling*, part of the suite *Philippines: Barrio Fiesta* by Delynn Peay, were performed in the BYU Folk Dance Ensemble’s 2008 Christmas concert *Opa!* They can serve as good examples of Vasylenko’s second principle of staging (Austin 2008).

In this staging of *Tinikling*, as in second principle stagings in general, the reference to a vival dance precedent is clear. Many groups performing reflective Filipino dances around the world have mounted this dance, with its parallel pairs of clapping bamboo poles. The dance has become a clear and recognized type in the Filipino stage dance repertoire (see published descriptions in Lidster and Tamburini 1965: 291–294; Jensen and Jensen 1966: 44–47; J. Hall 1963: 119–121). The audience has a general sense that this is a Filipino dance, based on what they have been told by the Masters of Ceremonies, what they have read in the concert program, the slide projection above the stage, and perhaps their earlier experiences watching other stagings of *Tinikling*. The audience has information that associates the dance with the country as a whole, rather than any specific locality. Such generalized ascriptions, discussed in Chapter 10, are particularly consistent with second principle compositions. The staged dance operates more as a representative symbol of the large imagined community rather than a documentation of any particular local vernacular culture. Lidster and Tamburini, incidentally, describe *Tinikling* as originating in the Visayan Islands, particularly the province of Leyte (1965: 291).

In second principle stagings, the dancers and even the choreographer may be unfamiliar with the imputed setting. Whereas Gubosh and all his dancers were obviously familiar with the dance traditions of Ruski Krstur, many of the Brigham Young dancers had never traveled to the Philippines. Few if any have never seen *Tinikling* performed in a vival setting. Second-principle dances such as this typically appear on a stage after being passed several times from one stage group and one choreographer to the next. In this way they develop their own clear reflective tradition more than first principle dances do. Filipino dance is very developed in the United States (Shay 2006: 106–115). One could certainly research the reflective *Tinikling* tradition in the U.S. with its variations as well as their geographic and historic patterns of distribution. It is likely that many of the differences arose within the revival tradition itself.

The same situation applies to the *Hopak* in that concert. There is a clear reference to a vival precedent, though the location is not made more specific than “Ukraine.” Like *Tinikling*, *Hopak* has become a clear and recognized stage dance type, and its stage history

is certainly researchable. The choreographers and perhaps a few of the dancers may have visited Ukraine, but most of the performers have not. This specific choreography was probably developed ten or even twenty choreographic generations away from its vival roots. Indeed, if the choreographers had had the chance to see a vival *hopak* in a village in central Ukraine, it would probably not have helped them create the choreography at all.

We typically see much stronger penetration of spectacular dance conventions in dances composed using the second principle. These dances typically avoid repeating any figures. Whereas rondo or theme-and-variation structures are not unusual in first-principle stagings, the chain form (ABCDEFGHIJ...) eclipses all other compositional choices in second-principle choreographies. The *Hopak* has a clear and long chain form, as does *Tinikling*. Second-principle dances such as these tend to be very frontal and monumental, and tend to highlight formational work, including lines, blocks, circles, semicircles, diagonals, and diverse transitional shapes. The *Hopak* involves 21 different formations that do not repeat. It is not as easy to change formations in *Tinikling* as it is in the *Hopak*, since the dance involves eight large bamboo poles held near the floor. Still, however, this choreography involves 6 different formations, including vertical columns up and down the stage, a “W” layout, two variants of a cross shape, horizontal rows, and a square shape. All the formations are visible best from the high-front vantage point of the main camera, characteristic for the proscenium tradition. Most of the dancers faced front most of the time, though they occasionally turned to face their partners. Monumentality is achieved with the four pairs of poles — building to twenty-four performers rather than four or eight as would have been normal in a smaller more intimate setting. A dramatic intensification to a climax is clear with the gradual acceleration in tempo throughout the dance, challenging the dancers to display greater skill and a greater risk of leaving an ankle in the path of the clapping bamboo poles.

Directors of second principle dances tend to emphasize strong uniformity in microstructure, and make an effort to rehearse the dancers to a standardized and “polished” performance style. In the *Hopak*, this is critical to a successful performance. In *Tinikling*, unison is essential on threat of physical injury. Virtuoso elements increase in frequency and in significance in second principle stagings. The *Hopak* has been called a “perennial favorite” for the Brigham Young Dancers because of the numerous solos and acrobatic small group elements. The very idea of stepping in and out of heavy clapping poles is perhaps an important reason that *Tinikling* has been so successful and popular on stage in comparison to other dances from Filipino village culture.

Brigham Young’s staging of *Hopak* and *Tinikling* are also typical of second principle stagings in their use of costumes, music and stage props. The *Tinikling* costumes are intended to symbolize the peasants or working class Filipino people. They are identical or almost identical for each gender of performer. It is typical in second principle stagings to simplify the costume substantially, often by selecting only some of the garments or variations that may have been worn in the imputed setting, by making the costumes from lighter fabric and of fabric types that are most easily available in the contemporary reflective setting. The cut of the clothing is often adapted to allow freer movement; we have noted before that the dancers tend to make larger shapes with their arms and legs, and that virtuosic movements are relatively more frequent. Important too, are factors such as maintaining a costume budget for the ensemble and facilitating fast changes for the dancers between numbers when necessary.

The music in these cases conveys a bit of the spirit of the original setting. The main

melody is derived from the vival setting. The music features a different instrumentation, introducing additional dynamics, and expanding structural variety. In *Tinikling*, the sounds of the bamboo poles on the floor and against each other are recorded into the sound track for the dance to amplify this feature of the dance and to assure consistency in the accelerating rhythms.

Though choreographers using the second principle of staging allow themselves substantial license, there is some limitation to this freedom. According to this principle, they should continue to try support the illusion of authenticity. Thus, whenever convenient, the melodies, the instrumental flavor, the costume, the dance motifs, the concert program all make clear reference to the original and either implicitly or explicitly invite the audience to “suspend their disbelief” and imagine themselves in that imputed context. This is clearly a significant theatrical strategy for the Brigham Young Folk Dance Ensemble’s performances, and many other groups as well. In many respects, choreography according to the second principle of composition is a very attractive strategy. It offers a balance between the goals of reproducing a vival dance event on the one hand, and creating interesting theater art on the other.

Third Principle of Staging

Ethnic dances arranged by the third principle of staging involve the greatest artistic license and are most overtly engaged with spectacular dance conventions in the choreographer’s contemporary community. Though folk roots are often claimed in promotional material about such choreographic works, the actual relationship with any earlier participatory tradition is very tenuous. In fact, third principle dances are sometimes not really stagings of earlier vival dances at all, but are born directly in the theater. These dances have been inspired by a wide variety of ideas: by folk songs, real life events, jokes, legends, embroidery or other folk-art designs, or simply abstract ideas. The choreographer perceives that this “kernel” reflects something essential in the culture and elaborates on it to create the choreographic representation.

In third principle dances the choreographer is characteristically no longer trying to maintain the illusion that the spectators are watching a vival dance. Sometimes, rather than being asked to “suspend their disbelief” and pretend they are in a romantic village, the spectators are actually encouraged to confront the in-authenticity of the dance. These dances often communicate contemporary or fantastic settings; develop a theme or story; or explicitly evoke another genre such as ballet or contemporary dance. The third approach to folk-staged dance choreography was very common in the Soviet Union, sometimes overshadowing the other possibilities. “We are creating new dances based on the folk traditions not yet embodied in dance forms” (Moiseyev in Sheremetyevskaya [ca 1965]: 32).

Two pairs of dance examples choreographed according to Vasylenko’s third principle will illustrate some of the possibilities of this strategy. The first is a performance of *Granea O’Malley*, choreographed by Mark Howard and performed by the Trinity Irish Dancers of Chicago and Milwaukee. It is found in their video *Green Fire and Ice* (Werner 1994). In about 5 minutes, the dance tells a story of the Irish “pirate queen” Granea O’Malley as she battles Sir Richard Bingham, one of the English invaders of her homeland. With her military skills and cunning, she achieves a number of victories, but is eventually captured: “Tragic, but unconquerable.” *Granea O’Malley* is inspired by a historical figure in Ireland, and clothed

in dance steps, formations, mime and other effects of contemporary Irish stage dance and modern dance. Elements of the movement vocabulary, the costumes, the dance structure, the music, the props and any combination of these are distinctly and admittedly different than anything in the imputed setting for that culture.

A more lighthearted Ukrainian example of a dance with a clear storyline was presented in Chapter 1. In *Iz syrom pyrohy* [Dumplings with cheese], the first dancer in the trio is dressed as a large cheese dumpling [*perih* or *varenyk* in Ukrainian]. He dances happily for a while, until he notices the entry of two other dancers, dressed as a fork and spoon. The dumpling is convinced of his imminent demise, but the cutlery surprises us by simply inviting him to dance, leading to a happy ending. This choreography, performed by the Sopilka Dancers of Vegreville, Alberta, and choreographed by Ken Kachmar, enjoyed success over several years in the group's repertoire.

Granea O'Malley and *Iz syrom pyrohy* can be described as using a "folk-ballet" approach to tell a story. Certain dancers portray defined individual roles and use mime and other movement to convey dramatic passages. They may take the stage alone, or dance in front of a *corps*. We have seen this as a convention of ballet since at least the times of Jean-George Noverre and the *ballet d'action* of the late 1700s, and very prominent in the Romantic ballet of the nineteenth century. In these folk-ballets however, the core movement vocabulary is not the lexicon of classical ballet, but is mostly taken from first and second principle dance compositions in that ethnic stage dance culture. Some folk ballets, such as *Granea O'Malley* are short in duration. Others constitute entire concert programs of two hours or more.

The folk ballet approach was not particularly common in Soviet Ukrainian dance. In Moscow, Igor Moiseyev choreographed a 38-minute Ukrainian work called *Night on Bald Mountain*, based on a story by the Russian/Ukrainian writer Nikolai Gogol [Mykola Hohol']. A drunkard Ukrainian peasant has a dream that he is tortured by a horde of demons in hell, and swears off alcohol (Arts Core Corporation 1994). In Ukraine, a longer theatrical presentation entitled *Maryna*, also set in midsummer, was reportedly prepared by Anatoli Avdiiev's'kyi of the Vervovka Folk Choir and Dancers of Kyiv, though it was apparently never presented to the public. Most Soviet dances that use a storyline are short, developing a simple plot in three to six minutes. We will see below that Pavlo Virsky created a number of memorable pieces using this approach. In general, however, Ukrainian dances created in Ukraine have relatively little thematic development, and are intended for "variety" format concerts, consisting of ten to twenty short unrelated dances presented during the course of an evening.

Ukrainian choreographies with elaborate plot lines have been much more significant in Ukrainian Canadian dance history. Perhaps the first two such compositions were Natalka Dobrolidge's *Oi pid vyshneiu* [Under the cherry tree] in Edmonton in 1964 and Nina Sotnikow's *The Ukrainian Pioneer: A Choreographic Offering* in 1966 (Pritz 1977: 182, 198). A number of Ukrainian groups in Canada experimented with "folk ballets," larger choreographic projects that included a number of dances linked together with a plotline, specific characters, and often scenery and other elements to support dramatic development. The Yevshan Ukrainian Folk Ballet Ensemble of Saskatoon, the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers of Edmonton, Rusalka of Winnipeg, and several other senior performing groups became known for their commitment to this approach. Many such compositions have been created, and dozens of full-length Ukrainian folk ballets have been toured across Canada and sometimes internationally (Pritz 1977: 179–201; Pritz 1983: 146–147; Pritz 1984: 94–95).

A second approach for third principle compositions highlights a clear fusion between the folk staged dance and other spectacular dance traditions. We will call this strategy the “fusion” approach. These dances characteristically feature a mixing of dance motifs, some of which are explicitly pulled from ballet, jazz, contemporary, or other high profile dance genre. The main message of the dance is the fusion itself.

In many cases, ethnic dance groups, whose primary expertise is in the dances of one or more specific cultures, choose to perform a fusion dance by inserting ballet, modern or other elements into their choreography. *Night of Perun*, performed by the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers of Edmonton, Canada, serves as our example here. It was co-choreographed by prominent Canadian contemporary dancer Brian Webb and Ukrainian dance specialist John Pichlyk (Webb and Pichlyk 1995). The 20-minute composition has a bit of thematic development, taking place during an intense ritual sacrifice in pre-Christian Ukraine. The most striking feature of the choreography, however, is the movement style. The movement lexicon has been described as resembling elements of *West Side Story* and Bronislava Nijinska’s *Les Noces*. The clearly contemporary dance movements were quite challenging for the cast and for the audience, who were both crossing over from their core expertise of Ukrainian dance.

The fusion can occur in the opposite direction as well. Ballet and modern dance companies sometimes consciously integrate what they see as “folk” styling into their performance. This is clearly observable in *Les Voyageurs* by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens (Gillson and Ianzelo 1975). The Grands Ballets piece features a very folksy song performed by Gilles Vigneault, juxtaposed with the obviously classical dance movements of the ballet troupe. The ballet movements and formations are choreographed to make reference to a country-dance as well; using circular and longways formations; keeping to partners through most of the dance; and including elements such as “do-si-do” and “under the bridge” figures. The costume is also clearly in the ballet tradition, with tights and close-fitting garments for both males and females. The miniaturized skirts, blouses and other elements are designed to hint at the traditional vernacular dress of rural Quebec.

The fusion approach is very common as part of the character dance tradition within classical ballet. In some such fusion performances, such as the Spanish dance in *Swan Lake*, the ethnic elements are fairly well integrated into the ballet style, and contribute to the overall performance as *divertissements*. These *divertissements* are subsumed within the overall ballet tradition. In other fusion performances, the cultural juxtapositions are notable for their “shock-value,” or “active non-integration.” Part of the artistic intent is exactly the juxtapositioning of a style that everyone knows doesn’t fit. The aesthetic tension between the noble ballet style and the non-noble (or sometimes anti-noble) style is really what the dance is about.

Vasylenko numbers his principles for theatricalizing folk dances “first,” “second,” and “third.” We have discussed the third principle last, but it should be made clear that this is *not* intended to suggest an evolutionary sequence nor even a chronological sequence. In fact, third principle dances have been composed at least as early as second and first principle choreographies. Third principle choreographies, in particular, are not presented here as the highest development in folk dance theatricalization, or as the summit of folk-staged dance by any means. Likewise, first principle stagings are not outdated or primitive. Each kind of spectacular dance rises or falls in popularity at specific times, places and contexts.



Figure 43. Principal dancer Jayleen Gordey performs a balletic extension in *Shumka's Cinderella* by the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, Edmonton, Canada (courtesy Ukrainian Shumka Dancers).

“Fidelity to Form” Versus “Fidelity to Spirit”

The relevance of contemporary artistic expression is one of the key attractions of the third principle of staging for certain audiences, dancers and choreographers. The staged dance here is, first and foremost, a work of expressive performance art.

It is clear that third principle choreographies are most distant from vival peasant dance

traditions. However, this does not necessarily mean that they are less ethnically salient, or that the choreographer is less interested in national or educational issues. On the contrary, given the freest reign for his or her imagination, the artist-choreographer may make choreographies that are very powerful and carry a potent national, cultural or educational message. In pluralistic societies, where audience members don't know the world of the imputed original setting but are familiar with spectacular dance conventions, the third principle is sometimes seen as the most effective strategy for communicating relevant and moving messages about a culture to the audience. In some cases, like *Granea O'Malley*, the third principle strategy sends a stronger nationalist message than any second or first principle choreography might do.

A comparison between first principle and third principle compositions shows that both may well be concerned with authenticity, that is, a focus on the original. The big difference however, is that first principle dances try to be faithful to the *form* of the vival dance prototype, whereas third principle dances may try to be faithful to a more abstract "spirit of the people," harnessing all the technology and resources available in spectacular theater to make its message loud and clear to the spectators. The relative strengths and weaknesses of first and third principle strategies are dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 18.

Not all staged ethnic dances, however, fit into the three principles conveniently. These three principles are conceptual models. In this chapter, each principle has been bound with many characteristics at the same time: consciousness of origin; immediacy of connection to origin; costume and music use; formational development; unison, etc. However, it is not hard to find examples where some of the characteristics of a staged dance fit the first principle, while other characteristics fit the second or third. This is the case in the example of *Shevchyky* that we looked at in Chapter 15. This dance by Pavlo Virsky has some characteristics of the first principle of composition because the choreographer had direct contact with the peasant dance, there is a connection with a specific place of origin, and a number of the vival dance motifs are incorporated intact into the stage dance. On the other hand the dance also exhibits some characteristics of the third principle of composition: The musical score is very non-peasant in style, especially in the first section. Furthermore, the dance is urbanized, and the actor/dancers use refined techniques of mime and acting to convey the story and mood.

Many other exceptions to these ideal categories also exist. This idea of three principles of composition remains a useful tool, a measuring stick for choreographers, critics and spectators. It can help them think about the ways that specific staged folk dances are comparable or not.

Chapter 17

Moiseyev and Virsky

In this chapter we'll look briefly at the work of Igor Moiseyev, Pavlo Virsky and their two dance ensembles. The Moiseyev State Folk Dance Ensemble of the USSR, based in Moscow has been an extremely important group in the history of folk-staged dance, and has had a profound influence on spectacular ethnic reflective dance, directly or indirectly, the whole world over (Shay 2002: 57–81). This influence is perhaps as great in Ukraine as anywhere. Pavlo Virsky's Ukrainian State Folk Dance Ensemble, based in Kyiv, has also had outstanding success. These two great figures had relatively similar choreographic visions. The "Moiseyev style" as this approach to folk-staged dance is sometimes called, is worth looking at in some detail. It can serve as one model of how spectacular reflective dance could and can be done. It is not without controversy.

Especially in context of Eastern Europe, the term "folk-staged dance" is often used to describe the phenomenon of spectacular ethnic dance.

The Founding of Moiseyev's Dance Company

A number of particular events in the mid-1930s led to the founding of the Soviet State Folk Dance Ensemble in Moscow in 1937, and to the Ukrainian Soviet State Folk Dance Ensemble in Kyiv a few months later. One of these was a general soul searching on the part of Soviet ballet choreographers in the 1930s and their increased interest in character dance as a discrete specialization within ballet (Slonimskii 1939: 24–27).

Another key event was a series of festivals that took place in Moscow starting in 1936.¹ Folk dance groups from many parts of the USSR were brought to Moscow as a part of a review of Soviet culture, a demonstration of how art and life was progressing in the Socialist state over the previous ten years. It was perceived as a sort of "medical check up" for this new way of organizing humanity that had been established under Communist government rule. The festival showed that there was enormous interest and activity in folk dance across the Soviet Union, and the participants felt that much of it was very good. The Soviet Culture ministers were pleased with this state of affairs and saw folk-staged dance as a positive pursuit worthy of support and promotion.

This attitude was strengthened with Soviet successes internationally. The Song and Dance Ensemble of the Soviet Army had successful international performances in 1936. All of this was very exciting for the Soviet government, as they realized by now that the proletarian revolution of 1917 was *not* spreading throughout the world as easily as Marx and Lenin had predicted. They were very eager to use any means possible to spread a positive

image of the Soviet Union around the world, and if folk-staged dance was effective in this pursuit, then they would let it be.

A year earlier, Soviet Ukrainian dancers won first prize at the International Folk Dance Festival in London in July 1935 (Boryms'ka 1974: 20; Ia. Verkhovynets' 1989: 16–17; Turkevych 1999: 79; Borysenko 2002: 69). Maud Karpeles organized the festival through the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Some 500 dancers from Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the Soviet Union participated ("Folk Dance Festival" 1935). The Soviet dancers were often described as Russian [sic]. Leonid Zhukov, balletmaster for the Kyiv opera, assembled soloists from the Kyiv and Kharkiv ballets. Zhukov and Verkhovynets' choreographed a *Trykolinnyi hopak* [Three-part hopak] for the festival. Their performance at the Royal Albert Hall was extremely successful, and the dancers were called to perform the dance several times in a row to satisfy the audience (Ia. Verkhovynets' 1989: 16–17). *The Times* reviewer, on 18 July 1935, commented on the professional mastery of the dancers, and the strong ballet influence in this performance. In this case, he and the judges obviously decided that this type of performance was acceptable as folk dance (cited in Ia. Verkhovynets' 1989: 17). Indeed, the performers for most of the other 17 countries performed according to the first principle of staging, and the judges were forced to compare quite different things. The much more spectacular Ukrainian approach was a novelty in London.² O. Sobol', one of the performers, reminisced that this performance had a very significant influence on the further development of Soviet folk-staged dance, since it gave the impetus for the formation of professional ensembles in the Soviet Republics (Syvkovich and Ia. Verkhovynets' 1976, cited in Ia. Verkhovynets' 1989: 17). In particular, within two years, a professional Ukrainian group was formed in Kyiv. Before this happened however, the first professional ensemble was established in Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union.

Igor Moiseyev was actively involved in a 1936 Soviet Folk Dance Festival in Moscow. Moiseyev had a strong career base with the Bolshoi theater as a performer and rising choreographer. He knew government and ballet people who were sympathetic to the idea of forming a professional company to perform folk-stage dances. Several of the first members of Moiseyev's company were dancers he had seen at the 1936 festivals. Many of them came from amateur groups and from performing traditions *other* than ballet. He accepted the great challenge of developing a classically based spectacular company. Several months after the festival, in early 1937, the Ensemble was officially founded. The dancers, balletmasters and support staff were given wages and assigned to follow through on the task. They performed their first time in August of 1937 (Chudnovsky 1959: 17–19; Sheremetyevskaya [ca 1965]: 30–31; Lutskaia 1968: 5–6; Shay 2002: 67).

Moiseyev remained director of the ensemble over a very long career, choreographing some 200 dances and traveling with them many times around the world. His ensemble clearly fulfilled the goals of the Soviet administrators, serving as prominent and positive emissaries of the Soviet Union for many decades. When they first performed in the United States in 1958, "the Moiseyev Dance Company took America by storm. With a company of 106, it was the first large Russian group to perform in America" (Prevots 1998: 71).

The dance critic John Martin, who had not been a fan of international artistic exchange ... was ecstatic. Martin's review in *The New York Times* on April 15 registered his excitement about the Moiseyev's opening night performance at New York's Metropolitan Opera House. "The implications of the occasion were enormous with regard not only to international relations but also to artistic exchange.... Under such circumstances, there might

easily be a tendency to overrate the performance itself and regret it the next day. To play safe, then, let us risk understatement and call it merely stupendous" [Prevots 1998: 72].

In Ukraine, the successes of the 1935 London festival translated into continued action in the direction of forming a professional folk-staged dance ensemble. Pavlo Virsky and Mykola Bolotov, the young balletmasters of the Shevchenko Opera and Ballet Theater in Kyiv, created a subgroup for folk dance. The performers of the London *Hopak*, Maria Syvkovych, N. Fedotova, Oleksandr Sobol', Mykola Ivashchenko, A. Zhmariov, H. Svetlova, and Anton Bielov, together with Halyna Lerkhe, Rozaliia Savyts'ka, Oleksandr Berdovs'kyi and Oleksandr Segal' participated in this subgroup. They performed in a number of Ukrainian operas, and particularly in the opera *Zaporozhets' za Dunaïem* [Cossack beyond the Danube], which was mounted in Moscow in March of 1936 during the "Decade" Ukrainian Art festival (Boryms'ka 1974: 22). Virsky and Bolotov wrote about the *Zaporozhets' za Dunaïem* dances that received such rave reviews.

We paid special attention to the typical elements of the character of the Ukrainian people, on the primary stylistic features of Ukrainian folk art.... Verkhovynets', an expert on Ukrainian song and dance, helped us a great deal, as well as masters of Ukrainian dance, artists of our theater Bielov and Sobol', who put great energy into transferring their expertise in the art of dancing with swords [Virsky and Bolotov 1936: 41–42, cited in Boryms'ka 1974: 26].

Issues related to Ukrainian staged dance were debated in the Kyiv newspapers of the time, and a conference was organized to engage with them. Verkhovynets' and Virsky both participated actively in the conference. Virsky made a long presentation about the great popularity of Ukrainian folk dances and the importance of exploring its riches. Verkhovynets' reportedly shared some of his long-time expertise in the research and collection of village dances. He took the opportunity to critique choreographers who worked with only a shallow knowledge of folk dance, distorting its images and introducing unnecessary foreign movements. He felt that they should be reminded of their responsibility to carefully protect this heritage from contamination ("*Za spravzhnii narodnyi tanets*" [For a real folk dance] 1937, cited in Boryms'ka 1974: 28).

In April of 1937, two months after the formation of the State Folk Dance Ensemble in Moscow, a Ukrainian Ensemble was founded. Its mandate was to present "the poetic and choreographic wealth of the Ukrainian people, the rapid development of the new national socialist culture," and to include the dances of other peoples of the USSR (Boryms'ka 1974: 28–29). Pavlo Virsky and Mykola Bolotov were entrusted with direction of the company. Several of the London festival performers were among the founding members. The first public performance took place on 1 September 1937, only days after the first performance of Moiseyev's troupe in Moscow.

The excitement and tension and power of that period must have been very intense. Debates about the best style and direction for Ukrainian dance were not simply about personal preferences and aesthetics. The brutality of the political context is made clear when we remember that Vasyli' Verkhovynets' was arrested by the NKVD on 26 December 1937, just months after the Kyiv conference and the formation of the professional folk dance ensemble. He was shot on 11 April 1938, found guilty of "Bourgeois Nationalism" (Ia. Verkhovynets' 1989: 18; Borysenko 2002: 69). The 1930s were a time of deep political repression in Ukraine and other parts of the Soviet Union (Subtelny 1996 [1988]: 563–571). He was rehabilitated by the Soviets in 1958, after Stalin's death. This is the history of a spectacular dance tradition, but its implications as a form of national dance were not trivial.

Pavlo Virsky worked as a choreographer for several military dance ensembles during World War II. He worked as the balletmaster for the famous Aleksandrov Red Army Ensemble from 1942 to 1955 in Moscow. The Ukrainian State Folk Dance Ensemble was reconstituted in 1951 after the war. After several years and a number of directors, Pavlo Virsky returned to Kyiv in 1955 and retained directorship of the Ensemble until his death in 1975. The group was renamed in his honor in 1977 (Boryms'ka 1974: 37–43; Turkevych 1999: 49–50). Like Moiseyev's company, the Virsky Ensemble has enjoyed great success and has toured some sixty countries of the world over many decades (Kozyrenko 1967; Boryms'ka 1974).

In some respects, the conditions were just right in the early decades of the Soviet Union for a flowering of new developments in folk-staged dance, and it is no accident that such achievements in spectacular ethnic dance come from this environment. Three key conditions supported Moiseyev and Virsky's successes: a strong foundation in related activities; a good environment for the subversion of the noble style in ballet; and strong institutional support.

Foundation in Related Activities

As we have seen in previous chapters, ballet was very popular in tsarist Russia in the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s. The Russian Tsar and his large court were stricken by "balletomania" and supported ballet strongly right up to the revolution in 1917. As a matter of fact, St. Petersburg and Moscow were in some ways the world capitals of Romantic and immediately post-Romantic ballet. The names Petipa, Fokine, Tchaikovsky, Vaganova, Pavlova, Diaghilev, Ulanova, Nijinsky, Nijinska and many others come from this tradition, which continued well into the twentieth century, nurturing Balanchine, Makarova, Nureyev, Barishnikov and many, many others.

Igor Moiseyev was not born into the fashionable elite of the Russian Empire. His father was a lawyer in Kyiv. Moiseyev was born in 1906. He had a bit of exposure to ballet as a young child because his neighbor took lessons. He began taking formal ballet lessons himself at age 12. Around 1920 he was admitted to the Theater School of the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow. He danced in the Bolshoi ballet company for five years and became recognized as a young promising choreographer at the theater by 1929. Pavlo Virsky had a relatively similar early career. Born in Odessa in 1905, he studied ballet in his home city and in Moscow. Upon graduating from the Moscow Theatrical Technical School, he secured a position with the Odessa Ballet as a classical dance performer in 1928. Virsky quickly switched to a directing role. He collaborated for many years with Mykola Bolotov, working together in the leadership of the ballet companies of the opera houses in Odessa, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Kyiv between 1928 and 1937 (Boryms'ka 1974: 32–42; Turkevych 1999: 49–50). There is no doubt about the presence of classical ballet as a strong foundational pillar upon which Moiseyev's style of folk staged dance is built. Indeed, Moiseyev and other young Soviets understood that this new form of dance was one of the ways in which the "old ballet" of the bourgeois tsarist times was to be replaced.

Within ballet, character dance was very important. We have already noted that ballet had included the noble style and "low" styles throughout its history, and Romantic ballet was no exception. In the Romantic ballets by Tchaikovsky, Petipa, Fokine and others, themes dealing with peasants and themes dealing with national dances from exotic countries were

quite popular. Character dance was highly developed in the ballet schools of Imperial Russia and the early Soviet Union (Slonimskii 1939; Lopoukov, Shirayev and Bocharov 1986 [1939]). Many examples can be named, including Lev Ivanov portraying Russian village dancing in the *Nutcracker* (1892) and Bronislava Nijinska in *Les Noces* (1923) (Slonimskii 1939: 18–27). Moiseyev used this expertise as one of the foundations for his ensembles.

A third pillar in the foundation of the “Moiseyev style” consisted of other traditions of ethnic dance that were popular in the Russian Empire at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Ballet was not the only kind of staged dance that was popular, and numerous other traditions flourished at that time. Certainly Russia itself and its many constituent cultural groups had been influenced by the rise of national consciousness in the 1800s and had developed national dance traditions that were quite significant. Many conventions of national dance traditions developed in the context of dramatic theater. That was certainly true in the Ukrainian case, where many plays were set in rural villages, and the actors quite often were called upon to dance as part of their representation of village life.

Also, cabaret and vaudeville-type entertainment was quite popular in urban life in the tsarist empire. Some of these acts included pseudo-folk dance, including Flamenco, Oriental, Russian and other styles. A virtuosic trio called “Orbielbol” and a group “Ukrainian Cossacks with Swords” are identified specifically as having influence on the 1935 and 1936 productions that led to the formation of the Ukrainian State Folk Dance Ensemble (Boryms’ka 1974: 16–17, 26).

Ethnographers were also studying peasant dance and reviving it, partly for academic and partly for national reasons. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross in Leningrad, (Sheremetyevskaya [ca 1965]: 31) and Verkhovynets’ in Ukraine worked in this ethnographic vein, documenting and reconstructing village dances for performance as part of plays, for independent performance on stage or in open-air folklore museums (Ia. Verkhovynets’ 1989: 11–16; Borysenko 2002: 68–69).³

Of course, another foundational pillar for Moiseyev and Virsky’s projects was vival dance itself, which remained in the imputed setting for many of the dances composed in the Moiseyev style. More than half the population of the Soviet Union in 1937 consisted of peasants living in villages and continuing to participate in relatively integrated local dance communities and dance cultures. There was no lack of “raw material” for Moiseyev to theatricalize if he wanted to.

Given all these diverse sources, it is interesting to note that Soviet authors such as Sheremetyevskaya, Lutskaia, Chudnovsky and Boryms’ka usually emphasize only two: These are the first and last in our list: ballet and vival dance. This bias was politically correct in their situation. The history of the other traditions of dance in the Russian Empire and in the Soviet Union are not nearly as well documented or published as the ballet tradition, but they were undoubtedly very significant in Moiseyev and Virsky’s worlds.

Subversion of the Noble Style

Since Moiseyev’s and Virsky’s early careers had been in ballet, it is interesting to consider how and why their activities led to a development within ballet that was *not* centered on the noble style. In folk-staged dance, the princes and princesses seem to step off the stage and allow the “low style” character dancers to present peasants under the spotlight. Indeed,

this is what happened in some senses. Moiseyev proposed to keep producing ballets, but to turn them inside out, to highlight the character dances and mass scenes as the core of the art, and to banish the elites and mythical swans to the periphery. Ballet needed to disassociate itself with the nobility to thrive in the Soviet context.

Folk-staged dance was obviously much more compatible with Marxist ideology than classical ballet. Marxist ideology and the Communist Revolution were based on the premise that the elites in feudal and capitalist societies exploit the working people, and that the working people of the world must overthrow this unjust domination in order to make the world a better place to live. Indeed, the heady days after the Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks intended to rid society of capitalist and bourgeois culture and start a wholly new society based on new relationships between its citizens. That goal meant the development of new aesthetics and new art as well. There was undoubtedly support within the Bolshevik party for banning ballet outright from the moment of the Revolution because of its strong association with the Tsar and nobility. Stories have been told that ballet was spared this fate because of Lenin's personal appreciation of it, and because the Soviets were concerned about mass discontent if they abolished it. In any event, eventually the continued support of ballet in the Soviet culture was rationalized on the basis that ballet represented many *positive* aspects of bourgeoisie art. It was allowed to survive as long as it served the working people. It is clear that Soviet choreographers, particularly in the earlier decades of the Soviet period, struggled with how to make ballet "serve the people."

Soviet and other Western ballet historians document these struggles. As Chudnovsky, Sheremetyevskaya and others emphasize, the "old ballet" was too nostalgic, too removed from real issues of contemporary life, too narrow to serve the people in building the glorious future they envisioned. In the 1930s the policy of Socialist Realism was established. Soviet spectacular dance, like all Soviet expressive activity, needed to conform to Socialist Realist tenets. In this regard it had to portray working people as heroes and heroines. It had to be *democratic*: to be accessible to everyone, including simple uneducated audience members, rather than catering to the aesthetic tastes of the cultural elite. Spectacular dance had to be *educational* to help spread the victory of socialism within the hearts and minds of Soviet citizens, as well as abroad. It had to be *optimistic*, showing the way to a better future rather than wallowing in degenerate vice, narcissistic introversion, or irrelevance. In Socialist Realism, art had to be engaged in politics. The commissars believed that there is no such thing as *art for art's sake*. A relevant slogan of Socialist Realism is that art should be "National in form, socialist in spirit." Moiseyev and Virsky's dance repertoires are superbly consistent with Socialist Realist aesthetics.

As we see, a focus on folk-staged dance that Moiseyev and Virsky promoted was quite well aligned with the official policies of the commissars above them. These administrators were politically correct in supporting their projects and allowing these men (and many others that followed) to establish a specialized school for folk-staged dance.

Institutional Support

Another key factor that helped the development of Moiseyev style dance in the Soviet Union after 1937 is strong institutional support. It is clear that this type of dance is very expensive and requires a strong institutional infrastructure. Soviet state support of folk-staged dance was probably unmatched by any other country in the world in the twentieth

century. With its monumentality and technical virtuosity, this style of dance requires a large and stable commitment of resources to come to full flower. People work full time for many years to develop their skills as performers, choreographers and organizers. The payroll of the Moiseyev and Virsky Ensembles approached 150 full time employees for much of their histories. But institutional support means more than money from a wealthy sponsor (the Soviet government in this case). These projects enjoyed moral support of significant groups within the ballet community, in the government, and in the theater-going public. In many ways, it was a winning formula. The key constituency here, however, was the government. The Communist Party perceived itself as the avant-garde in human civilization for most of the twentieth century, leading the way and setting the course in all facets of life. The government was to control everything, supporting and promoting activities that it saw as beneficial to the cause (the Communist Revolution and increasingly the Soviet state itself) and discouraging or banning everything that was not.

In the sphere of the arts, starting in the 1930s, this led to a severe narrowing of experimentation and diversity, complemented by massive support those types of art that were deemed positive. Since these spectacular folk-staged dance ensembles enjoyed political favor, they had full subsidy and security for their work. Not only were these two ensembles supported, but also a whole folk-staged dance industry was developed on this model. World War II broke out in 1939, and the Soviet Union was the site of many of its bloodiest and most devastating battles. The growth in folk staged dance however, was reinvigorated soon after 1945. Dozens of more professional groups were founded throughout the Soviet Union and its satellite states, each following the Moiseyev approach and the Moiseyev style to a large degree.

Folk-staged dance was practiced by hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of amateurs in the Soviet Union in its heyday, and this cultural industry involved thousands of schools and performing groups. This industry boasted a system of professional specialized higher education preparing performers, choreographers, rehearsal directors, administrators, musicians, costume designers and other specialists. Soviet folk-staged dance was very successful in terms of its exports, both in terms of performance tours around the world (Prevots 1998: 71–75; Shay 2002: 61, 57–60) as well as serving as a model for this style of dance internationally. This style spread not only within the Soviet sphere, but also beyond that into many other countries as well.

The Soviet Government support for professional folk dance ensembles was quite constant through most of the second half of this century. With the crumbling of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, its demise in 1991 and the collapse of the centralized economy, subsidy of cultural organizations declined sharply. Moiseyev and Virsky's ensembles continue to hold their own, though the administrative structures related to their daily operations and their tours must have changed substantially. Both ensembles have enjoyed great stability in their leadership over three quarters of a century. Moiseyev himself remained somewhat active well into his 90s. Virsky's ensemble experienced a number of short-term directors immediately after his death in 1975, though Myroslav Vantukh has led the group for some thirty years thereafter. The end of Socialist Realism as the official Soviet ideology might have been expected to change the complexion of the groups. Interestingly, the repertoire of both groups is tending to remain quite stable. Older dances from the height of the Soviet period continue to remain very prominent in their current concerts. Newer dances tend to be very similar in style. Both ensembles have established a very strong tradition, and traditions such as these can develop a momentum of their own.

Creative Strategies

Let's move now from a discussion of the historical context of Moiseyev and Virsky's work and have a look at the dances themselves. When watching the ensembles perform, spectators continue to be struck by the impressive technical skills and expressive abilities of the performers, as well as the sophistication of the choreographers.

The literature on Moiseyev and Virsky's ensembles is often quite explicit about their creative processes. It is clear that both choreographers reject the first principle of composition as inappropriate for their goals. Sheremetyevskaya mentions Professor Vsevolodskii-Gerngross and his work from 1929 to 1933 at the Ethnographic Department of the Russian Museum. He collected village clothing, song and dance descriptions; even filming them, then mounted them on dramatic actors on stage, keeping to the originals as closely as possible. The professor worked according to the first principle of staging folk dances. In Ukraine, Verkhovynets' was engaged in quite similar work with his group "Zhinkhorans" (the name is an abbreviation for "Women's theatricalized choral ensemble), portraying a folkloric wedding or an Easter ritual on stage.

But the "verbatim report" method of presenting folk dances on the stage could not satisfy Igor Moiseyev. Nor was he attracted overmuch by the mere collection and study of folk dances for the purpose of recreating them in a more clear-cut form for the stage. Such a path would have turned the ensemble into very good performers of folk dances, but not their creators, while the ballet master would have become a photographer rather than an artist [Sheremetyevskaya (ca. 1965): 31].

I am sure that art photographers would not appreciate Sheremetyevskaya's analogy in the last sentence, and we have seen that there is much more to first principle of staging than reproduction, but the citation does clearly show Moiseyev's creative and artistic aspirations. Numerous quotations by and about Pavlo Virsky convey the same message.

[Virsky and Bolotov's] program does not copy folkloric dances, and this ensemble is not an ethnographic collective. Village dances are only the raw material, the building blocks for their concerts. "In ballet, we have not yet resolved the question of whether there is a place for dances which are not literal copies of village dances, but rather their arrangements.... Other arts, such as music, have long ago resolved this question in the positive. In addition to the exact notation of folk melodies, we see many elaborations on these models.... [though he should not simply search for cheap effects] ... if a choreographer, retaining the national style, theatricalizes certain movements, presents them more broadly, with more emphasis, with more technical development, if he unites these steps with a thematic canvas — then we can hardly object to such "folklore" [Iving 1938, cited in Boryms'ka 1974: 31].

Moiseyev is credited with some 200 choreographies for his ensemble. Virsky's resume is not as great, however he also was quite productive in creating dance compositions. Many of Moiseyev and Virsky's creations can be described as using the second principle of theatricalization. We can see this in most of the dances in the ensemble's repertoire that carry names of earlier peasant dances (and other traditional sources): *Polyanka*, *Malambo*, *Oberek*, *Gopak*, *Quadrille*, *Khorumi*. We also see second principle theatricalizations as segments of larger suites, such as the *Horo* and the *Zhok* contained within *Cunning Moku*, and elements within his *Ukrainian Suite* or *Night on Bald Mountain*. Similarly, Virsky's second-principle dances include his famous *Hopak*, as well as *Kolomyika*, *Kadryl' deviatka*, *Lisoruby*, *Bereznianka* (adapted from the work by Klara Balog), and others. Both men typically refashioned these dances freely with a very strong eye for theatrical appearance and effect. Both directors

clearly cared a great deal about contrasts among the various numbers in their concert program. They concern themselves with virtuosity in the performance, and use all the conventions of spectacular ballet that they had grown up with. These issues are most prominent in their minds, rather than communicating the specifics of any vival peasant or town culture.

Literature about Virsky, Moiseyev and other Soviet folk dance choreographers often emphasizes their intimate connection with the “living source” of vival dance. After the State Folk Dance Ensemble was founded, Virsky and Bolotov

took on the task to seriously study the folk traditions. They undertook a series of creative trips around Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. There they collected a great deal of valuable and original choreographic material, which was eventually used in their compositional work [Boryms’ka 1974: 29].

Moiseyev made frequent and long trips all over the country. Goaded by the “muse of travel” he visited the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Tadjikistan, the Volga area, the Urals, Siberia, the Caucasus, and the Crimea. Sometimes on horseback and sometimes on foot he reached the remotest villages and settlements, acquainting himself with folk dances at their sources. At the village festivals and the evening parties at clubs the young ballet dancer met with gifted folk dancers and enriched his experience and knowledge, as well as his imagination as a ballet master.... “Folk art showed me my vocation,” he says [Sheremetyevskaya (ca. 1965): 30–31; see Chudnovsky 1959: 15; Shay 2002: 13, 42–44].

Such statements are made repeatedly in Soviet publications, and just as often in western promotional programs for these groups’ touring concerts. Moiseyev may well have traveled extensively in search of vival dance inspiration for his choreographies, and he apparently had a great kinesthetic memory and a talent for communicating nuances of dance of different cultures. This emphasis was also in the interest of the Soviet promoters because of Marxist ideology and its focus on the peasants and working class. On the other hand, it was also clearly in the interests of international tour promoters to emphasize the strong connection between the exotic village vival dances and Moiseyev and Virsky’s concerts. They sold more tickets that way.

Other informal information, and the form of the dances themselves, suggest a much more distant relationship with the vival originals than the promotional material claims. Indeed, both Virsky’s and Moiseyev’s works reveal a strong tendency towards the third principle of composition. Many of the second principle dances listed above contain strong elements of the third principle of staging, and can be described as hybrids in certain ways.

Descriptions of Moiseyev’s compositions often make claims about communicating “the essence of the people” in his dances. In Chapter 16 we contrasted dances that try to preserve the *form* of the original dance versus dances that try to communicate the *spirit* of the original culture. Moiseyev and Virsky are both clearly interested in the more abstract “spirit.” According to this view of dance and national character, each folk dance is like an oyster that contains a pearl; this pearl is the “essence of the people” that dances it — the “spirit of the nation.” Folk art and vival folk dance may be beautiful because the raw pearl is slowly polished by the participants’ aesthetic taste over the countless repetitions over the years. This process often takes a long time because of the possibility of contamination and distraction and the lack of focused attention. The process is not conscious on the part of the folk. According to this vision, the oldest dances are often prized as the best polished, most pure, most developed pearls of national spirit. Soviet ideology inherited these ideas almost directly from Romantic nationalism.

The artist's job is clear in this case:

Years may pass, and perhaps even decades before the people polish and enrich their creation. But the artist who has made a thorough study of the character and life of the people can and must apply his talent, his creative imagination to accelerate that complex process. The ballet master thus engaged will have to surmount considerable difficulties: he will have to make a profound analysis of the dance and gauge its meaning, he will have to capture all the shadings of national emotion in it and understand its character and style. Like a subtle pathfinder he must be able to read the most fleeting signs to penetrate to the soul of the people and thus reach the source of the dance [Sheremetyevskaya (ca. 1965): 32].

Many dances composed by Moiseyev then, involve a strategy that has been called "creating dances not yet composed by the folk" (Sheremetyevskaya [ca. 1965]: 32). The poetic metaphor "not-yet-composed folk dances" implies the process of elaborating on traditional culture somewhat as in the paragraphs above. In these cases, however, the artist is not polishing a single dance type from the vival setting, but is reportedly distilling the essence of the national spirit from his or her observations the national culture *in general*, and translating that essence into dance movement.

To preserve the very spirit, the unique core of the folk dance, to reconstruct its fiery essence and aesthetic-ideational content — this is what the balletmaster desired. He longed to theatricalize, develop and enrich the ethnographic material, technically complicating and refining its lexicon. These principles became Pavlo Virsky's credo [Boryms'ka 1974: 17].

If we agree with Romantic nationalism or Socialist Realism, this is perhaps the most powerful and effective path a choreographer can take: He can draw upon all his observations of life in that culture to create that work of art. Relationships, characters, gestures or values not specifically from dance can be integrated into the work to communicate the national spirit more potently than would have been possible otherwise. Dances that fit into this second group include Virsky's *My z Ukrainy* (a kaleidoscope of symbols of Ukraine's regions on stage at the same time), *Shevchyky*, *Pleskach*, *Rukodil'nytsi*, *Chumats'ki radoshchi*, *Pro shcho verba plache*, *Zaporozhtsi*, *Povzunets'* and many others fit into this category. Indeed, this type of dance seems to reflect the center of Virsky's creative impulses. Moiseyev's *Moscow Romance*, *Khazan Tatars*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, and the *Kalmyk Dance* and many others fit into this category as well.

If we do not subscribe to Romantic nationalism or Socialist Realism however, we might be skeptical of the existence of a "national spirit" that exists *a priori* as an independent entity, separate from actual individuals. In this case, we might emphasize how the choreographer is simply being a creative artist, *producing* rather than *reflecting* a dance image of a specific cultural group (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). The dance is perhaps more an individual artistic creation than a traditional expression. The phrase "not-yet-composed folk dance" is an excellent example of how promoters of this genre work hard to retain a strong connection with traditional culture, to gain the authority that comes with authenticity, to be able to claim profound rootedness, and to claim the prestige of representing the "spirit of the nation."

A third category of dances in the Virsky and Moiseyev repertoire have imputed settings outside of the traditional peasant or town world, but are set in contemporary settings and deal with modern themes. This category includes dances such as Virsky's *Sailors*, *My pam'iataiemo* (We remember, depicting the end of World War II), *Zhovtneva lehenda* (October

legend, depicting the essence of the Soviet Revolution), *Komsomol wedding*, Moiseyev's *Partisans*, *Naval Suite*, *The Soccer Match*, *Rock 'n' Roll Parody*, *Snow Maidens* and others. *Partisans* depicts Soviet fighters in the Caucasus during a military campaign. *The Soccer Match* is set in a contemporary urban soccer field. *Naval Suite* takes place on a large ship and *Snow Maidens* is set in a fantasy forest.

Polishing the Dances

One of the most striking features of performances of both Virsky's and Moiseyev's Ensembles is the incredible refinement and attention to detail in the choreography and in its interpretation by the dancers. In this respect they are indeed exquisite artists.

This fine polish is evident consistently in each of the different items in the program. The dances in the concert all differ from each other in terms of their character and mood and movement content, but they are all similar to each other in terms of their thick glossy polish, clean technique, clear focus and refined expression. Polish is an important part of the dance itself: Polish changes a dance—and the changes are not random, but quite directed. This polish potently connects Moiseyev's dances to elite Western spectacular dance conventions and professional ballet. The list of conventions of ballet and proscenium theater that we surveyed in Chapter 14 include social frame, artist status, suspension of disbelief on the part of the spectators, frontal orientation, monumentality, expansion and exaggeration, control of focus and thematic development. I should add one other spectacular dance convention to this list—"interest in virtuosic technique." I would argue that Moiseyev and Virsky's ensembles display these qualities at least as clearly as classical ballet companies.

Moiseyev's *Cunning Moku* and Virsky's *Podolianochka* are very similar to traditional classical ballets such as *Swan Lake*, based on their adherence to conventions of Western elite spectacular dance. The use of pantomimic gestures and the thematic development is very comparable between folk staged dance stories and Romantic ballet. The most obvious differences between a suite by Moiseyev and a ballet are the specific movement lexicon, the costumes and some of the melodies.

Not only do Moiseyev's compositions fit the conventions for ballet, but also they have tended to become *increasingly* spectacular as Moiseyev's career developed. M. Chudnovsky, in his discussion of Moiseyev's repertoire through the years, notes that the dances have tended to involve increasingly longer suites, more developed story lines and more non-peasant settings. Virsky tended to continue creating short "miniatures," and his thematic interest developed prominence early in his career.

Moiseyev in particular has served as a model that epitomizes the ideals of hundreds, perhaps thousands of folk-staged dance ensembles and choreographers since the 1930s. Everyone involved in theatrical folk dance must agree that his work has been extremely successful and popular, though not everyone approves or works in that style. It is indeed a very specific style based on a particular philosophy, and we would do well to remember that it is not the only option for people interested in staging reflective ethnic dance. In the next chapter, we explore some of the polemics involved between supporters of the first principle of theatricalization and supporters of the third principle.

Chapter 18

First Versus Third Principles of Staging

The Moiseyev style of folk-staged dance has been extremely influential in the western world and worldwide. It does not however, enjoy universal support. Many people interested in reflective staged dance consciously distance themselves from that approach. In this chapter, we'll look briefly at what kinds of groups work more according to the first or second principles of staging. We'll also look at why they choose to operate in other styles. In the folk staged dance world, the debate between supporters of the first principle and third principle is quite alive. (The second principle represents somewhat of a compromise situation, and the issues become clearer if we concentrate the two more extreme positions.)

Settings for First Principle Staging

For people who are involved in the Moiseyev style or following the model of Virsky's choreographies, the realities of their dance world may be so full and rich that they are scarcely conscious that there might be anyone out there who "still works according to the first principle." A quick survey of Eastern Europe illustrates a number of contexts where the first principle is common.

The Soviet Sphere

Even the famous folk stage ensembles of the Soviet Union didn't have to look far to find people working according to the first principle of staging. First principle groups were active all around them, all along. Dariusz Kubinowski describes a variety of different kinds of groups in Poland, partially reflective of the times that Poland was under the strong cultural and political influence of the Soviet Union. He lists a sequence of kinds of folk dance groups: "genuine ensembles," "ensembles reviving folklore," "ensembles presenting dance folklore in an artistically elaborated manner" and "ensembles presenting a stylized version of Polish dance folklore" (1987: 62–63). This list represents a spectrum of groups, ranging from those who work according to the first principle staging, to the second principle, and on to third principle staging. The various groups were organized into an explicit hierarchical system. This situation matched closely with the state of affairs in other countries under influence of the Soviets, and in each republic within the Soviet Union as well. The distribution of groups working primarily with the first principle was not random. Indeed, there

was a clear and conscious pattern and an implied hierarchy in the system of cultural organizations.

As Kubinowski makes clear, “genuine ensembles” worked according to the first principle. They were mostly smaller rural groups, whose repertoire was very local in nature, often demonstrating the very dances that these amateurs had danced in their vival contexts earlier in their lives. Thousands of such village groups operated in the Soviet bloc. Typically, these groups performed dances, songs, and music and created various types of folk arts and crafts native to their village or narrow region. Their main mandate was to represent the folk traditions of that specific area. Group leaders were typically local people, as were the performers and the spectators. On occasion, these groups were taken to perform in countywide celebrations, festivals or competitions where they saw and were seen by others from a broader area. On rare occasions, selected groups, which were deemed to be among the best, were invited to more distant province-wide or even national events.

Typically, county capitals and larger provincial capitals were expected to maintain a group on the “second level” in this hierarchical system. These groups tended to receive more financial support, employ more highly trained directors, and to attract more skilled performers from a broader population base. Their style of performance was also expected to be more spectacular, more “sophisticated” as they might have understood it.

The third layer in the hierarchy supported in turn by provincial groups, worked with a still stronger financial base, more professional leaders, and better trained performers. They typically aspired to a more spectacular performing style, and were based in those capital cities and larger centers that could support them.

A pyramid existed, from the thousands of local groups to the hundreds of regional groups to the tens of national level elite groups. The professional ensembles represented the peak of the pyramid. Poland had two professional ensembles through much of the second half of the twentieth century. Ukraine had as many as fifteen, and the Russian Federated Republic had more.

We are witness to a hierarchical system of “art-making” where it is understood that there is a progression from “low” at the grass roots local level to “high” at the elite national level. Numerous large performance-demonstrations and competitions were developed to

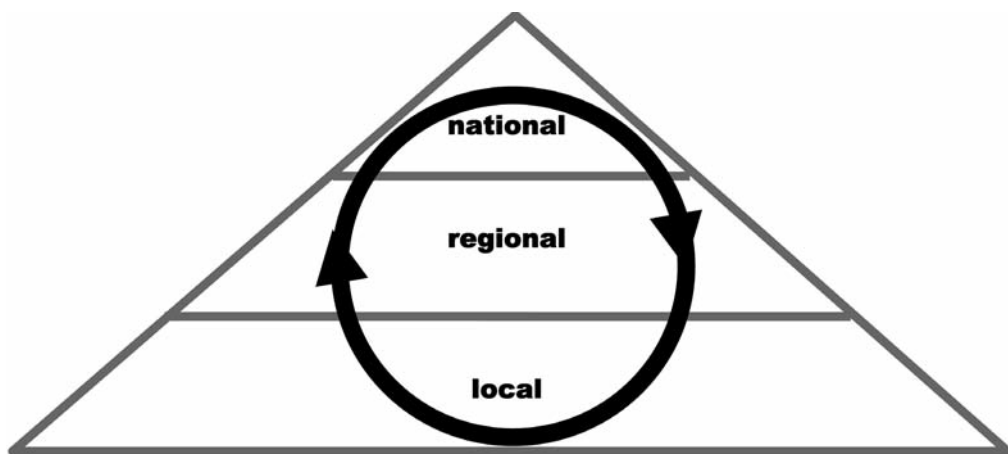


Figure 44. Hierarchical pyramid of folk dance groups in the Soviet system.

assess the standing of each group, confirm or award the appropriate status, and set the budget and goals of each group for the next period. Local groups tend to have less money, lesser quality leaders, less skill level, lesser facilities and resources, less travel benefits and certainly less status. Correspondingly, the expectations for producing real art were low. The elite groups of course, tend to have more of all of these.

This type of pyramid is not uncommon in sociological or demographic views of cultural phenomena, but what is key for our discussion here was the strong link with staging styles. People associated with the lower level were expected to work largely according to the first principle. They were expected to collect materials from vival dance culture, which the leaders understood existed among them in their very village. Their repertoire was expected to remain primarily local. At the highest level in the hierarchy, work was freer to proceed according to the third principle of theatricalization, generally in the Moiseyev style.

There's a clear status implication built into the system itself. First principle compositions are associated with lower status. Third Principle compositions, on the other hand, more stylized, are almost automatically associated with higher status and better art. This is part of the specific cultural bias of that system, and not necessarily true cross-culturally.

Not all aspects of this hierarchy were set in stone, and exceptions did appear. In terms of status however, the rural groups were certainly not competing on a level playing field. One of the cultural bases for this bias was that, throughout the Soviet period in general, cities almost always had higher status than towns or villages. People who lived in rural areas tended to want to move to the cities. Secondly, the institutions of specialized learning that produced the dance leaders; the art schools, pedagogical colleges and institutes of culture, were quite strongly biased as well. Their faculty and students had an interest in "great art" as they saw it. This meant in practice that they were oriented towards the style and reputations of the elite groups. The most talented and most dedicated of the graduates from these training institutions tended to remain in the big cities. Village groups were often directed by less successful, less talented, less driven or less well-connected graduates. As a matter of fact, people who did not graduate and local individuals with little training ran many village groups.

Even in situations where the leader of a village group was free of the biases of formal training, there was still often a bias towards the elite style. Institutional features of the folk dance group's organization tended to reduce the status of local indigenous cultural elements and lead even untrained group leaders to take on characteristics of the elite style. The bureaucrats in the system who funded the groups' activities often worked with assumptions of standardized and spectacular aesthetic values. The administrators who visited the groups and the judges who evaluated their performances also often pushed them in the direction of greater stylization.

For example, dancers in small rural groups sometimes wore stylized mass-produced costumes. These costumes were often well designed for viewing a monumental composition from the third balcony of a large urban palace of culture, but they did not work well for representing dress of these dancers' grandparents in that village, or other aspects of the local culture that was ostensibly the focus of work their village group. Similarly, accompanists were also often trained in classical music schools. They wanted to perform creative art works, rather than traditional local styles of participatory dance accompaniment. The Russian-based *baian* became the basic instrument for musical accompaniment for folk staged dance across the Soviet Union. Indigenous instruments were often unsupported. Many other features of Russian and elite spectacular dance became standard features of folk dance

and song ensembles all over the USSR and central Europe. When this occurred in small villages, this did not match the local role of first principle work that was ostensibly assigned to them. Many rural groups were torn between their aspirations to operate like elite urban groups, their theoretical mandate in the overall system, and their limited resources.

In theory, at least, the role of the local village group was two-pronged. Because of the ideology of Marxist-Leninism and Socialist Realism, there remained a need to call even Moiseyev's activity — "folk dance" "*narodnyi*" dance — "of the people." Since the sources for folklore were seen to lie in the simple peasant folk, the local village dance groups were seen as a source of raw material from which the elite artists would select, and then further refine into great art. Directors and choreographers of middle and elite level groups would attend county or provincial festivals and competitions and base their own compositions on this "lower," less-elaborated material. We have already seen this process in action with Moiseyev, Virsky and Bolotov, because they each took some of the repertoire, and even specific dancers, directly from lower level groups in 1937. We also see this process with the creation of *Cunning Mokanu*, for example, and with Virsky's *Shevchyky* in Ukraine. Hundreds of other examples could be named. So even though the lower level rural groups were disadvantaged, there seemed to be a cycle of creative ideas moving from those grass roots up into the elite.

On the other hand, the reverse process was intended as well. The refined artistic creations of the elite companies were to have great exposure, with thousands and thousands of such performances danced with great subsidies for the performers and the audiences. Because the elite level dances were performed so often, in the cities as well as in the towns and villages, the rural dancers were exposed to this artistic style. As the village dancers were exposed to the refined artistic productions, they were supposed to learn from them, appreciate them and raise their own aesthetic sophistication and culture. In this way, the artistically refined dances would move back down to the village level and "become traditional folklore again." The literature about a Belorussian dance called *Bulba* often describes its popularity in connection with this process. The dance was composed by Moiseyev, and thereafter reportedly became widely popular through Belorus and throughout the Soviet Union (Chudnovsky 1959: 40–41; Sheremetyevskaya [ca 1965]: 48).

Supporters of this theoretical system celebrated the mutual enrichment that occurs in this cyclical process. I often imagine it like water in a coffee percolator, with the choreographic images moving up through the ranks and then cycling down again repeatedly as the coffee brews. The state invested great amounts of money to keep this cycle vibrant and flowing. Of course the cycle did not include only dance motifs and choreographies, but aesthetics, taste and of political understanding.

In Socialist Realism, nothing was a-political. Dance too, was used as a powerful vehicle for indoctrinating the villagers with Soviet policy. This was one of the more important exceptions to the cyclical pattern described above, with the lower layers supposed to be involved in first principle stagings of local materials. Local rural dance groups were also expected to include a certain proportion of politically explicit content in their repertoire; often represented by songs and dances celebrating Russia's central status as the "older brother" leading the way to communism, glorifying Lenin, Moscow or Soviet patriotism. These compositions, of course, were not composed according to the first principle. They were composed by the higher-level groups and by the bureaucrats in the central administration of this cultural industry. Genealogically, these compositions were very different than the rest of the groups' repertoire. It was hoped however that these dances and songs would also cycle in and become part of village "folk" culture.

A number of factors conspired to complicate this theoretical system of cultural cycling. The problems weren't really acute at the elite level, and spectacular folk stage dance groups prospered throughout the Soviet period, as we have seen. Their choreographers could either choose to use the raw material that the village groups were producing, or they could choose to ignore it much of the time and work in a different vein.

The problems were more acute at the grassroots level, however. The key point is that with less money and less support, the village dance group only worked when local people really wanted it. The basic incentive for organizing and maintaining a grass roots rural dance group or folk choir was based largely on a strong sense of place and interest in local culture. Rather than being earnestly interested in the culture of earlier years and the work according to the first principle of staging, many leaders and administrators and dancers and audience members actually conspired to work according to the second or third principle. Thus we saw many groups struggling to work in a spectacular monumental, highly technical style without the personnel, facilities, the resources, or the talent to do so. Some village groups did succeed, of course, and produced marvelous and creative spectacular folk dance. Others were doomed, however, to be unfulfilled these new objectives. The institution was pushing them to work in the first principle, but it was also sending conflicting messages rewarding work in the third style.

Many rural groups were active irregularly. Still, however, given 33,000 villages in Ukraine, and hundreds of thousands in the USSR and Soviet satellite states where such activity was actively supported, there was a great deal of first principle dance activity occurring in the Soviet context. This activity was generally unobserved from the West. By their very nature, such groups did not tour internationally or receive active coverage in the prominent media and in literature, so outsiders were often unaware.

Post-Soviets

There was a tendency for an increase in first principle stagings of folk dance in Ukraine in the last years before the collapse of the Soviet Union and in the first few post-Soviet years. I believe that similar tendencies developed in other Soviet Republics. It continues to some degree in Ukraine, Russia and other post-Soviet countries today.

On the one hand, a specific campaign was launched in the mid-1980s in Soviet Ukraine, aimed specifically at rural schoolteachers, encouraging them to organize performing groups in every village. "To the sources!" encouraged a typical slogan. The administrators at the republic and provincial ministries of culture organized this campaign. In some areas, this campaign had good success. Though village groups tended to have sporadic enthusiasm, village children and adolescents were not hard to interest in this kind of activity because of its recreational and social aspect. Participation involved various rewards such as the occasional chance to travel. Many schoolteachers and administrators really did have a strong sense of heritage and local pride, and saw such activity as wholesome and useful. From their perspective, the teenagers in villages often seemed disconnected and un-rooted. Furthermore, Gorbachev's *glasnost* program was opening up cultural life. Sentiments of Ukrainian nationalism were being revived and were less dangerous.

Many villages that I visited in this period in western Ukraine had established or revitalized local groups presenting local song, dance, customs and music. The heyday for this particular wave of reflective dance occurred at the very end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. It rode on a wave of nationalism and local patriotism that mushroomed in

non-Russian areas of the Soviet Union at that time. In some cases, it was also connected with the new found religious freedom; local traditions and customs that had been too Christian for the Soviet authorities were no longer suppressed and were revived on stage. Theatrical presentations of Christmas, Easter, and other religious holidays that had been central to village life in pre-Soviet times became popular. This particular reflective movement also corresponded with rejection of Socialist Realist aesthetics and structures. The old spectacular, monumental, internationalist aesthetics that were so strongly supported by the Soviet government became seen as tainted in the eyes of those who were glad to see the regime fall. A more grassroots, more individual, more intimate style, based on the first principle of staging, was a clearly different aesthetic. There was some sense of resisting Soviet norms by preferring this kind of activity. Furthermore, because the dances, songs and customs of every region and every village were somewhat unique, this was an activity in which each village group could say that they were special. They were the best at performing their own material. No longer were they just second-class imitators of an urban art form, but could really be the best in the world at performing the specific materials that they knew. This was very attractive for many people.

The first principle style of performance activity did not require young, highly trained skilled performers, and often involved participants from several generations together. Audiences would often see sixty-year-old performers on stage next to younger group members. This was important given the aging population of rural communities. First principle staging was also less costly and required less infrastructure than monumental spectacular styles. It was easier to perform in a small village House of Culture with a rudimentary stage and hall.

After a few years, however, this reflective wave subsided, and by the mid-1990s, much of this activity faded again. The decline was due to several factors. Some groups had already staged all the main dances and songs and customs from village repertoire, and they felt a lack of new and interesting projects to mount. If they had already mounted their local wedding traditions once, they didn't want to work hard to stage those same traditions again. At least as important, however, the decline resulted from an eroding of government support for organized cultural activities as republic, provincial, county and local governments all struggled with the transition out of stable centralized budgets. The lack of financial stability was very demoralizing for these people, who had never experienced such administrative change before. As inflation soared and the economy continued to shrink, people had less energy and time and resources for voluntary cultural activities at all.

A discernable movement towards reflective folk dance according to first principle staging is documented in Hungary since the 1960s and in Poland since at least the 1980s. These cases share some of the characteristics of the post-Soviet examples I have just described and also lead us as a transition into a discussion of non-Soviet or even, anti-Soviet cultural spheres.

In Hungary, with its own strong nationalist tradition and its unique strength in documentation of vival dance, leaders in folk staged dance there led a sort of quiet revolution in folk staged dance. Like all Soviet satellite countries, there was a Moiseyev-style folk dance ensemble in Budapest up to the 1960s. At that time however, a new kind of reflective dance became extremely popular. This was the "*tanzhaus* movement," an urban recreational folk dance revival, where musicians and dancers could meet to perform the *csárdás*, *verbunk* and many many other Hungarian village dances. Thousands became active in the movement that requires improvisation and personal expression, and can involve great skill. This was a participatory tradition of reflective folk dance. The *tanzhaus* movement also had political

overtones, a sort of conscious distancing from the Soviet model of organized reflective folk dance. A “back to our roots” (but *our* roots) feel became the hallmark of many Hungarian folk dance ensembles. Choreographers began consciously composing pieces that broke up the monumentality on stage, re-introduced improvisation, and experimented in many directions (Héra 1986: 83–84). Dances were performed purposely with loose unison and with polykinetic passages where the focus was actively diffused.

Other Contexts Worldwide

Diaspora communities — emigrants from another homeland and their descendants — constitute another cultural context with somewhat of tendency to engage in dance staged according to the first principle. This is certainly true of Ukrainian diaspora communities, and perhaps takes place in many others as well. Members of these communities often experience a heightened sense of nostalgia and a desire to preserve something of their heritage and their old homeland. Ukrainian diaspora communities often express this desire through staged folk dance. National motivations in the dance include a desire for authenticity, which may be interpreted in a way to favor the first principle of composition. Diaspora communities also tend to have a special relationship with cultural forms in their homeland from the time before they emigrated, and which they remember. If cultural characteristics often tend to be conservative at the periphery of a geographic range, then diaspora communities, at the geographic outer edges of a culture, may well try harder to preserve older cultural forms (as in first principle stagings), rather than to experiment with them creatively (more characteristic of third principle stagings).

It is clear that community leaders wanting to establish a staged folk dance group have some choices to make regarding general artistic strategies. Practically anywhere on earth, we may find communities dedicated to following a third principle style or a first principle style of staging. Greece and Turkey are neighbors, each having a well-developed culture of reflective folk dance. When establishing top-level groups, leaders in both countries had experience with the Moiseyev model. Interestingly, they each reacted to that option in different ways.

Metin And, a prominent scholar of Turkish dance, devotes a chapter of his book *A Pictorial History of Turkish Dancing* to the history of ballet in Turkey (1976: 166–178). Ballet was introduced to Turkey in 1947 and Dame Ninette de Valois of the British Royal Ballet heavily influenced its growth. And speaks of the gradual growth of ballet in Turkey. He also writes with pride about the growth of Turkish choreographers and ballets on Turkish themes. In the last several paragraphs of this chapter, he speaks of the establishment of a professional folk-stage dance group in 1976.

... the idea of forming a professional company to perform folk dances separate from the ballet company occupied people's minds recently. Two conflicting views on this are, can the folk dance be revitalized, and can it realize its great potentialities within the pattern of classical ballet? Of course, the fresh blood of the folk dance can be injected into ballet, yet it is necessary to seek for new folk dance forms both artistic and organizational, free from the traditional and conventional classical ballet to enable folk dance to develop fully [And 1976: 177].

Professor And was the author of a report to the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Information, recommending the establishment of a professional folk dance company. He noted that the strategy was controversial. Some people opposed to the project argued that the

existing Turkish folk dance revival movement is already highly successful internationally, that these dances are “complete in themselves,” and that a company with strong ballet influence could disrupt authenticity. In spite of the objections, the Ministry agreed with the report and funded the company and a training centre. The company consisted of some 80 dancers.

local folk dance teachers trained them in the authentic forms of folk dancing. After mastering these dances, choreographers of the classical ballet company arranged the folk dances more expressively and artistically; while avoiding ballet forms. It took more than six months of hard work for the young dancers to prepare their first program. Once established, it is believed the company will popularize and revive the art of Turkish folk dance and will be excellent envoys of Turkish art [And 1976: 178].

And uses language and imagery reminiscent of Moiseyev’s argumentation. He is interested in tourism and representing Turkey to outside audiences. Notice also the hesitation and criticism of this style of folk staged dance activity, and the various strategies employed for maintaining authenticity.

Alkis Raftis’ ideas contrast with this position. Raftis is quite conscious of the Moiseyev style, but pushes to connect folk-dance with ethnography and village culture in general. Raftis has been very involved with the Dora Stratou Theater in Athens, a professional ensemble that performs dance primarily composed according to the first principle.

There are, of course, several avenues along which Greek dance could evolve. An academy could be founded where dances are taught correctly, accompanied by courses in sociology, ethnography, music, choreography, stage design, costume studies, the history of dance, etc. Feedback from ethnographic research could lead to an improvement of performances, through the introduction of associated customs (e.g. a town-crier could announce the program, there could be narration in local dialect, everyday scenes from village life could be enacted, exhibitions of local handicrafts arranged, local dishes prepared etc.).

Yet another course would be the stylization of traditional dances, as has happened with flamenco in Spain. The Russians have pioneered a school of thought in folk dance, with their extravagant staging of their dances by professional dancers originally trained in ballet. Thankfully, this course has not been followed in Greece [Raftis 1987: 160–1].

Polemics About Third Principle Staging

Supporters of first principle style and supporters of third principle style have been arguing for generations. A number of arguments in favor of third principle stagings have been presented in this and the previous chapter. Choreographies according to the third principle can translate a distant and foreign movement culture into a form that Western audiences can relate to and are familiar with. Such “translations,” packaging the dance form through familiar theater conventions, makes the source culture easily accessible. Third principle work connects low class peasant dance with high status elite art traditions, and thus can endow those kinds of dancing with higher status. Third principle dances have proven to be very popular, and attract much larger audiences than if they weren’t staged like this. The choreographer and performers can manipulate third principle choreographies creatively to communicate a wide variety of ideas effectively. Finally, work according to the third principle democratizes art dance, allows people other than members of the established Western elite to create art — to produce expressive dance in a form that is powerful in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Critics of the third principle of staging have a number of points of their own. Critic John Ayre wrote a sharply negative review of a performance by the Veryovka Ukrainian Folk Chorus and Dance Ensemble in Toronto (1981). Veryovka is a professional Ukrainian song and dance ensemble from Kyiv, performing in a strongly stylized format.¹ Ayre's critique raises several issues that are relevant here. His criticism of Veryovka's style of dance is political in the first instance. He says quite bluntly that he does not like the Soviet Union politically, and therefore he does not like their dance for its political implications. There is of course no denying that Soviet folk staged dance was political in its time. Veryovka's repertoire for their Canadian tours quite diplomatically avoided any *Ode to Lenin*. Still, however, there was a clear idea that the concert promoted the Soviet Union. (The tour organizers also avoided Russian numbers from Veryovka's repertoire, which would have likely offended Ukrainian Canadian audiences, though this was not an issue for Ayre.) The reviewer raises the issue of "what is the real spirit of the people?" Ayre calls Veryovka's dances "a lie" because the real spirit of the Soviet people, he argues, is better portrayed by negative images of "digging turnips," "wearing felt boots," "dreaming of apartments in Moscow" and "wishing to hear Barbra Streisand." Certainly, the images presented by the Veryovka cast were strategically selected for the concert presentation. However, John Ayre is just as political in his images chosen to represent the people. It is clear that performances created according to the third principle are engaged in choreographic politics (see Shay 2002: 13–37 ff).

This point, of course, is explicitly dealt with in Moiseyev and Virsky's writing. They and their supporters argue that the choreographer has to have a deep knowledge of the people and their national spirit or else the dances will ring untrue. Such statements are keys to literature on Soviet folk staged dance whether written by Soviet apologists or western promoters alike. Statements about the choreographers' intimate knowledge of isolated villages, and about "the living source" that inspires them to create folk dances are seen as strategically validating their work. I have heard people note that Moiseyev's Argentinean dance *Malambo* was performed so well that even Argentineans declared that, "it is as Argentinean as real Argentineans could ever dance. No, it is more purely Argentinean than what is danced by Argentineans themselves." Moiseyev might have visited 100 or 500 villages in Russia over many years, but when did he have time to acquaint himself so intimately with remote Argentinean culture? In the ensemble's first tour there, they were forbidden to enter into any discussions with local Argentineans (Sheremetyevskaya [ca. 1965]: 114). They were likely not allowed to travel outside of Buenos Aires. In this case, how could Moiseyev and his troupe know the Argentine people better than Argentine choreographers? Certainly, inspiration at the "living source" is not a sufficient answer. I believe that Moiseyev's supporters evaluated *Malambo* on theatrical criteria, and the claim of intimate knowledge of the "spirit of the people" is just a promotional device in at least this case.

The political implications of "spirit of the people" also come out clearly in Moiseyev's dance *Back to the Apes: Rock 'n' Roll Parody* which is said to have reflected the unhealthy spirit of decadent capitalist society in the United States. Certainly it was compatible with the political ideology in the Soviet Union at the time. Likewise, Cuban and Chinese dance compositions entered or were dropped from Moiseyev's repertoire in clear connection with the international political relations with those countries. It is difficult to argue that the "essential spirit" of one billion Chinese people changed in 1961, when the Sino-Soviet split became explicit. As a further example of the potential for politicization of dance in third principle stagings, one can consider that the spirit of the "new Soviet people" was proclaimed to shine brightly in Virsky's and Moiseyev's compositions up to 1990, though this rhetoric

has stopped abruptly when the ideal of the Soviet man collapsed. Yet their dance compositions remain often quite unchanged in post-Soviet times. In connection with these comments, and many western social scientists' views of nations as *imagined* communities, this "spirit of the people" is a construct itself. It can be manipulated, and constructed differently by the speaker in each situation.

An article "Ukrainian Dance in North America," by Richard Crum (1961), is also critical of Moiseyev style folk staged dance, but for different reasons. Richard Crum doesn't challenge Moiseyev's goal of representing the spirit of the people as much as he challenges the strategy for representing it. According to Crum, the third principle of staging involves a watering down of the original cultural heritage. Crum and proponents of first composition staging argue that the best possible way to reflect a culture is to preserve its original forms as much as possible, rather than by actively changing them. Since a choreographer's changes will unavoidably reflect the choreographer's own contemporary culture to some degree, then he or she can never preserve the original culture better by actively changing the raw materials. The best that he or she can do is to produce a hybrid where the original cultural elements are watered down. In a worst-case scenario, the original cultural elements are jettisoned in the process.

Crum does not accept that Moiseyev speaks a universal truth when Moiseyev says, "It is not a matter of gathering old folk dances and mounting them on pins like dead insects or preserving them in museum fashion." Indeed, Crum states, "As I see it, the only way to treat ... dances, once they are removed in time and place, is either to make them function in everyday life ... or to treat them as museum pieces, to be preserved in as good conditions as possible." (13). Crum is not the only one who argues that the museological and preservationist instinct can be good. There are in fact many groups and individuals whose primary reason for performing reflective dance is exactly to preserve older dances and present them in new contexts. When Kubinowski describes the objectives of the various folk dance festivals in Poland, we see the word "preserve" recurring prominently (1987: 62 ff.). People who are interested in preservation will obviously be more interested in work with the first principle where possible. They are exactly working in a museum fashion to save something precious from disappearing. This can be a valid and rewarding activity.

Another criticism of third principle stagings is based on the assumption that authenticity is valuable, but quite fragile and easily damaged. This argument suggests that the hierarchical cycle imagined by the Soviet cultural engineers is itself undesirable. This sentiment echoes the criticism mentioned by Metin And of Turkey. Some people warned him that a more spectacular style of dance performed by a professional Turkish folk staged group might "damage the authenticity" of the overall folk dance heritage in Turkey. The lure of spectacle is very contagious, whether we are living in the United States or in Turkey, whether in a city or in a traditional village. Third style compositions are imagined a bit like Pandora's box. Once they have been opened, the community can't go back. Information about the original culture is less and less available each time the dance passes from teacher to student; no matter how hard they try to preserve the original. It is especially doomed if they don't even try to preserve it. Crum referred to this problem when he asked the rhetorical question about the Soviet situation, "eventually, when all the local dances have been [stylized,] ... what will serve the socialist choreographer as raw material?" (1961: 10)

Finally, some people would argue that institutional support for art — particularly government supported art — is undesirable in general, and that third principle strategies such as the Moiseyev style always require such support. This seems to be one of the points that bothers John Ayre:

In Canada there are numerous song-and-dance groups to keep the ethnic illusions bubbling, from Scottish to Arabic. In an amateur context this is all rather innocent. But in the Soviet Union the *Veryovka* engenders a more insidious fantasy, which Moscow funds as enthusiastically as ballet or opera. In fact, the *Veryovka*'s director, Anatoly Avdiievskii, admits that his company, which totals 170 members at home, is only one of a staggering 15 professional folk companies in the Ukraine alone, with countless others in the various republics. It's as if Alberta and Saskatchewan mysteriously chose to finance a half-dozen country music square-dance ensembles manned by Broadway professionals in gold-embroidered jeans, silk shirts and sparkling un-muddied boots [Ayre 1981: 62].

Ayre's position seems generally against all forms of spectacular folk staged dance, though he seems to be willing to tolerate the smaller scale activities, those that make less claim to artistry, as less insidious.

It is probably not possible to resolve the debate between supporters of first principle stagings and the advocates of the third principle. Perhaps a cross-cultural perspective can allow that each strategy has strengths and weaknesses in some contexts (Nahachewsky 2001c: 232–233). Each approach is deeply bound up with the motivations of the choreographer, the dancers, the training of the dancers, the expectations of the audience, the occasion, the performing space and many other factors. First principle stagings can be very effective when the performers and audience have strong connections and familiarity with the imputed setting. Third principle stagings can perhaps be more effective when the goal of the performance is to translate a dance symbol for a culturally and physically distant audience.

For better or worse, Ukrainian dance has developed traditions that tend strongly towards second and third principle stagings. In Ukraine during the Soviet period, this strategy was strongly supported as a way to conform to Socialist Realist policy. In diaspora Ukrainian communities such as Canada and the United States, second and third principle stagings were the only ones possible, since the community had no access to vival dances as models for first principle choreographies. The enduring popularity of Ukrainian dance within Ukrainian communities and internationally demonstrates that second and third principle work has its strengths.

Chapter 19

Expanding Perspectives

The overall thrust of this study has been to develop a broad perspective for understanding Ukrainian dance. A cornerstone of the discussion has been to identify significant differences between peasant vival dance traditions and reflective dance. Furthermore, three main paradigms within reflective dance can be identified as relevant for our topic. Emphasis has been on differentiating these categories of dance to allow for a clearer understanding of the unique characteristics of each. We have sometimes tracked the increasing specialization and divergence of dance traditions as they engage more intensely with one specific motivation. The *Kolomyika in Two Couples* involved many significant innovations in comparison with the *kolomyika* danced by villagers around Dolyna. This staged composition was effectively geared for its role in the Ukrainian national dance movement led by Vasile Avramenko, and proved popular and inspiring for tens of thousands over more than a generation. Neither the *Kolomyika in Two Couples* nor Avramenko's other works however, were very successful when transferred over into the recreational folk dance communities across North America. The older national meanings softened greatly in the new context, but the forms of the dances were not well suited to this new role. Later, when the Ukrainian communities around the world became interested in a more spectacular focus, the Avramenko national dances were abandoned as inappropriate again.

As each of the different paradigms for Ukrainian dance became clarified in the text, they sometimes demonstrated solidity and independence from the other categories. We might remember however, that a number of examples did not fit neatly into this system, and we were periodically made aware of how the boundaries among these conceptual categories are fuzzy and porous. The recent social *kolomyika* in North America for example, is quite vival for most participants, but contains many elements of reflectiveness as well. It is thoroughly recreational, but is clearly national and spectacular at the same time. Whereas many of the other dances we have explored in this text tend to fit quite neatly into one or another of our major categories, the recent social *kolomyika* stubbornly engages them all.

In this chapter we return to a more conceptual tack and explore some of the subtleties of the proposed categories. The relationships between national, recreational and spectacular dance have been explored in the chapters above. Several additional features of the vival-reflective continuum however, deserve attention.

Vival and Reflective Dance as Alternating Phases

Up to now, most of our explorations of vival and reflective dance have concentrated on transitions that occur when a vival dance tradition gives rise to a reflective tradition. If

we allow ourselves to step back now, a broader perspective can contribute new insights. Indeed, several examples we have already looked at suggest that the reverse process can also occur; a reflective dance can give rise to a vival tradition.

The contemporary social *kolomyika* in Canada and the United States serves as an example of a dance that developed largely out of a reflective national tradition but that has become much more vival in its current state. The dance occurs at weddings, *zabavas* (dance parties) and other celebrations in the Ukrainian community. It developed as a hybrid, combining earlier social *kolomyika* forms danced by immigrants to Canada since 1891, as well as influence from Avramenko's national dance repertoires (Nahachewsky 1991: 240–246). Most steps performed here were taken up to the stage some time ago. Modified and interspersed among many newer stage dance movements, they have “re-descended” into a social dance context again.

We have noted that the social *kolomyika* symbolizes Ukrainian identity generally, though participants are often more focused on the competitive and courtship aspects of the experience. Skilled dancers enjoy the opportunity to show off virtuosic and difficult steps, to “let go” and have fun. The dance has ritual implications as well, marking significant moments in community life. Dancers generally join the *kolomyika* because of what it means to them today.

Most people who perform the social *kolomyika* simply assume that the *kolomyika* is a traditional part of their Ukrainian heritage. They may guess that their parents, grandparents and great great grandparents danced it the same way, but most have never thought of asking. They are surprised when told by researchers that this *kolomyika* form developed in the 1960s in North America (Nahachewsky 1991: 240–246). It is clear that this dance has entered the vernacular culture for this community and serves as a vival dance at least as much as for reflecting the past.

Vasile Avramenko's publications anticipate the performances of his national dance repertoire in social ballroom settings (Avramenko 1947: 31, 34, 35, 41, 43 ff.). This in itself does not constitute a return to a vival situation, but rather a shift to a recreational reflective mode. There is little evidence that his compositions became performed as vernacular social dances “completely in the present” in the first half of the twentieth century. However, a generation later, in the 1950s and 1960s, it does seem that the process took a step further, at least in western Canada (Nahachewsky 1991: 242–245). One of the keys to the normalization of this material as a vival social tradition was that the overall composition of Avramenko's choreography was dropped, but only motifs were carried into the new setting. The motifs were performed by individuals and in small groups, and the selection and sequencing of particular steps became a highlight of improvisation by the performers.

The history of Ukrainian dance undoubtedly contains other examples of reflective dances converting to vival traditions, but they have almost never been studied. Indeed, as we have seen, people with either Romantic national ideology or Soviet ideology tended to avoid thinking about vival and reflective dance contrasts of any kind. In spite of this de-emphasis, Roman Harasymchuk's fieldwork in the 1930s suggests that a number of motifs from Avramenko's stage dances may have entered the rural social dance repertoire in the Hutsul region in that period (Harasymchuk 2008: 153, 164, 169). The story about Igor Moiseyev's *Bulba* implies a similar process in Belorussian dance; Moiseyev's creation reportedly becomes popular and is performed widely by the general population (Chudnovsky 1959: 40–41; Sheremetyevskaya [ca 1965]: 48). In the Soviet context, this process of reflective dances converting to vival traditions was described using different terminology. As we saw

in Chapter 18, it was clearly imagined as a positive element of Soviet social planning when elite works of art became true “folk” dances. These examples, and the one that follows, indicate that the process of reflective dance shifting to vival dance involves a positive integration into vernacular culture. On the other hand, it also involves a critical component of *forgetting* about the past and its significance.

An article on the history of a dance named *Salonsko kolo*, by Elsie Ivancich Dunin, illustrates this idea clearly in relation to Croatian culture (1988). Dunin documents how the dance has gone through a number of different phases over time and space. Figure 45 represents my understanding of her description.¹ The first known forms related to this history are ballroom quadrilles of the early 1800s and apparently, a Slavonian village dance. A new quadrille is composed using elements of the village dance, and is introduced to Zagreb ballrooms in 1841. The dance is presented by a Mr. Bogunovic, a member of the middle to upper class urban culture of the time, imbued with Romantic nationalism. A Mr. Kuhac documents the form of the dance a generation later, in 1872. While the homeland is in the throes of World War I, the dance continues to be performed in the diaspora community that has been established in Antofagasta, Chile. A Mr. Roic is documented organizing a performance of *Salonsko kolo* there in 1917. The next documented incidence of the dance important for us is in Santiago in 1941, again within the ethnic minority community, and again during wartime. In more recent times, the dance reappears in Antofagasta, more as a softer symbol of ethnic identity than an explicitly political statement. Teenagers at a multicultural festival perform it. The dance’s name has changed to *Davi Ciro* and the terminology associated with it has switched largely to Spanish.

Overall, the changes from one phase to the next are fairly subtle in *Salonsko kolo*, since the form of the dance and its primary function as a national dance activity remains quite constant. A clear transition from vival to reflective mode takes place in 1841, at the beginning of this history. Bohunovic’s composition seems to be a typical reflective national activity, making the transition into a new participatory setting. The dance may be seen as going through several different phases after that point.²

Given our definition of reflective dancing as a mode in which the participants have a heightened sense of historical consciousness, Dunin’s comments about the Daleki Akordi dancers in Antofagasta in 1986 are striking: “None of the dancers knew of the origins of

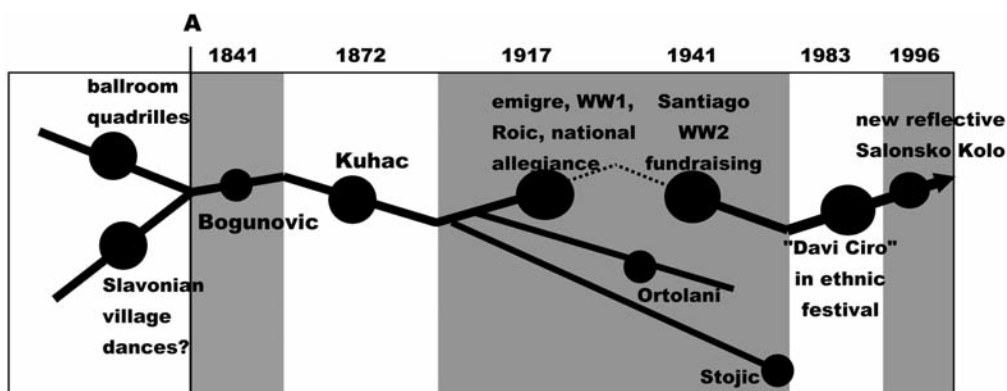


Figure 45. *Salonsko kolo* timeline, showing an impression of the possible increases and decreases in reflectiveness (Nahachewsky 2001a: 26).

the dance, how it first appeared in Antofagasta, except that the music and steps ‘may have come’ from Santiago” (113). They had only a vague general sense that this dance reflected their Yugoslav roots. This description does not match the basic definition of a reflective tradition. Indeed, from the perspective of the dancers, the dance seems to have functioned almost like a vival dance in this respect. They had a hazy sense of a tradition extending into the past, but they were probably much more involved in the cultural processes of their present time and the role of this dancing in their everyday life as persons, teenagers, and as a group of friends in an Antofagasta club.

Alternations between periods of relatively greater and relatively lesser reflectiveness for the *Salonsko kolo* are suggested in Figure 45 through the white and the shaded zones in the background plane.³ The white areas represent phases when the dancers seem not to be particularly self-conscious about representing past culture (approaching the vival mode), and the shaded areas represent phases when the dancers *are* interested in reflecting the past (reflective mode). The dancers of the ballroom quadrille and the peasant dance in the first phase were probably not reflective. Then the creator of this specifically Croatian ballroom dance clearly wanted to make its connections with the previous village tradition explicit. He was a reflective activist. We know from his writing that Kuhac shared this inclination too, as were many others of his time. Kuhac’s period, however, could be shaded a lighter gray, or left white, based on the premise that the ballroom dance had likely normalized within the repertoire for many of the guests at the balls in this generation. They perhaps continued to perform it because they enjoyed it as one of the pretty ballroom dances in their repertoire. In its next phase the dance was revived in context of political turbulence, wars, and nation building. The dance was surely politicized, and references to Croatianness and Yugoslavness were important. Symbolic connections to an imputed distant village prototype were probably re-emphasized. In the next period, the time of Daleki Akordi, the political aspect of the dancing faded again, as we have seen. The cultural reflectiveness softened as other motivations within their contemporary reality came to dominate. The dancers spoke Spanish amongst each other, their teachers and their audience. This phase is left with a white background again, in any case, it is clearly lighter than in the previous phase.

Dunin’s paper was published before the breakup of Yugoslavia and the ensuing wars, but I imagine that performances of *Davi Ciro* during and after the fighting in the former Yugoslavia involved a relative increase of political connotations and also an increase in their reflectivity. The most recent history of this dance tradition is interesting in this respect as well. Dunin’s research on the dance was published in Spanish and has become well known in the community. This has added to the substance and intensity of their historical reflectiveness. The dancers now present a historical introduction during the performances, and have restored the historical name *Salonsko kolo* (Dunin, personal communication). The intensity of the reflective mode has increased sharply in the community, based on the intriguing inquiries of a dedicated visitor.

Though it would be difficult to find solid data to confirm all of the suppositions in this timeline, I believe the alternations in the pattern are evident. Indeed, this characteristic of conscious reflectiveness in ethnic dance may well intensify and decline periodically in any dance tradition’s history.

Morris dancing in England has also been extensively researched, and raises several additional important points. Cecil Sharp “discovered” Morris dance in 1899 and sparked increased interest and study of the tradition. In the period immediately thereafter, researchers often searched for continuity between the activities they saw and pagan fertility rituals that originated

far back in the mists of prehistory. Because they emphasized constancy, their research would likely provide us with little obvious information on changing historical phases (Nahachewsky 2001a: 21–23). However, since twentieth century activity has been extensive, and since numerous researchers are interested in a critical evaluation of Morris' history, a great deal of information on change has now been amassed.

John Forrest presents his interpretation of the history of Morris dance in his book *Morris and Matachin* (1984: 15–30). He rejects the theory of origins in ancient fertility rites, and finds no relevant information prior to 1458. In that period, however, he identifies several related traditions. The courtly ring dance is the most significant tradition in this history in the 1400s. The processional, solo jig, and mumming traditions are also influential. These traditions are centered on courtly life. By the mid-1500s, records of dancing by townspeople, particularly members of guilds, become important. Documents seem to indicate a further shift of the dance traditions from the courts via the guilds to the commoners by the 1700s, and sources for Morris dance now make much clearer references to sword play. Forrest associates this with the merging of Morris and the Spanish *matachin* tradition, which featured simulated fighting. Morris tradition is described more clearly by the latter 1800s, by which time it has changed again from the Morris of the century before. Various writers on twentieth century Morris would furthermore differentiate the “traditional sides,” in locations where the dancing tradition has been performed continuously since the previous century, from the “revival sides” in locations whose tradition was interrupted or which operate in new places in England and around the world (Greenhill 1994; Barrand 1985). Forrest does not differentiate between Morris before and after the twentieth century increase in cultural self-consciousness, though I've introduced this element into the timeline.

Forrest's history indicates that Morris dancing has gone through many different phases over the years. One can postulate a cyclical alternation between vival and reflective modes in this history, suggested again by white and shaded background zones on the timeline. The ring dance, processional, solo jig, and mumming traditions may have been culturally unself-conscious. Perhaps the guilds were quite actively conscious about reflecting the previous court forms that they adopted. Perhaps the commoners in the next phases were less interested in that past as they danced. Once the twentieth century reflective tradition started, there was a discernable increase in interest in connecting with earlier forms. Within the most

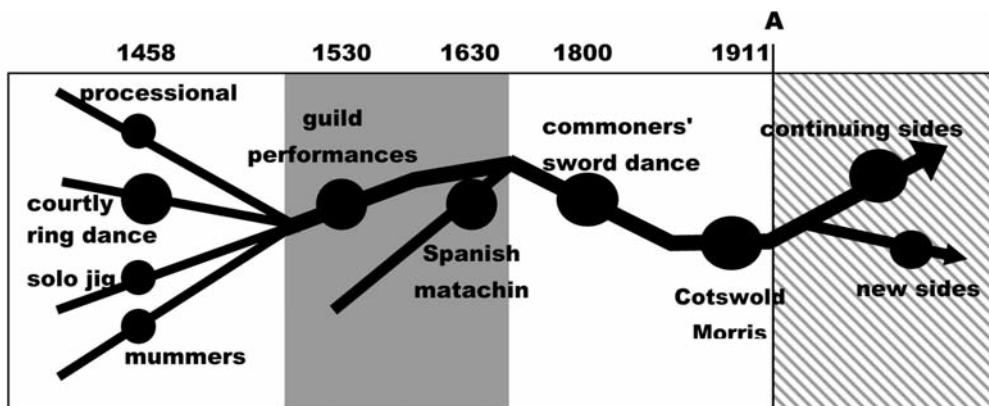


Figure 46. Morris timeline based on the description by John Forrest, and showing an impression of the possible increases and decreases of reflectiveness over time (Nahachewsky 2001a: 23).

recent period, it is clear that some Morris dance teams have continued to be quite concerned with cultural reflectivity while others are more geared towards the social aspect, the physical aspect, or other non-reflective elements of their activities (Greenhill 1994).

Morris dance suggests the alternation of vival and reflective modes in a dance tradition over a longer time span than *Salonsko kolo*, and illustrates the process as it takes place primarily *before* the most obvious transition from vival to reflective mode in 1899 (line A on the timeline). In this case, the description applies to a larger, more general tradition rather than a specific dance.

The theory of origins in pagan fertility rites brings out one of the main points of this chapter. Cecil Sharp and other Morris researchers at the beginning of the twentieth century had direct information on the Morris tradition mostly from the living memory of the dancers they interviewed and the reflective groups they supported. Given their ideology, and without the more wide-ranging research of John Forrest and others like him, their field of vision on the tradition was limited to the small window represented in the frame in Figure 47.

Theories such as those of Sir James Fraser in *The Golden Bough* (1906–1915 [1890]) influenced them to “draw in” a straight line far back to pre-Christian fertility rituals without really having direct evidence to support it. Cecil Sharp and his contemporaries did not find clear evidence that their Morris dancers knew that they were participating in a survival of ancient pagan fertility rites. If Sharp would have considered this graph carefully, he may have had to admit that there was a bend at least at one previous moment, when the Morris dancers themselves stopped believing in the fertility rituals, but then kept on dancing for recreation, local pride, personal status, and perhaps as a means of earning a shilling or a pint of ale.

I submit that the Croatian, English and Ukrainian examples presented in this chapter are not unusual, but actually point to a relatively common process. Vival and reflective traditions might simply be two phases among many in a longer timeline that extends further back in time, and also into the future. These processes are perhaps not described very frequently because shifts from reflective to vival modes are essentially processes of forgetting and of decreasing self-consciousness. Therefore they tend to be gradual and much less documented, in comparison with the often active and strategic moves from vival to reflectiveness. Felix Hoerburger contributed to the understanding of traditional dance when he noted that certain traditions are engaged in the present while others derived from them involve an awareness of the past. His choice of naming them “first existence” and “second existence” was unfortunate however, and reflects older assumptions about constancy in tradition (Hoerburger 1968; Nahachewsky 2001a). Indeed, the vival mode he observed might be better described as the “ninth” existence of any dance tradition, or any other ordinal number for all we know.

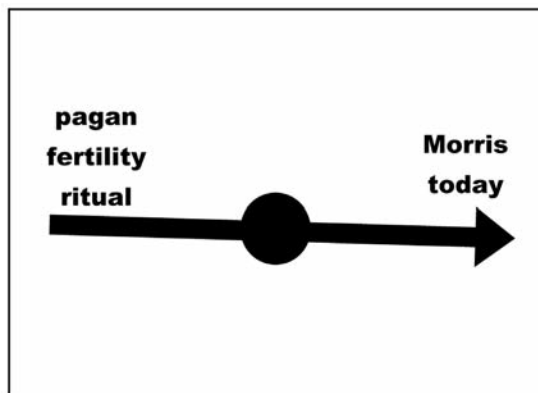


Figure 47. Romantic image of the Morris dance time line.

Vival and Reflective Dance in Their Cultural Contexts

Ethnochoreologists in the earlier part of the twentieth century were interested almost exclusively in vival dance: “As for ... the conscious revival or cultivation of folk dance, I have nothing to say” (Hoerburger 1968: 31). This stems partly from their Western Romantic heritage, which endows value to things that are older, especially if they seem to be endangered and at risk of disappearing. Reflective dance activity has often been seen as decontextualized in an era when scholars were interested in the significance of context. As such, reflective dances have often been understood as less authentic, less genuine, less real, and less important for understanding human culture.⁴

If these reflective dances are to be seen in any cultural context, then that context has to be the modern twentieth or twenty-first century Western world, their actual setting rather than their imputed setting. Contemporary Western culture is experienced uniquely in each locality but under strong international influence of industrialization, powerful media technology and economic relationships, as well as contemporary popular culture. Until recently, this sphere has typically not been associated with the concept of “tradition.” In this study however, I have frequently used the word “tradition” in reference to reflective dance activities. In Chapter 3 I described tradition as something that is repeated many times, passed on from generation to generation, becomes normalized and standardized, and yet allows for variation from performance to performance. We have seen ample evidence that reflective activities can indeed deserve to be called traditions.

A growing body of information describes reflective dance activities as cultural traditions. In some ways, the study of reflective dance is connected with the widening perception of tradition. Anthony Shay, for example, has published *Choreographic Politics* (2002), *Choreographing Identities* (2006), *Dancing Across Borders* (2008) and other works, documenting large state folk dance ensembles around the world, and comparing numerous ethnic folk dance movements in North America. The book *Ensemble Tanec: Dances of Macedonia*, by Elsie Ivancich Dunin and Stanimir Visinski (1995) describes the cultural context for a powerful reflective community, but is very special in that it explores the movement content of the tradition in great detail. The study presents an outline of the history of Tanec, the State Folk Dance Ensemble of Macedonia, with a focus on changes in the repertoire and style, as well as dissemination of those dances beyond their base in Skopje to the hundred or so folk dance groups in Macedonia in 1988. The authors include detailed descriptions of forty-five dances in the repertoire of the Ensemble. They map the diffusion of particular choreographies as they became spread from Skopje to many other cities and towns in Macedonia. The maps for this project echo those of Roman Harasymchuk, described in Chapter 5. It is clear that the geographic zones of vival and reflective dance traditions can operate in similar ways, and how similar methods can be applied in their study.

Though these scholars do not necessarily work within folkloristics per se, this trend parallels the widening definitions of “folk dance” noted in Chapter 3. Consistent with the third definition, some folklorists are interested in the lore of any cultural group that shares cultural traits. Participants in reflective dance communities, whether they are motivated by national, recreational, educational or spectacular impulses, constitute interesting cultural groups with interesting traditions. Simultaneously, shifts in anthropology have lead scholars to increasingly turn their gaze to Western culture. The growing discipline of cultural studies has opened new vistas for critically evaluating all aspects of contemporary Western social practice, particularly including non-dominant forms. Each of these factors,

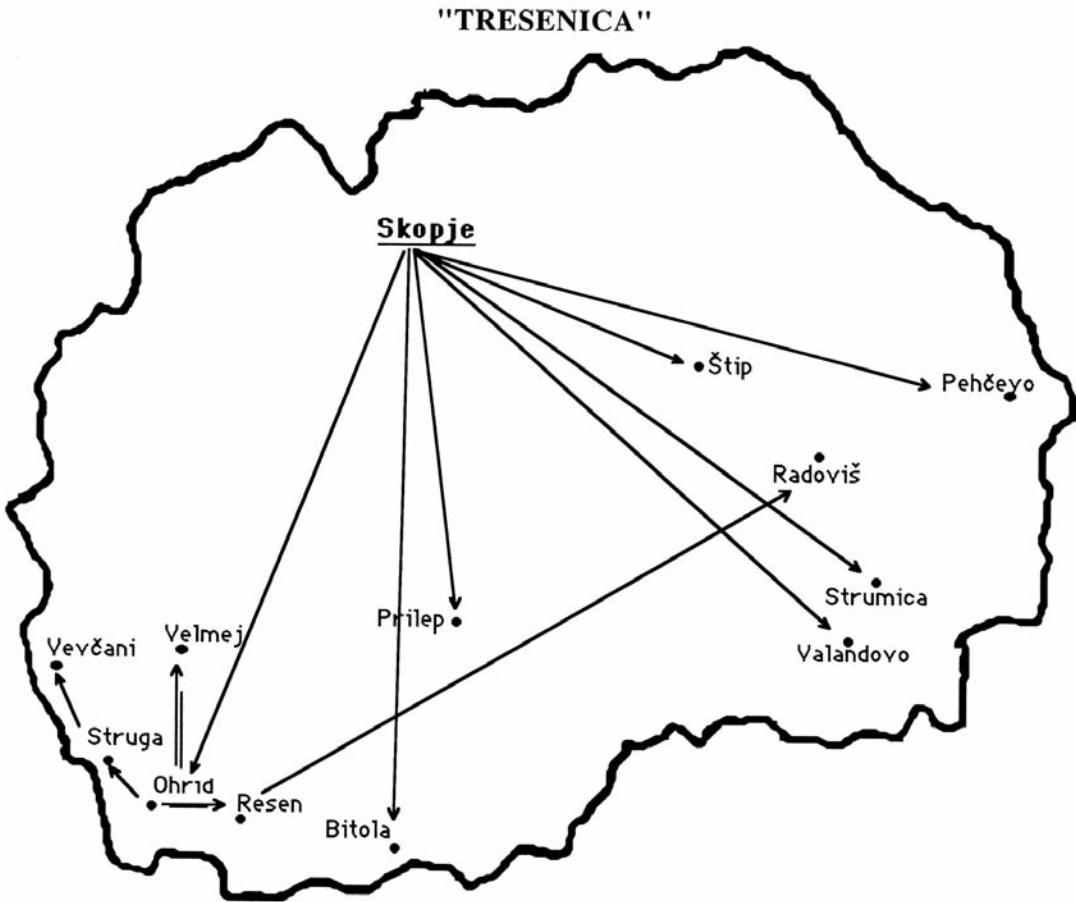


Figure 48. Map of the diffusion of the staged choreography *Tresenica* across Macedonia (Dunin and Visinski 1995: 332) (courtesy of Elsie Ivancich Dunin).

and others, came to reinforce the idea that reflective ethnic dance activities are legitimate subjects of study. The number of studies of reflective dance in their cultural context is growing (see the emphasis in Quigley 1996; Shifrin 2006; Nahachewsky 2003, 2006, 2008a).

The word “vival dance” was presented in this book to indicate the “living” dance traditions that exist and existed in peasant societies and other vernacular situations. These traditions have been shown to be fluid and elastic, sensitive to changes in context and meaning for the people who dance them. Reflective dance traditions are clearly “alive” in these ways as well. Reflective dances should not only be seen as being de-contextualized from their vival settings. Clearly, and just as importantly, they are re-contextualized into the new environments that nurture their existence.

Ukrainian dance has earned significant acclaim around the world. It has generated a large literature, though still somewhat limited in its scope, and lacking in perspective broad enough for contemporary Western social science. The specific trajectory of Ukrainian scholarship has been such that there are no works that explore the phenomena of Ukrainian dance similar to that of Forrest or Dunin and Visinski, nor like those of G. Martin or many other

scholars of traditional dance. I argue that comparative cross-cultural perspectives open great possibilities in this field. The concepts of vival and reflective dance are significant tools in achieving a broader and more balanced view. Once we appreciate the particular characteristics of reflectiveness, sensitivity to various specialized motivations can help us achieve a fuller understanding of Ukrainian dance.

Notes

Introduction

1. The term “Western culture” is quite problematic, and the boundaries of this culture remain vague. Some elements of “Western culture” relate most directly to the English-speaking world, while in other aspects, it includes at least Europe, the Americas and Australia. Certainly, other influences can be seen worldwide. Other commentators argue that it is not primarily a geographic entity, but rather a subset of humanity defined by economics and power. Perhaps “dominant Western culture” is a more appropriate descriptive term. The point is well taken, since many so-called “non-Western” dance examples have derived from marginal groups within the very heartland of “the West” (peasants, aboriginals, racial minorities). I will continue to use “Western culture” with these qualifications.

2. By contrast, classical anthropological fieldwork has typically involved a focus on one community across a variety of cultural activities.

Chapter 1

1. Sally Ann Ness (1996), Suzanne Walther (1979) and others argue that it is not possible to achieve absolutely objective cross-cultural understanding in dance studies, even by leading scholars after extensive study and participation. Our goal is not necessarily for perfect and universal cross-cultural understanding, but for empathy and openness in that direction.

2. For example, Allegra Fuller Snyder’s 1989 article “Levels of Event Patterns” suggests looking at dance events through a series of seven levels, which, in effect, include information on meaning, context and form incorporated into a single progressive series.

Chapter 2

1. The functionalist approach (or group of approaches) is a set of ideas in the social sciences that each culture is imagined to operate like a complex organism or machine. The culture consists of many parts, each of which contributes to the operation of the whole. Any particular element of a culture, such as a dance, serves a function in that society to make it work. (If it ceases to serve any function, it is typically dropped from practice.) Functionalism contributed many positive ideas to cross cultural perspectives in studying dance, since it emphasized that each culture has its own internal logic, and therefore should not necessarily be evaluated by standards from the researcher’s own culture. Researchers’ concerns with cultures that are in flux (and therefore don’t necessarily work like an internally effective machine) as well as increased focus on individual agency have contributed to the eclipse of the functionalist approach in recent times (See Royce 1980 [1977]: 64–65, 76–85; Williams 1991: 117–50).

2. For an exploration of ritual and dance in cross-cultural perspective, see Dąbrowska and Bielawski 1995: 19–140.

3. Other scholars argue that the Rusyns of Voivodina are part of a separate stateless Rusyn nation (Magocsi 2005: 7–12).

4. In practice, the ritualized buying and re-buying of the bride between the two clans was muted in several ways. Firstly, since the bride was tired and the dance lasted about 45 minutes, her mother and a few others sometimes “took pity on her.” They bought the right to dance with her, but brought her a chair so that she could sit and rest for a few seconds during their turn, before the next partner arrived. Secondly, as enthusiasm for the dance grew, the lineup to place money in the bowl mutated into a crowd, and the dance changed partly into an

individual competition to dance with the bride. Soon the aspiring dancers simply tried to be next, rather than paying attention to which side of the family they represented. Indeed, it was generally proper and desirable for all the wedding guests to join in the *chardash* with the bride. Some paid to dance with her many times.

5. Many Eastern Christians celebrate the feasts of the calendar cycle according to the older Julian calendar. The Julian calendar has now fallen 13 days behind the newer and more broadly accepted Gregorian calendar. Thus, Christmas (December 25) appears to fall on January 7 and New Year's Eve (December 31) appears to fall on January 13.

6. Indeed, one could argue that all theatrical dance performances have ritual or ceremonial aspects to them, as they all contain overtones of community cohesion, status, and perhaps other important ritual elements as well. Categories of meaning are seldom crystal clear.

7. These political messages were commonly expressed through dance and other Socialist Realist arts in Soviet Ukraine. The political message of pan-Soviet unity was clearly not acceptable to the majority of the Ukrainian community in the West, nor to diaspora communities of the other non-Russian peoples. National dance can be controversial.

8. The concept of the "nation-state" has been fundamental in nineteenth and twentieth century politics and culture. The ideal suggests that each nation (people, cultural group) should have a state and each state should govern a people (Motyl, "State" 2001: 2: 513). In reality, however, there are probably no perfect nation-states, where all the citizenry of a state belong to the same nation, and all the people of a nation live in the same state. See Chapter 9.

9. Ethnic identity is included within Richard Anderson's conceptualization of aesthetics (1990: 235). According to his broad definition of art then, "national dance" is a kind of art dance that falls under pragmatic aesthetic theories. Because of its importance for our subject matter, I will treat it separately in this book.

10. As part of her doctoral dissertation research, Sylvia Shaw interviewed Ukrainian dancers in western Canada. Many of them made it clear that they are very committed to Ukrainian dance, but not interested in politics (Shaw 1988: 85–100).

11. For examples of theorizations that have abandoned the hierarchical views of primitive versus civilized, see Redfield 1960: 23, 41–2 and R. Anderson 1990: 4, 224. Anderson prefers the terms "small-scale" versus "complex" societies. He speaks of:

important differences among ... societies — not in their worth or their legitimacy but rather in such unarguable areas as their size, the complexity of their technology, and the degree to which the division of labor and other differentiating factors (such as social class or ethnic identity) create a relatively high degree of internal diversity. Indeed, these three factors — population, technology and heterogeneity — generally vary with one another, and taken together they define a dimension that differentiates relatively small-scale from relatively complex societies [1990: 224].

12. Dance had an important role to play in the research of the unilinear social evolutionists in the late 1800s because it was generally imagined to be the most primitive type of communication, often characterized as the oldest of all arts, potentially older than language. The frequent focus on origins of dance in the "world history of dance" literature, the references to animal "dance" and the claims that dance is the oldest of the arts are each inherited from evolutionist arguments from the late nineteenth century.

13. A more cross-culturally sensitive survey of world dance history is difficult to write indeed, as most contemporary social scientists have realized that the existing solid evidence is simply not substantial enough to let us know about most dancing in the past (see Grau 1998; Williams 2000 for additional perspectives). Dance origins and pre-history tend to be de-emphasized in English-language dance literature, and many post-modernists would argue that history-as-progression itself is invalid. Concrete, grounded descriptions of specific communities are seen as more reliable than broad sweeping generalizations. Ironically, we know a great deal more about dance now than the early cultural anthropologists of the late 1800s, yet we still may not know enough about this amazing part of human experience to be able to summarize it clearly and equitably.

The huge JVC Smithsonian Folkways Video Anthologies of World Music and Dance and other projects perhaps serve as the more modern counterparts to the "old school" world histories, but most writers feel (and rightfully so) that the task is enormous and difficult.

Chapter 3

1. Felix Hoerburger, an ethnomusicologist in Europe, proposed the terms "first existence" and "second existence" folk dance as cross-cultural concepts, based on the terms "erstes und zweites Dasein," used to describe a similar phenomenon in German folk music.

We distinguish, in fact, between "first" and "second existence," that is, between original tradition on the one hand, and revival, or even arrangement, on the other hand.... I want to stress the importance of distinguishing first existence as a field of folklore research, and second existence as the field of cultivation [Hoerburger 1965: 7].

He argued that "first existence" dances were integral to the community, changeable from performance to

performance, and were learned naturally by the population in that community. In contrast, “second existence” dances were characterized as being associated with only a few interested specialists, fixed in form, and taught formally by special dance teachers (Hoerburger 1968: 30–31). Some descriptions of “second existence” traditions are consistent with his generalizations (see, for example, Crum 1961), though others illustrate that Hoerburger’s specific characteristics do not always apply (including Forrest 1984).

A second challenge of this model relates to the fact that Hoerburger’s terminology does nothing to challenge the myth of the monolithic stability of traditional dance—calling the former activities “first existence” and “original” suggests that they may have never changed until that time. In fact, however, the recontextualization he observed may well have been the “tenth existence” following upon a complex series of changes in the tradition throughout its history (Nahachewsky 2001a [2000]: 22–23).

Though Hoerburger’s particular generalizations may not be sufficiently cross-cultural for our purposes, at least one key attribute of “second existence” dance has been highlighted for this study. I believe that the most significant aspect in this set of concepts is the idea of a retrospective attitude or past-orientation, where the “second existence” dancers perform with an active consciousness of something that existed before (see Nahachewsky 2001a [2000]). This concept is shared as the key point for the definitions of vival and reflective dance.

2. In earlier publications, I used the pair of terms “vival” and “revival” dance to refer to the concepts I now call “vival” and “reflective.” I enjoyed the shared root and the suggestion of “living again” in “revival.” However, it has become clear that “revival” has many different implications for various readers, and these can sometimes interfere with communication. Revival is a good example of a word with “cultural baggage.”

The word “revival” has been used by ethnochoreologists and folklore scholars for over a hundred years, with a variety of specific ideas in mind.

Some dance historians reserve the term only for the most accurate re-productions of a staged dance performance, remounted personally by the original choreographer, or based on a detailed notated dance score, rather like a musician bringing a music composition to life from a notated music score [H. Thomas 2004: 36–37].

Many folklorists use the term “revival” more generally and with a different focus, using it to describe a tradition which nearly died out, then became newly appreciated by a subsequent generation, who then “resuscitates” it and re-establishes its popularity (Georges and Jones 1995: 79; Rosenberg 1996: 622; Zebec 2006: 97).

Thirdly, sometimes “revival” is used specifically when traditions are consciously perpetuated by descendants of the original cultural group. At other times however, “revival” is used to describe situations in which individuals or groups perform texts, enact customs, or create objects based on traditions from outside their own personal historical or cultural experience (Rosenberg 1996: 622; see Georges and Jones 1995: 82). In these latter cases, the earlier tradition is not necessarily facing extinction, but the emphasis lies in the shift in setting—recontextualization.

In all of these cases, the concept of revival is associated with an active and conscious use of the cultural material, emphasizing reflexivity and a connection with expressing identity (Georges and Jones 1995: 79; Rosenberg 1996: 622–623; Ronström 1996). In this respect, it remains closely related to the idea of “reflective dance” that is important for this book.

3. The relationship with the past is often perceived differently from *emic* perspective (from the “insider” position of the dancers themselves within their community), as opposed to *etic* perspectives (the more external vantage point of a cross-cultural analyst). Reflective dance here is an *etic* category, based on an “outsider” cross-cultural perspective.

4. Sughrue quotes Barrand 1985: 35 in the last phrase.

5. The difficulties are very clear in Gertrude Prokosch Kurath’s famous article “Panorama of Dance Ethnology,” when she tries to survey the understanding of “folk” and “ethnic” dance among her colleagues (1960: 234–236). Many of the definitions conflict with each other. Kurath later reveals that her own ideas on these definitions have not been stable. Consensus has probably not grown since that time. Many of the definitions she documents are untenable today from a cross-cultural perspective.

6. Freidland notes, however, that the term “folk dance” appeared somewhat later than these other “folk-” compound terms (1987: 213–214).

7. Agnes de Mille expresses a belated Romantic folkloristic view of the peasants and peasant dance when she makes the assertion: “The peasant dances in existence throughout Europe today are probably more or less what they were a thousand years ago, and use the same basic patterns” (1963: 46), and “We know exactly what these old dances were like. Folk dances change very slowly” (1963: 47). Similarly, Arnold Haskell is confident that the East European *kolo* tradition is 3000 years old (1960: 30). Such claims may be treated with some skepticism today.

8. This was communicated in the Dance Day Message of the president of the UNESCO International Dance Council in 2000:

Two major events will distinguish this past century’s state of the dance on a worldwide perspective.

Two new dance genres emerged at its outset, grew consistently throughout its span, and had created a new space for their respective forms by the end of the twentieth century: folk and modern dance.

Folk dance appeared when amateur dancers in the cities discovered they could practice traditional, that is peasant, dances for recreation and for stage presentation [Raftis 2000].

9. A fourth definition of “folk dance” suggests that it is the dance of anyone except members of Western elite culture (see, for examples, de Mille 1963: 166–72 and Cass 1993: 49). Here, “folk dance” is an ethnocentric gloss to cover all kinds of dancing by people in other cultures, rather than ours.

Apparently, one pan-human trait is to divide the world into “we” and “they.” The Greeks did this when “they” [non-Greeks] were called barbarians. Similarly, the Romans called [non-Romans] “they,” i.e. pagans, Hawaiians call “they,” *kanakaʻe*, and Hopis call [non-Hopis] *bahana*. All of these terms imply not only foreign [beings] but creatures who are uncouth, unnatural, ignorant and, in short, less than human. The yardstick for measuring humanity, of course, is the “we.” “We” are always good, civilized, superior, in short, “we” are the only creatures worthy of being considered fully human. This phenomenon reveals the world view of the speakers in every language, so far as I know [Kealiinohomoku 1997 ([1970]: 32–3)].

In practice, people in Western culture who use “folk dance” in this way often mean to separate ballet and modern dance into a separate and higher category. This definition is often used to support the old ethnocentric impression that all dances can be divided into “primitive dance,” “folk dance” or “art dance” as discrete categories. Primitive dance is reputedly danced by “primitives,” folk dance by peasants, and art dance by people in civilized societies (see Dundes 1980 [1977]: 2–6; Jowitt 1985: 241; Kealiinohomoku 2001 [1970]: 33–37; and others). “Our culture” [the culture of the person using this definition] is invariably assumed to be in the most civilized category. This usage is not cross-culturally viable and is rejected for use in this study.

10. See Raffé’s dictionary for a survey of definitions of “ethnic dance” in which the author himself seems confused and critical of its use (1964: 169). In other publications touching on the general subject, authors avoid the terms “ethnic” and “folk” dance entirely (Kinney and Kinney 1936 [1914]; Haskell 1960; de Mille 1963; Sorell 1967; Clarke and Vaughan 1977; Sorell 1981).

11. Like “folk dance,” “ethnic dance” is often (mis)used to identify dance of others as opposed to our dances. The implication is almost always that ours are somehow better. Again, this definition must be rejected because it is incompatible with cross-cultural perspectives.

As a catchall term, “ethnic dance” carries a heavy load of condescension. In America, it’s often used to mean “other” — in other words, not part of the predominantly white mainstream of Western theatrical dance [Jowitt 1985: 241].

In our attempt at a cross-cultural perspective, obviously, we must reject the condescending bias.

12. Sollors 1996 is a good introductory survey of the discipline, with an American focus.

13. “Peasant dance” overlaps with “ethnic dance” when the peasant dance occasions involve intercultural contact. However, many peasant events are not cross-cultural experiences. Rather, all the participants share the same peasant culture. According to our definitions, these latter situations are “folk” but not “ethnic” dances.

14. Admittedly however, even this is not a perfect example. The title makes a reference to an ancient Greek concept and Stravinsky’s music was inspired by a seventeenth century French dance manual.

15. As we have noted in the previous chapter, this use of the term “national dance” by the Royal Academy of Dance is different than the way I use it in this study.

16. Since the appearance of *Riverdance* in 1994, no less than 16 professional shows in that genre have been produced (Clark 2001: 44). They undoubtedly evince strong patterns of continuity and change.

17. Moshing is a recent urban social dance style in western Europe and North America, “a style of energetic, serious dancing done in a crowded space, especially to heavy metal or thrash music and usually done in a mosh pit, the area in front of the stage of a gig” (Hartman 1999: 18; Szott 1999).

18. Joan Cass explicitly organizes her book to contrast Western elite dance with all others on this basis: The material is organized with two themes in mind: tradition and creativity....

I would like to contrast Western European (and hence American) culture with Asiatic, tribal, and ancient cultures.... Considered in contrast to non-European cultures, the central theme of Western theater dance is the search for fresh ideas. The situation is different in Asia or Africa, where dance is closely related to a religious service, a royal ceremony, or a tribal ritual; and where the form and content of these activities are handed down from generation to generation. Not only are they familiar by their repetition to the people of a given culture, this familiarity is preferred to change and variation.

In contrast, Western theater dance is not part of religion, it is not ceremonial, and it is not practiced by the whole community together. Western theater dance features individual skillful performers, choreographers, directors, and companies ... Western audiences quickly tire of repetition. They are constantly on the lookout for novelty and originality ... reform and novelty have been sought throughout the years of Western dance history [1993: x].

Though Cass qualifies her comments as generalizations “open to criticism,” her position remains jarringly untenable from a contemporary cross-cultural social sciences standpoint. I hope some of the ethnocentric biases she promotes in this passage will be shown as unfounded through the pages that follow.

Chapter 4

1. The prospective bride asked a respected man to be her “wedding father.” The groom-to-be secured the services of a “wedding mother.” These “ritual parents” played an important role in the ceremonial proceedings, and needed to know the appropriate actions and songs well.

2. Typically, the bride and groom moved into a room in the groom’s parents’ home for a shorter or longer period. In a few cases, they were lucky enough to move immediately into a new or vacant house of their own.

3. Indeed, since the times of Sir James Fraser and his famous 12 volume publication *The Golden Bough* (1906–1915 [1890]), the idea that peasant calendar customs are all rooted in ancient pagan fertility rituals has become popular. Scholars have since cast doubts on his conclusions.

4. The recent ideas of five-day workweeks and two-day weekends are not particularly relevant in traditional peasant societies. People work every day except for Sundays and other holy days. In the Hutsul region and elsewhere, numerous religious feast days throughout the year were designated for abstinence from work.

5. For example, they claimed that only Toporivtsi preserves the bride’s elaborate *koda* headpiece, the groom riding a horse, and numerous other elements. These became symbols of identity for them.

6. I recorded a dozen weddings in western Ukraine in 1995 (BMUFA 1995.032).

7. At first, I suspected that the local wedding tradition was directly influenced by the stage wedding (re)production, but numerous people there downplayed this possibility. They insisted that the majority of the young people who were dressed in traditional clothes and sang the ritual songs had never been connected with the ensemble. Furthermore, the repertoire of dances did not match well. Nonetheless, this staged dance activity very likely influenced the village’s tradition at least in a more general way, promoting local pride and strengthening the impression that the Toporivtsi heritage is valuable.

8. Villagers reported a slight revival of traditional elements in local weddings in the 1990s, related to *glasnost*’ and independence from the Soviet Union.

9. Weddings are usually a good setting to document traditional dances in Western Ukraine, because members of the older generation are present and active. Musicians sometimes play older dances especially with them in mind. The Toporivtsi wedding was not a good example of this.

10. I had also collected information in Canada from people who had emigrated from Toporivtsi prior to 1914, and had been relatively isolated from their kin in the home village since that time. See Nahachewsky 1985 and 2001b.

11. They had moved to the village’s “latent repertoire” or perhaps the “obsolete fund.” See the use of these terms in Giurchescu and Bloland 1995: 65–73.

12. Descriptions of the dance by elderly people in Toporivtsi and by emigrants from Toporivtsi to Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century match quite closely (Nahachewsky 1985: 95–100; Nahachewsky 2001b: 96–100).

13. I believe that one extra girl was asked to be a bridesmaid after my arrival. She was a good singer and I think she got the honor of this position to strengthen their singing. I remember having seen her at the rehearsal of the village folk-staged dance ensemble during a previous visit. I believe that the bride’s brother was asked to put on the traditional costume for the dressing of the bride specifically because I was there. He felt uncomfortable and kept glancing at the camera. He changed back to normal clothes as soon as he could. As an 18-year-old male, his sense of personal honor did not include wearing the traditional clothes, but he ceded to his mother’s strong influence and her sense of family honor for a short while.

14. This did not concern them at all, except perhaps when they were speaking with me, and noticed that my Ukrainian speech was quite different than theirs.

15. I wish I had been able to document whether Moldovan weddings included *rus’ka* or any dance with a similar form.

Chapter 5

1. The “chor” part of the word relates to the ancient Greek word “chorus” for dance, which we know in English words like “choreography.”

2. Harasymchuk’s Hutsul map represents the study of one region rather than a country, but shares many of the same challenges. The Hutsul region was part of the Polish state in the interwar period when Harasymchuk conducted his core research and published his book. The graphic presentation of the distribution of *vorokhtianka* reproduced in Figure 13 is a bit misleading. All the villages in which the dance was found are encircled by the dotted line. To the north, this results in an isochor dividing the areas with *vorokhtianka* from those without *vorokhtianka*. To the east, south and west, however, the line simply documents the limits of his research. We do not know how far the dance zone continued to the southwest or southeast, and perhaps neither did Harasymchuk. He did not have the mandate or the funding to explore further.

3. The *Ethnographic Atlas of Slovakia*, of course, continues the description of the geographic dissemination of traditional dance in those villages. Specific comparisons and contrasts are difficult to make however, because

the questions asked by the researchers were not the same in both countries, so the isochors would be identifying different types of statements. Numerous studies of Carpathian mountain culture suggest strong commonalities in traditional life as this mountain range extends into Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania. Unfortunately, pan-Carpathian studies rarely deal with dance, and dance studies are rarely transnational.

4. Similarly, *kolesá* were found in approximately 74 of the researched villages after World War II, but were absent in 176 others.

5. The hypothesis of polygenesis suggests that the origin of any one cultural trait may occur in many places independently. The hypothesis of monogenesis posits the origin of each cultural trait in a single place and time. Some simple cultural traits seem to support the idea of polygenesis.

6. Since his study involved fieldwork in the Hutsul area specifically, Harasymchuk could not provide information on diffusion out of the Hutsul area into neighboring regions. This process did take place however, and was partially documented in his later research. He did not study diffusion to or from neighboring Romanian territories at all.

7. In this sense, dances are much like folk narratives. Folk narratives have been much better researched. Folk tale motifs typically have a very broad diffusion and variants of many tales can be found in multiple languages.

8. We also tend to know more about the forms and contexts for dance in elite societies since dance masters and others had the knowledge, opportunity and incentive to write.

9. No couple danced a *modernyi* dance in the ten hours of video recorded at that wedding. Rock 'n' roll dances may sometimes be performed in couples in discotheques.

Chapter 6

1. The historical-geographic method has been used for over a hundred years in folklore studies. It involves the study of geographic dissemination of specific folklore types as well as historic documentation in an attempt to reconstruct the development of that type and perhaps discover its origins (see Dorson 1972: 7–12; Georges and Jones 1995: 138–41). As noted by Dorson, Georges and Jones, many of the assumptions and conclusions of the historical-geographic method have come under some attack over the years, though it remains resilient in some respects.

2. Lillian Lawler elaborates seven different types of sources for her study of dance in ancient Greece: literary, metrical, musical, archaeological, epigraphical, linguistic and anthropological (1964: 15). Her more detailed list can be collapsed into our two categories.

3. It is particularly relevant to the dance of the elite classes. Dance historians know a great deal about the social and theatrical dances of various periods through the publications of dancing masters, drawings, diaries and even dance notations. Scholars are generally increasingly sensitive to the strengths and to the limitations of these sources (see Sparti 1997 and Shay 1996, for examples).

4. László Felföldi mentions G. Martin 1979, Lányi, G. Martin and Pesovár 1983 and Karsai and G. Martin 1989 as important texts for this perspective (1999: 58–9).

Chapter 7

1. An analogy can be made with speech on this level. When a person learns to speak, they do not have to learn all the possible sentences they will ever speak in their lifetime. They rather learn a set of words, word-forming rules, as well as a set of rules for how words can be combined into sentences. In linguistics, studies of these aspects of prescriptions are called *lexicology*, *morphology* and *syntax*, respectively. The same terms and concepts are used in dance research as well, particularly in structural studies.

2. This is significant within the village for the potential of continuity of the tradition (Giurchescu and Boland 1995: 62). It is also significant for researchers of peasant dance, who often work with elderly individuals if they attempt to document the dance tradition of the past.

3. One can imagine a technologically motivated choreographer trying to create a totally random dance. She programs all the human joints and their movement ranges into a computer, and instructs the machine to create a composition using a random number of movements by a random number of body parts, in random directions, with random types of energy, speed and timing. The result of the computer program is not likely to be easily perceived as dance in any culture. The most free improvisations by a human dancer from any culture (including contemporary theatrical dance in the West) would reveal much more patterned selections of movement.

Chapter 8

1. Choreographers also treat the issue lightly when they report that ethnographic sources are not important to them when creating their staged folk dances.

2. This is compatible with the perspective of thinking of dances involving form, context and meaning. The context, in any event, can never be identical, as time lapses between the two performances. More often, the differences are much greater than just the date.

3. “Regional” dance groups are one of several types of folk dance groups in Poland. They are often rurally based and focus on the historic vernacular traditions of their small region. They tend to reflect vival traditions quite closely, and contrast with the more “flashy” groups whose repertoires include more stylized dances from all across Poland. See Kubinowski 1987: 62–3 and the discussion in later chapters here.

4. This is quite clear in the case of the *kujawiak*, where the dancers on either side of the vival / reflective contrast seem to have serious difficulties in becoming competent in the other tradition. It is less obvious in the flamenco example because the vival and reflective traditions overlap significantly in time, space and form, and because numerous dancers actually perform in both settings at different times (they may be professionals, paid to dance in the *tablaos*, but also participating in *juergas* at home when they get a chance). Phillips’ descriptions imply the existence of performers who flourish in one context but are not as successful in the other. The dance forms and meanings differ in each setting, and the crossover dancers can be thought of as being “bicultural” (or perhaps “bi-chor-al”).

Chapter 9

1. As such, it has many similarities with the concept of “ethnic group.” See Chapter 3. Not all ethnic groups, however, enjoy the institutionalized status of “nation.”

2. In spite of the fact that the majority of countries in the world do not fit this model well, the nation-state has served as an ideal for the political world between 1800 and 1970. States are often referred to simply as a “nation” in non-technical conversations, implying a convergence of the cultural and the political-legal levels, and promoting the sense of legitimacy and “naturalness” for the country.

3. This connects with the discussion of the powerful geographic diffusion in upper class European culture from Chapter 5.

4. In England and other areas in western Europe, folklore also became strongly established through influence from the Romantic spirit. The interest was sometimes more connected with “popular antiquities” and, eventually, with the search for earlier stages of social evolution. In central and eastern Europe under the Empires, finding a national identity remained more dominant.

5. Folklore studies have since generally shifted away from the search for ancient and pure national character, though the energy that established the discipline remains somewhat influential.

6. This period of Romanticism coincides with movements for the emancipation of slaves and serfs all over the Western world (Drescher and Engerman 1998: 21–27, 346, 357).

7. As we see below, the bias towards antiquity in the development of national dance traditions remains. Along with other characteristics, this is an inheritance from the Romantic perspective.

8. This connection may be expected in descriptions of national dance activities, but it is interesting to note that it has remained just as pervasive for recreational, educational and even spectacular ethnic dance throughout the twentieth century.

9. The people who would normally know enough about the national dance tradition are often personally invested in it in a way that they do not want to “discredit” the national myth. Furthermore, most ethnochoreological research has gone into studies of vival dance, rather than reflective traditions (see Shay 2002, 13–14).

10. The most aggressive supporters of the concept of “invention” of traditions may emphasize the innovations more than preservation, though it must be recognized that

cultural traditions cannot be fabricated out of whole cloth; there are real limits to the inventions of tradition. As Hobsbawm argues, states or nationalist politicians may, in fact, make nations, but they cannot totally make them up. It should be obvious that one could not have constructed mid-to-late 19th century Italians out of the Chinese or New Guinean cultural traditions [Kohl 2001: 32].

11. Indeed, the specific need for material for national folk dance revivals was often a primary motivation for the development of dance research, rather than the other way around (Lange 1980: 7).

12. Avramenko died in New York in 1981, but his ashes were reburied in his home village of Stebliv in central Ukraine in 1995, after Ukraine’s independence. A museum was set up in his honor there, and there has since been some interest in his dances, though there are few in Ukraine who can reconstruct the dances accurately from the materials available there. Furthermore, the style of these dances does not coincide with the more spectacular style of folk-staged dance that has been dominant in Ukraine for over half a century.

13. To a large degree, I am also a member of a national community and I also believe in the validity of the national dance as a national symbol.

Chapter 10

1. One of the common functions of antique furniture shops is to “restore” the furniture by stripping off its layers of paint and then giving it a “natural” wood stain. Scholars of this subject have pointed out (perhaps somewhat scandalously for antique furniture sellers) that many of these pieces of furniture were painted when they were new. They were never intended to have the “natural wood look.” The “natural” look is an aesthetic that is often created retrospectively to associate the piece with an earthy, old-fashioned, rustic and wholesome image. The restoration of the furniture is very important to the antique market, but not necessarily historically accurate or consistent with the aesthetics or practice of the original users. “Antiquing” is an active process of creation to some degree, just as developing a national culture is.

2. Only after great energy is expended in disseminating and popularizing the national forms might they actually become the vernacular form themselves in some communities. If this is the case, as it seems to be in some communities in Greece and elsewhere, the dances become so integrated into local cultural life that the succeeding generation learns them and dances them even without additional support from the nation-building institutions. Such situations however, are rare.

3. Peasant customs and rituals are often engaged with the theme of fertility. They often express this explicitly. This earthy interest in procreation might translate as vulgarity when taken out of its context and put into a new one.

4. Perhaps with the exception of distant and safe ancient “pagan” elements, which were no longer seen as a threat to the Christian authorities, but served to emphasize antiquity.

5. Of course, he hoped that these dances would be performed in Ukraine too, though he realized that this was not likely under Moscow-based Soviet rule.

6. Avramenko hailed from central Ukraine, whereas most of the Ukrainian Canadians, Americans, Brazilians, Argentines, Yugoslavians, Australians and others that he worked with had roots in the western Ukrainian territories of Galicia or Bukovyna. Historical, cultural and political differences between Central Ukraine and Western Ukraine are significant, and it continues to take much energy to develop and consolidate a single Ukrainian identity.

7. Interestingly, the pro-Soviet ULFTA organization in Canada embraced Avramenko’s dance repertoire enthusiastically in 1926. In western Ukraine, when the Soviets invaded in 1939 and came into contact with Avramenko’s students, they banned his dance repertoire outright. Both reactions illustrate that national dances are ideological.

8. Critical scholarly validation of their claims is sometimes less important to them than the potential nation-building function of their conjured images. Torp notes with some irony that it was a university professor in Athens who wrote the strong patriotic passage about “Greekness” being so consistent throughout Greek history (1993: 277–278) (see the quotation about regional variation above). That perspective is very different than her own. Torp and many contemporary scholars in ethnic studies recognize that the *perception* of authenticity is sometimes more important in identity building than the actual preservation of older cultural forms. Our definition of “authenticity” in Chapter 3 is purposely linked to perception.

9. The Scythians were an Indo-European people who lived in Ukrainian territories and eastward along the steppes from approximately 900 to 300 B.C. They were described as the first horse riders by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus and left many archaeological treasures in their burial mounds. Unfortunately, we know nothing of their dancing, and the territories they occupied do not coincide with the geographic range of the *arkan* (see Talbot Rice 1957; Grakov 1971; and Rolle 1989). Lisbet Torp showed that the footwork pattern of the basic *arkan* step is widespread in the Balkans and other parts of Europe. She examined 1,291 chain and round dances from many countries across Europe (but not Ukraine). Almost one quarter of them (310) share the same core step with the *arkan*, which she identified as basic Pattern B (Torp 1990: 1: 99–111, and 2: 62, 83–92).

10. One exception to this pattern in the Ukrainian national dance repertoire are the *kadryli* (quadrilles), relatives of North American square dances, which originated in western Europe in the early nineteenth century and became very popular across the western world (see Lamb 2001). They became widespread in Ukrainian villages at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth (Humeniuk 1969 [1962]: 24 ff.). Avramenko’s published repertoire contains four dances with quadrille elements. It seems that Avramenko did not know the historical origins of these dance forms, but was attracted by the complex formations and therefore the dances’ theatrical interest (Nahachewsky 2003: 41).

Chapter 11

1. It may be for this reason that the Greek and Turkish examples were salient in the discussion of Chapter 9. These countries are situated in a part of the world where political and national relationships are intense.

2. The term “national dance” has complex connotations in the context of the Soviet Union. In Marxist-Leninist ideology, it was believed that nation-states would eventually disappear as communism matured around the world. The Soviet government was particularly vigilant against nationalism in the various republics under

its control. Some of these, like Ukraine, had developed strong nationalist movements and even independent states after the collapse of Tsarist Russia. They had to be “re-united with Moscow” by military actions of the Red Army between 1917 and 1922. “Nationalist dance” would have been seen as clearly anti-Soviet and dangerous. Socialist Realist policies did allow for art to be “national in content, socialist in spirit,” though any expressions of culture that contrasted with Russian-centered Soviet models had to be presented very carefully and in a politically correct way. The core definition of “national dance” presented in Chapter 2 — a dance expressing allegiance to a state — can best be applied in those situations where the dancers are expressing support for the multinational Soviet state in general. When applied to Ukrainian dance in the Soviet context, “national dance” might sometimes also be understood according to the broader definition presented in Chapter 2 — a positive symbol of a people.

3. Vasyl' Verkhovynets, for example, a major leader for dance in the Ukrainian national movement prior to the 1930s, was arrested and shot by the Soviet commissars in 1938, convicted of bourgeois nationalism.

4. Some cultural minorities are indigenous, as are the many aboriginal peoples in the Americas and Asia. Some came into existence as a result of cultural contact within a specific area, such as the Metis, Cajuns, Afro-Americans and the Muslims in the Balkans. These peoples all live in what can be called their homeland. Other cultural minority groups identify culturally with a people, which is dominant in an adjacent nation. These include French-speakers in Switzerland, Slovene-speakers in Austria, Hungarian-speakers in Romania and a great many others. They may well be indigenous in their particular areas. In these cases however, the current political borders do not match the ethno-cultural zones. Other cultural minorities, such as the Roma and Jews, have been widely dispersed for a long time. In all these cases, the concept of homeland is more nuanced and complex than with indigenous groups. Still other cultural minorities are immigrant groups, moving from an earlier location into the place they live now. This process has deep historic roots, but is particularly significant in the last several centuries and continues today. In fact, in many countries, including the United States and Canada, immigrant groups far outnumber the indigenous populations and claim the “mainstream” of culture.

5. Indeed, many people who emigrate from their homes may feel a nostalgia and homesickness. Making the transition to a new cultural milieu with its attendant stresses, they may become increasingly aware of the specificity of their own culture and sometimes become *more* attached to the cultural symbols of the homeland than their cousins who stayed behind.

6. See the discussions of the long and longer communications circuits in Chapter 13.

7. The other functions also affect the conventions of the dance tradition as well. We'll discuss the characteristics of educational, recreational and spectacular dance in the units that follow.

8. This position is a form of handholding for a mixed gender couple. The dancers both face the same direction, the male standing slightly behind and to one left of the female. Both dancers' left arms are extended forwards and to the side, with the female's left hand resting in his upturned palm. She bends her right arm sharply so that her right palm is located just above her right shoulder, facing up. He places his right hand in hers. The position may also be taken symmetrically.

Chapter 12

1. Note the perceptions of race and national spirit that are consistent with Romantic nationalism here and in point 2 of the cultural values below. See Chapter 9.

2. This value is drawn from the 1940s source and reflects the perception of race at that time. It is related to older perceptions of the relationship between race and temperament.

3. From a contemporary perspective, it is interesting to read how the proponents of folk dance were worried about the conservative segment of the American population that was against dance in general:

Folk dance serves as an excellent opening wedge to a rhythmic program in a community that will not accept dance as such, due to traditional taboos precluding participation in ballroom and other forms of dance through erroneous, but nonetheless prejudicial associations. In this regard, communities may be re-educated gradually, to accept dance as a wholesome form of recreation. If parents participate first in folk dance, in much the same manner in which our ancestors in this country devised “play-party games” to avoid the term dance and the use of musical instruments for their accompaniment. In those communities in which a prejudice against dance prevails, a similar compromise in terminology might be advisable at first, such as substituting the term “rhythmics” for “dance” until the prejudices against dance as such, are eradicated [Duggan, Schlottmann and Rutledge 1948: 32–33].

4. The repertoire from each source can be deduced often from their names alone, since the repertoire of dances performed in each context overlapped very little. Mary Ann Herman notes that *kolomyika*, *korobushka*, *karapyet*, *kokhanochka*, *polka koketka* were popular at Ukrainian social events in New York prior to 1930 (M.A. Herman 1961: 17). Only the *kolomyika* was part of Avramenko's national repertoire, and in quite a different variant. The others would have been seen as inappropriate because they showed foreign influence or were newer forms, inconsistent with the principles of purity and antiquity discussed in Chapter 10.

5. Avramenko was employed in Sadov's'kyi's group for several years up to 1921. Nine of the twelve dances recorded by Shambaugh from Sadov's'kyi have the same names as in Avramenko's publications (*Arkan*, *Chumak*,

Hopak *kolom*, *Hrechanyky*, *Kateryna*, *Kolomyika*, *Metelytsia*, *Zaporozh's'kyi herts'* and *Zhuravel'* [allowing for spelling changes]). The other three dances, *Kozak*, *Gonta*, and *Khorovod* are not published by Avramenko under these names, but can also be linked directly to Avramenko's later work. The actual forms of the dances are somewhat different in the two sources.

6. *Kateryna* was a popular opera performed after 1899, written originally by Mykola Arkas in 1891 ("Arkas, Mykola" 1984).

7. This process of attributing Ukrainian dances to Russia seems to have taken place within the international folk dance movement in America, rather than from earlier in Russian sources: Russian vival tradition and Russian language publications would have resulted in a spelling "*Gopak*," but the international folk dance publications usually retain the Ukrainian "H," even when calling it a Russian dance. The *kolomyika* is a vival dance from southwestern Ukraine, and its geographical distribution does not extend anywhere near Russian ethnographic territory, so it must have been ascribed to Russia later in the reflective context (Burchenal 1922: 27).

8. As we have seen in Chapter 11, national dances are sometimes converted into recreational or educational dances as part of their "life cycle."

9. Morris dancing is not always a purely recreational dance activity, but there are usually elements of national dance, and perhaps elements of ritualism and spectacle as well (Greenhill: 1994).

10. The term "step" reflects the fact that footwork is the focus in many European dance traditions. In other parts of the world, footwork is not important at all. In some Hawaiian dances, for example, the whole dance is performed sitting down. The focus is on movement of other body parts.

Chapter 13

1. Contrast this with the implied emphasis on the acoustic experience in the words "audience" and "auditorium."

2. The "silent" dances of the Dinaric Mountains in Croatia are one of several exceptions in European vival dance (Dunin 1966). Numerous modern dance choreographers have created dances without music.

3. An exception to this rule is when disc jockeys extend the personal and immediate control of the pre-recorded tracks, and actively increase this expressive potential.

4. Style has been defined in a great many ways. Some dance writers use it to define a genre of dancing, or a "school" or a specific "technique" within that genre, such as Balanchine's style or Martha Graham style. When used to describe dance form, I use the word "style" to differentiate those aspects of the dancing that are described qualitatively, in contrast to "structure" which involves those aspects of the dancing that are measured quantitatively (see Nahachewsky 1998: 71).

5. Various issues connected with "dance and costume" are explored in Loutzaki (1994b: 117–155).

Chapter 14

1. In contrast, locally based performances of spectacular dance, such as the local dance school's annual recital, obviously tend to have a closer, often personal relationship between performers and viewers.

2. The social status of the *corps* members of the dance company (though their training is very similar to that of the *prima ballerina*) is only moderately prestigious, and in some chapters of ballet history the *corps de ballet* have been ascribed quite low status.

3. Aesthetics too, are culturally specific. For example, many spectacular dance traditions in other cultures are spiritual events, often connected formally with religion. The most beautiful dance, then, is often seen as the holiest or the most effective in communicating with the supernatural.

4. Perhaps the frame of a television might serve as a closer analogy, because of the presence of movement and sound.

5. Some contemporary ballets, and particularly modern dance choreographies, push to dissolve the invisible proscenium wall, which, as Bertolt Brecht argued, insulates the audience too safely from the action on stage. As Brecht saw it, the proscenium frame insulates the audience from being transported. The intent in his style of theater is to perform right in the audience's face so to speak, to insist that the performers are here and now in the same building in the same real world. In some senses this approach negates the idea of suspension of disbelief. This is another example of the exception proving the rule.

6. Many participatory dance events also involve large numbers. We can imagine, for example 2000 people in a huge ballroom dance. In that case however, the sight lines are rarely a concern and any one person can see only a fragment of the large group.

7. This is not to say that all ballet is thematic. Particularly in the twentieth century, some ballet and modern dance choreographers have made conscious decisions to create non-literal, non-story-line dance that deals with the abstract qualities of movement in time and space.

Chapter 15

1. An earlier version of these ideas appeared in my article in *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 27/1: 1–15.
2. Reflective dances may also be participatory, including recreational and educational activities, as well as some national dance. We leave these out of the discussion for this chapter so that we can concentrate on the process of theatricalization specifically.
3. The term “motif” is technically more inclusive than “step” since many dance traditions focus on body parts other than the feet, and since significant repeated movements may not involve weight transfers of the feet at all. When it is used in reference to European based folk dance, the term “step” tends to be looser and less technical and more reflective of the participants’ perspective rather than the analyst’s.
4. See many examples in Warner 1974. I am not aware of any notation score for a complex spectacular Ukrainian dance. Avramenko’s *Kolomyika in Two Couples* is a relatively simple national dance, but sufficiently complex to make the points for this chapter.
5. At another point, later in this same dance film, the woman in the red sweater is involved in another distinct communicative moment. The group has just concluded the circling figure to the left. It would be normal for them to circle next to the right. Instead, she releases the arm hold and proposes they switch directly to the resting/display figure. It seems that she is in the mood to perform some fancy display steps. The other dancers communicate with their arms that they are not ready for that yet, and try to reunite in the closed circle again. She doesn’t cooperate. Before the kinetic debate is resolved however, the musicians stop playing.
6. The International Folk Music Council “Syllabus” defines a motif as “a fundamental building block of a dance upon which the whole composition of the dance is based. A motif is the smallest movement unit that functions on its own and exists in the consciousness of the performer” (1974: 129). The *kolomyika* data and descriptions from various other indicate that the concept of “existing in the consciousness of the performer” sometimes might need to be interpreted quite loosely.
7. The rhythm 1/8, 1/8, 1/4 (♩♩♩) is strongly dominant in the national *kolomyika* tradition and in almost all of Avramenko’s dances. It is the rhythm for some 60 percent of all steps in his *kolomyiky* (Nahachewsky 1991: 152–154).
8. The database contained three *kolomyiky* from each tradition, and the procedure for defining motifs was relatively mechanical and narrow. A total of 603 motifs were documented for five *kolomyika* traditions in total (Nahachewsky 1991).
9. The processes involved are reminiscent of vival dance geographic and historic zones in many ways. See Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 16

1. When Vasylenko speaks of “folkloric groups” here, he is referring to the smaller rural groups whose mandate is to display the local traditional dance and music repertoire on stages, usually with little arrangement and elaboration. Roderyk Lange called them “regional groups” of Poland in Chapter 8.
2. (BMUFA 1998.022.v1012). This is the same village in which the wedding *chardash* was danced, described in Chapter 2.
3. For our purposes, the video from that afternoon is not as desirable as a 1920s film of the actual dances in their normal vival context. However, it remains the most direct information available.
4. I describe this dance as “staged” insofar as the presentational intent is more important for us than any actual proscenium structure. The Ansambl has also performed this suite on outdoor and indoor stages in the district.
5. Clearly, every performance situation is unique. In particular, strategies for filming are not entirely the same as for staging dances on proscenium theaters.

Chapter 17

1. Large festivals called “Decades of Arts and Literatures of the Nations of the USSR” were organized and held in Moscow to showcase the professional and amateur arts of Ukraine (March 1936), Kazakhstan (May 1936), Georgia (January 1937), Uzbekistan (May 1937), Azerbaijan (April 1938), Kirgizstan (May–June 1939), Armenia (October 1939), Belarus (June 1940), Buriat-Mongolia (October 1940) and Tajikistan (April 1941) (“*Dekady*” 1970). Though many of these “Decades” took place after the founding of the State Folk Dance Ensemble, the Ukrainian Decade and plans for the others were very significant in the growing appreciation of folk staged dance with its repertoire of national dances as an exciting new genre of dance.
2. This was perhaps the first of hundreds of international folk dance festivals in which Ukrainian dancers have performed. Ukrainian Canadian dancers often joke about how Ukrainian performers tend to win either first or last place at such competitions. The judges typically feel a dilemma when comparing their material with

the more first-principle stagings of folk dancers from other countries. They either reward them for the spectacle, or discredit them for their lack of authenticity in form.

3. Vsevolod Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, a drama historian, and others may have been inspired by the work of Swedish folklife and folk dance revivalists who reconstructed traditional rural life and peasant dance in the open air museum in Skansen near Stockholm, as well as other similar projects established across Europe by that time.

Chapter 18

1. In comparison with the Virsky Ensemble, Veryovka tends to perform more pieces using the second principle of theatricalization. For our purposes here, because of Ayre's strong reaction, the example is still instructive.

Chapter 19

1. In the diagram, the history is represented as a two-dimensional timeline. The arrow symbolizes the dance tradition as it progresses from left to right across time. A ball or node in the line indicates a specific documented moment or performance in this history. A bend in the line represents a change in the tradition, and thus the boundary between one phase in the dance's history and another.

2. In this case, and in the Morris dance example that follows, it would be hard to define absolutely how many phases there should be. Some people, including the participants in the tradition, might not differentiate the 1917 from the 1941 incarnations of *Salonsko kolo*," noting that the functions and the forms and the contexts of the dance events were really quite similar. Even the teacher was the same person in these two cases. All of this, of course, depends on how much change is considered enough when contrasting one documented example with another. John Forrest takes up this issue, arguing that "the problem of defining what is the same dance and what is a different dance have haunted comparative choreologists throughout the twentieth century" (1984: 50–51). In the end, the comparisons must be done in context of the discussion, and the conclusions appreciated in that light as well. Such decisions are relative.

3. The shading is only impressionistic, since direct and specific information about the historical consciousness of the dance participants is rarely ever documented for researchers. Available information for this particular dance tradition is incomplete, though tantalizing.

4. Another reason that ethnochoreologists were sometimes interested in collecting information only about vital dance was because they themselves were involved in helping grow the revival movements.

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Index

- aboriginal dance 8, 10, 89, 118, 152, 233, 241
 academic dance 89, 204
 Académie Royale de Danse, Royal Academy of Dance 23, 38, 122, 158, 236
 acrobatics 6, 7, 15, 73, 143, 158, 187, 196
 adult recreational dance 124, 125, 127, 128, 130–131, 132, 133, 140
 aerobics 10
 aesthetics 14, 15, 17–19, 22, 23, 35, 47, 49, 51, 73, 77, 87, 88, 96, 102, 127, 150, 159, 194, 199, 204, 207, 210, 211, 215, 216, 218, 234, 240, 242
 Africa 65, 137, 236
 African-American dance 120, 241
Agon (by Balanchine) 36
 Akaiev, V. 191
 Aksdal, Bjorn 56
 Alberta, Canada 4, 16, 99, 172, 189, 198, 223
 Aleksandrov Red Army Chorus 116–117, 205
 “American Bandstand” 8
 American dance 8, 36, 37, 65, 78, 89, 116, 118, 119, 120, 122, 125–134, 136, 150, 156, 236, 240, 241
 American Folk-Dance Society 128
 And, Metin 219–220, 222
 Anderson, Benedict 100
 Anderson, Richard 17, 18, 20, 234
 Ankara, Turkey 94, 95
 anthropology 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 20, 21, 35, 38, 230, 233, 234, 238
 antiquity 2, 32, 39, 102, 109–110, 115, 239, 240, 241
 Antofagasta, Chile 226, 227
 Appadurai, Arjun 66
 Arabia 223
 Argentina 104, 111, 116, 182, 221, 240
arkan 78, 109, 133, 140, 151, 240
Arkan (by Avramenko) 241
 Arkas, Mykola 242
 Armenia 8, 77, 133, 243
 art dance 3, 14, 17–19, 22, 39, 88, 123, 129, 220, 234, 236
 artist status (of ballet) 160, 161, 212
 Association of United Ukrainians in Canada, AUUC 115
 Athens 153, 220, 240
 audience 55–58, 237; *see also* spectators
 Austin, Edwin 195
 Australia 10, 104, 111, 233, 240; aborigines 10
 Austria 61, 97, 137, 203, 241
 Austro-Hungarian Empire (Hapsburg Empire) 97
 authenticity 27, 29–30, 83, 87, 94, 100, 115, 122, 123, 124, 132, 134–137, 152, 154, 182, 187, 192, 193, 197, 201, 211, 219, 220, 224, 230, 240, 244
 Avdiievs'kyi, Anatoli 198, 223
 Avramenko, Vasile 7, 97, 98–99, 101, 103, 104, 106, 107–109, 110, 111, 115, 133, 148, 152, 172, 186–188, 224–225, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243
 Ayre, John 221–222, 244
 Azerbaijan 210, 243

Back to the Apes: Rock 'n' Roll Parody (by Moiseyev) 212, 221
 Bakhtin, Mikhail 162
 Bakka, Egil 56
 Balanchine, George 18, 36, 205, 242
 Bali 146
 Balkans 70, 71, 122, 131, 240, 241
 ballerina 3, 146, 148, 153, 158, 165, 242
 ballet 1, 4, 6, 7, 10, 17, 18, 21, 23, 28, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 64, 81, 112, 122, 123, 143–144, 146, 147, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 157–167, 183, 187, 188, 195, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 203, 204, 205–206, 206–207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 219, 220, 223, 236, 242; conventions 4, 160–167, 181, 196, 197, 198, 201, 210, 212, 219, 220
Ballet comique de la Reine (by Beaujoyeux) 157, 159, 161, 166
 ballet d'action 153, 158, 166, 198
Ballet de la Nuit 160, 161
 Ballet Folklórico de Mexico 37
 ballroom dance 23, 64, 66, 73, 123, 157, 164, 165, 225, 226–227, 241, 242
 Baroque 159, 164
 Barth, Fredrik 35
 Bartók, Béla 69
 Baryshnikov, Mikhail 205
 Basques 20, 123
 Bazala, Josef 77
 Beauchamp, Charles Louis 158
 Beaujoyeux, Balthasar de 157
 belly dancing 89
 Berdovs'kyi, Oleksandr 204
 Bharata Natyam 147
 Bielov, Anton 204
 Bingham, Richard, Sir 197
 birth 41
 Blasis, Carlo 158
 Boas, Franziska 25
 body language 10, 147
 Bogunovic, Mr. 226
 Boiko region, Ukraine 103, 106
 Bolotov, Mykola 204, 205, 209, 210, 216
 Bolshoi Ballet 205; Theater 203
 Bon Odori 8
 Borovyk, Tetiana 7
 Boryms'ka, Henrietta 206
 Bosnia 4, 172
 boundaries 19, 35–36, 53, 56, 57, 62, 64, 66, 77, 90, 94, 102, 104, 105, 107, 140, 224, 233, 244; fuzzy 11
 Brazil, Brazilian 4, 8, 99, 106, 111, 240
 break dancing 64
 Brecht, Bertold 162, 242
 Brigham Young University International Folk Dance Ensemble 195–197
 Budapest 218

- Buenos Aires, Argentina 221
 Bukovyna region, Ukraine 47, 53, 61, 106, 240
 Bulgaria 72, 133, 203
 Burchenal, Elizabeth 126, 127–128, 135, 140
 Buriat-Mongolia, Mongolian 243
- cabaret 189, 206
 Cajun 241
 calendar cycle 40, 43–45, 106, 234, 237
 căluș 152, 154, 156
 Canada 4, 98, 99, 106, 107, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117–118, 122, 123, 125, 131, 133, 167, 188–190, 198, 199, 221, 223, 225, 237, 240, 241, 243; western 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 16, 20, 28, 29, 65, 99, 108, 150, 155, 166, 172, 199, 200, 225, 234
 Carpathian Mountains 15, 40, 47, 70, 105, 238
 Cass, Joan 236
 Catherine de Medici 157
 celebration 6, 7, 14, 15, 16, 19, 41–47, 48, 51, 72, 94, 99, 117, 119, 137, 172, 214, 216, 225
 cell (structural unit in a dance) 171, 173, 186, 189
 ceremony 7, 14, 15, 16, 22, 27, 41–43, 45, 48, 50, 51, 70, 94, 121, 154, 156, 161, 195, 234, 236, 237
 chain dances 58, 69, 71, 72, 78, 79, 141
 chain structure 141, 196
 character dance 1, 3, 8, 9, 24, 38, 39, 120, 150, 159–160, 165, 167, 188, 191, 198, 199, 202, 205–207
 charleston 109
 Chechnia 20
 cheerleading 10
 Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company 4, 6, 29, 166
 Cherkassiya 123
 Chernivtsi, Ukraine 17, 49
 Chiapas 20
 Chicago 37, 66, 119, 197
 children's dance 18, 19, 41, 72, 76, 88, 89, 95, 102, 119, 122, 124–125, 127, 128, 130, 131–132, 133, 137–138, 140, 146, 150, 205, 217
 Chile 147, 226
 China 36, 37, 113, 120, 221, 239
 Chinese New Year 8
 choreographer 3, 4, 7, 11, 18, 37, 82, 98, 115, 118, 150, 151–153, 157, 158, 161, 184, 186, 189, 190, 191, 192–201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 207–212, 216–217, 219–223, 235, 236, 238, 242
 choreography (composition of a dance) 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 18, 19, 29, 36, 38, 49, 57, 72, 75, 77, 79, 84, 95, 98, 108, 109, 111, 113, 117, 125, 133–135, 141–142, 150, 151, 152, 153, 161, 164, 165, 166, 171, 172, 181, 187–194, 195–201, 203, 204, 206, 209, 210–213, 215, 216, 219, 220–226, 230, 231, 237, 238, 242, 243
chorovody 55–56, 58
 Chortovtsi, Ukraine 80, 81
 Christianity 44, 45, 46, 89, 119, 218, 234, 240
 Christmas 44, 195, 218, 234
 Chudnovsky, M. 206, 207, 212
Chumak (by Avramenko) 188, 241
Chumats'ki radoshchi (by Virsky) 211
 cinema 64
 Circe 157, 159
 circle 21, 22, 68, 74, 123, 237
 circle dances 7, 17, 22, 47, 49, 50, 58, 64, 65, 69, 70, 71, 73, 78, 80, 81, 93, 95, 99, 133, 134, 141, 163, 164, 172, 179, 181, 185–186, 192, 194, 196, 199, 243
 city *see* urban
 class: category 128; social stratum 32, 33, 38, 62–64, 69, 70, 73, 91, 93, 94, 105, 107, 126, 157, 159, 196, 210, 218, 220, 226, 234, 238, 239; study session 24, 30, 119, 122, 125, 132, 146, 151; *see also* elite, peasants, rehearsal, upper class
 climax 196
 colonialism 9, 38
Commedia dell'Arte 159
 commonalities 107, 238
 communal 31, 32, 69, 70
 communication 2, 6, 9, 10, 16, 17, 22, 23, 28, 36, 62, 69, 87, 96, 106, 113, 114, 115, 116, 119, 140, 144, 146–148, 150, 151, 163, 165, 168, 191, 197, 201, 210, 211, 220, 234, 235, 242; internal circuit 74–75, 144; long circuit 144–148, 164, 181, 191, 241; short circuit 144–145, 146, 148, 168, 172, 181, 243
 communism 19, 98, 107, 187, 202, 207, 208, 216, 240
 communitas 25–26
 community 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16
 competence 31, 74, 76–78, 79, 87, 137, 138, 146, 148, 149, 162, 171, 239
 competitions 4, 7, 23, 66, 94, 112, 151, 214, 216, 243
 composer (of music) 7, 161, 235
 contemporary dance, modern dance 1, 3, 4, 17, 21, 36, 39, 49, 50, 64, 68, 118, 123, 143, 150, 154, 157, 158, 159, 190, 197, 198, 199, 207, 211, 212, 222, 225, 235, 236, 238, 242
- context 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11–13, 17, 23, 27, 28, 30, 32, 36, 37, 38, 48, 53, 57, 58, 63, 64, 66, 68, 70, 71, 74, 75, 76, 79, 82–89, 93, 95, 96, 99, 101, 102, 103, 106, 109, 110, 111, 115–120, 123, 125, 126, 128, 132, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 144, 146, 147, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158, 159, 181, 182, 184, 185, 186, 189, 190, 193, 194, 197, 199, 202, 204, 206, 209, 213, 214, 217, 219–220, 222, 223, 224, 225, 227, 230–232, 233, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244
 contra dance 130, 163
 copyright 12, 103, 107, 135–136, 161
corps de ballet 6, 153, 242
 cosmopolitanism 101, 110, 114, 120
 Cossacks 7, 79, 108, 116, 117, 118, 188, 204, 206
 costume 6, 8, 16, 17, 19, 28, 29, 95, 96, 101, 106, 107, 115, 116, 118, 121, 122, 129, 130, 131, 143, 153–155, 156, 161, 164, 165, 182, 193, 196, 197, 198, 199, 201, 208, 212, 215, 220, 237, 242
 costume designer 154, 161, 208
 cotillions 65
 country 2, 4, 5, 8, 32, 34, 45, 53, 55, 57, 58, 61, 62, 67, 71, 85, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 99, 101, 104, 105, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 119, 120, 122, 123, 126–135, 195, 199, 203, 205, 207, 208, 210, 213, 217, 218, 219, 221, 223, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 244; *see also* nation; state
 couple dances 7, 17, 49, 50, 62, 64, 65, 69, 70, 71, 78, 79, 80, 81, 97–99, 101, 103, 104, 106, 109, 110, 111, 121, 123, 140, 141, 151, 163, 172, 193, 194, 224, 238, 241, 243
 court balls 63, 157–160, 161, 164, 228
 courtship 17, 22, 225
 Crimean Tatars 117, 210
 Croatia 77, 136, 226, 229, 242
 Croatian waltz 136
 cross-cultural perspective 1, 2, 3, 8–9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 21, 22, 35, 36, 37, 87, 90, 99–100, 110, 160, 215, 223, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236
 Crum, Richard 222
csárdás, *chardash* 15–16, 37, 47, 70, 103–104, 218, 234, 243
 Csikszentmihaly, Mihaly 25–26
 Cuba 221
 Cuiavia 147, 163
 cultural nationalism 90, 92–94
 culture studies 27, 67, 230

- Cunningham, Merce 18
 Curitiba 18, 104
 Czech Republic 4
 Czechoslovakia 55, 99, 111, 130, 133
 Dąbrowska, Grażyna 57
 Daleki Akordi Dancers, Antofagasta 226–227
 dance cycle 80, 171
 dance, definition 9–11, 25
 dance history 1, 4, 27, 31, 39, 67, 71, 143, 152, 198, 234, 235, 236, 238
 dance teachers, dance masters 4, 11, 32, 62, 63, 64, 70, 85, 88, 98, 99, 101, 102, 112, 124, 125, 127, 128, 130, 131, 133, 135–141, 150–152, 161, 188, 217, 220, 222, 227, 235, 238, 244
 dance therapy 74
 Dauphin, Manitoba 12, 189; Dauphin Ukrainian Festival 189
Davi Ciro 226–227
de unul singur 79
 death 43
 Decades of Culture and Literature, Moscow 204, 243
 de Mille, Agnes 235
 Denmark 8, 19, 92, 130, 182, 195, 203
 description (as opposed to prescription) 1, 2, 5, 40, 47, 53, 67, 68, 70, 73, 78, 79, 80, 81, 96, 99, 108, 124, 128, 133, 134, 136, 139, 143, 146, 170, 171, 172, 179, 184, 189, 195, 209, 210, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 234, 235, 237, 239, 243
 de Valois, Ninette, Dame 219
 Diaghilev, Sergei 158, 205
 dialect 34, 55, 56, 69, 71, 93, 96, 105, 220
 diaspora 35, 94, 104, 108, 111, 112, 113–115, 116, 171, 219, 223, 226, 234
 diffusion, dissemination 56, 58–65, 66–67, 96, 103, 107, 135, 136, 165, 230, 231, 237, 238, 239, 240; *see also* transmission
 director 4, 49, 98, 101, 108, 112, 121, 133, 150, 151, 161, 162, 165, 188, 193, 196, 203, 204, 205, 208, 209, 214, 216, 223, 236
 discothèque 5, 11, 17, 122, 238
divertissements 199
 Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine 205
 Dobrolidge, Natalia 198
 Dolyna, Lviv oblast', Ukraine 97, 99, 224
 Dora Stratou Theater 97, 153, 220
 Dorson, Richard 238
 Druids 89
duende 83, 85–87
 Duggan, Anne Schley 128, 129
 Duncan, Isadora 23
 Dundes, Alan 33
 Dunin, Elsie Ivancich 27, 226, 227, 230, 231
 Důžek, Stanislav 55, 56, 58
 Easter 43, 44, 72, 119, 209, 218
 Eastern Europe 38, 97, 99, 108, 113, 134, 192, 202, 213, 239
 “Ed Sullivan Show” 8
 Edmonton, Canada 4, 6, 7, 28, 29, 87, 108, 116, 122, 155, 166, 189, 198, 199, 200
 educational dance 4, 83, 88, 102, 106, 121, 124–125, 126, 128, 130, 131–132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 144, 149, 150, 151, 152, 201, 207, 208, 230, 239, 241, 242, 243
 elite 1, 3, 17, 27, 30, 34, 36, 62, 63, 64, 73, 112, 113, 159, 205, 207, 212, 214, 215, 216, 217, 220, 226, 236, 238; *see also* class; upper class
 Elizabethan playhouse 162
 Ellfeldt, Lois 143
 emic and etic perspectives 235
 emotionalist aesthetics 17, 18
en pointe 158
 England 2, 24, 31, 50, 67, 69, 89, 123, 126, 138, 140, 147, 151, 154, 192, 197, 203, 227–229, 233, 234, 237, 239; English dance 27, 123
 English Folk Dance and Song Society 203
 erotic dance 89, 143; *see also* sex
 Estonia 130
 ethnic dance, definition 28, 33, 34–38
 ethnic group 34–35, 92, 100, 102, 116, 129, 130, 239
 ethnic salience 35, 36–39, 52, 64, 66, 88, 92, 108, 113, 123, 166, 201
 ethnicity 34, 35, 37, 52
 ethnocentricity 9, 17, 20, 236
 ethnochoreology 2, 3, 27, 28, 56, 57, 71, 230, 235, 239, 244
 Evanchuk, Walter 133
 evolution 1, 20, 21, 159, 199, 234, 239
 expansion (in ballet) 158, 159, 161, 165, 181, 212
 expressive movement 3, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 41, 68, 73, 74, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 125, 151, 153, 165, 200, 207, 209, 212, 218, 220, 235, 242
 extension 35, 117, 147, 181, 200, 241
fandango 23
 Fedotova, N. 204
 Felföldi, László 238
 festivals 4, 5, 7, 17, 94, 112, 116, 122, 129, 130, 136, 146, 189, 195, 202, 203, 204, 210, 214, 216, 222, 226, 243
 fieldwork 4, 20, 57, 61, 85, 194, 225, 233, 238
 Finland, Finnish 55, 130
 first existence dance 229, 234, 235
 fish-flops (dance step) 189
 flamenco 83, 85–87, 121, 206, 220, 239
 Flem, Erling 56
 flow 6, 24, 25–26, 72, 75, 76, 130, 216
 focus 4, 16, 17, 18, 20, 27, 36, 47, 69, 71, 72, 88, 101, 102, 105, 112, 120, 121, 122, 125, 134, 136, 137, 142, 144, 146, 148, 149, 150, 153, 158, 168, 172, 181, 190, 201, 207, 210, 212, 225, 233; in ballet 159, 161, 165–166, 212, 215, 219, 224, 234, 235, 239, 242, 243; in vival dance 3, 12, 15, 24–26, 80, 84, 152, 182, 210
 Fokine, Michael 36, 158, 205
 folk architecture 32, 34, 92
 folk art 32, 129, 135, 204, 210, 214
 folk ballet 4, 152, 167, 188, 198
 folk dance, definition 10, 31–34, 234–235, 236
 Folk Dance Federation of California 130, 132, 136
 folk song 8, 32, 92, 191, 193, 197
 folk-staged dance 49, 115, 154, 167, 187, 192, 197, 199, 202–208, 212, 213, 219, 237, 239
 folklore 4, 26, 32–33, 91, 92, 103, 206, 209, 213, 216, 238, 239
 folkloric groups 37, 192, 209, 213, 243
 folklorists 3, 4, 27, 32–33, 34, 47, 52, 92, 230, 234, 235
 forgetting 226, 229
 form 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11–13, 17, 18, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 47, 49, 50, 58, 62, 63, 64, 66, 69, 70, 71, 74, 76, 78, 84, 89, 92, 95, 96, 99, 100, 101, 103, 104, 107, 109, 110, 111, 118, 119, 124, 128, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137–139, 142, 143, 146, 152, 153, 154, 159, 163, 165, 168, 171, 181, 183, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 200–201, 204, 205, 207, 209, 210, 218, 219, 220, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 228, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244
 formalist aesthetics 17, 18
 formation (in a dance) 6, 7, 17, 79, 80, 92, 98, 101, 102, 141, 164, 171, 172, 181, 196, 198, 199, 201, 240
 Forrest, John 228–229, 231, 244
 foxtrot 109

- France 4, 35, 38, 91, 119, 123, 130, 133, 157, 158, 199, 203, 236, 241
- Francis, Sandra 10, 11
- Fraser, Sir James 229, 237
- Freidland, LeeEllen 33, 235
- frontal orientation 11, 78, 84, 115, 139, 146, 161, 162–164, 196, 198, 212, 236
- functionalism 14, 20, 233
- funeral dance 8, 43
- fusion 199
- fuzzy categories, fuzzy boundaries 11, 22–23, 123, 224
- Gelman, Morrie 136
- gender 33, 65, 76, 104, 140, 142, 150, 173, 196, 241
- geography 33, 35, 52, 53–66, 67, 71, 77, 105, 106, 116, 129, 189, 195, 219, 230, 233, 237–238, 239, 240, 242, 243
- Georges, Robert 238
- Georgia 19, 210, 243
- Germany 28, 77, 119, 123, 203, 234
- gesture 25, 44, 147, 166, 169, 191, 211, 212
- Ghana 113
- Gilbert, Tamara 118
- Giselle* 17, 147
- Giurchescu, Anca 69, 70, 73, 74, 78, 79, 81, 82, 151, 152, 237
- glasnost* 217, 237
- globalization 9, 47, 122–123
- Gogol, Nikolai (Mykola Hohol') 198
- Gonta* (by Avramenko) 188, 242
- Goodman, Cary 126
- Gopak* (by Moiseyev) 209
- gopak* 103, 134, 242; *see also* *hopak*
- Gorbachev, Mikhail 217
- Gordey, Jayleen 200
- government 5, 15, 19, 57, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 101, 103, 106, 107, 112–113, 114, 120, 122, 202, 203, 208, 218, 222, 240
- govlia* 193
- Graham, Martha 18, 36, 242
- Les Grands Ballets Canadiens 199
- Granea O'Malley* (dance) 197, 198, 201
- Great Britain 91, 131, 219
- Greece 28, 36, 37, 40, 77, 94, 95, 96, 97, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 114, 116, 119, 120, 159, 162, 164, 219, 220, 236, 237, 238, 240
- Green Corn Dance 8
- Gregorian calendar 234
- Grimm brothers 92
- grouped structures 141
- Gubosh, Nikola 193
- guilds 228
- Gypsies, Roma 61, 85
- haivka* 44, 71, 109; *see also* *chorovod*; *chorovod*; *vesnianka*
- Hall, Edward T. 146
- Hanna, Judith Lynne 146
- Harasymchuk, Roman 40, 55, 58–61, 62, 225, 230, 237, 238
- Haskell, Arnold 39, 235
- Hawaii, Hawaiian 130, 236, 242
- H'Doubler, Margaret 21
- heavy metal 64, 236
- hegemony 6, 9, 35, 38, 134
- Heracleitos 6
- heritage 1, 2, 7, 8, 20, 27, 35, 49, 52, 69, 85, 102, 104, 109, 113, 116, 118, 119, 120, 122, 129, 161, 188, 204, 217, 219, 222, 225, 230, 237
- Herman, Mary Ann 132, 133, 134, 241
- Herman, Michael 130, 132, 133, 134
- Hernandez, Amalia 97
- Herodotus 240
- high context communication 146
- Highland dance 110, 114
- historical layers 9, 45, 65, 67–72, 73, 96, 108, 109, 122, 189, 230, 240
- history 1, 2, 4, 9, 18, 20, 21, 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39, 45, 47, 50, 52, 55, 58, 63, 65, 67–72, 73, 83, 88, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 101, 105, 106, 109, 114, 115, 117, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 127, 129, 134, 143, 149, 152, 153, 157–160, 162, 163, 164, 166, 171, 188, 189, 195, 197, 198, 202, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 219, 220, 225, 226, 227, 228, 230, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244
- Hladio, Richard 133
- hobbyhorse 154
- Hobsbawm, Eric 239
- hoe-down 121
- Hoerburger, Felix 229, 234–235
- holubka* 78, 151
- Holy Rollers 8
- homeland 5, 34, 35, 90, 106, 107, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 127, 128, 136, 197, 219, 226, 241
- honor 8, 18, 22, 49, 51, 52, 87, 112, 205, 237, 239
- Hoolaulea 8
- hopak* 6, 16, 19, 53, 71, 79, 93, 94, 103, 104, 133, 134, 183, 195, 196, 203; *Hopak* (by Kanevets) 6; *Hopak* (by Virsky) 6, 209; *Hopak* (by West and Austin) 195, 196; *see also* *Trykolinnnyi hopak*
- Hopak kolom* (by Avramenko) 133, 134, 242
- Hopi 236
- Howard, Mark 197
- Hrechanyky* (by Avramenko) 242
- huapango* 53
- Humeniuk, Andrii 7, 55, 190
- Hungarian turns 189
- Hungary 40, 55–56, 68, 69, 70, 71, 74, 77, 103–104, 107, 108, 130, 187, 189, 203, 218, 219, 241
- hunter-gatherer 30, 33
- Hutsul region, Ukraine 40–44, 46, 47, 54, 55, 60–61, 67, 105, 106, 225, 237, 238
- hutsulka* 6, 7, 17, 71
- hybridity 71, 120, 121–122, 210, 222, 225
- ice skating, ice dancing 11
- Iceland, Icelanders 116
- iconicity 120, 121, 154
- ideology 9, 33, 64, 90, 95, 99, 103, 106–107, 112, 114, 207, 208, 210, 216, 221, 225, 229, 240
- Ilashchuk, Vasyli' 47–48, 52, 65
- illusion 17, 29, 31, 162, 193, 197, 223
- imagined communities 53, 92, 106, 195, 222
- immigrant groups 65, 77, 113, 119, 126, 127, 128, 129, 225, 241
- improvisation 3, 7, 15, 39, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73–82, 84, 85, 89, 102, 137, 151, 152, 182, 184, 193, 194, 218–219, 225, 238; degrees of 78–82, 151, 152
- imputed setting 28–29, 30, 31, 33, 36, 40, 118, 120, 121, 124, 134, 135, 137, 140, 152, 153, 154, 162, 166, 189, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 201, 206, 211, 223, 227, 230
- India 10
- indigenous 36, 116, 122, 215; dances 32, 107, 120; groups 36, 113, 122, 241
- innovation 18, 51, 61–63, 72, 77, 88, 89, 114, 115, 127, 158, 189, 203, 224, 239, 236
- international dance 4, 33, 88, 118, 122, 123, 128, 130, 131, 132–134, 135, 188, 195, 198, 202, 203, 208, 210, 223, 235, 242, 243
- International Folk Dance Festival, London, 1935 203
- International Folk Music Council, Study Group for Dance Terminology 171
- Ireland 39, 82, 197, 198, 236
- Islam, Muslim 45, 89, 95, 117, 118, 241
- isochor 53–58, 62, 64, 66, 237, 238
- Israel 8, 123, 144; *see also* Jewish
- Istanbul, Turkey 95, 116
- Italy, Italian 5, 10, 53, 61, 77, 120, 157, 203, 239

- Ivashchenko, Mykola 204
Iz syrom pyrohy (by Kachmar) 7, 8, 198
 Izmir, Turkey 95
- Jamaica 116
 jazz 65, 143, 150, 199
 Jensen, Mary Bee 195
 Jersey 4
 Jewish 8, 45, 126, 241; *see also* Israel
 Jezková, Marie 77
 Jones, Michael Owen 238
 Julian calendar 234
- Kachmar, Ken 7, 198
kadryl' *see* quadrille
Kadryl' deviatka (by Virsky) 209
 Kaeppler, Adrienne 146
kalamatianos 95, 104
 Kalisz, Poland 98
Kalmyk Dance (by Moiseyev) 211
 Kanevets, Mykola 6, 29, 166
karapyet 241; *Karapyet* (by Herman) 133, 134
 Karpeles, Maud 203
Kateryna, Katerina 133, 134, 242;
Kateryna (Khersonka) (by Kropyvnyts'kyi, by Avramenko) 133, 134, 188, 242; *Kateryna* (opera by Arkas) 133, 134, 242
 Kazakhstan 19, 243
 Kealiinohomoku, Joann 8, 10, 31, 35, 77, 124, 146, 152
 Kharkhiv, Ukraine 203, 205
Khazan Tatars (by Moiseyev) 211
khovorod 71; *Khorovod* (by Sadovs'kyi and Shambaugh) 242; *see also chorovod; haivka; vesnianka*
khram (parish annual feast) 44
 kinesthetic sense 75, 144–146, 210
 kinetic element 62, 63, 144, 171, 172, 184, 189, 194, 243
 Kirgizstan 243
 Kodaly, Zoltan 69
kokhanochka 241; *Kokhanochka* (by Herman) 133
 Kolberg, Oskar 80, 81
kolesá 55, 56, 58, 238
kolo 39, 226, 229, 235, 244
 Kolomyia, Ukraine 6, 61
kolomyika 7, 22, 47, 58, 73, 80, 81, 87, 97, 98, 104, 107–181, 184, 185, 186, 187, 189, 190, 191, 224, 225, 241, 247; *Kolomyika* (by Shambaugh) 242; *Kolomyika* (by Virsky) 209
Kolomyika for One Couple (by Avramenko) 103
Kolomyika in Two Couples (by Avramenko) 97–99, 101, 103, 104, 106, 110, 111, 172, 174–178, 180, 185, 224, 243
- kolomyikovyi pidskok* 185, 186–188
 Korenivs'kyi, Ivan 190
korobushka 241; *Korobushka* (by Herman) 133, 134
 Koroliuk, Serhij 41, 55
 Kowal, Paul 189
kozachok 58, 80, 102
Kozachok Podil's'kyi (by Avramenko) 188
Kozak (Shambaugh) 242
krakowiak 102
 Kraus, Richard 134
 Kravchuk, Osyp 97–99, 101, 188
 Kropyvnia, Ukraine 190
 Kropyvnyts'kyi, Mykhailo 188
krubliak 44
 Kuhac, Mr. 226–227
kujawiak 83, 84–85, 239
Kupalo 44
 Kurath, Gertrude Prokosch 21, 235
 Kyiv, Ukraine 4, 6, 7, 19, 28, 189, 190, 195, 198, 202, 203, 204, 205, 221
 Kyiv Institute of Culture 4
- Labanotation, Kinetography Laban 168–170, 172–180, 243
Lamentations (by Graham) 18
Ländler 136
 Lange, Roderyk 83–85, 87, 89, 147, 163, 243
 latino 64, 66
 Latvia, Latvian 203
 Lawler, Lillian 238
 Lawson, Joan 134
 learning *see* transmission
 leisure 112, 126
 Lenin, Vladimir 7, 202, 207, 216, 221, 240
 Leningrad 206; *see also* St. Petersburg
 lent 44, 46, 70
 Lerkhe, Halyna 204
 lexicon 150, 182, 187–190, 198, 199, 211, 212, 238; *see also* motif; step
 Lidster, Miriam 195
 life cycle 40, 41–43, 45, 242; *see also* rites of passage
 lighting 16, 29, 121, 153, 155–156, 161, 164, 165
 line dances 141
 linked structures 141
 lion dance 8, 159
 Lithuania 19, 130, 203
 Litvinov, Victor 7
 location 7, 15, 16, 25, 27, 33, 34, 40, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 50, 52, 53–65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 80, 85, 89, 95, 104, 106, 109, 111, 126, 130, 142, 155, 156, 158, 160, 163, 165, 169, 170, 180, 193, 195, 199, 201, 202, 207, 212, 217, 222, 228, 230, 238, 241
- logo 103–104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 121
 London, England 203, 204
 longsword 27–28
 longways 138, 141, 199
 Louis XIV 157, 158, 160, 161
 Loutzaki, Irene 96, 242
 low style (in ballet) 158, 159, 160, 206, 199
 Lowenthal, David 26, 28
 Luh, Ukraine 97, 103, 106
 Lutskaia, Elena 206
 Lviv, Ukraine 97, 106
- MacAloon, John 25
Macarena 64
 Macedonia, Macedonians 230, 231
 macrostructure 171, 172, 181, 182, 191, 193
 Makarova, Natalia 205
 make up 165
Malambo (by Moiseyev) 209, 221
 Malanka 16, 20, 44, 155
 Manastyrsky, Roman 189
 Mardi Gras 8, 44
 Martin, György 69–71, 77, 231, 238
 Martin, John 203
 Marxism, Marxist ideology 202, 207, 210, 216, 240
Maryna (by Avdiievsky) 198
 masquerades 153, 157, 159
matashin 119, 120, 228
 Mátyás István “Mundruc” 77
mazurka 103–104
 meaning *see* purpose
Médée et Jason (by Noverre) 158
 Melbourne, Australia 104
metelytsia 134; *Metelytsia* (Shambaugh) 242;
Metelytsia viucha (by Avramenko) 7, 242
 Metis 241
 Mexico 5, 20, 37, 53, 65, 97, 113, 120, 152
 Mexico City 37
 microstructure 140, 152, 171, 172, 181, 182, 191, 196
 Middle Ages, medieval time 69, 70, 71, 162
 Middle East 89
 migration 20, 61, 65–66, 77, 113, 114, 119, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 219, 225, 237, 241
 Milwaukee, United States 8, 136, 197
 mime *see* pantomime
 mimetic aesthetics 17
 minority groups 20, 61, 111, 113–115, 116, 149, 172, 226, 233, 241
 minuet 24, 65
 modern dance, contemporary
 dance 1, 4, 39, 50, 118, 143–144, 150, 154, 157, 158, 197, 198, 199, 235, 236, 242

- Modernism 159
modernyi 50, 51, 53, 63, 65, 238
 Moiseyev, Igor 97, 198, 202–212, 216, 220, 221, 222, 225, 243
 Moiseyev style 115, 202, 205–212, 213, 215, 216, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222
 Moldova 49, 52, 210, 237
 Molodiatyne, Ukraine 6, 17
 monogenesis 58, 238
 monumentality 161, 164–165, 166, 181, 196, 208, 212, 215, 217, 218, 219
 Moravia 77
morisca 119
 morphology 238
 Morris dance 89, 138, 140, 147, 154, 227–229, 242, 244
 Moscow 111, 116, 158, 198, 202, 203, 204, 205, 211, 216, 221, 223, 240, 241, 243
Moscow Romance (by Moiseyev) 211
 moshing 39, 236
 motif 78, 79–80, 81, 108, 151, 171, 172, 182–190, 191, 194, 197, 199, 201, 216, 225, 238, 243; *see also* lexicon; step
 mp3 64
 multiculturalism 114, 116, 122–123, 126, 129, 226; *see also* cross-cultural perspective
 mummies 8, 16, 44, 153, 154, 228
 Mundare, Canada 99, 172, 174, 180
 music 5, 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 22, 23, 29, 30, 36, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 49, 52, 55, 64, 67, 70, 72, 74, 79, 84, 92, 95, 97, 101, 105, 107, 116, 117, 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 135, 137, 138, 139, 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 148, 158, 159, 165, 168, 169, 171, 182, 185, 186, 194, 196, 197, 198, 201, 209, 214, 215, 217, 220, 223, 227, 234, 235, 236, 238, 241, 242, 243
 musicians 15, 30, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 51, 52, 61, 63, 68, 79, 80, 84, 85, 138, 147, 148, 151, 153, 156, 161, 163, 165, 194, 208, 218, 235, 237, 243
 Muslim *see* Islam
My z Ukrainy (by Virsky) 211
Mykhailos 189
Natalka Poltavka (by Kotliarevs'kyi) 93, 96, 105
 nation 19, 40, 44, 56, 69, 71, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102, 103, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111–112, 114, 115, 125, 130, 134, 152, 211, 222, 227, 233, 234, 239, 240, 241, 243; nation-state 19, 90, 108, 111, 112, 113, 234, 239
 national 5, 16, 31, 45, 49, 52, 53, 57, 58, 62, 63, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 121, 122, 13, 125, 127, 130, 136, 139, 144, 150, 187, 188, 191, 195, 201, 204, 206, 207, 209, 211, 214, 225, 226, 230, 239, 240, 241; character, spirit 32, 33, 38, 57, 69, 90–92, 100, 107, 109, 110, 123, 127, 152, 204, 210–211, 221, 239, 241; consciousness 52, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101, 103, 104, 115, 116, 122, 125, 204, 206; identity 2, 37, 52, 87, 92, 104, 105, 106, 118, 123, 127, 239
 national dance 1, 3, 6, 8, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 32, 38, 40, 57, 83, 85, 88, 90–100, 101–110, 111–123, 124, 127, 128, 132, 133, 135, 137, 139, 140, 144, 150, 152, 153, 168, 187, 188, 189, 191, 204, 205, 206, 219, 224, 225, 226, 230, 234, 236, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243; definition 19–20, 122, 236; softer motives 111, 113, 120–123, 134, 224
 nationalism 2, 53, 57, 90, 94, 97, 98, 106, 107, 113, 114, 122, 123, 187, 201, 204, 211, 217, 218, 239, 240, 241; cultural 90, 92–94; romantic 2, 53, 90–92, 107, 108, 210, 211, 225, 226, 241
 Ness, Sally Ann 233
 Netherlands, Dutch 118, 203
 New Guinea 239
 New Mexico 8
 New Year 8, 16, 44, 234
 New York 7, 36, 66, 104, 106, 126, 129, 130, 133, 189, 203, 239, 241
 New York City Ballet 36
 New York World's Fair, 1939–1940 130
Night Journey (by Graham) 36
Night of Perun (by Pichlyk and Webb) 199
Night on Bald Mountain (by Moiseyev) 198, 209, 211
 Nijinska, Bronislava 199, 205, 206
 Nijinsky, Vaclav 205
 noble style (in ballet) 38, 158, 160, 165, 205, 206–207
Les Noces (by Nijinska) 199, 206
 nomads 30, 33
 North Dakota 17
 Norway 56–57, 67, 92–93, 94, 130, 144, 203
 nostalgia 18–19, 207, 219, 241
 notation 12, 84, 98, 168–170, 171, 172, 174–180, 185, 188, 209, 235, 238, 243
 Noverre, Jean-Georges 158, 161, 166, 198
 Nureyev, Rudolf 205
Nutcracker (ballet) 37, 206
obertas 80
 objectification 101–102, 105, 120, 121, 139, 182, 184–186
Ode to Lenin 221
 Odessa, Ukraine 205
 official state culture 5, 34, 93, 102, 111, 114, 120, 207, 208
Ohorodnik (by Herman) 133, 134
Oi pid vyshneiu (by Dobrolidge) 198
 O'Malley, Granea 197
 one step 50, 53
 Oppé, A.P. 143, 153
 Orbielbol 206
 oriental 20, 107, 117, 206
 Orthodox church 16, 40, 107, 117
 Ottoman 91, 95, 105, 116–117
 Öztürkmen, Arzu 94–96, 106, 121
 pagan 45, 89, 227, 229, 236, 237, 240
 pantomime 16, 17, 152, 158, 166, 167, 191, 198, 201
 participation 4, 24, 88, 106, 130, 133, 144, 151, 157, 161, 163, 165, 168–182, 185, 190, 193, 194, 197, 215, 218, 226, 242, 243
 past 1, 2, 3, 9, 21, 24, 25, 26–27, 28, 40, 51, 52, 53, 58, 65, 67, 83, 89, 91, 123, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 234, 235, 238
 Pavlicová, Martina 77
 Pavlova, Anna 205
 peasants 1, 2, 3, 16, 20, 24, 28, 29, 30–33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40–52, 53, 55, 57, 58, 62, 63, 64, 67, 68–72, 73, 76, 77, 78, 82, 83, 85, 88, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 100, 105, 106, 108, 124, 136, 148, 149, 153, 154, 155, 159, 160, 188, 196, 198, 200, 201, 205, 206, 209, 210, 211, 212, 216, 220, 224, 227, 231, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238, 240, 244
 Peay, Delynn 195
 Petipa, Marius 205
 Philadelphia 8
 Philippines 116, 138, 195, 196
Philippines: Barrio Fiesta (by Peay) 195
 Phillips, Miriam 83, 85–87, 239
 phonograph recordings 62, 64, 95, 96, 128, 130, 147, 148, 242
 phrase (choreographic) 78, 79, 108, 171, 172, 181, 187, 194
 physical education movement 126, 128, 131
 Pichlyk, John 199
pidskok Sadov'koho 188
 place *see* location
 place (in Labanotation) 169
 play 15; (music) 15, 42, 43, 47, 48, 51, 52, 61, 68, 79, 80, 84, 85, 130, 147, 159, 163, 165, 193, 206, 237, 243; (recreational) 15, 25,

- 41, 43, 44, 73, 76, 98, 124, 126, 128, 241; (theatrical) 93, 96, 98, 159, 160, 162, 188
- playground movement 126
- Pleskach* (by Virsky) 211
- plies* (midwinter dance) 44
- Podebrady, Czechoslovakia 133
- Podillia region, Ukraine 61, 106
- Podorozhnyi, Todor 49
- Poland 4, 5, 8, 55, 57, 61, 77, 83, 85, 97, 98, 99, 102, 103, 104, 107, 108, 111, 114, 119, 130, 151, 203, 213, 214, 218, 222, 237, 238, 239, 243
- polish (technical refinement) 17, 151, 191, 196, 210, 211, 213
- Polissia region, Ukraine 104
- political dance 18, 19, 20, 95, 96, 98, 99, 105, 109, 111, 115, 117, 118, 122, 191, 206, 207, 208, 216, 218, 221, 226, 227, 230, 234, 241
- politics 7, 9, 18, 19, 20, 45, 52, 53, 57, 58, 62, 64, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 107, 108, 112, 113, 115, 118, 121, 122, 204, 206, 207, 213, 221, 227, 234, 239, 240, 241
- polka 7, 16, 50, 53, 62, 65, 71, 102, 109, 119, 139, 142
- polka koketka* 241; *Polka Koketka* (by Herman) 133
- polonaise* 23
- pols* 56–57
- Poltava, Ukraine 93, 96, 105, 106, 108, 124, 153
- polygenesis 58, 238
- polykiny* 79, 142, 165, 219
- portability 106
- Portugal 91, 118
- post-modernism 9, 122, 123, 234
- Povzunets'* (by Virsky) 108, 211
- powwows 118–119
- pragmatic aesthetics 17–18, 234
- prescription 1, 15, 71, 74–76, 77, 78, 81, 151, 152, 170–171, 172–177, 184, 238
- presentational 24, 152, 157, 168, 170, 171, 172, 174, 181, 182, 190, 193, 243
- preservation 26, 32, 52, 68, 71, 101, 103, 110, 123, 125, 128, 152, 153, 192, 195, 210, 211, 219, 222, 237, 239, 240
- primitive dance 1, 2, 20, 199, 234, 236
- Prince Igor* (by Fokine) 36
- principles of staging: 4, 191, 192–201, 243; first 192–194, 196, 199, 201, 203, 209, 212, 213–220, 222, 223, 244; second 189, 194–197, 198, 199, 201, 209, 210, 217, 223; third 187, 189, 197–201, 210, 212, 213, 217, 219, 220–223, 244
- Prnjavor, Bosnia Herzegovina 173, 179, 185
- Pro shcho verba plache* (by Virsky) 211
- producer 3, 121, 135, 154, 155, 161
- professional dance 3, 63, 93, 112, 115, 122, 135, 149, 150, 158, 160, 161, 203, 204, 208, 212, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 236, 239, 243
- progress 1, 9, 31, 67, 71, 83, 92, 141, 142, 163, 172, 202, 214, 234, 244
- props 17, 28, 29, 142, 155, 164, 165, 196, 198
- proscenium 4, 35, 157, 158, 162–163, 190, 196, 212, 242, 243
- Prudentopolis, Brazil 106
- prysiadka, prysiadky* (squatting step) 73, 79, 80, 99, 108, 109, 189
- psychological release 14, 17, 71, 74
- punk 64, 66
- purity 91, 92; impurity (contamination, foreign intrusion, borrowings) 61, 91–92, 107–110, 204, 210, 241
- purpose (meaning) for dancing 3, 11, 12, 13, 14–23, 24, 30, 31, 36, 37, 40, 41, 64, 72, 78, 85, 87–89, 95, 99, 100, 107, 113, 114, 118, 123, 124, 127, 132, 134, 137, 138, 143, 154, 158, 201, 209, 211, 224, 225, 229, 231, 233–234, 236, 239; *see also* art; educational; national; recreational; ritual; spectacular dance
- quadrille (*kadryl'*) 7, 65, 71, 109, 163, 209, 226, 227, 240; *Quadrille* (by Moiseyev) 209
- Quebec 199
- race, racism 20, 31, 90–91, 107, 122, 127, 233, 241
- radio 62, 64, 97, 165
- Radio City Music Hall 165
- Raffé, W.G. 236
- Raftis, Alkis 220
- raked floor 164
- rap music 10
- Rath, Emil 139
- Realism 159; *see also* Socialist Realism
- rebetika* 107
- reconstruction 26, 27, 29, 30, 85, 89, 117, 124, 154, 206, 211, 238, 239, 244
- recontextualization 3, 26, 83, 124, 235
- recreational dance, social dance 2, 4, 7, 8, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 31, 40, 41, 46, 50, 63, 70, 71, 83, 85, 87, 88, 95, 102, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124–142, 143, 144, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 157, 158, 159, 160, 168, 172, 187, 192, 217, 218, 224, 225, 229, 230, 235, 236, 238, 239, 241, 242, 243
- Redfield, Robert 234
- redundancy 10, 79
- reels 65
- reflective 2, 3, 4, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 40, 52, 57, 67, 72, 82, 83–89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 99, 101, 102, 106, 112, 120, 121, 124, 125, 127, 128, 133, 134, 135, 136, 140, 152, 153, 154, 165, 168, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 190, 193, 194, 195, 196, 202, 212, 213, 217, 218, 219, 222, 224–232, 235, 238–239, 242, 243
- reflexivity 2, 9, 25, 26, 27, 38, 49, 235
- reggae 64
- regions, ethnographic 19, 34, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 71, 81, 85, 91, 94, 96, 99, 103, 105, 106, 108, 112, 114, 115, 116, 121, 130, 131, 153, 193, 211, 214, 218, 225, 237, 238, 239, 240, 243
- rehearsal director 150–151, 208
- rehearsal, practicing 7, 24, 30, 31, 76, 102, 107, 129, 144, 148–149, 150, 151, 152, 156, 173, 181, 184, 191, 196, 208, 237
- religion, spirituality 12, 14, 16, 18, 24, 31, 33, 34, 45, 64, 88, 89, 90, 94, 104, 117, 118, 119, 146, 149, 218, 236, 237, 242
- Renaissance 36, 63, 70, 157, 159
- repertoire 1, 5, 7, 22, 35, 44, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 61, 64, 65, 70, 71, 72, 77, 78, 79, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 114, 115, 118, 120, 123, 124, 125, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 140, 142, 158, 161, 166, 172, 186, 188, 193, 195, 198, 207, 208, 209, 211, 212, 214, 215, 216, 218, 221, 225, 227, 230, 237, 239, 240, 241, 243
- Repin, Illia 45, 116, 117, 118
- representation 3, 26, 38, 75, 95, 103, 106, 133, 160, 195, 197, 206
- resheto* 78, 151
- revival 2, 4, 26, 27, 28, 32, 57, 67, 83, 85, 92, 93, 96, 121, 125, 133, 144, 168, 182, 193, 195, 206, 123, 217, 218, 220, 227, 228, 230, 234, 235, 237, 239, 244
- rhythm 10, 11, 25, 36, 45, 50, 61, 74, 80, 84, 85, 96, 106, 127, 128, 129, 131, 138, 141, 147, 170, 182, 186, 191, 195, 197, 241, 243
- ring dance 228
- rites of passage 15, 40, 41–43; *see also* life cycle

- ritual 2, 10, 14–16, 20, 21, 22, 31, 33, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 50, 51, 55, 65, 76, 87, 91, 137, 146, 152, 154, 156, 199, 209, 225, 227, 229, 233, 234, 236, 237, 240, 242
Riverdance 39, 236
rivna 185–186
 rock 'n' roll 7, 10, 17, 64, 65, 66, 71, 73, 109, 212, 221, 238
 Roic, Mr. 226
 Roma *see* Gypsies
 Roman theater 162
 Romania 4, 40, 49, 52, 53, 74, 78, 79, 81, 82, 152, 154, 156, 187, 203, 238, 241
 Romans 164, 236
 Romantic ballet 17, 38, 158, 161, 198, 205, 212
 Romantic nationalism 53, 90–92, 107, 109, 210, 211, 225, 226, 241
 Romanticism 2, 90, 91, 159, 160, 230, 235, 239
Romeo and Juliette 36, 153
 rondo 141, 181, 196
 Royal Albert Hall 203
 Royal Ballet 219
 Royce, Anya Peterson 152
 Rubidge, Sarah 29
Rukodil'nyi (by Virsky) 211
rus'ka 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 87, 237; formal *rus'ka* 49; *molodizhna rus'ka* 48, 50
 Rusalka Ukrainian Dancers 198
rushnyk 15
 Ruski Banyliv, Ukraine 17
 Ruski Krstur, Voivodina, Serbia 15, 16, 37, 193, 195
 Rusnak, Svitlana 47, 48, 51, 52, 65
La Russe 123
 Russia 7, 17, 20, 52, 77, 97, 103, 105, 107, 108, 114, 117, 118, 123, 133, 134, 158, 182, 187, 188, 198, 203, 205, 206, 209, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 234, 241, 242; Russian Empire 7, 18, 38, 61, 91, 93, 97, 111, 205, 206, 209, 241
 Rusyn, Ruthenian 15, 49, 193, 233
 Rutledge, Abbie 128
 Sacher-Masoch, Leopold 73
 Sadovs'kyi, Mykola [Nicholas Sodofsky] 133, 188, 241
 St. George's day 44, 46
 St. Petersburg 158, 205, 206
Salonsko kolo 226–227, 229, 244
 Santiago, Chile 226, 227
 Saskatchewan, Canada 4, 189, 223
 Saskatoon, Canada 4, 188, 198
 Savvys'ka, Rozalia 204
 Scandinavia 119, 131
 Schlottmann, Jeanette 128
 school curricula 95, 104, 112, 127, 131, 132, 137, 139, 150
schottische 123, 138
 Scotland, Scottish 110, 114, 123, 129, 223; Scottish dance 114, 120, 123
 Scythians 109, 240
 second existence dance 26, 229, 234–235
 section (of a dance) 6, 7, 16, 80, 81, 99, 117, 139, 142, 159, 171, 181, 191, 193, 194, 201
 Segal', Oleksandr 204
 selectiveness 1, 10, 17, 30, 35, 76, 78, 79, 80, 101, 103–104, 106, 113, 119, 125, 133, 140, 142, 157, 159, 161, 188, 192, 196, 214, 216, 221, 225, 238
 semicircle 192, 194, 196
serba 52
 Serbia 4
 set designer 161
 sex, sexuality 35, 63, 89, 104, 140
 shake, *sheik* (dance) 50, 64
 Shakers 8, 89
 Shakespeare, William 162
 Shambaugh, Mary Effie 133, 241
 Shanin, Teodor 30
 Shank, Ben 6
 Sharp, Cecil 143, 153, 227, 229
 Shaw, Sylvia 122, 234
 Shay, Anthony 14, 21, 95, 230
shcha ia tebe dam (dance) 193–194
 Sheremetyevskaya, Natalia 206, 207, 209
shevchyk (shoemaker dance) 17, 168, 190–191; *Shevchyky* (by Virsky) 190–191, 201, 211, 216
shevchyky 17, 168; *Shevchyky* (by Virsky) 201, 211, 216
 shimmy, *shimi* (dance) 50, 53, 109
 Shukhevych, Volodymyr 40
 sight lines 163–164, 242
 simplification 5, 6, 85, 104–105, 108, 140, 154, 181, 196
 Skansen, Sweden 244
 skill 5, 22, 38, 61, 65, 76, 77, 79, 88, 92, 93, 98, 121, 125, 126, 128, 129, 131, 132, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140–141, 144, 146, 148–149, 150, 151, 156, 158, 160, 164, 165, 196, 197, 208, 209, 214, 215, 218, 225, 236
 Skopje, Macedonia 230
 Slovakia 4, 55–58, 67, 108, 119, 187, 237–238
 Slovenia 241
 Snyder, Allegra Fuller 233
 Sobol', Oleksandr 203–204
 social dance *see* recreational dance
 social evolutionism 1, 20–21, 159, 199, 234, 239
 social frame (in ballet) 160, 161, 212
 Socialist Realism 191, 207, 208, 211, 216, 218, 223, 234, 241
 soldiers 61, 63, 97, 98, 100
 Sollors, Werner 236
 solo jig 228
 Song and Dance Ensemble of the Soviet Army 202
 Sopilka Dancers, Vegreville 7–8, 198
 Sornikow, Nina 198
 Soviet Union 2, 4, 7, 18, 19, 38, 53, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 107, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 125, 134, 150, 151, 187, 188, 191, 197, 198, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 210, 212, 213–217, 218–219, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 234, 237, 240, 241
 space 3, 4, 10, 24, 28, 30, 35, 39, 67, 72, 74, 106, 162, 226, 242; effort shape 142; performing space 42, 65, 71, 78, 88, 112, 128, 141, 146, 162, 163, 164, 171, 190, 223, 236, 239
 Spain 10, 65, 91, 119, 199, 226, 227, 228
 spectacle 2, 4, 86, 113, 143–144, 149, 157, 159, 160, 164, 222, 242, 244
 spectacular dance 1, 4, 6, 21, 83, 88, 114, 121, 123, 125, 132, 143–156, 157, 158, 161–167, 168, 172, 181, 184, 185, 187, 188, 189, 190, 196, 197, 199, 201, 202, 203, 204, 206, 207, 208, 210, 212, 214, 215, 217, 218, 222, 223, 224, 230, 239, 241, 242, 243
 spectators 4, 7, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 25, 28, 29, 30, 36, 37, 76, 86, 87, 88, 92, 93, 94, 99, 101, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 110, 111, 115–118, 121, 132, 143–149, 153, 154, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 181, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 197, 199, 200, 201, 203, 207, 209, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 223, 227, 236, 242
 Spinat'ov, Oleksandr 7, 190
 split jumps 6, 188
 sponsor 16, 102, 112, 113, 127, 149, 157, 161, 208
springar 56–57
 square dance 8, 64, 65, 78, 109, 119, 120, 123, 130, 138, 141, 151, 240
 stage manager 153, 155, 161
 staging *see* theatricalization
 standardization 4, 30, 56, 95, 97, 103, 104, 105, 108, 121, 123, 140, 170, 181, 188, 194, 215, 230
 Stanislavsky, Constantin 162
 state 19, 20, 88, 90, 93, 95, 96, 97, 102, 105, 111, 112–113, 114, 207, 208, 216, 217, 230, 233,

- 234, 237, 239, 241; *see also* country; nation
 state support 112–113, 207
 step 6, 7, 18, 19, 23, 50, 56, 73, 84, 98, 99, 101, 102, 108, 109, 115, 121, 123, 129, 132, 137, 138, 139, 165, 170, 171, 172, 173, 181, 182–190, 191, 194, 196, 198, 209, 225, 227, 240, 242, 243; *see also* motif
 Stockholm, Sweden 244
 Stratou, Dora 97, 153, 220
 Stravinsky, Igor 36, 236
 Streisand, Barbra 221
 structural analysis 58, 171, 238
 structure 14, 15, 20, 36, 47, 69, 71, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 82, 138, 141–142, 152, 153, 171, 184, 187, 193, 194, 196, 197, 242; macrostructure 171, 172, 181, 182, 191, 193; microstructure 152, 171, 172, 181, 191, 196
 style 4, 19, 25, 34, 36, 38, 62, 63, 65, 66, 70, 71, 72, 73, 77, 78, 94, 99, 102, 105, 106, 107, 111, 116, 117, 118, 122, 123, 125, 150, 153, 154, 159, 160, 191, 193, 194, 196, 199, 201, 204, 205, 206, 208, 209, 211, 212, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 230, 236, 239, 242; *see also* Moiseyev style; noble style
 subculture 66, 77, 126, 130, 132, 149
 subgroups 33, 114, 141, 147, 204
 Sughrue, Cynthia 27, 235
 suite (choreographic) 49, 193, 194, 195, 209, 212, 224, 243
 Sunday 5, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 153, 237
 suspension of disbelief 161, 162, 197, 212, 242
 Svetlova, H. 204
Swan Lake 7, 18, 28, 199, 212
 Sweden 5, 11, 57, 92, 116, 130, 203, 244
 swing 64, 66
 Switzerland 114, 136, 203, 241
 symbolism 1, 3, 7, 10, 16, 19, 20, 23, 35, 37, 42, 52, 63, 70, 88, 92, 94, 95, 96, 99, 101, 102–107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 149, 153, 154, 160, 188, 195, 196, 211, 223, 225, 226, 227, 237, 239, 241, 244; in Labanotation 168–170, 172, 180
 syntax 238
syrtaki 119
 Syvkovych, Maria 204
 Tajikistan 243
 Tamburini, Dorothy 195
 Tanec, State Folk Dance Ensemble of Macedonia 230
 tango 109
tanzhaus 218
 tap dance 10, 143
 tarantella 23, 53
 Taras Shevchenko State Opera and Ballet 7, 28, 204
 Tatar 117–118, 211
 taverns 46, 156
 Tchaikovsky, Peter 7, 205
 technique 6, 12, 23, 38, 76, 85, 102, 122, 129, 137, 138, 139, 143, 148, 149, 150, 151, 154, 158, 165, 183, 191, 201, 208, 209, 211, 212, 217, 242
 techno music 17, 64
 technology 2, 9, 14, 30, 45, 51, 62, 63, 64, 88, 99, 100, 133, 147, 148, 154, 164, 201, 230, 234, 238
 television 8, 23, 62, 64, 97, 102, 115, 143, 242
 theater 1, 3, 4, 16, 17, 19, 20–22, 25, 27, 28, 35, 38, 85, 86, 93, 96, 97, 98, 105, 108, 110, 121, 125, 129, 133, 153, 154, 157, 158, 159, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 181, 182, 187, 188, 190, 191, 192, 197, 198, 201, 203, 204, 205, 206, 208, 209, 212, 218, 221, 220, 234, 236, 238, 240, 242, 243
 theatricalization, staging 4, 26, 93, 98, 168–191, 192–201, 206, 209, 211, 212, 215, 243, 244
 theme-and-variation 196
 themes, thematic development 18, 35, 79, 117, 157, 161, 166–167, 197, 198, 199, 205, 209, 211, 212, 219, 236, 240, 242
 timelessness 2, 24, 25, 49, 67, 110, 188
tinikling 138; *Tinikling* (by Peay) 195–197
 Tkachenko, Tamara 134
 Tomko, Linda 127
 Toporivtsi, Bukovyna, Ukraine 47–53, 64, 65, 87, 237
 Toronto, Canada 4, 104, 116, 221
 Torp, Lisbet 57–58, 71, 94–96, 102, 105, 106, 107, 109, 240
 Toruń, Poland 85
 tradition, definition 28, 39
 Transcarpathia, Ukraine 103, 106
 transmission, learning 28, 32, 119, 128, 136, 216; direct, kinetic, oral 32, 59, 61–62, 63, 68, 72, 75, 76, 102, 184, 235, 238, 240; formal 1, 5, 30, 98, 102, 121, 122, 124, 128, 129, 130, 131, 133, 135, 136, 139, 140, 149, 150, 151, 184, 188, 189, 215; *see also* diffusion
Tresenica 231
 Trinity Irish Dancers 197
Trykolinnnyi hopak (by Verkhovynets' and Zhukov) 203, 204
tsamikos 95, 104
 Turkey 94–95, 96, 117, 121, 122, 123, 131, 219–220, 222, 240
 Turner, Victor 14, 25, 26
 Two Hills step 189
 two-step 7
 Ukraine 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 17, 18, 19, 20, 41, 43, 44, 46, 49, 52, 53, 55, 61, 65, 71, 83, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 112, 115, 116, 120, 124–125, 134, 148, 151, 155, 158, 171, 184, 187, 188, 195, 196, 198, 199, 202, 204, 205, 206, 209, 210, 211, 214, 216, 217, 223, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243; Soviet 94, 98, 99, 107, 111, 112, 114, 115, 117, 125, 187, 198, 202, 203, 204, 205, 217, 223, 234, 241, 243; Western 5, 6, 17, 43, 46, 49, 53, 55, 61, 65, 97, 98, 102, 105, 106, 111, 171, 187, 188, 189, 217, 237, 240, 242
 Ukrainian Canadian 4, 7, 12, 16, 28, 99, 102, 104, 106, 107, 110, 111, 114, 115, 117–118, 120, 122, 123, 124, 133, 148, 150, 167, 172, 188–190, 198, 221, 223, 234, 240, 243
 Ukrainian Festival Dance Company, Toronto 4
 Ukrainian Labour–Farm Temple Association, ULFTA 107
 Ukrainian National Republic 53, 97, 111
 Ukrainian National Youth Federation, MUNO 107
The Ukrainian Pioneer: A Choreographic Offering (by Sotnikow) 198
 Ukrainian Shumka Dancers 4, 155, 183, 189, 198, 199, 200
 Ulanova, Galina 205
 uniqueness 5, 39, 47, 49, 57, 58, 90, 93, 107–110, 116, 120, 122, 125, 133, 142, 147, 149, 161, 211, 218, 224, 230, 243
 unison 6, 79, 132, 137–139, 151, 165, 172, 181, 191, 194, 196, 201, 219
 United States 4, 7, 8, 11, 31, 36, 37, 39, 64, 65, 77, 118, 119, 120, 122, 124, 125–128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 150, 152, 156, 195, 203, 222, 236, 240, 241, 242
 unselfconsciousness 27, 32, 36, 68, 107, 119, 210, 213, 227, 228, 229
 upper class 62–63, 69–70, 73, 91, 105, 107, 115, 126, 149, 159, 160, 207, 226, 239; *see also* class; elite
 upstage 164, 165
 urban, city 1, 7, 19, 30, 32, 33, 34,

- 45, 63, 64, 66, 69, 76, 77, 82, 83–84, 88, 91, 94, 95, 96, 106, 107, 116, 118, 126, 130, 133, 136, 138, 156, 165, 190, 201, 205, 206, 212, 214, 215, 216, 218, 222, 226, 230, 235, 236
 utilitarian movement 10; *see also* redundancy
 Uzbekistan, Uzbek 243
- Vaganova, Agrippina 205
 variant (alternate form) 32, 36, 39, 49, 50, 55, 56, 58, 61, 62, 71–72, 77, 78, 79, 84, 103, 105, 106, 109, 114, 115, 116, 123, 133, 136, 137, 141, 158, 164, 184, 186, 189, 190, 191, 192, 194, 195, 196, 230, 238, 241; variation (process) 61, 62, 76, 105, 111–123, 130, 136, 186, 194, 230, 236, 240
 varsovienne 123
 Vasylenko, Kim 187, 192–193, 195, 197, 199, 243
 vaudeville 206
 Vegreville, Canada 7, 8, 16, 20, 198
 Venezuela 19
verbunk 47, 70, 218
 Verkhovynets', Vasyi' 124–125, 128, 135, 184, 188, 203, 204, 206, 209, 241
 vernacular 33, 34, 52, 58, 77, 99, 119, 195, 199, 225, 226, 231, 239, 240
 Veryovka Folk Choir and Dancers, Kyiv 198, 221, 223, 244
vesnianka 71, 124, 125; *see also* *haivka*; *khorovod*
 Vigneault, Gilles 199
 Virsky, Pavlo 6, 108, 190, 191, 198, 201, 202, 204–212, 213, 216, 221, 243–244
- Virsky State Folk Dance Ensemble 6, 204–205, 208–212, 243, 244
 virtuosity 6, 18, 88, 108, 143, 149, 156, 189, 196, 206, 208, 210, 212, 225
 Visinski, Stanimir 230, 231
 vival 2, 3, 4, 24–26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 40, 47, 52, 53, 58–62, 63–65, 67, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 82, 83–87, 88, 89, 94, 96, 97, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 112, 121, 124, 128, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 144, 148, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 163, 165, 166, 168, 172, 181, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 200, 201, 206, 210, 211, 214, 215, 218, 223, 224–232, 235, 238, 239, 242, 243, 244; definition 3, 24–26
 vocabulary (of motifs) *see* lexicon
 Volyn' region, Ukraine 106
vorokhtianka 54–55, 58–62, 237
Les Voyageurs 199
 Vsevolodskii–Gerngross, Vsevolod 206, 209, 244
vysoka 185–186
- Waikiki, United States 8
 Wallacian 40
 Walther, Suzanne 233
 waltz 5, 7, 12, 17, 24, 50, 53, 62, 71, 80, 102, 109, 136, 146
 Warsaw, Poland 123
 Webb, Brian 199
 wedding 6–7, 8, 12–13, 15–16, 22, 23, 35, 37, 41–43, 44, 47–52, 61, 64, 65, 72, 77, 87, 94, 137, 189, 209, 212, 218, 225, 234, 237, 238, 243
 West, Colleen 195
- West Side Story* 199
 Western culture 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 20, 21, 26, 27, 30, 35, 36, 37, 38, 43, 46, 53, 62, 63, 64, 66, 70, 71, 72, 73, 82, 83, 88, 92, 94, 104, 120, 122, 123, 124, 131, 134, 139, 140, 144, 147, 148, 149, 151, 152, 157, 158, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 181, 194, 207, 210, 212, 213, 217, 220, 221, 222, 230, 231, 234, 236, 238, 239, 240; definition 2, 233
 whirling dervish 12, 89
 Winnipeg, Canada 104, 198
 witches 8
 World War I 20, 97, 226
 World War II 55, 56, 58, 71, 85, 99, 112, 130, 205, 208, 211, 238
 worlddance 122
- Yaqui 119
 Yaremenko, Victor 7
 Yevshan Ukrainian Folk Ballet Ensemble, Saskatoon 4, 188, 198
 Yugoslavia 15, 61, 111, 172, 193, 227, 240
- zabava* (dance party) 225
 Zagreb, Croatia 226
Zaporozhets' za Dunaiem 93, 204
 Zaporozhians *see* Cossacks
Zaporozhs'kyi herts' (by Avramenko) 108, 242
Zaporozhtsi (by Virsky) 211
 Zebec, Tvrtko 27
 Zhmariov, A. 204
 Zhukov, Leonid 203
Zhuravel' (by Avramenko) 242
 Zimbabwe 121