

WORLD DANCE: A (NEW) EUPHEMISM IN DANCE TERMINOLOGY?

(*Translation*)

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The term world dance has different meanings for dancers, various dance practitioners and amongst the wider public where it inconsistently denotes various dances or dance forms. There is no uniformity in its use or even agreement regarding connotations connected with how the term is used. This article will attempt to explore the possible meanings covered by the term and offer theoretical deliberations on it through the example of classical ballet. The controversial hypothesis of whether a ballet dance form could also be considered world dance will also be explored.

Keywords: *dance, world dance, world music, ballet*

The concept of the phrase *world dance* is used differently by dancers; various dance practitioners and the wide public and thus does not include all the various dances and/or dance forms. There is no agreement on the use of the term or on the concepts of the term.¹

In view of all scientific studies and analyses, it is a fairly new concept, although several attempts of scientific analysis have been made.² One of

¹ At the UCLA University in the USA (University of California, Los Angeles) the word *world* is used to replace the word *ethno* in order to make distance from the colonial past and associations related to racial and class hierarchy. *World dance* thus indicates a neutral comparative area where all dances are equally different and of equal importance (cf. Foster 2009:1–2). *World dance* is also used to name or describe dance groups, dance events, dance gatherings, dance festivals, etc. However, it is not determined when and where the term was first used and how it become widespread. It is used today to define many dance forms and dances.

² The book *A World History of the Dance* written by a German musicologist Curt Sachs from 1937 can be considered as one of the first scientific and significant attempts of observing dance from a global perspective. It is a radical attempt of collecting and comparing dances from almost the whole world and in different time periods, starting from the stone age and “oriental civilizations”, through Greek and Roman classical period, the renaissance, 18th century, the “waltz period” (19th century) and “tango period” (20th century). Sach’s history of dance, however, includes only the history of the dances of Western Europe.

them is the never published theme issue of the American magazine *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* (JASHM) that in 2011 issued an invitation for texts that would analyse the use of the concept of the *world dance*. Editors never prepared the issue so the texts were never published. The collection of papers *Worlding Dance*, edited by Susan Leigh Foster, which analyses world dance from different perspectives, has been more successful. It is one of the questions asked in the invitation of the American magazine that has, however, inspired this paper – “Does the *world dance* include all dances, except from ballet and modern dance?” This text will thus try to analyse possible connotations and current theoretical analysis of the phrase *world dance* on the example of classical ballet and question the controversial assumption that the phrase can include the dance form of classical ballet as well. The complexity of the construction and some of the related issues result from the way it has been used and, especially, from a possibly implicit copying of the segments of the meaning of the phrase *world music*, which has been analysed carefully and has imposed a contemporary and historical context of the terminology of ethnic in dance.

The complexity of the phrase *world dance* appears on several levels if our attention is directed to the meaning of the two words that make it. The first part of the phrase *world* at the same time implies heterogeneity and homogeneity of the category. It signifies *everything* of the world and the *unique* and *monolithic* of the world. The common denominator – *world* – creates an impression that it is really possible to talk about one, unique and representative dance, as well as the idea of a culture as a heterogeneous dance unity. The word *world* also includes a specific connotation of property in the sense that the world dance belongs to (the whole) world, and not necessarily (only) to a specific geographic destination or a dance community. This results with a question of whether the communities that identify themselves with specific dances or dance forms can or want to agree with the inclusiveness of the phrase. The other part of the phrase – *dance* – might refer to a single dance or a dance form, with the possibility to classify it according to its location, historical and contextual differences. Considering the first word *world*, the singular form of *dance* definitely signifies a potential plurality of representative world dances. The adjective *world* is associated with the term global, thus indicating one or several dance forms that are globally widespread, applied or recognised. Bringing different dances under

a common denominator reflects the effort devoted in making the category follow the trends of something global, intercultural, multicultural, and other similar trends. This inevitably results in ignoring the *internal* laws and qualities of each individual form. Marta Elena Savigliano believes that *world dance* is a representation, one of the new ways of combining, conceptualizing and evaluating “other” dances. (2009:164). *World dance* does not actually stand for new or emerging dances, but a selection of the existing forms that should be included in the concept, depending on the process of creating a new category. If the concept aims to identify a new dance category, however, it unavoidably interferes with the existing categories and their boundaries (which are also very flexible and imprecise) although, as Veit Erlmann noticed, the invasion of foreign elements can be defined as a destructive process only if we assume that any culture is *a priori* a coherent unity (cf. 1993:5). Potential intrusion into other dance categories or inclusion of several dance forms creates new problems, mostly in the attempts to qualify or apply aesthetic standards that belong to one category to another category. When a critic, for example, evaluates works according to their own aesthetic criteria, regardless of the fact that they have different aesthetic criteria (cf. Gottschild 1997:169–171). It is important to take into consideration the phenomena and standards that are crucial to the researched and be aware of the limitations (aesthetic and other) of understanding and evaluating, but also those of the observed or researched because “[o]ne of the easiest ways to disempower others is to measure them by a standard which ignores their chosen aesthetic frame of reference and its particular demands” (Gotschild 1997:171). On the other hand, giving equal value to all dances (or dance forms) in the world and emphasizing their equality leads to the loss of unique referential aesthetic frameworks that often influence the boundaries between specific dance forms, their definition and understanding. Creating a new category, within which some seemingly very diverse dance forms would appear (e.g. according to the structure of the steps and techniques that influence their performance), can result in decontextualisation (of understanding and then the performance). Decontextualisation often leads to transformation or even the loss of meaning since, as Georgina Gore said, the meaning is often not in the dance movements, but in the interaction of all elements of the performance, including the expectations of the audience and the turnout (Gore 1986:55).

WORLD DANCE AND WORLD MUSIC

The most complex problem of the phrase *world dance* is the association with the phrase *world music*. The perception of specific (dance) communities, groups or organizations of the *world dance* as dance or dances of “diversity” is quite widespread. Diversity is thus first seen as ethnic with the note of exotic, faraway and traditional. In light of the practice and tendencies of specific dance groups, organizations and even institutions³ that took over some perceptions of the phrase *world music* that can be applied to *world dance* so that *world dance* should or could refer to the dances with the elements of traditional and ethnic in modernity, the term ethno/folk appears to be problematic, i.e. evading unambiguity with the phrase *world dance*. Ethno refers to original and authentic, and when the same thing happens with the phrase *world dance*, there arise problems of the characteristics of the term and their boundaries.⁴

Comparison with music as a similar phenomenon seems necessary, considering the same part of the phrase – *world*, as well as the area of research of these two phenomena (music and dance). Some practices and discourses where the phrase *world dance* is already used might result from the perceptions and ideas copied from the ones related to *world music*.⁵

³ On the widespread use of the phrase *world dance*, especially at American universities, see Foster (2009:1–3).

⁴ Pure ethnographies and ethnologies or pure, original, authentic forms cannot be determined. Temporal and spatial framework of their perception is disputable since spaces are not necessarily the same and the first time they were used cannot be precisely defined (not only the oldest known, available or definable). Naila Ceribašić (2003:261) believes that originality is a “modern aesthetic concept and modern practice that relies on the imagined past practice. The real connection with the actual practice of the past (if it can be defined), is pretty irrelevant, although it is the core of the concept of originality”. Anca Giurchescu (2001:117), on the other hand says that “authenticity is a romantic construction. If authenticity has the connotation of ‘truth’, then every performance which makes sense for the people is implicitly authentic”.

⁵ Discourses within the disciplines that study music (musicology and ethnomusicology, i.e. anthropology of music as most representative) and dance(s) (dance studies, anthropology of structured movement, dance ethnology, ethnocoreology and dance ethnography) can be completed by researches of potentially related issues. In order to explain the potential area

World music is the result of the need of finding a new category where music with which “no one knew what to do” could have been put into. Interested distributors of music agreed to “create” it as a separate branch of the music industry (Connell and Gibson 2004:349).⁶ It thus became an imagined “genre” created by the West with the goal of placing within it all the music that satisfied their desire for the “new”, “essentially different” and “exotic” Other (Piškor 2005:33). Western record companies tried to launch something new, distant, exotic and authentic under one name by creating a new, artificially created category from the selected pieces of music launched for the needs of the modern media and with the goal of securing a good position on the market and making profit.

Mojca Piškor emphasizes that, in the beginning, *world music* included types of music that could have been connected with the so called tropical countries or the music of the countries partly connected with the countries of the so called Third World. Gradually the category began to include the music of the minorities of the Western world and only recently it has become possible to find Western music in the category as well, provided that it is not popular mainstream music or the art music of the Western Europe. Whether a type of music is labelled as *world music* or not depends on its connection with the specific location on the map of the world, social position or the position in the often disputable and unsuitable (nevertheless accepted in record industry) division of music into art music, traditional music and popular music (Piškor 2005:32–33). Above all, *world music* is a

of the copying (of the meaning of *world music* to *world dance*), it is necessary to shortly present some analyses of the *world music* as the area of research of music although the constructs cannot be compared in more detail nor it is possible to deal with the whole issue of *world music* in this paper. *World music* has been scientifically analysed within ethno(musicology) and humanistic studies and these analyses can be used to study *world dance*. The aspects that are already known, like racial imagination, (post)colonialism and globalization (cf. Piškor 2005:19–31) can be used as a guideline of reference point.

⁶ After the meeting of some record companies and journalists in London in 1987, “*world music* emerged in Britain as a formal commercial category” (Connell and Gibson 2004:349). According to the words of Ian Anderson, one of the participants of the meeting, different names were discussed and *world music* was agreed to be the one that includes the most and leaves out the least. (ibid. 349–350).

construct that is changing considering the time and place of its origin (ibid. 4) and the positions it is observed from.

Ethnomusicologists and scientists that study related disciplines approach *world music* from different points of view, but they agree that the phrase does not have a unique and clear definition and that it is not possible to observe it as a separate genre (cf. Guilbault 1997:31; Connell and Gibson 2004:350). Nevertheless, it is created as a genre – it has its own shelves in shops, specialised magazines, TV and radio shows (Piškor 2005:11). Emphasis on the differences or the otherness of the music it includes into its boundaries is in the core of discursive strategies that isolate *world music* as a separate category (ibid. 34). The principle of inclusiveness or exclusiveness is apparent here.

It is precisely the problem of inclusiveness or exclusiveness that proved to be crucial in creating the phrase *world dance*. If we do not use the word *world* only symbolically, the phrase *world dance* might include almost all dances since all dances are danced, perceived, interpreted, observed, created or appear somewhere in the world. The phrase that evokes something similar (*world music* in this case), even if it has a completely different meaning, cannot avoid perceptions that will identify it or associate it with the aforementioned one, regardless of the name. As Mojca Piškor says, despite its global characteristic, the music covered by the category *world music* does not include music from *all over the world* (2005:33; emphasized by I. K.). In case of real or potential copying, every dance or a dance form that is left out of the terminological framework of the powerful name *world dance* is either subordinate or superior to the others. Elimination of the dances that have western roots from the potential world heritage (that the name itself refers to) leads to their degradation or, on the contrary, their removal (whatever the reasons are) makes them superior to all the others. Does the *world* in the name refer to its exclusiveness or, quite the opposite, to its all-inclusiveness, as it is with *world music*? Should the new construct (again) separate *dance* from *world dance*?⁷

⁷ Piškor noticed that the use of the category *world music* created a terminological dualism that separated music from the music of the world, although the idea was to pluralise music studies within university programmes in Croatia. It actually created a deeper division according to which the music perceived as non-western and ethnically diverse remains separated from the music of the West (2005:18–19).

BALLET AS AN ETHNIC DANCE?

It might be good to remember a similar case of exclusion within a category of ethnic dances that was mentioned by Joann Kealiinohomoku, by referring to the justification of including classical ballet within the category of ethnic dances, i.e. within the framework of ethnological research.⁸ She says that each dance might be seen as ethnic or that all dances are ethnic since, according to the generally accepted anthropological view that the ethnic dance represents “a dance form of a given group of people who share common genetic, linguistic and cultural ties” (Kealiinohomoku 1969/1970:31), which places a special emphasis on cultural tradition. Therefore, if *world dance* are all dances and if all dances can be perceived as ethnic, all dances might be world dances or ethnic dances and, in this aspect, the terms *world* and *ethnic* seem rather synonymous. This interesting concept, although presented far back in 1969, has only remained on the level of a sensational idea of the time. It has definitely provoked interest and resulted in new editions of the text, as well as frequent citations. The text has expanded horizons and made an influence, although unparallel to the idea itself. Jennifer Fisher also noticed some of the issues raised by Kealiinohomoku’s text and invited cultural anthropologists to adjust their methods of research so that they would include ballet as well:

“If ethnography as it is rooted in cultural anthropology is to survive its colonialist roots, more methods that move toward collaboration need to emerge. Who better to develop them than scholars who know that elite form of ballet evolved from folk dance; and who better to call for collaboration than people who do and watch ballet, because they are the folk who are involved now?” (Fisher 2011:60)

However, Adrienne L. Kaeppler (2008:80–81) believes that what Kealiinohomoku sees as ethnic in ballet refers to the “western” interpretation of dance. Kealiinohomoku (1969/1970:30–31) identifies specific ethnicity in the scene performances of ballet in the symbolic presentation of traditional

⁸ Savigliano believes that there are two archives of dances. One is the archive of “Dance”, i.e. art dance and the other is the “archive of dancing” in anthropology (cf. 2009:170).

western customs and values, like e.g. the Christian holiday of Christmas. Kaeppler also believes that ballet was a local and “ethnic” tradition for a very short time (in the 16th century in Italy), and since “[a]ny story can be set to ballet movement”, it removes ballet from its local Italian origins. When ballet crossed the borders, says the author, it became “European” and, at the end of the 20th century, almost “universal”, i.e. widely known. Although it is not practised in some social communities, they are familiar with it. A person who has never performed in a ballet can understand the structure of the ballet system of movements (cf. Kaeppler 2008:80–81).⁹

The arguments presented by Kealiinohomoku, however, cannot be considered only as values and symbols of the local 16th-century Italy. They extend until today, although in different and adapted forms. Some western values, like the interest in flora and fauna mentioned by Kealiinohomoku, still reflect the symbolic values of the West. Kealiinohomoku thus mentions the phenomenon of “honoured” animals like swans, and not e.g. pigs, bulls or crocodiles that are respected in other, “non-western” parts of the world. Moreover, a rose is more likely to appear in a ballet story than e.g. coconut (cf. 1969/1970:31). Dixie Durr, relying on Kealiinohomoku’s arguments, recognizes ballet as an ethnic form

“not only because it is an example of an idiom of body language that encodes the customs and mores that were generated by the cultural traditions of a specific group of people, but that those common cultural and linguistic ties have persisted through time and can be seen in the body language of ballet dancers today.” (1986:3)

Ethnic elements identified by Kealiinohomoku can be found in white classical ballets¹⁰ (i.e. those written mostly in the 19th century). Modern neoclassical works (still recognized as ballet works) created by modern choreographers using dance vocabulary on the basis of the ballet technique, still reflect social values (in the new conditions) and interpretations through

⁹ There are, of course, different levels of understanding the structure of ballet movements, depending on the level of involvement. My aim here was to emphasize their recognisability.

¹⁰ *Ballet blanc*, T. N.

new stories, regardless of what they say. Familiar structures of movement they use to achieve it are their standardised language (dance technique), way of expression, but not the whole content. They create the content of meaning by each new performance and performances may reflect some modern values. The physical virtuosity of ballet can thus express the modern imperative of the West for the “progress”.¹¹ Ballet is definitely widely known today and it is this recognisability that attributes it with various *world* adjectives, starting from the *world* famous technique, *world* famous ballet body (formed by the technique) to institutionalised practices of its performances. The recognisability thus does not eliminate specific ethnicity of ballet performances.

Ballet can be considered as a very complex form. The complexity makes it fit into several categories; the category of standard, traditional, ethnic, global or a world dance form. As Andr e Grau noticed, the most dominant part of the complexity today may be in its existence within the neutral, transnational area (2008:205). Ballet is an international product of a standardised dance form. Transnational area of its existence denies it its fixed location. It is confirmed by the uniqueness or specific features of a dance form and not by the location, as it used to be. Today ballet is not made by the locations of its performance that always takes place at an area or by the stories whose topics cover diverse ideas of modern choreographers. It is made by a universally applicable technique and all the complexity of its heritage that are carried and transferred by dance bodies in movement.

Through the history ballet was unpretentious and reflected the social issues of its time although it was created as a distant art form of an airy and untouchable beauty. During the period of its development it was conditioned by social, political and cultural circumstances. However, it is still not perceived as rooted in the society although it revolves around the topics of love, betrayal and jealousy, which are all part of the life and

¹¹ “Progress” is the tendency and construct of the western world, which expects the body to develop in order to become stronger, technically more fit (for dancing) and acquire a masterly skill. The progress is welcome, but not necessarily realistic nor always useful for the body or the human being.

experience of individuals. The references to fairytales, kings and queens and mythical creatures do not increase its connection with the daily life of ordinary people (cf. Grau 2005:148–149).¹² In relation with the social structures, values and norms, ballet themes follow the patterns of European legends and folklore. Arkin i Smith (1997) analyse the popularity of the national dance on the scene and social stages, as well as the character of romantic naivety of ballet and character dances within the ballet form of dancing.¹³ Narrative characteristics of ballet, contained in ballet stories and expressed in the performances, were partly carried by national, i.e. character dances.¹⁴ With the dominance of the ballet technique (presented through more demanding virtuosity of ballet performances) modern ballet performances are “freed” from the great part of narrative elements. National or character dances, however, still speak of the neglected, although an including part of each classical ballet.¹⁵

The entirety of the ballet form consists of specific styles inherited through the course of history (like the English, Italian, French or Russian) and united under the unique outlines of the ballet technique. Some of the styles are connected with specific national characteristics and thus express national traditions of some of the styles of the ballet dance form. Arkin and

¹² At the time when “white ballets” were written there were kings and queens. They exist today as well (their role in the world is most often merely symbolic or far from the power they used to have), although the structure of their activity and influence is significantly different than the one they had in the past.

¹³ “Character dances” are a constant terminological definition among dancers and choreographers that refers to specific national or traditional dances within a classical ballet repertoire.

¹⁴ Authors of the 19th century alternately use the terms “national” and “character” for dances integrated in classical white ballets (Arkin and Smith 1997:13).

¹⁵ The audience at the Paris Opéra saw Polish, Italian, Hungarian and Spanish national (character) dances in a pre-romantic ballet (Arkin and Smith 1997:20). Like Herder, many dance theoreticians of the late 18th and 19th century, e.g. Andre Gallini, Gennaro Magri, Carlo Blasis, showed interest for the authentic, “true” and “natural” ethnic expressions of different nations (ibid. 30–32). Libretto of the *Swan Lake*, most popular classical ballet until this day, is based on the elements of a German folk story (cf. Wulff 2008:530), and the third act is actually an overview of national dances (Hungarian, Spanish, Russian ...).

Smith reveal that the iconography of the period of romantic ballet shows characteristic positions of hands, feet, torso or head that was used “to mark national origin” (1997:42).¹⁶ Ballet tradition might be claimed by Italy, Spain, England, France, Russia, Ukraine or Denmark. All of these areas greatly influenced the ballet of today. And they are all considered to belong to the western culture.

By the emphasis on national styles or character dances in classical ballet, which can be seen today as well, although to a lesser extent, I want to point out to ethnic elements, sporadically connected with classical ballet works. However, I do not want to claim that only these elements reflect a specific ballet ethnicity that is denied to ballet or at least (still) ignored. Other forms of ballet that can indicate its ethnicity are the duration of the tradition and, as it was already stated by Kealiinohomoku, stories on which they are based. Although ballet is not considered to be a traditional dance and is not characterised as such, the duration of the ballet tradition cannot be disputed. Ballet tradition is reflected in its century-long continuity and its elitist characteristics in the international reputation and sophisticated aesthetics intended only for the chosen bodies. Ballet is commonly described as an urban “elite” dance and a dance of “high” culture. Such adjectives are the result of a designed and demanding dance technique. Introduction of more

¹⁶ There are specific national characteristics which can be seen in some dances. Almost every observer of the so called Western world will recognise tango, flamenco or *czárdás*, even if they had no previous knowledge of the structure of the steps or the historical development of the dances. They have a distinct way of shaping the movements and are easily connected with some nations or localities, regardless of the way the performers of the dance identify themselves. Tango can be recognised at first sight, even on a painting or a photograph. Adrienne L. Kaeppler (2008) says that ballet, Hawaiian dance hula or the *Cats* musical is easily recognised and understood even if the observers are not too involved. Some dance forms are recognised instantly, regardless of the fact whether the observer had any knowledge of the details, dance technique or a dance form. Their recognisability lies in certain motives. Kaeppler defines the motives as culturally structured parts of the movement connected with specific dance tradition or genre. They are stored in the memory of choreographers, usually of the performers and often of the audience (2008:81–82). Their choreography might vary, but they will be recognised as, e.g. a Hawaiian, Korean or ballet dance.

precise criteria and the increased selection has intensified the elitist criteria for the dancers, i.e. their bodies, and made them more distanced.¹⁷ Ballet is considered to be a dance form of the highest degree of codification and the most elitist European theatre dance.¹⁸ Ballet is traditionally elitist, but elitist and traditional as well.

Ballet also has (relatively dominant) elements that are not considered classically or traditionally ethnic, like the dominant standardised form. It is precisely one chosen variant, however, that allows longevity and preservation, and thus tradition as well. Standardization, achieved by the ballet technique and its reflections, is not opposed to tradition.¹⁹ Dance uniformity is not necessarily opposite to the dance tradition and it should not contradict it. If it happens to be on the opposite pole, it is not necessarily opposite. Acknowledged (accepted) traditional or ethnic dances are sometimes also forced to find versions in order to be preserved that become the versions of the standard to remain the versions of the tradition. Standard does not mean unchangeability, but being defined. Standard is determined and set, but not unchangeable.

The Hawaiian dance hula, e.g. is a reflection of cultural combinations that are three-hundred years old and, at the same time, under the influence of the new expectations of the audience (tourists/tourism) it becomes more complex and uniform as a traditional, national, ethnic dance (cf. Rowe

¹⁷ We could raise another point of the comparison of *world music* and *world dance*, i.e. their potentially analogue Others (Western European art music and classical white ballet) by reflecting on racial imaginations and associations they are potentially burdened with, although we cannot carry out a more detailed analysis of this segment here.

¹⁸ Novack (1993:46) believes that, at the professional level, ballet is designed and organised as a closed tradition resistant to change. But, even as a set form of dance presentation, classical ballet is “refreshed by transfusions of new influences in series of transformations” (Tarle 2009:59). It is subjected to changes that some scientists connect with aesthetic values (Desmond 1997:38). With new generations and in new contexts – social, political and cultural – aesthetic values are also changed and redefined, thus inevitably changing the phenomena they are related with as well.

¹⁹ I do not aim to define or redefine tradition here, but use it as a term that gives legitimacy to some forms of the traditional and declines it to the other forms, often precisely because of their standardised form.

2008:36). As paradoxes of tradition Peter Burke singles out innovation that can eliminate the perseverance of tradition, but it can be the other way around as well – the outer “signs” of tradition can eliminate innovation. Therefore, what is changed is changed and really needs to be changed during its transmission to a new generation (Burke 2006:37). Inevitable changes do not affect the recognisability of the standard. If we compare ballet from one hundred years ago with the one performed today it is still recognisable, regardless of the time conditioned modifications. It is only when the dance form is changed so that it cannot be recognised anymore that the standard, but the dance form as well, is lost.

The unique form of ballet, in all its stylistic and predetermined forms, which depend on the time and location, is still recognisable. Next to the traditional elements it cherishes, it has also become a widespread dance form. Stylistic differences within the same dance form do not diminish the uniqueness and comprehensiveness of the dance form or their unique applicability and international recognisability. The international quality of ballet is reflected in the trained bodies of the dancers, shaped by the ballet technique.²⁰ National theatres have accepted well known choreographies, welcomed distinguished choreographers and dancers and added the works of modern choreographers to their repertoires. You do not have to travel to London to see Ashton’s choreographies or New York to see Balanchine’s choreographies²¹ anymore – you can see them in national and/or city theatres. Wainwright, Williams and Turner write about the global flow of successful ballets that resulted with their inclusion in almost all repertoires of national or large ballet ensembles. The choreographies have become part of the repertoire of big ballet companies in Europe, North America, etc. (Wainwright, Williams, Turner 2007:316) but, due to increasingly

²⁰ Regardless of the fact that dancers have acquired specific institutional and choreographic characteristics during their education and work in an institution, as well as their experiences and travels throughout the world, with time they can adopt a specific style of another dance ensemble (cf. Wainwright, Williams, Turner 2006:549).

²¹ Frederick Ashton is a very popular British dancer and choreographer (1904 – 1988), and George Balanchine (1904 – 1983) an American of Georgian ancestry. In 1934 Balanchine went to USA and worked at the *Metropolitan*. In 1948 he founded the *New York City Ballet* and worked as its art director.

intensified mobility, the method of transfer has changed.²² The body of the dancer has become the carrier of the national feeling and, since recently, of global cultural powers. In the forms of high culture, dance has become constitutive to nationalism (Grau and Jordan 1996; as cited in Wainwright, Williams, Turner 2007:322), but partly globalism as well.

Besides the fact that it is widely recognizable, ballet, as a dance form, has also significantly influenced other dance forms. Almost every school of modern dance includes ballet lessons as a basis for further training of the dance body. Many professional dancers, e.g. dance sport, and even athletes (skaters or gymnasts) complete their own techniques by borrowing from or upgrading ballet techniques. In this influence I see a certain *outflow* (transfer and crossing the boundaries) of ballet into other dance expressions or modifications of specific dance forms by other forms.

Regardless of the form, dance demands (and has always had) a context. There are differences in the degree of reality of the context or, as Andrée Grau (2008) noticed, some dances are rich and some are poor in context.²³ The reason for the appearance of “non-art” dances (or those that are not given the adjective *art*) Grau sees in the rootedness of their specific context. Their ability to survive far from the context of creation and representation is one of the factors that will make people think of them as “art” (Grau 2008:204–205). However, the context of ballet has changed, as well as the context of every other dance or dance form, but has not disappeared. It has become standardised and is thus recognisable to audiences and to dancers. From its early forms, since the court ballet,²⁴ it is performed on the stage

²² Ballet can illustrate the rapid process of cultural globalisation or the overlapping of national and global dance forms (glocalization) (cf. Wainwright, Williams, Turner 2007:320).

²³ American anthropologist Edward Hall suggested the concepts of the richness and scarcity of context in his book *Beyond Culture* from 1976 (as cited in Grau 2005:159, note 11). By relying on Hall’s concepts, Andrée Grau (2008) emphasizes the richness of context of national and traditional dances and the poverty of context of art dances, suggesting that the loss of the “original” context is the result of their staging.

²⁴ New and more demanding style of dancing has been created on the heritage of dance steps developed in the renaissance and baroque – *ballet de cour* or court ballet. With similar steps, but technically more advanced and more attractive, dances have moved from court rooms to the stage in a more advanced form. (cf. Nordera 2007:24, 27).

and such practice has become standardised in the later periods. Ethnic elements of ballet are hidden by symbolic characteristics and demanding dance technique with which it is (allegedly) possible to create art. It is ballet dancers who insist on art as the element of classical ballet that is considered to be contrast to ethnic in the dance. Dixie Durr sees the fear of recognizing ballet as an ethnic form within the dance community as a sign of the fear of the loss of its specific “magic” although, she says that “a comprehension of rules and meanings can promote a different, but equally irresistible ‘magic’ – one that is based on understanding” (1986:10). If the community does not see their practices as ethnic, it is questionable whether such constructions should be imposed from the outside. Should the term result from a dance practice or a scientific discourse?

Since this analysis has been done as an answer to the specific need of defining the phrase *world dance*, I will address the problem of ordered or subsequent definition in the conclusion.

The definition of a phenomenon is usually justified and necessary so that we could discuss the same phenomenon or understand each other (cf. and Kealiinohomoku 1969/1970:28). Ideas and stereotypes (sometimes copied from the related areas) create rootedness and specific recognisability, often before a specific phenomenon is defined. A phenomenon is thus attempted to be identified, researched, and then defined after a widely accepted understanding. It is recognisability (of the concept) that may appear as an indicator of a potentially necessary definition. However, the freedom of a complete and uninhibited agreement about the definition is thus eliminated. It necessarily includes already created constructs and maybe adds more precise contours. It is very difficult to define or determine clear boundaries of the phenomena like art or dance in general, although such concepts may seem recognisable. Definition can lead to a general idea of dance and the phrase *world dance*. However, definitions are specialised, often inaccessible and an unknown area to the wider audience. Specialised scientists deal with definitions and the process of defining, and the recognisability of certain concepts comes from the wide area of susceptibleness, popularity,

perception and receptions of the audience. There is a serious disconnection between dancers and scientists, unless when they are one person (when a person unites both interests and both practices). The necessity of reflecting on the concept of *world dance* does not necessarily result in the harmony of these two domains. The survival of the construct in different areas and circles has a different position or can be, in different parts of the world or among specific population, understood differently and sometimes even contradictory.²⁵

Clear definitions are very rare in social and humanistic studies. They can rarely (considering the fact that the definition of the definition is to be short and concise) cover all dimensions and, more importantly, include all the fluidity of certain phenomena so that they would last and survive. They are necessarily reanalysed, criticized and expanded. The phenomena that are determined by themselves (not necessarily defined as well), “from the inside”, from the communities, places or areas of activity of specific processes or activities, in light of their (sufficient) recognisability and acceptance, are then usually aimed to be defined “from the outside as well”. Legitimate and justified use of the concept “world dance” might be achieved by agreeing on the use or its stability. None of these (process) activities, however, is exempt from modifications, disputes or critics of absolutism.

²⁵ Connell and Gibson said for the *world music*: “In the USA, where lives a large Hispanic population, salsa is not usually considered to be *world music*, while it is in Great Britain. ‘Traditional’ Asian music in Singapore appears in the category of world music only if it is sold as foreign and exotic for the Western audience and by Western companies. On the other hand, canto-pop, J-pop, Chinese opera and other Asian styles, produced and distributed by big Asian record companies, are sold separately, in their own categories of mainstream sections of Singapore record shops. Australian Aborigine music can be world music if it is seen as ‘traditional’ but is eliminated from the category if it is considered to be ‘modern’. The categories of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ are inevitably defined differently in different contexts. Country and western music in Italy is usually found on the ‘world music’ shelf. Even completely simplified interpretations of world music as a ‘music sold in world music sections of the stores throughout the western capitalist world (partly non-western world as well) does not make world music a stable category. Moreover, most of the ‘non-western’ types of music have never become ‘world music’” (Connell and Gibson 2004:350; as cited in Piškor 2005:105).

In the end, a truly valuable scientific analysis of a phenomenon, as Piškor said, depends on the continuous dialogue of several authors and the process of confronting different attitudes and interpretations (2005:169). Since every definition (terminological) is the result of a (more or less) successful agreement, this paper introduces one of the suggestions and maybe a warning that may be missed in the process of a wider context of defining a term. From the perspective of individual dancers and considering the construct of the *world dance*, dances can represent a specific treasure that belongs to everyone and which has elements that can be borrowed, taken and danced in a unique way. Each dance is, therefore, a world dance as much as a completely individual dance in the final performance.

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