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EXPERIENCES AND DILEMMAS OF APPLIED ETHNOCHOREOLOGY

The possibilities for the application of ethnochoreological knowledge are considered in the article on the basis of the author's own experience in researching dance on the island of Krk, and the reception of the published results. One paradigmatic example is the reconstruction of the *tanac* dance that is shown, in a picturesque way, as a link between direct scholarly research and practical activity in the field. Assessment of the stage performances is a quite different and much more sensitive experience, since what is in question relates to a decision on the representativeness of the tradition and the persons presenting it. What stems from that are also the inevitable changes in aesthetics, depending on the context of the performance and its performers. The training method also shows itself to be one of the ways of preserving the stylistic and structural particularities of the dance. The writer attempts by reflexivity to encompass and interpret the multi-layered and diverse discourses. The researcher is equally accountable whether assessment of a performance or writing text is involved. Thus, he interprets scholarly and theoretical discussions in combination with diverse fields and research contexts and the reception of the published texts as part of their practical application and vice versa.

Key words: applied ethnochoreology, aesthetics, dance ethnography

Although applied anthropology was being discussed already from the very beginning of the 20th century,¹ there is nothing unusual in the fact that it has been only recently in Croatia that there has been discussion on "the encounter" aiming towards applied ethnomusicology (Pettan 1995).²

¹ "The concept of 'applied anthropology' dates back to at least 1906, when it was used to announce the establishment of a degree course at Oxford, while the term 'practical anthropology' was used as early as in 1860s by James Hunt, founder of the Anthropological Society of London" (see Reed 1998:1).

² Svanibor Pettan has taken as a theme the concept of applied ethnomusicology, supporting the idea of the use of music with the intention of enhancing relations between people as an innovation in the framework of Croatian scholarship on music, although he has pointed out

Many of the texts in which applied anthropology is discussed see meaningfulness precisely in the fact that experts should make the world better by their example and make possible improved understanding, prompted by certain changes in society, in solving practical problems in human relations, and in testing theory in practice (cf. Reed 1998). Applied anthropology is developing particularly in the United States where, together with the biological, cultural, linguistic and archaeological, it is regarded as the fifth anthropological sub-discipline, which actually unifies all the other four, in order, through the application of its methods and theories, to provide practical solutions to the issues confronting the social community. Many anthropologists and dance ethnologists who are engaged in application in the United States are employed outside the academic community. To that extent, there are frequent cases of lack of misunderstanding between the academic socio-cultural anthropologists, who consider themselves as being "basic", and those who are employed in non-academic settings. Dance ethnologists have recently stressed that it is just that dialogue between scholars and the public that they see as the nucleus of academically attained knowledge application (Snyder 2003:9). In that process, they comprehend dance ethnology application as the transfer of knowledge, training, and organisation of festivals, at which enhanced understanding develops between people of different races, nations and groups, and dance therapy as a tool in helping victims of war, illness and the like.

It would seem that European experience is somewhat different. There are fewer professionals permanently employed in application. At the same time, there is a smaller part of the academic community that is basically dealing with theoretical issues and university lecturing (also as application), and simultaneously active in other forms of application in practice. This relates particularly to folklorists, ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists who are often exposed to the wishes and the "needs from outside – from the field".

Croatian war ethnography from the early 1990s additionally prompted consideration of how much professionals could help with their knowledge in the practical life of the wartime everyday and the life of internally displaced persons (Čale Feldman [et al.] 1993; Pettan 1998). Along with critical comments on the influence of the anthropologist outsider and spotlighting of the weaknesses of anthropological expertise at the trials at The Hague, which

that ethnomusicological knowledge has been applied already for decades in work with folklore ensembles and in the preparation of festivals (Pettan 1995:219). Since we are aware that the public practice of folklore is everywhere deeply socially contextualised (cf. Ceribašić 2003:292), it would be difficult to conceive of the practical application of knowledge having acted otherwise than with the intention that relations between people be enhanced. Less was perhaps written on this point, while direct benefit was not so obvious as in the critical periods of war and forced internal displacement.

were wrongly interpreted and/or "remodelled" in the process by the Hague Tribunal (Rihtman-Auguštin 2002), the examples of direct action by ethnomusicologists seem to have been much more successful (Pettan 1995). By placing knowledge in the direct service of victims, the scholar tries to attain a balanced relation between giving and receiving, while the meaningful nature of applied ethnomusicology can be seen in the transmission of specialist know-how from a relatively small and enclosed academic circle to those whom that knowledge can help in everyday life (Pettan 1995:222, 231).³

There is also the fact that it does not always have to be a matter of afflicted persons when a professional is invited and agrees actively to participate, for example, in processes of revitalisation of customs, preparations for festivals, particular workshops or social drives (cf. Bagur and Vitez 2001). Ethnologists, folklorists, ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists have long been active in direct co-operation in the organisation of folklore festivals (since the 1930s in Croatia). They often do not regard that part of their activities – the application of specialist knowledge – as their primary task, since they are permanently employed in academic, research and teaching positions, while the practical part is a part-time activity and also an additional source of income. Nonetheless, "participation in the preparation of festivals has always also meant having an influence on the new life of tradition, whether the experts prompted performers to offer a particular repertoire (usually the earliest one) or that they injected new life into the content selected for the festival, also repeated in other performances by the same performers, while it was given the status of certified value in the local community" (Vitez 2000:42). However, this activity is rarely discussed since it is perhaps not always in full harmony with theoretical approaches or the knowledge that we have at our disposal, and it is confronted with all types of obstacles and necessary adaptations at the juncture of active application. In addition, "practitioners" are often disinclined to participate in theoretical discussions. Scholars in Croatia, who are also at the same time active in application, started more intensively to discuss their own influences on the shaping of particular traditions only under the influence of (reflexive) anthropology, while, as Ceribašić concludes (2003:271), "when one moves from principle standpoints to the actual practice of application, multiple

³ Naturally enough, the events of war only emphasised the need for that knowledge to be applied. However, what is most important in that process is the personal feeling of the professional on whether he/she want to become involved in the everyday life of the community and to what extent. Svanibor Pettan took an active part in the *Azra* Project with colleagues from Norway, who wanted by their commitment to help refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in their integration into Norwegian society through music therapy. Bosnian and Norwegian musicians were brought together in the *Azra* music group and with their repertoire of Bosnian urban music tradition and Norwegian music they made this group visible and identifiable to the public in Norway. In that way, they contributed to improved understanding of Bosnian circumstances and the refugees and gave them public support.

problems emerge". Ceribašić (2003:269-299) discusses in more detail the contemporary contentions she encountered in the active shaping of the public practice of folklore music. She opens up a host of questions on the manner of shaping identity, on the bearers of tradition, and on making decisions on the representative nature of someone's traditions and/or on the role of the scholar in application. She is also very critical in her raising of the question on the extent to which recognition of certain, until now marginal, groups in Croatian public practice, for example, female musicians, would actually help them in achieving improved social status, or if that would merely create the illusion of recognition, which would prevent the process of actual re-evaluation of their social position, and in that way perhaps create a new stereotype (ibid.:289).⁴

I have personally analysed the challenges of application on examples that were connected with folklore festivals (Zebec 2004; 2005). More will be said below on the experiences and dilemmas I have encountered in many years of field research into the dance tradition on the island of Krk. I shall commence with a brief review of the reception of field research results and interpretations, since that part of scholarly output was directly linked with subsequent application in that field.

As a performance art, dance by its nature conditions that we perceive each performance as a new field experience and that we try, in the context of the performance, to comprehend on an equal footing the message of all the participants in the event, as the consequence of mutual activities. The performers and the onlookers may be the same, the location of the performance, too, but the time and the conditions, the mood during the performance, and the existing energy are always unique and different in some aspect or, in a word, inimitable. It is through that that the unique nature of the emotions is achieved. The sense and the force of the message differ each time.

⁴ As a rapporteur and participant in the panel discussion on applied ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology at the ICTM World Conference in Sheffield (2005), I was asked if I considered myself "to blame" for a certain influence in the field itself as a consequence of applied knowledge, while one of the comments was on the extent to which we as scholars were aware of our "dirty hands", and/or possible manipulation of knowledge. That is, in fact, the crux of our ongoing examination of how competent we are as professionals to decide on the representative nature of a particular tradition. For if something seems to us as professionals with particular knowledge to have representative quality, it does not follow that the bearers of that culture would agree with our selection. Perhaps in our own eyes we are only trying to help someone, while those in question need not see what we are doing as help, but perhaps as the very opposite. In that sense, we must be considerably more sensitive, when application is involved, towards the consequences of our activities than when the consequences of theorising do not have to cross the limits of a relatively narrow academic circle, as in exclusively academic interpretations.

Those facts alone already indicate that the question of analysis and writing about dance and/or the interpretation of dance events are very complex undertakings. At the outset, researchers into music and dance have the advantage over colleagues from other disciplines, because music and dance are in the sphere of public expression that is more easily accessible. However, much of what is important to the performers themselves also takes place "behind the scenes", in the private sphere that is often concealed. Entertainment and satisfaction are readily shared, with researchers, too, but the deeper, more powerful meaning and symbolics that the participants experience is often not easy for researchers to penetrate to and understand (cf. Ronström 1999:135; Glauser 2004).

When one adds questions that are the result of reception, and the acceptability of the activity of professionals in the field itself, the accountability becomes multiple. For just as everyone experiences the dance event in his/her own fashion, gaining a conception about the performers and the messages they are sending, in the same way they create their own conception of the text that speaks of dance. That multiple transmission of the message can be more successful or less. And just as it depends on the dance performers, it also depends on the author writing about dance and transferring it into a completely different medium. Awareness of this guides us in our writing about dance to deliberate in various ways and from various viewpoints on the messages created during a performance. It is important to establish whether and to what extent our stances and interpretations are also acceptable to those of whom we are writing, that is, to those who, in conjunction with our scholarly curiosity and interest, are the basic stimulus for the emergence of those texts.

The statement of one of my experienced colleagues at the beginning of my scholarly activities has remained deeply stamped in my memory; she said that scholars are obliged to observe, to note down, to analyse and to interpret phenomena from the scholarly viewpoint, without intruding in the processes that we observe and interpret. My first field experience and research into Carnival dance events and weddings on the island of Krk made that possible for me. I had no idea at that time that, as an ethnochoreologist, I would soon find myself in a completely different role, that of an adjudicator and active participant in the processes of creating folklore presentations for the stage, organising festivals and concerts, and revitalising forgotten dance experiences. Despite my initial discomfort and efforts as a scholar to remain outside the processes that I was observing, to avoid direct expression of my opinions and taking any share whatsoever in the creation of individual stage folklore manifestations, I realised that, as an expert for folklore dance, quite the opposite was expected of me on occasion.

Sometimes we do that exclusively from academic, scholarly starting-points, sometimes as newspaper critics (which does not exclude the

commentary's scholarly dimension), while sometimes as active creators of stage events – in the direct consultant role of an expert helping in the revitalisation of abandoned or forgotten tradition, or, indirectly, in assessing performances at festivals while also giving advice on all the aspects that should be taken into consideration in order to remain consistent with local tradition. That latter way of active participation and application of professional knowledge is, at the same time, the most sensitive one, since it inevitably influences the creation of criteria on representative quality. In other words, as adjudicators at festivals, we create criteria on representative quality with which interlocutors from the field would not perhaps completely agree from their perspectives. Sometimes to a greater and sometimes to a lesser degree, a manifestation of authority emerges in that process, the authority that we have as experts in society – as concert organisers, festival moderators or editors in individual sections in the public media. With our own awareness of the possibilities to act that are open to us, we must therefore also be prepared for criticism from the communities in which we are working. That does not mean that we have to act against our own convictions in order to gratify the broad public, but that we systematically create awareness of the need for dialogue and the possibility to listen to the voices of all participants in the cultural processes that we observe, interpret, and even participate by ourselves in their implementation. Experience at the level of the application of professional, specialist knowledge prompts new scholarly, theoretical thinking, so that it can be said that this is the case of a closed circle, in a similar but, nonetheless, different way than in pedagogical, teaching activity. The ongoing permeation of theoretical knowledge and its practical application and examination is unusually inspiring and beneficial.

Reflexivity also builds up our sense of responsibility – on the one hand to our profession, and on the other to our interlocutors. For example, if we record them while they are singing and dancing they gladly accept copies of the audio- or video-recordings that we have made of their performances, while sometimes they also expect the texts, the papers we write about them. From my very first research of the *tanac* in Punat on Krk, my interlocutors drew my attention to the fact that their *tanac* had changed over time. They knew that changes had been made, but they no longer knew what their *old tanac* had looked like. They asked me to help them in making that discovery. They looked forward with impatience to the launching in public of the book about the *tanac* dances of Krk. However, the question remains as to what extent I justified their expectations with my mode of writing. Namely, in Croatian ethnochoreology up until now, particularly in the works of Ivan Ivančan, it has been customary that, along with the interlocutors' statements on the

context of the performance, detailed material was also regularly given on the dance structure. With my stance on the need to monitor in continuity the Krk *tanac* dances in dance events of diverse content throughout the year and the life of the island community, I have paid more attention to the context of the events and the ritual nature of the *tanac*, trying to link the diachronic and synchronic discourse of the research, with less detailed analysis of the dance structure itself. I chose that approach because of my own *outsider* position on the island. In that way, I tried to augment my *etic* viewpoint with the *emic*, the opinions of the islanders from the past and in the present, in order better to understand the deeper social structure and philosophy of their lives.⁵ In that process, both the choreographic structures and variants of the *tanac* dance were the subject of research, not so that I could note them down as a collection of different dances, but rather to show, through the stance of the islanders towards the *tanac* as a pronounced symbol of identification, that those differences were reflected both in the structure and style of performance, and in the local names given to the dance, thanks to the symbolic borders that the Krk inhabitants raise between their island communities. I was guided through my research by the theoretical precepts of dance ethnology as they have been developed at the University of California, Los Angeles, since the 1970s, with the basic idea that research narrows from the broadest towards the more immediate context. That is, in other words, from the *worldview* according to Allegra Snyder (1989), through the context of individual dance events and performances, followed by interpretation of dance through choreographic concepts, to interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the individual's dance by analysis of movements and the smallest gesture.

So far, the initial feed-back from the islanders has been fairly superficial and general. Despite the fact that the book contains some forty black-and-white and twenty colour photographs, half of which are photos of the *tanac* dance at various localities, one of the most frequent comments has been that there were too few good photographs of the *tanac* in the book. It is obvious that the islanders expect more than descriptions of the dance itself and more of the documentation collected during performances. On the one hand, this can again be interpreted as a result of the general view to date on what ethnographic research means and offers to the general public and readership, while, on the other, one has to recognise the public's need for more detailed documentation in various media. Namely, young people are increasingly obliged to learn the *tanac* dance as members of performance

⁵ Kirsten Hastrup also believes that the task of anthropology is to bridge the implicit forms of conceptualisation of the host's world and the exterior and explicit forms of professional knowledge: "The key factor is the sharing of experience and the making of ethnography. This making implies both an implicit knowing and an explicit understanding of the other world" (Hastrup 1993:175).

groups and in rehearsals and stage performances, while they more rarely have an opportunity to dance during Carnival, carol-singing – *koleda* gatherings, at weddings or on other festive occasions. Therefore, performance group leaders expect books to be manuals that they can put to practical use. It seems that this need should not be ignored by finding justification in the exclusively scholarly interests of research.

The experience of renewal and/or reconstruction of the *tanac* shows itself in a vivid way as a coupling of scholarly research and practical activity in the field. At the invitation of my colleague ethnologist Damir Kremenić and at the initiative of the inhabitants themselves of the village of Kornić, his fellow villagers by origin who wanted to set up a performance group, I helped them in revitalisation of their *tanac*. On that occasion, there was a meeting of several villagers of the middle and older generation, for whom the *tanac* was a neglected experience from their youth. I recorded the meeting with my video-camera and a small tape recorder, and participated with questions in the reconstruction of the *tanac*. The *tanac* was reconstructed and has been performed since then by the group. However, continuous monitoring of that group and repeated conversations with the older villagers have shown that, because of frequent "borrowing" of *sopela*-players from the western part of the island or from the neighbouring village of Punat (where they dance in much faster tempo, in a more lively way) and, because of the need to be more attractive on stage, the *tanac* has, with time, become brisker and has changed rithmically in relation to the way it was danced in the past. At events now, it is performed almost exclusively by younger dancers, and that is perhaps why it seems livelier to the older villagers than it was when they themselves performed it. Still, I prefer to rely on their communicative competence and kinaesthetic *memory* and *imagination* (Smyth 1984:22).⁶ Memories of one's own experience of frequent entertainment in youth is unusually important to older people, so that it can be said that they are very much aware of the tempo of the *tanac*-dancing. In addition, the *sopela*-players from the western part of the island – from Šotovento, have this to say about contemporary stage practice:

... we all do it in the stage way! Because if you are dead, or lazy... [that's no good, T. Z.]. Just as soon as we have started, Željko says: 'Be more lively, keep it lively, lively!'. So that you get the applause! But that's where they're wrong. But you do get a little more applause. That's

⁶ Anthropological deconstruction of kinaesthetic communication from the psychological aspect has claimed that kinaesthetic memory and imagination do in fact exist. Kinaesthetic reveals an internal feeling expressed by the body in movement and has contributed considerably to research into the systems of signs and semiology. Kinaesthesia, from the Gk. *Kinesis* – movement, *aisthanomai* – I feel; the feeling of movement from which we learn the position and movement of individual parts of the body (sensory corpuscles, so-called receptors – recipients, that are found largely in the joints) (Klaić 1978).

true... While that old Blažić, it doesn't suit him, because it's too fast, we play too fast. The musicians from Šotovento have always played too fast for the Kornić people (Zebec 1998:146).

In that way, observing the performances of the group for which I helped to reconstruct the *tanac*, I reached a point at which I could draw their attention to the fact that, from the professional aspect, if they want to remain true to the tradition of their grandfathers, they should slow down the tempo of the *tanac* performance. However, in the process, I did not wish to forget the fact and objective circumstance – nor should I – that, since they lacked a second *sopela*-player from Kornić, the musicians from the western part of the island and from Pumat, where the *sopela* are played faster and the *tanac* is danced at a brisker tempo, had helped them in the reconstruction of their *tanac*. The group has been developing successfully in recent years, and the young people are learning to play, and they practice for performances. They have not reduced the tempo of performance in the meantime, because, from the outset, the young performers have a very strong need to perform, and because of that 'heightened adrenalin' according to Kremenić, it did not even occur to any of them that their grandfathers *danced the tanac* more slowly and that they, consequently, should alter their feelings and needs and replace them by a different, calmer mode of expression in the *tanac*. The long period of between 35 and 40 years, during which the *tanac* was not danced prior to its revitalisation, no doubt contributed to the fact that the memories of the older people were ignored, while the zeal and tempo of the young performers wanting to give successful stage presentations was imposed without any uncertainty. Since the young now embody the *tanac* according to their own conceptions and the circumstances of contemporary life, it would not be appropriate authoritatively to impose a slower tempo as some sort of objective given from the culture of their forebears.

The changes made to the *tanac* by performance groups are inevitably greater and more emphasised than in traditional performances and the customary environment. The moment, the place of performance, and the participants and onlookers are particularly important, since the aesthetics, meaning of the performance and interrelations on diverse levels also change with the change of context. Therefore, the assessment that the organisers of performances by dance groups and their members expect from the ethnochoreologist are a sensitive area of activity.

The first attempt at essential changes in the *tanac* took place in the 1970s.⁷ At the invitation of expatriates from Krk, performers from the island

⁷ The *Krk Festival* is the oldest folklore festival in Croatia (held since 1935), so that there have perhaps been certain changes made earlier, but they have not been documented. They were prompted by the people of Krk, ostensibly because of the tourists; however, research has shown that for a series of years now it has been more important to the islanders to show themselves to be good organisers and hosts and mutually to prove themselves in *tanac*

were chosen to give guest appearances in the United States. The organisers' idea was that the best couples from the various citadel townships and the villages would perform a joint *tanac*. However, it was shown that the realisation of the idea of a common, hybrid *Krk tanac* did not succeed among the islanders because of the resistance from the performers themselves. This was particularly so because of the objections on the part of the *sopela*-players as the main bearers of the playing tradition, making it evident that they are the crucial individuals in decision-making on the representative nature of island tradition. To them, the *tanac* is too powerful as a symbol of mutual differentiation that they would entertain the idea of creating a *tanac* dance that would be common to them all (cf. Zebec 2005a:234). At the same time, quite by the way, in a different stage environment in Zagreb, Zvonimir Ljevaković did an authored choreography of a *Krk tanac* for the professional *Lado* folk dance ensemble. The choreography is made up of typical elements of the dance, with tiny steps and spins of the female dancers, and choreographed movement that does not have the firm traditional (one part being based on the variant of the dance from the Dobrinj, while there are also elements of the dance from Vrbnik), all of which is augmented by costumes from Vrbnik that seemed to the author, with their rich details, to be a representative choice.⁸ As an authorial work made up of Ljevaković's choice of artistically interpreted and formed elements, that choreography is still on the *Lado* repertoire today, without any negative comments. It has its place in the context of stage presentation and there is nothing questionable about the performances. And indeed, with the change in context and performers, the stance of the audience to what it sees also changes. Stage performance imposes respect for the stage rules that the choreographer is prepared to offer the wider audience. In that process, the feelings of aesthetics are changed implicitly. The relationship of the performers with the audience becomes much more important in that context and supersedes the mutual relations on the stage of the performers themselves, precisely because of their aim to offer the audience a brilliant performance. The roles of the participants that are defined by tradition, which the islanders accept with a feeling of responsibility, often become unimportant here. Their importance and the eventual prominence of individuals in the collective depends exclusively on the concepts of the choreographer, on his/her knowledge of that tradition and

performances and publicly express their local identity, than to be watched by a host of foreign visitors (cf. Zebec 2005:226-237).

⁸ Circling the dance area three times with changes in direction in front of the *sopela*-players and dancing with small mincing steps in front of them is mandatory in all the *Krk tanac* dances. In this process, there are three basic ways of spatial formation of the *tanac* (circular movement around the space in the *kolo*, or round-dance, and/or in couples or groups of three, with small mincing steps in two facing lines), arranged in various ways in the entirety of the *tanac*, depending on the local tradition (for more detail, see Zebec 2005a:252-257).

desire and/or the possibility to show on stage something that is more or less close to the "original". Communicative competence with possible, but, in actual fact, more frequently without any familiarity whatsoever with the more profound social structure of the community that inspired the choreographer to create stage pieces with their music and dance tradition, relates largely to that particular author.⁹ In keeping with the change in context, the competence of the choreographer is no longer based on the aspiration to show "truthfully", or authentically, the selected community, but rather on harmonising the relations of the performers and the audience. Much more knowledge and field research should be required for such undertakings than is invested by choreographers. From the choreographers' perspective, that is not at all necessary since they see material collected in the field as the basic inspiration for creating their work of art. In fact, they choose local folklore festivals as their field, and more rarely engage in more intensive research. In that way, they arrive at material that has already undergone one degree of control of its representative nature in its own environment. However, the knowledge attained in such a superficial way is treated lightly in alteration and creation by authorial interventions and, along with many high-calibre stage effectuations, sometimes results in choreographies that show a certain skill in dance only from the technical aspect, presenting isolated dance products that have virtually no connection with the social structures or the spiritual values of the culture or philosophy of the community they are depicting. The author's idea is signed as the choreographer's truth, story, and depiction, while the audience in the domestic theatre or the one abroad accepts it, dependent on the quality of the performance, the extent to which the performers enter into the spirit of the dance, and the mood created. And in the example given, when the choreography is performed on Krk, the islanders themselves see it differently than when the dance is performed by their fellow villagers.¹⁰

⁹ As a particular attainment of anthropology in relation to other scholarly disciplines from whose starting-points dance and movement systems are also researched, Adrienne Kaeppler mentions the detection of a two-fold structure and philosophy in the society in which she did her research. As a rule, Kaeppler does not want to identify structured movement systems and dancing with the conception of *dance*, since she believes that their deeper sense has to be uncovered. Introducing the syntagma of *communicative competence* into the theoretical discussion, she stresses that the basic question is how individuals combine their acquired grammatical knowledge with the performance knowledge in order to perform or understand the movement or dance in the specific context. Still, she considers that what is most important for anthropologists is to "learn about the social structure, politics, economics, literature, art, philosophy, and aesthetics, that is, the sociocultural system in which movement systems are embedded" (cf. Kaeppler 1999:16-17).

¹⁰ I heard a comment from a female interlocutor in Vrbnik about how it was not right that costumes from Vrbnik be taken for some "concocted" *tanac*, non-existent for the Krk islanders, that had no connection with the Vrbnik and other island variants. People from Baška recognised certain elements from their *tanac* in the dance and reacted quite angrily to such "distortion". Even with such criticism, the islanders are aware that these are the

Therefore, understanding the diverse aesthetic principles depending on difference in context and participants is more important than analysis of the content and structure of the performance. If one wants to understand the aesthetics and value of a community's cultural forms, it is necessary to understand the principles underlying such aesthetics, and to understand them in the way they are accepted by that particular community, and what their perceptions are (cf. Kaeppler 2003:154).¹¹ In accordance with performance anthropology, each performance is a new experience from the ethnochoreological viewpoint and also a possible subject of new field research, therefore making it important to set the aesthetic principles according to the context and performers of an event. Just as each performance differs according to the invested force and momentary mood of the performers, according to which its meaning can be changed, so depending on the differences in context, participants and aesthetics, the meaning of each performance can be interpreted differently. And that becomes debatable, the critical point of our discussions. It sounds paradoxical that sometimes the traditional dimension is what is crucial to our evaluations, while at other times it can be the artistic, adapted, stylised, authorial aspect. Many people connect aesthetics exclusively with high art and Modernism, not thinking that it should be viewed as part of feelings and sensitivity, which relate to all cultural systems, diverse conceptualisations of the world and what gives it meaning. It was in that sense that Andrée Grau (2003:173) spoke of *ethno-aesthetics*.¹² The fact is that, similarly to the islanders themselves, we look differently at the *tanac* in the choreography and performances of the State professional ensemble,

consequences of change of performers, in the context of performance, artistic modifications and authorship. In such altered relations, stage aesthetics and virtuosity become more important, while the dissatisfaction of the islanders, who sometimes feel that they are being wrongly interpreted, mocked and used, remain in the local framework. They shift the responsibility for this failure to the performers and the choreographer, and as long as they do not feel threatened by this they do not comment in public, interpreting it all as being due to a lack of familiarity with their tradition. However, the example from the island of Korčula of an authentic public struggle for the exclusive right to perform their Moreška dance and to protect their cultural assets is cited as a drastic example of reaction to performances that they do not regard as appropriate. This was largely because someone else – even if a professional ensemble was in question – ventured to perform their local tradition, which they consider to be exclusively their property and, thus, a powerful symbol of identification, so that they could not tolerate that anyone else participated in it.

¹¹ A. Kaeppler (2003:153) claims that relatively few anthropologists, ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists have to date dealt with aesthetics. She writes that in European languages since the 19th century the concept has related to the notion and philosophy of beauty and good taste, and that similarly to all philosophical systems, thought is based on particular principles, in this case, on aesthetic principles. Whether something is beautiful or not, is a matter of evaluation, and that mental construct is part of the system of thought.

¹² In his research and published collections, Ivan Ivančan fairly systematically dealt with the question of aesthetics among the bearers themselves of dance tradition, most frequently examining what is beautiful and what ugly in dance according to their view.

Lado and the amateur urban ensembles, than at the *tanac* danced on the squares of the citadel settlements and villages of Krk or in the performances of their groups. Nor can we, in keeping with the seventy-year tradition of folklore stage presentation in Croatia, consider the performances of diverse performers according to the same aesthetic criteria.¹³

Due to the Croatian tradition in the stage presentation of folklore in which the conceptions of folk dances were charged from the beginning with powerful national forces focusing on older and local tradition, there have not to date been any avant garde shifts in the way of choreographing, even for the urban ensembles. Today, too, efforts are made to reach back to the old and the local and to show collective, folk creativity. But still, although stylisations have been much moderate than those in the Eastern European tradition, particularly those of the *Beryozka* Dance Company and the Moiseyev ensemble, stylised interpretation does exist. Depending on the author, choreographies are more or less stylised, something that the choreographers themselves often do not want to admit. They regularly refer to "original" material from the field, while they justify the authorial interventions by the laws of the theatre, and artistic freedom and conceptions. Therefore, at the critical point of assessment of individual choreographies, their views differ from those of critics, usually ethnologists, ethnochoreologists and ethnomusicologists. For example, during discussions after performances at a festival, one also finds village groups whose members still practice their dance tradition in their everyday lives (although this is more frequently becoming the exception), and the exchange of views can become very lively.¹⁴

And so the role of the adjudicator is a thankless one. In our comments about performances given by urban ensembles, whose choreographers are not always well-informed about the culture they are depicting on the stage, we are obliged to draw their attention to traditional values and the way of assessing the community in question under contemporary conditions, and to ask about the extent to which there is sense in changing certain values because of a stage presentation. On the other hand, the "real creators" from Krk have to be asked about the reasons, possibilities and justification for transferring their culture to urban ensembles in a artistically adapted form, processed according

¹³ Modes of stage presentation have travelled a developing path since the performances of village groups (from the end of the 1930s), urban folk dance ensembles (founded after World War II), ballet pieces inspired by tradition (e.g. the *Simfonijsko kolo* by Gotovac, choreographed by Zvonimir Reljić), through to what have to date been rare, but completely contemporary, free dance performances with folklore motifs (e.g. Rajko Pavlić's choreography to the music of *Jedna pura, dva pandura* for the *Lado* ensemble).

¹⁴ Consequently, festivals have become distinctive and are categorised according to their participants and according to whether they present so-called choreographed folklore or original folklore. In that process, there are a growing number of groups who also present choreographed, authorial folklore along with their native-place, original folklore, which makes the assessments and discussions even more multi-layered.

to the requirements of the stage and the feeling of the author choreograph-adapter, the urban youth-performers and the very widest audiences. In those negotiations between one and the other, one cannot claim authoritatively that one is better than the other, but has to convince both sides that the existing differences between the *truth* from the Krk terrain and the stage presentation and/or the *authorial truth* of the choreographer, are not irreconcilable in harmony with diverse aesthetic principles. Values in the presentational context on the stage can function equally well in the relation between performer and public, as well as those in the context of island dance events in the community that creates them. One has to be a mediator in what is a peace process of sorts between diverse aesthetics means, as Hastrup (1993:175) says, *to bridge* the knowledge of the host, whatever side is in question, with the professional interpretation that seeks to bring out the meaning and has arguments for both sides. The responsible "assessor" is expected to have sound knowledge of local dance, music and other traditions, to dance actively, and, if possible, also to have vocal knowledge and rich stage experience. All this cannot be learnt exclusively during studies, while only such complex knowledge enables authenticity in the assessment of a folklore concert or individual choreographic and musical adaptations. At the same time, that is a pre-condition for attaining and maintaining personal authority and that of the profession. "Hiding" behind the authority of the profession is not much help because every leader and adapter, including those in village groups, very quickly discovers and recognises how well we really know the dance and how familiar we are with the music heritage of a particular area, and our knowledge of dance and our stage experience.

Two excerpts from Kirsten Hastrup article "The native voice – and the anthropological vision" would seem appropriate here: "The vision of anthropology is to embrace the multiplicity of natives and communicate the processes that at some point may compel them to stress their singularities"; and, "The dichotomy between native and anthropologist remains; our task is not to provide ethnographies that question this through an admission of 'native voices' into our text, but to provide a kind of anthropological knowledge that offers new entries into the world in which nativeness is premised and exploited as a symbolic resource" (cf. Hastrup 1993:183).

With her experience as a conservator and previously as a professional dancer in the *Lado* ensemble, the ethnologist Beata Gotthardi Pavlovsky invested years of effort to lobby for intangible cultural heritage also being included in the Act on Protection of Cultural Assets. Active in the application of her ethnological and dance knowledge, particularly her knowledge of the Krk *tanac* dances, she has lectured at the Summer School of Folklore conducted from the mid-1960s by the ethnochoreologist and choreographer, Ivan Ivančan. Her principle of tuition was that dance, whenever possible,

should be shown by demonstrators from the field. Her lecture gave the introduction and the context in which the people dance on the island of Krk, explaining what makes the *tanac* dances specific and how their structures mutually differ. However, she was very conscious of not wanting to set fixed choreographies of the dances, nor did she teach them as finished semi-products or products. Her first instruction was that each choreographer had to research them in the field. Perhaps that is also one of the basic reasons that, even today, one finds few Krk *tanac* dances in the repertoires of urban amateur ensembles. The manner of teaching has shown itself to be one of the ways of protection.¹⁵

Apart from that, instructing the people of Krk on how to teach their youth, Gotthardi Pavlovsky often stresses that they do not need to copy the leader of the group or the teacher in performing the *tanac*, but that each dancer should take one of their elders as a model. In that way, they can remain more faithful to the traditional transfer of knowledge and values, for as long as the conditions of life allow. The philosophy of the islanders is receptive to that way of teaching the *tanac*, which the young people also regard as their living creative experience, even though they now learn it in an organised way and more frequently in performance groups than spontaneously. There are fewer and fewer opportunities for spontaneous dancing of traditional repertoire, but they still do occur during the year – they are always current at Carnival entertainments and weddings, and, thanks also to the *sopac* schools, there is no lack of young *sopela*-players on the island, without whom there can be no *tanac*. Although it is evident from the Kornić example that certain dynamic shifts can occur (brisker tempo and more temperamental performance), the creativity and individuality of the performers still remain dominant.

The Krk *tanac* dances are rarely performed by amateur urban ensembles. One of the most frequently performed choreographies is Goran Knežević's *Baška j' malo selo* [Baška is a Small Village]. This author, too, did not adopt the traditional structure of the Baška *tanac* but only parts of it, which he then combined in his choreography from his own viewpoint. Performances of that piece on urban stages are popular because of the specifics of the accompanying instrument, the *sopela*,¹⁶ and the narrow intervals during the playing and the vocal performances. At the same time,

¹⁵ Naturally enough, one has to add to this the complexity of the choreographic whole of the *tanac* made up of a considerable number of figures and demanding dance elements, which implicitly includes skill in dancing and expression in movements, and necessarily require long years of practice and constant testing. In the same way, the instrumental accompaniment on the *sopela* is also demanding and also difficult to master in both the technical sense, and in the stylistic finesses that exist on the island of Krk.

¹⁶ Shawms of different size called *mala* (small) or *tenka* (thin) and *vela* (large) or *debela* (thick) *sopela* or *sopila*, are always played in pairs.

this is the major problem in performance because the young urban population finds such a relation of intervals to be quite foreign to the ear. Even with frequent practice, they rarely manage to sing it well – or do so with great difficulty – and in their desire to re-create that particular sound, they often resort to caricatured nasal singing or singing through the nose. Playing the *sopele* is an even more demanding and difficult skill. That is why the performance of that choreography is very rare and equally rarely successful. In their aspiration towards improved technical quality and uniformity of the group in keeping with stage aesthetics, the performers often appear stilted and unnatural, since they find that mode of dance, and vocal expression particularly, difficult to master. However, because of its exotic nature, the *tanac* attracts them although it is difficult to reconcile these contradictions.¹⁷ Consequently, professional comments and criticism relate more to the choreographer-adaptors and ensemble leaders, who are often insufficiently trained or prepare only superficially.¹⁸ Decisions on the representative nature of individual stage manifestations are transferred in that context to the professional evaluation of the jury. The experts balance between diverse aesthetic principles, because of that very host of poor performances of the artistic visions of choreographers and because stage inventions have not shown that being innovative can offer better solutions than the traditional models, and they decide more often in favour of the deeper respect for traditional values. To that extent, it is more readily understandable that, despite the steps forward in the theoretical expansion of research interests and approaches, the concept of the need to show older local traditions in practical application and execution has been maintained in the customary manner already for decades (cf. Vitez 2000; Ceribašić 2003). Choreographers interpret that by indifference and unjustified neglect of their authorial creations and, through the association of folklore choreographers and leaders, speak out publicly against the failure to standardise professional juries and the insufficient understanding of their artistic ideas. On the other hand, they

¹⁷ It sounds paradoxical that the dancers in urban folklore groups, where dance is practised at least twice a week and who can otherwise be described as excellent dancers, find it difficult to master the steps and figures of the *tanac*. Due to the shortage of original costumes from the field, which is also one of the traditional features of the presentation of stage folklore in Croatia, it can happen that the copies are badly made, either from the aspect of patterns or faulty choice of materials, leaving an even poorer impression.

¹⁸ Knežević staged the same choreography with several ensembles but the performance also depends on the capabilities and skills of the group leaders, who have to transfer the ideas of the choreographer to the ensemble with which they are working, as well as on the basis of his authorship. As composed works, choreographies are firmly set pieces and it is not always easy to adapt them to an ensemble. To this extent the choreographed version differs from the *tanac* in its original environment which, as a previously mastered skill, emerges spontaneously and it cannot happen that the performers do not enjoy the performance, or that any of the participants are missing or have the "wrong" role.

themselves are unflinchingly persisting with their modes of presentation as in the past, rarely finding new artistic solutions but continuing to expect and seek the help of experts, particularly in the sense of their heightened familiarisation with the material they want to utilise in their choreographies.

Within the framework of the association of choreographers and folklore group leaders and the professional conferences that they organise, we are therefore trying with our reports to interpret our attitudes in connection with the practical application and stage presentation of folklore, placing this in a certain relation towards the cultural heritage, social relations and philosophy of the communities that the choreographers present on stage. We direct attention to various levels of observation and the possibilities available that could overcome diverse viewpoints.

At the same time, as members of juries at folklore festivals or concert performances, we encounter diverse concepts and modes of presenting tradition. Our academic or professional authority as "guardians of the truth", based on knowledge of culture and tradition, and the responsibility that we bear in that process, must not be exclusive. Namely, *the truth* is similar to a kaleidoscope of possibilities which depends in the field on who turns it, when, and in which direction (Buckland 1999:205). We are obliged, therefore, to encompass the multi-layered and diverse discourses and to know how to interpret them. Whether it is a matter of adjudicating after a performance or of writing a text, our responsibility is the same. Thus, scholarly and theoretic discussion in combination with various fields and contexts of research become part of their practical application, and vice versa.

And the writing of this scholarly text has helped me to become more aware of and to see more clearly the individual segments of the processes in which I participate as an ethnochoreologist from both the practical side and in application.¹⁹ In other words, we form our texts, professional reviews and comments depending upon whom we are addressing, just as audiences that watch dances differ, so do the expectations differ. However, each new, subsequent step forward helps us in understanding and interpretation, irrespective of the audience that listens and those who read our papers.

¹⁹ I am grateful to Jasna Čapo Žmegač, Valentina Gulin Zrnić, Iva Niemčić and Stjepan Sremac for their very constructive and useful advices.

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ISKUSTVA I DVOJBE PRIMIJENJENE ETNOKOREOLOGIJE

SAŽETAK

U tekstu se promišlja o mogućnostima primjene etnokoreološkoga znanja prema autorovu vlastitu iskustvu istraživanja plesa na otoku Krku i recepcije objavljenih rezultata. Iskustvo rekonstrukcije tanca se slikovito pokazuje kao spoj neposrednog znanstvenog istraživanja i praktičnoga djelovanja na terenu. Ocjenjivanje nastupa folklornih skupina na pozornicama donosi sasvim drukčija iskustva, mnogo osjetljivija jer se u pitanje dovode odluke o reprezentativnosti tradicije i o osobama koje ih donose – tradicionalno su to sopci, ali pripremajući točke za scenske nastupe to postaju koreografi-obrađivači, a zatim i stručnjaci koji su pozvani komentirati nastupe jer to od njih traže organizatori festivala. Iz toga proizlaze i neminovne razlike u estetici, odnosno, njezine promjene ovisno o kontekstu izvedbi i izvođačima. Način poduke otkriva sa i kao jedan od načina očuvanja stilskih i strukturalnih osobitosti plesa. Autor kritički nastoji obuhvatiti i tumačiti višeslojne i različite diskurse. Odgovornost istraživača izjednačava neovisno o tome je li riječ o prosudbi nastupa ili pisanju teksta. Znanstvene i teorijske rasprave tako u kombinaciji s različitim terenima i kontekstima istraživanja te recepcijom objavljenih tekstova tumači kao dio njihove praktične primjene i obrnuto.

Ključne riječi: primijenjena etnokoreologija, estetika, plesna etnografija