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**WHAT DOES FOLK-DANCE COMMUNICATE?
THE CHANGING IMPACT OF TIME ON THE MESSAGE OF
FOLK-DANCE**

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1 INTRODUCTION

Edward Lucie-Smith describes folk art as ‘Unsophisticated art, both fine and applied, which is supposedly rooted in the collective awareness of simple people. The concept of folk art is a distinctly 19th-century one. Today it carries with it a tinge of nostalgia for pre-industrial society’ (Nonetheless, forms of traditional art in general and folk-dance in particular has always been present in the everyday life of many societies – especially in the Eastern half of the European continent. Most probably Lucie-Smith is fully right regarding the pre-modern nostalgic functions of folk art in the modernized world however in societies where the modernization is a still ongoing project folk art has rather different functions. Here some consider it important, some other people find it invented and fictional however, in each case, it serves the purpose of transmitting a social message for the outside world. My research interest is focused on traditions in general and folk-dance in particular as a means of communication – what does practicing folk art (dance) communicate in Central-Eastern Europe

My hypothesis is that a change has occurred in the message of folk-dance, in the past being a reaction to the state-socialist environment and political influence, whereas in nowadays it serves a completely different purpose. So, my interest is focused on revealing the transformations that occurred over time in the message of folk-dance and traditions, with special attention to the similarities and differences regarding the past and present communication. In the first part of my paper I provide a literature overview, theoretical research and background on the known roots of folk-dance, pointing out the main turning points that took place over time, paying attention to its social function in the different historical periods. Arriving to the 21st century, I compared it with the past times and examined whether can folk-dance serve the same purpose or not. In the second part of the research paper, I analyze interviews made with people connected to the field in order to gain a better understanding on the opinion and vision of real-life people regarding folk-dance as a means of communication.

The reason for me choosing this topic is that I have been participated in folk-dance for 10 years, and during that period, and even after I stopped dancing, I met people who did not believe in tradition as I did, and I also met other people from different countries who had the same believes as me. In my thesis I saw an opportunity to dive deeper into this topic, and find out where is the truth, getting to know more about history and society which we are part of. The world is changing very fast, and having a deeper look into our society and understanding just as the environment we

live in, as well as the driven factors which causes these changes, allows one to live a more conscious life, free from potential influencing. Many people tend to live in the world with closed eyes, knowing nothing about their surroundings and culture, so, with my work I want to create a bit more of an understanding, exploring whether the reason for and the message of folk-dance truly has changed over time or not.

2 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

Using the overview of the literature as a foundation, this study examines the message of folk-dance and how it communicates now compared to its historical significance. In addition to examining traditions in general, particular focus is placed on how folk-dance message is changing as a communication tool. Consequently, the study issue is: Is folk dancing still a collective response to the socio-historical and political environment, or did it acquire a new message in the form of strengthening human connection and providing sensations of joy and freedom?

Apart from examining the theoretical and historical literature, I conducted four semi-structured professional interviews with experts and practitioners of the field in September and October to gather as much relevant information as possible for responding to the research question. We had a friendly conversation in a welcoming environment, this providing me a real-life picture about the visions of today's people who are familiar with this field. The interviewees ranged in age and gender from thirty to sixty years old and they also came from a variety of places, including Romania and Hungary, both villages and cities, which allowed me to obtain as much varied information as possible.

My starting assumption is that what folk-dance communicated in the state-socialist past is significantly different from what does it communicate today. In order to demonstrate the validity of this hypothesis, I employed a comparison between the theoretical underpinnings of folk-dance – as determined by the literature analysis – and the firsthand narratives obtained from the interviews. With the help of the practical component from the interviews and the comparison of the literature, the goal is to gain a more accurate knowledge of the similarities and variances in the message of folk-dance across history.

The expected result of this comparison is to demonstrate how folk-dance, and more broadly, traditions, are changing in terms of both substance and message. Since no two persons are alike, I assume that contrasting viewpoints will emerge from the interviews as well as from the literature.

Additionally, I hope that some original and very thought-provoking points of view will be found, providing an opportunity to delve deeply into the field of folk-dance and obtain fresh insight into the subject.

3 FOLK-DANCE ON THE ROAD OF THE HISTORY

3.1 What is dance and how it is related to communication?

Dancing is a difficult concept to describe, but most people have an innate want to move their bodies because it relieves tension, therefore dancing generally has these benefits. It enables the participants to become acquainted with various rhythms and discover movements that support their process of self-expression. In addition to offering several health advantages, such as improved flexibility and fitness, balance, and body control, dance is a spatiotemporal exercise since it may thrive in both space and time. (Haboush A, Floyd M, Caron J, LaSota M, Alvarez K, 2006)

My primary area of interest is folk-dance, which combines some new elements with all the previously listed qualities. Some examples, especially when it comes to folk-dance traits, are uniformity, the sense of community, teamwork, cohesiveness, and some degree of improvisation. But the most distinctive of these is the phenomena of heritage, meaning that the younger generations inherit the traditional cultural aspects, core values, and folklore viewpoints from their elders.

Dancing can be interpreted using the ‘Communication Triangle’ concept since it is a type of communication. The components of this triangle are the transmitter, the message, and its receiver. According to this model, in the role of the transmitter is the dancer itself, the message consists of his or her performance, and in the role of the receiver sits the audience. The dancer's intention to convey any kind of information to the audience starts the communication process, which is facilitated by their contact. Thus, he or she uses the movement code to encode the message before sending it to the viewer, also known as the ‘recipient’. The audience, after receiving the encoded message, decodes and interprets it, so the original intention of the message from the dancer becomes revealed in front of them. They can therefore relate to this message because of the ‘aesthetic aspect of the dance’, which is known to be successful when it can influence the audience's feelings, knowledge, or behavior. Also, when the dancers consider transmitting their message in the best way possible, they shift their focus on the visual parts mainly, on the form of the dance. They work

hard to improve their physiques, their movements, and their emotional satisfaction in order to provide the audience with an aesthetically pleasant experience. After all, the dancer's expression of harmony and joy is just as much a part of the message as the dance itself. As a result, after receiving the message, the audience responds actively, by applauding and appreciative words. Since there is direct communication between the audience and the dancer and mutual understanding of the message, this indicates that the 'experiential function' of the dance is realized (Georgios L, 2018).

Folk-dance is considered to be in its 'first' or 'primary' form when it is examined in its original context – that is, when it is performed in large, community groups with the aim of developing connection and communication among the participants. It could also be referred to as the "first existence of dance." By dancing, the performers would, therefore, be able to convey a personal and intimate story about themselves, their emotions, and their thoughts. This narrative would be exclusive to each dancer. Group dances served as a unifying factor for the citizens and locals, enabling them to communicate to the outside world the message of their respective communities' cultural identities, since music has a connection building effect.

As the world changes and changed over time, in many aspects, historically, economically, socially, just to mention a few of them, it is inevitable for dance to change as well. In this way, its 'first existence' gave way to its 'second existence', indicating, as a result of the world changing over time, all the joy, freedom, and fundamental purpose of dance that existed during its first existence have either vanished or have by time. The teaching methods and the aim to be as professional as possible killed the natural creativity, which was present in its first existence, just as the shifting focus from feeling good and connect with other people to show something on stage which is so well-composed and flawless that the true essence of dance gets lost in the way. Due to this, the second existence of dance portrays a picture of monotonous movements lacking spontaneity, and it is interesting to note that this portrayal more closely resembles acting with rigid rules rather than the free expression of the dancer's emotions. Not to mention that the majority of teachers are far less qualified than they represent themselves to be, lacking knowledge of both the authentic aspects and the local groups and features.

As the previously mentioned instances demonstrate, dance as a communication tool has undergone several transformations over time, evolving from a primary focus on joy and unrestricted movement to a polished presentation. But regardless of which form we examine – the 'primary' or

‘secondary existence of dance’ – dance continues to be a means of communication even though its message varies.

3.2 The triggering factor of dance and dance movements

After facing what dance is and how it functions as a means of communication, the question of origin arises. How did it all start and what was the triggering factor of the social movements which lead to group dancing? One of the possible answers can be found in William Kornhauser’s influential monograph, ‘The Politics of Mass Society’ -which is well-grounded in history and provides a theoretical framework for further analysis. He deals with the problem of clash of cultures and tension between the civilizations, which can be even familiar regarding nowadays’ situation. Thus, Kornhauser had a theory that can provide theoretical ammunition for explanation of the origins of folk-dance. It is called the ‘mass-society theory’, where he explains that some people started to feel alienated from the society due to the remarkable well-being that was present in the society, and these wealthy people were the ones who had pretty much influence on the others. So, these people who felt cold and alienated could initiate social events to find a remedy for their situation, and with them being so influencing, they could convince other people easily, even unintentionally, to join them, connecting the public together and making them to get to know each other better, forming relationships. (Williams R, 2015)

And so, this phenomenon, when is looked at from the public relations point of view, especially that Kornhauser based his theory on the thoughts of PR thinkers like Lasswell and Lippman, can serve as a basic theory regarding the formation of social events. So folk-dance may have the roots from the mass society theory, being a reaction of alienated people from society to the historical and political environment, which was present long time ago, trying to find a new way for connecting.

3.3 The first steps leading to the movement

In order to understand the behavior of the people, in this chapter, I would want to first explain what is meant by the term "folk" and then examine the first social movements that are associated with dance. The term "folk" derives its meaning, according to Anthony Shay's research, from the linguistic activities of peasants in various places, such as the songs and stories they shared, and later

from the folk-dances they took part in. Folk, consequently, refers to the individuals who engage in these shared activities and values.

Considering the origins of dance-related social movements, keeping in mind the definition of 'folk' in this context and using Shay's ideas as a starting point, it is evident that there were ancient cultures in which folk dancing was an integral part of daily life. One example of this would be when the youths reached the proper age and were incorporated into the community through dance and events centered around dance. The young people would then appear in their finest clothing in an effort to demonstrate to society that they are not only ready for marriage, but also the ideal partner to be chosen. In addition to being one of the first forms of folklore to be practiced in a group setting and an everyday part of the lives of regular people, this is a pure manifestation of the 'first existence of dance', as it was explained in the very first chapter. People practiced it purely out of habit rather than with any artificial purpose or intention.

As we moved into the nineteenth century and the romantic ballet era, the mass society theory began to take shape. Dance started to take on the characteristics of a social movement that was influenced by external forces, and at the same time, its 'primary existence' began to give way to its 'secondary existence'. Character and national dances held a significant position in the theaters because they were a component of classical ballet, but they received far less scientific attention than other ballet genres. According to the study, the reason for this phenomenon, was that national and character dances including staged folk-dance into classical ballet, were more closely associated with the folk and the newly emerging nationalist ideas and sentiments than with the nobility. The elite were not as integrated with folk dancing, therefore only a little amount of scientific attention was given to it. The mass society hypothesis began to take shape when the nobility started to feel cut off from the peasant dances since they didn't want to participate in them. As a result, they created their own dances, giving themselves a chance to reunite. Therefore, this played a significant role in the emergence of a few elite ballroom dances, such as the well-known "csárdás" dance from Hungary, which will be covered in more detail in the following chapters. The process of dance's transition from its first to its second existence is seen in the surrounds and environment that are always changing. The authentic and original rural conditions have altered when the wealthy began to practice folk dancing inside the walls of the ballrooms. Once this occurred, folk dancing begun to lose its primary form.

The people who put these dances on stage were known as dance masters or choreographers back then, and as such, the public had certain irrational expectations of them. People thought that these so-called choreographers could watch folk-dance being performed by peasants in their natural surroundings, identify the regional and national features of these activities and people, and then turn all of this into a choreographed national dance that embodied the distinctive qualities of each country or region. This was obviously a rather unrealistic expectation – or perhaps a mistaken belief on the part of the public – given that choreographers tended to stage dances with an emphasis on elements that would make the dance appealing and less monotonous, rather than necessarily covering the various regional characteristics. The idea of creating dances specifically for the stage was carried forward by the state-backed national folk-dance ensembles, and they also played a significant part in the development of social movements. In terms of shared activities and language, European nation states shared the same fundamental beliefs and values as the folk. Because of their shared ideals, nation states were able to use the folk to shape national identities, essentially influencing them to their favor (Shay, 2023). The state did not need to work hard to win the folk's sympathies because they already formed a community; only pointing out their shared core principles would do. The people were excited to take part in these activities and to connect because they saw the 'connection' and support from the state through the national ensembles that were made available to them as a chance to learn and practice these dances. By taking part in these activities, people were able to ignore and forget about the cold political situations and facts that surrounded them. As a result, these movements provided a haven, and as I previously indicated, this was highly advantageous for the state since it allowed them to exert control over these people and sway them toward sentiments of nationalism. Since this has a significant impact on the evolution of folk-dance, it will also be covered in more detail.

Character and national dances, therefore, ultimately refer to partially choreographed dances performed by professionals for an audience. They also mark the beginning of social movements associated with the dance industry and the gradual transition of dance's meaning from its first to its second existence.

3.4 Moving on from character dance to folk-dance – with Igor Moiseyev

In what ways, then, did national dances and character dances evolve into what we now refer to as folk-dance? Igor Moiseyev, a national dance performer and choreographer, is the solution: he is

considered a turning point in the history of folk-dance since he elevated national and character dances to a new level and created the new genre of professional folk-dance and the professional folk-dancer. Disregarding the characteristics of character and national dance, he presented folk-dance through a new lens in addition to founding his own dance group. According to Anna Kisselgoff, dance critic of New York Times, the Moiseyev Dance Company introduced a whole new perspective of dance, and even though it was called folk-dance, it was something entirely new compared to the previously seen activities. The dancers had faith in Moiseyev and his plan to introduce them to a brand-new style of dance, which included ease of performance compared to classical ballet and the substitution of character boots for pointe shoes to facilitate more fluid movements. Additionally, the emphasis shifted from the individual to the collective, with the dances choreographed to include everyone and highlight the entire ensemble as a representation of the state's support for the working class. In this case, folk dancing essentially conveyed to the public that they are not alone, and that the government is supporting them, and having an attempt of getting involved with the folk, by showing this support for them and trying to get on the same side was important, since if the state had been an enemy of the people, it would not have had a chance to build the idealistic and patriotic image it has for the nation, nor could it have used the peasants to strengthen nationalistic emotions.

Another relevant factor was that with Igor being talented and good at what he did and the Soviet government noticing this, utilized him as a tool to shine light on the state, and on how the several nationalities who lived there were treated by the regime. The Soviet government reached its goals with Igor, and apart from creating this beautiful picture about the government, Igor became an important and influencing person, since many other countries started to follow the Moiseyev model, and established state supported dance ensembles on his model, which reached a leader position on the stages and festivals with their appealing visual components. These dances, in each nation state were designed by the choreographers in a way that it would fit the relevant state, showcasing their own characteristics, and the differences between each regions' attributions were noticeable in the incorporation of the authentic parts: movements, music and costumes. This meaning that each region's dance was different from the others in some small components, for example one region had one type of steps or leg raising, whereas the other raised their legs completely different. Each region's own movement ritual was created by varying these components, and as a result, each country began to create its own 'unique' dances to represent its culture. These dances are interesting

because, while ballet embodies the fundamentals, other dances were developed based on them. Therefore, before beginning to study folk-dance, every dancer wishing to learn the art must master the fundamentals of ballet first, through participation in ballet classes, and only after that they could dive deep in the field of folk-dance particularly.

In my first chapter, I discussed the two existences of dance. This process of giving each region its own distinct characteristics is a clear move towards the second existence, as the dances begin to be performed for show and entertainment rather than for the purpose of enjoying each other's company, in addition, the dances are taught to the dancers rather than being done naturally or instinctively. The secondary form will become more and more dominant over time, and the originality of the dances will decline.

3.5 Distinction between dances for the stage and ballroom

By giving the audience the chance to witness these strange, culturally-specific acts, the recently introduced folk-dance gave the sense that they were learning about new cultures and gave them the impression that they were traveling to other places and nations just by watching them. Furthermore, the delight and excitement the audience felt while watching these performances strengthened their emotions and sense of nationalism. As a result, the masters choreographed national dances for the ballroom rather than the stage, giving viewers the opportunity to practice the new folk-dance for themselves. During the 1830s and 1840s what happened was a national-dance enthusiasm in Europe. People who were amateurs, took lessons on national dance, then wearing national costumes they filled the public dance floors during public balls. However, 'It seems highly likely that original folk-dances were distilled to a certain repertory of steps, poses, and gestures that were recognizably associated with a particular culture' (Shay, 2023, p.18.). The quote indicates, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, that these characteristics of each region were invented purely for the purpose of symbolizing.

The folk on the stage however, even though the previously mentioned dance enthusiasm, - when viewed through the lens of classical ballet -, appeared as some replaceable figures without any individual characteristics and personalities. The fundamental explanation for this is that qualities such as originality, uniqueness, and talent were exalted during the romantic era. The majority of these folk-dances performed on stage were group dances with the community and the masses as

their focal points. As a result, individuality was frequently lacking, and the peasant and rural populations were perceived as monolithic groups lacking any sense of identity. The public saw them as a crowd of people singing and dancing, with music and dances that had been passed down through the years and were therefore unchanged. In some countries such as Saudi Arabia, Germany, or Iran they were seen as essential elements of the national character, but not as an artist on their own. Similarly, regardless of how big of an artist or exceptional a peasant has been regarded among his or her own people, in the eye of a noble or outsider they were seen as an average folk-dance performer, who is replaceable at any time. Regarding the views of the elite during the time of romanticism, they perceived the individual as an artist, who cannot be found among the peasants and rural people, and it was impossible for them to imagine that a simple peasant can have such abilities.

When it comes to teaching character dances, the Hungarian and Russian ones are highly well-liked. However, it should be noted that these dances were falsely portrayed as being entirely uniform and lacking any local or regional forms and characteristics. When in actuality, these dances comprised several distinct regional and local dances rather than just one universally recognized form. They even made it to the stage in the 1800s, first within the frame of classical ballet, then as musical comedies in Hungary or Ukraine, and still later as a component of the performances of state-sponsored folk-dance ensembles.

As the twentieth century drew near, nationalism remained popular and continued to have a significant impact on people's lives, to the point where purposefully distinctive national dances were created for ballrooms and stages. According to Lynn Garafola, different people had different interpretations of these dances. For instance, urbane audiences in large cities perceived them as the beauty of diversity, illuminating the locals; in contrast, national dances were perceived in other regions of the nation as 'the desire for national self-determination' (Shay, 2023).

People wanted to be able to watch performances and practice them simultaneously, cultivating their national sentiments. It is evident that the division of dances for the stage and ballrooms was related to the division between the urban elite and the peasants, as well as the folk. The elite, however, did not want to dance next to the peasants or even perform their exact series of movements. In the first chapter, I discussed this phenomenon and used a real-world example to illustrate the mass society theory: the elite people created ballroom dances for themselves, keeping the lower classes out, because they did not want to participate in peasant activities but still wanted to stay in

touch. An excellent illustration of this in the context of Hungary is the emergence of the 'csárdás', a national dance created by the nobility of the country that borrows some basic folk parts and patterns but alters the appearance of the original peasant dance. Due to its enormous success, it was a component of most Budapest society balls in the 19th and 20th centuries. Attendees would often dress in urban-inspired 'national' costumes to enhance the event. In conclusion, the 'csárdás' phenomenon comes to represent the Hungarian people's tremendous national enthusiasm in ballrooms (Taylor, 2021).

A similarity was observed in Croatia, where the nationalism took place in the nineteenth century similarly to Hungary, as an example of creating new national dance for the upper class, which was called 'dvoransko' or 'salonsko kolo'. The nobles in this place refused to wear their costumes, participate in the traditional folk-dance, or even listen to the music of the peasants, similarly to Hungary. Choreographers therefore stepped in to assist, crafting the previously mentioned dances by fusing the elite ballroom dance with the peasant dance, so boosting their nationalist feelings. In actuality, these folk-dances were very different from local folk-dances by the time they made it to ballrooms; they had lost their true meaning and had simply evolved into compositions with a few unique movements (Shay, 2023).

The purpose of folk-dance underwent a slight change at this point in history. No longer was it solely intended to support nationalist ideologies; people began to dance and congregate for their own enjoyment as well, especially the nobility, as was the case with the previously mentioned "csárdás." And this brings about a slight shift in the message that folk dancing conveys to others: joy and the chance to establish a connection of some kind. People were enthusiastic and positive about it even though it was taught by professionals without having most of the original movements, which eventually changed its intended meaning.

3.6 Authenticity

Talking about all of these topics would inevitably bring up the authenticity debate. Where does one draw the line, if any, between what people perceive authentic and the original dances' degree of modification? The search for authenticity is nothing more than a strange desire for it, according to European folklorist Regina Bendix. Over time, the ability to discern between something that is authentic and something that is not became increasingly significant for both Americans and Europeans.

The term ‘parallel traditions’ was first used by Anthony Shay, and it significantly clarifies the situation. His idea is that there is a certain level of authenticity in every dance tradition, and that all dance traditions are just collections of repetitions. These variations can appear as real peasant dances in their natural setting, as when villagers perform the dance for an audience on a festival stage, as when urban dancers perform the dance as part of a choreographed show during a concert, as when a ballet group performs a national dance that incorporates elements of rural dances, or even as dances performed for tourists.

The idea of parallel tradition is advantageous because it prevents the need for an individual to prioritize which of these instances is more authentic because all versions of parallel tradition are equally valuable despite differing degrees of authenticity. Based on these recurrences of related customs, Shay divides dances into two categories: ‘folk-dance’ and ‘ethno identity dance’. The initial instance from the list of examples I mentioned above, which is what his literature classifies as ‘folk-dance’, is peasant dances from villages in their natural environments. In real life, this could be a dance performance at a social gathering where the dance is regarded as an essential component of the people’s everyday lives. Every other dance that is listed in the list of examples is classified as ‘ethno identity dance’, which is the second category. These are meant to be seen and performed, with the goal of identifying a specific ethnicity through the unique dance traits of every country. Some people may refer to the ethno identity dances as folk-dance, due to the fact that more of them experience it in those ways, but, in order to avoid confusion about what is original – meaning that it is practiced as peasants did in the first times – and what is not – anything else which falls outside of the ordinary peasant environment - , Shay uses this distinguishment between the categories of folk and ethno identity dance, creating an easier way in understanding and talking about them at the same time.

Regarding Igor Moiseyev, who I mentioned in the fourth chapter when I talked about the evolution of the performances and who is a significant figure in the history of folk-dance, it is crucial to note that he and his associates referred to all of the dances they created as folk-dances, regardless of how authentic these dances were in comparison to the original forms. Even if it had only a minor modification, or a much bigger one, it was still called folk-dance. Other choreographers from Moiseyev’s generation, namely: Amalia Hernandez, Witold Zapala and Olga Skovran, noted that when they create a dance for the stage, it has to be modified from the original because

these changes enhance the genuine material. Additionally, the newly created dances have to be competitive on stage.

The creation of folk-dances/ ethno identity dances gained popularity due to the moral value they carried. ‘The creators and arrangers often fashion ethno identity dances because representation in the face of the loss of identity forges links to an idealized past and creates a sense of pride’ (Shay, 2023). Meaning that having something that shows directly to the audience, even if just symbolically, the lost they have suffered, creates the sense of a past which they can be proud of, since they had something important which got lost in the way. Even if this is not necessarily true, it serves as a perfect tool for having an impact on people’s thinking and reviving their nationalist sentiments which was beneficial for the states.

The doubt can arise about what people perceived as folk-dance maybe is only just a coincidence of choreographers meeting romantic nationalism. What I mean by this is that staging dances has been present since the eighteenth century but continued through the nineteenth century as the occupation of the choreographers and dance masters, especially in the field of national dance. And surprisingly, romantic nationalism bloomed in the nineteenth century as well, having the folk, their diverse cultures and interactions, and the sense of belonging to nations, as its core values. It can happen that there was a hidden driving force or sentiment of strong romantic nationalism in the dance creators, when staging and choreographing folk-dance, and because of it, it has this picture of the idealized past, and strong connection of patriotism as its core values.

3.7 Situations in different nations

Igor Moiseyev’s creation of a foundational model for folk-dance made it easier to create new dance ensembles and perfect the dances’ movements. Following the Moiseyev model outlined in the fourth chapter, numerous state-sponsored ensembles created a new, simpler dance genre than character and national dances while keeping some of its fundamental motions. The Serbian dance ensemble supported by the state could serve as an instance for this, by people having in their dance some original steps representing the peasants’ dances, but also some spectacular accents and elements from the ballet, like lifting legs higher than peasants would do, and of course some easier movements than a character dance would present. Serbia was not the only case, just an example from the many since similar movements happened in various other countries as well. Instances for

other national dance ensembles, having the Igor Moiseyev baseline are: The Polish State Folk Ensembles, Mazowse, Ballet Folklórico de México, and of course the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble, to mention a couple of them. (Shay,2023.)

Prior to World War II, peasants had the chance to practice and perform their songs and dances in dance festivals, which helped them become skilled performers. Furthermore, because of the Europeans' close connection to the area and its festivals, individuals with an interest in folk-dance were able to differentiate between the performances of the dance ensembles, which were either amateur or increasingly professional over time, and the 'real' peasant dances.

The literature mentions two Croatian dance companies as an instance: KUD and Lado. KUD means an institution, a cultural artistic society, basically a group where people could practice and perform staged folk-dance, taught in its original form, without modifications. Its aim was to represent the nation through its original dances. Similarly, Lado, being the National Folk-Dance Ensemble of Croatia, established in 1949, in Zagreb, had the same goals in representing folk-dance and tradition. And so, when interviews were made by the members of Lado with the members of KUD and other professional dance groups from the country, turned out that a major part of the interviewees trusted their dance leaders, that they give them attentively selected music, songs, costumes, and dances, that were truly authentic. Since Lado members had as their guide the professional choreographer and founder artistic leader in the person of Zvonimir Ljevaković, they could provide their colleagues, students and other dance ensemble members with authentic knowledge and practice, not having to prove their trust wrong.

Regarding Hungary, Lisa M. Overholser's name is significant because she thoroughly examined the authenticity issue in that country. Ballet's traditional national and character dances and the more recent ethnic identity dances are connected when folk-dances are performed to the music of classical composers like Bartók, Bihari, and Kodály, who were among the first classical musicians featured by the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble. Lisa M. Overholser investigated the relationship or fusion of folk and classical music.

Apart from this, she also was interested in the folk-dances created for the stage by the professional ensembles, in terms of the level of authenticity they had. The dance masters and choreographers claimed that their works represent the elements of folk, even if in the reality there was a big difference between their newly staged dances and the original peasant dances, and this have

raised some concerns in which Lisa M. Overholser was interested in. However, despite these discrepancies, ethno-identity dances would not be born and exist further without the theoretical background about the folk, their activities, and communication, since only they and the theories about them can serve as a basis for the new creation of ethnic-identity dances.

The Pearly Bouquet Hungarian Dance Ensemble (Gyöngyösbokréta) has made an intriguing remark on Hungarian folk-dance and customs. According to them, the belief that something is more authentic just because it originated in the village rather than anywhere else is more common in Hungary than it is in other nations. Because there were no large cities in those ancient times, folk-dance may have originated in small villages. As a result, when urbanization took place, the idea that people who moved to larger communities could not maintain these activities but could only ‘copy’ them, spread. However, living in a city does not exclude any opportunity for creating an original dance or practicing a traditional activity among the citizens.

The Pearly Bouquet dance group holds significant relevance as they are the originator of a movement that holds immense significance in the history of folk-dance. In addition to aiding in the dissemination of folklore and its activities, the Pearly Bouquet Movement served as a kind of meter for the stage-ready status of folk-dances prior to the formation of any official ensemble. The researchers discovered that the villages which had one of these folk-dance groups, ‘Bokréta’ groups, which existed in many towns, kept the form of the older dances’ way better than the people from other villages without these groups, by making possible for the peasants to perform their dances repeatedly for more or less fifteen years, with only minor changes in their dance movements.

Therefore, the Pearly Bouquet dance group is significant because of its double contributions: first, it maintained the dances’ authenticity; second, it assessed the performances’ level of growth and determined whether or not they were ready for the stage. Furthermore, with the events of Trianon and Hungary’s following territorial losses, the Pearly Bouquet movement served to reinforce Hungarian nationalism feelings. Even though they had lost those territories physically, in their minds and values those regions of Hungary were not lost but continued to exist through the traditions and folkloric activities as people gathered, keeping alive and practicing an apparently old dance. This only served to strengthen their sense of belonging and connection to one another and to their motherland (Pearly Bouquet (Gyöngyösbokréta), 1937).

3.8 The crucial political aspect of folk-dance

Looking back to the post-World War I era, the authoritarian government employed folk-dance ‘as a means of symbolic mass support’ (Shay,2023). They achieved this by bringing a large number of brightly costumed peasants to the stage to perform folk-dances for the regimes, which they justified as their protectors of tradition and folklore. Therefore, when nationalism and authoritarianism were on the increase, the authoritarian regimes used folklore and folk dancing as a way to show support for their people.

The former Soviet Union demonstrated an important political aspect of folk-dance and tradition as well. The political men who assisted Lenin to get into leader position in 1917 saw folklore as the domain of older women who lived in impoverished Russian villages; therefore, they believed folklore had no place in public life. When Lenin died however, things took a turn: he was replaced by Adolf Hitler, Stalin become concerned about the rising Germany under Hitler’s control during the 1930s. Stalin realized that the majority of the USSR would not fight against the Nazis and against their attempt of taking over the Soviet territories, in comparison with the Russians, who would fight no matter what, to protect Russia. Therefore, a change was needed to motivate people and rise their nationalist sentiments, so in case of a need they will be eager enough to protect Russia, do not minding the costs it would take.

The ideologists of Stalin, tried to use folklore, but most importantly the Russian one, to rouse and provoke people’s feelings of Russian nationalism, the conscious feelings of strong belonging and love towards the country, which eventually helped Stalin reach his aim. Since these folkloric activities, as I discussed a few chapters before, meant an opportunity for people to connect, form strong relationships, and offered the picture of an idealized past and sensation of national belonging by the unique dance characteristics, it served as an easy tool in the hands of the government for encouraging and manipulating people. By this attempt of Stalin being successful, ‘Russian folk song’ gained so much power that it developed into an institutionalized structure, and the Piatnitskii chorus emerged as a crucial institution of the ‘Soviet Russian national folk identity’ (Shay, 2023). So, the government not only managed to revive the patriotic sentiments in the citizens, but also reached that folklore would form a vital part in the everyday life. Moreover, if any nationalities would not have folk-dances, or any dance that could be choreographed for the stage, the Russian people would invent one for them, which also signifies the level of professionalism and involvement they had in this phenomenon.

The care for folk art, folklore, stayed in the Soviet Union until the nation state has ended, and even after that, the folk music, -dances, -arts and everything connected to these, played an important role in the Soviet ethnology. As a result, all folk connected activities were presented during the Ten-Days Festivals of ‘national arts’ that took place in Moscow, for the purpose of the pomp, propaganda, and show, serving both the audiences and the government.

In order to reinforce people’s loyalty to their state rather than to their local communities and ethnic identities, the government also used folklore as a political tool to link all nations, creating a ‘ethnic rainbow’ (Shay, 2023). In essence, their goal was to bring people together by directing their attention away from the individual and onto the nation as a whole. However, the drawback of creating an ‘ethnic rainbow’, or, to put it another way, ethnic groups, is that certain ethnic groups – such as the Jews, Roma, and Turks – cannot properly fit in with either national group. They are left with the idea of stereotypes, and in addition to not being able to fit into any national ensemble because to the prejudices that others held about them, they were also suppressed and held back at any event or festival. Although this part of the social movements around folk-dance is much less discussed, it is just as significant as the other aspects because these stereotypes have existed in all historical periods and may still be present in the current circumstances.

3.9 The role of folk-dance from a new perspective

A different point of view regarding what folk-dance communicated and its role, derives from the anthropologist David Guss. He stated that ethno identity dances share similarities in every culture, and their aim is also the same: with making the visual elements a priority, by bringing in colorful costumes, showered with pomp, and impressive, theatrical choreography carried out with professionalism, expertise, they crafted the picture of a bright, joyful, and optimistic world. And by creating this picture, there was no room left in people’s life for the true historical events and poor life conditions, because everyone got caught-up in the cheerful phenomenon.

The former Soviet Union’s government was well aware of what Guss was attempting to discuss because, in order to cover up what was really happening regarding issues of political dominance and power, they followed suit and spent enormous sums of money on creating folk festivals and establishing state-sponsored ensembles in an effort to ‘make people blind’ to the true political situation. Because of the example of the Soviet Union, which provides actual evidence, David

Guss's insight about the purpose and meaning of folk dancing ceases to be merely a theory and gains validity.

It is evident that David Guss's findings serve as an example for Kornhauser's theory about social movements when one associates this with the mass society theory, which I discussed in the second chapter as the primary theory underlying the emergence of these social movements. In an effort to distract people from the reality of the situation, the political leadership attempted to get them involved in folk dancing. People have viewed folk-dance as a source of joy, reconnection, and opportunity for socialization because these traditional activities did offer them an escape from the harsh reality and not so glorious everyday life during the world wars, similar to the mass society theory, which claims that people started dancing in order to revive their connections.

Looking more at the general picture, the main connecting force between national and character dances and the newly appeared folk-dances is the depiction of peasants as some enormously positive phenomena, people who seem to have no trouble, are always amiable, grinning, and neat. Folk activities and arts, no matter what, has been always seen as beautiful and pleasant occurring. Even though it was used as an asset for educating large groups, people would be eager to participate in these folk activities, being 'blinded' of what is truly happening by the fact that these dances could speak their languages and were basic, learnable, but vibrant at the same time. These folkloric activities communicated the very same values as peasants had, driving them to participate in performing folk arts.

Since I discussed authenticity a few paragraphs ago, I'd want to put it in a new context: dance festivals and competitions, where it takes on a different perspective related to the issues raised. Folk-dance competitions are no different from any other form of competition in that the goal is for the best competitor to emerge successful, regardless of the subject matter. The only issue with this behavior is that it might not be authentic, even if the modifications are just minor ones, like stealing an eye-catching technique from the closest region. Dancing groups, on the other hand, have a tendency to add new elements into their choreographies as they compare themselves and strive to be the best. Since the contest of the participants, the comparison of who is better, who can show the most beautiful dance, is what drives competition, the idea of a contest loses meaning if there are no new movements presented on stage, and every dance stays the same, without showing any unexpected from time to time. Therefore, having these competitions from year to year, highly increases the chance of modification of dances, which proportionately contributes to losing their

levels of authenticity, becoming a never-ending alteration of dances. In comparison to this, ironically, the reason these events are held, according to the public and the governments, is to ‘preserve the authenticity of the dances’ (Shay,2023).

So over time the message of folk-dance changes almost entirely, being only a peasant activity in the really beginning, dance in its very original, everyday environment, presenting the first existence of folk-dance which was explained in the beginning. Later, became a means of the state for showing and communicating their support towards the masses, but also for influencing them and strengthening their emotions of nationalism for the benefit of the government. However, this was the process that allowed folk-dance to grow and reach these stages because it became so significant that people started dancing in an effort to protect what they believed to be their ancestors’ property and to safeguard the hard-to-preserve authenticity of the dances, which is only partially preserved in their original form as we have seen through history. Therefore, dance reached its second existence, being taught in schools, put up on the stage, raising doubts regarding the levels of originality it has. It is so thought provoking that people trying so hard to preserve something that their ancestors had, actually resulted in losing the true essence of the original activity, with that being a part of the everyday life, offering joy and freedom primarily, have turned into a political means and activity which must be taught in order to be kept alive.

3.10 Nowadays’ situation

The world is changing, that much is true, but in the last several decades, the changes have been rapid in all respects, and people have had to adjust in one way or another. Technology has advanced to the point where humans are unable to keep up with its fast advancement, which has both benefits and drawbacks. Due to the introduction of the internet and other electrical devices, human communication has taken a turn for the worse. It appears that lengthy, hurtful conversations are being replaced by symbols, and as a result of everyone’s rush to get things done quickly and accurately, communication has lost its beauty and fundamental essence. This raises questions about our beliefs and suggests the possibility of getting some assistance. It also leads to alienation, where people lose their sense of warmth and connection to one another.

Folk-dance and traditions are no longer as common as they once were; people practice them and the traditions less regularly anymore, but they can nevertheless provide shelter in the modern world and an opportunity to revive the process of socialization through interpersonal interaction.

Keeping in mind William Kornhauser's theory of the mass society, folk-dance has a chance to flourish in the current environment as well because the conditions are right: people are becoming increasingly distant from one another due to technology, and some of them undoubtedly desire to heal their cool social bonds.

So, can folk-dance and the concept of tradition be looked at in today's world as an escape route from the alienation of the society? Well, to answer this question I used a study written by Amanda Haboush, Mark Floyd, Joshua Caron, Mark LaSota, and Krisann Alvarez where they examine the effect of ballroom dance lessons on elder people who have depression. This study contributes to our understanding of how dancing affects people's daily lives, body image, and self-perception. The study can be used as a foundation for understanding how dance affects people's moods generally, even though the participants are elderly individuals (69 years on average) who suffer from geriatric depression, also known as age-related depression, human emotions and basic functions remain the same regardless of age, and the structure and foundation of these ballroom dances are very similar to those of folk-dances.

None of the dances – foxtrot, waltz, rumba, swing, cha-cha, and tango – were created or choreographed with therapeutic purposes in mind. For eight weeks, each participant attended a single, 45-minute dancing class per week. The music they listened to, which featured a variety of genres and styles that could even be changed at the participant's request, is the relevant aspect of this story. Aside from this, the dances mentioned allow for physical contact between the dancers, which further immerses them in the activity and is a significant similarity to folk-dance. Additionally, the dances offer the chance to learn new movements, which can help people become more self-aware and socialize by interacting with new people. Thus, folk dancing and the dances included in the study provide quite similar experiences. According to the study's findings, ballroom dancing lessons generally have a positive impact on age-related depression. However, more research is required to ascertain whether the dance itself or social interactions – including a need to leave to go outside – were the primary factors at play.

Folk-dance, similarly, includes all the above-mentioned influencing factors. Sometimes all it takes to get involved into social interaction is to leave the house. In case of today's society where people are alienated from each other, the folk-dance could have the same effects as ballroom dance had on age-related depression, since it requires people to step outside their home, to talk to others, touch the person they are dancing with or even just to look into their eyes, almost forcing them to

get into social contact. Additionally, all of these activities contribute to lessening the rigidity and alienation feelings. The fundamental element of tradition is community, which is based on interpersonal activities such as attending events, sharing folktales with one another, singing songs together, and providing opportunities for social engagement.

So as a conclusion, regarding today's situation, even though that folk-dance is present in its second existence, since it is taught to people and does not form a part of our daily life and activities inherently, it can serve as a place of comfort for people to reconnect with each other and find their way back to socialization and real-life interactions. Because humans are social creatures who seek out opportunities for interaction, the mass society idea appears to be valid even in the modern world, despite conditions that may change with time. The groups performing on stage are still motivated to use dance to convey a message to the audience, who then responds with their own message. The difference between then and now is that, while politics was present to a much lower degree today, it was a far more influential and driving force in the overall phenomena of folk traditions back in time.

4 FOLKD DANCE THROUGH THE LENS OF REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES

In this chapter, I will discuss the experiences of a few people gathered from primary research in the form of semi-structured interviews, conducted recently for this purpose in order to have a complex view on the research, containing elements of real-life visions and experiences regarding this topic. This study is based on the literature and will be divided into several sub-chapters for clarity and to provide more information.

4.1 The changing form of communication

Folk-dance as a means of communication, as it was showcased in the beginning subchapter of the literature overview, it can be interpreted with the help of the 'Communication Triangle', consisting of the transmitter, message, and receiver, and having two differentiated forms regarding what it communicates towards the outside world: the first and second existence of dance.

When talking about folk-dance in real life, people do not use these terms consciously, since they maybe are not fully aware of the change that happened between the first the second existence of dance, however they can sense and phrase the process of transformation with their own words.

The interview participants in general stated that folk-dance communicates something towards the outside world, no matter under what circumstances is performed, it can express value systems, a particular kind of behavior, or even a lifestyle. Apart from this connotation, they also highlighted the staged performances as a means of communication.

Each participant started folk dancing at an early age, getting involved through school or family influence, with this meaning, that their first encounter with folk-dance already happened with its second existence, since by that time the tradition as something inherent and everyday practice was already lacking from the mundane activities. One of the interviewees got lucky enough as a child to experience the events of ballrooms, unfortunately, without them being an organic part of the everyday life, but rather organized during the event seasons, like Christmas or Easter, however this brought her closer to the first existence of dance and gave her a hint of the original practice of folk-dance and traditions. With this having a bit closer experience to what dance looked like in its first existence or primary form. She carried with her a clear memory of these times, when, despite different nationalities living in the same country, or more specifically, in the same village, they coexisted peacefully and harmoniously during ballroom events, even besides them. In fact, their differences provided a chance to learn from one another rather than cause conflict. Aside from this, she observed individuals being polite to one another, enjoying themselves, and maintaining solid, personal bonds which makes her case exceptional when it comes to learning about folk-dance. Even though the others did not have such opportunity to experience traditions and dance, they were still interested in practicing it, consequently they dived deeper and learned more about the topic, until the point that every participant had a period in their life when they became professional dancers. The next level meant to become a pedagogue, so they teach others as well at the highest professional level possible.

The only ‘problem’ present in this derives from the fact that they can only pass down what they have learned, and this means the second existence of dance from start. Despite they were provided with the theoretical knowledge on the first existence of dance, the circumstances did not allow opportunities anymore for it to be learned in practice as well, that is the reason why the first existence of dance exists only in literature and in theory. What they were born into and carried on was the model set up by Igor Moiseyev with ethno identity dances, with them already being dance alterations of the original form. The new generations did not even have a chance from the beginning

to learn folk-dance in its very early stage and original environment due to ever changing circumstances and lack of knowledge on the pedagogue's side. However, there is no one to blame, because since folk-dance received attention from Igor Moiseyev and the public, changes occurred both inevitably and intentionally, just as the everyday life habits evolve over time.

Thus, examining dance occurred in the past from a practical point of view, through the lens of 21st century people, despite their several ways of learning about the traditions and folk-dance, they showed a congruent opinion on the purpose of folk-dance practiced long time ago. This meaning, that they have recognized that there is no room for the primary form of dance in the 21st century. In the past indeed it served for connection, distraction, being an everyday habit, however, moving towards the 21st century, this gradually changed towards the purpose of show, performances, staging what they believe it is authentic and distracting the audience. So as from their experience, their opinions agree with the literature on a high level, despite that they could not phrase the shift in the form of dance with scientific terms.

4.2 Tradition and politics

When examining the political aspect of dance among the 21st century people, turns out that there is no connection between folk-dance and politics according to them. Even looking back at the state-socialist past, when the interview participants were asked about it, no answer came referring to any of this aspect.

Thus, the influencing motivation in case of the former Soviet Union, by showing an idealized picture and support towards the masses, using people to construct the notion of national identities turned out to be unknown among the interview participants. One thing however, which can be brought in connection with this aspect of dance was mentioned by them: the identity which tradition gives people. Looking at the interview participants separately, each of them stated that they feel that their identity is shaped by their involvement with tradition and folk arts. One of them said that the dance has helped her feel empathetic and that those who can dance and are a part of this tradition have an advantage over those who are not, and it is a plus when it comes to getting to know others. This is not a limiting or discriminatory characteristic, though; she simply connects and sympathizes with those who share her interests more instantly (Magdolna).

According to the viewpoint of some other participant, tradition is what actually gives people a sense of identity and belonging, therefore it is essential to be preserved and protected, dressing it up in a new shape if necessary to make it more 'consumable' and accessible for the modern world while maintaining the original fundamental movements. The speaker additionally stated that individuals who belong to minority groups typically preserve and engage in traditional and folk arts more passionately, as they provide a valuable means of maintaining community (Marianna). An entirely new perspective on tradition belongs to another interview participant, him stating that his identity is formed by traditions in the way of teaching him natural and organic lifestyle. Of course, it cannot be realized in hundred percent, but where he can he tries to choose the natural option, let it be him growing plants, or having a pig and slaughtering it as in the past times elders did, or just choosing sustainability where he can (Norbert). The perspective of the fourth interviewee on tradition forming identity is the sensation of being part of something valuable and passing down to the students' virtue, good manners which would not happen if he would not be a part of any folk-dance group or folk-related community. Tradition offers a channel for him where he can engage with youths, raising them to be courteous, and prioritize the human relationships (Máté).

Neither David Guss' name was mentioned, nor the phenomenon observed by him, where folk-dance served as a means in shifting people's attention from the cold everyday circumstances and political situations by showering the public with dance festivals and pomp. Only similarities were mentioned, in terms of nowadays situation: where everyone is in a rush, no one pays attention towards the other, and when people meet and dance, they have no chance, but to interact with each other, with folk-dance pushing them towards establishing some sort of social relation. Two interesting statements were made by two different interviewees that demonstrates the value and purpose shift that in their opinion happened over time. These are the following: 'The purpose of dance has changed in a way that in the past people danced for their own distraction, but in the 21st century people dance to distract others.' (Mariann), and 'Long time ago people wanted to be a part of the community by folk-dance, in contrast today, they want to stand out from the community by dancing, trying to show they are better than their mates by, for instance, a higher leg raise' (Norbert). Even though these thoughts do not include any political aspect of folk-dance, they do phrase through a new lens what kind of changes folk-dance went through as a means of communication. Therefore, people have an idealized vision regarding this topic, where nothing bad is connected to

folk-dance and traditions in the past times, but the distraction and festive events, and the opportunity for de-stressing are in the central focus. However, a few participants highlighted that they are happy they could learn about traditions and folk arts nowadays, and not in the past, since this way they had the opportunity to capture a wider range of information, a more comprehensive picture about how these occurrences are placed and practiced across the several parts of the world.

4.3 Identity and community

William Kornhauser's theory serves as a fundamental pillar when looking at the beginnings of social movements and the motivational factors behind them. When looking at the mass society theory by Kornhauser with respect to real-life experiences, turns out that the original driving idea behind his theory is timeless, meaning that his perception about alienation being the driving factor for the formation of social events was presented by the interview participants as well.

First, the interviewees perception about the purpose of folk-dance in the past times were about creating the opportunity for people to connect, strengthen their social relationships and free themselves from the duty of everyday. Not only by it being present in the people's everyday lives through the act of wearing a hat, or singing a folk song when feeling sad, but also when the main agricultural tasks came to an end, such as harvesting or sowing, folk-dance gatherings created a space for communal celebration and entertainment. Second, regarding the 21st century situation, the meaning behind the social events surrounding folk-dance is more or less the same, according to the participants. Having their own emotions as a starting point, everyone stated that during the act of dance they feel cheerfulness, youth, joy, and light-heartedness, helping them staying young, keeping the abandon of child. Someone also mentioned the motivation it gives them throughout the mondain situations. The act of singing, similarly, helps in releasing the pain, someone stated she 'sings out the sorrow' through the traditional songs. The same emotions are true in case of being a dance mentor: by being surrounded by children, it releases the tension in the adults and shift one's focus towards an easy-going view.

Another very important aspect of dance which was mentioned during the interviews – even though it does not necessarily fall under the idea of the mass society theory – is the character development made possible by folk-dance. As a pedagogue, people have the eye for noticing the

small changes in the children behavior, and it was stated that even if some children are more reserved, they could beautifully open up in their own pace and become more upfront when dancing. It helps, not only the children, but anyone to form relationships by providing a safe and familiar environment, where the dancer feels comfortable. The same situation is true for the very small children, one of the pedagogues mentioned that by getting into interaction with folk-dance and songs early on, can help in studying and self-development, by teaching the brain how to keep its focus and exclude the disturbing factors. There are the poems written for little children aiming to develop a sense of rhythm, without having meaningful texts, but by the parents reading out loud them, placing accent on the beats, it helps the children in catching up on that rhythm, which is easier to imitate at first, than whole sentences and words; also teaches the brain to focus on that particular sound and pulse.

Folk-dance and traditions creates a polarity between the individual and community. Apart from the above-mentioned advantage on the individual development, in case of adults, has similar benefits. Each participant mentioned the opportunity which they receive from folk-dance when it comes to self-realization. A woman described how she uses folk-dance for living in a 'pink bubble', meaning that she is not willing to engage in politics and news more than necessary, rather listens to folkloric songs, or watches distinct dance performances; all these activities increase her happiness and motivates her, allowing her to find a place and chance for de-stressing. The other aspect of individuality is the self-discovery one goes through when a new situation comes in the form of learning a new dance figure, meeting new people, or stepping on the stage. Each occasion can offer a new perspective one discovers about themselves regarding how they cope with these situations.

The beautiful part, however, is that all the opportunities for realizing the individual benefits, would not exist without the community. One needs to step into a group of people, to get into a new situation, to talk to others and to face unfamiliar situations so they would be able to improve themselves. These circumstances would not be existing without the community. Folk-dance and every traditional activity have the group of people as their essential components. Dance was tailored to the masses in the past, not with the best intention, yet, by the time it reached the 21st century it turned out better than it was. People keep an eye on the opportunity of connecting, of maintaining human relationships, and dance makes it possible for them to do so. The medium of community offers a safe place for finding friends and trustworthy people one can share vulnerable information

with, or creates an ambiance for opening up and showing one's true self. And by experiencing these uplifting interactions, people seek to implement the courtesy, respect and humility into their everyday life, by stopping for a minute from the rush and saying a kind hello, or listening to the cashier if she or he wants to share a short story, or even giving to those who are in need, to mention a few examples. So, the polarity of identity – community gives the true essence of folk-dance and traditions, especially nowadays, however it was always present in a bigger or smaller amount through the history.

4.4 The change of core values

The message of folk-dance and communication depends also on the values people attach to them. The interviewees all agreed that the family, unity, and human relationships were the most important component of their values. They claimed that by engaging in folk dancing, they embody these ideals and wish to preserve them for future generations. Dancing gives them direction, and they want to continue sharing the same fundamental principles that elder people and people from the past did.

These principles include preserving human relationships in all contexts, from being kind to strangers to actually listening to someone who wants to share a short story, to helping those in need, giving elders their seat, and acting politely, respectfully, and kindly to the point where they prioritize their family and community. If something goes wrong in any kind of a relationship, not throwing away a partner, but choosing to solve and work on the problem together, just as our grandparents did, because problems are everywhere, it just requires a matter of perseverance and decision. The interviewees mentioned that they would not like to get trapped in the running world of 21st century and consciously chose to protect the warmth of social relations, and this inner feeling in their case derives from being educated through folk-dance and getting familiar with traditions. Despite that it requires the individual as well to have the inner driving force to become someone fond of tradition and folk arts, being taught for this behavior through the communal activities and traditions also plays a significant role in shaping someone's core values for prioritizing the social interactions.

Someone mentioned that folk-dance for her is the means to communicate towards the outside world to live with eyes opened since many valuable things could be found in the outside world,

and folk-dance should be brought into the present moment of ‘now’ and lived. The message she wants to transmit by practicing traditions is that it feeds and heals her soul by bringing ease and adding value to her everyday life, and if the soul is okay, the body follows on much easier that pattern despite the surroundings; she would like to share this experience with as many people as possible.

Another example for someone’s core values would be essence of human relationships in the everyday life. He feels empowered and optimistic when he is attentive and thoughtful and spends time on social interactions. Not enough people are paying true attention to others in the modern world, since always being in a rush, so the most precious thing we can give to others is our time and attention. It is important to focus it on the good things, with pure and good intentions, so maybe a better world will be created where people will not pass by each other, and if only he can make someone’s day better, it means already a fulfillment. Also seeing this kind behavior in the children taught by him, serves as a confirmation which is heart-warming for him.

Someone else’s value system from the interviewees consists of living a simple, yet meaningful life. She learned this through folk-dance and traditions, witnessing the elder people and talking with them about the life they had in the older times. For her, the community of family, group of friends and a happy life is far more important than having enormous wealth or showing off. She believes that the essence of true happiness lives in someone’s soul, which to be fulfilled, does not require more than health, kindness, and human relations.

5 FINDINGS AND RESULTS

As a result of comparison of the literature overview and interview analysis, it can be stated that apart from the visible change that occurred over time in the message of folk-dance, both similarities and differences were found among the past and present communication.

As for the first and second existence of dance, according to the literature, ‘first existence of dance’ is realized when the person or people dance for their own joy, with creativity and improvisation involved and dance realized in the everyday environment. In comparison, the ‘second existence of dance’ demonstrates the performances, dances in any kind of form, without its original and natural habitat, and without creativity involved. Since we live in a world where the first existence

of dance does not exist anymore as such, anyone who decides to learn about tradition and folk-dance can only do so by learning its secondary form. Therefore, the authenticity of these dances is present in a very small amount, which is similar to what Anthony Shay described when he created two terms for defining folk-dance regarding the amount of authenticity it has: folk-dance – the true, primary form of dance, practiced by peasants in their everyday life; and ethno identity dance – basically anything which falls besides the original folk-dance. And since, Igor Moiseyev called every dance he created as folk-dance, even though his work falls under the category of ethno identity dances, people started to live and perceive folk-dance as a misconception, believing it to be something original, when in fact, the authentic dance already went through some changes. This misconception is proved to be present in the changing history of folk-dance, since people in the 21st century still have the belief of what they practice is authentic.

When examining the driving force behind the formation of social movements, William Kornhauser's name is important regarding his mass society theory stating that people search social connections through organizing events, when the danger of alienation is present. As it was proved in the chapter of the literature overview, in the past, especially when world wars happened, people did practice dance and got involved in social events because of the desire to find social connections, and free themselves of the burdens and pressure of everyday life. In addition to this, there is the influence on of the government in the state-socialist past, using the masses for their own purpose of creating national identities, strengthening the nationalism, and shifting the public's focus from the actual political situation, using folk-dance and social events as a means of manipulation.

When looking at the interviews, becomes clear that the reason behind people dancing nowadays is similar to the past situation, so William Kornhauser's theory is still valid. When the interviewees described their values regarding and intentions behind their practice of folk-dance, things like the family, unity and community could be found apart from the feelings of ease, joy and freedom it allows, demonstrating that in the 21st century where everyone is in a rush and people do not have enough time, those who are practicing traditions are more conscious and seek the opportunities where they can connect, and practice being humble. Also, the importance of passing down this knowledge and behavior was mentioned as something crucial for them, to teach their children and students respect, courtesy, and the importance of having social connections apart from teaching them folk-dance and traditions.

However, the biggest difference which was found among the past and present message of communication is the political aspect. Not only that folk-dance today is not used as a political means by the government, but rather looked at as something optional, a hobby for most people and profession for some, but also when asking people about folk-dance in the past, no one seems to be conscious about the political aspect it had in the period of romanticism and nationalism. It was not mentioned by anyone that folk-dance was in the hands of the government for so long, that it was a means for manipulating the masses, even though the interviewed people being professionals and experts in the field by learning it at a higher level. Similarly, neither the relatives or acquaintances of the interview participants were against folk-dance and traditions stating that it is something meaningless, or a political tool surviving the past. Even if there were people who were not involved in it, like the father of one of the participants, he just said to his son: 'No matter what you chose as your profession, only be the best at it!' and then he became his son's number one supporter.

Two very interesting statements were made by different interview participants, bringing a new light on the transformation process of the message of folk-dance. The first one is: 'The purpose of dance has changed in a way that in the past people danced for distracting themselves, but in the 21st century people dance to distract others.', which phrases the shift of focus in the message of folk-dance, with the first and second existence of dance being an explanation for this phenomenon. As the first primary existence it is really about the individual sentiments and benefits, yet the secondary existence of it shifts the focus from the individual to the masses, trying to distract them by the performances put on the stage.

The second taught, which sounds a bit contradictory comparing to the literature regarding the nowadays' situation and reasons for practicing dance, is the following: 'Long time ago people wanted to be a part of the community by folk-dance, in contrast today, they want to stand out from the community by dancing, trying to show they are better than their mates by, for instance, a higher leg raise.' The first part of the quote is quite telling and similar to the literature stating that people were searching for and eager about the social relationships, however, the second part of it contradicts the literature talking about folk-dance having similar purpose nowadays as in the past. People, especially in the present, want to feel special and there is always some level of competitiveness involved in everything we do, therefore, the modern people when performing folk-dance wants to do better than his\her colleagues and stand out from the mass by showing off his special knowledge. Even tough there is some similarity between the reason for folk dancing in the past and present

times, with this quote the assumption that folk-dance gained a new purpose as well over time, becomes true.

6 CONCLUSION

In summary, the supposition of the changing message of folk-dance and traditions over time, with special regards to the communication aspect of dance, turned out to be true, however some parts of folk-dance as a means of communication did not change in their meaning.

The facts which prove my initial suggestion true are the political aspects and the shifting existence of dance. In either of the interviews there was no politics mentioned at any level, which means that people in the 21st century have no political connotation with folk-dance at all, however in the state-socialist past according to the literature review, politics played a main driving force in guiding people towards traditions, by using folk-dance to cover the truth and create nation states. This shift depicts a value change in the message of folk-dance, where people in the modern world practice it for their self-fulfillment, for showing others' what they have learned, and for protecting folk-dance for the idealized values they believe it has. The second argument which proves the transformation of the message of folk-dance is the shift from the 'primary' to the 'secondary' dance existence, meaning that the creativity and improvisation which dance had in the first times, got lost in its way to the stage and dance classes, and as the interview participants mentioned, they all started dancing by getting involved initially with the second existence of dance. However, one reason for dancing was found that was similar in the past to the 21st century situation, with that being the joy and freedom of the participants they feel when practicing folk-dance and traditions. Even when the political aspect was strong, the reason why it worked was that people indeed felt good and joy while forming social connections, and in the present, while there is alienation due to the technology and rushing world, people feel the same freedom and ease while connecting with each other within the framework of traditions and folk arts.

So, as an answer for the question 'Does folk-dance serve the same purpose in the 21st century as it did in the state-socialist past?' it is demonstrated that a true transformation behind the reason for folk dancing occurred by leaving politics behind and focusing on preserving the traditions, however, the closure of human relationships is timeless in a sense of people being social creatures

by nature, whom always desire to interact with each other and finding joy in the process, using different ways of communication which involves folk-dance and traditions.

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