

Review of the dissertation work of **Iliana Petrova Salazar** on the subject  
*European Choreographers Oriented to Dance-therapy and its  
Application in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

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The arguments in favor of the topic of this interdisciplinary work are based on the dance-therapeutic practices and the need of a theoretical rationalization of the situation in our country. Thus set, the topic has a contribution to today's situation and presupposes an investigation on a voluminous historical European and non-European platform. It is also home to various and richly differentiated Bulgarian music and dance phenomena, which in our entire patriarchal past, but also after that, still have an influential social and healing effect.

The doctoral student - dancer, choreographer and therapist, presents the theoretical-choreographic and historical-biographical aspects of the European dance-therapeutic schools, which describe activities that build on dance as an art and as a spiritual process. We can draw a parallel with the successful music-therapeutic schools of the same period, which realize music immanently as a co-therapist, and not only as a background of psychological work. In the introductory section *Topicality of the Subject*, along with the list of "new forms and directions such as expressive-relational dance-movement therapy and psychomotor dance-therapeutic intervention" (p.7), a problem observed in music therapy is exposed: "...dance in its original sense of a *higher art* of movement with a musical character ... is in danger of disappearing from dance-therapy." (p.8) I share this concern; by analogy with music therapy - often practitioners do not have the necessary education, competence and interest to explore and apply the powerful immanent forces of classical music; for such psychologists, music is a "background", only an "impulse" or "occasion" for unlocking cognitive processes. Therefore, in both cases, the knowledge of the respective art, overcoming the difficulties and resonating it through one's own body, gives the real therapeutic results, deeply transforming the personality.

I immediately go into a problem area that takes the side of both the higher art of dance and the therapy that supports dance as a personalized means of expression with a musical character. Placing this accent, I want to illustrate the specifics and practical orientation of this study, its objectivity and social care.

Iliana Salazar's work is structured in three sections and a total of 7 chapters, introduction, conclusion, annexes, contributions and bibliography with 202 Latin titles, 140 papers and dissertations, 172 articles and reports, dozens of sites on methods, educational structures, personalized online sources, video and audio materials. Appreciating the thematic structuring of the bibliography, I would quote

the author on this occasion in the section on contributions: "basic information ... also for specialists in other fields such as art-therapy, psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, medicine, bio-medicine and quality of life, anthropology, neuroscience, biomechanics, European intangible cultural heritage. "

In the *Introduction* of the dissertation the parameters of the interdisciplinary and multidirectional research are skillfully formulated: the topicality, the goals, the tasks, the scope, the methodology, the structure and the terminology. Numerous names and cited literature (more than 50 references) are immediately mentioned, which will be later discussed in detail in the following chapters. In this new field, which needs to be argued precisely as a therapy, and not only as a primordial human activity, the initial overview "from a bird's eye view" leaves us with the feeling of a confident outline of the great contour. In the *Structure* section the **historical method** is reported, according to which the considered phenomena are located: from antiquity to the Middle Ages, 19<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> centuries in two main chapters: "choreographers related to the idea of dance as therapy (second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century - early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and choreographers using dance as therapy (mid-20<sup>th</sup> century - early 21<sup>st</sup> century) and the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the establishment and institutionalization of *dance-therapy* as a method for analysis, diagnosis, integration and resocialization" (p.11). The section on terminology is quite contributive, deriving "the fundamental principle of the impact of dance-therapy **through the syncretic connection between body, emotions and psyche** ... dance can harmonize space, matter and psyche ..." (p.12) Only I would suggest that the paragraph *Therapy* (p. 12), which, despite its brevity, contains the main features and the historical term, be more thoroughly argued, not only through the point of view of Dorothy Murdoch, who has her own, close to Arianism, reading of sacred history (in note 32 there is also a small typographical error in the spelling of the name "Christ" from the title of her book). One can mention the ascetic roots of the theory as a contemplative life, its connection with the Buddhist concept of *Theravada* (from स्थविरवाद *sthaviravāda* with the corresponding change in the transition from Sanskrit to Greek: literally "teaching" [vāda] "of the ancients" [thera] "). Significant is Philo Judaeus' treatise on *vita contemplativa*, which mentions therapists as philosophical teaching and practice, and Philo's allegorical exegesis would be an additional argument for the direction of research that focuses on certain spiritual practices, along with the methods of the arts because what was in antiquity is being rediscovered and affirmed by modern therapists.

The first section *Historical-theoretical understanding of dance as a form of treatment* contains two chapters with a total of 7 paragraphs. It is here that Iliana Salazar proves that the claimed Western European context needs a wider range of universal ancient planetary practices. This also happens in ethnomusicology; in his two-volume *History of Polyphony* (1934), Marius Schneider ("Geschichte de Mehrstimmigkeit") derives

the European Gothic organ technique (organum) from the principle of heterophony, described in Plato's *Laws*<sup>1</sup>.

In the first paragraph of the section (1.1.1.) The vast amount of knowledge about "*the dance of things*, the elements, configurations and harmonious movements of which can reveal the secrets of consciousness, matter and Spirit, the transformation of space and time" (p. 15) is placed around the dichotomous Cosmos-Chaos axis. The names of people inspired by this dance are mentioned, the last being Nietzsche ("Also sprach Zarathustra"). I will supplement with a quote; Nietzsche's dance ("The Other Dance Song") is of the man of life: "- I looked into your eye recently, oh, life: I saw gold in your night-eye – it shines .... To my foot, for a furious dance, give a glance, laughing, asking, melting swing-look ..." <sup>2</sup> Moving to the psychological, in the spirit of research of structuralism, it covers "the bilateral act of creative activity - *thinking and feeling* as external and internal, Shiva and Parvathi, the harmonious and logical structure and the processes of flowing associated with the element *water*. In Wagner's cosmogony music, water, as well as woman, but also love, which methods the therapist knows and applies, are in a semantic order: "Die **Musik** ist ein **Weib**. Die Natur des **Weibes** ist die Liebe: aber diese Liebe ist die empfangende und in der Empfängnis rückhaltlos sich hingebende" <sup>3</sup>. For the specific therapeutic tasks Iliana Salazar derives as the result of the dichotomy the *stable choreographic structure* that would organize the personality and would develop social skills and the *improvisational dance*, associated with a sense of freedom, individualism, personal ecstasy experience. As a parallel to the successful application of this type of primitive healing dichotomy, I would cite Heiner Ruland's practice "Music as Experienced Knowledge of Man. The Practice of Music-Therapy" <sup>4</sup>, where the ancient Greek terms *rhythmos* and *tonos* are dichotomously used; the first in the sense of the procedural in music, and the second as a fixation in the purity of tone in certain mathematical quantities. Ruland works with musical instruments, applying the method to the musical parameters of melody, harmony, rhythm, the research of intervals, along with psychological observations of the impact of music-therapy activities on people with disabilities.

The next paragraphs (1.1.2. and 1.1.3.) go into the depth of the psychophysical impact of the ritual. Particular attention is paid to the third group of ritual practices (according to the Oxford Folklore Encyclopedia of 1997) "crisis rituals ... which are

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<sup>1</sup> Платон. Закони. VII 812 [с,d], Сонм. С.2006, с.364. но на български, за съжаление, конкретните музикални феномени не са предадени коректно. В този труд, предизвикал яростно раздразнение в наци-кръговете от това време, Мариус Шнайдер, опирайки се на предшествениците си като Курт Закс, (цит. от Салазар на с.6), Карл Шумф ( *Anfänge der Musik*, 1855), Гвидо Адлер (*Über Heterophonie*, 1911) утвърждава хетерофонията, бурдона и паралелизма като единни планетарни явления на архаичното многогласие.

<sup>2</sup> Ницше, Фридрих. Тъй рече Заратустра, превод Мара Белчева, изд. "З.Стоянов" С.2003, с.202

<sup>3</sup> Wagner, Richard, *Oper und Drama*, Kapitel 10, Abschnitt VII. "Музиката е жена. Природата на жената е любовта, но тази любов е приемаща и в приемането (зачатието) се отдава без остатък." <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/wagner/operdram/operdram.html>

<sup>4</sup> Ruland, Heiner. "Musik als erlebte Menschenkunde. Musiktherapie in der Praxis", Verlag Ch. Möllmann.Schloß Hamborn, 2003. Rhythmos und tonos, S.94 uff.

to eliminate ... for example a disease that torments society" (p. 20). The ritual is necessarily connected with the movement and hence with the trance ritual dance (p. 23), which must be mastered and controlled; Kurt Sachs is quoted as saying that he sees two sides to the ritual dance - it is "harmonious and ecstatic". Attention is paid to the content of ritual practices, which introduces us to the next chapter, referring to the healing ritual impact: "dance elements, movements and figures placed in a ritual context are loaded with specific symbolism ..." (p.25)

The second chapter of the first section "Dance in Antiquity as a Preventive and Healing tool" is developed in 4 paragraphs on the basis of rich ethnological literature. This is more than an interdisciplinary approach, here we are speaking of a culturologist idea - the need for action in the arts with a healing and uplifting purpose based on tradition in a wide geographical and temporal space. Just like e.g. *Quattro pezzi sacri* of the late Verdi with the use of *scala enigmatica* as *cantus firmus* or just as Puccini's affective harmony requires a look back at the era of Italian mannerism of Monteverdi and Gesualdo, as well as knowledge of the tradition of healing dance, but in its meaningful gestures sheds light on the searches of choreographers, dancers and people seeing the spirit of the times, discussed in the next sections. In practice, this extensive, fact-rich section, which includes the Bulgarian folk ritual practices is a contributing independent study, which on a basis devoid of scientific-positivist prejudices, easily builds a picture of healthy, dancing, spiritual societies from the past to the present. Many details impress in their parallelism: "to use your feet" from the papyrus of Nut (p. 27), "the royal path in Yoga" (p. 27), "the microcosm of Paracelsus (p. 28), animism," folklore diseases " (p. 29), the circular dance (*Reigen* from Ode to Joy), the *sema* dance, the shamanic practices, the difference between the two forms of **meditative psycho-corporeal technique** - trans-dance as "related to the thought-transformative process and the ecstatic dance with its "sensory experience, liberation and psychophysical catharsis" (p. 35) On the occasion of the first is mentioned GIM, the imagination led by music; here I will allow myself to share a little personal experience from this technique, which inherited the hypnotic methods in psychology from the time of Charcot. (Jean Martin Charcot 1825-1893) Relaxing techniques release tension in the body and make listening to music very intensive. Helen Bonnie's musical programs, mostly romantic music (Stokowski's orchestra) or popular Baroque (no organ or spiritual cantatas, no rational understanding of the text), connect with the client at the level of his experiences and secretly asked personal question. The synesthetic experience and the sensory-procedural process are supported, guided by carefully selected stimulating questions by the leading psychologist. Music is a real co-therapist and shows its healing power. Therefore, I would refer to this technique as ecstatic, as defined by the PhD student.

The central section of the dissertation "The Idea of Dance as Therapy (20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe) respects with its comprehensiveness, precise structure and encyclopedic accuracy (pp. 52 to 176). The historical method assumes continuity, implemented in Chapter I of this section "Premises for the Revival of Dance as Therapy in the 20<sup>th</sup>

Century" and in paragraph II.1.1."The Changes". "At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the interest in dance is activated again, but not in its entertaining form of stage art, but as a psycho-emotional impact and therapy" (p. 53). I will add that this stage art is not always entertaining; in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. ballet themes of modernity are foretold such as man and machine or doll (*Coppelia*, *Nutcracker*), mass hypnosis, enchantment and the victory over evil (*Swan Lake*), the reality of the afterlife (*Giselle*). Going back to Iliana Salazar's text, we remember how gymnastic exercises and culture of movement form the new generations (Kalmayer, Jindler, Ehrenfried, Selver), when the sports disciplines such as rhythmic gymnastics, figure skating and synchronic swimming - the sports with physical and aesthetic pretense - are established.

From the second chapter of this section I will dwell on the erudite and very careful presentation of spiritual teachers of this period; the strong influence of three of them - Beinsa Douno, Rudolf Steiner and Georgy Gurdjieff, chosen to illustrate the new attitude towards movement as therapy, continues to resonate with the public consciousness to this day. The selected thoughts are very appropriate as a motto for every thinker and reformer. The structure is as follows: short biography, principles, method, (types), choreographic structure (elements). For example

#### Principles

Beinsa Douno	Rudolf Steiner	Georgy Gurdjieff
Divine triune principle	the trinity law	law of the social organism
The octave, the threesome of the octave, the trinity		
Love, wisdom, truth enneagram		

#### Or a method

Paneurhythmy	Eurhythmy as a	sacred
Gurdjieff dances	visual speech	
	social, pedagogical, stage	

Some clarifications: *Eurhythmy* was created by Rudolf Steiner, the term was proposed by Marie Steiner in 1912, who became an authoritative reader of poetic texts in the so-called *Lauteurythmie*, working with the sounds of human speech as visible speech. As early as 1908, after 12 lectures on the Gospel of St John, the lecturer asked Margarita Voloshin if she would dance the great opening words, as she herself shared in her autobiography, borrowing its title from Goethe's tale "The Green

Snake"<sup>5</sup> (p. 72). Dalcroze works also with the term "rhythmic gymnastics" (p.73 and pp.95-98).

Gurdjieff's work was documented by Pyotr Demyanovich Uspensky (1878-1947), while Gurdjieff's book was "Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson". Mistakes were made in the spelling of the names (p. 80 and p.78).

From II.2.3 to the end of the section with excellently found titles are covered the systematized phenomena of choreography and dance-therapy during the past and the beginning of the next century. This is the point of view of a high professional with a deep insight into the creative goals of the great choreographers and an expression of empathy for their search in the field of therapy as a humane act. For all of them, keywords were found that characterize the basic principles. Here are the paragraphs arranged:

α) by geographical principle:

2.3.1. Non-Europeans who worked in Europe - Isadora Duncan, Dr. Bess Mensendieck, Catherine Dunham, F.M. Alexander. Basic principles: *The source of all movements* (Duncan), *the conscious psychological rhythm* (Mensendieck), *primitive expression* (Dunham, Duplan), *the Alexander technique*.

II.3.1. European choreographers and their dance-therapeutic methods developed in the USA - Liljan Espenak with *psychomotor therapy*, Elizabeth Polk with children with special needs with *creative dance*, Irmgard Bartenieff with *the foundations of Bartenieff*, Trudi Schoop with the *double experience of limitation and infinity*.

II.3.3. European choreographers and their dance-therapeutic methods developed in Europe: Gertrud Falke-Heller with *structured improvisation*, Gerda Alexander with *eutonia*, Lindenberg, Holger, Reischelt with the *breathing circle*, Sherborn, Patoc with *Joydance*.

β) by choreographic-musical component: a) rhythm: 2.3.2. European author's systems, which brought to the fore the symbiosis between rhythm and movement - Francois Delsarte with *the triune man in the image of God*, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, who created a school in dance-therapy, Dorothea Gunther with dance education and the *cognitive approach*.

γ) on the choreographic style, where the paragraphs of the study represent extensive choreographic studies:

2.3.3. Choreographers, creators of expressive dance language; Rudolf von Laban, Mary Wigman, Gertrud Bodenwieser

II.3.4. European choreographers .... influenced by the classical (modern) exercise: Margaret Morris, Maria-Teresa Leon Fritch / Mante Leon, Ann-Marie Auteure.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://anthrowiki.at/Eurythmie>

In "Accents" to this section the application of psychological approaches to dance-therapy is substantiated: dance-therapy of Marian Chase, that of Jung, developing dance-motor therapy (p.171). The main dance instruments used in the therapy are presented: *dance expression, repetitive dance themes, mastering of dance technique, processing of dance movement, dance motifs and choreographic structures*. I assume that these important practical guidelines are obtained not only on the basis of theoretical knowledge, but also from personal therapeutic experience.

The panoramic part of the work gives its exceptional contribution, on the basis of which it enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the "Application of Dance-therapy". Here we look again at the global dance world - it covers institutions, dance forms and genres that are practiced by millions of people, saving them from social isolation and depression. Paragraph 3.2.2 is very original, where the interdisciplinary aspects of dance-therapy are located - on another level we return to Paracelsus and *musica mundana*. There is no lack of the Bulgarian trace in dance-therapy (3.2.3.), which is now worthily presented with the current dissertation of Iliana Petrova Salazar.

The publications and the abstract fully meet the requirements.

Based on the arguments I presented in support of the high level of the dissertation, I strongly recommend to the colleagues of the academic jury to award Iliana Petrova Salazar the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in *Musicology and Music Art*. Professional field 8.3. *Music and Dance Art*.

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