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DANCE IN CINEMA MOVIES OF EMIR KUSTURICA

The focus of this work is the wider concept of a dance as a movement motivated by music. In this era of modern media, we are the witnesses of origin or existence of dances which belong to a different levels of the society and which may be deprived of tradition,¹ but nonetheless they are under scrutiny of contemporary ethnochoreology. This research is based on the treatment of a dance in work of Serbian filmmaker Emir Kusturica. My approach to this work consists of systematizing the dancing spots in Kusturica's movies according to their specific structural-semantic parameters. Furthermore, I will try to observe that characteristics within the context of particular films. The aspects of the transmission of traditional dances into artistic language of different media will be also discussed.

What makes Kusturica's work distinguished is specific and complex permeation of imagination and reality,² which can be used in order to observe the veracity of traditional dance and references to it or the position and function of a dance between these two polarities. Kusturica in a popular, romantic

¹ M. Šivaković suggests redefining of ethnomusicology and that may be applied to ethnochoreology: "The new ethnomusicology is a general science about musical cultures, not only because it gives a complete – integrated, synthetic – response regarding to totality of historical and geographical society, like in sociology of music, or in anthropology when it relates to unique human nature. The new ethnomusicology is established as a heterogenic and hybrid study platform, i.e. index map of discursive models about specific comparable or incomparable micro-societal representations and demonstrations through music. In order to resematize and redefine the new ethnomusicology we should have on mind already mentioned thesis that musicology is a general science about music as an art in Western sense, but ethnomusicology is general science about musical cultures or about cultures that are established, identified and represented by means of music (as M. D. emphasized)." M. Šivaković, *Diskurzivna analiza: pristupi ili pristupi „diskurzivne analize“ filozofiji, poetici, estetici, teoriji i studijama umetnosti i kulture*, Belgrade, University of Arts in Belgrade, 2006, p. 245.

² In literature, this approach is called magic realism. More about that in: G. Gocić, *Notes from the Underground: The Cinema of Emir Kusturica*, Belgrade, Student Cultural Centre, 2005, pp. 314, 318.



meaning flirts with the notion of *folklore*, which reflects on a treatment of a dance. The result of that is a so-called *ethno* which is distinguishable in many areas of his work.³ Under the auspices of this term are the products of contemporary popular culture which are simulacrum of traditional folklore heritage additionally named as *ethno* in order to have a market value. Kusturica is considered to be a moviemaker who is oriented towards post-modern phenomenon – the genre of *ethno-movie*,⁴ which represents “the new and self-conscious synthesis of ‘primitive’ environment borrowed from the Third World,⁵ modern standards of production borrowed from the West, and the transposition which consciously adjusted to the modern-art dialogue.”⁶ At the same time, it does not possess naivety which is typical for ‘folk’ art. Nonetheless, *ethno* can be understood as (partial) loss of author’s authenticity or as a result of a fear of losing the authenticity, in addition it is a consequence of nostalgia.⁷ Actually, Kusturica speaks very positively about that: “I like those [*ethno*] movies very much. I think that it is the only real weapon, the only real defense against globalization which is inevitable process – but the manner in which the globalization implements is actually historical and political deception. The difference between cultures is something in which we should believe in. Off course, I enjoy movies that represent small cultures, because all of a sudden they transfer me into the world I may understand.”⁸

It should be mentioned that in Kusturica’s movies dances are not technically complicated (the dance pattern is not in the foreground, it is inconspicuous and indistinguishable, furthermore presentation of a dance is often fragmented). Given that, it is most likely that no choreographer is engaged in the movie. The idea of a dance in a movie came from the director and is realized of actor’s own free will.⁹ It is clear that dance is not crucially important for Kusturica, but the very act of physical response to the music.¹⁰ As a result,

³ I. Čolović implies the renewal of Adorno’s jargon of authenticity while referring to Kusturica’s film poetics and his affinity towards architecture (he built his own *ethno-eco* village in Mokra Gora). He also mentions the expansion of *ethno* narration which may become *ethno-mania*. I. Čolović, *Ethno- Priče o muzici sveta na Internetu*, Beograd, Biblioteka XX vek, 2006, pp. 273-274.

⁴ The term *ethno-movie* is taken from Gocić. More about that in: G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226.

⁵ The background of his movies is far from ‘normal’, ‘beautiful’ centre (for example, native Balkans, turbulent region with all its wild and good-natured heroes). (M. D.)

⁶ G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

⁷ *Ibid.* More complete explanation on pp. 295-296.

⁸ Quotation from: G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

⁹ This conclusion is reached on the basis of closing credits where no one is mentioned as a choreographer. Movie outlines, names of composers, producers, and performers of movie music are available on the web site <http://www.kusturica.com/wiki/doku.php?id=en:start> and in the credits of the movies.

¹⁰ “Music acrobatics” is the subtitle of a movie *Black Cat, White Cat, and that explains that statement*.

the concept of folklore dance¹¹ implies the movement which represents a reaction to folklore music, therefore the dance does not originate from the rustic tradition of the Balkans.¹²

The applied film music and sound theories are of the opinion that the purpose of music and sound is to supplement the scene so that their presence is imperceptible and absence perceptible,¹³ while their function can vary from having musicians in the scene or discrete music of the atmosphere, to dramatically justified leitmotifs which are the essence of the emotions in a movie.¹⁴ Nevertheless, in Kusturica's movies the music has specific value and important place in a story, because of its expressiveness, the manner of creating a plot, and defining characters.¹⁵ The filmmaker had an outstanding collaboration with a prominent composer Goran Bregović who created modern arrangements of folk songs.¹⁶ He also created new songs with *ethno* tone while using very well known elements of Balkans sounds in different combinations and idealized sounds of other exotic nations with whom The West is not very familiar, and all that with the help of the latest technology.¹⁷

Kusturica's activity as a guitar player in a rock-band called "The No Smoking Orchestra" about which he did a documentary named *Super 8 Stories*¹⁸ actually represents his relation to music and how significant the music is in his work. The music typical of this band aim at simplicity and catchy tunes which are very acceptable to a variety of international audience who crave for simulation of a myth of Balkan savagery complemented with *new primitivism*

¹¹ Term "folklore" is used here to mark locally specific dance of the folk.

¹² This refers to west and central part of the Balkan Peninsula.

¹³ B. Vartkes, *Muzika kao primenjena umetnost*, Belgrade, University of Arts in Belgrade, 1981, p. 49.

¹⁴ B. Vartkes, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁵ For example, *Dive music is obligatory as a part of a stereotyped description of sevdah which is experienced in a bar*, G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, pp. 163, 166.

¹⁶ It is about songs with unknown author which are part of traditional heritage. In addition, Bregović has almost never mentioned resources or models he used for his work, which is why he was considered to be plagiarist very often.

¹⁷ In that way, Bregović gained popularity on the world-music scene, analogous to popularity of Kusturica and his *ethno*-movie. Furthermore, numerous similarities are present in their works: they are both inspired by Gypsies, they both use scenes of national celebrations, *sevdah*, fatal destiny of some heroes, happy endings. Interestingly enough, although Kusturica and Bregović (music amateurs) do not collaborate anymore, they both dedicated themselves to composing opera. Kusturica adopted the movie *Time of the Gypsies* and created an opera (unfortunately, I did not occupy myself with this opera because it is not available in region of Serbia at this moment), while Bregović produced *Carmen With a Happy Ending* (more about this opera in: V. Terzin, *Opera „Karmen sa srećnim krajem“: Romi kao inspiracija u stvaralaštvu Gorana Bregovića* (term paper in handwriting), Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2008).

¹⁸ More informations about this band are available at <http://thenosmokingorchestra.com/index.php>. Kusturica's son Stribor has his own band which composed music for the movie *Promise Me This*. More about Stribor's band at: <http://www.striborkusturica-thepoisoners.com/>.

which primarily implies a parody of commercial pseudo-folk music.¹⁹ Many songs from Kusturica's movies became great hits so that they are still present in repertoire of modern ensembles who perform at the celebrations across this part of Europe (the most popular are "Mesečina", "Pit bul terijer"). As the time passes the songs become labeled as 'folk songs' because of their familiarity with the audience which is achieved through distinguish charge of emotion and catchy melorhythmic pattern.²⁰ In these songs, folklore is not shown as a part of the past, but as the present, authentic, realistic expression of modern emotion and tradition,²¹ therefore, the songs represent very successful blend of local and universal (i.e. something wide-spread that longs for timelessness). That blend is called *ethno*. Besides music citations, the tone of 'authenticity' is achieved through the use of *aksak* rhythms (7/8 and 9/8), very popular 'two-part' rhythm,²² manner of female singing that comes from the Central Balkans (very distinguish is specific color of voice as well as melodic ornaments), drone, augmented second (which is very established association with the Orient), parallel thirds, band of *tambura* players and brass-orchestra with typical bar-manner of play, then traditional instruments (such as *duduk*), accordion, and even modern synthesizer. Very visible are the scenes of commanded musicians which point out their oppression,²³ and their specific social status. Tradition is also shown through the use of specific dialects while singing. This treatment of folk music and music which is similar to folk has certainly marked dance in the movie, especially having on mind that most of the scenes with the dance are complemented with the adequate music accompaniment.

The treatment of a dance will be represented in concordance with the chronology of the movies, and the special attention will be drawn to Kusturica's interpretation of the *ethno* in his movies. Afterwards, the descriptive analysis of dance events will be presented, accompanied with the presentation of a body, role of a dancer and structurally-semantic characteristics of dance scenes.

In Emir Kusturica's early work, the dance that resemble traditional dance is not present and that is one of the characteristics of that period works.

¹⁹ More about that at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Primitives.

²⁰ Movie soundtracks (which are the result of long-term collaborations) are best-sellers. More about significance of music in work of Emir Kusturica in: G.Gocić, op. cit. pp. 211-221.

²¹ M. Vitas, *Uloga folkloru i specifičnosti njegove upotrebe u stvaralaštvu rok-grupe 'Bijelo dugme'* (graduation thesis, in handwriting), Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2006, p. 61. This paper is about a band whose front-man was Bregović, so that conclusions can be applied here, too.

²² That inspired Emir Kusturica & "The No Smoking Orchestra" to name their album *The Unza Unza Time*, Komuna/Cabria/Barclay, Universal Music Company, 2000.

²³ That occurs in the behavior of a singer (or a dancer) at the stage and a special demand that the band should satisfy (for example, "Black Obelisk" in *Black Cat, White Cat*, the *Gypsies in Underground* etc.).

In his movie *When Father Was Away on Business*²⁴ the dance is not important for the narrative – during the movie, there are only two dance scenes (the first one is hardly noticeable), and in the foreground is the music. Nonetheless, in his other movies, the dance becomes important in many different ways.

In *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?*²⁵ the motif of a dance event is very important for the story, also the couple dance occurs which serves to show idyllic marital relation of the characters. Given Kusturica's recognizable approach to directing, the scene which shows the audience in a movie theatre that dance in their sits while watching erotic dance on a movie screen, is very interesting.

The filmmaker's obvious passion towards representation of Gypsies as members of specific culture starts with the movie *Time of the Gypsies*.²⁶ That passion will become one of the major characteristics of his poetic. The dance served to illustrate characters and the society, as well as the very well-known description of *sevdah* (lovesickness) and wedding. The most important scene for the story of the movie is the scene where invalid sister of the main character dances in dream of her brother and in that way she shows that she has recovered.

In the movie *Arizona Dream*²⁷ filmmaker's aptitude for describing events, characters and scenes in *ethno* style, becomes emphasized. This movie has no innovations in this field. The dance occurs to illustrate good mood and mutual attractiveness of dance couple, and also the dance in the scene is present.

In the movie *Underground*²⁸ the dance serves to characterize the most active characters, to show the period of communism and wedding celebration. But, for the story, the most important is a dance movement of the main characters accompanied with the song "Mesečina"²⁹ in the crucial moments of the movie. The dance of these three characters is logically presented in formation of a threesome which moves in circles along with camera, and that represent specific director's intervention. The circle and circling can be interpreted as a symbol of unbreakable connection between characters who circle at the same time around a special underground world so that they lose themselves in time.

²⁴ E. Kusturica, *When Father Was Away on Business*, Forum Sarajevo, 1981.

²⁵ E. Kusturica, *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?*, Belgrade, VANS, 2003.

²⁶ E. Kusturica, *Time of the Gypsies*, Belgrade, VANS, 2003.

²⁷ E. Kusturica, *Arizona Dream*, France, Constellation IJGC /Hachette /Première/ Canal +/ CNC, 1993.

²⁸ E. Kusturica, *Underground*, Belgrade, ITP Komuna, 2005.

²⁹ The same scene appears twice in a movie, and that is a unique case in considered movies.

*Black Cat, White Cat*³⁰ is the most interesting movie for this topic because the dance is present almost during the whole movie: the dance serves to illustrate the characters and Gypsies as well. They are represented as a social group that dances often and the dance (accompanied appropriately) describes characters individually. Their vivacity can be understood as a popular idea of Gypsies as very happy and lively nation despite their poverty (as a symbol of bad luck). Their motto is that life is a dance, and we should behave in compliance with that as long as it lasts. In that we can identify Russo's myth about noble savage.³¹ In accordance with that, the very movement is free.

In the movie *Life Is a Miracle*³² there is the impression that sometimes, dance is not linked to the narrative.³³ Besides that, whenever the dance occurs where it is expected, the description is caricatured.³⁴

*Promise Me This*³⁵ gives us very long and superfluous pictures of reaction to music and stereotyped descriptions of bordels and weddings that are not important for the story. According to a film script, scenes of striptease and *kolo* are very important. I guess that insisting on dance in these last movies appears because of willingness to visualize famous celebrations from the Balkans to foreign audience.³⁶

In rare cases some dances are named. That is the case with the dance *kazachok* in the movie *Black Cat, White Cat*: the protagonists Dadan and his security named the activity of kicking under the table between them and Dadan's opponents, as *kazachok*. In relation to that, the same protagonist in a moment misunderstands the movement of grandmother's hand as a manner of a dance, while for her, that movement symbolizes the manner in which Dadan will get his punishment.³⁷

³⁰ E. Kusturica, *Black Cat, White Cat*, Belgrade, ITP Komuna, 2005.

³¹ *The Gypsies are very important for Kusturica's work. They do not have their homeland (many people say the same about Kusturica). Even when he is collaborating with the Serbs, he tends to present them as the Gypsies. The best example of that is his latest movie Promise Me This.*

³² E. Kusturica, *Life Is a Miracle*, Belgrade, Rasta International – METRO FILM, 2005.

³³ *For example, in the first and last dance scene. On the other hand, going hunting is very important for the story, but the dance scene is superfluous.*

³⁴ *In relation to the scenes of performance and send-off.*

³⁵ E. Kusturica, *Promise Me This*, Belgrade, 2008.

³⁶ *The best example of anthropological outsider interpretation of music and the life of Gypsies in time of war which is presented as wild, authentic, exotic and filled with politics, is represented in the book M. van de Port, Gypsies, Wars & Other Instances of the Wild – Civilisation and Its Discontents in a Serbian Town, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1998.*

³⁷ *Along with already mentioned dances and traces of a dance, rhythmic synchronized movement of three characters occur in movie Promise Me This. That movement can not be considered as a dance movement, since it was not inspired by music. Having considered the whole movie frame, it is more likely that origin of that movement can be traced to comic books.*

The descriptions of gatherings and celebrations where the dance is present are distinguishable in Kusturica's work. The most interesting scenes are the wedding scenes. The wedding occurs in almost all movies except *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?* and *Life Is a Miracle*, though, in the latter one there is ideologically similar scene of send-off. Therefore, that scene is considered as a compensation for a wedding. Through physical reaction to music, the group shows joy and in that way, the real association to that event is achieved. Couple dance, individual dance in a group, and free interpretation of *kolo*³⁸ formation and at the last time very popular so-called *train* occur.³⁹ In the movie *Black Cat, White Cat* the drama between the main characters is getting solved through a dance in the wedding.⁴⁰ The happy ending of this movie (as well as *Underground* and *Promise Me This*) is presented through a dance of all characters.

Apart from the wedding, the scenes of dance event occur especially in *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?*. In this movie, members of young generation of a small town are the participants in that socially very important event, in which they show their affiliation to a group, their status and where they communicate with each other.

Speaking about the dance events, there is a question about location for dance. Typical locations are bars in which often exists dichotomy performer-observer, but there are also some other in-door and out-door spaces. Having minded the locations of fabula, it's noticeable that all Kusturica's movies are shifted on periphery of modern civilization, and that is tool to effect little isolated community which is recognizable to narrower international public like escapist ideal of 'domestic'.

It's known that Kusturica often employs native actors which usually act themselves, or professional actors for roles which shown like most appropriated to them.⁴¹ In that actors' assumption acting method is very similar with

³⁸ The term *kolo* (or its synonym *oro*) in Serbian literature implies five different ideas: circular formation, a group of people dancing, dance event, the type of a dance in circular shape performed while accompanied by specific melody, and a type of a dance in circular shape with specific melodious, structural, and stylistic characteristics, that represents some ethnic group. These terms are common in the Balkans region and other ex-Yugoslav republics. More about that in: O. Mladenović, *Kolo u južnih Slovena, Belgrade, Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, 1973*; S. Rakočević, "Kolo in Vojvodina: Traditional Dance as a Network of Different Meaning", *Music & Network, Belgrade, University of Arts – Faculty of Music, 2005*, pp. 257-273.

³⁹ The train is a formation characterized by a line of dancers arranged one after another. They are usually connected while holding on to one another's shoulders. The most common line of path that forms during the dance is winding line.

⁴⁰ *Afrodita* and *Zare* do not dance at their wedding because they are not willing to marry each other, though everyone expects a dance. While other people are dancing, disappointed *Ida* dances for *Zare* while he draws attention of everyone to his dance in order to make possible for *Afrodita* to escape. Afterwards, there is a wedding of real bride and bride-groom while guests express their joy through dance.

⁴¹ G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-130.

natural behavior, and with that is longing for authenticity even in division of roles.⁴² His actors separately and according to social position can be considered for marginal people, but director treats them like special in social structure – different, ridicules, but at the same time honored.⁴³ In the movies are promoted their amateur's skills which are typical for 'Balkans' characters and far from performing perfection,⁴⁴ and there is also dancing. In fact, function of dancing in his movies is usually directed on expression of idea of *dancing man (character)*, so the following classification on dancing types will be mostly supported by that.

Connected with that, the body is usually shown like free, so that is also like that in movement initiated with music: energy of the character is manifesting using optional pattern. Dancing body, especially female, in Kusturica's movies is often treated like observation object, mostly exposed on scene (especially in erotic dance scenes). In presentations of couple dance, bodies of dancers usually show mutually attraction. There is also the idea of body like the metaphor of the life, because invalid bodies of some characters in imagination became able for normal functions, which exactly symbolize the dance.⁴⁵ In general, most active part of the body in considered movies is certainly upper (hands, and then hips for women), but often there is impression that the whole body is active, especially when it has to symbolize wantonness.

Now, it will be shown classification of dances from movies according to their structural-semantic characteristics, which means number and gender of performers, and also dance movement which they perform in particular context. Dance types which will be pointed, in movie scenes can appear together, and considering the criteria, that is expected.

In all Kusturica's movies most frequent dancing scenes are those in which solo dancers, separately or in the group, improvised move with music accompaniment. It's noticeable that characters often with their dance manifest 'energy excess' and dance for they own, usually for showing good mood, and sometimes contrary: dance seems to have therapeutic effect for sad characters. This is way of dance of both sexes and all statures (in dancing of the younger people sometimes is recognizable influence of the popular mass-media performers). Like it's said, dance often is not connected with fabula, so its primary function is to characterize the performer (one, or group of them).

⁴² G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁴³ G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁴⁴ G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-103. This is related mostly with music and acting skills.

⁴⁵ It is shown in dancing scenes of Perhan's sister (*Time of the Gypsies*) and Natalija's brother (*Underground*). Very interesting is the fact that director engaged in both cases controversial Davor Dujmović: in *Time of the Gypsies* he played Perhan, and in *Underground* he was interpretator of Natalija's brother character.

Connected with former, there are also some types of solo improvised dance, but they will be specially considered because of their context. One of block scenes is popular notion of *sevdah*, where the main character using dance (with accompanying elements) experiences catharsis.⁴⁶ It is also part of established notion about Gypsies life and Balkans 'macho men'. But, in some rare cases, women also can behave like that when strong emotions, especially sorrow, show by the dance with their weaker body, which is otherwise interpreted like seductive.⁴⁷

Another type of solo⁴⁸ dance is women erotic dance.⁴⁹ On the occasion of this, female character exposes her body and dancing skill to the male views. Centre of movement is mostly in upper part of body (sometimes are used just not striking movements accompanied by music, and sometimes there is even striptease). Exposition is often emphasized by performing in front of the bigger public,⁵⁰ which implies with more complicated movements.

By the way, dancing on scene is very often in Kusturica's movies and doesn't necessarily have to be erotized, and it can be even minor,⁵¹ but it always implies on dichotomy performer – observer, where are the both sides privileged comparing to another in special way: performer is superior with his attractiveness, while the observer is after all person who has to make decision about interesting of dance and performance in general.

Describing dance like sadness expression, it comes to the couple dance accompanied by the sad song.⁵² Although the couple dance in almost all cases has another connotation, I think that its function in movies *When Father Was Away on Business* and *Life Is a Miracle* to contrast mentioned presentations of good mood with its calmness, simplicity ('rigidness') and fixed steps pattern and behavior during the dance. More frequent couple dances can be interpreted like sign of mutually sexual attraction of partners, who show their closeness by dance act, which is representation of idyllic relationship.⁵³ Dance

⁴⁶ For example in *Time of the Gypsies* (similar in *When Father Was Away on Business*, but less peculiar). It is similar behavior of men in movies *Underground*, *Black Cat*, *White Cat* and *Promise Me This* – their unrestrained life in pictured with dance like that.

⁴⁷ Natalija in *Underground* and *Ida* in *Black Cat*, *White Cat*.

⁴⁸ Atypical cases when there are dancing in group exist in: *Underground*, *Black Cat*, *White Cat*, *Life Is a Miracle*, *Promise Me This*.

⁴⁹ *Underground*, *Black Cat*, *White Cat*, *Life Is a Miracle*, *Promise Me This*.

⁵⁰ *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?*, *Time of the Gypsies* (here it is part of *sevdah* show), *Underground*, *Black Cat*, *White Cat* and *Promise Me This*.

⁵¹ *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?*, *When Father Was Away on Business*, *Arizona Dream*, *Life Is a Miracle*, *Promise Me This*.

⁵² *Sorrow* is 'sounded' by minor tonality and slow tempo.

⁵³ *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?*, *When Father Was Away on Business*, *Arizona Dream*, *Underground*, *Black Cat*, *White Cat* and *Promise Me This*.

pattern is not recognizable, but couple dance is identified by holding and moving of partners. Example from *Black Cat, White Cat* is unique because of dancing with waltz music accompaniment, except noticed associations, has also meaning caricatured 'Western' ideal of well-situated, 'ordered' life of middle class.⁵⁴

Unique example of invented choreography (although very simple and again hardly perceptible),⁵⁵ is dance of pioneer group in movies *Underground* and *Life Is a Miracle*, which represent period in history of Yugoslavia (which was until recent times only recognized for homeland, i.e. land of origin by nostalgic Kusturica) when the children were really dancing like that during the performance which was organized in honor of regime. They are moving with aim to promote that time ideology of brotherhood and union through equality of all participants, which like some instruments with simple kinetic pattern contribute to forming network of ideological symbols, about what speak uniforms and specific music (fanfare and simple melody with march rhythm), too. Differently from other movies in which kinetic patterns are optional and individual, here they are invented for whole group of performers.

Differently from previous examples which, we can say, represent universal dance patterns, the most direct association to the traditional dance from Balkans is manifested through appearance of *kolo*.⁵⁶ In fact, *kolo* is used like illustration for some special and cheerful situation which contents that dancing as typical, such as wedding party. In this situation, there is no some recognizable movement pattern, because the more important thing is connecting of larger number of dancers with hands in highness of shoulders in very liberal interpretation of the circle formation, with specific music accompaniment. For this representation isn't important even typical moving of dancers in certain direction, but only emphasized rhythmical reaction by legs moving (mostly in one spot). So, Kusturica uses *kolo* like direct metaphor of traditional culture, and on *kolo* itself he refers not by step pattern, but with group of dancers in specific formation. Although on the beginning of this research I expected contrary, in Kusturica's cinema opus there is no representative *kolo* dancing, i.e. continuing performing of simple, but recognizable step patterns in formation of

⁵⁴ *Waltz dancing on ship is used to show difference between Gypsies and members of rich class, and dancing like that on wedding party shows wish of Gypsies for social prosperity and identifying with higher rank. Except that, Matko parodies waltz by dancing with ice, because it use to him like mask for doing some works for which other people shouldn't know.*

⁵⁵ *In Arizona Dream there is example of thoughtful scene movement in use to describe acting character, but because it is completely minor and lonely case, it isn't deeply considered here.*

⁵⁶ *Time of the Gypsies, Promise Me This.*

semi or closed circle.

Considering that presence of dance usually has describing character or society function, there are even musical-dancing leitmotifs for some roles. These are usually wanton characters, so their dance is also like that. Dance sometimes has metaphorical meaning, because it shows actors' relationships, and substance and eruption of their emotional conditions which aren't explained in narrative or photography. Also, director used dance to show some occasions for which it is immanent, such as wedding party, and usually it is even more important to him to show dancers than their dance. Often dance has secondary meaning and function in frame and in the whole movie. Connected with function and meaning of a dance, it's interesting that typical in Kusturica's creativity is scene of flying and levitation, what is in literature considered to be symbol of escapism (eventually of falling in love).⁵⁷ According to this, maybe it can be questioned how much dance has connection with this interpretation, because the movements are often rapid, strong and comprise larger space, so there is levitation impression.

Kusturica became celebrity in professional circles too because of his brilliant ideas and their realization which is often very complex, so in movie can be parallelly followed several levels, even in only one scene. Considering this stratification, it logically exists in dancing scenes: there are always detailed scenography and costume,⁵⁸ what is noted by camera in way of good photography effect, even when it is moving. In fact, in his focus are scenes, which accented visual⁵⁹ and emotional side of movie, while story and dialogs are in second plan, although there are good scenarios.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, as it's said, music also has very important place in essence of the movie, so dances that exist there have function to follow music and its functionality.

After all considerations I can summarize basics of Kusturica's treatment of dance and its traditionality. In first two movies, that represent special stadium of Kusturica's opus (*pre-ethno* stadium), dancing hasn't peculiar function and there is no association on traditional folk dance. But, in other movies director is turning to showing different traditional visual and sound motifs, given through his view. On example of dancing elements it can be noticed that Kusturica uses simple and direct associations, which further superstructures to accomplish imaginary dance. Its function is to show some characters and situa-

⁵⁷ G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-174.

⁵⁸ Some critics say – to much.

⁵⁹ Kusturica's connection with ethno is also presented in large influence of naïve painting on his opus (especially of Ivan Generalić). G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

⁶⁰ About Kusturica's technical manners that have very deliberate base more in: G. Gocić, *op. cit.*, pp. 264, 281-283, 287-289. Connected with upper, in spite of accent on visual, spatial side (opposite of temporal, audio) and fullness in scene, movies aren't 'slow', and they are very extended.

tions. Collective dancing, which is present in greater number of Kusturica's movies, is closest to conception of 'folk' dance because it shows group from some cultural stratum in common reaction on music, and mass affirms that, even when there is a group of unconnected dancers who dance improvised pattern. This is also the most authentic dance scene. Director's personal interpretation of traditional dance in nontraditional movie medium has also to show his mentioned inclinations to individual *ethno* concept, like some un-temporal and un-spatial category, and that's the way how to promote his personal ideological attitudes.

In the end I need to comment and give some critical view on authenticity, i.e. stylization of dances in movies, and also to their context. Knowing for movies success and relative small appearances of dances, it seems to be ungrateful duty for ethnochoreologist. I have to note that there is no any clear scene of traditional dance, and that there were a lot of model associations on it. But, these dances are successfully stylized considering Kusturica's idea of *folk* and things he wanted to show with that. Except this, it's noticeable that dancing sometimes has character of overreacting actions without constructive function considering movie narrative and scene logic. Dancing movements used for describing emotions of the particular characters are also often caricatured. Watching director's opus and his interpretation of Balkans and tradition, we should always know that his public is primarily people, who are not from Balkans, what implies on Kusturica's caricaturing of authentic shows and their adaptation to European public expectations. It is very important to know that they observe Balkan-crossroad like exotic,⁶¹ but not in complete sense (like it is, for example, Chad): it is not completely alien and that is the reason why they can (and want) identify themselves with Balkans "wildness". Nevertheless, Kusturica's opus is at any rate intriguing for ethnochoreology too, because dancing is very often, and special problematic is director's relation to the concept of tradition.

According to the symposium theme, I would like to tell something about presence of tradition, transmission and revival on the case of dances in Kusturica's cinema movies. If tradition is observed like assemblage of values that one rural community orally transmitted for a long time, it can be affirmed that in considered examples it isn't present at all, or if it existed, it hasn't get revival. But, if dances on movie are observed related with today non-urban practice on Balkans, it's noticeable that Kusturica in his artistic interpretation keeps some dance universalities, such as, for example, manifesting emotions

⁶¹ *Excellent example for this is presentation of Trumpet Festival in Guča among Western Europe public.*

with rhythmical movement.⁶² From that view, transition can be understood not just like changing through time, but through medium change (which is non-traditional). In fact, Kusturica moves authentic contemporary on movie screen and adapts it according to economic-political demands of audience. Although start supposition was that Kusturica, known by his essentially romantic inspiration with local, 'untouched' cultures and his alter-globalistic convictions, will stress clear quotations from some culture (even reconstruct something from the past), he uses in his movies simulacra and universal human symbols, emotions, and in the end – movements. This is typical creative work for postmodern artist, so something that should be traditional in fact is very artificial, even expressionistically over-accented. But, there is also question about connection with certain tradition: something represented on movie is familiar with everyone, it is far away from centre and urban rush, but we don't know where exactly it is located. That's the reason why his opus is intriguing for Western Europe⁶³ – he shows everything with universal and marked symbols because he wants other to comprehend Balkans and Gypsy mentality,⁶⁴ and precisely, construct it like exotic. Except he's considered to be interpreter of that, Kusturica with his opus has also huge influence on creating of new cultural patterns which are in larger public accepted like authentic.

⁶² *Some scientists had recognized in dancing like this even origin of dance (see: C. Sachs, World History of the Dance, London, 1938).*

⁶³ *Author himself emphasis that he is more popular there than in Serbia. After all, his financial sources are the biggest there, just like his prizes. Also, Kusturica doesn't have animosity for Northern American market, because it's too commercial for his taste.*

⁶⁴ *Both are 'unperceivable' in some way.*