

Szín – játék – költészet

Tanulmányok a nyolcvanéves Kilián István tiszteletére

Szerkesztette

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ANNA REGLIŃSKA-JEMIOŁ

*Terpsichore at the Jesuit stage – a glance in the past,
a glimpse of the future*

Le Ballet ne représentant que par les figures et les mouvemens; quand le personnage paroît une seconde fois, il n'exprime rien de nouveau quant à la figure, et il faut que les mouvemens soient diversifiez, que l'on puisse entendre ce qu'il représente de nouveau. Il n'en est pas de même [sic] dans la Tragédie, où l'intrigue se mène et se conduit par les paroles et la diction, aussi bien que par l'action.

Claude François Ménéstrier, *Des Ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre* (1682)

Much has been written for and against Jesuits. Whatever judgment we would make – we should recognize the importance of their contribution to the European culture, also in the field of theatre and dance. First there is the taste of an era, its scale of values set by particular society that incline it, in one period, to admire formal structure; in another to care more for emotional expression. Trends are incited by social and political conditions – as is true of all other arts.¹

The history of the art of dancing not only goes a long way back, but also seems to be developed in the slightly different way than in European area. Finally, as in Europe ballet became a crucial element of theatrical life, and is a significant genre in the tradition of the drama.

The history of ballet is dominant in dance in modern Europe culture, i.e., from the Renaissance on, particularly as concerns the stage, but also in social dancing down far into the 19th century, and reflexively in traditional folkdance. In Europe in the course of the Renaissance theatrical revival, the academic system of dance and the dance spectacle known as ballet emerged by degrees, to find definitive and permanent establishment in the second half of the 16th century, with which time

¹ *Dance as a Theatre Art. Source readings in dance history from 1581 to the present*, ed. by SJ COHEN, New York, 1974, 2; Also W. HILTON, *Dance of Court and Theater: The French Noble Style 1690–1725*, Princeton, 1981; S.L. FOSTER, *Choreographing History*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1995; S.R. COHEN, *Art, Dance, and the Body In French Culture of the Ancien Régime*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

its iconography also begins. By the end of the 16th century ballet prints were being issued in many European capitals and the works are continuously from then on. The French sequence is the richest and most unbroken. But central Europe (the Germanies, Poland, Moravia, etc.) offers an interesting and fairly consecutive line of works.²

Theatrical performances have always played an important role in spreading Jesuit messages. Ballet, in particular, is a crucial element of theatrical life, and is a significant genre in the tradition of the drama. But as an independent art form, dance itself is the field which mostly clearly shows the individuality and uniqueness of the Jesuit stage. Terpsichore was intended not only to entertain, but was perceived as a perfect tool for the cultivation of higher values (such as science, faith, patriotism, and morality), or for propagating a specific model of behaviour.³ We can observe this in all stages of the development of the art of dance – from ceremonial rituals, through short (usually allegorical) choreographic interludes, such as somersaults and leaps, and full pantomimes or dumb-shows, to completely independent ballets with plot and action.

School theatre in Poland, mostly in Jesuit centres, has a two hundred year history, and is a major chapter in the story of the Old Polish theatre. It has been claimed that different convents established school theatre in about 80 places. Jesuit stage proved to have the broadest social influence and operated in a permanent and rhythmic manner in the years 1568–1773.⁴

From the late sixteenth century, and throughout the seventeenth, new fashions emerged and a rich tradition of social and theatrical dancing was established.⁵ Ballets the latter appeared in college theatres together with theatrical reform and are undoubtedly a novelty in the theatrical repertoire of the middle of the 18th century. Theatrical dancing had become technically more sophisticated and challenging, and noble amateurs completely disappeared from the stage, which became the exclusive territory of professional dancers.

² G. CHAFFEE, *Iconography of dance* = A. CHUJOY, *The dance encyclopaedia*, New York, 1949, 268. See also A. REGLINSKA-JEMIOŁ, «*La Compagnie des danseurs de Sa Majesté le Roi*» or a few remarks on the beginning of Polish ballet, "Theatre et Drame Musical" issue 2004/3–4, 65–68.

³ For instance, Louis de Cahusac, in his ambitious *Le Danse ancienne et moderne* of 1754, describes Portuguese *ballet ambulatoire* from 1610. In this huge Jesuit event on the occasion of Ignace de Loyola's beatification, there were present ambassadors from different countries and the most interesting – African platform with dancing children dressed up as monkeys and parrots. L. de CAHUSAC, *Le Danse ancienne et moderne*, Paris, 1754, vol. 2, 121–125. More details: J. BONNET, *Historie Générale de la Danse, sacrée et prophane; ses progrès & ses révolutions, depuis son origine jusqu'à présent. Avec un supplément de l'histoire de la musique, & le paralele de la peinture & de la poésie ...*, Paris, 1724.

⁴ The history of school theatre may be divided into periods before and after the 1740s, when the educational system was reformed. The first college opened in Braniewo in 1565, which was the beginning of the history of Polish Jesuit theatre. However, the oldest records come from the year 1566 when staging was included in the octave of Corpus Christi in Pultusk. L. SIMON, *Dykcjonarz teatrow polskich czynnych od czasow najdawniejszych do roku 1863*, Warszawa, 1935, VI.

⁵ One of the best-known and most influential examples is the French *ballet de cour*, a theatrical form in which the king and court aristocracy directly participated as performers.

It was said that: *There is no one like the Jesuits for doing pirouettes*. In France three of the ballet masters – Beauchamps, Pécour, and Dupré – worked for the Jesuits and were directors of the Royal Academy, which later became the Paris Opéra. Dance – together with fencing and horse riding – was taught as a significant component of the chivalric and ‘martial’ arts, through which the European nobility was trained in Jesuit colleges. Although it did not belong to the Jesuit pedagogic curriculum, the acculturation of elite males into the dominant social skills and etiquette was not just an optional extra: it was an important component of their social know-how, an art at which amateurs, from kings downwards, could achieve exceptional style and gain notice⁶.

The final version of *Ratio Studiorum* (1599)⁷ became the basis for the rules of functioning schools and theatres. It allowed to present tragedies and comedies, but infrequent and in Latin, with no feminine roles. However, luckily for dance, these strict rules for the condition of performances were rarely obeyed in France. (“As there were the Jesuit educational rules from Rome, the French interpretation of them – and their Parisian interpretation!”)⁸.

⁶ Within this general framework, a major role was played by the Jesuits, not only because of careful initial planning, but also due to subsequent adaptation and the ability to identify key trends in European culture and society. About the French Jesuit dance and theatre compare: E. BOYSSE, *Le Théâtre des jésuites*, Paris, 1880; *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, ed. Par A. BACKER, A. CARAYON, C. SOMMERVOGEL, t. 1–11, Bruxelles-Paris, 1890–1932, or G. EMOND, *L’Histoire du Collège de Louis-le-Grand, ancien collège des jésuites à Paris, depuis sa fondation jusqu’en 1830*, Paris, 1845. Kurt Wolfgang DROZD in his book *Schul- und Ordentheater am Collegium S.J. Klagenfurt (1604–1773)* gives us some examples of German ballets. About the role of dance at Slovak Jesuit Colleges: L. KAČIČ, *Die Musik der Jesuitendramen in der Slowakei (1600–1773)*. (*Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Provincia Austriae S.J.*), [w:] *Ethnologische, historische und systematische Musikwissenschaft* (Oskár Elsček zum 65. Geburtstag), hrsg. Von F. FÖDERMAYR und L. BURLAS, Bratislava, 1998. More: V. KATALINIĆ, *Von Jesuiten zu Franziskanern: Kroatische geistliche Musikkultur im 18. Jahrhundert = Musik der geistlichen Orden in Mitteleuropa zwischen Tridentinum und Josephinismus*, ed. by L. KAČIČ, Bratislava, 1997, 95–102. About Hungarian stages: Á. GUPCSÓ, *Musiktheater-Aufführungen an Jesuiten- und Piaristenschulen im Ungarn des 18. Jahrhunderts*, „*Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*“, t. 38, 1997/3–4, 315–344. Also J.W. O’MALLEY SJ, G.A. BAILEY, G. SALE, *The Jesuits and the Arts, 1540–1773*, Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2005; and *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, University of Toronto Press, 2006.

⁷ The term *Ratio Studiorum* is an abbreviation of the official title, *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesu*, i.e., *Method and System of the Studies of the Society of Jesus*. This is The Constitutions of the Society from the beginning enumerated among the primary objects of the Society: instructing youth in colleges, or lecturing on philosophy and theology in the universities. Somehow that term is used to designate the educational system of the Jesuits.

⁸ “Comedy was played in French by 1699, and by 1704 at the latest, French tragedy was being acted. Feminine characters were cast in most years, and by 1650 danced intermedes with French songs and words were delighting the college’s cosmopolitan audience.” J. ROCK, *Terpsichore at Louis-le-Grand. Baroque Dance on the Jesuit Stage in Paris*, Saint Louis, 1996, „Series 3: Original Studies Composed in English”, nr. 13, 12. Similarly, their *rationes studiorum* contained nothing about dancing classes. Their actual pedagogic practice, though, had to deal, on one hand, with the task of educating the European nobility in the art of manners as well as in literacy and religion; and on the other hand, with the need to exploit the most updated and effective means of propaganda in the age of the emergence of absolute monarchies. As a result, Jesuit colleges and fathers were engaged in promotion of dance in early modern Europe. Compare: F. de DAINVILLE SJ, *Decoration*

The Jesuit college theatre had both religious-moralizing goals and purely didactic goals.⁹ In the 17th century, nobles and future intellectuals were mostly educated in the Jesuit colleges, where their aesthetical orientation and artistic tastes were formed. At the same time, the school theatre, like the literary models for drama writers and theoreticians, remained based on the classics. At first, they staged only Latin dramas intertwined with Polish interludes, but by the middle of the 18th century they mainly used the vernacular. At that time the major purpose of the school theatre was not only to popularize the modernized catechism but also to search for a new model of the hero (whose features had to be supportive of the good citizenship education program). I want to consider how dance, and ballet in particular, highlights the unique nature of school theatre against the background of the theatrical history of the 18th century. This will assist us to better understand the role played by the Jesuit college ballets in the history of theatre dance and in the history of the relationship between Christian theology and the performing arts.

Within this general framework, Jesuit pedagogic practice, though, wished to deal, on one hand, with the task of educating the nobility in the art of manners (as well as in literacy) and on the other hand, with the need to exploit the most updated and effective means of propaganda. The two different functions that I have just mentioned called for the adoption and exploitation of two types of dance, *social* and *theatrical*.

The clergy had left some theoretical works that appeared fundamental for further research into the history of Terpsichore's art. Jesuit writers were active in justifying ballet against its opponents, both Catholic and Protestant. The first ballet historian was the Jesuit, Claude François Ménéstrier, who wrote a definitive treatise on dance, *Des Ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre* (1682). Between 1658 and 1760, at least ten books and treatises were published in France on the history and theory of theatrical dancing. Five out of these ten works were by Jesuits from the College Louis-le-Grand. Four of the remaining five books were reviewed by the Jesuits in their influential journal *Les Memoires de Trévoux*. There were also many technical books by dancing masters, as well as collections of new dances, most of them social. More general treatises about theatre, and also against theatre were also being written.¹⁰

Besides some clergy such as: Grzegorz Cudotwórca, who had probably introduced the dance into the church formal ceremonies in the 3rd century, there were opponents who

théâtrale dans le collèges des jésuites au XVIIe siècle, „Revue d' Histoire du Théâtre” 1951, nr. 4; F. de DAINVILLE SJ, *Allégorie et actualité sur les tréteaux des jésuites*, „Dramaturgie et Société” 1967, v. 1; E.J. DEVLIN SJ, *Music and Choreography on the Late Humanist Jesuit Stage*, „The New Laurel Review” 1972, nr. 2, and A. ARCANGELI, *The ballroom and the stage: The dance repertoire of the Society of Jesus = I gesuiti e la Ratio Studiorum*, ed. M. HINZ, R. RIGHI, D. ZARDIN, Rome, 2004.

⁹ Social functions might also be considered, as the open-air school theatre all over the country was becoming the carrier of the theatrical culture among the lower social classes. Moreover, there were sometimes representatives of the rabble present in the audience that attended the nobility's theatre. J. POPLATEK, *Studia z dziejow jezuickiego teatru szkolnego w Polsce*, Wroclaw, 1957, 13–17.

¹⁰ For instance Jehan TABOUROT, the canon, who wrote a work of great importance entitled *Orchésographie* (1589). One of the lesser-known anti-theatre books is *New Reflections on the Poetic Art*, written in 1668 by the Oratorian priest, Bernard LAMY. The author was opposed to imaginative art forms as morally dangerous. J. ROCK, *Terpsichore ...*, 17. More: T.C. BLANNING, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660–1789*, Oxford University Press, 2002.

treated the art of Terpsichore as the remains of pagan cult dances.¹¹ General Claudio Acquaviva blamed the Polish Jesuits who asked him to introduce dancing classes in schools in 1584. (This was finally accomplished in the middle of the 18th century¹²). The other side of the question was represented by the Jesuit Joseph Jouvancy, a dramatist and teacher of rhetoric at Louis-le-Grand, who included a section on correct tragedy and theatre practices in his work *Ratio Discendi et Docendi* (1685).

One of the most respected theoreticians of Polish drama (and also the author of the ballet *Silviludia*), Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski expressed his opinion about Terpsichore forcefully stating: "(...) directions connected with dancing are not allowed to be given as they might seem to be a joke".¹³ The great progress of Terpsichore is indicated by its presence in the school curriculum at Colleges for Noblemen. This is how Hugo Kołłątaj evaluated the level of teaching:

The Physical Education of young people in boarding schools had to conform to both fashion and education. Students being educated there were participating in the dancing classes as well as in fencing and horse-riding. There had to be highly qualified masters to teach dancing and fencing. The young started dancing the minuet like the young from Paris, the mazurkas and the Polish cossacks became so beautiful that became to dominate the English dances (...).¹⁴

At the annual display in the Jesuit Collage in Vilnius in 1756, the programme included a *minuet*, a *lively dance*, *rigaudons*, *passepieds*, *Bavarian* and *Czech* dances. *The Acts of the Warsaw Collegium Nobilium* stated that "from the first to the third class – the physical exercises in groups are: *dancing*, *fencing*".¹⁵ The great interest in the theory of ballet was shown during one of the student performances in Vilnius, where not only the answer to the question "What is ballet?" had been eventually discovered, but the history of ballet had also been outlined.¹⁶

¹¹ J. REY, *Taniec. Jego rozwój i formy*, transl. I. TURSKA, Warszawa, 1959, 61–64.

¹² J. POPLATEK, *Studia...*, 34–35.

¹³ M. K. SARBIEWSKI, *O poezji doskonałej, czyli Wergiliusz i Homer (De perfecta poesi, sive Vergilius et Homerus)*, transl. M. PLEZIA, ed. by S. SKIMINA, Wrocław, 1954, 235. Compare K.M. SARBIEWSKI, *Silviludia*, Wilno. 1757. (from M. BETTINI, *Ludovicus, tragicum silviludium*, 1622).

¹⁴ H. KOŁŁĄTAJ, *Pamiętniki historyczne do objaśnienia dziejów mego czasu służące* = J. PROSNAK, *Kultura muzyczna Warszawy XVIII wieku*, Krakow, 1955, 43.

¹⁵ St. KONARSKI, *Ustawy szkolne (Przepisy Wizytacji Apostolskiej dla Collegium Nobilium)* = J. PROSNAK, *Kultura muzyczna...*, 45–46. Dancing was also taught at girls' boarding schools. Klementyna Hoffmanowa wrote about Mrs. Strumle's boarding school (founded in Warsaw in 1750), "I have been staying at Madam Strumle's well-known boarding school since yesterday I have a teacher of French and German languages, a teacher of dancing and drawing, of embroidery and music".

¹⁶ *Dowód rocznego postępu uczniów przy Imperatorskim Wilenskim Uniwersytecie... na popisach roku 1810 okazan*, Vilnius, 1810. Also: *Dowód postępu uczynionego w naukach i roznych umiejętnościach od WW. Ichmosc PP. Baronow Karola i Jana z Ludynckauzu Wolffow przez trzyletnie cwiczenie się w Konwikcie Wilenskim Societatis Jesu przypisany WW. Ichmosciom Panom Baronom Ich Rodzicom*, [without date]; *Dowód rocznego cwiczenia się w roznych umiejętnościach i językach [...] Kawalerow uczących się in Collegio Nobilium Societatis Jesu w Wilnie dany roku 1766 d. [?] julii*, Wilno,

In short, dance created a certain stylized and disciplined mode of conduct that marked the educated person. Dance offered pleasure and sociability amidst the rigid and often tedious etiquette of the court. Such performances raised the prestige of the court celebrations and enhanced theatrical events, and dance ultimately produced a space for traditional dance forms.

Dance was used to offset timidity and to restore confidence. To know how walk gracefully and handle body effectively. The skill to dance was considered as the valuable merit and it could guarantee success not only on the parquet, but also in the field of professional career. Moreover, the art of muse Terpsichore was the common element which played a significant part in the life of the high society.¹⁷

Tacjana Wysocka describes the staging of the 18th century drama *Praeda Tartari seu Didactus de Vellade* which contained a short ballet interlude of mountaineer's dances and dances with "arrows".¹⁸ Furthermore, the scholar Pauli Zegota recollected the performance to honour Stanislaw Leszczynski at the Calvinist College, where a ballet was danced by thirteen students, wearing knight's costumes, holding cutlasses in one hand and shields in the other. The letters on the shields were gradually uncovered to make statements such as: DOMUS LESCINA (the Leszczynski Family); OMNIS ES LUCIDA (the whole Family is holy); SIS COLUMNNA DEI (Let be the support of the religion); MANE SIDUS LOCI (Be the star of the place) and finally I SCANDE SOLIUM (Go and ascend the throne).¹⁹

"Somersaults" – short, allegorical interludes (for example: desperate, symbolic, religious, satirical or triumphal) – were the only acceptable mode of dancing in the old type of dramas. "Somersaults" functioned as short, allegorical interludes (symbolising, for example, desperation, religious feeling, satire or triumph) – were the only acceptable mode of dancing in the old type of dramas. In the 17th century Terpsichore found a place in the interludes, the action of which was often limited to dancing episodes only (examples

1766; *Dowod rocznego postepku z retoryki, poetyki, ekonomiki, wiadomosci o naukach, kunsztach i ziemioslach przez uczniow szkoły czwartej w Sali publicznej Akademii Wilenskiej*, Wilno, 1781.

¹⁷ Dancing education usually started at the age of five or six and was very intensive training, the final effect of which was deftness while dancing, confidence of movements, loose posture, and certain physical comfort during communication with high society. Dance could guarantee successful celebrations. Thus, it played a crucial role in both court life and the noble one. The nobleman at the ball acted as the representative of the particular social class he belonged to. See also J. ŁOTMAN, *Biesiedy o russkoj kulturie. Byt i tradicii russkogo dworianstwa (XVIII – naczalo XIX wieka)*, transl. by B. ŻYŁKO, Gdansk, 1999.

¹⁸ T. WYSOCKA, *Dzieje baletu*, Warszawa, 1970, 366.

¹⁹ P. ZEGOTA, *Teatr i muzyka w Polsce*, Krakow, 1895. Manuscript BJ., Krakow, 5400, 222. Also K. WOJCICKI, *Teatr starozytny w Polsce*, t. 1, Warszawa, 1841. The performance is analogical to the contemporary ideas of Italian and French ballet masters, who used to be fond of using names of the people to honor. This also demonstrates the influence of Italian and French ballet on Polish choreography. Apart from the frequent presence of Terpsichore at the Jesuit Colleges, ballet was also produced at the theatre of the Piarist Fathers. The *Bibliography of the Old Polish Drama* Wladyslaw KOROTAJ lists about 264 choreographic interludes (mainly decorative somersaults or leaps), performed in till the year 1765. A complete ballet was staged only once; the tragedy *Merop* was performed at the Collegium Nobilium in Warsaw in 1755.

of such balletic-pantomimical kinds of presentation are recorded in dramas such as *The Courtiers Were Taken for Hunters and Sailors*²⁰).

Somersaults could represent not only a cheerful atmosphere and the joy of playing, but also reflect the inner life of the hero. For instance, a “mortal leap” would be danced in front of a suicidal person. They belonged specifically to the compositions, and had clear characteristics accented by the dancing groups – mountaineer’s leaps, Persian, Danish and mimes. So the function of dancing was still only to support the main plot. Dancing emerged on the Polish school stage in the middle of the 18th century, having been taken over from French Jesuit Colleges. Before this the schools had staged pantomimes – these programmes were called *mutae scenae repraesentationes*.²¹

In the Jesuit theatre programmes published till the year 1765, there are approximately 620 choreographical interludes (of which 427 different types of dances can be distinguished).²² Single somersaults, leaps, compositions of dancing groups, and finally about 15 compositions in which the word *ballet* occurred, were rarely seen before Jesuit reform. We can explain, to a certain extent, the French origin of this type of composition. The traditional performances were based on dialogues that had been presented on the reformed stages, and on the modern playwriting of a pseudo-classical type created by French Jesuit playwrights such as Charles Porée, Gabriel Le Jay and Pierre Mambrun.²³ Gabriel de Jay, whose treatise *Liber de choreis* was frequently mentioned in the Baroque tradition as an influence in the development of dance in school theatre, was the author and the propagator of “attractive and meaningful” ballets. Allegorical ballet came into use as a pedagogical and propagandistic tool in the Jesuit theatre, in the context of the festive culture of the Baroque era and of the spectacular forms of celebration of political power that were common at the time. Pupils of Jesuit Colleges participated in ballets, which provided an allegorical representation of religious or political messages.

However, before ballet achieved an independent and self-sufficient dramatic status, leaps and somersaults on the stage served only to make the whole performance more spectacular and attractive. The most popular motifs were related to different nations or social groups (about 77 of them); there were about 54 characteristic somersaults which possessed very significant styles such as desperate, thankful, magnificent or prophetic.

²⁰ W. KOROTAJ, *Z problematyki staropolskich programow teatralnych*. In: *Wroclawskie spotkania teatralne*, ed. W. ROSZKOWSKA, Wrocław, 1967, “Studia Staropolskie”, t. 18, 100–101.

²¹ According to Tadeusz Bienkowski, no such records of this kind of presentations had been made in the programs of the heretical schools (as in the case of dances of *saltus* type). T. BIENKOWSKI, *Na marginesie lektury staropolskich programow teatralnych = Wroclawskie spotkania...*, 117.

²² The list of most frequent choreographic motifs can be made on the basis of the notices included in the theatrical programmes, which have been thoroughly established by Władysław Korotaj’s team and presented in the volume *Polish Drama from the Beginning till the Times of the National Stage – the Bibliography. Dramat staropolski od początków do powstania sceny narodowej. Bibliografia*. T. II: *Programy drukiem wydane do r.1765*, cz. 1: *Programy teatru jezuickiego*, ed. by team of W. KOROTAJ, Wrocław, 1976, Książka w Dawnej Kulturze Polskiej, t. 14.

²³ T. BIENKOWSKI, *Motywy i ich funkcja w jezuickim teatrze szkolnym w Polsce*. „Meander” 16 (1961) 26–43, 99–112, 149–165, 150. Also R. LEBÉQUE, *Les Ballets des jésuites*, „Revue des Cours et Conférences” Paris, 1936, nr. 10. T. GRABOWSKI, *Ze studiów nad teatrem jezuickim we Francji i w Polsce XVI-XVIII*, Poznań, 1963.

Third most frequent was the court motive (about 50); the military motive appeared to be of the same importance (about 44 interludes).

There were fewer examples of *simple dance* (la simple danse pure dance), approximately 37.²⁴ There were almost the same number of interludes representing antic motifs (32). Compositions with props were less frequent (about 25). Less popular motives were also dances connected with given professions (23), further figures coming from the fantasy world (21). Moreover, there was “anagrammatic” kind of dancing (20); representing allusions to the nature (18), typically Polish accent motive (8). The allegorical interludes end the list (4). It is difficult to describe the expressiveness and the nature of some of the compositions, for example “The conjuration of the Moon” or “The somersault of the Golden Hours” – which are the three graces or due to Ovidius “goddesses of hours”.²⁵

At the same time as various social and educational reforms were taking place in the eighteenth century, a critical tradition concerning the art of dancing started to develop. Ballet as we know it today is a result of the rationalistic Enlightenment changes in modern culture as well as of Louis XIV’s promotion of Terpsichore as an occupation for the nobility. The history of Enlightenment Terpsichore is strictly connected with the name of the great choreographer Jean Georges Noverre, the author of *Letter sur la Danse*. Noverre introduced the *pas d’action* the step of action – that is, of the use of pantomime to advance the story of the ballet. This helped break the rigid formula of court dances, and developed the dramatic possibilities of ballet. Noverre helped to change ballet from a divertissement, a mere pastime, into a *ballet d’action* – a ballet of action that told a story of human emotions. Noverre also championed reform in costumes, and he showed that a musician, a choreographer and a designer must work together in creating a ballet. Many of the principles that he first stated still hold good today.²⁶

²⁴ This is how it was defined:

... [L]a simple danse est un mouvement qui n’exprime rien, et observe seulement une juste cadence avec le son des instrumens par des pas et des passages simples ou figurez, au lieu que le Ballet exprime selon Aristote les actions des hommes, leurs moeurs, et leurs passions.

... Les portemens du corps sont les mouvemens harmoniques, ou les pas et les actions de la danse, comme couper en avant, en arrière, trousseur, pirouetter, sauter, s’élever, etc.

Les expressions sont les actions qui marquent, comme les actions des Rameurs, des endormis, des personnes prises de vin, etc., et les figures sont les diverses dispositions des danseurs, qui dansent de front, dos contre dos, en rond, en quarte, en croix, en sautoir, en croissant sur une ligne, en évolution, en se poursuivant, en fuyant, en s’entrelaissent les uns dans les autres.

C.F. MÉNESTRIER, *Ballets anciens et modernes...*, 158.

²⁵ W. KOROTAJ, *Z problematyki staropolskich ...*, 102. After the decline of college theatre, what was left of their approach was simply the teaching of social dancing. The aesthetic appreciation expressed by Jesuit theorists (in spite of their scorn for pure, not theatrical dance) is the mirror of a consistent value system. It sheds light upon a practice that did not represent a superficial requirement in the demeanour of the upper classes, but implied self-conscious development of refined manners.

²⁶ Jean Georges Noverre was heading toward the total “rationalization of the ballet”, replacing the centre of gravity from the correct performance of the elements to attentive of emotion. His contact with Poland began in 1767 when he presented his *Letters*, an eleven-volume work on the art of ballet, to the Polish king, Stanislaw Augustus. It is clear that the very talented choreographer’s offer was finally rejected for financial reasons.

From the middle of the eighteenth century we have four printed programmes of Jesuit performances of ballets with action: *Balet bozka trunkow Bachusa wesoly poczatek, smutny zas koniec majacy* (Vilnius, 1754), *Balet meznego czlowieka w osobie Herkulesa wyrazajacy* (Vilnius, 175...?),²⁷ *Balet w osobie Oresta, karę bogow na ludzi sprowadzoną za nieuszanowanie swiatnic i oraz pewna obrone w niebezpieczenstwie zycia garnacym sie do nich wyrazajacy* (Vilnius, 1754), and *Balet, wiek ludzki w czterech czesciach zamkneęty, wiosna mlody, latem sredni, jesieną podeszły, zima sedziwy wiek wyrazajacy* (Vilnius, 1761). These programmes contain not only a number of ballets, vocal and music, but also entire and completed musical acts. It is worth emphasizing that all the ballets were directly connected with the College in Vilnius. Ballet was clearly very important to the members of the college, and this shows how innovative this theatre was. This school theatre was strongly influenced not only by Western European trends, but by the local social conditions as well. The school theatre must also be seen as a bridge to the new professional theatre of Vilnius, which was established in 1785.²⁸

Although the school performances are based on Baroque emblematic constructions (with inscriptions above the stage, danced action that is mythological or allegorical – though rarely religious – and an aria which endows the plot with the quality of general truth), there can be noticed in these realisations an attempt to imitate nature and an emphasis on the artistic and imaginative form of spectacles.²⁹

All of these elements are important constituents in Noverre's reform of dance. It should be emphasised that after the Polish authorities eventually rejected this exceptional choreographer, these principles did not exert any direct influence on the Polish ballet. Against this background, the achievements of school dance seem even more original and valuable.

Ballet relied on props, costumes, scenery, mime and all the possible scenic facilities to convey its moral content and implications. Furthermore, the different scenery systems, costumes, stage equipment and props were in use and light was made by candles and olive lamps. So, it was possible, thanks to a trapdoor, to put up the vineyard in the place of the damaged Palace during the ballet called *Balet bozka trunkow Bachusa*. Similarly, in the ballet *Orest*, Diana's Temple was raised from the remains and ruins of the city. Among Hercules' enemies we can find the "larvas' regiments," Cerber, "the tossing bull," and the "Hydra born by the Earth." The task of destroying all these "exotic" creatures made the performance far more attractive and at the same time showed the hero's bravery. This was also achieved by the depiction of the twelve labours of Hercules.³⁰ Additionally, the character of these images allowed the choreography to be more dynamic and expressive. Moreover, the choreographic directions were very rarely presented in the programs – the

²⁷ It is worth-emphasizing that is kind of reminiscences of French ballet – *Les travaux d'Hercule. Ballet qui sera dansé a la tragedie de Clovis sur le theatre du College de Louis le Grand des peres de la Compagnie de Jesus. Le septième jour d'aoust à une heure après midy*, Paris 1686. More: F. de DAINVILLE SJ, *Allégorie et actualité sur les tréteaux des jésuites*, „Dramaturgie et Société” 1967, v. 1.

²⁸ It is particularly seen in the dances of aristocracy (anglaises, galliards, pavannas, saltarellas, or currants).

²⁹ I. KADULSKA, *Wobec Oswiecenia*. In: *Teatr jezuicki XVIII i XIX wieku w Polsce*, Gdańsk, 1997, 29.

³⁰ T. BIENKOWSKI, *Motywy i ich funkcja...*, 162.

mode of the characters' creation could be presumed on the basis of the contents being precisely described. However, for instance, the – “Work in special joy is going down (*Balet, wiek ludzki w czterech czesciach zamkniety*) suggests lively, vigorous dancing steps. Another example is the question “Is the Titan beating the Earth where the Giant has been created, who wants to expel Jove even from Heaven?” – this indicates tension or even the grim atmosphere which is expressed by the changing rhythm.

So when we consider the Polish school theatre in the context of the theatrical history of the eighteenth century, we need to appreciate the special role of the art of dancing in transmitting educational ideas and higher values. For example, *Balet, wiek ludzki w czterech czesciach zamkniety* showed the fact of lapsed time on Earth, and thereby praised work and education, and criticized laziness and overmuch fondness of wine. Arias which pointed moral conclusions from the plot were sung at the end of each of the four parts. The scenes were loosely connected with one another. Among the allegorical characters, Faun – a woodland divinity, Saturn, Minerva, Bacchus, Work and Laziness also appeared. Laziness, who is ridiculed by having a task of stripping feathers “for the pillows, on which one could sleep soundly and for a long time during the winter,” is the most significant negative example. On the other hand, Work permits unfortunate accidents to be caused by those ones who “were drinking deep.” The aria “About the changes of the world's things” depicts one who was thinking about the harmony of life and its close relationship with the rhythm and the passing of nature.³¹

Each age has enriched “dance assortment”, providing greater recourses for the next generation of choreographers and their spectators. When writing about ballet we become aware of the overlapping history of the development of dance. The interchange of dancers between France, Italy and Eastern Europe is the basis of modern ballet. In 1789 the French people overthrew their feudal government, and in the decades of confusion that followed, France was no longer the leader of European dance.³² Even before this, after the suppression, many dancers had fled to other countries to dance and to teach.

Surprisingly, after nearly 300 years the Jesuit ballets returned to the stage in San Francisco in 1985. The American dance scholar, Judith Rock re-staged and directed the first North American production of the ballet *L'Espérance* (1709) from the French Jesuit baroque repertoire.³³ This performance was an energetic theatre piece that attempted to recreate an echo of its social and historical context. Many in the audience commented after the performance that they had come for social reasons or out of historical curiosity, but had stayed to be delighted and entertained by the ballet on its own terms. It is fascinating that somehow the Jesuit ballet can still be an inspiration for the art of Terpsichore even around the world.

³¹ [...]Gdzie też jest jesień z swoim winogradem?/Zima wyciela ostra srogim gradem/Roze, tulipa pobrała za plony/W lakome szpony/Toż samo z ludzmi czynia ślepe Parki,/Stare i młode podcinają karki/Oraz wpychają do jednego dołu/Wszystkich pospolu[...]

³² For instance Dupré later appeared in Tyzenhaus' (the Lithuanian magnate) group.

³³ *L'Espérance* contained a lively thread of current events. In fact, it is the allegory - the story of Pandora's disastrous box, at the bottom of which hope was found. It is worth mentioning that the year 1709 was beset by war, plague, famine, and people urgently needed the counsel of hope. All information connected with this topic comes directly from the author of this amazing project – Judith Rock, with whom I was honoured and simple lucky to meet summer 2003.

We can have the full picture of how Jesuit dancing art still shapes the culture of different nations when we sum up all ballets performances being part of curriculum requirement at Jesuit universities in Europe, occasional performances all over the Catholic missions in which dance, besides its entertainment value, is used mainly to praise the name of the God and finally theoretic works on the art of Terpsichore written by Jesuit fathers.³⁴

In March 2001 American audience was amazed with spectacle *You Walk?* by Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. The main plot was taken from *San Ignacio* (“lost Jesuit opera” from the 18th century). The choreography with baroque music accompaniment skillfully interwove biblical scenes and remarkable pictures from missionaries’ everyday.³⁵

Also David Bintley, director of *Birmingham Royal Ballet* refers quite often to the Jesuit tradition:

I’m always amazed at the devotion that an old priest can still bring to the Mass that he’s said all his life. It’s like a dancer in class. You do it from the first time that you put on a ballet shoe to the very last performance. You do that exercise, that ritual, every day. That’s what you do it for – not the end of the evening and the applause. Or you wouldn’t do it. The drudgery must be the attraction in a sense.³⁶

Saju George – Indian Jesuit believes in the profound relationship of the sacred with Indian classical dance.³⁷

And finally, the interdisciplinary project, really worth-mentioning – *Jesuits in the performing arts*. Here among Jesuit composers, critics and directors, we can find a group of choreographers for whom “the language of dance is strikingly similar to the language of prayer and worship” (Fred Tollini SJ, Rick Curry SJ – initiator of *National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped* and Robert VerEecke SJ from *The Boston Liturgical Dance Ensemble*).³⁸

³⁴ For instance: F. VIAL SJ, *The Jesuit Theater in Eighteenth-Century France*, „Jesuit Educational Quarterly” 1957, nr. 19; E.J. DEVLIN SJ, *Music and Choreography on the Late Humanist Jesuit Stage*, „The New Laurel Review” 1972, nr. 2; W. CARROLL SJ, *Repertory of Biblical Drama, with “Ballets d’attache”, performed at Clermont/Louis-le-Grand* and his *The Seminar on the Bible in Dance*, Jerusalem, 1979; R.Fr. VEREECKE SJ, *Dance in Christian Worship*, Oregon, 1984. Moreover, N. GRIFFIN, *Jesuit School Drama: A Checklist of Critical Literature*, London, 1976.

³⁵ B. OLVECZKY, *Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company: You Walk? Tries to Run, but Stumbles*, “Dance Review” 2001, nr. 15 (vol.121).

³⁶ B. MCCARTHY made an interview with David Bintley for *The Tablet*. See also: [<http://www.ballet.co.uk/magazines>].

³⁷ Asking of how it is possible to integrate traditionally Hindu religious practice with Catholic spirituality Father George responded that “we have to go through a rigorous training – physical and mental. The form of dance involves a commitment of the whole person, body and soul. Everything that is danced is in place of God. God may be Shiva, or Krishna – or one of the other gods of the Hindu tradition”.

³⁸ More details: [<http://www.companysj.com/v142/opencall.html>].

Terpszikhoré a jezsuita színpadon – pillantás a múltba és a jövőbe

A tanulmány tánc történeti bevezetése hangsúlyozza, hogy a színpadi tánc lengyelországi fejlődése jelentősen eltért a nyugat-európai folyamattól.

Lengyelországban a jezsuiták két évszázadon át – 1568–1773 között – alakították a kultúrát. A színpadi tánc és a balett a 18. században a legdivatosabb újdonságként jelent meg a lengyel jezsuita színházakban, s elterjedt a mondás, mely szerint a jezsuiták értenek a legjobban a piruettre. A francia jezsuiták a Ratio Studiorum szigorú szabályait kevésbé tartották be, így, szerencsére, a tánc terén is nagy hatással lehettek a lengyelekre. A jezsuita pedagógiát a tánc alkalmazásában kettős célkitűzés vezette: az előkelő lengyel ifjaknak nemcsak a színpadi táncot tanították, hanem a társadalmi érintkezésben oly fontos társas táncot is.

A tánc elmélete a franciáknál már a 17. században megjelent: az első balett-történetet Claude François Ménestrier írta 1682-ben, a következő évtizedben pedig legkevesebb tíz további, elméleti és gyakorlati jellegű írás foglalkozott a táncsal, s a szerzők mintegy fele jezsuita volt.

A közzjátékokban, a némajátékokban már a 17. században szinte elengedhetetlen volt a tánc. Az 1765 előtti lengyelországi jezsuita drámaprogramokban mintegy 620 koreografált interludium van, 427 különböző tánc típussal (I. KOROŤAJ 1976). A legkedveltebbek a népek táncai voltak, de sok az udvari, katonai jellegű vagy a szakmákhoz kapcsolódó is. 1756-ban Vilniusban már számos táncot tanítottak, a varsói *Collegium Nobilium* tantervének testgyakorlás fejezetében kiemelt helyen szerepelt a vívás és a tánc. Vagyis: a tánc ismerete hozzátartozott a finom és kulturált viselkedéshez.

A felvilágosodás tánc történetének csúcsát Noverre gyakorlati és elméleti tevékenysége jelenti. Vilniusban volt a legerősebb a nyugat-európai hatás, ez látszik az iskolai repertoárban, s nyilván ennek is szerepe volt a hivatásos színház 1785-ös megnyitásában. A 18. századi lengyel iskolai színház nagy jelentőségéről szólva ki kell emelnünk a tánc sokféle – színi és társadalmi – funkcióját.

Kelet-Európában francia és olasz hatásra terjedt el a balett, a francia forradalommal azonban a jelentős francia hatás megszűnt. Ezután a lengyel történelem viharos évtizedei következtek, a színházi emberek, a táncosok szétszéledtek szerte Európában.

Nagy meglepetésre, három évszázad múltán, 1985-ben, San Francisco-ban visszatért a színpadra a jezsuita balett: Judith Rock amerikai kutató vitte színre a *L'Espérance* című francia jezsuita balettet, amely hajdan (1709-ben) az első észak-amerikai balett előadás volt. 2001-ben, ugyancsak Amerikában vették elő az egyik "elsüllyedt" 18. századi jezsuita operát, a *San Ignaciót*. Van tehát jövője a tetszhalott 18. századi balettek életre keltésének.