

SUMMARY

THE BODY AS EXPERIENTIALITY AND REPRESENTATION IN THE *LIFE-WORLD* OF CLASSICAL BALLET. AN APPROACH OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY

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Key words: sociology of the body, classical ballet, classical ballet dancers, social constructionism, sociological phenomenology of the body, *the life-world*, *performance*, self, body, embodied identity.

Introduction

The current paper has a scientific approach, within the sociology of the body, with two main objectives. The first objective was to configure an ideational epistemic intellectual space specific to the sociology of the body, through an interpretative articulation of several fragments of social theory. The second objective was to find this particular theoretical configuration of body sociology within the empirical ambit of the corporeality of classical ballet. Our research has a qualitative sociological underlayer, with an exploratory fundamental profile, approaching a thematic, an episteme, a qualitative theory, as well as a qualitative methodology. Due to the exploratory character of the paper, we shall be tackling orientations of the research, rather than configuration of hypotheses.

The current research unfolded within the National Opera House of Cluj-Napoca, consisting of 18 exploratory interviews with ballerinas, ballet dancers (professional dancers) and choreographers within the ballet ensemble of the National Opera. The group of classical dancers from the Cluj-Napoca National Opera is a homogeneous group *per se* as profession, having a complex heterogeneity as social, cultural, artistic, and behavioral and perceptive background. Of the 36 members of the group, 18 individuals took part in the research, 4 of whom are ballet dancers and 14 are ballerinas. The interviews were taken during August 19th 2014 and July 17th 2016, at the Cluj-Napoca National Opera.

In order to understand the peculiarity of our paper it is necessary to emphasize that contemporary sociology is going through a conceptual tension regarding the manner in which the debate between «postmodern sociology» and «the sociology of postmodernity» is described (Bauman, 1992a, quoted in Williams & Bendelow, 2002: 23). In the tense context between the two manners of producing sociological knowledge today, *the sociology of the body* holds the position of discipline within the matrix of "the new sociologies" (Corcuff, 2005), with an arborescent epistemic character, configured in a complex intellectual identity.

The problematic of sociology presenting a reflection on social reality and the problematic of sociology assuming a self-reflection on its own (conceptual, methodological, empirical) logic is an important epistemic point, found in the conceptual register of the sociology of the body. This type of self-reflexive evolution is the harsh nucleus of the sociological corporal paradigm, which amply debates the way in which the body represents a legitimate sociologic (re)source of comprehension of social worlds.

Self-reflexivity towards one's own scientific sociological productions is the conceptual dimension which we can assert produces a significant emphasis between functionalist, structuralist, systemic, paradigmatic, sociological macro-architecture and the phenomenological, comprehensive, interpretative, interactionist micro-architecture. The

sociology of the body is, *par excellence*, a self-reflexive phenomenological, comprehensive, interpretative, interactionist field, positioned in a permanent (de)constructive search that allows for a disclosure of binary sturctures, which actively take part in the construction of social reality. In this sense, the *mind-body* Cartesian proto-dualism and the descending conceptual duplicates, such as *reason-emotion*, *public-private*, *ethical-emic*, *masculine-feminine*, *nature-culture* etc., represent ramifications of a dichotomic thought/ construction, deconstructed by the approach of the sociology of the body.

The emergence of this new corporal paradigmatic space took place based on the societal changes in (post)capitalist societies, which reconfigured fundamental features of daily life, and which also reflected in the ambit of scientific (sociological) study by offering an "epistemic freedom" of corporeality (Turner, 1996).

The rationality behind the scientific approach underlies the sociology of the body and it has a double analytical significance; the *body* is simultaneously "forced" and "resistant", thus representing an important "field of political and cultural activity" (Turner, 1992: 12). As such, within the sociology of the body, we find a *somatic society*, analysing the body (in intimate relationship with the self) as a "dominating" means by which the tensions and the crises of contemporary society are thematised (Turner, quoted in Turner and Rojek, 2001: 214).

The classical dance/ ballet may represent the synthetising manner in which, starting from the configurational modelling of "the posture" and of "the gesture", the "mythologies" of the body specific to an *era*, to a *group* theoretically codify at a macro-interpretative level (Godard, 2011: 247). As a *particular field* "of political and cultural activity", *the corporeality of classical ballet* allowed us to configure an empirical platform of investigation of the theoretical ambit of the body's sociology. The *life-world* of the classical dance offers a multitude of interpretative possibilities to the sociology of the body. *The body* of the classical dancers is a *locus* for reflecting on the "constraint" and on the "resistence" specific to the structure of the academic canon of classical ballet. The choice for this matrix of empirical reflection for the theoretical registers of the space of the body's sociology caused a need for a detailed and multi-stratified comprehension of the history of ballet, of the corporeal-choreographic-technical ambit and of the relationship with contemporary art.

Summary

The current paper in divided into six chapters; the first four are theoretical and epistemic, the fifth is an incursion into applied methodology, while the last chapter presents the analysis and the interpretation of empirical data.

In **Chapter 1**, the approach of the current research, which *ab origine* has a deductiveexploratory specific, starts from the need to epistemically observe the territory of the sociology of the body in the fertile and revealing matrix of the *sociology of knowledge* (*Wissenssoziologie*), by configuring a critical rapport with classical sociology and with the way we (re)interpret the sociological canon within corporeality. Some fields of sociological study may impress on theoretical research, such as its empirical reflection, an approach that doesn't have an *a priori* need to rapport itself to the *sociology of knowledge*. In the current case, there was a fundamental need to refer to the onto-epistemic contextualisation of *knowledge* and of *embodied* (daily) *action*. The sociology of knowledge finds an exceptional tonus in the work entitled *Construirea socială a realității*. *Tratat despre sociologia cunoașterii* (*The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*) by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (2008), and it re-maps the manner in which we refer to the "social foundation of the values on the world" and the manner in which "reality is socially structured" (Berge and Luckmann, Ibidem: 9-12).

The debate around understanding the body allows for a "reflection on *the sociology*" of knowledge and it corresponds to two ample models: one is circumscribed to naturalistic epistemology, sustaining the biological features of the body as generators of individual, social, political, economic etc. existence.(...)The second one is covered by the conceptual umbrella of "the epistemology of social constructionism, which often times ignores or even denies the body as material entity, emphasising the mainly social(-ly built) basis of human existence. (...) Social constructionism shapes the body, accentuating its position as effect of discourse (discursive body, the techniques of the self, Foucault, 1996, 2005), its symbolic part – M. Douglas and R. Hertz-the symbolic body (Williams and Bendelow, 2002: 24-29), the metaphors and the emancipations of the body's practices (N. Elias - the civilised body and M. Mauss the techniques of the body, Cregan, 1995), the body as construction of power and society (Bourdieu, 2001; 2003) – physicial capital, (feminine) habitus, symbolic violence), the body as structure within the embodied interactional rituals (Goffman, 1959). The conceptualisation of the phenomenology of the body brings into discussion the body as «existential field of the self», of a «methodological field defined through the perceptual experience and the presence of engagement into the world» (Csordas, 1990: 11), as a «lived experience», an a priori condition of the micro- and macro-social human existence, conceptualising the scheme of bodily knowledge on a unitary platform of the sensorial-motor, temporal and intersubjective registers, as existence «of my body into the world» connected to its social cultural corporal alterity (Merleau-Ponty, 1999: 176-179)" (Gută, 2012:.319).

It's necessary to state that "*«the phenomenology of the body* doesn't support a reductionist-determinist, biologising and *in extremis* naturalistic type of paradigm; it supports a vision of experience, of understanding, of representation; a symbiotic perspective between the organic, the cultural, the social, the symbolic, etc." (Guță, Ibidem:319). The interrogation that this paper involves a reference to the wish to understand the way in which reality (social, interactional, cultural, scientific, artistic etc.), made of thousands of "provinces of significance", is *socially built* and *experienced/lived in an embodied manner*. This is the primordial epistemic underlayer of the current paper. The reference to the theoretical, epistemic, methodologic, interpretative models within the paper may offer a comprehensive picture (*teoretische gedankengebilde*), if we were to invoke Max Weber (2001), with a systematic argumentation, but whose relative and limited nature we only recognise *sui generis*.

The platform of articulating the abstract/ reflexive expressions of sociology (of the body and of its dimension related to embodiment/ incorporation) has no relevance and power without a methodological mapping of the conceptual projections into an empirical matrix. In the current research, in order to progressively transport the episteme into praxis, as emphasised above, we've chosen the empirical matrix of *the corporeality of ballet/ classical dance*. Choosing classical ballet for the empirical study involved a multifaceted construction

of the research, by reference to *social constructionism* and the comprehensive ambit of *the phenomenology of the sociology of the body*, by finding the *structured/ representational* character and by underlining the *embodied/ incorporated* feature of classical dance and the identity of the ballerinas/ ballet dancers.

Due to an *in extremis* specialisation, sociology does not sometimes get significantly close to social historical contextualisation, related to the subject/ object of research. The way to know the corporal choreographic register of classical dance (also) implies to theoretically, cognitively, culturally make a synthetic historiographical endeavour, with a certain register for the details and specific observations, necessary to render the world of classical dance comprehensible. This endeavour outlines the structure which shapes the sociological understanding of the corporality of classical dance; in the current research, the comprehension of the historical, cultural, corporal, choreographic genesis of classical ballet is just a condition *sine qua non*.

In **Chapter 2**, we have made the reference to *the history of ballet*, starting from the *Greek Latin inheritances* and all the way to the choreographic dances/ structures descending from the Greek Latin culture, specific to medieval times. We also underwent a process of understanding the peculiarity of *Christian culture* related to using a choreographic/ dancing ritual; we then made reference to Renaissance and to *court ballet* whose systematisation happened through the emergence of that *dans d'école*. A theoretical frame was achieved also by describing some aspects of the evolution of classical dance during the *pre-romantic* period; we then gave details about the emergence of the *en pointes* feminine technique from the *romantic* period, by invoking some references to Edgar Degas' *pictorial work* and its importance within the cultural and anthropological context of classical dance. An important place in the cultural artistic synthesis of the history of classical dance is held by the latter's relationship with postmodern dance and the critical/ deconstructive manner which postmodern dance approaches towards the academic canon. Another reference to the artistic historical contextualisation was done by presenting a synthetic history of the ballet in Romania, and the artistic manifestations of the Cluj-Napoca National Opera *ballet ensemble*.

The logic of the approach on the comprehension (corporeality) of classical ballet (also) involves a platform of understanding corporeality by appealing to the concept of *performance*, as classical ballet is a performative art, *par excellence*.

In **Chapter 3**, dance is illustrated in a paradigmatic way as *text*, in the ambit of *social constructionism*, as well as *performance* which cannot be conceived of without *corporeality*; thus, it is articulated conceptually in the ambit of *the phenomenology of the sociology of the body*. On the other hand, we conceived *performance* in the ambit of *Goffmanian social drama* (Goffman, 1956), by making a conscious statement about *the daily performativity* (of the self and of the body) as a *1st rank reality/knowledge*, and its relationship with artistic, cultural, aesthetic, corporal *performativity/systematic performance* which is specific to classical dance/ ballet, as a *2nd rank reality*. It's necessary to assert that the daily sociological drama conceptualised by Goffman finds inspiration and is culturally based on Shakespeare's "All World's a Stage", inspired from the Latin *motto* "Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem", which Shakespeare adopts for the Globe theatre (Kivisto and Pittman, 2011). Goffman offers a perspective of the human

interaction contextualised dramaturgically; this means that, at an interactional level, *the life-world* is, although we cannot be aware of it, "more of a stage" (Kivisto and Pittman, Ibidem: 271). On the other hand, "(...) nu este vorba despre a se identifica efectiv lumea cu un teatru, ci de a valorifica potențele explicative ale unei «analogii»"¹ (Stănciulescu, 1996: 114).

Classical dance cannot be configured without reference to *postmodern dance* (Banes, 1994), as we've mentioned above, and to the deconstructive manner of approaching the choreographic academic canon within the *paradigm of freeing corporeality*. *The choreographic canon*, which is specific to classical ballet, is fundamentally important in shaping the *balletic body*; as such, we've achieved an incursion into the *ambit of ballet lessons/ studies* in order to get to know as rigorously as possible the technical choreographic reality of classical dance, approaching in more detail the *feminine technique* of *en pointes* dance. Another dimension that we've approached in detail has a profoundly problematic character in the analyses of understanding classical ballet within *the sociology of art*. Classical ballet is under the cultural umbrella of what we call *superior art/ high art*, and is systematically subordinated to a contemporary deconstruction which emerges within the theories on mass art and culture, as well as in the (political) ambit of democratisation of the access to art.

In **Chapter 4**, we have tried to articulate within the ambit of sociology of the body several *areas of sociological thought:* the *configurational sociology* of Norbert Elias (2002, 2010, 2011), Marx's writings (1959, 1967, 1987, 2009), Max Weber's theses about *rationality, protestant ethics* and *the genesis of capitalism, the sociology of senses* (1968, 1998, 2001, 2003) and the exceptional vision on complete interaction/ reciprocity of the *social aestheticism* in Georg Simmel's sociology (1950, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2004), as well as *structuralist constructivism* specific to Pierre Bourdieu's works (1983, 1984, 1986, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2012). The interpretative reconfiguration of the five intellectual areas of sociological reflection in the ambit of *the sociology of the body* was a conceptual premise to offer an analytic register for the comprehension of *the corporeality of classical ballet*. In the ambit of Norbert Elias' thought, the dissertation about the *process of civilizing* and the combination *civilized self-body* was the basis for the interpretation of Louis' *absolutist royal body* within *court ballet*.

The Marxist texts interpreted in the ambit of corporeality have offered us an important reference to the concept of *alienation* of the feminine balletic body. Classical ballet, interpreted from the viewpoint of Weberian rationality, has led to a comprehensive scheme on *the rationality of technical aesthetic history of classical dance*, through choreographical evolution, at a macro-structural level of understanding. On the other hand, it has offered a micro-structural level of understanding related to *the rationality of the balletic body*, by pursuing its metamorphoses rationalized by the choreographic aesthetic techniques and the manner in which classical dance finds itself in a rationalized symbiosis with *Western music* (see the exceptional Weberian essay "The Rational and Social Foundation of Music" – 1911). Georg Simmel's sociological texts (1950, 1997, 1998, 2000), placed in the sociology of the body, have originated a vision on classical ballet, in the ambit of *social aestheticism*, through the understanding of *dance as form of sociability. The techniques of life*, of Simmelian origin,

¹ Translation into English: we're not talking about actually identifying the world with a theatre, but rather of giving value to explanatory possibilities of an "analogy".

have represented a heuristic conceptual support for the analysis of *choreographic techniques*, by emphasising the *technological dimension* of the construction of the *balletic body*, especially of the *ballerina's body*, through the technique of *en pointes* dance. On the other hand, we've conpceptually adopted the *physiognomy* as nucleus of interaction by trying to understand its role within the theatrical artistic frame of classical ballet. Bourdieu's *structuralist constructivism* (1984, 1986, 1989, 1994, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2012) significantly contributes to shaping the concept of habitus and its nuances specific to the world of ballet. We've detailed the *(feminine) choreographic habitus* and its peculiarity in the interpretation of symbolic violence, related to what Bourdieu calls *masculine sociodicea*. Bourdieu's sociology is for the sociological paradigm of corporeality an important analytical register; Bourdieu consciously asserts the dimension of corporeality related to *social existence* and *action*.

The chapter briefly presented above offers, *par excellence*, internal coherence to the conceptual architecture of the current paper, in an approach structured on three *logical interpretative dimensions*. The first one emphasizes the structure of each space of sociological thought; the second dimension talks about the conceptual ambit of each thinker in the matrix of corporeality, while the third dimension involves a process which helped us interpret the *corporeality in classical ballet* through these spheres of sociological thought articulated within corporeality.

In **Chapter 5**, we've elaborated on the *methodological logic* specific to the research and the manner in which the *qualitative exploratory design* was structured in our paper. Although it emerges under a deductive magnifier, the research is shaped around a more complex logic through the development of a *deductive, inductive, abductive* approach. The arborescent character of the *argument of research* developed from a theoretical space of *the sociology of the body* (articulated within the *sociology of knowledge*), going through an artistic cultural corporal ambit of the *classical ballet* and the exploration of *the empirical ambit* of the world of classical dancers.

The present research was developed at the National Opera of Cluj-Napoca, comprising 18 exploratory interviews with ballerinas and ballet dancers (professional dancers) and choreographers from the National Opera *ballet ensemble*. We used the strategy of *methodological triangulation* (as well as *theoretical triangulation*) by applying the method of *face-to-face interview, participatory observation, self-etnography* and by using the *analysis of documents* (from the Opera archives). We took samples through an AN relay, which helped us achieve our first interview. We got access to the subjects within the institution, but upon informal agreements. We present the scheme of the sampling further ahead:

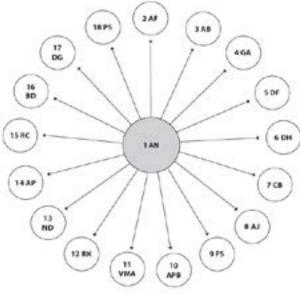


Fig. 1. Sampling structure

One of the dimensions above mentioned, which we pertinently wanted to articulate in the present paper, was that of producing analytic, epistemic, paradigmatic coherence between what the theoretical ambit implies and the manner of configuring the area of the applied methodology. The epistemic model shows some aspects of the face-to-face field research and the manner in which this type of interaction between the researcher and the subjects had an "embodied" character. Therefore, we conceptualied the interaction within the face-to-face interview as a construction of embodied intersubjective construction, we saw participatory observation as a construction through "body" and "sight", and self-ethnography as a method anchored in the in vivo (embodied) experience of a fragment of reality specific to the life-world of classical dance, with the researcher's participation in *classes of classical ballet for adults*. The complexity at a methodological level of the face-to-face interaction through language is echoed in the way we relate, in the current research, to the foundation of interactional knowledge as embodied social construction, both daily and at a scientific level. The faceto-face encounter in the qualitative research implies, for the empirical and analytical context of this research, an analysis of the embodied interactional plasticity of daily encounters as matrixes of the face-to-face encounters, regardless of the field of the daily/ professional world of life they are part of. In this sense, in their The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, Berger and Luckmann assert that "the reality of daily life is shared with others. But how did these "others" manage to go through the experience of daily life? It's possible to make a distinction between several types of such experiences. The experience closest to the others occurs during a face-to-face situation, which is the prototype of all social interaction. All other cases derive from this. In a face-to-face situation we meet the other in a concrete and alive present time, which is shared by both. We know that in the same concrete present they meet me, as well. Our here and now and their here and now mutually influence each other during the face-to-face situation. As a result of that, there is a continuous exchange between their expressiveness and ours. We see them smiling and then reacting to our frowning, then smiling again when we smile and viceversa, while this continuous reciprocity

of expressive acts is accessible simultaneously to both. This means that in a face-to-face situation, the other's subjectivity is accessible to us through a plethora of symtoms. Of course, we can interpret some of these symmtoms erroneously. We may believe that the other is smiling to us, when, in fact, they are condescending. Nonetheless, no other form of social interaction can express the ample range of symptoms of the subjectivity which appear in a face-to-face situation. It's only in this case that the other's subjectivity is so categorically "close". All other forms of relating to the other are somehow "distant"².

The peculiarity of our approach had a dimension correlated to the specific (self)reflexive and *performative* manner of contemporary episteme of social sciences in relation to the multiple hypostases/ positions which are experienced by the researcher during the research. Therefore, the ample typology which offers us a pertinent account of the manner we've approached the paper as research is that of the *bricoleur*. We have to say that the fact that the notion of bricoleur is of epistemic descendence in the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who defined bricoleur, in his well-known work La Pensée Sauvage/The Savage Mind (1966), as a typology of the researcher whose genealogy is found within the ambit of comprehension of "mythical mind"/ "savage mind"/ "pensée sauvage". "The savage mind" is characterised by a "heterogeneous repertoire" with structures from the construction of *rationality*, which overlap on multiple and complex aspects with registers of conceptualised rationality as *fluid*/ eclectic resources of human knowledge. On the other hand, the present research complies with a logic/ rationality of the sociology of the body, whose intellectual identity brings forward references to several ambits of social human knowledge. The sociologic study of corporeality complies with various conceptual genealogies; we have here the Nietzschian ambit, the Freudian psychoanalysis, the critical theories of the School of Frankfurt, the phenomenology of perception in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's writings, the post-structuralist ambit of feminist writings, and post-Marxist, post-Freudian analysis, corporal sociologic constructivism, the sociological phenomenology of the body.

Through the *bricoleur* epistemic positioning of the researcher, *critical hermeneutics* (Kincheloe, 2004a: 11, quoted in Roges, Ibidem: 12) designs a *hard nucleus* of the desire to remove the *binary structures* that dominate *the construction of reality*. As such, *the mind-body Cartesian proto-dualism* and the descending binary pairs, such as reason-emotion, public-private, masculine-feminine, ethical-emic, nature-culture, represent axes of a dichotomic thought which is deconstructed in the approach on *the sociology of the body*.

² The text in Romanian: "Realitatea vieții cotidiene este împărtășită cu alții. Dar cum au trecut acești «alții» prin experiența vieții cotidiene? Și aici este posibil să facem o distincție între mai multe tipuri de asemenea experiențe. Experiența cea mai apropiată cu ceilalți se petrece în situația de tip față în față, care este cazul prototip al interacțiunii sociale. Toate celelalte cazuri derivă din aceasta. Într-o situație față în față îl întâlnesc pe celălalt într-un prezent concret și viu, împărtășit de amândoi. Eu știu că în același prezent concret mă întâlnește și el [ea]. «Aici și acum»-ul meu și al lui [ei] se influențează reciproc pe durata situației față în față. Ca rezultat, apare un schimb continuu între expresivitatea lui [ei] și a mea. Îl [o] văd zâmbind apoi reacționând la încruntarea mea apoi zâmbind din nou când zâmbesc iar și viceversa, iar această reciprocitate continuă a actelor expresive este accesibilă, simultan, amândurora. Aceasta înseamnă că într-o situație față în față, subiectivitatea celuilalt îmi este accesibilă printr-un maximum de simptome. Desigur, eu pot interpreta greșit unele dintre simptome. Eu pot crede că celălalt îmi zâmbește, când de fapt, el mă privește cu condescendență. Cu toate acestea nicio altă formă de interacțiune socială nu poate exprima largul spectru de simptome ale subiectivității ce apar într-o situație «față în față». Numai în acest caz subiectivitatea celuilalt este atât de categoric «apropiată». Toate celelalte forme de relaționare cu celălalt sunt într-o măsură sau alta «distante»".

In Chapter 6, the interpretation on the field of *the corpus of collected data* allowed us to shape a significant *phenomenological* reference by using the concept of *the life-world of* classical ballet. The interpretation of the life-world of classical ballet implies two important dimensions present in the perceptive behavioral symbolic and narrative universes of the subjects. The first dimension is configured through the margin of significance of the world (ethics) of work/ choreographic technique specific to the construction of the identity of classical dancers. The identity of classical dancers develops at the intersection between the two provinces of significance, while the configuration of the identity is achieved through the development of some (choreographic) techniques of the body (Marcel Mauss, 1934) and of some techniques of the self (Michel Foucault, 2005) with a peculiarity related to the art of classical ballet. The construction of identity of classical dancers is influenced so that the subjects get to practice this art. In the corpus of analysis some *models* emerged regarding the manner in which the subjects get to follow a vocational choreographic education. The first model presents the passing from sports, karate, gymnastics and sports dance to ballet; another model shows a reference to the *native vocational models*, while the third one presents the need for an *opening* towards the social (social capital, group of equals) – an opening of the child, so that it comes to find classical dance. A fourth model showcases the selection of the subjects by the teachers from the High school of Choreography within elementary schools around Cluj; the fifth model emphasizes the profile of the energetic child that requires an activity which balances it; a sixth model is related to the social capital of the parents', while a seventh one implies the biography of the parents who used to be *dancers*; the next model presents the context in which the child needs. residence and thus comes in contact with the world of classical dance; the last model involves an *inspirational* reference of the child who is influenced by what they see on television and who, therefore, wants to study at a ballet school. The contextualization of the option to have a choreographic vocational education is most often shaped in our analysis within the model where subjects get to practice classical ballet, by giving up sports (karate and gymnastics) and sports dance.

Micro-comprehension and the micro-interpretative and micro-analytical references to the collected data presents the way in which *the world of classical ballet* is experienced empirically through a conceptual translation of what "*vocation*"/ "*beruf*" is. Max Weber calls "*beruf*"/ "*calling*" (Turner and Wainwright, 2003: 272) a dimension of the profession which is shaped through a systematic pattern of discipline and behaviour which is conceived in order to produce a self or a distinct "personality"³ (Weber, 1966:182, quoted in Turner and Wainwright, Ibidem: 272). The concept of *calling* brings forward, on a Weberian line, as we showcased above, *discipline, self-improvement, individual study, performance,* fundamental aspects of the construction of a *complex, distinct personality*. As such, we may show some fragments from the narratives of the subjects, saying that *one must be very harsh with oneself, have a very strict, very severe daily training, maintain a healthy diet, be rational, and so the body <i>must be taught, helped to understand some things from the moment the body understands this, it replies*⁴ (V.M.A., m., 22 years old, ballet dancer). One ballerina replied that *she likes to think*

³ Text in Romanian: "pattern sistematic de disciplină și comportament care este conceput pentru a produce un sine sau o «personalitate» distinctă".

⁴ The text in Romanian: "(...) trebuie să fii o persoană foarte dură cu tine însuți, să ai un antrenament zilnic foarte strict, foarte sever, să ai o alimentație foarte bună, să le faci cu cap, atuncea corpul, trebuie să înveți

*that ballet dancers are very strong people, strong psychologically and physically*⁵ (A.J., f., 28, prima ballerina); another one said that *one must work daily, very hard, on a daily basis, on Saturdays, on Sundays, on Mondays, all the time*⁶ (G.A., m., 27, soloist ballet dancer).

The complexity of the structure of *the self* and of the *body of ballet dancers* involves a dimension which we've conceptualised through the "phenomenology of pain and injury". In the respective literature, the concept of "phenomenology of pain and injury" is illustrated by Turner and Wainwright (2003: 270); in their article "Corps de Ballet: the case of the injured ballet dancer", the British researchers tell us that "dance is the classic illustration of the argument that performance cannot be understood but as text. It is important, therefore, for sociologists to pay attention to «performativity» in order to find the role of embodiment within the phenomenology of pain and injury"⁷. The technical artistic practice of classical dance, as shown in the subjects' narratives, also builds up the *perfection of the performance* of ballet through extreme physical effort, which predisposes the body to *injuries* and *accidents* (either during training, or on stage). From the ambit of the perceptions of the subjects taking part in the research, we show some expressive remarks saying that *both can be defined with one word*. *Ballet means pain*⁸ (G.A., m., 27, soloist ballet dancer); or that *we must refer to pain – you have a back ache, your ankles hurt, your toes hurt; the more you work and practice, the more likely it is to exhaust your body*⁹ (A.B., f., 29, ballerina within the ballet ensemble).

The sociological phenomenology of pain (of the balletic body) is expressively showcased by the feminine technique of the *en pointes* dance, whose complexity and choreographic aesthetics is emblematic for classical ballet. The *en pointes* dance shapes *the identity of the ballerina*, but this technique is built by *in extremis* force of the ballerina's body and, thus, *the phenomenology of pain* is an interpretative ambit of the way the *habitus of classical dancers* is shaped. The *habitus*, as a structuralist constructivist concept (whose sociological conceptual avatar can be found in Norbert Elias' works), has a general dimension, but it (also) presents a particularisation by conceiving *the feminine habitus*, whose *specific features/ dispositions* we may find in the *embodied construction of the ballerina's identity*, by conceiving the feminine (individual, choreographic, institutional) habitus. *The ballerina's identity*, in relation to the choreographic technique of the *en pointes* dance, holds a theoretical, empirical and corporal relevance; the participants in the research tell us that *ballet without the slippers doesn't exist; one feels pretty strange, one is in pain all the time, but then one gets used to it; it's up to*

⁸ The text in Romanian: "(...) intră într-un cuvând ambele, cred. Zici balet, zici și durere."

corpul ca să...nu știu să-l ajuți să perceapă anumite chestii, el din momentul ce le-o perceput chestiile alea îți răspunde(..)".

⁵ The text in Romanian: "(...) îmi place să cred că că noi, balerinii, suntem niște persoane foarte tari, tari din punct de vedere psihic dar și fizic (...)".

⁶ The text in Romanian: "(...) trebuie să muncești în primul rând, zi de zi, literă de lege (...) zi de zi, zi de zi, sâmbătă, duminică, luni, tot timpul (...)".

⁷ The text in Romanian: "Dansul este ilustrarea clasică a argumentului că performance-ul nu poate fi înțeles doar ca text. Este important, așadar, pentru sociologi să acordăm atenție «performativității» pentru a surprinde rolul încorporării [embodiment] în fenomenologia durerii și accidentării".

⁹ The text in Romanian: "(...) trebuie să ne referim la durere, te doar spatele, te dor gleznele, te dor degetele,(...) cu cât faci mai mult și repeți mai mult, există uzura corporală."

everyone to find the right slippers; the slippers are a ballerina's air¹⁰ (B.D., f., 43, ballerina within the ballet ensemble); or that the problem with the slippers is that the human body's entire weight resides in five toes, which is a lot. There was a study saying that it's like having an elephant sit on you; the first thing to appear are the corns¹¹ (D.H., m., 38, first soloist); another testimony said that they danced in 11th grade in a national ballet contest without the nails on their big toes, in the slippers, for 10 minutes, and when they got off stage their slipper was brownish with blood, that they hadn't felt anything because they used to have a technique. They would often tell their students that they had stopped feeling the pain and they'd ask their colleagues, the men, to step heavily on their feet so they'd go numb and would no longer care about the other pain¹² (N.D., f., 48, university lecturer and former ballerina).

Another dimension analysed within the corpus of interviews presents visions of the subjects on *corporal* and *expressive emotional freedom of postmodern/ contemporary dance*, compared to the "rigidity" and the *standardisation of classical dance*. The comparison between classical dance/ the academic canon and postmodern dance has multiple valences within the interpretative ambit of corporeality. The subjects put forward that, in their view, *contemporary ballet doesn't allow a greater freedom, but it allows for more different movement, which comes from within, which is not polished; it come from within and based on one's feelings¹³ (R.K., m., 27, ballet dancer within the ballet ensemble); <i>contemporary dance offers a different kind of freedom, it's not as strict and, as rigid as classical dance. One may improvise, invent and engage other groups of msucles than those required by classical dance¹⁴ (R.C., f., 20, Opera collaborator); <i>in contemporary ballet there are no limits and today that very thing is the here and now, that is why most performances or experiments are ephemeral*¹⁵ (N.D., university lecturer, former ballerina at the Opera).

The performance of classical ballet holds a complexity which is shaped, according to the interpretation of the current data, through the presence of the *audience* as active *actor/agent* in the configuration of the *embodied identity of classical ballet dancers*, through a continuous reference/projection of the dancers in relation to the audience's artistic/aesthetic expectation, on the one hand. On the other hand, by setting our interpretation within *the phenomenology of pain*

¹⁰ The text in Romanian: "Ah, baletul fără poante (...) nu există (...) te simți destul de ciudat, tot timpul dureri, dar după aia te obișnuiești (...) ține de fiecare să-și găsească poantele care i se potrivesc (...) poantele sunt aerul unei balerine (...)"

¹¹ The text in Romanian: "La ele problema intervine datorită faptului că întreaga greutate a corpului uman (...) stă în cinci degete, ceea ce-i foarte, foarte, foarte mult. Am înțeles că s-a făcut un studiu, e ca și cum s-ar așeza pe tine un elefant. (...) primul lucru care se formează îs bătăturile la ele, dragele de ele (...)".

¹² The text in Romanian: "Am dansat în clasa a XI-a la un concurs național de balet fără unghiile degetelor mari, poante 10 minute, când am ieșit de pe scenă, poantul meu era maro de sânge, n-am simțit nimic, pentru că aveam o tehnică atunci. De multe ori le povesteam foștilor elevi și studenți că nu mai simțeam durerea și îi rugam pe colegi, pe băieți să ne calce puternic pe picioare să ne amorțească ca să putem să nu ne mai intereseze durerea cealaltă (...)".

¹³ The text in Romanian: "(...) după părerea mea, sincer, baletul contemporan îți permite o mai mare libertate (...) îți permite...ăăă...mișcări mai diferite, care să vină de la tine, nu să fie gata (...) să vină de la tine și cum simți tu (...)".

¹⁴ The text in Romanian: "Dansul contemporan îți oferă o altfel de libertate, adică nu-i așa strict, și, cumva, așa rigid ca dansul clasic. Acolo poți să mai improvizezi, să mai dai de la tine și clar din punct de vedere fizic alte grupe de mușchi, decât solicită dansul clasic."

¹⁵ The text in Romanian: "(...) în baletul contemporan nu există limite și în ziua de astăzi chiar ăsta este principiul aici și acum, de aceea cele mai multe spectacole sau experimente sunt sub semnul efemerului (...)".

of the balletic body, we may assert that the subjects live a duplicity which is generally specific to the theatrical artistic world; however, its peculiarity in classical ballet shows a complex relation between *body-pain-emotions* and the dancer's ability to build a *complex identity* where the audience cannot see the physical pain, the effort, or the emotional states whose weight is implicit to daily life, the ballet dancers must leave the impression that everything comes easy to them on stage. Therefore, the complexity/ difficulty of the artistic performative act, in the ambit of classical ballet, involves a spiral of artistic and daily performativity, dimensions entangled in the way in which the *life-world of ballet* is experienced subjectively/ individually/ institutionally, both at an emotional artistic level, and at the level of embodiment of the perfection of balletic technique. The ambit of narratives within the corpus of empirical data shows us, in this sense, the following behavioural perceptive constructions: often times one must smile even when they don't feel like it, when they have trouble at the faculty, at work, even if they have a performance, once must get over it, realise they have a performance, get over it; that's the most difficult thing in tis job¹⁶ (P.S., F. 19, balerină în ansamblul de balet); in anv profession, in any field of activity one encounters difficulties, gets injured, has tough moments; the important thing is to hang on because we are taught to have a difficult life, to grin and beat it and not show the pain or that our job is hard; visually, everything must look as leker and graceful as possible, so as to please the public¹⁷ (R.K., m., 27, ballet dancer in the ensemble).

Another dimension of the interpretative thematic ambit of the research was the subjects' reference, analysed within Simmelian social aestheticism, to the perception of physiognomy in the choreographic technical artistic act of classical ballet. Social estheticism is the exceptional nucleus of Georg Simmel's theses and it approaches social reality in a micro-heuristic and micro-interactional manner, on a platform of theories of art, within the Neo-Kantian and Shchopenhauerian paradigm. The Simmelian social aestheticism structures one of the most rafined, subtle, revealing, sophisticated theories about the human (embodied) interaction (still fully unexploited in sociology), by conceptualising the physiognomy/ face as central place of the face-to-face interaction. The *physiognomy* holds both a valence of the force of *closeness*, of complete reciprocity, as well as an underlayer of the fragility of interaction. Suspending the individual subjectivities within complete interaction through the physiognomical subtleties implies, conceptually, that *epoche* specific to experiencing the artistic beauty, within the traditional theories on art. Simmel conceives *social aestheticism* by referring to a paradigm of society as a work of art, through , the comprehension of (pure) sociality/ sociability/ association/ interation as the *pure aesthetic life* is thought". The complete interaction "has a per se charater, without the constraint/ tension of utility, underlining the subjective/ individual epoche related to its own reality, in tandem with the other", who, in their turn, "experience this type of suspension/ unity/ social aestheticism, without any interest or immediate need". What Simmel builds in Weberian language is called *ideal-type*, and in Schützian sociological phenomenology is called *typification*.

¹⁶ The text in Romanian: "De multe ori trebuie (...) trebuie să zâmbești chiar dacă nu-ți vine- la facultate probelme, la serviciu probleme, ai spectacol, trebuie să-ți revii, să-ți dai seama că ai spectacol, să-ți revii, asta-i cel mai greu în meseria asta.".

¹⁷ The text in Romanian: "(...) în orice meserie, în orice domeniu de activitate ai parte de dificultăți, ai parte de accidentări, ai parte de momente grele, important e să reziști (...) pentru că noi suntem învățați să ducem o viață grea, să strângem din dinți și să nu arătăm că avem dureri sau să ne arătăm că munca pe care o facem este grea (...). (...) vizual trebuie să pară cât mai leker și cât mai grațios, cât mai plăcut publicului.".

Within the *performance* of classical ballet, the *physiognomy* interpreted as a means for corporal artistic, but also interactional expressiveness, in reference to the *public*, was found after the *content analysis of each interview* through a double *internalisation*: as a means for *theatrical (interactional) communication* with the audience, in the artistic expressive sense, but also as a form of *standardisation* of theatrical expressiveness by standardising the physiognomic register. The subjects tell us the following after these physiognomic dimensions of the classical ballet *performance*:

"(...) mimica feței este importantă pentru că...ăăă...publicul (...) vede expresia feței, înțelege că ești trist sau că ești fericit, trebuie să-i transmiți anumite energii, să simtă ce a simțit personajul pentru că altfel o să se plicitsească" (AP, f, 18 ani, colaboratoare a Operei); "Fără expresia feței noi suntem morți pe scenă, nu putem face nimic. Eu, (...)sincer, să mă duc la un spectacol și să văd un bufon care nu exprimă nimic, decât tehnica...nu-mi place, sincer. Pe lângă tehnica care-i impusă peste tot, pe lângă muzica pe care trebuie s-o respecți, tempo-ul și ritmul și toate celelalte, mai există și partea artistică care vine din interiorul tău și ceea ce exprimi tu se arată pe față (...)"(VMA, m, 22 ani, balerin în ansamblul de balet); "(...) lebăda îi lebădă, n-ai ce zâmbi, dansul clasic îi destul de rigid, sunt chestii foarte matematice, foarte clare, pe lângă asta trebuie să arate bine și să nu se vadă chinul de pe fața ta dacă-i o mișcare mai grea sau ceva (...)"(PS, f, 19 ani, balerină în ansamblul de balet); "(...)începând din secolul al XVII-lea s-au instituit niște modele, niște tipare, patternuri, cum se numesc acum, care au rămas prin tradiție neschimbate, nu pot spune că sunt de acord cu ele pentru că așa de tare s-au standardizat încât au devenit a doua mască, de după măștile care au fost folosite în antichitate(...) devenise un rictus zâmbetul nedezlipit de pe fața dansatoarei (...) dacă vă duceți la un spectacol la Opera din Paris vezi multiplicarea aceleași dansatoare de la firul de păr, de la privire, de la forma înălțării nasului și a zâmbetului, până la degetul mic de la picior (...)" (ND, F, 48 ani, lect.univ.dr., fostă balerină)

Conclusions

The current paper does not present firm conclusions, but rather possible theoretical, methodological and interpretative horizons. The register of the research's receptivity is in reference to the fact that this theme was not systematically explored in autochthonous sociology. The present paper proposes an interdisciplinary vision, by articulating the area of study of the sociology of the body and the study area of classical ballet. The approach of the work presents multiple interpretations of corporeality as a theme of sociological research. On the other hand, the paper puts forward various approaches of the corporeality of classical ballet within the corporal sociologic theory, but two great approaches stand out. The first one is an analysis of classical ballet through some macro-structural categoried related to dance as artistic, cultural and choreographic dance, conceptualised as production of Western culture. With an intimate configuration of the classical ballet dancers' corporal choreographic identity, the second approach tries to build a micro-analytical and micro-interpretative perspective, one that is articulated through the incursion in the empirical *life-world* of classical ballet.

The world of classical dancers is unexplored. The world of classical ballet is not

more special than any other social world, but each social fragment has its own complexity/ legitimacy, while the world of classical dance holds a particulat potential for knowledge, important for the sociology of the body. Modelling the corporeality of classical dancers involves a comprehension of cultural, choreographic, technical, aesthetic and political structures of classical ballet; the balletic "ideal body" is an "idealisation of some institutional forms", based on "unnatural standards", and that is why the selection of those who are capable of classical dancing is very strict (Khudaverdian, 2006: 68). The anthropometric standards of the ballerinas'/ ballet dancers' bodies is in a ritualistic relation to the "ideal shape of the body" structurally anchored in the form of an "idealised image of perfection" (Khudarvedian, Ibidem: 46, 47). On the other hand, our paper has a *deconstructive* approach in relation to the registers of the corporeality of classical dancers, while understanding corporeality under the umbrella of the *phenomenology of pain*, and marking the configuration of the *calling* to be a ballet dancer as comprehension of the *life-world* specific to the art, and the *life-world* of work.

The limits of the research

The limits of the current research consist in a methodological reference to the way of reconfiguring the main maethod used. The *face-to-face qualitative exploratory* interview has a methodological relevance in the methodological context of our research, but the best method to continue the research is to apply a method configured on the profile of the *biographical method*. What are the significant references for this type of method? Practicing classical ballet usually starts institutionally/ formally in 5th grade, at the age of 9 or 10. The transformations of the *self* and of the *body* of a classical dancer implies a direct relationship with the *institutional/ pedagogic/ choreographic/ aesthetic/ corporal* universe of classical ballet. The way to practice classical dance and the *path in the life* of a dancer intersect, they create a strong bond between the *individual* and the *institutional*, leading to an *embodied construction of identity* as a human, existential, interactional, choreographic, technical, aesthetic balletic structure. As such, the biographic method may shape a more detailed/ relevant/ significant perspective of the individual profile of each subject, because a specific shaping of the path of each classical dancer is necessary.

With regard to the discussion about the limits of the research, it is necessary to talk about the concept of validity of the research, as well. The concept of saturation has a methodological relevance in the spectre evaluated qualitatively in the ambit of *validity* together with what the notion of internal acceptance, internal coherence, external confirmation and completeness means. Each of these five indicators of the validity of qualitative research needs a methodological approach and fruition. With regard to the *saturation* of data, within the current methodological context, we may assert that it is necessary that the group of professional classical dancers of the National Opera in Cluj-Napoca be studies to exhaustion, because it is a well-defined and closed group. For reasons related to the entrance into the institution and to the manner of reconfiguration of the ballet ensemble according to the season, we managed to interview hald of the ballet dancers who are part of the *ballet ensemble*. On the other hand, an exceptional and profoundly particular and heuristic dimension of qualitative research involves internal acceptance, a register of qualitative paradigm of *relational* type, which shapes a *relational* ethics of the research in reference to the universe of the subjects. Internal acceptance implies that the researcher goes back into the field and presents the results of the study on participatory subjects. This relational moment of the research was not achieved, but we shall try to carry on the research after finding a robust mapping of the saturation of data, in order to present the results of the research to participatory actors.

Although we insisted in conceiving an epistemic theoretical architecture of the paper on corporeality, another limit of the research brings forward the fact that the need to make more theoretical references, *ab hinc*, to the construction of the *self* and of *identity*, with regard to the profile of the classical dancer is important. The reference to the construction of the *self* and of the *identity of classical dancers* is relevant to produce a more robust *analytic/ empirical unity* between *self-body-identity*. The interpretative triplet we are talking about was a significant reference resulted from the analysis of the corpus of data.

Theoretical and methodological contributions

The original epistemic weight, as well as the thematic weight of the current research implies the configuration of a multi-layered space where, starting from corporeality as a sociologic thematic, we built an approach on the corporeality of classical ballet. Positioned *sui generis* in a register of corporal study, through the analysis/ interpretation of perceptual, symbolic, narrative universes of the subjects, the current research has built an ampler dimension of classical ballet by integrating it in a sociological interpretative ambit of the *lifeworld*. The corporeality of ballet/ classical dancers was conceptualised in two ample matrixes. In *representational* matrix *of the body* (see *social constructivism*) by trying to describe/ understand/ analyse the history of ballet, its choreographic technical and aesthetic evolution. On the other hand, we've tried an analytical/ interpretative integration of the corporeality of classical ballet in the ambit of the *phenomenology of the body*, through the configuration of the classical dancers' *experience of* corporal *life-world* of classical ballet.

In the context of autochthonous sociology, there is no research on the corporeality of classical ballet. The current research presents a thematic, analytic and empirical horizon, in such a way that we can give it several conceptual virtues, but also a series of limits and theoretical, paradigmatic and epistemic contradictions.

On the other hand, the originality of the paper resides in the epistemic approach of the used *methodological matrixes*, and this type of epistemic anchorage of methodology offers internal coherence/ unity to the research, by relating the *method of face-to-face interview*, the method of *participatory observance*, *self-ethnography* to the ambit of fundamental comprehension of the (scientific/ sociologic) incursion into the field as *embodied research*. Within the methodological context of the current research, it's necessary to accentuate as indicator of originality the reseacher's practice of classical ballet for adults – see *autoethnography*. The experience of practicing classical ballet implied a reconfiguration of the theoretical view and of empirical analysis, bringing us to another conceptualisation of the researcher's hypostases within the research praxis of corporeality, by approaching a *relational ethics* of the research. However, we did find that the research leads not only to opening new cognitive theoretical epistemic methodological windows, but also to setting this moment within the researcher's (auto)biographic intimacy.

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