

The Folk Art Revival and Applied Ethnography in the Hungarian Heritage House

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ABSTRACT

The present study introduces the role played by the Hungarian Heritage House in applied ethnography and the folk art revival. It is the first such study to review their antecedents over the past 70 years, the evolution of the institutional background, and activities of varying emphasis (research, teaching, certification) in the fields of folk dance, folk music, and folk handicrafts. The second part of the study evaluates professional tasks in the context of the organizational framework of the Hungarian Heritage House, which was founded in 2001, highlighting the internal relationships among activities embedded within the historically developed structure. The study then goes on to describe the intermediary role of the institution in relation to the practical use/usefulness of basic ethnographic research in terms of: (a) knowledge transfer — the utilization of basic ethnographic research in trainings and courses; and (b) digitization — ensuring wide access to ethnographically authentic archive folk music and dance recordings as the socialization of basic ethnographic research; and (c) research activities within the scope of applied ethnography and existing and potential cooperation with the academic sector. By way of conclusion, the study outlines pressing tasks in the field of applied ethnographical research that are crucial to the everyday, practical work of folklorism. These tasks include delineating the image (i.e., concept) of folk art and folk tradition in the Hungarian Heritage House; clarifying the terminological issues that affect the profession as a whole; creating a professional historical archive of folklorism; organizing a regular forum for critical discussion; and rethinking the cultural context and function of the folklore revival in light of the present-day challenges.

KEYWORDS

folklorism, applied ethnography, crafts, folk music, folk dance, folk poetry, revival, dance house, Heritage House

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In fall 2019, the Institute of Ethnography of the Research Center for the Humanities devoted a separate event to the question of the usefulness/usability of ethnography and applied ethnography as part of its conference series on the place and role of ethnography. Fruzsina Cseh, one of the editors of the volume of conference proceedings (CSEH et al. eds. 2020), draws attention to the deficit and delay with respect to ethnographic research in the field of applied ethnography (CSEH 2020a:44). Several studies in the volume focus on Hungarian dance and music folklorism and the revival in material folk art. The authors are unanimous in their view that folklorism, tradition preservation, and heritagization are extremely important areas of applied ethnography in which academic findings have been utilized for decades, laying the foundations for the high standard of creative folk art communities as well as the preservation and propagation of traditions that form part of the national culture.

The volume refers to the Hungarian Heritage House on several occasions, but without offering a comprehensive picture of the activities carried out in the institution in relation to applied ethnography. This may stem from the fact that the Hungarian Heritage House is not sufficiently embedded in academic public life, and its researchers do not devote sufficient attention to revival-related phenomena. In an attempt to fill this gap, the present study reviews the activities of the Hungarian Heritage House, which has been in existence for 20 years, in terms of the cultural and artistic implementation of folk tradition, as well as its role in applied ethnography.¹

ANTECEDENTS: FROM 1951 TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN HERITAGE HOUSE

The Hungarian Heritage House building (the Budai Vigadó) in Corvin Square is both a real and a symbolic space that plays a decisive role in creative processes and community activities in relation to folklorism in Hungary. Since 1951, the building has provided the institutional background for the folk art revival, under different names and with a changing content and emphasis. From 1951, this same building was home to the Institute of Folk Art, later known as the Institute of Popular Culture and then as the Hungarian Cultural Institute, and, most recently, in parallel with the Hungarian Heritage House, as the National Institute for Culture and Arts. The Hungarian State Folk Ensemble (MÁNE) has held rehearsals and performances in the building since its foundation in 1951. The ensemble also deserves mention as the legal predecessor of the Hungarian Heritage House according to its founding charter.²

The Institute of Folk Art was founded in 1951 following the abolition in 1948 of the Hungarian People's Cultural Institute, which had been the coordinator of amateur art movements. "The ethos of (...) the artistic associations, their democratically based activities, as well as their art-political concept endeavored to create opportunities for expression in the Institute of Folk Art, within the framework of the state. In contrast to the provisions of the founding charter,

¹From the perspective of the history of the discipline, it would be instructive to review all the contentious issues and conflicts among the practitioners of practical and theoretical ethnography in recent decades. The investigation and analysis of these issues would also contribute to the practical and theoretical cultivation, utilization, and application of ethnography.

²https://hagyományokhaza.hu/sites/default/files/2021-09/Alap%C3%ADt%C3%B320okirat%20egys%C3%A9ges%20szerkezetben_20210726.pdf (accessed November 21, 2021).



the institute never aspired to play an ideological or official management role, nor even to contribute to such; instead, it organized trainings, published books, undertook experiments and research, provided advice, and, where possible, offered its help.” (FÖLDIÁK 1996:3) According to Ferenc Sebő, the institute oversaw contemporary amateur artistic activities, and not only in the field of folklore. In the Department of Ethnography, directed by Elemér Muharay, folk music and folk dance collecting work was initiated with the participation of eminent professionals such as György Martin, Ernő Pesovár, György Kerényi, and László Lajtha (SEBŐ 2007). Besides carrying out fieldwork, they organized training courses and launched the series of publications *Néptáncosok Kiskönyvtára* [Folk Dancers’ Pocket Library].

The dismissal of the director Jenő Széll in 1955 and the restructuring of the institute in 1956 were followed by a change of name. In the work by András Földiák quoted above, the period after 1956 is presented as the era of progress. Established in 1957, the Institute of Popular Culture was a professional and methodological center with responsibility for the amateur art movement and all branches of popular education. The strength of interest in folk art is evidenced by the ongoing ethnographic collecting work, the consolidated folk dance education system, and, consequently, the renewal of artistic quality throughout the country. Through their achievements, the contemporary generation of choreographers (Károly Szigeti, Katalin Györgyfalvai, Ferenc Novák, Antal Kricskovics, and Sándor Timár) raised stage-based dance folklorism to the level of a universal dance art. The launching of national choreographic competitions (in Szolnok and Zalaegerszeg) and the system of classification for amateur ensembles are also associated with this period. New impetus was given by the inauguration of a working group for childhood dance education, led by Mária Keszler, as well as training for directors of national minority ensembles.

From 1958, specialist training was launched that ensured the methodological consolidation of creative handicraft communities and material folk art. From 1953, the Council of Applied Folk Arts focused primarily on people working in folk art and cottage industry cooperatives and their output. The council organized specialist exhibitions and judged the handicrafts produced. Based on ethnographically authentic collecting work, a series of methodological publications was also produced.

Unlike Földiák, Ferenc Sebő views the period between 1957 and the 1970s as being marked by a decline in folk art activities in some respects, regarding as retrograde steps the abolition of the Dance Department and the transfer of both collecting work and the film archive to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences³.

The success story of the 1970s was the burgeoning of the amateur decorative arts and folk art movement. In the 1980s, between 40,000 and 50,000 people participated in professional interest groups, studios, creative workshops, and art retreats. From 1973, the National Folk Art Exhibition provided these participants with a forum. Iván Vitanyi, who took over the management of the institute in 1972, played a direct role in these achievements by welcoming into the institution the emerging dance house movement and the neo-folklorism initiatives of the “nomadic generation.”⁴ Since its foundation in 1981, the House of Folk Dancers has acted as a mediator

³The Folk Music Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was founded in 1953, while the Folk Dance Research Department was added in 1965.

⁴In conjunction with the launch of the dance houses, members of the younger generation came forward with avant-garde aspirations in the field of handicrafts. Since 1973, the Studio of Young Folk Artists has provided a regular forum for this creative community (BODOR ed. 1981; VAMOS 2019; CSEH 2020c).



between the folklorism movement and academic life, according to Béla Jávorszki (JÁVORSZKY 2013). It made archive folk music and folk dance recordings available to the folk dance movement (amateur ensembles, choreographers, and folk musicians) and documented the events and manifestations of the revival movement.

Having examined the drawbacks and advantages of the institutional operations associated with the Budai Vigadó building, it would be fair to say that since 1951, without interruption, trained professionals with nationwide authority have been responsible for this field in the interests of promoting the cultural adaptation and survival of oral traditional culture. In all eras, the trinity of academic research, art, and community culture have been consciously integrated in order to shape folklorism and folk tradition into elements of culture and embed them within cultural practice.

The Hungarian Heritage House is connected with the activities described above not only through its legal predecessor, the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble. The work carried out there in the 20 years since its foundation is an organic continuation of the history outlined above. In terms of activities and role, several of its immediate predecessors should be taken into account: the Institute of Folk Art (from 1951), then, following its restructuring, the Institute of Popular Culture (from 1957), the House of Folk Dancers (from 1981), the Department of Folk Art of the Hungarian Cultural Institute (from 1992), the Council of Applied Folk Arts, and the related collection of artefacts that is the direct successor to its ethos and activities. Ferenc Sebő, who is regarded as the person who envisioned the Hungarian Heritage House, describes the formative period before its opening as follows: “From 1996, we were racking our brains, wondering how we could reunite the strands of tradition preservation and so continue the work that had already been started so many times and repeatedly interrupted. This is what led to the establishment of the Hungarian Heritage House, bringing together the marginalized, folklore-oriented parts of the Institute of Popular Culture, which had been transformed in the meantime into the Hungarian Cultural Institute, and the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble, as well as the archive that supported the newly emerging revival movement. Thus, all aspects of tradition preservation were placed within the framework of a single institute and once again received independent budgetary support.” (SEBŐ 2007:21).

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND PROFESSIONAL TASKS

The professional tasks of the Hungarian Heritage House⁵ are distributed among three main units: the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble, the Folklore Documentation Library and Archives, and the Applied Folk Arts Department. Their work is supported by an administrative and financial apparatus, a technical maintenance unit, and organizational units providing the requisite background for operation and for the realization of professional content.⁶

As a professional dance ensemble, the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble acts as the representative of artistic folklorism by presenting on stage the folk dance and folk music heritage of Hungary and the nationalities of the Carpathian Basin. Performances are given in the Vigadó, as

⁵<https://hagyományokhaza.hu/en> (accessed November 21, 2021).

⁶https://hagyományokhaza.hu/sites/default/files/2021-04/Szervezeti%20%C3%A9s%20M%C5%B1k%C3%B6rd%C3%A9si%20Szab%C3%A1lyzat_20200826.pdf (accessed November 21, 2021).



well as in other venues both inside and outside Hungary's borders. Shows include authentic and dance theater choreographies in equal measure.

The Folklore Documentation Library and Archives preserves, catalogues, and disseminates folklore collections — that is, it makes the collections available in digital form by referencing them within the academic system. There is a significantly greater emphasis on the publication of folklore material, although documents related to the revival movement are also to be found. Among the latter, special mention should be made of the Oral Archive⁷ and Dance House Archive⁸ of Béla Halmos, as unparalleled resources for research into folklorism movements.

The tasks of the Applied Folk Arts Department (Népművészeti Módszertani Műhely, NMM) are to disseminate knowledge and ensure the sustainability of popular culture that survives in the form of cultural memory (ASSMANN 2018:19–23). In parallel with the transmission of this ethnographic and folklore content, the methods, good practices, and approaches that have proved successful in terms of the application of folklore in contemporary culture are explored and widely disseminated. The NMM itself develops educational materials, new methods, and innovative types of training, all of which are organically linked to the teaching and adult education activities that take place in the Hungarian Heritage House. Trainings take place in a variety of frameworks for different purposes. Accredited trainings and courses⁹ in folklore (folk music, folk dance, folk tales, folk games) and handicrafts aimed at teachers and those working in public education provide opportunities for professional renewal and knowledge improvement. The most advanced courses in folk handicrafts¹⁰ are aimed at ensuring the survival of traditional professions, transferring knowledge, and shaping a new generation of experts (e.g., basket weavers, gingerbread makers, leather workers, weavers, lace makers, etc.). In these same handicraft fields, shorter courses (lasting 30, 60, or 120 h) offer an opportunity to become acquainted with a craft and to practice handicrafts at hobby level. Courses providing professional qualifications are complemented by professional forums and further theoretical and practical training for practitioners.

The collection of the Museum of Applied Folk Arts, which forms part of the institution, consists of around 10,000 objects. The output of folk-art cottage industry cooperatives, prize-winning works from national specialist competitions, and representative works from individual folk craftspeople all find a place in the museum. Temporary exhibitions are curated to showcase competition entries, the activities of individual artists or creative groups (associations), or examination pieces from our handicraft courses. These exhibitions, which are complemented by professional conferences and museum pedagogical activities, play an equally important role from the point of view of disseminating information about the history of folk handicrafts, educational processes, and creative work. The Open Workshop, which has been operating in the museum for five years, is a kind of agora: it provides a venue for handicraft demonstrations and for maintaining professional relationships, where the establishment of creative partnerships or groups and creative experimentation are facilitated by innovative initiatives.

⁷<https://hagyományokhaza.hu/hu/mediatar/hagyatekok/halmos-bela/oralis-archivum> (accessed November 21, 2021).

⁸<https://hagyományokhaza.hu/hu/node/1409> (accessed November 21, 2021).

⁹<https://hagyományokhaza.hu/en/education/accredited-courses> (accessed November 21, 2021).

¹⁰<https://hagyományokhaza.hu/hu/oktatás/kezművesseg>; <https://hagyományokhaza.hu/en/education/handicraft> (accessed November 21, 2021).



The children's and young people's awareness-raising activities, experimental classes, interactive theater programs, and the ethnographic and civics interschool competition run by the Applied Folk Arts Department are model programs that provide our staff with opportunities for methodological and thematic innovations. At the same time, these programs are an ideal way for us to present our concept of folklore and its application, and to shape attitudes.

The professional judging of folk applied art and handcrafted objects has been ongoing since 1953. This official task, which functions as a form of quality assurance, yields additional advantages beyond professional prestige. Artisans awarded the title of Folk Applied Artist are able to sell their products with a tax discount and with trademark that is a guarantee of quality. Another longstanding form of quality assurance for the recognition of young talent is the Young Master of Folk Art competition, which has been running since 1972. Applicants in the fields of material folk art and folk performance are invited to demonstrate the skills they have acquired by means of their work (objects or performances) and a written dissertation. In 2017,¹¹ a system comparable to the appraisal of folk applied art was established in the field of folk performing arts: twice a year, the Hungarian Heritage House announces the decision of the Folk Performing Arts Qualification Board for individuals and groups in the categories of storytelling, folk dance, and instrumental and vocal folk music.

In 2017, the Hungarian Heritage House began to build up a county and cross-border network. Within the country's borders, it has signed strategic agreements with civil society organizations that play a decisive role in their respective regions. These organizations form a bridge between the small communities and the national institution: they are gradually increasing in number and today cover almost every county in the country.¹² Outside the country's borders, branch organizations in Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, and Serbia began to operate in 2017. As a further step, since 2019 the Transylvanian Heritage House Foundation has been performing tasks related to the documentation and promotion of folklore among the largest Hungarian minority as an independent organization, working in strategic partnership with the Hungarian Heritage House.

The Department of Programming and Communications at the Hungarian Heritage House is also involved in the production of content: it organizes programs at major events and festivals, and, in the framework of the adult dance houses, educational programs, and thematic days that take place in the Vigadó building, it ensures that folklore, as a cultural experience, is accessible to the wider public and interested parties. Systematic international networking is currently taking place in the field of the handicrafts, dance, and music revival. Since 2017, the International Relations Department has been tasked with helping competitively selected orchestras to reach the international stage.

THE ROLE OF THE HUNGARIAN HERITAGE HOUSE IN THE FIELD OF APPLIED ETHNOGRAPHY

In the above-mentioned study by Fruzsina Cseh, she points out that one of the most important media for the utilization of basic ethnographic research and the manifestation of wider social

¹¹Enacted by Government Decree No. 530/2017 (Dec 29).

¹²For the list of partner organizations: <https://hagyományokkhaza.hu/en/node/2828> (accessed November 21, 2021).



demand is the group formed by the users (audiences, participants), actors (educators, workshop leaders), and organizers of handicraft, folk dance, and folk music folklorism (CSEH 2020a:49). Community and public educational activities, trainings and courses, and the quality assurance systems based on them, forge an immediate connection between theoretical ethnographic knowledge and its constituent parts transformed into practice. Besides the utilization of research findings, it is clear that amateur folk art; the entire scope of school-based folk art education, all the way up from the basic level¹³; professional training and further training; certification systems and their professional background; as well as methodological developments related to the dissemination of folklore fall within the scope of applied ethnography. Educating a new generation in an individual folk craft; expanding the professional erudition of teachers in the field of folklore; and meticulous, high-quality creative work with a commitment to folk art in the performing and material arts “not only yield practical results but, having achieved these practical results, are also intended to help generate change, or prevent change that is deemed unfavorable, in one particular segment of the life of a given social group.” (CSEH 2020a:46).

In what follows, I present the applied ethnographic character of the activities that I have described in detail above, grouped according to three perspectives.

Knowledge transfer – The utilization of basic ethnographic research findings

In accredited courses on folk tales, vocal and instrumental folk music, folk dance, folk games, and folk handicrafts, academically based ethnographic expertise of the appropriate depth is accompanied by repertoire knowledge and the technical skills generated in artefacts, songs, and dance motifs. The development of methodologies for knowledge transfer and the shaping of knowledge into a curriculum is the value added to ethnographic basic research as a result of the work of the Hungarian Heritage House. The validation of the pedagogical (andragogical) aspects of the content of the curriculum manifested in terms of quantitative, qualitative, and temporal arrangement requires both a comprehensive knowledge of the ethnographic material and a pedagogical-didactic grounding. As a result of the training, a folk playhouse director or storyteller makes a conscious selection of material (folk tale or handcrafted object) for their work, and has the necessary ethnographic knowledge, ethnographic vision, and conceptual tools to do so. The scope of this activity is indeed far reaching, since it is also evident in the respective work of teachers and workshop leaders. The Hungarian Heritage House is currently advertising 11 accredited training courses for teachers, 16 within the system of public education, and 9 vocational courses in folk handicrafts. Some of these are implemented by county partners in locations outside Budapest.

Digital access – socialization

The online Folklore Database¹⁴ provides far wider access than the analogue database of the former House of Folk Dancers. “As of April 2021, the Folklore Database contains almost 9,000

¹³Since 2021, alongside folk music and folk dance, folk handicraft departments have been in operation in the framework of basic art tuition. Secondary education takes place in vocational high schools. In the case of folk dance and folk music, the Hungarian Dance University, the University of Nyíregyháza, and the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music provide university-level training. There is currently no higher education in the field of folk handicrafts in Hungary.

¹⁴<http://folkloradatbazis.hu/fdb/index.php> (accessed November 22, 2021).



folklore events and collections representing the folklore of 2,310 settlements in the Hungarian-language region. More than 5,700 h of audio recordings and 1,185 h of film recordings are publicly available.¹⁵ The digitized recordings are used primarily by teachers, workshop leaders, and choreographers working in art education and amateur ensembles. Anything that can now be studied by interested professionals from their home computer will become the fundamental materials of the rehearsal room and sources for choreographies. Students from the Hungarian Dance University and the Department of Folk Music of the Academy of Music can also take advantage of the digital databases during their studies.

Direct cooperation between basic research and applied ethnography

In the forums for judging and certification, there is even closer cooperation between theoretical ethnographers and the practical field. The permanent members of juries and committees inevitably include experts in the field of folkloristics, ethno-museology, ethno-musicology, and ethno-choreology. The documentary basis for this cooperation comprises two volumes containing the criteria for the certification of works of applied folk art (ILLES ed. 2013) and guidance with respect to the performing arts (SZÉKELY 2019). The compilation of these two volumes demanded extensive preparatory work and professional discussion, one of the main tasks being to establish the terminological principles as well as a balance/consensus between academic-theoretical and artistic-practical aspects.

Research carried out under the auspices of the Hungarian Heritage House can also be mentioned among the examples of direct cooperation. The story repertoire of Vilmos Csipkés, which includes many fairy tales, has been recorded on video. The publication based on the collecting work (KLITSIE SZABAD – VARGA 2022) will be a valuable resource for storytellers and story researchers alike.

The coronavirus pandemic has necessitated the use of digital methods in folk art education, too, confronting teachers with challenges not previously encountered. Besides the selection of appropriate platforms and dance pedagogical–didactic aspects (the size of the curriculum, working forms and methods, feedback, assessment), an equally important question has emerged concerning how to convey a culture that is essentially based on community and personal relationships via digital devices. Experiences accumulated during the first few months were summarized in the framework of a professional symposium.¹⁶

Research into the careers of folk handicraft practitioners,¹⁷ which is now in the data collection phase, partly serves direct goals in relation to cultural policy and economic policy by mapping out learning trajectories in these professions and exploring earnings-related problems; at the same time, it makes possible more prudent and more efficient career and professional development by delineating career paths and identifying important milestones. As an external

¹⁵<https://hagyományokhaza.hu/en/node/3380> (accessed November 22, 2021).

¹⁶Online conference, March 27, 2021. <https://hagyományokhaza.hu/hu/oktatas/program/digitalis-neptanc-2021-online-konferencia> (accessed November 22, 2021).

¹⁷Joint research program of the Hungarian Heritage House, the Alliance of Folk Art Associations, and the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the Eötvös Loránd University. The large-sample survey carried out via online questionnaire was based on a focus group discussion in the summer of 2021. The questionnaires will be analyzed in the first quarter of 2022. Qualitative data will then be gathered on handicraft-specific questions via in-depth interviews.



partner to the Reading Difficulties Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hungarian Heritage House is participating in a research program between 2021 and 2025 to support public education by developing and implementing generic training.¹⁸ The task is to develop, implement, and document a series of live music sessions based on the dance house method, with the integration of folk singing games, and to publish the methodology. In the course of the research, neurobiologists are investigating the impacts on reading skills of a training program based on folk music and dance.

The various activities of the Hungarian Heritage House link the practice of folklore revival with the theoretical aspects of ethnography. Their interdependence, and the expected mutual benefits, cannot be overemphasized. Education and training contribute to the transfer and interpretation of ethnographic findings for experts in the practical sphere – instructors, workshop leaders, and program organizers in particular – while at the same time enriching the profession with the outcomes of the research. “Master craftspeople, working at the same time as amateur researchers, have played, and continue to play, an extraordinarily important role in shaping the handicraft heritage by significantly expanding our knowledge of cottage industries, handicrafts, and folk art techniques” (CSEH 2020a:53). User-motivated fieldwork, the collecting of materials, and occasionally interpretation in the field of folk music and folk dance have a history going back decades and are now apparent in the folk tale revival.¹⁹

In addition, the work carried out in the Hungarian Heritage House raises questions concerning folklore and its survival that can be answered by ethnography. Although answering such questions sometimes goes beyond the scope and capacity of the Hungarian Heritage House, its task is to raise the questions in the public sphere and create a forum in which to discuss and answer them. Successful cooperation demands more than merely the involvement of individual professionals; it requires cooperation with higher education, professionals in the field of ethnographic-museology, and the Institute of Ethnography of the Research Center for the Humanities. In what follows, I refer to some of these current areas of research.

Current tasks. Below, I raise some fundamental questions that remain without clarification, or that have not been adequately dealt with in the field of folklorism, and that, as a consequence, hinder everyday practical work. I also discuss research topics that can contribute to a better understanding of the history of folklorism in Hungary, consequently interpreting the development of public education and national culture in the context of “the preservation of tradition.”

The mission of the Hungarian Heritage House, as defined in its current Organizational and Operational Rules, is to “keep alive, revive, revitalize, and restore those elements of bygone or disappearing small community (“village,” or “peasant”) culture that are part of Hungarian national culture for the cultural public life of today and tomorrow.”²⁰ By analyzing the

¹⁸<https://mta.hu/kozoktatas-fejlesztesi-kutatasi-program/mta-elkh-uj-technologiak-az-olvasas-fejleszteseben-kutacsoport-111637> (accessed November 22, 2021).

¹⁹The study by Katalin Juhász presents the relationship between basic ethnographic research, folk dance and folk music folklorism, and the utilization of research findings over a longer period from a historical perspective (JUHÁSZ 2020).

²⁰The Organizational and Operational Rules of the Hungarian Heritage House, 20/08/2020. https://hagyományokhaza.hu/sites/default/files/2021-04/Szervezeti%20C3%A9s%20M%20C5%B1k%C3%B6d%C3%A9si%20Szab%C3%A1lyzat_20200826.pdf (accessed November 22, 2021).



available resources and current activities, it is important to examine and determine the nature of the concepts of *folk art* and *folklore* as they are used in the mission statement, and their practical manifestation. This can be complemented by investigating and interpreting the relationship with the ethnographically authentic source material — a relationship that fluctuates both in time and according to the social groups of users. Rather than our current knowledge, which is based on impressions, we need to obtain a more accurate picture of the concepts of folklore and folk art as used by those involved in folklorism (i.e., what they encompass and what falls outside their scope). Furthermore, it would also be important to examine the nature of the antecedents to these concepts, which can be associated with specific periods in ethnography (e.g., the varying definitions of the concept *folk*), and to identify the trends in the history of ideas and ideology to which they are related. It is only on this basis that it will become possible to outline the reasons behind the different approaches among the actors (researchers, professional practitioners, consumers/audiences) involved in the evaluation and appraisal of the phenomena of folklorism.

The lack of clarity inherent in the term *folklorism* has yet to be resolved, despite all efforts made to date. CSEH (2020b:184) points out the many terms used in relation to material folk art and the lack of any reassuring consensus or debate that would contribute to a solution. I have undertaken an analysis of the use of terminology in pedagogical folklorism, and in my study proposed a value-neutral term that is capable of encompassing the phenomenon as a whole (SÁNDOR 2019). The ambiguity surrounding the concept of *authenticity* and *authentic* folklorism in folk music and folk dance is far from being a Hungarian phenomenon. Based on his experiences in a Slovak amateur folk dance ensemble, Feinberg devoted an entire book to the paradox of authenticity (FEINBERG 2018).

Although Hungary counts as one of the “great powers” internationally in terms of ethnographic collecting work and digitally accessible source materials, research into folklorism-related phenomena lags behind. The definitive corpus of folk handicraft artefacts, as well as written and other sources, is available in the storage facilities of the Hungarian Museum of Applied Folk Arts. Making this material researchable and (digitally) accessible would constitute the core of a *professional historical archive*. In the future, this should be supplemented by source materials associated with the Hungarian Heritage House and its precursors from the last 70 years, as well as the above-mentioned material in the Dance House Archive and the Béla Halmos Oral Archive. The documenting by a discipline — in this case, folklorism — of its own history, and the subsequent professional self-reflection, are essential for the realization of that discipline’s purpose.

It would be important to organize a regular, institutionalized *discussion forum*, with the participation of research, higher education, and practical aspects of folk art in order to be able to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to judgements based on pseudoscientific and damaging stereotypes, and, in addition, to allow space for all those problematic professional issues that arise at the intersection of ethnography and folklorism. The social interpretation of the phenomena of folklorism takes place in a three-party relationship, in the forcefield created by researchers, the practical transmitters of folklore, and the public. The knowledge, expectations, and requirements of these three parties sometimes overlap, while at other times they are in conflict. Highlighting and selecting individual phenomena from folklore as a whole and developing and maintaining an attitude of appraisal towards them — that is, reconstructing, constructing, and adapting them — is a necessary and inevitable aspect of folklore as it takes



its place in a new environment. Institutions and experts establish canons by means of knowledge transfer and certification activities, while at the same time, spontaneous re-creation and adaptation processes must be taken into account. In contrast to the objectivity that can rightly be expected in the case of basic research, the Hungarian Heritage House must also assume a role in evaluation and value creation in terms of its activities in the context of applied ethnography.

The “preservation of traditions,” or the present-day application of folk art, is primarily regarded as a phenomenon associated with folklore that forms part of the national culture and that shapes and reinforces identity (BALOGH 2020:30). However, in practice it can (and in some cases already does) encompass a far wider scope. Embedded in the *context of social responsibility*, the adaptation of folklore-based knowledge can contribute to the issues of sustainability, access to culture, social equality, and active communities, and can highlight anomalies in relation to ethnicity, cultural expropriation, and heritagization.

By way of conclusion, it can be stated that practice-oriented work in the field of art and public education folklorism depends on basic ethnographic research thanks to a professional tradition going back several decades. The Hungarian Heritage House continues to be the dominant institution in the field of applied ethnography. However, in carrying out its activities, it relies on institutional cooperation with the ethnographic profession.

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