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Revista de Antropología, Ciencias de la Comunicación y de la Información, Filosofía,
Lingüística y Semiótica, Problemas del Desarrollo, la Ciencia y la Tecnología

Año 35, diciembre 2019 N°

90-2

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

ISSN 1012-1537/ ISSNc: 2477-9385

Depósito Legal pp 198402ZU45



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Kazakh national culture and ceremonies as a philosophy of ethnic identity

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Abstract

The purpose of our research is to identify new areas and trends in the development of Kazakh dance through the example of the creative activity of the Kazakh leading choreographic groups.

The historical and theoretical analysis of the problem showed that the formation of the Kazakh dance culture was affected by the activities, life, folklore, talent, and imagination of many generations. In conclusion, the dance forms of folk choreography were improved with the course of time and acquired artistic value and completeness with each era.

Keywords: Traditional, Culture, Kazakh, Dance, Choreography.

La cultura y las ceremonias nacionales de Kazajstán como filosofía de identidad étnica

Resumen

El objetivo de nuestra investigación es identificar nuevas áreas y tendencias en el desarrollo de la danza kazaja a través del ejemplo de la actividad creativa de los principales grupos coreográficos kazajos. El análisis histórico y teórico del problema mostró que la formación de la cultura de la danza kazaja se vio afectada por las actividades, la vida, el folklore, el talento y la imaginación de muchas generaciones. En conclusión, las formas de baile de la coreografía popular se mejoraron con el transcurso del tiempo y adquirieron valor artístico e integridad con cada época.

Palabras clave: Tradicional, Cultura, Kazajo, Danza, Coreografía.

1. INTRODUCTION

People's intellectual culture was formed and established throughout human history. National traditions, ceremonies, and

rituals were created by the people to reflect their worldview, emotional essence, lifestyle and artistic potential. The dance originated in the distant past. Early forms of dancing imitated animal movements and natural phenomena. Thus, a primitive dance was born, which evolved into a real way of communication and manifestation of feelings and people's intellectual culture. The movements of such dances were a reflection of the surrounding world (CHAIKLIN, 2015).

Ethnic processes speak volumes about the fact that ethnocultural relationships are very important in the life of modern states and people (COOPER, 2019). This is reflected in the cultural integrity and modern civilization. Numerous ethnic conflicts, ethnic tension growth, the emergence of national, religious, cultural movements and associations show that the ethnocultural problems caused by the mosaic nature of the modern world and the active interaction of various systems have not lost their significance and relevance in recent history (KUZEMBAEVA, 1982; TLEUBAYEV, KULBEKOVA, TLEUBAYEVA, SAPAROVA, KABDUSOVA, DILDEBAEVA, & ISENGALIYEVA 2019).

Nowadays, it is virtually impossible to find an ethnic community that has not been influenced by the cultures of other

nations. No nation has lived in isolation, and there is no ethnic group that has not absorbed the cultural features of its neighbors. There is still much interest in authentic cultures despite the expanding globalization. On the other hand, the activation of ethnic cultures, the search for self-preservation and further qualitative development in the context of coexistence and collaboration with other cultures are the conditions for the development and formation of national self-awareness, as well as for the strengthening of multinationality and multifaceted folk art and the embodiment of national culture in modern works of art and contemporary art (BARNARD, 2019).

Modern society has made social and national issues more acute. Therefore, the problem of the creation of ethnic cultures in a multinational society based on equal cooperation and mutual understanding, preserving and developing the uniqueness and authenticity of each of them, comes into sharp focus. The historical aspiration of every nation is to preserve itself and its culture. National identity preservation is not only a condition for further development of the ethnic culture but also an important benchmark in preserving the identity of an ethnic group for future generations (RASOOLI & ABEDINI, 2017).

2. METHODS

The study of Kazakh national culture and ceremonies, as well as their reflection in the works of modern choreographers, is based on the study of historical sources, their comparative analysis, as well as tracking changes in the Kazakh society from the period of the early forms of Kazakh dance culture to modern national choreography achievements. In order to obtain certain results on the research problem, we analyzed various Turkic dance cultures, which have many similar characteristics in mental, choreographic and figurative aspects.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rituals, religious and ethnic ceremonies contributed to the creation of national dance as a type of traditional culture. Due to the lack of specialized national dance schools, the art of the Kazakh national dance could be preserved in everyday life not only by individual professional masters but also by the masses.

At the beginning of the 19th century, A.O. Orlovsky, the famous artist, depicted the clothes of the Kazakhs in some of his oil, watercolor and gouache paintings. When Taras Shevchenko,

the great Ukrainian poet, and revolutionary democrat, was departed to Kazakhstan, he colorfully reflected the life the Mangyshlak and the Aralsk Kazakhs of the middle of the XIX century in his numerous paintings and drawings. His works are used for studying men's, women's and children's clothing of the Kazakhs.

In 1865, *La vie des steppes kirghizes* by Zalessky was published in Paris. B. Zalessky, a Polish exiled politician, historian and amateur artist, spent a lot of time in Mangyshlak. In his album, he reproduced the nature and everyday life of the Kazakhs living in Western Kazakhstan. The clothes of Kazakhs, men, and women are quite clearly conveyed and different types of men's hats are especially good.

FRANKO (2015), a sculptor of the mid-19th century, turned to national historical scenes and studied the life of the peoples of Central Asia. Lansere created sculptural images of Kazakhs and conveyed the features of their clothes. The works by Lansere can be found in many large museums of the world, including the Tretyakov Gallery, the State Russian Museum and the State Museum of Kazakhstan.

Nowadays, the audience is amazed by folklore, artistic craft, and traditional dance. People admire their brightness, figurativeness and unique national color. They are the main sources for the creators of modern works of art and the development of new directions. All types of art, acquire new formats, enter into symbiotic relationship, and draw ideology from the traditional social culture.

Dances were modified, developed and acquired new forms as they were passed from generation to generation. Today, national dance is very diverse: each nationality has its own style, manner of performance and national costume. National dance cannot be confused with any other type of dance. It is transmitted ethnically and genetically from generation to generation, regardless of faith and nationality. Therefore, it is not surprising that our soul starts to dance when we hear national dance motives. Each nation has its own unique dance (DE VALCK, & HGENER, 2005).

It is distinguished by the style of performance, technical content, presentation, mood, music, and costumes. Traditional features evolved over the centuries and reflected the ancient history of an ethnic group. Once, the great Russian writer, Gogol, said:

National dances can be found in different corners of the world:

The Spanish do not dance like the Swiss ... the Russians are not like the French or the Asians... One dance is wild, loose, the other is calm, or it can be tense and heavy while the other is light and airy. Where did this variety of dances come from? It was determined by the character of the people, their life and lifestyle (BUDAGOVA, 2012: 30).

Kazakh dance art needs an objective assessment of the past and present. The mid-19th-century researcher, Fimenov, said that we not only can but should, by all means, strive to preserve those monuments of folk art that have not yet been lost and still remain in circulation.



Figure 1. Kazakh aul, the 19th century



Figure 2. Kazakh aul in the prairie, the 19th century

The current stage of national choreography development is determined by the performance analysis of choreographic groups at various performance venues. It is characterized by a high professional, aesthetic and substantial level. This means that the new generation of Kazakh choreographers and maitres de ballet seeks to understand their historical roots and stage impersonation of traditional intellectual culture. This is evidenced by the choreographic works, performances, ballet performances, as well as choreographic paintings that can be seen at large-scale cultural events.

One of the most famous Russian and American artists and choreographers, M. Shemyakin, appraised the national color: National moments are dramatically reflected in your ballet - I adore it. I have Russian and Kabardian roots and I really love everything related to folk dances, North Caucasus and

Kazakhstan. There is a force, which can create some new miracles if it is properly transformed into a modern ballet by the choreographer. It seems to me that the future is very serious for the Kazakhstan ballet. (retrieved from the interview for NUR KZ.).



Figure 3. Astana Ballet Theatre

The works by the choreographers GUTIERREZ (2017), ABIROV (1977), the folk artist A. Ismailov, the ethnographer, and public figure Dzhanibekov played an important role in the revival of dance traditions. They made a lot of effort to recreate forgotten images, movements and national costumes of the Kazakhs. In her book *Shaman Games*, Vsevolodskaya-Golushkevich writes: the folk dance has never been forgotten, it even gained a dominant position in folk art from time to time; this is evidenced by the rock drawings reflecting mass performances. Although later they gave way to other types of

art: songs, kyui, terma, and aitys due to the needs of nomadic life.

We believe that a stylized dance brings new means and forms of choreographic approach to national dance. The skill of a modern choreographer stylizing a national dance is the ability to combine modern movements and eurhythmy with truly folk movements. We are sure that stylized national dance is a modern means of preserving national culture and art for the young generation. Stylized dance is based on folklore and ethnographic material, ethnic color, style and everything that creates the desired image or feeling of the national character of people, their way of life and thinking.



Figure 4. Astana Ballet Theater

For the accurate reproduction and processing of specific material, the director should deeply understand the vocabulary, dance drawings and specific features of the development of the

choreographic stylization technique, as well as respect the mental features of the ethnos. Thus, the study of traditional culture, the desire to revive and convey the ethnic culture to the audience are the main tools of choreographers in the creation of new works.

National choreographic eurhythmics is an aesthetic means of the recreation of the unique Kazakh culture. That is why national dances have always been in demand. The choreography by A. Tati artistically reveals the lyrical image of a Kazakh girl: she is tender and touching in the Arular dance to the music of the folklore-ethnographic ensemble Turan.



Figure 5. Astana Ballet Theatre

One of the latest performances by the talented choreographer is *Asem - Konyr* to the *kyui* by Dina Nurpeisova. Grace, choreographic vocabulary, girls' historical costumes,

performance manner, colorful drawings, and moderate eurhythmy make the audience think about the dignity of Kazakh women, their identity and inner psychology. Asem-Konyr is a eurhythmic ode of the unique history of the Kazakh people conveyed through a female image.



Figure 6. Theater Astana Ballet

Today, we can observe an intensive development of national choreography in new interpretations and the neo-Kazakh choreography. It is based on life, intellectual culture and traditions of the people. The genre of the neo-Kazakh choreography was developed as a result of the search for directors. A. Sadykova defined it as the interpretative direction of national dance. The performances of the young choreographer reflect the national color and character. They tell the audience about the history of the Kazakh ethnic group. The choreographic

performances by A. Sadykova - Er Turan to the music of the folklore-ethnographic ensemble Turan, The Age of Welfare, Prairie to the music by E. Kusainov, Tolgau to the music by A. Raimkulova, Dala aueni to the music by Oralula are a modern interpretation of traditional national eurhythmy in the neo-Kazakh choreography which was approved by the audience and experts.



Figure 7. Choreographic performance Dala Aueni to the music by B. Oralula. Choreography



Figure 8. Choreographic performance Er Turan to the music of the folklore-ethnographic ensemble Turan

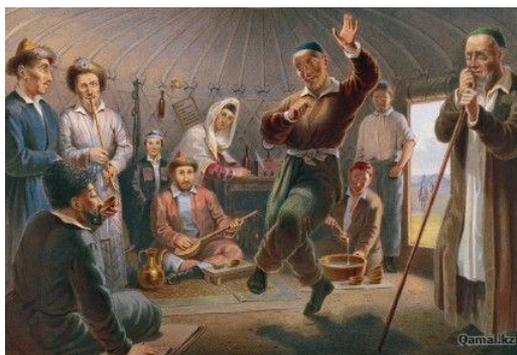


Figure 9. In the yurt of the Sultan of the Inner Horde Dauletkeri

4. CONCLUSIONS

The tendencies of the revival of the national and cultural heritage are connected with the increased interest of society in its origins. Folklore and the traditional national culture is the basis for the study and creation of choreographic works. For modern choreographers, this is the essence of their creative search and stage impersonation. There are unlimited horizons for the development of new dance genres within the framework of national choreography, the creation of works of art on the national theme and the creative search for choreographers. Today, at the brink of a new age, it is important to preserve the traditional culture of the people and the mental specificity of the ethnic group as a source of civilization.

One of the ways for preserving the original dance is a dance record and a passport containing information about the name of the dance; surnames and names of the researchers; surnames and names of the performers; their age; social status; place and time of recording. The sequence of actions of the collector is an important aspect of preserving and recreating ancient dances. The researchers BANES (2009), DANILOV (2017) and others also followed the presented structure of records:

- The name of the area where the dance was recorded;
- The name of the dances performed in the area;
- The people who gave them these names and the time; what the names of the dances are associated with;
- Which dances were more popular;
- Whether the dance was local or was borrowed; the reason for the borrowing;
- The last time the dance was performed;
- The performance occasion and place (wedding, public holidays, etc.);
- Themes and ideological content of the dance (ceremonial, every day, comic, lyrical, mass, solo);
- The performers (female, male or mixed dances), the number of performers;
- Dance pace and character;

- Costume sketches, audio and video recordings of the music and performance.

In the course of our research, we concluded that the rethinking of human consciousness and the civic position of the arts society have significantly strengthened. At the same time, there has been an increase in the professional interest in the history of the Kazakhs and its transformation in various genres.

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**UNIVERSIDAD
DEL ZULIA**

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Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

Año 35, N° 90-2 (2019)

Esta revista fue editada en formato digital por el personal de la Oficina de Publicaciones Científicas de la Facultad Experimental de Ciencias, Universidad del Zulia.
Maracaibo - Venezuela

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