

FROM CREATION OF THE WORLD TO COSMIC DANCE: ON COORDINATES OF ARTISTIC THINKING

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ABSTRACT: *The study is devoted to cosmological themes in dance, which is regarded as a cultural phenomenon suggesting an understanding of the historical relationship between pre-stage, extra-stage and stage dance forms. The continuity of development of cosmism in dance is traced. The problematics of the language of choreographic art, which is expressed in dance by the body and movement in conjunction with the concept of "The Origin of the Universe", becomes the basis of theoretical reasoning in this field. The relevance of the idea of globalization and synthesis of the arts, which is important for modern theory and practice of choreography, is substantiated; the main positions of theoretical understanding and stages of development of dance culture in the context of creation issues are identified. The author dwells on separate historical modes of dance mastering of the topic from the creation of the world to cosmic dance of the new time. The changes and complication of plastic forms, new content and imaginative structure, director's interpretation of the main ballet production "The Creation of the World" by N. Kasatkina and V. Vasilev are considered, as well as the version created later by the choreographer of the Belarusian Opera and Ballet Theater V. Elizariyev. The study ends with an analysis of the current state of choreographic art, which makes it possible to highlight the expansion of a cosmic theme up to the world of the universe, which is solved based on new material. The author concludes that the modern dance paradigm uses the atmosphere as a whole cosmic system together with innovative technologies penetrating the stage space.*

Keywords: cosmic theme, the creation of the world, the concept of cosmism, production solution, dance interpretation modes

1. INTRODUCTION

A cosmic theme as a phenomenon of the world vision is one of the oldest themes of world culture. The cosmos ... limitless space that has always attracted people, starting from simple observations of stars and ending with flights to this unknown world. People were always curious to know (What is this world and how did they appear in it?). They also wanted to be closer to the cosmos and therefore tried their best to bring this concept into their lives not only through scientific discoveries but also through art: cinema, painting, theater or dance. A cosmic theme as a phenomenon of the world vision is one of the oldest themes of world culture.

The purpose of the work is to expand our knowledge of cosmic themes in the context of choreographic art from the ideas of the world creation to the latest concepts of cosmism in contemporary dance.

Research objectives are focused on the following questions:

- The concept of cosmos and dance connection. Prerequisites of cosmic themes in dance;
- Choreographers interested in the cosmic theme. From the most ancient ideas of the creation of the world and their reflection in dance to the newest cosmic productions;
- Analysis from the perspective of the stated problem of the ideological-figurative content of the author's versions of choreographic solutions and their display based on the visual material.

The relevance of the research topic is because today world cultures are experiencing not only positive but also the negative influence of globalization processes. In this regard, cultural and art study of dance art as one of the most important components of both a specific national and general world culture is of particular importance. Many researchers suppose that dance arose from the human need to express the structure of those feelings that were caused by the feeling of belonging to the world. The dance considered in our study appears in the cultural space of different eras as a multidimensional mythopoetic phenomenon. It figuratively models the universe and its

structure, in which the microcosm of traditional culture reveals the most important meanings of existence.

A general review of the literature shows that the relationship between man and the universe is the problematics of cosmism, which was reflected sometimes indirectly, sometimes quite clearly, in philosophical, artistic and literary practice [1-9]. The problem of anthropocentrism found its most vivid embodiment in the masterpieces of Michelangelo and other Renaissance masters [10]. As for choreography, most authors consider this topic only as part of a specific cultural space and all the identified materials are scattered in nature [11-14]. Unfortunately, the authors do not highlight the interrelation of dance movements, costume, attributes, do not consider pictorial symbolism, which, in our opinion, is the most important aspect in the study of this topic and for understanding the peculiarities of its development in subsequent eras.

Source base of research. In preparing the research, various written sources containing a description of dances were used, as well as museum exhibits and materials: photo documents, videos, sketches of dance compositions.

2. METHODS

Based on the substantive complexity of the research topic, the methodological basis of the analysis was an integrated approach due to the use of the methods of history, the theory of fine arts and other humanities, which have their approaches to the study of various types and forms of choreographic art. The methodological basis of the research is a systematic approach to disclosing the beauty of the cosmos, creation of the world, the creation of mankind through the artistic language of choreography. We assume that the most important facet of research attention in this area is the socio-historical context associated with the cultural and aesthetic attitudes of a particular era. Various historical periods were characterized by certain bodily canons represented in culture as a standard of the external shape of the human body, based on which the body is transformed into an artistic object in the works of sculpture, painting and dance. The author's focus is not so much on

the progressive development of the philosophical embodiment of the cosmos in dance, but on the study of its most significant points, which give a new impetus to the development of new ideas and influence the emergence of genre modifications in its spectacular perception.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical modes of dance embodiment of the cosmos.

"Having originated at the dawn of human civilization, dance was a natural human need in expressing one's inner emotional structure and a sense of belonging to the world, the need for rhythmic movements, a plastic form of world development and space organization" [15]. Ancient dance movements express eternal archetypes of the universe: circle, square, spiral, line, point. These ancient symbolic forms, or pre-forms, underlie more complex archetypal elements both in the geometric (natural or architectural) and the inner space of man. [16,17]

Most exoteric teachings say that each of us is a microcosm, a miniature of its reflection in the universe. Therefore, man has all kinds of energies. The sacred dance of the most ancient epochs is a way of stimulation and direction not to the outer, but to the inner world, to deeper consciousness levels. In those days there were several types of dance: dances in circles, imitating the movement of the sun, dances one after another, personifying the fusion of male and female energies, for increasing fertility and connecting the sky and the earth, thread-dances, which, like the threads of Ariadne, led the dancer to secret knowledge of the labyrinth of life. The petroglyphs of Bushmen display the dance of a grasshopper-mantis, their totemic creature. The shaman's dance is a display of his inner state, a way to get rid of the accumulated energy and receive a new one in return. Dance ritual was part of most of the sacred Egyptian cults. For example, at the temple of Amon, there was a special school that trained priestesses-dancers, whose whole life was spent in dance. With the development of city life, even today many dances have lost their ritual and magical meaning. However, choreographers-thinkers continued to promote the themes of sacred dance. One of the representatives of the spiritual dance is G.I. Gurdzhiev (1874-1949), a Greek-Armenian teacher and writer. He discovered that many of the laws governing the universe were expressed in music and dance. In temples, monasteries and special schools he attended, dance was a series of unusual sequences of movements, through which the Truths could be passed down from generation to generation. Performance of movements also opens the way for the internal development of a person: overcoming one's usual automatisms and limitations, deepening the level of awareness, contact with higher energy [18].

An American worldwide dance teacher M.S. Lewis (1896-1971), a recognized expert on Zen Buddhism, Bhakti Yoga, Christian Mysticism and Hebrew Kabbalah, was engaged in the creation of dances synthesizing cultural experience gained from different nations. He composed choreography based on the motifs observed during trips around the world. He became a founder of the movement "Dances of the Universal World". Today, spiritual dances of the world are a universal "religion" expressing in practice the unity that underlies all traditions. "The practice of spiritual dance does not require special skills in singing or dancing – it is quite simple but extraordinarily deep in

content. All that you should do is to join hands and move along with everyone in a given rhythm, singing the original words about God, love and beauty of the world that connect us with all the people who lived before us and are living now. The texts of the chants are taken from the Bible, Koran, Torahs, Tibetan and Hindu mantras, traditions of Zoroastrianism, Sufism, paganism, etc. This is a harmony of movement and gestures, breathing, voice, sound and silence" [19].

A famous dancer, ballet dancer and choreographer of Chechen nationality M.E. Esambaev (1924-2000) could understand and express the deep essence of the culture of different nations in the language of dance. Spanish, Chechen, Russian, Indian, Jewish, Uzbek, Bashkir, Tajik, Mexican and many other dances are among the great many folk dances performed by him. M.E. Esambaev was invited to Brazil for the feast of sacrifice for his talented performance of the Brazilian ritual dance [20].

As is seen, the choreographic art of the peoples of different historical eras and regions is presented as an ethnic feature that has many of its traditional values, besides, they reflect the divine ideas and cosmological forms of consciousness (man is a part of the cosmos), which begin to manifest themselves in contemporary dance and in its stage design. There is a tendency to preserve in choreography the folk-mythological elements in their ethnographic primevalness.

Cosmological theme on the ballet scene. The 20th century not only developed the existing directions of myth research but also opened up new facets of its study. The ballet "The Creation of the World" to the music of A. Petrov is one of the most famous performances by Russian choreographers N. Kasatkina and V. Vasilev. The script and libretto are created by the choreographers, E.G. Stenberg is an art director of the pictorial concept. The starting point for the creation of the play was the series of drawings-caricatures of the famous French artist Jean Effel – "Creation of the World", it is based on the biblical story about Adam and Eve. Another source was the famous Vatican frescoes of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo. Subsequently, the ballet was filmed in 1982 under the title "Adam and Eve". Thus, the ballet idea synthesized the idea of the world birth shown by different artists and found its refraction in the author's choreography by N. Kasatkina and V. Vasilev. The producers used J. Effel's storyboarding graphics, based on which they developed the plot of their dance act. (Fig.1) The interpretation of the biblical story of the creation of the world is displayed here on the symbolic level in the aspect of anthropogonistic mythology. In J. Effel's drawings, a divine image is shown closer, comprehensible to man. God is similar to his creation – man, but he is close not to an abstract man, but to a creative, transforming man, an artist. The beauty of the cosmos is a secondary phenomenon here – it is derived from the beauty of the transcendent beginning (i.e. the beauty of God, the Logos, the world of ideas). J. Effel's drawings, permeated with subtle humor, are close and comprehensible to the viewer; moreover, they are distinguished by the director's mastery of compositional construction and expressiveness of mise-en-scenes, which helped the choreographers to use it on the stage floor. One plot taken from the Bible is a logical continuation of the next one, however, each sheet has its own value, it can be

considered as an independent episode, but, at the same time, it is part of the greater whole.

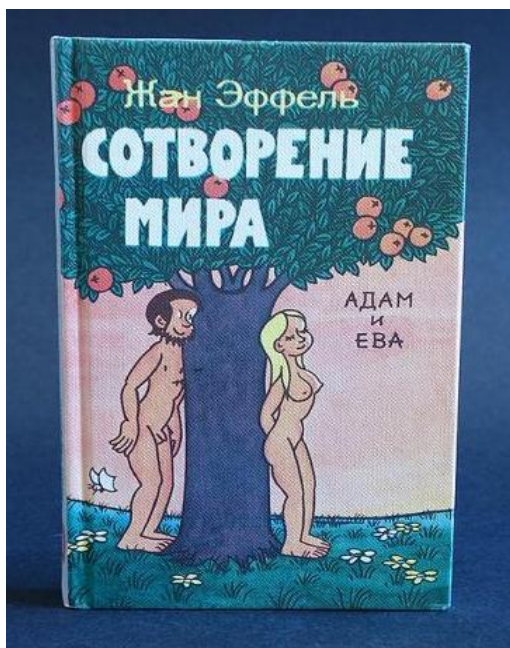


Fig.1. The book "Creation of the World" by Jeanne Effel with his drawings.

The choreographers-directors used the interpretation of J. Effel's images but presented the images of the main characters – Adam and Eve – in evolution. These are scenes of growing up of Adam and Eve, the birth of love. The lyric-dramatic scenes were designed under the influence of another cycle about the creation of the world – frescoes of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo. The Renaissance with its humanistic worldview proclaims man the crown of the world, the image of divine creation [21]. Heroes-titans are ready to fight for life, they have great physical and moral strength, with which N. Kasatkina and V. Vasilev sought to endow their characters. This shows an element of a game manifested in choreography, and the connection between choreographic dramaturgy and biblical mythology, coming from visual sources, can be analyzed. "Thus, the choreographers took as a basis two polar cycles revealing one theme – the birth of the world and man. Both cycles are inherently incredibly plastic, but each in its own way: half-children, half-adults by Effel and heroes-titans by Michelangelo. Ballet masters took the most important part of each cycle – the humor of Effel's characters and the inner will of Michelangelo's heroes – and created their own characters. The result was a lyrical and comic ballet proclaiming the idea: "A man had to be born, to win the right to give life to humanity and explain to them that happiness is in the hands of man" [22]. Besides, the directors managed to characterize the sign-symbolic structure of the physical plastic image that occurs in dance. Tight-fitting one-colored tights of costumes became the personification of their natural virginity and expressed the idea of the divine creation of man [23]. (Fig.2,3).



Fig.2,3. Scenes from the ballet "The Creation of the World" staged by N. Kasatkina and V. Vasilev.

The second version of the Creation of the World. appeared later in the interpretation of V. Yelizariiev. The ballet master of the Belarusian Opera and Ballet Theater in collaboration with the artist E. Lysik in addition to the biblical theme sounds the most important problem of our time - a protest against the threat of war, the glorification of human power and the eternal power of motherhood. Idea liked E. Lysiku. His monumental painting gave the play the scale and grandeur of the universal tragedy. This significant content is embodied in the polyphonic interaction of the musical, pictorial and choreographic themes of the play ... the most important problem of our time is protesting against the threat of war, glorifying the power of man and the eternal power of motherhood. "... monumental painting gave the play the scale and grandeur of the universal tragedy. The performance went on in a naked scene box - without a curtain and a curtain this enormous stage space produced a stunning effect. Here, the primeval chaos and modern weapons were mixed, the crucified man and the mountains of human skulls - an allusion to the painting "The Apotheosis of War" by Vereshchagin [24]. This significant content is embodied in the polyphonic interaction of musical, pictorial and choreographic themes of ballet. (Fig.3,4). "Each topic-synthesis carries the charge of living authenticity, recognition and concrete comparisons. So the image of Adam, a person becomes, gradually enlarges and gradually multiplies, the theme of Humanity, and it grows into an almost symbolic

generalization of Humanity. "... The authors of the Minsk performance managed to read in the ballet music philosophical and poetic generalizations more significant than they were designated in the original intention of the libretto.

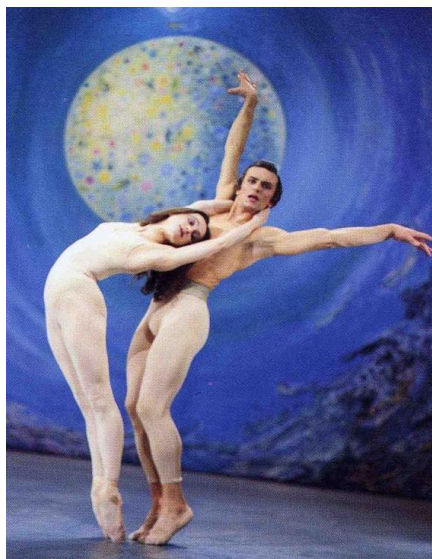


Fig.3,4. The ballet "The Creation of the World" in V. Elizariiev's choreography and artistic design by E. Lysik.

"... The authors of the Minsk performance managed to read in the ballet music philosophical and poetic generalizations more significant than they were designated in the original intention of the libretto. The contemporaneity of the performance is primarily in the scope of the topic, the capacity of artistic generalization, which makes it possible to convey the past and even look into the future of Humanity while maintaining vivid links with the warmth of every human heart." [25].

Cosmic dance in the mode of modern choreographic art. The problems of unity, the spiritual connection between man and the world have been attracting attention in the 21st century. The tradition of asserting the harmony of nature and man, going back to antiquity, the idea of their correlation as macrocosm and microcosm was pressed by the scientific and technocratic attitude to the universe in the

20th century. At present, in the period of the "electronic-cosmic" era, the need to reunite the destroyed unity of becoming obvious and this is confirmed by the development of modern art. The need to restore the global connection of man and nature, the experience of the world as a single cosmogenic whole, is felt more acutely [26]. Man in modern worldview and the language of dance is likened to the cosmos, associated with cosmic phenomena, these associations are based on the idea that natural cosmos and man present one world, they are similar and even identical to each other. Therefore, in the semiotic and semantic aspects of art history analysis, this assimilation can be explored in the directions from man to images of cosmic dance and from cosmic images to the human image embodied in choreography. The use of digital technologies in scenic art has influenced the quality of dance artistic design [27,28]. (Fig.5). The advent of choreographic works translated into digital format and filming of performances directly on digital media changed the requirements of the audience to the quality of visual perception. Cosmic dance expands our understanding of the universe. The modern dance paradigm uses the atmosphere as an entire cosmic system along with innovative technologies penetrating into the stage space [29]. Laser beams, staged light and body biomechanics interacting with each other stand in the way of mastering digital choreographic projects.[30]. Modern material allows deepening and expanding the conceptual system of cosmological themes and aesthetics of its embodiment.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, a review of dance culture of certain eras and the analysis of the exemplary and unique ballet performance "The Creation of the World" by N. Kasatkina and V. Vasilev in the context of the interpretation of the cosmic theme allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

- The genetic roots of cosmism in choreographic art penetrate deeply into the culture of antiquity and their national origins reveal the ethnocultural features of choreography, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the historical-cultural development of a particular people;
- The ideas of the main representatives of spiritual, ritual and world dances of world nations are ambiguous, reflect regional specificity and their transformation can be observed in the stylized choreography of the subsequent time;
- Features of the development and formation of stage (secular) dance in the culture of the 20th century are related to classical ballet art, masters of which bring their individual author's ideas into the vision of the world picture and its creation, reflected in the language of choreography;
- Currently, the development of contemporary dance in many countries of the world is taking place against the backdrop of broad cultural integration. Dance is conceived in the expanses of the cosmos and the figurative interpretation of a cosmic theme as a single image of the world and man in this world. New stage technologies contribute to the creation of original production solutions.



Fig.5.. Modern technology in dance. Space dance from Dance Enra.

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