

TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE: PROBLEMS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL CHOREOGRAPHY AT THE PRESENT STAGE

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Annotation

In this article, the author reveals the specific features of innovation in the development of contemporary dance art, the fundamental basis of which is undoubtedly tradition.

Keywords: choreography, innovation, folk art, history, tradition.

In the contemporary dance art of Uzbekistan during the period of Independence, two major externally opposing tendencies can be observed; however, they represent a natural, consistent, and integral process. On the one hand, the further formation of a nationwide dance style and a nationwide dance art is taking place, and this process is based on the gradual synthesis of different local schools and traditions. On the other hand, there is a noticeable revival and a distinctive flourishing of various local styles in the principal regions and even in individual localities and cities; that is, attention to specific features and differences is increasing.

During the last two decades of Uzbekistan's independence, dozens of new folklore ensembles have appeared in virtually all provinces and regions of the country. As a rule, they combine vocal and dance art and rely on their own rich local traditions. Interest in local traditions and local color has also increased considerably due to the development of international tourism. This sphere of the economy is actively supported by the state and developed by the private sector. The originality and specific features of the artistic culture of each region, including dance art, attract art enthusiasts from different countries of the world. This interest naturally encourages professional and folk dancers to pay more attention to the revival of their own traditions, contributes to the crystallization of local elements and characteristics of the dance.

These two trends, however, are not in conflict with each other, but complement and influence each other. Their existence within the unified cultural space of the country puts forward an important scientific and theoretical task—the need for a new understanding of tradition in the national choreography of Uzbekistan and for defining its content and character of evolution. What should be understood by tradition under contemporary conditions? What is the relationship between tradition and innovation? Where are the limits of interference with tradition and its renewal? Is innovative creativity possible outside the context of tradition? These and other similar questions await thorough and specialized consideration. The problem of preserving traditions in national dance art occupies a central place among all other issues and problems. It has become particularly relevant in connection with the growth of negative tendencies in dance art—the commercialization of dance, the influence of pop culture, the rupture with its own origins, and others. Nevertheless, the principal factor among these problems is the professional one—the necessity of reviving the high traditions of professionalism.

When speaking about the contemporary content of the concept of “tradition” as applied to the dance art of Uzbekistan, it is necessary to understand that it is not homogeneous but

polysemantic. It reflects the diversity of forms and types of dance practice, and not within a single historical period, but throughout a long historical development. First of all, it is important to define the components and constituents of tradition, that is, the actual layers of dance art.

Several layers may be distinguished within it, reflecting different stages in the development of dance. The first and fundamental layer is undoubtedly the national traditions developed by folk dance art. This layer is the earliest chronologically and forms the basis of all subsequent transformations.

The next layer, which is also organically included in the concept of tradition, is associated with the artistic reinterpretation of folk dance in its stage version. The creation of stage dance, and above all in its mass form, significantly enriched national dance and made it possible to speak of a broader phenomenon—national choreography. This, in turn, expanded the content of the concept of “tradition,” which came to include, alongside folk art, contemporary performance techniques.

Thus, taking into account the various components in the development of dance in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, it may be concluded that the concept of tradition includes everything that is best, professionally accomplished, and significant that has been created over a long historical period and that is perceived by bearers of dance art as a model for imitation and an artistic standard.

Innovation, by contrast, is characterized by greater mobility and variability. It arises from a sense of the necessity to renew artistic language and is primarily associated with the search of the creative individual and with the author’s artistic quest. However, while being innovation in relation to tradition, it eventually becomes a tradition itself. This constitutes the dialectical unity of the creative process, which imparts a certain conventionality to the concept. How innovation becomes tradition over time can be clearly seen in the creative work of Tamara Khanum and Mukarram Turgunbaeva. Both dancers were genuine innovators in their work, yet they relied upon preceding traditions and neither violated nor destroyed them. They followed centuries-old traditions of transmitting mastery and, without any exaggeration, adhered in their creative activity to a deeply considered artistic idea and aesthetic concept. Therefore, their innovation soon became part of tradition and was perceived by audiences raised on folk traditions as an element of folk culture.

Thus, the history of the development of Uzbek national choreography demonstrates the unity of traditions and innovation. This unity has been observed over several decades, ensuring the stable development of dance art and its continuity as an art form. It has been and remains a criterion of high artistic quality and the natural succession of everything best and most valuable in national dance.

However, the new era, with its dramatic changes, has called the existing order of things into question. Alongside deeply rooted and organic innovation, completely alien and inorganic elements and phenomena have begun to penetrate dance art. For the most part, these are direct borrowings from contemporary pop culture, often without any national coloring, and they express the “aesthetics of kitsch.” At the same time, examples of грубого вмешательства in tradition and its exploitation for momentary interests can be observed. A “genre” of ephemeral dance and applied works has emerged, appearing and disappearing within a short period of

time and leaving no emotional trace in memory before the next musical and dance product appears.

Such “innovative creativity” outside the context of authentic tradition has nothing in common with genuine high dance art. However, in order to successfully resist this negative tendency and develop a stable “immunity” toward it, it is not sufficient merely to criticize or reject this phenomenon. It must be carefully and thoroughly studied as one of the phenomena of modernity. Its history of emergence, the reasons for its appearance, the scale and area of its dissemination among audiences, the causes of its popularity, and similar aspects must be identified.

Even a superficial acquaintance with this phenomenon in the contemporary culture of Uzbekistan shows that it has a rather complex history of emergence and dissemination. It is evident, however, that one of the principal reasons for its appearance is the loss of traditions of professionalism, as well as the loss of basic notions of professionalism among a certain segment of young performers. A gap has emerged in the once stable chain of education based on the transmission of knowledge from ustoz to shogird (from teacher to student). The absence of continuity in mastery is compensated by recourse to impersonal means of plastic and musical expression that lack any national artistic foundation. Instead, a certain surrogate is offered—an imitation of national traditions, a pseudo-national shell.

In addition, it should be noted that authentic national dance, like any other art of a high order possessing classical features (serious music, maqom or katta ashula, theater, visual arts, and others), requires considerable intellectual and emotional effort, as well as substantial preliminary preparation on the part of the viewer and listener for its full perception and understanding. Contemporary variety-stage dance, by contrast, offers its audience an easily digestible spectacle that creates the illusion of participation in art.

Thus, it is evident that the problem of the spread of negative tendencies in the dance art of Uzbekistan has another aspect or component, namely, the aesthetic education of the youth audience. More precisely, it concerns the absence or insufficiency of such education based on the popularization of the best achievements of Uzbek national art, on the assimilation of the fundamental principles of this art, and on its system of artistic values.

The current situation in the contemporary dance art of Uzbekistan requires a comprehensive approach. It should be analyzed from different positions and viewpoints, and only then can a set of recommendations and measures be developed to overcome the emerging negative tendencies. Such an approach is possible only through the combined efforts of various specialists and creative professionals, as well as the bearers of dance art themselves—male and female dancers, ballet masters, choreography teachers, art historians, and all those interested in preserving and developing the authentic national traditions of Uzbek choreography.

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