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ETHNO-CULTURAL CODES OF KAZAKH THEATRE-STAGE DESIGN IN THE CONTEXT OF SPIRITUAL MODERNIZATION

Abstract: The relevance of the study is due to the lack of detailed studies on this topic. There is an urgent need for a fundamental comprehensive study and creation of a systematized base of knowledge about theatrical art and scenography, from the period of becoming, formation, to creative transformation in the works of modern stage designers. The main methods of research: comparativistics in conjunction with the general principles of historicism and systematization, allowing us to consider the continuity and transformation of national artistic traditions in their historical retrospect. Special methods of research: hermeneutics, epistemology, photographic fixation and cataloging artifacts of art and culture.

Keywords: the cultural code, theatrical art, tradition, scenography.

Introduction

The aim of the article is theoretical and methodological substantiation and development of a new concept in the field of theatre art and scenography, the construction of a worldview model of the cultural and civilizational identity of the theatre art of Kazakhs as a source of creative activity of modern scenographers.

The strategy of the spiritual and cultural development of any state in the era of globalization is “the most urgent task of mankind in the 21st century” (NAZARBAYEV 2017). The idea proposed by the head of state Nursultan Nazarbayev “Mangilik El” is a national idea which gathers stability, unity and tolerance the values that unite all Kazakhstanis, which are the foundation of the future of our country gained since independence. Following the wise policy of the President, we strive to preserve the heritage of our ancestors. Our goal is advocacy of the spiritual and cultural values of our ancestors, to retransmit the rich heritage of our people as valuable and revered to preserve, strengthen the national and state consciousness, enlightenment, and intercultural understanding of modern Kazakhstan society. Revival of the best traditions, ensuring the viability of cultural and spiritual heritage, increasing the interest of Kazakhstanis in their history and culture, will be a response to the challenges of the today and can become a prerequisite for the success of modernization of public consciousness.

Ethno-cultural theatre traditions of Kazakhs, having passed a difficult path from the simplest theatric representations to a megastructure, covering almost the entire territory of modern Kazakhstan, which gave life to a professional Kazakh theatre still remains an unexplored phenomenon of Kazakh culture. In this regard, the implementation of the research “Spiritual relics of Kazakhstan” could contribute to the large-scale transformations and modernization of public consciousness proposed in the article of our President Nursultan Nazarbayev “Course towards the future: modernization of Kazakhstan’s identity,” to become its platform and core “connecting the horizons of the past, the present and future of the people” (NAZARBAYEV 2017).

The large-scale reforms initiated by the Head of State should be accompanied by an outstripping modernization of public consciousness, not just complementing political and economic modernization, but to act as their core. However, what factors determine today our cultural self-identification? “How are the challenges related to globalization and the formation of a multipolar world affecting it? What contradictory tendencies of social development exacerbate the need for a harmonious attitude to the world, in the adaptation of traditional cultural values worked out by nomadic civilization?” (NURLANOVA 1987: 20-22). These and many other issues require their solution today.

In the Kazakh cultural self-identification, a special role is assigned to the preservation and the popularization of the historical and cultural heritage (SEYDIMBEK 2001: 21). It should be noted that the most unclear still remains the question: Was the theatre art in Kazakh antiquity, when it arose, what are its origins, etc.? There are still many blank spots in the history of national culture. Lack of new information and facts is felt acutely, and the base of scientific research is being updated rather slowly. Any culture is difficult to decipher, and the art of representation (PAVLENKO 2006) is one of its most complex components. The history of each national culture is a process that has its own specific features (NOMADS 1993), manifested in phenomena (KHALYKOV 2015: 249), (reflecting the meaningful aspects and spiritual being of the people themselves its worldview, mental qualities, worldview (NAURZBAYEVA 2003: 28). Therefore, in the proposed study, the study of the marked topic should begin with a review of the creativity of the bearers of the oral-poetic and musical tradition (AYAZBEKOVA 1999), from the position of theatre art.

In addition, to read and disclose the mechanisms of culture, it is necessary to turn to the peculiarities of thinking as the basic cultural code of humankind. So, according to the British scientists Hyatt J. and Simons H., the meaning of culture codes is expressed through the use of codes. “Codes are “a secret system of words, symbols or behavior” that are used to convey messages that are contextually related (HYATT – SIMONS 1999). Codes are usually expressed on an observable level, through verbal and non-verbal means, but they are the result of influence and interaction with other levels of culture.”

To reveal the essence of ethno-cultural codes and the condition for their formation, it is not enough to simply ascertain the facts of their existence in culture. To disclose the mechanisms of the formation of cultural codes and the features of their functioning in different cultural spaces, it is necessary to turn to the peculiarities of human thinking; inherently cultural code is an element of the psyche. In this respect, the utterance of the Russian culture expert, anthropologist V.Yu. Mikhailin, who puts forward the thesis that the coding of information is associated with the formation of infernal systems of human thinking (MIKHAILIN 2005: 540). He writes: “In addition to the phenomenon of zoning of the surrounding space, code systems have high cultural stability and continue to exert a powerful formative influence on modern civilization.”

To identify ethno-cultural codes in the theatre and plastic arts, it is intended to focus specifically on the consideration of such a category as perception in the research. In modern psychology, perception is understood as a holistic reflection of objects and phenomena of the objective world under their immediate impact at a given moment. Since perception occurs through the senses, the encoding of incoming information is presumably carried out along the same channels (BUKINA 2010: 232). From this, we made the following conclusion that the ethno-genetic code of Kazakh theatre-plastic art should be sought in the space of the cultural environment associated with the psycho-physiological processes of man in the ethnos.

In fact, in the traditional society of Kazakhs (SHAKHANOVA 1998), theatre representations in the form of their organization represented a social institution and a culture institute, and performed the functions of informal, unofficial art education, enculturation and socialization. The Kazakh People's Theatre as a sociocultural phenomenon throughout its development was formed into a social institution whose main function was to develop the cultural and social values of traditional Kazakh society (KHALYKOV – KARZHAUBAEVA 2013: 217).

The next important contribution to the study of the ethno-cultural codes of the traditional Kazakh theatre and the “preservation of national identity”, presumably, can be accomplished through a comprehensive approach and new knowledge in the field of the latest world semantic-semiotic research. For the first time the phenomena and creative processes of the Kazakh theatre will be considered from the point of view of the method of phenomenological reduction (KHALYKOV 2015: 214).

The theatre as a socio-cultural institution with its complex of audio-visual arts can influence the viewer through the ethno-cultural code of a nation whose social and economic effect lies precisely in the technological component, the novelty of the productions, i.e. the decision of the artistic-plastic form and the artistic image of the play. Today qualitatively new changes in the theatre process of the Kazakh theatre are due to the modernization of consciousness, which determines the path of development in the new technological discourse of innovations.

Another important aspect of the proposed research concerns the results of the research of Russian scholars, in which insufficient provision of educational and methodical resources is one of the main problems of the training and education of theatre directors, actors, artists and musicians. There are no scientific works and educational and methodical literature devoted to the study of the theatre traditions of Kazakhs. Educational programs, curricula, for which young specialists are trained today in the educational institutions of the Republic, requires improvement and introduction of new information into the educational process. At present, some articles and publications are distributed mainly in the field of supplementary education as additional training. From the point of view of the new education paradigm, basic curricula, in conditions of additional education, are not relevant, because the very role of the instructor is changing.

Hence the conclusion follows that in the process of professional training of future figures of theatre art it is necessary to introduce new knowledge, a new look and a reading of the cultural traditions and experience of previous generations.

Thus, the analysis allows us to conclude that the huge cultural layer remains open and requires understanding from a new perspective and incorporating new knowledge into this area of national science and education.

The implementation of this research would help develop a new conceptual approach and introduce new research in this direction in the process of professional training of future actors of theatre art: future directors, actors, stage designers and musicians at the university stage of education.

Methods of research

The methodological basis of the research is a whole complex of fundamental methods of modern science. One of the priority is the method of art criticism analysis, which allows comprehensively and comprehensive study of traditional forms of theatrical art as a phenomenon of Kazakh culture and art. 1) description and analysis; 2) relatively-comparative analysis; 3) analysis of compositions and plots; 4) bibliographic analysis.

The method of historicism will be used to reconstruct the complex under study, to identify the main stages of formation and genesis. A wide range of research trajectories will allow us to consider theatrical art in the context of the set of social, spiritual, aesthetic and artistic factors that affect it. The desire to represent the evolution of Kazakh theatrical art in transhistorical dynamics predetermines the use of the method of retrospective reconstructions.

Culture study and Philosophy: 1) hermeneutic analysis; 2) phenomenological analysis; 3) methods of analytical psychology; 4) methods for analyzing the nature of myth and symbol; 5) semiotic analysis. The application of the method of phenomenological reduction opens wide possibilities for revealing the intentional essence of creativity.

The application of interdisciplinary research is aimed at understanding the content aspect of ancient theatrical art and scenography as an aesthetic phenomenon. This kind of integral methodology in the interdisciplinary field of research is most appropriate both from the point of view of the specifics of the current stage of development of world and domestic theatrical art and scenography, and the disclosure of the topic and the achievement of the purpose and objectives of the study.

The scientific novelty of the proposed article is that for the first time:

- For the first time the traditions of Kazakh theatre art will be interpreted as a socio-cultural phenomenon;

- For the first time an attempt will be made to reveal the ethnocultural code of Kazakhs and the main channels of perception of codes in the theatre and plastic arts;

- For the first time in the domestic science, the creativity of the bearers of the oral-poetic and musical tradition will be considered as a social institution and culture institute aimed at realizing the spiritual, artistic and communicative needs of the traditional Kazakh society;

- For the first time, the socio-cultural functions of the traditional Kazakh theatre will be considered, taking into account their historical development and the transformation of their cultural codes;

- Semantic-semiotic analysis will be carried out for the first time, where the cultural code is different from the signs, symbols and other semiotic units in the Kazakh traditional theatre;

- For the first time the development of the author's methodology for conducting a sociocultural study of the theatre art of a specific region will be carried out;

- For the first time, a cultural understanding of the life of the Kazakh folk theatre and its interaction with other elements of the socio-cultural system of the Kazakh traditional society will be held;

- For the first time, a systematic approach will be applied, allowing to consider the Kazakh people's theatre as a systemic integrity and determine its role in the formation of the culture of modern Kazakhstan.

The significance of the research is concluded in the practical implementation of the idea of the Head of State N. Nazarbayev. “Magilik el” and the state program “Looking into the Future: Modernization of Public Consciousness”: “The first condition for modernizing a new type is to preserve its culture, its own national code. Without this, modernization will turn into an empty sound” (NAZARBAYEV 2017).

The implementation of this research will contribute to the expansion of knowledge and awareness of Kazakh culture in the world.

Conclusion

Kazakhstani theatres need innovations and are open to the introduction of advanced technologies and technology. Today, the scenography of the Kazakh theater “as a synthesis of many artistic aspirations is focused on the implementation of various solutions that are not repeated and differ from the usual methods” of visualizing the artistic image of the play (THE ART 2017: 210). Innovations should qualitatively change the professional processes in the modern theater of Kazakhstan to bring success, which will be appreciated by world experts (KABDIEVA 2016 : 16). The study of the cultural code can reveal the most promising ways for the development of Kazakhstani culture, bring income to cultural institutions, become a guideline and driving force for the development of modern Kazakhstan, and promote the prosperity of every creative person and state as a whole.

According to M. Fresli, the problem of «intercultural communication» in his monograph ‘looks at how a new theory of the cultural networks can be applied in studying some of the values in cinema. This is an opportunity to get to know our world and offers new ways of intercultural communication’ (FRESLI 2015: 75, 87).

The inclusion of folklore into the theatre becomes an influential art trend, in which art seeks to give a comprehensive and vivid real-life picture of a person who fights for his/her own destiny and justice. The Kazakh Theatres solve these problems using the comparative method of folk stories, encouraging the viewer to understand and appreciate the philosophical meaning of human life and existence. ‘The interrelation of myth and reality, used as the nature of time, is represented by an existential communicational human existence in the ethno-cultural discourse. Here, the conditions of existence for the heroes of both the reality and myth are the same. The comparison of the heroes’ lifestyle with Kazakh folklore gives a new interpretation quality to the director’s conception and dramaturgy’ (MAEMIROV – KHALYKOV – NURPEIS 2015: 207).

In the article ‘Theatre Semiotics: Semantic Formation of Scenography in the Kazakh Drama Theatre’ (KHALYKOV 2015: 268) we examined the problem of interpretation of the text in the theater and scenography as the semantic beginning of plastic and visual arts. Philosophical paradigm on the issues of unconscious, which were developed by contemporary culture researchers in relation to art were given as an example.

Considering the history of theatrical reform and qualitative changes, our attempt was made to conduct a semiotic analysis in Kazakh Theatre. “Peculiar difficulties in the perception of established essential concepts and categories of our society appear in the methodology for the understanding of artistic processes of an unconventional theater. Thus, a relevance of these differences and the study of the theory of global aesthetic features befalls” (KHALYKOV 2016: 94).

In another article ‘Application of movie effects in theater productions (the play “Tansulu” as an object of study)’ we analyzed the technological issues of the play design. The research of technological aspects in the development of theater is based on the problems associated with the study of the cultural heritage of the people, with the discernment of cultural codes, the history of cultural texts. Today it requires a special knowledge and an approach to the use of theatrical techniques in scenography and solutions to the visual problems of pictorial direction . (KHALYKOV 2016: 193). ‘M. Auezov State Kazakh Academic Theatre of Drama is also looking for the same language of technology that would be able to reflect a particular time and space on the stage play’ . This performance contributed technical novelty to the artistic reflection of reality. Every act of the play is in search for a new image–plastic language and for knowledge of the verge of being untouched before by other artists and directors. Despite the fact that the theater technique has a considerable history of use of existing scenery and technology of magic transformation of images, many projection effects, video, and arrangement of different holographic effects the theater process here is impacted by cinema.

The impact of the results on the development of science and technology and the expected social and economic effect: The implementation of this research involves the development of a methodological system of education that will contribute to the improvement of professional training of competent cultural and art workers who meet the requirements and demands of modern society.

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