

Summary

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**Art of Movement and psychoanalysis in the culture of the Russian Silver Age
until the year 1930**

This doctoral dissertation aims to demonstrate the existence of a deeper connection between two important phenomena present in Russian culture at the beginning of the 20th century - the Art of New Dance and the Psychoanalytic Movement.

The beginning of the 20th century in Russia, as in Europe, was a period of the modernist intellectual and cultural revolution, which saw the sources of human subjectivity in, among other things, the domain of the body and the unconscious. Dance and psychoanalysis played a significant role in this process in Russia. In my dissertation, I shall argue in favour of the thesis concerning both the direct and indirect and long-term influence of the theory and practice of Sigmund Freud and his students on the formation of the phenomenon called „the Art of Movement" which developed in the years 1904-1930 in Russia (also called “The Russian New Dance", "rhythmic movement", "Danse plastique", or "the body culture"). In the quarter of a century which lies in the field of my interest, this category was used to describe dance experiments, as well as more broadly understood movement techniques related to gesture, body posture, etc., practised both with an aesthetic, therapeutic and educational purpose. Therefore, in my thesis I would like to propose a broad approach to the Art of Movement as a culture of movement, gesture as well as liberation of the body, where practical skills allow both creating choreography and "becoming a work of art".

The time frame of the research is marked by dates important for the development of both dance and new Russian psychology. The new Art of Movement was initiated in 1904, when Isadora Duncan's first guest appearances took place in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and also when the Russian translation of the excerpt from *The Interpretation of Dreams* (*Die Traumdeutung*) by Sigmund Freud appeared. The second turning point in this respect was 1930, i.e. the closing of the Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences (later GAKhN – the State Academy of Artistic Sciences) together with the Choreological Laboratory, in which

dance research had been carried out since 1922. It is also a provisional date of the end of the Russian psychoanalytical movement after the political defeat and the emigration of Leon Trotsky, a great advocate of Russian psychoanalysts.

In the dissertation, I shall also provide arguments supporting the thesis that emphasising the deeper spiritual and physical unity of man and the belief in the salvific mission of art - characteristic of Russian culture, combined with inspirations from the field of psychology and psychoanalysis, which played the role of a catalyst in this case, guided the search of Russian authors of the Silver Age towards experiments with bodily expression as a "membrane", a meeting point between the conscious and the unconscious sphere of the human mind. At that time what became the focus of attention were affects, subconscious wishes and impulses manifested in gestures, attitudes as well as unconscious, illogical body movements. Traces of the experiments of these times can be found not only in theories of aesthetics that appeared at that time, theatrical practices, cinematography, poetry or the visual arts. What is important (and also visible only from the contemporary perspective) are the analogies of the conceptual assumptions, terminology used and dance practices of the movement with the trend of Reich's Western psychodynamic psychotherapy, Lowen's and Pierrakos' bioenergetic analysis and contemporary dance movement therapy that emerged several dozen years later. This allows seeing the nature of Russian dance experiments from a hundred years ago as pioneering for the later trends of the reformed Western psychoanalysis after World War II and schools of body-oriented psychotherapy.

In chapter one of the dissertation, I shall discuss the beginnings of the Russian psychoanalytical movement, taking into account its characteristics and including intensive cultural research conducted by Russian psychoanalysts. At that time, not only doctors, neurologists and psychologists but also the representatives of Russian symbolism, poets, musicians, visual artists and actors were interested in affects and their bodily manifestations. Dance played a central role in their deliberations and artistic experiments. This issue will be elaborated on in chapter two of the work, where I shall elaborate on, *inter alia*, the performance by Valentin Parnakh, a futurist poet and one of the creators of the art of movement. In the third chapter, various dance practices and methods indirectly influenced by psychoanalytic concepts will be analysed in detail. The chapter presents the author's own

interpretation of the work of Stefanida Rudnyeva and the "Heptachor" studio, Ela Rabeneck, Ludmila Alexseyeva, Kasyan Goleizovsky, Lev Lukin and Alexander Rumnev. The fourth chapter is devoted to the idea of collective sensuality, including theatricalization and rhythmization of life after the October Revolution, when the most pressing issue was the question of the relationship between the collective and the individual. In the same chapter, I present the theories on theatricality and theatricalization of life by Nikolai Evreinov, created in direct dialogue with Freudian psychoanalysis, the dance characterology of Nikolai Foregger, Inna Chernetskaya and Vera Maya's "New Virtuosity", as well as modelling the human motor skills according to the theory created by Alexei Gastiev and Nina Geiman-Alexandrova. Chapter five is devoted to the process of institutionalization of the Art of Movement and the interdisciplinary work of the Choreological Laboratory at the Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences, with particular emphasis on the local research on the psychology of artistic creativity. In the closing of the fifth chapter, I discuss the efforts of dance theorists and practitioners aiming at their movement's survival at the outskirts of the Soviet culture of the Stalinist period.

The issues presented in the dissertation are discussed from the perspective inspired, inter alia, by Mieke Bal's Cultural Analysis, with her notion of "travelling concepts", Jean-Marie Pradier's ethnoscenology and the point of view of Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism. The dissertation is largely based on the materials obtained during my own archival query at the Russian State Archives of Literature and Arts in Moscow, the Central Archive-Museum of Private Collections in Moscow, the archives of A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum in Moscow and the Russian State Art Library in Moscow. These queries included both private and institutional collections deposited there.

The concept of the "Art of Movement" proposed in the dissertation allows presenting the common features of activities undertaken by artists from very different fields, as well as the influence of contemporary dance experiments on the emerging aesthetic theories of symbolism and the avant-garde. The methodology used is intended to expose the complex social and intellectual interactions taking place in the Russian academic and artistic environment of the time. Psychology of creativity was one of the most important areas of interest for Russian psychologists – especially psychoanalysts. Research in the field

of physiology and psychology inspired many artistic experiments as well as the creators of the Art of Movement, belonging to the intellectual elites of the time. The circulation of psychoanalytical concepts in the Russian artistic environment indicated in the work proves that contemporary dance, which was born at the beginning of the 20th century, was a multidisciplinary project and object, developing at the meeting point of many fields as a project of comprehensive knowledge about man, about his sensitivity, perceptual and cognitive abilities.

The focus of the creators of the Art of Movement was the consciousness of the body as well as subconscious wishes and they also experimented with the perception of movement. A particularly interesting example is adapting and including the notions of "wish", "impulse" and "instinct" among the artistic concepts used by Russian choreographers in various contexts. At the pre-expressive level, the concept of subconsciousness became a tool and indicator like "gesture" and "body movement" and it was used in artistic work and workshop activities. In the culture of movement, dance was understood as an "expressive load", a form of expression shaped under the influence of an impulse, in which the wish to reveal oneself in movement was manifested, as well as the dance instinct characteristic of every human being. The body became "the stage on which the spontaneity of the spiritual life was realized." Due to the existing interest in the body, gesture and movement in Russian culture, it should be stated that Freudian psychoanalysis, extremely popular at the beginning of the 20th century, but dealing mainly with mental representations of instincts, had no tools to describe this culture in its orthodox dictionary focused on the notions of "repression" and "neurosis".

Art in the psychoanalytical sense remained a phenomenon from the sphere of the irrational, and the importance of corporeality or physical body was emphasized by Freud's students only in the 1930s' texts of Wilhelm Reich. At the beginning of the 20th century, it were the Russian founders of dance schools and studios who focused on the subconscious impulses and the problem of complex personality development. From the perspective of the present-day knowledge about the directions of development of 20th-century therapies focused on working with the body, it should be stated that the need for the liberating motor catharsis, recognized in the Russian culture of the Silver Age, is still a topical issue.

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