

Original Paper

Body Metaphor and Educational Strategy of Lingnan Hakka Female Dance

Qing Wang^{1*}

¹ Shenzhen Dancers Association, Shenzhen 518000, China

* Qing Wang, E-mail: 437859401@qq.com

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Abstract

This paper attempts to clarify the Hakka dance concept that “body” carries the change of social ideology and life experience of ethnic groups, symbolizes the female image that occupies the dominant position of social culture, and then promotes the connection between Hakka tradition and modern cultural memory in the process of promoting the historical narrative and cultural composition of Hakka ethnic groups through female body discourse. It also presents the cultural narration and historical reflection of Hakka ethnic group.

Keywords

Lingnan dance, Hakka dance, Female image, Body metaphor, educational strategy

1. Introduction

In rhetoric, metaphor represents an implicit analogy, which imaginatively equates one thing with another, and applies the characteristics of the former to the latter, or imparts the related emotions and imaginative elements of the latter to the former (Zhang, 2004); In short, the cultural act of grasping such things under their implication (JI, 2002). The human body can carry all things, and the recognition of the body is the logical starting point of all philosophical thinking and interpretation of the world. Merleau Ponty believes that the human body, like all things, is a kind of “flesh” existence. The connection between things is embedded in the “flesh” of the body through the body as a connection, constituting the complex meaning of the body. The body goes beyond itself and forms specific cultural representations and signified practices in different contexts. Therefore, the cultural and social power structure constitutes the interpretive system behind the body. According to the principle of mutual penetration of intentionality between subject and object in artistic creation and aesthetic activities, metaphor is the essential attribute of artistic image. In the aesthetic field, body metaphor is not a

naturalistic wonder of the body, it must be a connection of emotion and meaning, a wild metaphor, which exerts its influence through its own objective image (JI, 2002). “As the most representative art of body aesthetics”, dance itself is the strongest manifestation of body metaphor and the most vivid expression of life. Accordingly, no matter the Hakka folk dance originated from the folk or the field, or the Hakka dance created by the artists on the modern stage, the female image shaped by the body metaphor has a high degree of abstraction, and its generation cannot be separated from the collective wisdom of Hakka people’s group life, or they can accumulate and extract their own social life. Thus creating artistic works that express female group consciousness in a wide range, or indirectly expressing the ideology of female roles in a certain period, a certain religion or a certain cultural branch through artistic works. In this process, it can be seen that a kind of emotional experience based on embodied perception and mediated by physical presence gradually participates in cultural interpretation, which implies two parts: the historical narrative of Hakka female group ideology and the societies connotation of Hakka group memory.

2. Embodied: The Historical Narrative of Female Group Ideology

As we all know, Lingnan Hakka is a migration group of ancient Han people from the Central Plains to the south, originating from Guangdong culture. In terms of cultural basins, they are more concentrated in the Meijiang River basin and Dongjiang River basin, which is a local culture with distinct regional colors. For a long time, in the historical experience and cultural composition of the Lingnan Hakka ethnic group, due to the special social division of labor and life style, women have become the main body of the cultural and historical narration of the Hakka ethnic group, occupying the dominant position of social production labor of the ethnic group, and also a special landscape in its cultural composition. Based on the visual threshold of body aesthetics, the body of Lingnan Hakka women can be regarded as an intersexual existence, that is, the intermediary of the memory and cultural identity of Lingnan Hakka ethnic group. It is not only the body that has been influenced by culture and shaped by society in the ethnic memory, but also the body that has undergone cultural cultivation and aesthetic observation in the development of The Times. In the aesthetic form of gender narrative and body metaphor, Hakka dance with women as the main body not only conveys the cultural significance of different times, politics and even ethnic groups through the mirror relationship of contrast and identification, but also carries the cultural function of Hakka women to build a unified self and ethnic identity. Moreover, as an effective symbol of Hakka ethnic group’s historical narrative and cultural composition, the transition process of Hakka female body metaphor connects traditional and modern cultural memory, presenting the cultural narrative and historical reflection of Hakka ethnic group.

As mentioned above, it is self-evident that women play a penetrating role in the Hakka ethnic group’s history, society, culture and other fields. Their body metaphors represent the meaning practice of Hakka ethnic group’s historical narrative and cultural composition; In the long run, Hakka ethnic groups have formed a concentrated ideological expression with female groups as the core and the typical Hakka

architecture “Big Wai House” as the ideological base. Western scholars once defined “ideology” as “the science of ideas”, and Hakka dance interprets the excerpts of historical narratives by integrating the ideology of female groups divided by gender as the body and the female body as the metaphor, trying to summon the imagination factor of Hakka group’s collective memory. By using typical female images, it further presents the cultural composition and historical reflection of Hakka ethnic group in its changes. Among them, “Hakka girl” and “Waitangmei” are the legendary female images that are still talked about and passed down from mouth to mouth. They are also the aesthetic models created by many literary works and art categories.

2.1 The Image of Life Scene: Hakka Girl

As one of the characteristic buildings in the inhabited places of Hakka ethnic groups in China, the large enclosure house has witnessed the life changes of the Hakka family lines throughout the ages. Among them, the main content of daily life is the existence of “Hakka women” under the big enclosure house. The hard-working, kind-hearted, gentle and virtuous “Hakka women” reappeared the image of Han women who still lived a simple, unrefined and down-to-earth life with the southward migration of the Central Plains. These female images focused on reflecting the behavior pattern and life attitude of Hakka people in ordinary life, and over time formed the concentrated ideological expression dominated by “Hakka women”. Therefore, the artistic image building based on the body metaphor of “Hakka woman” has also become the main content of the aesthetic appeal of Hakka dance; For example, the dance drama “Da Wai Wu·Xue Niang” (2008), the dance “Wai Wu Woman” (2014), “Wine Maid” (2016), “Hakka Xi” (2018) and other works can be seen in different aesthetic, but have the same body metaphor of female images.

Among these Hakka dance works, the dance drama “Da Wai Wu·Xue Niang” is the one that takes the body metaphor of Hakka female image to the extreme. By telling the historical process of Hakka ethnic group’s millennium struggle and generation migration, it creates a complete and vivid Hakka female image—Xueniang in the event narration and the overlapping of contradictions and conflicts. From “Prologue”, “Liangtai” and “Pillar”, an ignorant adopted daughter of the Lin family is portrayed, presenting a lively and brave “Hakka girl” in her teenage years, and physically witnessing the difficulties of Hakka ethnic migration at the beginning, to “The mountain wakes up” and “The candle is red” gradually growing into a “Hakka girl” in the adult period, when participating in and sacrificing oneself. Through the protagonist Xue Niang to promote the narrative, and correspondingly map the important influence of Hakka women in the development of migration, and finally to the “song is mute”, “the light is on”, “the Dragon Teng” the plot is interlinked, the protagonist Xue Niang has become the successor of Lin, the image of Hakka female characters has gradually three-dimensional, and finally narrated the Hakka people’s millennium circulation and thousands of miles of migration under the grief and joy of several generations. Although it is the basic method of artistic creation to condense characters’ characteristics and select typical characters’ personalities, it is rare to see artistic works that complete the historical narrative of the entire ethnic group with women’s own efforts. And

the dance drama “Da Wei Wu Xueniang” can complete the narrative of the main female in the heavy historical composition, which can be seen that it relies on the concentrated presentation of the ideology of Hakka female groups behind the image. This is a historical fact, but also the basis for the success of dance drama. In particular, at the beginning of the 20th century, the contemporary Chinese dance drama was at a new creative starting point of “great transformation”. This national dance drama with regional characteristics, gender color, historical narrative and body metaphor instantly became a highlight of Lingnan dance drama, adding a spring color to the creation of Chinese national dance drama. In addition, 10 years later, another Hakka female-themed dance work Hakka Xi (2018) came out, focusing on the marriage and marriage customs of Hakka women in the enthusiastic and positive concept of doing things and life attitude of Hakka children; In particular, this work beautifies the movements of Hakka women in their daily lives, extracts typical character forms and body movements, and through the group presentation and linear flow development on the modern stage, promotes the work to better express the inner emotions of “Hakka women” when they get married, becoming an excellent work with both aesthetic and ideological.

2.2 The Expression of Inner Emotion: Waitangmei

There are many different images of Hakka women, and their body metaphors are all-encompassing; If “Hakka woman” is the embodiment of gentleness, kindness, diligence and bravery in daily life, then, on the contrary, it is the melancholy, quiet and sincere emotion of “Waitangmei”. In fact, the title of “Waitangmei” did not have the praise of advanced civilization earlier, but was a deformed marriage custom that destroyed women in the traditional bad habits and drows. But with the evolution of social civilization, Hakka’s cognition and respect for women, and the understanding of gender relations have undergone brand new changes; Therefore, “Waitangmei” is no longer a kind of child bride identity, but a metaphor for the emotional loyalty, responsible for the family of newly married women; Due to the perennial absence of their husbands in family life, they are gentle and quiet, with a slight sense of melancholy on their brow. However, their loyalty to marriage emotions is the most praised quality of Hakka women, so they also become the typical objects favored by Hakka dance characters in shaping their images. For example, the female group dance “Red Cotton Pan” (2018) focuses on the human subject, pays attention to their emotional needs, connects the physical metaphor of the Hakka female character “Wait Lang Mei” with the common image of kapok, which is a landscape characteristic, lyrically expresses the daily mood that Hakka women look forward to: They may be looking forward to Lang’s return, or they may be looking forward to the occurrence of a certain event in a certain time node, or they have infinite expectations in their hearts... And from the “hope” emotion of this group, their “hope” is not simply combined with the action of “hope”, but with the performance of props cold hat to promote: While the use of the cool hat changes from “turning the hat” to “turning the hat” and “shaking the hat” in different Spaces, the mood of the work also experiences a progressive process from bland to warm. In the combination of Hakka female characters and the reality of the props and the virtual reality of the kapokay, the emotion expression is based on the ego, focusing on the depiction of

this group with a common inner emotional appeal. In this way, it highlights the attention to their humanity.

3. Presence: The Societies Meaning of Hakka Ethnic Memory

societies culture is an important part of Hakka memory. Hakka people's strong concept of ethnic origin is influenced by their societies belief. Different from the marginal status of Han women in the societies culture of the Central Plains, the Hakka ethnic group's societies sacrifice activities involving many deities are presented by the female body in a formula, which is metaphorically behind the Hakka ethnic group's collective memory identity, and the eternal presence of this body practice has become the image of Hakka societies culture, especially Buddhism and Taoism culture.

The fragrant flower ritual is an important part of Hakka societies ceremonies. Through academic research, it contains Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism as a whole, and presents a variety of performance forms of funeral customs and ceremonies. Among them, the Hakka female figure "Zhai" hosted by the "lotus pond" belongs to the Xianghua Buddha, is one of the performance forms of praying for the female dead soul in the Buddhist death rituals and Taoist Ji Du Ke Yi, it comes from the Buddhist classic "Buddha said on the Lanpenhui" in the "Mu lotus to save the mother" story, its forms are diverse, there are "single lotus" "double lotus" "hexagonal" "octagonal lotus" and so on. These female "Zhai" are singing scriptures around the lotus pool, while using different ceremonial appliances in their hands "play" out of a dozen kinds of varied actions, such as brandishing the dance stick flower, finger turning stick flower, pool stick around the back, stick chisel the prison door, dance incense back incense, tripod tip bowl, etc., in the interpretation of the "eye even to save the mother" story at the same time, also completed the female soul of the crossing. (Chinese national Folk dance integrated editorial Committee, 1996) Behind these body languages is the cultural support of the scriptures of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, so as to reach the synesthetic thinking with the gods, praying for the dead on the basis of transcendence. To this end, the female-dominated "Dalianchi" breaks through the prejudice that women are not allowed to participate in traditional societies culture, which shows that Hakka women's metaphorical function of the body is recognized as a societies meaning in the collective memory of the ethnic group.

In addition, Xingning Hakka "Cup flower dance" is a relatively active societies activity in Hakka Taoist culture, and it is also one of the few folk activities that can be danced and pray for the well-being of living people. It is usually performed in drag by men, accompanied by two singers and accompaniment. It tells the process of the combined witch mother, named Chen, Li and Lin, who is a nurse of the folk Chen, going to Maoshan to learn the Fa to wipe out evil. The performer holds two white porcelain bogong cups in each hand, and dances while singing and knocking on the porcelain cups. Dance steps are varied, from cloud step, cross step, kneeling step, etc., can advance and retreat, can be around the circle, can also walk "∞" shape; Hand movements have shaking cup, playing cup, turning cup, grinding cup, cup flower hands, etc., performers should follow the rhythm of the dance steps, with skilled

percussion skills, so that the porcelain cup alternately sent out crisp and pleasant, rich in rhythm changes and unique charm of the sound. (Chinese national Folk dance integrated editorial Committee, 1996) Although it is carried out by male performers, the narrative subject is still Hakka female; With the origin of folklore, we can still see the independence and self-consciousness of Hakka women's self-consciousness awakening, as well as the important role of the historical development of Hakka ethnic groups present. Even today, there are still artists who never get tired of it, and carry out aesthetic practice and artistic creation around the societies meaning under the Hakka female body metaphor; For example, the gold medal work of the fifth Lingnan Dance Competition "Qi" (2016) is based on the societies belief of the Cup flower dance and rooted in the spirit of Taoism; On the one hand, by the female dancers' body contains a strong sense of eight eight, with the theme of "praying for rain", aestheticizing the original function carried by "cup flower" in Taoist activities. On the other hand, extracting the core concept of folk Taoist monks in the cup flower performance, coupled with "cup flower dance" as the meaning of Hakka societies culture, The work also permeates the meaning of "Tao" everywhere in the performance process; In particular, the movement rhythm of women's bodies, dance vocabulary and kinetic force are mainly based on the turning potential of the circle, such as the body dynamics of bending, twisting and twisting and many "S" shaped bodies formed by the trend, etc. In the formation changes, the circle and its changes and transformations are also mainly based on its turning and balanced movement mode, which is similar to the movement of eight diagrams in the Taiji diagram. Among them, the contrast of the female body's symbolized trend and reverse trend of the circle is also consistent with the unity of opposites of everything in the universe and the harmony of the cyclic movement and change of Heaven and Tao, and it also gives full play to the eight diagrams consciousness in it. The meaning of "Tao" in the work is directly connected to the universe itself, and combined with the meaning of "pray", it symbolizes the harmony and unity of man, nature and the universe. The dancers set the overall tone of the work with their gestures beyond the physical body and their humble attitude toward all things in the universe. Combined with the sound of the cup flowers, the images beyond visual space are strengthened, making people feel the hollow state of mixed vitality in Tai Chi, and further feel the "Tao" of life in the universe and understand where the "Tao" lies. That is to say, while pursuing the realm of "the unity of heaven and man", the image of "a thousand worlds in a mustard" is wonderful. However, with the widespread spread and creation of "Cup flower Dance" in the modern stage, the folk Hakka "Cup flower Dance" gradually combined with Hakka tea culture, transforming from societies to entertainment activities, resulting in women's dance works such as "Invite Tea" (2009), "Youyou Salt Water Love" (2009), "Cup Flower Dance" (2017), etc. Its relaxed and cheerful performance style, elegant and demure aesthetic characteristics have made it widely spread in various groups and fields.

4. Peroration

The interdisciplinary study of dance, body and female issues is the key to re-examine various dance

phenomena in the human world, and it is also the meaning of the subject of anthropology, which includes both rational and sensual dance and body, thereby triggering people's thinking in different fields. Under the layers of stripping and digging, the value and significance of dance as a historical and cultural phenomenon and a component of cultural norms will continue to be strengthened and enhanced, which is also the direction and goal of future research on grand dance view. Hakka, as one of the Lingnan peoples, plays an important role in the special regional geography and culture. The female body metaphor of Hakka dance also presents a distinct feature that is different from the Han nationality in the Central Plain. Its appeal to social changes and the continuous improvement of ethnic aesthetic ability will connect the traditional and modern cultural memory, and present the cultural narrative and historical reflection of Hakka ethnic group.

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