

On Carr's Eleven-Dimensional Dramaturgy

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Abstract—Contemporary Irish playwright Marina Carr integrates eleven-dimension theory into her post dramatic art creation, forming a unique eleven-dimensional dramaturgy. This unique eleven-dimensional dramaturgy runs through Carr's whole drama creation career, and has different focuses in different periods: in her early drama, Carr concentrated on the expression of the concept of “non-linear time”. In the mid-land drama, she focuses on the creation of “high dimensional space”, while in the later drama of death and fantasy, she focuses on the presentation of “multidimensional worlds”. Finally, with the connection of the eleven-dimensional dramaturgy, Carr created a “non-linear”, “high dimensional” and “multi-dimensional” dynamic post-dramatic theater, and conveyed the eleven-dimensional philosophy of life beyond time and space.

Index Terms—Eleven dimensions, high dimensional space, multidimensional worlds, non-linear time, post-dramatic theater

I. INTRODUCTION

Marina Carr's drama is bold and innovative, which integrates the artistic features of absurdity, mystery, realism, surrealism and grotesque. [1] The research on the artistic characteristics of drama criticism mainly focuses on narrative art, space art, performance art, language art and style genre. These studies explored the aesthetic characteristics of Carr's dramatic art from different aspects. However, no critic has systematically summarized Carr's dramaturgy. This paper holds that Carr's dramaturgy is characterized by the term of “eleven-dimensional drama”. This paper will specifically explain the three core concepts of Carr's eleven-dimensional dramaturgy and their representation in different stages of Carr's drama creation. It points out that Carr's three different stages of drama creation focus on practicing the three core concepts of the eleven-dimensional dramaturgy, creating a “non-linear”, “high dimensional” and “multi-dimensional” post-dramatic theater and conveying Carr's eleven-dimensional philosophy.

II. ELEVEN-DIMENSIONAL DRAMATURGY AND POST-DRAMATIC THEATRE

Eleven Dimension is a new concept of physics in the 1990s. [2] In physics, eleven-dimensional time-space consists of three low space dimensions, one time dimension and seven high space dimensions. The three low dimensions

refer to the first dimension of line, the second dimension of surface and the third dimension of square which can be quantified by the length, width and height of Euclidean geometry. The fourth dimension is the time dimension. The other seven dimensions refer to the invisible curly higher dimensional spaces. The essence of the eleven-dimension theory lies in the three core concepts of “nonlinear time”, “high dimensional space” and “multidimensional world”.

Nonlinear time means that time does not move forward in a straight line from one direction, but is a nonlinear multi-directional and ubiquitous infinite stillness. In the eleven-dimension theory, time and space are unified. Every point in time is a point in space and exists simultaneously. Time is actually a space composed of points, lines and surfaces. Time is also a medium that connects things and allows information to pass through itself. [3] Where the time of one universe ends, the time of another universe begins. [4] Therefore, it makes sense to reverse the direction of time. Matter in reverse motion in time is antimatter. [3]

High dimensional space is a relative concept. Compared with the third dimension of surface, the third dimension of square is a high-dimension, and for the third dimension of square that we can perceive, the fourth dimension to the eleventh dimension are high dimensions. The famous Japanese physicist Michio Kaku points out that all matters are different vibration forms of string in high-dimensional space. [5] High dimensional time-space has supersymmetry, which determines the symmetry of the universe. Most importantly, high-dimensional space can unify the laws of nature. [5]

Multidimensional world refers to the universe with multiple dimensions, and each dimension coexists in parallel with other dimensions in other complete worlds. The microstructure of every universe is a complex multi-dimensional labyrinth. [4] Each universe at the same time forms a multidimensional reality with more universes: all other universes that do not create stars, planets or intelligent life do exist. [3] Through the wormhole of time and space, we can cross the worlds of different dimensions. The possibility of space-time crossing breaks the continuity and linearity of time, and also breaks the boundary between life and death. Death is like Roy Kerr's black hole wormhole, which can connect the living universe to the mirror death universe and make it heard and seen in a way that confuses the superficial modernity and the primitive atavism. [5]

The three core concepts of the eleven-dimension theory are of great significance not only to physical science, but also to social science. “Nonlinear time”, “high dimensional space” and “multidimensional world” deconstruct deep-rooted binary oppositions. The concept of non-linear time makes commonly held concept of linear time and finite space disintegrate. The existence of high-dimensional space and its ability to unify nature law transcend the boundaries of all things. [5] The coexistence of multi-dimensional

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worlds smashes stereotyped cognition of the oneness, centralization and modularity of the world. In short, the eleven-dimension theory contains a pluralistic and inclusive world view and cosmology. From the perspective of the eleven-dimension theory, individuals, social groups and even the world as a whole are presented as complex and diverse equal coexistence. The traditional binary oppositions are dispelled, and there is tolerance and awe everywhere. The division of the past / present / future in time, here / elsewhere in space, our world and the alien world are artificial illusory constructions. In the universe, we are all things, all things are also us.

It's in one year before Carr's *By the Bog of Cats...* (1996) came out, when the physics circles held the "Annual Meeting of Strings". At the meeting, Edward Witten proposed that a new vertical dimension appeared in the whole nine-dimension spaces, that is, the tenth dimension of space, which together with time constituted the eleven-dimensional space-time. [4] Carr is deeply influenced by this physical theory, and integrates it into her dramaturgy. Carr's usage of the concept is not to show the eleven dimensions as quantitative and accurate as physics on the stage, but to highlight the thinking mode and creative method of "non-linear time", "high-dimensional space" and "multi-dimensional world" in drama creation. The philosophy of "non-linear time", "high dimensional space" and "multi-dimensional world" is the essence of Carr's drama creation.

In 2012, modern world literature conducted an interview with Carr. In this interview, Carr summed up her dramaturgy with "eleven-dimensional drama":

NF: Your plays are of mixed genres—they include aspects of tragedy, comedy, realism, magical realism—but there are different dimensions to them and different realms of existence. Often there are characters coming in from the afterlife or the otherworld, and any boundaries separating those realms are permeable. Why do you think you bring those elements into your writing?

MC: I suppose the temporal is one dimension, and then the eternal is another dimension. The physicists have discovered eleven dimensions. The mind boggles. I go into meltdown when I try to think about it, but there are people alive today who understand what eleven dimensions are. Wouldn't that be amazing? a play with eleven dimensions, that's my ambition. A life with eleven dimensions. I don't think we live ambitiously enough at all. Can you imagine? I have eleven lives. Who would you spend them with? How would you spend them? [6]

In the dialogue, the interviewer mentioned the remarkable characteristics of Carr's Drama with "mixed type - tragedy, comedy, realism, magic, etc., "multi dimension", "multi field", and even "multi-dimensional world", "breaking the separation" and "infiltration boundary". When the interviewer asked Carr why she wanted to integrate these elements into her writing, Carr's answer focused on the core concept "eleven dimensions", and put forward the concept of "eleven-dimensional drama", and clearly pointed out that her writing goal was to create eleven-dimensional drama. Obviously, Carr is familiar with the eleven-dimension

theory and applied it to her dramaturgy, forming the unique eleven-dimension dramaturgy, and even gradually condensed into her "eleven-dimension philosophy". As a matter of fact, Carr's eleven-dimension dramaturgy and philosophy run through her whole drama creation process. This paper will specifically explain how Carr's drama embodies eleven-dimension dramaturgy in her writing.

Simultaneously with the eleven-dimension theory, the post drama theater was also popular. In the 1990s, great changes took place in western drama, and a debate about "theatre" and "drama" was launched. Western drama emphasized the importance of other elements besides text in theatre and gradually went beyond the category of "drama" art and paid more attention to "theatre" art. Hans-Thies Lehmann, a famous drama expert, summarized this period as "post-theatre period" (or post-Brecht Theatre). [7] The core characteristics of this new type of theater include performance process, discontinuity, non-textuality, pluralism, symbol diversity, subversion, deconstruction and resistance to interpretation. Specifically speaking, the characteristics of post-drama theater are shown in three aspects. First, the linear and continuous forms of time are replaced by synchronic and multi-level ones. [7] The traditional linear narrative structure is also replaced by the splicing of visual space, which produces a poetic effect. [7] Secondly, drama text and stage space are regarded as high-dimensional space of equal vision which highlights the audience's autonomy. Third, the text is no longer the center, but juxtaposes with other dramatic means such as music, dance, art and so on. Words are seen as part of the sound in the theater. The dialogic structure is replaced by the polyphonic structure, so as to construct multiple world dimensions in drama.

The golden 30 years of Carr's drama creation is the period when the theory of the eleven-dimension theory and post-drama theater sweep the world. Carr introduces the essence of the eleven-dimension theory into the post-drama theatre, breaking the Irish drama creation tradition and forming her unique eleven-dimensional dramaturgy.

Carr's eleven-dimension dramaturgy is embodied in her post-drama theatre of "non-linear time", "high dimensional space" and "multi-dimensional world". Through theater art, Carr breaks the boundaries of different time and space, reappears our invisible other time and space, such as myth, thinking, dream and fantasy, breaks the boundaries of life / death, past / present / future, known / unknown and other different time and space, and presents the existing creative dramatic effect through multi-dimensional time and space performances. Just as the critic Enrica Cerquoni summed up, Carr's drama is a kind of changing, real and concrete art form, which expands the concepts of time, space and the world by creating real space and imaginary space as well as crossing and extending between different time and space. [8] Carr breaks the dichotomy of time and space, deconstructs the linear characteristics of time, the static state of space and the uniqueness of the world. Guided by the thinking mode of "nonlinear time", "high dimensional space" and "multidimensional world", Carr created a grotesque and alienated post-drama theater, and inspired readers and audiences to think "who are we? Where are we from? Where are we going? " with explosive thinking revolution,

so as to inspire people to rethink the binary opposition solidification thinking in theater, pursue nonlinear, high-dimensional and multi-dimensional life, and finally change the linear, low dimensional, unified, single and solidification thinking. The eleven-dimension dramaturgy in Carr's plays has different emphases in different stages. In the early absurd experimental drama, Carr concentrated on the concept of "nonlinear time". In the middle drama, she focused on the creation of high-dimensional space, while in the later drama of death and dreams, she paid more attention to the presentation of multi-dimensional worlds. Finally, Carr broke through the male tradition in drama creation, created a unique post-drama theater, and conveyed a type of eleven-dimension philosophy.

III. NONLINEAR TIME IN EARLY DRAMA

Carr once said: "I never believe that time is linear", "we are time, but also beyond time" [9]. She believes that everyone is both in time and out of time. [10] We don't belong to the world, but at the same time we do belong to the world. She holds that time always crosses the infinite cycle of time and space limitation, no boundary, juxtaposition and coexistence. In her early drama, Carr concentrated on the concept of "non-linear time", presenting the absurd experimental style of post-drama theater.

The experimental nature of Carr's early drama practices the nonlinear characteristics of time from the drama production itself. Since the 1970s, Irish theater began to create experimental drama. In this regard, Carr is a pioneer. Her early plays draw lessons from the "feminist collective creation" mode in the production mode. On the basis of cooperative practice, on behalf of the Irish marginal theater in the late 1980s and early 1990s, she created absurd, treacherous and fascinating experimental drama. Among them, *Low in the Dark* (1989) and *Love Things* (1991) are produced through studio and improvisation. *Low in the Dark* is produced by Carr and all the staff of "Crook Sixpence" Theater Art Center. The whole process is dominated by actors, and the production is completed in cooperation and gameplay. In the same way, Carr joined two new drama studios to complete *Love Things* through a series of "meetings, seminars and rehearsals". The two plays transcend the limitation of linear time structure and single author, subvert the traditional way of drama creation, break the barriers between individual and art, and create a common dramatic language among playwrights, actors and producers. [11]

In terms of the dialogue, the linear development of time is broken by the fragmentary stories, repeated scenes and fuzzy memories in the early drama. Carr inherits Beckett's absurd features, erasing the beginning, the middle and the end in her early drama, overlapping and replacing the dialogue with many fragmented events, making it chaotic and trivial without main line, plot or even contradiction. Many of the story clues in the play become an infinite cycle because of the continuous repetition of the beginning, interruption and recovery, which makes the beginning, development, climax and end unrecognizable. For example, in *Ullalllo* (1989), Tilly and Tom Reid's argument over a period of their memory leads to the breaking of the accuracy,

uniqueness and linearity of time:

Tilly: That was the last time.

Tomred: That was the first time.

Tilly: Tomred.

Tomred: Yeah.

Tilly: That was a time. [12]

Their debate on memory unifies the beginning and the end of time, dispels the beginning and the end of the story, makes time spatialization, and makes memory present a state of natural existence without time belonging, thus breaking the concept of linear development of time. In contrast, the banter and dispelling of linear time is more thorough. The script of the play is composed of a series of absurd and loose episodes, which is very innovative. At the beginning of the play, six members of the chorus enter the stage, and they disperse randomly on the stage. Each member takes turns to provide various fragments for an initially confusing "once" story:

1 chor: Once upon a time there was a time

2 chor: And before that time there was a time before that

3 chor: Called one time which was nearly the time we want to talk about.

4 chor: But after that time called one time, there was a time beyond that

5 chor: which was before once upon a time and after one time. [11]

Each chorus member's time language completely disrupts the certainty of time, resulting in the multi-dimensional movement of the whole follow-up story in time.

Carr's early nonlinear time structure resists the closed state of traditional drama. She avoided adjusting the chaos on the stage, made the drama open, and expressed the various possibilities of drama. [11] Carr's "non-linear time" of eleven-dimension dramaturgy avoids the imitation convention of the dominant patriarchal drama organization, breaks the classic drama creation mode of Abby Theatre, brings the absurd experimental style of post-drama theatre to the Irish Drama world, alleviates the status quo of the marginalization of non-traditional techniques and female voices in Irish Drama, and marks her role in the drama. Her non-linear time production of the early drama also lays a solid foundation for the successful representation of "high dimensional space" in the following mid-land drama.

IV. HIGH DIMENSIONAL SPACE IN MID-LAND DRAMA

The practice of nonlinear time makes Carr think about the innovation of dramatic space, which is mainly practiced in her mid-land drama. According to the eleven-dimension theory, the high dimensions have three main characteristics. First, the existence of high-dimensional space can explain the strange phenomenon of low dimensional space. For example, "supernatural", "evil" and "supernatural" phenomena are actually the existence forms of high-dimensional space in low dimensional space. Secondly, the supersymmetry of high-dimensional space causes the space to break up, overturn and transform into a new space, so as to constantly transform the form of life existence. People can become gods, ghosts, magicians and monsters, and vice versa, [5] and finally achieve the effect of

“changing constantly while unchanging consistently, and there is an unchangeable source in the changing”. Third, the high-dimensional space is the metaphor of people's overall vision and high-dimensional panorama. Carr transformed the high-dimensional space's characteristics of physics into the literary world. The waters and bogs in Carr's mid-land drama show typical high-dimensional spatial characteristics.

The powerful waters are the powerful entrances of Carr's drama and the high dimensional spaces in the world of Carr's drama. [12] Carr regards waters as an important symbolic power of high dimensional space. [13] She believes that water is the gateway to a high-dimensional world. The owl Lake in *The Mai* (1994) and its mythology determine the fate of people in the play. [13] No one can get out of the fate brought by Owl lake. In the house by Owl lake, the grandma can summon ghosts and dance with them. [13] Owl lake here is like a higher dimensional world, calling Mai to her own destiny - death. Similarly, the Belmont Lake in *Portia Coughland* (1996) is also a high-dimensional space, which reflects Portia's fate and calls Portia to death. The Cula Lake in *Ariel* is also a typical high-dimensional water space in Carr's dramatic world. These high-dimensional water spaces are the literary metaphorical representations of high-dimensional space in the physics, and have the typical characteristics of high-dimensional space: the occurrence of supernatural phenomena, the mutual transformation and mirror symmetry between human and non-human life, and the overall vision and high-dimensional panorama.

The bog is similar to the fold of time and space, [14] connecting the low dimensional and high dimensional world, thus becomes the high dimensional space in Carr's drama. At the beginning of *By the Bog of Cats*..., black swan, witch, prophet, ghost fancier, spirit, human and other species gather in the bog of cats, and transform the bodies with each other, showing different dimensions of the mirror image relationship. The heroine Hester Swane and the black swan are like shadows of each other. [13] As her mother said: “Swane means a swan. She will live as long as this black swan, not a day more, not a day less” [13]. The ghost image of Hester also mirrors the spirit of her brother. She also has a mirror image relationship with witch named Catwoman and the ghost fancier because of her ability of prophecy. As mysterious and weird as high-dimensional space, the ancient bog of cats often makes people's eyes change and transform. [13] In the same way, the decay of the bog farm determines the corruption of the family's decay. The bogs in the two plays present people with different mirror image groups. The bogs act as high-dimensional spaces bearing supersymmetry, like porous deformers and prisms, causing deformation between different species. [6]

In the high-dimensional spaces of Carr's mid-land drama, all life forms cross borders of life species and achieves life unity, and the central position of human being has been dispelled. As Carr said: “we have sharks, reptiles, gorillas, snakes in our bodies. We have these qualities at the same time in the high-dimensional fog of time and space” [6]. Half god, half monster and half spirit are more in line with the essence of human being as a living body. Human civilization, which puts human beings above other living beings, obviously violates the laws of nature and is absurd

and ignorant. The opposition between human and non-human is not tenable in the eleven-dimension theory. The concept of “high dimensional space” in Carr's mid-land drama breaks all the binary oppositions, advocates a high dimensional and overall outlook on life, and guides the later drama to infuse the concept of “multi-dimensional world”.

V. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL WORLD IN LATER DRAMA

According to the eleven-dimension theory, the structure of the universe is a complex multi-dimensional maze. [4] The extension of this physical multi dimension in Carr's plays is reflected in the dramatic representation of the “multidimension worlds” such as death and dream in her later plays.

In Carr's later drama, the realm of death is presented as another dimension of the world. Carr regards life and death as the wormhole of multidimensional space-time, and uses the technique of time polyphony or flashback to cross the past / present / future, here / there, known / unknown and different space-time dimensions between life and death, giving the meaning of rebirth to death and seeking the support of rebirth. The possibility of rebirth can be realized on the stage of Carr's drama. Through the dislocation of time and the displacement of space, Carr builds the channel of time and space travel, and realizes the time leap and the extension of time and space. In *Women and Scarecrow* (2006) and *Sixteen Possible Glimpses* (2011), the characters connect the past / present / future, here / there and different dimensions of time and space through the dislocation and displacement of time and space. Their state of life and death is always uncertain. They are always on the stage world but at the same at other worlds. They may participate in the plot with the characters in the stage scene, and simultaneously insert the memory of the characters in other places as outsiders. The polyphony of time is realized through the jump and turn of time, the stratification of narrative time and the juxtaposition of present, past and future. In *Women and Scarecrow*, the dimension of the real time and space is juxtaposed with those of unknown death, realizing the crossing and folding of known / unknown time and space. The confusion of existence and death in drama breaks and subverts the boundary between life and death, transcends the worlds of life and death, and gets rid of the tyranny of closed death. On the one hand, the dead characters act as normal stage characters, on the other hand, they live in the invisible alien world of death. Their conversation juxtaposes the space-time orientation of reality with the self in fantasy in the form of imagination. [15] In *Sixteen Possible Glimpses*, Chekhov and himself after death are like shadows; their mirror image existence makes the time and space of life / death transform each other, leading human beings towards the life orientation of life to death, that is, life to death.

Dreamland is another dimension of world in Carr's drama. In the interview about “eleven-dimensional drama”, Carr expressed her views on dreams. She said, dreams are omens, dreams are beautiful, and dreams cannot be realized. In fact, we carry so much mystery that we deny it until it forces us to pay attention to it and admit its existence. [16] Carr also stressed that another world exists in extreme moments, or in

our dreams in another interview. [17] In the trilogy of dreams (*The Cordelia Dream* 2008, *Marble* 2009 and *Indigo* 2015), Carr subverts the binary opposition between dream and reality, unifies the myth, religion and science of eternal return “dream”, and establishes the eternal emotional connection between them. James George Frazer, a famous anthropologist, emphasizes in his *The Golden Bough* (1910) that human needs are basically similar no matter when and where they are, but people in different times adopt different ways to meet their needs. [18] In the final analysis, dream myth, religion and science are just theories of thought and eternal pursuit of divinity. [18] Although the demonstration of dreams as the existence of another world in the eleven-dimension theory is still only at the theoretical level, one day, as Frazer believed, “dream” will become a scientific and sober reality. No matter dream, myth, religion and science are different dimensions of thoughts and beliefs. They overlap, interweave, merge and change with each other, eventually overturn the opposition between dream and reality, and construct a multi-dimensional life in the process of fantasy and truth.

Through the scientific facts of juxtaposition and coexistence of multi-dimensional worlds in the eleven-dimension theory and the deduction of multi-dimensional juxtaposition and coexistence of text and stage space, Carr enlightens people that any exploration of single authenticity of the world is doomed to fail, because the authenticity of the single world is changing all the time; we should adapt to the common existence of multi-dimensional worlds to make room for the diversity and inclusive truth. As the Irish mythologist Stephens said, the world is not just one, but several. We live in worlds of mutual communication and integration, and there is no real and inexcusable harm. The binary opposition in the single world norm no longer exists in the multi-dimensional worlds. From the perspective of eleven-dimension theory, the single world view is dispelled, and the multi-dimensional worldview of mobility, pluralism and hybridity is reconstructed.

VI. CONCLUSION

Carr's eleven-dimension dramaturgy makes her plays extremely innovative. Carr's eleven-dimensional drama has experienced the evolution and sublimation from the early non-linear time theater to the high dimensional space theater in the mid-land drama, and finally to the multi-dimensional world theater in the later stage. With these plays, finally, she successfully constructs the “post-drama theater” which highlights the deconstruction, subversion and reconstruction of the concepts of time, space and the world. Moreover, she not only challenges the Irish tradition but also conveys the eleven-dimensional philosophy of life with the core of “non-linear”, “high-dimensional” and “multi-dimensional” under the background of the new era.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

D. Z. Zou conducted the research, analyzed the data and wrote the paper, and had approved the final version.

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