

Text Transformation of Dance Language from the Perspective of New Media

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Abstract—New media technologies drive the transformation of dance language from “body ontology” to “audio-visual fusion”, at the core of which is the multimodal reconstruction of dance body symbols and audio-visual symbols of images. Based on the framework of Saussure’s semiotics, Bakhtin’s dialogue theory, and Kristeva’s intertextual theory, and in combination with cases such as Henan Satellite TV’s “Tang Palace Banquet” and the variety show “Dance for a Thousand Years”, this paper dissects the mechanism of text transformation of dance language: The camera language achieves vertical deepening of expression through the “secondary encoding” of body symbols through shot size arrangement and motion design; Visual text builds a network of intertextuality based on the fusion of virtual and real and the design of light and shadow, promoting the horizontal extension of meaning. Research shows that this transformation reshapes the system of dance symbols and helps classical dance shift from “theatrical aesthetics” to “media aesthetics”, but beware of the risk of ontological dissolution caused by technology. This paper provides a theoretical reference for dance language innovation and cultural inheritance in the new media era, emphasizing that the application of technology should adhere to the ontological nature of art.

Keywords—new media, dance language, text conversion, semiotics, intertextuality

I. INTRODUCTION

Dance uses the body as its core medium, and the essence of its language system is “body symbols” - through movement postures, spatial arrangements, rhythm and cadence, emotions and culture are conveyed, as Professor Lyu Yisheng puts it: “Dance language is the main component of dance composition and the main object of dance aesthetics. It is both mediating and the ultimate result of the completion of dance images.” In the context of traditional theater, the dissemination of dance language relies on the direct presence of the “dancer - audience”, and the signifier (body movements) and signified (deep connotations) of the symbols need to be interpreted based on the aesthetic experience of the audience, which has the limitations of limited dissemination radius and easy distortion of expression [1].

The introduction of new media technology has broken this predicament: video technology reconstructs the language of dance with audio-visual symbols such as camera shots, light and shadow, and sound effects, transforming it from a “single body text” to a “body-audio-visual” complex text. This transformation is not a superimposition of technologies, but an innovation in the symbolic system - dance body symbols interact with image symbols to generate new ideographic logics [2]. Linguistic theory provides a key perspective for

interpreting this process: Saussure’s dichotomy of signifier and signified reveals the mechanism of symbolic meaning generation; Bakhtin’s “dialogue theory” explains the interaction of symbols; Kristeva’s Intertextuality theory dissects the meaning network of complex texts [3]. Based on this, this paper focuses on classical dance television programs in the context of new media, using linguistic theories as tools to analyze the paths, values, and risks of dance language-text conversion.

II. CAMERA LANGUAGE: AUDIO-VISUAL TRANSLATION AND IDEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION OF DANCE BODY SYMBOLS

The visual language is the core means of the translation of the dance text. Through audio-visual symbols such as shot size, movement trajectory, and editing rhythm, the dance body symbols are “re-encoded” - while retaining the core meaning of the body symbols, the expressive dimension is expanded to achieve the leap from “theatrical perception” to “medium perception”. From a linguistic perspective, this process is a dialogue between the “audio-visual signifier” of the camera and the “action signifier” of the body, ultimately generating a new “signified” and deepening the level of expression.

A. Framing: Focusing on Body Symbols and Extension of Spatial Meaning

The choice of shot size directly affects the range of representation of the body symbol, adjusting the audience’s perceived focus through “focus” or “extension” to make up for the limitations of the theatrical perspective. In traditional theater, due to the perception of dance from a “panoramic perspective”, body details (such as finger movements, eye changes) are easily overlooked, resulting in some “referents” not being conveyed; The “close-up - medium shot - full shot” switch in the language of the camera allows for the “selective presentation” of body symbols.

For example, in the classical dance segment of Henan Satellite TV: The production team used “aerial vertical overhead” panoramic shots to capture the group dance - at this point, the rotation of individual dancers’ sleeves is no longer isolated, but forms a “dynamic pattern” (like blooming petals) with the movements of other dancers. The “downward finger” of the camera and the “rotational finger” of the body communicate, expanding the body symbols from the “three-dimensional space of the stage” to the “multi-dimensional space of the image”, generating a new “signified”: not only the “gentle rhythm” of the boxiu dance, but also the “order beauty of group synergy” and the “cultural

connotation of ‘harmony without uniformity’’. This extension of spatial meaning is difficult to achieve in a theater, as the audience cannot perceive the overall connection of the body symbols from a vertical perspective.

Close-up shots deepen the subtleties of expression by “focusing” on parts of the body. In classical sword dance performances, the camera often focuses on “hand movements” and “facial expressions”: Close-ups in high-speed photography break down the sword dance’s “thrusting, picking, chopping, and flicking” into details such as “sword tip trajectory” and “wrist flip”—these “microscopic fingers” are easily overlooked in the theater, but close-ups make them the “visual focus”, enhancing the sword dance’s “precision”, “power”, “agility” and other “points”. At the same time, the close-up’s capture of the dancer’s “resolute gaze” extends the “signified” of the body symbols from “the movement itself” to “the state of mind”, achieving a deepening of meaning “from the surface to the core”.

B. Motion Shots and Editing: Temporal Reconfiguration and narrative Logic Construction of Body symbols

Motion shots and editing are “temporal reorganizations” of body symbols, breaking the theater’s “linear time” and constructing multi-dimensional narratives, transforming the language of dance from “sequences of movements” to “narrative texts”. Bakhkin’s “dialogue theory” points out that textual meaning stems from symbolic interaction; In this process, the “temporal flow” of moving shots converses with the “temporal patchwork” of editing and the “temporal rhythm” of body symbols, generating narrative meaning that transcends linear time.

Motion shots give the body symbols a “temporal fluidity” signifier through trajectories such as “follow”, “surround”, and “push and pull”. Take the “Li Bai Water Sword Dance” in “Offering a Drink” from “Dance for a Thousand Years” as an example: The “underwater follow-up shot” follows the dancer’s movement trajectory - when the dancer breaks through the water surface with the sword, the camera captures water splashes and light and shadow; When the dancer spins, the camera wraps around to show 360-degree motion. This synchronous dialogue elevates the “point” of the body symbols: the sword dance is no longer an isolated movement, but a “narrative of Li Bai’s unrestrained state of mind” - the camera movement simulates “drunkenness”, water splashes and light and shadow enhance “poetic romance”, achieving a leap from “movement expression” to “emotional narrative”.

Editing techniques reconstruct the narrative logic through “time splicing”. In traditional theater, the dance time is “irreversible” and the audience needs to perceive the “beginning, development, transition and conclusion” in sequence; Editing breaks the linear time through “slow-motion replay” and “multi-view switching”. In “The Night Banquet of Tang Palace”, the “fast cut + slow play” combination: the fast cut “round step” shows the “agility” of the Tang figurines, and the slow play “lifting the artifact” highlights the “solemnity”. The signifier dialogue between “fast” and “slow” generates a new “signified” - “the vitality of Tang Dynasty music and dance and the depth of traditional culture”. In addition, the multi-perspective switching (the same movement presenting “front-side-back”) provides the

audience with a “multi-dimensional interpretation space”, allowing the expression to form a “network of meaning” and enriching the narrative layers.

C. Summary: The Expressive Expansion Mechanism of Camera Language

The ideographic expansion of body symbols by camera language is essentially “the superposition and dialogue of the symbol system”: The “visual and auditory signifiers” of the camera interact with the “motor signifiers” of the body to generate new “signifiers” through “focus - extension” and “recombination - dialogue” - retaining the core meanings of classical dance such as “softness” and “power”, while adding new dimensions such as space (multi-dimensional order), time (multi-dimensional narrative), emotion (delicate state of mind), A shift from “single meaning” to “multi-dimensional meaning” [4]. This transformation enhances communication efficiency and makes the aesthetic concepts of classical dance, which are “vivid and dynamic” and “harmony between man and nature”, perceived by a wider audience.

III. VISUAL TEXT: INTERTEXTUAL RECONSTRUCTION AND SPECTACLE CREATION OF MULTIMODAL SYMBOLS

Visual text spectacle creation is a “systematic reconstruction” of the language of dance - through the fusion of virtual and real scenes, dynamic lighting and shadow design, and multi-media superposition, to build an “intertextual network” of body symbols and image symbols, transforming the language of dance from “body-dominated” to “multimodal collaborative” text. Kristeva’s “Intertextuality theory” states that text is an absorption and transformation of previous text; The new media dance visual text is a “multitextuality” of the body text, the historical and cultural text, and the video technology text, forming a “spectacle text” with both sensory impact and cultural depth.

A. Integration of Virtual and Real Scenes: Intertextuality of Body Symbols and Spatial Symbols

In traditional theater, dance space symbols (stage sets) are “static and monotonous”, and have limited interaction with body symbols; The “dynamic pluralism” spatial symbols generated by technologies such as “3D modeling” and “AR/XR” intertextuality with the body symbols creates a spectacle of “coexistence of man and scene”, extending the “signification” to the interpretation of “historical and cultural scenes”.

The chapter “Yue Nu Lingfeng” in “Dance for a Thousand Years” is highly representative: 3D modeling restores the spatial symbols of “ancient Jiangnan water town” - pavilions, terraces, flowing water and houses are not static backgrounds, but dynamic intertextuality with the dancers’ body symbols: When the dancers’ “small steps” move through the streets and alleys, the “small step signifier” converses with the “street and alley signifier” to generate the signifier of “the lightness of the Yue girl”; When the dancer spins her waist by the water, the “spinning waist finger” echoes with the “rippling water finger” to create the “walking in a painting” signified. The deeper meaning of this intertextuality lies in the spatial symbols (the water towns of Jiangnan) recreating the “poetic atmosphere of ancient times”, and the body symbols (the movements of the Yue women) restoring the

“temperament of historical figures”. The combination of the two extends the “signified” from “the beauty of the movement” to “the remembrance of ancient Jiangnan culture”, achieving the leap from “expressive movement” to “expressive culture”.

AR technology further enhances the intertextuality between the virtual and the real. In “Tang Palace Banquet”, AR technology superimposes virtual symbols of “Sui Dynasty Music and Dance Figurines” around real dancers - the “static postures” of the virtual music and dance figurines are intertextualized with the “dynamic movements” of real dancers: when dancers imitate “bowing hands”, the virtual music and dance figurines are simultaneously “activated”; When the dancers show “Tang Dynasty music and dance”, the virtual figurines become “historical references” [5]. This intertextuality adds a reference of “historical heritage” to the body symbols: the dancers’ movements are no longer isolated creations but an inheritance of “ancient music and dance culture”, and the virtual symbols reinforce the sense of cultural weight.

B. Dynamic Light and Shadow and Special Effects: Resonance of Meaning between Body Symbols and Light and Shadow Symbols

Light and shadow are the core symbols of the image, and their “light and shade, color, and motion” can refer to the “meaning resonance” with the body symbols - by responding to the rhythm and emotion of the movement through changes in light and shadow, visual wonders are constructed and cultural connotations are deepened. In “Semiotic Aesthetics”, Barth emphasizes that artistic creation is the “re-encoding” of the symbolic system; The application of dynamic light and shadow and special effects is a “re-encoding” of the body symbol and the light and shadow symbol, enabling the signifier to echo and the signified to strengthen [6].

The creation of the “Fire” section in “Dance for a Thousand Years” is a model: the dancer interprets the “vitality of fire” through body movements - the arms “rise” to simulate the rising of flames, and the torso “twist” to simulate the leaping of flames, which is the “signifier” of the body symbol; Virtual flame light and shadow symbols generated by real-time rendering technology gradually change from sparks to bands of light against a black backdrop, flipping and entwining as the dancer moves, this is the “signatory” of the light and shadow symbols. The “resonance of the two fingers” creates the spectacle of “human-fire coexistence” : the time bands extend synchronously when the arms are raised, and the time bands wrap synchronously when the torso is twisted. From a semiotic perspective, this resonance elevates the “signified” : from “imitation of the flame” to “praise of the power of life” - the flame becomes a cultural metaphor for “tenacious vitality”, and the “bright warmth” of light and shadow further highlights the emotional value.

Split-screen technology combined with light and shadow achieves intertextuality of “multi-dimensional meaning”. At the climax of “Fire”, split screens are presented: on the left, the dancer’s movements; on the right, the light and shadow of the flames; and in the middle, the historical scene of “a prairie fire” (ancient people drilling wood to make fire, prairie bonfire). The intertextuality of multiple screens makes the “signified” form a network: the “flame imitation” of body

movements, the “flame form” of light and shadow, and the “flame culture” of historical scenes all point to “the connection between flame and human civilization”, achieving a horizontal extension of the meaning.

C. Wia and Surround Presentation: Breakthroughs and Elevations of Body Symbols and Movement Symbols

In classical dance, “flying” is the core aesthetic pursuit (such as “floating in the air” in the flying apsaras and “leaping and soaring” in the sword dance), but the physiological limits of the human body make the body symbols of “flying” in the theater mostly “mimics” (jumping, lifting), expressing abstract meanings; The “wirework technique” and “360-degree surround shooting” provide the “motion symbol” support for the “flying” body symbol, breaking through physical gravity to achieve “concretization” and “sublimation”, creating a spectacle of “beyond reality”.

The 伎乐飞天 dance segment in “King Kong of the Dragon Gate” is highly representative: via makes the dancer “hover in the air”, 360-degree surround camera captures the performance - via’s “hovering finger” and the dancer’s floating finger ‘dialogue: The ribbon unfolds as it hoists, and the arms’ stretch and ‘hover’ combine to transform the ‘flying’ body symbol from ‘analog’ to ‘concrete’; The “motion finger” surrounding the camera further enhances the effect: the audience can perceive the dynamics of “flying” from any Angle-the flow of the ribbon, the posture of the body, and the vastness of the space together create the experience of “being in the Heavenly Palace”. The significance of this transformation lies in the elevation of the meaning of “flying” from “abstract lightness” to “concrete divinity” -- 伎乐飞天 as a “Buddhist art symbol”, “flying” inherently contains the connotation of “transcendence and auspiciousness”, and the wirework and the surrounding camera perfectly present this connotation, achieving a cultural elevation.

In addition, the surround presentation enhances “audience participation”: in traditional theater, the audience is a “passive viewer”; The “multi-view pointing” of the surround lens makes the audience an “active perceiver” who can switch angles to “participate” in the scene, and this resonance further reinforces the aesthetic value [7].

D. Summary: The Mechanism of Creating Wonders in Visual Texts

The creation of the spectacle of visual text is the “construction of an intertextual network of multimodal symbols”: body symbols (movements), image symbols (virtual scenes, light and shadow), and historical and cultural symbols (Jiangnan water towns, flying apnea culture) absorb and transform each other, forming a “resonance of meaning”. This intertexturing, through “fusion of the virtual and the real”, “resonance of light and shadow”, “breakthrough of movement”, breaks the limitations of physical space, gravity, and time, extending the “signification” from “the action itself” to “cultural connotations”, “emotional resonance”, “audience participation”, and builds a spectacle text that combines “sensory impact and cultural depth”. This transformation meets the aesthetic demands of the new media audience and drives classical dance from “niche art” to “mass communication”, providing a new path for the inheritance of

traditional culture.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The text transformation of dance language in the new media perspective is an inevitable result of dance art adapting to the media environment. Its essence is the “reconstruction of the symbol system” based on linguistic theory - the “secondary encoding” of body symbols by camera language to achieve vertical deepening of expression. Visual text builds multimodal intertextuality networks to promote lateral extension of meaning. From a linguistic perspective, this transformation has three core values:

The first is the enrichment of symbolic meaning. Camera language adds a “visual and auditory signifier layer” to body symbols, extending the “signified” from “movement beauty” to “spatial beauty, temporal beauty, emotional beauty”; The intertextuality of the visual text is associated with historical and cultural symbols, forming a “network of meaning” that deepens cultural connotations.

Secondly, communication efficiency is enhanced. Camera language compensates for the limitations of the theatrical perspective, allowing the details and the whole of body symbols to be perceived; The visual spectacle meets the “sensory demands” of new media audiences, attracts non-professional audiences to focus on classical dance, and drives it from “elite aesthetic” to “mass aesthetic”.

Third, cultural inheritance and innovation. Virtual scenes, AR and other technologies visually reproduce historical and cultural scenes (such as Jiangnan water towns, Longmen Grottoes), making classical dance a “carrier of traditional culture” and achieving the dual goals of “artistic inheritance” and “cultural inheritance” [8].

At the same time, the application of technology should be wary of two major risks: one is “ontological dissolution” - over-reliance on image symbols (cool special effects, virtual scenes), which may neglect the normativity of movements and the authenticity of emotions, making the language of dance a “technical appendage”; The second is “superficiality” - the blind pursuit of wonders may only retain the external form of classical dance and lose the aesthetic core of “vitality” and “unity of body and mind” [9]. Therefore, text conversion should adhere to the principle of “art as the foundation, technology as the application”: image technology serves the expression of the meaning of body symbols, not substitutes; Visual wonders are built on cultural connotations rather than just showing off skills.

In the future, technologies such as AI motion capture and

the metaverse will offer more possibilities for the transformation of dance language, but no matter how technology evolves, the core of dance language remains “the emotional and cultural expression of body symbols [10].” Only by being guided by linguistic theories, grasping the mechanism of symbolic meaning generation, and balancing the relationship between technology and art can the sustainable development of dance language in the new media era be achieved, and the traditional art of classical dance continue to thrive.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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