

An Exploration of the "Appreciation by Both the Refined and the Popular" Path in Song and Dance Troupe Performances

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Abstract: In the context of contemporary cultural diversification, song and dance troupe performances face the challenge of integrating tradition with modernity, and elite aesthetics with popular tastes. As a traditional Chinese aesthetic paradigm, "appreciation by both the refined and the popular" embodies a rich cultural context and dynamic symbolic interaction. From the perspective of aesthetic logic, this paper systematically explores innovations in content generation, narrative mechanisms, and aesthetic experience within song and dance troupe performances. By means of deconstructing and reconstructing cultural symbols, integrating diverse aesthetic elements, updating narrative structures, and enhancing audience-performer interaction through technological intervention, dance performances have achieved an effective dialogue between traditional culture and modern aesthetics. This promotes the transformation of the concept of "appreciation by both the refined and the popular" within the contemporary artistic ecology. The study reveals the mechanisms by which aesthetic experiences are generated under cross-cultural and digital technological conditions, providing both theoretical and practical references for the future development of dance art.

Keywords: appreciation by both the refined and the popular; dance performance; aesthetic logic; cultural integration; narrative mechanisms; technological intervention

Introduction

With the increasing complexity of social and cultural structures and the diversification of audience aesthetic demands, traditional dance art urgently needs to break through the limitations of a single aesthetic paradigm and explore innovative paths that reconcile both refined and popular aesthetic orientations. As a model of aesthetic pluralism in traditional Chinese culture, "appreciation by both the refined and the popular" not only carries profound historical significance but also aligns with contemporary trends of cultural integration and aesthetic accessibility. As an important performance platform that combines traditional art with modern creativity, song and dance troupes bear the dual responsibility of promoting cultural heritage and enabling innovative expression. Based on theories of semiotics, reception aesthetics, and hermeneutics, this paper systematically analyzes the practical paths to achieving "appreciation by both the refined and the popular" in song and dance troupe performances, focusing on content generation, narrative innovation, and aesthetic experience. This study not only enriches the theoretical connotation of dance aesthetics but also provides theoretical support and practical guidance for the sustainable development of dance performance art in the context of globalization, highlighting the necessity and practical significance of deeply integrating traditional culture with modern aesthetics.

1. The Aesthetic Foundations and Cultural Context of the Concept of "Appreciation by Both the Refined and the Popular"

1.1 The Cultural Binary Structure and Interactive Relationship between the "Refined" and the "Popular"

The "refined" and the "popular," as two major aesthetic paradigms in traditional Chinese culture, carry rich cultural connotations and social significance. Their essence not only reflects distinctions in aesthetic hierarchies but also embodies the construction of cultural identity and value systems. The "refined" originates from Confucian culture and pursues normativity, order, and rational beauty,

manifesting as highly stylized artistic forms and condensed spiritual meaning, emphasizing transcendence and spiritual orientation in aesthetics. In contrast, the “popular” is rooted in everyday life experience, reflecting a more open and inclusive artistic expression, focusing on emotional immediacy and connection to social life. In song and dance troupe performances, this binary structure is reflected in the tension between technical rigor and popular preferences, combining the formal discipline and ritual quality of the “refined” with the approachability and expressiveness of the “popular.” The integration of these elements not only enriches artistic expression but also constructs a complex arena of cultural interaction, making dance a cultural medium where multiple aesthetic values coexist.

From a semiotic perspective, the “refined” and the “popular” constitute opposing poles within a symbolic system; however, they do not remain in static opposition. Rather, they continuously evolve and penetrate one another in cultural practice. In elements such as dance movements, costumes, music, and stage design, the “refined” is embodied in meticulous and rigorous formal vocabulary and symbolic signs, while the “popular” appears as a system of aesthetic symbols that are mass-oriented and concrete. Their organic combination not only stimulates diverse audience interpretations but also expands the expressive boundaries of dance performance. In the creative process, song and dance troupes utilize the tension inherent in the “refined-popular” binary structure, employing multi-level symbolic encoding and emotional engagement to achieve a high level of aesthetic integration and innovation, thereby facilitating meaningful dialogue between traditional cultural symbols and contemporary aesthetic demands ^[1].

1.2 The Aesthetic Mechanism and Reception Theory Analysis of the Concept of “Shared Appreciation”

“Shared appreciation” is not merely a simple act of aesthetic sharing among subjects; it is a complex process of cultural meaning construction, involving interaction among the artwork, performers, and audience. Reception aesthetics provides a theoretical foundation for understanding “shared appreciation,” emphasizing that audiences are active producers of meaning who interpret and reconstruct works based on their cultural backgrounds, aesthetic experiences, and psychological expectations. In song and dance troupe performances, the ambiguity and openness of the works provide audiences with multiple interpretive pathways, enabling aesthetic resonance across diverse social and cultural groups and bridging the gap between the “refined” and the “popular.” This mechanism breaks the traditional one-way model of aesthetic transmission and fosters an aesthetic ecology centered on interaction, highlighting the plasticity of artistic symbols and the participatory role of the audience.

Hermeneutic theory further deepens the understanding of the “shared appreciation” process by asserting that the generation of meaning in artistic texts arises from the dynamic tension between performers' intentions and audience interpretations. As a visualized art form, dance performance relies on the symbolic function of movement and the power of emotional transmission, making “shared appreciation” a simultaneous experience across cultural strata and aesthetic preferences. Through nuanced control of movement structures, spatial relationships, and emotional atmospheres, song and dance troupes achieve multi-layered communication of aesthetic information, allowing audiences to resonate cognitively and connect emotionally at various aesthetic levels. This highlights the complex connotation of “shared appreciation” as a paradigm of aesthetic co-experience.

1.3 The Value Shift from “Aesthetic Rupture” to “Cultural Integration”

The phenomenon of “aesthetic rupture” is commonly found in the cultural exchange between tradition and modernity, and between the popular and the elite. It is primarily reflected in the differences in artistic perception and emotional alienation among various aesthetic groups. This rupture not only weakens the communicative power of dance performance but also limits the dissemination of its aesthetic value. In recent years, cultural integration has become a significant trend in aesthetic practice, aiming to bridge the gap between the “refined” and the “popular” through the integration and innovation of aesthetic resources and to construct an aesthetic system with inclusivity and diversity. In the creative practices of song and dance troupes, this value shift is evident in the modern reinterpretation of traditional elements and the responsive engagement with popular aesthetic demands, enabling the restructuring of cultural symbols and the expansion of aesthetic contexts ^[2].

Cultural integration is not a mere overlay of artistic forms but a profound interaction between aesthetic concepts and cultural identities. Through the integration of diverse dance languages, rich emotional expressions, and cross-cultural elements, song and dance troupes transcend the limitations of

traditional aesthetics and construct an innovative framework of “appreciation by both the refined and the popular.” This process fosters a unification of cultural diversity and aesthetic universality within artistic works, revitalizing dance performance within the contemporary cultural ecology. From the perspective of cultural integration, “appreciation by both the refined and the popular” emphasizes not only artistic sophistication and depth but also broad audience participation and emotional engagement, reflecting the value innovation and aesthetic enhancement of modern dance performance art.

2. Aesthetic Expression and Structural Reconstruction in Dance Performances of Song and Dance Troupes

2.1 Encoding Strategies of Dance Language and Mechanisms of Perceptual Guidance

As a symbolic system of bodily movement, dance language carries multilayered cultural information and aesthetic meanings. Its encoding strategies are a crucial element in achieving the ideal of [elegance and vulgarity in harmony]. During the creative process, song and dance troupes emphasize the polysemic design of movement symbols and utilize a combination of movement forms, rhythmic patterns, and spatial structures to achieve progressive and diversified aesthetic expression. The symbolization of movement encompasses not only the formal norms of traditional dance techniques but also integrates elements of popular culture and modern performance methods. This fusion creates cross-cultural symbolic connections and enhances the perceptual recognition of the audience. A scientifically constructed encoding strategy facilitates the audience’s visual attention and emotional resonance, accurately guiding aesthetic expectations and enabling a seamless psychological transition and integration between “elegant” and “vulgar” aesthetics.

The mechanism of perceptual guidance is manifested in the coordination of multiple senses and the active engagement of psychological participation during dance performances. Song and dance troupes employ the collaborative design of lighting, music, costumes, and stage aesthetics to reinforce the situational representation and symbolic meaning of the movement language, enabling the audience to enter a specific aesthetic space through sensory stimulation. This mechanism not only enhances the emotional appeal and expressive power of the performance but also establishes an emotional bond between the audience and the stage. By delicately manipulating rhythmic variations and dynamic spatial arrangements, dance performances regulate the audience's psychological rhythm, helping them achieve a balance between the refined aesthetics of “elegance” and the approachable experience of “vulgarity,” thereby facilitating the comprehensive reception of multilayered aesthetic symbols ^[3].

2.2 Pathways to Aesthetic Integration in Diverse Performance Forms

Multidimensional aesthetic integration is an indispensable strategy for achieving [elegance and vulgarity in harmony] in the dance performances of song and dance troupes. The forms of performance integrate classical elements of traditional dance with innovative techniques of modern creation, thus constructing a multidimensional space for aesthetic expression. The intertwining of tradition and modernity is reflected not only in the inheritance and transformation of movement language but also in the interdisciplinary fusion of dance narrative, musical arrangement, and visual presentation. These diverse aesthetic pathways emphasize respect for traditional cultural foundations while leveraging modern stage technologies and expressive media to broaden the scope of artistic expression and enhance the depth and breadth of audience experience. Through this approach, song and dance troupes overcome the limitations of singular aesthetics and foster aesthetic coalescence among audiences of varying aesthetic levels and cultural backgrounds within the same performance space.

This integration pathway is further reflected in the effective incorporation of diverse cultural resources, including ethnic dance elements, symbols of popular culture, and contemporary artistic concepts. By interweaving cross-cultural symbolic systems, dance performances achieve the pluralistic expression of cultural connotations and enrich the aesthetic semantics and emotional layers of the work. Stimulated by these multicultural symbols, audiences are able to locate their own aesthetic positions between “elegance” and “vulgarity,” thus achieving emotional resonance and cognitive sharing. Multidimensional aesthetic integration not only enhances the artistic value of the troupe’s dance works but also provides a new theoretical paradigm and practical model for reconciling traditional and popular aesthetics.

2.3 Aesthetic Mediation through Emotional Projection and Performer-Audience Interaction

Emotional projection is a vital dimension of the audience's aesthetic experience and serves as a bridge between dance performance and the audience's psychological world. Through nuanced bodily language and emotional tension, the dance works of song and dance troupes elicit emotional resonance from viewers, enabling deep aesthetic communication. Elements such as rhythm, force variation, and spatial movement serve as vehicles for emotional expression, allowing audiences to perceive the emotional trajectory of the performance on a sensory level and to respond emotionally on a psychological level. Emotional projection not only deepens the audience's experiential engagement with the work but also promotes the integration of "elegant" and "vulgar" aesthetic elements, thereby supporting diversity and inclusiveness in aesthetic experience ^[4].

Performer-audience interaction, as a dynamic aesthetic process, forms an open space of aesthetic mediation through mechanisms such as on-site perception, psychological feedback, and cultural identification. In this process, dance performance is not merely a one-way artistic output but becomes a communicative platform among multiple subjects. The audience's aesthetic expectations and the expressive intentions of the performance continually adjust and adapt through interaction, facilitating the reproduction of aesthetic meaning. This interactive process breaks down traditional aesthetic barriers, transforming the ideal of [elegance and vulgarity in harmony] into a concrete aesthetic practice, and demonstrates the troupe's deep understanding of and innovative application of aesthetic interaction mechanisms within the modern artistic ecosystem.

3. Innovative Paths of Performing Arts Oriented Toward "Elegance–Popularity Integration"

3.1 Content Generation Strategies Driven by Aesthetic Logic

3.1.1 Multilayered Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Cultural Symbols

The core of content generation lies in the in-depth deconstruction and reconstruction of traditional cultural symbols, breaking through established cultural boundaries and endowing them with renewed aesthetic vitality. In blending traditional and contemporary contexts, song and dance troupes systematically explore the multiple connotations of symbols, promoting their extension into multidimensional aesthetic spaces. This process not only reshapes the form of symbols but also emphasizes their compound expression in cultural semantics and aesthetic value. Through multilayered decoding and recombination, dance works shift from a singular cultural perspective to a cross-cultural, pluralistic viewpoint, effectively dismantling the dichotomy between "elegance" and "popularity," enriching the aesthetic vocabulary, and enhancing the adaptability and vitality of cultural symbols. This strategy, through the integration of complex structural components, realizes the organic fusion of tradition and modernity and serves as one of the core paths for implementing the "elegance–popularity integration" concept ^[5].

3.1.2 Differentiated Adaptation Mechanisms for Audience Aesthetic Expectations

Effective content generation requires a precise understanding of the diversity in audience aesthetics and the construction of differentiated and dynamic adaptation mechanisms. Song and dance troupes, through detailed contextual design, emotional layering, and rhythm control, accommodate both professional audiences' pursuit of formal beauty and spiritual connotation and general audiences' emotional resonance and sensory experience. The structure of the performance integrates cultural depth with sensory stimulation, balancing the aesthetic demands of "elegance" and "popularity." This mechanism achieves dynamic resonance across multiple audience tiers by segmenting aesthetic expectations and promoting the synchronization of emotional and cognitive engagement. More importantly, it constructs an audience-centered interactive experience, allowing viewers from different cultural backgrounds and aesthetic experiences to resonate within the same work. This approach advances the aesthetic unification of "elegance" and "popularity," while expressing cultural identity in diverse ways, thereby highlighting the social and cultural significance of performing arts.

3.2 Innovation and Reconstruction of Dance Performance Narrative Mechanisms

3.2.1 Exploration of Nonlinear Narrative Structures

Song and dance troupes break away from traditional linear narratives based on temporal sequence and causal logic by innovatively employing fragmentary, cyclical, and symbolic storytelling strategies

to construct an open and pluralistic narrative space. Nonlinear narratives eliminate temporal and spatial constraints, enhance the ambiguity and multi-layered interpretation of the work, and encourage audiences to construct meaning autonomously within multidimensional spatiotemporal frameworks. This mechanism meets the demands of “elegance–popularity integration” for aesthetic diversity and interactivity by blurring linear time boundaries, stimulating audience participation and reflection, and enhancing the openness and inclusiveness of the work. As a result, dance becomes a dynamic and repeatedly interpretable aesthetic text, opening a new narrative paradigm that integrates traditional culture with contemporary aesthetics.

3.2.2 Interwoven Construction of Symbols and Imagery

In dance narratives, symbolic systems and imagery construction jointly serve the essential task of generating rich meaning. Through the symbolic expression of bodily movements, the visual suggestion of stage settings, and the atmospheric enhancement of lighting and sound, a multi-dimensional and deeply coordinated narrative vocabulary system is formed, marked by complexity and symbolic orientation. This interweaving of symbols and imagery not only endows dance performances with cultural depth and emotional breadth but also enhances the narrative's layered texture and aesthetic tension. The multiple referential functions of symbols and the emotional connections evoked by imagery complement each other, enabling the audience to discover new interpretive angles and emotional triggers during the viewing process. This effectively supports the structural integration of “elegance” and “popularity,” while elevating the cultural resonance and expressive power of the performance [6].

3.2.3 Dynamic Design of Emotional Arcs

Narrative innovation is not limited to structure; it is also reflected in the refined progression and dynamic fluctuation of emotional experience. Through the skillful modulation of movement rhythm, the smooth arrangement of spatial transitions, and the progressive layering of emotional expression, dance works construct emotional arcs that are multilayered and full of dramatic tension. These arcs guide the audience through a fluid emotional journey between “elegant” and “popular” aesthetics, enhancing immersion and emotional resonance. Dynamic emotional design deepens the multidimensional perception of the narrative and fosters emotional identification and aesthetic interaction. Thus, dance performances become comprehensive fields of emotional transmission, cultural expression, and aesthetic experience. This design effectively expands the boundaries of emotional expression in traditional narratives, enriching the narrative function and aesthetic value of performing arts.

3.3 Mechanisms of Aesthetic Experience Generation and Future Trends

3.3.1 Multidimensional Participation Structures of Aesthetic Subjects

The generation of aesthetic experience depends on interaction and coordination among multidimensional subjects, transcending the traditional unidirectional viewing model and emphasizing the audience's active participation and feedback. Dance performances stimulate not only the senses of sight and hearing but also enhance immersion and agency through rich contextual setups and multisensory stimuli. Song and dance troupes actively construct highly interactive and layered aesthetic ecosystems, transforming audiences from passive aesthetic recipients into active meaning-makers. This multidimensional participation structure enriches the content of aesthetic experience and deepens and expands the experiential dimensions of the “elegance–popularity integration” concept, thereby promoting a more pluralistic and inclusive aesthetic resonance in performing arts.

3.3.2 Aesthetic Innovation in Cross-Cultural Contexts

Against the backdrop of globalization and cultural diversity, the development of dance art is increasingly oriented toward cross-cultural integration and innovation. Song and dance troupes, drawing upon global cultural resources and diverse aesthetic traditions, continuously expand their aesthetic horizons and organically integrate different cultural symbols and aesthetic values, thereby building a multifaceted aesthetic symbiosis system. This mechanism not only enriches the forms and content of aesthetic experience but also facilitates the breaking and blending of cultural boundaries. Through cross-cultural aesthetic innovation, dance works not only enhance their competitiveness in the international art context but also reinforce the function of cultural exchange and understanding. This promotes the transmission and practice of the “elegance–popularity integration” concept across broader cultural backgrounds, reflecting the contemporary value and cultural responsibility of performing arts.

3.3.3 Technological Intervention and the Upgrading of Aesthetic Experience

The in-depth application of digital technology and new media has brought a revolutionary upgrade to the aesthetic experience of dance performance. Advanced technologies such as virtual reality (VR), motion capture, and multimedia projection are widely employed in dance creation and live performance, significantly expanding the boundaries of vision, space, and perception. These technological tools not only diversify stage presentation formats but also enhance audience interactivity and immersion, allowing for more varied and personalized participation in the aesthetic process. Through technological intervention, the traditional concept of “elegance–popularity integration” acquires new interpretive pathways in the digital age, advancing the digital transformation and innovative development of performing arts. This opens a new frontier for the integration of art and technology, highlighting the forward-looking and inclusive nature of contemporary dance art.

Conclusion

The "appeal to both refined and popular tastes" approach in the dance performances of song and dance troupes is manifested through the multilayered deconstruction and innovative reconstruction of cultural symbols, the integrated application of diverse aesthetic elements, and the dynamic design of non-linear narratives and emotional arcs. By enhancing mechanisms for multidimensional audience participation and interaction, dance performances have not only achieved effective transmission of aesthetic information but also created a multi-level space for cultural resonance. Future development should continue to focus on aesthetic integration within cross-cultural contexts, deepen the incorporation of digital technologies and new media, and promote comprehensive upgrades in visual, spatial, and emotional experiences. At the same time, sustained exploration of the organic integration between technology and traditional art will inject new momentum into the modern transformation and innovative practice of the "refined-popular integration" concept, thereby empowering dance art to maintain vitality and competitiveness in the realm of international cultural exchange.

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