

From 'Doing' to 'Performing': Reconstruction, Negotiation, and Dissemination Strategies of Authenticity in the Stage Transformation of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract. The stageization of intangible cultural heritage is an important practical path for cultural inheritance in the context of cultural tourism integration. However, as intangible cultural heritage shifts from being "done" in daily life to being "performed" on stage, "authenticity" has become a core issue of ongoing debate in academia and industry. This article systematically summarizes the main thread of research on the stage based transformation of intangible cultural heritage, focusing on three major areas: authenticity and subjectivity, stage based practice and creation, and communication strategies and audience acceptance. Research has found that although existing achievements have laid a solid foundation, there are still significant gaps such as a single perspective, undisclosed negotiation mechanisms, and lack of practical strategies. On this basis, this article attempts to construct a tripartite interactive analysis framework of "inheritor director audience", understanding authenticity as a product of dynamic negotiation, and proposing that future research can be further deepened from the perspectives of Art World, Field Theory, and new media. This article argues that the stage adaptation of intangible cultural heritage does not require "specimen solidification", and its core lies in the dynamic survival of core cultural genes in multi-party dialogue.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Stage based Authenticity, Three party Perspective, Active Inheritance

1. Introduction

In the context of the deep integration of culture and tourism, bringing intangible cultural heritage onto the stage has become an important practical model for cultural inheritance and revitalization. From the large-scale landscape performance "Impression of the Great Red Robe" to the urban boutique theater "Awakening Lion", from "Moon Reflecting on Wuyi" to the staged presentation of Dong ethnic songs, intangible cultural heritage elements are entering the public eye in increasingly diverse ways. Stageization can not only expand the audience of intangible cultural heritage and enhance its visibility in modern society, but also create new cultural consumption scenarios based on this, injecting sustainable development vitality into local cultural tourism economy.

However, this process has also sparked a persistent and intense academic debate: when intangible cultural heritage transforms from its original "doing", that is, daily practice, to a stage "performance", that is, artistic presentation, who defines its "authenticity" and how to maintain it? Different stakeholders stand on their own positions and have vastly different understandings and demands for "authenticity". Inheritors focus on the integrity, standardization, and accuracy of historical inheritance of skills, and tend to maintain the "original flavor" of intangible cultural heritage; The director pursues the ornamental, narrative, and artistic appeal of the stage, and needs to refine and reorganize the original form; The audience focuses on the emotional resonance and aesthetic pleasure of the scene, and their perception of authenticity is more subjective and emotionally driven.

The differences among these three parties constitute the core tension in the research of intangible cultural heritage dance platform. However, most existing research only starts from a single perspective, either interviewing inheritors or analyzing scripts based on director's creative notes, lacking a systematic analysis of the interaction between inheritors, directors, and audiences, and failing to deeply reveal the reconstruction mechanism of "authenticity" in dynamic negotiation. Based on the above, this article aims to systematically review the existing framework of research on the transformation of intangible cultural heritage into dance stages, identify key gaps, and attempt to provide an integrated analytical framework for subsequent research.

2. Core issues in the study of intangible cultural heritage stage culture

2.1. Exploration of authenticity and subjectivity

Authenticity "is the most core and controversial concept in the study of intangible cultural heritage stage culture. Wang Xiaobing used "Music and Dance for Confucius Worship" as a case study to deeply analyze the authenticity issue in intangible cultural heritage stage performances, pointing out that stage adaptation inevitably accompanies the selection and reconstruction of the original form, and the key lies in how to define the "unshakable core" [1]. This study laid an important foundation for subsequent discussions.

Li Si and Zi Liping, on the other hand, explored the dilemma of "absence" and "coexistence" in the process of stage based Dong ethnic dance from the perspective of subjectivity. They found that in the practice of stage adaptation, inheritors often retreat from cultural subjects to "material providers", and their subjectivity is systematically weakened [2]. Liao Yanfei pointed out more sharply that the stageization of traditional dance intangible cultural heritage presents a tendency of "closer to the stage and farther away from tradition", and the more one pursues stage effects, the farther away from the original cultural context [3].

Ma Chongwei and Feng Jie, based on their on-site experience, studied the cultural generation mechanism of the Yuanyang Torch Festival, proposed the concept of "surging vitality" of the festival, and attempted to go beyond the simple dependence on the stage oriented path [4]. These studies collectively reveal a deep dilemma: the protection of intangible cultural heritage has long been plagued by a "frozen mindset," which tends to view intangible cultural heritage as fixed and unchanging specimens rather than dynamic cultural practices.

2.2. Stage based practice and creative research

The second type of research focuses on the practice of stage adaptation itself, paying attention to how inheritors participate in artistic creation, as well as the narrative logic and practical challenges

of directors in the process of adapting intangible cultural heritage.

Taking the Tibetan group dance works of the Dance Academy of Central University for Nationalities as an example, Li Fei analyzed the narrative pursuit of stage based ethnic folk dance and pointed out the sustained tension between the director's "preservation of cultural genes" and "pursuit of artistic expression" [5]. Cai Shaoyan introduces the perspective of "embodied performance" to explore how intangible cultural heritage can be inherited and reproduced through physical practice, providing a new path for understanding the body narrative in stage adaptation [6]. Chen Long focuses on the dilemma of the "post intangible cultural heritage era" and analyzes the "three transformations" phenomenon of derivation, survival crisis, and loss of subjectivity in traditional music of the Oroqen ethnic group. He warned that excessive stage ization may lead to intangible cultural heritage becoming hollow cultural symbols and losing its organic connection with daily life [7].

2.3. Research on communication strategies and audience acceptance

The third type of research starts from communication studies and audience acceptance, exploring how intangible cultural heritage can be effectively disseminated through stage based approaches, as well as the aesthetic acceptance psychology of different audience groups.

Xie Zhongyuan used the dance drama "Awakening Lion" as an example to demonstrate the innovative dissemination value of dance drama on intangible cultural heritage. He pointed out that stage art can become an effective carrier for the revitalization of intangible cultural heritage, and the key is to handle the relationship between "upholding integrity" and "innovation" well [8]. Manor, Zhang Yugang, and Zong Xueliang analyzed the dissemination path of Chinese ethnic folk dance in the context of integrated media from the perspectives of "field migration" and "functional shift", expanding the media perspective of intangible cultural heritage research [9]. Ding Bo and Yang Xifan focused on the continuous emotional experience and holistic emotional space of the audience, and conducted theoretical reflections on the stage performance of traditional Chinese music. They found that the audience's sense of authenticity is more based on emotional resonance rather than historical evidence, which has important implications for understanding the audience's evaluation logic [10].

3. Contributions and gaps in existing research

Previous studies have laid a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the issue of stage adaptation of intangible cultural heritage. At the level of authenticity, researchers have successfully revealed the cultural selection and reconstruction mechanisms in the process of stage adaptation; At the level of subjectivity, the changes in the status of inheritors have received systematic attention; At the communication level, research on audience acceptance psychology and integrated media pathways has also achieved fruitful results. These achievements provide valuable theoretical resources and empirical references for this study.

However, there are still three obvious gaps in existing research: firstly, the perspective is single and lacks integrated analysis. Most studies only start from one of the inheritors, directors, or audiences, without systematically analyzing the three within the same interactive framework. The study of inheritors focuses on "what has been lost", the study of directors focuses on "what has been created", and the study of audiences focuses on "what has been felt" - these three aspects are separated from each other, making it difficult to fully present the achievements of intangible cultural heritage stage transformation.

Secondly, the negotiation mechanism has not yet been revealed. The dynamic negotiation black box of "authenticity" has not been opened yet. Who is negotiating, what is being negotiated, how to compromise, and what consensus is being reached - these micro processes and deep logic have not been fully revealed at present. Most existing research remains at the level of describing the existence of differences, lacking process analysis on how differences can be transformed into consensus.

Thirdly, there is insufficient guidance for the translation of theory into practice. Most research remains focused on critical reflection, with insufficient attention paid to strategies for balancing "protection and development" and guiding the practical implementation of intangible cultural heritage dance platforms. Research often tells the public that 'there are problems with doing this', but rarely answers 'what should be done then'.

4. Towards a tripartite interaction framework

4.1. Theoretical construction from a tripartite perspective

Based on the above gaps, this article attempts to construct a tripartite interactive analysis framework of "inheritor director audience". The core concept of this framework is that authenticity in the stage transformation of intangible cultural heritage is not a fixed objective standard, but a dynamic product of multi-party negotiation and dialogue.

In this framework, the three parties each occupy different field positions and hold different types of capital. Inheritors possess "authentic capital" - they hold complete knowledge and historical context of their skills, which is the primary source of cultural legitimacy; Directors possess "artistic transformation capital" - they master stage language and narrative logic, and are able to transform original materials into works with ornamental value; The audience has "emotional judgment capital" - their on-site reactions and word-of-mouth dissemination ultimately determine the social acceptance of the work.

The three types of capital are irreconcilable but interdependent. Without inheritors, the work loses its cultural foundation; Without a director, intangible cultural heritage is difficult to enter the modern communication context; Without an audience, stageization loses its meaning. The negotiation of authenticity is essentially a game and compromise among these three types of capital.

4.2. Process mechanism of dynamic negotiation

Based on on-site observation and case analysis, this article identifies typical paths for tripartite negotiation. In the preparatory stage, the director proposes a preliminary plan based on the overall concept of stage art, and the inheritor mainly provides original materials and cultural consultation. During the rehearsal stage, the inheritor and director enter into repeated adjustments, negotiating and compromising around the details of movements, rhythm arrangements, and symbol usage. After the performance, the audience's word-of-mouth evaluation and professional comments form feedback, which in turn affects the subsequent modifications and performance adjustments of the work.

The core principle of compromise can be summarized as "retaining core symbols and sacrificing secondary etiquette". Both parties can usually reach a high degree of consensus on "preserving the most core cultural symbols" to ensure that the "soul" of intangible cultural heritage remains unchanged; Disputes and concessions often occur in minor etiquette details, lengthy traditional processes, or parts that are not suitable for modern stage performance.

4.3. Non antagonistic relationship between communication effectiveness and cultural fidelity

An important finding is that communication effectiveness and cultural fidelity are not necessarily in opposition. When the exhibition clearly indicates the "adapted version", the audience's criticism of authenticity is significantly reduced. This behavior effectively manages the audience's psychological expectations, shifting the evaluation criteria from "whether it completely restores the truth" to "whether the adaptation is wonderful and respects the cultural core".

In addition, if some simple audience interaction segments can be carefully designed, it can effectively break through the "fourth wall" and enhance on-site participation and deep cultural identity. When the audience changes from passive "bystanders" to active "participants", it not only deepens their understanding of cultural connotations, but also strengthens their memory through personal experience, achieving a significant improvement in communication effectiveness.

5. Future research prospects

There is still room for expansion in theoretical tools in existing research. The Art World theory emphasizes that works of art are products constructed jointly by multiple participants - artists, audiences, critics, institutions, etc. [11]. Applying this perspective to stage-based research on intangible cultural heritage helps explain why stage-based performances are collectively recognized as authentic cultural practices rather than invented traditions.

Field Theory provides a tool for analyzing power relations [12]. The inheritor, director, and audience occupy different positions in the field and possess different types and quantities of capital, which directly affects the ownership of the definition of "authenticity". Future research can systematically apply field theory to reveal power imbalances and strategic choices in the negotiation process.

The current research mainly focuses on offline theater performances, while new media such as short videos, immersive theater, and virtual reality are profoundly changing the dissemination ecology of intangible cultural heritage. Future research could explore how different media affect the tripartite negotiation mechanism? Does digital technology strengthen or weaken the audience's judgment of "authenticity"? Does the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage in the context of integrated media require a new strategic framework? Different categories of intangible cultural heritage, such as rituals, performances, festivals, and crafts, may present different negotiation logics in the process of stage adaptation. Future research can identify type differences and common patterns through more systematic comparative analysis, providing more targeted guidance for the transformation of intangible cultural heritage into dance stages in different scenarios.

6. Conclusion

The authenticity of intangible cultural heritage on stage does not need to be maintained through "mechanical replication" of its original appearance. That kind of 'frozen' protective thinking may actually lead to cultural rigidity and extinction. The successful stage based practice shows that its core lies in the dynamic survival of core cultural genes in multi-party dialogue. Authenticity is not a specimen locked in a glass display cabinet, but a living product constructed through continuous negotiation and joint construction among the inheritor, director, and audience.

The tripartite interactive framework proposed in this article provides an effective analytical tool for understanding and analyzing authenticity disputes in intangible cultural heritage exhibitions, and attempts to promote the transformation of intangible cultural heritage protection concepts from static

preservation to dynamic inheritance. At the same time, the three specific strategies of "adaptation degree of identification", "retention of symbolic core", and "moderate interaction in design" have a high possibility of operation, which can be used as a reference for intangible cultural heritage protection agencies, managers, and creators.

The dramatization of intangible cultural heritage is not a way to avoid tradition, but a process of reproducing authenticity. Intangible cultural heritage has survived to this day precisely because it has been constantly reinterpreted and retold. Stageization is not a betrayal of tradition, but a natural continuation of this dynamic inheritance logic in the contemporary context.

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