

# Research on the Stage Art Design in Drama

Hui Qiao

Weinan Normal University  
Weinan, China 714000

**Abstract**—With the advent of the "reading picture era", the important role of stage art design in drama and other stage art has become increasingly prominent. The task of the stage art design is to unify the concept according to the content of the performance, use various plastic arts means to organize the action space, create external image and create a stage atmosphere. It has become the consensus of the industry to use the stage art design to highlight the visual expression of stage art such as drama. How to promote, develop and innovate the beauty of the dance design to keep pace with the times has become a hot research topic. This thesis will be based on the theatrical performance, starting from the artistic function of the stage art design, exploring the significance, development process and existing problems of the stage art design in the drama and proposing the innovative strategy of the stage art design from the two aspects of the choreography thoughts and the stage art design methods.

**Keywords**—*drama; stage art design; function; meaning; innovation strategy*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The choreography of the stage is the stage art, which is an important part of the stage performance. The comprehensive use of scenery, props, clothing, makeup and lighting is called the stage art design. The task of the stage art design is to unify the concept according to the content of the performance, and use a variety of plastic arts means to organize the action space, create an external image, and create a stage atmosphere. With the advent of the "reading picture era", the important role of the stage art design in the stage art such as drama has become increasingly prominent. The use of the stage art design to highlight the visual expression of stage art such as drama has become the consensus of the industry. How to promote, develop and innovate the beauty of the stage art design with the times has also become a hot research topic. This thesis will be based on the theatrical performance, starting from the artistic function of the stage art design, exploring the significance, development process and existing problems of the stage art design in the drama and proposing the innovative strategy of the stage art design from the two aspects of the choreography thoughts and the stage art design methods.

## II. THE ARTISTIC FUNCTION OF THE STAGE ART DESIGN

The stage art design is a highly integrated performance art. Through the use of various styling methods, the performance of the actors is enhanced. The scenery and lighting emphasize the environment of drama or performance.

The costumes, makeup and scenery are mainly direct or indirect expressions of characters. Different modeling means constitute a clear and closely linked artistic whole of division of labor. The stage art design belongs to the "re-creation art". It needs to be "re-created" on the basis of the content of the drama or performance and the overall concept. All kinds of modeling methods should serve the character image and event development in the overall concept to create a performance situation, thus achieving the role of enhancing the atmosphere and deepening the theme. [1] At the same time, the stage art design has strong spatial, temporal and technical characteristics in the process of scene modeling and character modeling. First of all, it needs to provide the necessary space environment for the performance. With the promotion of the performance and the flow of time, both the scenery and characters have changed, and in the stage art design, the transformation of space and the passage of time should be reflected. With the continuous development of the stage art design, from mixed machinery such as lifting platform and turntable, to the application of electric light source and laser technology, and to the application of film projection equipment and stereo, the technical means of the stage art design is constantly enriched, and its technical requirements are constantly highlighted.

In general, the artistic functions of the stage art design mainly include the following aspects. The first is to shape the stage art as a whole. As mentioned above, the stage art design belongs to the performing arts, and it is necessary to carry out the "re-creation" around the performance. From scenery modeling to character modeling, it reflects the characteristics of four-dimensional interlacing of time and space. The overall shaping of the performance is carried out in the artistic design of creating situation and creating atmosphere. The second is to help shape the characters, the characters are the core of the stage art, and the function of the stage art design is first reflected in the character modeling, including the "outside shaping" of the external image beautification as well as the "inside shaping" of revealing the inner heart of the character, and through the clothing, makeup to reflect the character's appearance, identity, personality, ideas, feelings, thoughts, etc. The third is to reveal the theme idea. The stage art design is based on the content of drama or other performances. Both character modeling and scenery modeling are carried out around the theme of stage performance. Only by revealing the dance beauty design of the theme can the integrity and coordination of stage art be reflected. [2] The fourth is to create an atmosphere. With the development of the stage performance, the function of the stage art design is also constantly

developing. While shaping the inside and outside image of the character, it is necessary to bring the audience a rich visual experience, create an atmosphere that matches the theme of the performance, and promote the integration of visual image, performance theme and audience's emotions, and promote the spiritual resonance and emotional resonance of actors and audience.

### III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STAGE ART DESIGN IN DRAMA

The performance of the drama is very rich, mainly including modern drama, dance drama, opera, and musicals and so on. As a strong comprehensive art form, drama is an art that uses narratives in the form of language, movement, dance, music, etc., and actors perform in stories or situations in the form of dialogue, singing, dancing, movement, etc. In short, drama consists of four important elements: actors, story/situation, stage, and audience. The main purpose of drama is to express emotions and convey thoughts through performances, and to resonate with the audience on the spiritual and emotional levels. As an important element of drama, the stage is crucial for performances and is an important carrier of communication, emotional integration and thought collision between actors and audiences. Theatrical performances do not simply interpret the language and movements between the characters. At the same time, they need to fully play the role of scenery, props, costumes, makeup, and lighting on the stage, comprehensively present the content of the drama, and completely express the characters, times, emotions, and thoughts, which shows that the drama and the stage art design are closely connected, and the stage art design directly affects the expressiveness and integrity of a drama.

At the beginning of a drama, the audience first sees the stage setting. After the actors appear, the audience first sees the actors' costumes and other external images. These sets, costumes, makeup and lighting are the first impression the drama presents to the audience. In the process of theatrical performance, the stage art design renders the atmosphere through the control of color, light and shade, reflects the space and timeliness of drama through the adjustment of setting, and shapes the inner and outer images of characters by adjusting the costumes and makeup of actors, so as to highlight the theme and express emotion. In short, drama is performed in a virtual environment, and to resonate with the audience, it must rely on the stage art design. For example, in "A Dream in Red Mansions", the scenery of the scene reflects the grandeur of the Grand View Garden and provides the necessary background for the narrative. In the classic drama "Tea House", clothing designs such as unlined long gown and suits reflect the identity of different characters and reflect the changes of the times. [3] As mentioned above, the stage art design is an art form with diverse attributes. It is necessary to fully consider the use of scenery, props, clothing, makeup, and lighting and to fully consider the content, theme, space and time of the drama. Excellent stage design not only requires the full integration of all aspects of elements, but also needs to achieve the "four unity", that is, the unity of similarity and dissimilarity, the unity of

similarity in spirit and similarity in form, the unity of life reality and art reality and the unity of limited space and infinite space. All along, the industry has been paying close attention to the "four unity" of the practice of stage art design in theatrical performances. Fully understanding the significance of stage art design for drama performance is undoubtedly an important basis to promote the continuous innovation and development of the stage art design in the drama.

### IV. THE DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF THE STAGE ART DESIGN IN DRAMA

As early as the early stage of drama, the stage art design was an indispensable element in the drama. From the initial actor dressing and props to the later stage set, the stage art design is always accompanied by the development of drama. The early stage art design did not receive enough attention, and was simply interpreted as the "background painting" on the stage, or a set of costume of actors, a folding fan, or a set of tables and chairs on the stage, which were just necessary decorations and props in the drama performance. After the founding of New China, especially after the 1970s, Chinese drama was influenced by new trends of thought and took the pace of reform. With the emergence of new historical dramas, modern dramas and later pioneering experimental dramas, the concept of the stage art design in the drama has also evolved and changed, attracting more and more attention. The means of stage art design is increasingly rich. While the characters and scenery are more vivid and sophisticated, the lighting and sound effects have also been comprehensively applied on the stage of the drama, bringing more strong visual impact and emotional resonance to the audience.

In recent years, the concept of drama creation and performance has been constantly updated, and the audience's aesthetic level has been increasingly improved, which puts forward higher requirements on the timeliness, space and technology of stage art design in drama, and presents a new situation in the exploration and development of stage art design. On the one hand, the lack of "original" design of the stage art design has hindered the role of the stage art design to a certain extent. Although the level of the stage art design of the National Theatre and some folk theaters is excellent and stable, it lacks innovation, and the interpretation of the classic plays also presents the tendency of formalization. It also fails to realize the comprehensive integration of advanced design concepts and means, and its reliance on traditional stage art design can't meet the increasing aesthetic needs of the audience. For example, in recent years, although the adaptation of Shakespeare's classic works reflects the inheritance of historical classics, but its "originality" is not enough, failing to reflect the pursuit of Chinese-style stage art design, which is difficult to resonate with national emotions. On the other hand, the form of drama is constantly expanding, and the combination of the performance of the drama and the design of the stage art design is constantly mixing. The diversity of the stage and the increasing richness of the stage art design methods reflect the continuous development of the stage art design, which is in some experimental drama, the sense of space and time of the

choreography gets constantly strengthened, and the interaction on and off stage has been promoted, which has brought a stronger sense of participation and experience to the audience, enhancing the expressiveness and appeal of the drama, and providing new ideas and development momentum for the innovation of the stage art design in the drama.

#### V. INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE STAGE ART DESIGN IN DRAMA

The innovation of the stage art design in the drama should start from the ideological level, it should constantly draw on the nutrition from the advanced stage art design concept, so as to lay a foundation for the formation of artistic characteristics with innovative spirit of stage art design. From the conceptual level, as an important component of drama, the innovation of the stage art design should be unified with the innovation of the drama, and it should be compatible with the innovation of the drama content and the diversified development of the style. In different eras, the content of thought and the fate of the characters reflected in the drama are different, which requires that the stage art design should be innovated according to the different content of drama in different times. At the same time, with the development of drama, in addition to the traditional realism and romantic style, the symbolism style and the absurd style of the drama have also moved to more stages. The emerging styles naturally can't be integrated with the traditional stage art design, so it is necessary to innovate from the perspective of overall design concept and design framework, enrich the way of transition, highlight the color expression, and use various means to achieve the flexible division of time and space. Especially in the "reading picture era", the importance of the design and innovation of the stage art is increasingly prominent, and the constantly innovative stage art design will not only match the new style and the new form of drama, but also make the traditional classic drama show a refreshing effect. Therefore, under the new development situation, the stage art design innovation should not only assist the drama innovation, but also fully reflect the times, follow the changing habits of the audience and the increasing aesthetic level.

Specifically, the innovation of the stage art design method is the carrier of the revolutionary design concept innovation. The stage art design includes multiple elements such as scenery, clothing, lighting, makeup, sound effects, props, etc. The innovation of its design means is not only the innovation of multiple elements, but also the innovation of the mutual cooperation between multiple elements. Clothing and props are called "the second skin of the actor" and "the second hand of the actor", occupying a very important position in the character shape. [4] Innovative fashion design should pay attention to the innovation of fashion style and craftsmanship. The fundamental purpose of this kind of innovation is not to "catch others' eyes", but to better carry out the modeling of the inside and outside of the characters. The fashion design that pays attention to details and innovation reflects the time sense of the characters and the personalities of different characters, and even implies the

destiny of the characters. On this basis, the integration of popular elements and new technologies will also enhance the visual appeal of the external shapes of the characters. The props can be described as the "grand old man" in the stage art design. The props in modern drama are no longer simple a chair or a folding fan. In the innovation of props, modern technology is also used to make the props design more precise and realistic so as to promote its key role in drama performance.

Set design is the most complicated and comprehensive link in the process of stage art design. The innovative set style should make full use of modern information technology, such as large screen, three-dimensional animation, etc., so that the overall setting of the stage reflects the sense of depth and variability, creating a typical environment that is deeply compatible with the drama performance. Meanwhile, the injection of the sense of science and technology will also expand the space of scenery modeling and improve the cultural taste and visual impact. Stage lighting has become an important means to reflect the modern elements and fashion sense of the drama. The innovation of lighting is first reflected in the color level. Different colors, as well as the regulation of light, shade and strength have a direct influence on optimizing the external coloring effect of the characters. It also has an indirect effect on highlighting the themes of drama, inspiring emotional resonance and stimulating imagination. In the innovation of lighting, it is necessary to make full use of intelligent control devices to strengthen the dynamic function of lighting, and comprehensively use computer lights, modeling lights, lasers, soft lights, spotlights, etc. to express the sense of time and space of the stage so as to construct a complete picture and enhance visual impact. [5] At the same time of scenery, clothing, props and light innovation, it is also important to focus on the innovation of the sound effect by using the electronic mixing table and the recording and playing equipment, and to realize the innovation of the make-up design from the make-up method and the material.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Mr. Cao Yu once said: "Without stage art, there is no drama." Zhu Hong, a contemporary playwright, also clearly pointed out that "the stage art is a creative part of the comprehensive art of drama". As an important part of the drama, the stage art design is closely related to the content theme, thoughts and emotions, and character modeling of the drama. The innovation of the stage art design should be consistent with the aesthetic style of the new era and be consistent with the creation of the constantly innovative drama. In the current era, the importance of the stage art design to the drama is increasingly prominent. On the basis of the innovative design concept of the stage art, it is necessary to realize the innovation of the scenery, clothing, lighting, makeup, sound effects and props, and use the innovative design method of the stage art as the carrier to show the power of the stage art design, realize the "four unify", highlight the expressive power of the drama, create a good stage effect, so as to promote the stage art design to

play a more and more important role in the process of promoting the development of the drama culture.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] [German] Written by Manfred De Pfister, translated by Zhou Jingbo, etc. *Drama Theory and Drama Analysis* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Broadcasting Institute Press, 2004. (in Chinese)
- [2] Zhang Liming. The Beauty of the Years of the Dance — On the Relationship between Stage Art and Drama [J]. *Popular Literature*, 2014(18): 171. (in Chinese)
- [3] Shao Li. The Role of Stage Art Design in Theatrical Performance [J]. *The Divine Land*, 2012(11): 215. (in Chinese)
- [4] Liu Donghua. The Diversity and Integration of Theatre Stage Art Design [J]. *The Divine Land*, 2017(34): 23. (in Chinese)
- [5] Editor-in-chief of Fang Dekui, edited by Huang Chunke. *Stage Lighting and Sound Technology* [M]. Beijing: Beijing China Radio and Television Publishing House, 2005. (in Chinese)