

# Study on Dunhuang Dance — Hand Dance under the Perspective of Simulation\*

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**Abstract**—This paper discusses the object of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance in detail under the perspective of simulation. First of all, the author sets forth the current situation of China's Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance under the angle of view of simulation, and points out the theory and realistic significance of this study; then analyzes briefly the connotation of the concept of "simulation" and discusses in detail the concepts of "simulation 1", "simulation 2" "simulation 3" in the concept of "simulation" and the specific manifestation of them by means of relevant examples: in the analysis of "simulation 1", the process of ancient painters and artisans converting their own experiences and creating the magnificent and glorious art of Mo Gao Grotto at Dunhuang is discussed in detail; in analysis of "simulation 2", the basic hand forms of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance are organized taking the basic hand forms of Dunhuang Dance created by Professor Gao Jinrong; in the analysis of "simulation 3", the hand posture meaning and formal aesthetics of dance works of Goddess of Mercy with a Thousand Arms created with the influence of basic hand forms of Dunhuang Dance created by Professor Gao Jinrong are analyzed particularly; at last, the problems existing in the current development process of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance under the perspective of simulation are proposed, and the corresponding strategies for solving such problems for its development in the future are proposed, hoping to provide certain reference opinions for relevant researches, to deepen the understanding of researchers of this direction in the essential characteristics of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance, so as to promote the inheritance and development of Dunhuang Dance.

**Keywords**—*perspective of simulation; Dunhuang Dance — Hand Dance; development*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The hand in Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance is endowed the title of "second face" thanks to its diversified forms and extremely strong expression, reflecting the unique and unparalleled artistic characteristics of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance. By consulting relevant data and references, it is obvious that the study about Hand Dance is really rare; nevertheless, these few papers also inspire the author a lot. In the few studies of Hand Dance, the author finds that almost no one has studied Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance from the

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perspective of "simulation". From this point of view, this study is of certain innovative significance in terms of selection of the subject. In addition, the process of refining Dunhuang Dance hand forms is the product of unceasingly developed Dunhuang Dance, which is consistent with meaning contained in the concept of "simulation". With respect to the concept of "simulation" the author will elaborate with emphasis in the following, it is a dynamic process with endless cycles and renewals. As a result, "development" becomes the conjunction connecting Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance and the "simulation" perspective. Thus, the author obtains solid theoretical foundation for the research on the development of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance. Moreover, from the point of view of realistic significance, targeted research on Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance as well as the analysis and sorting of the formation basis and development process of Dunhuang Dance hand forms focusing on the concept of "simulation" are conducive to the deepening understanding of Dunhuang Dance and the exploration of more research perspectives, to intensify our recognition of the essential characteristics of Dunhuang Dance, make people devote more attention to traditional dance, to promote the diversified development of Dunhuang Dance, and then discern major principle from the minor issues, to inherit and carry forward the brilliant Dunhuang culture, so as to achieve the protection of China's cultural heritage and promote effect innovation of national culture.

## II. BASIC CONCEPT OF SIMULATION

Simulation is to convert the world into a symbol simulate it. In 1922, Walter Lippmann, an American new critic and writer, promote simulation environment in Public Opinion, belonging to the conception of public opinion science and media studies. In the opinion of Walter Lippmann, simulation is not true, but the imagination of people through the contents provided by media. Simulation is a dynamic process with unceasing circulation and development, involving the transmitter and researcher of the symbol. Transmitter converts her experience into narration or dictation. At this time, the transmitter's experience is converted into symbol and simulates the real world (simulation 1); researcher structures text based on the symbol created by transmitter to explain these symbols, and rebuilds the opinion towards the world through the researcher's understanding (simulation 2); upon completion of explanation by the researcher, return these views toward the world to daily scenes, then they would be interpreted again by new researchers, and new understandings would be generated

from objects being interpreted once again, thereby to build new understanding of the world (simulation 3) [3]; new researchers transform out new symbols and simulate the real world combining their experience on the basis of text built by the predecessors, and then new researchers emerge, brand-new simulation turns up constantly; each new link takes the previous simulation as basis. In this way, it circulates updates and develops in a ceaseless manner.

### III. SIMULATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF DUNHUANG DANCE

The development and evolution of Dunhuang Dance can also be interpreted using the concept of simulation. Mo Gao Grotto at Dunhuang is a cultural and artistic treasure-house integrating architecture, fresco, sculpture and other plastic arts. Ancient painters select and process the dance forms shapes they see in real life, and apply them to the creation of frescoes, this is simulation 1; research Dunhuang Dance, imagine the scene one thousand years ago through pictures on the frescoes. Ancient pictures contain large amount of information; researcher converts such information into dynamic dancing posture according to her own experience and her understanding of the picture through viewing the picture; from static to dynamic, new meaning of the picture is structured and thus simulation 2 is completed. For example, in 1977, the edition and creation team of Silk Road, a large-scale dance drama originally created by Gansu Song and Dance Organization, entered into the Mo Gao Grotto at Dunhuang to experience the life. Facing the dancing posture with the clothes flying upward on the frescoes, the artisans also referred to the law of dance and music in the poetry of Tang Dynasty based on the research of static shapes on the frescoes; they turned the issue in their mind repeatedly, recreated the dance by hardworking, experiencing a difficult yet happy artistic creation process. In 1979, Professor Gao Jinrong went to Mo Gao Grotto at Dunhuang several times to examine on the spot; studied the Dunhuang literatures intensively on the basis of careful collection and research of dancing postures on Dunhuang frescoes, compiled Textbook for Basic Training of Dunhuang Dance in combination of their years of experience. They are the researchers in simulation, and they understand and build the world again based on the symbols built by the transmitter; theory and works come out, new researchers create new understanding again combining their own experience and understanding by virtue of the enlightenment of the predecessor's works, and this is simulation 3. A Course in Dunhuang Dance written by Professor Gao Jinrong was published in 2002, and in July 2011, the revised version came out. In the revised version, the training demonstration was supplemented, teaching demonstration was adjusted in detail, especially the basic steps and element training, and the movements are refined to be more delicate and accurate, making the whole process more clear and smooth in the actual teaching. In simulation, she is not only the researcher, but also the new researcher, and the transmitter, connecting the paths from simulation 1 to simulation 2 till simulation 3 through her own activities. The dynamic simulation process promotes Dunhuang Dance developing forward constantly.

#### A. Simulation 1 --- Factors of Simulation Changes of Realistic Hand Forms in Fresco

In this simulation process, the painter acts as transmitter, who selects and processes the dance forms in real life through her experience, and applied them to the creation of fresco, thus the ideal scene of playing was created. However, these Dunhuang frescoes that have been created become the important basis for researchers of later generations to construct new theoretical system in turn. The researchers imagine the scene in fresco more than one thousand years ago, endow new meaning to these pictures through various ancient information contained in the pictures and according their own careful observation and understanding of the pictures, convert the static picture on the fresco to dynamic dancing posture, thus the process of simulation 2 that will be elaborated in the following paragraph is completed.

#### B. Simulation 2 --- Rebuilding of Hand Posture in Fresco in Dynamic Conversion

With respect to simulation 2, it is to start from the perspective of researchers, construct the text for the second time by virtue of symbols built by transmitter and on the basis of them, to interpret these symbols in a more precise way, and infuse in their own experience and opinions in the course of interpretation, so as to rebuild the research object. Many hand postures in the dance drama Silk Road are taken from Dunhuang fresco directly. As for the development of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance, Professor Gao Jinrong went deep to the spot and refined the hand forms of Dunhuang Dance starting from fresco prototype. Here, we sort and trace it by taking the basic hand forms of Dunhuang Dance created by Professor Gao Jinrong as an example.

The hand forms of Dunhuang Dance are diversified and exquisite. Entering into the grotto, you will find by observing the figure's hand posture on the fresco that, some hand postures are reproduced from life directly, some are rebuilt by the painters' imagination. Some hand postures with same content and similar hand forms have slight or obvious differences in terms of expression skills due to different generation periods of time, and the style and expression of them are of their respective charms.

#### C. Simulation 3 --- Reconstruction of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance Theory in Dance Works

It can be known from the above that, simulation 3 refers to that upon completion of the interpretation by researchers, their opinion about the world will be returned to daily scenes, and these new opinions will be interpreted again by new researchers. In this way, new understanding would inevitably be generated from objects being interpreted again, thus new understanding of the world is constructed. Discuss the development of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance using simulation theory, new researcher will form other dance forms and schools according to the theory built by Professor Gao Jinrong, or the researcher, new researcher and transmitter are the same person, he would produce new understanding and experience based on the theory created by himself, and then transmit such new understanding toward the world out in the process of summarizing experience by himself and self-

improvement. From simulation 1 to simulation 3, the figure's identity will shift in the course of construction, and the discipline circulates, updates and develops in the unceasing development process of simulation. Taking the dance work of Goddess of Mercy with a Thousand Arms created and directed by Professor Gao Jinrong, the reconstruction simulation 3 process of Dunhuang Dance basic hand forms in dance works is analyzed in detail.

#### IV. PROBLEMS EXIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DUNHUANG DANCE - HAND DANCE AND THE COUNTERMEASURES

Generally speaking, in the recent decades, although various works about Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance emerge in an endless stream and the works keep on developing and advancing with the passing of time from conception to edition, the academic research and dance works in aspect of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance are quite few, which cannot attract enough attention. In addition, there is another obvious problem, namely in the simulation 3 process with more innovation and extension, many works still lie in the level of inheritance and protection of Dunhuang Dance from material selection, clothing, design and arrangement of movements as well as the creation and reorganization of music. However, to carry forward Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance with more vigor, the young researchers of Dunhuang Dance today must think deeply about the reasons resulting in above phenomenon. How to inherit and carry forward Dunhuang Dance on the basis of theory and practices created by excellent predecessors and how to take the predecessors' precious legacy properly, are the questions young researchers of Dunhuang Dance should think deeply. Simulation that appears earliest in science of public opinion and media studies may as well be taken as another way of thinking for us to research Dunhuang Dance. Under the perspective of simulation, we should analyze the reasons that cause the above phenomenon with developing view, work out effective solutions and measures, to correct the problems step by step, improve the current situation gradually, so as to promote the healthy development of Dunhuang Dance.

#### V. CONCLUSION

No matter the simulation 1 created by the painter by applying his own experience to the fresco colored sculpture, or the simulation 2 of Dunhuang Dance basic hand forms refined by Professor Gao Jinrong according to the prototype of Dunhuang fresco colored sculpture, even the simulation 3 of Hand Dance element works created by the later researchers based on Dunhuang Dance basic hand forms constructed by Professor Gao Jinrong, all of them show the broad and rich knowledge covered by Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance. The transmitter like painter or artisan, the researches and new researchers in later generations like Professor Gao Jinrong, come to realize their own experience and confer more new meaning and ideological connotation, expand the research perspective of Dunhuang Dance through theory and concept of interdisciplinary science, explore the way closer to the research object, look back upon history, reflect on current situation and look ahead for the future, so that the Dunhuang Dance research may be of more theoretical value and realistic basis, so as to

further promote the innovation and sustainable development of Dunhuang Dance - Hand Dance, enabling more people to know and love Dunhuang Dance, thus to realize the inheritance and development of glorious culture of Dunhuang Dance.

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