

# Analysis of the Beauty of Imagery in Yang Liping's Dance Drama "Pingtan Reflections"

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## Abstract:

Dance is a comprehensive art form reflecting real life and shaping artistic image through typical dance art language. Yang Liping's dance drama "Pingtan Reflecting Image" is experienced, considered, processed and condensed through the material of Pingtan's life, incorporating the regional characteristics of Pingtan's folklore and music, shaping the typical character image, and constructing the beautiful dance imagery through representation, imagination to imagery, forming the unique beauty of the Oriental marine culture art of the drama.

## Keywords:

Dance Imagery, Yang Liping, Pingtan Reflections

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## 1. Introduction to the Dance Drama

### 1.1. Artist Profile

Born in 1958, Dali's famous dance artist Yang Liping has loved dance since she was a child. Under the cultivation of Yunnan's beautiful ecological environment and the constant accompaniment of song and dance, Yang's dance works can be considered a dazzling flower in the dance world. Yang Liping was born in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan, where the rich ethnic flavor and good ecological environment nurtured her pure artistic talent. The "wind, flowers, snow, and moon" of the Cang Mountains and the Er Sea, which are famous in China and abroad, are the soil of the artist's artistic creation. In Dali, the ecological environment is very good, the climate is pleasant, the forest and water system are well preserved, and people live in harmony with nature. For example, the famous architectural style of "Three Rooms and a Shining Wall" is a typical example of the Dali Bai people's respect for literature and art. In this environment of good natural environment and rich cultural atmosphere, Yang Liping has been nourished by nature and humanities since she was a child, and she still has the romantic feelings of literati in her bones, loves to observe, loves to think, and loves to create beauty. Yang Liping was formally exposed to the professional training of dance art in 1971, when she entered the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture Song and Dance Troupe of Yunnan Province, and during the

nine years she worked in the Xishuangbanna Song and Dance Troupe, the troupe often performed in the countryside, bringing Yang Liping closer to nature and working people. Xishuangbanna in Yunnan is a typical tropical rainforest (monsoon rainforest) ecological environment, the local Dai people have been revering and worshipping nature for generations, and have been living in harmony with nature for thousands of years. During the performance in the countryside, Yang Liping ran through the villages and cottages in Banna, and gained a deeper understanding of the natural ecological environment and the aesthetics of humanities and arts in Banna, and felt the charm of the truest nature. She began to integrate human beings into nature to think about the way of living with nature, draw inspiration from nature, present the essence of nature in the form of dance art on the stage, sublimate the dance works, and in the dance The dance works are sublimated, and the dance language is presented to express a deeper level of dance imagery. In the second national dance competition in 1986, Yang Liping, through her unique understanding of nature, life and aesthetics, choreographed and performed the dance work "Spirit of the Bird", sublimating the artistic image of dance and expressing the beauty of dance imagery. In many future works, such as "Two Trees", "Reflections of Yunnan", "Tibetan Mystery" and "Reflections of Pingtan", the imaginative beauty of dance art is perfectly presented again and again, reflecting the unique charm of Chinese traditional culture and the profound attainment of Chinese traditional aesthetics.

### **1.2. Human Background of Pingtan**

Pingtan County, Fujian Province, abbreviated as "Lan", is under the jurisdiction of Fuzhou City, commonly known as "Haitan", and looks across the Taiwan Strait from Taiwan Island, near Putian City in the south, neighboring Fuqing City in the west, and near the Taiwan Strait in the east. Nearly six thousand square kilometers. The climate is warm and humid, with warm winters and cool summers. The islanders of Pingtan are hardworking and simple, and the rich island folklore and culture are unique. The historical culture of Pingtan includes: Maritime Silk Road, ancient style of Min-Yue, culture of Mazu, ancient city of Haitan, culture of Haiphong, etc. Typical art forms include: Pingtan dialect, Pingtan shell carving, Pingtan Min drama, Pingtan word Ming opera, Pingtan row only, Pingtan "Ten Fan", vine play, lamp snake, fishing song Pansi tune, etc. The beauty of Pingtan includes the beauty of nature's original ecology, the spiritual beauty of humanistic sentiment and the artistic beauty with great characteristics. As an island, Pingtan, across the long river of time, has rich and diverse forms of culture and art in the process of human being living with nature. It is also a place with strong patriotic sentiment, where the heroic patriotic story of Qi Jiguang fighting against the Japanese invaders has taken root and firmly rooted in this land, and the combat technique "Yuanyang Formation" created by Qi Jiguang fighting against the Japanese invaders is the embodiment of patriotism. The "Yuanyang Formation" has become the "Pingtan Vine Exercise" with many cultural and tourism functions. The Pingtan Vine Exercise has witnessed the patriotic spirit of Qi's army and the men's pride in fighting against foreign enemies, with unique formation moves, compact and powerful rhythm of attack and defense, and powerful and majestic momentum. Pingtan is also an international archaeological research base for the South Island language group. It is a common view in the international academic circles that Pingtan is an important intermediate station for the South Island language group to migrate from the mainland to overseas, and the first place for the South Island language group to migrate overseas is Taiwan, and Pingtan is the first pedal to reach Taiwan. migration journey.

### ***1.3. The story of the dance drama "Pingtan Reflecting Image"***

In this magical and rich land of Pingtan, such a brilliant culture is nurtured. Under the watering of culture, the dance drama "Pingtan Reflecting Image" was born. According to legend, long ago, A-Ma, Cheng-Huang and people lived in the same mysterious and rich land, but due to the insatiable greed of some people, their inordinate greed destroyed the original ecological balance, they fought with each other non-stop, some tribes were constantly harassed, some immortals thus turned into evil demons and tempted the inhabitants with distracting thoughts to deviate from the gods and the original intention of goodness, A-Ma led the seekers to open up a new piece of bliss land. In this context, "Pingtan Reflections" tells the story of our ancestors, who were harassed by pirates and Japanese invaders for a long time, sent the prince of their clan to sail out with the escort of soldiers to seek foreign aid, and on the way they encountered a fierce storm, and the sailing ship was mercilessly destroyed by the storm, the prince and his soldiers drifted to Pingtan Island, and after disembarking, they entered the mysterious land of Pingtan, where they met They went to the capital city with the immortals and people here, and saw various looks of the life of the amazons, people and immortals in the capital city, such as the daily harvest, labor, ritual celebrations, etc. The prince also met the daughter of the sea here, and the two young people fell in love at first sight. The Japanese island followed the footsteps of the prince's people, along with the wreckage of the ship, but also on the mysterious land, after the island A-Ma, immortals and people on the prince's people's protection, pirates Japanese pirates repeatedly harassed all to no avail, all ended in failure. However, the Japanese pirates did not give up, but colluded with the devil forces, began to attack and invade the mysterious land, immortal, the prince and people and the island Japanese pirates fought hard, with the help of A-Ma, successfully repelled the evil devil and pirate Japanese pirates. Under the inspiration of A-Ma, the pirates and devils abandoned evil and lived in peace, and no longer illegally invade the land of others. At the end of the story, after a grand blessing ceremony, with a voluntary help to the prince of the fairy, people together on the way home.

## **2. The Imagery Construction of "Pingtan Reflections"**

### ***2.1. The realm of imagery presented by dance movements***

Dance movement is the most basic basis of dance character building, and it is also the main means to express the emotion of dance. Dance movement is also the most typical feature that distinguishes this art from other arts, and it is through movement that dance art expresses emotions and shapes characters. Dance movement is derived from life and refined by the artist. It can be an imitation of social life and natural environment, or it can be a second creation of processing and refining, forming a unique artistic language and shaping a typical character image.

In "Reflections of Pingtan", the daily life movements of local production, life and folklore performance are extracted and refined into a beautiful and moving dance. At times, the rhythm of the whole body is driven by the change of arm joints, just like the walking of marine creatures. Walking dragon, sometimes in the air, sometimes in the ocean, these beautiful dance movements, all from the actual life experience and the creator of the second degree of refining processing. The simple movements create different contexts, making the dance imagery more profound. Through the rhythmic movement of arms and fingertips, the actor's speed is fast and slow, and the body is combined with movement and stillness, using only two dexterous hands to change

various postures back and forth. The shape of the dance movements incorporates the local folklore performance movements of Pingtan and the forms of natural creatures, showing the spirituality of the dragon dance, and the rhythm is fast and slow, making people overwhelmed. With different performance props, it brings the audience more imaginative imagination space. The complete process of art creation includes art collection, art conception, art creation and art appreciation. With the audience's unique reverie of art and the second creation conducted, it makes the audience fascinated with the unique artistic beauty of the dance works.

In the dance drama “Pingtan Reflections””, in the language of creation, the dancers adopt the performance form of “bionic mimicry” through their body movements, imitating the natural forms of animals, plants, wind, rain, thunder and lightning, waves and waves in Pingtan, creating the beauty of artistic imagery with body language. The hat, fish pole and boat movements in the labor are all imitations and compositions of the dance imagery. By plucking local folk instruments, incorporating modern multimedia shapes, rising waves, fish swimming in the picture, a series of movements and the integration of the natural environment, the dancers form a unique imaginative context. Through the imagery presentation of the work, the unique artistic language depicted in the work is further felt.

In “Reflections of Pingtan”, the actors show the spirituality of the sea’s daughters through the twisting of their bodies and rhythmic changes of rhythm, and the sea’s daughters are also the presentation of typical dance imagery. Light movements and floating dance steps present the softness and undulation of the ocean, jumping back and forth, and entwined with the prince’s rotation, symbolizing the masculine beauty of men and the gentle femininity of women.

## ***2.2. Emotional characteristics of dance imagery construction***

Dance imagery can resonate with the audience, emotion is the center of gravity of all this creation, through the inner activities of joy, anger, sadness and joy, making the art of dance become a real emotional endowment, which is the biggest difference between dance art and art, literature and other art forms, dance can directly express emotions through body movements, expressing the true flow of emotions inside, dance art without emotion can not be called good Art. The simple gestures and body postures can show the emotions at that time. In this magical land of Pingtan, local islanders will dance whether it is for sacrifice, funeral or festivals. These primitive beliefs and folk activities are the manifestation of the most real emotions, and the movements of local folk activities are integrated into the movements of dance through refinement to express emotions. The unique Pingtan island culture, whether it is the emotion of mutual relationship between islanders, the emotion of belief in Mazu culture, or the emotion of reverence and perception of nature and life, all these are expressed in the dance drama “Pingtan Reflecting Image”.

The soundtrack of “Pingtan Reflections” is mostly from the local folk music of Pingtan, and local famous musicians, dancers, historians and other experts and scholars are invited to participate in the creation, along with the local music and musical instruments to play the rich characteristics of the music, and then with the original regional characteristics of Pingtan folk dance movements, reflecting Yang Liping’s love for traditional Chinese art, which also expresses the dance drama for the local This also expresses the deep emotion of the dance for the local region. The rich love of the prince and the daughter of the sea is expressed through the beauty of love

in their lingering dance; the daily dance movements of the residents wearing hats and straw raincoats, working at sunrise and resting at sunset, pulling nets and catching fish also build the islanders' love for nature and reverence for life; the image of the villainous soldiers is mostly expressed in group dances, showing the grandeur and highlighting the bravery of the islanders in defying the enemy.

### ***2.3. The philosophy of life reflected by dance imagery***

The "image" constructed by dance is based on "meaning", dance is the meaning of "image", which is not visualized. Through their own life experience and emotion, the audience can appreciate the creation of the work twice and feel the deeper meaning brought by the dance itself. The "meaning" presented by the dance movement is not a line, the audience can interpret and understand it by themselves through certain emotions and concepts, which is also condensed by the choreographer's sublimation of life experience and social life. The movement design and creative techniques are taken from the natural ecological objects of life, and the imagery presented can enter the audience's inner world.

There is a very typical generalization in the physical construction of the dance imagery of "Pingtan Reflections", using the richly meaningful dance imagery to construct the islanders, nature, faith and national temperament, and presenting Yang Liping's philosophy and attitude of life through dance movements. In the natural society, human being is only a very small part of nature. In the life cycle of human being, how to get the embodiment of their own value, no matter what the final result is, they will experience birth, old age, sickness and death, without any exception. In the present materialistic era, we face the great challenge of society, and some people become the masked man with a thousand faces in the dance drama "Pingtan Reflections", who speaks human words and ghost words. The prince in the play, representing the hope in our society, will eventually usher in a happy life in pursuit of a happy life, without fear of power, without fear of hardships and hardships, and in the first place. The love story of the prince and the daughter of the sea, although subject to various challenges and difficulties in the middle, eventually overcomes all with the power of love, defeats the enemy invasion and leads a happy life. The belief of the vast number of islanders in A-Ma culture reflects that in the present society, many people have no faith and no spiritual pillar. For such a phenomenon, we can establish our personal faith and pursuit, which does not necessarily have to be a religious faith, but it can be a belief, such as the belief of creating a better life and the belief of obtaining academic success. On the surface, "Pingtan Reflections" is a mythological legend and story, but in fact it reflects Yang Liping's philosophy of life. The characters and story outlines set in the play have very unique symbolic meaning and imagery metaphors, they are all taken from real life and become condensed philosophy of life through creation. These elements and symbols build a complete "reality" society.

## **3. Aesthetic Characteristics of the Imagery Beauty of "Pingtan Reflections"**

The dance drama "Pingtan Reflections" contains profound meaning and rich philosophy of life, which is the presentation of the aesthetic consciousness of Chinese nation, and the law of creation and artistic principles embodied in it are very worthy to be explored, which is the unity of creating the subjective and objective commonality and individuality, and has rich aesthetic imagery beyond the elephant,

leading the plot from one emotional peak to another. The dance language in “Pingtan Reflections” completes the presentation of complete imagery with the integration of scene scheduling, costumes and props, materials and lights, etc., which makes “Pingtan Reflections” a fusion of situations, reality and imagination, and forms a philosophical beauty of imagery from appearance to imagination and then to imagery.

### ***3.1. Representation of “Pingtan Reflections”***

Representation is the presentation of the external image of objective things, which is the impression left in the brain by visual perception. Representation is the basis of forming artistic image, and there is a close relationship between representation, sensation and art, all three need to mobilize human perception to understand and complete the construction of artistic image. The creative team experiences life in the space where they live together with the islanders, feels the most real local folk culture, and after the most profound experience and feeling in daily life, they have some kind of emotion or collision with some specific objects, which is used as the material for creation. The rich experience of the creative team and the profound experience of life in Pingtan have honed the team’s good insight and imitation. The beautiful legends of Pingtan and the harmony and beauty of nature deeply attract the creative team, which makes the creative team have a strong interest in the objects of Pingtan, and the intentional and unintentional observation and experience of Pingtan make the heart feel and emotion move.

### ***3.2. The imaginary construction of “Pingtan Reflections”***

The creation team of “Pingtan Reflections” travels to and from Pingtan villages and observes the sea, nature and islanders’ life scenes, these natural and humanities are deeply embedded in the mind of the creation team, through this archetypal inspiration, repeatedly processing and refining to complete the imagination, and through the imagination of the condensation, the construction of the dance character image is formed. The choreographer's perception and cognition of the phenomenon of life in Pingtan forms the theme of the dance drama, and through the conscious imagination activities, the character image is processed and shaped to build a new artistic image. The dance of the prince and the dragon in “Reflections of Pingtan” is definitely not a simple processing of the dragon dance movements, but a new creation from intention to imagination, recreated through imagination.

### ***3.3. Imagery sublimation of “Pingtan Reflections”***

The whole dance drama “Pingtan Reflections” does not flow in the form of superficial techniques and emotional representations, and the dance imagery is not simply fused and superimposed. The dance imagery in the whole dance drama is the product of the imaginative activity of the creator, creating a distinctive dance image, such as the prince, the daughter of the sea, the amazon, etc. Through the transformation of the senses and the shaping of the image, the characters are given unique emotions and life, and the audience can taste the emotions of the characters through the presentation of the dancers’ dance movements, which is also the most direct and effective way of communication between the work and the audience. The dynamic imagery beauty presented in “Pingtan Reflections” is not only the simple imitation of folklore activity dragon dance, mask performance and waves, but also the presentation of choreographer's creative thoughts. The “dragon” in the dance drama has a special mysterious nature, and this object has always been the essence of the

Chinese nation, in the appearance design and the presentation of the movement, the subjective “meaning” and objective “image” are achieved. In the appearance design and movement presentation, the subjective “meaning” and objective “image” are united in both directions, which shows the incessant life inheritance of the Chinese nation and the traditional national cultural spirit.

#### 4. Conclusions

The imagery of dance works is constructed through the artist’s real experience of perceiving life, and after repeated conception and refinement, the dance imagery presented is the embodiment of multiple ways of thinking intertwined and fused through dance body movements. The dance drama “Pingtan Reflections” is divided into four acts and fourteen chapters. Throughout the chapters, folk dance, traditional music, folk culture and other art forms are integrated into the dance drama, and the culture of Pingtan has been running through the whole dance drama. The natural objects are processed and processed through the aesthetic experience of choreographer Yang Liping, and become intuitive artistic visual images, breaking through the constraints of character forms through the anthropomorphic performance of natural objects, making the artistic images more varied and vivid, and presenting a more meaningful and profound dance imagery.

#### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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