

Contemporary Communication Research on Local Opera in Hunan Province: A Case Study of Hunan Huagu Opera

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Abstract

Hunan Huagu Opera belongs to China's valuable intangible cultural heritage, which contains a strong atmosphere of folk life and has important inheritance and preservation value. This paper takes the contemporary dissemination of Hunan Huagu Opera as the research object, and uses the theories and research methods of Opera and communication Science to explore the connection between the original art represented by Hunan Huagu Opera and social communication. In the current communication context, Huagu Opera, a Chinese folk opera culture, links the relationship between native art and social communication and shows a two-way construction process of local culture and social interaction. However, it cannot be ignored that Hunan Huagu Opera also faces many communication obstacles in the process of inheritance, and it is necessary to further combine the development and communication needs of opera culture and art to explore solutions. It is should to increase policics support, focus on brand awareness, encourage innovative expressions, and apply flexible, high-quality digital technology interaction communication strategies.

Keywords: *Folk opera dissemination, Chinese Opera culture, Hunan Huagu Opera.*

Introduction

Communication is a form of social interaction through information (Fiske, 2010). Society is not only a channel for the transmission of resources, but also an interaction of networks and relationships (Bidart et al., 2020). Social interaction is the process of “individual subjectivization” based on information dissemination, in which individuals construct themselves as components of a particular culture or society. In fact, the spread of opera is also a social interaction between the creators

and the audience. The process of opera artists curating, performing opera and expressing it in diversified means includes the communication and interaction between opera artists and audiences, opera artists and opera works, and audiences and opera works. Each subject gains freedom and transcendence in the aesthetic experience brought by opera. Chinese opera artists provide a leisure and entertainment experience for the audience, and the audience watches the opera and provides feedback, thereby achieving direct or indirect social interaction. However, in the contemporary communication environment, especially in the digital era, information technology has had a major impact on the dissemination of traditional theater. The rapid replacement of information accelerates the overall rhythm of social communication, such as “fast”, “entertainment”, and “popular” culture. In contrast, opera, as a representative of traditional culture, has become synonymous with “slow”, and even squeezed into the cultural fringes. In recent years, the spread of Chinese traditional opera has also encountered a “trough”. For example, Hunan Huagu opera (花鼓戲; which is a representative opera of Hunan Province, China) is not optimistic, and the audience has decreased sharply. The space for communication and development is being squeezed and challenged unprecedentedly. It is urgent to explore effective communication methods to promote the protection and promotion of the Hunan Huagu opera.

This study conducted a field survey in Hunan Province, where Huagu Opera was spread, and visited some cultural departments, theater troupes, Huagu Opera actors, and audiences. This study uses the theories and research methods of Opera and Communication Science collect data. Based on the survival dilemma and existing problems of Hunan Huagu Opera, this paper analyzes the reasons for its complex development in the contemporary era, and then puts forward some optimization suggestions for the dissemination of Hunan Huagu Opera, such as policy support, brand optimization, and digital support. The research vision of the paper is not only Hunan Huagu Opera, but also can provide reference for the development of similar operas. It aims to attract more scholars’ attention and research on Hunan Huagu Drum Opera and even other folk opera cultures, and improve development vitality of operas.

1. Symbols and Rituals: The History of the Spread of Hunan Huagu Opera

1.1. VISUAL AND AUDITORY SYMBOL EXPRESSION OF HUNAN HUAGU OPERA

Under the situational interaction theory, the most obvious way to present individual situations is impression management through clothing, hairstyles, makeup, etc. Individuals communicate and interact in social situations, and they

use facial expressions, bodies, voices, etc. to present a social “self-portrait” (Goffman, 1970; 1981). Communicators can control visual and auditory symbolic expression, which attracts the viewer’s attention and elicits aesthetic responses. Viewers will develop some level of connection with the object being disseminated based on their individual needs and expectations (Smith et al., 2004). Hunan Huagu opera shows visual and auditory symbols, which completes self-representation in the process of being received and interpreted. These symbols have been processed and refined for hundreds of years and have acquired rich signifiers. Visual symbols of the theater stage are symbols that the audience can directly see, mainly composed of actions, performers and stage props. The social content of information is mainly transmitted by nonverbal behavior (Yang, 2018). When the audience appreciates the Hunan Huagu opera, they could understand the emotional direction and the ideological content to be expressed in the opera by observing and analyzing these visual symbols. For example, different roles have different wearing language rules and performance programs. Clothing also plays an important role in shaping the image and character of the character.

Auditory symbols are mainly transmitted through the language of opera. Dramatic language can be divided into character language and text language. Character language is singing words in the popular sense, such as dialogue, monologue, narration, etc. Text language refers to the written language that exists in a dramatic script. In a good drama, the text is a medium, and the image presented by a comprehensive symbol system is used to complete the dissemination and acceptance. The language of the dramatic text can only be transformed into the language of the characters through the stage. In the development process of Hunan Huagu Opera, opera creators have processed their thoughts in real life into text language and formed character language through the performances of actors. They changed the content of these opera languages according to local conditions and times, which gave Hunan Huagu Opera a unique sense of rhythm and rhythm. In fact, Hunan Huagu opera is an oral art form that incorporates local colloquial features, such as “shunkouliu(jingle)”. Influenced by the Xiang dialect, Hunan Huagu Opera has some characteristics of humor and fun, forming a unique local characteristic singing style. The language is easy to accept and makes people feel familiar. Hunan Huagu opera mostly adopts a special modifiers techniques (潤腔) when singing, and adds Xiaowan (小彎) and Xiaoguai (小拐), which makes the singing tone of Hunan Huagu opera more rounded and the tone more gentle and beautiful (Liu, 2021). In terms of language style, more local vernacular slang is used, which is close to the speed of speech in life. The

music style borrows more from folk music, and the main accompaniment instrument is the “Huagu tube”, which has a very strong local atmosphere.

Chinese opera artists use symbolic thinking and behavior to create and disseminate opera, transforming the stage of life symbols to bring the audience a novel viewing experience. The performer-centered Hunan Huagu opera has a benign interactive relationship between symbol display and reception. In the process of communication, the communicator obtains the cognition of “self”, and adjusts the communication strategy according to the communication effect. And the audience integrates the symbolic information and forms the cognition of the art of opera. In this process, opera communicators will also highlight different “symbols” in the performance of different “paragraphs” according to their own aesthetic pursuits, such as pauses, lighting, sound effects, etc. The audience reconstructs the meaning system in combination with the personal understanding symbol system. In the performance practice of Hunan Huagu Opera, different opera artists will also freely play the traditional repertoire according to their own understanding, and different audiences have very different understandings of the same Huagu Opera.

1.2. CHARACTERISTICS AND FORMS OF THE SPREAD OF HUNAN HUAGU OPERA

Communication is the ensemble of social practice starting from ideas, expressions and social relations. In this circumstances, the dissemination of opera is not only a vehicle for transmitting information, but also a social art that helps maintain society and cultural generation (Carey, 2008). The Huagu opera in various parts of Hunan has some common ideological tendencies and artistic regularities, which is determined by various historical connections and artistic traditions in Hunan. The spread of Hunan Huagu opera is the result of the interaction between the social environment and the communication ecology. The emergence and dissemination of Hunan Huagu Opera art rely on the local traditional culture. The formation of the idyllic artistic style of Hunan Huagu opera is closely related to the customs and culture of Huxiang (Tan, 2010). Hunan Huagu Opera is deeply nourished by the local culture of Hunan and embodies the thoughts and emotions of the Hunan people. It records the historical changes in Hunan, vividly expresses the character characteristics of Hunanese people, and fully reflects the humanistic spirit, artistic personality and social style of Hunan society. Due to excessive realism, Hunan Huagu Opera has been rejected by the upper class for a long time since its birth, and it is mainly spread in the bottom society.

Hunan Huagu opera originated in the field and grew up in the folk, and some of the plays are derived from folk tales and legends. The traditional script of Hunan Huagu Opera is to enrich the themes of real life, folklore, folk tales, and dramas (Tan, 2011). The exorcism culture in Hunan Huagu opera is closely related to the “Nuo culture” with religious overtones, with a very strong sense of ritual (Meng & Zheng, 2020). In the process of development, Hunan Huagu Opera has absorbed a large number of local performance culture, and gradually developed into a folk comprehensive art integrating song, dance and music. Its themes are mostly closely related to the daily life of ordinary people, such as family life, labor production, love between male and female, etc. Huagu opera expresses the essence of social life, reflects the living environment and survival state of the people at the bottom, and has strong folk characteristics, such as “*Liu Hai Chopping Woodcutters* (劉海砍樵)”, “*The virtue of sister-in-law* (小姑賢)” and so on. *Liu Hai Chopping Woodcutters* praises relying on the unyielding struggle to strive for the happiness of marriage, and through the dramatic conflict between Liu Hai, Hu Xiuying and Shi Luohan, which praises loyal love and criticizes the forces of evil. *The virtue of sister-in-Law* criticizes feudal rites and praises Xiao Gu’s virtuous virtue.

In terms of transmission form, Hunan Huagu opera is a typical oral transmission. Like other types of opera, in the process of spreading Hunan Huagu opera, performers must not only inherit the singing words, but also inherit specific performance actions and demeanor when performing Huagu opera, and also need to convey a “sense of presence” to the audience. Due to the customs, phonology, and intonation of each county and city in Hunan have their own characteristics, six types of local Huagu opera art with different characteristics are mainly formed: Changsha Huagu Opera, Shaoyang Huagu Opera, Changde Huagu Opera, Hengzhou Huagu Opera, Yueyang Huagu Opera, and Lingling Huagu Opera. The Huagu operas in various places are all from the people, and after a long period of complex evolution and development, many unique art types and opera genres have been formed. It is precisely these rich and diverse artistic types and genres of Huagu opera that have caused the prosperity of Huagu opera in Hunan. Among them, Changsha Huagu Opera has the greatest influence. Because Changsha is the capital of Hunan Province, there are more opportunities to absorb the strengths of various Huagu operas and other operas, so Changsha Huagu Opera has rich tunes, more repertoire, and higher performance skills. In fact, many plays will be transplanted and adapted from each other to meet the aesthetic needs of local audiences. For example, in the repertoire of “*Grinding Tofu* (磨豆腐)”, the basic

meaning of the singing words of Changsha Huagu Opera and Shaoyang Huagu Opera is the same, but the number of words in the singing words is quite different from the overlapping sentences. Both of them have designed singing melodies according to local intonation, forming their own musical style characteristics (Wu, 2021). In addition, in order to expand the mass base, Hunan Huagu Opera has also transplanted and adapted excellent plays from other opera genres. For example, after the Beijing opera “*Shajiabang* (沙家浜)” and “*Chuncao Breaking into the Hall* (春草闖堂)” were adapted into Hunan Huagu operas, the singing and chanting have strong local characteristics of Hunan, and many Huagu minor key singing passages have been sung to this day.



A folk performance of Hunan Huagu Opera; photographed by the authors

1.3. THE SPREAD OF HUNAN HUAGU OPERA IN SOCIAL HISTORY

Hunan Huagu opera originated from mountain songs and folk dances in people's early labor life. It was influenced by art forms, such as chant, fishing drums, and shadow puppets in the process of development, and then developed into a unique Hunan folk drama. In the process of social and historical evolution, the development of Hunan Huagu opera has roughly gone through three historical stages. The first stage is the Ground Huagu opera period. The Ground Huagu opera period is performed by two people (once ugly) with hand towels, cups and chopsticks and other props. They usually perform along the ground, without a stage and a specially designated performance location, which is very life-like. During this period, the spread of Huagu opera was mostly carried out among the people at the bottom, in the form of field performances and field viewing. The second stage is the Crude stage of Huagu period. In addition to their work, people use labor tools to build a simple stage and perform on it. At this time, the performance roles include XiaoSheng, XiaoDan, and Xiaochou. The third stage is the stage of professional class clubs. At the end of the Qing Dynasty, professional clubs of Huagu opera began to appear in rural areas, and they gradually developed into cities, showing a vigorous development trend. After the 1911 Revolution, more professional class clubs appeared. In fact, until 1949, Huagu opera prospered without government approval, and many class clubs sang Huagu opera at the same time as Xiang opera in order to survive. In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded, the ruling authorities ordered systematic reform of Huagu opera (Chen, 1995). At that time, Huagu opera performing artists and literary and artistic workers jointly sorted out and created a number of excellent Huagu opera repertoire, Changsha's Huagu opera performances increased. The development of Hunan Huagu opera entered a truly prosperous period, and many classic plays are still active on the Huagu opera stage as reserved repertoire. In 1953, Hunan Huagu Theater was formally established in Changsha. The performance of Huagu Opera is becoming more and more mature and standardized. Hunan Huagu Theater responded to the call and opened the creation of modern opera, and the creation and performance of modern operas such as "*Playing Tongluo (打銅鑼)*", "*Sanliwan (三里灣)*" and "*Tinker A Pan (補鍋)*" made Huagu opera re-enter people's vision in a new form, enjoying a great reputation. For example, *Tinker A Pan* praises and cares for the collective through a slice of life, and opposes the harm to public interests and private interests. Since the beginning of the 21st century, Hunan Huagu Opera has adopted some methods to achieve modernization, such as "enriching" musical melodies by including popular music and Western opera vocal styles, producing modern plays that reflect contemporary

themes, absorption of Peking Opera and other large-scale Chinese theater forms of performance systems, etc. (Huan, 2010).

2. Positioning and cognition: the communication dilemma of Hunan Huagu opera

2.1. CULTURAL IDENTITY AND COGNITION FALL INTO APHASIA

In the contemporary communication environment, the rapid replacement of information has accelerated the overall rhythm of social communication, such as “Fast”, “Entertainment”, and “Popular” culture. In contrast, opera as a representative of traditional culture has become synonymous with “Slowness”, and has even been squeezed to the edge of society stage. Hunan Huagu opera is a typical oral inheritance of literature and art, and has a high degree of dependence on the language environment. Like other local operas, the singing and chanting of Hunan Huagu opera are mainly based on the regional dialects of Hunan Province. The actors need to be able to speak the Hunan dialect when singing, and the audience is required to understand the Hunan dialect when listening to the play. With the increase in Chinese mobility and the vigorous promotion of Mandarin, the frequency of use of some dialects has gradually decreased, and many young people do not speak the dialect of their hometown. When leaving a specific language and cultural environment, many viewers reported that they “did not understand” the Hunan Huagu play. When the Huagu performers see the confused expressions on the audience’s faces, they will also fall into confusion in their hearts. This “sense of difficulty” will dissolve the cultural confidence and identity of the communicator and audience. The loss of the linguistic environment of local dialects has limited the spread and development of Hunan Huagu opera, and the spread of Hunan Huagu opera also needs to be reoriented.

As the main body of communication, Hunan Huagu opera artists bear the heavy responsibility of inheriting the art of opera, and they give more people the opportunity to contact and understand this art through their performances. However, there are also some inheritors of Huagu opera who have a relatively simple understanding of the current situation of the dissemination of Huagu opera in Hunan Province, do not know their identity as a disseminator of opera culture, and fall into the dilemma of self-awareness and confusion of the communication subject, and only regard the performance process of Huagu opera as a way channel for their own livelihood. They subjectively lack the communication cognition of seeking innovation and change, and prefer to maintain the “ritual mystery” of the past, to meet the security of a corner and maintain the current communication status of Hunan Huagu Opera. Because in the past, the teaching of opera was a

money-making business, a “housekeeping skill”. The disseminator has insufficient will, lacks the awareness of network communication, and even sets up its own barriers due to the characteristics of “self-secret skills”, which is not conducive to the spread of opera, and even causes communication aphasia. As a Huagu opera performer, it is easy to understand that there is a mentality of “sticking to the rules”, but if the awareness and acceptance of Huagu opera in Hunan is getting lower and lower, it will not be conducive to the survival of Huagu opera performers themselves in the long run, and will have a greater impact on the self-identity of Huagu opera performers.

In addition, the main body of Hunan’s Huagu opera communication gradually exposed the following problems in the dissemination of opera: Huagu opera artists are not familiar with the communication trends of major digital media platforms, and do not grasp and use the characteristics of each platform well; The awareness of innovation communication is not strong, and the publicity work of Hunan Huagu Opera still stays at the traditional level of information notification and activity summary, which fails to form an information dissemination matrix, and ability to attract fans is insufficient. Also, the quality of new media created by the communication subject is uneven, and the problems of low picture clarity, lack of hierarchy of sets, incomplete content, and simple and random shooting methods will also affect the communication effect of Hunan Huagu Opera (Hu & Guo, 2020).

2.2. THE POTENTIAL OF COMMERCIAL MINING NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

It cannot be ignored that objective factors such as difficulty in inheritance and economic difficulties have also dealt a strong blow to the enthusiasm of opera communication, and the potential of commercial communication needs to be improved. The so-called “one minute on stage, ten years off stage”. At present, there are three main inheritance methods of Hunan Huagu opera: individual inheritance, school inheritance and training course inheritance (Yang & Chang, 2021). However, no matter what form of inheritance, it requires long-term training and stage practice, and it is by no means a quick success. In recent years, the market demand for local traditional opera arts such as Huagu Opera has been decreasing. Most of the audiences who like to enjoy Huagu Opera are mainly older groups, and there are fewer young audiences. The inheritance and dissemination of Chinese opera art requires material resources and soil, and needs to pay attention to the dynamic changes of market demand. Hunan Huagu Opera originated from the folk culture. As a product of agricultural civilization, Hunan Huagu Opera has virtual and abstract symbols with a large amount of agricultural civilization

information that is far from contemporary life and even disappeared into history. The love and spiritual pursuit of middle-aged and elderly people for Huagu opera are mostly based on living habits and value recognition, while young people are forced to watch and social needs and other external factors. Compared with the intrinsic drive of cultural identity of middle-aged and elderly groups. Young groups lack the initiative to actively watch, and their demand for traditional opera is not high. The psychological rhythm of contemporary audiences is very different from the rhythm of traditional plays. When the traditional Hunan Huagu opera encounters the audience in the contemporary information society, it will inevitably cause asymmetry in communication and reception. As the audience of contemporary society, their viewing habits are fragmented reading mode, and the content of reading tends to be flat and intuitive “reading pictures”. Much fragmented information distracts the audience’s attention, which makes the audience seem to “walk through” in multiple media (McQuail, 1997). Compared with the Hunan Huagu opera with a high degree of comprehensiveness and strong virtuality, the acceptance and understanding ability of the vast majority of ordinary audiences, and even the degree of patience, are not so high. Hunan Huagu opera, which is limited to a single form of expression, is difficult to meet the aesthetic appreciation needs of the broad audience, and it is necessary to further enhance the influence of commercial mining and accurately grasp the cultural resource needs of the audience.

2.3. THE MEDIA SITUATION AND CHARACTERISTICS ARE DIVERSE AND COMPLEX

The widespread use of electronic media shortens the distance between time and space, which affects human behavior, sociopolitical and economic structures (Hatzipanagos & Warburton, 2013). In the new media environment, the spread of Hunan Huagu Opera enjoys the dividends of the new era. Unlike the previous Huagu opera that could only be watched live and the number of viewers was limited, many theater groups and individuals now use platforms, such as Tik Tok, Bilibili, and Kuaishou to spread Hunan Huagu opera through video editing and live performances. The use of modern new media has broken the time and space limitations of the spread of Huagu opera, and people can pick up their mobile phones anytime and anywhere to see the performance of Huagu opera. Everything is two sides of the same coin. Although new media are helpful to the spread of Huagu opera, the spread of Huagu opera is also squeezed by new media channels. In the stage of mass media and the Internet era, cultural lifestyle choices have become diversified, modern communication tools, such as Internet web pages, short videos, movies, and television have been continuously popularized and

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updated, and the media environment has become diversified and complex, while the audience's time and attention are limited. With the advent of the development of modern digital technology and the era of media art, all kinds of rich and diverse art communication media have made the audience have a stronger autonomy in the selection and absorption of media products. And people's habits and means of appreciating art have also changed. Hunan Huagu opera relies more on the closed stage with a sense of atmosphere, this traditional live art is not easy to transfer to new media to spread, modern shooting methods are also difficult to perfectly present the Huagu opera performance on the screen, through the new media of the Huagu opera performance, greatly weaken the stylized performance effect of the Huagu opera, and will always make the audience lack a sense of on-site experience. These have also brought a huge impact to the traditional flower drum opera, and its sound and painting advantages are no longer obvious. Of course, not only the spread of Huagu opera, but also other traditional Chinese opera performing arts also face the need to adapt to complex and diversified media situations, and opera media communicators need to face the current situation of distracted audiences.



Survival dilemma of the Huiling folk troupe; dilapidated props, the lonely actor; photographed by the authors

3. Brand and Medium: A New Path for the Development of Hunan Huagu Opera

3.1. INCREASE POLICY SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COLLABORATIVE TRAINING MECHANISMS

In the process of opera art management, the support of the public sector is indispensable for the development of theaters, and the government should increase policy support and financial subsidies for opera (Trevisan, 2017). Chinese opera has a long history and is an important root vein for inheriting the traditional cultural values of the Chinese nation. As a folk opera, Hunan Huagu opera is deeply rooted in the thick soil of Huxiang culture, carries rich historical memories and spiritual meaning, and has a deep mass foundation. Because of its important historical, cultural and artistic value, it has been included in the Chinese national list of intangible cultural heritage. The development of Huagu opera first needs to do a good job in inheritance, and only by “keeping the right” can Hunan Huagu opera continue to innovate and develop.

It is necessary to increase the policy support for the development of Huagu Opera, strengthen the power of inheritance, and enrich the soil for the inheritance and development of Huagu Opera. The spread of Hunan Huagu opera is inseparable from the care of artistic aesthetics, parent culture and real life. It is necessary to conduct in-depth research on the inheritance of Huagu opera at this stage, and pay close attention to the inheritance of existing Huagu opera. Local government could increase support from the aspects of talent training, actor learning and exchange, and theater construction in the theoretical research of Huagu opera, and give appropriate preference to theater troupes that have done a good job in inheriting Huagu opera. Local public cultural departments also could pay attention to the folk dimension of Huagu opera, maintain the individuality of Huagu opera as a local opera, and prevent the language, phonology, and performance characteristics of Huagu opera from being eliminated in the process of modern transformation. Dramatists should also dig deep into the cultural resources of local characteristics and highlight the aesthetics of theatrical characteristics.

The key to the inheritance of the art of Huagu opera lies in the cultivation of inheritors. In the past, the training of inheritors of Huagu opera mainly relied on the “mentoring system”, and young people worshipped old artists as teachers to learn the performing arts of Huagu opera. At present, the training method of inheritors of Huagu opera is mainly to set up special opera performance departments in theater schools, such as Hunan Art Vocational College, and invite Huagu opera performing artists to teach. Most of the students of the drama school

enter the troupe after graduation, but due to the current sluggish development of the opera market, many students who study opera do not want to engage in the profession of opera actors after graduation and choose to work in other industries, resulting in difficulties in the inheritance of Huagu opera art. To this end, local public cultural departments could to promote the implementation of the Huagu Opera talent support plan, build a collaborative training mechanism, and establish and improve the training, evaluation and incentive system that meets the characteristics of Huagu Opera talents. It is important to cultivate inheritors of Huagu opera in a planned and guaranteed manner to prevent the loss of artistic talents and the lack of youth. Local government should encourage talents from existing genres to study and stage practice the classical repertoire of folk operas. At the same time, government officials should pay attention to the cultivation of innovative and composite folk opera talents, increases “industry-university-research” cooperative education, and promotes the establishment of a “dual tutor” system for joint training of schools and theaters. The Hunan provincial government could issue some policies to guide Huagu opera artists to create freely, encourage them to make more positive and elegant masterpieces, and strengthen cross-school, cross-regional and cross-country exchanges in talent training and management. Through discussions, cooperation, joint training and other means, Huagu opera Troupe learns from advanced art talent management models and builds a talent echelon for Huagu opera creation. At the same time, practitioners of Huagu opera must also consolidate their basic skills, repeatedly study and comprehend classic plays, comprehend and display the artistic essence of Huagu opera, and form a performance style that not only loses the characteristics of traditional Huagu opera, but also has its uniqueness.

3.2. FOCUS ON BRAND AWARENESS AND ENCOURAGE INNOVATIVE EXPRESSION

With the development of the times and the changes in society, the audience has more aesthetic expectations for opera, hopes that opera can be closer to the life and emotions of the new era, and has higher expectations for the arrangement, sound, optoelectronics, and service of opera. When people’s income continues to increase, their consumption demand at the spiritual and cultural level will become more and more vigorous, and the potential of the cultural content consumption market will also increase. Traditional opera needs to be “moving” in order to break the “circle wall” of traditional audiences, and innovative and diversified expression can continue to create more high-quality works. Huagu opera injects the ideal of human nature and humanism in the way of artistic reconstruction, plays the social function of “rejoicing and resentment”, and is very culturally

caring. In the period of rapid social and cultural changes, the long-term development of Huagu Opera needs to focus on real life and adapt to the diversified needs of the cultural market, and handle the relationship between the times, the market and the audience, so as to continuously enhance social identity and promote the prosperity and development of Huagu Opera. Keeping pace with the times is the proper meaning of the modern transformation of traditional Huagu opera, and it should help the creative transformation and innovative development of Huagu opera.

The creation and dissemination of Huagu opera need to meet the requirements of the law of artistic production and the law of the market. The modern expression of Huagu opera should pay attention to the modernization of aesthetics and concepts, and when conveying cultural thinking about history and society, it should be able to make the current audience and able to produce emotional resonance. To this end, it is necessary to strengthen the modern interpretation of the traditional cultural spirit represented by Huagu opera and construct a new Huagu opera in the modern context. Opera artists should continue to strengthen the brand advantages of Huagu Opera, encourage innovation and integration, realize the modernization of creative concepts, and carry out innovative expression in singing, repertoire, performance style, concept expression, etc., so as to promote Huagu Opera to radiate new vitality. Only by not departing from the social status quo can Huagu Opera create a model, paying attention to the needs of the people can arouse the emotional resonance of the audience, and constantly accepting challenges can Huagu Opera keep up with the pace of the times.

In the final analysis, Huagu opera is also a cultural product, which needs to be directly faced with the mass cultural market. The development of Huagu opera art industry is also affected by a series of market levers, such as art resource allocation, market supply and demand. Only by continuously enhancing artistic creativity and market competitiveness at the same time can the long-term development of Huagu Opera be realized. Integrating into the contemporary cultural context and following the law of market value will help enhance the realistic artistic appeal of Huagu Opera. The key to expanding the Huagu opera market is to continuously attract an artistic audience. While consolidating the existing consumer groups, Huagu Opera should focus on tapping the potential of young consumer groups, closely combining the cultural needs of the audience, and continuously expanding the “circle of friends” for the inheritance and development of Huagu Opera.

On the basis of adhering to the spirit of national art, it is necessary to promote the modern transformation of the performance form of Huagu opera. In the face of three types of Huagu opera works: classics, adaptations and new creations, the modern transformation of Huagu opera requires specific analysis of specific problems. For classic traditional Huagu opera works, opera artists should try to be faithful to the works, inherit and develop the historical rationality and humanistic care expressed in the classic works, and enhance the perception of history and the communication of aesthetic ideals. When adapting the traditional Huagu repertoire, the traditional performance form is used to show realistic care, integrating the traditional Huagu opera with modern values to express the beautiful pursuit. When creating new flower drum plays, respect the laws of artistic creation, highlight modernity while ensuring ideological and literary nature, and keep pace with the times.

3.3. WITH THE HELP OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, BUILD A SERIES OF OPERA IP CONNECTIONS

Modern technology and media do not replace human capabilities but recover and extend them. Digital communication technology should be more humanized, with the ultimate goal of serving and satisfying human needs. Human beings can transform and guide technology, making media technology function according to the path of human needs (Levinson, 2003). “Interactivity” is a feature of the new media environment, and digital technologies can increase the “suprasocial interaction” of mass media (Rafaeli, 20-19). “Internet+” can break the limitations of time and space, bring new cross-format integration to traditional opera, and build a new network interaction space. In the era of new media, only by seizing the dividends brought by digital technology, exploring new formats and models of Huagu opera, and expanding the “interactive space” can Huagu opera continuously expand our social influence. In cyberspace, the digital performance of Huagu opera is a kind of “recontextualization”. On the one hand, modern information technology can be used to digitally collect, preserve, publicize and research traditional Huagu opera to help protect and inherit Huagu opera in a timely and effective manner. On the other hand, digital technology should be fully used to enhance the artistic attraction effect, and the use of opera communication media for innovative communication and dynamic display should enhance the audience’s stage appreciation experience. The publicity of Huagu opera needs to strengthen communication planning, apply flexible and high-quality interactive communication strategies, and improve the “communicability” of Huagu opera communication. It can use multi-platform collaborative communication, use technology to empower the form of opera programs, promote the combination of

traditional Huagu opera with emerging digital media communication technologies, such as VR, AR, live broadcast, and metaverse, and explore the innovative integration of Huagu opera with games, animation, music, etc., so as to create a wonderful audiovisual experience. Hunan Huagu Opera can stimulate the creative enthusiasm of communication subjects, narrow the distance between opera and audience, and strengthen the connection between opera and audience, and between communication subjects and audiences, thereby enhancing audience stickiness and stabilizing the integration of communication effectiveness (Zhu et al., 2022). Due to the openness and compatibility of network propagation. When using modern digital technology to promote opera, it is also necessary to prevent the rigid superposition of digital technology and traditional art, and avoid the emergence of “fragmented” communication forms affecting the “immersive” communication effect. The Internet can innovate the form of interaction between audiences and opera performers, but the quality of content and production is indispensable, and it cannot be just formal interaction.

As a kind of intellectual property right, IP (Intellectual Property) has a variety of forms, can be applied to a variety of fields, and can be independently developed, authorized and other ways to obtain market profits. The mobile Internet brings great fragmentation of time and traffic, but IP linkage can be cross-platform and can bring more gameplay, such as games, animation, toys, books, live-action entertainment theme parks, etc. Through the diversified development and promotion of Chinese opera IP, the public’s attention and recognition of traditional local opera can be enhanced. It is essential to promote further the development of the cultural industry of Huagu opera with IP as the core and actively develop IP derivatives of Huagu opera. Based on the character image of Huagu opera, virtual works popular with young groups – online game characters can be created, so as to realize the coordinated development of Huagu opera culture, virtual reality technology and online games. Or the cross-border linkage and “breaking the circle” combination of opera and two-dimensional can be used as a breakthrough to break the current communication barriers of Huagu opera, and become an important channel to enrich the role of the audience. Give full play to the IP linkage effect with Huagu Opera as the main body, promote “high-frequency” interaction between IP and the public, amplify the value and profit space of IP, and extend the industrial chain of Huagu Opera. With the help of the new trend of cultural and tourism integration, the historical and cultural value of Huagu opera is organically combined with local tourism to create tourist attractions with local opera cultural characteristics. Therefore, the value of Huagu opera is not only

reflected on the stage, but also contributes to the local economic development and further promotes the culture of Huagu opera.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on the spread of Hunan Huagu opera as a traditional Chinese opera culture, and puts forward some suggestions, hoping to provide reference for the development of local opera and intangible cultural heritage industries in other regions. Hunan Huagu opera grows up in the folks, takes root in the folks, and is also oriented to the broad masses of the people, with unique folk characteristics. Although new media technology has an impact on the inheritance of traditional art, it can also promote the spread of traditional art through the further development of science and technology and human rational control. Today, with the rapid development of modern media, Hunan Huagu opera is still spread in the form of urban theaters and rural class clubs, but it is also facing a relatively severe communication dilemma. The spread and revitalization of Huagu opera still needs to pay attention to the needs of the people's spiritual and cultural life. The government needs to increase policy support to establish a collaborative training mechanism, build brand awareness of Huagu opera as a local folk opera, and encourage innovative expression by Huagu opera artists. Huagu Opera can also enhance interaction with audiences with the help of digital technology and extend the industrial chain with IP interaction. To enhance their identity as communicators, Huagu opera artists should also make some useful attempts and breakthroughs in the main inheritance and reflection of the social life of this genre, and use all-media means, create a variety of media products, and use market forces to encourage continuous innovation in the creation of Huagu opera images. In the face of the rapidly changing communication environment, traditional opera in other countries or regions should pay attention to the current communication space, inherit good repertoire works, and further attract and transport talents to drive the vertical inheritance of local opera. Focusing on the innovative and integrated publicity strategy of optimizing resource allocation and all-round digitalization, novel publicity planning and advertising communication methods are used to optimize information dissemination, improve the communication effect of opera in the region, and promote the continuous development of traditional culture.

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