

Exploring the Role of Dance in Shaping and Expressing the Classic Literary and Artistic Image of Contemporary Hunan Culture from a Cultural and Ideological Perspective

Wei Song*

School of Music, Hunan University Of Technology and Business, 410205, Hunan,
China

wwax8212@163.com

Jin Jiang

School of Music, Hunan University Of Technology and Business, 410205, Hunan,
China

Xinxing Han

School of Music, Hunan University Of Technology and Business, 410205, Hunan,
China

Abstract: Many communities feature unique dance styles, movements, and uses. Dances have been studied to enhance an understanding of their roles in mainstream societies. Our main objective is to explore the role of dance in shaping and expressing the classic literary and artistic image of contemporary Hunan culture from a cultural and ideological perspective. Our analysis showed that the vigorous movements of the Tujia people's dance and the flowing costumes of the Miao people's dance exemplify how dance embodies the profound respect for nature ingrained in Huxiang culture. Furthermore, dance serves as a powerful tool for transmitting cultural heritage across generations. Traditional dance styles, passed down through families and communities, encode narratives, rituals, and beliefs specific to Huxiang. The act of learning and performing these dances fosters a sense of identity and continuity among younger generations. Additionally, dance plays a crucial role in sustaining religious practices. The Cixi silk dance, with its elegant movements and symbolic costumes, reflects the cultural significance of ancestral veneration. Similarly, folk dances associated with Taoist rituals serve as a means of transmitting religious knowledge and practices. Beyond cultural preservation, dance also reflects and reinforces social values within Huxiang culture. The delicate footwork and synchronized formations of the Cixi silk dance represent the deep respect for ancestors and the emphasis on community spirit. Conversely, the powerful stomps and synchronized drumming of the Tujia people's dance embody the values of strength, resilience, and perseverance. By showcasing these qualities, Huxiang dance fosters a sense of collective identity and motivates individuals to overcome challenges. In conclusion, the examination of Huxiang dance underscores its critical role in shaping and reflecting the province's cultural identity. By serving as a repository of tradition, a platform for social commentary, and a catalyst for artistic innovation, dance plays an indispensable role in the ongoing evolution of Huxiang culture.

Keywords: Huxiang Culture, Traditional Dance, Cultural Preservation, Social Values, Collective Identity

1. INTRODUCTION

Hunan Province, China, situated along the north-south flow of the Xiang River, boasts a rich cultural heritage known as Huxiang Culture. This regional tradition, passed down through generations, reflects the influence of various historical periods. From the Shang and Zhou Dynasties (1600 BC – 256 BC), elements of Chu culture from the north, Miaoman culture of the Miao people, and Yue culture from the south and west shaped the early identity of Hunan. Notably, the poetry of patriotic poet Qu Yuan and historical relics like the Mawangdui Han Tomb exemplify the enduring influence of Chu culture. The subsequent Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589) and Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties (386-1644) witnessed significant cultural transformations due to large-scale migrations. These population shifts impacted customs, ideologies, and the distribution of inhabitants across Hunan. This period also saw the rise of prominent thinkers like Zhou Dunyi, the founder of Neo-Confucianism, Wang Fuzhi, a critic of Neo-Confucian interpretations, and Wei Yuan, who advocated for practical solutions to contemporary challenges. Through the contributions of these figures, a distinct regional culture with its own intellectual character emerged in Hunan. Dances refer to artistic expressions encompassing societal ideologies, visual arts, and literature, paramount pillars of human culture. As dances serve as mediums for expressing and shaping cultural beliefs, values, identities, and cultural trajectories into the future, their influence and importance of dances transcend mere entertainment (Von Salgarino, 2023). Thus, exploring the role of dances in the expression of classic literary and artistic images bridges knowledge gaps regarding contemporary human cultures and ideological perspectives. In the existence of human beings, dances have influenced human cultures, perpetuating and reflecting diverse traditions, cultural norms, and societal ideals. Irrespective of the artistic forms, dances reflect the socio-cultural context from which they emanate (Von Salgarino, 2023). Contrasting the European Renaissance era with the modern street metropolis displays the evolving landscape of changing human culture. These investigations show unique patterns of cultural expression and preservation of intrinsic traditions (Giannini & Bowen, 2023; Von Salgarino, 2023). The historical accounts demonstrate how classic literary and artistic images and dances catalyzed cultural evolution. A historical

review of dances indicates evolving costuming, narratives, choreography, and dance styles that communicate narratives resonating with global themes while insinuating distinct cultural ideologies, norms, traditions, and epochs. In the Hu Xiang culture, artistic imageries bear cultural ideologies and characteristics, marking cultural inheritance (Huang, 2021). The longstanding influence of artistic imageries has been dubbed “New Confucianism” as the contemporary society adopt artistic values. Tao Haoming is a celebrated author or classic literary in Xiangya area of Hunan. Despite criticisms, Tao’s works have elucidated fundamental cultural values and qualities, shaping ideologies in the region. The present study investigates the influence of roles on the expression of classical literary and artistic images through the lens of ideological and cultural perspectives. A critique of historical, artistic interpretation, and cultural critique establishes the connection between dances and elements of human culture, including visual arts, literature, and societal ideologies (Bezruchko et al., 2024). Fundamentally, contextualizing dances with cultural and ideological perspectives unmasks extensive comprehension of their influence on the transformative and dynamic forces in human cultures. Dances transform contemporary cultures through learning and behavioural influences. Despite significant evidence and literature on the role of dances in the expression of classic literary and artistic images, more is needed to know about the impacts on human culture. Dances are critical aspects of human culture. However, when viewed through ideological perspectives, it reveals paramount themes and aspects that must be studied at length. As such, the present study highlights dance's enduring influence on human culture to underscore implications on artistic imagery and classic literary in the contemporary world. Interdisciplinary research draws insights from art history, dance scholarship, cultural studies, and literature to articulate how dances shape and influence the expression of artistic imagery and classic literary in contemporary human cultures. Additionally, the findings will illuminate inspiration for the inquiring multifaced and rich relevance of dances in cultural activities.

2. ROLES OF DANCES IN CLASSIC LITERARY AND ARTISTIC IMAGES

The literature of dances asserts that dances serve multiple purposes, from ideological critique to cultural preservation, in classic literary and artistic images (Izu & De Villiers, 2023). Notably, the roles of dances

unfold in different patterns and mechanisms as human cultures and heritage encompasses unique elements that serve unique purposes and align with specific ideological perspectives.

2.1 Cultural Preservation and Representation

Originating in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Xiang Opera is the dominant form of local opera within Hunan Province, China. It features twelve-character types, including the Sheng (male), Dan (female), Chou (comic), and elaborately painted "flower face" (jing) roles. Accompaniment typically includes traditional instruments like the flute, jade piano, and percussion instruments. The repertoire boasts over 300 works, encompassing historical dramas ("Patriotic General Yue Fei"), lyrical pieces ("Salute to the Moon"), folktales ("The Story of the White Rabbit"), and mythological epics ("Exploration of the Gods"). However, the rise of modern cultural trends coupled with funding and performer shortages threaten the opera's survival. Urgent protective measures are necessary to ensure the continuation of this significant cultural heritage. Dances represent and preserve culture (Reshma et al., 2023). Fundamentally, dances embody integral elements of cultural identities, including values and traditions. Importantly, artistic imageries and classic literary in the Hu Xiang culture convey unique cultural meaning (Zhong, 2023). In the Xiang region of Hunan, artistic imageries is unique to every generation. The vast cultural artifacts represent generational skills and artforms, and embody the entire cultural preservation and representation. Other notable examples include classical Indian dances, Kathakali or Bharatanatyam, which are rooted in ancient mythology and rituals and embody the community's robust cultural heritage (Pai, 2020). Similarly, folk dances, including Brazilian samba and Irish jig, represent cultural traditions (Emoghene & Spanos, 2023). Evidence shows that cultural knowledge and awareness are a requirement for professional dances in the Irish and Brazilian communities. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognizes dances as intangible cultural preservation (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023). A widespread regional opera form, Flower-drum Opera originated in the rural areas of Hunan province. Characterized by lively melodies, concise plots, and singing in local dialects, Flower-drum Opera draws its musical inspiration from rural life, incorporating elements of ballads, folk songs, work chants, and Taoist musical traditions. Reflecting the everyday experiences of its audience, its repertoire often features themes of labor, love, and family conflicts. The Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) saw the standardization of Flower-drum Opera

performances, centering on three core roles: the Dan (female), Sheng (young male), and Chou (comic). Initially, these performances were short, life-oriented plays featuring folk songs. Over time, the repertoire expanded to include narratives based on local legends. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China, Flower-drum Opera experienced a surge in popularity. The Hunan variant, with over 200 years of development, boasts a rich collection of melodies exceeding 300. Traditional pieces have been revitalized and adapted, while new, modern dramas have been created, such as the renowned play "Tinker Pans" featuring the young soprano Li Guyi. Rooted in the life of the common people, Flower-drum Opera continues to evolve through the ongoing efforts of established and emerging artists.

2.2 Narrative Expression

Hunan's vibrant dance traditions serve as a powerful medium for expressing and promoting the artistic imagery of Huxiang culture. The province boasts a diverse array of folk dances, each reflecting the unique customs and traditions of its distinct ethnic groups. The vigorous movements and rhythmic drumming of the Tujia people's dance represent their strength and resilience in the face of challenging terrain. In contrast, the graceful hand gestures and flowing costumes of the Miao people's dance embody their deep connection to nature and ancestral traditions. These diverse dance forms, often performed during festivals and celebrations, become living canvases that showcase the richness and dynamism of Huxiang culture. Furthermore, dance plays a crucial role in transmitting cultural heritage across generations in Hunan. Traditional dance styles are passed down through families and communities, with elders serving as mentors to younger generations. The embodied knowledge embedded within these movements ensures the preservation of cultural practices and narratives. Moreover, contemporary dance choreographers in Hunan frequently draw inspiration from folk forms, reinterpreting them for modern audiences. By incorporating traditional elements into new creations, these artists bridge the past and present, ensuring the continued evolution and relevance of Huxiang culture's artistic imagery. Previous studies posit that the physical aspect of dances reflects artistic imagery and classical literary, which present ideals of contemporary human culture (Hester, 2020). Classical ballet is an excellent example of narrative expression, where love, redemption, and betrayal stories are told through complex emotive and choreography gestures. The iconic display of Odile and Odette identifies with contemporary human culture as ideological perspectives dispense hard work as avenues of

eradicating poverty or overcoming struggles (Hoydis, 2020). Dances adopt artistic images that transform the world or seek solutions to challenges faced in modern societies, thus becoming excellent storytelling mechanisms within artistic imagery and classical literary (Figure 1).

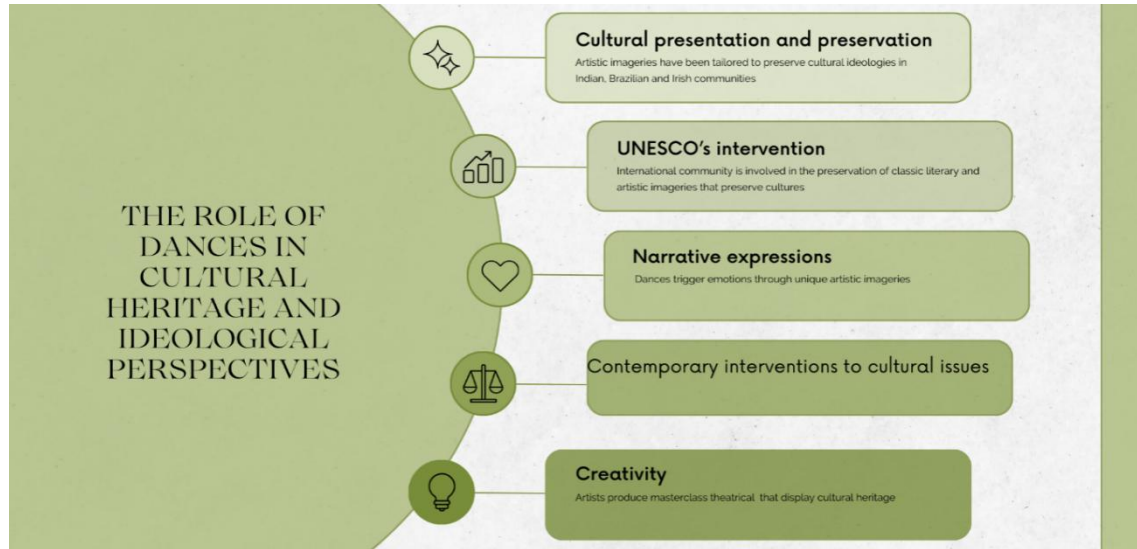


Figure 1: The Multipurpose Roles of Dance in the Expression of Artistic Images and Classic Theory

Ideally, unique dances and interluding classical literary and artistic imagery deliver artistic pleasure to dancers and their audiences. To entertain the audience, Giuseppe Verdi's "Aida" displays enriched opera's grandeur and spectacle in the ancient Egyptian court (Somma, 2021). More recently, choreographers have applied themes and ideas to address global community issues, including race, ethnicity, political injustices, and gender (Magyar, 2021).

3. DANCE AND HUXIANG CULTURE

3.1 Cultural Development and Heritage

Dance acts as a catalyst for cultural development within Huxiang culture, particularly regarding its connection to nature and its emphasis on community. The vigorous movements and rhythmic drumming of the Tujia people's dance, for instance, embody their deep respect for the rugged mountainous landscapes they inhabit. Similarly, the intricate hand gestures and flowing costumes of the Miao people's dance reflect their harmonious relationship with the natural world. These dances, performed during festivals like the Lusheng Festival, create a shared experience that reinforces the values of respect for nature and living in balance with the environment. Furthermore, dance serves as a platform for celebrating the

unique customs and traditions of Huxiang's diverse ethnic groups. Through inter-community performances and competitions, dancers share their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of appreciation for the richness and variety within Huxiang culture. Previous studies suggest that dances reinforce cultural identities and significantly contribute to "cultural development," making it a crucial element of cultural heritage and traditions (Lykesas et al., 2020; Ni Made & GYK, 2020). According to UNESCO, through the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003, dances stand out as an inventory and repository system of preserving cultural heritage through continuous performance (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023). In Greek culture, the transgenerational conveyance of traditional dance is marked by fundamental cultural and traditional heritage. The traditional dances determined the Greeks' cultural identity (Ni Made & GYK, 2020). Like the Greek culture, dances have marked cultural and heritage development. Adopted teaching or standardized methods nurture individuals into artists and expert dancers (Figure 2).

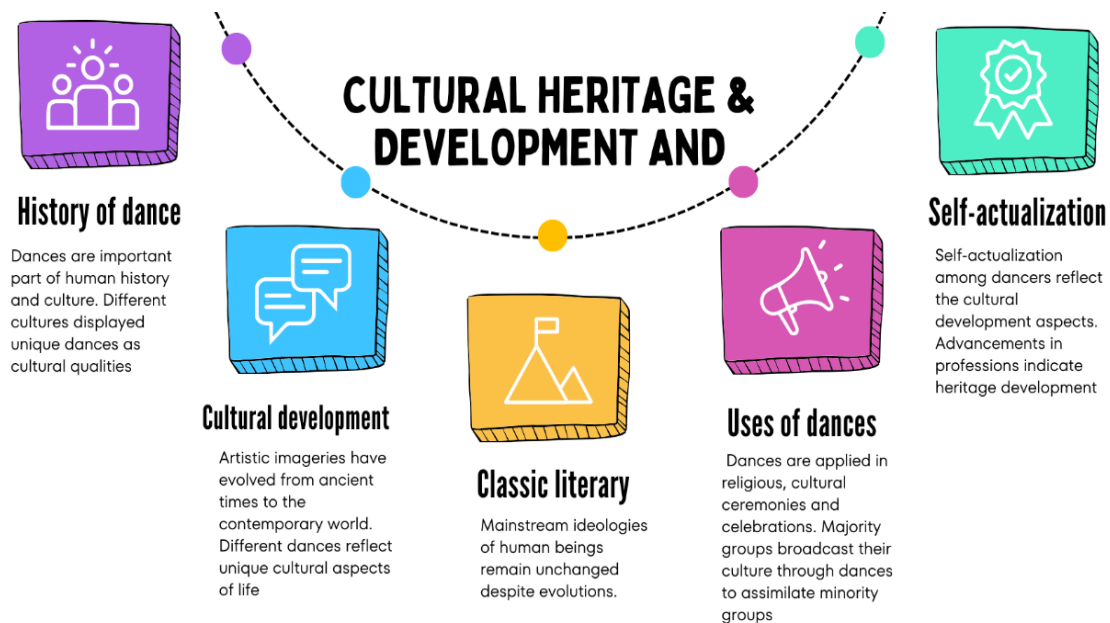


Figure 2: Dances as Marks of Cultural and Heritage Development

Dance plays a critical role in safeguarding and transmitting the unique martial arts traditions of Huxiang culture. The powerful stances and coordinated movements of Hunan opera, for example, are not merely artistic; they encode historical fighting techniques and philosophies. These movements, passed down through generations, preserve the essence of ancient martial arts forms like Hun Gar, a style known for its powerful strikes and close-quarter combat techniques. Similarly, the intricate footwork and acrobatic elements of lion dances symbolize strength,

warding off evil spirits and promoting good fortune. In Huxiang culture, particularly its emphasis on filial piety and ancestor veneration. Consider the delicate footwork and graceful movements of the Cixi silk dance, a performance traditionally dedicated to honouring ancestors. The intricate choreography and flowing silk costumes symbolize respect for tradition and the enduring legacy of past generations. Moreover, dance serves as a powerful tool for preserving the storytelling traditions of Huxiang culture. Many folk dances, like the Dragon Boat Dance, reenact historical events or mythological tales. By learning and performing these dances, younger generations gain a deeper appreciation for the martial heritage of Huxiang culture. Moreover, dance serves as a powerful tool for intergenerational transmission. Additionally, a traditional Chinese dance style instigates the role of dance in shaping human culture and drifts to ideological perspectives on artistic image and classical literary. In this account, the Chinese believe that a Zhuang ethnic girl invented a particular dance where dancers wore flesh-coloured costumes, giving the impression of a naked figure (Liu, 2021). The dance style is a cocktail of Chinese classical and contemporary chorographical features of theatrical effects. The dance style represents a famous Chinese tradition of bathing before marriage. This danced style has been performed in Chinese ritualized marriage ceremonies, with the use of Zhuang ethnic costumes taking CenterStage of the artistic image. Huxiang culture's relationship with religion is multifaceted and reflected in its dance forms. While some traditional dances hold direct connections to specific religious practices, the overall influence is more subtle. The energetic movements and vibrant costumes of the Nuo dance, for example, might be seen as appeasement rituals for deities or ancestral spirits within indigenous religions. However, the dance can also be interpreted as a celebration of life and community, transcending purely religious purposes. This relationship extends to performances like the Lion Dance, which can hold symbolic significance within both Buddhist and folk traditions, promoting blessings and warding off evil spirits. Ancestral veneration IS a cornerstone of both Confucianism and Daoism and finds expression in dances like the Cixi silk dance. The elegance of the movements and the symbolism embedded in the costumes create a reverential atmosphere honouring past generations. Furthermore, folk dances associated with Taoist rituals, such as those incorporating swords or fans, serve as a means of transmitting religious knowledge and practices. The enactment of these dances during religious festivals reinforces the connection between the physical and spiritual realms within Taoist beliefs.

4. CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS THROUGH DANCE

Hunan's vibrant dance serves as diverse cultural representations of Huxiang. The reverence for nature deeply ingrained in Huxiang culture finds expression through the movements and rhythmic drumming of the Tujia people's dance. These movements embody the Tujia people's resilience and respect for the rugged mountainous terrain they inhabit. Conversely, the Miao people's dance, characterized by flowing costumes and intricate hand gestures, reflects their harmonious relationship with the natural world and their connection to ancestral traditions. This dance is often performed during the Lusheng Festival, a vibrant celebration that reinforces the importance of living in balance with nature. Furthermore, dance serves as a platform for showcasing the unique customs and social structures of Huxiang's ethnic groups. For instance, the dynamic movements and synchronized formations of the Dongjing Dragon Dance represent community strength and cooperation. This spectacular performance, featuring a long, multi-coloured dragon puppet manipulated by numerous dancers, is a highlight of traditional festivals, fostering a sense of shared identity and collective celebration. Through these diverse dance forms, Huxiang culture comes alive, offering a window into the province's rich history, values, and connection to its environment. The findings from previous studies suggest that dances express the diverse, rich, and dynamic aspects of human life. In many cultures, dances are incorporated into deeply rooted religious beliefs, traditions, and social life. Fundamentally, the dances are specific to communities and vary depending on the activity at a given moment.

Dances as a spiritual expression or worship dances are believed to invoke blessings, establish a connection with divine beings, and a method of devotion expression (Knäble et al., 2021). In the last decades, investigators examined the influence of dances in the early church across all Christian denominations, Greek mysteries, Hasidic Judaism, Islamic Sufism, Afro-Brazilian Umbanda, and West African Togolese religions to unmask a myriad use and landscape of dances (Knäble et al., 2021). Importantly, dances are used in Chinese shrines to invoke spirits. More recently, dances were used in the Wuhan region during the COVID-19 pandemic (Xu et al., 2020). The people sought the spirits, seeking favor against the deadly disease. Intercultural and interreligious connections emerge in the investigations, asserting the longstanding effects of dances on contemporary life (Figure 3). However, dances are tailored to match particular religious activities, which vary across the global community.

Traditions	Religious life	Social life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring dances for cultural events • Thanksgiving through dances in harvesting or prosperity events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique dances to religious events • Dancing to invite the Gods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgenerational dances as entertainment • Establishing cohesion through dances

Figure 3: A Schematic Representation of the Influence of Dance on Artistic Imagery and Influences on Culture and Ideologies

Dances reflect social customs and traditions in communities. For example, while dances in traditional weddings symbolize union and affection in many communities, communal dances celebrate prosperity and abundance during harvesting seasons (Akano, 2020; Osei, 2022). Dances' specificity, uniqueness, and purposes are contextualized within ideological perspectives of cultural norms and standards. By consolidating a people, celebrations and communal activities warranting the dances embody solidarity and reinforce cultural identities. The ideological perspectives of cultural and social events in Hu Xiang region of Hunan and West Africa emerge through the organization and performance of rites, liturgies, sacrifices, and rituals (Akano, 2020; Wong, 2023; Xu et al., 2020; Zhong, 2023). Members of the communities demonstrate their beliefs and values in the festivals, inferring religious, political, and social life.

5. THE ROLE OF DANCE IN SHAPING SOCIAL IDENTITIES, TRANSCENDENCE, AND TRANSFORMATION

Even though the core elements of cultural dances remain uncompromised, the general landscape of dances evolves, spreads, and intertwines with societal changes (Von Salgarino, 2023). Contemporary Hu Xiangya society are characterized by periods and unending changes. The external environments, including sociocultural, political, and gender identities, change to conform with the new developments. In artistic imagery and classic literature, dances symbolize identity complexities, enumerating class, race, and gender intersections within societies. A classic example is the Hu Xiangya society where dances are purposefully used for cultural dissemination and heritage (Peng, 2024). Huxiang dance forms act as powerful transmitters of social values, particularly the deep respect for ancestors and the emphasis on community spirit. The Cixi silk dance exemplifies this reverence for ancestors. Performed traditionally by

women, the delicate footwork and graceful movements symbolize filial piety and the enduring legacy of past generations. The flowing silk costumes further emphasize the importance of tradition and the interconnectedness between the living and the departed. Furthermore, the act of performing these dances together fosters a sense of community and shared purpose. The coordinated movements and synchronized formations require cooperation and mutual understanding, reinforcing the value of social cohesion within Huxiang culture. This emphasis on collective effort extends beyond dance performances. Many traditional festivals in Hunan involve communal activities like preparing food, decorating public spaces, and participating in parades. These shared experiences strengthen social bonds and cultivate a sense of belonging within Huxiang communities. Previous studies highlight that the characteristic scenario during the Harlem Renaissance marked a significant era in the lives of the African-American community as the dances addressed the racism and ethnicity issues affecting them (see Table 1). A similar aspect has been replicated in the current society as artistic imageries and classic literature are used to implicate gender and sex ideologies.

Table 1: The Diverse Aspects of Dances and Roles in the Contemporary World

Asian Communities	European Communities	American communities	African communities
In the Hu Xiang region of Hunan, China, Bali and India, dances were performed in crucial life events, including wedding ceremonies and religious and life celebrations. Dances yielded the connection between the living and the spiritual world.	In Ireland and Greek, dances are longstanding cultural aspects of life. Dance has been practiced and preserved to establish a connection between traditional life and the contemporary world	Harlem Renaissance marked a crucial in the development of dance among African-Americans Samba dance has been preserved in the Brazilian community, indicating the transcendence	Colonialists introduced education to eradicate African culture African traditional dances were among the threatened cultural aspects of life

There is a disposition that dances have evolved, portraying artistic imagery as spiritual instruments. In many cultures, dances have fostered relationships with the spiritual world (Izu & De Villiers, 2023). In spirituality, the role of dances is a two-fold aspect. In establishing a

connection between the living and the spiritual world, the traditional rituals involving dances bridge the gap between the living and the spiritual dance (Figure 4). Dances are sometimes deliberated to establish a rapport between the living and spirits, asserting the longstanding cultural practice. Interestingly, this is a tradition that is yet to change.

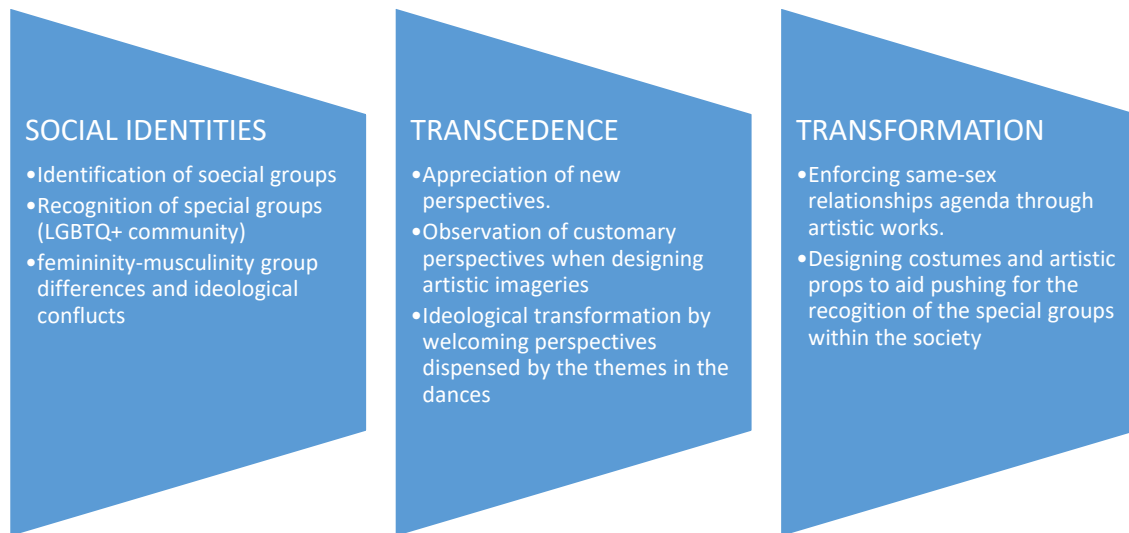


Figure 4: Social Implications of Dances on the Expression of Artistic Images

Social values of strength, resilience, and perseverance are also prominently reflected in Huxiang dance traditions. The Tujia people's dance, characterized by vigorous movements and rhythmic drumming, embodies these values. The Tujia people have a long history of inhabiting challenging mountainous regions, and their dance reflects their ability to overcome adversity and thrive in a harsh environment. The powerful stomps and synchronized drumming create a sense of unwavering determination and collective spirit. Similarly, the dynamic movements and synchronized formations of the stilt walking dance, popular during festivals, showcase physical prowess and a willingness to confront challenges. Dancers skillfully navigate elevated platforms, demonstrating agility and bravery. These dance forms not only entertain audiences but also serve as a source of inspiration, reminding viewers of the importance of strength and resilience in the face of obstacles. By celebrating these qualities, Huxiang dance fosters a sense of collective identity and motivates individuals to overcome challenges. The objection to same-sex relationships from diverse cultures sparks debates on artistic imageries promoting same-sex relationships and their influence on contemporary human culture and ideologies. In many parts of the world, robust discussion exists on femininity and masculinity based on a categorical divide (Wong, 2023). The role of dances comes in through the need to

embrace same-sex relationships in the modern world. Often, artists and advocates of same-sex relationships exploit artistic imageries to pass the information on their presence and campaign for acceptance. Interestingly, the number of dancers advocating for same-sex relationships increased in the last few years. From the DanceSport in the United Kingdom to a series of studies carried out in other parts of the world, there is a consensus on the increasing number of dance events selling same-sex relationship ideologies. The events have been sponsored by stakeholders, asserting the use of dances to implement cultural and ideological changes (figure 5).

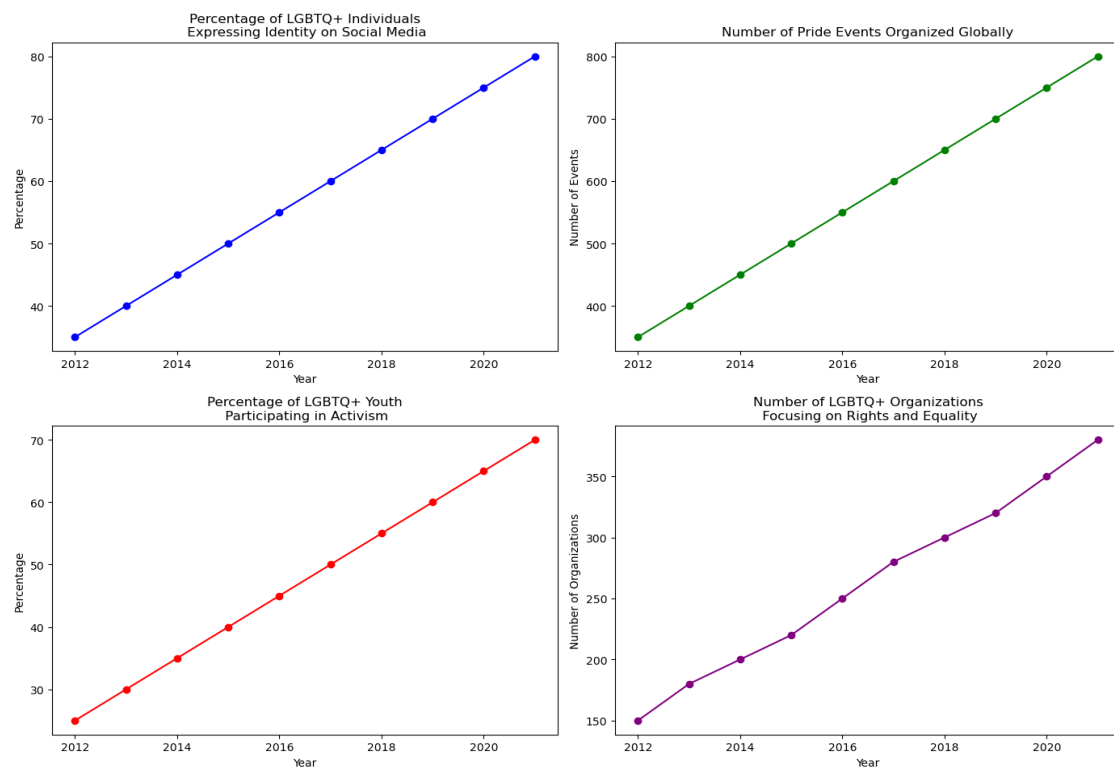


Figure 5: A Summary of Ideological Landscapes on the Influences of Dance in the United Kingdom

Hunan's dance traditions play a complex role in shaping artistic imagery in the contemporary world. While these dances serve as powerful transmitters of Huxiang culture's rich heritage, they are also constantly evolving to reflect the realities of modern life. For instance, contemporary choreographers often draw inspiration from traditional folk forms, reinterpreting them to address contemporary social issues. However, this evolution can lead to tensions with more conservative elements within Huxiang culture. The portrayal of same-sex relationships in dance, for example, might challenge traditional notions of gender and sexuality, sparking resistance from those who view these themes as conflicting with established social values. While it's important to respect the cultural context

of Huxiang dance, discouraging artistic exploration that pushes boundaries hinders the art form's ability to adapt and remain relevant. Dance can serve as a platform for open dialogue about social issues, fostering a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of Huxiang culture in the contemporary world.

6. CONCLUSION

Our exploration of Huxiang culture reveals the multifaceted significance of dance in shaping and expressing its artistic identity. Dance forms act as a dynamic platform, promoting cultural development, safeguarding heritage, and nurturing religious practices. The vigorous movements of the Tujia people's dance and the flowing costumes of the Miao people's dance exemplify how dance embodies the profound respect for nature ingrained in Huxiang culture. Furthermore, dance serves as a powerful tool for transmitting cultural heritage across generations. Traditional dance styles, passed down through families and communities, encode narratives, rituals, and beliefs specific to Huxiang. The act of learning and performing these dances fosters a sense of identity and continuity among younger generations. Additionally, dance plays a crucial role in sustaining religious practices. The Cixi silk dance, with its elegant movements and symbolic costumes, reflects the cultural significance of ancestral veneration. Similarly, folk dances associated with Taoist rituals serve as a means of transmitting religious knowledge and practices. Beyond cultural preservation, dance also reflects and reinforces social values within Huxiang culture. The delicate footwork and synchronized formations of the Cixi silk dance represent the deep respect for ancestors and the emphasis on community spirit. Conversely, the powerful stomps and synchronized drumming of the Tujia people's dance embody the values of strength, resilience, and perseverance. By showcasing these qualities, Huxiang dance fosters a sense of collective identity and motivates individuals to overcome challenges. However, the evolving nature of artistic expression can lead to tensions. The portrayal of themes that challenge traditional values, such as same-sex relationships in dance, necessitates a balance between respecting cultural heritage and fostering artistic exploration. Dance, with its capacity for adaptation and social commentary, can serve as a platform for open dialogue, promoting a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of Huxiang culture in the contemporary world.

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