



From “Secondary” to “Multidimensional”: The Innovative Path of Recitation Creation

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Abstract— At present, recitation should go beyond the narrow realm of "secondary creation" focused on text language and move towards a "multidimensional" creative space that includes "pan-secondary," "primary," and "tertiary" creation, forming a comprehensive and three-dimensional space that encompasses "primary—secondary—pan-secondary—tertiary." Recitation has seen diverse breakthroughs and transformations in terms of the creative subject, object, elements, dissemination, and communication relationships. This will inevitably lead to a brand-new creative pattern for recitation.

Keywords— Recitation, Secondary Creation, Multidimensional Space, Innovation



I. THE ORIGIN OF RECITATION THEORY

At present, when reciters use theories to explain and evaluate recitation, they often mention that they are using theories from broadcasting studies, such as secondary creation, the "three internals and four externals," perception-understanding-expression, and so on. It seems that without broadcasting studies, there would be no theoretical basis for recitation. Is there no theory for recitation? The reality is not the case!

Here, we do not discuss the long-standing traditional chanting and related literary theories. Looking only at the past century in China, influenced by Western drama and propelled by the Chinese vernacular language movement, the new-style recitation that emerged in the early 20th century has always been a focus of theoretical attention. Just looking at the 20 years from the 1930s to before the Cultural Revolution, scholars such as Qian Jibo, Zhu Ziqing, Huang Zhongsu, Hong Shen, Zhao Yuanren, Shu Xiowen, Xu Chi, Gao Lan, Ke Zhongping, Sun Qian, and Guo Xiaochuan have all provided theoretical discussions

and explorations on recitation from the aspects of literature, linguistics, and performance studies, and a number of discourses and monographs have been published in the media. For example, Huang Zhongsu's "Recitation Method" published in 1936, Xu Chi's "Poetry Recitation Manual" published in 1942, Hong Shen's "The Speech in Drama and the Recitation of Poetry" published in 1943, "The Recitation of Literary Works" published in 1956, and Wu Lang's "On Recitation" published in 1957, and so on.

Learning from history and reflecting on the present, many linguistic expression theories in Chinese broadcasting and performance studies have largely drawn nourishment from recitation. When we talk about recitation now, we always mention broadcasting and performance studies, which is nothing but a disregard for the history of recitation and ignorance of recitation theory.

Since recitation has a theoretical basis, why is it that no one mentions it at present, but instead frequently borrows theories from other disciplines? There are three reasons: 1. The traditional linguistic research that focuses

on written language and neglects spoken language has ignored the study of verbal expression, resulting in theoretical lag; 2. The recitation itself focuses on practice and neglects theory, leading to stagnation in theoretical research; 3. The rapid development of disciplines such as broadcasting and performance studies has promoted their theories to cover all types of verbal artistic expression.

Recitation, rooted in linguistics, has gradually lost its theoretical research forefront and depth under the influence of the linguistic discipline's research orientation. Recitation itself, influenced by political orientation, has been attached to literary and political activities, with many people involved but few focusing on research and summary. The discontinuity or weakness of theory has made it increasingly dependent and narrowed its path. More importantly, the rapid development of mass media and the vigorous advance of the broadcasting discipline have led to the broadcasting theory, which draws on recitation theory, to integrate it into a broader theoretical framework with its relatively broad vision. To some extent, the expansion of the field of broadcasting theory has a strong discursive hegemony. Over time, recitation itself has lost its voice. However, broadcasting studies do not deny that it draws on the nutrients of recitation theory. For example, Mr. Zhang Song mentioned in the preface of "The Foundation of Broadcasting Creation": "For a long time, the foundation of broadcasting creation has drawn too many rules from other linguistic arts and has few of its own characteristics." However, many broadcasting workers have gradually forgotten this.

We know that the initial establishment of broadcasting theory was limited to the narrow field of news broadcasting. When Mr. Zhang Song interpreted the concept of "the correct creative path of broadcasting," he pointed out that the creative subject of broadcasting is "journalists." However, since both are linguistic arts, they naturally have similarities and commonalities. Whether it is the perception-understanding-expression of the text or some specific techniques, it is feasible to explain recitation with broadcasting theory without knowing the theory of recitation. However, this feasibility is limited. The genres, contexts, forms of dissemination, and reception expectations that recitation faces are quite different from those of broadcasting. If this is not recognized, recitation

will become broadcasting and lose its independent artistic personality. This kind of recitation studies derived from broadcasting also directly affects our aesthetic evaluation of many elements of recitation, such as timbre, vocal cavity, and the subjectivity of expression. It seems that only Mandarin can be recited, and only the so-called "professional timbre" can be recited. These are all caused by the strong influence of broadcasting theory and the neglect of the characteristics of recitation itself.

II. "SECONDARY CREATION": THE SHACKLES OF RECITATION INNOVATION

The preceding section devoted considerable space to clarifying the status of recitation theory, primarily because recitation has been profoundly influenced by theories from broadcasting and performance studies. It has confined itself to a narrow theoretical domain, thereby impeding its own development. At the core of this issue lies the concept of "secondary creation."

"Secondary creation" refers to the linguistic expression creation based on the primary creation of the text. The object of this creation is "text language," emphasizing the perception and understanding of language, as well as the emotional mobilization and vocal creation based on this. This type of creation is clearly the core of the main creative work in recitation. It is the essence of recitation as a linguistic art. However, when we return to the essential theory of recitation, this creation limited to the "secondary" level is a dependent type of creation. It is a creation that significantly loses the personality of the creator. I refer to this as the narrow sense of "secondary" creation.

On the one hand, reciters want to highlight the individuality of their recitation, but on the other hand, they are constrained by the "primary" control of the text and the author. Therefore, within the realm of "secondary creation," it is very difficult, or almost impossible, to find space for innovation. Many so-called "innovations" are nothing more than new understandings and expressions of the text from a certain perspective, but none can break free from the strict confines of the text. This "secondary creation," which is strictly dependent on text language, on the one hand, clarifies the importance of the text and the

path of creation based on the text. On the other hand, it severely restricts the innovation and development of recitation. This is by no means an exaggeration.

III. FROM "SECONDARY" TO "MULTIDIMENSIONAL": THE INNOVATIVE PATH OF RECITATION CREATION

"Multidimensional creation" is a reflection on "secondary creation." It represents a breakthrough in the inherent thinking of reciters and even creators of other types of art. The "multidimensional" aspect can be manifested in three ways:

(1) "Pan-Secondary" Creation: The so-called "pan-secondary" creation is in contrast to the traditional "secondary" creation, where the object of creation is merely the single element of "text language." That is, based on "text language," it uses a broader range of linguistic expression elements to more three-dimensionally present the deeper spiritual core of the text. We say that recitation is an art of spoken language. More broadly speaking, recitation is an art of sound, and even an audio-visual art. This is by no means an exaggeration! If recitation were only a narrow art of spoken language, then the visual presentation of recitation would be meaningless; if recitation were only a linguistic art, there would be no need for elements like music to enhance and reflect it. Recitation can completely break free from the narrow understanding of language and incorporate many expressive elements, such as music, sound effects, and visual images, which are broader "languages," to enhance the three-dimensional presentation of poetry and prose. However, it is important to note that no matter how many elements are included, spoken language remains the core element and occupies the dominant position. This is crucial for recitation. Otherwise, it would deviate from recitation and become another form of art.

In addition to the introduction of diverse elements, "pan-secondary" creation also emphasizes creative interpretation of the primary text. For example, it includes the external expression of inner speech in poetic texts, the multi-element enhancement of context, and the soundscape expression of historical background, among others. What is emphasized here is a kind of "secondary creation" with an adaptive nature, based on the primary creation.

(2) "Primary" Creation: The "primary" creation of recitation is not something new but has existed historically. This primary creation is first manifested in the creation of poetry and prose that belong to recitation itself. That is, the creation by reciters or literary authors is aimed at recitation. Their texts are created in accordance with the characteristics of recitation. The "recitation poetry" movement in China in the 1930s was the ultimate expression of recitation's "primary" creation. Among them, Mr. Gao Lan, an advocate of recitation poetry, created and recited a large number of recitation poems, which caused a strong response nationwide.

In the history of poetry development, there are many "recitation poems." Many classic works in classical poetry are also expressions of recitation's "primary" creation. Many poems were created and recited on the spot, and many poems and verses were widely sung as soon as they were created. This is because the poetry in classical poetry and verse was created for "recitation." There are also many such works in modern Chinese poetry, such as Dai Wangshu, Xu Zhimo, and Zhu Xiang, who emphasize musicality and vocal quality. However, influenced by Western poetry, the path of Chinese poetry creation has gradually transformed from "auditory" poetry to "visual" poetry. Many poems are becoming more and more distant from recitation. By "distant from recitation," it does not mean that these poems are not readable, but rather that they are becoming weaker in terms of vocal quality. The use of imagery, the refinement of language, and the narrowness of thought, among others, have made modern and contemporary poetry lack the power of "auditory" dissemination. This is also why many "recitation masters" still find it difficult to popularize many modern and contemporary "masterpieces."

Therefore, recitation needs primary creation and needs to create literature that belongs to recitation. Due to space limitations, this article will not elaborate on the issue of recitation literature. The characteristics and types of recitation literature will be discussed in a separate article in the future.

(3) "Tertiary" Creation: Recitation is a multidimensional activity composed of reciters, authors, audiences, contexts, and so on. The subject of "secondary" creation is the reciter; in "pan-secondary" creation, the

function of the reciter is expanded; the subject of "primary" creation is expanded from the reciter to the reciter or the creator of recitation literature; then the "tertiary" creation proposed here further expands the subject of creation.

"Tertiary" creation places recitation in the three-dimensional space of recitation activities, composed of reciters and audiences. The expression of the reciter and the reaction of the audience in the context form an echo. In the "secondary," "pan-secondary," and "primary" creations of the reciter, the reaction of the audience needs to be considered. When expressing on the spot, this comprehensive consideration is combined with the scene, and the immediate feedback of the audience is integrated into the recitation, forming another element of recitation, and can adjust the presentation of recitation in real time according to the feedback of the audience. This is similar to the small theater performance in drama.

As can be seen from the above, the "tertiary" creation of recitation can be divided into two contexts. One is the stage recitation on the spot; the other is the recitation that relies only on sound expression and has a dissemination distance from the audience, and cannot be created in real time. The former can integrate the reaction of the audience in advance and implement and adjust it on the spot; the latter is limited by the dissemination distance and only has the expected integration of the audience's reaction in the early stage of creation.

"Tertiary" creation is an experimental proposition. So far, no real recitation attempts have been seen. However, in terms of creative elements and interrelationships, this idea is feasible.

Moving from "secondary" to "multidimensional" is a breakthrough in concept and a macro expansion and innovation of recitation itself in terms of functional positioning, element composition, creative thinking, dissemination concept, and audience acceptance. In this way, recitation creation forms an open, diverse, and three-dimensional space.

Breaking free from the narrow realm of "secondary" creation focused on text language and moving towards a "multidimensional" creative space that includes "pan-secondary," "primary," and "tertiary" creation, and forming a comprehensive and three-dimensional space that

covers "primary—secondary—pan-secondary— tertiary," recitation has seen diverse breakthroughs and transformations in terms of the creative subject, object, elements, dissemination, and communication relationships. This also has great value for recitation teaching. This innovation will inevitably lead to a brand-new creative pattern in recitation theory, practice, and educational teaching.

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