

## A Study of Cultural and Creative Industries on Dance in Taiwan

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### I. Introduction

The idea of cultural and creative industries has been one of the most discussed issues in Taiwan in the last two decades. As an observer, I have been investigating the effect on the development of the dance field. In this paper, I will discuss the development of cultural and creative industries on dance by focusing on three areas. First, the influence of foreign cultures on government planning and the involvement of politics in dance activities is described. Second, I discuss the idea of industrialization of performing arts and use the Tjimur Dance Theatre as an example to discuss the situation of performing arts in the development of cultural and creative industries in Taiwan. Third, I discuss the changes that have affected dance in higher education as a disciplinary power. In these three areas, the changing of power relations between dancers and the development cycles will also be discussed to uncover the unspoken phenomena that are often overlooked and taken for granted.

### II. The Government Plan of Cultural Development

Unlike many other policies in Taiwan influenced by American culture, such as Leisure Studies, a development plan was imported from Europe after the start of the third millennium. The Development Plan for Cultural and Creative Industries, established in 2002, took as its original model that of the

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United Kingdom.<sup>1)</sup> This cultural policy was started under the former Prime Minister Tony Blair during the late 1990s and has had some success in promoting the economic and educational value of the arts.<sup>2)</sup> Within three years, the ‘creative industries’ model that evolved under the reforms showed satisfactory results in the UK.

The success of the creative industries model encouraged the government of Taiwan to look to the UK as a new model for its design of cultural policy. A new cultural policy was incorporated in Challenge 2008 - National Development Plan, and was announced by the Council for Economic Planning and Development in 2002.<sup>3)</sup> The plan’s ten major investment projects are infused with themes of local development for international compatibility. The ten projects include:

1. e-Generation Manpower Cultivation Plan
2. Cultural and Creative Industries Development Plan
3. International Innovation and R&D Base Plan
4. Industrial Value Heightening Plan
5. e-Taiwan Construction Plan
6. Operations Headquarters Development Plan
7. Island-wide Trunk Transportation Construction Plan
8. Doubling Tourist Arrivals Plan
9. Water and Green Construction Plan
10. New Home Community Development Plan

One of the strategies for the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Plan is to “cultivate art, design and creative manpower,” and its goal is to transform and infuse culture and traditions with creativity and quality for economic development.<sup>4)</sup> This strategy has stimulated the emergence of new companies and new departments in higher education. Some examples will be discussed in the following sections.

### III. The Industrialization of Performing Arts

For the performing arts, the social, political, and economic forces of industrialization have also

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- 1) CCA(2004), *Biao yan yi shu chan ye hua* [Industrialisation of Performing Arts], Development Plans for Creative Cultural Industry. Council for Cultural Affairs; MOEA(2013), *Ying-guo wen-hua chuang-yi chan-ye fa-zhan gai-kuang* [British cultural and creative industry development], Small and Medium Enterprise Administration, Ministry of Economic Affairs.
  - 2) R. Hewison(2001), Cultural Policy. In *The Blair Effect: The Blair Government 1997-2001*, A. Seldon (Ed.)(London: Little, Brown & Company), pp.535-553.
  - 3) J. S. Chang(2004), The Planning and Implementation of the Challenge 2008 National Development Plan, *National Policy Quarterly* 3(2), pp.135-163.
  - 4) MOE(2015), *Challenge 2008: National Development Plan*(Ministry of Education).

affected many of the artists' productions. The idea of the Industrialization of Performing Arts was officially announced in 2004. It aims to bring arts and business together in order to promote quality of life by raising artistic standards, to create more jobs for artists and to preserve traditional performing arts.<sup>5)</sup> This idea has prompted the Tjimur Dance Theatre among many other performing groups to seek profitability in individual and collective innovations. Tjimur Dance Theatre expanded from a folklore group established in the 1980s by Shatao Madiljin. His daughter Ljuzem Madiljin and his son Baru Madiljin are now the artistic directors of the contemporary dance group which was established in 2006 to distinguish itself from the traditional indigenous performing group. The family also runs a studio and a shop, the Sha Tao Company, that produces and sells Paiwan glass beads. The family also runs a café that sells "innovative traditional cuisine" which had been closed temporarily and just reopened recently. The group's dance studio, the glass beads studio, the shop and the café are all located on one site which is in Sandimen Township of Pingtung County in southern Taiwan.

It seems they are on the right track for collecting profits through their creativity and unique cultural artifacts. However, the family members are constantly fighting against each other as in a tug of war between arts and entertainment, a conflict of high culture versus low culture. According to Ljuzem Madiljin, the new Tjimur (which is directed by Ljuzem and Baru) has been working towards its way to become an international known brand-name and wants to be distinguished from the older group, now the Yun-yang Dance Theatre (directed by Ljuzem's father). On the contrary, according to Ljuzem Madiljin, the Sha Tao company (directed by Ljuzem's mother and her sisters) has tended to give in to local trends and market competition, sacrificing artistic value for profit.<sup>6)</sup> Thus, tensions have often been found between the family members in the past years. In the summer of 2014 and 2015, Tjimur Dance Theatre and other performing groups were sponsored by Taiwan's Ministry of Culture to attend the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and presented their works. The Tjimur Dance Theatre performed their 2009 production *Kuraw-kuraw* in Edinburgh.

Again, the group received the same honor in 2016 for attending the Festival d'Avignon, indicating for Ljuzem that she's on the right path. She states,

I believe, because of the opportunities of going global, my family members and dancers will work hand in hand to find the best way to draw the fine line between performing arts and commercial entertainments, yet to keep the profits for the artists and to bring arts into our business.<sup>7)</sup>

Indeed, balancing between commercial interests and artistic value is a big task for Tjimur Dance

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5) MOC(2004), *Chuang-yi yi-shu chan-ye xian-qi gui-hua bao-gao* [Creative arts industry primary planning report](Ministry of Culture).

6) L. Madiljin(2015), personal communication.

7) Ibid.

Theatre and also for many other performing artists. The “Know How” in selling is not easy for artists, but the technique of “buying low and selling high” is even harder because it requires balancing analytic, synthetic and practical abilities<sup>8)</sup>. The Tjimur Dance Theatre seems to have found its key for the right direction but more challenges lie ahead. One such challenge is the situation that’s commonly found in the field of theatre, as Jay H. Skrifletz (2003) states “in search of the widest possible market, industrialized performing arts purposefully lower audiences’ expectations by relying upon formulaic dramatic texts and the over-use of spectacular effects.” Further observation will continue as the Tjimur Dance Theatre prepare for their new productions, more and deeper study will also be carried for my research of Industrialization of Performing Arts.

#### IV. The Effect on Dance in Higher Education

The establishment of the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Plan has stimulated the emergence of new departments in higher education in the 2000s. One example found during the preparatory stage of the plan is the establishment of the Department of Cultural Business Development in 2001 by National Kaohsiung University of Applied Sciences. Its founding purpose was to “cultivate[s] professionals who will devote themselves to literary writing, multimedia arts or design and promotion of cultural activities”.<sup>9)</sup> This department was renamed as Department of Culture and Creative Industries from August 1st in 2013 in respect for new government higher education policies and current industrial trends. Its educational goals are cultivating talents for the industries of digital design, communication projecting and cultural development.<sup>10)</sup>

Another example was the Chia Nan University of Pharmacy and Science which established the Department of Cultural Activities Development in 2003. Its aim was to train talented individuals in promotion and management of cultural activities and traditional performing arts.<sup>11)</sup> H. F. Lee, a dance anthropologist, took a full-time teaching position at the Chia Nan University of Pharmacy and Science when the new department was established. In an interview with the researcher he expressed his vision for the future of the cultural and creative industries in higher education and its relationship with the development of dance. Lee did not foresee dance playing a major role in this department; however, by

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8) Sternberg, R. J. & Williams, W. M.(1996), *How to Develop Student Creativity*(Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), pp.1-5.

9) NKUAS(2005), *Department of Cultural Development Businesses*, National Kaohsiung University of Applied Sciences.

10) NKUA(2015), *About us. Department of Culture and Creative Industries*, National Kaohsiung University of Applied Sciences.

11) CNUPS(2005), *Department of Cultural Activities Development*, Cha Nan University of Pharmacy and Science.

introducing indigenous dance and various dance styles to the students, the development of dance in higher education could find its way into the curriculum through non-major courses. In addition, by studying management for the performing arts, dance as a creative industry could well be a familiar concept to the students of this department. Therefore, Lee states,

Although dance performance is not the main purpose of this department, I try to incorporate as many dance related topics as I can in my teaching. I also assign my students to attend dance performances and write reports. However, the feedback is not focused on the choreography and dance skills but more about the attendance of the audience and the relationship between the performers, the theatre and the audience.<sup>12)</sup>

The idea of Cultural and Creative Industries has also attracted a few dance departments to organize activities to fulfill its concept. For example, in 2006, a summer project sponsored by the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA, now the Ministry of Culture), the International Dance Elite Academy, was undertaken by the Department of Dance of the Taipei National University of the Arts.<sup>13)</sup> The project took place from the 24th of July until the 26th of August and offered four major workshops: Community Dance Workshop, Laban Dance Notation & Teaching Certificate Workshop, Dance Curriculum for Professionals, and Workshop & Performance of Asian New Prominent Talents. According to the Council for Cultural Affairs, this project was held in order to cultivate creative manpower.<sup>14)</sup>

In 2007, the Community Dance Workshop was eliminated but the other three remained.<sup>15)</sup> However, similar kinds of workshops have been held in the past in various educational settings. The project's workshops did not seem to be particularly different from past workshops on dance technique or choreography nor did they seem unique in cultivating manpower for cultural and creative industries. In 2008, the project was taken over by the Ministry of Education and the workshops changed their content to focus on ballet, Pilates, modern dance, repertory, and choreography.<sup>16)</sup> At present, these workshops no longer claim to be linked to the cultural and creative industries.

These projects, offering workshops in dance skills, choreography and curriculum design, repeated what had been done in the past by most of the institutions of higher education within a dance department. Thus, it is doubtful that such projects have different results from other workshops in

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12) H. F. Lee, personal communication, March 25, 2005.

13) CCA(2007), *Guan yu wen jian hui* [About the Council for Cultural Affairs], Zu zhi ji zhi zhang [Organisations], Di yi chu [First Department], Council for Cultural Affairs.

14) Ibid.

15) TNUA(2007), *2007 International Dance Elite Academy*, Taipei National University of the Arts.

16) TNUA(2008), *2008 International Dance Elite Academy*, Taipei National University of the Arts; WDA-AP.(2008), *2008 WDA-AP event*, Taipei International Dance Elite Academy, World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific.

bringing arts and business together. In fact, it could be argued that every dance department has been cultivating creative manpower over the years. Such projects and many other workshops also emphasize the exploration of creativity, but what is lacking is the medium that would transform and infuse culture and traditions with creativity and quality for economic development. Therefore, I would suggest that more discussion and collaborative efforts be held to help dance talents find their way towards the cultural and creative industries and/or the industrialization of the performing arts.

An example of making dance fulfill the idea of cultural and creative industries and the industrialization of the performing arts, bringing extra work and pressure, can be found in other activities of the dance department at Tainan University of Technology. According to D.H. Cheng, the chairperson from 2001 to 2008,

Over the past 18 months (2007-2008) or so, the department has been involved in many projects relating to the government policy of cultural and creative industries. These projects have given us more opportunities to promote this department and the university, but have also brought us lots of extra work and pressure. Each project has been almost like an order that was passed down to us by some university supervisors. They thought we would be accumulating credentials and accomplishments in promoting the policy of cultural and creative industries by attending lots of activities and festivals such as travel fairs. In fact, the supervisors did not care about the content of the activities that we were involved in. They just cared about the quantity, not quality. Many times our students were sent to dance for a ribbon-cutting ceremony or someone's wedding, just because the university received an invitation by someone that asked for a performance of one or two dance pieces to augment their events.<sup>17)</sup>

Cheng's statement indicates that dance has been manipulated in various instances by using the name 'cultural and creative industries'; however, neither the creative nor economic value of dance has actually been recognized. Rather, dance was used to entertain the guests at events, and thus in private educational settings such as Tainan University of Technology, an authoritative force often acts as an arbitrary power to silence dance. For example, when a supervisor such as the Chief Secretary of the university raises an issue, the appointed dancer(s) is(are) expected to accept the issue cooperatively. When the power relations in the university shift, the dancers' assigned work shifts accordingly. In Cheng's example, many activities in which the department participated were assigned by the former Chief Secretary of the university. Since his successor (officially appointed in the spring of 2008) has shown no interest in pressing on the policy of cultural and creative industries, dancers in the university have not been appointed for any related activity.<sup>18)</sup>

From these listed examples, it shows that dance at this university was not applied in the right way to

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17) D. H. Cheng, personal communication, April 25, 2008.

18) Ibid.

comply with the policy of cultural and creative industries in the first few years since its establishment. The reasons can be varied but one possibility might be that “the policy of cultural and creative industries is a good idea but it takes time and effort to plan if we, as dancers, are to be involved”.<sup>19)</sup> Perhaps by nature dance is part of the cultural and creative industries, but its economic, artistic and educational values must achieve a balance with subject-specific disciplinary training.

In recent years, more and more universities have found ways to explore the concept of Cultural and Creative Industries. Many dance departments in Taiwan have also claimed to apply the concept as a guideline for policy making and curriculum design. Taking the dance department at Tainan University of Technology as an example, several local projects, class designs and international exchange programs were developed under such guidelines.<sup>20)</sup> Such application may not directly draw economic profit for the institution but can be seen as a way to bridge the gap between the local dance field and international communities. Such endeavors also contribute towards cultivating in its students a new respect for local dance and a rethinking of the value of their cultural roots.

## V. Cyclical Recurrence in Dance Development

From the examples listed above, we can identify a cyclical pattern in the development of dance in Taiwan, whereby past experiences recur in an ongoing loop. Specifically, these past experiences include a pervasive foreign cultural influence in dance and the involvement of national politics in the form of cultural diplomacy.

The first example of the cyclical pattern, the recurrence of pervasive foreign cultural influences, in this instance coming from the United Kingdom, happened just as a local cultural identity was striving to find its footing in the dance field. Additionally, the adoption of the British government’s policy of cultural and creative industries, I argue, was a demonstration of recurring westernization in the twenty-first century. The movement of westernization in Taiwan can be seen in three different parts. Some of the foreign nations from Europe brought the very first wave of technical development in the seventeenth century, and then the Imperial Japan created a wave of modernization in Taiwan in the early twentieth century.<sup>21)</sup> According to Patricia Tsurumi in “Colonial Education in Korea and Taiwan” (1984), the system of Japanese education challenged traditional rules in Taiwan. For

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19) Ibid.

20) J. A. Tai(2015), *Gao-deng ji-zhi wu-dao jiao-yu de fan-si* [A reflexive study of dance in vocational higher education](Kaohsiung, Taiwa: Liwen), pp.107-148.

21) Y. L. Hsueh(2005), *Transformation of Modernity: The Regional Vision of the Modernism during the Japanese Colonial Era*, W. Andrew (Trans.)(Taichuan, Taiwan: National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts), p.9; A. C. J. Lin & J. F. Keating(2001), *Island in the Stream: A Quick Case Study of Taiwan’s Complex History*(Taipei, Taiwan: SMC Publishing), pp.1-12.

example, the Japanese policy of education for the arts in Taiwan emphasized western-styled forms of art, literature and music, and this has affected many Taiwanese people's aesthetic preference. The third wave was seen in the second half of the twentieth century. As sociologist Marc J. Cohen,<sup>22)</sup> observed, the West has exerted increasing cultural influence on Taiwan since 1945. "The West" in Cohen's interpretation is a broad term that includes many western countries especially the US that have influenced Taiwanese culture, in areas such as fashion, lifestyle and popular culture. The adaptation of the idea of Cultural and Creative Industries shows the recurrence of foreign cultural influence on dance development in Taiwan.

The involvement of national politics in the name of cultural diplomacy is found in the mutually beneficial relationship between the government and dancers, a recurring relationship between the government and dance students in the case of the Chinese Youth Goodwill Mission (1974-2001). For both parties, through the activities of dance for cultural diplomacy, the government and participating dancers received the benefits, such as honor and prestige that they desired. By fulfilling the dancers' desire of performing abroad, positive reputation acknowledged by the government and the government funding, politics shows its exercise to control in dance.

The examples listed above explain that cyclical patterns which occurred in the development of dance in the last two decades disclose the enduring account of recurrence in history. Although change did take place, and can happen in the habits, its endurance also reinforces the recurrence of past experience from time to time. Under such circumstances, the collective habits of the dance field have been modified and dancers have adjusted their institutional habits accordingly. Thus, dancers are constantly searching for means to secure their positions and the power relations between themselves are therefore constantly changing. Many of the changes that took place in the last two decades also suggest that dance is often controlled by the knowledge and power of others, and ideologies from other fields outside dance. Overall, dance development in Taiwan continues to be subjected to social and political shifts in society.

## VI. Conclusion

This paper has documented several examples of the new force from the concept of cultural and creative industries affecting the dance field and dance in higher education in Taiwan. The changes of the force created are a result of social transformation during the last two decades, although not everybody will assign the same significance to these factors and the changes they engender. In

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22) Marc J. Cohen(1988), *Taiwan at the Crossroads: Human Rights, Political Development and Social Change on the Beautiful Island*(Washington, DC: Asia Resource Center), p.163.



addition, the examples listed to explain the development cycles indicate that politics and foreign influence have never stopped their powers to affect the dance field in Taiwan. The effects thus have an impact on the changing of power relations between dancers in the performing arts industry and in the higher education system. The shifting of power relations depends greatly on the profit making ability of each individual, group or institution. However, the profit concerns and artistic value may not be considered equally and therefore controversial debates often arise between artists. Also, from some of the examples, the concept of cultural and creative industries was misled and manipulated. Although some cases showed improvement, uncertainty about future application of the concept remains and enlarges. What can be sure is that, as the global communication continues to advance, interactions between politics, foreign cultures and artists in the international dance landscapes will expand and extend. Dancers will find more means to apply the concept of cultural and creative industries.

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## 대만의 무용관련 문화 창조 산업에 관한 연구

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2002년부터 문화·창조 산업을 위한 발전 계획은 대만 문화정책의 중요한 부분이었다. 이 정책은 많은 예술가들이 개인의 수익성과 단체의 혁신을 추구를 장려하여 왔다. 본 논문에 포함된 연구들은 정부의 문화 정책이 어떻게 개념화 되고 무용 공연과 대학무용교육관련 정책이 영향력을 갖게 되는가에 대하여 집중한다. 본 연구는 민족지학적인 연구로서 대만의 무용 발전의 발자취를 설명한다. 또한, 심층 인터뷰 분석, 참여 관찰, 그리고 신문, 잡지, 블로그, 그리고 온라인 상의 소셜 네트워크와 같은 다양한 문헌을 통해 예술적 가치와 이윤을 남기는 것 사이에서 균형을 잡는데 어려움을 겪는 대만의 예술가와 교육자들에 대하여 살펴본다. 본 연구는 대만의 무용과 무용교육계에 외국의 영향력과 정부의 간섭이 지속되는 주기적인 패턴의 양상을 발견한다.

키워드: 문화 창조 산업(Cultural and creative industries), 대학무용교육(Dance in higher education), 토착 무용(Indigenous dance), 공연 예술(Performing arts), 컨템포러리 댄스(Contemporary dance)