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# Real Historical Imagination: the “Depths of Memory” under the Spatial Transformation

## -- Comment on the Realistic Theme Dance Drama “Deep in Memory”

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on the dance drama —— Deep in Memory, which is adapted from the real historical event of the Nanjing Massacre. The author pays attention to three layers, one is the real historical events of the Nanjing Massacre, the English works of the Nanjing Massacre, the Nanjing Massacre: the forgotten catastrophe in the Second World War, and the director of the historical events of the Nanjing Massacre and the Nanjing Massacre: the forgotten catastrophe in the Second World War. Through these three levels of transformation, “real memory” discusses the contradiction between history and art, which involves the realistic technique of realistic dance drama; “narrative memory” focuses more in the internal research of art, and discusses the space, structure and form analysis of the two dance dramas; “Warm memory” shows the attitude of the author’s through the works, showing the humanistic care and compassion.

**Keywords:** Spatial narrative; Deep Memory; Zhang Chang; Tong Ruirui

### 1. True memory —— from historical facts to artistic truth

As a work created by director Tong Ruirui's thoughts on the "Nanjing Massacre", the Chinese American writer Chang Chang explores the historical truth behind the "Nanjing Massacre" as the entry point of the story. Chang at the cost of life, with the soul touch history, write the Nanjing massacre: the forgotten catastrophe in the second world war, the book in publication, has become the American bestseller, book chang cited hundreds of documents, historical materials, justified, after interviewed a number of survivors in the massacre. As an academic work, its authenticity, public credibility are self-evident. But is "Deep in Memory" as a dance drama "true" enough? Tong Ruirui once said: "Deep Memory does not premise 'beauty', even any form of beauty will be marked as a interference to the dance itself. The work is based on the "truth", strictly comparing the historical materials, and being loyal to the real characters and events."<sup>[1]</sup> The words "truth" and "beauty" obviously do not correspond to the truth, goodness and beauty in traditional Chinese philosophy." Beauty "corresponds to the decorative dance section in the dance drama, while" truth " points to the truth of an event and shows the attitude of respect for history.

As a realistic dance drama, what should "Deep in Memory" carry? Liu Qingyi think "reality dance" theme is "reality", refers to the real life, real life, real life, the real world and its "present continuous tense", in the creation to focus on and criticize the spirit of the reality, stick to the people-centered humanistic care this core, makes literature and art can bear the human spirit redemption and protect the task of life development <sup>[2]</sup>. One is the importance of the "reality" of the reality themes, and the other is whether there is the spirit of criticizing the reality. In the dance drama "Deep Memory", Iris Chang, Rabe, Wei Ling, Dong Shang and Li Xiuying are all real. And the dance drama is not a documentary, although it is a documentary also can not achieve 100% restoration. The director must go through artistic creation to abstract the concrete people, so that the real individuals become the will one by one. Finally, the director creates a distinct artistic image to carry these will, thus transforming from historical reality to artistic reality.

### 2. Narrative memory —— from real space to mental space

Tong Ruirui created two works of Nanjing 1937 and Deep Memory during the Thirteen years. If "Nanjing 1937" and "Deep Memory" convey the same ideological connotation, why do it twice? Will the change of the art form change the content behind it, and will the corresponding thoughts and attitudes also change accordingly? If the answer is no, then there is no need for "Deep Memory". I just want to rearrange "Nanjing 1937" and adjust it. It is enough to try to create a new dance drama."This is not a replay, it is a recreation," Tong said. After 13 years, Tong Ruirui experienced the dance drama "Water Moon Luo God", "crested Ibis" and other works, once again the "Nanjing Massacre" on the stage.

The author believes that Tong Ruirui's use of space in the "Deep Memory" has played a decisive role. Zhang Ping, executive deputy director of the Dance Art Center of the Chinese Federation of Literary and Art, commented: "Creating multiple Spaces, virtual and real space, subject and object space, etc. The free switching of different Spaces reflects the spatial orientation and creative ability of Tong Ruirui's structural dance drama. It is this creation of multiple Spaces that enables the dance drama to enter the realm of free space and time, presenting a comparative aesthetic principle of reciprocity, echoing the beginning and end."<sup>[3]</sup> In "Deep Memory", Zhang Junru wanders between reality and "unreal", reality refers to her collection of literature and other real movements, "unreal" is her visible, but intangible "historical picture".

Tong Ruirui, through space design, constitutes the narrative logic of the whole dance drama. First, the stage space. It involves two aspects. One is the real stage space, which is represented in the dance drama and the reproduction of scenes and events in historical events. The second is the psychological space, which in the dance drama is the performance of Chang's inner emotional changes after seeing the history. Because of Zhang Iris's crossing type of seeing, the visual switch of two Spaces is constructed. In the dance drama, the real space gives the reproduction of the history, which is the explanation. Psychological space is a kind of reaction and attitude, which forms the unique narrative of the dance drama in the overlapping of the two.

In the ballet at the beginning, after the stage device start, Chun Chang wandering in space, and leads to the remaining four characters: jin-ling women liberal arts college dean — wei ling, the leader of the Nazi party in Nanjing — rabay, participated in the "Nanjing massacre" Japanese veterans — east shi Lang, survivors of the "Nanjing massacre" — xiu-ying li, the story. The director takes the interweaving of five people as the connection in the paragraph, which is also an indispensable part of the narrative structure of the whole dance drama. For the first time, a small square composed of four people pairs with Chang Chang, and then the stage device starts again, opening the "door" to the historical facts.

Unlike "Nanjing 1937" such linear narrative different, "deep memory" without a consistent timeline, similar to pina Bao part of the dance theater events and events, such as work "full moon", is a seemingly unrelated events, but in fact carrying the event behind a similar theme. The part of "Deep Memory" adopts such narrative logic to superposition the unlogical events and tasks under the "Nanjing Massacre" to show Zhang Iris's inner changes. The narrative is developed under the structure of interweaving the real space and the psychological space.

### 3. Warm memory — from Chang Chang to Tong Ruirui

At the beginning of the dance drama, Chun Chang picked up a pistol, pointed it at the front, and then turned away, with the gun barrel against her temple. This beginning is, no doubt, meaningful. The head of the gun aimed forward is full of countless interpretable space. On the one hand, Chang angered the Japanese right wing after completing the book, *The Nanjing Massacre: The Forgotten Hero in World War II*, and was repeatedly threatened and warned. He finally committed suicide with a pistol in Galros, California, in 2004. There may be a lot of room for interpretation, but we hope the guns end up missing anyone.

The subtitle of this academic work was named "The Second World War", which means the second massacre, "Nanjing Massacre" is not only an indelible trauma in Chinese history, but also a stain on the whole history of world civilization. The author believes that whether Chun Chang or Tong Ruirui, their writing or creative techniques use the anthropology paradigm to create. Focusing on individuals, Chang's writing is full of objective historical materials, and the content is extremely restrained and rational. As she received higher education in the United States and trained under a rigorous academic system, her works are impeccable from logic to writing. In her preface, she notes that the book only gives the most basic overview of Japan's brutal atrocities in Nanjing. In the process of reading, we may dare to be angry and sad because of the atrocities of the Japanese army, but it is difficult for us to feel Irony's grief and hesitation from the words. Tong focuses on Zhang Chang, so that the audience is not only focused on the catastrophe (the "Nanjing Massacre"), but also on the outstanding female writer. Through the exquisite capture of the director, we feel that Zhang could not change the facts after discovering "Rabe Diary" and "East Shang Diary".

As an outstanding choreographer in the Chinese dance industry, Tong's works always strike a balance between novel art forms and profound expression of ideas. Many realistic dance dramas often earn the tears of the audience through sacrifice, and the tragic and stirring love and the helplessness of the war years overlap. The "Deep Part of Memory" presented by Tong Ruirui highly combines the content and the form, and the human nature revealed by the work is based on the dance drama itself, that is, the narrative structure, body language, stage lighting and so on. Because of the narrative structure, we are getting better, to repeatedly recognize Iris and this historical fact. Because of the internal imitation of dance art, each finger of us danced with Tang Shiyi (one of the actors of Iris Chang in *The Deep Side of Memory*) to feel her inner world at that time.

"Deep in Memory" not only arouses the forgotten memory, it more wants to arouse a kind of humanistic care, the reason why we are human, because we have love, have compassion, we have the ability of empathy, we jointly protect the civilization of all mankind, it is good.

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