

The Cultural Phenomenon of Clown Dance Performance in Gannan Tea-Picking Opera: A Philosophical Perspective

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the cultural phenomenon of Clown Dance in Gannan Tea-picking Opera (CDGTPO) from a philosophical perspective. It first outlines the opera's development and the distinctive features of CDGTPO, highlighting its role and function in traditional performance. Drawing on concepts from aesthetics, ethics, and existentialism, the study examines the philosophical, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions embodied in CDGTPO. It further explores the evolution of CDGTPO within its socio-cultural context, its role in performing arts, audience reception, and issues of cultural transmission. The paper also considers how CDGTPO adapts to new media and modern communication, thereby preserving its cultural value. By integrating historical, artistic, and philosophical analysis, this study offers fresh insights into the modern transformation and sustainable development of traditional cultural arts.

Keywords: Gannan Tea-picking Opera; Clown Dance; Cultural Phenomenon; Philosophical Interpretation; Cultural Inheritance; Modern Transformation

1. Introduction

Clown Dance in Gannan Tea-picking Opera (CDGTPO) represents a fundamental element of traditional Chinese opera, significantly influencing both its artistic expression and regional cultural identity. While providing humor and entertainment, CDGTPO also functions as an important medium for cultural critique and social commentary. Through its distinctive language, physical gestures, costumes, and exaggerated facial expressions, CDGTPO reflects social customs and collective emotions. The art form employs irony, parody, and sudden rhythmic variations to evoke both laughter and thoughtful reflection among audiences. Its vibrant costumes and highly stylized visual appearances enhance memorability while simultaneously emphasizing regional cultural heritage. From a philosophical standpoint, CDGTPO embodies resistance against conventional role expectations and represents deeper contemplations on power structures, tradition, and social values. Deeply rooted in local culture, CDGTPO communicates both the difficulties and hopes of everyday life, providing valuable perspectives on social psychology and cultural practices. Within today's context of cultural diversity, CDGTPO serves not merely as entertainment but also as a vessel for collective memory and cultural identity. Through a sociological lens, CDGTPO strengthens local distinctiveness and fosters cultural confidence in an increasingly globalized world. Empirical research methods, including surveys and in-depth interviews, can further enhance our understanding of audience reception and the formation of cultural identity through this art form.

2. The Origin and Development of Gannan Tea-picking Opera

2.1 The Historical Origin of Gannan Tea-picking Opera

Gannan Tea-picking Opera traces its origins to the Ganjiang River basin, where distinctive geographical and climatic conditions supported the development of a prosperous tea culture. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, tea cultivation and trade thrived, making the tea harvesting season an important economic activity for local farmers and ultimately giving rise to this operatic form. In its early stages, tea-picking opera primarily served as community entertainment, enriching rural cultural life while also functioning as a medium for expressing social values and interpersonal relationships ^[1]. Thematically,

this opera form depicts rural labor and daily life, utilizing humor and wit to explore traditional values and ethical concepts. Performers often connect the tea picking process with broader themes including local governance, family dynamics, and romantic relationships. These narratives are expressed through exaggerated movements and vivid language, creating a distinctive dramatic style. Over time, regional cultural variations led to the emergence of multiple performance subgenres, each possessing unique artistic characteristics ^[2]. A notable example is the Clown Dance in Gannan Tea-picking Opera (CDGTPO), which demonstrates particular artistic appeal through its expressive physicality, varied vocal techniques, and distinctive facial expressions. Historical records from the Ming Dynasty, such as the Songjiang Records and Jiangxi General Records, document local folk opera activities. Based on these archival sources and regional cultural practices, scholars conclude that tea-picking opera had already begun to take form during this period. The Qing Dynasty represented a significant developmental phase, characterized by deeper integration between tea culture and operatic performance. Local troupes became increasingly active during this time, and audience participation grew substantially. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, nearly two hundred opera troupes were active in southern Jiangxi, collectively attracting audiences exceeding one million people, clear evidence of its cultural significance and social relevance ^[3]. During the mid-twentieth century, against the backdrop of rapid social transformation and economic development, tea-picking opera continued to evolve in both cultural identity and performance practice. This period saw diversification in stage design and musical accompaniment, particularly through the incorporation of traditional instruments like the erhu and suona, which significantly enriched the auditory dimension of performances. Scripts also began to integrate modern elements, addressing contemporary social issues and enabling the genre to adapt to changing cultural environments ^[4]. In contemporary practice, tea-picking opera maintains an active performance schedule throughout southern Jiangxi. It has been successfully incorporated into educational programs and community cultural activities, while specialized training initiatives work to cultivate new generations of performers. Current cultural protection and inheritance mechanisms highlight the ongoing importance of preserving this artistic tradition. Furthermore, enhanced collaboration between local government agencies and private organizations has led to the establishment of dedicated art festivals that continue to attract expanding audiences, ensuring the sustained vitality of this traditional art form.

2.2 Development, Evolution, and Genre Formation

Gannan Tea-picking Opera boasts a long history and profound cultural significance. Its evolution has been deeply shaped by regional culture, social context, and diverse artistic influences. Originating during the Ming and Qing dynasties, it began as seasonal entertainment for tea-picking communities before gradually developing into a structured performing art ^[5]. Throughout its development, it absorbed elements from Jiangxi Bangzi, Cantonese opera, and various folk music traditions, ultimately forming a distinctive local style that seamlessly integrates singing, dancing, acting, and prop usage. In terms of stylistic classification, three major schools have emerged. The Nanchang School is recognized for its elegant vocal delivery and harmonious instrumental accompaniment, typically featuring the erhu and flute. The Ji'an School focuses on narrative depth, drawing extensively from local customs and legends. The Ganzhou School stands out for its dynamic stage presence and exaggerated acting style, which has proven particularly appealing to younger audiences. Since the mid-20th century, Gannan Tea-picking Opera has expanded beyond its regional origins to participate in national performances and cultural exchanges. Beginning in the 1980s, conscious efforts to integrate traditional drama with modern media technologies, including advanced lighting systems, sophisticated sound design, and multimedia projections, have substantially transformed its stage presentation. At the technical level, professional training has standardized role performance while deepening actors' comprehension of physical expression and emotional portrayal. Simultaneously, innovations in stage design have enhanced visual aesthetics through more sophisticated use of color and spatial arrangement. These artistic advancements, supported by local government initiatives such as special funding, dedicated art festivals, and organized touring programs, have effectively balanced preservation with innovation, thereby ensuring the sustainable development of this traditional genre.

2.3 Generation and Characteristics of the Clown Character

The emergence of Clown Dance in Gannan Tea-picking Opera (CDGTPO) represents a distinctive fusion of local folk culture and traditional operatic art. Over time, this specialized role has evolved into a unique performance genre that captivates audiences through exaggerated movements, vivid facial expressions, and comedic elements, while employing satire to critique social phenomena and human flaws ^[6]. CDGTPO has been shaped by diverse cultural influences, including tea cultivation traditions,

folk storytelling, and continuous theatrical innovation. Performers frequently incorporate elements from rural daily life, such as the challenges of agricultural labor, celebratory humor, and community interactions, to create authentic and relatable characters. The art form utilizes exaggerated characteristics, strong contrasts for instance between elegant female leads and rough clown figures, along with local dialect, colloquial language, and wordplay to strengthen regional identity and enhance audience connection^[7]. Historically performed primarily by male artists, CDGTPO has progressively incorporated female roles, mirroring evolving social perspectives. Its diverse representation across age, gender, and social status enriches the dramatic content, extending beyond mere comedy to serve critical, mediating, and reflective functions within performances. The strategic use of props, including painted masks, oversized costumes, decorative fans, and symbolic containers, heightens visual impact and adds layers of meaning to the artistic expression. In comparison to other operatic roles, CDGTPO carries substantial social and cultural significance. Through its satirical treatment of contemporary issues, it not only intensifies dramatic conflict but also provides audiences with opportunities for introspection and emotional release. Aesthetically, CDGTPO, firmly grounded in regional cultural heritage, has become an essential component of Gannan Tea-picking Opera, embodying the depth and vitality of this local operatic tradition.

2.4 The Current Situation of Gannan Tea-Picking Opera

Contemporary Gannan Tea-picking Opera faces both challenges and opportunities. In terms of inheritance, traditional forms are increasingly diluted by modern cultural elements, and many plays struggle to retain audiences due to limited innovation^[8]. Younger generations, in particular, are drawn to popular culture, leading to declining interest. Economically, reduced performance frequency and financial pressures have forced some troupes to scale back or even disband. Nevertheless, protective measures and new initiatives have revitalized the genre. Government support through initiatives such as its inclusion in Jiangxi Province's intangible cultural heritage list has significantly raised public awareness^[9]. Moreover, integration with tourism and cultural industries has generated new performance contexts, attracting visitors and fostering closer interaction between performers and audiences. Digital media has further expanded access. Opera excerpts shared via short-video platforms and live streaming reach broad, often younger, audiences. Some troupes actively engage online, creating wider recognition and fostering cultural dissemination. Educational institutions also play a vital role. By incorporating tea-picking opera into curricula, universities and training programs cultivate new talent, enhancing artistic literacy and creativity. Such cross-disciplinary collaborations support innovation in form and expression, ensuring the genre remains relevant while rooted in tradition.

3. Philosophical Interpretation of CDGTPO

3.1 The Philosophical Implications of Laughter and Thought

In CDGTPO, laughter and contemplation constitute the core philosophical significance of performance. Laughter is not only an emotional release but also a metaphor for social relationships. Through humorous language and exaggerated actions, CDGTPO exposes social contradictions and tensions, thereby prompting deeper reflection. As American philosopher Henry James observed, humor disrupts conventional thinking and generates new modes of cognition. Philosophically, laughter represents a lighthearted interpretation of life. In CDGTPO, performers often occupy marginal social positions; their laughter becomes both self-deprecating in adversity and a challenge to authority and tradition. Through wit, irony, and improvisation, CDGTPO creates a reflective space for audiences, turning laughter into an expression of wisdom^[10]. Thought emerges as the extension of laughter, as audiences are led to reconsider social structures and personal conditions. For instance, humorous portrayals of family affairs not only evoke amusement but also encourage reflection on ethics and responsibility. Improvisation further enhances this dialectic. CDGTPO frequently adapts to audience reactions, transforming the performance into a two-way cultural exchange in which spectators become active participants. This interactivity produces a communal sense of reflection while integrating multiple art forms such as music and dance. Beneath its humor, CDGTPO also conveys universal insights into human nature, contrasting levity with the hardships of life. Through this tension between lightness and gravity, the performance guides audiences toward deeper philosophical contemplation of human existence and social ethics^[11].

3.2 The Dialectical Relationship between CDGTPO and Aesthetics

CDGTPO is not merely a comedic role but an important medium of aesthetic expression. Its artistry is conveyed through exaggerated body movements, expressive facial gestures, and vivid costumes. Masks and brightly colored attire amplify contrast and visual impact, allowing audiences to experience harmony and conflict through aesthetic tension. By subverting traditional expectations of dignity and seriousness, CDGTPO challenges classical notions of beauty. Its absurdity and irrationality paradoxically contain profound social meanings, dissecting human nature and social complexity under the guise of laughter. Performance techniques such as improvisation and direct audience interaction further expand aesthetic possibilities, breaking the “fourth wall” and creating participatory experiences. CDGTPO also functions as a tool of social criticism. Through irony and satire, it exposes injustice and human flaws, transforming serious concerns into comedic expression. At the same time, it integrates local customs and folklore, embedding regional aesthetics within the character. In this sense, CDGTPO embodies a dialectical understanding of “ugliness”: an aesthetic form that reconciles entertainment with reflection, and tradition with social critique.

3.3 Ethical Views in CDGTPO

The ethical dimensions of CDGTPO are deeply embedded in its character portrayals, narrative structures, and moral implications. Frequently depicting figures from marginalized social groups or ordinary daily life, CDGTPO employs humor and artistic exaggeration to illuminate social contradictions while encouraging critical reflection on systemic injustice. Through its distinctive artistic lens, CDGTPO reveals the complex dilemmas and moral choices inherent in everyday existence. Its satirical treatment of human vices such as greed, hypocrisy, and unequal power relations creates a critically engaging atmosphere that challenges audiences to examine their own ethical responsibilities. Performance techniques including witty dialogue and exaggerated physical gestures temper the seriousness of moral critique, enabling viewers to contemplate profound consequences through the medium of laughter. CDGTPO further demonstrates a process of cultural re-creation by integrating traditional moral narratives with contemporary social issues. This synthesis of heritage values and modern concerns maintains the art form's relevance in today's evolving cultural landscape. The characteristic emotional duality of performances, where laughter interweaves with underlying pathos, captures both the vulnerability of marginalized communities and their enduring resilience. This emotional complexity deepens the ethical exchange between stage and audience, as spectators develop empathy with characters and actively participate in moral dialogue. Thus, CDGTPO serves not merely as entertainment but functions as a significant vehicle for ethical and cultural education.

3.4 Existential Analysis of CDGTPO

The cultural practice of CDGTPO resonates with existentialist thought, reflecting tensions of individuality, freedom, and absurdity. The performer is not merely an entertainer but also an “observer” who confronts life's contradictions through satire and exaggeration. As a liminal figure both marginal and central CDGTPO mediates between stage and society, guiding audiences into existential reflection. As phenomenological perspectives suggest, being a clown is not about an internal essence but about “the clown as an embodied ‘being-in-the-world’,” emphasizing that the clown exists through performance and practice, not through some fixed identity.^[12] In this way, CDGTPO's language and physicality often mock social norms, sharply contrasting with traditional solemnity. It exposes hypocrisy and delusion while dramatizing the individual's struggle against meaninglessness. From an existentialist perspective, CDGTPO embodies conflicts between social constraints and personal desire, free choice versus passive submission. The shifting identity of the performer reflects rebellion and redefinition in the face of rigid expectations. Its nuanced expressions combine humor with tragedy, vividly capturing existential loneliness. While laughter may be fleeting, it often provokes contemplation of isolation and vulnerability within society. Through this tension, CDGTPO articulates not only absurdity but also resilience. Its improvisational and interactive techniques affirm the existential idea that “existence is performance,” transforming the clown into both a stage character and a critic of life. Through this dual role, CDGTPO enriches the philosophical depth of performance and underscores the self-awareness inherent in artistic expression.

4. In-depth Analysis: The Phenomenon of CDGTPO

4.1 The Image of CDGTPO in the Social and Cultural Context

The image of Clown Dance in Gannan Tea-picking Opera (CDGTPO) carries profound social and cultural significance, embodying the region's history, folklore, values, and aesthetic orientation. CDGTPO is not only a vehicle for comedy and entertainment but also a medium of social critique and folk wisdom. Through exaggerated facial expressions and body movements, it reflects contradictions and challenges in daily life, serving as an emotional outlet for the people. As Thorpe (2007) observes, the chou clown in Chinese opera "traverses culturally sanctioned moral codes, publicly defining them" and embodies "a complex mixture of fool, villain, trickster and hero," highlighting its dual role as both social critic and cultural symbol.^[13] Costumes and makeup play a crucial role in shaping this image. Bright colors, elaborate facial designs, and symbolic masks enhance stage appeal and emphasize character traits. Such visual elements not only highlight comedic qualities but also deepen audience engagement. The regional language of CDGTPO marked by dialect humor, idioms, and puns reinforces cultural identity and connects audiences to local traditions. As society evolves, CDGTPO incorporates contemporary elements such as internet slang and current affairs, blending tradition with modernity. Its humorous critique of corruption, family conflicts, and social injustices demonstrates the resilience and humor of marginalized groups. Gender representation further enriches the cultural meaning of CDGTPO. Male performers often adopt exaggerated feminine traits, challenging conventional gender norms, while female performers introduce new perspectives, broadening the aesthetic and emotional resonance of the performance.

4.2 The Positioning of CDGTPO in Performing Arts

Within Gannan Tea-picking Opera, CDGTPO occupies a central position as entertainer, cultural transmitter, and social commentator. By juxtaposing humor with critical reflection, CDGTPO enhances both the vitality of performance and its cultural depth. On stage, CDGTPO often contrasts with protagonists, drawing attention through exaggerated gestures, humorous lines, and distinctive performance styles. Satire and irony allow it to expose social contradictions and the complexity of human nature. Its positioning, therefore, extends beyond comedy, revealing deeper patterns of social interaction and values. As observed in other Chinese theatrical traditions, the clown—or chou—is uniquely permitted to break character and comment on current events, often serving as the only role with the license for social and political critique.^[14] Technically, CDGTPO employs body language, tonal variation, rapid movements, and absurd gestures to construct a vivid stage presence. Props such as umbrellas and canes heighten theatricality and audience engagement. The performance style—marked by self-mocking humor and audience interaction—facilitates both entertainment and reflection, making CDGTPO a cultural symbol of intelligence and resilience. As modernization reshapes social identities, CDGTPO evolves in both form and function, reflecting contemporary realities while maintaining its cultural essence. It thus contributes not only to the artistic system of opera but also to the shaping of cultural identity and values in southern Jiangxi.

4.3 Audience Acceptance and Cultural Inheritance of CDGTPO

Audience reception serves as a vital indicator of the vitality and sustainability of CDGTPO. Research conducted in the Gannan region reveals that actor–audience interaction occurs in 58% of performances, while audience recognition and approval of CDGTPO reaches as high as 76%. Many viewers express a preference for storylines that reflect their personal experiences, and interactive features such as post-performance discussions and participatory on-stage activities have been shown to significantly enhance engagement levels^[15]. Survey data demonstrate that younger audiences aged 15 to 30 constitute 40% of the viewership, while middle-aged and elderly audiences account for 35%. This distribution reflects the growing connection of younger generations with this traditional art form, a trend partly attributable to its dissemination through new media platforms. Short video clips and live streams of CDGTPO performances frequently accumulate tens of millions of views, substantially expanding cultural reach while enabling immediate audience feedback. Content relevance remains another crucial factor influencing audience acceptance. CDGTPO has progressively incorporated contemporary themes into its scripts, including political commentary, social issues, and elements of popular culture. In one survey, 68% of respondents expressed interest in seeing performances that address current social topics, a preference that has motivated creative teams to ground their productions more firmly in real-life experiences.

4.4 The Cultural Function and Value of CDGTPO

The cultural functions of CDGTPO span social, artistic, and educational dimensions. Socially, CDGTPO regulates dramatic atmosphere, guiding audience emotions and fostering reflection on social realities amid laughter. It thus serves as a bridge between stage and audience, enhancing both entertainment and engagement. Artistically, CDGTPO integrates opera, dance, and music. Exaggerated movements, comical gestures, and detailed character portrayals enrich dramatic expression, making CDGTPO both a driver of plot and a vital medium of aesthetic value. Its strong regional characteristics contribute to the diversity of Chinese opera traditions. Educationally, CDGTPO frequently conveys traditional morals and values through humorous narratives. By employing witty dialogue and exaggerated behavior, it teaches etiquette, wisdom, and ethics in subtle ways, particularly resonating with younger audiences. This implicit educational role strengthens cultural identity and fosters a sense of belonging to traditional heritage. In sum, CDGTPO is not merely a theatrical role but a cultural symbol that embodies local culture, historical memory, and social responsibility. Even amid globalization and modernization, CDGTPO demonstrates resilience and vitality, ensuring its continued cultural significance in heritage preservation and innovation.

5. The Performance of CDGTPO and Modern Transformation

5.1 The Portrayal of CDGTPO in Contemporary Films and TV Shows

In contemporary films and television, the portrayal of Clown Dance in Gannan Tea-picking Opera (CDGTPO) extends beyond humor and satire to offer deeper reflections on social transformation. CDGTPO characters often move beyond conventional heroism; their exaggerated designs, distinctive makeup, and unique costumes leave a powerful visual impression. In some works, for example, asymmetrical facial patterns and distorted expressions deliberately subvert traditional aesthetic standards. The CDGTPO archetype frequently embodies complex human qualities, illustrating both the hardships and resilience of marginalized communities. Through satirical language and comedic behavior that mock authority, CDGTPO prompts viewers to contemplate social contradictions, thereby enriching its thematic significance. The incorporation of digital technology has further broadened its expressive potential. Computer-generated imagery and motion capture techniques now enable more vivid exaggeration of physical movement and subtle facial expressions, pulling audiences deeper into the performance. Narratively, CDGTPO characters often function as agents of reversal, using unexpected plot developments to alter destinies. This produces not only comic surprise but also genuine emotional resonance. Many works use the personal growth of CDGTPO figures to explore themes of self-worth and social identity, thereby inspiring meaningful cultural introspection. As researcher Xiao Yuan notes in her study on the evolution of opera clown figures in China, the symbolic function of the clown in new media increasingly aligns with an "aestheticization of the ugly." This is particularly evident in short-form videos, where traditional clown personas are being reimagined as potent expressions of youth subculture and social critique.^[16] In the new media era, short video platforms and internet culture have further diversified performance styles. The integration of memes and online language into CDGTPO has fostered a dynamic and evolving popular culture around this traditional art form.

5.2 The Transformation of CDGTPO in Modern Times

In contemporary society, CDGTPO has experienced substantial evolution characterized by diversification and innovation. Originating from the humor and social commentary intrinsic to Gannan Tea-picking Opera, CDGTPO has progressively become integrated into wider entertainment culture. Global cultural exchanges have introduced external influences, resulting in the emergence of hybrid performance styles^[17]. Digital technology serves as a crucial driver in this transformation. The application of virtual reality, augmented reality, and interactive media significantly enhances immersive and interactive experiences. Social media further accelerates dissemination; brief video excerpts of CDGTPO can achieve rapid virality, substantially increasing both visibility and cultural influence. The growing aesthetic expectations of modern audiences have also stimulated innovation. Performers increasingly combine traditional comedic elements with commentary on current social issues, creating performances that reflect contemporary realities. Individualized artistic styles, which draw from personal experience and cultural background, hold particular appeal for younger viewers. Concurrently, educational reforms now emphasize interdisciplinary training in drama, dance, and music, moving beyond traditional single-lineage mentorship. Today's CDGTPO performers must develop skills in improvisation and cross-genre

performance to respond effectively to evolving market demands^[18]. Commercialization represents another significant dimension of CDGTPO's development. The art form has transitioned from localized folk performance toward mainstream commercial entertainment, enhancing its economic value while creating certain tensions between cultural authenticity and market pressures. Excessive commercialization carries the risk of eroding traditional essence, leading scholars and practitioners to explore mechanisms that can sustain a productive balance between heritage preservation and creative innovation.

5.3 The Impact of New Media on CDGTPO

The emergence of new media has fundamentally transformed the dissemination, interaction, and cultural expression of CDGTPO. Short-form video platforms in particular have created new pathways for communication, reducing the art form's historical dependence on in-person performances. Artists who share excerpts of CDGTPO on social media are able to rapidly attract large audiences, generating powerful network effects and significantly expanding its cultural influence. Audience-performer dynamics have grown more immediate and sustained^[19]. Interactive features such as comments, likes, and shares enable viewers to actively influence performance content, promoting a more participatory form of cultural dialogue. This continuous feedback mechanism enriches artistic expression, allowing CDGTPO to become more responsive and varied, thereby increasing its appeal to younger generations. New media has also spurred the development of innovative performance formats, most notably live online streaming^[20]. CDGTPO now increasingly integrates diverse art forms including music, dance, and situational drama, which broadens its expressive possibilities. That said, the condensed nature of short videos often leads to compressed narratives and simplified characterizations, accelerating the pace of storytelling. Commercial prospects have expanded in parallel. Many CDGTPO performers now generate revenue through platform-based monetization models such as virtual gifting, brand partnerships, and advertising^[21]. Data-driven insights further support the customization of content to better align with audience preferences. While commercialization enhances the sustainability of CDGTPO, it also carries the risk of cultural dilution, as traditional aspects may be downplayed in the pursuit of broader popularity.

5.4 Modern Communication of CDGTPO

In the contemporary digital landscape, the dissemination of CDGTPO confronts a landscape rich with both opportunities and challenges. Social media platforms, including WeChat and Weibo, as well as short-video services such as Douyin and Kuaishou, provide highly accessible channels. These platforms effectively lower the barrier to entry for younger demographics and are actively shaping a new ecosystem for cultural transmission. To maximize its impact, communication strategies must accentuate the local distinctiveness and emotional depth inherent to CDGTPO^[22]. A key approach involves merging traditional performance techniques with modern aesthetic sensibilities. This could include the thoughtful integration of contemporary language or relatable humorous elements, allowing performers to refresh the art form and enhance its connection with modern audiences. Furthermore, advanced technologies like Virtual and Augmented Reality offer pathways to create deeply immersive experiences, significantly boosting its appeal. A diversified promotional model is essential. Cross-disciplinary collaborations with fields like music and dance can broaden its artistic influence. Simultaneously, integrated online and offline initiatives, for example, organizing "Tea-picking Opera Flash Mobs" or "Interactive CDGTPO Experience Zones," can foster direct public participation. Engaging in regional and national cultural festivals and exhibitions will further elevate its profile and strengthen its role in shaping local cultural identity. The application of big data analytics allows for the refinement of these strategies. By identifying nuanced audience preferences, content can be precisely tailored for specific groups such as students, young professionals, or families. Concurrently, developing the cultural IP of CDGTPO and its associated creative industries, exemplified by themed products linked to local festivals, serves to extend its commercial and cultural reach while building lasting audience loyalty. The sustainable development of CDGTPO hinges on a harmonious balance between modernization and tradition. This equilibrium ensures that it will endure not merely as a protected cultural heritage, but also as a dynamic and relevant contemporary art form.

6. Conclusion

The culture of Clown Dance in Gannan Tea-picking Opera (CDGTPO) embodies both artistic expression and social critique, integrating local tradition with philosophical reflection. It conveys insights

into life, society, and values through humor, irony, and cultural symbolism. Philosophically, CDGTPO resonates with phenomenology and existentialism, emphasizing lived experience and the search for meaning, while its fluidity echoes deconstructionist perspectives on identity and cultural interpretation. As a form of cultural inheritance, CDGTPO reflects the dialectic of preservation and innovation: reinterpreting folk elements, engaging with current social realities, and sustaining its vitality in modern contexts. Aesthetically, its exaggerated imagery and dynamic rhythms create a dialogue between beauty and ugliness, while audience interaction transforms cultural acceptance into active participation. In sum, CDGTPO is not only a regional performance style but also a profound medium of cultural reflection. Its multiple layers of meaning contribute to the reinterpretation of tradition and provide valuable perspectives for the sustainable development of contemporary cultural practice and intercultural dialogue.

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