

Exploring Iconographic Concepts: Analyzing Body Movements in Creative Dance at Phanom Rung Temple, Thailand

การสำรวจแนวคิดประติมานวิทยา: การวิเคราะห์การเคลื่อนไหวร่างกาย ในนาฏกรรมสร้างสรรค์ที่ปราสาทพนมรุ้ง ประเทศไทย

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คำสำคัญ:

การวิเคราะห์
การเคลื่อนไหวของลาบัน,
การออกแบบนาฏกรรมเชิงวัฒนธรรม,
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มานุษยวิทยานาฏกรรม

Abstract

Background and Objectives: This research article forms an integral part of a comprehensive study titled "An Analysis of Creative Dance from Iconographic Concepts in Buri Ram Province with Laban Notation's Theory." The primary aim of this study is to systematically investigate and analyze the intricate movements of the human body in creative dance performances through the lens of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)—a well-established theoretical framework widely recognized in the field of dance studies.

Methods: The study focused on four fundamental components of LMA: Body, Effort, Shape, and Space. For the Body component, it was found that, based on the Bartenieff Fundamentals used for scrutinizing the dynamics of individual body parts, the fundamental movements and the choreographic sequences are the bodily expressions that can convey cultural narratives. For the Effort component, this was dissected through its contrasting elements—Flow (free versus bound), Weight (strong versus light), Space (direct versus indirect), and Time (sudden versus sustained)—leading to a nuanced understanding of the dancers' emotional and cognitive expressions. For the Shape component, it was shown that the moving body adapts to external stimuli, environmental contexts, and interactions with other dancers. In addition, it was found that bodily configurations reflect attitudes and emotions, particularly in relation to the Phanom Rung Temple's iconography. For the Space component, there have been movement trajectories within defined spatial dimensions and pathways, reflecting the interpretation via the temple's architectural layout and enhancing the narratives and the concepts through dancing dimensions.

Results: The analysis shows the complex orchestration and relationship of bodily elements that not only demonstrate the dancers' technical skills but also reveals a profound connection via the temple's cultural and historical narrative. This intricate interplay between body movement, symbolism, and spatial dynamics shows the dancers' physical embodiment can convey the temple's stable cultural heritage by iconographic interpretation.

Application of this study: This study makes a significant contribution to the fields of dance anthropology and movement studies, offering a deeper understanding of dance as a medium for cultural storytelling. In addition, it provides valuable insights that can be applied in university-level teaching within Dance or Performing Arts programs, and serves as a reliable academic reference for future research endeavors.

Conclusions: This study demonstrates Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) can clearly explain the intricate relationship between bodily movement and cultural identity in creative dance performances at Phanom Rung Temple. By dissecting the body movement process into its fundamental components—Body, Effort, Shape, and Space—the research can capture both the technical complexity and the profound expressiveness of movements that reflect the temple's various cultural and historical heritage. The dancers' physical movements are shown to serve as a "living archive," transmitting historical narratives and cultural memory through each gesture and spatial design. Moreover, the analysis highlights how dance functions as a form of cultural diplomacy, bridging local traditions with global audiences and reinforcing the dance's role as a powerful medium that help preserve, interpret, and develop the cultural heritage to make it have a contemporary feel sustainably. Ultimately, the application of LMA in this context not only deepens scholarly understanding of dance anthropology but also offers a valuable analytical framework for examining the enduring power of creative dance in communicating cultural heritage.

บทคัดย่อ

ที่มาและวัตถุประสงค์: บทความวิจัยนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของงานวิจัย เรื่อง “การวิเคราะห์นาฏกรรมสร้างสรรค์จากแนวคิด ประติมานวิทยาที่จังหวัดบุรีรัมย์ด้วยลาบานโทเทชั่น” มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาและวิเคราะห์การเคลื่อนไหวร่างกายจาก นาฏกรรมสร้างสรรค์ที่ได้ถูกออกแบบขึ้น ด้วยการใช้แนวคิดการวิเคราะห์การเคลื่อนไหวของลาบาน ซึ่งเป็นทฤษฎีที่ได้รับ การยอมรับอย่างกว้างขวางในด้านการศึกษานาฏกรรม

วิธีการศึกษา: การวิเคราะห์มุ่งเน้นที่องค์ประกอบ ประการของแนวคิดการวิเคราะห์การเคลื่อนไหว 4 ร่างกายของลาบาน ได้แก่ ร่างกาย แรงพยายาม รูปทรง และพื้นที่ ในด้านร่างกายพบว่า จากการวิเคราะห์หลักการพื้นฐานอันเป็นงานค้นคว้า ของบาเท็นเนียฟ สำหรับการตรวจสอบพลวัตของส่วนต่าง ๆ ในร่างกาย การเคลื่อนไหวพื้นฐานและลำดับของ การออกแบบลีลานาฏกรรมเป็นการแสดงออกทางร่างกายสามารถถ่ายทอดเรื่องราวทางวัฒนธรรมได้ ในด้านแรงพยายาม พบว่า ได้ถูกจำแนกผ่านลักษณะย่อยที่แตกต่างกัน ได้แก่ ความไหลลื่นของการเคลื่อนไหวร่างกายที่มีอิสระ การใช้น้ำหนัก ของแรงพยายามที่มีทั้งหนักและเบา การพื้นที่พื้นที่ที่เคลื่อนไหวร่างกายทั้งแบบตั้งใจและแบบยืดหยุ่น และการใช้เวลาที่มี ทั้งแบบกะทันหันและสม่ำเสมอ ผลการวิเคราะห์ผลักดันให้เกิดความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับการแสดงออกอารมณ์และมิตติ ความคิดของผู้สร้างสรรคนาฏกรรม ในด้านรูปทรงพบว่า ร่างกายที่มีการเคลื่อนไหวนั้นปรับตัวเข้ากับสิ่งเร้าภายนอก บริบทของสภาพแวดล้อม และลักษณะปฏิสัมพันธ์ของนาฏศิลป์ นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่าการจัดท่าทางของร่างกายสะท้อน ทิศนคติและอารมณ์ในการแสดง โดยเฉพาะความสัมพันธ์กับประติมานวิทยาที่ปราสาทพนมรุ้ง และในด้านพื้นที่พบว่า มีการใช้ทิศทางของการเคลื่อนไหวร่างกายในขอบเขตเชิงพื้นที่ที่กำหนดเอาไว้ ซึ่งสะท้อนการตีความผ่านมโนของปราสาทพนม รุ้ง และยังเสริมสร้างเรื่องราวและแนวคิดผ่านมิติของนาฏกรรม

ผลการศึกษา: ผลการวิเคราะห์แสดงให้เห็นถึงการประสานงานและความสัมพันธ์ที่ซับซ้อนขององค์ประกอบทางร่างกาย ที่ไม่เพียงแต่แสดงให้เห็นถึงทักษะทางเทคนิคปฏิบัติของนาฏศิลป์เท่านั้น แต่ยังแสดงถึงความเชื่อมโยงที่ลึกซึ้งผ่าน การถ่ายทอดทางวัฒนธรรมและประวัติศาสตร์ของปราสาทพนมรุ้ง การผสมผสานที่ซับซ้อนระหว่างการเคลื่อนไหวร่างกาย สัญลักษณ์ และพลวัตเชิงพื้นที่ ได้ชี้ให้เห็นว่า การใช้ร่างกายของนาฏศิลป์สามารถสื่อถึงมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมที่มั่นคงของ ปราสาทพนมรุ้งผ่านการตีความในลักษณะประติมานวิทยา

การประยุกต์ใช้: การศึกษาครั้งนี้มีส่วนสำคัญต่อการแลกเปลี่ยนในด้านมานุษยวิทยานาฏกรรมและการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการ เคลื่อนไหวร่างกายด้านนาฏกรรม โดยให้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับนาฏกรรมในฐานะที่เป็นสื่อกลางในการเล่าเรื่องราว วัฒนธรรม นอกจากนี้ยังเป็นพื้นที่แลกเปลี่ยนในการเรียนการสอนหรือการวิจัยระดับอุดมศึกษา ที่จัดการเรียนการสอน ด้านนาฏกรรมหรือศิลปะการแสดง เป็นแหล่งอ้างอิงทางวิชาการเพื่อค้นคว้าหรือทำวิจัยในตนเองเดียวกันในอนาคต

บทสรุป: งานวิจัยนี้นำเสนอให้เห็นว่าการวิเคราะห์การเคลื่อนไหวของลาบาน สามารถอธิบายความสัมพันธ์ที่ซับซ้อน ระหว่างการเคลื่อนไหวร่างกายกับอัตลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมในนาฏกรรมสร้างสรรค์ ณ ปราสาทพนมรุ้ง ได้อย่างชัดเจน โดยการจำแนกกระบวนการเคลื่อนไหวร่างกายออกเป็นองค์ประกอบพื้นฐาน ได้แก่ ร่างกาย แรงพยายาม รูปทรง และ พื้นที่ การวิจัยครั้งนี้สามารถนำเสนอประเด็นทั้งความซับซ้อนทางเทคนิคและความลึกซึ้งทางอารมณ์ของการเคลื่อนไหวที่ สะท้อนมรดกทางประวัติศาสตร์และวัฒนธรรมอันหลากหลายของปราสาทพนมรุ้ง การเคลื่อนไหวร่างกายของนาฏศิลป์ จึงทำหน้าที่เป็นเสมือน “คลังข้อมูลที่มีชีวิต” ในการถ่ายทอดเรื่องราวและความทรงจำที่ปรากฏในวัฒนธรรม ผ่านอิริยาบถ และการใช้พื้นที่ นอกจากนี้ การวิเคราะห์ยังเน้นบทบาทของการแสดงนาฏกรรมในฐานะเป็นเครื่องมือแจกแจงชุด วัฒนธรรม ที่เชื่อมโยงประเพณีท้องถิ่นกับชุมชนที่หลากหลาย และยืนยันบทบาทของการแสดงนาฏกรรมในฐานะสื่อที่มีพลัง ที่ช่วยอนุรักษ์ ติความ และพัฒนามรดกทางวัฒนธรรม ให้คงความร่วมสมัยได้อย่างยั่งยืน ท้ายที่สุดการประยุกต์ใช้แนวคิด การวิเคราะห์การเคลื่อนไหวร่างกายของลาบานในครั้งนี้ ไม่เพียงขยายความเข้าใจเชิงมานุษยวิทยานาฏกรรม แต่ยังเสนอ กรอบวิเคราะห์ที่มีคุณค่าในการสำรวจพลังแห่งนาฏกรรมในการสื่อสารมรดกทางวัฒนธรรม

Introduction

Phanom Rung Temple, an architectural marvel situated atop a prehistoric volcanic hill in Buriram Province, Thailand, epitomizes the sophisticated interplay of art, culture, and spirituality in Southeast Asia (Diskul, 1974). Renowned for its elaborate stone carvings and bas-reliefs, this temple encapsulates rich narratives from Hindu mythology, presenting a plethora of iconographic motifs deeply ingrained in the region's cultural tapestry (Gaston, 1983; Gopinatha Rao, 2012). This site, beyond its historical and architectural significance, serves as a dynamic stage where creative dancers reinterpret these ancient symbols, translating them into movements imbued with profound meaning and significance.

Central to Phanom Rung's cultural and architectural heritage is the Narai Banthomsin lintel, also referred to as the "Vishnu Reclining on the Nāga lintel" or "The Vishnu Anantasain Padmanabha lintel." This intricately carved lintel, prominently positioned within Phanom Rung Castle, stands as a testament to the temple's storied past and significant transformations. The temple underwent extensive restorations from 1181 to circa 1220 and experienced a major transformation in the 18th century under the reign of King Jayavarman VII of the Khmer Empire, who introduced Mahayana Buddhism and initiated a notable theological realignment (Achuthananda, 2018; Diskul, 1974; Sangkhakul, 2016; Woodward, 2005). The engravings on the lintel, predominantly depicting Lord Narayana, exemplify the intricate blend of historical, cultural, and spiritual influences that have shaped Southeast Asia.

The integration of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) into the study of creative dance at Phanom Rung Temple marks a significant advancement in the scholarly examination of dance as a cultural medium. LMA offers a comprehensive framework for dissecting and understanding the diverse dimensions of movement, including spatial, temporal, and kinetic aspects (Fernandes, 2015; Laban, 2011; Newlove & Dalby, 2003; Wahl, 2018). This theoretical approach plays a crucial role in transforming the temple's static iconographic symbols into a dynamic, kinesthetic language, thereby enabling a more profound engagement with the rich cultural narratives embedded in the temple's architecture.

Creative dancers, inspired by the temple's iconic motifs, strive to bring the deities, legends, and myths depicted in the engravings to life through their physical expressions. By employing Laban Movement Analysis, these dancers imbue their performances with symbolic depth, faithfully mirroring the complex narratives preserved in the temple's bas-reliefs. For instance, a dancer's graceful extension of a limb may replicate a divine posture, while rhythmic pacing might evoke a cosmic dance, each movement meticulously aligned with LMA principles to create a deep connection with Phanom Rung's iconographic essence.

The interdisciplinary application of Laban Movement Analysis in exploring Phanom Rung's iconographic motifs in creative dance not only pays homage to the temple's cultural and spiritual heritage but also enriches the academic dialogue on the universal language of movement. This methodology highlights the enduring capacity of art to transcend temporal and cultural boundaries, revealing new interpretive possibilities and fostering an ongoing dialogue between historical and contemporary artistic expressions. As dancers embody the symbolic narratives of the temple, they underscore the timeless resonance of these stories and their continued influence on artistic innovation across generations.

Nevertheless, the application of Laban Movement Analysis in studying Phanom Rung's iconography presents certain challenges that merit further investigation. A deeper exploration of the local cultural context and the impact of contemporary regional practices on interpreting the temple's iconography is essential for a more nuanced analysis. Additionally, conducting a detailed technical examination of the movements and their precise correlation with specific iconographic elements could provide more robust evidence supporting the relevance of LMA in this setting. Comparative studies involving other cultural sites and dance traditions could further illuminate the unique characteristics of Phanom Rung's artistic heritage. Furthermore, analyzing audience reception of these performances could yield valuable insights into the broader implications of such interdisciplinary approaches on public engagement with cultural heritage.

Addressing these areas in future research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between dance, iconography, and cultural heritage at Phanom Rung Temple. This will ensure that the temple's legacy continues to inspire and educate future generations of artists and scholars. The ongoing integration of Laban Movement Analysis in this context holds considerable potential to enhance our appreciation of the temple's iconography and broaden the scope of dance and performing arts studies, fostering a richer dialogue between historical traditions and contemporary creative expression.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research article is to conduct a systematic investigation and analysis of the intricate movements of the human body in creative dance performances, utilizing Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)—a highly regarded and well-established theoretical framework within the discipline of dance studies.

Research Methods

1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to thoroughly explore movement as a medium for expressing cultural heritage. It specifically investigates how Phanom Rung Temple's iconography is translated into the physical lexicon of creative dance, set within the rich historical and cultural context of Thailand. This methodological approach is chosen for its ability to delve deeply into the dancers' subjective interpretations and to elucidate the emblematic significance of their movements. The qualitative design is particularly apt for this research, as it allows for an in-depth examination of the intricate ways in which cultural narratives are embodied and conveyed through dance.

2. Data Collection

The study utilizes purposive sampling to recruit dancers who are proficient in integrating cultural iconography into their dance practice. This sampling strategy is employed to ensure that the participants represent a broad spectrum of dance disciplines, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the artistic translation process. The purposive sampling method is selected to identify participants with substantial knowledge and experience in fusing traditional iconography with contemporary dance forms, thereby enriching the study with their expert insights and sophisticated performances.

3. Research Instruments

3.1 Video Recordings

Performances by the participants are filmed within the evocative setting of Phanom Rung Temple, capturing the intricate interaction between the dancers and the symbolic environment, thereby preserving the authenticity of the cultural performance for subsequent analysis. These video recordings serve as a primary data source, offering a visual and kinetic record of how the dancers interpret the temple's iconography.

3.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with the dancers, allowing them to articulate their choreographic inspirations and the impact of iconographic motifs on their creative output. These interviews provide rich qualitative data, offering insights into the dancers' personal narratives and their cultural engagement with the temple's iconography.

3.3 Laban Notation

The study employs Laban Notation, a respected system that meticulously documents the dancers' movements, providing a comprehensive codex for analyzing the ephemeral nature of dance and preserving the choreographic structures for posterity. This notation system is crucial for detailed movement analysis and for ensuring that the choreographic work can be replicated and studied in future research.

3.4 Observation

Real-time observation of both rehearsals and performances is conducted to gain direct insights into the creative process, capturing the fluidity of decision-making and improvisation that are integral to the embodiment of cultural iconography. These observations are systematically recorded to document and analyze the dynamic aspects of the creative process.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)

Laban Movement Analysis is employed as a critical tool for dissecting the dance movements, focusing on the intricate dynamics, spatial patterns, and kinetic language as the dancers navigate and express the temple's iconographic narratives. LMA provides a structured framework for understanding how movement elements are organized and interpreted in the context of cultural symbolism.

3.4.2 Interpretation of Iconographic Elements

A comparative analysis is conducted to align the recorded movements with Phanom Rung Temple's iconography, exploring how dancers transform static images into kinetic narratives, thereby revealing the embedded cultural stories and their significance. This involves a meticulous examination of the iconographic elements and their translation into dance movements, offering insights into the creative process and cultural interpretation.

3.4.3 Thematic Analysis

The study includes a detailed thematic analysis, identifying recurrent motifs and patterns in the performances. This process involves careful coding, theme identification, and review, culminating in a comprehensive analytical report. Thematic analysis helps distill the central themes and narratives emerging from the dancers' performances and interviews.

3.4.4 Content Analysis

Systematic content analysis of interview transcripts and video recordings is conducted to assess the frequency, connotations, and interrelationships of specific linguistic expressions, thematic elements, or symbolic references. Content analysis serves as a quantitative complement to thematic analysis, uncovering patterns and trends within the data.

3.4.5 Strengthened Ethical Considerations

The study is conducted with a strong commitment to ethical standards, ensuring informed consent, participant autonomy, and strict confidentiality. Ethical considerations are paramount, particularly in cultural and artistic research, where it is essential to protect participants' rights and to respectfully represent cultural heritage.

3.4.6 Data Integrity Assurance

To ensure the integrity of the study, data triangulation is employed alongside the establishment of intercoder reliability. Multiple analysts engage in independent coding, and interpretive discrepancies are reconciled through rigorous collaborative review, thereby securing consistency and consensus in the findings. This methodological rigor ensures that the study's conclusions are robust, reliable, and reflective of the diverse perspectives of the participants.

By thoroughly addressing these methodological components, this study aims to provide a rich, nuanced understanding of how Phanom Rung Temple's iconography is reinterpreted through contemporary dance. The research contributes valuable insights to the fields of dance studies, cultural heritage, and interdisciplinary scholarship. This robust

methodological framework not only guarantees the accuracy and reliability of the findings but also emphasizes the significant interplay between historical iconography and modern creative expression, fostering a deeper appreciation of cultural narratives through dance.

Research Results

This study primarily focuses on an in-depth exploration of the nuanced bodily movements characteristic of creative dance compositions, particularly those inspired by the profound iconographic principles of Phanom Rung Temple in Thailand. The investigation is situated within the theoretical contours of two preeminent methodologies: Laban Notation and Laban Movement Analysis (LMA). The cardinal purpose of this scholarly inquiry is to systematically distill and categorize empirical observations into foundational elements, as articulated within the Laban Notation and Laban Movement Analysis paradigms. This structured analytical framework encapsulates a total of four discrete dimensions, outlined as follows:

1. Body

In the interdisciplinary field of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), the "Body" dimension stands as a pivotal construct, emphasizing the intrinsic complexities of the human corporeal form. This facet integrates diverse elements, encapsulating the nuanced anatomical structures, dynamic postural configurations, and the meticulous interplay of varied body segments during movement processes (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Guest, 1984; Hodgson, 2001; Thornton, 1971). Viewing the body through this lens allows for a dual appraisal: first, as an integrated, holistic entity and subsequently, in a segmented manner focusing on distinct parts like the cranium, upper limbs, and lower extremities.

Motivated by these theoretical underpinnings, the current study initiated a profound assessment of bodily kinematics. Undertaking this analytical journey necessitated a dedicated immersion into the Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) framework, zeroing in on the "Body" dimension. The fruits of this academic labor have been systematically organized into five pivotal thematic areas, each set to be elucidated in the subsequent exposition, ensuring depth and scholarly precision.

1.1 In-Depth Examination of Bodily Kinetics in Dance

This scholarly exploration rigorously probes the intricate utilization of bodily kinetics, with each anatomical segment endowed with profound symbolic resonance. The articulation of the cranium and cervical region in specific choreographic sequences evokes the solemnity and grace inherent in the temple's sculptures, while manual expressions were meticulously synchronized with the canons of traditional Thai dance, albeit ingeniously modified to mirror the temple's iconography. Such a sophisticated orchestration of corporeal elements not only manifests exemplary technical acumen but also signifies a deep-rooted affinity with the temple's cultural and historical narrative.

1.2 Complexities in Postural Foundation and Movement Initiation

The dynamic shifts in postural foundation throughout the performance are emblematic of the dancers' adaptability and somatic expertise. These oscillations, ranging from unipedal stances, potentially emblematic of spiritual transcendence, to fully grounded postures, possibly alluding to moments of historical gravitas, delineate a spectrum of physical expression. The origination of movement, predominantly from a grounded posture, intimates an intrinsic connection with the temple's ancestral heritage.

1.3 Nuanced Choreographic Progressions and Kinetic Fluidity

The sequencing of the choreography was observed to be intricately aligned with the emotive arc of the narrative. Tempo-modulated, calculated progressions suggest contemplative or somber intervals, in contrast to the brisk, animated sequences that depict jubilation or festivity. The tempo and rhythm of these progressions elucidate a profound understanding of the narrative's emotive pulse and the historical saga of the temple.

1.4 Integration of Bartenieff Fundamentals in Performance

The integration of Bartenieff Fundamentals within the dancers' repertoire was distinctly evident, marked by an acute awareness of bodily interconnectivity and spatial harmony. The choreography transcended mere limbic articulation, encompassing the dancers' entire physicality, thereby cultivating an aura of wholeness and emotive expression. This integrative approach markedly enhanced the conveyance of complex emotional narratives and thematic elements.

1.5 Choreographic Symbiosis with Architectural Elements

The choreographic alignment and spatial orientation of the dancers were in continual consonance with the temple's architectural ethos. Linear movements corresponded with the temple's direct paths, while the curvilinear motions were congruent with its arches. This choreographic-architectural synergy fostered a visual interplay between the dance and the sacrosanct space, thereby intensifying the performance's overall impact.

The results of this study provide a comprehensive examination of how dancers at Phanom Rung Temple utilized their physicality to elucidate and articulate the site's rich cultural and historical narratives. This investigation underscores the multifaceted interaction among movement, symbolism, and spatial dynamics, highlighting the dancers' role as vital conveyors of historical and cultural legacies through the medium of dance.

This extended analysis, grounded in Laban Movement Analysis, offers a comprehensive exploration of how the dancers at Phanom Rung Temple utilized their physicality to vividly convey the site's rich cultural and historical narratives. The study highlights the intricate interplay between movement, symbolism, and spatial dynamics, showcasing the dancers' embodiment of the temple's storied legacy and their critical role as transmitters of history through the medium of dance. By doing so, the study contributes a crucial perspective to the fields of dance anthropology and cultural studies, providing valuable insights into the connection between physical expression and cultural narrative.

2. Effort

Within the intricate framework of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), the "Effort" paradigm serves as an illuminating construct, delving deep into the dynamism of movement attributes such as speed, force, flow, and time, as elucidated by Laban (2011), Hodgson (2001), and Flatt (2019). This evaluative platform not only presents a panoramic view of the complex interrelationships among these dimensions but also highlights their consequential roles in both the expressive and functional domains of human kinetics. Additionally, it sheds light on the symbiotic relationship between the affective and cognitive substrates that fundamentally inform our kinesthetic engagements.

Building upon these conceptual underpinnings, the researcher embarked on a comprehensive scrutiny of human motion, assiduously embracing the doctrines of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Nagrin, 2001). This scholarly pursuit was underscored by an overarching objective: to decode the nuanced interplay between the "Effort" dimension, emblematic principles, choreographic aesthetics, and the intrinsic propensity for emotive articulation via movement. Stemming from this rigorous exploration, the derived conclusions and insights have been systematically curated into four pivotal segments, set to be detailed in the ensuing discourse, ensuring depth, clarity, and scholarly resonance within the academic milieu.

2.1 Flow Dynamics: The Binary of Free and Bound Flow

2.1.1 Free Flow Movements

The dancers exhibited a distinctive fluidity in free flow movements, akin to the serenity and natural fluidity present in the temple's environment. These movements served as a visual metaphor, encapsulating the temple's tranquil spirituality and establishing a symbiotic relationship between the dancers and their surroundings. The fluidity inherent in free flow movements allowed the performers to convey a sense of ease and grace, reflective of the temple's spiritual ambiance and natural beauty. This connection between movement and environment underscores the dancer's ability to mirror the temple's serene and contemplative atmosphere.

2.1.2 Bound Flow Movements

In contrast, bound flow movements were prominent during portrayals of historical and religious narratives. These movements, characterized by their controlled precision and symbolic depth, resonated with the temple's ritualistic heritage. The dexterity with which dancers navigated between free and bound flow movements underscored their versatility and deep interpretative understanding of the narrative's requirements. Bound movements added a layer of intensity and focus, mirroring the disciplined and structured nature of religious rituals and historical reenactments. The contrast between bound and free flow movements highlighted the narrative's emotional and symbolic peaks, offering a dynamic storytelling method through dance.

2.2 Weight: The Spectrum of Light and Strong Dynamics

2.2.1 Light Movements

Employed to convey the subtler aspects of narratives or emotions associated with the temple's spiritual essence, light movements were executed with a subtle profundity. These movements communicated themes of ethereal beauty and transcendence with a delicate yet impactful articulation. Lightness in movement allowed for an expression of gentle, spiritual themes, aligning with the temple's serene and sacred atmosphere. This usage of light dynamics in dance underscored the dancers' ability to embody and convey the temple's spiritual narrative through nuanced, delicate expressions.

2.2.2 Strong Movements

Contrasting the light movements, strong movements were utilized to depict themes of resilience, historical strength, and vigor. Particularly evident in sections representing historical battles or the temple's resilience, these movements embodied a narrative of enduring strength and cultural pride. The robust, forceful nature of strong movements highlighted the temple's historical significance and the cultural fortitude of the people who built and preserved it. The interplay between light and strong movements within the performances provided a balanced depiction of the temple's multifaceted history and cultural significance.

2.3 Space: The Dichotomy of Direct and Flexible Movements

2.3.1 Direct Movements

These movements were closely aligned with specific elements of the temple's architectural and iconographic features. They acted as a bridge linking the physicality of the temple with the intangible narrative of the dance. Direct movements allowed the dancers to draw clear connections between their physical expressions and the temple's structural and artistic elements, enhancing the narrative coherence of the performance. The precision and focus of direct movements underscored the dancers' ability to reflect the temple's architectural elegance and cultural narratives accurately.

2.3.2 Flexible Movements

In contrast, flexible movements were marked by their exploratory nature. These movements extended beyond the performance space, inviting audience engagement and reflecting the narrative's broader scope. Flexibility in movement enabled a more dynamic and interactive experience, encouraging the audience to engage more deeply with the performance and its underlying themes. This approach fostered a greater sense of connection and understanding between the audience and the dancers, highlighting the performance's inclusive and expansive nature.

2.4 Time: Contrasting Sudden and Sustained Movements

2.4.1 Sudden Movements

Utilized as dramatic devices, these movements captured critical moments in the narrative, often synchronized with peaks in the musical accompaniment or pivotal plot developments. They created a striking visual and emotional resonance, underscoring key moments of tension or surprise. Sudden movements served to punctuate the performance, providing moments of heightened drama and engagement. These movements effectively captured the audience's attention, accentuating critical narrative junctures and enhancing the overall impact of the performance.

2.4.2 Sustained Movements

These movements offered a contemplative counterbalance to the sudden movements, allowing for the expression of prolonged emotional states and providing deeper insights into the temple's enduring spiritual and cultural significance. Sustained movements created a sense of continuity and reflection, aligning with the temple's timeless and contemplative atmosphere. This dichotomy between sudden and sustained movements provided a rhythm to the performance that mirrored the temple's historical and spiritual cadence.

This detailed analysis of the Effort elements within Laban Movement Analysis elucidates the rich and layered utilization of movement qualities by the dancers at Phanom Rung Temple. It highlights the importance of Effort in decoding the depth and diversity of expression in dance, particularly within a context laden with cultural and historical significance. By dissecting the various facets of Effort, this study provides a nuanced understanding of how dancers interpret and embody the temple's iconography and historical narratives through their movements. This analysis contributes to a deeper appreciation of the dancers' technical and interpretive skills and underscores the role of movement analysis in preserving and conveying cultural heritage.

This study's exploration of the Effort dimension within Laban Movement Analysis provides profound insights into the intricate interplay of movement qualities in dance performances inspired by Phanom Rung Temple. By analyzing aspects such as free and bound flow, light and strong dynamics, direct and flexible movements, and sudden and sustained actions, the research emphasizes the multifaceted nature of movement and its pivotal role in expressing cultural and historical narratives. The study makes a significant contribution to the field of dance studies, underscoring the importance of detailed movement analysis in the understanding and preservation of cultural heritage through dance. The findings highlight the essential role dancers play in bringing historical and cultural narratives to life, showcasing the enduring power of dance as a medium for cultural expression and preservation.

3. Shape

In the intricate sphere of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), the "Shape" dimension offers a detailed scrutiny into the subtle contours and configurations of the human physique during its diverse kinetic undertakings (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Jordan, 2011; Maletic, 2010; Moore, 2009). Beyond merely addressing the body's innate structural design, this dimension invites a thorough examination of its dynamic trajectories in space and resulting choreographic patterns. By

delving into the "Shape" element within LMA, academic practitioners are equipped with a pivotal instrument for discerning and distinguishing a vast array of movement characteristics and paradigms (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Davies, 2006; Laban, 2011). This analytical construct establishes a robust framework, underscoring the relationship between the body's physical composition and its myriad interactions, accentuating both the perceptual and proprioceptive facets of human movement.

Grounded in these foundational concepts, the researcher embarked on a comprehensive inquiry, focusing primarily on the "Shape" dimension relative to human kinetics (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Guest, 2005; Thornton, 1971). Drawing upon the core tenets and intricate methodologies inherent to Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), the derived insights have been methodically segmented into three distinct thematic domains, each elaborated upon in the ensuing discourse. This methodological rigor fosters a deepened appreciation of the intricate symbiosis between the body's structural characteristics and its expressive kinetic potential.

3.1 Elevated Scrutiny of Shape Flow Dynamics

The dancers' exhibition of Shape Flow was marked by a diverse array of complex body configurations, each meticulously crafted to resonate with specific elements of the temple's lore and emotive states. These configurations were not mere aesthetic expressions but purposefully crafted to symbolize various aspects such as aspirations, reverence, introspection, or solemnity. The transitions between these shapes, characterized by their fluid elegance, not only demonstrated the dancers' technical finesse but also their profound insight into the narrative's evolution, thereby enriching the interpretive depth of the performance. For instance, the delicate transitions between shapes often mirrored the temple's intricate carvings, bringing to life the ancient stories depicted in stone.

3.2 Refined Analysis of Shape in Environmental Context

A critical aspect of the performance was the dancers' engagement with their surroundings, where their body shapes frequently mirrored the architectural elements of Phanom Rung Temple. This reflection established a profound visual and thematic synergy between the dance and the temple's physical edifice, imbuing the performance with additional symbolic depth. Moreover, the dancers' spatial awareness and manipulation, especially evident in group formations, underscored their adeptness in incorporating the environmental context as an integral part of their performance narrative. This facet was particularly highlighted in how the spatial arrangement of bodies appeared to resonate with the temple's sacred geometry and architectural layout. The dancers' movements often aligned with the temple's directional orientations, creating a harmonious blend of physical and symbolic space.

3.3 Intricate Analysis of Shape in Interpersonal Interactions

The research further delved into the complex dynamics of interpersonal relations among the dancers, as expressed through their body shapes. These relations spanned a spectrum from harmonious, symmetrical arrangements to more dynamic, contrasting forms, each infused with deep narrative and thematic significance. These configurations not only augmented the visual appeal of the performance but also symbolically represented underlying themes such as unity, conflict, and cooperation. The strategic use of negative space between dancers was also a notable expressive component, serving as a medium to convey varied relational nuances such as tension, attraction, or spatial storytelling, thereby adding rich interpretive layers to the performance. The interactions between dancers often mirrored the temple's dualistic themes of balance and opposition, reflecting the cultural narratives of harmony and conflict.

This expansive analysis of the "Shape" component within Laban Movement Analysis offers an in-depth understanding of how the dancers at Phanom Rung Temple harnessed their physical form as powerful instruments of storytelling. Their movements and configurations articulated a sophisticated visual language, intimately intertwined with the temple's cultural and historical narrative. By examining the Shape dimension, the study highlights the dancers' ability to use their bodies to create vivid, dynamic sculptures that resonate with the temple's artistic heritage.

The research underscores the critical role of Shape in dance, emphasizing its capacity to convey complex cultural and emotional narratives. This analysis enhances the understanding of how bodily configurations and movements can be meticulously crafted to reflect and amplify the thematic elements of a performance. The findings demonstrate the potential of dance to serve as a living, breathing extension of static art forms, bridging the past and present through kinetic expression.

In conclusion, this detailed exploration of the Shape dimension within Laban Movement Analysis offers profound insights into how dancers use bodily forms to articulate and enrich the cultural and historical narratives of Phanom Rung Temple. The study underscores the pivotal role of Shape in the choreographic process, illustrating how dancers transform their bodies into living embodiments of artistic and cultural themes. This research makes a significant contribution to the field of dance studies by highlighting the intricate relationship between physical form and expressive potential in performance art. By illuminating the nuanced ways in which dancers engage with their environment, interact with one another, and reflect cultural narratives, this study provides a comprehensive perspective on the role of Shape in dance, thereby enriching the academic discourse on movement analysis and cultural expression.

4. Space

The "Space" dimension, as conceptualized in Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), provides an intricate understanding of the spatial dynamics inherent in human movement. This encompasses elements such as locational nuances of kinetic activities, the scope of spatial interaction, and the sophisticated liaison between the human form and its prevailing environment (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Davies, 2006; Guest, 2005; Laban, 2011). This dimension necessitates an acute examination that traverses both personal and environmental realms, going beyond the mere geospatial orientation of the body. It seeks to unravel the body's nuanced engagements with, and adaptability to, the spatial constituents of its surroundings, thereby deepening our comprehension of human kinesiology.

Informed by these theoretical underpinnings, the investigator pursued a rigorous exploration centered on human kinetics, particularly emphasizing the "Space" dimension. Utilizing the core principles and methodologies of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), the resulting data was systematically parsed into distinct sub-domains. This methodological precision aims to illuminate the integral role of spatial elements in choreographing and interpreting human movement dynamics. Through this comprehensive inquiry, pivotal insights were derived and organized into thematic clusters, each reflecting unique facets of the "Space" dimension as rooted in LMA theory.

4.1 Elevated Analysis of Spatial Planes

4.1.1 Vertical Movements

The study discerned that vertical movements encompass both ascending and descending gestures, symbolizing a connection between the celestial and terrestrial realms. These movements were notably prevalent in segments portraying divine entities or spiritual interventions, representing a confluence of the ethereal and the earthly. Ascending movements often conveyed themes of aspiration, enlightenment, and transcendence, while descending movements suggested grounding, humility, and return to origins. This duality highlighted the dancers' ability to bridge the divine and human experiences, enriching the narrative with layers of symbolic meaning.

4.1.2 Horizontal Movements

Horizontal movements transcended mere lateral gestures, encapsulating a broader sense of community and interconnectivity. Employed in scenes depicting social interactions or cultural rites, these gestures also served to represent the dissemination of narratives across communities and through generations. The expansiveness of horizontal movements symbolized the spread of ideas, traditions, and collective experiences, reinforcing the themes of unity and shared heritage within the performance. The dancers' adept use of space in this plane emphasized the cultural and social bonds integral to the temple's historical narrative.

4.1.3 Sagittal Movements

Movements within the sagittal plane were characterized by their dynamism, incorporating both anterior and posterior motions. These movements were instrumental in depicting the narrative's depth, often symbolizing temporal journeys or the traversal of emotional landscapes. Forward movements suggested progress, exploration, and future aspirations, while backward movements indicated reflection, memory, and reverence for the past. This dynamic use of the sagittal plane added a temporal dimension to the choreography, allowing the dancers to visually articulate the passage of time and emotional transitions.

4.2 Insightful Deliberation on Pathways

4.2.1 Straight Pathways

The deliberate use of linear pathways corresponded with narrative moments necessitating decisiveness or clarity. The intersections of these pathways often symbolized pivotal decision points within the story, enhancing the narrative's complexity. Straight pathways were employed to convey direct actions, clear intentions, and structural coherence within the performance. The clarity and precision of these movements underscored critical moments of the narrative, aligning the dancers' physical trajectories with the storyline's logical progression.

4.2.2 Curved Pathways

The utilization of curved pathways extended beyond aesthetic considerations, reflecting themes of flexibility, adaptability, and the cyclical nature of existence. Their prominence was observed in the portrayal of natural elements and the narrative's introspective segments. Curved pathways suggested fluidity, organic growth, and the non-linear progression of life. These movements allowed the dancers to embody the natural ebb and flow of existence, creating a visual representation of continuity and transformation. The use of curves enriched the choreography with a sense of organic rhythm and cyclical repetition, resonating with the natural and spiritual themes of the temple.

4.2.3 Intricate Correlation with Temple's Architecture

The spatial choreography of the dancers was intimately aligned with the architectural nuances of Phanom Rung Temple. Circular movements around the central sanctuary mirrored the temple's layout, while linear movements along its corridors echoed its structured design. This spatial harmony imbued the performance with symbolic significance, intertwining the dance with the temple's historical and cultural essence. The dancers' movements were carefully choreographed to reflect the temple's sacred geometry, creating a seamless integration of physical space and narrative content. This alignment underscored the dancers' deep connection to the temple's architectural and cultural heritage, enhancing the performance's authenticity and depth.

4.3 Complex Spatial Dynamics Among Dancers

The spatial interplay among the dancers manifested in both symmetrical and asymmetrical formations, each reflective of different thematic aspects. Symmetrical arrangements often symbolized harmony and order, whereas

asymmetrical configurations depicted themes of conflict, imbalance, or transformation. Additionally, the spatial intervals between dancers were expressive of relational dynamics, emotional distances, or closeness, further enriching the narrative. The strategic use of spatial relationships among the dancers added layers of meaning to the performance, conveying themes of unity, tension, and resolution. These configurations not only enhanced the visual appeal of the dance but also deepened the interpretive complexity of the narrative, allowing the audience to engage with the underlying emotional and thematic currents.

This expanded analysis of the "Space" component within Laban Movement Analysis reveals a profound understanding of how the dancers at Phanom Rung Temple utilized spatial dimensions and pathways to narrate a rich mosaic of cultural stories and emotions. The study accentuates the critical role of space in dance—not merely as a physical entity but as a dynamic and expressive medium integral to storytelling and cultural articulation. By examining the nuanced use of vertical, horizontal, and sagittal planes, as well as the deliberate choice of straight and curved pathways, this research underscores the dancers' adeptness in using spatial elements to enhance narrative depth and emotional resonance.

In conclusion, this thorough examination of the Space dimension within Laban Movement Analysis offers deep insights into how dancers utilize spatial elements to articulate and enrich the cultural and historical narratives of Phanom Rung Temple. The study underscores the critical role of space in the choreographic process, demonstrating how dancers can transform spatial dimensions into compelling narrative tools. This research makes a significant contribution to the field of dance studies by emphasizing the intricate relationship between spatial dynamics and expressive potential in performance art. By illuminating the nuanced ways in which dancers engage with their surroundings, interact with each other, and convey cultural narratives, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of space in dance, thereby enriching academic discourse on movement analysis and cultural expression.

Conclusion and Discussion

The research titled "Exploring Iconographic Concepts: Analyzing Body Movements in Creative Dance at Phanom Rung Temple, Thailand" effectively employs Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) to unravel the complexities of creative dance. This scholarly endeavor not only vividly captures the essence of the dance performances but also bridges the conceptual divide between movement analysis and cultural semiotics, thereby advancing an interdisciplinary understanding of dance as a cultural phenomenon.

1. Sophisticated Exploration of Bodily Dynamics

The study's engagement with the Body, via Bartenieff Fundamentals, offers an in-depth analysis of the dancers' engagement with individual body parts, the establishment of their bases of support, and the sequencing of their movements (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Davies, 2006; Laban, 2011). This exploration adeptly highlights the dynamic interplay between the mechanical and expressive aspects of movement. The research delineates how the dancers' kinesiological articulations serve as a conduit for the cultural and historical narratives of the temple, effectively transforming their physicality into dynamic tools for storytelling. The nuanced analysis underscores how bodily mechanics are not just functional but also profoundly expressive, enabling dancers to convey intricate cultural narratives through their movements.

2. Effort and Emotional Nuance

Within the domain of Effort, the investigation delves into the qualitative nuances of movement, encompassing aspects such as Flow, Weight, Space, and Time. This segment of the analysis brings to the fore the emotional and

psychological landscapes navigated by the dancers. The dichotomy between free and bound flow is explored as a reflection of a range of emotional states, from unbridled expressiveness to controlled introspection (Davies, 2006; Hodgson, 2001; Laban, 2011). The research also sheds light on the transitions between light and strong weight, illustrating the dancers' ability to subtly modulate movement intensity in alignment with the narrative's thematic exigencies. Furthermore, the study probes the use of spatial orientation and temporal dynamics in the creation of a multifaceted expressive movement palette, contributing to a richer understanding of the dancers' emotional resonance with the temple's mythos.

3. Shape as a Communicative Device

The aspect of Shape is scrutinized with meticulous precision, emphasizing the dancers' ability to adapt their bodily forms in response to various stimuli and environmental contexts (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Jordan, 2011; Maletic, 2010; Moore, 2009). The study accentuates how these forms resonate with and mirror the architectural splendor of Phanom Rung Temple, as well as reflect the interpersonal dynamics within the dance. This analytical section elucidates the dancers' proficiency in molding their physical forms into expressive symbols, effectively capturing a wide array of emotions and narratives, from the nuances of personal experience to the intricacies of collective history. The dancers' ability to transform their shapes in response to the temple's environment underscores their deep engagement with the space, making their movements an extension of the temple's cultural essence.

4. Spatial Dynamics and Narrative Integration

The exploration of Space goes beyond the mere physicality of movement, examining how dancers navigate and employ the vertical, horizontal, and sagittal planes, and their pathways through space (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Nagrin, 2001). This analysis reveals how the dancers' choreography is in synchrony with the temple's spatial architecture, thus creating a visual narrative that mirrors the temple's structural elegance and historical grandeur. The study provides detailed insights into how these spatial dynamics augment the narrative, with each movement and pathway adding symbolic depth to the performance. The careful alignment of movements with the temple's spatial dimensions not only enhances the aesthetic quality of the performance but also embeds the dance within the cultural and historical context of Phanom Rung Temple.

This comprehensive study, anchored in the framework of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), provides an in-depth exploration of the dance performances at Phanom Rung Temple. It meticulously examines how the fundamental components of LMA—Body, Effort, Shape, and Space—serve not only as indicators of technical skill but also as powerful conduits for expressing the dancers' deep engagement with the temple's rich cultural and historical legacy. This research is a significant contribution to the fields of dance anthropology and movement studies, advancing our understanding of dance as a vital medium for cultural expression and the preservation of narrative.

The findings of this study offer profound insights into the intricate relationship between dance and cultural identity, thereby enriching academic discourse on the subject. Through meticulous analysis, the research illustrates how dance functions as a living archive of cultural memory, embodying and transmitting the layered history of Phanom Rung Temple. This perspective aligns with contemporary cultural studies theories that view performance as a dynamic and evolving repository of communal identity and historical consciousness.

The application of LMA in this study not only facilitates a nuanced interpretation of the dance performances but also provides a robust methodological framework for future research at the intersection of dance, culture, and history. LMA's capacity to translate the ephemeral nature of dance into a structured analysis of movement patterns allows for a

deeper understanding of how cultural narratives are physically manifested and communicated through dance. This study, therefore, contributes to the academic field by offering a model for analyzing the cultural significance of dance performances, while also underscoring the importance of dance as a medium for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage.

Furthermore, this research highlights dance's role as a form of cultural diplomacy, where the performances at Phanom Rung Temple transcend local or regional boundaries to engage in a broader dialogue on cultural representation and identity in a globalized world. The dancers' movements, deeply rooted in centuries-old traditions, resonate with contemporary audiences, thereby bridging historical narratives with modern interpretations. This aspect of the study aligns with current academic trends that emphasize the global implications of localized cultural practices and their potential to contribute to international cultural discourse.

In conclusion, this study exemplifies how dance, when viewed through the lens of LMA, can be understood as both a technical discipline and a rich cultural practice that embodies and perpetuates cultural narratives. The integration of theoretical analysis with practical application offers a comprehensive model for future studies, highlighting the significance of movement as a crucial element in the cultural and historical continuum. The research presented here not only deepens our understanding of the dance performances at Phanom Rung Temple but also sets a benchmark for how such performances can be studied and appreciated within the broader context of cultural heritage and academic scholarship.

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