

A Study of Family Tragedy in Modern Drama Based on Sociological Analysis

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Abstract: With the long-term development of modern drama, more and more attention has been paid to family problems. Some modern dramas based on family tragedies have attracted more attention. In some modern analytical methods, sociological analysis has been applied in many analytical fields. In view of this, this paper elaborates the relevant theories of sociological analysis and its application in modern drama represented by family tragedy. It also focuses on the family tragedy in modern drama. This paper makes a deep analysis of the creative forms of family tragedy in modern drama from three aspects: the singing of the old-fashioned family, family problems and family disintegration and alienation of human beings. It is of great significance for modern theatre to use social analysis method to make modern theatre develop and perfect continuously and create more popular works.

1. Research Background

1.1 Literature review

Gong Yuanlei believed in 2018 that in modern drama, there are many excellent works with family background. This kind of drama works are mainly devoted to discussing the occurrence and change of family contradictions under the background of the times. And the relationship between family members. It reflects the social problems and social relations under the background of that time. It also focuses on three American dramatists' dramatic works of family tragedy, which convey more typical social significance (Gong, 2018). Li Gang and others analyzed *Lifelong Events* in 2018, which is not a modern drama. And through the recommendation of Chinese translators and overseas literary scholars. Seeking the return and development of Chinese modern drama in the world. Compared with fiction and poetry, the number of Chinese modern drama is very limited. But its charm and development of Chinese literature can be called "hegemony". Especially through the efforts of the new generation of Chinese dramatists, it not only lays a foundation for the evaluation of the development of Chinese modern drama. It also made an important contribution to the use of Chinese elements in foreign modern drama (Li and Xie, 2018). In 2017, Niu Weina believed that drama in different countries has different characteristics and aesthetic standards. It is obviously very unreasonable for Chinese drama to be judged by the Western drama model. If we compare Chinese drama with ancient Greek tragic drama, Chinese drama has its own unique character and characteristics in terms of aesthetic standards. Through the analysis of ancient tragedies in Chinese drama, this paper further discusses its influence on modern Chinese drama (Niu, 2017). In 2017, Li Haiping believed that modern drama is a modern school in drama art. It is also a unique theatrical art that combines various radical ideas, rebellious spirit and advanced consciousness. In modern literature and art, it is a representative art trend of thought. This theory was put forward by German literary theorists through the study of modern drama. This is of great significance to the development of modern drama and the impact of people's lives (Li, 2018). In 2018, Zhu Jie studied the American one-act play *Trivial Things*, which reflects the social situation in the United States from the 19th to the 20th century. The play also mainly reflects the distinction between the private and public spheres, the vulnerability of women in their family status from the perspective of women, and the struggle against marriage despite the threat of violence from their husbands. Through the analysis of the social roots of the heroine's tragedy, this play shows the audience the social status of women in the family at that time and the redemption behind domestic violence (Zhu, 2018).

1.2 Purpose of research

The descriptions of family problems appeared very early in the drama. The earliest descriptions were in Agamemnon and King Oedipus. After a long period of development, playwrights began to pay more attention to the description and discussion of family tragedies. From an ethical point of view, family is the most problematic link in ethics and morality. Once love goes beyond the natural state, it will inevitably lead to tragedy. The development of contemporary drama is to focus on social issues, and constantly produce some critical works with characteristics of the times (Zhou, 2018). This paper mainly discusses the family tragedy in modern drama under the background of sociological analysis. Combining three American modern dramas, this paper focuses on the related issues in family tragedy. It presents and explores family problems in modern society. Further response to the reality of human nature, to express the playwright's understanding of human nature, the refinement of life observation. In response to social problems, modern drama will continue to develop and grow.

2. Overview of related theories

2.1 Analytical methods of sociology

The so-called sociology is to study the relationship and behavior between people and society through systematic methods. It originated in the early 19th century and evolved from the category of philosophy. The research methods of sociology are based on sociology. The study of key issues should be carried out in conjunction with sociology. This research method will mainly involve the scientific quantitative demonstration method. And the relationship between them, together developed into a set of sociological knowledge to study various social activities. Through sociological analysis methods to solve the relevant problems in human society, and benefit human society. Through the relevant fields of sociological research, it includes not only advanced social behavior and human behavior. Even in the field of social structure and system, there are also key areas in general political economy, psychology, history and culture (Ji, 2017).

Sociological research methods also have a wide range of subjects. It mainly provides assistant means for relevant research through the objects of social stratum, population flow, religious affairs, laws and regulations, etc. Specific research methods are mainly quantitative research methods. In the long-term evolution and development of human beings, the field of activity is influenced by social structure and individual behavior. Therefore, with the continuous development of society, more and more sociology will be used to further study other fields. For example, military, medical, internet, and even scientific knowledge have a key impact on human development. In addition, the application scope of social science analysis method is expanding. Since the middle of last century, research has been carried out on language, literature and culture. An analytical method with philosophical thinking has been formed (Zhang, 2017).

2.2 The application of theatre sociology

The study of drama through social analysis has long existed in the development of world drama, which can be said to be a relatively traditional method. From Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece to Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot in the eighteenth century, they all studied the relationship between art and society. These early-rising studies are still in a one-sided and scattered stage, and do not form a system, but lay the foundation for later research and development. In 1810, Madame de SDAR published the important German wheel. This is a historical document in the study of Sociology of literature and art. It is also a sign that the Western Sociological Analysis art has begun to form a systematic system. Since then, some western scholars in the field of art began to study the related fields with sociological analysis, and carried out rich discussions and studies from different angles, levels and sides. It has formed various theoretical systems of literary sociology (Lin and Luo, 2017).

The application of sociological theoretical analysis in China also appeared very early. After development and improvement, it has now become one of the important methods for literary and

artistic circles to study. This method not only combines the relevant Marxist philosophical theory, but also is an effective dissemination of Chinese elements. Scholars in literary and artistic circles study literature and art as a social phenomenon. Through the use of sociological analysis to analyze the close relationship between literature and art and society, to form a complete research system. On the one hand, this research method should pay attention to the relationship between literature and art and social ideology, on the other hand, it can also explore the origin and constraints of the development of literature and art. In the course of its development, this research method can better integrate with literary and artistic research by constantly overcoming its own limitations (Duan, 2017).

3. Family Tragedy in Modern Drama Based on Sociological Analysis

3.1 The old style family singing under sociological analysis

Through sociological analysis of Williams' *Glass Zoo in Tennessee*, this paper explores the tragedy of the old family in modern drama. This play mainly describes the early 20th century, the United States is in the Great Depression, Winfield, a typical Southern family before the collapse of the plantation economy, the family has undergone a series of tremendous changes. In the family, although seemingly the family loves each other, the mother is next to the children, the sister thinks about the mother and brother, while the brother also cares about the mother and sister. But they did not find that the mother's love for the children was actually hurting them, not giving them more care from the heart, but constantly passing on their worries and discontents to the children. Under the pressure of the family, the younger brother finally chose to go away with his father. They supported each other and tore each other under the cruel first try.

In the special historical environment at that time, the departure of father became the beginning of family tragedy. Father has no sense of responsibility, not to mention fulfilling his obligations to the family, is the whole family into chaos. And the mother did not care about the children's psychological state, just according to their own ideas to interfere in the children's lives. In the end, the son couldn't stand such an environment. He chose to follow his father and did not fulfill his obligations as a son. Through the description of these low-level social figures, under the impact of the social environment at that time, they were unwilling to assume responsibility and abandoned their responsibilities in family ethics, which ultimately led to the final bleak and despair. Through the description of family tragedy, the author expresses that in the post-industrial era, people still live according to the traditional way of life and thinking mode, resulting in family tragedy. It also criticizes the collapse of traditional culture under pragmatism with realistic methods.

3.2 Problem family in sociological analysis

Through sociological analysis of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, to express the tragedy of the small family in the context of the era. Through the story after World War II, people's pursuit of the American Dream reached the point of madness. Willie, the hero of the story, is a salesman. He always believed that he could succeed, but the reality hit him again and again. Since his ambition could not be realized, he placed all hope on his son, but he did not pay attention to his son's achievements and character, but encouraged him to make achievements in his own industry. Reality once again gave Willie a blow, the failure of his son's education, but also let his son become the reality of another himself. In the social environment at that time, the hero's self-contradiction continued and passed on to the next generation in an attempt to control the lives of family members by himself. But what the eldest son hoped for was a carefree life, which was incompatible with the social environment at that time. Under the influence of his father, the youngest son lost himself and fell into the abyss of degeneration.

Through the description of this family, the author expresses the disintegration of a person's personal dignity from reality, which can eventually lead to the tragedy of the whole family. Although Willie eventually committed suicide for the insurance money, he also disguised himself from self-contradiction. Not only did he become a tragedy of life himself, but he also disjoined his

two sons from society and could not find an outlet for their liberation. Through this work, the author expresses that in the contemporary environment, he was full of such little people as Willie. Under the wrong guidance of the American dream, the ultimate loss of self is the root cause of family tragedy. From this play, we can find that the characters in the play are very similar to their present situation. The author did not go through too much artistic processing, but let the characters choose their destiny according to their own logic. As a result, the audience will find themselves in the play. The tragedy of a character is his own tragedy. Family contradictions also exist.

3.3 Family disintegration and human alienation under sociological analysis

Through sociological analysis, Eugene O'Neill's *Long Journey into the Night* expresses his loneliness under the influence of the American Dream. The work depicts the life of the Tyrone family, although the surface of harmony is real but the undercurrent surges. They all love each other, but everyone is isolated. The story mainly describes what happened to a family in a day, the conflicts that happened, and finally collapsed. Tyrone married Mary, a fairly nun, who lived a busy life, leading to his wife living in despair and drug addiction all day. The eldest son also had a bad life. He ate, drank and played all day long. The youngest son became negative under the influence of his brother, and eventually became seriously ill. From the turntable of a family, we can find that the cause of the tragedy is the love in the family. They will not give up themselves for others or be influenced by others because of love. Finally, it leads to endless quarrels and misunderstandings, love and hate intertwined, mutual harm, although there is a form of family, but everyone is lonely. From this play, we can find that the development of capitalism will inevitably lead to the alienation of human beings and lead a machine-like life without spiritual support.

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