

Research on the Artistic Value of the Romance Drama of Literators and Prostitutes in the Yuan Dynasty

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Abstract: Romance drama, one of the most important types of Yuan opera, which describes the love of literators and prostitutes, has distinctive meanings and art value. Especially on the point of aesthetic tropism, figures of prostitutes and structure of plots, this kind of plays shows these characteristics—the aesthetic interests of being refined in vulgarism, female images that differ from the preceding dynasties and the close combination between structures and plots.

1. Introduction

In the Yuan opera which is called by Wang Guowei "literature of the generation"^[1], the drama about prostitutes is an important vein. There is a section of "firework beauty" in Zhu Quan's *Taihe Sound Spectrum*, and the drama of literators falling in love with prostitutes (the following referred to as "shiji opera") is undoubtedly the highlight of "firework beauty". From the perspective of quantity, according to the *Selection of Yuan Operas* written by Jinshu Zang, and *Compilation Outside the Selection of Yuan Operas* written by Shusen Sui, there are 11 kinds of shiji opera plays in the strict sense of inheriting the current script: two kinds of Guan Hanqing: *Xie Tian Xiang* and *The Gold Line Pool*; Ma Zhiyuan: *Blue Shirt Tears*; One kind of Shi Junbao: *QuJiang Pool*; a kind of Wu Hanchen: *JadePot Spring*; Zhang Shouqing: *Red Pear Flower*; there are two kinds of Qiaoji: *Yangzhou Dream* and *The Marriage between Two Generations*. Jia Zhongming: *To the Jade Comb*; another two kinds of anons: *The Pavilion of Flowers* and *The Dream of a Cloud Window*. The content of these works is roughly that literators and prostitutes fall in love with each other, due to the intervention and interference of various external forces, the literators and prostitutes were forced to temporarily separate, but both sides remained faithful. Finally, the literators took the imperial examination and was admitted. This paper attempts to explore the artistic value of this type of drama, and further analyzes its aesthetic orientation, images of prostitutes, and plot structure.

2. Aesthetic orientation of elegance in vulgarity

Danner, a French thinker, once said, "to understand a work of art, an artist, a group of artists, we must correctly visualize the spirit and customs of the time to which they belong. "This is the final interpretation of the artwork and the basic reason for determining everything. "^[2] The aesthetic orientation of art is always inevitably marked by the times. The analysis of the aesthetic orientation of the gentry cannot leave the Yuan Dynasty society. The Yuan Dynasty is the first in China's history to be ruled by ethnic minorities. In the dynasty, the shining spears and armored horses of the Mongolian army broke through not only the mountains and rivers of the Central Plains, but also the major changes in literature. The traditional Chinese poetry style has been broken since the poems of the three hundred poems. Losing the practical effect of the Confucian scholars' meritorious deeds, the Confucian imperial examinations in the Yuan Dynasty were hopeless and they had to hide in the hurdles after the ideals of standing, ruling the country and the world, and then looking for personal values in the creation of folk popular drama. The abnormal prosperity of the urban economy in the Yuan Dynasty and the growth of the ranks of the citizens have accelerated the pace of the downward movement of literature. Therefore, the popular literature based on opera and novels has created a new era of literature. The gentry's opera is in such a background. On the one hand, its

secularized love theme and twists and turns of love storyline stimulate the entertainment consumption needs of the public class; on the other hand, elegant words and the genius relationship between the gifted scholars and beautiful ladies have made it the best endorsement for the frustrated literati to dispel their anger and express themselves. Two different aesthetic objects and aesthetic needs determine the elegant aesthetic orientation of this theme. So, where is the gentry's custom, and where is it?

First of all, the first is the vulgarity of the subject matter. As the Song and Yuan dynasty literature continues to move down, literary works with the theme of love and love appear in large numbers. For example, in the existing Yuan poetic drama, love and marriage dramas account for nearly one-third. The theme of love is in line with the reality of the civilian class, the secularized aesthetic taste, the gentry relationship can better satisfy the psychology of the public to pry into the life of the prostitute, and the twists and turns of the love story between the scholars and the prostitutes are also delighted by the audience. Second is the ideology of civilians. As the civil society in the Yuan Dynasty grew stronger, some of their ideologies different from traditional moral concepts had an impact on literature and art, and gentry operas were thus injected with more social significance, which reflected in the drama for the great strengthening and improvement of the status of women, the figure of prostitutes is also characterized by the intelligence of a civilian woman who is smart, vixenish, bold, kind and passionate.

The vulgar is external and superficial, while elegance is internal and deep-seated. The resentment and dissatisfaction of the literati in the Yuan Dynasty often turned into a dream of their own ideals in the Yuan opera. This ideality shows in two points: the first is the "idealized" color of the figure of the prostitute. The figure of the prostitute in the gentry of the Yuan Dynasty is the psychology of the literary ideals after the projection of the ideals of the literati or their official career make up. The prostitutes in the play defended the Confucian scholars when they were blinded and mocked. They appreciated the talents of the scholars and were loyal to them. These situations, which are impossible in reality, occur in the works and are the sustenance of the author's beautiful ideals. The second is the happy ending, the ending of the reunion is the ideal expression of hope in the desperate literati of the Yuan Dynasty. It casts the writer's love ideal and social ideal, with the literati venting his heart after self-consideration of the intellectuals. Emotional anger. In addition, elegance also expresses a large and elegant lyrics in the drama. The love of the niece and the lover is best suited to describe with such lyrics, and this is an excellent choice for the literati to show his talents, especially in the middle of the Yuan Dynasty. After the transformation, with the representative of Qiao Ji's "Yangzhou Dream" and "The Marriage of the Two Worlds", the theme of the struggle against rebellion in the play was obviously faded, the theme of the literati's romantic self-reward was highlighted, the lyrics were beautiful, and the gentry's love drama was further refined.

3. The self-consciousness and the female consciousness highlight the image of the prostitute

3.1 Highlighting self-awareness

In the gentry, the prostitutes themselves are not self-sufficient. On the contrary, they are struggling to maintain their high morality in a dirty environment. The Yuan opera writers see the bright spot, that is, there has spiritual value in the inner heart.

3.1.1 Strong self-esteem to be a human being.

Du Ruiniang and Xie Tianxiang, who are the authors of Guan Hanqing's opera "Miscellaneous Class Head". Du Ruiniang, who is so determined and resolute and arrogant. She is a "door of injustice", and a feeling of "depreciation is low" has a strong sense of self-esteem. She showed pride and self-respect in the face of the apology of Han Fuchen, even her lover. The character of Xie Tianxiang, though not as hot as Du Ruiniang, also showed the dignity of human. She did not admire the powerful, when Qian Dayin proposed to accept her as a concubine, she cleverly declined, in the face of the power of power, she not only did not yield, but also witty for their own defense, as a

reflection of self-esteem.

3.1.2 None of the prostitutes in the play are unwilling to go down.

They actively seek their own liberation and desire to jump out of the sea of fireworks and fire to restore their personal freedom and lead a normal life. The only life goal that Xie Xianxiang pursues: "how to eliminate the status of being a prostitute, abandon the base and follow the good", and "be a free man"; Du Ruiniang worried about "old death in the dust", to "take leave of Mingke lane, to marry Han adjutant"; Pipa girl and Bai Lutian meet again, resolutely left the merchant and jumped out of the bitter sea; Gu Yuxiang hates "temptress moon door"... All kinds of Shouting, are only to fight for their own legitimate rights as people.

3.2 Highlighting of female consciousness

This point focuses on the prostitute's explicit view of love. As women, they yearn for genuine affection, and often fall in love at first sight with a talented and good-looking Confucian. They encouraged them to seek merit and fame, and often took the initiative in pursuing love and freedom. He Lianlian is a typical character in the hundred flowers pavilion. He Lianlian and Wang Huan fell in love at first sight in the flower pavilion during the Qingming festival. Since then, she embarked on the tortuous road of pursuing love. She always showed her initiative and enterprising attitude. First, she invited him to drink wine and write poems in the pavilion. She urged him to seek fame, and then told him the crime of corruption of Gao Changshan and made plans for the future. It can be considered reasonable. In the end, everything worked out according to her plan. Wang Huan gained fame, Gao Changshan was convicted, and the sergeants and prostitutes were reunited. In the peony pavilion of Tang Xianzu in Ming dynasty, Du Liniang's youth sprouted when she visited the back garden of hundred flowers in spring. This kind of self-consciousness is no longer spontaneous, but a kind of self-consciousness, and the sexual consciousness of women has been highlighted, all of which were developed on the basis of opera in Yuan dynasty.

4. The combination of the point-line structure and the romantic story of the prostitutes

According to the definition of Gestalt psychology aesthetics, the drama structure is a dynamic and orderly systematic regulation and complete construction of the drama plot. In short, the dramatic structure is an artistic treatment of the whole plot and its movement process. It can be seen that there is a natural connection between the dramatic structure and the plot. The relationship and combination of the two will have an important impact on the aesthetic effect of the aesthetic subject.

4.1 About the point-line structure

“The point-line combination is a common aesthetic form of Chinese traditional art.”^[3] The point-line structure refers to a scene in which a main line runs through, and a field with different capacities is arranged around the main line to form a drama structure of a vertically developed point-line combined pattern. This kind of structure emphasizes the penetration of the main plot. Not only does the whole drama run through a main line, but also does each scene. In the development of the plot, the main line of the whole drama is reflected in the central events of each play. The central events of each play is regulated and restricted by the main line of the whole play. The greatest advantage of this structure is that it expresses a story completely, and the context is clear but it is not flat and straightforward.

4.2 The combination of the point-line structure and the romantic story of the prostitutes

First, the script form of Yuan opera, which is four folds and one wedge is easy to form a pattern of point-line combination. Each play in the Yuan opera can be named by its content. Each play has its main content and key events, which constitute the main points on the main clue. These events are centered on the main line and expand according to the main line. The point-line structure is actually regarded as the authenticity of the script structure by the Yuan opera writers, almost all Yuan opera

uses this structure, so does the love story of prostitutes. The discussion of the structure of Li Yu in the Qing Dynasty was carried out on the basis of summing up the creation of the Yuan people. The so-called "one line through the whole", "straightforward like a Chinese parasol (tree)and bamboo", "stick to the one".^[4]Second, the point-line structure is the best way to show the complete story plot, and the love story of prostitutes is one of the representatives. Thirdly, the love between scholars and courtesans, twists and turns of the joys and sorrows provide the necessary "points" and "lines" for the point-line structure of the opera.

4.3 For the audience

The clarity of the plot line and twists and turns of the story are the national forms with Chinese style welcomed by the audience. The main line of the play is clear, and the development of the love story guides the audience like a conductor, making it easy for them to understand. However, the audience does not know about the specific development of the plot, such as how to meet, how to be separated by external forces, how to fight and how to get together. The ups and downs of the plot can attract the audience's attention. It can be seen that the combination of point and line structure and the plot of the play meet the requirements of audience and is accepted and loved by them.

To sum up, compared with other types of Zaju in the yuan dynasty, drama of the love between scholars and courtesans has its unique artistic characteristics in terms of aesthetic orientation, characterization and plot structure. The brilliance of Zaju of yuan is not in which writer, which work or which type, but the achievement of various works' thought and art contributed to the formation of "literature of the generation". Although shisha opera is only a small part of the yuan drama, its ideological and artistic light is also the components of the yuan drama's boundless radiance. On the basis of opera in the yuan dynasty, the theme of shisha's love continued to develop and inject new artistic vitality. As the starting point of the drama, ideological and artistic features of shisha opera were inherited and developed by later generations, and the legend of the peach blossom fan in the Qing dynasty reached its peak.

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