

A Study on the Influence of Chinese and Western Culture on Tian Han's Drama Creation Turn

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Abstract: *Tian Han, a well-known name in Chinese history, is a unique and legendary great dramatist and poet. His outstanding achievements are closely related to his extraordinary artistic talent and personality, as well as his experience of joining the young Chinese Society in his youth. His view of drama not only integrates the traditional Chinese opera idea, but also is influenced by western romanticism and realism. It can be said that in these two completely different cultural forms, Tian Han learned from others and was compatible with Chinese and Western cultures, forming a set of his own unique drama view and drama creation style. In terms of ideology, Tian Han was mainly influenced by the utopian socialism and democracy in the Institute, as well as by nationalism and reformism, and later turned to communism. The experience of the Young China Society fostered Tian Han's character of being true, honest and chivalrous. However, learning the loose organization and management, to a certain extent, Wang aggravated Tian Han's character of being independent of the organization and going his own way. Combine the innovative spirit of art with the actual stage expression to form its own unique aesthetic personality and artistic style.*

Keywords: *Tian Han; Chinese and Western culture; Theatre; Creative turn*

1. Introduction

Tian Han is an outstanding modern playwright and the founder of the revolutionary drama movement. Tian Han is influenced by European, American and Japanese writers in many ways, and his creative ideas are very complex, unlike what many critics say, he is simply "sad", "decadent", "empty" and "aestheticism" [1]. At the end of the 1920s, he began to accept the influence of revolutionary literature in his persistent and diligent artistic practice, and there was a "turn" in his creative ideas and artistic style [2]. Observe and judge life with more conscious and profound rational consciousness, expose and criticize the darkness of society, and show the living appearance, awakening and resistance of all living beings who are "below the horizontal line". Because he was in a turbulent era and society, he had to have a sad, decadent shadow, and he could not but accept the temptation of Wilde and Metlinck's ideas; Because he was born in a poor peasant family and had strong resistance, he had to accept the influence of Schiller, Ibsen and Tolstoy [3]. The formation of Tian Han's drama concept not only blends the traditional Chinese drama concept, but also is influenced by western romanticism and realism. It can be said that in these two completely different cultural forms, Tian Han learned from others and was compatible with China and the West, which laid a good foundation for the formation of drama concept and drama creation in the future. Tian Han's achievements in literature, especially in drama, have been extensively studied in academic circles [4]. However, the influence of Chinese and western cultures on the formation and creation of Tian Han's drama is seldom systematically analyzed in the sense that the historical concept of "period" is consistent with the historical concept of "construction form" [5].

In the new century, the study of Tian Han ushered in a new spring, and our research also has new historical significance: First of all, as a mirror of the development of modern Chinese drama, Tian Han's thought is rich and unique, and his thought and drama contain rich new factors leading to the future, which is of great significance in the history of modern Chinese literature, especially in the history of modern Chinese drama, and is worthy of serious treatment by researchers [6]. Tian Han's life in Japan was an important period for the development of his thoughts. He was influenced by various Japanese thoughts at that time, but he selectively absorbed some of these ideological factors and created his plays under the influence of these ideological factors. The exploration of the influence of heterogeneous Japanese culture on Tian Han during his time in Japan helps us understand the reason why Tian Han has no regrets about his pursuit of drama in his life [7]. We can show new value and

significance by studying the Japanese factors in Tian Han's ideology and art. Thirdly, in the context of the increasingly classic study of modern Chinese literature, it is both important and feasible to focus on playwrights like Tian Han who can support a world [8].

Based on this, this paper attempts to explore Tian Han's thoughts on drama creation in various periods, and show how he was determined to reform the old dramas under the influence of Chinese and western cultures, and combined the innovative spirit of art with the actual stage expression to form his own unique aesthetic personality and artistic style. Therefore, there are two tendencies in Tian Han's early works: romanticism and realism. Not all of Tian Han's early works are full of sadness, decadence and aestheticism. "His sadness is mixed with the voice of resistance, and it is a paper seal containing the fire of resistance".

2. The Embodiment of Tian Han's Drama View in Drama Creation

2.1. Early drama creation

Tian Han's early creation has not absorbed a large amount of western culture, and its advanced nature is mainly reflected in the elimination and transformation of feudal backward elements in traditional dramas. His dramas such as *Xin Jiao Zi*, *New Peach Blossom Fan*, *Lin Chong*, etc., borrow ancient times to satirize the present, endow people's familiar historical figures with new personalities and ideas, and let these ancient costume figures make a cutting-edge sound, criticize the disadvantages of the times, and give immediate inspiration to modern audiences. This technique of "borrowing old songs to fill in new words" is more attractive and acceptable to traditional audiences who are not yet fully equipped to appreciate new dramas [9]. Looking at the history of Chinese and western drama, Chinese drama started later than that of western drama, and from the exploration period to the mature period symbolized by Cao Yu, the development period took a short time [10]. When it comes to Chinese drama, the first thing I think of may be Cao Yu in his mature period, or Hong Shen, the proponent of the name of "drama". From a macro point of view, drama is an art as well as a culture. It is the expression of the essence of human nature. While culture does not belong to the nature itself, the key lies in a kind of processing, transformation and participation with people. It must show human nature to achieve the goal of transforming the world. The word "situation" first appeared in enlightenment.

In the 18th century, Diderot proposed that the formation of character is inseparable from the surrounding environment. Hegel believes that "situation" is the plot endowed with conflict and the relationship between characters generated by the plot in the conflict. Combining the two viewpoints, "situation" performance includes at least three factors: (1) Character activities are restricted by the environment; (2) Specific events affecting the characters; (3) The conflict between the feud relationship in *Romeo and Juliet* and the couple's free love relationship shows that the change of the character's relationship is easy to construct the conflict. These three factors infiltrate and influence each other. Feudal ethics is the core of China's feudal society. It not only frames the political system politically, but also stipulates everyone's code of conduct from daily life, which is deeply rooted in people's values. When ethics and morality meet each other, the spiritual connotation of drama works has changed. This change is also a complaint against the inhibition of human nature in ethics. The characters written in *Death of a Famous Brand* are not the real Hongsheng Liu in history. This is a dramatic and artistically famous story. His tragedy lies in the fact that the "beauty" he represents-the spirit of artistic creation-is fundamentally opposed to the ugly reality. The more persistent he is in his pursuit of "beauty", the deeper the root of his tragedy grows. Liu Zhensheng's tragedy is the tragedy of "beauty" and the tragedy of art. Finally, Liu Fengxian found his conscience and asked for "a chance to repent", where Tian Han's hope was pinned. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that as a radical revolutionary democratic writer rooted in Chinese society in the 1920s when the new-democratic revolution was in the ascendant, he could never become an authentic aesthete. Although Tian Han felt the ugliness of the real society very painfully, although he was disappointed and sad, he never despaired of it and became decadent because of it. Instead, he wanted to shine out these ugliness with the light of beauty, heal the social defects and rebuild the beautiful world.

2.2. Creation during the Anti-Japanese War

After the outbreak of War of Resistance against Japan, the Japanese imperialist aggression and the historical mission of national salvation made the spiritual tradition of the enlightenment of the May 4th

Movement conform to the realistic theme of national liberation, and the national consciousness was highlighted unprecedentedly. Tian Han took part in the struggle with his pen in the bonfire of War of Resistance against Japan, wrote march of the volunteers and adapted *The True Story of A Q*, with the aim of inspiring people to fight for the independence and freedom of the nation. In 1938, Tian Han, who returned to Changsha, Hunan Province, did two things with fervent patriotism. First, he founded the *Anti-Japanese War Daily* under very difficult conditions. The second is to start the anti-Japanese drama activities, especially to carry out reforms in the old drama circles. Tian Han also organized xiang opera artists from Changsha and Pingju artists who came to Hunan with the Third Hall to hold "wartime workshops". He taught in person, instilled anti-Japanese war thoughts, taught art theory, cleared away the old habits of pear gardens, and changed the life style of old artists. Tian Han's enthusiasm, which was inspired by the May 4th Movement, gradually cooled down in the reality of suffering. The grim reality makes Tian Han have to abandon his neo-romantic thoughts and works soon. During this period, drama and politics were naturally and closely combined, which actually reflected the awakening of Tian Han's national cultural mentality. In the works of this period, Tian Han carried forward the national spirit of drama and highlighted the practical role of historical drama. And advocated that the opera art which is easily accepted by the general public should be used as a weapon to publicize the anti-Japanese war and save the nation. The main line of resisting Japan and saving the nation is closely combined with the love life of Gao and Mei, which enriches and strengthens the theme.

As a cultural product at a certain stage, opera follows the Confucian ideology and philosophical considerations, carries the social function of enlightenment, and strives to achieve the highest proposition of "self-cultivation, family harmony, national governance, and world peace". Deeply influenced by Confucianism, Tian Han also created works. He poured ideas into his works and the characters jumped on paper, which made the main body of the works more and more magnificent. Tian Han learned not only from the excellent thinkers of the past, but also from the idea of "people are the most important" advocated by advanced intellectuals. In short, it is about caring for the people and caring for the common people. Tian Han's thought that "every man is responsible for the rise and fall of the country" has long been deeply rooted in his mind. His thought can be seen from his concern about the social situation when he was studying and his act of creating *New Teachings*. The influence of childhood traditional culture has been explained and developed to the greatest extent here.

3. An Analysis of Tian Han's Early Drama Creation under the Influence of Tradition

3.1. The positive evolution of the overall drama culture in the world

From the primitive song and dance to the formation of Southern Opera, the views gradually accepted by the public are marked by the formation of Southern Opera in Song Dynasty, which is regarded as the emergence of mature Chinese operas. The aliases of Southern Opera include Wenzhou Zaju, Yongjia Zaju, etc., all of which come from the folk. This example shows that Southern Opera is closely linked with folk art, and scholars in the past were dismissive of this art form. Different from other scholars, Xu Wei has a strong interest in Southern Opera, and he has written a book "Narration of Southern Ci", which has become a monograph that can't be ignored by people to study Southern Opera. Tian Han's early dramatic works did contain many artistic elements such as romanticism and sentimentalism. This artistic style is inseparable from Tian Han's eclecticism of foreign literary thoughts and styles. Tian Han expressed deep admiration for the works of romantic poets Whitman and Heine, aestheticism writer Oscar Wilde, symbolism writers Maeterlinck and Baudelaire, and left some traces of romanticism, aestheticism and sentimentalism in his early dramas. Tian Han once said in the article "How I Go to the Literary Road of the Party" that "at a certain stage in Tokyo, I almost went astray by aestheticism and decadence". But after all, I am a conscientious Chinese child born in a poor peasant family. I can't help but wake up and cheer up in front of the deep suffering and national crisis of the motherland people under the dual oppression of feudalism and imperialism. Because the writers of these plays generally lack school education and know little about the rhythm of poetry, this has aroused public dissatisfaction. Those who accept it affirm that it gives different life to the opera style. The addition of singing and dancing and the presentation of folk dramas resonate with the public. Sincere, simple and close to life ingenuity subverts the elegant aesthetic tradition of Kunqu Opera, makes up for the vacancy of Kunqu Opera on the inner aesthetic psychology of ordinary people, and shows a fresh and exciting artistic charm. The development of human art is always accompanied by the development of human society.

The change of aesthetic consciousness of opera shows a process from simple to complex, and the artistic expression and material form are gradually enriched, from simple adaptation to aesthetic level.

When talking about the narrative structure of Chinese classical drama, we need to talk about the narrative tradition of historical biography first. Historical narration strictly requires time as the scale, and shows distinct linear characteristics in turn. The straight narrative in Yuan Dynasty Zaju supported the whole structure of the whole drama, and in the subsequent evolution process, the legends of Ming and Qing Dynasties derived rich variations based on tradition. Linear narration is first used in historical records. Historians stand in the center of the historical stage, so they need to keep an objective and rational attitude towards historical events of great significance. It will be clear and definite to record them according to the natural sequence of the whole events. As shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Illustration of Tian Han Opera Works

The integrity of the characters lies not only in the stereotype of their appearance, but also in the real and interesting records of specific events. This convenient and ingenious way has gradually formed a distinctive mark. As for the legendary dramas of Ming and Qing Dynasties, "it gave birth to the plot-centered artistic conception of literati legends." Summed up the narrative structure suitable for complex plots, and the double-line parallel style and mesh cross style make the overall artistic effect of the drama more substantial. In the end, it can be concluded that the efforts made by historical biography literature in narrative structure have provided a sample and reference direction for legendary operas to a certain extent.

3.2. Sentimentality of emotional tone

From 1937 to 1948, Tian Han's drama theme was basically centered on the idea of resisting Japan and saving the nation. Because of the social reality at that time, Tian Han was prompted to think deeply about the problem of literature nationalization. However, one of the plays, "A Line of Beauty", is the most successful and sensational one since Tian Han began his career in drama. The play premiered in Wuxi on March 9, 1947, with 26 performances in a row, and the venues were full. Since April 24, it has been performed again in Shanghai, with more than 50 performances in 26 days. This play once again pushed Tian Han's drama career to the peak. The motive for creating "The Beautiful Person" came from two cases that shocked the whole country at the end of 1946. One is the "Shen Chong case" - American soldiers raped Shen Chong, a female student of Peking University, arousing public anger. One is the "street vendor case" - the police forcibly outlawed street vendors, making life impossible for poor citizens. These two events are just the token of China's internal and external troubles. Tian Han wants to use this to conceive a play that shows the suffering of Chinese people, and also to shout his voice. As shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Pictures of the characters in "A Line of Beauty"

Tian Han wrote "Beauty in Travel" in order to realize his idea of drama nationalization by exploring the national form of drama. This work is a successful exploration. In terms of the number of plays and the portrayal of characters, he drew on the methods of traditional Chinese operas. In order to make this play a colorful life scene, Tian Han broke the form of three to five acts since the drama was introduced into China and divided the whole play into 21 scenes. He borrowed the cutting method of "words are long, words are short" from the drama. Some scenes are only a few minutes long, while some scenes are equivalent to a single act play. When the director directs the play, he adds a reporter, just like the voice over of the film, The twenty-one scenes are strung together. At the same time of the free transformation of narrative time and space, it realized the "organic integration" (Belinsky) of the fate of the three women and their plot structure, and widely and deeply revealed the dark social reality and historical essence after the "tragic victory" at that time. In the characterization of characters, Tian Han also used the method of describing characters in traditional operas for reference. He highlights the characters, makes the contradictions clear, and the choice of the details of the characters' activities is closely combined with the theme. The images of the three heroines are vividly portrayed. These two points all reflect Tian Han's successful exploration on the road of nationalization of drama. In a sense, the success of two for the road is inseparable from Tian Han's reference to Chekhov's Three Sisters. Two for the road, like The Three Sisters, was not shrouded in sad and gloomy tones, especially at the end, when the Anti-Japanese War was won, and the awakening of the three women made the whole play show a clear and optimistic tone, revealing a positive and optimistic spirit. The Three Sisters also shows an optimistic tone of "going to work" and "going to work". Therefore, there are still many similarities between the two in the structure of the plot.

In general, Tian Han has made outstanding contributions to the history of modern and contemporary Chinese drama. It has formed an art form with its own characteristics. In his early plays, romanticism and realism coexist, but the main tendency is romanticism. After a long period of exploration and practice by the playwright, and constantly exploring the creative path of combining drama and reality, Tian Han's creative style changed "from the 1930s to the 1930s, and gradually tended to realism.

4. Conclusions

As one of the founders of modern drama, Tian Han's dramatic works show a very appropriate combination of tradition and drama. The author believes that choosing Tian Han's early dramatic works can fully explain Tian Han's social value and aesthetic value. He is able to combine Chinese and Western cultures. He can learn from the fusion of traditional Chinese operas and foreign artistic experiences and turn them into the soul and flesh of his own artistic life, without any strange alienation. The concrete presentation of works of art is closely related to the spiritual activities of the playwright's brain. Although Tian Han, who returned from studying abroad, was influenced and edified by the excellent thoughts of foreign schools, he was always closely connected with the tradition because of his noble national integrity and the exaggeration of Chinese operas in his childhood. Tian Han, full of oriental vision and in line with national aesthetics, integrated western drama styles, and made his own contribution to the dynamic development of "drama" on the Chinese stage. In the aggregation and collision of Tian's different cultural forms, the ultimate goal of Tian Han and our descendants is how to learn from the past experience and lessons, absorb foreign nutrients, transform and develop their own traditional culture, and make the Chinese traditional culture with a long history renew its youthful vitality and integrate into the historical process of modern civilization in the world.

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