

The Idea of Edification in Jiao Xun's Conception of Drama

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Jiao Xun's drama edification concept emphasizes "morality" and "emotion" at the same time, which expresses his tendency for drama conception to move closer to classics. Jiao Xun thinks that drama creation values the audience's acceptance, which also makes drama an effective testing ground for re-processing the relationship between "morality" and "emotion" in Confucianism; and Jiao Xun respects folk daily life in popular literary forms to promote moral enlightenment, which shows that drama research has become one of his practical methods of "changing customs".

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Jiao Xun's view of the theater was developed during the Qianlong period when one of the more notable cultural phenomena in the history of theater—the "Hua Ya Controversy"—was at its most intense (Li, 1960, p. 107). The so-called "Yabu drama" refers to Kun Opera alone, while the "Huabu drama" refers to various vocal styles other than Kun Opera. In terms of dramatic literature, the biggest difference between the two sections is the elegance of the Kun Opera literature and the simplicity of the folk music literature (Zhao, 1980, p. 236). Although the "Huabu drama" won a large audience for opera, it was also often despised by the literati. At a time when the two were competing with each other, Jiao Xun particularly pointed out the characteristics of the "Huabu drama": Originated from the Yuan Dynasty, its stories are mostly related to loyalty, filial piety, temperance, and righteousness, which can move the audience; its language is popular and can be understood even by women and children; its music is very bold and can mobilize the audience's emotions (Jiao, 2016, p. 469), which celebrates the unique value of "Huabu drama".

Many scholars believe that Jiao Xun's respect for Huabu drama is a manifestation of his respect for the individual spirit and folk culture; however, Jiao Xun also emphasized that Confucian morality, such as "loyalty, filial piety, temperance, and righteousness", is more representative of Huabu drama, which carries a clear "edification" position. Thus, on the one hand, Jiao Xun's admiration for Huabu drama is regarded as an advancement in the understanding of artworks from folklore, but on the other hand, it is also believed that Jiao Xun affirmed Huabu drama only in the sense of "edification", still with a heavy "feudal consciousness", not realizing the true vitality of folk art. Some scholars' view probably tends to present a dichotomy between folk art and literati art, with no commonality between them. The literati class is subordinate to the so-called feudal class, always with misinterpretation and prejudice in their observation of folk art. This claim emerged in large concentrations in the 1980s (Ye, 2014, p. 460; Li, 1997, p. 700; Tang, 1994), forming a voice that cannot be ignored in the discourse on Jiao Xun's conception of theater. The implication of this assertion by contemporary researchers seems to be that artistic independence runs counter to the theatrical concept that emphasizes

indoctrination, and that to hold both views at the same time would mean that Jiao Xun, though progressive to a certain extent, was “limited by his time” or “a remnant of feudal thought”. This view is based on the idea that respecting artistic independence is advanced while adhering to the concept of indoctrination is conservative. Huabu drama represents folk culture and is linked to artistic independence. At the same time “loyalty, filial piety, temperance, and righteousness” are the moral oppression of folk spirit by Confucian intellectuals. The remnants of feudalism and the two are in opposition. Therefore, when Jiao Xun both approved of the Huabu drama and insisted on the spirit of indoctrination, the contradiction in it can only be explained by the “remnants of feudalism”.

To understand Jiao Xun's concept of edification, one should first clarify Jiao Xun's attitude toward his view of Confucianism and dramaturgy. How Jiao Xun viewed dramatology is closely related to how Jiao Xun viewed Confucianism, and the two are even somewhat isomorphic. How moral connotations in Confucianism were expressed changed in many ways in the mid-Qing period when Confucian intellectuals tried to change the basic Confucian moral order. In this change, the dramatic genre, which was distinct from the expression of Confucianism, provided the ideological and logical impetus for the new moral connotations and became the vehicle for explicating the expression of moral truth.

Jiao Xun's Moral Values

In the middle of the Qing Dynasty, morality was understood differently than in the Song Dynasty and Ming Dynasty, thus inevitably giving rise to questioning about moral standards. In the Han-Song controversy (Jiang & Fang, 1998, p. 296), Fang Dongshu, a Confucian scholar of the Qing Dynasty, argued that there was no problem with Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's philosophy, which defines ethics and corrected people's hearts, but rather that Han studies had expanded the scope of knowledge and involved a wide range of other studies, failing to learn the moral truth in-depth, so that morality itself had lost its benchmark for judgment. On the other hand, Jiao Xun believes that the most practical solution can be found by examining specific situations and characters' feelings. Therefore, Jiao Xun believes that the fundamental connotation of Taoism is “adaptability” rather than “doctrine” and that the connotation of Tao is not only positive but also varies between positive and negative (Jiao, 2012, p. 345). This way of thinking not only dissolves the eternal righteousness of the Tao but also reduces the Tao from absolute truth to an understanding of the regular order of the world. He denied that there is a self-evident order in the world and believed that the order of the world is always in a state of flux, requiring people to actively adapt by examining and judging things, which is the only way to truly grasp the “Tao” (Jiao, 2012, p. 807).

In addition to the world order, Jiao Xun also believes that human nature is in a state of flux, not inherently good or evil (Jiao, 2012, p. 1027). After seeing the changes in the human heart, Jiao Xun pointed out the nature of sexual goodness: Humanity is just the natural mood and behavior of people in eating and drinking, and it is the same for human beings and other species in nature (Jiao, 2012, p. 1022). However, the difference between human beings and other species lies in human ethics, that is, the laws and orders established by the sages to facilitate human flourishing, which connects human intellect with morality. For animals, their actions are all about survival, and there is no such thing as good or evil. But humans have the ability to know good and evil, so they have two sides, which is the basis for morality—human habits can be guided. And, the difference between humans and animals is that there are different desires than those beyond survival, which are

preferences. These factors also make the habits of human beings very different from each other. This is different from the Song Confucian concept of rejecting the desired part of human nature.

Therefore, the premise of edification is precisely based on the desire and emotion that distinguish human beings from animals, which are composed of survival and other needs (Jiao, 2012, p. 1022). Only by acknowledging the existence of desires does the thinking of change gain the possibility that the power of morality can truly be maximized socially by itself. And the most important task of the sage, or the one who leads the edification, is to understand his desires and emotions through his intellect and to extend them to the people in all forms to complete the edification (Jiao, 2012, p. 1027). The ultimate purpose of morality is the stability of social order because morality is originally based on natural human emotions and daily life (Jiao, 2012, p. 1032). Because people feel differently in different situations, the way they handle them is also very different. Therefore, we should choose the most appropriate solution for different situations, and the final effect is that each is in its way without chaos (Jiao, 2012, p. 1032).

This is consistent with Confucius' theory of the differential order of status, and is the theoretical basis for Jiao Xun's assertion that "rituals replace theories". Therefore, Jiao Xun also attaches great importance to the identification of codes of conduct in specific contexts based on identity relations (Jiao, 2012, p. 1025). But this differential order is not to hierarchize people, but to respect the differences between people, to understand each other, and to be close to each other in a relationship of identity. This return to Confucian thinking offers new ways of thinking about dealing with a more complex world, which places more emphasis on the distinction between people and advocates taking into account the situational differences brought about by different identities as a way of forming new standards of value judgment, rather than making sweeping statements in a single language from a position of power.

The Dramatic Context of Moral Discourse

Jiao Xun's two stories about chastity, which are collected in his book called *The Drama*, reflect his deep concern about the situation of moral discourse controlled by the powerful. The first is a play called "Two Jewels", which is about a low-ranking soldier who has a beautiful wife. A higher-ranking soldier, Li, designs to seduce Guo. The soldier threatened Li with a knife to stop him from crossing the border but was arrested and imprisoned for it. At this time, a jailer surnamed Ye cared for the soldier a lot in the prison, so he wanted the soldier to give him his wife and son. The soldier agreed to give his wife and son to Ye because he was grateful for the jailer's kindness. Guo said to her husband, "You are dying, how can I possibly marry another person to survive". There is nothing that can be done about the individual's inability to rise above the power. Then Guo committed suicide in the stream.

Guo's story has spread because of the need to show her chastity and to praise her moral character of being faithful to her husband. But Guo's story is not explained by the concept of "chastity" alone. First, the soldier's death was due to the conflict triggered by Guo's beauty; second, the conflict happened because Li was bullying people with his power. This points out that the moral practice is not entirely out of compliance with objective moral precepts, but out of a grateful "righteous" moral oppression and power compelled by no choice. For Guo, if he married another person because the soldier was imprisoned, it was a sign of unchastity to the soldier, not to mention that the soldier was imprisoned because of Guo's beauty and Guo needed to repay the kindness of the jailer, Ye; if she raised her children alone, she was ignoring the kindness of the jailer. In this situation, Guo is caught in a dilemma that prevents her from marrying another person or raising her children alone, and the

social environment at the time does not provide her with the possibility of living alone. Guo's death was to fulfill moral chastity and to repay the jailer's kindness. Moreover, we find that this story of Guo is not just about women's chastity, but it reflects the oppression of people by power. Thus, the moral discourse itself does not put a man to death because it describes the concept of chastity. Rather, it is the double compulsion of moral discourse and power that makes man dominated by moral precepts and deprives him of the possibility of free existence.

Another story about chastity comes from the story of "The Hairpin". Liu and Yan have a marriage contract, but Liu's father thinks Yan's family is poor and wants to break the contract. Liu is willing to marry Yan with her wealth and meet in the garden to elope. When Yan heard this, he told his teacher Jiang's two sons, and they hosted a feast for Yan to celebrate and get Yan drunk. The two met with Liu and cheated Liu of money and then exposed; Liu was furious and Jiang killed Liu and his maidservant. Yan sobers up and mistakenly enters the garden, stained with Liu's blood, and is believed to be the culprit of the murder. Later, when the truth came out, a plaque was built for Liu to praise her chastity. In this story, the reason why Liu deserves praise is not entirely because she kept her moral principles of chastity, but because she kept her promise despite power and wealth, and was still willing to abide by the marriage contract to marry Yan. A woman of such moral character was brutally murdered by greedy people. Therefore, what makes Liu lose her life is not the moral principle, but Liu's father's excessive regard for power and the Jiang brothers' excessive pursuit of profit. Therefore, the moral connotation of chastity does not kill someone; what makes it difficult to survive is the snobbish notion of disregard for morality.

Jiao Xun once mentioned the definition of a chaste woman in his "Chaste Woman Discernment" (Jiao, 2012, p. 181). Jiao Xun also points out that the ancient rules for chaste women should not be used to bind the code of conduct of chaste women in the present and to form a moral high ground to oppress women. The laws and customs between the ancient and modern worlds are different, and one cannot prescribe the behavior of women in the present simply by the content of one morality. If civil behavior is not restricted in the name of "chastity", women are likely to be repeatedly traded as property in marriage, so that the moral definition of chastity remains in the hands of the powerful. Jiao's proposal to revalue morality according to situational conditions is an attempt to resist the status quo where morality is arbitrarily defined by the powers that be, to find new grounds for the regulation of behavior by morality.

Jiao Xun has discussed the issue of women's chastity with his contemporary Qian Daxin. Qian Daxin believed that women should be strongly opposed to the idea that they would end up depressed or being persecuted repeatedly to maintain the reputation of "chaste women", which would lead to unhappy marriages (Qian, 1989, p. 108). Jiao Xun argues against this view, citing numerous ancient texts that check the social motives and emotional logic of the institution of the couple (Jiao, 2012, p. 161). The institution of marriage derives from the arrangement of the social order, and a woman's observance of her husband is not only a requirement for women but also an agreement on the relationship between husband and wife. The status of women is low, and if they are allowed to remarry, it is very difficult for women to have free choice, and most of them are subject to their parents or their husbands' families and are very likely to marry badly husbands again. Therefore, the problem of women remarrying can be solved not by allowing women to remarry, but by arranging human emotions and social order from the very beginning of the marriage institution. This suggests that Jiao Xun's research idea is not to look at the system on its surface and its current social consequences but to understand social problems in terms of the logic of the system itself as it fits into the actual social situation.

The moral principles of chastity and filial piety are born out of the spontaneous lust of the human heart. But the domination of power not only causes evil but also prevents people from living freely under such oppression. This is what makes Guo choose morality between moral fame and personal life, and Liu does not cling to power but is tragically killed. It can be said that in both stories, the choice of morality is a sacrifice in the lives of the protagonists, but the oppression of social power on human existence leaves them no choice.

Thus, the idea of edification must play an important role in the drama. First, Jiao Xun's view that social power creates a stigma against morality by imposing sacrifices that people must make when they choose to abide by it. Second, Jiao Xun does not encourage the unprincipled choice of morality over one's own life or the social order, which runs counter to his original intent. Finally, people choose morality because it is based on the spontaneous flow of emotions, and people choose lust for profit is also based on it is the spontaneous flow of people's emotions; the role of drama is to recognize in the narrative the moral quality of the spontaneous flow of feelings to make sacrifices even in the face of damaged interests, but also to expose the social power oppression of people's lives and freedom. It is in this dual revelation of "emotion" and "situation" that indoctrination accomplishes the purpose of transferring spontaneous "emotions" to the audience in a "situation" narrative.

The Ideal Way of Indoctrination

One of the dramas that Jiao Xun believes accomplishes the best form of indoctrination is the Huabu drama "Saipipa", the household story of Chen Shimei's abandonment of his wife (Jiao, 2016, p. 474). Jiao Xun compares "Saipipa" with the famous drama "The Pipa". Jiao Xun points out that previous dramas depict wives being abandoned by their husbands, such as "The Pipa", in which Cai abandons Zhao and joins Chancellor Niu's household, and Zhao sings and begs the capital to find her husband. Because Niu wanted Cai to acknowledge, Zhao was able to reunite the family, and ultimately it was because of Niu's kindness that the three were able to live together in peace. Jiao Xun believes that such a creature has an overly happy ending, but fails to maximize the audience's emotions. But in "Saipipa", the Prime Minister asked Chen's wife to play and sing in front of Chen Shimei, who did not dare to recognize her because of the county princess and tried to kill his wife and children. When the Prime Minister knew about this, he was very upset and impeached Chen Shimei for having an ex-wife, which was a crime of cheating the king, so Chen was imprisoned. Moreover, the god of heaven learned that Chen killed his wife and son, not only to protect his wife and son, but also to teach the art of war, and use the military in Western Xia to get military success. The emperor dealt with two things at the same time in the court, one for the verdict of Chen Shimei, the second to praise the military achievements of Chen's wife. The two were in the hall together, Chen's wife on top of the hall, and Chen in prison clothes prostrate under the hall. At this time, Chen's wife was able to condemn her husband. There is a proprietary play, describing Chen's wife who accused Chen Shimei in court, spilling more than a thousand words, and the release of the hatred of abandoning his wife and son, first suppressing and then raising, which is enjoyable.

And, as mentioned earlier, the most valuable aspect of the drama is the depiction of Chen Shimei's remorse. In other words, although Chen Shimei had the desire to kill his wife and children, his natural emotions still came out of his heart when he confronted his wife in court. Jiao Xun believes that what is most appreciated about this drama is that the narrative shows how Chen Shimei, when desire overcomes reason, tries to kill his wife and children, and then has the sincere feelings of reluctance toward his wife and children and repents his wrongdoing. Effective edification is not only the praise of Chen's wife's virtue and the accusation of Chen

Shimei's selfishness, but should also reveal all the good and evil truths of human nature, and promote the moral qualities of human beings in it. The difference between humans and animals lies in the ability of these remorseful and good thoughts about sincere emotions to change human behavior, rather than portraying the character as selfish for no reason and directly assigning him evil retribution.

And this way of bringing out the true remorse is accomplished by the author through changes in the narrative structure. Because the simultaneous occurrence of reward and punishment allows Chen Shimei and Chen's wife to be placed in the same space for dialogue, this allows the reality of what happened to his wife and children to be disclosed to both Chen Shimei and the audience. On the other hand, by arranging surreal character functions, Chen's wife acquires a more advantageous position than Chen Shimei, which enables her to justifiably accuse Chen of his crimes. But at the core of both is the opportunity for women, who were at a disadvantage, to speak directly to men. This undoubtedly makes the deepest accusations of those in a lower position possible and is more consistent with the audience's daily moral and emotional structure of being oppressed by the powerful. This makes the audience empathize with Chen's wife and denounce Chen Shimei's act of killing his wife and children. Thus, the change in narrative structure and the portrayal of characters enable the audience to understand Chen Shimei's desires. On the other hand, in the course of the dramatic narrative, it is necessary to describe Chen Shimei's natural flow of emotions towards his wife and children to control the inflated desire for power, which is not only to show Chen Shimei's remorse, but also to show that the natural expansion of the desire for power seems to be able to be satisfied, but it will hurt the violation of another natural emotion of affection for his wife and children. This is not a moral concept to regulate behavior, but rather a way to accomplish indoctrination in the same way that is attributed to human emotions. This is how we see "emotions" in "situations", practice "morality" in "emotions", and realize the concept of edification derived from "human nature and daily use".

Jiao Xun's conception of edification in drama reflects his thoughts on the relationship between morality and emotion. As a kind of hermeneutics, the relationship between morality and emotion is expressed in Jiao Xun's study of the scriptures as a kind of historical-linguistic reduction and doctrinal reflection. As a literary form, the relationship between morality and emotion can be practiced in theater as a form of performance. The characters, narratives, emotional expressions, and moral practices in the drama, as a kind of mirroring expression of "human nature and daily use", became a perfect testing ground for Jiao Xun to practice his ideal of achieving happiness for the people. And Jiao Xun respects folk daily life in popular literary forms to promote moral enlightenment, which shows that drama research has become one of his practical methods of "changing customs".

Ge Zhaoguang believes this breakthrough in the dichotomy between emotion and morality is a groundbreaking "alternative thinking". His view shows that the early 19th-century discussion of morality and emotion has almost reached the verge of breaking through the dichotomy between morality and emotion, of breaking through the opposition between absolute truth constructed by traditional truth and practical life. Its vision of "ritual" implies something of the dismantling of the centralized political system of cultural tyranny, truth exclusivity, and the establishment of social order on common sense and rules. It also implies the possibility of being recognized as a person with space for independent existence in social life (Ge, 2013, p. 376). Of course, in the complex context of social experience, under the domination of powerful power discourse and the indoctrination of stereotypical moral discourse, it has become a difficult task to recognize one's most authentic emotional expressions. Because respecting the authenticity of the natural flow of emotions

in natural situations provides the ideological premise for respecting the individual spirit of freedom. In his "Introduction to Qing Dynasty Scholarship", Liang Qichao mentioned that Dai Zhen's *Mencius' Encyclopedia of the Meaning of Words* was a "philosophy of emotion" instead of a "philosophy of reason" and represented a new direction for Chinese culture, which was consistent with the essence of European Renaissance thinking and advocated the spirit of equality and ethical progress (Liang, 1988, p. 42). Liang Qichao's argument of replacing "philosophy of reason" with "philosophy of emotion" and the spirit of "equality" did provide a possibility for the transformation of Chinese ethical thought. However, we should also be aware that it is difficult to achieve a complete presentation of the situation of everyday life and a renewal of ideas in theatrical performances. Therefore, Jiao Xun's idea of expressing the moral education of "human nature and daily use" in his dramas could only achieve some weak effects, and the discovery of "personal emotion" and "subject spirit" could only serve as a potential implication of the 18th century to the free and independent spirit of the 20th century.

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