



Analysis of Historical Narrative Points in Zijin Huazhao Opera Repertoires

Ying Lin

Heyuan Polytechnic, Heyuan 517000, Guangdong, China

Abstract: This article takes the Zijin Huazhao opera *Blazing Heart* and *Soul of the Blood Field* as examples to analyze the historical narrative points. From the aspects of historical background presentation, character shaping and emotional expression, plot construction and theme communication, it analyzes in detail how the opera conducts historical narrative, and demonstrates the unique value and significance of Zijin Huazhao opera in inheriting historical culture and promoting national spirit. The aim is to deeply explore the historical and cultural connotations of Zijin Huazhao opera and promote the protection and development of this traditional art form.

Keywords: Zijin Huazhao opera; historical narrative; *blazing Heart*; *soul of the Blood Field*

1. Introduction

Zijin Huazhao Opera originated in Zijin County, Guangdong Province. The singing music of Huazhao Opera mainly consists of Shenchao Opera and folk tunes, sometimes also using Hakka folk songs. Shenchao Opera originated from the tone sung by shamans during the ceremonies of the Shenchao. The lyrics are irregular long and short sentence patterns, often connected by village characters such as "where", "li", "ya", and "yo". The main types of melody and sentence structures are the Zheng mode and the Yu mode. Shenchao Opera generally has a slow rhythm and a melancholic mood, often used for lyrical singing. The traditional singing characteristic of Shenchao Opera is that one person leads the singing and the others assist in singing. Combining singing and recitation, free and flexible. During the process of transmission, Shenchao Opera also absorbed and integrated many elements of local folk songs and melodies, changing the original mood of sacrificial music, thus possessing the characteristics of theatrical music. Analyzing the historical narrative points in the Zijin Huazhao opera plays can help uncover the unique contributions of this genre in the inheritance and dissemination of historical culture.

2. Narrative Methods and Techniques of Zijin Huazhao Opera

2.1 Combination of linear and non-linear narratives

The narrative techniques of Zijin Huazhao Opera often combine linear and nonlinear storytelling. In some plays, linear storytelling is the main thread, sequentially narrating the occurrence, development, climax, and conclusion of the story according to the chronological order. Starting from the birth of the protagonist, it tells the story of his upbringing, the difficulties he encounters, and how he eventually overcomes them to achieve success. This linear narrative allows the audience to clearly understand the story line and follow the ups and downs of the main character's destiny to produce emotional resonance. At the same time, non-linear narrative techniques, such as flashbacks and interludes, are also cleverly used in the play. Through flashbacks, the ending of the story or a key plot is first shown to arouse the audience's curiosity and suspense, and then the cause and passage of the story are gradually retraced. Flashbacks are used to add background information about the characters or an important event to make the story richer and more complete [1].

2.2 Setting up suspense and conflict

The narrative of Zijin Huazhao Opera is extremely ingenious, especially the setting of suspense and conflict is unique. In terms of creating suspense, the playwright often throws out an intriguing puzzle in the opening scene, or at the key points of the plot twists and turns, the use of hidden hints, unanswered questions and other means to arouse the audience's curiosity, so that they can't help but be attracted by the plot, and eagerly look forward to the unveiling of the mystery. The construction of conflicts is even more rich and diversified. The personality conflicts between characters show the complexity and diversity of human nature, and the differences in personality collide with intense sparks; the conflict of interests adds realistic tension to the plot, and all parties compete for their own needs; the conflict between people and the environment highlights the vagaries and struggles of destiny, and immerses the viewers in the tense atmosphere created by the plot. These suspense and conflicts are interwoven with each other, just like a tight big net, firmly grasping the audience's eyes, driving the plot of the

Zijin Huazhao Opera to develop with ups and downs, showing unique artistic charm [2].

3. The Presentation of Historical Background in the Plays of Zijin Huazhao Opera

3.1 Depiction of the Times

Both *Blazing Heart* and *Soul of the Blood Field* are set in a specific historical period and vividly depict the times. Set against the backdrop of ancient times of war, *Blazing Heart* showcases the tumultuous times of war and social unrest through the arrangement of stage scenes, costumes of actors, and lyrics. On the stage, scenes of rudimentary military camps and dilapidated city walls are presented, with actors dressed in battle armor and holding weapons. The lyrics describe the cruelty of war and the displacement of the people, making the audience feel as if they are in that turbulent historical period. If *Soul of the Blood Field* is set against the backdrop of the modern revolutionary period, it will showcase the darkness of society, the suffering of the people, and the rise of revolutionary forces at that time. For example, by depicting the shabby clothes of poor farmers, the arrogance and tyranny of landlords and bullies, as well as scenes of secret gatherings of revolutionaries and propaganda of revolutionary ideas, it reflects the social contradictions and class struggles of specific historical periods [3].

3.2 Integration of major historical events

In *Blazing Heart*, if there are major events such as dynastic changes or ethnic wars, key battles or political decisions will be used as nodes to drive the development of the plot. For example, a major battle that determines the fate of a country will be presented in detail in the drama, combining actors' combat performances, commanders' strategic deployment singing, etc., to let the audience understand the importance and influence of this historical event. If *Soul of the Blood Field* is based on revolutionary history, it will incorporate iconic revolutionary events such as uprisings and resistance against oppression. For example, taking a famous peasant uprising as an example, the reasons, process, and results of the uprising are presented. With the participation and witness of the characters in the drama, the audience deeply understands the role of these major historical events in promoting social change, and also allows these historical events to be inherited and remembered in the form of art [4].

4. Character Creation and Emotional Expression in Zijin Huazhao Opera

4.1 Character Image Depiction

In the Zijin Huazhao Opera repertoire, the portrayal of characters is very delicate. Taking *Blazing Heart* as an example, the protagonist is a valiant and fearless general, whose image is portrayed through his valour on the battlefield, his care for his soldiers and his perseverance in the face of adversity. In battle scenes, he is the first to fight and kill the enemy, showing his superior martial arts and military skills; in the military camp, he cares about his soldiers' lives, injuries and illnesses, reflecting his loving side; when faced with difficulties such as a shortage of food and grass and enemy siege, he is calm and collected, and he actively searches for a way to break out and solve the problem, highlighting his resilience and perseverance. And in *Soul of the Blood Field*, the portrayal of a revolutionary from a poor peasant background, his transformation from his initial helplessness and silent endurance of fate, to his awakening after being inspired by the revolutionary ideology, and then to his active participation in the revolutionary struggle is meticulously portrayed.

4.2 Depth of emotional expression

In *Blazing Heart*, there is the love of robe between generals and soldiers, such as the soldiers' trust and following of the generals, and the generals' life and death co-operation with the soldiers; there is also the protagonist's nostalgia for his hometown and loved ones, and in the long years when he is on the march, he expresses his attachment to his hometown landscape and the parents, wives and children in his home through the lyrics of the song. In *Soul of the Blood Field*, the hatred of the poor peasants for the landlord class is expressed to the fullest extent, and their longing for a better life and the deep friendship they have built up with their comrades in arms in the course of the revolution are also touching. The scenes of mutual encouragement and support between comrades when the revolution suffers setbacks, through the performances of the actors and the heartfelt singing, allowed the audience to deeply feel that sincere emotion. This kind of emotional expression not only makes the characters more three-dimensional and full, but also enhances the audience's empathy for the plot and their sense of history.

5. Plot Construction and Theme Conveyance in the Zijin Huazhao Opera Programme

5.1 Logic of plot development

The plot construction of Zijin Huazhao opera follows a certain logical order, For example, the protagonist, who has

practiced martial arts since childhood, joins the military because of the national crisis, undergoes all kinds of battle tests in the army, how to resolve internal conflicts in the face of the enemy's divisive tactics, etc., and ultimately shows his heroism in a decisive battle, which is an interlocking plot and attracts the audience to go deeper into the story. In *Blazing Heart*, the plot may start from the protagonist's growing up experience or acceptance of the mission, and then gradually unfolds to the plot of the military. The plot may begin with the protagonist's upbringing or acceptance of a mission, and gradually unfolds into military struggles, strategic decisions, internal conflicts, and eventual victories or sacrifices. The plot of *Soul of the Blood Field* starts with the hardships of the peasants' lives, followed by the spread of revolutionary ideas, the preparation for organizing the uprising, the difficulties and dangers during the uprising, and finally the adherence to revolutionary ideals or the heroic sacrifice. The development of the plot makes the story complete and smooth, conforming to the audience's aesthetic and cognitive habits.

5.2 Connotation of thematic ideas

Both plays contain profound thematic ideas, with *Blazing Heart* conveying themes of patriotism, heroism, and more. Through the protagonist sacrificing their own life for the interests of the country and the nation, it showcases the noble qualities and great emotions of ancient heroic figures, inspiring current generations to inherit and promote the spirit of patriotism. *Soul of the Blood Field* focuses on the themes of revolutionary spirit, class struggle and social change. Through the awakening and struggle of the poor peasants in the revolution, it reflects the important role of the masses in driving history forward, reminds people to cherish the hard-won happiness of today, and also encourages them to be courageous in fighting and pursuing justice in the face of social injustices and difficulties. These thematic ideas are deeply embodied through the development of the plot, the fate of the characters and the expression of their emotions, making the Zijin Flower Dynasty Theatre of high ideological value and educational significance.

6. Conclusion

The Zijin Huazhao Opera *Blazing Heart* and *Soul of the Blood Field* show a number of key points in the historical narrative through unique forms of artistic expression. From the vivid presentation of the historical background, the audience can understand the times and major events of a specific period; to the delicate characterisation and rich emotional expression, the characters are vivid and can arouse the audience's emotional resonance; to the reasonable construction of the plot and the profound theme conveyance, the plays have both artistic appreciation and ideological education. These features not only reflect the artistic charm of Zijin Flower Dynasty Opera, but also highlight its important value in the inheritance of history and culture and the promotion of national spirit.

Acknowledgments

This thesis is one of the research outcomes of the 2024 Guangdong Province General Colleges and Universities Young Innovative Talents Program project titled "Research on the Artistic Characteristics and Inheritance Development of Zijin Huazhao opera from the Perspective of Cultural Heritage." Project number: 2024WQNCX157. It is also one of the research achievements of Heyuan Polytechnic College's 2024 Guangdong Provincial Department of Education Scientific Research Project - School-level Cultivation Key Field Project "Collection and Research on Classic Repertoires of Zijin Huazhao Opera", Project Number: 2023KYPY13.

References

- [1] Xueru Li. A Brief Analysis of Hakka Huazhao Opera and Its Culture in Zijin County[J]. *Shenzhen Folklore*, 2013(12):121-122.
- [2] Ping Zou. The Inheritance and Development of Local Opera — Huazao Opera[J]. *Charm China*, 2016(2):53.
- [3] Ping Zou. A Brief Discussion on the Music of Huazao Opera[J]. *Charm China*, 2016(3):69-69.
- [4] Lihua Huang. Discussion on the Art of Hakka Huazhao Opera[J]. *Literature and Life·Literary Theory*, 2016(11):147.