



A Study of the Contemporary Dissemination of Classical Literature in Chinese Costume Dramas

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Abstract. Traditional literature is widely used in many fields and is universally accepted in various forms of language, and it has become an indispensable part of people's life and artistic creation. In the TV drama Zhou Sheng Ru Ru, the short line "What the soul desires, the heart's pleasure is on the side" is almost equivalent to linking Shanglin Fu and love, a phenomenon that has been enthusiastically pursued by the public. Whether it is a film or television adaptation of the original text, or a work that incorporates elements of ancient texts such as Chu Ci and Han Fu into the dialogue in order to enhance the cultural connotation, it has led to both positive and negative effects of traditional literature in modern communication. This study aims to explore how to better guide and disseminate traditional literature in costume dramas through comparative analyses of successful and unsuccessful cases of costume dramas, with a view to finding effective methods.

Keywords: Ancient Drama; Classical Literature; Dissemination; Chinese Costume Dramas

1 Introduction

In recent years, with the popularity of short video platforms and the emergence of the self-media industry, TV has gradually declined as the third media, but it still plays an important role in the mass media. The link between TV dramas and self-publishing media is highly subjective, and if the self-publishing media deliberately interpret a certain aspect of a TV drama, it may create a hot topic, or even contribute to a trend, as in the case of costume dramas. While the dissemination of classic works is pleasing to all, the spread of false literary knowledge among the general public is a loss of the true nature of literature, leaving the entertainment and fun of film and television behind. "Further improving the quality of TV dramas is a necessary condition for realising high quality cross-cultural communication."^[1] Film and TV dramas have been widely used in the world for a long time. ^[1] The application of literature in film and television dramas is closely related to social reactions, and the "Shanglin Fugue Fe-

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ver" has shown the heavy influence of costume dramas on the contemporary dissemination of classical literature, with both advantages and disadvantages, which is a cause for deep thinking.

2 The Formation of Classical Literature Dissemination Fever and the Definition and Characteristics of Classical Drama

The "Upper Forest Fugue Fever" originally originated from the popular costume drama "Zhou Sheng Ru Gu". In the drama, when the female lead was writing "Shanglin Fu" silently, she suddenly forgot the second half of a sentence, and her master, the male lead, came behind her and wrote the second half of the sentence very carefully, i.e., "The lust of the soul is given to the soul, and the heart is pleased with the side". After this, the relationship between the two people has also undergone a subtle change. These two lines touched the hearts of netizens, who started the trend of "copying the Shanglin Fu to get your beloved". "In the 21st century, with the rapid development and popularisation of internet technology, people can have their own mobile devices and access the internet independently during their youth, which is also a critical period for the physical development and shaping of youth's outlook."^[2] The drama is a great example of how a young person's physical development and outlook can be shaped by the internet. ^[2] In the drama, the hero and heroine use the Shanglin Fugue as a medium to convey their hidden and delicate feelings, and this connection turns "copying the Shanglin Fugue in its entirety" into an excellent way to express love and a major criterion for identifying sincerity. This act may not touch people with rich life experience, but it may have a great impact on the perception of young people. While many people are immersed in this "obsessive determination", the "romance of copying" has become a symbol of love. When the topic arose, public opinion was mixed. Regardless of whether the Shanglin Fugue is related to love, it is puzzling to think that it is a mutual expression of love just based on the sentence "the colour confers on the soul and the heart is happy on the side". The Upper Forest Fugue was written by Sima Xiangru, a rhetorician and author of the Western Han Dynasty. It mainly depicts the grand scale of the Upper Forest Garden, and then describes the scene where the Son of Heaven led his ministers to hunt in the Upper Forest, which is magnificent and magnificent, and gives the impression of a dynasty in the prime of its life. The phrase "the colour of the eyes and the soul, the heart is happy in the side" comes from it, with the meaning of "the beauty of the eyes and the soul makes one delirious, the heart is happy, and it is difficult to hold on to oneself". If this sentence is used to convey the love of the playwright, it is too frivolous. On the one hand, it does not fit the image of the character, and makes the plot setting of "love and manners" biased; on the other hand, it will inevitably cause the audience to misunderstand the words and phrases and thus use them inappropriately. The hand-copying of the Shanglin Fu to express love and admiration may or may not be of value. Costume dramas refer to TV dramas set in ancient times, including TV dramas that are not based on history but dressed in ancient costumes and acting in the manner of the ancients ^[3], including martial arts, history, mythology, court, and even travelling through

the ages. There are various sources of inspiration for their plots, whether they are adaptations of classic literature or completely fictional stories, all of which involve analysing and interpreting classical Chinese literature. The rigour of costume dramas is inherent in the fact that every word, every line, every poem and every word is limited by the time period, and cannot be reversed without making a mockery of it. Therefore, the creation and filming of costume dramas must not neglect the foundation of literature and cultural inheritance. While it is difficult to get the theoretical support for the empty history of costume dramas, which are more concerned with the audience's appreciation and the aesthetics of film and television culture, they can be tolerated to a certain extent. However, if there are errors of principle and they are widely publicised, they will do great harm to the dissemination of knowledge of ancient literature. Television dramas are an excellent medium for the dissemination of literature, more accessible to the public than the written form, and more inclusive, taking into account different age groups and social strata. In the current film and television drama market, there are both excellent costume dramas and "bad dramas", which brings great challenges to the dissemination of classical literature in contemporary times, and is also a major obstacle to the enhancement of China's cultural self-confidence.

3 The Influence of Costume Drama on the Contemporary Dissemination of Classical Literature

It is absurd to link the Shanglin Fugue with love and it is suspected of misinterpreting the ancient text, but after explanation, the voices of doubt have been weakened. The Shanglin Fu itself has nothing to do with love, but it has more than 2,000 words, and the copying of the Shanglin Fu, which has been hotly debated on the Internet, may not be the only one, but its sister piece, the Zi Xu Fu, was added, and the total of the two is more than 4,000 words. Whether or not the Zi Xu Fu is included, the large number of words and the difficulty of writing them suggests that the copying project could have taken a great deal of time and effort. Thus, with the approval of many people, this act became a sign of "using one's patience and sincerity to prove that I like you". The popularity of Shanglin Fugu was greatly increased by the popularity of Zhou Sheng Ru Ru, and the copying of the whole text helped more people to understand it better. In this way, we can appreciate the beautiful words and phrases, enrich our knowledge of ancient Chinese, appreciate the grandeur, and pass on classical literature, but all of these are based on consciousness and devotion, and if we take the time and effort just to complete a task, it will lose its value. The powerful communication power of short videos can magnify hotspots indefinitely, which can be exploited by those with a mind to do so. Literature is biased by love, and even with seemingly reasonable explanations, it will eventually have a subtle impact on the audience's perception. Assuming that whenever Shanglin Fu is mentioned, some people will be moved by the sincerity and perseverance of love and be immersed in the implicit love of the male and female protagonists of the TV drama, then what is the literary value

of Shanglin Fu? Besides, it is not very scientific to prove true love by copying "Shanglin Fu" alone. True love will not be essentially changed by spending time and effort on copying a long fugue. It is not uncommon for costume dramas to "rub the heat" of classical literature. Some drama teams have made full use of their resources and produced almost perfect works; however, there are also works that do not respect or understand classical literature, but only focus on its economic value, and in the end, they receive a lot of curses. This shows that the collision of two elements, costume drama and classical literature, is not necessarily harmonious, and works directly adapted or with other elements should stand up to the public's aesthetic and cultural considerations. Film and television dramas make literature go from the altar of "white snow in the spring" to the aesthetic daily life of "the people in the lower class", explaining the existence and value of literature in its unique way, and deepening the connection between literature and the public^[4]. The 1987 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* was based on the classic Chinese literary masterpiece *A Dream of Red Mansions* and was directed by Mr Wang Fulin. In order to make the production closer to the original, the cast invited redologists such as Zhou Ling and Liu Kenglu to act as scriptwriters, and set up a strong team of expert advisors to provide guidance. The filming location and casting of the actors, as well as the costumes and make-up, and the flowers and trees, were all recreated to the greatest extent possible. The Grand View Garden is a very important element of the play, and the cast and crew of *A Dream of Red Mansions* built a Grand View Garden in Beijing. The background music and lyrics of the play are all original lines from the book, and the casting was even more rigorous. Chen Xiaoxu's Lin Daiyu is elegantly dressed and elegantly elegant, in keeping with the book's character of Lin Daiyu, who is elegant, calm and melancholic. Wang Xifeng's splendour and opulence at the beginning of her career and the simplicity of her clothes as she has to pawn off her family's possessions due to the decline of the Jia family are both shown in a very realistic manner. The 1987 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* was aired to rave reviews, and was hailed as a "wonderful chapter in the history of Chinese television" and an "insurmountable classic". "The 1987 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* has the support of literary masterpieces and excellent film and television adaptations, classical literature has become more intimate and influential. While deepening the audience's memory and understanding of the contents of the literary works, it has also made the literary works three-dimensional and graphic, and has promoted the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

In comparison, the 2010 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is much inferior. From the actors' headdresses and make-up to the dubbing of the play's lines and even the soundtrack, the film is full of "slots" and is not as good as it could be. "The 87th version of the soundtrack is faithful to the original author and focuses on realism, while the 2010 version of the soundtrack focuses on the tragic theme of *A Dream of Red Mansions* and the dreamy mood and focuses on realism." The 2010 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is not as good as the previous version. The score of the 2010 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is a mixture of tragedy and fantasy, which seems to be in line with the theme, but it goes to the extreme of being too modern and melancholic. Some of the lyric-less music in the play seems a bit frightening, and the end songs and interludes have the freedom of a modern play, losing the classical flavour of tradi-

tional Chinese instruments. With the characters' judgements and the different musical accompaniment, the 1987 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* gives a sense of the characters and the sorrows and joys of the times, whereas the 2010 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* only makes the audience "cry at the sound of the music", lacking a trace of compatibility. Nowadays, there are very few costume dramas in which the cast and crew of the 1987 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* have made such a great effort. Although there are also better costume dramas such as *Knowing Whether or Not Should Be Green, Fattened, Red and Slim*, and *Dreams of China*, most of these dramas are subject to criticisms. The popular TV drama "Jade Tower Spring" has sparked controversy among netizens. The title of the drama, *Jade Tower Spring*, implies the names of the main characters and tells a comedic story. It shares the same name with *Jade Tower Spring*, a vernacular novel of worldly love written by Longqiu Baiyun Taoist in the Qing Dynasty, but the storylines are completely different, with the only similarity being that both the title of the drama and the title of the book are formed by combining the names of the main characters. Although this can be called a coincidence, it is somewhat suspicious. At the same time, "Yulouchun" is also the name of a lyric tablet, which was used by famous lyricists such as Li Qingzhao and Yan Shu, reflecting the tendency of the current titles of costume dramas to cater to the national trend. While the public's passion for classical literature continues to grow, excellent costume dramas can be said to be without merit. However, if classical literature is used incorrectly in costume dramas, it will lead to the widespread dissemination of fallacies, thus reducing the value of literature and turning it into a tool that can be casually "rubbed off" on the public.

4 Strategies for Effective Communication of Classical Literature in Contemporary Costume Dramas

Today's society has entered the age of visual culture, and the image-centred form of sensualism poses a great challenge to the text-centred form of rationalism. Images have gained a large audience because they are more intuitive and vivid. The emergence of film and television drama is a good solution to the problem that a person who cannot read may not be able to read literature, or may have difficulty in comprehending complex masterpieces in the form of literary texts. Although film and television dramas may not be able to reproduce 100% of the descriptions in the books, as long as they can present a general picture of the original works and present them in a form that is pleasing to the public, they can be considered a great success. Of course, film and television classics such as the 87th edition of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and the 86th edition of *Journey to the West* have reached a high level. Adaptation and citation are both affirmations of the classics, and therefore the use of classical literature in costume dramas needs to be examined and researched in many ways, which on the one hand ensures the correctness of the communication and avoids fallacies as much as possible, and on the other hand respects the literature and helps to show the glamour of Chinese culture. First of all, except for adaptations, the titles of ancient

costume dramas should be appropriate to the theme, instead of just copying elegant words from poems or songs and fugues, which are beautiful but confusing and confusing. Quotations can be made, but it is better to have some connection with the context or the main idea of the drama to avoid contradictions. When a TV drama is broadcast, viewers may pay more attention to the content of the drama and the cast than to the title of the drama, and therefore use their subjective impressions as substitutes. If the title of a drama deviates significantly from the plot, the audience may be "sprayed" or misled. Only a very small number of people will go to check, and the results of the checking will create a furore and a "war of words" due to the powerful communication power of modern media. The hit TV series *Qing Ping Le* tells the story of Zhao Zhen, the Emperor of the Northern Song Dynasty, from his accession to the throne at a young age to his gradual control of the imperial government to his exhaustive efforts to love the people and rule the country. "Qingping" is the name of the word "Qingping", which was popular in the Song Dynasty, echoing the era. In addition, "Qingping" means "the pleasure in lightness and calmness", and it is used to express one's feelings in peace and tranquillity, which is more characteristic of the times, so it can be seen that "Qingping" has a certain positive effect on the use and dissemination of classical poems. Secondly, literary works and ancient poems that appear in costume dramas with a clear period setting should be correct. If there is a discrepancy between the period and the work, it may not only be accused of being crude, but also mislead the public and affect the building of spiritual civilisation. Only when excellent classical literature is used appropriately can it be used to the fullest extent. Finally, while broadcasting costume dramas, the public should also be actively urged to read the originals. Even the best adaptations cannot present the original text in its entirety, and some details must be discarded in order for the audience to quickly understand the whole picture, so reading the original text is a good opportunity for those who can afford it to absorb knowledge. The remake of a masterpiece should not be distorted, and although the theme of the shelf has a stronger inclusiveness, it should be created within the same moderate limits. Although the subject matter of the remake is more inclusive, it should also be created within the limits of moderation. Such works cannot be based on imagination alone, but also on a certain basis, which is created to form the so-called "empty background". Innovation is the spirit needed in the creation of costume dramas. The costume drama is a platform for the dissemination of classical literature and a new carrier for the promotion of excellent traditional Chinese culture. Effective use of literary works will get twice the result with half the effort, while self-righteous and casual "dabbling" will eventually lead to losses that will not be worth it.^[5]

5 Conclusion

In the rapidly changing contemporary society, classical Chinese literature has gradually drifted away from people's lives, who prefer to look towards the future rather than the past. However, in recent years, the national style craze has pushed the classics into a new era. Historical things have been brought back to the public through innovation,

with costume dramas as the main means of communication, supplemented by cultural and creative products, song and dance performances, costumes and make-up, etc., to promote the dissemination of Chinese excellent traditional culture. Using the elements of excellent traditional Chinese culture, we can make history come alive, and then go to the world and the future. Ancient classic literature is connected with today's literature and art, alternating the old and the new, and linking the ancient and the modern. At the present time, we should strongly advocate the clever use of excellent classical literature in our TV drama works and in our lives, and quietly transfer this rich cultural heritage to our audience, so that they can feel the profoundness of the music and the sense of infinite power in the process of enjoying the TV drama, and combine the music with the emotions to achieve a deep emotional resonance, and to promote the music culture while paving the way for the The country's cultural confidence pave the way.

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