



# An Analysis of the Artistic Charm of Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels

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**Abstract.** Jin Yong is a first-rate master in the creation of martial arts novels. His works neither repeat others nor himself. There are few similarities in plot design, characterization, theme expression and other aspects of his 15 novels, which can be said to have their own styles and embody distinct artistic characteristics. At the same time, Jin Yong will be profound Chinese traditional culture connotation, into the magic and romantic martial arts stories, actively promote the excellent Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** The plot of innovation, People alive, Elements of Traditional culture

## 1 Introduction

Jin Yong is a first-class master of martial arts novels. His novels have twists and turns in the plot, with ups and downs. The characters are described with distinct personalities and vivid images. In the selection of writing materials, Jin Yong is good at drawing on ancient Chinese cultural classics. His works have a strong artistic charm that attracts readers.

## 2 The Narrative Mode is not Limited to One Style

Traditional narrative mode of martial arts novels is often "justice defeats evil" and "evil cannot prevail over good". For example, "The Legend of Swordsman in Shu Mountain" by Huanzhu Louzhu, which is known as the world 's first strange book, "The Legend of Jianghu Heroes" by Pingjiang Bushoushen, and "The Eagle Claw King" by Zheng Zhengyin. Jin Yong 's novels break through the narrative mode of traditional martial arts novels. Good people may not be rewarded, and bad people are often free and easy. The story does not develop according to the plot generally recognized by the public.

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## 2.1 For Example.

The opening of *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* states that although Wanyan Honglie, a Jin man, was shot by an arrow, he was saved by Bao Xiruo and survived. After Wanyan Honglie recovered from his injury, he did not repay his gratitude but made a vicious plan. He sent soldiers to kill the Guo and Yang families, pretended to be chivalrous and took the opportunity to get close to Bao Xiruo and tricked Bao Xiruo back to Yanjing. This plan succeeded, and Wanyan Honglie finally realized his private wish and married Bao Xiruo. He was in power for a long time. Whenever I read these, I will sigh at the complexity of human nature and resent Wanyan Honglie's hypocrisy and cruelty. Another example is Di Yun, the protagonist of *The Untold Story*. He has a simple character, is honest and dutiful, is sincere to people, and is kind-hearted. He follows his master to farm and practice martial arts with one heart. He is completely unaware of the dangers of human nature. In the end, he was framed and imprisoned. He lost his family, lover and everything. He could only drag his disabled body in prison, survive, and spend the rest of his life in loneliness. Some readers think that Di Yun is the most ordinary character in Jin Yong's martial arts novels. In my opinion, Di Yun is an ordinary person among the masses. The author uses his experience and fate to express silent cries and sighs for the millions of people at the bottom of society who have been oppressed and exploited since ancient times. This novel truly shows readers the dangers of the world and the distortion of human nature. Readers can truly feel the darkness of society and the helplessness of the weak at the bottom. There are no great heroes who serve the country and the people in "The Untold Story"; there are no earth-shaking and touching love stories; even exciting fighting scenes are rare. The novel portrays human nature to the extreme with a narrative mode of telling stories. Various scenes of transformation from good to evil and psychological distortion emerge in an endless stream, which deeply attracts readers.

## 2.2 The Plot Patterns of Jin Yong's Novels are Always Innovative.

In his article "Little Wei Xiaobao," he said: "Researchers of Western drama have analyzed that there are basically only thirty-six plots in dramas and novels. It can also be said that the drama of life is difficult to go beyond these thirty-six variations. However, thousands and thousands of dramas and novels have been written in the past, and there will still be thousands and thousands of new dramas and novels published in the future. People will not get bored because of the repetition of plots. This is because the personalities of the characters in dramas and novels are different. Of course, the author's way of expression and technique are also different." [1] When Jin Yong is narrating, he always changes the pattern, and even absorbs certain patterns of detective novels, mystery novels or romance novels and uses them in his martial arts novels.

## 3 The Suspense is Endless and the Plot is Intertwined.

Traditional martial arts novels often use suspense, but they are mostly used between two chapters or in the middle of the story, often to attract readers to continue reading.

From the perspective of plot, Jin Yong's novels are very exciting suspense novels and very exciting detective novels. [2] Each of Jin Yong's novels is full of exciting suspense, which can be said to be one after another and one after another.

In *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*, Xiao Feng is a peerless hero, with a burly figure and heroic spirit, and he has the qualifications and conditions to be a leader of the martial arts world. Jin Yong did not write about how he became successful after becoming a leader of the martial arts world, but designed the mystery of his life experience as a suspense. Xiao Feng is actually a Khitan. He was brought back by the Han people and raised up in regret and shame after the Han people killed his biological parents. Therefore, he was deeply influenced by the Central Plains culture. When Xiao Feng learned the truth, he was deeply inferior and lost his ambition. He wanted to escape very much, and only hoped to avenge his parents and hide in the frontier for the rest of his life. Later, his beloved woman Azhu used "disguise" to change her appearance to fight in order to save her father Duan Zhengchun, but was beaten to death by him. This heavy blow made him discouraged again. - These endless suspense made readers eager to read on and want to know the truth of the matter.

In *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*, Jin Yong also created a lot of suspense when he wrote about the deaths of Guo Jing's five mentors. Guo Jing's five masters died on Peach Blossom Island. Guo Jing initially identified Huang Yaoshi as the murderer and vowed to avenge his masters. From misunderstanding Huang Yaoshi to the final truth - Yang Kang was the mastermind who killed Guo Jing's five masters. It was he who falsely accused Guo Jing of killing Ouyang Ke, which led to Ouyang Feng killing the five monsters. Ouyang Feng killed the five monsters out of misunderstanding. Some works retain suspense until the end. A reader asked Jin Yong: "Did Hu Fei really chop down with his knife in *The Snow Mountain Flying Fox*?" Jin Yong smiled and said: "Even I don't know." [3]

## 4 The Plot is Tortuous and Reasonable

### 4.1 Conform to its Own Logic, so that it can be Read with Interest and not Disgust.

Jin Yong's novels naturally combine rich imagination and logic, not only conceiving and imagining many bold, bizarre and tortuous plots, but also making these plots more reasonable and well-founded. His plots are both "unexpected" and "within people's expectations" if you think about it carefully.

In "The Untold Story". Mei Niansheng, a famous martial artist in Hunan, is a well-deserved hero. He is upright, indifferent to fame and fortune, regards money as dirt, cares about the world and the people. However, he did not know how to judge people and mistakenly accepted three vicious apprentices. Because Mei Niansheng's "The Untold Story Sword Manual" involves a secret of a treasure, the three apprentices actually joined forces to plot against their teacher and seize the sword manual. However, Mei Niansheng was soft-hearted and finally defeated by his apprentices. He was also plotted against by Qi Changfa. The contrast between good and evil in human nature is vividly reflected here. For their own selfish interests, the three apprentices did

not hesitate to betray their teacher and ancestors, and killed people to silence them. They were completely conscienceless. Among them, Qi Changfa, the third apprentice of Mei Niansheng, was particularly cruel and vicious, ruthless, and did all kinds of evil things that hurt the world. Qi Changfa looks honest and dull, like an illiterate country bumpkin, but in fact he is very scheming. He teamed up with his two senior brothers to kill his master Mei Niansheng and took the Liancheng Jue, which hid the secret of the treasure. The three of them did not trust each other, but in the end he took the secret book. Qi Changfa was suspicious of everyone, including his own daughter Qi Fang and his apprentice Di Yun. The swordsmanship that his master taught them was completely wrong. In the end, this man with such deep scheming died on the "big treasure" covered with poison. It can be said that evil will be punished.

#### **4.2 When Designing the Plot Development of the Novel, Jin Yong will Fully Consider the Personality Characteristics of the Characters, so that the Plot Changes Fit the Characters.**

When I first read the ending of A Zi in " Tianlong Babu ", I sighed and was unexpected. But after reading the previous chapters carefully, I will sigh that A Zi's ending is reasonable. We all think that A Zi is an extremely selfish person, cold and cruel, using poison to cheat, vicious means, and willful. In the end, outside Yanmen Pass, Qiao Feng committed suicide. A Zi actually dug out the eyes that You Tanzhi gave her, hugged Qiao Feng and jumped off the cliff without hesitation, and died for love. A Zi's death was unexpected and reasonable. Her love for Qiao Feng was deformed. A Zi, who always acted paranoid and extreme, would choose to die with Qiao Feng without hesitation, and returning You Tanzhi's eyes represented A Zi's determination and resentment, and such behavior drew a clear line with You Tanzhi.

### **5 The Character Descriptions are Vivid and Lively.**

I think any reader who has read Jin Yong's works can name dozens of characters in his novels. It is not difficult to name three or five characters in each work on average. So there are at least a dozen characters who have become classics without any doubt.

#### **5.1 Why can Jin Yong's Characters Leave a Deep Impression on Readers?**

When Jin Yong writes characters, his characters are not stereotyped from the moment they appear, which is different from the character creation in traditional martial arts novels. For example, Song Jiang in " Water Margin " is strategic, ambitious, generous, and helps the poor and needy. He is not an ordinary person. Song Jiang's overall personality does not change much from the beginning to the end of the novel, but Jin Yong's novels will write about the reasons for the formation of each character's personality traits and explain clearly the ins and outs of the character's behavior.

## 5.2 Jin Yong has Written Many Villains in his Novels.

These villains often have different appearances and distinct personalities. More importantly, these villains are not purely evil. The evil they do is generally justifiable. If you stand in their position, you will find that these villains actually have shining points of humanity. The most commendable thing about Jin Yong is that he writes about the reasons why people are bad or good.

For example, Mei Chaofeng in Jin Yong's "The Legend of the Condor Heroes" became notorious for her evil martial arts of the Nine Yin White Bone Claw. However, after reading the original novel and understanding Mei Chaofeng's life experiences, you will find that she is not vicious by nature. Although she is a villain, she deserves sympathy. Mei Chaofeng's original name was Mei Ruohua. She became an orphan because her parents died early. She was helpless and lonely, and was often bullied by evil people. Fortunately, she met Huang Yaoshi, who took her to Peach Blossom Island, accepted her as a disciple, and taught her martial arts. To her, Huang Yaoshi was not only a master, but also a relative. Mei Chaofeng probably never thought that she would leave Peach Blossom Island one day and betray her master. Mei Chaofeng and her second brother Chen Xuanfeng grew up together on Peach Blossom Island. They were childhood sweethearts and had a lot in common. Although it is common for senior brothers and sisters to fall in love and get married in the martial arts world, it is a taboo on Peach Blossom Island. They both respected and feared their master. They did not dare to let Huang Yaoshi know about their love, so they chose to flee Peach Blossom Island and fly away. They also secretly stole half of Huang Yaoshi's "Nine Yin Manual". The two people who were overwhelmed by love went to sin step by step. Man proposes, God disposes. The theft of half of the "Nine Yin Manual" hurt them. Because they only had half of the book and lacked internal skills, Mei Chaofeng and her husband could not practice the martial arts of the "Nine Yin Manual" correctly. In order to avoid going astray, they could only take some unorthodox methods, which made them look like humans but not humans. In addition, due to lack of Taoism, they failed to correctly understand the martial arts content in the book, and eventually turned the martial arts of the Nine Yin Manual, which should have been upright, into sinister and vicious kung fu. Those who do evil will eventually die. In the battle in the desert, the Seven Freaks of Jiangnan took Guo Jing to fight with the "Black Wind Twins". In the chaos, Chen Xuanfeng died at the hands of Guo Jing, and Mei Chaofeng was blinded by Ke Zhenwu. Chen Xuanfeng's death made Mei Chaofeng lose the meaning of living. From then on, Mei Chaofeng lived for only one thing, that is, revenge.

From the perspective of Mei Chaofeng's life, she had a miserable life, was lonely and helpless, and although she committed many evil things, most of them were excusable. She was good by nature. She gave everything to her husband Chen Xuanfeng, and was loyal to him. She was also consistent with her master. Mei Chaofeng died to protect her master. She flew to block Ouyang Feng's plot for Huang Yaoshi and was fatally injured. It can be seen that Mei Chaofeng was a person who attached great importance to friendship. Before she died, Mei Chaofeng did not forget to break her hands and abolish her martial arts to pay for the crime of stealing the "Nine Yin Manual". Huang

Yaoshi also pitied Mei Chaofeng and agreed to formally accept her as his disciple. Before Mei Chaofeng died, she finally got the forgiveness of her master.

Jin Yong's martial arts novels have created a group of flesh-and-blood, distinctive, and popular characters: Xiao Feng, Duan Yu, Chen Jialuo, Zhang Wuji, Yang Guo, Linghu Chong, Guo Jing, Xiao Longnu, Huang Rong, Wei Xiaobao, etc. These characters are like ink-and-wash figures, elegant and graceful, with long sleeves fluttering in the wind, which are unforgettable and hard to let go. [4]

## 6 Traditional Culture, Perfect Fusion

### 6.1 Jin Yong is very Good at Drawing on Ancient Chinese Cultural Classics and Promoting China's Excellent Culture.

His novels comprehensively and systematically express ancient Chinese traditional culture by using Tang poetry, Song lyrics, Yuan opera, Ming and Qing novels, etc. "Jin Yong uses different specific ways of expression for different themes and different literary styles in ancient literature, including direct quotations, textual use, transplantation, and a combination of reality and fiction." [5]

The most direct quotations are mainly poems, Yuan Dynasty songs, ancient proverbs, two-part allegorical sayings, and riddles. Most of them are short, but vivid and interesting. The 17th chapter of "The Sword of Blood and Jade" is "Qing Jin's heart is in his mind, and the person is in the painting with a colorful brush."

Here is an example of a direct quote from the Book of Songs:

Your green collar is always on my mind. Even if I don't go, why don't you send me a message?

Your green jade pendant makes me think of you. Even if I don't go, why don't you come?

I am standing at the city gate. One day without seeing you feels like three months. [6]

### 6.2 There are Many References to Tang Poetry in Jin Yong's Novels.

And the one that leaves a deep impression on readers is the "Lying Corpse Sword Technique" in "The Untold Story". The villain Qi Changfa, who is known as "Iron Chain Across the River", has mastered a sword technique. In order to deceive people, he deliberately misrepresented "Tang Poetry Sword Technique" as "Lying Corpse Sword Technique", and changed the names of various moves into homophonic characters or homophonic characters. Each move of this sword technique is taken from a Tang poem. Therefore, when readers read Jin Yong's novels, they are not only reading the plot, but also learning the excellent traditional culture of ancient times from Jin Yong. This learning process is subtle, and readers have unknowingly improved their understanding and comprehension of Tang poetry.

The last part of Jin Yong's "The Legend of the Condor Heroes" trilogy, The Heaven Sword and Dragon Saber, begins with a poem from the Song Dynasty, "No Worldly Thoughts." [7]

Spring outings are grand, and it is the cold food festival every year, the pear blossom season. The white brocade is fragrant without any pattern, and the jade trees and white buds are piled with snow. The quiet night is deep, the floating light is hazy, and the cold moon is immersed. The world and the sky are illuminated by the bright silver clouds.

He is just like Gushan Zhenren, with a natural and elegant appearance and noble spirit. Who believes in Taoism when there are thousands of flowers? He is not among the flowers. He is noble and talented, and has outstanding talent. It is difficult for the lower world to distinguish him. After returning to the fairyland, I can see the clear and pure world. This passage is both real and unreal, and it is also true and false. Jin Yong leads us to walk between reality and fantasy. It is also the brilliant writing in Jin Yong's hand that walks between "historical truth" and "fictional fiction" that allows us to fully appreciate his profound knowledge and unparalleled talent. [8]

Jin Yong was able to fully draw on and learn from ancient Chinese cultural classics, not by copying them mechanically, nor by simply transplanting them, nor for the sake of showing off his talent, but by focusing on the "spirit" rather than the "form". This combination of excellent ancient Chinese culture with martial arts novels is not only a major feature of Jin Yong's martial arts novels, but also the reason why his novels have become popular throughout the Chinese world.

## 7 Conclusion

Jin Yong's martial arts novels have plots that break away from traditional narrative patterns. Many of his works use complex suspense to attract readers and are intertwined. At the same time, the characters are vivid and lively, leaving a deep impression on readers. Jin Yong's martial arts novels also contain the rich heritage of traditional culture. He used traditional novels with poems, songs, couplets, etc., and used a lot of poems, colloquialisms, and couplets in his writing. In terms of language expression, he used vernacular and rhymed verses. The use of language is natural and there is no trace of artificiality, which reflects Jin Yong's profound language expression skills.

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