

Innovation of Narrative Theme and Narrative Time of the Television Dramas on the Period of the Republic of China

Centering on *Legend of Fragrance**

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Abstract—The theme of Chinese TV drama about the period of Republic of China heavily relies on the division of time, and the narrative theme is indulged in rendering of love and the narrative technique is “short and flat”. That is easy to dilute the diversity of the themes of the Republic of China and cause the proliferation of homogeneous works. The Chinese present television drama *Legend of Fragrance* has jumped out of these limitations, taking “fragrance” as the narrative field, effectively combining multiple themes of the times, and relying on the selection of narrative time and the narrative network of multi-angle character relations, highlighting the paternal narration to avoid excessive love imbroglio. In a serious historical atmosphere, the quality of the work has been set. The creative technique of the play reflects the trend of multi-theme integration of the current drama on Republic of China theme, which has great enlightening significance to the exploration of the theme and narrative techniques of Chinese TV drama.

Keywords—TV dramas on the period of Republic of China; *Legend of Fragrance*; narrative theme; narrative time; paternal narration

I. INTRODUCTION

As an art of long narration, TV dramas always seek enough time and space to arrange their themes. The touchable history of the Republic of China is a very special period in China, which often attracts the favor of Chinese TV dramas. The magnificence and twists and turns of this period could always contain all kinds of fierce conflicts and thinking about the significance of the existence of people and the nation, which is helpful to the construction of tension in TV dramas. The drama based on the period of the Republic of China has become an important and unique branch of Chinese TV dramas. Those TV dramas often have a large

time span, and generally cover the period from the end of Qing Dynasty to the end of 1940s rather than the history of Republic of China. The content is mostly about powerful families and great men with large invest and famous stars. Thus they are also usually called as “Great Play on the Period of Republic of China”. However, at present, the themes of this kind of TV dramas are more dependent on the rigid division of time, addicted to the rendering of love stories; the narrative techniques are relatively “short and flat”. In addition, the impact of capital gambling, entertainment programs and new media, the theme of the TV dramas on the Republic of China has met the question of “where is the way”.

According to the preface of *TV Research* (2017 No. 2 issue), the paper *The Key to TV Integration and Innovation is to Take the Content as Core* points out that, “some market participants often advocate that content as core is out of date. Content as core has been replaced by technology, channel and platform as the core. Capital logic replaces the logic of literary creation and common sense of life.” [1] In recent years, the TV dramas on the Republic of China, represented by *Legend of Fragrance*, have made breakthroughs in its content quality. It is because they have made their own explorations in the multiple times themes and its paternal narrative techniques in a serious historical atmosphere. It has not only gained a positive response from the market, but also enhanced the glory of the play and highlighted its spiritual core.

II. THE LIMITATION OF NARRATIVE THEME AND NARRATIVE TIME IN TV DRAMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The presentation of the theme is the key to the success of film and television drama creation; how to lay out the plot is important to the theme rendering. Despite the continuous reform on plot and vision, the traditional Chinese drama on

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the period of the Republic of China still lacks sufficient innovation in theme division according to the times.

In the division of themes, excessive emphasis on the absoluteness of times is one of the limitations of former Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China. The related TV dramas mostly take 1937 and 1945 as cutting time to show three main themes according to the characteristics of the history. The first section mainly reflects the freedom of love and the rise and fall of large families in the Republic of China, while the middle section mainly reflects the historical fate of individuals or families in the national anti-Japanese war, while the latter section focuses on the choice of life and belief of individuals in the tide of national liberation. Besides the three major themes, the love story is very common in these dramas. The lack of historical significance and diversified themes of the times is a common problem these dramas are facing. These limitations are embodied in the three popular plays of the Republic of China in the same period. *The Home of Lady* is located in the 1930s before the boundary tablet of 1937, which shows the ups and downs of Shen's family in Shanghai. *Breaking out of the Fog* is located in 1937, when the anti-Japanese war fully broke out. It shows the family changes of the Lin's family in Lanshui City, and the cruel national anti-Japanese war. *Spirit of War* is mainly located in the most decisive period of the Anti-Japanese War. It tells the growing of the unruly young master gradually transforming into an excellent soldier, and elucidates the theme of unity of all classes in the Anti-Japanese War. They more or less present the rigid role of 1937 and 1945 in the themes division of these Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China.

Because of the cutting of the theme rigidly basing on times, the Chinese TV dramas on of the Republic of China often rely on the definite narrative time background. For example, at the end of 2016, the hit *The Unknown, Impossible Mission* and *Deep House 1927* all have definite background time. The definite time, although it will bring the audience a definite sense of time belonging, will also make the plot subject to specific historical events, thus limiting the elaboration of multiple-in-depth themes. Although some works have crossed these two time boundaries by adopting large historical span to show multiple-in-depth themes, they are still divided according to the 1937 and 1945 along with the development of the plot, instead of showing them organically in the same field, and can only be classified as varied themes rather than multiple-in-depth themes. In addition, under this theme division, the narrative time line commonly used in the industry is the directly forward mode. For example, the popular drama *Hidden before Dawn* arranges the plot along the clear historical time of the Kuomintang's overall defeat from the summer of 1947 to 1949. Although the plot is very clear, the audience's appreciation is restricted on this time line, and the vision is constantly enlarged along the time, thus the appeal of the plot is limited. While the film *The Wasted Times*, which also reflects the great historical span of the Republic of China, adopts a disruptive narrative time line, and produces great space for thinking and plot appeal.

Stick to the rendering of love entanglement, the lack of multiple-in-depth themes of the times in the serious history is another limitation of the former Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China period. The indiscriminate love theme has diluted the multiple-in-depth themes and reduced the content and quality of the works.

Although the shadow of love in both Chinese and any other countries' movies and TV works are very common, love seems to be the only theme of Chinese TV plays. The history of the Republic of China is full of struggle and death, while in the contemporary television screen, except a very few political dramas, the pursuit of love could always transcend the brutal struggle to be the main plot. Even the cruel spy drama *Sparrow* and *The Disguiser* focus the theme of love. As a result, the dramas on the period of the Republic of China period, which should be rich and varied, are almost equal to the love drama, and its narrative technique is rather simple. They gradually become the "joking" and "bragging" on the history. In fact, the identity of the characters in the plot, except the mutual jealousy relationship of, can also be a complex relationship of intimacy and alienation; love can also be a pure feeling between husband and wife. Even the conflict of love could be the misfortune caused by the times in *The Age of Innocence*, or the melancholy caused by the family's pressure in *Liang Zhu*, or the tragedy caused by the accident in *Romeo and Juliet*.

In contrast, many Chinese TV love dramas on the history of Republic of China lack elaboration of complex relationships and characters. They mainly stick to the simple triangular relationship, thus forming a "jealousy show" phenomenon. For example, focusing the history from the beginning of the Republic of China to the War of Liberation, the large-time-scale TV drama *Tie Li Hua* adopt the theme of nations' struggle, but there is also a hexagonal relation that five men falling in love with one woman. They are not only school teachers, warlords and local tyrants, but also revolutionary people. Although such design is easy to obtain complex plots, it is unavoidable that it is too patterned, which is detrimental to other topics.

Love entanglement can always transcend the cruel struggle as the main line. Apart from the historical reason that love has always been the theme of literary works, the factors behind it are rather complex. First of all, "Beautiful Appearance" has become a prominent phenomenon in the related Chinese industry; the "beauty selection" among actors and actress are quite popular. "They (producers) believe that placing the label of 'beautiful appearance' on TV play can attract the audience and get high ratings." [2] The dumb blonde and handsome actors have no skill or image to shoot the difficult cruel war drama and serious political drama, flirting and swearing love drama is the most suitable scene for them. That often leads TV works miss the major purpose and add excessive love plot for these beautiful actors and actresses, and limited to the "excessive love entanglement".

Secondly, because of the increasing pressure of supporting the family, it is difficult for married men and single white-collar workers to find time and mood to watch

TV dramas. While housewives and retired people have become the main audience of Chinese TV dramas, which can be confirmed by the advertisements mainly aimed at women customers before and after TV dramas. Compared with the political drama with a strong sense of history, cruel war drama and action drama with tense narrative rhythm, those love plays with broken hearts, imagination and relaxation are more likely to be sought after by them. Some scholars criticize that this is the decline of the audience's appreciation taste, but objectively speaking, it is indeed the change of the appreciation needs brought about by the change of audience.

Thirdly, the Mainland TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China have been deeply influenced by the Hong Kong and Taiwan romantic drama, especially the Qiongyao love drama with the background of the Republic of China as the main era, which has deeply influenced the whole Chinese TV drama industry. Besides, under the current "short and flat" producing direction, love entanglement could often show intensive conflicts as the simplest way to promote the development of the plot, with less investment and quick results.

Nowadays, the TV dramas of the story in Republic of China emphasize the subversion of the stereotype of epic dramas. But this subversion should not invariably focus on the multi-angle relationship of jealousy, undermine the elucidation of other themes and reduce the spiritual level of the works. Many of the Chinese TV dramas on the story of the Republic of China were adapted from famous works, but some of them were still criticized. It could not be denied that some themes and narrative techniques were deviated in adapting. For the audience, "to obtain entertainment is the basic purpose watching movies and TV dramas, and to reach the spiritual enlightenment and insight is the pursuit of a higher level." [3] The dilemma of Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China lies in how to set up the relationship between characters relationship and narrative time under the historical background, not only to meet the needs of the audience, but also to avoid diluting the diverse times themes and without reducing the quality.

III. THE MULTIPLE-IN-DEPTH THEMES OF "FRAGRANCE" AS THE NARRATIVE FIELD IN *LEGEND OF FRAGRANCE*

Although the story took place in the early period of the Republic of China before 1937, *Legend of Fragrance* broke through the limitations of the theme of the Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China. The work combines many themes, such as the contradictions of three families of Ning's, Wen's and An's, the difficult development of fragrance industry, the pursuit of free love among two generations, the resistance to Japanese economic invasion, the detective stories of the Devil Ridge, and the growth of tameless boys. The play does not evade the theme of love, but not the excessive love entanglement. Its love story has been regulated by many other themes. Ning Zhiyuan and An Yichen both fell in love with Leyan at the same time, there was not a lot of rival fighting among them; on the contrary, An Yichen refused to take advantage of

others' danger. For this reason, *Legend of Fragrance* borrows the similar creative techniques of historical dramas such as *Big Family*, and puts the background of multi-theme stories into the history of the hard development of Chinese industry and national struggle, which makes the atmosphere of the stories more historical and less romantic.

Multiple-in-depth themes could make movies and TV dramas present diversified narrative and three-dimensional themes. If multiple themes are mixed together, it is easy to cause chaotic situation. When discussing the polyphonic characteristics of the protagonists' consciousness in Dostoevsky's novels, Bakhtin pointed out that "if we want to find an image that can be yearned for by the whole Dostoevsky world and reflect the appearance of Dostoevsky's basic human world, that is, church, which symbolizes the communication of incompatible minds" [4], and it should not be the "unified philosophy conception" [5] that Grossman believed. Likewise, the multiple-in-depth themes of *Legend of Fragrance* do not point to a specific dominant idea, but to a narrative field of "fragrance", the core element of the work. This technique not only responds to the title of the drama, but also integrates these themes under the changing times. Ning Haotian, a fragrance-maker, hated his junior fellow apprentice An Qiusheng running away with his fiancé Xueyin. Xue Yin died after drinking poison to save An Qiusheng. An Qiusheng thus misunderstood another family Wen' who helped him, and eventually led to the intensification of contradictions among the three families. The harsh involvement of Japanese businessmen in the narration is also desire the fragrance spectrum. Therefore, all these stories, in fact, revolve around the "fragrance" to develop the narration.

"Fragrance" is the narrative field of the whole story. Fragrance-making industry is the national industry that the people of Devil Ridge strive to develop, the fuse of three families' hatred, the catalyst of entanglement of the next generation, the focus of all groups, the root of the crimes of Devil Ridge, the touchstone of human nature, and the mission of all people to guard the national industry. At the end of the play, Koya Taro carefully organized the World Fragrance Club, is the battlefield for all forces to fight at the artifacts level, is the eve of the resolution of fierce contradictions at the psychological level, and is the stage to elucidate the profound significance of multiple-in-depth themes at the spiritual level. This technique neither makes the love theme prevail over other themes, and dilutes the elucidation of multiple-in-depth themes, nor causes the confusion of themes. With this core element as the narrative field and the integration of multiple-in-depth themes, this innovation breaks through the limitations of the theme of the Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China Opera creation.

However, although this technique makes the drama attractive, it shows the dilemma of the theme of the TV Drama on Republic of China. The "Bragging Anti-Japanese Drama" has been initially curbed by the efforts of all groups, but "Spy Dramas" which stick to the theme of Kuomintang-Communist cooperation and love entanglement have begun to spread again. It has become one of the most urgent tasks

for Chinese TV dramas to seek unique themes and avoid imitation.

IV. SELECTION OF NARRATIVE TIME UNDER MULTIPLE-IN-DEPTH THEMES

Narration is always carried out in a certain time and space. The choice of narrative time often includes setting and choosing narrative background time and narrative time line. In this respect, the TV dramas represented by *Legend of Fragrance* have made different explorations.

Legend of Fragrance places the background time of narration in the early years of the Republic of China. Such time point marches the background that people opened their eyes to see the world and Chinese society entered the era of modern civilization, which is conducive to highlighting the diverse themes of the times, reflecting the drastic changes of society, and showing the ups and downs of the glorious world. If the starting point of the story is placed in the feudal society in the late Qing Dynasty, the words and deeds of these men and women in love are obviously against the law, and the changes of the big family can hardly epitomize the national suffering, let alone develop the national industry. If we postpone it in the Anti-Japanese War when the nation is in trouble, it seems that love should belong to anti-Japanese heroes than to young masters and young ladies.

However, unlike the general Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China, which has a very definite background time, the background time of *Legend of Fragrance* is vague. We can only infer from the clothes and life scenes of the previous generation when the grievances occurred that the story began in the early years of the Republic of China and would not be later than the end of the 1920s. This ambiguous time setting reminds us of Mark Twain's masterpiece *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. The author's protagonist Tom's age is also uncertain. Mark Twain's description is obviously not a semi-adult or a young child, but a self-image of the author who yearns for innocence, memory and the naturalness of the Mississippi River. Likewise, the theme to be promoted in *Legend of Fragrance* is not the historical process of the Republic of China, but the struggle of individual and national destiny. The definite time will only make the plot dominated by the historical events which appear before and after, thus restricting the elaboration of multiple-in-depth themes in the play.

In order to highlight the interweaving of multiple-in-depth themes, the narrative time line of the play does not choose the common forward narrative mode in the Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China, but takes the short meeting of Ning Zhiyuan and Leyan as the wedge. Then the story of the next generation grown up was set as the real beginning, and the truth behind it is presented intermittently by dialogue, memory, dreams, old things and other modal narratives. This technique is similar to the timeline layout of the American film *The Da Vinci Code*, which limits the viewer's perspective by the logic of the timeline and produces a strong call for drama. In Ingarden's

view, the work is a schematic outline structure full of indeterminate points and blanks. The realization of the work requires the reader to determine and fill these indeterminate points and blanks. Iser further believes that "blankness itself is the structural mechanism of the text to call readers to read". [6]

However, for film and television works, the traditional text reading expectation has evolved into a multi-modal viewing expectation. At present, Chinese TV dramas often fully tap visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory modes to promote narrative and build viewing expectations. It is a careful plot design in the olfactory mode of the play that can reasonably adopt this narrative method in the plot of *Legend of Fragrance* to avoid the resentment of the previous generation directly penetrating into the relationship of the next generation. That is to say, whether for the purpose of revenge or the original intention of healthy growth of children, the previous generation used the fragrance of forgetfulness to their children, so that the younger generation can start their lives again in the state of amnesia. The American film *Inception* mentions that the difference between reality and dream is that the latter could not find a starting time point. Cut-off memories allow the next generation to enter a dream-like life, but the cruelty of the truth tears apart the dreams on which they live. As the truth and contradictions continue to unfold, the narrative intervention of Japanese businessman Koya Taro has played a role in fueling the flames and gradually reorganizing the narrative lines filled with blanks. Therefore, the setting of narrative time in the works effectively shows the combination of the theme that Chinese people began to pursue free love at the beginning of the Republic of China with the theme of developing national industries and resisting Japanese economic aggression in the 1920s and 1930s.

V. MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES CHARACTER RELATION NETWORK UNDER PATERNAL NARRATION

Reflected in the relationship between characters, the organic combination of multiple-in-depth themes should be a multi-perspective relationship. The narration of the relationship between the multi-perspectives characters full of contradictions and conflicts promotes the rendering effect of the multi-themes, which is also a new trend of the current Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China.

First of all, unlike the fixed narrative identity of the mainstream Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China, *Legend of Fragrance* adopts a variety of narrative identity settings. In the narrative of TV plays, the body and identity of characters are very important. The body is the subject of action, while the identity is the image symbol behind the action. The change of identity often brings about the change of narrative perspective. In Nietzsche's view, the body is a positive initiative. It can explain, evaluate and perspective the world from various angles according to its own strength. In Foucault's view, the body is passive and is the subject of subjugation and transformation by power. [7] It should be said that the role of

the body in the works is largely based on the identity of the characters. The action of the body of the characters in the story is the result of the dualistic dialogue between the external identity and the internal soul, from which the identity and the soul acquire their respective meanings at different levels and enrich the image of the characters together.

The protagonist status of traditional Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China is often directly positioned in the rich young master, or Cinderella-like fairy tales, and little attention is paid to the love stories of ordinary people. Under the thought of resisting patriarchy, the fathers in these TV plays on love story in big family are often negative. They are either spokesman for the feudal parents who obstruct the freedom of love, or are an indispensable figure of their back. Their positive identity, spiritual value, guiding role, as well as the norms and responsibilities conveyed by their father's identity are seldom presented. Anti-patriarchy has been stolen into anti-father in those TV dramas. Maternal narration or female narration has become the main narrative techniques. These narrations about fatherhood are often marginalized, resulting in spoiling mothers, family inner fighting, jealousy among lovers, and indifferent sense of responsibility, which interfere with the diversity of characters and reduce the structure of the works. But in *Legend of Fragrance*, the protagonists' identities are different, and they present multiple identities and interweave with each other. Different identities are connected around father's identity; the conflicts and tangles behind their identities are also the breakthrough to elucidate multiple-in-depth themes. For An Qiusheng, as a revenger, An Yichen is his tool; as an adoptive father, An Yichen is his dependent son. Within the family, Ning Haotian is the father of several intractable children, the main source of family income; in the family group, he is the successor of family business; in the whole community of Devil Ridge, father Ning Haotian is the strong core of resisting invasion. As Xue Yin's lover, Ning Haotian and An Qiu Sheng are rivals; but as fathers, they are allies. The diversity and complexity of fatherhood in family, family and society has greatly promoted the development of the plot.

It can be seen that paternity narrative plays a central role in the whole narrative, and the positive role of paternity, especially the sense of responsibility and sense of overall situation, has been highlighted. It is this multi-perspective network basing on fatherhood that makes it impossible for everyone to act as they wish. Similar to Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter*, the identity of the peeper makes father An An Qiusheng to be in the dominant position of omniscient, but the truth such as Leyan is his daughter, which he did not expect. The identity of father is highlighted and changes the preset narration route. Father is more positive in this drama, which makes the whole work full of tension, and changes the low pattern of similar TV plays which generally focus on selfishness, jealousy and intrigue. In this way, the identity setting on fatherhood brings great psychological tangle and confusion to the groups, and makes the work full of tension. Because of this complex network of multi-perspectives characters, An Yichen did not follow the road of selfish

revenge by all means like Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter*, but chose to fight for the interests of the ethnic group as a father.

Secondly, unlike many related Chinese TV love dramas, the multi-angle relationship network is adopted in *Legend of Fragrance*, which is due to the tragedy between the families of fragrance making on Devil Ridge. In the turbulence, An Qiusheng abducted Wen Shiqin (named as An Yichen later, the eldest son of Wen's), and his daughter, An Ruohuan (named as Leyan later), was adopted by the elder wife of Mr. Wen. That not only caused serious opposition, but also lay a foreshadowing for the next generation's vanishing hatred and enmity. Thus, the relationship of multiple characters for multiple-in-depth themes was formed. The multi-perspective relationship network here is not only the contradictory relationship between generations with multiple narrative perspectives, but also the relationship between the previous generation and the next generation, in which the narrative characters are in multiple contradictory relationships and narrative perspectives. Like Ning Haotian and An Qiusheng are love rivals, they are involved in the love relationship of their children with multiple narrative identities. In addition, many people form contradictory relationships with one person at the same time, and these lovers and rivals are often loved or hated by others. Like Ning Zhiyuan and An Yichen fall in love with Leyan at the same time, while An Yichen is deeply loved by Koya Keiko, but asks her to lure Ning Zhiyuan's sister's lover Wen Shixuan. This network of characters involves fewer people, but it can form a complex and tensile network of conflicts, constantly changing the viewer's perspective.

Finally, the end of video works is often the resolution of contradictions to a certain extent and the re-clarification of the relationship network. Due to the excessive love theme and the unique proposition of the love destination, it is difficult to find other solutions to the flat multi-relationship of the traditional Chinese TV dramas on the period of Republic of China. In the absence of paternity narration, the constructive role of paternity in the whole narrative and the spiritual guiding value of paternity for the growth of characters are evaded. Therefore, the love entanglement in the current Drama on Republic of China is often full of selfishness, cruelty, conspiracy and jealousy. Thus those dramas are often ended with death or ruin: either love rivals destroy themselves together; or many failed pursuers throw themselves into the revolutionary and finally sacrifice; or the pursued dies into her boots, the pursuer take revenge. For example, the TV drama *The Disguiser* does not mainly about love stories, there are also two women (Yu Manli, the Kuomintang secret agent with a very bitter background, and Cheng Jinyun, the peaceful underground Party member) who fall in love with a man (Mingtai, a rogue grows up to be a skilled secret agent). Ultimately, in order to complete the "dead room" plan, Yu Manli, sacrificed magnificently, while Mingtai and Cheng Jinyun inherited the behest of their comrades and grew into excellent spies.

In contrast, as a result of much paternal narration in *Legend of Fragrance*, the sense of overall situation and tolerance often around father greatly promote the rational

development of narration towards the final ending, and enhance the spiritual level of the ending. Although this drama has polygon love, the solution of contradiction ultimately relies on the sense of responsibility in the face of national crisis and the voluntary abandonment between love rivals. All those are the result of paternal narration centering on the responsibility in the play. An Yichen and Ning Zhiyuan deeply fall love with the girl Leyan. An Yichen could have taken the opportunity to win, but he is against the wishes of An Qiusheng to deceive Leyan. Finally, seeing that his sweetheart and his rivals were growing in true love, he chose to step back. Ning Zhiyuan eventually changing from a wandering son to the pillar of the whole Devil Ridge is because under his father's guidance, he had replaced his father position as the father of the whole group. The sense of responsibility made him put aside his personal feelings, and resolutely resisted Japanese economic aggression. "Like all literary and artistic works, the eternal cultural core of TV dramas is to tell positive stories and spread positive content. The eternal literary and artistic function is to educate the mind and enlighten the soul." [8] The theme of love should not be confined to love entanglement, but should also show the function of positive enlightenment, especially the positive spiritual power and growth guidance function behind paternity. The protagonist realizes the spiritual resonance between "loving one person and admiring one person's wish" in his moral choice. The choice between private hatred and national hatred embodies the positive spirit of the nation. As for the setting of the ending, the new mode of some current Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China represented by "*Legend of Fragrance*" avoids the old patterns of traditional similar Chinese dramas. Based on the paternity narrative, the contradiction solution of the multi-angle character net is mainly based on the positive energy model of righteousness, which highlights the spiritual value of paternity, promotes the plot development and enhances the quality of the works.

VI. CONCLUSION

It should be noted that many of the creation of Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China still restrict to the audience ratings. There are rigid theme-division according to times and one-sided interpretation of love, and there are obvious limitations in narrative techniques. Works often seldom pay enough attention to the theme, style, artistic techniques and spiritual sentiment of TV dramas. Although it is not advisable to focus only on "artistic pursuit" and ignore audience ratings in the current market-oriented film and television creation, we should be alerted by the mismatch between ratings and artistic quality caused by the emphasis on entertainment, love entanglement and simple imitation.

Many of the Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China are adapted from famous works, but many of them are still suffering poor comment. It is true that in the process of production, some themes and narrative techniques have been deviated. Under the predicament, the Chinese TV dramas like *Legend of Fragrance* take core element as the narrative field, relies on the skilled selection of narrative

time and the narrative setting of multi-angle character network in single narrative field. It effectively highlights the paternal narration and combines multiple-in-depth themes, improves the content quality in the serious historical atmosphere. These techniques reflect the current trend of multi-element and multi-theme integration of the Chinese TV dramas on the period of the Republic of China, and also have enlightening significance for the future development of Chinese TV drama.

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