

Study of Modern Drama Theory in Lao She's "The Tea House"

Qianyue Xu

Shandong Normal University, Jinan250014, China

13791606470@163.com

Abstract. Among all literary genres, drama is the closest to the daily life of the general public, and China modern drama was born directly in the city under the background of modernity. "The Tea House" has made great achievements in the field of art since it came out, which can be called the pinnacle of drama since the founding of the People's Republic of China, and "The Tea House" has also left a rich and colorful stroke in the history of drama because of its unique artistic creation characteristics. In this paper, the author takes "The Tea House" as an example to deeply explore the artistic features of "The Tea House" in modern drama theory, aiming to deeply explore its artistic value, so as to provide certain reference value for the exploration direction of the peak construction of modern drama art in China.

Keywords: Lao she; "The Tea House"; Modern drama.

1. Introduction

Both China's modern drama and daily life are closely related to the giant concept of modernity. The discourse of modernity originated from the west, but with the rapid development of capitalism in the world and the accelerating pace of globalization, it has already crossed the boundaries of nation-states and become a worldwide phenomenon. To reflect life, art should be more concentrated and typical than life, which is a universal law of art, and drama creation is no exception [1]. As a sensational drama, "The Tea House" is Lao She's masterpiece. "The Tea House" has made great achievements in the field of art since it came out, which can be called the pinnacle of drama since the founding of the People's Republic of China, and "The Tea House" has also left a rich and colorful stroke in the history of drama because of its unique artistic creation characteristics. In this paper, the author takes "The Tea House" as an example to deeply analyze its artistic characteristics in modern drama theory, hoping to provide some reference for contemporary drama art creation.

2. Portrait exhibition structural layout

"The Tea House" is only a three-act play, but it reflects the age of half a century. Even if it is described by novels, it is a difficult problem, let alone a short three-act drama. Lao She's great ability to summarize and refine life is also manifested in his selection of three eras from half a century as the support of this three-act drama; From the teahouse after the failure of the Reform in the late Qing Dynasty to the teahouse during the warlord scuffle in the early Republic of China, and then to the teahouse after the end of War of Resistance against Japan. From the old democratic revolution to the new democratic revolution, these three times are full of characteristic significance, which is an important moment of social change in China for half a century [2-3]. This highly concentrated artistic skill is mainly reflected in the shaping of typical characters in "The Tea House". If a drama lacks the representation and description of typical environment, it is impossible to talk about the shaping of typical characters. Without creating vivid and real typical figures, it is difficult to have artistic vitality and it is also impossible to infect people.

Although "The Tea House" has created many characters, Lao She has his own unique artistic creation techniques and different creative methods for different characters [4]. "The Tea House" adopts the layout structure of "portrait exhibition", which highlights the primary and secondary characters, which is more conducive to highlighting the contradictions of the characters and plays a vital role in portraying the characters of the main characters. The idea that the father and son of the

minor characters come down in the same line makes the characters set in order, and is different from the main characters, and the primary and secondary characters are different.

In "The Tea House", Lao She did not use the traditional technique that he skillfully used plots to structure the drama. Instead, he boldly reformed the drama structure and used characters to drive the story structure to form the drama conflict of "The Tea House". He uses portraying characters, starts with expressing the theme, and skillfully weaves the stories from many characters into a general story. This reflects the broad social outlook. On the screen, as the characters get older, the original steaming teahouse becomes increasingly cold, which symbolizes that this old age is hopeless. Neither the Hundred Days Reform nor the industry saving the country can save its inevitable fate, thus indicating the irresistible trend of a new era. Such dramatic conception and dramatic conflict make the whole drama clear in theme, precise in structure and fierce in dramatic conflict. Three different eras constitute the basic features of China in the past half century [5]. The author's superb structural art is breathtaking.

3. Everyday poetry and resistance in drama

Throughout history, all dramas are composed of conflicts. Once a drama loses its conflicts, it will not be a drama, because the conflicts in the drama are the embodiment of the contradictions among the characters in the drama, and the characters in the drama are the main bodies occupying the space of the drama. In comedy, there are some conflicts between people, some conflicts between individuals and society, but internal conflicts are rarely shocking. In tragedy, conflict is mainly manifested in two forms: one is external conflict, and the other is internal conflict. Plays are composed of external conflicts and internal conflicts. External conflicts often occupy the vast majority of plays, but internal conflicts also play an important role. It not only supplements the shortcomings of external conflicts, but also deepens the plays, making the characters in the plays richer, and the characters and themes of the works have far-reaching significance [6-7].

Daily life in cities always seems to be inseparable from the corresponding public spaces. If cafes and bars are typical representatives of public spaces full of political and cultural meanings in modern Europe, teahouses are probably the indispensable public spaces that can best represent the secular daily life of the urban masses in China. Therefore, if we want to try to observe the cultural and political changes of China urban society, the teahouse, as the most important public space that affects people's daily life, should attract our attention [8]. "The Tea House" is not so much about burying three dark ages and welcoming the new era as the mainstream critics say, but rather about Lao She's intention to present the vicissitudes of public space in the old days, and to express his strong nostalgia for the declining teahouse culture with a melancholy elegy style.

The whole drama of "The Tea House" relies on unique typical characters to grab the audience's attention. The lack of dramatic structure puts high demands on the creators and greatly increases the performance difficulty of the actors. Lao She's "The Tea House" pursues symbolism instead of story. Lao She used a teahouse to symbolize a society. The teahouse is a miniature of China society, and its 50-year history is the 50-year history of China society. At the end, the situation of three old people throwing paper money renders a tragic atmosphere and symbolizes the funeral for the old days. The word "don't talk about state affairs" in "The Tea House" is bigger than one scene, and it also has its symbolic significance.

As far as "The Tea House" is concerned, the teahouse is by no means a purely commercial place, but a public space closely linked with people's daily life. Lao She's "The Tea House" reveals the exhibition function of the teahouse on the ups and downs of life destiny. In order to show the daily life of Beijing residents in the old days as widely as possible in the teahouse, Lao She adopted the drama structure of portrait exhibition. In his view, the daily life of citizens is like a river. Although there are no big waves, waves and eddies still exist [9]. Through the decline of The Tea House as a public space, it shows the social changes in China and conveys the historical information from the

passing of daily life, which is the special perspective of "The Tea House". This public feature of teahouse is consistent with Lao She's good performance in civil society.

4. The subtext meaning and relevance theory of "The Tea House"

Relevance theory is a cognitive theory about human communication and discourse understanding. It explains verbal communication behavior from a cognitive perspective, and holds that relevance is the key to successful communication. Relevance theory holds that all discourses are related. Explicit and inference refer to two aspects in the process of verbal communication. Explicit refers to the behavior that the speaker clearly expresses his intention to the listener. Explicit behavior generally includes two kinds of intentions: informational intention and communicative intention. The author thinks that in "The Tea House", the speaker implies the subtext in the explicit information, and the listener deduces it according to the cognitive context. In the specific cognitive context, lexical information, encyclopedic information and logical information sometimes appear independently, sometimes cross and sometimes simultaneously.

The dialogue of the characters in the play is full of life and Beijing flavor, which makes the audience feel as if they were there, and the use of a lot of "subtext" in the dialogue is more effective. The three-act drama "The Tea House" shows the social life in three times, namely, the failure of the Reform Movement of 1898 in the late Qing Dynasty, the warlord scuffle in the Republic of China and the victory of War of Resistance against Japan over the Kuomintang. From the final artistic effect, "The Tea House" is not an epic, but it is better than an epic. Accurate language design and clever use of "subtext" not only highlight the theme of drama, but also fully show the most acute social contradictions in three historical periods, and even reveal the root causes of social contradictions. Literary works describe the historical era in a grand and heroic way, and the events are huge. However, Lao She only presented the true face of history to the audience through a small stage and a few conversations between a few little people in the teahouse. Every line of the characters was accurate and profound, and there was no screaming accusation, but we heard the most painful wailing of the times.

Purpose means that the subtext behind the speaker's words must be conscious and purposeful, not unconscious and aimless. By expressing information, the speaker wants to express some meaning that he doesn't want or is inconvenient to say. Generally, the speaker deliberately hides his true intention. The conflict between spiritual civilization and material civilization, the confusion of some people after the opening of culture, the contradiction caused by the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the moral bereavement after the loss of ideals, etc., are all vividly branded with the reality of China. Here, the author just makes these serious social reality problems express themselves through absurd forms. The plot lacks a beginning, a development, a climax and an ending. Although it is unreasonable, it is at least completer and more reasonable than most absurd plays in the west, and it has a story that is basically suitable for readers (or audiences) in China. Of course, the characterization of "The Tea House" is not a simple typification, but a fusion of typicality and typology. Although a character's lines are only a few words, the actor is prepared to say a thousand words on his behalf. Therefore, "The Tea House" has achieved the organic combination of characterization and typification. This also enables Lao She to surpass Brecht's drama view that "actors are not allowed to make themselves into characters in the drama for a moment".

Lao She's "The Tea House" is still China's drama with its own innovation in form, although it draws lessons from some expressions of modern western drama. Based on the reality of China and the aesthetic habits of China audience, he creatively absorbed various art forms from China, which enhanced the expressive force and appreciation of the drama. The most important thing of drama is to keep the discussion of social value, and at the same time, go deep into the conscious thinking of human nature and the essential meaning of human beings. Profound history and ideological content are the fundamental reasons for the popularity of "The Tea House", and the purpose of formal innovation is also here.

In Lao She's "The Tea House", the subtext embodied by the characters in the verbal communication process has the communicative function of creating humorous effect, skillfully realizing irony and euphemistic suggestion. At the same time, as a literary work, the language in the work is set to reflect the theme of the work. Therefore, in Lao She's "The Tea House", subtext should realize its literary functions: shaping the characters' personalities, showing their inner world, revealing social reality and deepening the theme of the drama.

5. Modern drama draws lessons from classical drama

Stage instruction is a narrative text description in the script, so it is also called stage instruction. This is an important part of the drama space. Therefore, in general, there is always a description of the scene before each act. If the scenery is the same, it is often mentioned in a sentence or two. If it is different, there will be detailed text descriptions. The instructions on the atmosphere are mainly the use of lights, smoke and sound effects. These descriptions are very important for strengthening the atmosphere of the whole drama and creating the artistic realm of the whole drama. It should be emphasized that the explanation of psychological activities and emotional changes has a problem of unity before and after, which is related to the integrity shaping of characters, and both readers (or audiences) and playwrights need special attention.

In the drama construction of "The Tea House", Lao She didn't confine himself to tradition, but made a breakthrough in Aristotle's drama system and absorbed Brecht's drama system. "The Tea House" is not unified or unitary. From its grand artistic conception, "face-to-face" narrative structure and narrative poetic way, we can see Lao She facing the world, echoing, learning, talking and communicating with Faulkner, Chekhov, Brecht and other masters. "The Tea House" has given people an outstanding deep impression and extraordinary aesthetic impact with its modern spirit and rich and diverse artistic expression.

Although things that appear on the stage originate from life, they are not copies of real life. Although they attach importance to emotion and reason that conform to the logic of life, they never pursue stage illusion that resembles life. "The Tea House" draws lessons from the assumed characteristics of China traditional operas: the assumed nature is a common attribute of art, but the assumed romanticism on the stage is more intense, full of creative imagination, poetic refinement and poetic exaggeration. The trick of "The Tea House" on the stage is to show the truth of the times through the assumption that "the son inherits his father's business" which does not necessarily conform to the truth of life. When an actor changes clothes, he changes a character and a new era [10]. In this way, the stage space of "The Tea House" is blended with the real space, which is audible but invisible, because "it can accommodate all kinds of people, and a big teahouse is a small society.

Lao She is a realistic writer, but there are also expressionist artistic skills in his works. In the drama "The Tea House", symbolism, alienation and other skills are used. Epic drama means to express the true face of modern social life with breadth and depth on the stage of drama and show its development trend. The symbols in "The Tea House" have both general symbols and local symbols. The overall symbol is to use a teahouse to symbolize a social era. The teahouse is not only a specific place for people's activities, but also has its specific symbolic significance. It is a miniature of China society in the past 50 years. Lao She put the artistry of drama in a high position. He said: "What the audience asks us is both emotional and sonorous; It has profound meaning and musicality; Both inspired and enjoyed by art. " It is this idea of drama that pays equal attention to ideology and artistry that makes Lao She create a unique China drama masterpiece.

6. Conclusions

If art wants to reflect life, it must be more concentrated and typical than life. This is a universal law of art, and drama creation is no exception. As a sensational drama, "The Tea House" is Lao She's masterpiece. Although "The Tea House" has created many characters, Lao She has his own unique

artistic creation methods and different creative methods for different characters. As far as "The Tea House" is concerned, the teahouse is by no means a purely commercial place, but a public space closely linked with people's daily life. In the drama construction of "The Tea House", Lao She didn't confine himself to tradition, but made a breakthrough in Aristotle's drama system and absorbed Brecht's drama system. The creation of the drama "The Tea House", which integrates traditional and modern drama, also has great enlightenment for the development of modern drama in China. Creators should constantly draw nutrients from the classic plays such as "The Tea House" and temper their works, further expand their innovative spirit, and contribute to the peak construction of modern drama art in China.

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