The Evolution and Circulation of Cui Nings' Story

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Abstract. The story of Cui Ning has been told for a long time in the early days of ancient times, and can be found in the scripts for story-telling in Song and Yuan dynasties, such as " Mistakenly Beheading Cui Ning" and "Grinding Yu Guanyin", in which the man named "Cui Ning" is a pivotal role in the script. This paper takes the story framework of " Mistakenly beheading Cui Ning" as an example and studies the evolution and circulation of Cui Ning's story in detail. "Mistakenly Beheading Cui Ning" is a Song Dynasty novel by an unknown author, which was first included in the "Capital Popular Novel", but was later selected by Feng Menglong in the late Ming Dynasty for inclusion in the 33rd volume of "Stories to Awaken Men", and slightly modified and renamed as "Fifteen Strings of Cash and Playful Words Become Coincidental Disaster" (hereinafter referred to as "scripts for story-telling in Song"), and then adapted by the Qing Dynasty dramatist Zhu Suchen as the Shuang Xiong Meng(hereinafter referred to as the "scripts for story-telling in Zhu"), and in the 1950s it was adapted by the then National Customs Su Opera Company into the Kunju "Fifteen Strings of Cash" (hereinafter referred to as "scripts for story-telling in Kunju"), which was very popular among the Chinese.

Keywords: Cui Ning, Mistakenly Beheading Cui Ning, Shuang Xiong Meng, Fifteen Strings of Cash, ideological connotation.

1. Scripts for story-telling in Song - the hazards of jokes

1.1. "Whether you are sad or happy, you should be careful and not take things lightly."

Although the title of the text is "Mistakenly Beheading Cui Ning", the opening and ending verses show that the author is intentionally emphasizing the hazards of jokes. There are actually many reasons for the injustice: first, Liu Gui should not have joked about Chen's fate, that is, the " jokes" emphasized in the article; second, Chen should not have left home without verification, and did not lock the door, giving thieves the opportunity to take advantage of; third, the feudal society's three obedience and four virtues deeply restricted her, and if not for these dregs, Chen would not have been so panicked; fourth, a murderer like Jing Shan Da Wang is the main culprit of the case, if there is no such vicious criminals in society, the bloodshed will not arise; fifth, if the law can really do "the net of justice, but not leakage", officials can be justice and integrity, then will find the real culprit, will not wrongly accused this pair of young people.

In the author's opinion, the first two reasons are superficial and incidental, while the last three reasons are the deeper reasons that reveal the essence of society. However, the author only emphasizes the hazards of " jokes ", which is certainly one of the shortcomings of the scripts for story-telling.

According to the author, the cause of Cui Ning's death was the joke of the ordinary citizen Liu Gui, not the error of judgment of the governor or the lawlessness of the Jing Shan Da Wang, so can we conclude that in the society at that time, the dim officials and villains were already everywhere and people were so numb to what they did that even the author of the scripts for story-telling, who was good at criticizing the society, failed to see the root of the problem? In fact, the author is thinking from the perspective of the weaker person. In the old society, the weaker people could not change the harm caused by others, and in that case, they could only find the causes in themselves and seek ways to avoid the scourge. This is the hidden logic expressed in the text: "Whether you are sad or happy, you should be careful and not take things lightly." Many well-known phrases have a deep " the idea of the weaker person ", such as "happiness lies in contentment", "Be forgiving and everything will be fine", etc. The person who says these words may not be satisfied with the status quo, but cannot

change the status quo, so they have the idea of seeking what is less attractive than one's original objective. Liu Gui was killed, Cui Ning was unjustly beheaded, and Chen was cornered. The author concludes the case not by blaming the real culprit, but by blaming Liu Gui for saying something he shouldn't have said, which is like a woman being raped, but people only blame the woman for not being good-looking, which is what Lu Xun calls “glaring at the weaker person”.

1.2. The sprout of female’s initiative consciousness

In his novel, Cui Ning adopted the attitude of keeping out of trouble. In contrast to Cui Ning, who does not act in a rebellious manner in spite of the misfortune that befalls him, Chen, the heroine, is relatively proactive and does not sit idly by when things go wrong, but strikes out decisively to seek the life she wants.

Chen's decisive boldness is not a virulent resistance, but more of a legitimate defense. In hearing Liu Gui's tease, Chen did not rush, only said: "Although this is so, must also inform my parents". Then Liu Gui made the jokes more and more realistic, she realized the seriousness of the problem and began to think about solutions. In the era of "at home from the father, married from the husband", the husband isn’t able to be relied on, the woman can only go to the father to discuss countermeasures, so she left. Chen did not walk away, she is thoughtful, and left fifteen strings of cash at the feet of Liu Gui, and then went to a neighbor's house to explain the matter of staying overnight, leaving a message to the Liu family. Chen did not panic in the face of the crisis and took the initiative to seek changes in order to take control of her own destiny, instead of avoiding and shirking her responsibilities like Cui Ning did at first. This is the first sprout of female’s consciousness.

2. Scripts for story-telling in Zhu

Because scripts for story-telling in Zhu Suchen is richer, the ideas it presents are also more diverse.

2.1. Clean official complex

The scripts for story-telling in Song focuses on the author's sympathy for the merchants, but it is a bit narrow in attributing the root of the tragedy to "jokes" alone.

The scripts for story-telling in Zhu, in addition to adding a story line, is more noteworthy is the appearance of the clear official at the end. In “Fifteen Strings of Cash”, inspired by the dream entrusted to him by the two bears, Kuang Zhong disregards the trouble and fulfills his duty by vindicating the unjust cases of two young men. The scripts for story-telling in Zhu depicts in detail the circumstances of the two unjust cases, but unlike the tone of the scripts for story-telling in Song, the writer no longer blames all the woes on nebulous "jokes", but highlights the importance of the human heart through the contrast between clean and mediocre officials. The dramatist believes that a clean official should not only follow the rules, but also be realistic and practical. People have always had immense expectations of clean officials, and when people encounter injustice and darkness in reality, they often look to the iron-faced and unbiased clean officials. Therefore, throughout the ages, there have been many images of clean officials for people to praise, such as the Northern Song Dynasty's Bao Zheng, his three guillotines, whether it is the imperial relatives, or the ordinary people, who committed a capital crime, it is difficult to escape his justice punishment, the most famous than his execution of the emperor's son-in-law Chen Shimei with a dragon-head guillotine. Another example is Hai Rui of the Qing Dynasty, he once went to Chun'an County as a magistrate, he repeatedly broke some difficult cases during this period, deeply loved by the people. Of course, there is also the important character of this story, Kuang Zhong, who was a Ming dynasty man and was loved by the people of Suzhou for his diligence and loyalty to his duties and for his efforts to remove the evil and work for the people. After his death, many people wept and grieved for him, and erected a shrine to remember him. In the “History of Ming Dynasty”, there is “Biography of Biao Zhong”, which is dedicated to his life.

2.2. Status of businessmen

Among the many adaptations of scripts for story-telling in Zhu's "Fifteen String of Cash" based on "Mistakenly Beheading Cui Ning", the change of identity of the main characters is one of the topics that cannot be ignored. Businessmen remain an inevitable part of the saga, and are even portrayed in many more important ways than in scripts for story-telling in Song. However, it is easy to see the shift in the playwright's view of businessmen and scholarly men when neither Xiong Youlan nor Xiong Youhui are businessmen, but bookish families, and achieve happy endings compared to Cui Ning.

Whether it is a novel or a saga, writers can reveal their ideal pursuits in the literature. The scholar in scripts for story-telling in Zhu passed the examination and became an official, which is the writer's recognition of the scholars and literati. And the author's ideal still lies in the traditional Confucian idea of being an official. Xiong Youlan's beautiful dream of "the brim of the hat is connected to the front of the royal building, and the trail has never left the royal stairs" is actually a replica of Confucianism's "getting promoted to be an official if you do well in your studies".

Compared to this, the status of merchants is less important in the saga. However, as early as the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the development of the commodity economy, the emergence of capitalism, and the idea of emphasizing agriculture and suppressing business, the status of merchants should have been further enhanced, so why do they no longer play the most important role in scripts for story-telling in Zhu? In fact, it was the emergence of new social forces that challenged the dramatists' sense of social superiority, the rise of money power, which greatly enhanced the status of businessmen, who were respected for having money, and the prevalence of money worship, as exemplified by Ximen Qing in The Golden Lotus. In terms of ideology, Wang Yangming said that "the four people (the Four People are those who are engaged in the four professions of scholarship, agriculture, industry and trade) have different professions but are on the same path", which reflects that people have pulled the status of the four peoples, which has existed since ancient times, to the same level. Against this backdrop, some literati remained steeped in tradition, rejecting the emerging population and thus having difficulty adapting to the changes in the outside world. In addition, the goal of winning a noble position for oneself and for one's wife and leave it to one's posterity, which the literati struggled to achieve, was readily available to the merchants by the power of money, which further aroused the righteous indignation of the literati and scholars. They felt that the money of merchants was a desecration of their ideals, so there was bound to be a great divergence between the minds of the scholars and the merchants, and it is easy to understand why the main character was replaced by a literato in scripts for story-telling in Zhu's "Fifteen String of Cash". Of course, in the face of dramatic social changes, some literati chose to follow the trend, such as " Sanyan" and "Erpai" have strongly shaped a number of positive image of businessmen, here is not to list.

3. The scripts for story-telling in Kunju - A Critique of Subjectivism

After the above analysis of the scripts for story-telling in Song and Zhu, we can learn that the strengths and weaknesses of Cui Ning's story coexist, so it is a very important topic for contemporary times to make use of the strengths and avoid the weaknesses, and in this regard, the adaptation of "Fifteen Strings of Cash" by Zhejiang Kunju Company is worthy of our study and reflection.

The first thing that needs to be made clear is that "Shuang Xiong Meng" was written in the scripts for story-telling in Song during the Qing Dynasty, which was still in the feudal period, and therefore, both the background of the time and the social trend were vastly different from the contemporary era, and we need to understand the ideological background of the era in which the kunju writer lived.

The adaptation of "Fifteen Strings of Cash" was carried out under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. The reason why the authorities selected "Fifteen Strings of Cash" for adaptation was that the article catered to the purge campaign carried out at that time and had the value of adaptation. That is, government officials should be conscientious and responsible, insist on seeking truth from facts, purge all counter-revolutionary elements, correct all mistakes made in the

purge campaign, not miss a bad person or misjudge a good person, investigate and study, rely on the people, and refrain from subjectivism and bureaucracy.

Therefore, the editors need to pay attention to the bad ideas of the original work and correct them, as well as to absorb the reasonable parts of the original work. On the whole, "Shuang Xiong Meng" has the following major shortcomings:

First, the line of Xiong Youhui is too fishy, all things develop is through the various actions of the mouse, which is somewhat bizarre. Therefore, the scripts for story-telling in kunju directly removed this plot.

Secondly, the image of Kuang Zhong has many flaws, such as relying on the gods to point out the case, criticizing and accusing the criminals without examination, and joining hands with Guo Yuzhi to play matchmaker and reconcile the conflicts, etc. The scripts for story-telling in kunju removes the line of Xiong Youhui and arranges the events of the field survey of Kuang Zhong to the Xiong Youlan case, inheriting the reasonable plot of the scripts for story-telling in Zhu going to the scene to investigate and enriching the conflict between Guo Yuzhi and Kuang Zhong. At the same time, although the scripts for story-telling in kunju preserved the Kuang Zhong's spirit of cleanliness and honesty, the part in which he vowed to the gods to be a clean official and the guidance through the gods' dreams was deleted. Because the requirement of the new era is to attach importance to the role of the people, so, in the scripts for story-telling in kunju, the people are facing the false accusations of Lou Ahshu, they show exceptional calmness. After Guo Yuzhi jumped to conclusions, people said "This, villain did not dare to talk nonsense", after Kuang Zhong came to the field investigation, and they said the truth one by one, to guide him to clarify the truth. This treatment makes up for the shortcomings of Kuang Zhong's image, but also adapts well to the requirements of the new era.

Thirdly, the original work is not thorough enough in its criticism of Guo Yuzhi's subjectivism. In the process of examining the case, he did seem to have investigated and researched, and he did question the canon of Wuxi County, only that things were too fortuitous, and therefore made a wrong judgment, which more or less concealed the error of his subjectivism. The scripts for story-telling in kunju portrays the episode of the overly persistent interrogation of Xiong Youlan and Su Shujuan as follows:

Guo Yuzhi said: "Look at her so beautiful, how can no one seduce? In her youth, how can she be as cold as ice? She and her adulterer are in love, so naturally they want to fly together. Because of her father's obstruction, killing her father and stealing his money, this is a common human feeling. This case is not to ask, but also has almost understand. I do not know how many suspicious cases have been cleared, let alone your case! No matter how cunning you are, you can still hide it from me?"

This paragraph, which reflects both the overly obsessive subjectivism and Guo Yuzhi's blind self-confidence, can be said to make the character more distinct and the criticism more thorough.

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