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硕士学位论文

The Revenge Epic of Blood and Tears--A Study of The
Orphan of Zhao from the Perspective of Western Theory
of Tragedy

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摘 要

“悲剧”一词由西方人发明,并在此基础上形成了一套完整的悲剧理论。中国在古代是没有“悲剧”概念的,但在中国传统戏剧创作作品中却存在着大量的悲剧,这是不容质疑的。这只能说明世界各民族在思想、情感、道德、荣誉等很多方面是相通的,人们用相似的艺术形式来表现这些相通性。也正是这种相通性给我们提供了用西方悲剧的概念和理论来分析我国传统戏剧中的悲剧作品的可能性。对悲剧的不同理解使得一些学者认为,从西方悲剧理论的角度上看,中国式悲剧并不是真正意义上的悲剧。随着中国戏剧研究的发展,更多学者发现,使用西方悲剧理论去判断中国悲剧的性质是不合理的。

《赵氏孤儿》是一部著名中国悲剧,情节选材于家喻户晓的中国故事。自12世纪被创作以来,这一悲剧就不断以多种形式被搬上舞台。它已被改编成为京剧、话剧、剧以及电影,广泛受到观众的喜爱。作为第一部传播到西方的中国戏剧,《赵氏孤儿》在西方受到了热烈的欢迎。很多学者用西方悲剧理论进行研究,认为:《赵氏孤儿》不是一部悲剧,中国没有悲剧。也有人认为,这一结论的得出是因为他们没有运用正确合适的理论分析中国传统悲剧。

通过分析,本文得出如下结论:首先,西方悲剧理论强调情节简单和情节安排上的浓缩性,《赵氏孤儿》的情节中穿插这悲喜因素,但情节安排具有浓缩性。其次,西方悲剧理论要求塑造具有内心冲突的人物,《赵氏孤儿》中的人物则一直被内心冲突所困扰。再次,西方式悲剧结局一般是悲伤的,它要表现人物的毁灭。尽管《赵氏孤儿》的结局体现的是中国传统的“善有善报,恶有恶报”的观念,但是死者的悲哀和生者内心的创伤永远不可磨灭。最后,西方悲剧赞扬悲剧价值的“崇高”,这种崇高在《赵氏孤儿》中也有所体现。悲剧的复仇主题也给观众带来巨大的悲伤,整个悲剧就像是一部滴着血与泪的复仇史诗。本文从悲剧情节、悲剧人物、悲剧结局和悲剧价值四个方面,用西方悲剧理论分析《赵氏孤儿》,从而得出本剧符合西方悲剧理论要求,是一部名副其实的悲剧。

关键词:《赵氏孤儿》,西方悲剧理论,悲剧情节,悲剧人物,悲剧结局,

悲剧价值

ABSTRACT

The Revenge Epic of Blood and Tears
—A Study of *The Orphan of Zhao* From the
Perspective of Western Theory of Tragedy

Bao Hui

The word tragedy was invented by western people, and they have formed a complete system of tragic theory. In ancient China there was no concept of tragedy or tragic theory. Although there is no obvious concept of tragedy, there are many Chinese traditional dramas with elements of tragedy, which means that different countries and nations share similarities in thoughts, emotion, morality and honor, and express them in similar artistic forms. These similarities make it possible to study Chinese traditional drama from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy. Due to different understanding of tragedy, some scholars do not think that Chinese tragedies can be regarded as real tragedy from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy. With the development of studies about Chinese drama, more scholars think that it is not reasonable to use the Western theory of tragedy as a standard to measure whether a certain Chinese play is a tragedy or not.

The Orphan of Zhao is a historical story widely known by Chinese people. It has been put on the stage since it was composed in the 12th century and has been adopted as Beijing Opera, modern drama, opera, as well as film. As the first play introduced to the West, it has been warmly accepted as a brilliant Chinese tragedy in the West and it was adopted by playwrights from different countries and performed on the stage. Many scholars have studied this drama from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy and got the conclusion that *The Orphan of Zhao* is not a good tragedy, and there was no tragedy in China. Some people believe that they have not used correct method to analysis traditional Chinese tragedies.

Through analysis of the play from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy, this thesis intends to get following results. Firstly, Western theory of tragedy emphasizes simple plot, and arrangement of the plot should be concentrated. The plot in *The Orphan of Zhao* intersects happiness and sadness, but its arrangement is concentrated. Secondly, Western theory of tragedy shapes heroes with internal conflict. Heroes in *The Orphan of Zhao* are always suffered by internal conflicts. Thirdly, Western tragic ending should be sad, it express ruin of heroes. Although the ending of *The Orphan of Zhao* is traditional Chinese “God’s mill grinds slow but sure”, the sadness of heroes’ death and inner wounds of the living cannot be overcome. Lastly, Western theory of tragedy praises highly “submit” of a tragedy, to realize its tragic value. The “submit” has been embodied in *The Orphan of Zhao*, and the theme of revenge brings the audience great sorrow. The whole tragedy creates a revenge epic of blood and tears. In the thesis Western theory of tragedy is utilized to analyze *The Orphan of Zhao* and a conclusion is drawn that this tragedy can be analyzed reasonably with Western theory of tragedy from the perspectives of tragic plot, tragic hero, tragic ending, as well as tragic value.

KEYWORDS: *The Orphan of Zhao*, Western theory of tragedy, tragic plot, tragic hero, tragic ending, tragic value

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The word tragedy is invented by Western people and the West has a long history in tragedy theory research. They have made a lot of achievements. In *Poetics*, Aristotle sums up an ancient Western thinking about drama, and he writes that a tragedy should treat a serious subject and involving persons of significance. According to Aristotle, when the audience see a tragedy, they should feel both pity and fear because of the reorganization in themselves and the potential for similar reactions. The “Purging” of these emotions that the audience experience as they watch the dramatic action unfold is called “catharsis”. To ensure the effect of catharsis, the protagonist of a tragedy must draw the attention of the audience and arouse their sympathy. In an exalted position, the fall of a tragic protagonist is greater and more serious than that of an average person; therefore, it arouses more pity and fear in the audience. Often the entire society suffers as a result of the actions of the protagonist.

At some point in a tragedy—usually after the climax—the protagonist recognizes the reasons for his or her downfall. This recognition elevates tragic protagonists to grandeur and gives their suffering meaning. Without this recognition, there would be no tragedy, just pathos—suffering that exists simply to satisfy the sentimental or morbid sensibilities of the audience. In spite of the death of the protagonist, then, tragedy enables the audience to see the nobility of the character and thus to experience a sense of elation.

In ancient China there was no obvious concept of "tragedy", and Chinese scholars did not take much interest in tragedy until the twentieth century. Because of the lack of Chinese theory of tragedy, many scholars in China would like to use Western tragic theories to analyze traditional Chinese tragedy. When the audience watch a Chinese tragedy, they usually feel sympathy when the protagonist is tortured. With the coming of conventional happy ending, sympathy is replaced by the delight of triumph. Some scholars think there is no "catharsis" in the process of seeing the play and they get the same conclusion: "The highest dramatic art is of course tragedy and it is precisely in tragedy that our old playwrights have not a man failed"(Qian 2005: 54). However, with more studies in Chinese tragedy, scholars think it is unarguable that there are many elements of tragedy in Chinese traditional dramas. They state that since the traditional Chinese tragedy and the Western tragedy are born in totally different cultures, it is reasonable that Chinese and the Westerners have different aesthetic outlooks and habits of appreciation.

To be exact, Western drama treats a serious subject and persons of significance such as kings, princes and their destiny. Chinese tragedy has more extensive themes. They draw materials from the history without caring much about historical accuracy. Western tragic ending is catastrophic, but Chinese ending is happy. Most Chinese tragedies are mixtures of tragedy and comedy. They have tragic beginnings but comedy endings, because the root of Chinese philosophy and religion is the doctrine of the mean Confucianism². Although some Western tragedies have happy endings, they do not agree with Chinese conventional happy ending.

Although there are some different tragic elements in Chinese tragedy, tragic forms and themes are similar with Western tragedy. That means different countries and nations have interlinks in thoughts, emotion, morality and honor. These interlinks make it possible to study Chinese traditional drama from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy. We should not simply use the Western theory of tragedy as a standard to measure whether a certain Chinese play is a tragedy or not, but conduct more analysis of Chinese tragedy from the perspective of Western theory of

tragedy. *The Orphan of Zhao* is the first Chinese tragedy introduced to the West, and there have been many studies about the play from different perspectives both in China and in the West, of which criticisms are radically distinct. Because of its importance in Chinese literature and influence in the West, it is reasonable to take it as an example to analyze Chinese tragedy from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy. Because of the great influence in Europe, scholars from both China and Western countries have finished many studies about the tragedy from different perspectives, which is the inspiration for the thesis.

This thesis is going to analyze *The Orphan of Zhao* with the Western theory of tragedy and get the conclusion that this tragedy is fit for the theory from the perspective of tragic plot, tragic heroes, tragic ending, as well as tragic value. There are five chapters in the thesis. The Introduction tells the significance of the study and the goal of the research, and the background knowledge and synopsis of the play are mentioned in the second chapter. With above mentioned background knowledge, studies about the play are stated from perspectives of Chinese traditional tragedy and Western theory of tragedy in the third chapter. The fourth chapter, which is the main body of the thesis, is divided into four parts to support the main ideal of this thesis. Different factors of tragedy are discussed in every part, that is, definitions of factors, comparison of Western tragedy and Chinese tragedy with a detailed analysis of *The Orphan of Zhao* followed. With above analysis, the conclusion is got in the last chapter: from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy *The Orphan of Zhao* is still a great tragedy; Chinese tragedy has common features with Western tragedy and it is a part of world tragedy.

CHAPTER TWO

JI JUNXIANG AND *THE ORPHAN OF ZHAO*

The Orphan of Zhao was a true revenge story recorded in many historical books. Based on the history story, the author Ji Junxiang, lived in Yuan Dynasty, adapted it and the play was well-accepted since its first show. As a great Chinese tragedy, *The Orphan of Zhao* is the first Chinese play known in Europe in the 17th century. Thanks to Western writers' adoptions and criticism of the play, "China fever" quickly reached the climax and the "enthusiasm for the orphan" prevailed in the European theatres, which has important influence to studies of the play. Therefore, in order to study the play from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy, it is quite necessary to introduce the historical background of the author and the play, as well as its influence in the West.

The drama *The Orphan of Zhao* was set in Jin State during the Spring and Autumn Period, while the author Ji Junxiang lived in Yuan Dynasty. Ji Junxiang, also known as Ji Tianxiang, was born in Dadu, the capital of Yuan Dynasty. There is little record about him left in history. As a famous dramatist in Yuan dynasty, Ji Junxiang has six works, of which *The Orphan of Zhao* is the only one that has been preserved. Living in the capital of Yuan Dynasty he could see and feel the control of the government directly and understand people's expectation to the society clearly.

Yuan Dynasty is a special period in Chinese history, because the government was controlled by the Mongolian people. Dadu, the capital of Yuan was built on the old capital of Song Dynasty, and it was called Yanjing by the Mongolian emperor Kublai Khan. He devoted himself to the construction of the capital to build a center of

politics, economics and culture. “In 1283, Kublai Khan had finished all the projects of the city wall, and people began to live in a relatively stable state”(Li 1996: 156). The economics developed well, the number of population was enlarged, and Dadu had become a center of culture in North of China. However, due to Chinese traditional Confucianism Chinese did not accept the government of national minorities, so they were not satisfied with stable social environment but always tried their best for national rejuvenation.

Although Kublai Khan ended the Zhaos’ government and corruption of Song Dynasty, people regarded the Mongols as invaders. They had the strong emotion to avenge for the country. They hoped that there were some heroes, who could rise up to stop the control of Mongols. Yuan is the dynasty mixed with ethnic struggles and conflicts. On the one hand these struggles and conflicts made people lived in abyss of suffering; on the other hand they also pushed the history forward. In this sense, although these conflicts meant wars and disasters, they also widened dramatists’ life and creative vision and made them pay more attention to people’s lives. Dramatists understood what people wanted to see and they expressed their wished of national rejuvenation in their works, which were put on the stage and accepted by people quickly, and this made Yuan Drama the most welcomed form of art in Yuan Dynasty.

In 1260s, Dadu, where many playwrights lived, was the centre of Yuan drama. At that time, “Lyrics set to the northern tunes were known as ‘san chu’, while the operas which used them were ‘tsa chu’, the celebrated Yuan drama” (Feng 1959:83). As a sign of mature Chinese drama, “tsa chu” is a good way to express Chinese people’s feelings of daily lives and the country. In form, *The Orphan of the Zhao* is “tsa chu”, the most popular form of drama to common people at that time, so the play could be accepted easily by the audience. The tale can be dated back in the *Zuo Zhuan*, but it focused on Zhao Dun’s (the grandfather of the orphan) story. The orphan was seldom mentioned. There was no reference of other characters like Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu in *Zuo Zhuan*. Ji Junxiang’s *The Orphan of Zhao* was written based on an episode in Sima Qian’s *Records of the Historain*, the play has

its full name *The Great Revenge of the Orphan of Zhao Family*. The chapter of *Records of the Historian—The House of Zhao* especially records the rise and decline of the Zhao family. Si-ma Qian told the story in detail and shaped Tu Angu, the maker of the tragedy. Liu Xiang's *The New Annals* (《新序》) and *Garden of Tales* (《说苑》) also contain versions of the story, which are quite similar with Sima Qian's record.

Tragedies can reflect struggles and conflicts in reality, which is “a conflict between a historical requirement and the impossibility to fulfill the requirement” (Wang 1982: 3). Impressed by these chivalrous and heroic figures, Ji Junxiang adored the priceless friendship and strong feelings of national rejuvenation and adapted this story into Yuan Dynasty “tsa chu”, *The Orphan of Zhao*, in which the principles of national revenge and national revitalization are demonstrated obviously.

The tragedy happens in the Spring and Autumn period, when the king of State Jin (Jin Ling Gong) favors assistant Tu Angu, who hates Prime Minister Zhao Dun and orders one of his servants to assassinate Zhao Dun. The servant is deeply moved by Zhao's loyalty to the Jin State when he is about to act, and cuts his own throat. Tu Angu frames Zhao Dun up and suggests the King to kill Zhao's family, which leads that all Zhao's family members and servants of a total 300 people are killed. Zhao Dun's daughter-in-law, Princess Zhuang Ji, is the sister of the King, who is excluded from the massacre and ordered to move into a palace.

The Princess is pregnant at that time, and in order to save the Zhao lineage, the princess figures out a solution with one of Zhao's friends, Cheng Yin, who is a physician working for Zhao Dun. When the orphan is taken out by Cheng Bo, the guard Han Jue finds the baby but does not hope the only descendent of a good man to be killed, so he lets Cheng Ying leave and kills himself. Learning that the orphan has been out of the palace, Tu Angu orders that all the babies who are born at about the same time as the orphan in the state should be killed. Cheng Ying then visits Zhao Dun's friend, Gong-Sun ChuJiu and asks GongSun to report to Tu Angu. Cheng Ying had a baby son who is about the same age as the orphan, so he is going to sacrifice him and his son to save the orphan and other babies, and then GongSun

could bring up the orphan and avenge them. GongSun is too old to raise the orphan up, so he asks Cheng Ying to take care of the orphan and he takes Cheng Ying's role. Cheng Ying reports to Tu Angu so that Cheng's own son and GongSun are killed by Tu. To protect the orphan more efficiently, Cheng asks Tu Angu to take the orphan as his adoptive son.

Twenty years later, the orphan has become a well-educated young man with excellent martial skills, and Cheng Ying thinks that the orphan has got ready to know everything, so he draws pictures of what has happened twenty years ago. He is in tear for his own son and the misunderstanding to him for such a long time. The orphan, Cheng Bo (Zhao Wu), is shown the pictures and learns who he is. Cheng Ying set a banquet, at which the orphan tells Tu Angu the truth and kills him and revenges for the whole family and all the heroes who have sacrificed for him.

From the play, it is clear that the family name Zhao was hypersensitive in Yuan Dynasty, which stands for the perished Song Dynasty and the Central Plains Nation controlled by the Mongols. The orphan finally killed Tu Angu, which showed the author's strong emotion of national revenge. At the end of the drama, the orphan was bestowed the royal family and named Zhao again, which meant not only the revitalization of the Zhao family but also the dream of the revitalization of the country. From the synopsis of Ji Junxiang's *The Orphan of Zhao*, we can see that Ji Junxiang added his own artistic fabrications to the story to make the whole story more complete and suspenseful. He made Cheng Ying the first hero and emphasized the conflict between justice and injustice and the theme of loyalty and revenge, so the ideas of poetic justice and commendation of the righteous penetrated the exciting development of the story. It was these ideals in tragedy that aroused a French priest to translate it and take it to the West.

It was first translate into French and named it *The Orphan of Zhao, a Chinese Tragedy* by Ma Yuese, a priest of the Society of Jesus in France. Then Father Du Halde, the secretary to the master who presided over the confession by French king Louis XIV, included the translation into his book *The Description of the Empire of*

China and Chinese-Tartary, Together with the Kingdoms of Korea and Tibet; Containing the Geography and History (Natural as well as Civil) of Those Countries and had it published. Immediately after the book made its debut, it caused a stir in the literary circles and received warm recognition.

When spread to the west, *The Orphan of Zhao* was welcomed by Western people and translated into many different languages. It has the revenge theme which has been well accepted by Europeans. The story happened among nobles, which is highly praised by many Western scholars and writers. Scholars and playwrights regard it as a great Chinese tragedy and rewrite it into different versions. The drama was first adapted and re-created from *The Orphan of Zhao* by Voltaire. On August 20, 1755, *The Orphan of China* by Voltaire made its official debut, performed by the actors and actress from comedie-Francaise (Theatre Francais). This performance was warmly received by the public who seldom received Chinese culture and caused a stir in the theater of France and Europe. Due to Voltaire's *The Orphan of China*, Europe's "China Fever" quickly reached the climax.

After watching *The Orphan of China* by Voltaire, British writer Arthur Murphy felt that it was not perfect written and adapted his version of *The Orphan of China*. Another British writer William Hatchett, who always paid attention to Chinese culture, was moved by the story and adapted it. Both of Murphy and Hatchett discovered unlimited appeal in *The Orphan of Zhao* and they placed their earnest expectations on the story. Apart from France and Britain, some other European writers also adapted *The Orphan of Zhao*. In Italy, P. Pietro Metastasio changed *The Orphan of Zhao, a Chinese Tragedy* by Ma Yuese to *The Chinese Hero*. The great German writer Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe also wanted to adapt it to a new Chinese drama—*Elpenor*, but he never finished it. Russian Writer Weiland for the first time wrote a Russian novel based on it.

Why did the writers want to adapt *The Orphan of Zhao*? Goethe gave an explanation. "He said he wanted to show Chinese characteristics and the oriental absolutist customs. From this we can also see that introduction of *The Orphan of*

Zhao aroused the Europeans' strong interest in Chinese culture and they hoped to have a better understanding of China through the adaption and presentation of this drama”(Li 2010: 152).

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a famous traditional drama, Chinese scholars have finished lots of studies about it from the perspective of traditional Chinese tragedy. Many scholars believe that with distinct features of Chinese tragedy, *The Orphan of Zhao* is a great tragedy, if not the play cannot be passed from generation to generation and keeps its popularity in different fields of arts. With the development of communication between Chinese and Western cultures, new thoughts rise abruptly. Scholars would like to study more comparisons and intercommunications about different cultures and literature works. Although it was welcomed at first, it had got different criticism from perspectives of the Western theory of tragedy, and it is the criticism that enlightens scholars to study this play from different views and explore its features of tragedy.

3.1 Studies of *The Orphan of Zhao* From the Perspective of Chinese Traditional Tragedy

Different scholars in different period have completely different opinions about the play. Some Chinese scholars firmly held that Tragedy is by no means peculiar to Western countries and in China there are very excellent tragedies. Wang Guowei considered *The Orphan of Zhao* and *Tou Er is Wronged* as real tragedies and they even “deserve to be listed among the greatest tragedies in the world”(即列之于世界大悲剧中，亦无愧色也)(中戏，1984:85). Some other scholars, such as Qian

Zhongshu, and Chu Kwang-tsien who are quite familiar with the Western tragedy and tragic theories, compared the Chinese plays which were called “Classical Chinese Tragedy” by Wang Guowei with the classical Western tragic theories and finally arrived at a conclusion that there had never existed any tragedy in China, since so-called “Classical Chinese Tragedy” could not conform to the Western theory of tragedy.

“The highest dramatic art is of course tragedy and it is precisely in tragedy that our old play wrights have not a man failed”(Qian 2005: 54). Qian Zhongshu thinks that Chinese serious drama belongs to romantic drama. He states that Chinese play does not present a single master-passion, but a series of passions loosely strung together (Qian 2005: 54). Different from Wang Guowei, he does not think *The Orphan of Zhao* is a tragedy.

The play closes with ample poetic justice and universal jubilee: the villain is cruelly done to death, the orphan recovers his lost property, and Cheng Ying receives rewards for his sacrifice. Here the tragic conflict is more intense and more internal. Cheng Ying’s self-division between love for his own boy and the painful duty of sacrifice is powerfully presented. But unfortunately, the competing forces, love and duty, are not of equal strength and there is apparently no difficulty for the one to conquer the other... This play which gives high promise to be a tragedy ends in material fruition rather than spiritual waste.

(Qian 2005: 61)

Chu Kwang-tsien, the most famous Chinese aesthetician argues that “More than five hundred plays were written in the Yuan Dynasty alone, but not a single one of them can be properly called a tragedy” (Chu 1993:207) . “The idea of Fate is essential both to the creation and to the appreciation of Tragedy” (1993:120). Fate is one of the important philosophies in religions. However, Chinese people do not have a fixed religion, and they always have worshippers of different religions. Instead of religious belief, they would like to believe their own philosophy: Confucianism and

Daoism. They think that man can have his own salvation by himself rather than any divine force. That is why scholars insist that there had never existed any Tragedy in China.

Chu Kwang-tsien thinks that drama in China was always a synonym for comedy. Although there are some unhappy incidents in plays, the ending is always happy. He takes *The Orphan of Zhao*, which is best known to European readers, as an example to support his statement from the perspectives of plots, heroes and endings. In his opinion, the play is introduced to Europe mainly because that without long and consequent lyrical element the play is easy to be translated. He compared the plots of *The Orphan of Zhao* with *Athalia* and *Hamlet*. He said,

One might expect that it is something of sanguinary nature like *Hamlet*, filling the stage with corpses in the fifth act. But it is nothing of the kind. The revenge is only promised by a royal degree(指公孙杵臼) and not represented on the stage. The final stroke comes to the satisfaction of everybody. Even the villain himself acknowledges its justice. (1993:210)

That is to say, the play emphasizes the escape rather than the revenge of *The Orphan of Zhao*, so the hero is Cheng Ying rather than the orphan himself, who is also quite different from Western tragedy. Moreover, the happy ending makes the tragic theme turn into a comedy. Therefore, *The Orphan of Zhao* is not a tragedy at all.

3.2 Studies of *The Orphan of Zhao* From the Perspective of Western Theory of Tragedy

The Orphan of Zhao was also criticized by some Western scholars. There are also different voices about it. When it was widely welcomed in Europe in the 17th century, Marquis Argens, who was influential in France, criticized that there were some defects in the drama from the classical dramatic view in Europe at that time.

He stated that the writing of *The Orphan of Zhao* did not follow the “Three Unities”³, especially the Unity of time and the Unity of place, because there were inconsistencies in both the time and scenes of the drama. He did not think the complicated plot could be stated clearly in such a short play. From killing of the Zhao to the revenge, twenty years has passed, so the time was not in unity. Furthermore, the blood and cruel scenes were improper and too intense to be staged. He listed some bloody scenes in the play:

Zhao Shuo's wife hanged herself in order to let Cheng Ying rescue the orphan right after she gave birth to the orphan of Zhao; Gongsun Chujiu bumped himself to death against the stair after being clubbed; and Tu Angu was tortured savagely. Marquis Argens pointed out that such scenes should only be briefed and explained to the audience as a background instead of being presented on stage. (Li 2010: 160)

Different from Marquis Argens, the English critic Herder praised the drama of *The Orphan of Zhao* and compared it to the ancient Greek tragedies. He believed *The Orphan of Zhao* had reached Greek artistic height and was a very excellent drama as they were. He thought the plot of *The Orphan of Zhao* was quite similar with Greek tragedy *Electra*. They had the same theme of revenge. He also said *The Orphan of Zhao* and Greek tragedies “were both successful works in imitation of nature and were similar or identical in the way of writing” (Li 2010: 162). “Herder concluded that there were two rules in Greek tragedies—united action and coherent incident” (Chen 2004:64). *The Orphan of Zhao* generally could meet the two rules.

Today more and more scholars begin to challenge authority. In recent years scholars pay more attention to comparative study between Chinese and Western tragedies. They discuss Western theory of tragedy from different points of view and provide others more space to analyze Chinese tragedy. Li Zhixiong discusses the following issues in his work *Aristotle's Classical Narrative Theory*: three differences between the plot of Aristotle and modern narratology, five types of “discoveries” in tragic plot, four principles of tragic character, and the divine essence of thought, the

lyrical characteristics of diction, the function of lyrical poetry by adornment & actualization and the tragic effect of spectacle. Guo Yusheng states in his *Tragic Aesthetics: Historical Review and Contemporary Interpret*: “Tragic adopt negative pattern such as pain, suffering, exterminate confirm indirectly human practice-creation freedom. Speaking briefly, the endings of tragic have mainly three situations: “the pattern of exterminate of flesh, the pattern of injure of spirit, the pattern of harmony, reunion” (2006:7). He thinks that classical tragic or contemporary tragic, the death and suffering of tragic characters have double meaning. They analyze Western theory of tragedy form different points of view, and provide us more angles to appreciate Chinese drama and its influence and development in the world literature.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF *THE ORPHAN OF ZHAO* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WESTERN THEORY OF TRAGEDY

With the advance of globalization, communication of different countries has become universal. Chinese people can see a wide variety of tragedies from the West and Western people have interests in studying Chinese tragedy. Due to different living environment and ways of thinking, people in different countries have different points of view to understand tragedies. Western theory of tragedy is illustrated fully in Aristotle Poetics, in which Aristotle concluded his understanding of drama and suggested theories of different kinds of drama. He emphasizes the importance of tragedy, represented standards to determine what kind of tragedy is good, and analyzes elements in tragedy. The complete system has been used as a rule to measure if a tragedy is good or not in the West. Ji Junxiang's *The Orphan of Zhao* is always considered as a traditional Chinese tragedy. With Chinese tragic features, it has been welcomed by Chinese people for hundreds of years. As the first tragedy published in the West, *The Orphan of Zhao* must have its highlights to satisfy Western people's expectation. This chapter will discuss these features from the perspectives of tragic plot, tragic hero, tragic ending as well as tragic value to interpret the secret of its attraction.

4.1 Tragic Plot

Plot is the playwright's arrangement of events, which we experience as the performance or reading the play. It connects events by cause and effect, which gives rise to conflict. Besides, it is the devices the playwright uses to engage us emotionally and intellectually. Tragedy playwrights make great efforts to work out a tragic story with good arrangement of plots, and it is the wonderful plot that tells the story vividly and constructs the soul of this tragedy. Based on a historical story, there is a wonderful plot in Ji Junxiang's *The Orphan of Zhao*, and it is quite necessary that analyze its tragic plot. Firstly, the definition of plot must be defined clearly.

4.1.1 Definition of Plot

Aristotle defines the tragedy in his article "On Tragedy" as follows:

Tragedy...is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its katharsis of such emotions. (Goldblatt 1977: 363)

Here he gives a fixed model for tragedies. First, the action must be serious and complete; then, the language must be written with rhythm; lastly, some parts are rendered through the medium of verse alone, others with the aid of song. He also puts forward six elements of tragedy: Plot, Characters, Thought, Diction Melody and Spectacle, of which plot is important.

Plot is the first principle, because it is "the soul of a tragedy". A tragedy should have a whole plot, which means it has beginning, middle and end. These complex parts must closely connect together to make it a whole system and the plot must have a single issue. The length of plot is also limited: "A length which allows

of the hero passing by a series of probability or necessary stages from misfortune to happiness or from happiness to misfortune”(Adams 1971: 56). That is to say, Aristotle thinks that for the development of plot there are two forms: “from misfortune to happiness” and “from happiness to misfortune”. He emphasizes the importance of harshness in a tragedy rather than sadness. As the soul of a tragedy, the tragic pleasure should be found from the plot. He ranges plots into three stages: the worse situation is the hero has already known what to do but does not do it; a better situation is the hero has finished something before he got to know if he should do it; the best one is when the hero makes the final decision he suddenly realizes something and makes a different ending.

Although plot encompasses what happens in a play, it is more than the sum of its incidents. Plot is the order of incidents, their arrangement and form. Traditional plot structure consists of an “exposition”, presentation of background information necessary for the development of the plot; “rising action”, a set of conflicts and crises; “climax”, the play’s most decisive crisis; “falling action”, a follow-up that moves toward the play’s resolution or denouement. “In 1863, the German critic Gustav Freytag devised a pyramid to represent a prototype for the plot of a dramatic work” (Kirsznner& Mandell 2006:1337). According to Freytag, a play typically begins with exposition, which “presents characters and setting and introduces the basic situation” in which the characters are involved. Then during the rising action, complications develop, conflicts emerge, suspense builds, and crises occur which means the rising action culminates in a climax. Finally during the falling action, the intensity subsides, eventually winding down to a resolution, or “denouement”, in which “all loose are tied up”.

Therefore, it is clear that plot is three interrelated things. Firstly, it is the playwright’s arrangement of the events, which we experience in the process of performance or reading of the play. Secondly, it is the connection of events by cause and effect, which makes conflict rise. Thirdly, it is the devices which the playwright uses to engage us emotionally and intellectually, such as rising action, climax,

surprise, intensification of conflict.

Plot is the “soul”, while other elements also play important roles in the development of plot. Character holds the second place, and Aristotle thinks the first important feature of a character is that he should be good and such goodness can be “possible in every type of personage” (Adams 1971: 59). Characters should also be made appropriate, real and consistent. Thought is the faculty of saying what is possible. It depends on historical background of the author, the purpose of writing, and some themes of the play and many other conditions. Diction is the expression of meaning in words; it can be verse or prose. Melody is good embellishment to tell the story and attract audience. Spectacle is hardly controlled by playwright, and it falls apart from actors and representation.

These six elements are closely related to each other. In a drama, plot unfolds through action: what characters say and do. Generally speaking, plays do not include narrators to ensure that events will move smoothly along. Instead, characters’ dialogue and thoughts, stage directions and staging techniques work together to move the play’s action along. “Characters can recount past events to other characters, announce an intention to take some action in the future, or summarize events that are occurring offstage” (Shen 2008:101). Characters’ thoughts are revealed by their dictions to promote the development of the plot. Dialogue reveals what is happening and sometimes suggests what will happen in the future or indicates what had happened in the past. In such situations dialogues takes the place of narrators. Melody can also move a play’s action along, predicting excitement or sorrow or a romantic interlude or a particular character’s entrance. Stage directions and staging techniques constitute spectacle together. By special entrances and exits, stage directions efficiently move the audience from one location and time period to another and identify the play’s structural division—acts and scenes—and their accompanying changes of setting. Staging techniques can advance a play’s action. The six elements make a drama treat a serious subject and persons of significance. To push the plot development, other five elements must be

connected together, and with the help of other elements the plot can be performed perfectly and vividly.

4.1.2 Comparison of Western Tragic Plot and Chinese Tragic Plot

As plot is the soul of a play, differences between Western tragedy and Chinese tragedy are first revealed in plots. Western tragedy and Chinese tragedy have different interpretation to plot, so they have different requirements on the development and arrangement of plots to provide the audience an ideal tragic pleasure. As for Western tragedy, it requires heroic characters and great events, and protagonists must have some fatal flaws lead to tragic incidents. These features have their special requirements on development and arrangement of plots—the simple development and concentrated arrangement.

First, the plot must be simple. The plot must develop from happiness to sadness—it allows neither perversion of the development (from sadness to happiness) nor alternative development (mixed with happiness and paradox). Aristotle points out that “A well-formed plot will be simple rather than (as some people say) double, and that it must involve a change not to good fortune from bad fortune, but (on the contrary) from good fortune to bad fortune” (Aristotle 1996:22). This kind of plot asks for sad ending for they believe happy ending can not constitute tragedy. “For the poet is guided in what he writes by the wished of his audience. The pleasure, however, thence derived is not the true tragic pleasure” (Aristotle 1996: 24). To keep the seriousness of tragedy, comedic elements even some funny words are not allowed to appear in tragedy. Tragic plot can make striking tragic effect.

Second, the arrangement of plot must be concentrated. The development and change from happiness to sadness should be concentrated in some limited acts so the sad ending comes abruptly. Ups and downs change radically from happiness to the

end of the story. These continuous tragic plots are concentrated into some sections and the acts are divided according to these sections. These concentrated section move act after act to the climax of the tragic conflict. The concentrated plot is also the concentrated rhythm of a tragedy. When the audience watch a drama in a theater, they can feel the time of the plot development, and concentrated plot provides them aesthetic speed. Therefore, in order to accelerate the arrival of sad ending and get more intense tragic effect, Western tragedy would like to choose the concentrated plot.

Chinese tragic plot is quite different from Western tragic plot. The development of plot is intersecting and the arrangement of plot is stretched and then it forms the comparison of happiness and sadness. The intersecting development of plot is the comparison of happiness and sadness during the development of plot. Chinese tragic plot is contrary to Western simple development of plot. Followed with happy ending, the suffering process is adopted to Chinese tragedy, which means that Aristotle's "double structure" is the best ending in Chinese tragedy.

The intersecting development of plot can be discussed from two aspects. First, the protagonists' suffering is followed with triumph ending. This is one of the basic features of the difference between Chinese and Western tragedy. In Chinese tragedy, no matter how much misery the hero has suffered and how unfortunate he is, the result of these disasters always contains a hefty dose of comedy. Some plots develop from sadness to happiness; others have a happy beginning, a miserable body and a happy ending. Chinese happy ending has nothing like Western disastrous ending, and it is the happy ending that brings a kind of Chinese romance.

Second, the comparison of happiness and sadness provides the audience mixed feeling. Chinese tragedy would like to present a tragicomedy, which is a taboo in Western tragedy. There are some tragicomedies in Western tragedy, but they think this is a kind of comedy because it has features of tragedy and comedy and comedy is always dominated. However, the comparison of happiness and sadness in Chinese tragedy is not the so-called tragicomedy, because it requires that the development of plot should be mixed with happiness and sadness. Every act should focus on one

kind of feelings, and different acts provide the audience different feelings and the mixed feelings can make the audience feel the whole process of heroes' vicissitudes of life. Chinese tragedy is not tragicomedy at all. It is never dominated by comedy, and it is not a mixture of tragedy and comedy. Some Chinese tragedies even have some comedian characters to make the comparison of happiness and sadness. It is this comparison that makes tragedy more miserable.

Chinese tragedy has stretched plot, which means the process of development is extended. Chinese tragedy often has some separated acts which are mixed with happiness and sadness and they together move the story along. This is not used for promoting the coming of the ending but lengthening the process of suffering. Chinese people believe that if they want to have some good ending, heroes must suffer a lot, so the tragic effect of lengthening is not peripetie, but the plot develops gradually, and comparison of different life experience strengthens tragic conflict.

In conclusion, Western tragedy has a simple plot: the arrangement of plot is concentrated; the ending must be tragic, and they must avoid tragicomedy; the process of happiness and sadness is short and they stress peripetie. Chinese tragedy has an intersecting plot: it shows both happiness and sadness to stretch the process of suffering; it calls for a happy ending and change of vicissitudes of life that concludes the ending of triumph over adversity.

4.1.3 The Tragic Plot in *The Orphan of Zhao*

As the first drama introduced to the West, *The Orphan of Zhao* has its own features in plot. The development of the plot has the feature of intersecting plot in Chinese tragedy, but the arrangement of the plot is much more like Western concentrated plot. The whole play has five acts and the prologue. In such a long play happiness and sadness is not mixed or intersected. The prologue and first four

acts are all about hatred. Let us analyze it in detail.

The *Prologue* is the beginning of the tragedy, and it tells the background of the story. In the *Prologue*, the villain, Tu Angu and Zhao Dun are often at variance because one is a civil official and the other is a military official. Therefore, he wants to kill Zhao Dun. He makes many malicious remarks about Zhao Dun in front of Duke Ling of Jin and obtains the Duke's consent to kill more than three hundred people of the Zhao family. Because Zhao Dun's son Zhao Shuo is Duke Ling's son-in-law and Zhao Shuo's wife is pregnant, they are spared death. Later, Tu Angu gives a false imperial decree of Duke Ling of Jin, forces Zhao Shuo to commit suicide, and imprisons Zhao Shuo's wife in the mansion. With a sad beginning, the *Prologue* tells the audience this is a story full of slaughter and hatred, and then the story of the orphan begins.

Act One tells the birth of the orphan and the first hero Cheng Ying in the play. Tu Angu decides to kill the orphan of Zhao when he is one month old. He sends the General Han Jue to guard the mansion. Zhao Shuo's wife asks Cheng Ying, a physician from the countryside, to rescue the orphan and bring him up to avenge the death of the Zhao family. Seeing Zhao Shuo's wife hanged herself, Cheng Ying hides the orphan in his medical kit to take him out. Han Jue is a courteous, righteous and valiant general and he detests Tu Angu's vile massacre of the loyal and honest people, so he lets Cheng Ying go and cuts his own throat to keep the secret and strengthens Cheng Ying's determination to rescue the orphan of Zhao. Here the sadness is continuing. Although the Zhaos are all killed, other heroes still sacrifice for the orphan.

In Act Two and Act Three, another hero appears—Gongsun Chujiu. Tu Angu hears that the orphan is rescued and he decides to kill every baby in Jing State to realize the malicious intention of killing the orphan of Zhao. Cheng Ying looks for Gongsun Chujiu to help hide the orphan and they reach an agreement that Gongsun Chujiu and Cheng Ying's son would be sacrificed to save the orphan and Cheng Ying would bring the real orphan of Zhao home and take him as his own son. Their plan

works. Gongsun Chujiu can not bear the horrible torture and kills himself by bumping his head on a step, and Tu Angu cruelly kills the fake orphan of Zhao. To reward Cheng Ying, Tu Angu lets him become his hanger-on, adopts Cheng Ying's fake son—the real orphan of Zhao, and teaches him martial arts. In the two acts, more people sacrificed for the orphan. With some bold actions and bloody sacrifice, the tragedy becomes more miserable: heroes are killed one by one and audience's hatred has become deeper.

No body dies in Act Four, but this act prepares a lot for the coming of the triumph end. Twenty years has passed in the act, and things have changed a lot. Cheng Ying has finally got the chance to tell the truth to the orphan, but he is not sure if the orphan could accept the truth and kill Tu Angu, so he draws pictures. Reading the book and knowing the truth, the orphan swears to kill Tu Angu and avenge his family. This is the beginning of revenge and the ending of sadness. If the play stops here, the plot is Aristotle's simple plot—the whole story is sad. However, traditional Chinese drama cannot avoid triumph ending to express author's passion and the audience's anticipation.

In the last Act, the orphan kills Tu Angu and he is allowed to have the surname of Zhao and inherit Zhao family's original title of nobility. The whole story ends with the punishment of the villain and the commendation of righteous people. Here, characters' density changes completely. Different from many Chinese tragedies, the intersecting plot in this play is not a happy act followed with a sad one. It starts with a sad beginning and ends with a traditional Chinese triumph ending.

From above analysis it is clear that from the *Prologue* to the Act Four the main ideal of the play is to express suffering and hatred with hope. Much hope for the future is placed with the orphan's growth. The author spends a good amount of time on forming of suffering and hatred, and then the ending comes naturally and reasonably. With a sad beginning but a happy ending, although most parts of the play are talking about sadness, the plot is not Aristotle's "simple plot" but Chinese intersecting plot.

The play has five parts, and the main conflict happens from Act One to Act Three. The arrangement of plot is concentrated plot. First, the title of the play is *The Orphan of the Zhao*, which means the author is going to tell a story about the orphan not his father and grandfather. Contradiction between Tu Angu and Zhao Dun as well as Duke Ling's fatuity are not connected closely to the orphan. The complicated relation is transferred in the *Prolog* to avoid dilatory plot. The author's focus is the sacrifice of heroes, so he concentrates on the process of sacrifice in three acts. Second, the story happened in twenty years is concentrated in only five acts. "The whole story takes about twenty years, and dynasties of Duke of Cheng, Duke of Jing and Duke of Li are omitted"(Zhang 2008:152). The arrangement of plot concentrates on the plot development and the formation of the conflict. It can make concise change of scene, speed the story rhythm and make the audience feel nervous during the development of the plot. Therefore, we say that the plot of *The Orphan of the Zhao* is a mixture of Chinese tragic plot and Western tragic plot, and the tragedy must have round characters⁴ to embody its plot.

4.2 Tragic Hero

As with plot, the playwright must keep character portrayal simple enough for the audience to understand during the course of performance. The playwright must therefore relay heavily on characters, especially stock characters, whose personalities and moral traits are easily caught and remembered by the audience. According to Western theory of tragedy, with tragic statues or tragic experience, tragic heroes usually have complicated thoughts and inner conflicts. Heroes in *The Orphan of Zhao* are round characters with tragic experience easily remembered. Different from traditional Chinese stock character, heroes have their own features.

4.2.1 Comparison of Tragic Heroes in *The Orphan of Zhao* and Western Tragedies

As the first critic who defined the meaning of tragedy, Aristotle has a set of complete theory for portraying and analyzing characters.

“The very same difference distinguished tragedy and comedy from each other; the latter aims to imitate people worse than our contemporaries, the former better” (Aristotle 1996: 5).

“Epic poetry corresponds to tragedy in so far as it is an imitation in verse of admirable people” (Aristotle 1996: 9).

From Aristotle’s theory about the difference between tragedy and comedy and the similarity between tragedy and epic, we can conclude that tragedy would make its personage better, and the heroes should be better than common people and be more admirable than others. He explained the meaning of “admirable”. “He is one of those people who are held in great esteem and enjoy good fortune, like Oedipus, Thyestes, and distinguished man from that kind of family” (Aristotle 1996: 21). Here, Oedipus and Thyestes are people with high social status at the beginning but get a tragic ending. There are only a few people with high status, so Aristotle complemented: “nowadays the best tragedies are constructed around a few households”(Aristotle 1996: 21).

Besides high status, Aristotle also put forward a theory of “morally good” character.

It is clear first of all that decent men should not be seen undergoing a change from good fortune to bad fortune—this does not evoke fear or pity, but disgust. Nor should depraved people be seen undergoing a change from a bad fortune to good fortune—this is the least tragic of all.

(Aristotle 1996: 20)

Aristotle puts forward some principles to describe complex characters in tragedy. The first is that “they shall be good”. Those good characters can reveal their “moral purpose”, and these actions can embody their character. The second is to “make them appropriate” to make audience feel the character is fit for the drama. The third is to “make them like the reality”. The fourth is to “make them consistent and the same through”, so that the whole drama is logical and believable. To sum up, in Aristotle's theory, an ideal tragic hero should be someone with high social status and morally good. On basis of this theory, many writers have portrayed characters following these principles. From Prometheus to Hamlet, from Oedipus to Macbeth, heroes are all those who are better than common people. They are either Gods or nobles with high status and high moral, and just because of this, when they inflict bad fortune, they must suffer more than others and get more pity from the audience.

In *The Orphan of Zhao* characters also have above features. At the very beginning, the story happens among lords of the court. Like many Western dramas, it has a background of nobility, that is, the orphan himself also has noble blood. The main conflict throughout the story is the conflict between the Zhao and Tu An, another important lord of the court. With spirit of sacrifice, heroes in the play have high moral. “The real hero is Cheng Ying rather than the orphan himself” (Chu 1993: 211). Ji Junxiang portrays heroes Cheng Ying, Han Jue, Gongsun Chujiu and others who insist the principle of “to be good”, sacrifice their lives to hold the justice and fight with the villain till the end.

Han Jue's character and image are revealed from the change of his minds, because he realizes “If he handed Zhao the Orphan over to Tu An, he would be committing a treacherous and heinous act”(Ji 2001: 184). When he suspects that there is something in Cheng Ying's medicine box, he is in a dilemma: one is his duty, the other is his conscience. For three times he lets Cheng Ying leave, and for three times he calls him back, which shows his complex internal conflict. Finally, he finds

the orphan in the medicine box. Avoiding the temptation of richness and success, he lets them go. "If you never put your trust in man, how will you make your way in the world"(Ji 2001: 186). To make Ching Ying leave with an easy mind and save the orphan, he kills himself.

As the most important hero in the play, Cheng Ying is mere a physician, but in order to protect the orphan he sacrifices his own son. Going through lots of difficulties and sufferings, he brings up the orphan. His moral quality touches the heart of audience and gets admiration from the orphan:

Cheng Bo: How many would sacrifice their own child for one of another name?

Such generosity and goodness are not easily forgotten.

I shall summon a painter of the highest rank

To make a memorial of your true likeness,

To be worshipped ever after in our family temple.

(Act Five)

In Act Three, Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu show their brilliance vividly. When Tu Angu beats Gongsun Chujiu and sees Cheng Ying standing nearby, he suspects him again, so he asks Cheng Ying to beat Gongsun Chujiu. To express characters' psychological activities Ji Junxiang portrays a lot on actions of the two heroes. Cheng Ying makes a hard decision before picking up a stick; Gongsun Chujiu suffers a lot and covers an imperceptible nod of the head with a sneer. Gongsun Chujiu's character here is described fully, and we see a great hero with strong will, brave heart, and deadly determination. Ji Junxiang describes the changes that occur in Cheng Ying from the beginning of the story to the end. Although there is no melody⁵ prepared for him, his character is also clear and vivid. Compared with Gongsun Chujiu, Cheng Ying has the burden of bringing up the orphan of Zhao and revenging for all those who had sacrificed their lives, which is harder than death. From Cheng Ying, we can see not only his loyalty of being

thankful but also the spirit of self-sacrifice and great perseverance in the face of hatred. In palace intrigue, characters with both high status and low stratus all show the brilliance of humanism, which is an eternal theme in the world.

4.2.2 Internal Conflict of Tragic Heroes

Conflict is a basic feature and spirit of drama. If there is no conflict, there is no plot as well as drama. In tragedy, conflict is the inherent incompatibility between the characters or forces. By its nature, conflict is unstable, because one side must win and the other side must lose in the end. However, this instability is desirable because it helps hold a reader's interest in a plot. In Western dramatic theory, dramatic conflict is often considered as conflict of struggle which emphasizes internal conflict⁶, but Chinese dramatic conflict can be considered as conflict of ethical critique.

Western tragedy is usually classified into three types. The ancient Greek tragedies, which are called as Tragedy of Fate, reflect the confusion of the power of nature and fate. The theme is often about ancient myths to prove that although people struggle a lot with the nature and the fate, they cannot change the tragedy of fate. Take Sophocles's *King Oedipus* as an example. Defying the fate of "killing father and marrying mother," Oedipus runs away from his hometown, but he still could not escape the fate and blinds his eyes, only because his fate is predicted by Apollo and humans cannot resist the oracle. With the coming of Renaissance, during which people highly praised humanism, tragedies in that period stressed the struggle of their character, so the Shakespearean tragedies are called Tragedy of Character. The result is that the protagonist cannot overcome character flaws and end in tragedy. Due to his envy Othello loses his mind; because of his weakness and hesitation Hamlet misses opportunities again and again. Modern Western tragedy is named Social Tragedy, which is represented by Ibsen, O'Neill, Strindberg and other modern playwrights. In these dramas, the protagonist cannot struggle with the

social power to change his situation and lead to tragedy. Some famous dramas like *A Doll's House* and *Emperor Jones* have this kind of theme. Apparently, *Tragedy of Fate*, *Tragedy of Character* and *Social Tragedy* have a common feature: the protagonist always struggles for something. "Western tragedy can be called as conflict of struggle. The struggle shows either the conflict between the protagonist and external forces or the conflict between the protagonist and his own character"(Lan 1992: 552).

Different from Western conflict of struggle, conflicts in Chinese tragedies emphasize critique. The basis of these conflicts is ethical forces, such as conflicts between good and evil, beauty and wickedness. They praise good and beauty and punish evil and wickedness to satisfy Chinese people's aesthetics of ethics. Chinese playwrights write more about the harsh process of pursuing good and punishing evil but not the struggle between the protagonist and other forces. That is why some people say there is no tragedy in China. Those which can be called tragedies have sad stories, such as Guan Hanqin's *The Gross Injustice to Maid Tou*, where Maid Tou's miserable experiences are movable. In Hong Sheng's *The Palace of Everlasting Life*, the death of Emperor Hsuan Tsung and Yang Kuei-fei shows their strong will and eternal love.

Western tragedy pays attention to complexity of character and heroes usually have some fatal flaws more or less. On the contrary, Chinese tragedy devotes particular care to twists and turns of plots and heroes are usually ideal. Chinese tragic conflicts show the process of the bitter feelings, so they need twists and turns of plots. Characters are often stereotyped, and they are either good or evil, either beautiful or wicked. For example, Maid Tou is the embodiment of beauty while Zhang Luer⁷ is the embodiment of wickedness. Here the character has been filtered, which means they emphasize one side of the character but get rid of other sides of the character. In other words, Chinese tragic conflicts do not come from the heroes themselves but the pressure comes from the opposite power. This stereotyped character makes the audience feel more pitiful for the weak to produce a better tragic

effect. In short, Chinese tragic conflicts have distinct tendency: the basis of conflicts is to show some entirely different moral and ethics, which always put critique in the first place.

In *The Orphan of Zhao*, Ji Junxiang portrays both conflict of struggle and conflict of ethical critique. As mentioned above, when Han Jue can not decide whether to let Cheng Ying leave or not, he has a great internal conflict in his heart. And in Act Three, when Gongsun Chunjiu decides to sacrifice his life to save the orphan, Cheng Ying says: "Death is over quickly, but raising the orphan will take twenty years, I would say seeking death is an easier option"(Ji 2001:232). It shows his remorse to the unknown plight, which means that heroes also have fear and remorse. The struggle is the process which Han Jue and Cheng Ying try their best to overcome their character flaws.

In the drama Tu Angu thinks of trying to searching for the orphan, and heroes sacrifice everything for saving the orphan. During the process of searching and sacrificing, the plot is endowed with strong miserable tragic atmosphere, and the drama finishes the theme of ethical critique: praising loyalty and punishing evil. Also the process reflects the twists and turns of the conflicts between the heroes and the villain. Although Cheng Ying, Han Jue as well as Gongsun Chujiu and other loyal heroes have internal conflicts, they are still the embodiments of loyalty.

In conclusion, compared with Western tragic conflicts, Chinese tragic conflicts have three features: conflict of ethical critique, distinct ethical tendency and ideal character. In *The Orphan of Zhao*, Ji Junxiang portrays heroes with internal conflicts, which corresponds to Western Tragedy of Character, and these characters have their own distinct ethical tendency. Conflicts make the plot compact and thrilling. From this point of view, it can be concluded that either from the perspective of Western tragic conflicts or from the perspective of Chinese tragic conflicts, these heroes are real tragic heroes who can make the audience feel greatly pity and somber.

4.2.3 The Relationship of Tragic Heroes in *The Orphan of Zhao*:

In “tsa chu”, there is usually one singer in a play. If the singer is male, he is called “mo”(末), and if the singer is female she is called “dan”(旦). This kind of system in “tsa chu” is called “yi se”(一色). The singer is the center character in the whole play, but sometimes the “yi se” can be different singers, and this is called “bian li”(变例). This system can restrict performances of dramas and make dramas flexible and attractive.

The Orphan of Zhao changes its singers in different acts. In the first act, Han Jue is the singer; in the second and third acts, the singer is Gongsun Chujiu; in the fourth act, Tu Cheng (also called Cheng Bo, the orphan of Zhao) acts as “mo”; in the fifth act, Zhao Wu is the singer. Why does the author change the main character in different chapters? Let’s analyze fates of these characters in detail. In the first act, Han Jue is ordered to guard the gate of the Zhao’s house by Tu Angu, and he controls lives of the whole Zhao’s family, which makes him the key character in that situation. Then he releases Cheng Ying and the orphan and suicides in order to get Cheng Ying’s trust. This brave act makes Han Jue the first victim for the Zhaos.

In the second and third act, the plot moves to another hero—Gongsun Chujiu, who discusses how to save the orphan with Cheng Ying. They get the agreement that Gongsun Chujiu sacrifices his life and Cheng Ying raises the orphan. The process of Gongsun Chujiu’s sacrifice is thrilling, because he suffers a lot and he must be the main character in the two acts.

In the fourth act, Tu Cheng, as the adopted child of Tu Angu, has grown up twenty years later. He does not know who he is and what kind of hatred he has. Cheng Ying paints a long picture and tells everything to him. Here, Cheng Ying is adventurous, because if the orphan does not believe in him, he must think that Cheng Ying frames up Tu Angu and tells this to Tu Angu. Then in the fifth act, the orphan understands everything, swears to revenge. Finally, he kills Tu Angu, and the empire vests him his family name Zhao again. In the fourth and fifth acts, the

orphan changes his mind and kills him, for avenging for everyone who has sacrificed for the Zhaos, therefore, he should be the singer and the main character in these chapters.

According to the special plot, Ji Junxiang arranges different singers in different chapters, Han Jue, Gongsun Chujiu and the orphan act “mo”, and they express their thoughts vividly. However, although singers are main characters in chapters, they are not the hero throughout the whole drama; instead, Cheng Ying is the first hero. The power of killing the orphan declines; power of saving the orphan increases; the development of the tragic conflict happens, all these are realized on Cheng Ying.

In *The Orphan of Zhao*, the connection between Cheng Ying and other heroes is the highlight. Reviewing the whole play, we can find the author gave every character enough lyrics to express their tragedy. Cheng Ying never has the chance to act as “mo”, but his influence can be seen everywhere in the play. This direct or indirect relationship with other characters makes him the soul character.

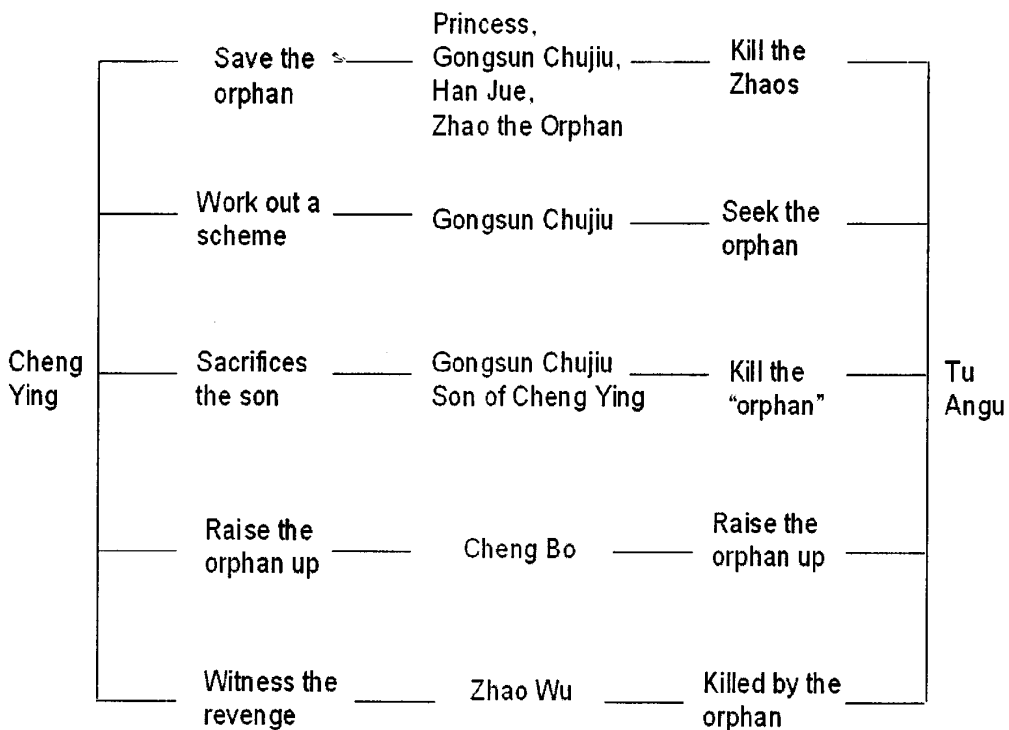
In the first act, Cheng Ying feels “Zhao Dun treats Cheng Ying with particular courtesy” (Ji 2001: 162). He goes to Zhao’s house, promises the Princess that he would save the child, and then he convinces Han Jue to release the orphan. To some extent, the death of Han Jue is made by Cheng Ying. In the second and third act, Cheng Ying visits Gongsun Chujiu and finds method to save the orphan. Seeing death of Gongsun Chujiu, Cheng Ying brings the orphan to go to Tu Angu for shelter, and Tu Angu likes the child and adopts the orphan, who is named as Cheng Bo. In the fourth act, twenty years later the orphan feels easy in Tu’s house, which bothers Cheng Ying a lot, so he paints the long picture to reveal the fact. In the last act, the orphan revenges successfully. As the witness of the tragedy, Cheng Ying has seen the process of destruction and revival of the Zhaos, which means as the first tragic character Cheng Ying pushes the plot forward and he joins characters together to build the plot as a whole. Ji Junxiang arranges the structure of the play with two clues: singers changed in different characters are the main clue and Cheng Ying acts as the protagonist is the assistant clue. These clues are connected together and make

the drama complete and informative.

Another important figure who acts throughout the play is the villain hero, Tu Angu, who has never been a singer in the play. If we say Cheng Ying is the witness of the tragedy, we can conclude that Tu Angu is the culprit and the victim of the tragedy. The author portrays a violent and wicked villain. "It's better to risk killing the innocent than let the brat escape. If Zhao the Orphan cannot be found I will have all the babies in Jin killed, and then we will see where that accursed puppy can run to" (Ji 2001:196). As a merciless and treacherous man, when he could not find the orphan, he would rather kill every baby, and he asks Cheng Ying to beat Gongsun Chujiu to test the relationship between them. His ambition does not stop with the death of the Zhaos, for he wants to murder the emperor and usurps the throne.

In the first three acts, Tu Angu moves the story alone. In Act One, he slaughters the Zhao family and begins to find the orphan. He asks Han Jue to guard at the gate of Zhao's house, and Han Jue suicides during the mission. In the second act, he kills Gongsun Chujiu and Cheng Ying's son, the substitute of the orphan, which means the end of the search to him. In the fourth act, Tu Angu adopts Cheng Bo, and likes him very much, but seeing this, Ching Ying worries about how to convince Cheng Bo that his adopted father is his enemy. In the last act, Tu Angu is killed by his favorite adopted son. He is the last victim of the tragedy.

In the first three acts, it is Tu Angu who pushes the plot forward and Cheng Ying is passive victim. Without his search, there is no escape of Cheng Ying and the orphan, neither the sacrifice of Han Jue and Gongsun Chujiu. In the last two acts, it is Cheng Ying who helps the orphan to finish the story. Cheng Ying and Tu Angu's opposite actions lead other's tragedy. They make the tragedy and they must bear suffering no matter who was killed first. The relationship of Cheng Ying, Tu Angu and other characters can be seen clearly in the following figure.



The character relationship

From the figure we can see the importance of Cheng Ying and Tu Angu clearly. Without Tu Angu, the whole story will not exist. If there is no Cheng Ying, there will not be so many heroes who have died for the orphan; if Tu Angu is the crime culprit of the event, Cheng Ying is also a crime for the death of others. Besides, he raises the orphan up only for the revenge. Seemingly, the ending of Tu Angu is death and Cheng Ying gets triumph, but in fact, everyone must suffer the tragic ending with different forms.

4.3 Tragic Ending

When we talk about an ending of a Chinese story, we usually think it must be happy. The story of *The Orphan of Zhao* has a happy ending in the history.

Chinese dramas usually have this kind of happy endings, so many scholars do not regard sad plot with happy ending as tragedy. Chinese tragic ending is different from Western tragic ending, and Chinese triumph ending is not Western tragicomedy. In order to keep tragic meanings of the triumph ending in *The Orphan of Zhao* clear, we should compare the Western tragic ending and Chinese ending clearly first.

4.3.1 Comparison of Western Tragic Ending and Chinese Tragic Ending

Aristotle holds that “a well-formed plot will be simple rather than (as some people say) double, and that it must involve a change not to good fortune from bad fortune, but (on the contrary) from good fortune to bad fortune” (Aristotle 1996: 22). According to Aristotle’s theory, heroes’ endings should be unfortunate. They can be fortunate at the beginning, but they’d better have a bad ending to produce an entire tragedy.

Many western tragedies follow Aristotle’s theories, and best tragedies in Western literature always have this kind of structure: simple plot and sad ending. The sad ending has two meanings. The first is the ending must be sad. It does not allow the ending of “God’s mill grinds slow but sure” neither the ending in triumph. “The serious nature of the action which it imitates marks tragedy off from tragedy”(Barnes 1995:277). Therefore, Sophocles’ *Antigone* is a great tragedy because the two sides of the conflict perish together in the end. While Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter’s Tale* cannot be seen as great tragedies. Although there are many dark and gloomy incidents in the stories, there is no death in the ends but a harmonious situation. So some critics classify these two dramas as tragicomedy. The second meaning of the sad ending is that the drama must avoid the mixture of tragic plots and comedic plots to keep the seriousness of the tragedy. In *The Tragedy of Macbeth* there is a gatekeeper who speaks many amusing words, which is considered as Shakespeare’s fault description by many critics.

In addition to define the best structure of tragedy, Aristotle also mentions the second best structure:

The second rank comes the kind of tragedy which some place first. Like the *Odyssey*, it has a double thread of plot, and also an opposite catastrophe for the good and for the bad. It is accounted the best because of the weakness of the spectators; for the poet is guided in what he writes by the wish of his audience. The pleasure, however, thence derived is not the true tragic pleasure. It is proper rather to Comedy, where those who, in the piece, are the deadliest enemies—like Oretes and Aegisthus—quit the stage as friends at the close, and no one slays or is slain. (Aristotle 1996: 24)

The second best structure is welcomed due to “the weakness of the spectators”, and it usually has no slays or slain. Aeschylus’ tragedies contain this kind of triumph structure, which is expressed well in a trilogy chronicling the life of the mythological figure Prometheus. The first play *Prometheus Bound* is a traditional model tragedy, but in the second play *Prometheus Unhinged* the tragic hero makes his peace with Zeus, then in the third play *Prometheus the Fire-bringer* Athens people held many celebrations to thank God for all he had done for them. “In theory, critics of Italian Renaissance approved that a tragedy could have a triumph ending. Some early French theorists also agree to this opinion. This tragic triumph ending is different from so-called tragicomedy.” (Chen & Shen 1983: 27)

The structure of Chinese tragedy mostly coincides with Aristotle’s “double thread of plot”. This is the triumph ending follows misery plot, which makes the distinctive feature of Chinese tragedy. In Chinese tragedy, no matter how much suffering and misfortune they have suffered, they usually have comedic endings. Sometimes officers or wise emperors act as righteous power to save the protagonists; sometimes protagonists reunite again in dreams or in the heaven, and sometimes victims finally revenge for positive characters. Sometimes plots develop from sorrow to happiness, sometimes from happiness to sorrow then to happiness, and they

all pursuit a happy ending. Apparently, this is quite different from Western destructive endings. This common sense of Chinese tragic ending is affected by Chinese culture and other phenomena of the whole society. In Psychoanalytic criticism, this is called “the collective unconscious”.

The collective unconscious, the part of the psyche that is more impersonal and universal than the personal conscious or the personal unconscious. This part of the psyche houses the cumulative knowledge, experience, and images of the entire human species. According to Jung, people from all over the world respond to certain myths or stories in the same way, not because lying deep in our collective unconscious are the species’ memories of humanity’s past. According to Jung, this collective unconscious is ‘a second psychic system of collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals.’ This universal psychic aspect is an inherited receptacle of deep, powerful human themes and commonalities. (Bressler 2007: 150)

According to Jung’s theory, the model of “happy ending” is “the cumulative knowledge” of a nation. This aspiration of happiness and satisfaction exists as unconscious in the hearts of every Chinese and has formed the collective unconscious passed from generation to generation. Writers in different dynasties had different living environment, various aesthetic temperament and interest, and the form of writings are quite different, but they are all Chinese living on the same land with similar habits and customs. Their thoughts are unexceptionally dominated by the national consciousness of the happy ending. This kind of collective unconscious has powerful cognitive drive, which takes over writers’ individualized creation. Writers lose their special psychology of art and have to be controlled or ordered by the collective unconscious. Even if the ending is something destructive, they would rather make it happy. Therefore, Chinese happy ending is the demand of Chinese national psychology. In some sense, this happy ending is not created by writers but by Chinese national psychological culture.

Why do Chinese people have the psychology of pursuing happiness and satisfaction? There are three main reasons that affect Chinese tragic character: the traditional ethics and professional standards, the culture of pleasure and the Chinese philosophy. For years, the thought of “God’s mill grinds slow but sure” has formed Chinese ethics and professional standards as well as the habit of drama appreciation for Chinese audience. Therefore, Chinese tragedy describes misery but never inclines to see misery as the end purpose of tragedies. Chinese people believe that those who have suffered a lot must be rewarded with goodness, while those who are crime-ridden are sure to be punished. “The psychology is also influenced by ancient Buddhism” (Lan 1992: 604). Buddhism advocates turn of the transmigration and karma, so many dramas choose Karma and retribution as their endings.

Western traditional culture is called the culture of offense feeling, so Chinese traditional can be named as the culture of pleasure. Chinese never have the story of exile as the origin of human or the image like bloody crucified Jesus for worship. The form of Chinese drama is affected deeply by the traditional culture, so the motive of writing is to get education instead of enjoying the drama, and happy ending is a direct way to enjoy the play.

The traditional philosophy Confucianism means ethical thought which is one of major theory of Confucian thought. They stress promotion and restriction among everything, and abstinence is a sublimity outlet for feelings. Different from western tragedy, Chinese tragedies do not highly color characters miserable failure and destruction. They mix happiness with sadness to relieve audience’s sorrow, to realize Confucian ethical thought. From this, it can be seen that Western tragedy has both grief and hurt, but Chinese has mourning but no hurt.

4.3.2 The Tragic Ending of *The Orphan of Zhao*

With a happy ending, *The Orphan of Zhao* is a traditional Chinese tragedy. In

the end, the orphan avenges for all those sacrificed for him and the villain is killed, which means the moral of loyalty and faith is propagated and the evil is punished. The ending in triumph takes public fancy and complies with China's traditional morals. However, if we analyze characters in detail we can find that some tragedies have happened even before the final triumph ending, and it is clear that nobody in this tragedy can escape from their tragic ending.

Although Cheng Ying helps the orphan kill Tu Angu in the end, his tragic fate cannot be changed from the very beginning because of his character. Cheng Ying is only a physician, but why does he like to help the Zhaos? There are two reasons: on the one hand his thought is affected deeply by social moral, on the other hand he feels grateful to the Zhaos. The root of Cheng Ying's ethical standards is the traditional Chinese morality in which justice is an eternal theme. The Zhaos is a loyal family, in which Zhao Dun is a senior statesman during two dynasties, and he is loyal and plainspoken to his emperor. His son Zhao Shuo is heavily influenced by his loyal father, so he tries his best to help the emperor and marries the princess. The Zhaos family is so loyal that every righteous man feels pity when they hear the slaughter of the whole family. The supporting of justice is an important moral principle in that period. As a faithful man, Cheng Ying must follow his moral principle to support the justice, which is the primary cause of Cheng Ying's sacrifice.

The other direct reason is that Cheng Ying is thankful to the Zhaos. Cheng Ying is only a physician who does not have a high social status at that time. By accident, he enters the practice of medicine in Zhao's house and looks after the princess, and he thinks the Zhaos are kind to him. When the princess entrusts him to save the orphan, he could feel the trust of the princess. It is the trust that encourages Cheng Ying to sacrifice his life, and it is the morality and his gratitude that make Cheng Ying's tragic character.

Cheng Ying's entire life is a tragedy, though he has revenged in the end. The death is not the sadness of decedents but the sadness of the survivals. He sees the death of Han Jue, Gongsun Chujiu and his own son, and he feels miserable when he

beats Gongsun Chujiu, so he must be extremely distressing painful seeing the death of his own son. These deaths compose his hatred and he lives in the shadow for twenty years, which is the first manifestation of his misery. The second and the most painful misery is the death of his son. Cheng Ying does not have a child until he is forty-five, so his son is a special gift to him, so the sacrifice of his son is a heavy blow to him and the result of the sacrifice is that he never has his own child again. In old China "having a son" is a basic principle of filial piety. This sacrifice brings him inner disturbance throughout his life. Anyway, his life is really in disturbance: he lives in his enemy's house and raises other's son, to whom he could not tell his suffering. His emotion to the orphan is complicated. He raises him as his son but the reason of raising him is the revenge; he builds the emotion between the orphan and Tu Angu and destroys it by himself. Behind the triumphing ending, his tragedy in his life cannot be changed and nothing can redeem his trauma left on his character.

To some degree, the orphan in the play is another tragic hero and he is the standard Aristotle's tragic hero. First, he was born in a royal family, which provides him a great background. His father and grandfather are ministers of the monarchy and his mother is the princess, just because of his noble statue his tragedy begins when he was born. Hence we could say his tragedy is the tragedy of fate: the primary cause of his tragedy is that he is the son of the Zhaos, which is his fate and he cannot change it. His fate is destined to be a tragedy and he is a victim of the hatred between the Zhaos and Tu Angu, but he is also the indirect maker of the tragedy between Tu Angu and other victims. During the process of conflicts changes, he plays the two identities in different period. Born as a victim, he loses his parents and all the relatives who have nothing to left him only a name "the orphan of Zhao".

Then in order to protect him, other heroes sacrifice lives one after another. Without him these tragedies would never happen, so this can be seen that the orphan is the cause of other's death, and Han Jue, Gongsun Chujiu and Cheng Ying's son are all dead for him. Cheng Ying brings him to Tu Angu's house, which stops the identity of the tragedy maker but begins another victim's period lasted for twenty

years.

In the twenty years he lives in ignorance of his real status. As an innocent child, he loves his “father” Cheng Ying and his adopted father Tu Angu and he is named as Cheng Bo and Tu Cheng. He loves them and learns everything from them, while they take advantage of him. Cheng Ying loves him because the orphan is his spiritual sustenance and the orphan is the only hope of the Zhaos and those who have sacrificed for him. The reason to bring him up is the promise to the princess and the hatred for Tu Angu but not the true love. Tu Angu’s emotion is not true love either. Tu Angu does not have a son, but he needs some young man to help him realize his dream of emperor. The orphan does not know Cheng Ying and Tu Angu’s purposes. He loves them, which makes Cheng Ying once worry about if the orphan could believe the real story happened on them and if he would like to kill Tu Angu for revenge. The orphan pays his true love but gains his father Cheng Ying’s truth and his adopted father Tu Angu’s death. He certainly could not accept the fact immediately and he must suffer a lot when kills his beloved adopted father. In the end, he supports the justice, revenges for his family and heroes, and regains his family name Zhao, high social status and admiration from others. However, sacrificing his love to his adopted father and trust to Cheng Ying, he cannot change his fate of making him a real orphan both in life and in heart.

Tu Angu, as a villain in the play, is killed in the end. No matter whether he deserves death or not, his death is his tragedy, which is caused by the social fact and his character. He is a minister of the emperor Duke Ling, who is a fatuous and self-indulgent ruler. The emperor pays more attention to how to make fun but not how to manage the country, so he is easily fooled by Tu Angu, trusts sycophantic courtiers and even hurts his sister and nephew. Tu Angu knows everything about the emperor and he could not believe him. He is afraid of the unsteady situation; he needs something to consolidate his position. Seeing the Zhaos gain grace from the emperor, he is anxious about losing his status, which are disturbing factors to him. As a vicious character, to protect his benefits he could do anything. He falsely

accuses the faithful and gains more for himself at others' expense. In order to find out the orphan of Zhao, he would rather kill all the babies of the same age. These actions reveal his evil nature. It is the social fact and his nature that lead to his tragic ending.

In his heart, he likes Tu Cheng, he hopes Tu Cheng could help him to fulfill his dream of emperor and if Tu Cheng is good enough he would plan a bright future for him. He helps Cheng Ying to raise him up, provides good living conditions and teaches him a lot about fighting and how to establish long-term outlook on life. The result is that he is killed by Tu Cheng who is his adopted son. His crime is punished after twenty years, which means all his efforts in the twenty years are in vain and his plans are all destroyed. Even if he is not killed by the orphan, he is also a failure because he raises his enemy falsely and makes him strong enough to kill him. This kind of punishment is much more serious than death.

In conclusion, the death of Gongsun Chujiu, Han Jue and Cheng Ying's son is the tragic ending of their character, which shows the audience sorrow directly. Although the orphan avenges for those heroes and his family, he cannot change his fate of orphan both in life and in heart. Lived in confusion and self-accusation for twenty, Cheng Ying, the most tragic hero, gets nothing but a good frame, which can never bring him real happiness again. Tu Angu's death is the wish of all those who have been persecuted, but his hurt in heart is much serious than the death. With tragic fate or tragic character, every character in the tragedy has his reason to be tragic and this play has the atmosphere of tragedy from the beginning to the end, which makes it a great tragedy with special tragic value.

4.4 Tragic Value

“Literature is aesthetic; it gives pleasure. The aesthetic quality of literature is hard to define and describe. In a sense it just is. Like various other art forms,

literature is an end in itself”(Griffith 2006: 23). Aesthetics of literature is hard to describe, but the value of a work can be commented. If plots, conflicts, characters and endings are parts of a tragedy, the value of the tragedy emphasizes aesthetic appreciation. Western and Chinese tragedies end with different aesthetic characteristics, which meet the different demands of tragedy spirits between them.

4.4.1 Different Values of the Tragedy between Western and Chinese Tragedy

According to Aristotle, when audience see a tragedy, they should feel pity and fear, because of the reorganization in themselves and the potential for similar reactions. The purgation of the emotions that audience experience as they see the dramatic action unfold is called catharsis. “With incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions,” (Aristotle 1996:10) Aristotle proposes that emotions can be purified by arts. For catharsis to occur, the protagonist of a tragedy must be worthy of the audience’s pity and fear.

Tragedy is an imitation not only of a complete action, but of events inspiring fear or pity. Such an effect is best produced when the events come on us by surprise; and the effect is heightened when, at the same time, they follow as cause and effect. The tragic wonder will then be greater than if they happened of themselves or by accident; for even coincidences are most striking when they have an air of design. (Aristotle 1996:18)

The catharsis of tragedy is called as sublimity aesthetically by some Western theater theorists. They think that sublimity is the most basic aesthetic property, which means the tragedy and the sense are often connected together. Therefore, the nature of tragedy reflects the sense of sublimity.

Actually, the sense of sublimity can be understood in two ways. The catharsis

on the aesthetic subject is first shown on the misery of the aesthetic object. Dark and forbidden accidents, devastating endings and the “reproduction” of realistic are shaped in living, which bring us more intense stimulation. Take Sophocles’ *Antigone* as an example. At the end of the play, Antigone dies and her fiancé—the king’s son—dies for falling love with the body. The king’s wife also suicides because her son’s death. From this point we can see that “*Antigone* is the most satisfactory work of art” (Beiser 2006:153). The fear shakes souls and evokes emotional or spiritual responses. The audience are conquered by the great power, and they feel they are so small and powerless. Then the fear appears. The feeling of pity could bring the audience some pleasure and as they face something terrible, the audience would think deeply about philosophy. Then, they get inner “Catharsis” from their deep thoughts.

Chu Kwang-t sien explained his understanding of catharsis as follows:

We have shown that a part of tragic pleasure is the pleasure converted from pain through expression. ‘Expression’ we have found to be synonymous with ‘relief’, and what Aristotle has called ‘Catharsis’ is nothing more than emotional relief. These emotions according to our analysis, are each accomplished with a mixed feeling-tone: there is a positive pleasure, and there is also a painful element which, when felt and swells the current of the positive pleasure which is caused by tragic pity and by art. (Chu 1993: 185)

We read tragedy and go to see tragedies in theaters to feel the “relief”. We feel we are parts of the protagonists, put ourselves in their positions and bear what they have suffered, so that we can get “catharsis”—the beauty of sublimity. Therefore, the value of Western tragedy is the beauty of power, the feeling of overwhelming power which makes fear and pity. They build the feeling of reality. However, Chinese tragedy does not emphasize these effects.

For Chinese tragedy, the purpose is not “arousing pity and fear” but the influence of virtue and ethics. Chinese Tragedy is not the spiritual aesthetic

sense—pity and fear, but the reasonable moral influence from reasons and ethics—the appreciation of goodness. The value is goodness, a kind of aesthetic morality, and the corresponding form of Chinese tragedy should convey the feeling of goodness but not the reality. It is clear that the value of tragedy depends on feeling of sublimity, but the influence of morality is quite different. With apparently different aesthetic psychological effects, Chinese tragedy usually do not have factors like pity or fear. They pursue self-sacrifice of tragic heroes and virtue as well as ethics. Facing death, Chinese tragedy does not handle death as “the most serious misfortune and the most terrible result”. Instead, “death” is usually the synonymous of hopes and dreams, self-sacrifice spirit and goodness.

Compared with Western tragedy, different features of the value of Chinese tragedy can be concluded as follows: Chinese tragedy focuses on the influence of virtue and ethics, and it does not have the function of Western “catharsis” but the expression of reasons and etiquette. For aesthetic psychological effects, it stresses the beauty of goodness but not the Western beauty of sublimity. The key factors are not great power or psychological mercy of justice and weakness, thus the audience cannot be shocked in heart by terrible ending but they are moralized by protagonists’ benevolence. The end must be fitted for the endurance of members of audience. Embodiments of goodness, wickedness, beauty and hideousness in endings fulfill the satisfaction of the audience’s psychological needs.

The pleasure of Chinese tragedy cannot be felt in the miserable and terrible ending but in the process of suffering. The audience admire protagonists’ good deeds and they expect that justice finally defeats wickedness (but not two sides perish together), beauty vanquishes hideousness. Appreciating these good deeds and beautiful forms, Chinese audience do not think deeply about philosophy but the emotional judgment. If it is fair and reasonable, they admire it; if not they criticize it. Chinese tragedy tries to move audience’s sentiment, while Western tragedy aims to move audience’s reason. In short, Chinese tragedy has a frame of conflicts between goodness and wickedness, beauty and hideousness, loyalty and treachery,

integrity and turpitude. The aesthetic psychology of the audience is judged by moral value, and the value of tragedy is also the beauty of ethics.

4.4.2 The Tragic Value in *The Orphan of Zhao*

The value of *The Orphan of Zhao* can be analyzed from perspective of Chinese tragic value and Western tragic value. Chinese tragic value emphasizes the hardship of the process and Chinese tragedy advocates goodness and punishes evil to realize its value. For Western tragedy, its value is shown on “catharsis”, and it stresses the triumph of power but not pity to the weak. All these features can be seen in *The Orphan of Zhao*

In *The Orphan of Zhao* we can feel the hardship clearly from the difficult process of saving the orphan, raising the orphan and killing Tu Angu. From Act One to Act Three, the process of searching and saving the orphan is described thrillingly. Tu Angu does a lot of efforts to find the orphan, and heroes die for the orphan one after another. They all try their best to find or save the orphan. In the process, Han Jue suffers greatly in intrapsychic conflict and changes his mind; Gongsun Chujiu endures cruel torture then sacrifices his life; Cheng Ying bears the terrible pain of losing his only son. From all these details the audience are moved by every hero and the hatred of Tu Angu has been rooted in everyone’s heart. Although the process of raising the orphan takes only a small part in the drama, the first step of rising—Cheng Ying brings the orphan to Tu Angu’s house—is a hard decision for him. Living with the enemy must be difficult, which can be understood by every audience. The revenge is also not easy. For Cheng Ying, he is worried about if the orphan can accept the truth. For the orphan, he also has intrapsychic conflict. Besides, as a brave fighter, Tu Angu has his army and owns trust from the emperor. Every step of killing the villain is dangerous. The whole drama creates the atmosphere of tension. The audience feel the tragic value from the beginning the death of the Zhaos to the end the killing of the villain.

Except the villain Tu Angu, other characters are all good and kind. With a humble background but had high moral, Cheng Ying is the best representative. Han Jue's change reveals his goodness in his heart. Gongsun Chujiu is always a loyal minister with high prestige and gain universal respect otherwise Cheng Ying would not ask for his help. The play has achieved its task of propagandizing justice. The audience experience sufferings of heroes and celebrate the triumph. Chinese enjoy the pleasure of the experience and get the result which is fit for their common sense. From the point, it has finished its tragic value during the process of heroes' death. The triumph ending is to fall in with the wishes of the audience, without which, most Chinese would not accept it and this great tragedy could not be inherited till now.

Moved by the power of ethics, the audience can also get the inner "catharsis" from *The Orphan of Zhao*. In the great tragedy, the feeling of pity and fear is shown throughout the whole play. People would like to feel pity for those who are weak, which is why the orphan was so pitiful. He has no power to protect himself, so Cheng Ying chooses to help him. Cheng Ying is not powerful either. He is only a physician and his duty is to save others' life but not kill them, and it is his kindness that leads him to lose his only son. Besides, death of other heroes makes the pity more worthy. Compared with other's weakness, the villain's power shows his ambition and evil, which produces the feeling of fear. On the one hand, with terrible power Tu Angu is wicked and would do everything he wants. He is the murder of the Zhaos and would rather kill every baby in the country to find the orphan of Zhao, which shapes a fearsome Tu Angu. On the other hand, the fear to Tu Angu comes from the fear to death. There is no doubt that the villain would kill everyone who has helped the orphan, so the fate of fighting with him must be death. Although heroes show their braveness in the process of saving the orphan, the audience could still feel the fear of death. With the development of the plot, the audience are moved and shocked by the conflict between pity and fear and get their inner catharsis.

Western tragedy shows the triumph of power to realize the sublimity, while Chinese tragedy emphasizes the protection of the weak, which means after suffering a

lot, heroes are usually protected by some strong power, but the end in *The Orphan of Zhao* is not that the weak get protection. Compared with Tu Angu's power, Cheng Ying, Han Jue and Gongsun Chujiu are all not powerful enough, so they must exchange something for the orphan's life. It is Tu Angu's power that makes the sacrifice. They sacrifice a lot but they still cannot escape from the evil power. Nobody can revenge at that time and there is not any other strong power to protect them, so Cheng Ying brings the orphan to Tu Angu's house to wait for the growth of power. In many Chinese dramas, when the hero suffers a lot, other strong power would help him and then he has a good ending. Here, the orphan's life is different: he becomes the strong power himself. In twenty years, he has grown strong enough and has the power to resist Tu Angu. In the end, when he kills Tu Angu and gets his status again he is not one of the weak anymore. He has his thoughts to judge if it is right to kill Tu Angu, and his righteous reason prevails over emotion. Therefore, the triumph in this play is not the weak but the power of justice, which is similar with Western tragedy.

Moreover, the story of *The Orphan of Zhao* comes from history, and the author chooses this real story in order to provide the audience the feeling of reality. Different from many other Chinese tragedies, there is neither god nor strong power to save the weak. The tragedy presents us a vivid and real picture; Characters' thoughts and actions are reasonable. The audience are moved by reasons not emotion. From perspective of Western tragic value, the play is fit for Western aesthetic value.

4.4.3 Tragic Value of the Revenge Theme

"Like a short story or a novel, a play is open to interpretation. Reader's reactions are influenced by the language of the text, and audience's reactions are influenced by the performance on stage" (Bressler 2007:1766). The theme of revenge has been popular in Western countries for many years. From *Medea* to

Hamlet, the theme can always find its position in audience's heart. Chinese revenge tragedy has its special moral features. No matter what forms they have, this kind of tragedy intends to speak highly of justice. They emphasize revenge and make it just for other's violence. However, revenge must bring hurts to others, and in the process of revenge some negative impacts and results must be brought. The value and impacts of the theme of revenge have their special features in both Western and Chinese tragedy.

Western tragedy calls for "the beauty of sublimity", and understandings of "sublimity" have changed in people's heart. From the ancient Greek myth to Renaissance, especially after the Reformation, the eulogium of revenge has been weakened, because Western tragedy teaches people to think deeply about life and philosophy, so the audience in different ages have different thoughts about revenge. They have tried to judge whether the revenge is good and this is not good for the development of Revenge Tragedy. Chinese can hardly change their belief of revenge. To them the revenge is goodness in plays. The actions of revenge are usually positive examples of ethics. The aspiration of goodness cannot be changed and revenge can get praise in any ages. In Western tragedy, most heroes revenge for themselves. In Chinese tragedy, most heroes' revenge for their whole family even for the whole country, and this makes the revenge much more elevated. The revenge is their duty and responsibility as important as loyalty and filial piety in their hearts.

As we have mentioned before, Western tragedy stress reality and Chinese tragedy stress goodness. Some reality is not good and the theme of revenge is not always justice. In the West, Satan, the opposed character to God, is the representation of the hell and evil and due to the existence of evil, people feel the difficulty of getting justice. The revenge for justice is right, so it is not necessary to stress other themes like virtue and ethics. Chinese cannot accept some evil force powerful enough to fight with justice. They believe goodness must defeat badness and those who avenge for others are always good and fight for justice.

The revenge theme in Western tragedy supports justice and strives to indicate

human nature, and neither stresses the perfection of character nor teaches moral principles. With revenge in tragedy themes arousing heart shocking, and audience cannot help thinking deeply about the theme. Then they get their own rational cognition and intellectual self-reflection. Chinese audience want to see the realization of Confucian “ceremony” in Chinese tragedy, so the revenge theme also displays Confucianism. They never doubt if the revenge is right. They pay more attention to fight with evil, and justice always praises the revenge.

There is no doubt that revenge is an important theme in *The Orphan of Zhao*. With strong emotion of avenging his country, the author composes the tragedy to express his will of stopping the government of Mongols, just like Cheng Ying’s will of avenging for those who sacrifice for the orphan. Chinese people love it because heroes finally avenge for justice; Western people like it because it is similar with Western tragedies: revenge, bloods and death. The audience, no matter where they come from, go to theaters to see a tragedy in order to feel tragic aesthetics. They are moved into tears, feared by bloods and shocked by revenge. The revenge theme connects heroes, the author and the audience together, and they together compose a revenge epic full of blood and tears. Then, who will deny there are some great tragedies in China? Who would say *The Orphan of Zhao* is only a tragicomedy?

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The story of *The orphan of Zhao* is recorded in *Records of the Historian—The House of Zhao*. The chivalrous images of Cheng Ying, Gongsun Chujiu and Han Jue it describes are truly admirable. Impressed by these chivalrous and heroic figures, Ji Junxiang adapts this story into the Yuan Dynasty Tsa Chu *The Orphan of Zhao* to express his admiration to the heroes and hope of rejuvenation of the country. The ideas of poetic justice, commendation of the righteous and “a gentleman who is ready to die for his bosom friends” penetrate the exciting development of the story. Maybe the European admire deeply such Confucian ideals contained in *The Orphan of Zhao* and chivalrous spirit manifested by Cheng Ying, Han Jue, Gongsun Chujiu, etc., so Joseph Prémare translated it into French.

With the development of comparative literature, it is possible to analyze Chinese literary works with Western theories and the comparison has become deeper and more comprehensive. By studying Chinese traditional tragedy from perspective of Western theory of tragedy, this thesis intends to prove that there are some Western tragic elements in *The Orphan of Zhao* and these elements reveal Chinese tragic features to the world. The development of the plot has Chinese intersection plot and Western concentration. Tragic heroes' fate change with development of the plot and have shaped round characters in front of the audience. The ending is Chinese traditional happy ending, but tragic atmosphere has been constructed in the process of heroes' suffering, so the real sadness does not lie in the ending. Besides, positive characters have a happy ending but they cannot change their sad fate in more than

twenty years. From perspective tragic value, the play is fit for both Chinese tragic value and Western tragic value. Therefore, with the mixed features of Chinese tragedy and Western tragedy, *The Orphan of Zhao* is accepted by European easily and it has gained its place in world literature.

The revenge theme is a highlight in the play and this is an eternal theme which people from different countries like deeply. If there is the revenge, there must be death, blood and tears, which can move people greatly. The author Ji Juxiang, the heroes in the play, actors and directors in different countries as well as the audience, they together compose a revenge epic full of blood and tears and keep a great Chinese tragedy all over the world. However, with the study of *The Orphan of Zhao* from the perspective of Western theory of tragedy as the key point, the thesis focus more on Western theory of tragedy and the interpretation of the tragedy from the theory, so the study of revenge theme is not handled deeply and comprehensively. It cannot be discussed clearly in short and that is another perspective for further study of the play and Chinese dramas.

The Orphan of Zhao has been played on stages for many times in China, and different directors have different interpretation of the drama. Chen Kaige, a famous Chinese director has made a film based on the play and named it *Sacrifice* in 2010. He stresses the theme of sacrifice and enlightens us to reread the great work from different points of view. The play was also put on in America in 2003. They have showed a different *The Orphan of Zhao* and take an opportunity for China to spread its tragedy all over the world.

We should not simply use the Western theory of tragedy as a standard to measure whether a certain Chinese play is a tragedy or not, and get the conclusion that there is no tragedy in China. From the perspective of Western theory of tragedy, Chinese tragedy cannot be separated from world tragedy and it corresponds with the trend of world tragedy. As a great part of world literature, Chinese literature holds an important position, which helps scholars to study it from different perspectives. Having accepted Western cultures and theories, Chinese scholars should make

comparisons of Chinese and Western cultures, take advantage of those theories to analyze Chinese work and discover different charm of Chinese literature, therefore, more and more Chinese works can be accepted by the world, which is good for the development and spread of Chinese literature, and this is a duty of every Chinese scholar who is studying world literature and culture.

Notes:

- ¹ According to Aristotle, “Purigi” means the purging of emotions such as pity and fear.
- ² The doctrine of the mean thought in ancient China contained moderate thought which means goes too far is as bad as not far enough.
- ³ The “Three Unities” is the theory on the structure of classical plays in Europe. This rule stipulates that the play creation must follow the unities of time, place and action, that is, a play should have only one story ploy, and the story should happen in one day and at one place.(Li 2010: 120)
- ⁴ When a play is dominated by flat characters, the plot hinges mainly on external conflicts; the focus is on action. When the play includes round characters, the plot deals largely with internal conflicts, the focus is on characterization (Griffith 2006: 85).
- ⁵ In “tsa chu” there is only one singer in one act and the singer is usually the main character in the act.
- ⁶ Internal conflicts occur when a character is in disagreement with him or her. Specifically, this occurs when a character has two or more values or traits in opposition.
- ⁷ The crime culprit in *The Gross Injustice to Maid Tou*

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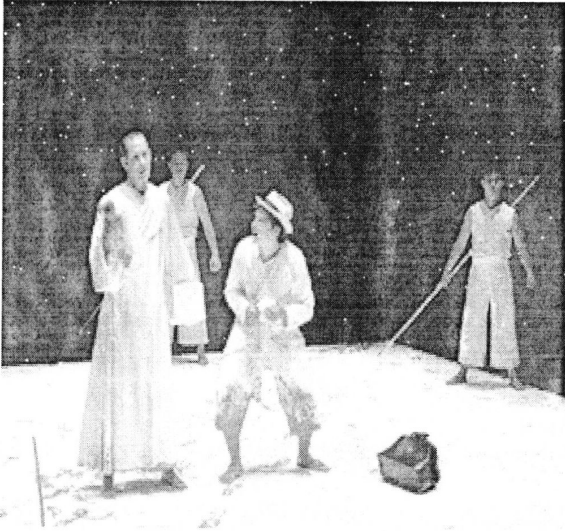
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Appendix



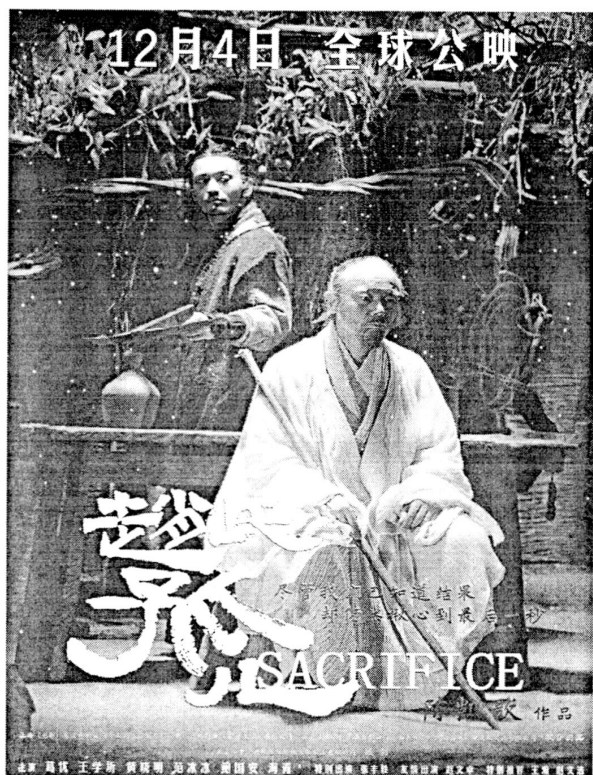
Stage Still:

In 2003 the American *The Orphan of Zhao* directed by Chen Shizheng was performed on Lincoln Center Festival in New York.



Stage Still:

In 2009, the National Theatre Company of China presented *The Orphan of Zhao* directed by Tian Qinxin. It had beautiful visual and shocked the audience.



Stage Still:

Chen Kaige adapted the play and showed it in 2010. He translated the title of the play into *Sacrifice*



Stage Still:

The Orphan of Zhao has been adapted for Beijing Opera for many times.