

## ***The Liberated "Orphan of Zhao"***

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*The Orphan of Zhao* was part of the A World Elsewhere trilogy of RSC's newly adapted classics from around the world, alongside *Boris Godunov* and *A Life of Galileo*. Adapted by James Fenton and directed by Gregory Doran, *The Orphan of Zhao* played in the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon from November 2012 to March 2013. Tian Chen, the translator, and I were lucky to be in Stratford to watch the performance at the time. Swan theatre was built according to an Elizabethan theatre, with audience very close to the stage and a deep thrust stage on both sides for actors to enter and exit. That night was the last performance of the theatrical season with fully packed audience. My initial thought was that this adaptation was one of the attempts of how the Western people misread the Eastern opera. However to my surprise, this production completely shattered my preconception of East and West. This was neither an Eastern play nor a Western play. This was nothing but just a good play. This production was so straightforward that not only the British audience felt lamentable, but also us Chinese who already knew the story could feel our eyes brimming with tears. Hence, the question was why this British adaptation of *The Orphan of Zhao* still had such a unique charm since this story has been continually discussed and adapted with so many existing adaptations already in China.

### One

As a matter of fact, *The Orphan of Zhao* was considered not to be a very popular story in modern times, as the belief of "loyalty" was too overwhelmed in the traditional play of *The Orphan of Zhao*. However, if its motif was just simply to declare the concept of etiquettes (as there were many of this kind of play), then it would certainly fail to hold modern audience's attention. In this regard, the story of *The Orphan of Zhao* might contain some factors that go beyond the traditional etiquettes. Specifically speaking, the above assumption was based on following two incidents. First, Cheng Ying sacrificed his own son in order to save the orphan. Second, the orphan carried out his revenge on his foster father, Tu'an Gu, after he learned the truth about himself. In the original story, the setting of these two incidents was to strengthen the morality standards in which self-sacrifice for loyalty and revenge for family were to be pursued without hesitation. These two incidents (killing his own son, and killing his foster father) did not possess any independent meaning. However, as time went by, these two incidents gradually moved away from the original framework of the story, and revealed the true nature of the conflict in the whole story. How could someone kill his own son? How could someone kill his foster father? This kind of conflict had drawn modern people's attention. Since the new century, most of the Chinese directors adapted *The Orphan of Zhao* from the angle of these two incidents. In Kaige Chen's film adaptation, Cheng Ying's sacrifice of his own son was interpreted as a misunderstanding (accident). In Xiaoying Wang's Yue Opera adaptation, the orphan's revenge was staged as a punishment from heaven (as in the end, the orphan gave up killing Tu'an Gu, but a sword hung above stage killed Tu'an Gu

instead.) In Zhaohua Lin's adaptation, the orphan even gave up revenge on Tu'an Gu.

Nevertheless, the modern meaning of these two incidents revealed in the modern production was always not strong enough to illustrate the human nature because the whole story framework still followed the main storyline of revenge. In other words, the original story framework, comprised of etiquettes propaganda to conquer evil with self-righteous sacrifice, should remain in the modern productions as a sign of motivation. However, most of the adaptors nowadays chose to abandon this story framework. In Zhaohua Lin's play adaptation, the grudge between the Zhao family and Tu'an Gu became the power struggle within the court. Also in Qinxin Tian's adaptation, licentious Ji Zhuang (the Princess) was portrayed as the source of crime. In this regard, the original main storyline of revenge, with justice conquered evil in the moral war, totally disappeared. The characters were deprived of the ethical nature of which they were born with. Tu'an Gu could become a good man, and revenge became a type of personal behaviour, which no longer had public and moral meanings. The original grand setting of *The Orphan of Zhao* was no longer existing. In addition, the new adaptations often created a new theme that was not relevant to the original story at all. In Qinxin Tian's adaptation, the core of the play was formed in the part that both fathers taught the orphan the rule of "living" and "bravery." As a result, the whole story turned into a story of orphan growing up, instead of a story of orphan seeking revenge.

For modern adaptors, it was not difficult to realise that Cheng Ying should not sacrifice his own son; neither the orphan should kill his foster father without hesitation. The difficulty was how we interweave these two questions with the story of revenge. We could take it for granted to make excuses for Cheng Ying and the orphan's actions, but then the question was whether these excuses were reasonable enough to subvert the description logics of the original historical story or to come up with a new logic. The original story was composed for the purpose of advocating morality, so if new description logics were inserted into the original story, then the expression of the new theme would certainly be interfered and affected. Was there a way to preserve the components of traditional morality existing in the original play while discovering the modern meaning of humanity at the same time? In this regard, Royal Shakespeare Company responded to this question and also helped us to extend our understanding of this question beyond the scope.

RSC's adaptation of *The Orphan of Zhao* chose to walk in the opposite direction from most Chinese adaptations. First of all, RSC's adaptation acknowledged the main storyline of revenge, and recognised the theme of the traditional morality that was preserved in the original story. From reading the performance programme, we learned that RSC had done a thoroughly research of the whole story. They not only studied difference version of stories of ancient China, but also looked at modern drama and TV/film adaptations. RSC even looked through all the Western adaptations since Voltaire. In order to further understand the thinking behind the play, they even compared all the adaptations and examined how the orphan reacted differently in different versions from the versions of

Yuan and Ming Dynasty. For this, we could clearly see that RSC took this very seriously, and intended to bring out the dramatic tension behind the original traditional play.

In RSC's adaptation, the Eastern etiquette tradition (self-sacrifice for loyalty) was first revived in the production. In Fenton's play, Zhao Dun and Gongsun Chujiu were portrayed as upright officials in contrast to Tu'an Gu's brutality and the Emperor's incompetence. In the scene of the peach garden massacre, the conflict between good and evil was very clear. Cheng Ying not only just chose to help Zhao family whom he was indebted to, but also chose the justice in the sense of ethical. Cheng Ying had every reason to sacrifice his own son. First, he needed to show his loyalty by protecting the orphan whom the princess entrusted to him. In particular, the General Han Jue already sacrificed his life for the orphan before him. Moreover, Cheng Ying would also need to consider the rest of babies in the whole city. He gave up his own son because he deeply believed that only by saving the orphan of Zhao, can they then be possible to overthrow Tu'an Gu's tyranny regime and to build an ideal peaceful world. On a similar basis, Gongsun Chujiu also sacrificed himself for the so-called ideal justice. Most importantly, he abased himself and prostrated himself in front of Cheng Ying's wife (RSC's stage direction) in order to force her to give out the infant. Gongsun Chujiu's action was very impressive. He paid a huge price for ethical justice, including his life, his position as a senior and also benevolence. Han Jue's, Ti Miming's and Chu Ni's characteristic all fit into the same description as well. Chu Ni rather killed himself than killed Zhao Dun because he heard Zhao Dun's prayer. The content of the prayer was "Let the empire be governed by a wise ruler and honest advisers, our soldiers and our officials be faithful and true, hold back the raging seas to keep our country safe, wash all injustice clean for every subject."<sup>1</sup> This was a very abstract ethical ideal and all people made "sacrifices" for this ideal. In this regard, their actions without doubt had shown heroism. This was the impression that the traditional Chinese drama of *The Orphan of Zhao* was trying to make.

However, there was a gap behind this noble spirit of sacrifice. That gap was the dead infant whom Cheng Ying sacrificed for. Fenton precisely grasped this main point. He realised that Cheng Ying's dead son was a living person who was never mentioned in all the previous adaptations. People always talked about whether Cheng Ying should sacrifice his son or not, but never really considered how the infant would feel. Why was this important? It was because once people started to consider the infant's feelings, then the infant would be regarded as a living individual, rather than an abstract symbol. Cheng Ying could choose to kill himself, but he could not choose death for others. If he chose death for others, then he would be committing a murder, which was a serious crime. In most traditional Chinese opera, and many modern adaptations, the directors always put the blame on Tu'an Gu for the murder of the infant. However in truth, Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu were the criminals behind this and they were the one to blame. In the ending of adaptation, Fenton set up a scene for Cheng Ying to meet the ghost of his grown-up son. The ghost asked Cheng Ying: "Why did you hate me? Why did you love the Orphan of Zhao?" Cheng Ying answered: "I can see that I wronged you long ago, and the truth is: I cannot remember why. I feel there must have been a reason. I feel that I could have had no choice. But I cannot

any longer tell you what the reason was.”<sup>2</sup> All Cheng Ying could do to make it up was to commit suicide.

Fenton mentioned the design of the infant’s ghost in a Beijing Radio interview. He believed, “The actual dilemma of the characters...is very comprehensible, not just in terms of plot but in terms of psychology.”<sup>3</sup> We could also interpret the ghost as an illusion of Cheng Ying. From this part, we started to see the boundaries of the noble morality advocated in the traditional opera play. The morality was complete in the past, and was still very encouraging and inspiring in the modern day, but it had boundary. The ghost of the Cheng Ying’s son or a part of Cheng Ying’s mind stood outside this boundary. And because of this gap, the whole concept of morality collapsed. What we saw from the play was no longer a majestic “sacrifice,” but a brutal “crime.” Cheng Ying committed the crime, Gongsun Chujiu committed the crime, and the people who committed suicide all committed the crime. What right did they have to end a life whether it was their life or someone else’s life?

The incident of Cheng Bo killing Tu’an Gu was also taken into such a consideration. Fenton arranged the following incidents to explain Cheng Bo’s action of killing his foster father. First, Cheng Bo’s visit outside the court was added in the production. Cheng Bo learned that Tu’an Gu was an evildoer and Tu’an Gu lost the support of the Jin people. Second, the Orphan met with the Princess, which had become a motivation for the orphan to seek the truth. Third, the Emperor had somewhat awakened and gave the commander’s tally (tiger-shaped) to Wei Jiang. So after Wei Jiang destroyed Tu’an Gu’s army, Tu’an Gu had nothing left but himself. Fourth, Tu’an Gu was too scared to kill himself, so he asked Cheng Bo to finish his life for him. Cheng Bo finally went to see Tu’an Gu, but it was not because Cheng Ying told him the truth about how his family was butchered by Tu’an Gu. This did not become the reason to push him to kill Tu’an Gu, because he still had doubts, “Cheng Ying might lie to me.” Cheng Bo killed Tu’an Gu only because he believed this action was demanded by the people of Jin State. He believed that Jin State did not lie to him. Hence, Cheng Bo said to Tu’an Gu: “I will not kill you unless you beg me to. The crowd will demand an answer from you, and they will make you pay at length for their suffering. ” In RSC’s adaptation, the motivation of Cheng Bo’s revenge was clearly seen as an ethical justice that Cheng Bo made the decision himself. Tu’an Gu beg Cheng Bo to kill him: “Kill me. I am afraid. I dare not kill myself. Kill me quickly if ever you loved me.”<sup>4</sup> Cheng Bo ran toward Tu’an Gu from the thrust stage 10 metres away, and ended Tu’an Gu’s life with the sword. From RSC’s stage direction, we could see Cheng Bo’s eyes brimming with tears and also felt his pain and anguish while he killed Tu’an Gu. Here we saw a fierce confrontation between personal emotions and the traditional ethical justice. Cheng Bo<sup>i</sup> must give up his personal morality while he chose traditional morality. This was a justice action a grown-up man took to his evil father who loved him deeply. As a result of this justice action, Cheng Bo held Tu’an Gu’s body tight with tears and grief because he knew deeply in his heart that he also committed a crime by killing his own foster father.

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<sup>i</sup> The original text was Cheng Ying. But reading the context, I think it was a typo. It should be Cheng Bo.

We could clearly see when RSC adapted the theme of *The Orphan of Zhao*; the modern value of respecting humanity was survived from the traditional story. It described a huge conflict between this modern value and traditional morality. Roughly speaking, there were two factors indispensable for its success. First, the adaptation insisted a clear position of individualism value. Second, there was self-awareness towards the beauty of ethical morality in terms of traditional meaning. The difference between RSC's adaptation and the classical Chinese opera was that it did not stand in a position of traditional morality to admonish, advocate and enlighten people. On the other hand, the difference between RSC's adaptation and other modern adaptations was that it maintained the powerful energy of the traditional morality and to use it not only as a soil for the development of the tragedy but also as a target for the individual spirit to fight against.

## Two

As a matter of fact, the reason that Chinese modern adaptors gave up the traditional ethnical context in their adaptation of *The Orphan of Zhao* was not because they realised the deficiencies of the traditional ethnical context so that they feel they could express an in-depth modern thinking. On the contrary, it was because that they were not even aware of this context. They did not realise that the two incidents of sacrificing son and killing father were abrupt and this was because the incidents happened inside the framework of such traditional morality. If they were not aware of this issue, then they would not be able to see the completeness of Cheng Ying and the orphan in terms of their individualism world. If in the traditional opera, it dealt with the individual of being conquered by the unified morality, and if the individual had to unconditionally comply with the requirement of the morality, then most of the Chinese modern adaptations were only dealing with personal grudges between individuals and the existing difficult conditions of complex individual behind these personal grudges. Nevertheless, RSC put the conflict of individual and traditional morality in the core position of the whole adaptation. For the modern spectators, it had successfully created the most important conflict between modern value and traditional morality, which was buried and hidden inside the story of *The Orphan of Zhao*. And this was the key of its success.

However, simply with a crucial guiding ideology, it was still far from a complete and expressive artistic work. The form of drama, or dramatic stylistic, may decide the success of adaptation to a greater extent. The following question was whether the topic of struggle between modern and traditional value that was shown in RSC's adaptation affected the actual process of creation or the process of the creation (a realisation of a certain dramatic stylistic) resulted in this topic? This was a very difficult question to answer, but at least through the observation of the dramatic stylistic, this could help us to enhance the understanding of this adaptation.

The development of Western drama was a highly complicated process, emerging with a variety of dramatic forms throughout the whole process. Since Aristotle, there has always been an essence of drama in the abstract. This essence of drama

was hugely influenced by two important traditional thoughts, which were rationalism and individualism. When Aristotle interpreted Greek drama in *The Poetics*, he combined rationalism with drama. He believed: "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude; for there may be a whole that is wanting in magnitude. A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end."<sup>5</sup> The dramatic structure hence became a product of this rational arrangement. This conclusion might not be consistent with the chrematistics of ancient Greek drama, but the spirit of rationalism decided the essential context of Western drama's development since the Renaissance (*Poetics* was found and widely read during the Renaissance). As the Renaissance developed, individualism also became a prominent theme in Italy. Simply speaking, individualism meant to liberate individual from everything including religions, nations and traditional morality. All individuals were equal with all the abstract noun of religions, nations and traditional morality. Ferdinand Brunetière's (a French critic) dramatic perspective was quoted by William Archer in *Play-Making: A Manual of Craftsmanship*: "The theatre in general is nothing but the place for the development of the human will, attacking the obstacles opposed to it by destiny, fortune, or circumstances... Drama is a representation of the will of man in conflict with the mysterious powers or natural forces which limit and belittle us; it is one of us thrown living upon the stage, there to struggle against fatality, against social law, against one of his fellow-mortals, against himself."<sup>6</sup> Brunetière's dramatic perspective was the evidence of showing the importance of individualism in the drama. *The Poetics* was originated in ancient Greek, but it was not discovered until Renaissance. In other words, this type of the abstract Western drama could be actually seen as a modern dramatic stylistic. Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Western drama had undergone enormous changes, but this abstract modern dramatic stylistic had never been phasing out throughout the history. In contrast, the Postmodern theatre based on deconstruction was only a brief movement. And among all, Hegel was the best known to help us to understand this dramatic stylistic in a most comprehensive and accurate way.

Hegel refined the elements of rationalism in the drama. When Hegel explained the truly inviolable law of the unity of the action, he said: "In principle every action must have a specific end which the action is realizing...the circumstances for a dramatic action are of such a kind that one individual's aim encounters hindrances from other individuals, because an opposite aim, seeking commensurate realization, stands in the way, so that in this confrontation mutual conflicts and their complication result." On the other hand, "the individual have more or less put their whole will and being into the undertaking they are pursuing."<sup>7</sup> Hegel repeatedly stressed that the individual dramatic character must possess a free, self-conscious will. In this regard, in Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*, rationalism and individualism were consolidated to function together in the drama. From Hegel's point of view, the issue of dramatic stylistic was not simply a question of its genre. The form of the dramatic poetry itself had reached a high stage of development both in its outlook on the world and in its artistic culture.

RSC's adaptation of *The Orphan of Zhao* adopted this type of Western essential drama of what Hegel had described. It could be said that by the use of this drama, RSC had found the modern meaning of the story of the orphan of Zhao, and to be able to present this with a strong and full of artistic appeal. First, we examined the unity of the action in RSC's adaptation. Fenton divided the play into two parts. I believed the major concern here was that there were two different actions in this production. The first action was Cheng Ying's sacrifice to save the orphan. The second action was the orphan's revenge. Many adaptors divided *The Orphan of Zhao* into two separate parts was because there was a gap of 18 years (the gap was 20 years in Yuan dynasty play, and 16 years in some adaptations). But we found that Fenton did not divide the play according to the time. The ending of the first part was 18 years later when Cheng Bo went to the frontier fortress to see Wei Jiang and told him that the Emperor was seriously ill. From Fenton's point of view, this was set up for first action's ending in order to explain the outcome of the action of saving the orphan. This scene was also paving the way for the beginning of the second part. Right after the prelude of ballad in the second part, this part began with Wei Jiang's return. Wei Jiang saw Cheng Ying on his way back, and told Cheng Ying that he heard the rumour of the Emperor's illness. Cheng Ying took the opportunity to tell Wei Jiang the truth of the orphan's survival. This scene automatically became the beginning of the second action.

If we simply looked at the unity of external action, we found it difficult to tell the RSC's adaptation from other Chinese adaptations in terms of essence. The main reasons were as follows. First, *The Orphan of Zhao* was considered as the alternative to Yuan dynasty play, so in terms of plot, it was more unified than most of the Chinese operas. Based on this model, the adaptations of *The Orphan of Zhao* were easier to maintain its unity to some extent. Second, in terms of unity of plot, modern drama has acquired the unity. In other words, adaptors had already been able to realise and grasped this artistic tool to some degree. Therefore, even if there was a difference between Chinese adaptations and RSC's adaptation, there were only differences of degree. In terms of the unity of plot, the most important thing was as Hegel pointed out, the action of the character was driven by the free will derived from personal intention. Hegel stated: "In this way alone does the action appear as an action, as the actual execution of inner intentions and aims. The individual identifies himself with their realization and in it finds his own will and his own satisfaction, and now with his whole being must take responsibility for what the issue is in the external world. The individual dramatic character himself picks the fruit of his own deeds."<sup>8</sup> So was there any similar independent free will in Yuan dynasty play? Guowei Wang's statement may be the most appropriate to illustrate this question. Wang commented on *The Orphan of Zhao*: "The concept of the play was interwoven with the action of villain, but also with protagonist who put himself in danger. His action was the result of his own will. And he should be proud of his own action, as it was no worse than of all the others tragedies in the world."<sup>9</sup> In this regard, there was a "will," but was it a "free" will? Guowei Wang misread the belief of sacrificing for morality as a personal free will. The difference was the belief of believing to sacrifice for morality ended as soon as sacrifice happened. In Yuan dynasty play, we had seen many great people who sacrificed themselves

and died without guilt. But people who survived received great reward from the Emperor with pleasure. In RSC's adaptation, Cheng Ying was the best example to illustrate this. Cheng Ying realised that he carried the sin of killing his own son so after Tu'an Gu was killed, he had to seek redemption by killing himself in front of his son's tomb. He was conscious of his own actions whether he chose to save the orphan or to sacrifice his own son. Most importantly, he was responsible for the outcome of his own deeds. In contrast, we could actually see that such a free-will self-awareness was missing in both Yuan dynasty play and traditional Chinese opera. However, as a matter of fact, in terms of the whole structure of the play, even if the character conceived a will, it was not enough to compose a modern drama. It was completely different between a character had a will and the dramatic action was realised by a will. In the second part of RSC's adaptation, the purpose of the whole play's design was for the orphan to carry out his revenge on Tu'an Gu. The execution of the orphan's revenge was for him to see Tu'an Gu's malevolence step by step, and for him to gradually come to realise the misfortune his family had suffered. But at the same time, he still had to face Tu'an Gu's love, and he had to make a choice between love and hatred. From this, we could see the development of the orphan's inner struggle, and it was the orphan's will that pushed this dramatic action. In Yuan dynasty play, we have seen the will to sacrifice for loyalty, but the whole story was not developed according to an individual's will. In particular, the most crucial action in this play was the orphan's revenge, but the action of orphan's revenge was not driven by the orphan's will. The revenge was not the choice of the orphan, but the choice of the morality. From this perspective, the Chinese adaptors of the new century also faced the same issue. Although they have seen the meaning of anti-modernity behind the two incidents of Cheng Ying's sacrifice and the orphan's revenge, the free will of Cheng Ying and the orphan they created was only a glimpse in the play and was not consistent in the whole play. The core actions in the play were not always driven by this will either. Fundamentally speaking, their adaptations did not spontaneously follow the Western modern dramatic stylistic which Hegel mentioned.

### Three

Apart from the unity of action and individual free will, Hegel also mentioned another important element for the composition of Western drama. Hegel stated that, "Dramatic poetry, finally, makes central the collisions between characters and between their aims, as well as the necessary resolution of this battle. Consequently the principle for distinguishing its genres can only be derived from the relation of individuals to their aim and what it involves...the essence of every true action: (i) what is in substance good and great, the Divine actualized in the world, as the foundation of everything genuine and absolutely eternal in the make-up of an individual's character and aim; (ii) the subject, the individual himself in his unfettered self-determination and freedom."<sup>10</sup> Hegel regarded "what is good and great in substance" and "the subject in self-determination and freedom" as the essence for the true dramatic actions. In other words, behind every action of the characters, there must be an abstract morality involved. Here we could see the struggle between the individual and the morality had already



emerged in the essence of drama. Hegel's statement above could be seen as the continuation and supplement of Aristotle's six elements of tragedy.

RSC's adaption did fulfil the essential requirement of this dramatic stylistic. Cheng Ying's personal action fulfilled what was in substance good and great. His action to save the orphan was not to satisfy his selfish desire, but to perform his duty for loyalty and for an ideal world peace. Nevertheless, his subject character of self-determination and freedom required him to be liable for the consequence of his action. The absolutely eternal of morality, parallel to ethical loyalty, was a respect to the individual life. The conflict arising from these two forces of morality eventually destroyed the subject. The process of the whole destruction was exactly the process of tragedy's development in Hegel's view. However, in most modern Chinese adaptations, the great ideal behind the action of saving the orphan was always weakened at a great deal. In Zhaohua Lin's spoken drama adaptation, the grudge between the Zhao family and Tu'an family merely turned out to be the court struggle for power without the essence of justice fighting against evil. Tu'an Gu was on the Emperor's side, and Zhao Dun chose to be on the Empress' side. Tu'an Gu's problem with fertility was attributed to Zhao Dun's practice of torture. Zhao Shuo became a licentious spoiled son, but the Emperor turned out to be a brave character. He used his power to connive Tu'an Gu in order to recapture power from the Zhao family. In this way, the action of Cheng Ying saving the orphan did not have the ideal condition of morality. Because of this, the orphan lost the essential motivation for his revenge. This could also explain why in the end of Zhaohua Lin's play, the orphan refused to get revenge.

The loss of what was great in the substance in this kind of dramatic action could be interpreted as the adaptor returned the individual to the individual himself. As a matter of fact, it was quite the opposite. In Zhaohua Lin's adaptation, the reason that Cheng Ying did not leave the Princess and fled alone was because "As a servant, I would die in front of you if you don't leave...as long as I live, I swear I will protect your son's life as a servant till I die."<sup>11</sup> Cheng Ying was not a free individual, but a domestic servant who swore his life for his masters. And the reason that Han Jue let Cheng Ying and the orphan leave was because he felt he was obliged to face his own conscience towards Zhao Dun's mother (fictitious character). Here we could see in this adaptation of spoken drama, the insufficient level of the individual's free will was even worse than the Yuan dynasty play. When we thought the modern adaptations were better to express individual, but it turned out that they had gone back to the most superficial level of traditional morality in this process of drama's development. Sacrificing own life for the masters was definitely not the element of "absolutely eternal" in terms of traditional morality. Only when the sacrifice was raised to a higher level (in other words, the servant sacrificed his life for loyalty instead for the specific masters), can it become the element of tragedy action. Even if the content of morality was removed from the individual, it still did not mean the realisation of the individual freedom. It simply pushed the individual to a much lower level of morality requirement. Therefore, in RSC's adaptation, the more "absolutely eternal" of this kind of traditional morality was expressed in the drama, the higher the tension between the drama and the individual became. It would become more difficult

for the individual free will to decide the action. Hence, free will would be fully expressed, and resulted in the creation of variations and tension in the drama.

RSC's adaptation of *The Orphan of Zhao* provided a window for us to fully understand the essence of Western drama, and also an example for us to comprehend the source and origin of individualism in the drama. Similar to Chinese adaptors, RSC recognise the modern value hidden in the two incidents of "Cheng Ying's sacrifice" and "the orphan's revenge," and also realised that these two incidents could not be effectively advocated for the traditional morality. When RSC tried to explore the meaning of new morality behind these two incidents, they chose to adapt the modern drama stylistic, originated since the Renaissance. This stylistic contained the profound and dialectical thinking of individualism. Because of this modern drama stylistic, which was used as the essential core in the play, no matter how many eastern elements were added in the play (operatic soliloquy, singing, ballad-singer), it did not reduce the influence it had to the spectators as a dramatic creation of modern individualism. RSC's adaptation of *The Orphan of Zhao* fully exercised the expression of free individual. These individuals were the "orphans," truly liberated from the traditional morality. They walked over to the edge of the traditional morality, and stepped into the realm of new modern morality. They were destroyed, and in return, they obtained the meaning of absolutely eternal.

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<sup>1</sup> James Fenton, *The Orphan of Zhao*, Chinese translation by Chen Tian, London: Faber and Faber, 2012, p.12.

<sup>2</sup> James Fenton, *The Orphan of Zhao*, Chinese translation by Chen Tian, London: Faber and Faber, 2012, p.69.

<sup>3</sup> Li Ruru, *The Ghost of Zhao*, RSC Programme.

<sup>4</sup> James Fenton, *The Orphan of Zhao*, Chinese translation by Chen Tian, London: Faber and Faber, 2012, p.64-65.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *The Poetics*, translated by Luo Niansheng, Renming Literary Publisher, 1962, p. 25-28.

<sup>6</sup> William Archer: *Playing-Making: A Manual of Craftsmanship*, translated by Wu Junxie and Nie Wenqi, China Drama Publisher, 1964, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics*, translated by Zhu Guangqian, Commercial Press, 1981, p. 251.

<sup>8</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics*, translated by Zhu Guangqian, Commercial Press, 1981, p. 297.

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<sup>9</sup> Wang Guowei, *History of Song and Yuan Theatre*, Shanghai Books Publisher, 1998, p. 99.

<sup>10</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics*, translated by Zhu Guangqian, Commercial Press, 1981, p. 283.

<sup>11</sup> According to the adaptation of Beijing People's Art Theatre, which was edited by Jin Haishu, directed by Lin Zhaohua.