

BALANCE AND SYMMETRY IN THE *HUAN SHA CHI* 浣紗記

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Balance refers to a state of equilibrium among the various parts of a composition. A drama, whether Chinese or Western, might be said to be lacking in balance if it ends abruptly, with the main action of the story only partially developed, or if most of the characters appear as villains on stage and triumph in the end, or if all the long scenes are crowded together at one end of the play. When balance is achieved by the correspondence of parts on either side of a central axis (running through the whole play or a certain part of it) we have *symmetry*, and the corresponding parts, if viewed as elements of a linear structure, may be said to be in a state of parallelism. The corresponding parts on one side of the axis may be the reverse of those on the other side, as in a mirror image. In this case, the corresponding parts are in antithesis (or antithetical parallelism) with each other. Thus, parallelism and antithesis are not mutually exclusive terms, that is, A may parallel B at one level, such as the structural, but at the same time constitute an antithesis to B at the semantic level. Such, for example, is the case of "clothed" and "stripped," "slaves" and "tyrants" in these two lines from stanza 14 of "The Eve of Revolution" (*Songs before Sunrise*) by Swinburne:

...freedom clothed the naked souls of slaves
And stripped the muffled souls of tyrants bare.

The Chinese interest in balance and symmetry goes back to the dawn of history: the geometrical patterns on the colorful pottery of Yang-shao culture in the Neolithic period, and the *t'ao-t'ieh* 饕餮 motif on Shang bronzes are early examples of symmetrical design. But by far the most important example of balance and symmetry which has left its imprint on almost every aspect of traditional Chinese culture is the concept of Yin and Yang; the Yin force being negative, passive, weak, and destructive, the Yang being positive, active, strong, and constructive.⁽¹⁾ According to this theory, the two cosmic forces complement and balance each other, and their eternal interactions result in all universal phenomena. Also contributing to the Chinese concept of harmony and equilibrium is the *Doctrine of the Mean*, whose tremendous influence may be chiefly attributed to Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), who selected it from the *Book of Rites* to form one

(1) Early references to Yin and Yang are found in *Lao tzu* ch. 42; *Chuang tzu* ch. 2, 4, 6, 11, 13, 16, 21, 24, 25, and 33; *Hsün tzu* ch. 9 and 17, etc.

of the *Four Books*. In poetry, the feeling for proportion and symmetry (also shared by the ancient Greeks, incidentally) is well expressed in the poetics of *lü-shih* 律詩 (regulated verse) with its mandatory mechanisms of parallelism and antithesis; in prose, the complex network of parallelisms of *p'ien-wen* 駢文 (parallel prose). Parallelism in the *lü-shih* and the *p'ien-wen* has been studied by several scholars.⁽²⁾ In Ming (1368-1644) and Ch'ing (1644-1911) drama the great length of the *ch'uan-ch'i* 傳奇 genre has made it possible to craft a play of intricate balance and symmetry. The Ch'ing dramatist K'ung Shang-jen 孔尚任 (1648-1718), for example, envisioned the unfolding of his own work, *T'ao-hua shan* 桃花扇 (The Peach Blossom Fan) as the interacting of Yin and Yang forces,⁽³⁾ and the characters as being related to one another in perfect equilibrium. In this paper I shall examine the structural artistry of *Huan sha chi* 浣紗記 ("Washing Silk"), a sixteenth-century historical romance which K'ung presumably had read, if not seen on stage.

The beginning of the Ming dynasty saw the gradual decline of the four-act Yüan *tsa-chü*, or Northern drama, and the rise in popularity of Southern drama. From the dramaturgically unsophisticated *hsi-wen* 戲文 of the Sung (960-1279) and the Yüan (1280-1368) had evolved a new type of Southern drama characterized by its length, scene-division, fine music, elegant diction and elaborate scene arrangement. This was the *ch'uan-ch'i* 傳奇 (dramatic romance), to which genre the *Huan sha chi* (ca. 1570) belongs. Depending on the locale of the stage, Southern drama in early sixteenth-century China was performed in a number of different theatrical styles (apropos of singing techniques, musical instruments, rhythm, dialect, etc.), each originating in a different geographical region. Chief among the styles were the *I-yang ch'iang* 弋陽腔, the *Yü-yao ch'iang* 餘姚腔, the *Hai-yen ch'iang* 海鹽腔, and the *K'un-shan ch'iang* 崑山腔. The last, according to Hsü Wei 徐渭 (1521-1593), prevailed only in the Wu 吳 region (now part of Kiangsu and Chekiang), but "in terms of flowing beauty, slow tempo and far-reaching quality, it surpasses all the other three styles."⁽⁴⁾ Although the *K'un-shan ch'iang* was probably in existence as a singing style of the common people in the K'un-shan

(2) See James R. Hightower, "Some Characteristics of Parallel Prose," rpt. in *Studies in Chinese Literature*, ed. John L. Bishop (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 107-139; Hans H. Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1976); Roman Jakobson, "The Modular Design of Chinese Regulated Verse," in *Echanges et Communications, Mélanges offerts à Claude Lévi-Strauss* (The Hague, 1970), pp. 597-605.

(3) According to K'ung, his *ch'uan-ch'i* "amounts to the *tao* of Yin and Yang in [complementary] alternation": 名曰傳奇實一陰一陽之爲道. See K'ung Shang-jen, *T'ao-hua shan*, ed. Wang Chi-ssu 王季思 and Su Huan-chung 蘇震中 (Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1961), p. 25 of the *gang-ling* 綱領 section.

(4) 洗麗悠遠出乎三腔之上 See Hsü Wei, *Nan-tz'u hsü-lu* 南詞敘錄 in *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng* 中國古典戲曲論著集成 (hereafter, CKKT), Vol. III (Peking: chung-kuo hsi-ch'ü ch'u-pan-she, 1959), p. 242.

area (near Soochow) even before the Ming,⁽⁵⁾ it was Wei Liang-fu 魏良輔 (fl. 1522-1572) who gave it vitality and refinement, enriching it with elements of the *Hai-yen* and *Yü-yao* styles. By the end of the Wan-li period (1573-1620), the K'un-shan theatrical style had spread beyond Kiangsu and Chekiang, and even penetrated into Northern China, where it eventually became an important constituent of Peking opera. Known as *k'un-ch'ü* 崑曲 in the Ch'ing dynasty and much loved by the scholar class, the K'un-shan style of drama was characterized by elegance of language, soft, melodic music (with the flute as the chief musical instrument), graceful movement, and a close affinity to dancing. The importance of the *Huan sha chi* (hereafter *HSC*) lies in its influence (see below) and the fact that it was the first play specifically written for the *K'un-shan ch'iang*. Its author, Liang Ch'en-yü 梁辰魚, courtesy name Po-lung 伯龍 (ca. 1521-1595),⁽⁶⁾ a native of K'unshan exceptionally gifted in music and poetry, is usually regarded as the true transmitter of Wei Liang-fu's style of singing. Yet in point of fact, Liang went beyond Wei to develop new techniques and new tunes of his own and may indeed be regarded as founder of one of the several variant styles of the *K'un-shan ch'iang*. The *HSC* was extremely popular in its day: there was much competition for stage parts among the actors, one song (from sc. 30) became a great favorite of the singers, and several later *ch'uan-ch'i* contained allusions to the play.⁽⁷⁾ All this popularity, no doubt, had much to do with the play's "singability" and the harmonious blending of parts. The text used for this paper is the *I-yün-ko huan sha chi* 怡雲閣浣紗記, originally a Ming edition in two volumes, photo-reprinted in the *Ku-pen hsi-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an ch'u chi* 古本戲曲叢刊初集 series.

The story of *HSC* is based on historical events which took place in China in the fifth century B.C. As the play opens, Fan Li 范蠡, prime minister to King Kou-chien 句踐 of the state of Yüeh 越, is vacationing in the countryside. He meets beautiful Hsi Shih 西施 washing silk in a stream near Chu-lo Village 苧蘿 and immediately falls in love with her. Before parting, Fan tells Hsi Shih that he will marry her in a few months' time. Meanwhile, King Fu-ch'ai 夫差 of the state of Wu 吳 leading a powerful army launches a sudden attack on Yüeh, soon bringing the greater part of the latter state under his control. Hopelessly encircled, Kou-chien, acting on Fan Li's advice, sends High Official Wen Chung 文種 with liberal bribes to Wu's corrupt minister Po P'i 伯嚭 to plead for surrender. Despite Premier Wu Tzu-hsü's 伍子胥 (Wu Yüan 伍員) advice, Fu-ch'ai accepts Kou-chien's surrender, but keeps the king of Yüeh, his wife, and Fan Li imprisoned in a stone-house, where the Yüeh prisoners are assigned the unpleasant task of looking after horses. Stoically enduring all indignities, they profess

(5) See Lu E-t'ing 陸粵庭, *K'un-chü yen-ch'u shih kao* 昆劇演出史稿 (Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-i, 1980), pp. 19-20.

(6) For Liang's biography, see Lu, pp. 34-38, and *Ming shih tsung* 明詩綜, ed. Chu I-tsun 朱彝尊, ch. 50.

(7) See Lu, pp. 27-29, 36-38, 48-50.

absolute devotion to Fu-ch'ai, who gradually grows lax in his ways and slips into a life of pleasure and complacency. With Po P'i thwarting him at every turn, all Wu Yüan's counsel falls upon deaf ears. After three years and what he believes to be Kou-chien's proof of loyalty, Fu-ch'ai sets the Yüeh prisoners free. Back in his own state, Kou-chien vows revenge. He sleeps on a straw bed and tastes bitter gall every morning, to remind himself of the shame he has experienced during his captivity. When Kou-chien announces a plan of using a beautiful woman to lure Fu-ch'ai into neglecting affairs of state, Fan Li offers to sacrifice Hsi Shih, who consents to cooperate for the sake of her country. Against the advice of Wu Yüan, Fu-ch'ai accepts Hsi Shih with great delight, and soon becomes totally infatuated with her. As expected, the Wu king immerses himself in sensuality and pleasure, much to the detriment of the state. Kou-chien exploits the opportunity and presents Fu-ch'ai with more gifts, including some rare timber, with which the grateful Fu-ch'ai builds even more pleasure palaces. Meanwhile, Wu Yüan keeps reminding his king of the danger of accepting gifts from Yüeh, but his advice is ignored. Finally, infuriated by Wu Yüan's nagging remonstrances and his ominous interpretation of a dream, Fu-ch'ai orders his prime minister to kill himself. As Wu Yüan does so, he makes the request that his head be hung over the West Gate so as to watch Kou-chien's troops marching into Wu. Kou-chien's troops indeed march in later, while Fu-ch'ai is out of the country launching an attack on the states of Ch'i 齊 and Chin 晉. He hurries home, but this time his troops are no match for the well-trained troops of Yüeh. In desperation he sends Po P'i to Yüeh as peace envoy, offering gifts of gold and beautiful women, only to be rejected. Kou-chien's army enters the Wu capital easily and, with the help of Hsi Shih, soon captures Fu-ch'ai, who is forced to commit suicide. As Kou-chien exults in his victory over Wu, Fan Li now asks to be relieved of his post as prime minister and, taking Hsi Shih with him as his bride, quietly steps into a boat on Lake T'ai and disappears. An outline of the forty-five scenes of *HSC* is appended to this paper.

The historical sources of the story of conflict between Wu and Yüeh can be found in *Shih-chi* (hereafter *SC*) 史記 ch. 31, 41, 66, and *Kuo yü* 國語 ch. 19-21. Other works containing some version of the story include the *Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu* (*WYCC*) 吳越春秋 by Chao Yeh 趙擘 (fl. 40), and the *Yüeh ch'ieh shu* 越絕書 by Yüan K'ang 袁康 (fl. 40). The fact that the *chia-men* 家門 (Prologue) in *HSC* contains the line 看古今浣溪新記舊名吳越春秋 ("Let's see a new version of the old Huan-hsi story, formerly known as *Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu*") has given rise to the speculation that there probably was an old *hsi-wen* by that name. Or, the line may simply refer to Chao Yeh's historical work. Two one-act *tsa-chü*, one by Wang Tao-k'un 汪道昆 (1525-1593) titled *Wu hu yu* 五湖遊 depicting Fan Li and Hsi Shih as care-free escapists, the other by Hsü Shih-ch'i 徐石麒 (fl. 1644) called *Fu Hsi Shih* 浮西施, which treats Hsi Shih as a source of evil, are attempts

to continue the *HSC* story.

I think one cannot fail to be impressed with the symmetrical structure of *HSC* even on a cursory reading. The plot pivots on the conflict between Wu and Yüeh. Events of the conflict assume a mirror image: Wu's initial victory over Yüeh is paralleled by Yüeh's victory over Wu in the end, with the roles of victor and the vanquished reversed. The conflict is rooted in events which took place outside the play: it was to avenge his father Ho-lü's 闔閭 defeat and death (only briefly alluded to in *HSC* scene 4) that Fu-ch'ai initially launched an assault on Yüeh; years later, as portrayed in the play, it is to avenge this assault that Kou-chien inflicts death and defeat upon Fu-ch'ai. Within this larger symmetry of attack and counter-attack, bloodshed and revenge, the dramatist builds a neat symmetry of characters. The number of advisors in the Yüeh camp (Fan Li, Wen Chung) is matched by an equal number in the Wu camp (Wu Yüan, Po P'i). But imbedded in this parallelism is an antithesis, because while Fan Li and Wen Chung are always single-minded in their concerted efforts to assist their king, Wu Yüan and Po P'i are forever divided in their advice, with Po P'i seizing every opportunity to discredit Wu. The result is that while Fan Li enjoys the complete confidence of Kou-chien, Wu Yüan finds his counsel repeatedly rejected by a cynical Fu-ch'ai. However, the antithesis between Fan and Wu gradually loses its edge to look more and more like a straightforward parallelism when toward the end of the play, Fan Li feels increasingly uneasy about his relationship with the triumphant Kou-chien. He wonders whether his future might not be an ironical repetition of Wu Yüan's fate after all:

Who knows today's Fan Li might not turn out to be yesterday's Wu Hsü!

焉知今日之范蠡不爲昔日之伍胥也

In the Wu camp Po P'i is the very antithesis of Wu Yüan: the former is sly, cowardly, greedy, licentious, corrupt, whereas the latter is thoroughly honest, outspoken, upright, imbued with a spirit of self-sacrifice. Po P'i serves as a foil to Wen Chung, his counterpart in the Yüeh camp; Wen is depicted as reliable, responsible, loyal, dedicated, and upright. Symmetrical relationships are emphasized in the martial scenes: combatants fight only those of corresponding rank. Thus, in scene 5, Po P'i engages Wen Chung, while Fan Li engages Wu Yüan. A repeat performance of the same task by officials of equal rank but with roles reversed underscores the irony of reverse symmetry. In scene 7, Wen Chung (Yüeh) urges Po P'i (Wu) to accept surrender; in scene 40, Po P'i (Wu) urges Wen Chung to accept surrender—the oblique parallelism of events is extraordinary. In carrying out his duty, Po P'i sends gifts identical to those once sent by Wen Chung, except that each gift is doubled in quantity. He also offers the same terms of surrender. In terms of symmetry, poetic justice comes swifter

and more dramatically in the play *HSC* than in its historical source *SC* 41, where only the second offer of surrender is rejected. In the *SC* this offer is made by Kung-sun Hsiung 公孫雄 and not by Po P'i, four years after Wu made the precarious peace with Yüeh. Po P'i's death at the hands of Wu Yüan's soldiers from the nether world (*HSC* sc. 44)⁽⁸⁾ provides a better sense of nemesis, and hence a better sense of balance to the Po-Wu feud than at the hands of Kou-chien (as in *SC* 41, 66).

Both being heads of states, Fu-ch'ai and Kou-chien occupy parallel positions. Both have been brought low, both have a past to avenge, but since the outcomes vastly differ, it is dramatically expedient for the playwright to subscribe to the mechanistic theory of cause and effect. Thus in the *HSC* we have a benevolent Kou-chien full of lofty resolves, and sensitive to the needs of his subjects (albeit somewhat prone to self-pity), poised against a headstrong, over-confident, irresponsible Fu-ch'ai, whose supposed iniquities fit the popular description of a stereotyped "bad last" ruler (self-indulgence, licentiousness, extravagant building projects for pleasure, etc.). To heighten the contrast, the unflattering side of the historical Kou-chien—a paranoid distrust of people in time of peace—is suppressed in the *HSC*, only barely hinted at in the second last scene when Fan Li quietly warns Wen Chung: "The king (lit., "lord" in the original)⁽⁹⁾ is a long-necked pecker. He stalks with the eyes of an eagle and the gait of a wolf. You can live with him in time of trouble, but not in time of peace." 主公爲人長頸鳥喙，鷹視狼步，可與共患難，不可與共安樂 (*HSC* sc. 44). According to *SC* 41, Kou-chien eventually forces Wen Chung to commit suicide. In grooming Kou-chien for the perfect foil to Fu-ch'ai, Liang Ch'en-yü carefully avoids dwelling on the Yüeh king's costly mistake of not heeding Fan Li's advice, which is directly responsible for the military disaster at K'uai Chi 會稽.⁽¹⁰⁾ The difference between Kou-chien and Fu-ch'ai is also cleverly heightened by placing them next to each other in parallel scenes (see below) but varying their order of entrance. Both scene 3 (Yüeh) and scene 4 (Wu) show a king consulting his ministers. In scene 3, first enters Kou-chien, then his wife, then his two ministers. This order presents an image of a serious Kou-chien devoted to affairs of the state. In scene 4, however, Fu-ch'ai's two ministers enter first, only for one of them to ask: "I wonder whether the king has arrived to hold an audience yet?" 不知主公升帳未曾?

Perhaps the most obvious antithetical arrangement of characters is the balancing of Tung Shih 東施 with Hsi Shih 西施, the two being cousins of sorts. Fan Li's description of the latter is "incomparable beauty rarely seen in the

(8) For a study of Wu Tzu-hsü's posthumous influence, see Richard C. Rudolph, "Wu Tzu-hsü, His Life and Posthumous Cult: A Critical Study of *Shih chi* 66," Ph. D. Dissertation, Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1942.

(9) Hsü Fu-tso 徐復祚 (1560-ca. 1630) objects to the use of 主公 (lord) instead of 王 (king). See *Ch'ü lun* 曲論, CKKT IV, 239-240.

(10) Cf. *SC* 41.

entire world" 艷色絕倫舉世罕見 (sc. 21). Tung Shih, on the other hand, is said to "look like neither a human being nor a ghost" 人不像人, 鬼不像鬼 (sc. 22). To match this Tung-Hsi (East-West) polarity of names and looks, there is also a Nan-Pei (South-North) polarity of two sisters—beautiful Nan Wei 南威 of South Village, married to Duke Wen of Chin 晉文公, and Pei Wei 北威, a hunchback doctor of North Village. Though their names do not appear in SC 41 or 66, both the *Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu* ch. 9 and the *Yüeh ch'üeh shu* ch. 8 mention Hsi Shih and Cheng Tan 鄭旦, another beauty allegedly offered to Fu-ch'ai but not noted in the *HSC*. Hsi Shih's proverbial beauty is alluded to in a number of pre-Ch'in texts, including the *Chuang-tzu* 莊子. Tung Shih, however, is not mentioned in any of these works. I suspect that she is probably an invention of the playwright, who took his cue from the *T'ai-p'ing huan-yü chi* 太平寰宇記 ch. 96 (compiled by Yüeh Shih 樂史, 930-1007), which gives the information that in the Chu Chi 諸暨 district of the Yüeh prefecture 越州 there is a Hsi Shih family and a Tung Shih family.

The division of a lengthy *ch'uan-ch'i* drama into a large number of scenes poses certain problems for the playwright, such as pace, proportion, unity, and span of interest. Part of the genius of the *ch'uan-ch'i* playwright consists in carefully balancing the scenes so that the various parts of the play echo one another to form a harmonious whole. In traditional Chinese dramaturgy, scenes may be categorized as grand (*ta-ch'ang* 大場), major (*cheng-ch'ang* 正場), short (*tuan-ch'ang* 短場), transitional (*kuo-ch'ang* 過場), comic (*hsieh-ch'ang* 諧場), martial (*wu-ch'ang* 武場), or civil (*wen-ch'ang* 文場).⁽¹¹⁾ A grand scene (*HSC* sc. 14) is a long scene of important action, marking a high point in the play, with fine arias and a large number of characters, usually in lavish costumes. A major scene (sc. 2) played by the leading roles, carries important developments of plot or mood. A short scene (sc. 9) is supplementary in nature, played by leading or secondary roles, with the structure of a major scene in miniature, but no significant developments of plot. A transitional scene (sc. 22) is essentially a filler; it may consist of all dialogue and no arias, or, at most, just a few brief songs. I have constructed a comparative chart of scenes in Appendix 2, based on Chang Ching's 張敬 analysis.⁽¹²⁾ The chart shows theatrical craftsmanship of the dramatist in balancing one type of scene with another, in spacing certain scenes so as to avoid monotony, in placing comic scenes after the serious, thereby providing emotional relief, in propelling the action forward and giving the play a sense of rhythm.

Compare the chart with the summary of scenes in Appendix 1, and it will be seen that contrast is used to great effect in the play. Scenes of an antithetical nature are paired together, for example, sc. 3 *mou Wu* 謀吳 (king of Yüeh consults

(11) For a detailed discussion, see Chang Ching 張敬, *Ming Ch'ing ch'uan-ch'i tao lun* 明清傳奇導論 (Taipei, 1961), pp. 101-121.

(12) *Ibid.*, pp. 110-113.

with his ministers) with sc. 4 *fa Yüeh* 伐越 (king of Wu consults with his ministers); sc. 16 *wen chi* 問疾 (diagnosis of a king) with sc. 17 *hsiao-p'in* 效顰 (diagnosis of a commoner—and her aching cousin); sc. 22 *fang nü* 訪女 (ugly Tung Shih and Pei Wei rejected in beauty selection) with sc. 23 *ying Shih* 迎施 (beautiful Hsi Shih received in Yüeh palace); sc. 13 *yang ma* 養馬 (a throneless Kou-chien attending to horses) with sc. 14 *ta wei* 打圍 (triumphant Fu-ch'ai hunting on horseback), etc. The contrast between scenes 13 and 14 is extreme: images of the victor and the vanquished, the past and the present, king and commoner, are all juxtaposed together. Irony is heaped upon irony when the guards in scene 13 cannot recognize a king when they see one! (Another *ch'uan-ch'i* that has a marked pattern of alternating scenes of contrast is Kao Ming's 高明 *P'i-p'a chi* 琵琶記.)

Given the cohesive structural symmetry and the scheme of balanced scene arrangement shown in the discussion above and in Appendix 2, I think it is grossly unfair of Hsü Fu-tso 徐復祚 (1560-ca. 1630) to criticize the dramatic incidents (*kuan-mu* 關目) in *HSC* as "slow and sprawling, without bones or muscles, entirely devoid of a proper ending" 關目散緩無骨無筋全無收攝.⁽¹³⁾ True, the play is rather long—forty-five scenes—but not much longer than the average Ming-Ch'ing *ch'uan-ch'i*, which has some thirty to forty scenes. On the other hand, *Ching ch'ai chi* 荆釵記 has forty-eight scenes, and *Mu-tan t'ing* 牡丹亭 fifty-five. If length is a weakness, it is a weakness of the genre, rather than *HSC*. One can better appreciate Liang's concern with pace when one bears in mind that according to *SC* 41 and *WYCC* ch. 10, the historical Fan Li did not leave Kou-chien in the hour of triumph (as in *HSC*, which makes the incident more dramatic), but much later, only after Kou-chien had gained military control and assumed hegemony over the eastern states. On the question of ending, neither the *SC* nor even the imaginative *WYCC* mentions specifically that Fan Li leaves with Hsi Shih or, indeed, any woman. But by making her leave with him in a boat, Liang Ch'en-yü completes the symmetry of structure in the shape of a diamond, that is, the play begins with Fan Li and Hsi Shih and ends with Fan Li and Hsi Shih—between the beginning and the ending the two are practically separated, their lives interwoven into the larger themes of loyalty and vengeance. Despite Hsü Fu-tso, the last scene actually contains something of the traditional scholar-beauty reunion: Hsi Shih and Fan Li are finally joined together in marriage. What one finds conspicuously absent from scene 45 is the bestowing of imperial honors upon the hero, the proclamation of fame and official recognition, a loyal commitment to the emperor, in short all the trappings of a stereotyped ending which may well be described as *ju-shih* 入世 ("entering the world"), to borrow a Buddhist term. By contrast, scene 45 is refreshingly *ch'u-shih* 出世 ("transcending

(13) *Ch'ü lun*, CKKT IV. 239.

the world”⁽¹⁴⁾ in tone, marked by Taoist images, the lack of a prearranged destination (which Hsü Fu-tso would probably decry as looseness of structure), a sense of release, and a freedom of the spirit that comes with “roaming on whale-back and flying on the crane” 跨鯨遊鶴飛。

Within the scene itself, there is often internal symmetry of structure, effectively reinforced by music. For example, scene 2, which describes the first and therefore rather formal meeting between Fan Li (*sheng* 生 role) and Hsi Shih (*tan* 旦 role), has the following structural arrangement:

- Sheng* sings (tune: *Jao Ch'ih yu* 遶池遊)
 soliloquizes
 sings (tune: *Chin-ching hsiao hung hua* 金井小紅花) (exits)
Tan sings (tune: *Jao ch'ih yu*)
 soliloquizes
 sings (tune: *Chin-ching hsiao hung hua*) (leaving stage, meets *sheng* coming up.)
- Sheng-Tan* dialogue
Sheng sings (tune: *Yü pao tu* 玉抱肚)
Tan sings (tune: *Yü pao tu* 玉抱肚)
Tan says good-bye.
Sheng says good-bye,
 (Exit Verse) *Sheng* -----
 Tan -----
 Sheng -----
 Tan -----

Words in the exit couplets have been deliberately left out in order to give prominence to formal relationships. The symmetrical repetition of songs gives the impression of harmony and rapport appropriate to the occasion. Such internal symmetry, usually reserved for the more lyrical scenes, is seldom extended to the comic. Scene 19 is another example of the effective use of song, through well-distributed repetition, chain and choral singing (the latter a special feature of Southern drama), to create a mood of solidarity and determination. The scene ends with a resounding chorus with everybody on stage joining in.

The special arrangement of songs known as *nan-pei ho-t'ao* 南北合套 gives certain scenes in the *HSC* an added dimension of symmetry. This practice, allegedly initiated by Shen Ho 沈合 (fl. 1295) of the Yüan dynasty, refers to the alternating of Northern and Southern arias to form a mixed suite (套). Thus scene 45 has a perfect balance of North-South songs, with the male lead singing the Northern tunes, and the female lead the Southern. The symmetry gives a

(14) I am only using the term to describe the ending. By no means am I suggesting that the historical Fan Li had anachronistic Buddhist thinking.

satisfying sense of blending of opposites at the close. Here are the first few titles:

- Northern *Hsin shui ling* 新水令 (*sheng*)
 Southern *Pu pu chiao* 步步嬌 (*tan*)
 Northern *Yan-erh lo* 雁兒落 (*sheng*)
 Southern *Ch'en tsui tung feng* 沉醉東風 (*tan*)
 Northern *Te sheng ling* 得勝令 (*sheng*)
-

Some of the juxtapositions of tunes in the scene have been previously used by other dramatists in mixed suites, but Liang Ch'en-yü's alternating the Southern tune *P'u t'ien lo* 普天樂 with the Northern *Ch'ao t'ien tzu* 朝天子 in scene 14, with one rime for the Southern arias and several separate rimes for the Northern, is innovative.

The song, whether by itself or as a unit of the suite (*t'ao-shu* 套數), has to conform to established conventions of meter, tonal arrangement, and rime, though one may conjecture that at early stages in the evolution of the genre, the composer must have been allowed considerable latitude. The prosodic conventions governing the various verse forms of the tunes involve systems of balance on the phonological, syntactic, and semantic levels of language. Since the verse patterns fixed by convention are not unique to the HSC, I shall discuss only one example here, namely, *I chien mei* 一剪梅, in the *nan-lü* 南呂 mode, from scene 31.⁽¹⁵⁾ This song is a *yin-tzu* 引子, that is, a song used to introduce a suite. The first three lines are sung by Kou-chien (*hsiao-sheng* 小生), the last three by Fan Li and Wen Chung together (*sheng* 生 and *mo* 末 respectively). Kou-chien is supposed to see the other two persons only after he has sung his part, so presumably the *hsiao-sheng* sings at one end of the stage, while the *sheng* and *mo* sing at the other end.

(*Hsiao-sheng*)

1. 海黑山昏劍氣沉
hai hei shan hun chien ch'i ch'en
2. 誓奮雄心
shih fen hsiung hsin
3. 未奮雄心
wei fen hsiung hsin

Standard Tone Pattern

t t p p t t p (r)

p t p p (r)

p t p p (r)

(*Sheng, mo*)

4. 螯龍困久夜長吟
che lung k'un chiu yeh ch'ang yin

p p p t t p p (r)

(15) The standard verse form can be found in *Ch'in-ting ch'ü-p'u* 欽定曲譜 8.2b (Shanghai: Sao-yeh shan-fang, 1924 edn.) The work was compiled by Wang I-ch'ing 王奕清 (1664?-1736?) and others.

- | | | |
|------------------|---------|-----|
| 5. 欲作甘霖 | p t p p | (r) |
| yü tso kan lin | | |
| 6. 定作甘霖 | t t p p | (r) |
| ting tso kan lin | | |

Black seas, dark hills, and the spirit of the sword hangs low,
 I vow to rouse my ambition,
 I fail to rouse my ambition.
 The hibernating dragon, long stranded, groans all night,
 It wants to make sweet rain,
 It'll certainly make sweet rain.

The standard metrical pattern on the right is based on the example given in *Ch'in-ting ch'ü-p'u* 欽定曲譜 ch. 8. As in the case of *lü-shih* or *pei-ch'ü* (Northern dramatic songs), tonal harmony in a Southern song is achieved through balancing the level, or *p'ing* 平 (p), and deflected, or *tse* 仄 (t) tonal categories. The whole song should consist of thirty syllables and the last syllables of all the lines should rime (r), as in the case above. According to the *Hung-wu cheng yün* 洪武正韻 (Preface dated 1375),⁽¹⁶⁾ a riming dictionary widely consulted by writers of Southern *ch'ü*, 沉, 心, 吟, and 霖 belong to the same 侵 rime category, though 沉 does not rime with any of the other end-syllables in modern Mandarin, on which the above romanization is based. *t* in our notation means it may be replaced by p, and *p* means it may be replaced by t. Beyond this essentially mechanistic balancing of tones in accordance with established rules, beyond the obvious metrical parallelism between lines 1 and 4; 2 and 3; 5 and 6; or the 744:744 rhythmic repetition, the dramatist has greater scope for ingenuity when it comes to syntactic and semantic parallelism. Syntactically, lines 2,3,5,6 parallel one another in their verb+object construction, and yet semantically, between themselves lines 2 and 3 form an antithesis. Further, the overall negative tone of lines 2 and 3 contrast with the positive tone of lines 5 and 6. Line 1 contains three parallel subjects 海, 山, 劍氣, predicated by the stative verbs 黑, 昏, 沉, respectively—all suggesting the gloom overhanging the state of Yüeh as long as its past domination by Wu is not avenged. By contrast, 困 and 吟 in line 4 are functive verbs, and though line 4 complements line 1 in tone, the last three lines taken as a whole exude contrastive optimism and a brightening sense of purpose. Scene 31 depicts Kou-chien's impatience with waiting and reveals his plans to further erode Fu-ch'ai's moral sense and sabotage the Wu economy. This theme is hinted at in the opening song and recapitulated in the four lines of exit verse at the end of the scene. The cohesiveness, balance, and symmetry

(16) Compiled by Sung Lien 宋濂 (1310-1381) and others under imperial auspices during the reign of Ming Emperor T'ai-tzu 太祖 (1368-1398). It arranges syllables into four tonal categories, *p'ing* 平, *shang* 上, *ch'ü* 去, and *ju* 入, the last indicating the influence of Southern regional dialects.

exemplified in the texture of *I chien mei* in scene 31 are by no means exceptional, but are present in most of the songs in *HSC* in varying degrees.

A good example of non-binary parallelism amplifying emotive appeal is the following four lines sung by the wife of Kou-chien (*t'ieh* 貼 role) to the tune *Shan p'o yang* 山坡羊 (*shang* mode):

滴溜溜亂拋的珠淚
 羞答答新參的奴婢
 病怯怯未死的骨骸
 遠迢迢難度的時和歲
 Drop after drop of tears in confusion
 A new maidservant extremely shy
 A living skeleton, sick and timid
 Time interminably hard to endure

This is part of a *Kuo-ch'ü* 過曲, that is, one of several songs which form the main body of a suite. Scene 13 from which the above quote is taken shows the royal prisoners performing the chore of looking after horses. Kou-chien has just indulged in self-pity in a preceding song; here it is his wife's turn. The onomatopoeic repetitions and prolongations of sound suggest time dragging on, the pain and monotony of being imprisoned in the stone-house, and the abjectness of her spirit. While reduplication of syllables (*tieh tzu* 疊字) as a poetic device is as old as the *Shih ching* 詩經, it is particularly popular with Yüan and Ming dramatists and song writers.

In the above quote, the multi-layered parallelism neatly arranged in four lines—metrical, semantic, grammatical (modifier+noun)—refers to related things of similarity, and may be regarded as *tieh tzu* imbedded in a form of *p'ai pi* 排比 (parade of similarities). But more highly regarded in traditional Chinese rhetoric is antithesis, or the parallel arrangement of opposites (*tui ou* 對偶). Thus, according to Liu Hsieh 劉勰 (465-522), "Parallelism involving opposites is excellent, parallelism involving similarities is inferior 反對爲優正對爲劣."⁽¹⁷⁾ While one may take issue with Liu's position of extremes, there is no lack of examples of antithetical parallelism in the *HSC*. The theme of contrast between the past and the present underlies this and many other examples:

問扁舟何處恰才歸
 嘆飄流常在萬重波裡
 當日個浪翻千丈急
 今日個風息一帆遲
 烟景迷離
 望不斷太湖水

(Tune: *Hsin shui ling*)

(17) See *Wen-hsin tiao lung* 文心雕龍 ch. 7, Section 35.

Ask where's a suitable place for the boat to anchor?
 Alas, it's always drifting amidst the myriad waves.
 Yesterday, the toppling waves a thousand *chang* high,
 Today a slow sail in calm weather,
 A misty scene blurring,
 On the endless waters of Lake T'ai.

The song is sung by Fan Li (*sheng*) as he steps into the boat in the last scene. Although the neat contrast is between lines 3 and 4 (grammatically and semantically at every point *in the original*), there is also some antithesis between the uncertainty of the first line and the certainty (of being forever in rough waters) of the second.

Linguistic parallelism is not confined to the arias; balanced constructions reminiscent of parallel prose are often found in the speech of the important characters and those of high station in life. In the scene in which he is condemned to death, the outspoken Wu Yüan enters the stage with a perfect couplet of oblique parallelism, setting the keynote of the scene:

忠臣不怕死
 怕死不忠臣
 (scene 33)
 Loyal ministers are not afraid of death,
 Those afraid of death are not loyal ministers.

Earlier, in scene 32, where another outspoken man of integrity, Kung-sun Sheng 公孫聖, is killed by Fu-ch'ai, the minister responsible for bringing Kung-sun before Fu-ch'ai escapes in the nick of time, saying

雙手擘開生死路
 一身跳出是非門
 (scene 32)
 With both hands I split open the path of life and death
 With one bounce I leap out of the gate of right and wrong.

The irony is that Fu-ch'ai is blind to the devotion of his ministers, whereas Wu Yüan is one who always has his ruler at heart. Reporting to his king on his mission to the state of Ch'i, Wu says:

孤身去國三千里
 一日思君十二時
 (scene 28)
 Alone, I left the country for three thousand *li*
 One day I thought of you for twenty-four hours.

Though originally of humble station in life, Hsi Shih, the female lead, has become a key figure in the Wu-Yüeh conflict. Her speech is often charged with rhetoric. In scene 41, finally "liberated" from Fu-ch'ai after three years in the Wu palace, she sighs:

三載已飛它國夢

一朝還作故鄉人

The flight of three years

Overnight

(scene 41)

a nightmare in an alien land

I've come home as a native

All the above examples show a clever balancing of grammatical and semantic units necessary for antithetical parallelism in Chinese poetics. Such chiselled care in highflown speech contrasts sharply with the linguistic vulgarities of Tung Shih and Pei Wei in scene 22, or the bawdy exchanges between the eunuch and the palace women in scene 34. Despite the abundance of examples, parallelism in *HSC* is of the simple, straightforward kind, either between parts of the same line (as in "the hills of Wu and the lakes and rivers of Yüeh" 吳山越水), or between the two lines as exemplified in earlier quotes (known as *ho-pi tui* 合璧對).⁽¹⁸⁾ I have not been able to find in *HSC* examples of such elaborate parallelism as categorized in Chou Te-ch'ing's 周德清 (fl. 1324) *Chung-yüan yin-yün* 中原音韻.⁽¹⁹⁾

Poetic or historical allusions⁽²⁰⁾ are in a sense implied parallelisms (which could be antithetical), since in an allusion a person, situation, or thing is perceived to be sufficiently similar as to parallel another person, situation, or thing, either directly or as an exact opposite. In such a case, the parallel being drawn lies outside the work of literature which contains the allusion. The many allusions to Li Yü's 李煜 (937-978) poetry, especially in scenes 10, 13, 14, suggest that the author of *HSC* sees parallels between the mood and situation of Kou-chien, a king reduced to slavery, and that of Li Yü, the last ruler of Southern T'ang (937-975), taken captive by the Sung army—another case of a man of power brought low by the conqueror.

The practice of alluding to historical figures or events in order to emphasize a point has its early precedents in pre-Ch'in texts. By the 5th century, the practice had become so common that Liu Hsieh devoted a special section to it in his *Wen-hsin tiao lung* 文心雕龍 under the title "Clarification through Historical Analogy" (*shih lei* 事類).⁽²¹⁾ Historical allusions appropriately adorn a historical romance such the *HSC*, where they are used chiefly to buttress an argument. Thus, in scene 27 when the king of Yüeh tries to convince Hsi Shih of the importance of her mission, he quotes the story of King Wen of Chou's 周文王 imprisonment by King Chou 紂王 of Yin and his loyal minister's use of a beautiful

(18) One of the seven types of parallelism listed by Chu Ch'üan 朱權 (d. 1448) in his *T'ai-ho cheng yin p'u* 太和正音譜, CKKT III. 14-15.

(19) Cf. CKKT I. 236. Three types of parallelism are listed: *shan-mien tui* 扇面對 (alternate lines parallel), *ch'ung-tieh tui* 重疊對 (line 1 parallel with line 2, line 4 with line five, at the same time lines 1, 2, 3 parallel with lines 4, 5, 6), *chiu wei tui* 救尾對 (last three lines parallel).

(20) For a full discussion of the function of allusions, see James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 131-145.

(21) *Wen-hsin tiao lung* ch. 8, Section 38.

bait (Yu Hsin 有薪氏美女) to secure King Wen's release and eventually overthrow the Yin (Shang) dynasty (1766?-1122 B.C.). This historical reference finds a parallel in the scene immediately following where Wu Yüan, citing a list of rulers who he claims came to doom because of bad women (King Chieh 桀 of Hsia 夏 through Mo Hsi 妹喜, King Chou of Yin through Ta Chi 妲己, etc.), warns Fu-ch'ai of the danger of accepting Hsi Shih. When both participants in a conversation cite historical parallels to impress each other and balance their speech with song, the result can be a scene of complex symmetry. Such is the case of scene 20. Prior to this scene Kou-chien, recently released by Fu-ch'ai despite Wu Yüan's remonstrations, has just returned to Yüeh. Fu-ch'ai now sends Wu Yüan to the state of Ch'i as an envoy of war, challenging Ch'i to a contest of strength. Dismayed at his father's folly, Fu-ch'ai's son wants to discuss the deplorable state of affairs with Wu Yüan on the eve of the latter's departure for Ch'i. The scene opens with a soliloquy by Wu, followed by the prince's. After a brief conversation, the prince compares his own predicament to that once faced by the three sons of Duke Hsien of Chin 晉獻公 (r. 676-651 B.C.), namely, what to do when the ruler listens to slander and turns a deaf ear to good advice. The parallelism lies in the fact that whereas Duke Hsien listened to no one but Li Chi 驪姬,⁽²²⁾ Fu-ch'ai now has ears only for Po P'i. As a result of Li Chi's slandering, Shen-sheng 申生, the eldest son, committed suicide to preserve his reputation, Chung-erh 重耳, the second son, fled the country, and I-wu 夷吾, the youngest son, was driven to the city of Ch'ü 屈.⁽²³⁾ His present dilemma, Fu-ch'ai's son now tells Wu Yüan, is this: which example of the three sons should he follow? Wu Yüan recommends the course of integrity once chosen by Shen-sheng. Then comes Wu's turn to cite *his* historical parallels: the three conscientious ministers of King Chou of Yin, viz., Wei-tzu 微子, Chi-tzu 箕子, and Pi Kan 比干.⁽²⁴⁾ Because King Chou preferred to believe the slanderous Marquis of Ch'ung 崇侯 rather than his faithful ministers, Wei-tzu left the king, Chi-tzu feigned madness to live among the slaves, while Pi Kan died remonstrating. Now that the state of Wu is heading for doom owing to Fu-ch'ai's blind trust in Po P'i, which example of these three ministers, Wu Yüan asks, should he follow? As expected, the prince advises him to follow the exemplary conduct of Pi Kan. The scene closes with the two men's affirmation of devotion to the state in song and speech. Below is a graphic representation of scene 20:

(22) Duke Hsien's favorite consort who schemed to make her own son Hsi-ch'i 奚齊 heir-apparent to the Chin throne. Cf. SC 39.

(23) Eventually took refuge in the State of Liang 梁, later returned to Chin, was installed as ruler (Duke Hui 惠公) in 650 B.C.

(24) All were relatives of King Chou. For a brief account of their conflict with Chou, see SC 38.

Wu: Song A
MONOLOGUE

Prince: Song A¹
MONOLOGUE
DIALOGUE

Prince: Song B
DIALOGUE

Wu: Song B¹
DIALOGUE

Prince: } Song C
Wu: }

Prince: } Song D
Wu: }

EXIT VERSE

Prince: -----
Wu. -----
Prince: -----
Wu: -----

A¹ and B¹ refer to *ch'ien-ch'iang* 前腔 (preceding tune), i. e., an aria sung in the foregoing tune. Titled *lun hsia* 論俠 (On "Chivalry"), the scene is a *cheng ch'ang* 正場 (major scene), played by two chief supporting roles. It is important for contrasting Fu-ch'ai's character with that of Kou-chien and showing the moral blindness of the king of Wu in historical perspective. Both vertical (i. e., historical) and horizontal (i. e., structural) parallelisms are present here, reinforced by parallelism in music. The resulting symmetry operating at different levels adds a hint of inevitability to the sense of doom, which is gradually overtaking the house of Fu-ch'ai.

"I find allusions most delightful when they are appropriately used, yet nothing irks me more than to find them used excessively and not to the point," remarked Hsü Wei, dramatist and critic, in his survey of Southern drama.⁽²⁵⁾ The use of historical parallelism in the *HSC* is generally linked to the pursuit of an argument, lending it weight and helping to clinch it. Such parallelism gives the drama an extra dimension: images of the past, a perspective of continuity, associations with off-stage spectacle, etc. And because the parallels cited often carry a moralistic intent, historical parallelism adds to the overall didacticism of a play. Chu Yün-ming 祝允明 (1460-1526), a Ming aficionado of the stage, looked at Chinese drama in precisely such terms. "Don't speak lightly of drama as if it were nothing important—its stories of intense loyalty are enough to be my teacher," he writes.⁽²⁶⁾

(25) 最喜用事當家最忌用事重沓及不著題。See *Nan-tz'u hsü-lu*, CKKT III, 244.

(26) 勿云戲劇微激義足吾師。From "Thoughts on Seeing *Su-ch'ing Holding on to His Integrity*" 觀蘇卿持節劇 in *Chih-shan wen-chi* 枝山文集 ch. 3.

One reason for the popularity of historical parallelism in drama, I suspect, is the Chinese sense of history as a mirror to reflect moral lessons.

Few *ch'uan-chi* show a structural symmetry as highly textured as the *HSC*. Indeed, the dense parallelisms call to mind the symmetrical structure of a different genre, the *pa-ku-wen* 八股文 or the "eight-legged" examination essay, which also flourished during the Ming period, and which may well have exerted an influence on the *HSC*.⁽²⁷⁾ Whether *pa-ku* refers to the eight structural parts of the essay or merely the rhetorically parallel paragraphs in the middle,⁽²⁸⁾ the fact remains that parallelism, the voice of the ancient sage (代聖賢立言), and historical allusion (the very title of a typical Ming examination essay was taken from the *Four Books*) characterize the genre. And given the pivotal position occupied by the *pa-ku-wen* in the mechanism of social mobility, it is easy to understand why the examination essay took hold of the Ming imagination. Wang Wan 汪琬 (1624-1690), a notable essayist of the Ch'ing period, claimed that "as long as one did not have a full understanding of the examination essay, one's organization of thought [in poetry or ancient-style prose] would never be clear."⁽²⁹⁾ It is no mere coincidence, then, that the great dramatist T'ang Hsien-tsu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616) was also an accomplished writer of the examination essay,⁽³⁰⁾ though one should bear in mind that T'ang's attitude toward that genre was somewhat unorthodox in that even here, he ranked imaginative talent (*ts'ai ch'ing* 才情) above form. The rapport between *ch'uan-ch'i* drama and the examination essay, at least in one case, is well illustrated in the story that a certain admirer of T'ang Hsien-tsu greatly improved his skill of essay-writing through a diligent study of T'ang's *Mu-tan t'ing* and so successfully passed his examinations.⁽³¹⁾

Certain similarities between *ch'uan-ch'i* drama and the examination essay are easy to see. The entrance tune (*shang-ch'ang hsiao ch'ü* 上場小曲) of a Southern play could be compared to the *p'o-t'i* 破題 ("opening the title") of the essay, and the rest of the *chia-men* 家門 (prologue), usually in another tune, which outlines the plot and explains the title, could be compared to the *ch'eng-t'i* 承題, which elaborates on the *p'o-t'i* and explains why the sage made the statement quoted as the essay title. Scene 2, which marks the beginning of the story in a play, par-

(27) In my opinion, the allegation that Liang Ch'en-yü considered the examination essay as something beneath him is no ground for rejecting the view that he might have been unconsciously influenced by it.

(28) Known as *ch'i-ku* 起股, *hsü-ku* 虛股, *chung-ku* 中股, and *hou-ku* 後股. See Tu Ching-i, "The Chinese Examination Essay: Some Literary Considerations," *Monumenta Serica*, XXXI (1974-75), 399.

(29) 不解八股則理路終不分明. See Wang Shih-chen 王士禛, *Ch'ih-pei ou t'an* 池北偶談, quoted in Ch'en Chu 陳柱 *Chung-kuo san-wen shih* 中國散文史 (n. p., Commercial Press, 1936?), p. 267. *Tun-weng* 鈍翁 (*ibid.*) is an alias of Wang Wan.

(30) See Sung P'ei-wei 宋佩韋, *Ming wen-hsüeh shih* 明文學史 (Commercial Press, n. p., n. d.), p. 236.

(31) See Kuo Shao-yü 郭紹虞, *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing shih* 中國文學批評史 (rpt. Hong Kong: Hung-chih, n. d.), pp. 356-357.

allels the *ch'i-chiang* 起講, or the beginning of the essay proper, The reunion scene at the end would, of course, correspond to the *ta-chieh* 大結, or grand conclusion of a *pa-ku* essay. It is against this background of correspondences that Li Yü 李漁 (1611-ca. 1679), in his discussion of Southern drama, maintains that the craft of playwriting is indeed not much different from the art of writing an examination essay.⁽³²⁾ One modern essayist and critic, Chou Tso-jen 周作人 (1885-1968), in his typical satiric fashion, arrives at the same conclusion from the opposite end; he claims that writing a *pa-ku* essay is like writing a musical drama—one needs only to “select appropriate song suites and fill in the words according to the *ch'ü* register.”⁽³³⁾ To the above list of correspondences, one may add that the essayist's tone of the sage is echoed in the general tone of Confucian orthodoxies in the *ch'uan-ch'i* (presumably, Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Ming 明太祖 praised the *P'i-p'a chi* precisely for this reason), the pointed parallelism of the middle sections of the essay has a parallel in the pairing of scenes in some *ch'uan-ch'i* (in the case of *HSC*, structural symmetry in many places),⁽³⁴⁾ and lastly, there is much similarity between the two genres in the use of poetic and historical allusion. Excessive use of the latter in Southern drama is seen as a pernicious influence of the *pa-ku* essay and vehemently decried by Hsü Wei;⁽³⁵⁾ on the beneficial influence of the *pa-ku* genre—balance and symmetry as an aesthetic and cohesive force—our Ming critic is unduly silent.

APPENDIX 1

Outline of Scenes

- Scene 1. Prologue: Story is introduced.
2. Fan Li meets Hsi Shih, declares his intention of marrying her.
 3. King Kou-chien of Yüeh consults his ministers, Fan Li and Wen Chung, in the face of impending invasion by the King of Wu.
 4. Acting on the advice of Premier Wu Yüan (Wu Tzu-hsü), King Fu-ch'ai of Wu decides to launch an attack on Yüeh.
 5. Yüeh and Wu forces meet, the former retreating.
 6. Kou-chien sends Wen Chung to bribe Fu-ch'ai's minister Po P'i.
 7. Po P'i accepts bribes.
 8. Wen Chung sees Fu-ch'ai, who accepts Kou-chien's terms of surrender.
 9. The love-sick Hsi Shih misses Fan.

(32) See *Hsien-ch'ing ou chi* 閒情偶寄, CKKT VII. 65-69.

(33) 選定合適的套數按譜填詞. See Chou Tso-jen, *Chung-kuo hsin wen-hsüeh te yüan-liu* 中國新文學的源流 (Peking: Jen-wen, 1934), p. 123.

(34) For an example of very neat parallelism, presenting first one side, then the other, of an argument (a technique much used in the *pa-ku* essay), see Fu-ch'ai's speech in sc. 18 in which he calls Wu Yüan “disloyal” 不義 and “unkind” 不仁, contrasting him with Kou-chien, whom he sees as “loyal” and “kind.”

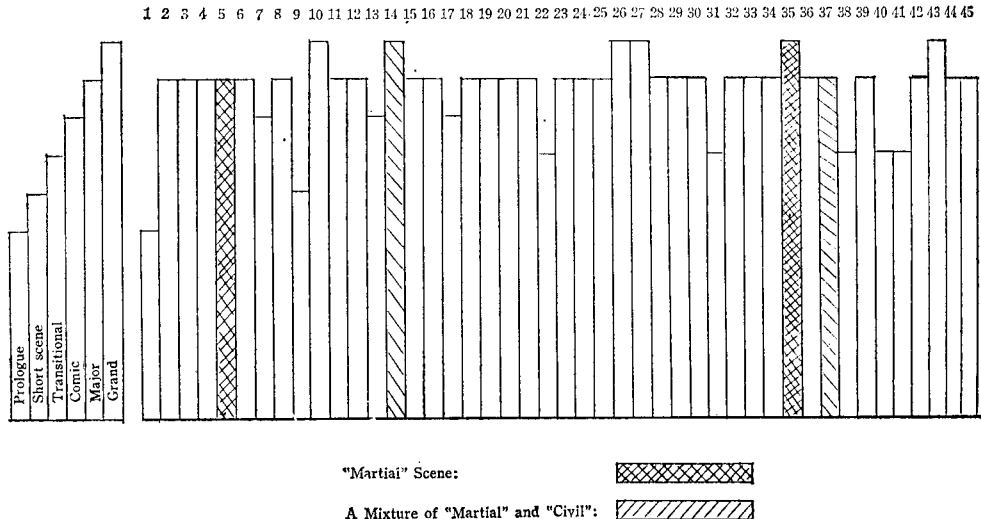
(35) See *Nan-tz'u hsü-lu*, CKKT III. 243.

10. Vowing revenge, Kou-chien, his wife, and Fan Li leave for Wu.
11. Fu-ch'ai orders Kou-chien and his attendants to be put in a stone-house to look after horses. Wu Tzu-hsü's warning ignored.
12. Disillusioned, Wu Tzu-hsü visits sworn brother Kung-sun Sheng, now a recluse, for advice.
13. Kou-chien, wife, and Fan look after horses in the stone-house. Guards demand money.
14. Fu-ch'ai picnicking with palace ladies and retinue.
15. To gain Fu-ch'ai's confidence, Fan Li urges Kou-chien to sample ailing Fu-ch'ai's stool.
16. Kou-chien samples Fu-ch'ai's stool, and predicts Fu-ch'ai's date of total recovery.
17. Tung Shih gets Doctor Pei Wei to examine the ailing Hsi Shih.
18. Fu-ch'ai recovers as predicted, sets Kou-chien and his attendants free, against Wu Tzu-hsü's advice.
19. Kou-chien returns home after three years.
20. Wu Tzu-hsü discusses affairs of state with Fu-ch'ai's son.
21. Kou-chien throws banquet celebrating return, but embarks on a stoical program of revenge immediately after. Minister Wen Chung advises using a beauty as bait. Fan Li offers Hsi Shih.
22. Yüeh officials select beauties for Kou-chien's plan.
23. Hsi Shih is presented to Kou-chien.
24. Ch'i attacks Lu, who seeks aid from Wu.
25. Hsi Shih receives lessons in dancing and music.
26. Determined to risk his life remonstrating with Fu-ch'ai, Wu Tzu-hsü leaves his son with Minister Pao of Ch'i, an old friend, for protection.
27. Hsi Shih leaves Yüeh on her mission to Wu.
28. Fan Li presents Hsi Shih to Fu-ch'ai.
29. Summoned by Fu-ch'ai, Kung-sun Sheng reluctantly leaves home to interpret a dream.
30. Infatuated with Hsi Shih, Fu-ch'ai goes on a boating picnic with her.
31. Kou-chien decides to present Fu-ch'ai with rare timber and to empty the Wu granaries by offering huge prices for grain.
32. Fu-ch'ai kills Kung-sun Sheng. His son remonstrates with him without success.
33. Fu-ch'ai orders Wu Tzu-hsü to kill himself.
34. A tired Hsi Shih ponders the past and the present.
35. With Fu-ch'ai and his crack troops deep in Ch'i territory, Yüeh launches a sudden attack on Wu. Fu-ch'ai's son taken prisoner.
36. Fu-ch'ai informed of his son's death. Ambition spurs him on to plan attack on Chin.

37. After an attack on Chin, Fu-ch'ai is proclaimed leader and assumes hegemony over Chin and Lu.
38. Kou-chien leads troops to march on the Wu capital.
39. Back in Wu, remorseful over his past folly, Fu-ch'ai sends Po P'i to Kou-chien to beg for surrender.
40. Offering gifts of gold and beautiful women, Po P'i pleads with Wen Chung to accept surrender, but is rejected.
41. Wu Tzu-hsü's ghost guards the west gate of the Wu capital; Yüeh troops told to enter through the east gate.
42. Fu-ch'ai kills himself.
43. The spirits of Wu Tzu-hsü and Fu-ch'ai's son leading troops from Hades capture the fleeing Po P'i.
44. Kou-chien and ministers celebrate victory. Fan Li asks to be relieved of his post. News of Po P'i's death.
45. Fan Li takes Hsi Shih as his bride and the two leave for the shores of Ch'i in a boat.

APPENDIX 2

Chart of Scenes



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論「浣紗記」的對稱美及藝術均衡性

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均衡與對稱可以說是一般中國藝術的特色，在傳統文學方面不只反映在律詩和駢文的結構上，也可以從某些傳統戲劇的佈局看得出來。所謂對稱包括平行式的相似以及鏡象式的對立。此文討論的是明代梁辰魚的崑劇傳奇「浣紗記」。筆者指出劇中對稱式的結構和佈局似乎和當時崇尚的八股文有密切的關係。

「浣紗記」共四十五齣，寫吳越興亡的歷史故事；先是越王勾踐戰敗降吳，後乃吳王夫差戰敗降越。劇中一系列的情節通過西施和范蠡兩人的戀愛與離合，一起一伏，前呼後應，極為對稱。梁辰魚顯然為了強調這種對稱的效果，特別先把相對性質的情節相繼地排在一起，例如第四齣「伐越」接第三齣「謀吳」，第十四齣「打圍」（吳王出獵）接第十三齣「養馬」（越王被囚於石室中牧馬）等等。至於角色的分配，也是基於均衡與對稱的原則的。譬如左右越王的范蠡及文種，就和左右吳王的伯嚭與伍員互相對立。既有西施就得有東施，既有南威就得有北威。而夫差與勾踐兩人，一個排斥忠良，貪圖淫逸，一個聽言納諫，刻苦報仇，正是一陰一陽之謂道。

中國戲曲，顧名思義，本來就是音樂與唱詞和賓白的結合。「浣紗記」的每一齣，往往因為詞和曲的適當安排，構成非常協調感人的場面。如果再加上南北合套則對稱性當然更強。其實每一首曲子的唱詞都有它在音韻上、文法上、和語義上的藝術均衡性和對稱性。在語言方面，平行句和對偶句的運用特別豐富，有時甚至連普通賓白也用起駢偶來。至於使事用典，則比比皆是，實為平行式對比的伸延，在此劇中多用以加強論點的根據。

明代是非常崇尚八股文的時期。八股文極重對稱。「浣紗記」的高度對稱美及藝術均衡性，不免令人聯想到文體與戲曲兩者之間的關係。一部傳奇開首的上場小曲，就好比八股文的破題。家門本身好比八股文的承題。第二齣有如起講，劇情的對稱式佈局有如八股文的股股相對。劇終的大團圓和時文的大結頗有共通之處。無怪清代戲劇家李漁討論到戲曲的時候常把它比做八股文了。