

MASTER'S THESIS

才學小說《鏡花緣》

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才學小說《鏡花緣》

Flowers in the Mirror as an Erudite Fiction

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哲學碩士學位課程

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提要

《鏡花緣》是李汝珍寫成於清嘉慶末年的章回小說。由於它內容龐雜，風格獨特，魯迅謂之「清之以小說見才學」者也，故被稱為「才學小說」。一直以來，《鏡花緣》不乏研究者且論題廣泛，惜真正對「才學小說」的進一步探討卻不多，故本文擬由此切入展開研究。才學小說《鏡花緣》無疑應被視作文人小說的其中一個分支。李汝珍以小說炫才、以文為戲的創作意圖，使小說形成了「文人」特有的風格，其中的焦點是反諷的修辭文體。這與明代後期的文人小說評點之學有密切的關係。

除了繼承文人小說的共同特點，作為一部才學小說，《鏡花緣》的獨特性在於對「才學」前所未有的重視。炫耀才學是對個人才華的自信，更是時代風尚衝擊下的反思，以「才女」作為小說才學的主體，則源於李氏對「才」的獨立性的肯定。在才學內容方面，舊學與新知並列，舊學注入了新元素，新知瞥見舊學影子，新與舊混雜，正反映了明清之際文人面對的局面。隨著外來文化大量輸入，傳統知識架構正在產生異動，這諸般的徵兆滲透於小說炫耀的才學之中，由「天下」融入「萬國」的天下觀的轉變更具體地表現在對海外世界的想像。稍後的晚清，面對著嚴峻的外來挑戰，如此炫耀「中國文化的理想與樂趣」的小說雖成絕響，《鏡花緣》的新舊雜陳卻使之歷久常新。

Abstract

Flowers in the Mirror is a major work of Qing fiction written by a mid-Qing scholar Li Ruzhen (c. 1763-1830). Comparing with other contemporary works, *Flowers in the Mirror* characterized itself with its sophistication in content and uniqueness in style. Lu Xun labeled it as “a work employed by its author to show off his ingenuity and knowledge among the Qing novels,” and it was consequently labeled “an erudite novel” by some later critics. Though the *Flowers in the Mirror* has attracted a great deal of attention of modern scholarship, the eruditeness of the *Flowers in the Mirror* has been to some extent neglected by modern scholars. This thesis, with emphasis on the eruditeness of the *Flowers in the Mirror*, attempts to reveal the traits of scholarly novels as a sub-genre of fictional writings, and regards the *Flowers in the Mirror* as a mature representative of Qing scholarly novels. In this thesis, I will also discuss the features of the *Flowers in the Mirror* and other scholarly novels in many respects, especially the ironic rhetoric employed by those scholar-novelists.

The uniqueness of the *Flowers in the Mirror* is in debt to the author’s encyclopedic knowledge. Li Ruzhen’s enthusiasm to show off his intelligence and knowledge, partly due to his self confidence as a scholar, was rooted primarily in the intellectual climate from late Ming to mid-Qing. This thesis, therefore, will also examine Li’s Confucianism-based knowledge, and its initial encounter with foreign culture. As I observe it, many of Li’s innovative ideas descended not only from traditional Chinese culture, but also from those cultures alien to China. Unlike his contemporaries, Li Ruzhen was quite open-minded to the new coming knowledge from different cultures, and was intended to re-examine our own cultural heritage. The *Flowers in the Mirror* demonstrates Li’s search for a culturally unified society under Confucian ideal.

After all, Li Ruzhen represents the last model of Qing scholar-novelists who were gifted with encyclopedic knowledge and had enthusiastic admiration to his own cultural attributes and legacies. The cultural confrontation and conflicts between China and the West increased dramatically after the death of Li Ruzhen. The Qing scholarly novels hence concluded with the dwindling of the last dynasty.

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