

Remolding Aesthetic Paradigm for Chinese Theater: Yu Shangyuan's *Qinxian* Articles and the American New Stagecraft Movement

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Abstract

Offering to fill in a gap in the modern Chinese theater history, this paper probes into the famous Chinese dramatist Yu Shangyuan's 余上沅 *Qinxian* 芹獻 series of articles which was published between 6 January and 23 May 1924 and has been received limited scholarly attention due to its scattered topics and equivocal wording. Via textual analysis and contextual investigation, this paper finds that *Qinxian* articles are not all original compositions but contain many unmarked translations rendered from the works concerning the “aesthetic paradigm,” an antirealistic theatrical scheme derived from the American New Stagecraft Movement. Based on the aesthetic paradigm, Yu Shangyuan devised a similar theatrical scheme in *Qinxian*, covering four facets: simple and symbolic stage sets decorated with lines, masses, and expressive lights; powerful anti-Ibsenite artist director; non-Ibsenian poetic drama; and presentational acting. Upon comparing *Qinxian* with the National Theater Movement's propositions, this paper finds that the movement's main arguments largely echo the key notions of *Qinxian*, indicating the movement's umbilical tie to *Qinxian* and, more at large, to the American New Stagecraft Movement. The analysis of *Qinxian* provides perspectives for the understanding of the aesthetic stance of the National Theater Movement, shedding light on the new insights that translation studies can bring to theater historiography.