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INTERPRETATION OF A CONFUCIAN WOMAN IMAGE IN THE DRAMAS OF ENLIGHTENMENT THINKERS IN EUROPE

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The purpose of the article is to determine the peculiarities of the interpretation of “Confucian woman” image in the famous dramas of European educators Settle, Voltaire and K. Gozzi in terms of implementing the moral principles of Confucianism and the implementation of humanistic ideas of the Enlightenment. Understanding the peculiarities of the perception of the phenomena of Chinese culture in the Western world is relevant because it provides an opportunity to find common ground between polar cultures in historical perspective, as well as to identify the ability to synthesize corresponding value paradigms in general.

The authors agree that the concept of “Confucian woman” is controversial, because, on the one hand, expresses the lagging role of women in traditional China (*The Analects of Confucius*), on the other hand, fixes a number of guidelines for women’s education as criteria for nobility (Ban Zhao *Lessons for Women*). The article focuses on the second variant.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the image of China is formed in the minds of Europeans, incorporating different traditions, institutions, and personalities. The women’s theme also had some coverage. The authors usually did not seek to maintain historical authenticity, focusing on the implementation of the moral component.

In the tragedy *The Conquest of China by the Tatars*, E. Settle used the intercultural image of Amazon to create the image of the Chinese Princess Amawanga. It successfully combines the traits of a warrior (firmness, courage, patriotism) and a Confucian woman (restraint, wisdom, sacrifice). Instead, Voltaire, who saw in the Confucian system of government the ideal model of an enlightened monarchy, in his drama *The Orphan of China* created the image of the noble Chinese woman Idame as the embodiment of Confucian morality (loyalty to “zhong” and respect for “xiao”).

At the same time, in this image, the author declares enlightenment ideas (re-education of barbarians by virtue of charity, the dominant natural sense of motherhood) as part of Confucian ideology. In the end, Gozzi created an exotic image of the Chinese princess Turandot in the play of the same name, using the archetypal image of a cruel and clever beauty. The author least sought historical correspondence, but the image of Turandot is consistently associated with the figure of the cruel Chinese Empress Wu Zetian, emphasizing the extraordinary will and mental abilities of the woman.

In this way, European playwrights opened the veil of mystery of the “Confucian woman” existence, creating complex, dramatically filled characters and conflicts. It is the complexity and ambivalence of the images of Chinese women that testifies to the authors’ avoidance of the stereotype of the “impersonal oriental beauty” and creates the basis for a deeper understanding of these images in the new Europe.

Keywords: “Confucian woman”, China, Enlightenment, drama, E. Settle, Voltaire, K. Gozzi

Introduction

“Confucian woman” is a term not often found in the scientific literature. This is due, obviously, to the fact that in traditional Chinese society a woman could not be a bearer of Confucian virtues. In the main treatise of Confucianism, the *Analects of Confucius*, women are mentioned only in one sentence: “Women and inferior men [meaning slaves] are hard to get along with, they get out of hand when befriended and they resent it when kept at a distance” [Fu Wen 2018]. This statement provoked a great deal of scholarly debate and greatly angered feminist critics in the 20th century. In 1974, Julia Kristeva’s work *About Chinese Women* convincingly demonstrated that women always remained “strangers and vagrants” in a feudal society. “Confucius”, she noted, “put women on the same social footing with ‘slaves, petty men, and vagrants’”. Thus <...> Confucianism earned itself the glory of ‘woman eater’” [Kelisidiwa 2010, 72]. Of course, in the context of such considerations, the concept of ‘Confucian woman’ sounds inappropriate. We also note that since the Han (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.) era, gender roles in China have been defined according to the Confucian concept of family and state hierarchy. Women’s roles were expressed in Three Obediences and Four Virtues. In essence, this meant that “the woman, in her youth, should be obedient to her father and her older brothers; in married life, she should be obedient to her husband; and as a widow she should be obedient to her son” [Dass 2012]. Confucianism did not envisage the development of talents and bright abilities in a woman but instead cultivated in them restraint, chastity, and humility.

However, according to the observations of contemporary scholars, including Jeffrey Richey, the situation of women did not fully reflect the historical reality: “Rather, it describes women’s lives as experienced during the last several hundred years of traditional Confucian cultural history in East Asia. Prior to that, women enjoyed a relatively greater degree of freedom in Confucian societies, and some women actually played prominent roles as Confucian thinkers...” [Richey 2008]. Such, for example, was the educated aristocrat of the Han dynasty (45–116 C.E.) – Ban Zhao, known as the first female historian, philosopher, and writer of the Celestial Empire. She wrote the notorious tractate *Lessons for Women* (Nüjie), which initiated the systematization of the rules and norms of behavior of noblewomen in feudal China. Ban Zhao identifies four aspects of women’s qualification that have become canonical: 1) womanly virtue (chastity, modesty, circumspect behavior, ritual observance); 2) womanly words (“to choose her words with care; to avoid vulgar language; to speak at appropriate times...”); 3) womanly bearing (“...to keep clothes and ornaments fresh and clean; to wash the head and bathe the body regularly...”); 4) womanly work (“with wholehearted devotion to sew and to weave;... in cleanliness and order to prepare the wine and food for serving guests...” [Ban Zhao 2019]. The main content of the treatise corresponded with the Confucian concept of role and the place of women in the family and society, but at the same time, it made an attempt to prove the need for the spiritual and intellectual development of women, to show their important role in the harmonious existence of the family. Under the influence of *Lessons for Women*, a series of women’s works were written later, detailing and extending the content of Ban Zhao’s work according to the needs of the time. During the Ming Dynasty, the most authoritative treatises were compiled into the *Four Books for Women* (Nüsishu). Of course, this collection could not be included in the canon of Confucian texts, however, the image of the woman formed in it could be legitimately called Confucian. Thus, in our study, the concept of “Confucian woman” will mean “noblewoman in feudal China, raised by the admonishments of the *Four Books for Women*”. The subject of our attention is the image of a Chinese woman, represented by such traditional social roles as Empress, concubine, wife, bride, mother in the interpretation of European Enlighteners.

The historical-cultural period under study – the Enlightenment – was chosen by us for several reasons. First of all, in the 16th–18th cc. Europe has accumulated a great deal of

information about China coming from travelers, merchants, and especially missionaries (mainly Jesuits). At this time, the first translations of Chinese philosophical and fiction works were made, and many works of Chinese art were imported. All this created favorable conditions for the acquaintance of different sections of European society with China. Further, a characteristic feature of Enlightenment philosophy was its interest in the non-European world. M. P. Alekseyev rightly noted that to overcome political and cultural constraints, thinkers of this era “turned not only to ancient times but also, for example, to the ancient and modern East” [Alekseyev 1947, 14].

That is, the Enlighteners purposefully conceptualized Eastern philosophical and socio-political concepts, including Chinese ones. Finally, China has a special place in the work of a number of European thinkers. According to O. Fishman, “in the image of China depicted by the Jesuits, they found the embodiment of their ideal of the Enlightenment monarchy, the Platonic state of the sages”, and the example of China was used by them as “an instrument of political struggle” [Fishman 2003, 236–237]. Of course, the interest in China in different countries of Europe was of a different nature due to the national peculiarities of the educational ideology. However, it was in the 17th and 18th centuries. The image of China is formed in the minds of Europeans, incorporating different traditions, institutions, and personalities. The women’s theme also had some coverage.

The problem of forming the image of the Celestial Empire in European culture has been studied for more than a century. In the early twentieth century the works of H. Cordier [Cordier 1910], A. Reichwein [Reichwein 1925], G. C. Martin [Martin 1916] and others, in which the authors highlighted various aspects of the adaptation of Chinese material in European culture of the 14th–17th centuries, were influenced by the “cult of China”. In particular, G. C. Martin clearly shows the fascination of China in his work, analyzing the “wonderfully fascinating picture” of China in the writings of travelers and the works of such English writers as J. Milton, W. Cowper, T. Moore et cetera [Martin 1916]. At the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st century the main conclusions of the researchers have not changed. Thus, in 1990, D. F. Lach and T. N. Foss summed up the previously expressed ideas that Chinese material was adapted to the needs and artistic tastes of Europeans: “The chameleon-like image of the Asian changed in literary creations as a response to the historical conditions prevailing in Europe and Asia at a given time. Renaissance, Baroque and Enlightenment writers certainly conceived of the Asian in terms set by their own European mental and artistic bents” [Lach and Foss 1990, 31]. In 2003, a Russian sinologist, O. Fishman, in monograph *China in Europe: Myth and Reality (XVII–XVIII cc.)* elucidates in detail the history of the formation of the “myth of China” in Europe [Fishman 2003]. This work deals with the “women’s theme” mainly as a component of understanding Chinese philosophical and political concepts by European thinkers and writers. So far, there have been many studies devoted to the author’s interpretation of Chinese material in the works of European Enlighteners, such as Settle [Chang 2015; Mesker 2015] by Voltaire [Derzhavin 1946; Chen 2012; Zhang 2013], K. Gozzi [Zhirmunskiy 1981; Mokul’skiy 1956; Xiang 2015] and others. In general, there is a tendency for Western researchers to turn to the problem of reception of Chinese material in Europe. Instead, Chinese scholars are more likely to track mechanisms of influence and look for Chinese elements (facts) in European literature. This also applies to the fragmentary coverage of the “women’s theme”. In our study, we will try to determine, on the basis of the available material, the peculiarities of the image formation of the Chinese (Confucian) woman in the well-known plays by E. Settle, Voltaire, and K. Gozzi.

The Intercultural Image of Amazon in Settle’s Tragedy The Conquest of China by the Tartars (1676)

During the period of the European Enlightenment, Chinese subjects found the greatest incarnation and transformation mostly in dramaturgy, that is why the “women’s theme”

was reflected in theater in the greatest variety. In the second half of the 17th century in Britain, the heroic drama has grown in popularity, and the authors were eagerly drawn to the history of distant countries, including China. Exotic material made it possible to create lofty poetic texts, where high passions erupted. One of the first examples of heroic drama was the tragedy of Elkanah Settle *The Conquest of China by the Tartars* (1676). The plot is based on the books of the Jesuit missionaries about the fall of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and the Manchurian conquest of China (in particular, Martino Martini's work *De bello Tartarico historia*, translated into English in 1654) [Chang 2015; Fishman 2003, 325]. Settle expressed in his play the motives of conquest, kingdom, bloody duels, military strife, and love affair. It is in this work that the brightest female character, the Chinese warrior princess Amavanga, first appears. She is an active actor in two major conflicts – the military and the love affair.

The hero of the drama, the son of Tatar ruler Zungteus, faces a dilemma: he must multiply the glory of the Tatar army and conquer China, while he is in love with the daughter of the ruler of one of the provinces of China – Princess Amavanga. In the image of this heroine, the author combines the strength and courage of a warrior with the gentleness and wisdom of a Confucian woman. Amavanga, dressed in men's suit, disguised as the king's ambassador, appears in Tatar camp to try to stop the bloodshed and “give a check to the proud Tartars Pride” [Settle 1676, 3]. She is also driven by personal motives – Amavanga wants to try Zungteus in a duel: “To try his Courage, and his Gallantry, / The only merit that can Conquer Me...” [Settle 1676, 6]. However, on the eve of the fight, which should decide the fate of the Middle Kingdom, Amavanga plunges into painful hesitation – she does not want to compete with Zungteus, who captured her heart. It is noticeable that at this moment her companion Vangona accuses Amavanga of cowardice, pointing out that “personal feelings cannot prevail over duty and dignity” [Settle 1676, 26]. In the end, Amavanga, disguised as a man, receives a fatal injury from the hand of Zungteus. The courageous and hard-working heroine does not regret anything and asked to consider the cause of her death – the loyalty to the laws of honor: “Think what Devotion to my King I owe. / Nothing But Loyalty and Honou's Laws / Engag'd Me in This Great But Fatal Cause” [Settle 1676, 26]. At the end of the play, it turns out that Amavanga is amazingly recovering. She becomes the wife of Zungteus, the new King of China.

Most modern researchers treat Amavanga as an Amazon image but evaluate it differently from the perspective of the Chinese worldview. In particular, O. Fishman, relying on Ch'en Shouyi's opinion, says that “to transform a Chinese princess into an Amazon is a completely unthinkable thing” [Fishman 2003, 325–326]. Instead, Dongshin Chang views this image in an intercultural sense: “Settle's portrayal of Amavanga's deeds interculturalizes the acts of the Amazons with those of a brave Chinese female general; in his creation of her name, Settle in the interculturalisation of multiple linguistic and cultural references” [Chang 2015]. Chi-ming Yang, for his part, focuses on adapting the story to the expectations of the British community: “...the effeminate warrior epitomizes a new approach to heroic virtue, an innovation that resonates with the English after decades of political unrest...” [Mesker 2015]. In our view, O. Fishman's opinion is completely unfounded, since the image of a female warrior has been cultivated in Chinese history and literature for over 5000 years. As Xiaolin Li states, “in ancient and modern times, numerous literary and artistic portraits... historical and fictional women warriors... No matter how educated or where they are located, all Chinese women know the names of such heroes as Mu Lan Hua or Hong Yu Liang” [Li 1994]. Therefore, we consider Dongshin Chang's position most convincing, but with several rectifications. First, Amavanga is not limited to the characteristics of the Amazon, she also manifests herself as a typical “Confucian woman” – gentle, restrained, wise and sacrificial (in scenes of hesitation before the duel and the final scene of coronation). Secondly, the image of Amavanga is not

portrayed as unique; a kind of “twin” heroine is her friend Vangona, who also possesses courage, determination, and patriotism. Moreover, Vangona embodies the reproaches of Amavanga’s conscience and manifests the fundamental moral principle of Confucianism: the interests of the empire must always take precedence over the personal aspirations and desires of man. Thus, Settle in his heroic drama, using the intercultural image of the Amazon, quite successfully embodies the important characteristics of a “Confucian woman”.

***The Europeanized image of a noble Chinese woman in Voltaire’s play
The Orphan of China (1755)***

E. Settle’s drama *The Conquest of China by the Tartars*, unfortunately, did not have much success on the theatrical stage. However, almost a century later, another story of the period of China’s conquest by the Mongols, gained the recognition of the French, and later the entire European public. It is Voltaire’s philosophical drama *The Orphan of China* (*L’Orphelin de la Chine*), which was released in 1755. This is the author’s interpretation of the play by the Chinese playwright of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) Zi Junxiang *Orphan of Tchao (Zhaoshi guer)*, translated by the Jesuit J. A.-M. de Premar. This work caught the attention of the missionary as an example of Chinese virtue, manifested in the feelings of loyalty and self-sacrifice of the heroes [Fishman 2003, 272]. As you know, Voltaire was one of the biggest supporters and promoters of China in Europe. Well versed in the writings of the Jesuits (in particular, Du Aldo, Leconta, Bouvet, Fouquet, etc.), he admired the idealized image of the Far Eastern country and saw it as an “enlightenment monarchy” led by a sage ruler. Voltaire was particularly attracted to China’s “state philosophy” – Confucianism, which he interpreted as the doctrine of morality.

Based on the Chinese play translated by Premar, Voltaire wrote his own philosophical drama, which he described in his letter to D’Argenton (September 12, 1755) as “the morality of Confucius in five acts”. The main theme of the original play is “tyrannical struggle, the desire to restore neglected justice” and the realization of “blood revenge” by the saved heir of the Zhao clan [Sorokin 1979, 152]. Voltaire greatly expanded the thematic boundaries of the play. He transferred the action from The Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BC) to the time of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). The main topics were: the conquest of China by Genghis Khan, Genghis Khan’s love for the noble Chinese woman Idame (different from the original version), the salvation of the child – the sole heir of the Song Dynasty to the Idame and Zamti spouses, loyalty to the Idame husband. Voltaire’s main focus is not on historical validity, but on the implementation of moral principles. In the preface, he states: “I have endeavored to describe the men of the Tartars and Chinese: the most interesting events are nothing when they do not paint the men...” [Voltaire 1901, 179]. Modern scholars agree that Voltaire’s main idea is to show that Chinese civilization, as a carrier of high Confucian morality, defeats the barbaric power of the conqueror-Genghis Khan [Derzhavin 1946, 364; Fishman 2003, 280–281; Chen 2008; Zhang 2013, 91]. In addition, according to K. Derzhavin, *The Orphan of China* is a “tragedy of moral heroism, the carrier of which, in contrast to the Chinese original, became a woman, wife, and mother” [Derzhavin 1946, 365]. It is about the noble Idame – Mandarin Zamti’s wife who captivated Genghis Khan’s heart.

Idame is traditionally regarded as a Europeanized image of a Confucian woman. In the first act of the play, she reflects on the brutal actions of the conqueror – Genghis Khan and recounts the story of his love for her. Even as a mere warrior, he wanted to take her as a wife. However, he received the refusal of her parents as a barbarian, not worthy for the hand of a noble Chinese woman. In the spirit of Confucian morality, Idame feels guilty that her home country suffers from the invasion of Genghis Khan (because the conqueror is guided by the motives of revenge for his dignity). However, she also believes that she has lost the opportunity to curb his cruel disposition and send a savage

force to the service of the Celestial Empire: "...perhaps / I hoped in time to soften his rude soul, / he might have served the state / Which now would he destroy" [Voltaire 1901, 183]. Such considerations are not peculiar to traditional Chinese women (they are absent in Yuan drama). Re-educating the barbarians by virtue is a purely enlightening idea that Voltaire seeks to present as a component of Confucian ideology.

In the second act, Idame is revealed through a conflict of social responsibility and maternal love. According to the plot, the Idame and Zamti have to give the Mongols their own child in order to save the infant, the last heir to the Chinese Song Dynasty (960–1279). There is no hesitation in the original drama – the heroes sacrifice their own child and commit suicide (in the Confucian virtue system, this is the highest manifestation of the loyalty to rulers). Instead, the Voltaire's Idame selflessly rescues her own child. She accuses Zamti of cruelty and violation of the "law of heaven": "What is your country, what is your king to me? / The name of the subject is not half so sacred / As a husband or as a father. Love and nature / Are heaven's first great unalterable laws, / And cannot be reversed" [Voltaire 1901, 197]. This act of Idame has caused the greatest amount of researchers' criticism as contradicting the norms of female behavior in ancient and medieval China. Referring to Wang Dezhaoh's observations, O. Fishman stated: "She [Idame] expresses the ideas of enlighteners about the power of natural feeling, on the contrary, the idea of devotion and obligation is unnatural to her" [Fishman 2003, 280]. One can agree with this thought since it characterizes only one episode. In addition, let us recall the Ban Zhao guidelines, where the duty of the woman was to maintain harmony in the family. Further on, Idame's play demonstrates the extraordinary courage and sacrifice for the sake of the salvation of the imperial infant.

The willful qualities of a Confucian woman, as well as the fidelity to the duty of Idame, manifested themselves in Genghis Khan's palace, where she went to release her son. Voltaire portrays the heroine through the feelings of an enamored conqueror: "The fair Idame has some secret power / That charms me more than victory and empire: / I thought I could have driven her from my heart, / But she returns, and triumphs" [Voltaire 1901, 212]. Let us note that it is not the woman's outward appearance but her "secret power". This is not characteristic of the Chinese artistic tradition of depicting women as an object of love – their beauty and grace are usually poetized. However, the very situation when the emperor is fascinated by the beauty and is delayed by public affairs is not uncommon in Chinese history and literature (it is worth mentioning the history of the relationship between the Thai emperor Xuan Zong (712–756) and the concubine, Yang Guifei). In Voltaire's play, Genghis Khan promises to pardon both children if Idame agrees to leave her husband and share the throne with him. The heroine rejects the offer ready to accept death, but not to break the promise made to her husband and parents. In our view, it is the situation that the Confucian essence of the Idame image is most pronounced – it operates in accordance with the important principle of "xiao" deference, which is expressed in its appeal to Genghis Khan: "Thou know the power of parents o'er their children; / They are the image of that God we serve, / And the next to them should be obeyed: this empire / It was founded on the paternal right, on justice, / Honor, and public faith, and holy marriage..." [Voltaire 1901, 219]. As we can see, the moral dominance of the heroine is based on the principles of statehood as family relations, which formed the basis of Confucian ideology. For Idame, fulfilling the duty of "xiao" meant sacrificial service to the emperor, the state, and the man. (Note that in China for 1.5 thousand years until the 20th century the practice of widows' suicide as a manifestation of loyalty and reverence was cultivated). After all, the devotion and "moral heroism" of Idame impressed Genghis Khan and turn the conqueror barbarian into an "enlightened monarch".

Thus, Voltaire's image of Idame balances between the ideals of the French Enlightenment and the Confucian virtues. However, the tendency to interpret the heroine as an

expression of the principles of being a Confucian woman has increased recently, regardless of the degree of adaptation of the original Chinese play. Thus, K. Derzhavin associates the image of Idame with the Confucian principles of humanity “ren”, fidelity “zhong” and reverence “xiao” [Derzhavin 1946, 365]; Zhang Wen sees in her actions the manifestation of “the three rules and five constant virtues of Confucianism” (“san gang wu chang”) [Zhan 2013, 91]; Chen Zhengmin notes that Voltaire in the image of Idame expressed the idea of philanthropy “ren ai” and the principle of combining the firmness and resilience of “gang rou xiang ji” in Confucian culture [Chen 2008] and so on.

The Orphan of China by Voltaire has been a great success on the theatrical stage in the context of Europeans’ growing interest in Eastern exoticism. In general, the plot of *Orphan of Tchao* translated by Premar, in addition to the play by Voltaire, formed the basis of four more European adaptations – two English (W. Hatchett, 1741 and A. Murphy, 1756), German (unfinished Goethe’s play *Elpenor*, 1783) and the opera by the libretto of the Italian playwright P. Metastasio *L’eroe cinese* (1752). However, in none of them, the image of the main character has reached Voltaire’s brightness and fullness.

***The archetypal image of the cruel and clever beauty
in fiabe Turandot by K. Gozzi (1762)***

Voltaire’s *The Orphan of China* (as well as other adaptations, after all) was an exception on the French stage as a philosophical and historical cover of the Chinese theme. In the French and Italian theaters of the 18th century China has usually been portrayed “as an exotic backdrop for fun activities” [Fishman 2003, 252] in line with the masquerade-carnival aesthetics of chinoiserie. Numerous masquerades, commedia dell’arte performances, theater de la foire popularized the image of ‘comic China’. According to D. F. Lach and T. N. Foss, “the bridge of the 17th-century and early 18th-century court pageants, ballets, harlequinades, and dramas presented an opulent and confused image of Asia” [Lach & Foss 1990, 23]. The images of Chinese women appearing in the scenes were a reflection of farcical stereotypes. An example is Pietro Chiari’s “comedy larmoyante” *The Chinese Slave (La schiava cinese, 1752)* and *The Chinese Sisters (La sorelle cinese, 1753)*, staged during the Venice Carnival.

In 1729, the comic opera of Lesage and d’Orneval *Princess of China* was successfully performed at the Parisian Fair Theater. Her story was taken from the story of poet Nizami, placed in a collection of Persian tales, *The Thousand and One Day*, translated by F. Pétis de la Croix in 1712. The authors used only one episode of the story – the arrival of the Tatar prince to the palace of the Chinese emperor and his successful unraveling of the mysteries of a wayward princess. This story caught the attention of Italian playwright Carlo Gozzi and inspired him to create the famous fiabe *Turandot* (1762). Gozzi’s work is “much deeper and richer in content” than the comic opera by Lesage [Mokul’skiy 1956], which leads to the thought of Gozzi’s awareness of Nizami’s story.

Researchers of Gozzi’s play *Turandot* quite rightly claim that it is not necessary to look for similarity to real China. Contemporary Chinese art historians have noted that, in general, the story of Turandot shows “the ancient Islamic world in ‘Chinese style’ (Chinoiserie)” [Luo & Mei 2003, 21]. In particular, this is indicated by the Persian name of the main character, which means “daughter of Turan”. A more common version is the folk origin of the Turandot plot. V. Zhirmunskiy, in particular, sees it as “one of the variants of the motive of marriage puzzles that is widely spread in the world folklore, which the bride offers to her grooms, and the losers in the race pay their heads” [Zhirmunskiy 1981, 262]. Therefore, the image of the main character – Princess Turandot – is an archetype of cruel beauty, who destroys the suitors to demonstrate her mind and disobedience. Therefore, it can be representative of any culture (West or East) and not related to the historical truth of Chinese life in the Imperial Forbidden City. This is evidenced by the genre

of the Gozzi play – “theatrical fairy tale” (fiaba teatrale), where oriental exotica replaced the “magic element” [Mokul’skiy 1956] and became a mean of poetizing the exalted feelings of heroes.

Guided by the purpose of our research, we will look at the image of Turandot in terms of the hypothetical ability to reflect the circumstances and characteristics of a “Confucian woman” of high rank (as illustrative material we will use an English-language version of the play by K. Vollmöller). Thus, Turandot in the play of Gozzi is primarily concerned with the motive of the cruel male-hatred. She spoke candidly about the reasons for her hatred of Prince Calaf as a representative of the male community: “I hate him. For I know / They are all treacherous: pretending love / Until they have the maiden in their toils; / But when they have their will, they laugh at us...” [Vollmöller 2008]. To Calaf himself, she states: “It is but my deep loathing for all males / That forces me to stand as now at guard / To keep from me sex that I abhor” [Vollmöller 2008]. This position of the heroine provokes researchers, it is not sufficiently justified, to treat her in a feminist perspective as a free-spirited person who protests against the degraded position of a woman in her country [Mokul’skiy 1956]. All these circumstances distance Turandot’s image from the principles of the life of a “Confucian woman” for whom malevolence could not be the motive of actions and deeds.

Ye. Serebrjakov has indicated, that in the Confucian doctrine the women, who were in the closest environment of the ruler (first of all, the empress and concubines), should meet the highest requirements – virtue, wisdom, sense of duty. At the same time, it gave them a sense of personality [Serebrjakov 1984]. The women could influence a decision on the throne issues, appointing officials and more. It was women who were often responsible for the emperor’s decisions that led to the collapse of the empire (the most striking example is the already mentioned influence of concubine Yang Guifei on the Tang Emperor Xuan Zong).

To compare with other countries misandry did not offer any prospects or opportunities for the Chinese women. This is probably the reason why there are no images of court beauties in Chinese literature that would enjoy oneself by the extermination of men who were in love with them. However, there were cruel and strong-willed empresses in Chinese history, the most famous of whom was Wu Zetian (624–705). In the work *Ancient Turks* L. Gumilev described her ignorance as follows: “The new empress dealt with her rivals, who, at her command, were quartered and drowned without trial or charge. This was followed by poisonings, exile, executions, usually members of the imperial house and the closest aides of the Tang Dynasty” [Gumilev 2004, 191]. Of course, Empress Wu was guided by a thirst for power, but the terrible picture of her massacres, in our view, is in some degree consonant with the effects of Princess Turandot’s cruelty – “...Over the gate, planted on iron poles, a row of severed heads with shaven crowns and Turkish tufts” [Vollmöller 2008].

Besides, there are things in common between historic Wu Zetian and the fictional Turandot – intelligence and ingenuity. In *About Chinese Women*, Julia Kristeva shows Wu Zetian as a wise and active reformer ruler who improved Confucian exams, reformed the bureaucracy, introduced 19 new hieroglyphics, and so on [Kelisidiwa 2010, 83]. This goes against *Lessons for Women*, where Ban Zhao stated, “Now what is called a womanly virtue need not be a brilliant ability, exceptionally different from others” [Ban 2019]. This trend is also contradicted by the works of Chinese classical literature depicting intelligent and resourceful heroines as a men’s feminine ideal (for example, the heroine of Pu Songling’s fantastic short story *The Red Jasper*, *The Cloud of Ivy*, etc.). That is, the wit is portrayed as the virtue of a noblewoman, which in combination with beauty makes her especially attractive. It is not difficult to draw a parallel here with the image of Turandot, who values her wit as an extraordinary gift: “...Put not my sharp mind to the test. / It is my only come, the only weapon / Heaven gave me...” [Vollmöller 2008]. However, there

is a fundamental difference: Chinese heroines use their wit to help a man in adversity or to overcome rivals; instead, Turandot uses it as a weapon to show her superiority and show the worthlessness of men. Therefore, for her loss in an intellectual fight is more frightening than death because this leads inevitably to an enormous loss of dignity.

The clever beauty of Turandot is associated with the folklore motive of solving marriage puzzles. In Chinese culture, this motif is associated not only with the folk tales but also with ancient traditions. For example, guessing the hieroglyphic riddles written on lanterns has long been one of the main traditions of the Lantern Festival that ends the Chinese New Year celebration. On the one hand, it was fun, and on the other hand, a rather difficult intellectual competition, because very complex puzzles have occurred: whole puzzles built on the structure of hieroglyphics or related to traditional Chinese poetry. These entertainments could turn into a serious act called “solving puzzles to find sons-in-law” (caimi zhaoqin). A wealthy citizen could stage a competition for the right to marry his daughter. Any young male could participate in this competition. However, some people decided not to solve puzzles, not to marry, but to show off their knowledge. A story called “Solving Mysteries to Find Son-in-Laws” from *Green Entertainment Tower* (*Qinglou yule zhinan*) tells us that even the son of the emperor participated in such a competition to refute rumors of his weak intellectual abilities [Quanxin Quanyi 2015]. Therefore, we can conclude that the Turandot and Calaf duel, in essence, is in harmony with this long-standing Chinese tradition, and most importantly, it is not the marriage, but the opportunity to establish justice and the glory of a smart, gifted person.

Thus, the image of Princess Turandot, being the artistic embodiment of the human archetype, nevertheless reflects the particular principles of the life of noble Chinese women. However, the heroine’s actions illustrate more unique cases in the history of Chinese women than the traditional behavior of a Confucian woman. It is worth noting that the play *Turandot* has a great literary and stage history. The image of the Chinese princess captured European artists who did their own reworking of the play (the most famous is F. Schiller’s drama) and also wrote more than eight operas based on this story (the most famous is G. Puccini’s opera). In the 20th century, many alterations and sequels to Turandot’s history have been made in China as well.

Conclusions

Overall, we can conclude that Chinese feminine images were not widespread in the works of European enlighteners; however, in the analyzed dramas Settle, Voltaire and Gozzi presented vivid and extraordinary images of noble Chinese. Their main feature is syncretism, namely, the merging of the moral dominants of the European Enlightenment with the teachings of Confucian virtue. Purposeful or involuntary playwrights have opened the veil of mysteries of being women of the Middle Kingdom, creating complex, dramatically filled characters and conflicts. It is the complexity and ambivalence of Chinese women’s images that, in our view, evokes the authors’ avoidance of the stereotype of “impersonal oriental beauty” and creates a basis for a deeper understanding of these images in the new Europe.

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Н. С. Ісаєва

Інтерпретація образу конфуціанської жінки у драмі європейських просвітників

Метою статті є визначення особливостей інтерпретації образу "конфуціанської жінки" у відомих драмах європейських просвітників Е. Сеттла, Вольтера та К. Гоцці з погляду втілення моральних настанов конфуціанства та реалізації гуманістичних ідей Просвітництва. Осмислення особливостей сприйняття феноменів китайської культури в західному світі є актуальним, оскільки дає можливість знайти точки дотику полярних культур в історичній перспективі, а також виявити спроможність синтезу відповідних ціннісних парадигм загалом.

Автор статті дотримується думки, що поняття "конфуціанська жінка" є суперечливим, оскільки, з одного боку, виражає упосліджену роль жінки в традиційному Китаї ("Луньюй"), а з другого боку, фіксує низку настанов жіночого виховання як критеріїв шляхетності (Бань Чжао – "Настанови жінкам"). У статті зосереджено увагу на другому сенсі.

У XVII–XVIII ст. у свідомості європейців формується адаптований до локальних обставин образ Китаю, що включає різні традиції, інституції та персоналії. Жіноча тема теж мала своєрідне висвітлення. Автори зазвичай не прагнули дотримуватися історичної достовірності, зосереджуючи увагу на реалізації морального складника.

Е. Сеттл у трагедії "Захоплення Китаю татарами" використав інтеркультурний образ амазонки для створення образу китайської принцеси Амаванги. У ній вдало поєднані риси воїна (твердість, сміливість, патріотизм) та конфуціанської жінки (стриманість, мудрість, жертвовність). Натомість Вольтер, який вбачав у конфуціанській системі державоуправління ідеальну модель просвітницької монархії, у своїй драмі "Китайський сирота" створив образ шляхетної китайки Ідаме як втілення цивілізаційної конфуціанської моралі (насамперед вірності "zhong" і шанобливості "xiao"). Водночас у цьому образі автор декларує просвітницькі ідеї (перевиховання варварів силою добродетності, домінанта природного почуття материнства) як складник конфуціанської ідеології. Зрештою, К. Гоцці створив екзотичний образ китайської принцеси Турандот в однойменній п'єсі-ф'ябі, використавши архетипний образ жорстокої та кмітливої красуні. Автор найменше прагнув історичної відповідності, втім образ Турандот послідовно асоціюється з постаттю жорстокої китайської імператриці У Цзетян, з акцентом на непересічних вольових і розумових здібностях жінки.

Отже, європейські драматурги відкрили завісу таємниць буття "конфуціанських жінок", створивши складні, драматично наповнені характери й конфлікти. Саме складність та амбівалентність образів китайок засвідчують уникнення авторами стереотипу "знеособленої східної красуні" і створюють підґрунтя для більш глибокого осмислення вказаних образів у новій Європі.

Ключові слова: "конфуціанська жінка", Китай, Просвітництво, драма, Е. Сеттл, Вольтер, К. Гоцці

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