

**Asian 204, Summer 2010**

**Questions 05: *The White-Haired Girl***

We will discuss these first questions after viewing the film's "Prologue":

1. What happens in this scene? Summarize its content: setting, characters, events.
2. What themes are established in this scene? Through what means (plot, characterization, imagery, etc.) are these themes suggested?
3. If question #2 is too abstract, consider the following:
  - a. What's the first image you see in this scene? What is the character of the music that accompanies it?
  - b. What's the last image you see in this scene? What is the character of the music that accompanies it?
  - c. What does the juxtaposition of these two images suggest?



Consider these questions as we watch Scene 1:

1. What is the essential dramatic conflict developed in this scene; what is the problem that must be resolved?
2. How does Xi'er's situation resemble or differ from that of other female protagonists we have seen? Is her reaction similar to theirs? How is her reaction represented? Consider such matters as music, acting (body language and expressions), and camerawork (angles, framing).
3. What is Wang Dachun's role? How do his actions and choices compare with those of other male protagonists we have considered?



Read through the rest of the questions before watching the remainder of the film on Friday 7/9. Jot down ideas and notes on details or scenes you think are relevant, and be prepared to discuss your ideas in class on Monday 7/12.

1. The film begins with a quotation from Chairman Mao, translated for you on your synopsis. How is this quotation presented? What is its relationship to the rest of the film?
2. What is Xi'er's role in the story? Beyond her role in the storyline (plot), does she have a symbolic role? How is this conveyed? How does her role (on its various levels) compare with that of the female protagonists in other works we have studied?
3. How is the color red used in the film?
4. What might have been the reasons for choosing to stage this story as a dance drama rather than filming it in a more "realistic" style? What are the strengths or advantages of dance as a medium here? What are its drawbacks?
5. What styles of dance and music are used in the film? Do these styles have associations or meanings in and of themselves (i.e. apart from the story being told)?
6. You have read an article by Kirk Denton on myth and the Model Dramas. What elements of *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* did Denton analyze, and which of those elements are applicable to this film?
7. You have also read an article by Paul Pickowicz on melodrama and the May Fourth tradition. Are any elements of Pickowicz's analysis relevant to this film? Are there elements that are not applicable?