

ONLINE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

PREMODERN CHINESE LITERATURE AS AN ARCHIVE OF VERNACULAR KNOWLEDGE AND EVERYDAY LIFE CULTURE

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<https://vernaknowl.sciencesconf.org/>

Ethics and the discourse on vernacular in *Peach Blossom Fan*

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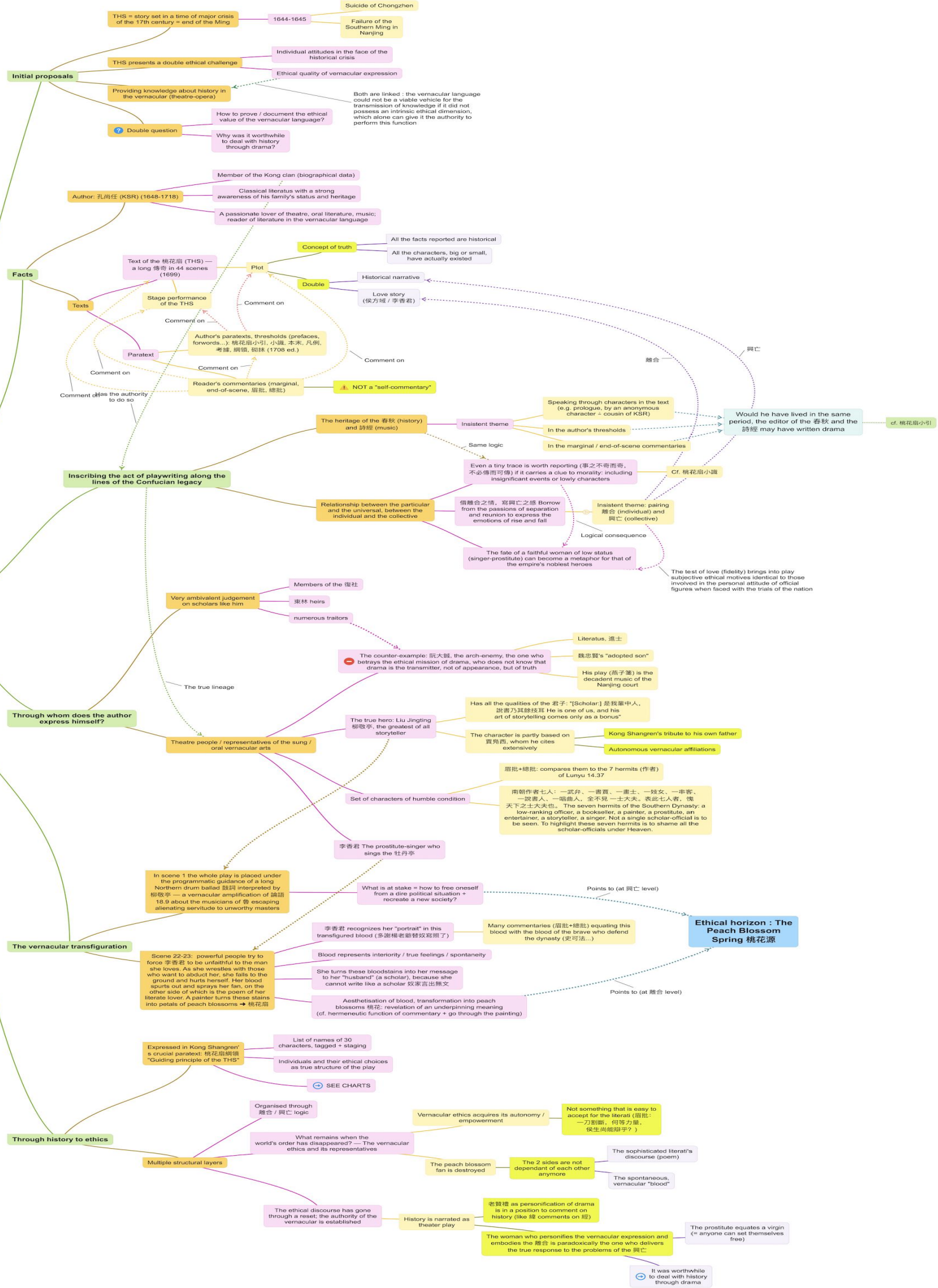
École Pratique
des Hautes Études



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**Ethics and the
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Peach Blossom
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Ethics and the discourse on vernacular in Peach Blossom Fan 桃花扇

▶ **Initial proposals**

▶ **Facts**

▶ **Inscribing the act of playwriting along the
lines of the Confucian legacy**

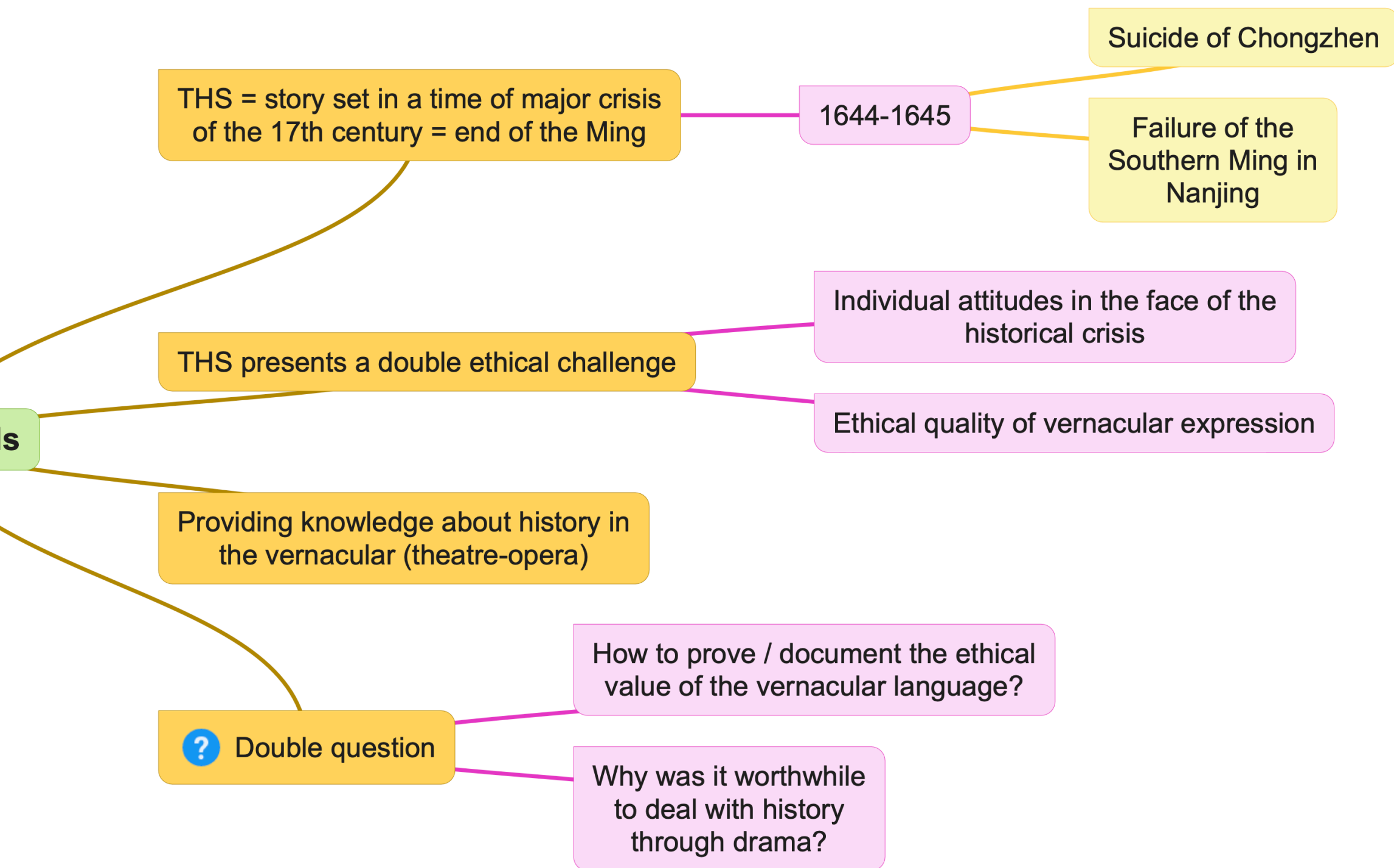
▶ **Through whom does the author
express himself?**

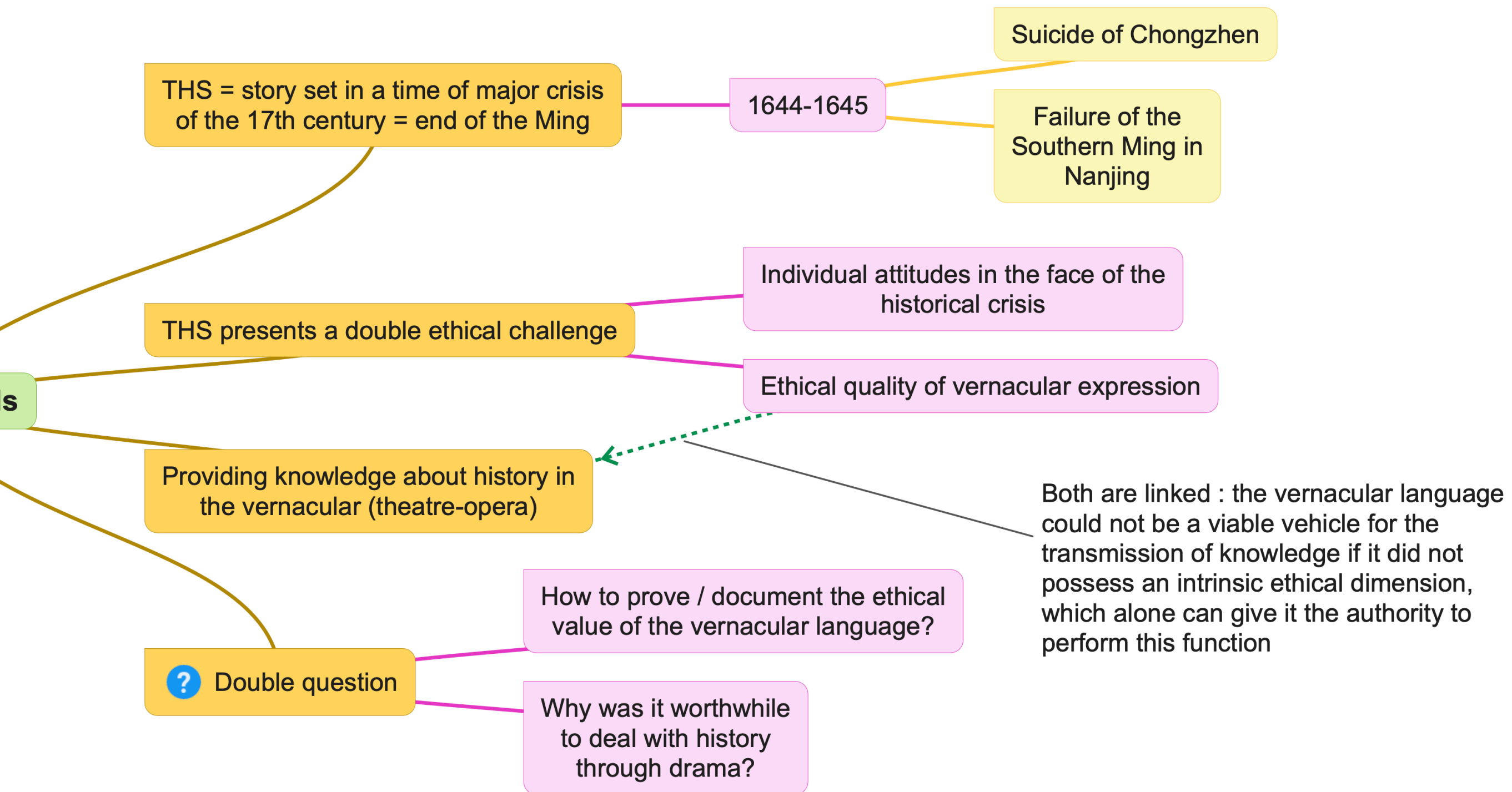
▶ **The vernacular transfiguration**

▶ **Through history to ethics**

Initial proposals

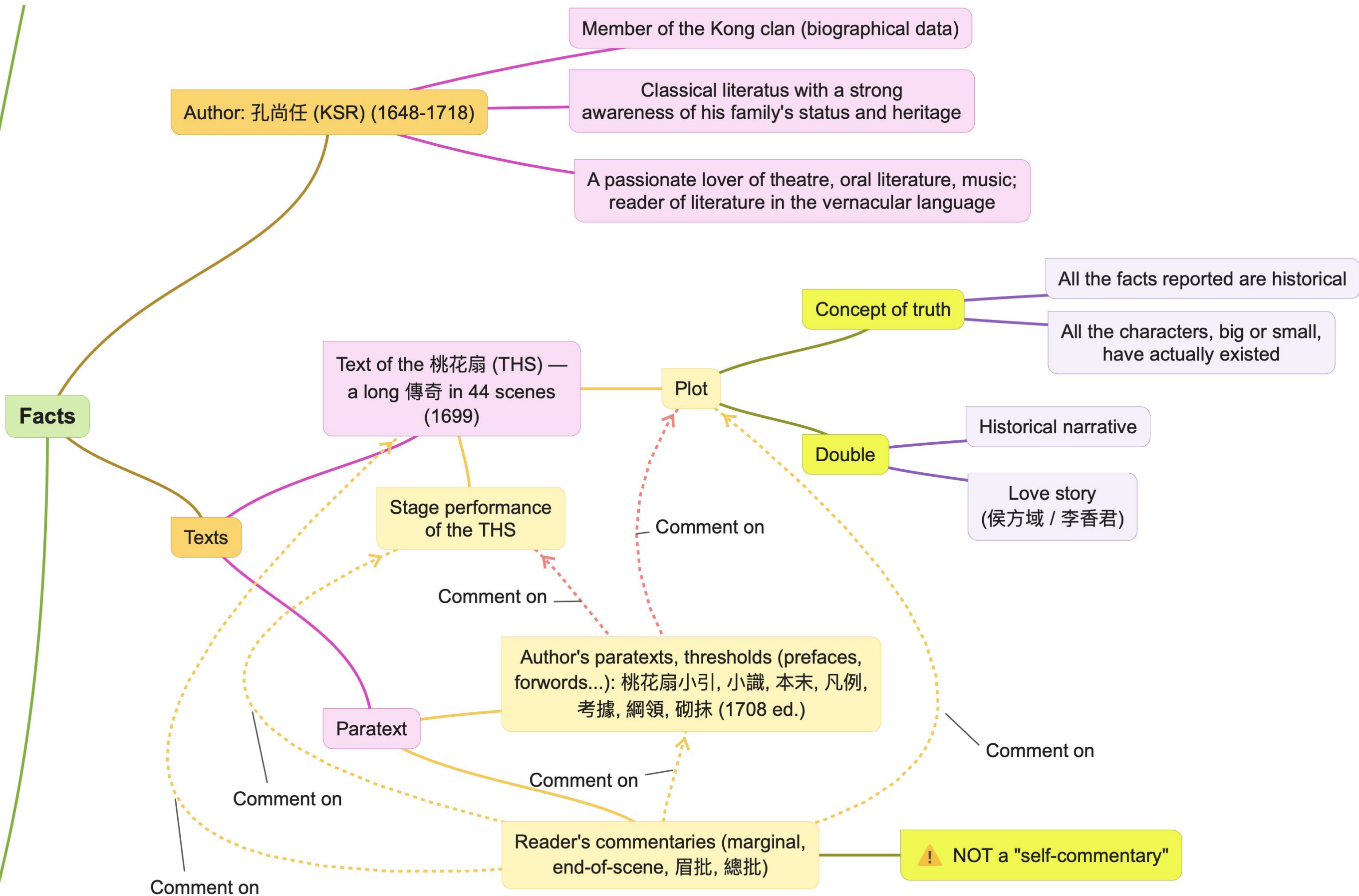






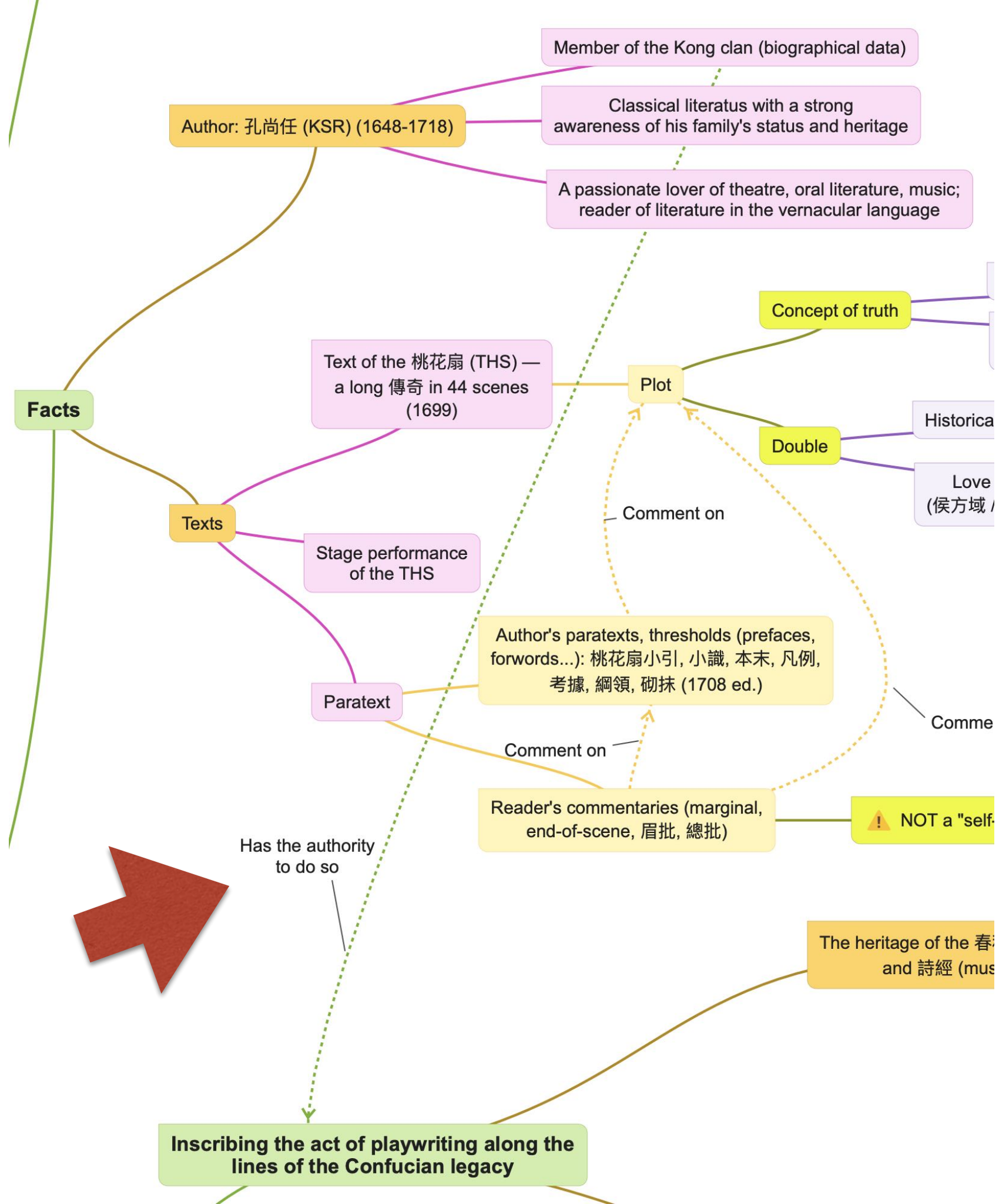


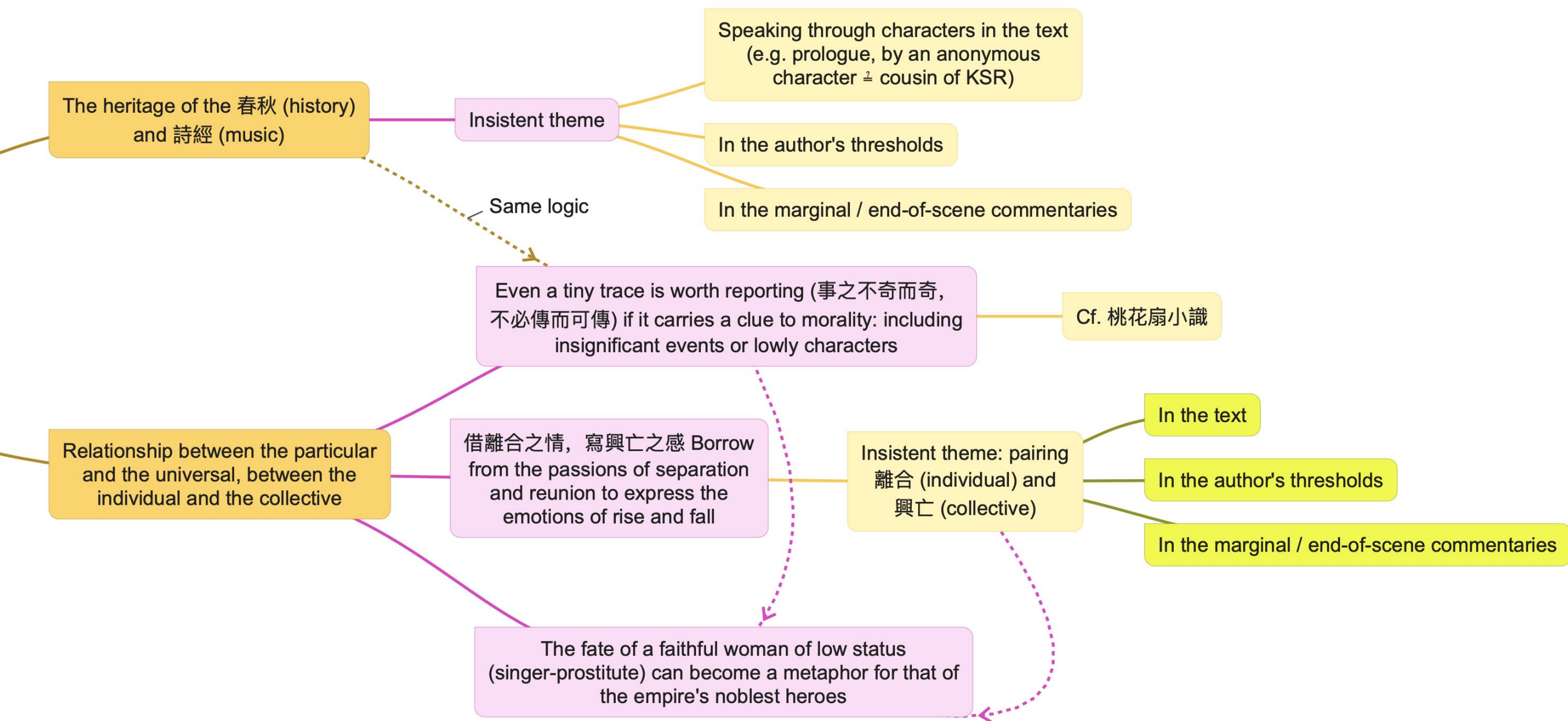
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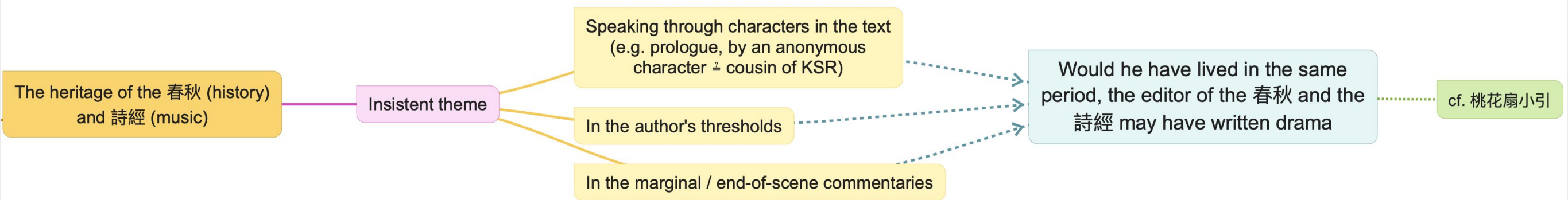


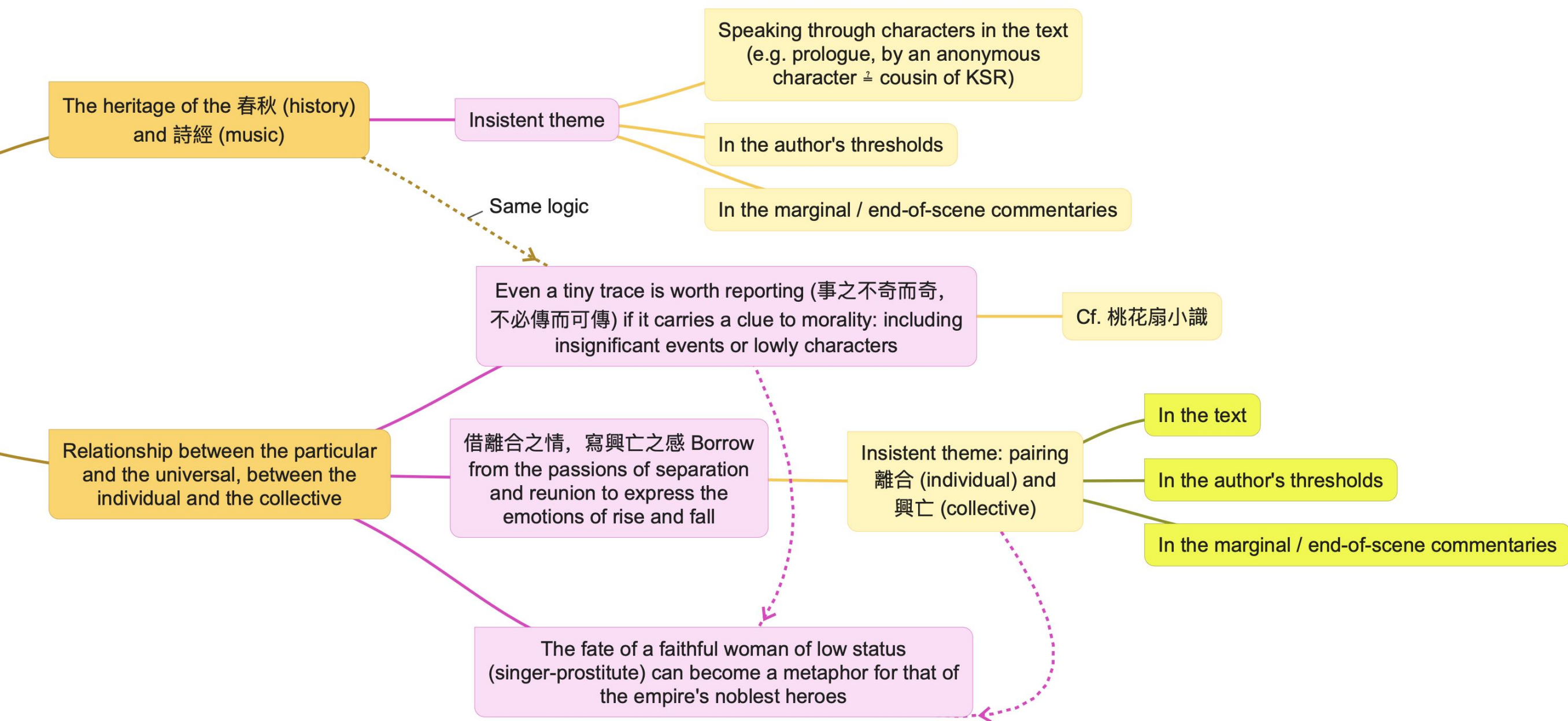
**Inscribing the act of playwriting along the
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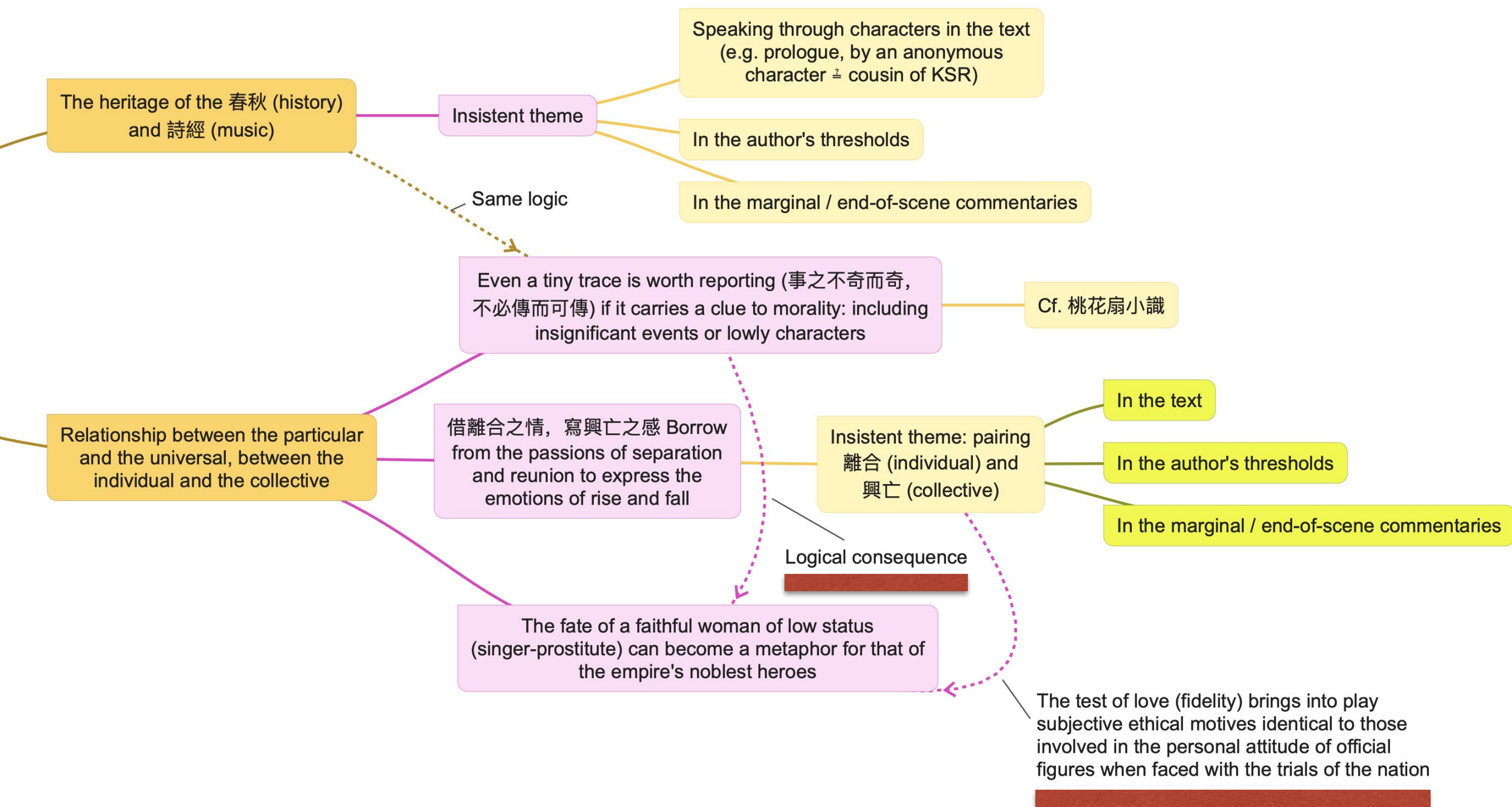


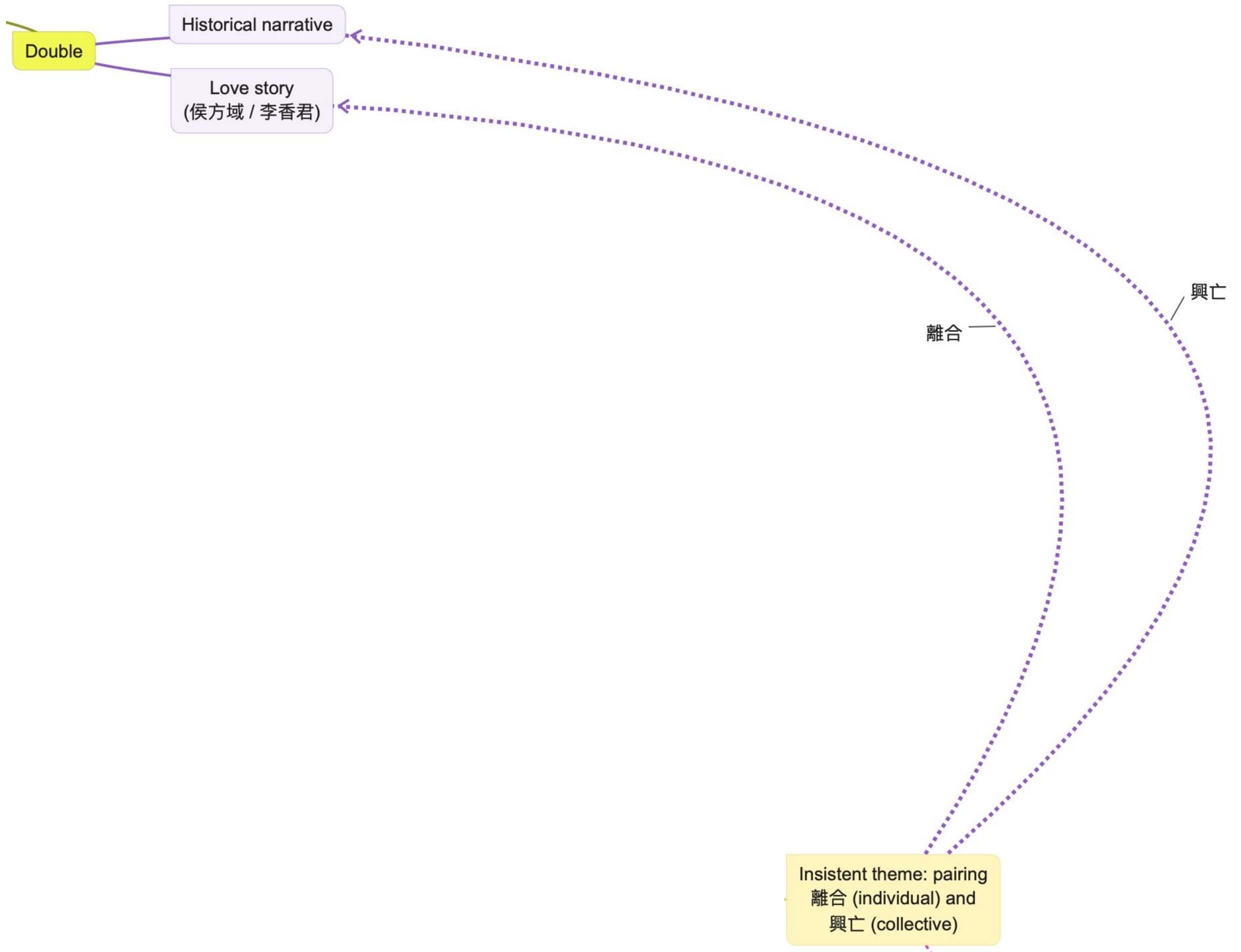















**Through whom does the author
express himself?**

author

Very ambivalent judgement
on scholars like him

Members of the 復社

東林 heirs

numerous traitors



The counter-example: 阮大鍼, the arch-enemy, the one who betrays the ethical mission of drama, who does not know that drama is the transmitter, not of appearance, but of truth

Literatus, 進士

魏忠賢's "adopted son"

His play (燕子箋) is the decadent music of the Nanjing court

Has all the qualities of the 君子: "[Scholar:] 是我輩中人, 說書乃其餘技耳 He is one of us, and his art of storytelling comes only as a bonus"

The true hero: Liu Jingting
柳敬亭, the greatest of all storyteller

The character is partly based on 賈鳧西, whom he cites extensively

Kong Shangren's tribute to his own father

Autonomous vernacular affiliations

Theatre people / representatives of the sung / oral vernacular arts

眉批+總批: compares them to the 7 hermits (作者) of Lunyu 14.37

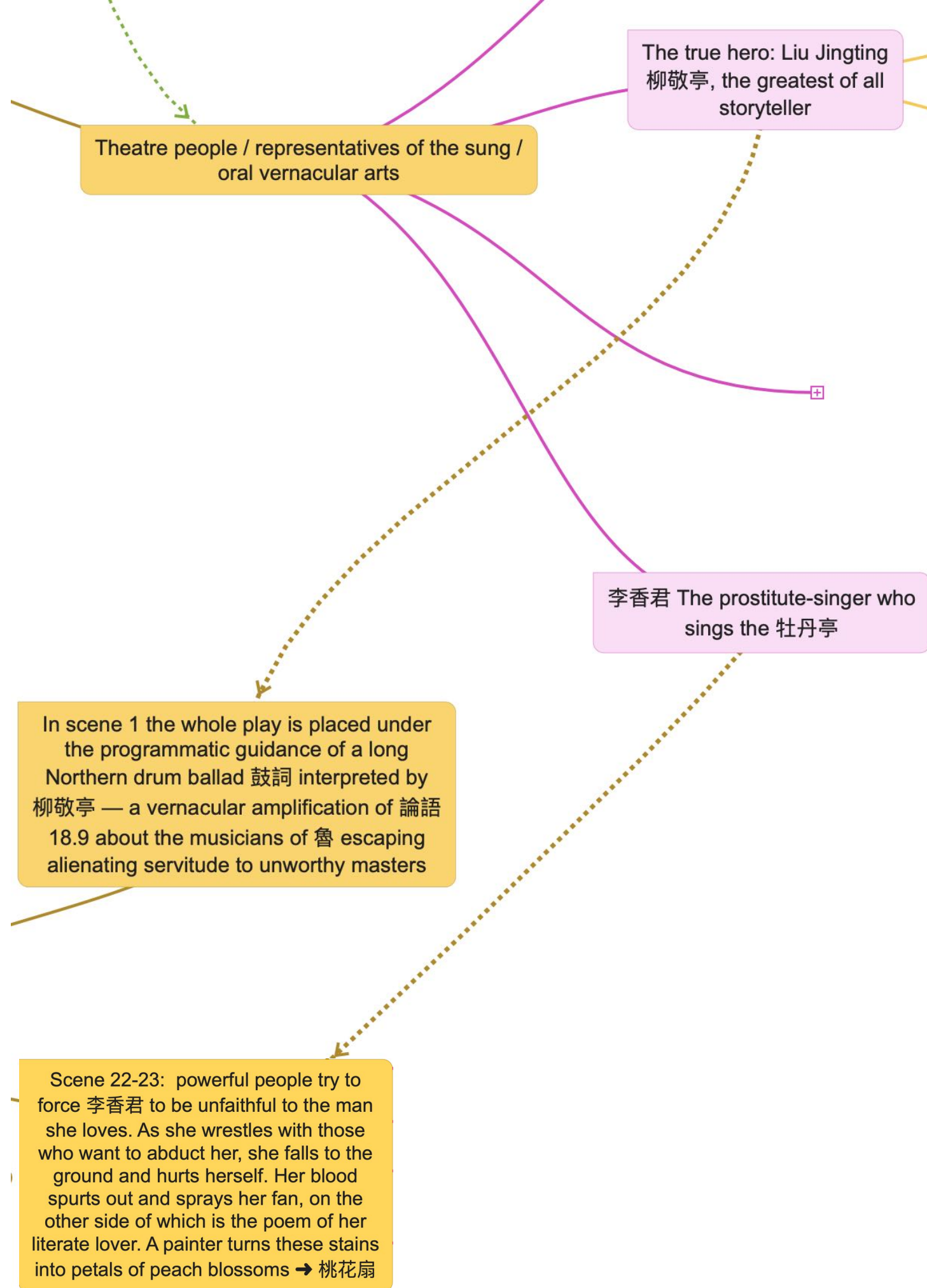
Set of characters of humble condition

南朝作者七人: 一武弁、一書賈、一畫士、一妓女、一串客、一說書人、一唱曲人, 全不見 一士大夫。表此七人者, 愧天下之士大夫也。 The seven hermits of the Southern Dynasty: a low-ranking officer, a bookseller, a painter, a prostitute, an entertainer, a storyteller, a singer. Not a single scholar-official is to be seen. To highlight these seven hermits is to shame all the scholar-officials under Heaven.

李香君 The prostitute-singer who sings the 牡丹亭



The vernacular transfiguration



uration

In scene 1 the whole play is placed under the programmatic guidance of a long Northern drum ballad 鼓詞 interpreted by 柳敬亭 — a vernacular amplification of 論語 18.9 about the musicians of 魯 escaping alienating servitude to unworthy masters

What is at stake = how to free oneself from a dire political situation + recreate a new society?

李香君 recognizes her "portrait" in this transfigured blood (多謝楊老爺替奴寫照了)

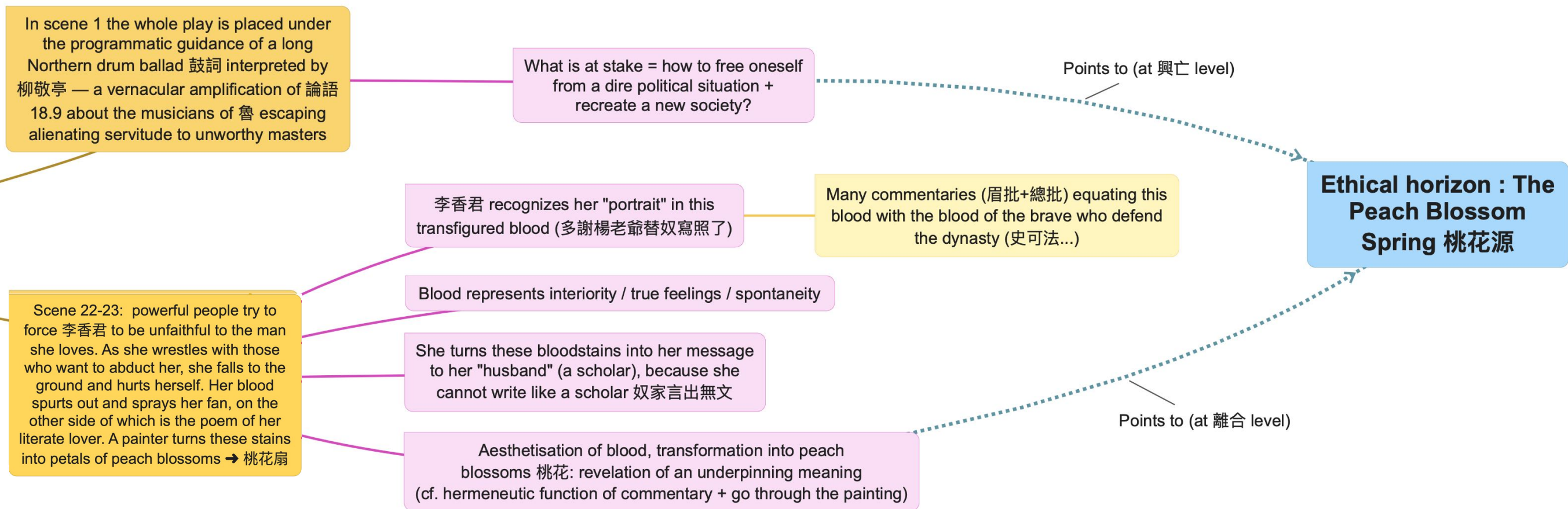
Many commentaries (眉批+總批) equating this blood with the blood of the brave who defend the dynasty (史可法...)

Scene 22-23: powerful people try to force 李香君 to be unfaithful to the man she loves. As she wrestles with those who want to abduct her, she falls to the ground and hurts herself. Her blood spurts out and sprays her fan, on the other side of which is the poem of her literate lover. A painter turns these stains into petals of peach blossoms → 桃花扇

Blood represents interiority / true feelings / spontaneity

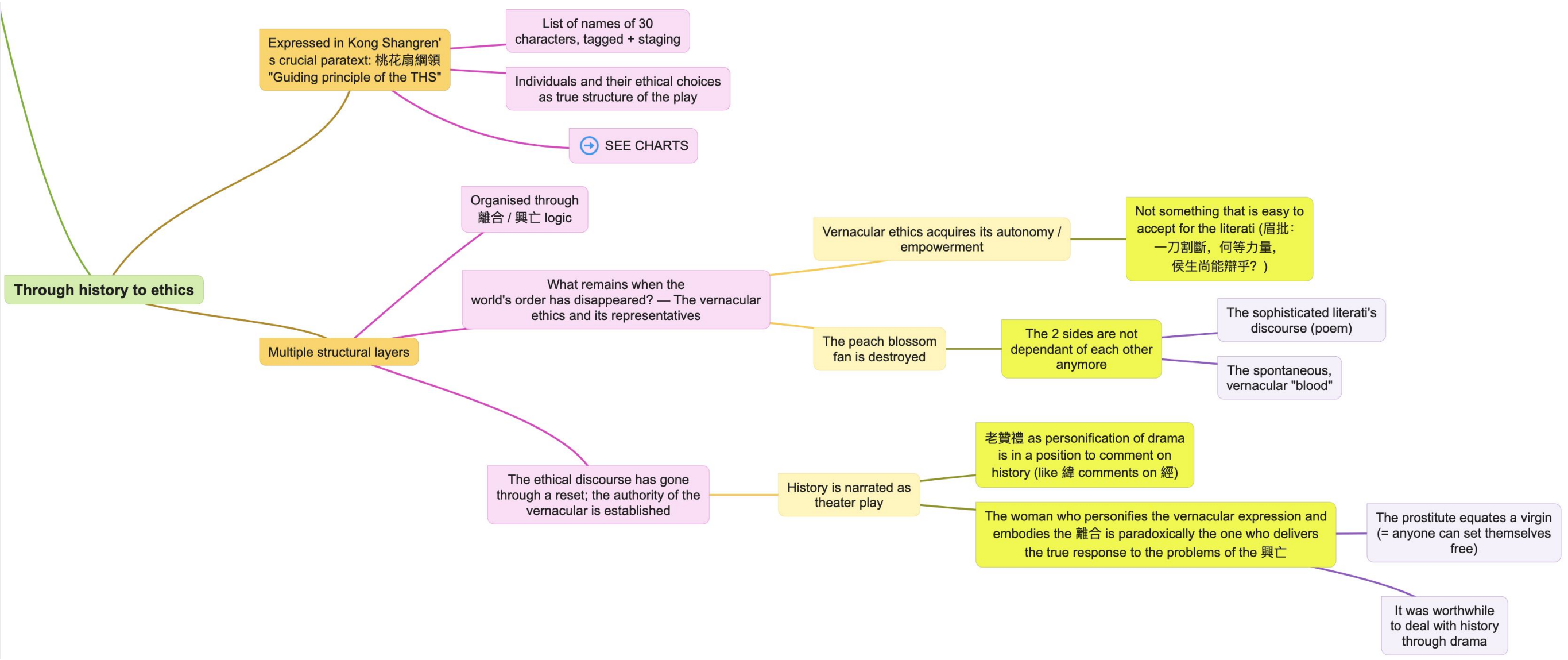
She turns these bloodstains into her message to her "husband" (a scholar), because she cannot write like a scholar 奴家言出無文

Aesthetisation of blood, transformation into peach blossoms 桃花: revelation of an underpinning meaning (cf. hermeneutic function of commentary + go through the painting)





Through history to ethics



Expressed in Kong Shangren's crucial paratext: 桃花扇綱領
"Guiding principle of the THS"

List of names of 30
characters, tagged + staging

Individuals and their ethical choices
as true structure of the play



SEE CHARTS

桃花扇綱領

經部

張道士（外）

經星

老贊禮（副末）

緯星

奇部

史道鄰（外）

中氣

弘光帝（小生）

戾氣

高傑（副淨）

餘氣

田雄（副淨）

煞氣

偶部

左崑山（小生）黃虎山（末）

中氣

馬士英（淨）阮大鍼（副淨）

戾氣

袁臨侯（外）黃仲霖（末）

餘氣

劉良佐（淨）劉澤清（丑）

煞氣

左部

侯朝宗（生）

正色

陳定生（末）吳次尾（小生）

間色

柳敬亭（丑）丁繼之（副淨）蔡益所（丑）

合色

沈公憲（外）張燕築（淨）

潤色

右部

李香君（旦）

正色

楊龍友（末）李貞麗（小旦）

間色

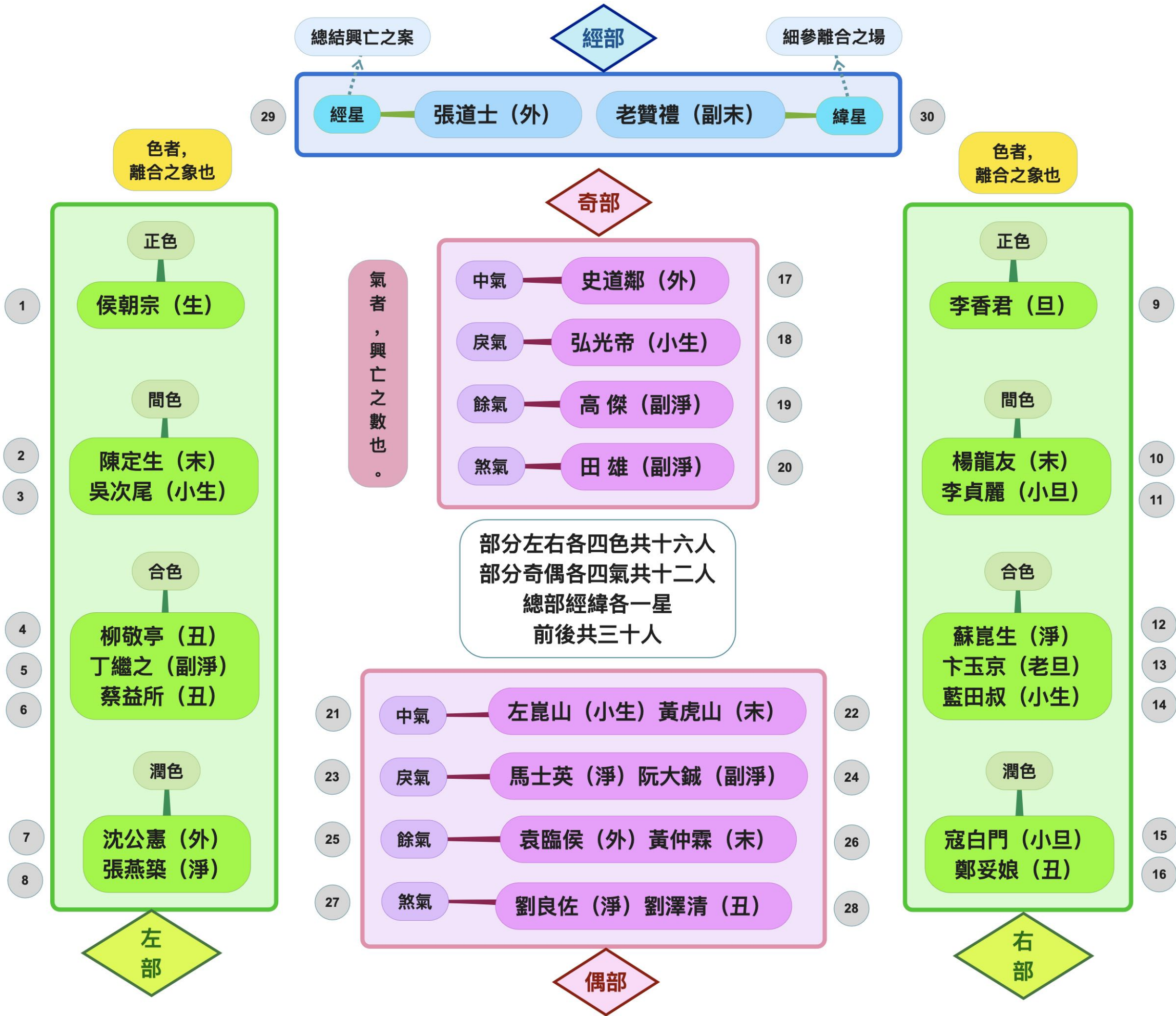
蘇崑生（淨）卞玉京（老旦）藍田叔（小生）

合色

寇白門（小旦）鄭妥娘（丑）

潤色

- * 字（號）→ 名
- * 張道士 = 張薇
 - * 史道鄰 = 史可法
 - * 左崑山 = 左良玉
 - * 黃虎山 = 黃得功
 - * 袁臨侯 = 袁繼咸
 - * 黃仲霖 = 黃澍
 - * 侯朝宗 = 侯方域
 - * 陳定生 = 陳貞慧
 - * 吳次尾 = 吳應箕
 - * 楊龍友 = 楊文驄
 - * 藍田叔 = 藍瑛



經部

經星

張道士 (外)

老贊禮 (副末)

緯星

正色

侯朝宗 (生)

間色

陳定生 (末)
吳次尾 (小生)

合色

柳敬亭 (丑)
丁繼之 (副淨)
蔡益所 (丑)

潤色

沈公憲 (外)
張燕築 (淨)

左
部

正色

李香君 (旦)

間色

楊龍友 (末)
李貞麗 (小旦)

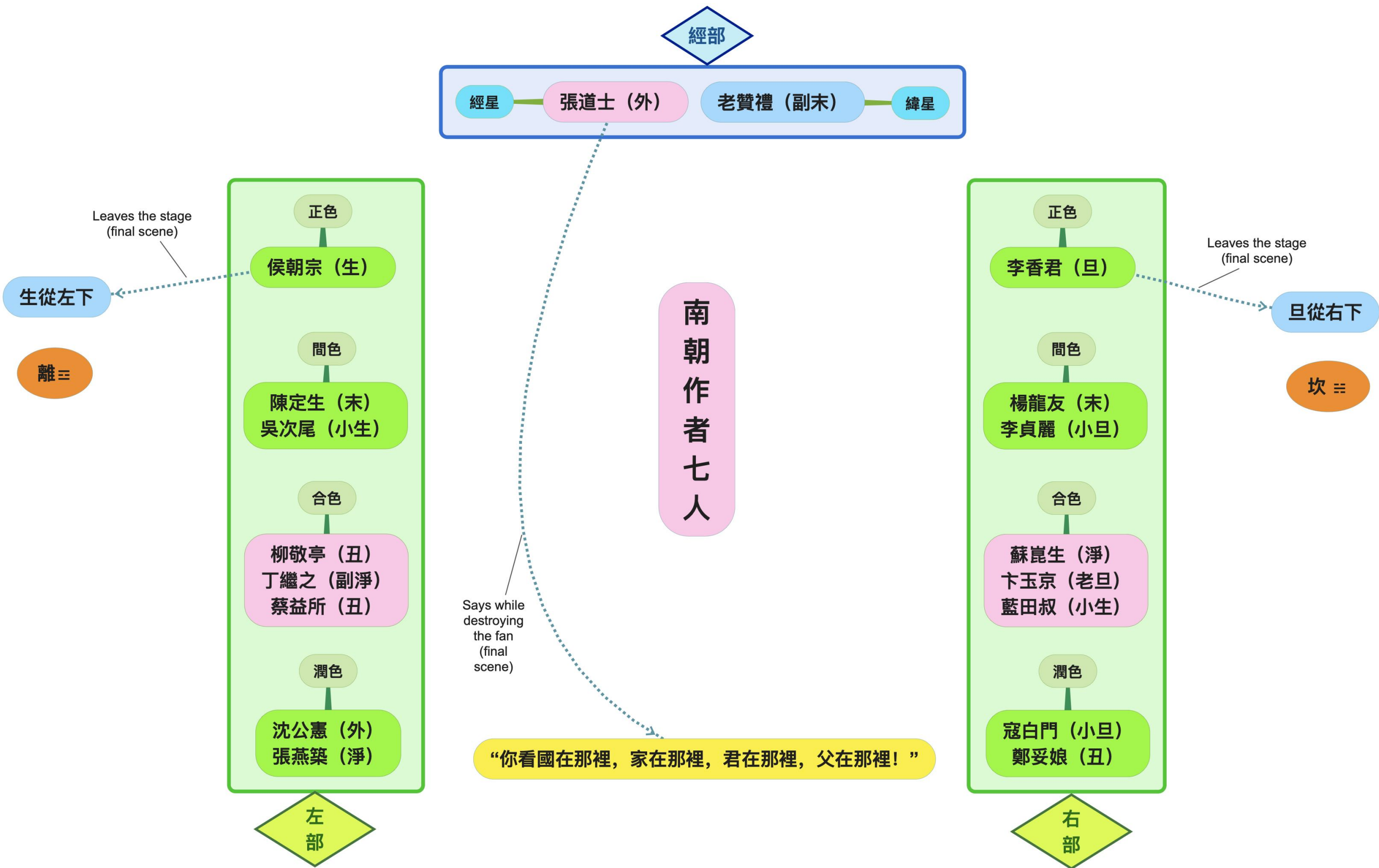
合色

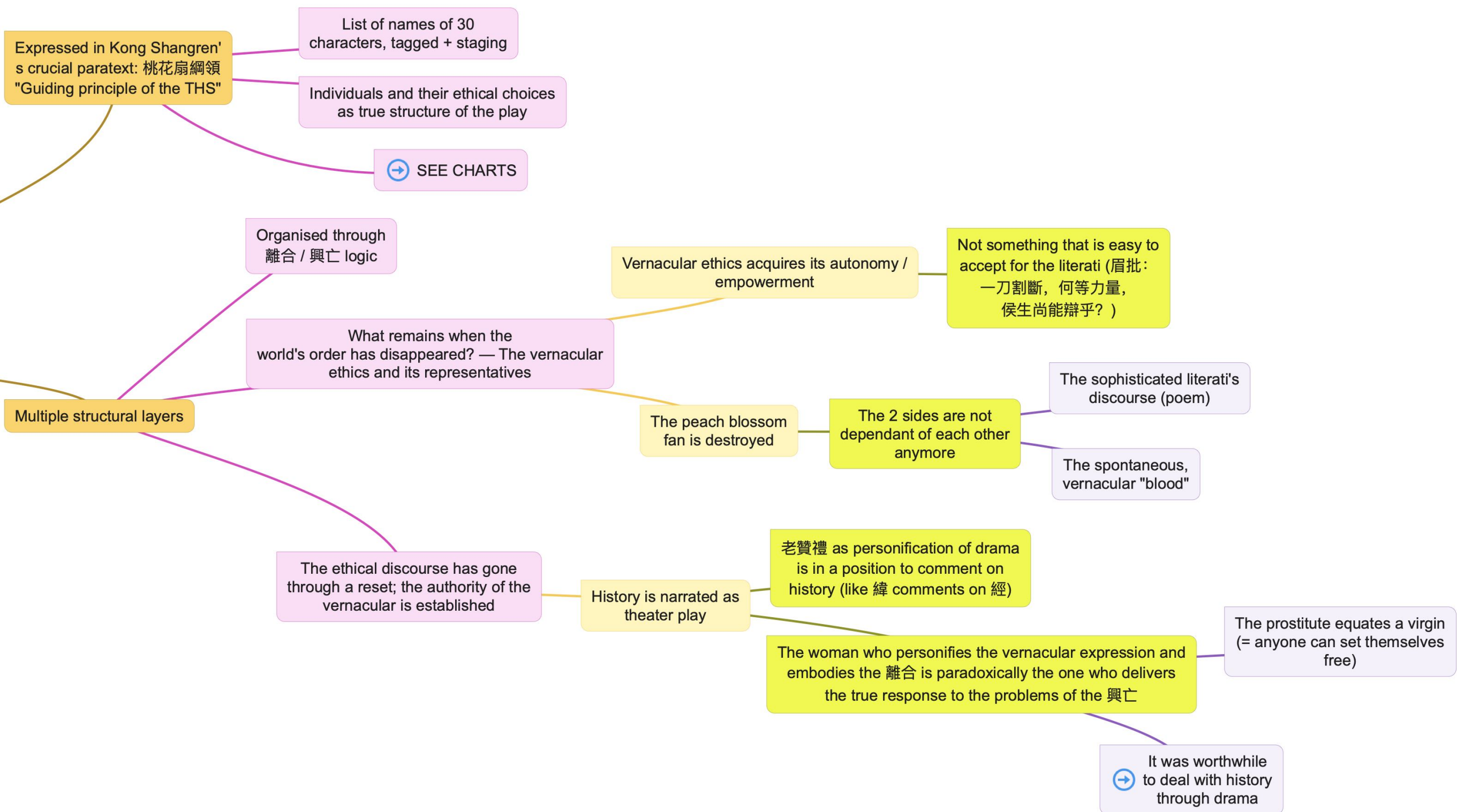
蘇崑生 (淨)
卞玉京 (老旦)
藍田叔 (小生)

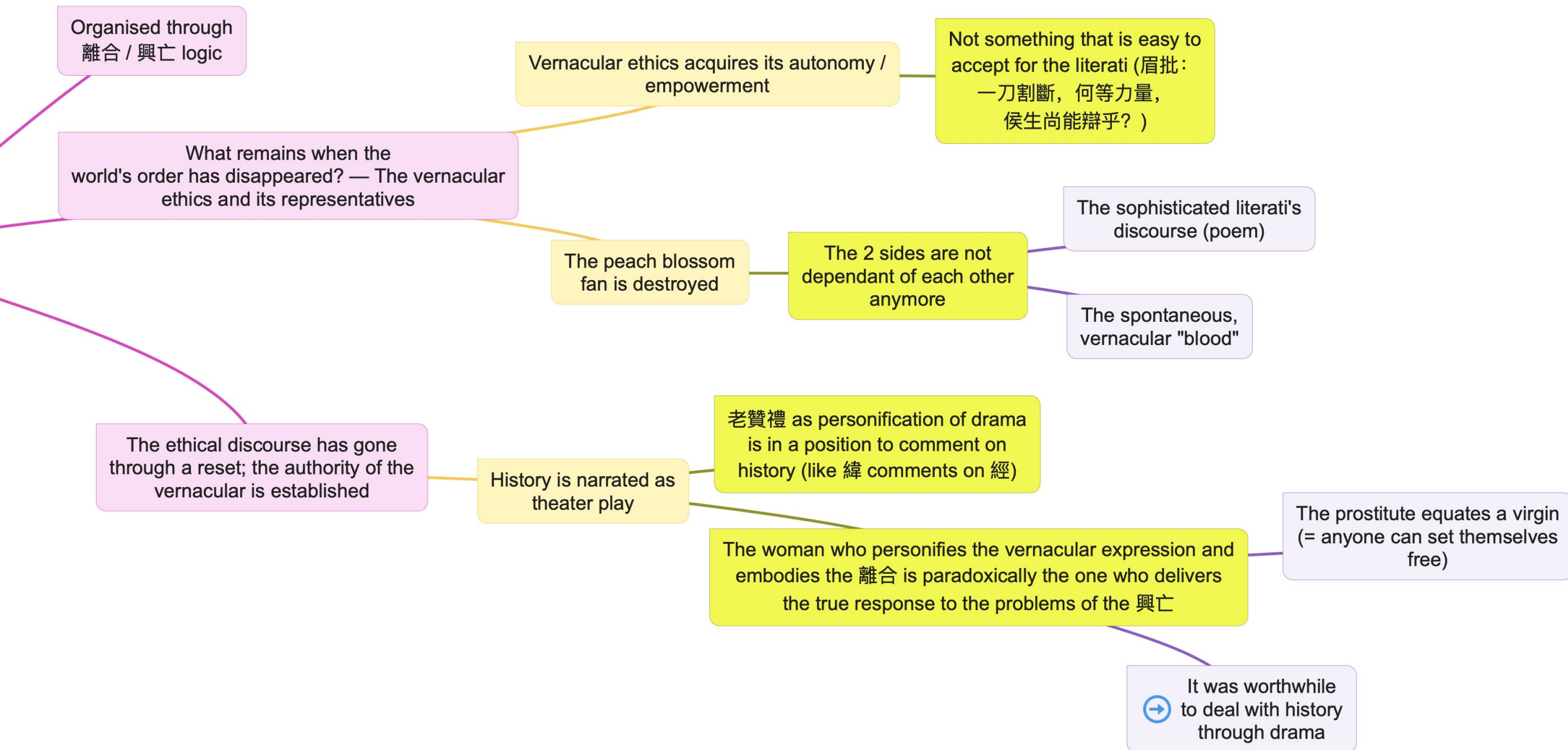
潤色

寇白門 (小旦)
鄭妥娘 (丑)

右
部







《李香君小影》
(1817)

By
Cui He 崔鶴
fl. 1800-1850

*Metropolitan
Museum of Art,
New York*

