



The Subversion and Transcendence of Traditional Lyric Aesthetics by Modern Popular Songs

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Abstract: *Modern popular songs have become one of the most influential cultural products for the people today, with various characteristics such as great influence, wide audience, and diverse means of dissemination. Lyrics, as the backbone of popular songs, can be regarded as a form of musical literature in terms of their nature. They contain both literary elements in music and musical attributes in literature. On the basis of inheriting the unique aesthetic artistic characteristics of ancient Chinese poetry, the lyrics of domestic popular songs also integrate modern elements of the times, forming a unique new poetic style. Compared with traditional songs, the lyrics structure of modern popular songs has undergone significant changes, with a subversion of grammatical norms and a reshaping of classical imagery, showcasing the unique aesthetic and cultural connotations of modern music.*

Keywords: Modern popular songs; Traditional lyric aesthetics; Subversion; Transcend.

1. Introduction

Pop songs are also known as popular songs, mainly because their themes are mostly about modern and real life, which is more relevant to the daily life of the audience. The organic combination of lyrics and melody forms a lively, rhythmic, and wide range art form. The lyrics of modern popular songs, on the other hand, are a literary style presented to the people through language as material material, and are an artistic form similar to poetry, prose, and novels. Lyrics are usually short in length, combined with melodies to create music that can express atmosphere and mood, that is, an aesthetic world that can immerse people in it. Lyrics separated from melody are a different literary article with their unique narrative style and aesthetic perspective, which can become a true portrayal of people's spiritual outlook, cultural mentality, and survival status over a period of time, just like poetry, novels, and essays.

2. Beyond grammatical norms

Modern popular songs have a profound impact on people's lives. Every aspect of our lives is permeated with the elements of modern popular songs, and their unique charm is mixed in. They have successfully become an indispensable spiritual food for people, directly or indirectly influencing their thoughts, behavior, emotions, and social trends.

With the development of the times, literary figures have gradually deviated from conventional language use. In order to express unique and innovative ideas in language, almost every use of modern language provokes the threat of stable language structures and seeks to break established language laws. Those who have a certain understanding of poetry should know that there are significant differences in grammatical structure between poetry, prose, and novels. Prose and novels still use more conventional voice, and what attracts readers is their content and plot; Poetry, on the other hand, is an art of contemplation and appreciation, meant for those who understand poetry. Therefore, poets often do not adhere to any particular style when creating poetry, and poetry mainly uses imagery to create artistic conception and express the emotions in the poet's heart. So, poetry as a whole is very beautiful, and poets naturally abandon conventional grammar norms in pursuit of aesthetics when creating. From this, it can be seen that it is not unreasonable for people to say that poetry is meant to "break the neck of grammar". The difference between lyrics and poetry is that lyrics are an art form used to complement the melody to create music. With the attributes of music attached, lyrics are destined not only to be read but also to be sung from the very beginning. This precisely determines that lyrics are different from language styles such as poetry, novels, and essays. However, as a form of art, lyrics are not only created for unique aesthetic features, but also embody the creator's deep emotions. The reason why modern popular songs have such a profound impact on people is not only due to the aesthetic characteristics of the music itself, but also because the emotions contained in the music resonate with the audience, giving them a sense of emotion and emotional outlet.

It is not difficult to find from the popular songs we can hear in our daily lives that with the development of the times, the need for emotional expression, and the changing aesthetic tastes of creators, the lyrics of modern popular songs have surpassed the language aesthetics of traditional lyrics. Therefore, it can be seen that the language art of lyrics and the language art of poetry are gradually approaching each other. For example, in the modern popular song "Resting Heart", there is a lyric that goes: "I used to think my family was like ticket stubs, torn open and embarked on a journey, thrown into another stranger." The clever use of this phrase by the lyricist is that "stranger" was originally an adjective, but it was placed after the quantifier "one," naturally turning "stranger" into a noun, which is a subversion of conventional grammar. Looking at the lyrics of the song "Holding Hands" again: "So sad is your sadness/happy is your happiness", the two "sadness" and "happiness" have different parts of speech. In modern Chinese, "sadness" and "happiness" are intransitive verbs, while the first "sadness" and "happiness" are transitive verbs, which are actions performed by "I", and the second "sadness" and "happiness" are nouns. However, if translated using conventional grammar, it is actually a causal relationship. Because you are sad, I am also sad, and because you are happy, I am also happy. From the change in its part of speech, it can be seen that the transcendence of grammatical norms in modern popular song lyrics is a concrete manifestation of its aesthetic variation.

There are significant differences between the language and artistic style of modern popular song lyrics and the aesthetics of traditional lyrics, mainly reflected in the transcendence of grammar norms and the subversion of conventional grammar norms in modern popular song lyrics. We cannot deny the aesthetic characteristics of traditional lyrics, nor can we deny the trend of a new aesthetic trend that modern popular song lyrics aim to construct. Philosophically speaking, everything is in a state of change and there is no absolute stillness. However, the lyrics of modern popular songs are only a continuation of traditional lyrics as things change. In this process, aesthetic characteristics, as their own attributes, will naturally change. So, the lyrics of modern popular songs bring us a brand new aesthetic enjoyment, and we should give them some recognition. However, no matter how you go beyond and subvert grammar norms, it is necessary to make the audience understand the meaning you want to express. Otherwise, no matter how innovative or extravagant you are, no one will like you, and the so-called transcendence and subversion will only become a joke.

3. Rebellion against strict sentence structures

Since ancient times, China has placed great emphasis on neatness and rhyme in word and sentence construction, which is also a unique aesthetic feature of ancient Chinese language. Mr. Wen Yiduo, a famous literary figure, once said, "The greatest characteristic of Chinese art is uniformity. The lyrics of traditional songs are very much in line with Mr. Wen Yiduo's characteristic of "uniformity". For example, in Liu Bannong's "Teach me how not to miss her", it is written: "There are some clouds floating in the sky, and a gentle breeze blowing on the ground. Ah! The breeze moved my hair, teaching me how not to miss her? The moonlight loves the ocean, and the ocean loves the moonlight. Ah! Such a honey like silver night, teach me how not to miss her?" Compared with the two sections, it can be seen that the first and second sections have exactly the same name and word count, which fully embodies the aesthetic element of "uniformity".

The lyrics of modern popular songs appear to be unconventional and more flexible and free, with sentences of varying lengths. When combined with tones, they can create rhythmic music. When lyrics are no longer bound by the aesthetic norms of traditional lyrics, modern popular songs present a new and different beauty to everyone. As written in "Her Eyelashes": "Her pink and delicate appearance is like a juicy peach/Everyone wants to bite/Her bright lips have a confident pride/I can see it. At first glance, it appears that the sentence structure is also very neat, but upon closer inspection, one or three sentences are too long to catch one's breath, while two or four sentences are too short to slow down for a moment. This combination of length and brevity creates a distinct sense of rhythm. The long sentences of one or three sentences make people feel delicate and can enrich the emotions that the music itself wants to express; 2、 The short sentences of four or two sentences are easy and clear, giving people a strange aesthetic feeling. Looking at "The Woman downstairs" again, it is written: "If my heart is tired, my tears have dried up. This deep affection is hard to let go of. I once had it, and it is old and bad." Each sentence is only four words long, which looks neat and not long, but it does not deliberately pursue rhyme. Although the sentences are short, they are better than many. When sung so coherently, it actually sings the short sentences into the tense and urgent rhythm of the long sentences, inevitably producing a different aesthetic sense.

Although modern popular song lyrics rebel against the strict sentence structure of traditional lyrics, it does not mean that such strict sentence structures are not beautiful, nor does it mean that modern popular song lyrics are very scattered. In the lyrics of modern popular songs, there is also a very neat line, such as Jay Chou's "Fireworks Are Easy to Cold": "Rain falls one after another, the old hometown is deep with trees and grass. I have heard that you are always alone, with mottled city gates and old tree roots, echoing on the stone slabs. Wait; rain falls one after another, the old hometown is deep with trees and grass. I have heard that you still guard the lonely city, with the sound of pastoral flutes on the outskirts of the city, falling on the Nomura. Fate takes root and we are together." The first and last two sentences are repeated, and the sentence structure and word count are exactly the same. In addition, "The Moon on the Fifteenth Day" and "Looking at the Starry Sky" are also very neat sentences. Similarly, traditional lyrics are not always well structured, such as the lyrics of "Chairman Mao's Quotations Song" and "March of the Volunteers" during the Cultural Revolution, which have alternating lengths. What we emphasize is that the aesthetic characteristics presented in the lyrics of modern popular songs are no longer strict in sentence structure requirements, but more free and flexible, and the scope of creation is broader.

4. Disruption of Rhythm

Lyrics are a part of a song, so when we talk about lyrics, we cannot ignore the song. Therefore, lyricists

also need to consider whether it is suitable for composers to compose music when writing lyrics. For the audience, a song is an auditory art that requires lyrics to rhyme or flow smoothly. Mr. Guo Moruo once said, "Poetry can have rhyme or no rhyme, but songs must have rhyme." Indeed, lyrics with rhyme can better integrate with music and have more musicality. The main aesthetic aspect of traditional lyrics is the beauty of music, which stems from the strict sentence structure and rhyme of traditional lyrics. From this line in "The Great Wall Ballad", it can be seen that "the Great Wall is thousands of miles long, and outside the Great Wall is my hometown. Sorghum is plump and fragrant, and gold is abundant with few disasters. Since the beginning of the great disaster, rape, abduction, and suffering have been unbearable. Hardship should run in all directions, and parents should be separated and lost." There are a total of eight lines, except for the "qi" at the end of the fifth line, each sentence in the other seven lines has a "ang" rhyme at the end, and the neatness and rhythm of the sentence structure can be compared to the seven character regulated poetry of the Tang Dynasty, giving people a feeling of lightness and lightness.

Although the lyrics of modern popular songs have not abandoned the beauty of rhythm, they do not deliberately rhyme according to the rules. Many lyrics are basically not rhymed at all, but presented in prose or similar poetic styles, thus reflecting the aesthetic diversity of lyrics. As Leslie Cheung wrote in "The Wind Continues to Blow": "How many happy memories of the past, why not pursue them with you? I want to wash away the melancholy and pain. I am willing to remember the tenderness and sweetness, and endure the thunder of separation, not allowing it to droop. Sorrow is like a lock, eyebrows gather, and tears of separation will always droop." It is not difficult to see that this passage has no rhyme at all, and the whole song actually has no rhyme at all. For example, in Andy Lau's "Thank You for Your Love," he wrote: "When I avoid your tenderness, tears begin to fall. I dare not but want to thank you for your love. It is necessary to exist. In your future, the most feared thing is that this will bring you eternal harm." This passage is also rhyming and presents a person's inner monologue in the form of prose, fully reflecting the free style of prose format.

There are too many modern pop songs that do not emphasize rhyme, because lyricists did not consider pursuing rhyme when writing lyrics. This does not mean that they gave up on the beauty of rhythm from the beginning, but rather that they tried to find more ways to pursue it, such as in a relaxed and cheerful prose style. Besides 'The Wind Continues to Blow' and 'Thank You for Love', there are countless modern songs that do not rhyme. However, this does not mean that there are no rhymes in modern songs. For example, in "Taste," it is written: "I thought sadness could be rare, I thought I could live well, but who knew that when I think of you, I miss bitter medicine, nowhere to escape, I miss your smile, I miss your coat, I miss your white socks and the scent on you." Except for the "you" at the end of the third line, all other lines end with the rhyme "ao". Similarly, traditional lyrics are not always rhymed, such as the "Quotations from Chairman Mao" and "The Great Sword Slashes the Heads of the Demons" from the extraordinary period. So, the disruption of rhythm in modern song lyrics that we emphasize does not refer to an absolute boundary, but rather to the significant differences in rhythm between modern song lyrics and traditional lyrics. The true meaning of the subversion we want to emphasize is that today's lyric creation should present a more "diversified" and "liberalized" trend, rather than being troubled by deliberate pursuit of rhyme.

5. The creation of classical artistic conception

Whether it is traditional lyrics or modern song lyrics, lyricists basically write lyrics based on real stories of daily life, while contemporary people describe their lives and express their emotions. However, in recent years, there has been a continuous emergence of lyrics that lean towards classical music. Lyricists are devoted to ancient culture and write their own gains into lyrics, creating a classical atmosphere,

mood, and sentiment in the lyrics, ultimately forming music with unique classical beauty, which can be said to be unique in modern popular songs. And these types of lyricists mainly include Fang Wenshan from Taiwan, Mo Mingmiao from the internet, and Chen Xiaoqi from mainland China.

Many people believe that history has entered the 21st century, and the creation of modern popular songs should be further aligned with the world, full of fashion and trend. Why are there still people who are obsessed with ancient culture? This is mainly due to people's increasing emphasis on traditional culture, which is a precious asset bestowed upon each of us by our nation and history. We should learn to cherish it. And people inevitably have a nostalgic feeling towards the past, lamenting the passing of time and the beauty of the past. In this situation, modern pop songs full of classical imagery have emerged. And these songs mainly include "Blue and White Porcelain", "East Wind Breaks", "Inch of Thread", "Mountains and Rivers Forever Admire", "The Sound of Waves Still Remains" and so on. Please see "Inch of Thread": "Let this weak water be thrown back into the river, and after returning to the sea, may the hospitality not be old? From then on, I love spring rain, summer thunder, autumn frost, winter snow without need. I declare it to my mouth, and my breath is like gazing into your eyes. How to restrain the wind and trek through the mountains, forests, and gardens, how to organize the obsession to take root at the end of my dream? When you wake up from your dream and climb the tall building alone, there is also a night wind blowing through my sleeves at my railing, and the eaves water penetrates the wall. Even the slightest itch has been carved into wounds for years. The long night is not yet in the center, and my blind eyes are inclined to look at the distant light. I am full of sadness and anxiety, and joy also adds three parts of madness. I implore you to look back Just treat it as the most ordinary moment of admiration, someone has worn out all their makeup and gone crazy for you, dedicating their spare time to create a deep and endless love. At least they have the courage to be influenced by anger and ignorance. Imagine the cycle of reincarnation, the world of red dust, the green silk, white bones, and yellow springs, where everything will never stop. All three souls and seven souls will be extremely gentle because of you Climbing high-rise buildings, leaning on railings, reincarnation, worldly affairs, green silk, yellow springs, white bones, three souls and seven spirits, and other highly classical imagery, suddenly seem to show us the endless helplessness and grief in the hearts of a couple who love but cannot hold hands and grow old. Both the lyrics and the melody leave an endless classical aesthetic impression on people.

6. Conclusion

With the rapid development of the economy, people's lifestyles and aesthetic concepts are undergoing tremendous changes. In the field of music, this is reflected in the significant changes in the lyrics of modern popular songs, which have unprecedentedly subverted and surpassed traditional lyrics aesthetics. We in academia should raise our awareness and increase our research efforts, making our due contributions to the development and prosperity of Chinese pop songs, and to the globalization of Chinese culture.

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