

The differences between Chinese and Western music philosophies: a case study of hip-hop music in China

Xiao Wang¹, Tongjun Chen^{2,*}

¹ Department of Art, Northeastern University, Shenyang, 110167, China

² Department of Music, Daye Vocational and Technical School, Huangshi, 435106, China,

Corresponding author: 1462072723@qq.com

Abstract

Rap music originated in the black community of the United States for cultural and historical reasons: because black people are still unable to fully establish a foothold in society, coloured people in the United States still endure poverty, unemployment, and crime, and their hearts are full of contradictions, leading hip-hop music to thrive in the United States' continuing prosperity. In comparison to the rigidity of traditional Confucian culture and the revolution in culture and politics, there are presently a huge number of rap actors in mainland China. In addition, several hip-hop styles have evolved in various regions of China, and the substance and form of rap have substantially improved. This article examines the link between Chinese and Western music concepts underlying hip-hop music localization through the growth of hip-hop music.

Keywords

Hip-Hop, China, Philosophy, Cross-cultural, Localization.

1. Introduction

In terms of the global stage of civilization's progress, we frequently use the idea of east and west to distinguish between ideological opposition and philosophical conceptions. To some degree, western culture reflects the culture and practises of Australia, North America, Western Europe, and Northern Europe. Eastern cultures in the nation usually originate from orthodox Christianity, Islam, Asian countries, and developing third-world countries (Zi, 2011). Music education across the world largely followed the West after the Industrial Revolution. We frequently encounter the following unusual phenomena: performers dressed in Chinese clothes, carrying traditional Chinese musical instruments, doing current fashionable dances, playing Western repertoires, and the audience sitting upright, which is recognisably both to Western and Chinese audiences. We don't need to create a fuss if something is already a part of our culture; from God's perspective, this is known as cultural blending, according to anthropologist Taylor's description (Boone, Meng, & Velden, 1995).

In today's globalised world, Internet knowledge is widely disseminated, and no matter where you are, you have a sense of cultural "displacement" and acquaintance with the cultures of various areas.

Hip-hop music is adored by young people all around the world. Hip-hop music reflects an autonomous life experience, emotional value, striking lack of life experience, suppressed survival, developing a sense of ambiguity, and the eagerness to confront the world. However, in the age of capitalism, hip-hop music has become increasingly symbolic, homogenised, extracted into consumer items, and devoid of a feeling of exclusion. On a philosophical level, culture deformation is also worth considering: how to acquire cultural identity while localising hip-hop music.

2. The history of chinese hip-hop music

With the success of the film Breakdance in the 1980s, many teens began to copy its motions. As a consequence, they are classified by society as "bad teenagers" or "having no work to do," which is suppressed by the entire society (Gitonga & Delpont, 2015). Following the mainland's complete reform and opening up, Hong Kong and Taiwanese pop music began to resurface. Because of the early start of Hong Kong and Taiwan music and the entire industrialization process, most of the repertoires were imported from Japan with comparable cultural features, the lyrics were rewritten, and high-frequency chanting and interaction during the climax were added as selling points.

In the mainland, the most well-known singer at the moment is Jay-Chou, whose songs have influenced the development of a generation and whose composition combines a variety of genres and elements, mainstream positive energy, a love of fashion, and his unique singing methods, which are deeply loved by mainland fans and belong to the genre of music recognised by mainstream culture. However, the majority of hip-hop music is still anti-mainstream, anti-ideology, one-of-a-kind, and full of conflict. Of course, one of its labels is "revolt against popular music" (Magaa, 2014). In 2017, there were a number of "hip-hop in China" concerts that entirely launched hip-hop music on the Chinese mainland (Zhao, 2020). Because the candidates are primarily from the lower socioeconomic classes and have a low cultural level, the vulgar aspects of hip-hop music that reach the TV channel are infinitely magnified, making them the subject of a public assault (Luo & Ming, 2020). The words and behaviours of hip-hop performers have been over-interpreted, which has had a detrimental influence on the spread of hip-hop music, particularly with the rapid growth of social media and the stimulation of short films and vegetarian reading.

3. Hip-hop music and neo-confucianism

"It's worth the life to be born in China; it provides a great existence for the young; we are all the offspring of the Yellow Emperor; five thousand years of history is incredible." ("不枉魂魄入华夏，尘埃岂能掩芳华，炎黄浩瀚沐苍霞，上下五千岁月似流沙"). In 2017, the Chinese hip-hop player "GAI" appeared on the mainstream Chinese propaganda platform CCTV International Channel. The content of his songs revolved around love for the country; the musical instruments were merged into traditional Chinese musical instruments; the melody was produced in the Chinese pentatonic style; and the powerful Chinese style came to the fore. In terms of style and expression, the song is radically different from conventional patriotic songs. Traditional Chinese patriotic songs are frequently simple tunes with captivating lyrics; even someone without musical expertise may come up with a few lines that juxtapose rap with traditional Chinese art, which is often intermingled with opera readings, dialogues, and role-playing. Hip-hop music and traditional Chinese art performances have a natural connection, which also provides soil and possibilities for the Chineseization of hip-hop music. Chinese-style hip-hop music demonstrates greater cultural and national self-confidence, a wish for a better life, genuine pride, and love for the country, which is completely different from African-style hip-hop music, and there have been noticeable improvements (Zou, 2019). The evolution of hip-hop music in China is also heavily inspired by Chinese Confucian culture. Because Chinese people listen to songs and focus on the lyrics rather than the melody, the lyrics have become part of the Chinese aesthetic system. Lyrics should focus on artistic conception, good energy, and praise. The validity of personal image, wearing clothing, and modelling are comparable to the mainstream Asian aesthetic, where people no longer wear costly clothes and more aspire to be recognised by the mainstream culture, followed by the legitimacy of music and creative

lyrics. The original lyrics are full of wildness and Jianghu taste. The lyrics are now based on popular cultural icons such as nation, hero, dragon, and so on.

As a result, it can be observed that on the mainstream platform, the general style and pursuit of hip-hop music are new aspects. Initially, Chinese hip-hop music was brought to the mainland through the secondary upgrading of Japan and South Korea. It was enhanced further based on traditional Chinese-Confucian culture, communist principles, and the theory of Marxist philosophy and practice. Under the influence of this ideological tendency and the notion of culture and art, the first thing that art ecology defends is having healthy values (Thornton, 1996). Hip-hop music's rebellious attitude has been interpreted post-modernization in China, as the lyrics express more scorn, abuse, contemplation, and conversion to the spiritual home. Hip-hop music, coupled with the pace of the music and the rapid and seamless recitation of lyrics, weakened mainstream culture and strengthened its reduction and disappearance aspects. The performers' clothes should be less extravagant, their performances should be more delicate, and their relationship with the audience should be less dramatic. In Confucian culture, the aesthetics of harmony and positivity, paired with the essence of the term, are no longer rebellious and alternative (Flew, Ryan, & Su, 2019). If hip-hop music and Chinese principles have nothing in common, why does hip-hop music enter the country and have such a large social and cultural impact? First, hip-hop music, as a component of Western culture and a powerful culture, is in the process of spreading outward, influencing the development of a generation of young people and cultural colonial hegemony (Eckert & Rickford, 2001). Second, China's contemporary economy has entered a stage of fast development at the same time as the emergence of numerous challenges, which also arose in many capitalist nations following the industrial revolution. In this situation, hip-hop music in the spirit of revolt and modern young people's spiritual ambitions for the world are congruent. Again, at the national level, with the fast expansion of material civilization, spiritual civilization has attracted significant attention. Hip-hop music is adored by young people as a sub-culture system, and confidence is usually high now with its stringent management, which certainly better leads to its healthy growth while complementing the current cultural kinds. Finally, although hip-hop music is closely related to Islam in official doctrine, it has a cross-cultural affinity with Chinese Confucian culture. In essence, it seeks beauty, equality, and love. The Chinese government's attitude toward hip-hop music has shifted from the trough to the climax. The key reasons are that Chinese culture is heavily impacted by Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism, and that impact is undetectable. Although school teaching does not explicitly emphasise Confucius' ideas of collectivism, socialism, and family values in everyday life, kinship is nevertheless the foundation for the operations of people and even governmental institutions. Of course, as the ages have progressed, particularly in contemporary times, with the introduction of Marxism, gender equality, and the arrival of the materialisation era, different social problems have evolved. A new wave of Confucian education, known as sinology, erupted at the national level. The sinology movement is a new era and an improved version of the cultural movement, which is a combination of the times, the integration of current difficulties, a hundred schools of thought, a hundred flowers contend, reflect the state leader's mind and open eyes, and are the embodiment of national will. n "literary creation is written in the history of rejuvenation and the struggle of the people; actors must have both virtue and art; literary and artistic creation must be combined with the fate of the times, the country, and the people; and this high level of artistic requirements of literature and art certainly does not allow hip-hop music in the strange performance clothing, publicity of personality expression, rebellious spirit, sex, This is opposed to the cultural and spiritual attitude and expectations of the entire nation; therefore, hip-hop music was barred early on and can only be perpetuated in the underground and with a few genres of music.

Why has hip-hop music recently had a major cultural effect with unprecedented commercial and official recognition? (Clark, 2013). The fundamental reason is that, despite the cultural market's success, pop music on the mainland lacks inventiveness; for many years, the use of love songs and repeated melody has constrained mainland music. Whether formal or self-helping, musicians are subdividing the market and exploring the possibilities of music. As a pilot project, we will create hip-hop music to express the official open cultural attitude as early as the reform and opening up. At the same time, in the value system of Chinese culture, people's capacity to criticise the official culture is very low, and Chinese culture has been there for thousands of years, and the cultural value system accumulated in the Chinese language is stable. Hip-hop music cannot undermine the government's power if the content review system is tightened. Hip-hop music may be included in the border system of the national culture strategy and utilised as a cultural output object to generate a favourable image of the country and to create an open, pluralistic, civilised, and peaceful new era. According to the preceding, the combination of Confucian culture and hip-hop music is the penetration of Chinese traditional cultural concepts into the development of hip-hop music itself through absorption and integration, giving hip-hop music a new charm in China.

4. Hip hop music and religious

Religions in the United States are diverse and complicated. According to religion experts Josef Sorett, Anthony Pinn, and Monica R. Miller, there is a necessary basis in religious discourse, art, and hip-hop: mostly sunni from the Arab area, shia or sophie, sunni and ahmadiya from south Asia, and the newly founded Moore Scientific Temple and Islamic Nation in the United States. The impact of religion on hip-hop music is a complicated issue. In terms of national psychology, cultural identification, and clan belief, this article solely uses Islam as an example to demonstrate the impact of religion on hip-hop music from the side.

American slaves are sold from Africa to the United States and are not considered whites. The Islamic movement and the civil rights struggle of black Americans have been mutually beneficial (Tervo & Mervi, 2014). Three factors primarily influence the propagation of Islamic thinking. To begin with, Muslims from outside the United States are keen to create church groups and enhance their religious identity in order to preserve Islamic culture. Second, black immigrants brought about by the black people's congress' migration movement encounter a harsh reality. With the growth of pan-Africanism in the United States and the rising of nationalist consciousness, black people are paying greater attention to their own identity and sense of belonging (Duinker, 2020) and are ready to find emotional support and a sense of belonging. At this time, when Islamic church groups were growing as the times demanded (Hutchings and Rodger, 2018), blacks had a magnificent idea. Finally, in the white-dominated Chinese racist system and the Christian-era theoretical framework, Islam is the devaluation and blaming of black Americans for the disintegration of whites (Aldana, Baales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019).

As a result, Islam emerged as a black religion, whose religion, as a type of belief, has a profound impact on individual lifestyle, values, social life, and institutional culture. Both Christianity and Islam believe in the same God and share strong universal values, which contributes to their peaceful cohabitation in the same nation. However, the process of localising Islam is a process of religious identity, with Christianity as the dominant body. Islam embodies the preservation of life, faith, mind, property, and family. As a result, these beliefs and attitudes are congruent with mainstream American values (Anyiwo et al., 2018a). Islamic beliefs, as portrayed in the area of music, have a long history of influence on black American music and are incredibly vast and in-depth. Almost all styles of American music are tied to Islam. In the 1920s, the Black Area of Harlem in New York lauded "New Black" and new black culture via creative forms, which was

known as the "Harlem Renaissance" (Anyiwo et al., 2020). Attempts to break through traditional music grammar in the late 1950s and the resulting free jazz tide helped jazz musician "John Kochuan," whose spiritual essence came from Islamic enlightenment, transcend monotheism and exclusive belief structures (Porter, 1999) and form a complex and profound view of the universe. Since the 1960s, the major area has been black music, and Malcolm X is one of the important personalities (Ahmed, 2020), whose pursuit of radical forces is a significant absence of peace and love in Christianity, which is the ideology of Islam that African Americans use to shape their rebellious music. Hip-hop music, with its filthy lips, costumes, and grotesque imagery, is the most prominent among them (McLeod, 1999). (Oredein, Evans, & Lewis, 2020) Music dispels the confrontation of positive tensions, makes the battle spectacular (Curtis IV, 2012), and renders universal ideals inconceivable. Because of the inspiration of Islam, black Americans' musical potential has been completely harnessed and discharged. As can be seen from the above, Islam has had a significant impact on the hip-hop music movement. Religion, as a form of spiritual nourishment, has indirectly influenced the development of hip-hop music through its additional input on the elaboration of lyrics.

5. Hip-hop music and cross-cultural value identity

In China, there is a GAI that has won the hip-hop championship, we compare the five most popular songs ("The world is dry(天下物燥)", "Huaxia(华夏)", "The sea is laughing(沧海一声笑)", "Hot pot primer(火锅底料)", "Never walk alone(永不独行)"). The lyrics of "The world is dry" are "too many styles are too similar, life is a hero and death is a hero, this is Lao Tzu's life(太多的风格都过于雷同,生当作人杰死亦为鬼雄,这是老子的人生)" reflect the rebellious spirit, and should be distinguished from the mainstream to reflect their own values; the lyrics of "Huaxia" are "The gall of the yellow skinned dragon sails in the wind to bless the land of China. History will not be buried, let alone its glory(黄皮肤龙的胆乘着风扬起帆 天佑我神州大地, 历史它不会被掩埋, 辉煌更不用谁编排)" reflect the recognition of local culture and reflect national pride; the lyrics of "sea laughing" are "swagger around and spend the day in the muddy sky, when I sing the lyrics, I froze at the mouth. I can't bend my head, every mountain is higher than every mountain(到处招摇过市在浑天过日, 歌词唱到口吐白沫, 我命硬学不来弯腰, 一山还要比一山高)" reflect the stubborn and rebellious personal spirit; the lyrics of "Hot Pot Primer" are "Lao Tze eats hot pot, you eat hot pot primer, hot pot primer, laugh at you because i'm polite(老子吃火锅,你吃火锅底料,火锅底料; 对你笑呵呵 因为我讲礼貌)" reflect the parody and ridicule of local culture; the lyrics of "Never Walk Alone" are "You wait for the hare, i am too stable, but never lazy(你慢慢等,守株待兔;我太过稳,但绝不怠惰)" reflect a positive attitude towards life and pursuit. From the perspective of Shangmai and in the process of localization of hip-hop music in China, the lyrics infiltrated the Chinese Confucian culture and expressed the pursuit of love and beauty. Even if there was rebellion, it was also a display of personality, and did not challenge the mainstream values.

Let's listen to five tracks by 2PAC ("I don't give a penny," "I get around," "Dead Mama," "If I die 2Nite," "Hit EM up"). "I don't give a fuck" lyrics are "All I see is niggas dying fast, the sound of a gun blast, then watch the hurst pass" and reflect hatred of gun proliferation; "I get around" lyrics are "now everyone's looking for the latter and ain't no need in being greedy" and reflect criticism of materialistic society; and "Dead Mama" lyrics are "even though we had different daddy's, the same drama." "If I die 2Nite" lyrics are "my teachers couldn't reach me, I run in the streets and punish," which describe themselves as victims of life and reflection on death; "Hit EM Up" lyrics are "Call the cops when you see 2Pac uh who shot me, but you punks didn't finish, now you're going to feel the wrath of a menace, my teachers couldn't reach me, I run in the streets and punish, "During the process of localising hip-hop music in the United States, the lyrics entered a religious setting and language, expressing unhappiness with life and scorn for

problems. However, in these negative languages, they effectively communicated hope for a better existence. After all, humans are not born to moan. Although the songs question mainstream norms, they are restricted to the trash of local culture. Because of the processes of globalisation, population movement, and cross-cultural aspects that are becoming increasingly prevalent, we can sense cultural resemblance and portability wherever we go.

According to the preceding study, Confucian culture and Islam fundamentally share a common pursuit. The Confucian culture promotes individual tranquillity and peace, which is the harmony and oneness of the individual and the environment, the cosmos, and Islam instructs black Americans to find their spiritual home, become autonomous individuals, and allow their souls to flourish. Convergence will essentially follow. Because there are differences in the external form due to the political environment and national tradition, the Chinese are more implicit; the main nation is the Han nationality. Facing painful setbacks, their resistance is more lasting and moderated, which is reflected in the field of music, which is more peaceful and pays attention to rhythm. However, during the national crisis, the music of the entire country became more realistic, violent, and impulsive, and black Americans, because of their skin color, experienced national hostility in their life and death, so Islam in the localization process became more brutal and direct. Music reflects this since it is more abrasive, confrontational, and daring (Osuna, 2019). With the equal rights movement and a more enlightened government stance, the situation is rapidly changing. Whites are harvesting black music as well, and music culture is shifting in terms of diversity and symbolism. Music culture is influenced by political culture, ecological culture, and dynamic changes. The primary spirits of Confucian culture and Islamic culture are fundamentally congruent and harmonised, according to previous research (Huang, 2012).

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