

# Analysis on the Cultural Transmission of Film and TV Music — Taking the Film "Parasite" as an Example

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## ABSTRACT

Film is an audio-visual art and an important carrier of cultural transmission. Music is an important element in film art, which plays an important role in the expression of the film, among which the cultural transmission of music is an important feature of the film, possessing characteristics of the times, national characteristics and social characteristics, being able to combine with other elements of the film to reflect the corresponding communication value. This article takes the film "Parasite" as an example, analyzes the characteristics of the use of music in it, and explores how to use film music to express cultural transmission and reflect the value of the film.

**Keywords:** Film and TV music, The film "Parasite", Cultural transmission.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Among many film and TV works, film and TV music has played a very important role, which can effectively portray characters, promote the development of the plot, and sublimate the theme of the film. Excellent film and TV works can often make film viewers have a deep impression of the music after watching the film. Music is an important part of the film and TV art, has an important ideographic function, has the characteristics of the times, national characteristics and social characteristics, and is an important carrier of cultural transmission.

## 2. THE USE OF FILM AND TV MUSIC

### 2.1 The Characteristics of Film and TV Music

In film and TV works, music is fragmentary. Music often runs through the work and plays a role in exaggerating the atmosphere. In the plot, music will not be used all the time, and it is usually part of the plot. Using music can express emotional sorrow and joy. In the TV series "A Dream in Red

Mansions", when expressing the sad emotions of the protagonist Lin Daiyu, the music "Funeral Flowers Chant" is used to express the inner activities and portray the characteristics of the characters.

Film and TV music has a foreshadowing effect. In the film "Raise the Red Lantern", the sad music is repeatedly used to express that the protagonist Songlian suffers a tragic blow, and the repetitive montage of music is used to reflect the imprisonment and destruction of women in the film by the feudal system, narrating the change of the whole character from an intellectual to a lunatic, and continuously deepening this theme through music.

### 2.2 The Symbolized Expression of Film and TV Music

Film and TV music can participate in the ideographic function of film text in film and TV works. Through listening to the music in the film, the audience perceives musical notations and gains meaning. There are four ideographic functions: the first is to express themes and emotions; the second is to express the psychology of the characters; the

third is the manifestation of the era; the last is the expression of narrative functions.

### 2.2.1 *The Film and TV Music Expresses Themes and Emotions*

Film and TV works use music to express themes and emotional tone, which is a common ideographic technique. The well-known Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi created the theme dubbing "Memory" for the film "Okuribito", using the low cello as the main sound, and bringing a deep and quiet grief to people. If people break away from the guidance of the text of the film and simply appreciate "Memory" as a kind of art of music, they can certainly experience the solemn and peaceful sorrow in this piece of music, but they may not be able to comprehend the contemplation and awe of the circulation of life referred to by this musical notation. Through the use of music, the text of the film has promoted the meaning of musical notations as a kind of philosophical thinking about life and death, and has been expanded as a symbol of the hero's spiritual growth.

In the original film, the cellist Daigo Kobayashi, who originally dreamed of becoming an outstanding performer, was unemployed due to the dissolution of the orchestra and faced high debts. He had to accept the job as an undertaker. At first, he was disgusted with this profession, gradually, he respected the profession, and finally, he agreed with the profession and his understanding of life, death, and family affection was sublimated. The theme song "Memory" appeared three times in the film. The first time was after attending the encoffining ceremony for the first time, Kobayashi, who was agitated and awake in the middle of the night, played the melody with his cello; the second time was when he had a new understanding of his profession, he played the melody. Accompanied by the melody, the shots were constantly switched, alternately appearing scenes such as playing the cello, swan swimming in the water, and encoffining the deceased; the third time was at the end of the film. When Kobayashi encoffined his father, the melody rang out and the scene showed the protagonist's childhood memories. The appearance of this melody is more soothing and soft, which has a conciliatory effect on the characters. This piece of music has also been led to the attitude towards life and death, the feelings of family affection, which are consistent with the theme of the film, and effectively express the emotional tone.

### 2.2.2 *The Film and TV Music Expresses the Psychology of Characters*

In film and TV works, music is often used to indicate the situation of the characters, express the psychology of the characters, and it is also the way in which musical notations express the meaning. The music of the trilogy "Blue", "White" and "Red" by the Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski deeply embodies this characteristic. In the movie "Blue", the heroine lost her husband and daughter in a car accident. The film expressed her pain through a large number of frames. At this moment, music became an important carrier for expressing her psychology. The emergence of a passionate symphony was the same as the protagonist's psychological state of being easily shocked; the switch of music was a metaphor for the protagonist's transformation between the two states of freedom and restraint. At the end of the film, a group of symphony rang out, showing different content in frames, implying the impermanence and the helplessness of life. Accompanied by this melody, the narration of the film was pushed to a climax, and then the film stopped at the climax, bringing audience a strong shock and endless aftertaste. After the rendering of this melody, the complex and helpless secret psychology of various people's experiences in the world was vividly expressed. And this piece of music is also given a specific meaning by the film text: in the face of the paradox of freedom, hope, faith and love may be the way of salvation. These symbols — the melody, human voice, lyrics in the music text, and the characters and the switching rhythm in the video text, especially the close-up of the heroine's face at the end, are mutually restricted, expressing the thinking about freedom and salvation that the character's situation implies.

### 2.2.3 *The Film and TV Music Is a Manifestation of the Era*

Music is the art of hearing, which can be a manifestation of a specific era or a specific region and national culture. When people hear a familiar song, they may instantly think of the age when the song was produced, and so on. In film texts, music with the sense of the age, as well as regional and national characteristics as a designated symbol can not only give clearer information about the era, but also identify the spiritual characteristics or historical circumstances of a particular era and nation so that the music has a certain symbolic meaning. The film "The Last Emperor" tells the life

of Pu Yi. From childhood to senectitude, the protagonist spanned several different historical periods, from the Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China, the Puppet Manchukuo, the founding of New China and the Cultural Revolution. The film chose the music with sense of the times and coordinated switched scenes, such as Guzheng music and the monarch and his officials of Qing Dynasty, and powerful and dynamic revolutionary songs and the streets of Beijing during the Cultural Revolution. The combination of vision and hearing presents the protagonist's enforced destiny in historical changes. In the palace of the Qing rulers, the infantile Pu Yi was in the arms of the wet nurse, and the queen mother used a telescope to control everything from a distance. At this time, the rapid Guzheng music rang out, indicating that a storm was coming. Guzheng is a traditional Chinese cultural symbol. Here, Guzheng was used to express the tune full of tension and sense of loss, which was the same as the fate of the impending collapse of the Qing Dynasty. The dance hall and cheerful Western dance music of the Puppet Manchukuo were in sharp contrast with Pu Yi's situation as a puppet emperor. As a cultural symbol, the dance music here originally carried the meaning of the outsider. Under the rendering of dance music, the more enthusiastic the scene was, the heavier restrained repression sense of Pu Yi had. The music in these two places embodies the characteristic of musical notations that produce meaning through perceptual one-sidedness: it dilutes and excludes the meaning of music as an art symbol, and strengthens and expands the meaning of music as a cultural symbol.

### 2.3 *The Cultural Transmission Function of Film and TV Music*

In film and TV works, the film and TV music has the function of cultural transmission. In the popularization process of film and TV works, music often becomes its iconic representative. It can effectively enhance the development of the film and TV industry and promote cultural exchanges in different fields. A lot of national style music was used in once popular Hong Kong martial arts films. For example, in Tsui Hark's films "Wong Fei-hung" and "The Swordsman", the combination of national style music and martial arts films spread the traditional Chinese martial arts culture. The film "Farewell to My Concubine" uses a lot of Peking Opera to spread the traditional Chinese Peking Opera culture, allowing the audience to know about the traditional Chinese culture through the film.

Miyazaki Hayao's animated films "Castle in the Sky", "My Neighbor Totoro" and "Spirited Away" used a lot of music composed by Joe Hisaishi and became classic works. Among them, the combination of Miyazaki Hayao's animated films and Joe Hisaishi's music represents the Japanese animation and represents the classic works of animation. In these films, all the film and TV music has the function of cultural transmission.

## 3. THE CULTURAL TRANSMISSION OF MUSIC IN THE FILM "PARASITE"

### 3.1 *The Use of Characteristic Music*

The film "Parasite" directed by Bong Joon-ho won the Oscar for Best Picture and the Best Picture at Cannes Film Festival, becoming the most successful film in the history of Korean film. The director's elaborate creation makes the film a great success, and the music of the film is also a key factor in the film's success. The film scorer, Jae-il Jung, is a famous Korean musician. In the process of creating the film's music, Jae-il Jung's music deeply expresses the director's intentions and portrays the characters' characteristics and their psychological activities, controlling the narrative rhythm of the film.

At the beginning of the film, the use of music contrasts with the expression of meaning. The opening frame shows the life of the poor class living in the basement. The purpose of using piano music at this time is to pursue the effect of contrast and irony, so that the audience will be more impressed by the expression of the film. There is such a scene in the Japanese film "Battle Royale": what came on the radio was relaxed and cheerful music, which formed a strong contrast with the killing of boys and girls and highlighted the cruelty and absurdity of human nature. At this moment, what the audience perceives from this piece of music will never be joy, but unspeakable sadness. The poor father and son are using the way of parasites to carry out their strategies. At this moment, the music used is "On the Way to Rich House". The plot is developing in a tense state, indicating that their strategies will face corresponding problems. When the whole family of the rich are out on vacation, the whole family of the poor enter the villa to enjoy life. Then, after the appearance of the former housekeeper and the tense moment when the whole family of the rich are about to return to the villa in advance, the music

"Mr. Yoon and Park" is used. The whole family of the poor usher in a sudden emergency and finally pull through. Later on, the music "Conciliation III" is used to express that the whole family of the poor really become parasites. The use of music in the film portrays the psychological states of the characters in different periods and shows the narrative rhythm of the film. From plain, surprise, nervous to helpless, it deeply expresses the theme of the film and reflects the differentiated classes of Korean society and the dark side of society.

### 3.2 *The Symbolized Expression of Music*

There is a very important element in the film, which is "smell". Analyzed from the perspective of semiotics, the "smell" in the film is a symbol of the lower class. No matter how poor people conceal it, there will always be a special "smell" that the rich can nose out. Jae-il Jung deeply recognizes the gap between the rich and the poor. In the use of music, he adopts the music "The Frontal Lobe of Ki Taek". The accompaniment of the piano music brings a deep sense of oppression to people, expressing that the poor class is always discriminated against by the rich class, and this kind of discrimination is everywhere and penetrates into the bone marrow.

"Smell" appears in the film many times. The first time is that, when riding in the car, the rich man smells out the special "smell" of the male protagonist as the driver. At this moment, the male protagonist feels embarrassed and uncomfortable. As the poor class, they are used to living in the basement and unaware that this "smell" comes from the basement and is a symbol of status. Then the children of the rich can always smell out the "smell", which is an invisible class difference. The whole family of the poor hid under the sofa because the whole family of the rich return to the villa ahead of time, and the whole family of the rich smell out the familiar "smell" again. This "smell" has become a kind of humiliation. At this moment, this feeling of humiliation reaches a certain level, making them aware of the deep sense of excitement, but they have no place to hide, only to accept the humiliation. In the end, when the protagonist's daughter is killed and the rich still cover their noses to cover up the familiar "smell" they smell, the "smell" at this moment has become the label of the poor, a label disgusted by the rich. The "smell" at this moment has already driven the protagonist to a dead end, and finally he chooses to kill the rich.

### 3.3 *The Cultural Transmission of Music*

In the film "Parasite", the use of music profoundly expresses the theme of the film, reflecting the serious stratification of Korean society. The upper class lives a flashy life, and the lower class parasitizes society in order to survive. The film expresses the universal problems of Korean society and deeply reflects on the development of society; the use of music profoundly expresses the characteristics of the characters in the film and their psychological activities. People can choose to be parasites in order to survive, and the audience will have similar inner feelings. Music has the function of cultural transmission. The culture embodied in Korean society in the author's impression should be typical Confucianism, and the society embodied in it is a developed mechanism, but the film shows a social culture with distinct classes.

## 4. THE CULTURAL TRANSMISSION OF FILM AND TV MUSIC

Music is an important cultural transmission method. The earliest mode of transmission was word of mouth. Ancient tribes used the way of singing to disseminate culture. From silent films to the integration of music, film music has a very important meaning for cultural transmission, and the transmission of culture through music possesses sociality. For example, the theme song of the film "Titanic" has been widely recognized nationwide, and its cultural connotation is a symbol of love. This is a unique characteristic of music, which can be used for spread.

In film and TV works, the film and TV music has the function of cultural transmission. The music of Disney's animated films embodies the American sense of humor and personal heroism. A lot of national style music is used in the martial arts films of Hong Kong, China. The films "Wong Fei-hung" and "The Swordsman" represented by director Tsui Hark use the combination of national style music and martial arts films to spread the traditional Chinese martial arts culture. The film "Wong Fei-hung" embodies the justice of Wong Fei-hung serving the country, and the film "The Swordsman" embodies the free and easy swordsman seeking his fortune with a sword. The use of Peking Opera in the film "Farewell to My Concubine" spreads the traditional Chinese Peking Opera culture and makes the audience feel the typical Chinese elements. In Miyazaki Hayao's works, animated films "Castle in

the Sky", "My Neighbor Totoro" and so on used the music composed by Joe Hisaishi and became classic works. Among them, the combination of Miyazaki Hayao's animated films and Joe Hisaishi's music represents the Japanese animation and represents the classic works of animation. Through the analysis of the music in these films, film and TV music has the function of cultural transmission.

The film "Parasite" reflects the antagonism of classes, including strong culture and weak culture. The rich class is the strong, representing a strong culture, and the poor class is the weak, representing a weak culture. In the music of film and TV works, music can render the atmosphere of the environment, can also shape the characteristics of the characters, and can also reflect the times of the society. Music can attract audiences to increase their interest in films, and they can face the real problems of society through films and reflect on society. The film fully reflects the living conditions of the lower-class people in South Korea, and at the same time calls on the government to implement more effective policies for specific groups. While the film has achieved excellent results internationally, the Korean government has provided corresponding support to the "basement" families that the film focuses on. The significance of the Korean film "The Crucible" is not only inspiring and thinking, it also promotes and changes Korean laws. The film "The Crucible" was staged in the real South Korea, and South Korea has strengthened its punishment for sexual assault cases of minors and disabled people through the Crucible Act. Excellent films can not only touch people's hearts, but also improve the status quo of society through cultural transmission.

The combination of music and visual images in film and TV works makes it easier for the audience to have a sense of substitution to generate corresponding emotional resonance. Film and TV music deeply embodies the creator's cognition and experience of society in the process of creation, transcends the limitations of time and space, and embodies the process of cultural exchange and cultural transmission. The communication of film and TV works is global. From Hollywood commercial films to art films, the use of film and TV music in film and TV works is also global. Film and TV music has the significance and value of cross-cultural communication.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In film and TV works, film and TV music plays a very important role in the work, which can effectively portray characters, promote the development of the plot, and sublimate the theme of the film. Music is the carrier of cultural transmission and has the function of cultural transmission. Hearing the national style music of Hong Kong martial arts films, the audience naturally return to the glorious period of Hong Kong films and feel the characteristics of the times; hearing the Peking Opera in the film "Farewell to My Concubine", the audience can feel Chinese unique national quintessence that embodies Chinese unique national characteristics; hearing the music of Joe Hisaishi in Miyazaki Hayao's animation, the audience will appreciate the expression of the social characteristics of Japanese animation. Miyazaki Hayao's animated films are often a deep excavation of social phenomena. Culture is spread through music, letting the audience see the history and understand the society through music. The music in the film "Parasite" conveys the message that the director wants to express, allowing the audience to feel the theme of the Korean society with distinct classes that the director wants to express through the music, and making them deeply reflect on the society; the audience feels the characteristics of the characters in the film and the psychological activities of the characters. People can choose to be parasites in order to survive, and the audience will have similar inner feelings. Through the use of music, cultural transmission can be carried out across time and space to express the corresponding meaning.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Jinjun Luo.

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