

Gong Pengcheng's critical study of the "lyric tradition" theory

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Abstract. "Lyric tradition" was put forward by Chen Shixiang, a scholar in the United States, in a speech in the 1970s. It became a view of the characteristics of Chinese literature, and was developed and widely accepted in the later literary criticism, becoming one of the most productive views of foreign Sinology in the last century. But in recent years in the academic circle of its theory system, there are some dissenting voices on the system, among which the most critical criticism is written by Taiwan scholar Gong Pengcheng *The Nonexistent Tradition — On Chen Shixiang's Lyrical Tradition*. The author tries to criticize the lyric tradition from Gong Pengcheng, starting with the original document, to have an overview of Gong's lyric tradition and explore why the "lyric tradition" is still quite influential despite of the fierce suspicion; Whether there is a stronger narrative tradition beyond lyricism?

Key words: lyric tradition, domain and foreign Sinology, Chen Shixiang, Gong Pengcheng

1. The origin of lyric tradition

Chen Shixiang was one of the early pioneers of the overseas Chinese literature research. In 1941, inherited the "May fourth" learning vein, Chen Shixiang left Chinese mainland and went to the United States. He has been teaching at the University of California, Berkeley to promote the development of Chinese and Western comparative literature until his death. Chen Shixiang probably has already formed a preliminary idea of the lyric poetry tradition of Chinese literature in the 1940s. The overseas academic situation and the nature of his work further promoted Chen Shixiang to look at Chinese studies from the perspective of comparative literature, and finally put forward the thesis of Chinese lyric tradition in his later years.

Chen's theoretical construction mainly consists of three articles: "On the Original Concept of Chinese Poetry", "Original Xing 兴: A Discussion on the Characteristics of Chinese Literature", and "Chinese Lyric Tradition" delivered at the annual meeting of the Asian Society of America. In the first article, Chen Shixiang analyzed the original meaning of poetic characters from the source of words. It is believed that the root of "Shi" 诗 is "Zhi" 之 and "Zhi" 止 is the opposite meaning, and the intention of the character is the primitive dance concept, which is the natural expression of emotion. Also quoted *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*: "Shi, Zhi also." 诗, 志也 And do not accept "Zhi" 志 this word shows that the two characters ancient the same, that "poetry" originally has lyric meaning, laying the foundation for the later "*Book of Songs* is lyric poetry". The second article analyzes the concept of "xing" 兴 in the

Book of Songs, and thinks that "xing" 兴 is the "xing" 兴 sound made by the original residents when they were jubilant, to further explain the lyricism of *the Book of Songs*. The last essay is a summary of Chen's previous views, and also marks the formal introduction of the "lyrical tradition".

2. Gong Pengcheng's criticism of the "lyric tradition"

After Chen Shixiang put forward China's "lyric tradition", it was immediately responded by a group of scholars. Gao Yougong 高友工, CAI Yingjun 蔡英俊, Lv Zhenghui 吕正惠, Zhang Shuxiang 张淑香, Chen Fangying 陈芳英, Xiao Chi 萧驰, Wu Xingchang 吴兴昌 and so on all carried out active discussions and expanded and constructed the proposition of "Chinese lyric tradition" from a new perspective. After more than half a century's elucidations, "lyric tradition" has become a spectrum of discussion covering comparative literature, literary criticism, aesthetics and other aspects. Most of them give play to Chen Shixiang's lyric tradition on the basis of basic recognition, or use it for theoretical construction, such as Gao Yougong's "Lyric Beauty" proposed; Or use it for literary interpretation, such as Lin Shunfu's research on Jiang Kui and the Ci of the Southern Song Dynasty. On the whole, there are more adherents to the lyrical tradition than there are objections in academia.

One of the fiercest criticisms of the lyrical tradition is Taiwan scholar Gong Pengcheng's 2013 article "The Nonexistent Tradition: On the Lyrical Tradition of Chen Shixiang". In this essay, Gong Pengcheng bluntly stated,

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"The lyrical tradition he outlined is actually absent from Chinese tradition." Gong Pengcheng refuted the theory of lyric tradition from three aspects: First, from the perspective of research methods and categories, Gong believed that Chen Shixiang's research scope was only limited to the Book of Songs, Songs of Chu and some Tang poems, and could not represent all Chinese literature. He wrote, "In his words, I do not know how to explain the blessings 祝, alliances 盟, eulogies 颂, praise 赞, lament 诔, monument 碑, tablet 书册, edict 诏, order 令, historical biography 史传, comment 论说, chapter and tables 章表, records 记志, writing in the history of literature." Therefore, it cannot be explained that Chinese literature has such traditions or norms. At the same time, Chen Shixiang's opinion focuses on the Book of Songs and the Ci of Chu, which shows that the lyric characteristics of works in the early stage of Chinese literature cannot show that all Chinese literature has such characteristics. In Gong's opinion, how the "characteristics" rose to the height of "traditional" or "norm", Chen Shixiang's argument lacks logic. Secondly, it criticizes the evaluation standard of Chen Shixiang's lyric poems. Gong Pengcheng believes that the lyric tradition put forward by Chen Shixiang is judged according to the standards of western lyric poetry, and Chinese lyric poetry is intrinsically different from the lyric poetry in the context of western literature, which makes a mistake of "Measures China by Western standards". He wrote, "These statements all show Mr. Chen's understanding of Chinese poetry, basically from his Western romantic concept of lyric poetry, and he uses this concept to explain the Book of Songs and Chu Poetry in detail, so that he would say: 'The music of the words as organization and the inner confession as content, are the two main elements of lyric poetry.' " He also cited Chen Shixiang's treatise on Song Poetry, 'Chinese Poetics and Zen', to illustrate that Chen's academic vision was Western, so his research on Chinese poetry was always "separated". Finally, Gong Pengcheng points out that Chinese lyric poetry is actually love poetry, with the philosophical connotation of "qi and feeling's interaction" 气类相感 of the Han people, rather than the simple Western lyricism. In fact, Gong Pengcheng's discussion of lyric tradition published in 1987, 'From Lv Shi Spring and Autumn— Natural Qi Sense and lyric Self' has reflected the different construction of Chinese lyric tradition. In this article, Gong Pengcheng put forward his understanding of the view of love poetry. " In fact, although the view of love poetry is complex, its theoretical focus is roughly three:

- (1) face emotion and its function;
- (2) Literary creation comes from an emotional subject;
- (3) People can feel, things are moving; Man and the outside world;

For an induction relationship, the so-called "should feel". Starting from the Spring and Autumn Annals of Lu, he explained that the Han Dynasty formed a philosophy of valuing oneself, passion, and the sense of Qi. Gong made use of "Heavy Ji", "Bunsheng" and "Lust" to illustrate the Han Dynasty's affirmation of lust and emphasis on the sense of qi. "This is an idea that has never been put forward before, and by following this idea, the Spring and

Autumn Annals of Lu affirms passion for the first time. Lust says: 'The body desires five sounds, the eye desires five colors, the mouth desires five tastes, and so does the feeling. These three, the noble and cheap fool wisdom and sages if one. Although the Huangdi of Shennong was the same as King Zhou. But it is a creation that has not been made."Based on the face of emotion, Gong believed that the theory of human nature in the Han Dynasty was constructed around emotion, thus leading to the perceptual subject: "In particular, emotion is interpreted to move by feeling things, and it is also the basis for people to feel the corresponding things in heaven and earth. *The book of Music*: "music, the sound of the health also, its in the heart of the feeling in the matter. (Sorrow, joy, love and love)... The six are not sex, feeling things and then moving. The mind that is moved by the object is the perceptual subject, so it is said again: 'People have the nature of understanding blood and spirit, rather than sorrow, joy and anger, and should be moved by the object.' "Every sound, the heart is also born, the emotion is in the middle, so the form is in the sound." The feelings of anger, sorrow and joy are all feelings and feelings; This feeling, in turn, is the origin of music and the root of artistic creation." Here, the construction of Gong Pengcheng's "lyric tradition" has begun to take shape. Gong Pengcheng's lyric tradition is based on the Han Dynasty's philosophy of Qi, kind and appearance sense, and temperament interaction. Then Gong cited Huan Shu's "On Chinese Poetry" to explain the stark difference between the lyric creation of Han Dynasty and later period and that of the "Book of Songs" and "Songs of Chu" : "Chinese Ci Fu is indeed deeply influenced by" Ci of Chu ", but the pathos of "Ci of Chu" is purely derived from the inner pain of the authors such as Qu Yuan and Song Yu, or from the natural world view of ancient religious rituals in Chu, which is different from that of the Han people. However, compared with the *Book of Songs* and *Songs of Chu*, it is indeed a passionate world of individuals, rather than a simple world of groups.

The most wonderful part of Gong Pengcheng's construction of lyric tradition is his philosophical interpretation of the literary self-consciousness of Wei and Jin Dynasties reflected in Wen Xin Diao Long. He said, "But why can literature and art be independent? Can the feeling of the Dark Age of Wei and Jin make literature independent? Can the romantic spirit of individualism make literature independent? If literature and art want to become an independent art, it must have its independent principle. Our philosophy is based on heart theory, but we can not open the moral heart of literature and art. Contemporary philosophers who hold moral subjectivity look down on the path of conformism; The ancient neo-Confucianists, who put nature's reason aside human's desire, denigrated literature. If the Han people did not put forward the subject of sensibility based on Qi perception, then literature and art could not be revealed. If the Han people's sense of qi can pass on both sides of morality and beauty, then after the independence of literature in the future, they will tie into two prongs with morality. In other words, it is because of the philosophy of the Han Dynasty that literature and art developed independently in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, or in the Eastern Han." Gong

Pengcheng's lyrical tradition traces the lyricism in Chinese literature from another Angle. Such a tradition is derived from the Han Dynasty's philosophy of qi, type and sense of appearance, and is completely different from Chen Shixiang's lyricism from the time of the Book of Songs.

In addition to finding another way to construct the lyrical tradition, Gong Pengcheng also proposed a virtual tradition outside the lyrical tradition. In his collection of essays "Vision of Literary Criticism", he included "On Li Shangyin's Cherry Poems—Illusion, Endorsement, Intertwining Between Poetic Style and Lyric Tradition". He started with Li Shangyin's several cherry poems that were noted as quite difficult by previous dynasties, and discussed the imitation of ancient poems, Fude poems, and borrowed poems created by the poet, to explain that virtual borrowing is also an important creation in the process of poetry creation. method. He said: "Thus, through the analysis of Yishan's "Mocking Cherry" and other poems, we should be able to re-examine the fictional pseudonyms and related issues in Chinese poetry: fictional fiction must be the essence of literature. In the lyrical tradition, many critics are concerned with this fact, and they can't help but associate literature with confessions or historical events (the relics of individuals and the society of the time). Because the structure of words is different from personnel events, words convey mood and refer to foreign affairs. Objects are inherently fictitious, and apples on canvas are never equal to real apples. Lyrical expression of ambition is not "truthful." Gong Pengcheng here puts forward the argument that the virtual tradition seems to have weakened the lyrical tradition. However, in terms of form alone, the creation of lyrical literature in the pre-Qin and Han dynasties that had not yet had clear signs of borrowing, such as "Dai" and "Fu De", could not be interpreted well with the theoretical system of borrowing fiction, because from In terms of form, it has obvious lyricism. And virtuality, although it has the possibility, can only be a kind of subtext in essence. Therefore, the virtual tradition cannot shake the theoretical foundation of Chen Shixiang's lyrical tradition. Since Gong Pengcheng's public criticism of Chen Shixiang's lyrical tradition theory in 2013, in July of the same year, he wrote "A Systematic Theater Theory: On Gao Yougong's Lyrical Tradition" to criticize Gao Yougong's construction of lyrical "beauties". After Gong, discussions on Chen Shixiang's theory of lyric tradition were published in 2014 by Xu Chengzai's "Zhi" and "Zhi" in the Discussion of Lyric Tradition, "Chen Shixiang's Methodological Limitations of Chinese Lyric Tradition"; Zhang Chuntian's "Lyric Tradition: A Way of Imagining Chinese Literature"; "On the Inherent Paradox and Narrowness of the Overseas "Chinese Lyric Tradition" Proposition" co-published by Wang Pengcheng and Zhu Tianyi in 2021; "Stolen Concepts" by Zeng Xiaoyue "Xing"—On Chen Shixiang's "Lyric Tradition" Argument Lack". Most of these expositions affirmed Gong Pengcheng's exposition ideas, emphatically criticizing Chen Shixiang's mistakes in the western law. Xu Cheng and Zeng Xiaoyue further discussed the basic concepts of "Zhi", "Zhi" and "Xing" mentioned in Chen Shixiang's argument. But in fact, the critique of the lyrical

tradition has not aroused widespread discussion, and quite a few scholars still use the concept of Chen Shixiang's lyrical tradition for research. This is also quite an intriguing phenomenon.

3. A Brief Discussion on the Lyrical Tradition

The following author tries to talk about some personal views on the lyrical tradition and its criticism. Lyricism and narrative are the two main components in the development of literature. From the perspective of the origin of Western lyric poetry, the lyric tradition of ancient Greece is consistent with the spirit of traditional Chinese poetry. The lyric poetry in the ancient Greek period has similarities with the poetry in the "Book of Songs" era. It is recorded that learning poetry was an important part of the formal education in Athens: "When the schoolchildren learned to write and began to understand the contents of the books... the teachers would put the works of outstanding poets in the sitting room and urge the pupils to sing aloud. There are many admonitions, stories, and hymns in the poems, praising the sages of the past and inspiring them to follow suit... When schoolchildren practice cithara, music teachers also teach them other outstanding poets The works, that is, poetry (by the way, the ancient lyric poems are often sung with the accompaniment of the qin), after the rhythm is gradually mastered, the minds of the schoolchildren are completely familiar with the rhythm and the melody, and they become gentle and honest, and their words and deeds can be full of beautiful rhythms and harmony; for the adjustment of rhythm and rhythm is necessary in life. Moreover, parents send their children to physical education instructors, so that their physical bodies will be in better condition to serve the virtues of their hearts, and no one will fight because his body is weak. Becoming a coward in time or other tests." This is strikingly similar to the traditional Chinese poetry teaching and poetry tradition, which shows the universal law of the culture of the world. The lyrical tradition and the narrative tradition are put forward based on a comparative perspective, and should be expressed based on a specific historical period, rather than generalized. Chen Shixiang himself did not raise the lyrical tradition to the altar. After formally proposing this point of view, he emphasized: "I am sure this is an exaggeration. But since we are discussing the Eastern lyrical tradition and giving it due attention, I fully Understand its limitations, as well as understand its true glory." The abuse of the lyrical tradition is nothing less than the "credit" of the successors. However, Chen Shi did apply the Romantic poetry that emerged in the 19th century in the West to measure Chinese lyric poetry or love poetry, and there are many problems in his argument. However, his point of view can only be regarded as a conjecture. After all, he passed away in the same year when he officially published "On Chinese Lyric Tradition", and he was unable to write further works. The theoretical system of lyric tradition is not yet perfect, which leaves a lot of room for future scholars to interpret. . In addition, this topic itself has a historical origin since

modern China and an interpretation foundation in literary philosophy, so it has achieved a current grand discourse system. It should also be noted that China has a very complete and strong history-compiling tradition. The original meaning of "history" in ancient China is a historian, "whose initial cover is similar to that of Wu Zhu 巫祝 (wizard)", who was in charge of political and religious power. The history of the country is a matter, and since Sima Qian began to call history books as history. Coincidentally, however, Wu Zhu is also regarded as one of the main creators of Chinese lyric poetry. Both China and the West have extensive discussions on the specific relationship between literature and history. The problem of "historical imagination" represented by the "Ancient History Discrimination" school in modern China and the West Collingwood. Due to space limitations, it is not expanded here. To be sure, history and literature are particularly closely related in China. In contrast to the West, there was no well-developed historiography tradition in the Axial Age and in the later historical periods, and history writing was a private act starting from Herodotus. Here we will not discuss the historicity of Homer's Epic. What the author intends to explain is that the development of narrative and lyricism in China is fundamentally different from that in the West, or even reversed. As a necessary composition of literature, the discussion of lyricism and narration is destined to be the main one. Then, is there a stronger and more persuasive narrative tradition in Chinese literature?

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