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## The Syntactic Style of Cultural Revolution Literature

*Lan Yang*

*University of Leeds*

### Abstract

*This paper investigates the language of official literature produced during the Cultural Revolution (CR), concentrating on linguo-stylistic characteristics of sentences, relating to length, rhyming, parallelism, quotation and grammaticality. By demonstrating the intended syntactic features, it aims to explore the language's aesthetic and stylistic characteristics and functions. A comparative perspective is made of the CR literary language with that of pre-CR and post-CR literature.*

**Keywords:** *formalist criticism, sociological criticism, linguo-stylistics, stylistic register, syntactic style, CR literature*

### Introduction

Ever since Russian formalist criticism emerged, literary criticism has placed much emphasis on the language of literature.<sup>1</sup> F. De Saussure's theory of structural linguistics resulted in enhanced linguistic criticism of literature.

<sup>1</sup> Although successive theories and practices, including New Criticism and Structuralism, were distinct from preceding ones, a general tendency towards greater emphasis on the linguistic perspective in literary criticism was evident. See Fowler, 1975.

Harold Whitehall formulated the view that: “as no science can go beyond mathematics, no criticism can go beyond its linguistics” (Whitehall, 1951: 713). Roman Jakobson went even further and stated: “Since linguistics is the global science of verbal structure, poetics may be regarded as an integral part of linguistics” (Jakobson, 1960: 350). The practice by which classic linguistic concepts and paradigms, such as “langue”, “parole”, “signifier”, “signified”, “deep structure” and “surface structure”, have been applied to literary criticism indicates the extent to which scholars have incorporated modern linguistics into literary criticism.

Sociological criticism based on the literary criticism of Stalin’s Soviet Union dominated Chinese literary criticism between the Yan’an period and the late 1970s. This criticism affirmed the demarcation between the “form” and the “content” of literature, regarding language as an essential aspect of the form of literature. Echoing Mao’s Yan’an Forum demands, the Cultural Revolution (CR) literary authorities claimed “the unity of revolutionary political content and the best possible artistic form” to be the highest pursuit of CR literature (Lin Biao, 1967).

Although no specific authoritative documents regarding language in CR literature were available, CR critics’ comments on the language of CR works indicate the principles promoted by the CR authorities on literature and the arts. Below is a quotation from an official writing group, which shows that the language was under the careful scrutiny of the literary authorities and workers.

The hackneyed and stereotyped language, which displays mediocrity, vulgarity and obscurity, can certainly not depict the revolutionary nature of our time or represent the quality of our heroes ... Pure steel is smelted through high temperature; the language of revolutionary works needs be refined carefully and polished repeatedly. Taking the model theatrical works as models and employing the most beautiful language, let us produce new works and create brilliant heroic characters, thereby glorifying our great era (Fang Yun, 1974).

The CR is well known for its ideological struggles in the humanities.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, although many humanities-related fields suffered from catastrophic attacks, the field of language studies was to a great extent spared. This was a result not so much of linguistics' particular relationship with both the humanities and the natural sciences as of Stalin's doctrine on the relationship between language and class character. In response to a number of Soviet linguists who attempted to define language by means of Marxist class theory and argued that language had class character, Stalin wrote a series of essays entitled "Marxism and Linguistics", in which he rejected the concept of the class character of language.<sup>3</sup> According to him, "Language, as a means of intercourse, always was, and remains, the single language of a society, common to all its members... The formula about 'the class character' of language is erroneous and non-Marxist" (Franklin, 1972: 420). In spite of the ideological conflict between China and the Soviet Union during the 1960s-70s, the Chinese government generally affirmed the validity of Stalinism. Stalin's doctrine on language was introduced to China in the 1950s and regarded as a Marxist classic on linguistics.<sup>4</sup> This endorsement emanating from Stalin's views on language played an important part in protecting Chinese linguists and linguistics during political campaigns. In all the political campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s, including the Anti-Rightist campaign and the Cultural Revolution, we seldom find influential linguists under attack. This situation thus offered CR writers some

<sup>2</sup> See "The CCP Central Committee's 'May 16th' Circular" (May 16, 1966): "The whole Party must follow Comrade Mao Tse-tung's instructions, hold high the great banner of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, thoroughly expose the reactionary bourgeois stand of those so-called "academic authorities" who oppose the Party and socialism, thoroughly criticise and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois ideas in the sphere of academic work, education, journalism, literature, art, and publishing, and seize the leadership in these cultural spheres." (Institute of International Relations, 1978: 236).

<sup>3</sup> A Chinese version of Stalin's essays is *Makesizhuyi yu yuyanxue wenti* 马克思主义与语言学问题 [*Marxism and Linguistic Issues*] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1953). Stalin's statements were extensively quoted and interpreted by Chinese scholars. A representative exposition can be seen in Gao Mingkai, 1963: 44-66.

<sup>4</sup> While affirming Stalin's statements, Chinese scholars made efforts to reconcile them with Saussure's linguistics. In the 1960s, before the CR, the sensational discussion on the differences between *langue* and *parole*, which attracted many linguists and critics, further affirmed Stalin's statements. This reached the conclusion that *langue*, as a semiotic system does not have class character, but *parole*, as speech or discourse, may do so.

freedom in the exploration of their language, including the freedom to experiment. In brief, therefore, the linguistic style of CR literature to a great extent represented the endeavours of the CR literary authorities and writers to explore the “best possible artistic form” of literature.

The present study deals with the syntactic style of official CR literature. “CR literature” refers to the literary works of the Cultural Revolution, including fiction, poetry and drama.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, CR literary works consist of two groups: the first was originally produced before the CR but revised and published during the CR; the second group was produced or very substantially reworked during the CR, with most works being created after 1969. As a synchronic study, this article concentrates exclusively on the second group. Hence, Hao Ran 浩然, the most important CR writer, had two CR novels: *Jingguang dadao* 金光大道 [*The Golden Road*] (Hao Ran, 1972-1974) and *Xisha ernü* 西沙儿女 [*The Sons and Daughters of Xisha*] (Hao Ran, 1974).<sup>6</sup> The former is the best known CR novel and has been mostly analysed by scholars from the literary, sociological and ideological perspectives. However, *The Golden Road* is not included in this linguistic exploration, since it was partly written before the CR. The primary CR works sampled are: *Hong taiyang song* 红太阳颂 [*Ode to the Red Sun*],<sup>7</sup> *The Sons and Daughters of Xisha*, *Shanchuan huxiao* 山川呼啸 [*Mountains and Rivers Roar*] (Gu Hua, 1976),<sup>8</sup> *Yuhou qingshan* 雨后青山 [*Mountains Green after*

<sup>5</sup> According to Chinese critical convention, the written form of drama, including both script and libretto, is regarded as a literary work or text, whilst drama in performance mode belongs to the arts.

<sup>6</sup> This novel was one of the most experimental CR works, highlighting the author’s intentional linguo-stylistic creation in his CR writing. His well-known pre-CR and post-CR novels include *Yanyangtian* 艳阳天 [*The Sun Shines Bright*] (Vol. 1, 1st ed., Beijing: Zuojia Chubanshe, 1964; vol. 2 and 3, 1st ed., Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1966), and *Cangsheng* 苍生 [*The Common People*] (Beijing: Shiyue Wenyi Chubanshe, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> The Chinese Department of Yan’an University, 1977. It includes a collection of the best-known CR paeans to Mao.

<sup>8</sup> This novel attracted much attention from the contemporary literary authorities and a film based on it was in production before the end of the CR. The author was also popular in the post-CR period. His post-CR novels include *Furongzhen* 芙蓉镇 [*A Small Town called Hibiscus*] (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1981).

*Rain*<sup>9</sup> and *Dujuanshan* 杜鹃山 [*Azalea Mountain*] (Wang Shuyuan, 1973).<sup>10</sup> As indicated in the footnotes below, these works were very well-known during the CR, and the authors were either renowned individual writers before, during and/or after the CR, or joint authors promoted in the CR. 'Syntactic style' refers to linguo-stylistic characteristics at the sentence level, relating to length, rhyme, structure and functional nuance. According to linguists, the study of style is essentially comparative and contrastive (Leech and Short, 1992: 51-54; Spencer and Gregory, 1964: 59-105; and Halliday, 1970: 68). This study puts the syntactic style of CR literature in a comparative perspective with that of pre-CR, and, especially, post-CR literature.

### Stylistic Categories

The first stylistic category under discussion concerns the length of sentences. Long and short sentences are relative concepts and sentence length varies in individual texts since many factors can influence this. For instance, narrative sentences are generally longer than exclamatory sentences; descriptive texts have more long sentences than conversational texts; and adults' language includes more long sentences than children's language.

Based on these present observations, short sentences are more conspicuous in comparison with post-CR works. Below is a descriptive discourse composed of short sentences from Hao Ran's *The Sons and Daughters of Xisha*. Following linguistic conventions, only “。”, “?” and “!” are counted as sentence punctuation marks in the present analysis.

海不嘯。  
云不动。  
轮机不鸣。  
人群无声。(Hao Ran, 1974: 228)

<sup>9</sup> Baise diqu san-jiehe chuanguo zu, 1976. The authorship of this novel is a three-in-one group. It was one of the small number of CR novels published by a top press in the field.

<sup>10</sup> This Beijing opera received considerable critical acclaim in the CR. See *Red Flag*, No. 10 (1973): 84-88, and *Red Flag*, No. 6 (1974): 70-75.

The sea did not roar.  
 The clouds did not move.  
 The turbines did not sound.  
 The people kept quiet.

This section is of prose text although the sentences are printed in separate lines. Prose texts in this novel are mostly printed in lines; the printing style represents one aspect of the author's experimentation with the novel's language. The four sentences are short in length, with an average of 3.5 syllables each. They are all of simple subject-predicate structure.

Some other descriptive texts in CR fiction include normative-phrase or single-word sentences, which do not have predicates and are normally short. Regardless of other factors, the authors' stylistic predilection for short sentences is in the distribution of such sentences. For example, in Gu Hua's *Mountains and Rivers Roar*, we can find such descriptive sentences as: 两个月后。(The time) "Two months later." (Gu Hua, 1976: 17); 县委院子里。(The locality) "In the courtyard of the County Committee." (ibid); 呼龙峡! "The Hulong Valley." (Gu Hua, 1976: 89); 可是今天! "But today!" (ibid); 夜。 "Night." (Gu Hua, 1976: 132). Below is a quotation from *The Sons and Daughters of Xisha* (Hao Ran, 1974: 200)

岛上的灯光，一点又一点。  
 海上的船影，一片又一片。……  
 金银岛上的椰子树、古泉井。  
 黄沙土里的古铜钱、花瓷盘。  
 日本侵略者的枪声。  
 西沙先烈的鲜血。  
 十五年前南越西贡劫持我们渔船事件。

The island speckled with dots of light.  
 The sea around crowded with vessels.  
 The coconut trees and old wells on the Treasure Island.

The ancient copper coins and porcelain plates buried in yellow sand.  
The shots from the Japanese invaders.  
The blood of the Xisha martyrs.  
The incident when Saigon Vietnamese seized our fishing boats fifteen years ago.

This section consists of seven sentences, of which the last five are normative-phrase sentences. These normative-phrase sentences present a series of scenes appearing montage-style before the eyes of the heroine A Bao 阿宝.

Consistent with the characteristic of using numerous short sentences, long sentences in CR literature generally include frequent pauses. This can be seen in the following example from *Mountains Green after Rain*:

你的所作所为，其实早就在群众当中积怨很深，意见纷纷了！干工作好大喜功，不顾客观规律，独断专行！如今闹起争地纠纷，群众思想波动，就是你自行其是的恶果！对干部排斥打击，对群众漠不关心，偏袒私己。这些，就是龙榕群众给你的评论！一个人屡犯错误，却不思悔改，反而巧言令色，极力洗刷，甚至倒打一耙，这是什么态度？ (Baise, 1976: 488).

The masses have had a lot of complaints about what you did for a long time! Disregarding objective laws, you have a fondness for the grandiose, and like to make arbitrary decisions and take peremptory actions. Now the quarrel about land boundaries, which upsets the masses, is precisely the evil consequence of your arbitrary action! Discriminating against other cadres, you are indifferent to the masses and partial to your personal friends. All these are comments on you by the Longrong masses! You have made mistakes again and again, but you have no intention of mending your ways; on the contrary, you have a glib tongue, try to gloss over your faults, and even make unfounded counter-charges. What sort of attitude is this?

This characteristic of having short sentences or frequent pauses is in accord with scholars' research on the lexical style of CR literature, which indicates that CR literature includes more idiomatic phrases than pre-CR literature. Chinese idiomatic phrases normally include four characters, and epitomise succinctness and neatness in form (Yang, 1996: 165-79).

In CR poetry, the frequent pauses are indicated by separate lines. For example:

红日  
红旗  
拉开了  
万里江山的多采画图；  
龟山  
蛇山  
抬起一座长桥  
横出天幕；  
大风  
大浪  
敲响了  
惊天动地的战鼓；  
号声  
歌声  
应和着  
南北两岸的万众欢呼。(Guo Xiaochuan 1971: 441)<sup>11</sup>

The red sun  
The red flags  
Pulled open  
The colourful screens of vast expanses of land  
Tortoise Mountain

<sup>11</sup>Guo was one of the most popular contemporary Chinese poets between the 1950s and 60s. This poem became well known after its first publication in 1971.



Snake Mountain  
 Were supporting a long bridge  
 Hung in the sky  
 The wind  
 The waves  
 Were beating  
 The earth-shaking battle drum  
 The sound of bugles  
 The singing  
 Joining in  
 The ovation of people on the north and south banks.

Short sentences, or long sentences with frequent pauses, can also often be seen in pre-CR literary texts, especially pre-CR poetry, such as the poems produced in the Great Leap Forward. Nevertheless, representing a stylistic characteristic of literary language, they are more prominent in CR literary texts. This is the exact opposite to many post-CR literary works in which long sentences with few or no internal pauses are commonly seen. Although there is little research on post-CR literary language, some scholars have observed the fact that post-CR literature in the 1980s shows a trend towards increased syntactic length. In her *Dangdai Hanyu xiuci yishu* 当代汉语修辞艺术 [Rhetoric art of contemporary Chinese], Wu Jiazhen 吴家珍 notes that the rhetoric of the post-CR literary language laid stress on the technique of “complication and abundance” 繁丰, which includes an increase in sentence length (Wu Jiazhen, 1992: 8-9). According to Lan Yang’s investigation, in post-CR literature, especially in the so-called avant-garde literature, writers were enthusiastic for formalistic exploration of literary language. One mainstream aspect of this was the increased length of sentences, although individual writers also wrote short sentences (Lan Yang, 2012: 117-28). In CR fiction, for instance, we could never find a sentence like the example below from Wang Meng’s 王蒙 *Shitai de jijie* 失态的季节 [The Embarrassing Season] (Wang Meng, 1994).<sup>12</sup> Sentences such as this are in fact prevalent in the post-CR fiction of Wang Meng and many other writers’.

<sup>12</sup> Wang Meng is one of the most representative post-CR writers. He had been active in the 1950s before he was labelled a Rightist in 1957.

他们必须注意不要给人家得意忘形的印象，或者是想家想城市 - 意味着不安心在农村劳动改造也就是意味着更亟须不让他回家不能让他进城只让他在农村劳动和改造直到他改造好了那一天也就是等到他根本不想进城不想回家只想在农村里劳动为了改造改造为了更好地劳动的时候才让他进城回家为止。(Wang Meng, 1994: 2)

They had to be careful not to give others the impression that they were complacent or that they were thinking of their families or cities — that implied that he was not content to reform himself through labour in the countryside which meant that he should not be allowed to go home or back to the city but he should further reform himself in the countryside until the day when he became well reformed that is he could go home or back to city when he no longer wanted to go back to city or go back home but only wanted to stay in the countryside labouring for reform and reforming for improved labour.

This narrative sentence, which bounded by the Chinese full stop “。”, contains 128 syllables. It has only two internal pauses. Linguists might think that this is an ungrammatical sentence or that it is ill-punctuated and should be divided into several sentences. However, such sentences prove to be Wang Meng’s intentional stylistic creation. These are commonly seen in his post-CR fiction but cannot be found in his pre-CR writings. After the CR, Wang Meng started to explore different literary techniques; his most noticeable exploration is stream-of-consciousness. The gradual increase in sentence length is one aspect of his experimentation with language style in exploring stream-of-consciousness. On the other hand, Wang Meng’s change of style is not an individual phenomenon but represents a fashion trend towards long sentences in the post-CR literary language.

In terms of syntax, sentences are categorised into simple and composite types. This example is a composite sentence. A composite sentence includes two or more clauses, which may independently be simple sentences. The increased length of a composite sentence may be mainly attributable to one

or more extended constituents of the clauses. In the following passage from Zhang Jie's 张洁 *Chenzhong de chibang* 沉重的翅膀 [*Leaden wings*], the second clause includes an attributive of 117 characters.

这种缓慢，绝不是有意做出来的，这是那种有个有地位的丈夫，又长年过着优裕的生活，受惯了人们的奉迎，知道自己的一举一动（哪怕就是掉了一张早已失去兴趣的、某种化妆品的使用说明），立刻会使一些别管有多么着急的事在等着办的人，耐着性儿，毕恭毕敬地守候着的，上了年纪的妇女才会有的缓慢。（Wu Jiazhen, 1992: 9）

This slowness was by no means intentional; it was the slowness of a woman of advanced years, who had a husband of status, lived in comfort and had grown used to receiving people's flattery, and who knew that a single movement of hers (even if it was losing the directions for a certain kind of cosmetics, one that she had long lost interest in) would instantly cause people, no matter how urgent their own affairs, to patiently and deferentially wait upon her.

The main construction of the clause is “这是(.....)缓慢” [it was the slowness of (...)]. The long attributive portrays the female character's unhurried manner, reflecting her poised, leisurely and aristocratic deportment.

Apart from existing in prose literary language, extended length sentences also appear in post-CR poetry. The following four lines are taken from Yu Jian's 于坚 well-known poem “Ershi sui” 二十岁 [Twenty years old], which was written in 1983:

二十岁是一只脏足球从玻璃窗飞进来又跳到床上弹起来落下去  
在臭袜子黑枕头通洞的内裤和几本黄色杂志里滚几下就不动了  
呼噜呼噜大睡挨着枕头就死掉了没有梦醒过来已是下午三点半  
二十岁是一棵非常年轻的树在阳光中勃起向天空喷射着绿叶

(Wang Yichuan, 1999: 238)

The age of twenty is a dirty football that flies in through the window falls onto the bed bounces up and down  
 Rolls among dirty socks a grimily-dark pillow tattered underpants  
 porno magazines and stops  
 Snoring falls into a deep dreamless sleep as soon as the head touches the pillow wakes up it's already a quarter past three in the afternoon  
 The age of twenty is a very young tree standing erect in the sunlight ejecting its green leaves towards the sky...]

Each line here has 26 or 27 characters (the whole poem consists of long lines, averaging about 25 characters each). Such extraordinarily long poetic lines are never seen in CR poems, but are not uncommon in post-CR poetry.

According to Wang Xijie 王希杰, a renowned Chinese linguist specialising in rhetoric and stylistics, the functional differences in style between long and short sentences are the following: firstly, long sentences are more complex in meaning and structure, and thus less straightforward in style; secondly, long sentences sound swifter in pace due to their syllabic quantity and density; finally, short sentences are more distinctive and regular in rhythm (Wang Xijie, 1983: 104-110). Based on these characteristics, therefore, we can conclude that CR literary language, which includes large numbers of short sentences and has frequent internal pauses in long sentences, lays stress on stylistic succinctness, straightforwardness and rhythmicity.

The next category is rhymed sentences. Of all the rhetorical devices present in the language style of literary texts, rhyming is one of the most universal. Rhyming in Chinese literature has a very long-established tradition: some basic rhyming patterns were established in literary discourses produced around three thousand years ago. In traditional Chinese literature, poetic texts follow established rhyming rules, and prose works commonly include rhymed sections. The rhymed sections in prose texts are presented either in the form of phrases or sentences in works such as the Confucian classics, or in the form of verses in texts such as drama and fiction. In the 1920s and 30s, however, the dominance of modern vernacular Chinese as a result of the

Literary Revolution meant that the prominence of rhyming in literary texts was weakened by emerging modern literary styles, including unrhymed poetry (created and translated) and spoken drama. Nevertheless, from the Yan'an period to the 1980s, in spite of the existence of non-rhymed works, rhyming was emphasised in mainstream verse-related literature.

The present investigation indicates that during the CR the prevalence of rhyming reached an unprecedented extent in the history of modern Chinese literature. The CR literary world regarded rhyming as a key component of aesthetic endeavour or experimentation in CR literary language style. We have so far not found a single officially-published poem during the CR period which does not contain rhyme. This enhanced role for rhyme in fact went so far that rhyming broke into a number of areas that were conventionally the preserve of unrhymed discourse. For instance, spoken parts or prose monologues and dialogues [*nianbai* 念白] in Chinese drama include both non-rhyming and rhyming types [*sanbai* 散白 and *yunbai* 韵白]. In Beijing operas, *nianbai* are conventionally *sanbai* while *yunbai* may sporadically exist (primarily in characters' monologues) (Cao Yu & Huang Zuojian, 1983: 458). In CR Beijing operas, however, a development toward rhyming prose discourse is evident. CR Beijing operas consist of two groups of five operas each: one, produced before the CR and slightly revised in the early years of the CR; the second, produced or substantially revised during the CR. For the former, *nianbai* are generally not rhymed, but in the latter they developed toward being rhymed. *Azalea Mountain* and *Rock Bay* (A Jian, 1976) are representative of this rhyming experimentation, in which almost all spoken parts are rhymed. The example below is from *Azalea Mountain* and the rhymed syllables (characters) are underlined (the English translation given omits the rhyming characteristics of the source text):

罗成虎	毒蛇胆抓住了杜妈妈！（紧抓雷刚手）
雷刚	啊？
罗成虎	绑在镇口，受尽摧残！（顿足）
雷刚	（震惊）啊！（猛甩罗成虎手，冲向隘口）
温其久	杜妈妈待大哥恩重如山，
	可不能袖手旁观哪！

雷 刚 集合部队，马上下山！（冲向树桩欲拔刀）  
 李石坚 （力阻）敌强我弱，不能蛮干！  
 温其久 （对雷刚）火烧眉毛，你要果断！  
 李石坚 上级命令，岂能违反！  
           （雷刚翻身扑向树桩，李石坚再阻。）  
 雷 刚 噯！（挣脱）  
 唱【二黄散板】 人命关天不容缓，  
           心急好似箭离弦。  
           哪管山崩地又陷，  
           不杀那毒蛇胆（扑至树桩，拔刀）  
           我誓不回山！（拔刀欲冲下）……  
 郑老万 那里定有重兵埋伏，  
 李石坚 岂不是自投罗网，  
 郑老万} 有去无还！（按住雷刚手臂）  
 李石坚} 他就是张网捕鱼，（甩开李石坚、郑老万的手）  
 雷 刚 我也拼他个鱼死网破，打他个稀巴烂！  
 柯 湘 棋错一着，  
           要输全盘。  
 雷 刚 山下亲人遇险，  
           岂能坐视不管！  
 柯 湘 首先转移出山，  
           然后设法救援。  
 雷 刚 我主意已定，  
 柯 湘 要考虑再三。  
 雷 刚 你太主观！  
 柯 湘 这是蛮干！  
 雷 刚 不救亲人，  
           我决不出山！（又欲冲下）  
 柯 湘 （再急阻）  
           这样救法，  
           后果更惨！（Wang Shuyuan, 1973, 65-67）

- Luo: The Viper has arrested Granny Du. (*Seizes Lei Gang's hands.*)
- Lei Gang: No!?
- Luo: She's tied up at the entrance to town, being cruelly tortured. (*Stamps his foot.*)
- Lei Gang: (aghast) Ah! (*Shakes off Luo's hands and dashes towards the gap.*)
- Wen: You owe Granny Du a great debt of gratitude, brother; you mustn't just look on with folded arms.
- Lei Gang: Muster the troops. We'll set off at once. (*Rushes to the tree stump to retrieve his sword.*)
- Li: (*stops him*) Don't be so rash – we're no match for the enemy.
- Wen: (*to Lei Gang*) Resolute action's needed at this critical moment.
- Li: We mustn't go against orders.  
(*Lei Gang turns and rushes to the tree stump. Again Li stops him.*)
- Lei Gang: No! (*Struggles. Sings.*)  
*We must hurry – a life is at stake.*  
*I am burning to fly like an arrow from the bow.*  
*Even if the mountain falls, the earth gives way,*  
*I swear not to return (*seizes the sword from the stump*)*  
*Till I have killed the Viper! (*Whirls his sword and prepares to dash off.*)...*
- Zheng: They're bound to lay an ambush there.
- Li: You'd be walking into a trap.
- Li & Zheng: And you'd never come out alive. (*They hold Lei Gang's arms.*)
- Lei Gang: Even if they try to trap me, (*throws off their hands*)  
I'll go down fighting and drag them to hell with me!
- Ke Xiang: One wrong move  
Can lose the whole game.
- Lei Gang: But her life is in danger;  
How can I just sit watching?

Ke Xiang: First withdraw from the mountain,  
Then find some means to save her.

Lei Gang: No, my mind is made up.

Ke Xiang: You must think again.

Lei Gang: You're too subjective.

Ke Xiang: You are too impulsive.

Lei Gang: I refuse to leave the mountain  
Till she's rescued. (*Starts dashing off again.*)

Ke Xiang: (*stops him again*) Your rescue plan  
Can only make things worse. (Wang Shuyuan, 1974:  
118-9)

As stated below by Wang Shuyuan, the playwright of this drama, rhyming the text was his (and other co-operators') intention:

In the spirit of Chairman Mao's instruction "weed through the old to bring forth the new", we introduced an innovation, rhyming the dialogue throughout the opera. On the basis of classical Chinese poetry, while retaining good features of the traditional dialogue, we broke the fetters of convention and incorporated forms of expression from modern Chinese poetry to render the spoken passages more expressive. Our aim was to make the dialogue more harmonious, rhythmic, antithetical and dramatic. (Wang Shuyuan, 1974)

Since rhyming was conventionally regarded as a fundamental feature of poetic language, the experimentation of rhyming all monologues and dialogues highlights the contemporary aesthetic emphasis on poeticised literary language. Nevertheless, this phonetic arrangement is likely to weaken the natural syntactic style of the operas' monologues and dialogues, and to reduce differentiation between the lexical register of conversation and aria. We could tentatively conclude that this phonetically stylistic pursuit or experimentation to some extent deviated from the politically sanctioned goal of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers, since the style seems too literary to be appreciated by the target audience.



Apart from poetry and drama, the application of rhyme is also visible in CR fictional prose discourses, although the rhyming is not formulated as strictly or extensively as in the modern Beijing operas. Chinese characters are generally monosyllabic and Chinese rhyming includes two categories: 'strict' [*yanshi* 严式] and 'loose' [*kuanshi* 宽式]. In the first, the rhymed syllables have the same final; in the second, the rhymed syllables have similar finals (Wang Xijie, 1983: 164-93). It is the second type that predominates in CR fictional prose discourses. The rhyming can be seen both in the narration by the author or narrator and in the speech of the characters. Below are two quotations from Gu Hua's *Mountains and Rivers Roar*:

燕子含泥，布谷唤春。今年春天的脚步勤。她怀揣数不清的花苞，绿芽，嫩茎，又要把经历了一冬霜打雪盖的大地，装扮得繁花似锦，绿草如茵，万木争荣；她带来丰肥的雨露，和煦的东风，百鸟的啼鸣。她用许多柳雾，杏雨，桃云，在溪旁路口，村院果林，悬崖岩嘴，山谷田垌，到处留下了美好的色彩富丽的足印.....(Gu Hua, 1976: 447)

Swallows carried bits of earth and cuckoos called Spring. Spring came early. She carried numerous buds, green sprouts and tender stems. She was about to decorate the land which had experienced the winter's frost and snow and to make it full of beautiful flowers, green grass and luxuriant trees. She brought the land abundant rain and dew, genial spring wind and birds' merry singing. Beside brooks, at entrances of roads, in village courtyards and orchards, and on cliffs, valleys and fields were her beautifully colourful footprints.

同志们！我们已经向那些梦想开倒车、耍阴谋的人显示了我们的不可动摇的力量和决心！昨天的哑炮事件，我们一定要查清！不把阴谋家、牛鬼蛇神挖出来，决不收兵！下面，同志们继续开工。继续用我们大干社会主义、大批资本主义的行动，投入这场斗争！(ibid: 375)

Comrades! We have already demonstrated our unshakable power and determination to the people who dream of turning back the wheel of history and pursue intrigues and conspiracy. We shall certainly investigate the incident of the failed explosives from yesterday. We shall not stop fighting until we catch the schemers and enemies. Now, let's go on with our work. We should participate in this struggle through our activities in building socialism and criticising capitalism.

In the first example above, apart from the sentence-ending rhymes, there are frequent internal rhymes in long sentences. This example is a description of the scenery of the setting. The highly rhymed sentences enhance the musicality of the description. The second example is a section from the protagonist Liu Wangchun's 柳旺春 speech addressed to the villagers on a worksite. Unlike the previous example, which represents the beauty of nature and has a certain inherent poeticism, this example describes class struggle, offering an intense ideological atmosphere seems too discordant with the rhymed text.

In *The Sons and Daughters of Xisha*, Hao Ran certainly paid much attention to language. Some of his efforts involved experimentation in an attempt to produce poetic effect.<sup>13</sup> Much of the novel was printed in lines so as to enhance the intended poeticised style. Rhyming was often taken into consideration. Below is an example:

他原来以为岛子上是荒凉的，没料到人民公社社员们，已经  
用双手把宝岛变成一片繁荣的景象。  
这里有社员自己平坦的路。  
这里有社员自己凉爽的屋。  
这里有社员自己种植的菜田。  
这里有社员自己栽培的果树。

<sup>13</sup> The novel's language was in particular commended by the publisher as being "poetic". See "Neirong tiyao" 内容提要 ["Introduction to the Work"], *The Sons and Daughters of Xisha*, verso.

这里有社员自己的武装民兵——他们没有埋头劳动，在阿宝带领下，正在一面生产，一面练武。(ibid: 163)

He had originally thought the island would be desolate, and had never imagined that the people's commune members would have already changed it into a flourishing scene. There were the commune members' flat roads. There were the commune members' comfortable houses. There were the vegetable fields cultivated by commune members. There were the fruit trees grown by commune members. There were the commune members' own armed militiamen — they were engaged in not only productive labour but also military training under A Bao's leadership.

A further type of sentence feature is parallelism; this can be sub-divided into antithetic parallelism [*dui'ou* 对偶] and progressive parallelism [*paibi* 排比]. In structure, antithetic parallelism consists of two parallel parts; progressive parallelism includes at least three parallel parts. Although both these two categories are commonly seen in CR literature, the former, antithetic parallelism, is more significant.<sup>14</sup>

As a stylistic feature, similar to the above categorisation of rhyme, antithetic parallelism in Chinese includes loose and strict parallel forms; in the former, the two parallel items have the same or similar syllabic numbers (characters) and grammatical structures, whilst for the latter, apart from having the same (rather than similar) numbers of syllables, rhythmical constructions and grammatical structures, the two items are contrastive in tonal patterns and rhyme schemes. This strict antithetic parallelism had originally been unintentional, but after the Wei 魏 and Jin 晋 dynasties, when traditional Chinese phonology was established, it gradually became part of the writer's conscious style. It applied to, or was ruled to be applicable to, various types of literary work, and the stylistic significance of antithetic parallelism in Chinese literary language cannot be overstated.

<sup>14</sup> For the definition and stylistic characteristics of the two categories of parallelism, see Wang Xijie, 1996, 432-44; Hu Yushu, 1986, 526-30.

Along with rhyme, antithetic parallelism also came in for criticism in the modern literary campaign of the early twentieth century, which regarded it as a stylistic feature of the classical Chinese language.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, in spite of this opposition to it, antithetic parallelism has often been employed by contemporary Chinese writers. What is significant here is that usage reached an unprecedented level in CR literature. It can be stated that the CR literature under discussion includes a higher density of antithetic parallelisms than any other period of twentieth century literature. In the general framework of Modern Standard Chinese, these antithetic parallelisms are mostly loose ones. Moreover, parallelism can be applied at various syntactic levels, such as word, phrase, clause and sentence. The present study indicates that in CR literature greatest number of antithetic parallelisms appears at clause level. The parallelisms in the following examples are underlined:

让资产阶级去笑话我们‘痴’和‘傻’吧！我们痴在农村绣地球，  
傻为革命把根扎！他们搭的是经不起风雨的个人安乐窝，我  
们建造的是使公社山河一新的幸福堤坝！ (Gu Hua, 1976, 304)

Let the bourgeoisie ridicule us for being “crazy” and “foolish”. We are proud of being “crazy” because we are embroidering the earth in the countryside; we are proud of being “foolish” because we settle in the villages for the revolution. What they are striving for is only constructing their own cosy but flimsy nests, but what we are building is a dam of good fortune, which will bring an entirely new look to the commune.

文化革命暴风雨  
带来祖国新天地：  
芳草绿，  
春山碧，  
新松亿株，  
彩虹万里。 (Gong Yiming, 1976)

<sup>15</sup> The pioneers of modern Chinese literature and language opposed rhyming and parallelism. See Hu Shi, 1917.

The storm of the Cultural Revolution  
Has brought forth new scenery to the country:  
Fragrant grasses are green,  
Mountains in spring are verdant,  
A hundred million new pine trees,  
Ten thousand miles of rainbows.

The first of these two examples is from a conversation between the protagonist and his companion in Gu Hua's *Mountains and Rivers Roar*; it consists of three sentences. The first is a simple sentence, and the other two are compound sentences. The two clauses of each compound sentence are parallel. The whole section is rhymed. The second example is from a well-known CR poem; the four underlined lines are four coordinate clauses, which include two parallelisms. There are two rhymes, 'u' and 'i' each appearing in alternate lines.

Antithetic parallelism can also often be seen at phrase level. For example,

只见垄场里，水田似镜，秧苗正绿；坡地上，梯田叠翠，碧波连天。垄陌之中，悬崖之畔，干直枝虬的木棉树，抽萼扬蕾，红花怒放，有如长虹贯日，烽火燎天。 (Baise, 1976: 588)

In the farmland there were mirror-like paddy fields and green rice seedlings; on the hillside there were green terraced fields and emerald waves extended to the sky. Between fields and on cliffs, red kapok flowers were in full bloom with calyxes and buds waving. The flowers looked like long rainbows or flames of war stretching into the sky.

Hao Ran pushed parallelism forward beyond the internal structures of sentences. In *The Sons and Daughters of Xisha*, antithetic parallelism is frequently extended to paragraphs. The novel reads at the beginning:

西沙的雨量特别丰裕。它把这岛屿上所有植物的叶子都滋润得肥肥的、厚厚的，包含着过多的水份，仿佛稍一挨碰，就要滴下来。

西沙的光照特别充足。它把这岛屿上所有草木的花朵都养育的密密的、艳艳的，呈现着过浓的色彩，好似微一接触，就会印记在衣襟上。(Hao Ran, 1974: 3-4)

There is abundant rainfall in Xisha. It enriches the leaves of all plants on the island, making them plump and stout. They seem like drops of water which would fall with only the slightest brush.

There is plentiful sunshine in Xisha. It raises all the flowers on the island, making them flourishing and full of colour. They seem likely to leave an imprint on your clothes with only the gentlest touch.

The other type of parallelism under discussion, progressive parallelism, was also commonly applied to CR literary texts. For example:

唐群面向群众，把这个消息一宣布，瞬息间，会场上红旗招展，锣鼓震天，歌声阵阵，鞭炮齐鸣。恰似春雷滚滚，松涛呼啸，叫人心弦激荡，振奋不已。(Baise, 1976: 585)

Facing the crowd, Tang Qun announced the news, then, in a twinkling, there was the waving of red flags, the deafening sound of gongs and drums, the echoing of dulcet singing, and the resounding of firecrackers on the meeting ground. It was like thunder in spring or the souging of wind in pines, which heartened all the people.

大海，鼓动起银亮的碧波。  
波浪，催开了梨花千万朵。  
蓝天，飞跑着柔软的白云。

云影，又轻轻地把海浪和船帆拭抹.....( Hao Ran, 1974, 196)

The sea was surging with silvery waves. The waves bloomed beautifully. Soft clouds were floating in the blue sky. The shadow of the clouds was lightly touching the waves and sails.

In many cases the progressive parallelism is combined with rhetorical repetition; that is, the paralleled items include certain repetitive elements. For example (with the repetitive elements being underlined):

西沙的军民，紧紧地连接在一起。

西沙的军民，牢牢地站立在一起。

西沙的军民，久久地战斗在一起。 (ibid: 139-40)

The soldiers and civilians in Xisha closely united together.

The soldiers and civilians in Xisha firmly stood together.

The soldiers and civilians in Xisha long fought together.

This frequent application of parallelism and rhyme by the writers of CR literary texts was intended to enhance the stylistic register of literary Chinese. These syntactic features accorded with the lexical characteristics of CR literature, and marked a trend towards highlighting the language's literary style (Yang, 1998: 165-86). This use of parallelism and rhyme was not only popular in official CR literature, but was also prevalent in underground CR literature. For instance, underground CR poems were generally rhymed and full of parallelism. These include the misty poems by a number of famous post-CR poets such as Bei Dao 北岛 and Shu Ting 舒婷, which were written during the CR but were published afterwards (Yang Jian, 1993: 73-166).

No official policy documents on the frequent application of parallelism and rhyme have been found. One reason for the popularity of stylistic parallelism and rhyming could have been the influence of the writing style of Mao Zedong and other old revolutionaries.<sup>16</sup> According to McDougall, Mao personally

<sup>16</sup> Apart from Mao Zedong, a number of other old revolutionaries, such as Chen Yi and Ye Jianying, were also proficient craftsmen of classical forms of Chinese poetry,. Chen Yi's poetry circulated underground widely after his death in January 1972.

preferred traditional literature to modern literature. In traditional literature, he loved *lüshi* 律诗 and *ci* 词 for poetry and *fu* 赋 for prose. All these classical genres are known for their emphasis on the above stylistic characteristics. Mao's personal literary writing exclusively took the form of *lüshi* and *ci*, in which he showed impressive skill in applying the specified classical stylistic paradigms (McDougall, 1978). In the immediate aftermath of the CR, Mao's poetry was almost the only poetry in official circulation. During the campaign to study Mao's works, his poetry, which was also graced by his calligraphy, became widely known. Although his poems were in the classical style, and not as accessible as modern new poems, the powerful propaganda by which they were disseminated and explicated promoted their popularity. This popularity was, of course, due to both meaning and form, but the form, which is relevant here, was that of *lüshi* and *ci*. The popularity of classical-style poetry during the CR is attested by numerous sources. Yang Jian notes that there was a tendency towards writing *lüshi* and *ci* in the underground CR literary world (Yang Jian, 1993, 201-38). A small pre-CR book on the stylistic rules of classical poetry by the famous Chinese linguist Wang Li 王力 circulated underground, and became a style guide from which people learned how to write *lüshi* and *ci*.<sup>17</sup> In the Tian'anmen Incident of 1976 people displayed numerous mourning poems dedicated to the late premier Zhou Enlai and opposing the Gang of Four. These poems came to be regarded as an exhibition of unofficial CR poetry; significantly, the majority of the poems were in the classical style (Yang Jian, 1993: 407- 408).

Another stylistic category investigated here is the use of direct speech and indirect speech. In terms of grammar, direct and indirect sentences are of different syntactical structures. Linguists have distinguished between the two by comparing their representational characteristics. According to Wang Yichuan 王一川, direct speech has a more explicit and straightforward style, since it presents the speaker's mind directly. The direct presentation authenticates the representation of the narrative. By contrast, indirect speech tends to indicate some implicit or oblique nuance, since it is offered by the author or the narrator rather than the actual speaker (Wang Yichuan, 1999: 147-48).

<sup>17</sup> The book was entitled *Shici gelü* 诗词格律 [*Tonal Patterns and Rhyme Schemes of Classical Poetry*], which was published in the early 1960s. It can be seen in Wang Li, 1989.



As noted by Wang Yichuan, there is a tendency towards indirect speech in many post-CR works (ibid: 145-48). In the fiction of Ge Fei 格非 and Su Tong 苏童, two well-known post-CR writers, for instance, indirect speech occupies a dominant position. Below is an example from Ge Fei's "Hese niaoqun" 褐色鸟群 ["Brown Flocks of Birds"]:

棋从我的公寓的椅子上站了起来，她一定是知道我的故事再也没有任何延伸的余地了。她说她该走了。她还说今天下午她要去“城市公园”参加一个大型未来派雕塑的揭幕仪式。她说这座雕塑是李朴和一些自称为“慧星群体”的年轻艺术家共同完成的，她说过一些时候再到“水边”的公寓里来看我。(Ge Fei, 1993: 76).

Qi stood up from the chair in my apartment house; she must have been aware that my story had come to an end. She said that she had to leave then. She also said that she would go to the "City Park" that afternoon to attend the grand unveiling ceremony for a futuristic sculpture. She said that the sculpture had been produced by Li Pu and several young artists who claimed to be "a group of comets". She said that she would come to visit me again in my apartment house by the "waterside".

This passage includes four sentences of indirect speech, which could be converted into direct speech as follows:

她说：“我该走了。”她还说：“今天下午我要去‘城市公园’参加一个大型未来派雕塑的揭幕仪式。”她说：“这座雕塑是李朴和一些自称为‘慧星群体’的年轻艺术家共同完成的。”她说：“过一些时候再到‘水边’的公寓里来看你。”

She said, "I have to leave now" She also said, "This afternoon, I shall go to the 'City Park' to attend a grand unveiling ceremony

for a futuristic sculpture". She said, "The sculpture was produced by Li Pu and several young artists who claim to be 'a group of comets'". She said, "I shall come to visit you again in this apartment house by the 'waterside'".

Direct speech in Chinese texts is conventionally indicated with a colon and quotation marks, the former to introduce and the latter to mark. However, some authors prefer to blur the distinction between the two speech forms by refusing to use quotation marks and colons. In other words, in order to reduce the reader's impression of narrative authenticity indicated by direct speech, or to keep with the oblique style of narration suggested by indirect speech, writers remove formal markers of direct speech. The example below is from Su Tong's "Qiqie chengqun" 妻妾成群 ["Wives and Concubines"].

飞浦摇摇头，一下一下地把打火机打出火来，又吹熄了，他朝四周潦草地看了看，说，呆在家里时间一长就令人生厌，我想出去跑了，还是在外边好，又自由，又快活。颂莲说，我懂了，闹了半天，你还是怕她。飞浦说，不是怕她，是怕烦，怕女人，女人真是让人可怕。颂莲说，你怕女人？那你怎么不怕我？飞浦说，对你也有点怕，不过好多了，你跟她们不一样，所以我喜欢去你那儿。(Su Tong, 1990: 24)

Shaking his head, Feipu took out his lighter; again and again he struck a light but blew it out. He glanced all around and said, it makes me be bored with the family that I stay so long at home; I want to go away; it's better to stay outside; I have more freedom and feel happier outside. Songlian said, I've understood now; you are actually still afraid of her. Feipu said, I'm not afraid of her; I'm afraid of trouble; I'm afraid of women; women make me scared. Songlian said, why are you not scared of me if you're scared of women? Feipu said, I'm also a little bit scared of you, but much less; you're different from them; I like to be with you.

CR literature, however, shows a contrasting style, in which direct speech dominates. Below is a quotation from Gu Hua's *Mountains and Rivers Roar*:

于是两个小青年，边走边谈，……

“只是听说他最近一段，心情不好！”小莽转了话题，“说他象闷雷公！”

“为了什么事？”黎小芳心里顿时泛起了淡淡的愁云。

“这个事要我说出来呀，先讲好条件。”

“你卖关子！”

“你立保证！”

“保证什么？”

“保守机密。”

“哪—，不当听的，我不听。”

“哪—，不该说的，我不说。”

Then, the two youths had a conversation as they walked, ……

“I hear that recently he has a heavy heart,” Xiao Mang changed topic. “It is said that he has become reticent.”

“What’s wrong?” a gloomy mood came over Li Xiaofang.

“I may tell you but I have to set a condition.”

“You are just mystifying.”

“You must promise!”

“Promise what?”

“To keep it secret.”

“Then, I don’t want to hear what I shouldn’t hear.”

“Then, I shan’t say what I shouldn’t say.”

This example represents the typical direct speech style of CR fiction, presenting such features as short sentences, quotation marks, and single speech paragraphs. Stylistically, the prevalence of direct speech in CR literature offers a perspective on the straightforwardness of CR literary language. In view of the promotion of literary realism during the CR (Yang, 1996, 88-105), this prevalence accords with the claimed spirit of this literary technique— encouraging authentic or realistic representation.

The final aspect of this study is the use of ungrammatical sentences. A common national language in principle has its established grammatical norms, based upon which speakers can check their speeches for grammaticality. Due to the particular morphology of Chinese, the establishment of grammatical norms has been a controversial topic ever since linguists started to analyse the language within the framework of modern linguistics. Nevertheless, in spite of its relatively loose characteristics, a broadly accepted grammatical system for modern Chinese was generally recognised from around the 1930s. The system was endorsed by the Chinese government during the 1950s, although, like the grammar systems of other languages, it has had the flexibility to allow further revision based on practical usage and natural development. Synchronically, thus, we have the basis to judge a structure's contemporary ungrammaticality even if it is due to become grammatical following future development. Based on contemporary criteria, for instance, the following sentences from post-CR works are ungrammatical (with the ungrammatical parts underlined):

我泪滴下来：“我爸要活着，知道我当了作家，非打死我。”  
(Wang Shuo, 1992: 75)

Tears dripped from my eyes: “If Dad were alive and knew I had become a writer, he would not beat me to death” (he would surely beat me to death).

他家门口已经蹲了几个老头。还没落地，哼得也不紧。他把锄子往墙上一靠，也蹲下了。(Wang Anyi, 1995: 197)

Several old men were already squatting on their heels in front of his house. (It) had not come into the world; (she) had not groaned aloud. He leant his hoe against the wall, and he too squatted down.

电影已经快要演完，他突然十分十分地感动起来。(Wang Meng, 1994, 7)

The film would be over soon; he was suddenly very very moved.

他们一个比一个更纯洁高尚理想。(ibid: 24)

They are all truly pure (,) noble (and) ideal.

In the first example above the first 我 ought to be in the possessive case, and then 我泪 becomes 我的泪 “my tears”; the last clause 非打死我 ought to be 非打死我不可 “he would surely have beaten me to death” since 非……不可 is a fixed structure indicating a negation of negation.<sup>18</sup>

In the second sentence of the next example 还没落地，哼得也不紧 has two clauses, but neither has a subject. The absent subjects are neither 他 “he” nor 老头 “old men” which appear in the preceding sentence or the following sentence. The complete form would be 婴儿还没落地，女人(他妻子)哼得也不紧 “the baby had not come into the world; the woman (his wife) had not groaned aloud.” The absence of subjects is not a conventional rhetorical omission, and the incompleteness of the two clauses is likely to give rise to confusion in reading.<sup>19</sup>

In the next example, the second clause includes two adverbials: 突然 “suddenly” and 十分十分, the reduplicated form of 十分 “very”. Based on the contemporary norms, however, bisyllabic adverbs of degree were not eligible for reduplication in written Chinese.<sup>20</sup>

The final example consists of two parts: subject and predicate. The predicate includes a coordinative word group 更纯洁高尚理想, where the structure does not conform to the existing grammar norms. A reasonable form in the context would be 更纯洁、更高尚、更富有理想 “more pure, noble and full of ideals”.<sup>21</sup>

Sentences such as the above are fairly common in post-CR literature. Although some of them might be regarded as stylistic features, such as ironical imitation, deliberate misuse or language experimentation, they

<sup>18</sup> For the norms of the attributives with *de* and the negation of negation under discussion, cf. Li Dejin and Cheng Meizhen, 1988, 267-72 and 689-92.

<sup>19</sup> For the rules of the presence and absence of subjects in complex sentences, cf. Hu Yushu, 1986: 389-90.

<sup>20</sup> For the norms on the reduplication of adverbs, cf. Li Dejin and Cheng Meizhen, 1988: 107.

<sup>21</sup> For the norms on coordinative phrases, cf. *ibid*: 155-62.

factually do not conform to the existing grammar norms, that is, they are ungrammatical.

By contrast, however, rarely can ungrammatical sentences be found in CR literature. For instance, I have not found any ungrammatical sentences in the sampled *Mountains Green after Rain* and *The Mountains and Rivers Roar*. In Hao Ran's *The Sons and Daughters of Xisha*, I have found only the following line which is ungrammatical:

她十分的高兴。因为她对追求的目标十分有信心。(Hao Ran, 1974: 62).

She was very happy. Because she had full confidence in the goal she was trying to reach.

This line is comprised of two sentences. In the first, according to current grammatical norms, the structural particle 的 should be deleted. The second sentence beginning with 因为 “because” can be taken as a causative subordinate clause, but where is the main clause? If the full stop were removed and the two sentences combined into one it would produce a structurally complete composite sentence (Li Dejin & Cheng Meizhen, 1988: 267-72 and 669-73).

The remarkable grammaticality of CR literary language is an indication of the extent to which people at the time observed the established norms of standard Chinese. Apart from the observance of the CR writers, this may have reflected the attention other organisations and individuals paid to grammaticality. For instance, censorship was strict during the CR, and editors had to go through manuscripts very carefully: the grammaticality of CR literary language may be partly attributable to their efforts.

## Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, we may reach the conclusion that at a syntactic level, in comparison with pre-and-post-CR literary language, CR literary language demonstrated, or endeavoured to demonstrate, the

following six characteristics: musicality, rhythmicity, symmetry, grammaticality, succinctness and straightforwardness.

The first three characteristics are rooted in the stylistic paradigms of the classical Chinese literary language. They are based on such intrinsic factors of the language as tone changes and an abundance of monosyllabic words and homophones. From the key role poetry played in the development of traditional Chinese literature, we may see the importance the latter placed on stylistic musicality, rhythmicity and symmetry. Although themes such as love, marriage, homesickness, patriotism, and meditation remained constants in traditional poetry, there were changes in verse format over time: from four character lines [*siyanshi* 四言诗] to five character lines [*wuyanshi* 五言诗], seven character lines [*qiyanshi* 七言诗], regulated verse *lüshi*, 'cut off verse' [*jueju* 绝句], 'song lyrics' [*ci* 词], and 'arias' [*qu* 曲], etc. These changes involved syllable numbers, line numbers, tonal patterns, rhythmical constructions, rhyme schemes and syntactic structures. These all reflected the ways in which traditional writers sought to explore musicality, rhythmicity and symmetry in language style.

However, it was these stylistic characteristics that came under attack in the early twentieth century during the May 4<sup>th</sup> New Culture Movement and its literary revolution. Those pioneers of modern Chinese literature, in opposing classical Chinese and promoting the vernacular language, called on writers to reject these classical stylistic paradigms, which were significantly weakened in subsequent years.

Since the rationale for the CR was the destruction of traditional culture and its values, it might be expected that the CR literary language would further weaken these stylistic paradigms. Yet, as this investigation shows, what actually happened was the reverse: CR literature reaffirmed those traditional stylistic paradigms and applied them to literature written in modern standard Chinese. Scholars have carried out many studies on the relationship between the CR and traditional Chinese culture, pointing out paradoxes between the stated aims of the CR and its actual impact. The CR was supposed to sweep away outmoded facets of feudal culture but it actually carried forward and reinforced many of them (Liu Qingfeng, 1996: 127-48). Other studies have focused on the ideological level: for example, the CR personality cult is compared to traditional loyalty to emperors, and the CR communist altruism

to Confucian and Buddhist asceticism. However, the fact analysed in this study that classical stylistic paradigms were revived during the CR reveals the relationship between the CR and traditional culture from a different perspective.

According to Chinese linguists, one of the practical functions of rhyming, parallelism and rhythmicity is to impress readers with sound and structural association so as to make the text easier to remember, since in traditional China remembering texts was an essential part of literary education (Qi Gong, 199: 5). During the CR it was the fashion for people to recite slogans, verses and quotations while participating in the relevant ideological campaign. This fashion is reflected in rhyming, parallelism and the rhythmical language. Thus, the aesthetic aims of the CR literary language were undermined by the practical function being pursued through intensified musicality, rhythmicity and symmetry. Moreover, in terms of modern rhetorical aesthetics, the overwhelming neatness of the literary language would tend to reduce the language's modernity, flexibility and liveliness.

The fourth of the above-generalised characteristics of CR literary language is grammaticality. Unlike pre-CR literature and the arts, which were generally denounced during the Cultural Revolution, the norms of Modern Standard Chinese (*Putonghua*) endorsed officially in the 1950s were not subjected to attacks during the CR. Although people showed unprecedented enthusiasm for breaking with existing conventions in many other fields, it proved to be the case that CR writers consciously and strictly followed existing grammatical norms. Their strict observance of these grammatical norms resulted in the unified grammaticality of the CR literary language, although, as a general stylistic characteristic, this unified grammaticality to some extent militated against stylistic variety and experimentation, especially the development of individual styles.

The last two generalised characteristics of CR literary language are succinctness and straightforwardness, which are essentially applicable to meaning. These stylistic factors could reasonably be attributed to the literary authorities' consistent promotion of the idea that literature and the arts were to serve the common people, especially the workers, peasants and soldiers. Complexity, vagueness and sophistication seemed beyond the tastes of the specified audience. Yet, the above analysis indicates that CR literary language



was formalistically complex, borrowing classical stylistic paradigms of musicality, rhythmicity and symmetry. These characteristics seem to be in conflict with the succinct and straightforward style. The answer to this apparent paradox seems to be that musicality, rhythmicity and symmetry are stylistic conceptions that apply to form and structure while succinctness and straightforwardness mainly operate at a semantic level.

Post-CR literature turned away from the language style of CR literature. Classical style paradigms such as musicality, rhythmicity and symmetry largely disappeared. During the 1980s and 1990s verse without rhyme or symmetry became dominant, and stylistic complexity, obscurity and ungrammaticality were common features of poetry, fiction and drama. Inspired by Western modernism, a number of writers enthused about language experimentation, engaging in what scholars call “a language carnival”.<sup>22</sup> The carnival-like experimentation, which was aimed at breaching established norms and conventions, has undoubtedly enriched the language style of post-CR literature. At the same time it may be thought to have produced certain anti-aesthetic tendencies. A thoroughgoing investigation is thus needed into the language style of post-CR literature and its relationship with its predecessors.

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<sup>22</sup> The term “carnival” is quoted from Mikhail Bakhtin. A number of Chinese scholars have become interested in Bakhtin’s “dialogic” theory, and his notions of “carnivalisation” and “heteroglossia” are adopted to explain post-CR changes in Chinese culture and literature. See Liu Kang, 1995, 2, 129, 181 and 182.

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**Lan Yang** is Lecturer in Chinese at the University of Leeds where he publishes on linguo-stylistics and the literature of the Cultural Revolution.

