

Identity Formation and Cultural Mediation through Lyrics: An Exploratory Study of English Lyrics in Hong Kong's Cantopop

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Abstract

Hong Kong's pop music, known as Cantopop, emerged as a significant cultural phenomenon in the 1970s. Singer-songwriter Sam Hui created lyrics in vernacular Cantonese to tell stories related to social issues and local identities. As the music permeates in the lives of the audience, Cantopop shapes the audible "Hong Kongness" which in turn plays a critical role in identity formation and cultural mediation.

With the changes in music consumption habits, Cantopop underwent a quiet phase until the resurgence of boy bands and independent music from 2018 onwards. A notable development is the growing use of full English lyrics, one of Hong Kong's lingua franca. This phenomenon opens up possibilities in self-expression, identity formation and cross-cultural exchanges.

This study analyzes English lyrics produced by Hong Kong singer-songwriters, drawing on audience reception and social identity theories. It examines how audience interpret these lyrics and how the lyrics mediate culture and construct the identities.

Index Terms

Cantopop, Lyrics, Pop Culture, Audience Reception, Social Identity