

# Explore wang Anyi's borrowing techniques in "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow"

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## Abstract:

This article aims to explore the borrowing technique used by the famous writer Wang Anyi in "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow." Through the analysis of specific examples, it further studies the role of the borrowing technique in the expression of the novel's theme and reveals how Wang Anyi employs this technique to reflect the inner world of the main protagonist, Wang Qiyao, as well as the old Shanghai culture and secular life. Borrowing technique is a rhetorical form that is vivid and engaging by representing one thing with another. For instance, Wang Anyi uses "Director Li's status" to refer to "power and status" and "lane rose" to refer to "Wang Qiyao's youth." This article will delve deeply into the internal role of Wang Anyi's borrowing technique in "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow" and the core of Wang Anyi's writing about Shanghai through the utilization of this technique.

**Keywords:** Wang Anyi, The Song of Everlasting Sorrow, daily life in Shanghai, Borrowing method

## 1. Introduction

In the literary world of contemporary literature, Wang Anyi is one of the representative female writers. She has a distinctive creative style and is an innovative writer. Wang Fei once said: "Writers who consistently maintain a remarkable position in the literary world for more than ten years are very limited. From the 1980s to the 1990s, there were not many novelists who wrote well, and those who could always rise and maintain their weight in the hearts of readers and critics are a minority. Wang Anyi is one of the few." [1] Her midlife peak work, "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow," has the main protagonist, Wang Qiyao, based on a news story that Wang Anyi read. It's about the story of a cover girl who was harassed by a young man, leading to her psychological breakdown and subsequent murder. Based on this simple news story, the author conceived a female character who fits the image of a little woman in Shanghai. [2] The novel depicts the fate of Shanghai for nearly 40 years through the fate of Wang Qiyao alone. In the narrative, the work deliberately abandons major social and political events, pushing them into the deep background of the narrative, and melting them into the plain narrative. After winning the Mao Dun Literature Prize, Wang Anyi mentioned the creation of "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow," believing that the novel had reached some extremes in her creative career, both in terms of language and narrative. The language of "The Song of Ever-

lasting Sorrow" is fresh, like a gentle breeze, fascinating, leaving a unique stylistic mark of Wang Anyi's personal characteristics in the contemporary literary world.

The language of "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow" is very emotional in color, without gorgeous rhetoric. It outlines the cultural style of old Shanghai in simple language and takes readers back to Shanghai in the 1940s and 1950s. Poetic language conveys implicit, sentimental, damp mood. Studying the language characteristics of "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow" can make us better understand the old Shanghai lifestyle. Through the portrayal of Shanghai over nearly forty years, it gives us a clear understanding of the contrast between old and new Shanghai culture in the context of cultural and historical change. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the techniques of "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow".

## 2. Study the history and the current situation

As "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow" has an important position in the contemporary literary world, there are numerous articles and monographs studying it. However, most of them study their artistic value, characters, urban culture, and other perspectives. Basically, they analyze its characteristics from the perspective of literature, and few people discuss "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow" through the perspective of linguistics. Therefore, from the perspective of linguistics, through the analysis of the passage

of the novel. In recent years, there has been no full paper on the linguistic grammar of “The Song of Everlasting Sorrow”, which is only mentioned in Huang Lianping’s “Lingering and touching”.

### 3. Study methods and materials

This paper will draw lessons from other scholars study book grammar, vocabulary method, the use of the part of the borrow technique systematically investigation and analysis as far as possible, show the “The Song of Everlasting Sorrow” borrow technique use appearance, reveals the “The Song of Everlasting Sorrow” borrow technique, with the characteristics of the study of “The Song of Everlasting Sorrow” provide some basic work. There are numerous books on the definition and classification of borrowing techniques at home and abroad, among which Chen Wangdao’s Rhetoric is orthodox, and most of his later published works on rhetoric are based on this. This paper will also study the definition and classification of borrowing in Rhetoric.

### 4. About the borrowing technique

The word “the borrowing technique” can be traced back to the pre-Qin period. In the Book of Songs, “Qing qing Zi Jin” and “Qing qing Zi Pei” were used to refer to lovers. In the continuous development of the Chinese language, the experts constantly define and analyze the “the borrowing technique”, among which the representative ones are as follows:

(1) Chen Wangdao in “Rhetoric” for the definition of borrowing is: even if things are not similar to other things, if there is an inseparable relationship in the middle, the author can also borrow the name of the relationship between things, to replace the thing, such borrowing, called borrowing words.[3]

(2) In the New Practical rhetoric, Li Yude wrote about borrowing: use the words that do not refer to a person or thing to refer to a person or thing, that is, to replace a person or thing. This kind of use is “borrowing generation transfer”, referred to as “borrowing”.[4]

(3) Pan Zhaoming, Yao Dianfang in the practical Chinese rhetoric, for example: the Guizhou renhuai maotai town of maotai directly called “maotai”, the brush made of Wolf hao directly as “Wolf”, the big cigarettes called “big the front door”, wear blue collar overalls workers called “collar”, this catch a connection between the two things, intentionally use b things to refer, appellation a things rhetoric, is called borrow.[5]

(4) Huang Borong, Liao Xudong’s edition of Modern Chinese, believes that the substitution is: not to directly say the name of someone or something, but to replace the

name closely related to him.[6]

To sum up, in the process of continuous development and improvement of linguistics, people’s definition of generations has gradually become unified, but most of the classifications of generation have their own classification standards. Chen Wangdao’s “Rhetoric Fa” is divided into two categories: collateral and opposite generation, these two categories are divided into four groups, a total of eight groups. According to the relationship between the replaced body and the replacement body, Li Yude’s New Practical rhetoric is mainly divided into three categories: the parts replacing the whole body, the general name, and the abstract things replacing the concrete things. Huang Borong and Liao Xudong divided the Borrow generation into five categories: characteristics, symbol generation ontology, special name and general name, concrete generation abstract, part with whole, and result generation causes.[3-6]

However, the above classification method is still not accurate in the above academic circles. Since there are not too many types of borrowing used in “The Song of Everlasting Sorrow”, this paper adopts the classification method of Chen Wangdao in “Rhetoric”, based on this to analyze the application of the borrowing method in Wang Anyi’s “The Song of Everlasting Sorrow”.

### 5. The borrowing technique type in the Song of Everlasting Sorrow

It is very common in both daily language and written language. As early as in the pre-Qin period, the technique of borrowing had appeared, but no one had studied it in ancient times for a long time. Cui Rong in the Tang Dynasty first put forward the excuse in theory, and called it “jing hua ti”. [7] In modern times, Rhetoric has laid the foundation of rhetoric. The borrowing is divided into the following categories, including the specific examples of the use of the borrowing:

#### 5.1 Lend

The Lend refers to the relationship between the accompanying things and the main things. In principle, there is nothing wrong to replace the main things with the accompanying things, and to replace the accompanying things with the main things. But in fact the companion replaces the trunk; and the trunk, though not entirely absent, is not great, but is called borrowed.[3]

##### 5.1.1 The characteristics or markers of things and things

In Part 3, Chapter III, Part 11:

“Long foot riding a shabby bicycle, riding toward the southwest corner of Shanghai.”

“There was a dark nightmare, only one soul awake, and Long foot.”

“How can the Long foot out of the light!”

“People like Long foot, they wander through the busy fields day and night.”

“Long foot appeared again, in a more energetic look, his refreshed, smiling, fresh hair, changed clean clothes, rich, even long bow waist also straight up.”

“I said that Long foot is a night god, but midnight does not return to the nest.”[8]

“Long foot” in the above example refers to the person who killed Wang Qiyao. It is to replace him with his own mixed social characteristics.

### 5.2 Replace each other

The Replace each other means to borrow in place of the original name, the name of the opposite thing in the text.[3]

#### 5.2.1 Mutual replacement of part and whole

In Part 3, Chapter III, Part 10:

“The young men and women of The Lao kela are all modern figures. They are at the two levels of things, and they are at the forefront of the trend.”

“They are the students of The Lao kela when they read the physical education department. They lead with the spirit of sports and also reflect the trend characteristics of today’s world.”

“The Lao kela is one of the unknown, one without achievements.”

“The Old kela’s parents regard him as an honest child.”

“What really knows well about The Lao kela is the road in the west district of Shanghai.”

“The roads in the east district of Shanghai also know The Lao kela, and all roads lead to the river bank, and the scenery is more rugged and refreshing than the west district. The black and white silent films are epic themes, and the old wind and rain are also wild.”

“But children like The Lao kela have become old people again.”

“The Lao kela was walking on the road, the wind was blowing towards him.”

“When The Lao kela came, I do not know it was the tenth batch.”

“It was in this situation that The Lao kela met Wang Qiyao.”

“The Lao kela then realized his injustice.”

“But these details were not so real, floating on the surface, they stung The Old kela’s heart.”

“The Lao kela did not walk away, if anything stopped his footsteps, he took a glass of wine, leaning on the door frame, his eyes on the TV.”

“Wang Qiyao has also seen The Lao kela several times.”

“The Lao kela told Wang Qiyao that he suspected that he was actually from 40 years ago and had died badly.”

“The Lao kela said to invite Wang Qiyao to dinner next day.”

“By this day, The Lao kela came early.”

“The Lao kela is already like half a master...Zhang Yonghong and they were not familiar with The Old kela.”

“The Lao kela heard that Wang Qiyao was said to him, meaning to tell him about his heart forty years ago, and what he was doing was only superficial.”

“The Lao kela is really a very savvy young man, for the sophistication of that days.”

“The Lao kela will invite Wang Qiyao to dinner again... The Lao kela insisted: you actually know what I mean...The Lao kela said: I don’t want you to agree.”

“The Lao kela and Zhang Yonghong are still not feeling fresh.”

“The Lao kela fought for several times, but failed, he had to do the east.”

“The Lao kela said: really invite you to eat a meal, all also did not please.”

“As it happened, The Lao kela was there, and the four people sat down to gossip.”

“Only for a moment, The Lao kela sitting opposite him could see everything.”

“Especially when The Lao kela was just pulled into the relationship with that couple...The Lao kela can’t listen anymore...The Lao kela said, according to your words, these three people, what group can be legal?”

“Zhang Yonghong scolded The Lao kela neuropathy, his heart is very subtle move. Wang Qiyao smiled and nodded to The Old kela, said: your mouth fierce, I lose to you!”

“The Lao kela went to Wang Qiyao’s house again and went straight upstairs.”

“The Lao kela knew she was angry, but she ignored it.”

“The Lao kela pulled out a chair and sat down and watched the sparrows on the windowsill.”

“The Lao kela smiled and said: Am I here for dinner?”

“The Lao kela asked, What do you say I do?”

“The Lao kela was also angry and sat down with his hands still in his trouser pocket.”

“It was The Old kela’s turn to ignore her.”

“The Lao kela is getting down.”

“The Lao kela did not know what she wanted to say. She just stopped her chopsticks.”

“The Lao kela put down his chopsticks and looked up at Wang Qiyao.”

“When she got home, there was no one in bed and The Lao kela left.”

“When will The Lao kela come back?”

“The Lao kela is cycling on the road.”

“This day was all the work of The Old kela.”

“Wang Qiyao toward The Lao kela mouth, The Lao kela and smile and not answer.”

“The Lao kela then said: dare not be!”

“Then by The Old colour, began to taste the dishes.”

“The Lao kela saw that her mouth was not soft.”

“When she gave the fruit bowl to The Old kela, she did not look at him.”

“The Lao kela said: Let me go with you.”

“He saw a bicycle stop at the back door. It was The Old colour; He went straight through the back door and closed it gently.”

“I watched The Lao kela and fought with Zhang Yonghong.”

“When I first arrived at Wang Qiyao’s back door, I saw The Lao kela coming out of it; somehow, he asked her if she had anything and wanted to eat together.”

“Zhang Yonghong thought The Lao kela would ask about long feet..... The Lao kela listened to say: long feet to Hong Kong?... The Lao kela did not notice, and discussed with her what food to order.”

“But The Lao kela almost can not support, his face changed color, stopped and said: Sit down!”

“The Lao kela advocated 40 years ago, but the heart is still a heart now.”

“She wouldn’t know how to spend these days if she hadn’t spent time with her. She even had the idea of empathy to The Old kela, but with her intelligence, enough to understand the true mood of The Old kela.”

“The Lao kela said there was one thing to trust her..... I wonder what The Lao kela and Wang will have to do with Wang Qiyao..... Have a meal with The Lao kela and then break up.”

“The Lao kela asked me to give the key to Wang Qiyao, as if he couldn’t do it himself.”

“There seems to be another The Lao kela in front in the dark.”

“Yes, The Lao kela asked him to bring it.”

“The Lao kela did not come.”[8]

In the above example, “The Old kela” refers to the person associated with Wang Qiyao. It is to use the general term of a certain kind of heroes to replace a specific person with the characteristics of such heroes.

### 5.2.2 Ordinary and specific substitute for each other

In Part 1, Chapter V, Part 5:

“Every morning, when the back door rang, Wang Qiyao came out with a flower bag.”

“In the afternoon, it was Wang Qiyao who sang” Song of the Four Seasons “with the phonograph next door.”

“Go to the cinema to watch Gone with the Wind starring Fei Wenli. It is a group of Wang Qiyao.”

“Go to the photo studio to take small photos, is two par-

ticularly good Wang Qiyao.”

“In every wing or pavilion, there is almost a Wang Qiyao.”

“Every Wang Qiyao has another Wang Qiyao in her company, sometimes a classmate, sometimes a neighbor, and sometimes one among the Cousins.”

“One, Wang Qiyao married, the other Wang Qiyao came to be the bridesmaid, with the meaning of tribute, or see off.”

“In every lane in Shanghai, there are Wang Qiyao reading, embroidering, whispering with her little sisters and lying in tears with her parents.”

“There is always a young girl in Shanghai’s alleys, whose name is Wang Qiyao.”

“The moon shadow on the wall of the lane is the name of Wang Qiyao, the pink falling flowers of oleander, the name of Wang Qiyao, the dancing light behind the gauze curtain, the name of Wang Qiyao, the soft and glutinous Shanghai language of Suzhou accent, and the name of Wang Qiyao.”

“Bangzi selling osmanthus porridge knock up, seems to give Wang Qiyao the night; the three pavilion of the literary youth, writing a new poem to Wang Qiyao; the dew wet the plane tree, is Wang Qiyao’s tears; the private aunt quietly slipped into the back door, Wang Qiyao’s dream but do not know where.”

“Because of Wang Qiyao, the Shanghai lane has a taste of love. This taste is a bit like bursting out from the gap of daily livelihood. The grass with yellow flowers in the cracks in the wall, which is slightly careless and omitted.”

“Because of this taste, there is pain, this painful name, also called Wang Qiyao.”

“This is Wang Qiyao with endless pain” [8]

The “Wang Qiyao” in all the above examples is used to refer to the ordinary women in the lane of Shanghai. It is a specific representative figure that replaces thousands of ordinary and similar people.

### 5.2.3 Specific and abstract mutual substitution

In Part 1, Chapter IV, Part 15:

“When the car passed the door, there was an unusual atmosphere. The car stopped at the intersection, she paid to get off, and then walked into the iron gate of the lane, with eyes behind it.”[8]

In the above example “eye” is to someone who talks about Alice’s apartment. Is to use a concrete human organ instead of the group of people behind the abstract.

## 6. The role of borrowing techniques in the Song of Everlasting Sorrow

The successful use of substitution in “The Song of Everlasting Sorrow” has achieved distinct rhetorical effect. The



borrow technique is essentially a replacement of concept. Through replacement, the following two functions are achieved in “The Song of Everlasting Sorrow”:

First, call the role. Borrowing another related name to call the ontological things, so as to highlight the characteristics of people or things. The theory function is the most basic function of the borrowing generation. According to the context, it can borrow the name associated with the ontological things to replace the ontological things, and highlight the characteristics of the ontological things from the side. For example, in “Long Foot”, it does not directly point out what Zhang Yonghong’s boyfriend is called, but from when he appears with long feet. In the later article, explain the identity of long feet, he is a mixed in Shanghai vanity fair mixed social people, they have no formal occupation, but it is the main force of Shanghai night-life, without their Shanghai night will lose a lively. They disappeared from the sight during the day, and mingled on all the occasions at night, without no one. Therefore, according to their characteristics, the author uses “long feet” to replace this one person. That is to say he this kind of people at night in Shanghai, like how long a double, go out at 11 o’clock, with false mask desperately into vanity fair, in one after one banquet, in a group and a group of top people, ran back before sunrise dark narrow block “shelter”, like only that a Cinderella is about to disappear dress to save their self-esteem. They are a group of people attracted by Shanghai Vanity Fair, in order to reduce their inferiority complex, but also to integrate into such a prosperous holy land as soon as possible, they paid “tax” for this snob. As said in the book, his favorite thing to do is to spend money for his friends, even if he has no money, even if he can borrow money, rob, cheat accounts, but also to be fat, to create the image of a rich son. This is undoubtedly a proof of the prosperity of Shanghai in the 1940s and 1950s, and a revelation of the atmosphere in the 1940s and 1950s.

Second, the descriptive function. The use of borrowing can make the language become humorous and achieve the effect of irony. With the use of rhetoric in the article, the language of the article is more changeable and has played a positive rhetorical effect. It can better trigger readers’ feelings and explore the deeper meaning and connotation through the noumenon of things. For example, in The Old Kela, when introducing him to himself, it directly points out that people call him The Old Kela is ironic. Because he was only twenty-six years old, he pretended to deep miss the past time, miss the old things. The author uses The Old Kela to satirical him for not knowing progress, do not accept new things, and do not deeply understand the old things, with these meanings of moaning. In the conversation between The Old Kela and Wang Qiyao, it

also reflects the shallow of The Old Kela himself. Wang Qiyao often mentions the things of the last era, and the core of the story is to tell the details of the old Shanghai, thus laughing at The Old Kela that his understanding is only a surface. Because The Old Kela did not know the depth of time, he thought that the old things deepened his heart. The author also took this opportunity to criticize those ignorant and sticking to the The Old Kela. He did not want to make progress, made no achievements, and failed to keep up with the pace of The Times.

### **7. See Wang Anyi’s daily life writing in Shanghai from the borrowing generation**

“Wang Qiyao” mainly introduces the appearance of Shanghai boudoir women in the 1930s and 1940s. Through the appearance of “a group of Wang Qiyao”, we can see that Wang Anyi focuses on the daily life of Shanghai when writing about Shanghai. This is related to Wang Anyi’s move to Shanghai with her mother. She lives in the lane of Huaihai Middle Road, and she is also exposed to a slightly Philistine life.”Wang Qiyao” and “Wang Qiyao” meet to take photos, go to the movies, go to school...Although Shanghai was already influenced by western culture and became one of the most developed commercial and financial cities in China, in Wang Anyi’s eyes, Shanghai was not a prosperous vanity fair, but a down-to-earth, diligent and practical existence. She wrote in the “long hate song” first Wang Qiyao from an ordinary lane girl become popular “miss” in Shanghai, between fame and honor, but the vanity, however, easy to go to quickly, after director li died, Wang Qiyao was forced to leave the sound of Shanghai. In the second and third part, Wang Anyi describes Wang Qiyao’s dull life of the solid little citizen class. This dull life is far longer than the bustling “Alice Apartment”, which has a more practical feeling.

In the writing of the fifties and sixties, It also highlights the daily living atmosphere of Shanghai citizens, Although Wang Qiyao is in the safe lane, Life is not generous, But she also never slack off on the creation of the ordinary life of the small interest, meet Mrs.yan and three others, Knowing each other made her enjoy the life in the lane more, She is not pursuing a modern expression, But content in a corner of their own world, Even if I entered the Mrs.yan’s home several chance, To remember her memories of “Alice Apartment,” She was only sentimental, treat with indifference, Return to their own life is still buried in the daily life of life, Settle yourself in your three meals a day, Even when living in tough, harsh conditions, And remain optimistic, Take life in your stride.

In entering the seventies, new things wave over wave,

broke the prosperous Shanghai elegant calm, Wang Qiyao's daughter indulge in the emerging trend, further follow the fashion of little sisters, and Wang Qiyao as a representative of small citizen class, keep the spirit of Shanghai core, will live leisurely. As Wang Anyi once said, "The motivation Shanghai gives me may be the understanding of the spirit of the citizens, which is a highly active way of life. There is nothing quiet meditation, but it is full of practice. They immerse themselves in a day of livelihood, leisurely meals a night, enjoy the fun of life. It is with this that the city of Shanghai has survived many moments of crisis, still in shape." [9] It can be seen that the daily life in Shanghai is grassroots and steady. The shaping of the character of Wang Qiyao "has also certified the core of Wang Anyi's Shanghai writing —— Daily life in Shanghai.

## 8. Conclusion

In "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow", it appeared in five articles, including "Long Foot", "Xiao Wall" "Blue Yellow Spring", "The Old Kela", "Wang Qiyao". The borrowing used in "The Song of Everlasting Sorrow" creates a subtle and hazy aesthetic feeling for the article, and adds a change to the fresh and vernal style of Wang Anyi's article. The effect of satire makes the whole article with a humorous atmosphere in the narrative, avoiding the unchanged writing. In the Song of Everlasting Sorrow, the form of borrowing is not much, basically the same category of large text. In fact, since the development of the pre-

Qin period, but there is no variety of techniques in this book, which also confirms that Wang Anyi's writing style is without flowery words and focuses on the plot, just like a gust of wind in spring.

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