

Current Situation and Research of Feminist Music Criticism in China

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Abstract: Women have always been a topic that needs to be deeply discussed. The main reason is that women have always been in a special position, especially in the Middle Ages, women were even inferior to some valuable goods. Therefore, the discussion of women is the bottom rebound after women were oppressed to the extreme, mainly because women want to obtain more rights. In terms of music, it is still the case. Feminism has always been in a very hot situation in music criticism, mainly because male musicians are unwilling to recognize the contradiction between female musicians and female music independent resistance for their own status. This contradiction exists for a long time and is difficult to reconcile. However, in the Chinese mainland, there is little understanding of feminist music criticism, mainly due to the different background and times. In order to promote the research of feminist music criticism in the Chinese mainland, this paper will start with the core content of feminist music criticism, and elaborate the current situation and research of feminist music criticism in the Chinese mainland.

1. Introduction

Feminism originated in the west, mainly lying in the western world. Women had been in an oppressed position for a long time. Therefore, after women's resistance, feminist movement and feminist ideological trend appeared. In the 1970s, a large number of female composers and musicians joined the feminist movement in the celebration of feminist music, hoping to obtain a position matching their own contribution. After continuous development, female musicians finally won the victory. On the basis of feminism, female musicology has been added in the world, which mainly focuses on the contribution of female musicians and the contribution of female music movement, representing the success of female music movement. However, there was no feminist movement in China, so the research on feminist music criticism is always in the primary stage. Therefore, it is necessary to deepen the understanding of feminist music criticism, which is as follows.

2. Core Content of Feminist Music Criticism

2.1 Feminist Music Criticism Focuses on the Binary Opposition of Gender Identity

Binary opposition is a basic judgment standard in feminism, that is, there is an opposite relationship between things, and the two have irreconcilable attributes, so they become two independent elements without any intersection, such as men and women, light and darkness, mind and body, stupidity and wisdom. Feminism expounds this binary opposition, but in the process of elaborating, it especially emphasizes the vocabulary of men and women. In the eyes of feminists, the words men and women have obvious special meanings. Female musicians have mentioned that there are obvious differences between men and women, that is, most people mark men and women with good and bad labels, and always think that men are better than women, while women are worse. Therefore, in music culture, the famous musicians are all men. For example, the chants used in the church are from male musician Gregory, and there have also been a series of musicians such as Beethoven and Mozart. Moreover, these musicians have obvious discrimination against female musicians, and even many musicians say that female musicians' works are difficult to be elegant, mainly because they recite some dirty lusts. Therefore, female musicians became vulgar representatives at that time, and many people did not want their daughters to embark on the path of female musicians. If women wanted to be recognized by the upper-class society, they must "castrate" their own identity, no longer write love songs, but move towards male music style.

2.2 Feminist Music Criticism Focuses on the Class Differences of Gender Identity

Class difference is a concept put forward after the development of female music movement. The core of this concept lies in class. It does not mean that the class status of female musicians is low, but that there is no class of female musicians at all. Women don't have the name of musician. In essence, they are just "amateur musicians", which is a hobby after the completion of their own industry work, rather than a complete career. In the Middle Ages, most female musicians in society lived like this. Their main job was to serve the upper-class society. Whether nuns, ladies, celebrities or others, these occupations without the name of musician were their main occupations, while musicians can only be "amateur". In addition, the works of these female musicians were not valued because they infringed on the status of male musicians. When female musicians wanted to publish and perform their works, they often bore the pain to sign their music works on the names of other male musicians, and obtained the recognition of male musicians at the same time. In the eyes of contemporary female musicians, part-time is nonsense. But in the Middle Ages, it was a common phenomenon. This also means that in class, women are not allowed to participate in the music industry. Because in the Middle Ages, music was a noble work that women could not defile and touch. Once women participated in music creation, in the public statement of the Holy See, it was to create obscene sounds, which was not conducive to the development of society. Such a charge was unbearable for women at that time, so they had to give up the creation of music or attached to male musicians.

2.3 Feminist Music Criticism Focuses on the Racial Differences of Gender Identity

The development of feminist music criticism is lagging behind, and there is a minority perspective of feminist music criticism on race. That is, the main concern is female musicians of other races. In the western world, white race is the dominant race, while yellow race and black race belong to inferior people. Compared with white female musicians, black and yellow female musicians have a more difficult life and have less autonomy. At that time, two opposing words

appeared to describe the relationship between races, namely “self” and “other”. The word self represented nobility, while other represented inferiority. It was an embodiment without self. Moreover, other colored music that mainly appeared in the white world at that time was black music. This simple singing method and content were considered vulgar by white musicians at that time. Black female musicians, in particular, can no longer be called musicians, and their race is so inferior that they even didn’t have the right of authorship on their own works. Even just adding a name after others was not allowed. Therefore, an interesting phenomenon in the society at that time was that some white male musicians would train several black female music lovers. If these lovers had outstanding personal abilities, they would be given preferential treatment. But the songs they wrote were eventually handed over to white male musicians. This is a discussion of race in contemporary feminist music criticism, which also reveals a dark era.

2.4 Feminist Music Criticism Focuses on the Sexual Orientation Difference of Gender Identity

In feminist music criticism, another classification appears in the subdivision again, that is, a classification due to different sexual orientation, which is a suppression of lesbians. In the western world, heterosexuality is still dominant. When women have homosexuality, it represents vulgar and dirty, while men have homosexuality, there will be no problem. This is a kind of discrimination against women’s status. The main reason is that the definition of women is obscene, so female homosexuality represents a kind of vulgarity. Such a combination is not recognized by the secular world. However, in the world of female musicians, there are a large number of female homosexuals in essence. The main reason for its emergence is that female musicians have been oppressed by male musicians for a long time, and women comfort each other’s injured hearts, which finally forms the phenomenon of female musicians’ homosexual group. This phenomenon is based on the oppression of male musicians and society, but it is not recognized by the secular world. Therefore, female musicians have always been insulted and discriminated against. An interesting word - Queen once appeared. Before the feminist music movement of this word was successful, it always had the meaning of discrimination. It means homosexuality, which was not recognized by the secular world. And many female musicians were always insulted by this word. For example, in opera performances, most female characters were called Opera Queen, which was essentially an insult with the meaning of homosexuality, not an honorific title. These opera queens themselves were excluded from the music circle.

3. Current Situation of Feminist Music Criticism in the Chinese Mainland Region

3.1 Translation Introduction Lag

The Chinese mainland’s research on feminist music criticism has been at an initial stage, mainly due to the lag in translation. The biggest problem is that in the process of translation, Chinese translators do not understand the real meaning of these terms in the era. In fact, in addition to the gay-oriented vocabulary of Queen, there are a series of other words with such special meanings. These words make the whole translation very difficult. Because China did not experience this period, translators can’t understand the importance of these words and the harm they bring to female musicians. Therefore, if the translation goes beyond these words, it will not be able to effectively show the truth of feminist music criticism.

3.2 Insufficient Attention of the Academic Circles

Feminist music criticism has never been noticed in mainland China. The main reason is that the

background culture is different. China has not experienced the female music movement, so Chinese mainland does not have any problems in the control of these contents. Because in Chinese traditional opera, there are always female roles - Dan role. Therefore, the status of women in music was not too low. In the past, music was also one of the low-end industries in China, failing to have a very elegant status, so there was no discrimination against each other. It was not until the founding of new China that the status of musicians began to improve, so there was a great unity of Chinese music. Therefore, the feminist movement could not appear in China's music industry. As a result, not many people are interested in the follow-up feminist music criticism.

3.3 Differences in Academic Context

On the issue of feminist music criticism, there has always been a great academic context difference between China and the West, mainly because the embodiment of men's and women's rights is not obvious or even nonexistent in China. There are two main reasons. First, in the revolutionary era, the success of China's revolution fully depended on the strength of women. At that time, the slogan "women can hold up half the sky" also appeared. Therefore, Chinese women have become a solid backing in the hands of Chinese men's revolutionary struggle, so they complement each other, and there is no problem of female discrimination at all. Second, after the founding of new China, in order to effectively change the concept of men's superiority over women, China specifically included the content of gender equality in the constitution, so the concept of gender equality is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for Chinese mainland people to understand what women feel when they are discriminated against. Therefore, there are differences in academic context.

3.4 Strangeness of the Research Subject

In Chinese mainland research on female movement, there is always a situation of strange research subjects. This is mainly because Chinese women have never received anything independently, so there is no competition for the right to speak. The only political power led by women appeared in the era of Wu Zetian, thousands of years ago. In addition, Wu Zetian also spoke on the basis of imperial power, not just for women. As a result, the Chinese people's concept of feminism is vague, and Chinese women do not know what feminism is. At the same time, China has always created a certain development space for women, and Chinese women can survive according to their own wishes, so there is no competition for the right to speak.

4. Path of Feminist Music Criticism in Chinese Mainland

4.1 Try to Keep the Original Words in Translation

In order to fully understand the relevant contents of feminist music criticism, it is necessary to try best to ensure the original content of feminist music criticism in the process of translation. One of the most effective ways is to retain the original words in the translation of feminist music criticism. The flavor of these original words may not be found by people or translators for the time being, but after using the original words, the flavor of the whole translation is more in line with the original one. Therefore, in the subsequent supplement, such translation can restore the meaning of words based on its specific environment at that time, rather than the meaning of self-understanding. This is closer to the essence of feminist music criticism.

4.2 Raise Academic Attention

At present, the great integration of music has become a trend. Therefore, Chinese academic workers should effectively learn the content and actively try to understand feminist music criticism, so as to find more characteristics of female music. This can ensure that China's music culture is more abundant, so as to improve the level of China's music culture. The main means still needs the corresponding call of the ministry of culture to comprehensively carry out the research on western feminist music criticism from some masters in China, so as to improve the integration of feminist music criticism in China's music culture.

4.3 Deeply Study the History of Feminism

China can only study the content of feminist music criticism with a learning attitude. The main reason is that there is no female music movement in China. As a branch of the feminist movement, feminist music criticism requires Chinese scholars to better understand the content of feminist music criticism, fully understand the history of feminism, start with the birth, development and thought of feminism, comprehensively understand feminism, and analyze the content of feminist music criticism from the perspective of western women, so as to better enter feminist music criticism, ensure that the content of feminist music criticism is true and effective.

4.4 Open Chinese Ideas

The biggest problem of Chinese scholars' research on feminist music criticism lies in ignorance of some special problems. This is mainly because Chinese scholars generally have a certain ideological imprisonment, and have adopted an evasive attitude towards a series of issues such as sex, homosexuality and incest that can be talked about in the West. Because this is taboo in China's ethical thought. However, the content of feminist music criticism itself is western, so if you want to better study the content of feminist music criticism, you need to go deep into western thought and open inherent ideas.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, there has never been a female music movement or explicit feminist movement in Chinese mainland, so Chinese music circles have never understood enough about feminist music criticism. The main reason is that for a long time, Chinese female musicians have never been oppressed, and people always respect female musicians. Therefore, Chinese music circles have always taken a dabbling attitude towards Western feminist music criticism. However, with the gradual integration and deepening of world music culture, in order to better develop Chinese music culture, feminist music criticism has become a content that must be studied. Therefore, there are the above research viewpoints.

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