

Rational Thinking and Irrational Thinking in Song Creation

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Abstract: Song creation is a complex and comprehensive activity, which is the combination of rational thinking and irrational thinking. Irrational thinking is the forerunner of creation and destination of emotions. Rational thinking provides organizational elements and means for creative activities. Both of them are indispensable.

1. Introduction

There are many theoretical foundations about the rationality and irrationality in artistic thinking. Rationality is a way of thinking that can grasp the essence of things through logical reasoning, judgment, analysis or summary, while irrationality is the content of consciousness “outside rationality”, such as emotion, intuition, inspiration, will, etc. In artistic creation, we should recognize the role and position of rational thinking. Only full of inspiration and impulse is of no help. If you have the same life experience and personality color of Beethoven, can you create the Symphony of Destiny? However, the important role of irrational thinking can not be ignored. As Hegel said, “Rational thinking can not master the beauty of the world alone”. [1] From a scientific point of view, the “creativity” of artistic works may just be generated from the unique irrational thinking. Creation is personalized, and the irrationality on the basis of rationality is the root of creation. When it comes to the creative activity of song creation, it is no longer regarded as a simple emotional expression, but a complex comprehensive activity, that is, it should admit the importance of irrational thinking, such as image thinking and inspiration thinking, and it also needs the standardization of rational scale.

2. Leading Role of Irrational Thinking in Song Creation

According to the explanation of the Soviet philosophers Rozentali and Eugene, “irrationality” is “what rational thinking can't understand and logic concept can't express”. [2] Irrationality is a mysterious “entity” that can't be traversed by reason, is a chaotic and disordered consciousness phenomenon in human's spiritual structure. It has the characteristics of illogical, informal, unorganized, non normative and non procedural. [3] In song creation, the inner spiritual structure or cognitive mode constructed by intuition, emotion, desire and unconsciousness is the prerequisite for injecting soul into a song. Most textbooks say that writing a good song needs rich life experience and strong perceptual ability, which can produce emotional fluctuation when seeing and hearing objective objects and consciously make composers contact their own life experience to obtain different emotional colors when the senses process information. We inject the emotions, which come from objective object and move ourselves, into the melody creation and pass the emotions when listeners enjoy the sound. The core content of composing songs should be the non logical factors such as emotion, intuition and idea. The others is just an explicit form of these inner cores.

Irrational thinking can be used to direct people's rational thinking in music creation. All kinds of music theories and writing skills we have learned are just tools to broaden the channel of rational thinking, which will serve the mysterious and real entity of irrationality after all. Hume once said in Psychology of Emotion that “reason is the servant of passion”. We always think that it is reason, science and logic that dominate human beings. However, in the field of music creation, what can directly attack the soul is the irrational essence that reason can't achieve. Therefore, the premise of a good song creation is to have sufficient irrational leading reserve.

3. Organizational Elements of Rational Thinking in Song Creation

Rationality and irrationality are both spiritual phenomena of human beings, which are derived from human spiritual essence. In the creative activities, the psychological process of the creative subject is extremely complex and diverse. Various factors, such as rationality, irrationality, intelligence, non intelligence, experience, non experience, subjective, non subjective, always interweave and interact with each other. Belinsky, a Russian critic, once said that “creation is purposeless and purposeful, unconscious and conscious”. [4] In the process of writing, the timing of mobilizing rational thinking and rational tools is extremely uncertain. The following summarizes and sorts out the rational tools that may be mobilized for song creation, which vary from person to person, from song to song, and from time to time.

3.1 Selection of Song Creation Methods

The way of song creation is a rational choice based on the internal and external factors. Different social development stages and different individuals have different ways of song creation.

Modern song creation methods are relatively free, including “tunes before lyrics”, “lyrics before tunes” and “simultaneous lyrics and tunes”. In the creation method of “lyrics before tunes”, melody should be created according to the structure of lyrics, music image, rhyme and word rhythm. In addition, the structure of lyrics can also be used to plan the form of music. Under the premise of setting the mode of music, harmony should be designed within the framework of the structure. Chinese pentatonic melody can be created according to its common characteristics with the scale of major and minor modes, and the harmony framework can be designed according to the thinking mode of major and minor modes. This method is more often used in the creation of modern pop songs. “Tunes before lyrics” is also one of common methods, which can be called “filling lyrics”. This method is common in the history of song creation in ancient China, such as “sing poetry into music” in Tang Dynasty and “fill in Ci according to Qu” in Song Dynasty.

3.2 Logical Framework of Song Structure

“Hegel discusses the beauty of form from two aspects: one is perceptual materials, that is, the quality of art is required from the aspects of intonation, rhythm, timbre and volume control; another is structure, it requires the artistic quality from the aspect of structure, that is, whether the organizational structure of music sounds is beautiful? The latter is mainly for the requirements of composition (music creation).” [5]

The structure of music form is the overall performance means of music. In music, the whole and the part interact and restrict each other. The thinking level from the whole to the part should be adopted in the creation. If creation method of “lyrics before tunes” is taken, the original structure of lyrics needs to be taken into consideration. If the creation method of “tunes before lyrics” is adopted, there is no concern about the details of specific lyrics, only need to plan on the whole. Generally, the space of song structure is small, and simple binary form (consist of two segments) and simple ternary form (consist of three relatively independent segments of similar scale) are used more often. At the same time, it is also necessary to consider the functional role of the musical form structure. Different parts of the musical form play different roles, such as presentation, consolidation, development and termination. The Chinese people prefer the functional mode of “starting and changing” and its changing form. This kind of emotional presentation can be used from large part to small sentence.

3.3 Adaptive Conception of Song Theme

“The theme is the most musically characteristic part of the music which is outstanding because of its relatively complete image.” [6] The contrast theme and the single theme depend on the complexity of emotional expression and the length of the song. Of course, from contrast to singleness is a gradual process, and there is no clear boundary. From complete contrast, derivative

contrast to change and repeat theme itself is the result of comprehensive selection by a creative subject in accordance with complex factors such as irrationality. The theme is the foreshadowing of the overall emotion and style of a song, which lays the emotional tone of the whole piece of music. Therefore, the creation of the theme is suitable for many attempts under the guidance of irrational emotions. Once the theme phrase is determined, the subsequent succession and conversion should be more logical.

3.4 Color Control of Song Mode

Generally speaking, the choice of modes is nothing more than the major mode, minor mode and the Chinese national mode. The major mode is bright and rigid, while the minor mode is dark and soft. Of course, it's not absolute. We will take their differences as the first level differences. The creative subject also needs to grasp according to the style orientation of songs, their own mode preferences and creation habits. In the system of major and minor modes, more distinctive melody effects can be obtained through the differences in the details of characteristic intervals, such as the ascending VI in Dorian mode, the descending V in Locarian mode, the descending II in Phrygian mode, the ascending IV in Lydian mode, and the descending VII in Mixolidian mode. In all natural modes, the falling of the original tone level produces soft effect, and the rising tone level has the masculine effect. Therefore, we can try to introduce new characteristic scale steps on the basis of the original tonality, which can greatly increase the expressive force of the mode.

3.5 Forward-Looking Consciousness of Song Innovation

In the process of creation, in addition to the arrangement from the whole to the details, composers also need to consciously create new sound effects different from others. Of course, it is not only a labor process of song creation, but also a series of music arrangement and singing. Song creation is the source and foundation. Therefore, the creative subject has the responsibility to give himself innovative motivation, and should have new consciousness and breakthrough from the beginning of creation, so that the innovation consciousness can be reflected in all aspects of creative activities, such as theme selection, theme melody, rhythm arrangement, rhythm movement, structure function, tonality arrangement, harmony layout, etc.

4. Conclusion

In fact, most of creative activities of music are realized in the unconscious instinct. The mathematician Leibniz once said that "music is the unconscious operation of mathematics in the soul". That is to say, the phenomena that composers create immortal music works and can be used for future generations to study the mathematical laws are mostly unconscious products, which may be controlled by innate sensitivity to beauty. But as an ordinary person, you can't achieve the effect of using rational and irrational thinking freely without years of learning and accumulation or strong thinking ability. Most people still need to use the tools of rational thinking to expand their thinking channels and obtain the transmission and release of irrational thinking.

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