



A New Look at Other Perspectives from The Integrationist View of Music Education

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Abstract

Following the spirit of integration proposed by Bennett Reimer in the field of music education, we conduct a new examination of the historical views of music "formal theory", "practical theory" and "functional theory". By returning the above questions to their starting point, we will find that there are also different voices within many opinions. More importantly, through discourse analysis of representatives of each viewpoint, we can find that each viewpoint cannot be said to be completely correct or wrong. The problem is that if they are given an extreme expression, it is easy to blur the essential attributes of music's compatibility and openness. Therefore, this article attempts to make a certain analysis of these views that exist in history by carefully sorting out these issues.

Keywords: fusionism, music education, formal theory, practice theory

Introduction: This article is based on Reimer's new view of fusionism and gives a new interpretation to many viewpoints that have appeared in history. The core of this article is to construct a new music education concept from a new perspective, and to show the significance of fusionism to music education research by analyzing how fusionism deconstructs many previous theories. This historical perspective will challenge many famous viewpoints in the history of music education and deeply analyze their advantages and disadvantages.



Research Objectives:

1. A new interpretation of formalism through fusionism.
2. A new interpretation of practice theory through fusionism.
3. A new interpretation of feminism through fusionism.

Literature Review:

This section carefully sorts out the viewpoints of formalism, practice theory and feminism, refines their theoretical core, and then introduces the criticism and deconstruction of them by fusionism. The above viewpoints that appeared in history have the meaning of a hundred schools of thought. By deconstructing their theoretical core, we can make a qualitative leap in thinking about the theory and practice of music education at present.

Objective 1: The core of formal music

Many music theorists once believed that music can be independent of the scope defined by people, and the essence and value of music can be found in self-contained musical works. This view was later called music "formalism". In their view, once a work is created, the composer and the performer seem to be able to retreat behind the scenes, and the remaining work can independently carry the real musical meaning. But it is undeniable that the composer must have added some elements of his own subjectivity in the process of creating the work. As an individual, they cannot abandon the overall context of their time to create. The viewpoints on the formalism of music are mostly discussed in the field of music aesthetics. In my country, the issue of music formalism also attracted the attention of many music scholars in the last century.

The discussion of the issue of music formalism can be traced back to the era of Hegel, Kant and others if it is said that it has reached a relatively mature period. Many key issues in our discussion of music formalism were triggered by Hanslick's music aesthetics work "On the Beauty of Music" written in 1854. In this book, Hanslick clearly stated that music is the result of the arrangement and combination of musical sounds. The musical sounds that are combined into music will produce forms. These arrangements and forms do not carry any content such as



emotions except themselves. The content of the music contains nothing other than the musical sound forms heard. He also believes that "the beauty of music is not determined by any theme given by the outside world, nor does it need such a theme, but is entirely composed of artistically combined sounds."^[1] We can also see the description of this view in another formalist, Bell: For those who are obsessed with a work of art, they can feel a world of strong and special meaning, which has nothing to do with our lives. In this world, we have no place for emotions in life. Remer generally summarizes the ideas advocated by formalists who hold the same views as Hanslick as: "The essence of music - its fundamental existence - lies in its form"^[2], and such a form is the whole meaning of its existence as a work. Therefore, we can conclude that the relationship between sounds as the basis of music is the formalist's view of the essence of music. At the same time, we can see that formalists believe that the true meaning of many other arts, including music, can actually only be discovered by a few people, and most people's understanding of music is actually based on non-musical reactions. This leads formalists to believe that most people are born unable to truly understand music, and some only have non-musical essences that they understand from music. However, the key to the problem is how formalists explain why most of us always appreciate and need music, and how formalists answer what they mean by non-musical essences. Even under the very vague premise that formalists deny that music expresses emotions, but do not completely deny that many works of art have references to the external world, they cannot answer the above questions.

Clive Bell, a more extreme formalist, was also troubled by similar problems. He had to admit the original role of artists in creating forms. More acutely, questions such as why we are so attracted to certain combinations of lines or notes have always troubled formalists who share the same views as Bell. Interestingly, Bell believes that the answer may be, "The artist truly expresses an emotion that can be captured by people with a combination of lines or notes."^[3] Among those who have deeply thought about the extreme views of formalists, Chinese scholar Yu Runyang questioned the extreme ideas of formalism based on the standpoint of Marxist philosophical epistemology, believing that music cannot exist independently from objective things, and it must be a reaction to some objective things. Reimer pointed out that those things described as non-essential are "stories, images, thoughts, etc. that



they imagine are in music."^[2] If we look at it from the perspective of integration, formalists find that the biggest feature of music is to use the combination of sounds to spread meaning. Such meaning is different from other human experiences. It is something that is strictly distinguished from the non-musical world and is worthy of affirmation. The view of formalism does reveal some essential attributes of music. For example, it believes that music can be independent of other aspects of our lives. It is precisely because it is isolated from the non-musical world that it makes sense for it to be an independent system. However, using such an extreme idea to express one's own position will eliminate other characteristics of music, which is opposed by the attitude of integration. In Reimer's view, with such an extreme attitude, teachers and students may go to extremes in our music education practice.

Objective 2: The advocacy of the theory of practice

In the field of music, the earliest person who held the view of practical philosophy can be traced back to Aristotle in ancient Greece. The "theory of practice" discussed in this article mainly revolves around the advocacy of the practitioners since the 20th century. In contemporary times, scholars who hold the view of practice theory mainly include Francis Sparshott, Philip Ailpson, Wayne Bowman and David J. Elliott. At present, among the research sequences of Chinese scholars, the practice theorist Elliott and his book "Focus on Music Practice-New Philosophy of Music Education" have attracted the most attention. Because Elliott fiercely criticized the aesthetic music education viewpoints put forward by Reimer and others, to a certain extent, the music education philosophy community has presented a binary opposition between "aesthetics" and "practice". The practice theorists affirmed that the aesthetic philosophy of music education headed by Reimer is one of the most influential concepts in the field of music education. After sorting out the historical evolution of the concept of aesthetic education, Elliott concluded that the philosophy of music education in the past was extremely consistent and its context was very clear. It is based on the general aesthetic concept assumptions of the 18th and 19th centuries, especially Langer's theory, and the practice theorists captured the core of Langer's assumption that music is similar to human emotional forms, and the tonality of music is similar to emotional life. Then, Eliot clearly believed that if it is based on the above-mentioned Langer assumption, the aesthetic philosophy of music



education does not provide a logical and comprehensive philosophical foundation for the teaching and learning of music.

Like Reimer, Eliot does not deny that the philosophical concept of music is a logical prerequisite for the philosophy of music education. The difference is that Eliot, as a practice theorist, believes that music is essentially a human activity and music is a "practice" (Praxis). Therefore, this leads Eliot to regard the process of music formation as the essential content of music, and the process of music formation occupies an important position in the concept we call "music". As he said: "Fundamentally, music is a human activity. This is a starting point for a definite, multidimensional approach that leads to an explanation of what music is and why it is important." If the process of music and human practice is further refined, the creed of the practice theorists is "music is what people do."^[4] After summarizing the arguments that share the same view, Elliott believes that the concept of music consists of the following four parts: first, the implementer or the person involved in the production; second, what is being done; third, what has been done; and fourth, the complete context in which the creator does things. Based on the above four points, Elliott further emphasized: "Music is a diverse human practice. There are many music practices or music types around the world. Each music practice depends on the common understanding and efforts of the professional workers in that practice, that is, the music creators."^[5] Recognizing the important role of professional workers, Elliott further concluded that music education should serve those professional listeners with superior abilities and superb skills. In order to meet this, he advocated that capable and artistic music makers should be cultivated if this service goal is to be achieved. Reimer believes that such a view is extreme. It obviously severs the relevance of music and music education to most people, denies the fundamental positioning of music education, and is full of elitism.

Objective 3: Feminist Thoughts

In Reimer's examination of various extreme issues, he observed that many scholars believe that music and other arts are often regarded as serving certain social-political purposes. Their more extreme idea is that most of the music we can hear now is the product of political purposes. Therefore, some people propose that music is used as a certain purpose of social development, a kind of "social agent", and fundamentally "exists as a political phenomenon"^[2].



Its educational behavior should be considered from this point of view. As Suzanne G. Cusick said: "Behind all classical music performances, there is a culture. No matter what content any selected performance repertoire gives us on the surface, we can always find that it serves as a script for the culture that serves the public."^[6] They also emphasize that music as a social agent is hidden, and music is not what music education behavior shows on the surface. Many scholars believe that there are many messages in music that need to be decoded, especially standard Western classical music. What these scholars are concerned about is very different from any extreme ideas we have discussed before. It is no longer about "music experience" or "music practice", but the focus has become on revealing the "information" hidden behind the music. It is this information that controls what kind of music we can access. In addition to how feminism views music education, which will be discussed later, music as a social agent is generally considered to be related to a certain issue that people are interested in, and is not for the purpose of completing our music and music education. It's just that this idea of social agency is most prominent from the perspective of feminism.

For music scholars who hold the view that music is a social agent, they believe that the interpretation of music should be examined from various perspectives, such as race, age, social class, ethnicity, culture, religion, ecological concerns, locality, etc. Since they believe that music or other art serves some other purposes including social and political purposes, the meaning of music will inevitably be presupposed to achieve that purpose, even if our interpretation of a specific work still cannot escape the information and values that are hidden in advance. Such a view coincides with the postmodern claims mentioned above, and is full of political implications.

Since social agency covers too many perspectives, all kinds of people can more or less point out that music education serves a certain "purpose", "agenda", etc. Fusionism selects the representative perspective of feminism to respond to the various issues raised by social agency. The analysis of the feminist perspective is taken as a case to analyze the various concepts implied by social agency because the topic of feminism has undoubtedly constituted a relatively stable academic field in the West today. The ideas advocated by fusionism naturally cannot avoid this issue. The extreme ideas of this issue also allow us to better reflect on how to examine



music with an integrated attitude. Fusionism makes the following brief summary of feminism, believing that feminism is exclusive, and it "forces all people of both biological sexes and all races, ethnicities and other identities to view music from a prescriptive perspective rather than from any perspective that fits their identity."^[2]

From a feminist perspective, music education becomes a question of female-male political relations, which makes the concept and behavior of music education necessary to differentiate. At the beginning of the feminist movement, scholars in the field of music strongly protested that our music education was incomplete and that they were in "a subject still dominated by men."^[7] In the 1990s, Lucy Green argued in *Music, Gender, and Education* that our music education model for hundreds of years was unfair because women were under the authority of men. All of this made educators begin to pay attention to the impact of gender on music education. They began to reflect on "how music education cooperates with patriarchal traditions in curriculum setting, teaching activity arrangements, teaching concepts, teaching expectations and other explicit and implicit means to influence the music education of both sexes."^[8] Cooks believes that no matter what position we take, we cannot deny the music criticized by feminism, because they do bring us peace of mind and some instinctive things. He believes that feminism deprives music of a source of pleasure, so he asks: "How can feminism justify the music that it believes distorts our instincts?"^[6] Obviously, feminism is unwilling to admit or does not know what specific political signals those works have, especially when the music they are exposed to does not have an overtly gendered content, or explicitly calls attention to a gendered title, or the program clearly describes a gender situation. When we look for gender interpretations for music in this way, it means that we artificially put pre-existing interests into the music. Reimer believes that taking such an interpretive stance has caused serious damage to the way that music can be experienced freely and individually. Reimer simply summarizes the above two opposing views as follows: the fact that the feminist perspective as a manifestation of social agency is based on the search for information as the content of music, and "interpretation" as a means. People like Kux experience music, immerse themselves in the music, and perceive the music with their whole body and mind, without the help of symbols or language. Obviously, these seem to be two extremes. Both of these two



extremes seem to make sense. At the same time, we cannot avoid the important debates of our time being involved in music. On the other hand, we cannot experience music without any prejudice. This is just like we must admit that the music we can hear is already full of the "cause and effect" that the composer experienced during the production process. This is the meaning of fusion. It affirms the unique experience of individuals in music and does not deny that music contains possible value tendencies advocated by feminism. The meaning of music described by any concept will eventually enter, filter and merge in the individual experience. Therefore, what fusionism advocates is to recognize that those diverse concepts and values are reasonable, but they should not be bound by a certain value. They are only one of many concepts that appear, and respect is the best way to deal with them.

Research Methodology:

This paper adopts the literature research method, which is a research method to understand and recognize things and phenomena by consulting, analyzing and organizing literature. Therefore, this paper adopts the literature research method to collect and organize the historical evolution and development process of the above-mentioned Western music education philosophy. The use of literature research method enables researchers to grasp the update of previous Western music education concepts by fusionism in the way of readers and conduct theoretical discussions on it.

Results:

Objective 1: Using the concept of integration, we first acknowledge that the formalists' attention to and insight into the "inner" of music is reasonable, but at the same time we should also note that this concept will go to extremes if the essence of music is understood as a single "form". Like other extreme views to be introduced later, a more integrated suggestion is that we can understand "form as playing an important role among other roles, and therefore receiving different degrees of attention, depending on the specific circumstances of different music, different cultures, different interests and different motivations." If we turn to



people's description of the meaning of music to express the essence of music as much as possible, we can find that the limitations of formalism are obvious. Regarding the vague characterization of music given by formalists as "meaningful form", some scholars believe that it is more appropriate to describe the meaning of music as the meaning that is recognized by the audience, because the material of music is inherent, and the meaning of music is also generated from the relationship between the material of music. For this meaning, it depends on how the audience thinks, and the number of researchers holding such views is also increasing. Most of them believe that sound itself must, to some extent, become part of the meaning or importance of other "phenomena."

If we regard music as an aesthetic object, the following assertion by French aesthetician Mikel Dufrenne can provide a new perspective for our understanding of music. Specifically, in *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, Dufrenne believes that the physical factors of experience also affect our experience of music all the time. This influence ranges from the creation process to the listening process, and the participation of the senses fundamentally restricts the presentation of aesthetic objects in our minds, as he said: "The first step of the aesthetic object is to convey itself to the body, and the existence of the body is to join any action of the aesthetic object without delay."^[9] Anthropologist Armstrong also agrees with this idea. This idea of cooperating music with the senses to create the meaning of music has attracted the attention of many scholars. It can be imagined that with the deepening of research, the complexity and inclusiveness of music will inspire more and more new ideas, and the scale of scrutiny will continue to be promoted over time.

Objective 2: Compared to the extreme expression of formalism that regards "form" as one of the results of music as the essence of music, the practice theorists believe that "action" is the essence of music. However, the fusion attitude believes that there is no either-or assertion mentioned above, or if this essential issue continues to be discussed, many new viewpoints will emerge. In addition to Reimer's response to Eliot's sharp criticism of aesthetic education introduced in the first chapter of this article, later scholars have also confirmed that the concept of the word aesthetics is indeed constantly expanding. It changes with the development of society, and this change is deeply influenced by our culture and art. Therefore,



the practice theorists insist that the past and present music aesthetic theories focus on the thinking of contextless, internal and distant objects, and then conclude that the concept of aesthetics is just "the reproduction of the basic tenets of social ideology. This statement obviously does not realize that "aesthetic education" has been continuously enriched over time.

Furthermore, Reimer discusses the core of the practice theory - "action" in actual situations. Practice theorists cannot deny that in most of the activities of musicians creating music, we cannot be present at the scene, "we usually cannot observe the working state of such people", and it is the "product" that proves the significance of their practice. To be precise, in most cases, "it is what they produce, not what they think when making the product." At the same time, fusionism believes that the viewpoint of practice theory is also inappropriate in describing some aspects of performance. They believe that focusing on performance will better reflect the philosophical position of emphasizing "practice" as the whole or main content of music, but music performance has a deeper meaning, which These meanings cannot be covered by practice alone. In fact, as the fusionists discovered, both the practice theorists and the formalists must admit that the process of music practice will inevitably produce products, and in fact, these products have indeed been used as an important medium for the public to understand the meaning of musicians' practice. Regarding the extreme idea that "the essence, value, or substance of music lies in its practice", Reimer believes that it will also cause music teachers to teach music with the main purpose of helping people to act in the way of musicians, just as they emphasize that "practice" is the essential value of music. In this way, those who cannot participate in music practice are blocked from music, which will undoubtedly shake the fundamental purpose of music education. Regarding other misleading ideas based on the practice theory, Reimer believes that the practice viewpoint, in order to strongly oppose the aesthetic education creed, artificially abandons the inclusive factors contained in the aesthetic education creed, which also makes it "in order to resist one extreme, but go to another extreme tendency".

Objective 3: Reimer believes that the fact that a feminist perspective as a manifestation of social agency is based on the search for information as the content of music, using "interpretation" as a means. People like Kux experience music, immerse themselves in



the music, and perceive music with their whole body and mind, without the help of symbols or language. Obviously, these seem to be two extremes. Both of these poles seem to make sense. At the same time, we cannot avoid the important debates of our time being involved in music. On the other hand, we cannot experience music without any prejudice. This is just like we must admit that the music we can hear is already full of the "cause and effect" that the composer experienced when making it.

Related Researches: In the field of world music education, in addition to the extreme views of formalism, practice and feminism mentioned above, there are still some music education concepts with important influence, such as functionalism, culturalism, expressionism and expressionism. From the perspective of integration, if these concepts are expressed or understood in an extreme way, they will also bring practical difficulties to music education. It is impossible to list all these concepts one by one, but the main viewpoints still need to be given necessary attention. Therefore, this article combines the two concepts of functionalism and culturalism, which are more concerned in China, to make necessary explanations.

The concept of music education related to functionalism is not a new idea in the field of music education. At present, music education in most countries in the world also has functionalism. The currently recognized representative of music education functionalism is Paul Haack. The functional music education concept he proposed is mainly based on the pragmatic philosophical discourse system. As early as 1983, the American "Music Educators Journal" (Music Educators Journal) took "practical or aesthetic" as a special topic and discussed it within the scope of music education. Haack believes that the idea of functional music education and American school music education appeared at the same time, and at the beginning it was for the purpose of improving religious music life. He summarized the reasons for the functionalism, which is that "music plays a role in the intellectual, physical and moral development of people", and music is taught in schools because it has this function.^[10] The key to the problem is that many scholars have found that functional music education, under the rule of pragmatism philosophy, has led to an excessive emphasis on the training of music skills in



the field of teaching practice, and it can even be said that it is committed to the teaching model of music elites. But on the other hand, Hack also emphasized that we need to take seriously and think seriously about serious social problems related to music, the use and abuse of music, and seek solutions to problems that are consistent with education, life and contemporary society. Here, some concerns about music education raised by functionalism seem to be undeniable. From an integrated attitude, just as Hack did not completely deny the idea of aesthetic education, in modern times, no matter from what perspective music education is examined, some ideas of functionalism are still worth retaining. In the field of music education, the concept of "culturalism" is also quite influential. In a broad sense, it refers to the idea of music education that advocates multiculturalism. Culturalism places music education on the stage of world music, believing that "music of all styles, forms and cultures of all periods should be included in the curriculum", and further believes that all countries in the world should pay attention to the entire music culture of our time. Under its influence, UNESCO called on "schools to adopt diversified music and cultural education, and to take world music as the content of music education, rather than just Western professional music". However, some scholars pointed out that the many beliefs advocated by cultural theory are actually more to oppose "Western-centered music", even though cultural theory emphasizes cross-fertilization and excludes any philosophy as a paradigm of music education. Some scholars also analyzed from the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics that multiculturalism is to break the monoculture, but multiculturalism itself is fundamentally a "one-dimensional view of truth", which does not equally cover all music education philosophical thoughts. Its advocacy is seriously inconsistent with its actual practice, at least it unfairly compresses the status that Western music should have. From the perspective of integration, music education that emphasizes multiculturalism is indeed popular, but it cannot be used to view all music phenomena indiscriminately or even with prejudice. The concept advocated by multiculturalism should be put into a specific context for discussion. Music is too inclusive and must be identified in order to properly handle it in specific educational behaviors.

Discussion:

Objective 1: Therefore, from the perspective of integration, the many viewpoints that



have appeared in history cannot be completely limited to one of their multiple scales. We must first admit that music does create its own unique world as formalists say. In this world of only sound, it is fundamentally different from other things in many aspects. At the same time, we should also realize that the formalist thought of music has complex and profound radical arguments, and such radical arguments should not constitute a complete negation of other viewpoints. As Reimer discovered, in the pursuit of the essence of music, theorists with formalist views such as Hanslick and Bell fell into an extreme formalist position, which can only represent a specific historical and cultural view. As human beings continue to deepen their understanding of things, extreme formalists like Bell will continue to appear and reflect on themselves as above. Such reflection reminds us that there are huge risks in denying form. Over-emphasizing form also has huge risks.

Objective 2: When Reimer came up with the idea of fusion, he also saw another claim of thinkers who are attracted by the view of pragmatism today, that is, pragmatism recognizes that "music has always been based on culture and serves many social functions." This can also explain that fusionism advocates a more stable and moderate view than extreme formalism or extreme pragmatism. At least within pragmatism, they also begin to believe that culture and social functions play a certain role in the scope of music. Standing on the opposite side of pragmatism, we also admit that while appreciating these seemingly extreme musical works, we can also try our best to understand the "actions" that make all these products possible in the first place. After all, "if you don't recognize the mutual dependence of the work on the maker and the maker on the work, such a common dependence phenomenon shared by music and all other human productive activities, then he can't explain music." Based on this, the attitude of fusionism is to face up to the concerns of pragmatism, absorb the reasonable factors in the position advocated by pragmatism, and at the same time affirm the insights suggested by pragmatism that play an important role in any adequacy and balance that is conducive to music and music education.

Objective 3 : This is the meaning of integration. It affirms the unique experience of individuals in music and does not deny that music contains possible value tendencies such as



those advocated by feminism. The musical meanings described by any concept will eventually enter, filter and integrate in the individual's experience. Therefore, what fusionism advocates is to recognize that those diverse concepts and values are reasonable, but they should not be bound by a certain value. They are just one of many concepts that appear, and respect is the best way to deal with them.

Conclusion:

In the field of music education, uncertain beliefs can be seen in the long history of self-justification and self-doubt. This can be seen from the fact that many of the viewpoints discussed in the article are highly praised by some people, and the subsequent dissociation appears. The reality is that everything music educators do is putting into practice the disciplinary tenets of self-awareness. As Reimer says, until music education understands what it really has to offer, until it realizes that it is a necessary component of human culture rather than a peripheral part, we will not gain the peace of mind that marks maturity. In order to find such a kind of peace, or to rationally think about the essence of music education out of love, many people have been making long-term efforts, and the work of formalists, practicalists, and functionalists has also been ongoing. continues. This article starts from the discussion of domestic and foreign views and demands on music education, focuses the discussion on the transformation of Reimer's integration thoughts, and then conducts new reflections on music education.



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