

The Aesthetic Loss of Chinese Philosophy in the 20th Century: Chinese Painting under Aesthetic Education

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Abstract: In the 20th century, Chinese philosophy gradually showed its alienation from the traditional aesthetic dimension in the tide of modernization and the spread of Western learning to the East. This phenomenon of "aesthetic loss" was particularly prominent in the transformation of Chinese painting under the aesthetic education system. The introduction of Western realism and the infiltration of scientific education have caused Chinese painting to shift from "expression of mind" to "technical training", the traditional brush and ink artistic conception has been deconstructed, and the "unity of man and nature" spirit at the philosophical level has been marginalized. Although scholars such as Cai Yuanpei advocated "replacing religion with aesthetic education", at the practical level, aesthetic education has mostly become a utilitarian tool and has failed to truly connect with the aesthetic core of Chinese philosophy. This article analyzes the evolution of Chinese painting education and practice in the 20th century, explores how the rupture of the interaction between philosophy and art has led to the weakening of aesthetic subjectivity, and reflects on the possible path to rebuild the Chinese aesthetic spirit.

Keywords: Chinese Philosophy; Aesthetics; Loss; Aesthetic Education.

1. Introduction

Chinese philosophy in the 20th century experienced a silent and profound aesthetic loss, which was particularly evident in the modern transformation of traditional Chinese painting. When aesthetic education was incorporated into the modern education system as an enlightenment tool, Chinese painting, a traditional art form that carries the aesthetic spirit of thousands of years, unexpectedly fell into an identity crisis. The strong intervention of the Western aesthetic system and the decline of traditional aesthetic values together constitute a cultural field full of tension, where the artistic conception of literati painting encounters the challenge of scientific perspective, and the mysterious "lively spirit" gives way to concrete realistic techniques. This aesthetic shift is not a simple change of artistic style, but reflects the cultural dilemma faced by the entire nation in the process of modernization - how can we establish our own modern aesthetic subjectivity in the negation of tradition? When Kang Youwei cried out that "Chinese painting has declined to the extreme since the Ming Dynasty", and when Chen Duxiu held high the banner of "art revolution", the aesthetic dimension of Chinese philosophy has actually faced unprecedented challenges. The purpose of this study is to reveal the philosophical roots of this aesthetic loss, to examine how Chinese painting has become a battlefield for the confrontation between Chinese and Western aesthetic thoughts under the discourse of aesthetic education, and to explore possible paths to rebuild China's aesthetic subjectivity in the contemporary context.

2. Research Background

2.1. Reflection on the Aesthetic Loss of Chinese Philosophy in the 20th Century

Chinese painting the loss of aesthetics in Chinese philosophy in the 20th century, and the situation of Chinese

painting under aesthetic education, I wonder if any artist has ever thought about how our Chinese painting in the 20th century is different from ancient Chinese painting, whether it is innovation or regression. Mr. Cai Yuanpei proposed to use religion for aesthetic education. Zhang Yanyuan of the Tang Dynasty mentioned in "Famous Paintings of All Ages": "Use pen to convey emotions, and use painting to educate people." It can be seen that painting is important in life, and it can even be said to be important to the entire nation.

2.2. Background of the Loss of Aesthetics in Chinese Philosophy

The Opium War broke out from June 1840 to August 1842, and the corruption and incompetence of the Qing government made China poor and weak. In March 1839, Lin Zexu ordered a ban on smoking. From 1843 to 1845, the Qing government signed a series of unequal treaties, and China officially became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. On October 18, 1860, the Old Summer Palace was destroyed, leaving unforgettable scenes. Giuseppe Lang Shining (July 19, 1688 - July 16, 1766) came to China as a missionary in 1715, and then entered the important historical node of the 54th year of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty, becoming a court painter. Lang Shining has been engaged in painting in China for more than 50 years, and he was also favored by Emperor Kangxi for his use of Western realistic oil paintings. What I remember most clearly is that Kangxi did not like his works. He thought that his paintings were very realistic, but why there were shadows, it can be seen that the Chinese at that time were confident in their own culture. Although Lang Shining's paintings are realistic, they cannot be considered divine works. China has always divided Chinese paintings into four categories: capable, wonderful, divine, and elegant. "Those who can paint and express wonderful ideas are considered to be wonderful products; those who have both spirit and form are considered to be divine products; those who cannot follow the rules or the rituals are considered to be

inferior products". In the Qing Dynasty, Lang Shining was proposed as a "quality product". This kind of product is the lowest level of Chinese painting. It can paint anything and express the truth in a way that conforms to the public's aesthetic standards. It has creativity but no vitality. The picture does not reflect philosophical aesthetics, but is just a mature expression of muscle memory. It is an inferior product.

2.3. The Current Situation of Chinese Painting under Aesthetic Education

2.3.1. The Current Situation of Chinese Painting under Aesthetic Education in the 20th Century

The 1.4 billion Chinese people have such a strong cohesive force because we have a profound Chinese culture and spirit, which is the source of our cultural confidence. When we understand our 5,000-year history, we will naturally have a strong sense of national pride and pride. Chinese painting under aesthetic education in the 20th century has come to the crossroads of the century and shouldered another burden of the nation. It must be guided by the core values of socialism, serve the people and socialism, let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend, and closely focus on the mission of raising the flag, gathering people's hearts, educating new people, and revitalizing culture, showing the image of Chinese cultural confidence. Where will the trend of "The Lost Aesthetics of Chinese Philosophy in the 20th Century - Chinese Painting under Aesthetic Education" go? Whether it is continuing to seek truth in the ocean of techniques, or blindly pursuing brush and ink skills in traditional techniques, or Shi Tao's brush and ink in the early Qing Dynasty, or Mr. Wu Guanzhong's brush and ink equal to zero, and Mr. Wu Guanzhong's kite line in the 1980s, this is undoubtedly just a transition from subject matter to technique. The term "aesthetic education" first appeared in Cai Yuanpei's "Replacing religion with aesthetic education" in 1912. Cai Yuanpei believed that culture is a phenomenon of will activity. The activity of will depends on two abilities: one is the reasoning ability, which takes concepts as the starting point and puts various sciences into action; the other is imagination, which takes intuition as the starting point and integrates into literature and art. Here, "will activity", "reasoning ability" and "imagination" are all psychological concepts, while literature and art are regarded as an intuitive and imaginative activity of human will. In order to further explore the difference between literature and science, he gave an example: "For the same natural scenery, in science it is human anatomy, physiological experiments, applied transformation, etc., while writers focus on the description and verification of color, sound, fragrance, and taste, which is completely super practical." He also pointed out that the types of art are nothing more than the two major categories of vision and hearing, and literature is a combination of vision and hearing. In short, when discussing literary and artistic issues, psychological viewpoints are used everywhere. "Mr. Cai Yuanpei's term "aesthetic education" has continued to modern education in the 20th century and is deeply imprinted in the

2.3.2. Outlook of Chinese Painting under the Aesthetic Education of Philosophy in the 20th Century

Chinese painting is a process of internal and external cultivation. If we only focus on the external, there will be no depth, and we will only deepen the memory of muscles. The internal is like the martial arts movies we watch. If we get a good martial arts book, we only focus on the practice of moves, not the cultivation of internal skills, and we will never

learn the fur. A good Chinese painting must be a process of internal and external cultivation. Only by internally cultivating painting, artistic cultivation, and literary cultivation can we reach the aesthetic realm of traditional Chinese philosophy, and externally cultivating personal language, composition language, modeling language, and ink language, so as to achieve the mastery of muscle skills. Both are indispensable. The aesthetic education of Chinese painting, which complements calligraphy and seal carving, has matured. Su Shi of the Song Dynasty first proposed the unity of poetry and painting, which is natural and fresh. He believed that Wang Wei of the Tang Dynasty had paintings in his poems and poems in his paintings. With the historical changes of the Song and Yuan Dynasties and the baptism of war, Chinese painting also changed with the changes in politics, history, and economy. From October 1254 to July 1322, Zhao Mengfu proposed the view that calligraphy and painting have the same origin, pointing out that poetry, calligraphy, painting and printing are integrated into one, and Chinese painting began a long period of continuous changes in the times. Some people say that Chinese painting has begun to decline. Is it progress or regression? Perhaps only the waves of history can wash away the sands, and what should be left should be the glittering gold. Chinese painting is constantly innovating, but shouldn't the decline of the masters be a question we should think about?

Since the development of Chinese painting, the differences in Chinese painting under aesthetic education, as well as the different styles of artistic techniques and expressions have led to the emergence of various styles and schools of Chinese painting, which are all-encompassing and colorful. However, although the continuous absorption of Western painting techniques by Chinese painting in the 20th century has not been transformed into the Chinese painting system, the continuous changes in technical expression methods and the progress of realistic painting have enriched the research on Chinese painting texture techniques. It is also hoped that in the new social era, more art lovers can find the Chinese local context through Chinese philosophical thoughts and aesthetic tastes, and show more art works with Chinese systems.

3. Conclusion

The development trajectory of Chinese painting in the 20th century under the aesthetic education system is like a long scroll of freehand brushwork filled with ink. When the Western aesthetic paradigm permeated rice paper like a torrential rain, the traditional brush and ink method once lost its luster under the impact of "scientific realism". Kang Youwei's call for "the decline of Chinese painting" and Xu Beihong's practice of sketch transformation constituted the most intense aesthetic deconstruction movement at the beginning of the century. This aesthetic revolution in the name of enlightenment, while breaking the stereotype of literati painting, inevitably caused the break of traditional aesthetic genes - Guo Xi's "three distances" view of time and space was replaced by focal perspective, and Xie He's "vivid and lively" evaluation standard was reconstructed by anatomical proportions.

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