

Beauty of / and Harmony in Classical Chinese Aesthetics

ZHOU LAI-XIANG

I

Classical beauty and art of harmony

In general, so-called classical beauty of harmony is a harmoniously organic whole in which all of the beautiful elements are related simply and dialectically. It includes subject and object, people and nature, individual and society, content and form in which every relation becomes free or possesses free quality. The art of classical beauty of harmony is in the mode of this, in which each aspect: subject and object, representation and expression, reality and ideal, emotion and reason, artistic conception and type, space and time, content and form are seen to differ from one another and relate with each other and become a steady, orderly whole. Obviously, this classical art is created according to the ideal and rules of classical beauty of harmony. And in classical art, the ideal of classical beauty of harmony is reflected. Their spiritual qualities are the same, but the ways of existence are different: one is the existence of objective thing, the other is the product of spiritual ideology; one is more sensitive and more realistic, the other is more rational and idealistic.

Classical beauty of harmony is different from modern sublime. Modern sublime puts stress on contradiction, struggle, and conflict. It is fierce, turbulent and unstable. However, classical beauty of harmony puts stress on relation and infiltration between both aspects of contradiction. So it is peaceful, slow and tranquil. The sculptures of Greece's are said to be "sublimely simple", "still and mighty". The classical art of China, in general, also is pastoral. Though Chinese art emphasizes Expression and Time, require "motion in stillness" and "stillness in motion", as compared with modern arts, it is simple and still, too. People's feeling from the sublime at first is oppressive, unharmonious, and unfree; but since it is maintained in the field of aesthetics, this depression must be transferred into liberation, this unharmony and unliberty must be transferred into harmony and liberty. People's feeling from sublime art is complicated, and contradictory for sublime art itself possesses the quality of transition. But classical

art of beauty, since it is simple and still, since it stresses balance, steadiness and harmony, would let people produce the feelings of liberty, happiness and harmony. Classical art of beauty is different from the art of modern sublime, the latter is individual, but the former seeks an example beauty or beauty specimen. The painter in Greece absorbed the merits from a large number of beautiful girls to create The Queen Helen. Obviously, this Helen is a specimen of beauty. In China, there was a poem titled "DongTuzi wallows in the pleasure with woman," in which a girl was so beautiful that "adding a little would be too long, cutting off a little would be too short, offering her a little white make-up would be too pale, offering her a little red made-up would be too red". This "just right" beauty was created exactly according to the classical ideal of harmonious beauty.

The classical ideal of harmonious beauty reflects people's moral ethnical and social political ideal in ancient society. In ancient society, people's ideal was to become a complete person who would maintain harmonious relations with nature and society. The appearance of such ideal: people would lead to high moral ethics and the development of social harmony; then, millenium would become a reality. In about 800-200 B.C., some Chinese had already emphasized the problem of the harmony of subject and object in regard to people's physiological response to such things as sound, colour, smell and so on. Later, Confucius pointed out, from a view of nature, the harmony between people and the nature, and between people and the cosmos. The goal was to reach the harmony of soul – of people – of politics.

The idea of harmonious beauty is related to the closed small production economy and social structure and the way of class struggle in ancient China; and at the sometimes it is related very closely to the ancient simple ideology of dialectics. In ancient society, all of the conflicting elements such as people and nature, individual and society, the subject and the object, the flesh and soul, the soul and things had not been completely divided. People in ancient society sweepingly recognized things with simple dialectics. They did not try to recognize all things in the way of qualitative analysis, though they had seen the difference and distinction among things. They paid more attention to relations than conflicts between contradictory things. So, they held "harmony" as the lofty ideal and the highest standard to estimate and judge everything. In the field of ethical morality, if the physiological and the psychological, the ethical and the psychological, the individual and society become harmonious, it is "Virtue". In the field of philosophy, if contradictory things do not go to the extreme, it is "Truth". In the field of production, if the feminine in nature and the masculine in nature become harmonious, it would be a year of bumper harvest; Harmony is healthful. Unharmony is disaster and disease. In the field of social politics, the highest ideal is harmony among kings, statesmen and the common people. It

would be a great peaceful society. In general, "harmony" is a central idea of philosophy, ethics and politics in ancient society. As an aesthetical idea related to philosophy, ethics and political ideal, "harmony" is also inevitably held as the ideal of classical beauty and art.

Ideal of classical beauty of harmony

No matter where, in the west or in the east, in China or in Europe, in regard to things, people in ancient society seldom said "beautiful" or "not beautiful", but they often said "harmonious" or "unharmonious". To them, harmony was beauty. In the west, in the sixth-seventh centuries, B.C., the Pythagoras school of thought offered the idea that beauty was harmony. They considered "number" as the origin of all things in the world. They studied music from the view point of "number", pointing out that the beauty of music is composed of harmonious relationship of different sounds. They also studied sculptures from the same view point. Of course, the harmony that the Pythagoras school of thought talked about is more in the form of perception. But the influence of this viewpoint lasted for a very long time. Later, it became the goal and ideal of all classical arts in Europe.

Plato and Aristotle inherited and deepened the thinking of beauty being harmony from the Pythagoras school of thought. However, their inheritances are in different way. From a view of idealism, Plato held that beauty is Idea. Aristotle disagreed with his teacher's opinion and held that beauty is in form. Though their viewpoints were different, yet they both thought that beauty is harmony; only harmonious things are beautiful.

Plato was the founder of idealistic aesthetics and Aristotle was the founder of materialistic aesthetics. Their aesthetical ideas were in opposition to each other. Their ideas had their respective inheritors with different ideology. But it was common for their inheritors to regard harmony as beauty. Plato's inheritors such as Plotinus in ancient Rome, Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and H. Wolff and A.G. Baumgarten in Germany, all accepted the idea that beauty is harmony. Plotinus was the founder of New Platonism. He inherited the thinking of Plato's directly and regarded the Idea as the origin of beauty. On the one hand, Plotinus inherited Aristotle's view that beauty is in form, on the other hand, he also thought that the harmony of form is not in things themselves, but from the Idea. According to the Idea, all parts of things are prearranged and then become a harmonious unity. The Idea is the reason of beauty as beauty, for the Idea has to be controlled by God; so God is the last reason of beauty. Saint Augustine held that beauty is the "Suitability". He said, beauty itself should be suitable. The "Suitability" is harmony, for he said that the "Suitability" was like the situation that the shoes were suitable for one's legs. That is, the objective is suitable for the subjective. Saint Thomas Aquinas held that "the Harmony",

“the Completeness” and “the Brightness” are the three elements of beauty. Among the three elements, the Harmony is the most important. Then the Completeness and the Brightness only are sensitive present, which are not related with the quality of beauty defined rationally. Saint Augustinus and Saint Thomas Aquinas both were theologians. They believed the beauty was from the God. Augustinus said, the beauty was the glory of God. Aquinas said, the God was master of the beauty. Their religious aesthetics was the interpretation for the harmonious beauty of form from theological teleology. They thought, there was a first original type among all of the things in the world. The God created all things according to their type. The things were different because they were from types. Here, Plato’s Idea had been changed to God. Leibnitz, the founder of rational aesthetics in Germany, held clearly: that the beauty was the predetermined harmony. He pointed out that the thinking was like a big clock, in which all the parts had their respective tasks; when they were arranged properly, a complete unity would be formed. This predetermined harmony was the beauty. H. Wolff, another philosopher of rational school in Germany, offered the theory that the beauty was the completeness. The completeness in meaning is like the unity of different things, so “The theory of Harmony” and “The theory of Completeness” are similar qualitatively. Based on these theories, A.G. Baumgarten offered the theory of perceptual completeness. He held that the beauty was the completeness recognized by people’s sense-organs, and incompleteness was ugly.

Aesthetically, this completeness is a harmonious unity of content, order, and expression. Though A.G. Baumgarten emphasized that the beauty was the completeness too, which is similar to the Rational School; yet he paid attention to the sensitive elements of formal beauty, in which he received the influence from the Experimental Aesthetics. He attempted to combine the rational with the sensitive. So there are some elements of modern aesthetics in A.G. Baumgarten’s aesthetical thinking, though his theory basically belongs to the classical aesthetics. His theory enlightened Kant, and was the forerunner of Kant’s aesthetic thinking. From the way of thinking, the aesthetics of Rational School in Germany, Plato’s, Plotinus’ ideas and the aesthetics in the Middle Ages are similar, for they defined the essence of beauty either from the Idea, or God, or the priori Ration and looked upon the free harmony as the beauty. Certainly, there are differences among them: e.g. Plato’s Idea is mystical. The philosophers of Rational School also held the Ration is priori. But they stressed that only people have the Ration. It is anti-theological, from which the advanced thinking of the bourgeoisie is shown. So there is a new quality that shows the aesthetical transfer from ancient times to modern times. In the aesthetics of the Rational School, most of them were material aestheticians who inherited Aristotle’s aesthetic thinking. In the Middle Ages, Aristotle’s thinking was transformed to the religious

theology by Plotinus and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Aristotle was not as famous as Plato, but he became very in the Renaissance. In the Renaissance, Aristotle was a banner of aesthetical thinking. Many artists' ideas were from Aristotle's : Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael Santi studies more about formal beauty and deemed that the aesthetic pleasure that people got was from the harmonious arrangement of formal elements of things. In the eighteenth century, the British painter William Hogarth wrote "The Analysis of Beauty" in which he researched into formal beauty and offered the aesthetical principal of "The Changing in good order". German historian of art Winckelmann also considered in his "History of Ancient Modelling Arts" that the beauty of modelling art was composed of circle lines. In general, from the times of Aristotle to the Renaissance, the harmonious beauty of form was the center to which aestheticians and artists paid more attention. The rise of experiential aesthetics in Britain was an important turn. It showed that philosophy and aesthetics began to come close to natural science. E. Burke held that beauty was the feeling of pleasure, based on biology. It seemed to Burke, beauty was a feeling of love or something similar to love. How do people get physiological pleasure? He held that their aesthetical pleasure came from the appearance of some aesthetical character of objective things such as "Little", "Weak", "Smooth", "Gradually Changing", etc. Burke's idea was materialistic. Burke disagreed with both the theory of the completeness of the rational school and the theory of Aristotle's that the beauty is proportional symmetry. His theory seems to depart from the harmonious idea. But in fact, the center of the theory of pleasure is also harmony; it merely sees harmony from a different angle. The harmony of the Experiential School is certainly different from other aestheticians. The beauty in the Experiential School is the harmonious relation between the objectives character and subjective experience of aesthetics. It is with this harmony that people produce the feeling of love, and of sensitive pleasure. Therefore, we can say that "beauty is harmony" is still the main idea of Experiential School. In the history of aesthetics, D. Diderot's theory of relation is more profound than Burke's theory of pleasure. D.Dederot said : "I regard all the things which are able to awake the concept of relation in my soul as beauty;" and the beauty of art only is the reflection on that objective beauty. D. Diderot thought that there are three relations, i.e. three kinds beauties : Firstly, the substantive relation which presents objective things themselves: It is the substantive beauty such as the beauty of a flower or a fish. This beauty is a relation on which the orger and symmetry of things are reflected. Secondly, the comparative relation : It is not a relation in things themselves, but it is a relation in the comparison between things that the beauty is seen. Then, this is a relative beauty e.g. this flower is beautiful and this fish is beautiful; they are not beautiful by themselves, but through comparison with another flower and another fish. D. Diderot deemed, in this relation, the more relative ideas are awaked in the thing,

the more beautiful the thing would be. Thirdly, the fictitious relation: it mainly refers to the fictitiousness in art; i.e. the beauty of art. There are not these relations in objective things. They seem to be given to things by the soul people. For example, when a artist creates a sculpture, his imagination is faster than his shisel; and where he cuts off the unnecessary parts of the marble, then an imaginarily living figure is made. The fictitious relation in art that D.Diderot said is based on the objective things, though it is the product of people's imagination. The fictitious relation simply is another way of the substantive relation. Since there the many deep contents in the Diderot's theory of Relation, he raised the formal aesthetics of materialism to a new height. On the other hand, D. Diderot emphasized the idea that beauty is a relation in people's comprehension, and pushed the ideal element of aesthetical feeling forward, which surpassed Burke's theory of physiological feeling of pleasure. It shows that D. Diderot's aesthetical thinking not only developed the aesthetical thinking of the Experiential School, but also absorbed some good elements from the Rational School. The ideas of the Experiential School and the Rational School began to combine with each other and became the basis of later German classical aesthetics.

In the history of aesthetics in the West, aestheticians had common character which held the aesthetical ideal of classicalism i.e. beauty is harmony, though they had different viewpoints in regard to the essence of aesthetics.

In the East, the same character of aesthetics existed in the feudalistic times, e.g. in China, the harmonious beauty was regarded as the highest ideal of classical arts. "ShanShu Yao Dian" (a book written in about 1000 B.C.) had taken the idea "Different sounds" become harmonious, "people and the gods become harmonious" "Different sounds" means different musical instruments on which different sounds may be made. But the free movements of harmony that people use those musical instruments to play are able to let the relation of people and the Gods become harmonious. This at that time reflected the vogue of the witchcraft, and music was used to reconcile the relation of people and Gods. Of course, the stress of this idea is in the beauty of form. Confucius developed the theory about harmony. He put stress on the harmony of morality and feeling. It made the theory of harmony go forward from the mere form aspect to the content aspect. Confucius said: "Pleased, but not to be excessive; sorrow but not to be undue". He emphasized that feeling should be governed by morality, so that feeling and reason become harmonious. The thinking of Confucius is the main ideology in Chinese feudalistic society. Reject the dross in it, from a view of aesthetics, the thinking of Confucius is just a harmonious beauty of the unity of morality and feeling.

"The feminine in nature" and "The masculine in nature" are two ancient concepts in Chinese classical philosophy. The people in ancient times said: "The feminine and the masculine are the basis of every thing." Stillness is the feminine, and movement is the masculine; therefore, the scholars in China deemed that there are the beauty of the feminine and the beauty of the masculine. "If the feminine and the masculine are harmonious, the soul will be vigorous". The feminine and the masculine are not separated from each other, between which there is a relation of dynamic balance. They also stand for two mode of harmonious beauty in ancient China: the beauty of the feminine – the graceful beauty, the beauty of the masculine – the vigorous beauty. The dynamic balance of the feminine and the masculine were sought by ancient Chinese not only for all of living things, but also for the beauty. The thinking of "Harmony" is the basic character of Chinese classical philosophy, and of Chinese class aesthetics too.

From the above, we can say that it is common for the classical aesthetics of both the east and the west to pursue the harmonious beauty, though there are different stresses between them. It is for same aesthetical ideal of class aesthetics that there is an essential distinction between the aesthetics of feudalism and the aesthetics of the bourgeoisie.

II

The idea of the art essence in the classical aesthetics.

As the ideal of ancient arts, the classical harmonious beauty is referred to make the balance, harmony, steadiness, organic unity between opposite elements of art such as the representation and expression, the object and the subject, the ideal and the reality, the feeling and the reason, the time and the space in art work. As an idea, the harmonious beauty is just the essence of art that ancient people got from artistic practices. As an ideal, ancient arts were produced generally according to the principle of the harmonious beauty. So the artistic ideal and artistic practices of harmony are identical. But it is very different from the modern idea of artistic essence and the modern arts of sublime mode. The classical arts of harmonious beauty could not include the modern arts of romanticism or realism that were developed towards the different extremes of united beauty of harmony, for the classical arts was required to relate, permeate one another among the artistic elements. Therefore, it is classical aesthetics and art. There are different meanings in the concept of "Classicism". Generally, the meaning of classical art is an example quality, e.g. the poems by Li Bai or Du Fu in the Tang dynasty of China are considered to belong to classical poems. Classicism also means the aesthetic trend and art type which appeared in Europe in the seventeenth century. Here, this concept I use includes all of the leading aesthetical thinkings artistic phenomena in the slave society and the feudal society. The great controversy about Romanticism and Classicism started and developed by J.W. Goethe

and J.C.F. Schiller which lasted several years in Europe is, in fact a great controversy between the modern aesthetics of the bourgeoisie and the classical aesthetics of the slave society and feudalism. Boileau-Despreaux's "The art of poem" is identical with Aristotle's "Poetics" virtually, though the former is more rational and more normal than the latter in a new social situation. They were identical too in the practices of art, e.g., there were many conclusions of great reunion in the classical theatres of China; and so were they in the classical theatres of Europe in the seventeenth century. In short, it is a historical type of arts and a historical pattern of aesthetics. The arts of classicism are the same both in the west from ancient Greece to the Age of Enlightenment and in China from Before Ch'in dynasty to the Ch'ing dynasty.

1. The classical arts of harmonious beauty required the unity of the representation and the expression, the object and the subject; and to have rich representative, imitative elements in the expressive arts and to have rich expressive, lyric elements in the representative arts. Unlike the modern aesthetics and arts which set the representation and the expression against each other, the quality of the classical aesthetics and arts is harmonious among the elements.

In the field of Chinese poem, the principle to unite "Fu", "Bi", "Xing" was offered very early. "Fu" is a style to present something directly. "Bi", and "Xing" are the style to put stress on expression and imagination. The unity of "Fu", "Bi", "Xing" is just the unity of imitation and expression, writing the reality and writing the feeling. Liuxi (about 465-520 A.D.) in the Liang dynasty said: "The spirit is expressed with images, in which feeling is included. The thing is known through the appearance; the information is exchanged through feeling". His view to unite the spirit and the thing, the form and the content, the reason and the emotion harmoniously stands for the aesthetic ideal of classical arts before the Middle Tang dynasty in China (about 750 A.D.). After the Middle Tang dynasty, painting was considered to be more important than poetry. In other words, the expression was considered to be more important than the representation in the work of art. But it is a reaction to the former idea that poetry is the most important among all of arts. Shu Dongbo (1037-1101 A.D.) in the Sung dynasty pointed out: "The qualities of painting and poetry are same". "There is painting in a poem; and there is poetry in a painting". This idea summarizes the basic character of the classical art and aesthetics in China.

It was so in China, and there was no exception in the West. In ancient Greece, the painting was regarded as a "Silent poem"; and the poem was regarded as a "voiced painting". In the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci said: "The painting is a dumb poem; and the poem is a blind painting. "Originally, painting and poetry are two different

forms of art: poem is among the arts using words, expressive and lyrical; but painting is a typical art of representation. Here, certainly, the concepts of painting and poetry mean not only the types of art, but also two different categories of aesthetics. Poetry is looked upon as "representation". What Shu DongBo said that there is painting in a poem and there is poetry in a painting shows that there is expression in the representation and there is representation in the expression. There was a common quality of aesthetics between the lyric poem and imitating painting in the times of classical beauty of harmony i.e. "the qualities of painting and poetry are the same".

There is a distinct difference between Chinese arts and western arts. The classical aesthetics and arts in ancient China laid particular stress on expression; and the classical aesthetics and arts in the West laid particular stress on representation. But the Chinese aesthetics and arts did not exclude representation; and the Western aesthetics and arts did not exclude expression. They were not in opposition to each other, nor did they negate each other. They were never separated from each other. Of course, they were different. Their difference laid only in the different quantity and different leading role based on harmony. The basis of Chinese arts is poetry, which pays more attention to expression and lyricism. Its representation is practised through expression. The basis of the Western arts is painting, which pays more attention to representation and imitation. Its expression is practised through representation.

Originally, poetry is more expressive, and stresses the creation of conception. Painting is more representative, and stresses the presentation of images. However, since classical aesthetics emphasized the unity of representation and expression, in China, the images also were presented in poetry—it was so-called "presenting something which was difficult to say as if it was front of you"; artistic conception was also pursued in painting—it was so-called "the highest value in painting is the artistic conception". From this view, the image and the artistic conception in art were united harmoniously. The theatre and the novel were originally more representative, and were required to express feelings through images. But in the classical theatre and novel of China, there were many elements of expression, though the representative elements of these kinds of art were much large in amount than those of poetry. Wang Guowee (1877-1927 A.D.) in the Ch'ing dynasty pointed out that there was artistic conception in poetic drama in the Yuan dynasty. The realistic novel "Dream of The red mansion" in which there is rich critical colour of the modern times is, on the one hand, a real picture depicting the life of the feudal nobles, and on the other hand, a lyric expressing deep feelings. If it is compared with the novels by Honore de Balzac, we will see that the novel has wonderful artistic conception which cannot be found in Balzac's novels.

The unity of the representation and expression, the subject and object is both integrative and separate. For example, in the Chinese theatre, the actor is required to play the role that he acts and also to be the actor himself. There is a distance between the actor and the role, the audience and the stage. The actor knows that he is acting in a play; and the audiences know that they are watching a play. It is very different from the realistic theatre where the actor is required to enter the role entirely and forget himself completely. This view is the classical view of aesthetics and arts.

2. The relation between the representation and expression, the object and the subject defines the relation between the ideal and the reality in art too. In classicism, the ideal and the reality are required to be united simply and harmoniously. On the one hand, it is satisfied with the ideal in the reality and would not like to pursue something beyond the reality; on the other hand, it does not think the beauty in the reality to be sufficient and would like to collect the scattered beauty in the reality so that a complete beauty is created. Beyond doubt, the classical beauty of harmony which is created as above is both real and ideal. It is real, because the elements which form the beauty are able to be found in the reality and nothing is beyond the reality. It is ideal, because there is nothing in the reality to tally with the standard beauty. Because of this reason, the art work in China or in Greece very seldom use only one model. The characters that artists create in art work are like what Lu Xun said: "Take the different elements from reality to form a whole". Schiller's theory of the difference between the simple poem and the sentimental poem is essentially a distinction drawn between ancient art and modern art, between classical art of harmonious beauty and modern art of the sublime. People in the ancient times did not know the division of the ideal and the reality. Their ideal was in the reality; and their reality also satisfied their ideal. So the simple poem that they created was to unite the reality and ideal harmoniously. No sharp opposition between the reality and the ideal existed until the appearance of modern sentimental poems. Schiller's theory basically summarized the main character of classical aesthetics and arts in the West.

III

The harmony of imagination and thought, feeling and reason.

The representation of object is related with the reason and the thought directly; and the expression of subject is more closely related with the feeling and imagination. Therefore, the harmony of the representative and the expressive, the subject and the object in classical beauty and art also conditions the harmonious unity of the feeling and the reason, the imagination and the thought. The unity of the feeling and the reason is a traditional idea of Chinese classical aesthetics. In the Chun-Chou period (about 500 B.C.),

Confucius pointed out "Happy but not to be excessive, sad but not to be harmful." It is his view to deal with the problem of the feeling and the reason. There were two stages in the poetic aesthetics of ancient China—"poetry expresses will" and "poetry expresses feeling". In the former stage, under the principle of expression, poetry laid greater stress on representation and imitation; and put greater emphasis on "the expression will". What is "will" ? Will is reason, but it is based on feeling. With the development of the representation and imitation, the theory of expressing feeling gradually replaced the theory of expressing will. The feeling means individual emotion and sense; and greater stress was put on the lyric and imagination. Liu Xie (about 465-520 A.D.) in the Liang dynasty wrote a lot on the imagination in his book *Wen Xin Diao Long*. He pointed out the internal relation between expressing feeling and imagination. Then, though the feeling and imagination were stressed, the reason and thought were not looked down upon; but there was the reason in the feeling; just as what Yan Yu in the Sung dynasty said. "There are special subject matter for poetry, which are not related with knowledge; there are special tastes in poetry, which are not related with the reason. But ancient poets also read books and learn the reasons, however, the appreciators could find nothing about the reason and the knowledge from the books in his poems. The poetry like this is first class poetry". What he said is a typically classical art that the feeling and the reason are in balance.

The same thing can be found in the aesthetic thinking of ancient Greece. e.g. Socrates required artists both "to make graceful image," and "to depict the soul of people". Aristotle also emphasized imitating and learning, laid at the same time stress on the task of tragedy—the catharsis of emotion.

Representation and expression in art are closely related with the space and time. Generally speaking, the representative art put more stress on the space, in which the time is fixed on the space, and is spatial. The expressive art put more stress on the time, in which the space moves with the time, and is timing. The representative art stresses the objective time and space of physics. The expressive art stresses the subjective time and space of psychology. Since the classical aesthetics seeks the harmonious unity of the representation and expression, it emphasizes both the time spatial and the space timing, both the objective time and space of physics, and the subjective time and space of psychology. In short, the time and space should be in balance and harmonious. In the eyes of the western people, the classical aesthetics and art in china is put more emphasis on the aesthetics and art of expression. Its elements of the representation are based on the expression. Therefore, the idea of the time and space in classical aesthetics of China is more subjective and free, putting greater stress on the consciousness of time and the idea of movement. For example, in ancient paintings in China, there were often many

things in a picture, in fact, which could be seen according to the normal way of perspective. In Wang Wei's (about 701-761 A.D.) painting "Yuan-an lying on the snow", even the flowers which came into bloom only in summer appeared in the picture. The same is true of other types of art in China. In general, it is the main trend of classical aesthetics and arts of China to change Still into Movement, to change Space into Time, to change Representation into Expression; and to unite the representation and space on the basis of the expression and time.

In contrast with the classical arts of China, the classical arts of the west lay stress on the representation and space. They unite the elements of the expression, ideal and time on which the representation, sense and space are based. Their taste is to make the time spatial. Their element of the time is hinted in the moving trend of the space. Their objects are arranged according to the principle of the nature, sense and recognition. For example, the painting in the west pays more attention to seeking the truth. It is required to paint picture by the strict perspective. In the picture, the view is fixed, and cannot be moved and fabricated freely. Leonardo da Vinci who held the classically representative tradition of the west required artists to present the reality as in a mirror. He suggested that artists learn from nature, and study the knowledge of the perspective, the proportion, anatomy, zoology and botany; so that they could paint as realistically as the truth. The classical arts in China are the arts of the time. The classical aesthetics in China is the aesthetics of the time. The classical arts in the west are the arts of the space. The classical aesthetics in the west is the aesthetics space. But this conclusion comes only from the comparison between the characteristics of the two. In essence, the classical aesthetics and art both in China and in the west put stress on the balance and harmony of the object and subject, the time and the space.

Because of the requirement to unite the representation and expression, the classical arts also is sought to be the harmonious unity of the content and form. In China, Confucius advanced the idea of the unity of the content and form. He said: "the content over the form is crude, the form over the content is garish; the harmony of the content and form is the best." Since Confucius, his idea about the content and form had always been accepted by aestheticians and artists from generation to generation. The classical aesthetics of the west also has the same thinking: Aristotle emphasized the united beauty of the content and form etc. Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux in his "The Art of Poetry" still said: "No matter what subject matter is written—solemn or jokingly, artists should coordinate the reason and rhyme harmoniously. Because this unity was stressed, there appeared a strange phenomenon in the field of aesthetics: Originally, the expression and form were laid stress on in Chinese arts, e.g. the books about the theory of poetry, of penmanship, of

painting devoted a great number of pages to present the unity of content and form; but the harmonious beauty as the ideal of beauty pursued in the feudal society of China put stress on the harmony of the political and the ethical, the ethical and the psychological. All of these elements belong to the content. In contrast to this, the representation and the content were laid stress on in the arts of the west, e.g. from the theory of imitation by Aristotle to the theory of "the mirror" by Leonardo da Vinci and Miguel de Cervantes, the content and representation were always emphasized. But the idea that the beauty is in the harmony of form, from the School of Pythagoras to Kant was a traditional ideal of the beauty. Perhaps, these states was to stress the harmonious unity of the beauty in the content and the beauty in the form.

The ideal of classical aesthetics and arts to unite the representation and expression, the content and form harmoniously also conditioned the unity of the function that expressed the feeling and the function that recognized the things of artistic mediums harmoniously. Originally, the function of recognition of artistic mediums was stressed in the art of the representation; the function of expressing of artistic mediums was stressed in the art of the expression. But in the classical art of beauty, the function of expressing of artistic mediums was stressed in the art of the representation, and the function of recognition of artistic mediums was stressed in the art of the expression, for the aim of the harmonious beauty. For example, the colour whose function of recognition was strong was not emphasized in the classical painting of China; but the line whose function of expressing was strong was stressed. Similarly, as literature, the qualities of music and expressing in Chinese poetry also were specially stressed. On the other hand, in the artistic mediums was laid stress on. The classical music of China laid greater stress on the vocal music than on the instrumental music. The instrumental music in ancient China stressed the imitation of the voice of people, which made the instrumental music very much like the vocal music. In the classical dance of China, greater stress was put on imitation than on expression. The classical arts in the west was no exception. In general, the function of expression of artistic mediums was stressed in the east, meanwhile, the function of recognition of artistic mediums was stressed in the west. Therefore, the Chinese art can be said to be the art of the line; the western art can be said to be the art of the colour and light.

The harmonious unity of representation and expression, the beauty of the content and the beauty of the form in the classical arts is more aesthetic in character. The appreciator is able to get more pleasure from it than from the modern art of the sublime, though there is much more force in the modern art of the sublime, which is able to move people's soul and from which people are able to get more truth and wisdom. Of course, this harmonious unity of the beauty of the content and beauty of the form in the classical

art is a simple unity, which is a historical and restricted beauty as compared with the new harmonious beauty in the socialist age.

IV

The classical art puts stress on the unity of truth, virtue and beauty; on the harmony of appreciation, recognition and morality in art.

1. The expressive art stressed the unity of beauty and virtue; the representative art stressed the unity of the beauty and the truth. The ideal of the classical beauty of harmony was to unite the truth, the virtue and the beauty harmoniously. The classical art in China was expressive. The classical aesthetics in China was the aesthetics which laid stress on the ethics and psychology. In the classical aesthetics in China, the beauty was always related with the man, the society and the morality, and stressed the unite of the beauty and the virtue. At first, Confucius was the first to point out the ideal of "the beauty of perfection". He paid close attention to the social functions of art. From the view of the social functions of art, he associated poetry and music with ethics and politics; and deemed that poetry and music could serve the aim of ethics and politics. Bai JuYi (772-846 A.D.), a great poet in the Tang dynasty, considered that poetry could be used to "know the society and lead people's feelings", through which "the information could be understood by the leaders and common people." From poetry and music the people will be able to know the whether political policies are good or bad; here is the function of recognition in poetry and music. The essence of music is expressive, in which the feelings and the sounds are united directly; and the content breezes in its form. It is not the strong point of music to mimic the objective reality. But in China, music was required to imitate the objective things for a long time. For example, the statement "to mimic the things that appeared" was written in "The Music Book", the first book about the music theory in China, more than 2300 years ago. This idea became a traditional thinking of aesthetics later. So the quality of imitation in the classical music in China is very distinct e.g. "The Night with Flowers on the River in the Spring", "All of the Bieds fly towards the Phoenix", etc; in these music works, the people were presented; or the natural scenery was depicted; or the singing of birds was represented.

Classical aesthetics and arts in China required the unity of the feeling and reason. This reason was also related to the objective rules of the nature and cosmos, though its stress was laid on the moral principles. The virtue of feudal ethics and morality was thought to be inevitable truth in ancient China. The truth was presented through the virtue, which was an important characteristic in the aesthetic culture of China. Therefore, the unity of the feeling and reason is just the simple unity of the truth, the virtue, the beauty in harmony and balance.

In the west, the art in ancient Greece was a more representative art; the aesthetics in ancient Greece was more the aesthetics stressed on the recognition. It always related the beauty with the object, the nature and the sciences; and emphasized the unity of the beauty and the truth. Aristotle was the founder of the classical aesthetics of the west. He offered the principle of stressing imitation and representation, and the unity of the beauty and the truth in his "Poetics". He abandoned "the Idea" offered by Plato, and deemed that the truth is in the reality. The truth which he said was the objective appearance and rules of the world in a general way. He said : "The task of a poet is not to describe the things that had happened, but to describe the things that may happen according to the principle of necessity and possibility". He thought, the distinction between a poet and the historian is that "the historian describe the things that have happened, and the poet describe the things that may happened. So, poetry is more philosophical and more solemn than history, because what are presented in poems are most in universal, and what are presented in history are specific things". This trend of stressing the representation, reason and truth had a great influence on western aesthetics. New classicalist Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux looked on the "reason" as the standard of poetry, and suggested that the poet must first of all love the reason. He considered that : "Only the truth is beautiful; only the truth is lovely. The truth should rule over everything". Though the unity of the beauty and truth was stressed in western aesthetics, the virtue in art was not abandoned and denied. Meanwhile, the deep relation between the art and the morality was not ignored. The Pythagoras School of thought related the beauty of music with the harmonious structure of mathematics in the cosmos; and Socrates united the beauty with the virtue much more closely. Plato, on the one hand, classified the beauty as the absolute idea, and on the other hand, emphasized the ethical function of art in the society. Because of this reason, he suggested to drive the poets out of his PUBLIC. Aristotle and the others held the similar idea on the relation of the beauty and virtue. In short, the truth, virtue and beauty in the classical aesthetics of the west also are united, though this unity is different from that of China. In China, the medium is the truth; and in the west, the medium is the virtue. It seemed to the western aestheticians, only the truth is beautiful and virtuous ; that something which is not true is not beautiful and virtuous.

2. In the classical aesthetical aesthetics and arts, the truth, the virtue and beauty were united harmoniously. This basic characteristic also determined the harmonious unity of the functions of recognition, ethics and appreciating beauty. Confucius was the first scholar who offered the concepts of "Xing", "Guan", "Chung", and "Yuan", and tried to unite the functions in art. "Xing" is the characteristic of art and art action, which includes the images and feeling content, it is the aesthetic function of art. "Guan" is the

function of recognition in art which lays stress on the reason. "Guan" is to watch the prosperity or decline of a state or society through the change of people's feelings and spirit. "Chung" and "Yuan" put stress on the united function in art. "Chung" is to let people unite together. "Yuan" is to criticise the leaders for their poor policies. The aim of the two is the same, i.e. to let the people themselves or the people and the leaders be harmonious. So "Xing", "Guan", "Chuang", "Yuan", emphasize the unity of the aesthetic functions and the recognitive function and the educational function in art. In the Han dynasty, the people pointed out the three concepts "Feng", "Ya", "Shung" as the requirements for the function of art. What is "Feng"? There are two meanings in this concept. The first is to move people's feelings. The second is to educate people. What is "Ya"? "Ya" is to comment on the prosperity or decline of the government. What is "Shung"? "Shung" is to praise success the leaders and tell what the leaders have accomplished to the gods. There is a common point in "Ya" and "Shung", there are, on the one hand, the content of the politics and society, and on the other hand, the meaning of recognition and reason. They are very different from "Feng". "Feng" lays greater stress on the individual and emotion. But "Ya" and "Shung" lays greater stress on the political affairs and recognition. The unity of "Feng", "Ya" and "Shung" is the unity of the aesthetical function, recognitive function and educational function. It is the unity of the feeling function and reason function. Of course, particular stress is laid on certain aspects in this unity. Since the unity of the beauty and virtue was emphasized in the classical aesthetics and arts of China, more attention was paid to the unity of aesthetical function and educational function. "Educating in playing" is a traditional principle in the classical aesthetics of China. Political education is stressed; but the method is to exist imperceptible influence, and not to pour exhortations into somebody's ears. People are educated in artistic activities. The method is also to exist imperceptible influence. The aesthetical appreciation was important for the classical art in ancient China. A painting could be watched for several day, and a play could be appreciated for more than ten times or a hundred times. While people appreciated the work of art, they were educated unconsciously. Though the classical aesthetics in ancient Greece laid more stress on the essence of art, which was unlike that of China, greater stress was laid on the function of art, but the function of art was not ignored. Plato criticised Homer's epic from the view of strong utilitarianism.

V

Strong beauty and grace

1. There are two types in the classical beauty and art of harmony : the one is the strong beauty, the other is the grace, i.e. a masculine beauty and a feminine beauty.

As classical beauties, the strong beauty and grace are both sought to be harmonious in the

opposition as compared with the sublime. But on this basis, there are two types in the beauty : the strong beauty and grace, in which the different characteristics are included. Relatively, the strong beauty is more opposite, in which there are more elements of the antithesis and solemn. The grace is more harmonious, in which there are more elements of the balance and harmony. The strong beauty is vigorous, moving. The grace is gentle, still. The strong beauty is towards the unlimited, the subject and the reason. The grace is in the limited, the object and the sense. In the sensitive character, the strong beauty is high, square; the grace is little, round. In the feeling for the strong beauty, there is a high-spirited and roused experience in the aesthetical liberty. In the feeling for grace, there is a simple enjoyment of pleasure and tranquility.

2. But the strong beauty of the classicalism is different from the modern sublime. The modern sublime is based on the separation of the subject and object, the opposition of the social classes. Its quality is opposite in the unity. The strong beauty is based on the harmony of the subject and object, the class struggle of the classicalism; there are more elements of antithesis in it. The strong beauty could never break through the classical circle of harmony, and reach the essentially opposite stage as the modern sublime. In the classical beauty, the rigid and gentle are not separated. The strong beauty is to unite the rigid and the gentle, but in which the rigid is primary. The Grace also is to unite the rigid and the gentle, but in which the gentle is primary. The rigid and the gentle are not entirely separated until the modern sublime which receives the rigid and abandons the gentle. Though the strong beauty is towards the unlimited, the subject, its unlimitedness is always related with the limited. There are more subjective elements in the strong beauty. But this subject is not separated from the object completely. The subject sometimes includes the object, and sometimes is melted in the object and meanwhile surpasses the object. The unlimited and subject of the modern sublime is not reached. Though the perceptual character of the strong beauty is high and square, in the classical beauty, the square and circle are also to unite with each other: there is the circle in the square, and there is the square in the circle; both of them are not towards the extreme. The strong beauty is always required to follow the rules of the formal beauty. But the sublime is stressed to be unharmonious and unbalanced, which breaks up the rules of the formal beauty. Though there is the high-spirited feeling in the strong beauty, it is free and pleasing. But in the sublime, the high-spirited feeling includes the feeling of pain, which is unfree. Schiller said that the beauty is free; the sublime needs to have a jump in order to reach the stage of liberty.

3. The strong beauty and grace are the opposite categories in logic; they are also the developing categories in history. They are the still modes which stand side by side in the beauty; they are also the moving modes in the aesthetical history. In China, there are

three stages in the development of the classical beauty of harmony. Before the Tang dynasty, the strong beauty was primary. After the Late Tang dynasty, the grace became primary. With the rise of the romantic thinking of aesthetics in the Middle Ming dynasty, the element of the modern sublime was sprouted.

Before the Middle Tang dynasty, the strong beauty played the dominating role though the strong beauty and grace existed side. It was thought that the aesthetical value of the strong beauty was much higher than grace. Mencius (about 390-305 B.C.) deemed: "The substantial is beautiful. Both substantial and bright are great." It might be the first exploration of the characteristics of the strong beauty and grace. This "great" has the quality of "bright" which "the substantial" beauty does not possess. Obviously, the "great" has higher value than "the substantial"; i.e. the strong beauty is higher than grace. Zhuang Zi (about 369-286 B.C.) was also a eulogist and advocator of "the Great Beauty". He once criticised something: "It is beautiful; but it is not great." He considered that "great" is higher than "beauty". Mencius' "great beauty" is very different from that of Zhuang Zi's, though both of them advocated the strong beauty. Mencius laid stress on the subjective greatness in ethical moral quality. This subject in moral ethical quality includes the social content, though its appearance is individual. This kind of the beauty are solemn, dignified, upright and unaffected. However, Zhuang Zi laid stress on the assimilation of the subject and nature, but at the same time, the subject surpassed nature. It is free state, which surpassed ethics and utility. The arts before the Middle Tang dynasty were influenced by Mencius and Zhuang Zi greatly. Generally speaking, these arts were closely related to the ideas of these two great scholars.

After the Late Tang dynasty, with the development of the feudal society from the early stage to the late stage, great occupied an increasingly dominating position, and its value gradually became higher than the strong beauty. During this stage, "The Criticism of poetry" by Shi KungDu (837-908 A.D.) in the Tang dynasty, "The Theory of the Interest" offered by Yan Yu in the Sung dynasty and "The Theory of the Romantic Charm" offered Wang Shizheng (1634-1711) in the Ch'ing dynasty were important representative art theories.

After the Middle Ming dynasty, with the beginning of capitalism, with the growth of the power of the towns people, and with the rise of the individual liberation and the enlightenment movement, the new aesthetical ideal—sublime was germinated. The classically simple harmony was broken up by the principle of the separation and opposition. The ugly in form deepened to become the ugly in essential quality; and it occupied an important position in art. Under this separation and opposition, the romantic and critical trends with modern colour became more and more distinct. Li Zhi (1527-1602 A.D.)

advocated "The mind of children"; Tang Xianzu (1550-1616 A.D.) emphasized the emotion; Shi Tao (about 1642-1718 A.D.) stressed "the ego". All of them put stress on the subject, the individual, the emotion and the spirit in the opposition of the subject and object, the individual and society, the emotion and reason. Especially, "Dream of the Red mansion" by Chao ShueCh'ing (?-1763 A.D.) became the first art work with the quality of the modern tragedy, in which the circle of the classical beauty of harmony was broken through. But the creation of art work went faster than the aesthetic theory. In the field of the aesthetical theory, the category of the sublime and the theory of the tragedy with strictly modern quality did not appear. The idea of the sublime and theory of the tragedy with modern quality was not formed until the time of Wang Guawee and Luxun. Wang Guawee and Luxun symbolized the conclusion of the classical aesthetics and the beginning of the modern aesthetics and also symbolized the end of the classical beauty and appearance of the modern sublime. They were the most important figures in the transformation from the classical beauty to the modern sublime.

In the west, there were similar laws in aesthetics in ancient Greece and Rome as in China: in the same way, there two types of beauty— the strong beauty and grace; two theories of aesthetics about the strong beauty and grace. Marcus Jullius Cicero in Rome said: "We can see, there are two types of beauty: one beauty is in the grace; another beauty is in the dignified. We should look on the grace as the female beauty, and look on dignified as the male beauty. "These beauties of the female and the male are similar with the beauties of the feminine and masculine in China. If "the Venus in Milo" is the representation of the former, "the Laocoon" will be the model of the latter. Of course, since the classical aesthetics in the west might lay stress on the rules of the objective representation and on the analytical principle of philosophy, it had more elements of the opposite and dignified than that of China in the aesthetics and arts. Its spirit of the tragedy and idea of the sublime also were stronger than that of China. In Rome, there was a book entitled "On the Sublime" by Longinus, which exerted a great influence on the aesthetics in the west. The writer stressed the great and solemn thought, the rich and creative imagination, the exciting and warm feeling, the grand and magnificent language. He deemed: "As the field for the flying of people's thinking, all of the world is not wide enough. People's soul often goes beyond the edges of the space". He again: "The style of the sublime is an echo from a great soul." Here, the elements of the subject, soul and emotion are emphasized, which broke through the classical harmony and balance. But this "sublime" is not in the modern level of the opposite. In a general way, Longinus did not go beyond the limit which Aristotle set when he said that the beauty is organic unity

of harmony. So these opposite elements are still included in the organic unity of harmony. Of course, it seems to us, Longinus would like to give a clear definition for the sublime too. But there was a long course to the time when the sublime was able to be really recognized, as Longinus could criticise the sublime only from the viewpoint of the harmonious beauty. As in ancient China, there was a developing course from the strong beauty to grace too in the west. In the early times, the strong beauty was emphasized; and the strong beauty was considered to be the grace. For example, Aristotle looked on the strong beauty as the main object of the tragedy in "Poetics", in which, the tragedy of the strong beauty was considered to be higher than the comedy of the grace. Longinus' "On the sublime" might perhaps be looked upon as the conclusion of the idea of the strong beauty in ancient Greece and Rome. Winckelmann divided the art of Greece and Rome into four stages: The first stage is in the style of primitive simplicity, whose character is forceful and firm, vigorous and unbeautiful. The second stage is in the style of "sublime" or "greatness". During this period, artists not only regarded the beauty as their main aim, but also regarded the greatness as their main aim. This style is a little rigid and angular; but also is simple and united in a high degree. In a general way, it is the strong beauty that we pointed out. The third stage is in the style of beauty, which is named the style of grace too. Its main characteristic is to present the loveliness of human body. The fourth stage is in the style of the ancients. Winckelmann considered this stage to be the decline period of art when the artists had no new creation, so they turned round to mimic the ancient beauty. This division might enlighten Hegel. In "Aesthetics", Hegel looked on the first stage as the pre-art time, the second and third stages as the classical times of art, i.e. the times of the beauty of art. But the romantic art that Hegel said had passed the Middle Ages and developed towards the modern sublime. This transformation from the classical beauty to the modern sublime took a very long time. The classical beauty did not come to a conclusion from the view the aesthetics and philosophy until Kant. Kant initiated the modern sublime; and completed the transformation in theory. Though there are two types of the beauty—the strong beauty and grace in both the east and the west, the west stresses the objective reality, contradictory opposition; therefore, there are great developments in the strong beauty and tragedy. Relatively, the grace is laid stress on in China; and the strong beauty is laid stress on in the west.

VI

The ideal of harmonious beauty and other aesthetic categories

In the classical aesthetics of China, since harmony is looked upon as the beauty, and the harmonious unity containing different elements is stressed, then all of composition pattern that may give rise to the unharmonious and unstable are rejected and objected. It

tries to find a suitable location between the harmonious and the unharmonious, the still and the unstillness.

Since the harmonious beauty is regarded as the ideal of the classical aesthetics in China, all of the elements of the unharmonious ugliness could not find an important position in the classical aesthetics.

The classical arts in China are the harmonious arts, in which no deep ugliness in quality can be found; so in ancient China, a modern satire and modern comedy did not exist. In the classical aesthetics and arts of China, the beauty and the ugly, the subject and the object, the individual and society are not sharply opposite to each other. Their contradiction and struggle were never driven to the extreme. Often, the contradictions were resolved when they are developed to a certain degree. So there appeared a final reunion. Because of this reason, there was no sublime in the modern sense in ancient China. The modern tragedy is based on the sublime. Since there is no sublime in the modern sense, it is not possible to have modern tragedy. Basically, the classical tragedy in China is in the strong beauty; and it does not possess the strict sublime in the modern sense.

The Ideal of the classical beauty of harmony conditions not only the classical arts in China, but also the classical arts in the west. In the aesthetics and arts of the west, since imitating the real content of the contradiction, opposition and struggle as compared with that of China, therefore, the ugly element, sublime idea, the arts of tragedy and comedy are more fully develop more divided and more protruding, though they are still within the harmonious circle of the the classical beauty, and very different from the ugly and sublime in the modern times. Hegel once said: People in ancient Greece were the free subject; in that time, people and the object were united; so "the stage that the Greeks were conscious of is the 'beautiful' stage". In the same way, we can say, ancient Chinese were in the Beautiful stage too; and ancient China was a beautiful country too. In this field of the classical beauty of harmony, the beauty was the highest principle. The ugly, the sublime, tragedy and comedy had not been separated from the beauty completely, which existed as some elements of the beauty. As above, there are the common laws in the classical aesthetics and arts in the west and in China.

Institute of Aesthetics
Shandong University
Republic of China