

Aesthetic Studies in New China

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In the 90's of the 20th century, it is very significant for us to review the past of Chinese aesthetic research and look forward to its future. Generally speaking, after the establishment of New China, for more than 40 years, Chinese aesthetic research has passed a hard and tortuous way, but it also has gained great achievements which are specially attractive when we compare it — the younger branch of study — to other traditional subjects.

I

The development of aesthetics in New China knows mainly two phases which can be divided by the " Cultural Revolution" since the founding of the People's Republic. In the first stage (1949 - 1966) there became four schools, centred on the discussion of aesthetic thought of Mr. Zhu Guang - qian. These four schools laid their respective theoretical foundations by virtue of the different answers to the question of aesthetic essence. Mr. Lii Ying advanced the idea that beauty consists in the subjective; Cai Yi held on to his view that beauty consists in the nature or objective and that beauty is the ideal; Mr. Zhu Guang-qian put forward the statement that beauty consists in the unification of the subjective and objective after self - criticism of his idealistic point of view that beauty is the creature of the subjective soul. He thought that beauty lies in the "image of matter" which is unified by the subjective and objective, neither merely in the pure objective matter nor simply in the subjective soul. Li Ze - hou applied Marxist viewpoint of practice to the aesthetic studies, and thought beauty consists in the objectification of human essential faculty, so beauty is both social and objective. Among these four viewponts, there is the difference between materialism and idealism and as well as between dialectics and metaphysics. They had sharp polemics and heated arguments each other and simultaneously assimilated in varying degrees as well. For instance, Mr. Zhu Guang - qian was interestingly paying attention to the important role of labour practice in aesthetic and artistic activities. The unification of subèctive and objective, he said, somtimes refers to the unification of the two aspects in labour practice. So that shows his assimilation to the standpoint of practical school headed by Li Ze- hou. Li Ze-hou, however, was also getting attentive to the functions of

esthetic consciousness and esthetic psychology. He separated the essence of beauty and aesthetic object into two categories, and thought the former has nothing to do with the esthetic consciousness while the latter is mediated by the subjective factors such as the esthetic psychology and esthetic consciousness etc. That seems to be left some vestiges, affected by Mr. Zhu Guang - qian, of high valuation of the esthetic role of subjective. In brief, the great discussions on aesthetics during the 50's and the initial stage of the 60's are healthy and profitable with regard to its main current and laid a foundation of the esthetic studies in New China.

Apart from the abstract and philosophical speculation of the problems of essence of beauty, the other questions such as the object of aesthetics, the relationship between the aesthetics and the artistic practice or the reality of life, the law of both balance and imbalance between the material production and artistic production etc. are dealt with. These discussions not only benefit the theoretical exploration on aesthetics, but also play an active role in the development of art and even in the socialist constructions.

II

During the decade of upheaval turbulence (refers to the "Great Cultural Revolution"), aesthetics was consigned to limbo and devastated a great deal. It was almost a forbidden area where no one dared speak of the word "beauty". Even if Yao Wen - Yuan's pragmatistic aesthetics, idealist empiricist aesthetics and the metaphysic aesthetics were rampant at that time, some comrades were still exploring the true essence of the esthetic questions silently with inflexible will. Here comes a spring in the great and prosperous development of esthetic studies up to the smashing of "the Gang of Four". Specially after the Third Plenary Session of the XI' th Central Committee, under the guidance and the encouragement of Marxism -Leninism -Mao Zedong thought and the Party's policy of letting a hundred of flowers blossom and a hundred of schools of thought contend, people have freed themselves from old ideas. That comes to the 2nd stage of development of aesthetics in New China. This is the most important and most splendid period in New China's esthetic studies. Here are some characteristics of it :

1. Unprecedented development and strength of the workers of esthetic studies

People who wrote articles and joined the great discussions on aesthetics were no more than several dozens during the 50's and early in the 60's. At that time, only in Beijing University and Chinese People University were teaching and research sections of aesthetics set up and only in a few schools such as

Beijing University, Chinese People University and Shandong University, was the course of aesthetics offered. There was no professional journal of aesthetics in the whole country at that time. Anyhow, there has been much development in comparison of the conditions before Liberation. But it was far away from the demands of the socialist construction. After the smashing of "the Gang of Four" and alongside the proposal of the construction of the two civilizations, the workers in aesthetic studies have been thriving unprecedentedly. According to the tentative statistics, the teachers of aesthetics working in institutes of higher learning (colleges or universities) have been nearly to 600 or so. The courses of aesthetics are almost offered universally in every institute of higher learning. Graduate students of aesthetics (M. A. or Ph. D) have been enrolled in a lot of universities or colleges and scientific research institutions. The institutes of aesthetics have been founded in China Academy of Social Science, Shanghai Academy of Social Science, Shandong University and Chinese People University etc. The research work on aesthetic theories has been vigorously unfolding in these units. Books and journals of aesthetics are emerging one after another, e. g. *Aesthetic* by Research Section of Aesthetics, Institute of Philosophy, China Academy of Social Science; *Collected Essays on Aesthetics* by Research Section of the Theory of Art and Literature, Institute of Literature, China Academy of Social Science; *Aesthetic Education* in Hunan Province etc. The collected aesthetic works of Zhu Guang - qian, Li Ze - Hou, Cai Yi, Lii - Ying etc. have been published by Shanghai New Literature and Art Press; *The Outline of Aesthetics* by Wang Chao - wen was published by the People's Press. There are still a lot of comrades whose works of aesthetics have been published, e. g. Zhou Lai - xiang's *The Treatises on Aesthetic Problems, On What Beauty is Harmony*, Gao Er - tai's *Beauty is the Symbol of Freedom*, Yang Xin and Gan Lin's *The Fundamentals of Aesthetics* etc. Along with the unprecedented development of the workers of aesthetic studies, Chinas National Society for Aesthetics, which has held four sessions of annual meetings, was founded in Kunming in May, 1980. The Societies for aesthetics have been founded in most provinces and cities throughout the whole country. Their aesthetic studies have been developed in depth and this popularization of aesthetics has been made wide spread, especially the Youth are more interested in aesthetics. They have founded their own aesthetic associations and they are being the main strength of aesthetic activities. Unexaggeratedly speaking, a fad of aesthetics has been engulfing in China and an upsurge of the aesthetics has reached in New China.

2. Deepening of Aesthetic Theory

One of the great achievements on aesthetic studies was displayed on the deepening of studies on the questions of fundamental theory of aesthetics in

the past ten years. These fundamental questions of aesthetic theory deal mainly with the object of aesthetic studies, the essence of beauty and the characteristics of aesthetic consciousness.

So far as the object of aesthetic studies is concerned, there became three schools of opinions before the "Cultural Revolution" : One of them thought that the aesthetics is a science which deals with beauty and the law of beauty, the other one thought that aesthetics is a science which deals with the essence, characteristics and the general law of the art, so aesthetics is a study of art. The third one thought that aesthetics is a science which deals with the aesthetic connexions, concentrated by the dialectical unification of beauty, aesthetic consciousness and art; and artistic study is the key link. After the "Cultural Revolution", the deepening of the studies of the object of aesthetics represents on the following aspects :

(1) Some researchers advocated a new point of view that aesthetics is concentrated on the experience of the sense of beauty which leads to a combination with beauty and art. He has the opinion that aesthetics should consist of philosophy of beauty, aesthetic psychology and the artistic sociology.

(2) The theory of aesthetic connexions has been deepened to some extent. This school has made a historical study to the object of aesthetics in the relations and distinctions with the cognitive connexions and the ethical or practical connections. They do not think that the object of aesthetics is fixed or static, but of history and of development. Classical aesthetics is inclined to philosophy of beauty which is partial to the objective studies, the modern aesthetics is the aesthetic psychology and artistic sociology which is inclined to the subject. The former is dealt with the individual subject while the latter, the social subject; the contemporary aesthetics of Marxism should take aesthetic connexions as the key link so as to highly synthesize dialectically the studies of subject and object, the studies of beauty, aesthetic consciousness and art, the studies of philosophy, psychology, ethics and sociology.

As for the question of the essence of beauty, there came four schools of opinions, namely the theory of subjective, the theory of nature, the theory of unification of subjective and objective and the theory of unification of subjective and objective before the "Cultural Revolution". This question has a remarkable development in recent years. First of all, around the philosophic elemental questions of the school of practical aesthetics, a further exploration and discussion has been held. Secondly, the school of practical aesthetics has made considerable progress in the discussions. The theory that beauty is "the form of freedom" gives a further elaboration of the idea that beauty is the objectification of the human faculties. They thought that the so called "humanization of nature", essentially speaking, is the human characteristics of the freedom and self-consciousness which are objectified in the object; and that becomes the human

possession of the object. They are two aspects of the same thing. Both of them can be put into a nutshell of the "freedom". It is only on the basis of this condition that the form of freedom, i.e. the beauty comes into being, that the world of nature becomes the works and reality of the human and that the human being can realize and offer their eyes upon themselves; therefore they can have the merry sense of the form of freedom. Finally, on the basis of the idea of practice, the theory of beauty as harmony is advocated by Professor Zhou Lai - xiang. There are two characteristics in the theory of harmony, one is that they think beauty neither consists simply in the object, nor simply in the subject, but in the aesthetic connexions which take shape in each other's corresponding of the aesthetic object and aesthetic subject. In other words, beauty is the objectified properties, determined by the aesthetic connexions. This kind of theory assimilates the reasonable elements among the four schools above, and yet different from them, with regard to its distinctions with the idea that beauty consists simply in the objectivity. It is different from the theory that beauty consists in the nature or in the society. Concerning its distinctions with the idea that beauty consists purely in the subject, it is also different from the theory of subjective consciousness of the beauty. As for its being the aesthetic connexions that is the objective reality independent of men's will, formed between the aesthetic object and aesthetic subject it is not alike to the theory of unity (which consists in the subject) between the subject and object. The other one is that they do not think the aesthetic connexion can be confused with the cognitive connexion and the practical connexion. Those three kinds of connexions between man and his objects are of free relationship. But the cognitive and ethical practical connexions, however, are all interfered with the object itself while the object in aesthetic connexions is essentially man himself (the objectification of the man through the labouring practice); and the relationship between man and himself (is mainly not the relationship between man and his object), in this kind of connexion is both of harmony and freedom.

About the studies of aesthetic sense and aesthetic consciousness, somebody had a deepening analysis of the contradictory duality in the aesthetic sense before the "Cultural Revolution". At the present, psychological aesthetics has a greater development. The achievements of psychology have been used for the meticulous analysis of the problems on aesthetic sense. Some one probes into the psychological characteristics of aesthetic sense in the analysis of the four elements of psychology or cognition such as sense perception (idea), understanding, feeling and imagination, and has a concrete exploration and study of variety of the types of aesthetic sense in the combinative connexions of these four elements with different proportion and construction. The study on this aspect will be making more and more conspicuous achievements along with the increasing development of psychology.

3. The opening-up and expanding of the realm of aesthetic studies

The achievements of aesthetic studies are not only displayed on deepening of the original questions but also on the opening-up and expanding the realm of the aesthetic studies. The gratifying achievements have been made in the new realms of studies such as aesthetics of literature and art, aesthetics of artistic branches, the Chinese classical aesthetics and the comparative aesthetics etc.

As for the aesthetics of literature and art, people were made intently and extensively interested in it with the comparison of the abstract speculative philosophy of beauty. The aesthetics of literature and art is approaching and defining its object and range of study on one hand, and is making a concentrative approach in the question of the distinctive essence of the art only for art's sake on the other. In the past, the studies of the artistic essence are mainly the studies of sociology and epistemology. By virtue of the latter, it should come to the conclusion that art is a kind of form which has the reflection and the cognition of the reality through the vivid description of the figures. At present, in the aesthetic realm of literature and art, a further exploration on the aesthetic essence is being made on the basis of the research mentioned above. Someone thinks that art is intermediated by the feeling, but mainly is not the cognition. Someone advocates that art conveys ideas by virtue of the feelings but not the images. Someone thinks that art is the cognition but not only the cognition, and the feeling but not merely the feeling. They think that art is the unity of feeling and cognition, unity of psychological form and cognitive content, an immediate unity between the perceptual and the rational, the finality and the infinity, the necessity and the freedom. So it is the third kingdom of the aesthetic freedom which is bound between the rational cognition and the ethical practice. The aesthetics of every artistic branch is also flourishing along with the deepening of the studies on aesthetics of literature and art. At present, the studies of the unique essence and distinct law of the artistic branches such as theatre, calligraphy, free sketch, classical horticulture and architecture, music and film etc, become more exact and subtle in comparison with that in the past.

About the studies of Chinese classical aesthetics, people are getting more and more attracted to pay attention to it along with the advocacy of setting up a Marxist system of aesthetics with Chinese characteristics and, along with, the western countries' interests in it is getting more and more enhanced. Chinese classical aesthetics is a great treasure house while we didnot approach it from the aesthetic angle basically before the " Cultural Revolution". Although the fundamentals on this aspect were very vulnerable, considerable achievements have been made yet. The creativeness and achievements in the studies of Chinese classical aesthetics are sufficient to bring one's attention if compare it to the other traditionals, and strong branches of Chinese classical cultural studies. The studies on Chinese classical aesthetics are setting off on the following three aspects :

1. The collection and systematization of the aesthetic materials.
2. The macrocosmic studies and the reviews on the historic development of Chinese classical aesthetics. Li Ze-hou's *A History of Beauty* and his *A History of Chinese Aesthetics* (Volumes 1 and 2), co-edited in chief with Comrade Liu Gang - ji; Zhou Lai - xiang's *On Chinese Classical Aesthetics, The Main Trends of Chinese Aesthetics*, Min Ze's *A History of Chinese Aesthetic Thoughts*, Ye Lang's *An Outline History of Chinese Aesthetics* have been published. At present, the discussions have been made about the quality, characteristics, the general law and the specific law of the development of Chinese classical aesthetics and about the historical divisions of its development etc. With the comparison of the western aesthetics, Zhou Lai-xiang pointed out that Chinese classical aesthetics is partial to expression, expanding specially the theories about poetic atmosphere and lingering charm whereas the western aesthetics is partial to reproduction, correspondingly contributing to the theories of images and artistic ideals. Chinese classical aesthetics is the combination of ethics and psychology which emphasizes the integration of the good with the beautiful while in the West, aesthetics is the philosophic epistemology which places the stress on the integration of the true with the beautiful. As far as theoretical form is concerned, Chinese classical aesthetics is more intuitive and empirical and the spirit of rationalism was deeply latent in the perceptual form while the western aesthetics is more analytical and systematic. However, the aesthetic law which is elaborated in its dissecting way is not as vivid, exact or splendid as the aesthetic law caught in intuition and "sudden realization" (a category in Chan) in Chinese classical aesthetics with regard to some aspects. The distinctive exploration of Chinese classical aesthetics is spreading out in every aspect. In these studies, Chinese classical culture may be led to re-exploration, rerecognition and recommentary. Its vistas are beyond estimation.
3. The microcosmic studies of the aestheticians and their works of Chinese classical aesthetics. At present, the studies of Confucius, Mencius, Lao-Zhuang Gongsun Nizi ("Yue Ji" i. e. *Notes on Music*), Liu Xie, Li Yu, Wang Guo - wei, Lu Xun (earlier period) are carrying out deeply. The macrocosmic study and the microcosmic study are helping each other forward.

About the studies of western aesthetics and the comparative studies of aesthetics, Mr. Zhu Guang - qian's *A History of Western Aesthetics* two columns was published before the "Cultural Revolution". After the smashing of "the Gang of Four", the studies of the western aesthetics also have a new development. Comrade Ru Xin's *Collections on History of Western Aesthetics* and its sequel,

Comrade Jiang kong-yang's *Classical German Aesthetics* are all the results of new achievements of these studies. Generally speaking, Chinese aestheticians only studied the western aesthetics which was before Kant and Hegel. But along with the deep development of reforming and opening, especially since 1985, western contemporary aesthetic works have been translated into Chinese and introduced to China in large number. The first is Schopenhauer's, Nietzsche's and Sartre's philosophy and aesthetics, then, nearly every aesthetic school of the West in the 20th century has been recommended to Chinese readers, such as Susanne. K. Langer's *Feeling and Form*, Clive Bell's *Art*, Robin George Collingwood's *The Principles of Art*, Thomas Munro's *Toward Science in Aesthetics*, Rudolf Arnheim's *Art and Visual Perception* etc. Besides, collected essays on New Criticism, Structuralism, Semiotics, Hermeneutics, Reception - Aesthetics, Analytical Aesthetics and Phenomenological Aesthetics have been published too. For this importation of the aesthetic works, on one hand, it has widened Chinese aesthetes' horizons, has expanded the realm of study and enlightened Chinese aesthetes' thinking. But on the other hand, these aesthetic works have not been studied deeply, systematically and critically. They need to be further studied for lack of the combination with Chinese traditional aesthetic spirits and the current practice.

It is worth mentioning that the comparative studies which reveal the common laws of the aesthetic activities and the distinctive characteristics of nationalities between the East and the West by virtue of the comparison of the art and aesthetics between the East and the West are in the offing. At present, the comparative studies are carrying out variously. These are general comparison of the art and aesthetics between the East and the West, and the comparison of some artistic types (i.e. the comparison between Chinese opera and western drama, between traditional Chinese painting and western painting and the comparison of the idea of tragedy between the East and the West etc), the comparison between the aesthetes (i. e. the comparison between Confucius and Plato or Aristotle) as well. Comparison is a proficient method to cognize the matter. Through comparison, the general laws of aesthetic activities and the particular laws of Chinese classical aesthetics seem clearer and more distinctive.

III

In the huge tide of reforming and opening in the 80's, the second aesthetic spring of New China has come. But along with the new aesthetic activities and culture, the changes of new aesthetic tastes and concepts, also with the large importing of western modernist aesthetics, new problems have come, such as :

1. First of all, the contradiction is getting more and more obvious that the old aesthetic theory is unfit for the new aesthetic culture and practice. It

is difficult to use the aesthetic categories or the artistic concepts now available such as beauty, ugliness, sublimity, comicality, tragedy, comedy or realism, romanticism, modernism and post - modernism to exactly explain the new and developing artistic creation and aesthetic culture. Some persons think what they themselves imitated is western modernism, but we find that their creation is much different from the ugly arts of western modernism because they still obey some aesthetic laws. Some persons flaunt realism and think it is the main stream of Chinese contemporary (i. e. after 1919) and current literature and arts, but they have already gone beyond realistic law—— objective, perceptual, necessary and cognizant. Instead of that, in their creation, there are more romantic spirits and expressive consciousness, eg. subjectivity rationality, freedom and emotion. Even in disco and break dance we imported from the West, the rapid rhythm, the strong dynamics and the terroristic countenance have been greatly weakened, while the Chinese harmonious, tender feelings and gracefulness have been added into them. At present, the striking contradiction and main problem is that the original aesthetic categories and concepts do not fit the new aesthetic phenomena —— theory is behind the reality. Facing this problem, some persons are doing active exploration, but for some other persons, although on one hand, they are unsatisfied with the original theoretical pattern, on the other hand, they are perplexed and are at a loss what to do. They cannot comprehend and explain the complex aesthetic reality.

2. Along with the importing of western modernistic aesthetics, some young people blindly worship and imitate western modernism. They ignore the great difference between China and the West in history and culture, blindly recommend western aesthetics and arts to China without any analysis or differentiation. They import whatever theory as soon as it rises in the West. So, in a short period, every western aesthetic school was shown in China, but they had shorter lives. If a school in the West could keep in the limelight for 3 or 5 years, it could probably only exist for 3 or 5 months in China. On the other hand, there is also a minority of people who basically keep a negative attitude, they think the value of western modernistic aesthetics and art is not high.
3. Being related to the blind worship of western modernism, there is a small number of people who incline to negate the tradition of ancient aesthetic culture. Their viewpoint is that to negate the old traditional culture is a prerequisite to the establishment of new aesthetic concepts and culture. They consider that the traditional aesthetic culture is feudal, conservative and negative; it is basically opposite to the socialist aesthetic culture and has lost its active meaning. They think “the May 4th Movement ” (1919)

was a good beginning to fight against the feudal aesthetic culture but was not complete, so, it is necessary to continue the fight to the end. This kind of nihilistic attitude of completely negating the ancient aesthetic culture without any analysis is also an undeniable question. But on the other hand, some persons give the ancient aesthetic culture too high evaluation. These people are short of developing historical foresight ; sometimes, they even think the present new creation has been existing since the ancient times. So, they have gone to another extreme.

The problems mentioned above are the main questions in the present Chinese aestheticians' field. How to solve them ? Chinese aesthetes are doing serious consideration and deepgoing research. It is just like the Eight Immortals crossing the sea, each one showing his or her special prowess. Every aesthetician is trying to find a way out. Here, I'd like to offer some of my considerations to my colleagues all over the world for reference. For 40 years, I have researched aesthetic theory, aesthetics of literature and arts, Chinese aesthetics and comparative aesthetics between China and the West. My main purposes are: with the aid of researching the history of aesthetics, to comprehend the present situation of aesthetics and forecast its future ; to advance some aesthetic categories and theoretical construction which either conform to Chinese distinctive features or reflect the spirits of the times ; to solve the contradiction that the original aesthetic conventions are unfit for the new aesthetic practice of the times. Here are my main points :

- (1) In order to solve the problems above, I think first of all, we should research the renewal of the mode and methods of the subject' s thinking. If we do not build the modern scientific mode of thinking, nor grasp the most scientific methods of research, it is difficult for us to research new problems, to sum up the new experience and to produce the aesthetic concepts and construction with modern level. I advocate to use the method of dialectic thinking; furthermore, absorb some new methods of modern natural sciences such as: systems theory, information theory, cybernetics cooperation theory, dissipation structure theory and fuzzy mathematics etc. These methods are of quite universal significance. They have deeply enlightened and advanced the thought of human being. Once when Karl Marx talked about how to judge whether a branch of science was ripe or not, he said that it only depends on if it took advantage of mathematics. It is said that in " New American Encyclopedia ", Marx wrote the entry of aesthetics, in which, he raised to use the method of mathematics to research the law of artistic forms. This had keen insight. Contemporary mathematics has developed from constant mathematics, variable mathematics to fuzzy

mathematics. It is an urgent task to take advantage of mathematic achievement in aesthetic research so that aesthetics will be a ripe branch of science. Besides that, some methods of western modernist and post-modernist aesthetics should be differentially assimilated. There are some rationalities in the methods of psychology, structuralism and analytic philosophy. We should base those methods on the dialectic thinking and assimilate all these methods to form a highly synthetical method. So long as we did this, we could research aesthetic phenomena in many angles, gradations, branches of science, and all directions. We could solve all the problems comprehensively and seek truth from facts.

- (2) I advocate to smash and reform the old aesthetic categories according to the aesthetic practice of the new times, and to form new aesthetic concepts and theoretical construction. I separate the aesthetic categories now available into two big historical categories which are the harmonious beauty of ancient times and the opposite sublimity of modern times. Corresponding to the ancient harmonious beauty, classical arts consisted of exquisiteness and magnificence which were formed by the simple combination of undivided beauty, ugliness, sublimity and comicality. As for ugliness, it was not an independent category in ancient times. In ancient times, only forms were allowed to be ugly, just like Aristotle's "unharmful ugliness". Essential ugliness was excluded then. The principle to deal with ugliness then was turning it into beauty. Only in modern times, along with the revolution and rising of ugliness, beauty, sublimity, tragedy, comedy began to divide into independent, opposite categories. Realism and romanticism correspond to sublimity. Modernism corresponds to ugliness. In postmodernism, ugliness changes into absurdity. This process of developing and changing of western aesthetic concepts are simple, pure and clear. But in the reforming and opening contemporary China, the condition is much more complex. From the 80's to the initial stage of the 90's, first, traditional classical beauty still exists. Secondly, modern western aesthetic concepts and artistic culture of sublimity, ugliness and absurdity etc, are imported in a great quantity. Thirdly, the ideal of dialectic harmonious beauty which reflects the spirits of the day is forming and developing. These three patterns of aesthetics oppose, exclude and conflict each other and infiltrate, absorb and accelerate each other as well. This forms a very complicated and plural situation. In this case, unlike the West where many aesthetic phenomena are simple and pure, now in China, many aesthetic elements are mingled with each other, even the different elements of ancient, modern and present times. So, today's realism is not the original, and some modernist arts which are advertised by some artists

themselves are not the original either. This analysis of mine to the speciality of Chinese contemporary aesthetic culture, has given the complicated contradiction in aesthetic practice a theoretical explanation. In the situation of emergence of many elements, I have another point that the dialectic harmonious beauty is probably the aesthetic ideal of contemporary and future times. I hold that the new type of beauty absorbs both the ancient harmony and the opposition of modern sublimity and ugliness. It synthesizes the harmony and opposition in a higher degree. So, it is different from the ancient beauty and the modern sublimity. This phenomenon has been demonstrated in arts. e.g. the elements of subject, emotion, reason and freedom have increased in realistic art. The present new-experiential novels demand both photographic reality and abstract expression, and vice versa, some modernistic writings absorb Eastern, Chinese harmonious principles and graceful sentiments. They expect a higher degree of synthesis in the extreme opposition and division. This is probably the emergence of the new ideal of harmonious beauty in arts. The two aspects above influence each other and develop simultaneously. I also consider that the dialectic harmonious beauty needs an arduous process to ripen and get the dominant position as an aesthetic ideal and a new type of beauty. In this rather long transitional period, kinds of aesthetic types will exclude and assimilate each other. We need a long exploration and creation. It should be judged by history whether my theory and method for solving the problems fit the practice of Chinese modern and contemporary aesthetic developing or not.

- (3) To create and raise new aesthetic categories and theories, on one hand, we need to deeply research the aesthetic culture and practice of the reality. On the other hand, we need to expand the excellent Chinese tradition of aesthetic culture and use modern and contemporary western aesthetic experience or artistic culture for reference. In approaching Chinese traditional aesthetic culture, we should not look it as perfect quintessence or nihility. Ancient Chinese aesthetics once was one of the two heights of slavery world classical aesthetics society. Ancient Greek aesthetics was the first height in the world aesthetic history. The foundation of western aesthetic thoughts was laid on the aesthetic thoughts of Plato, Aristotle and Horatius. This formed the tradition of western culture and the system of western aesthetic thoughts which were of long standing and well established. As the representative aesthetics in feudal times, Chinese classical aesthetics was the second height in the world aesthetic history. It was longer in history and richer, more complicated in theories. The foundation of eastern aesthetic thoughts was laid on the aesthetic thoughts

of the “Book of Changes”, Confucius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Gongsun Nizi (“Yue Ji” i.e. “Notes on Music”), Liu Xie, Sikong - Tu, Yan Yu, Su Jin Sheng - tan, Wang Guo - wei, etc. This formed the unique system of the eastern culture and aesthetic thoughts. It is a peculiar and splendid treasure-house of aesthetics. In the past, many people researched and explained it by using the western aesthetic system which laid particular stress on reproduction and imitation, or by using the modern realistic categories and concepts. It makes me feel that it is irrelevant to the subject and unfair in praise or depreciation. The praise to Chinese classical aesthetics according to western modern concepts makes me feel like it is stretching the meaning, while the depreciation usually belittles the cream and originality of Chinese classical aesthetics. At present, people have realized that China and the West belong to two different types of culture and two different systems of aesthetic thought. Their respective characteristics and original contribution should be correctly realized. We should not use one type to play down the other or vice versa. Along with this awakening of thought, the originalities and true features of Chinese aesthetics have been paid more attention in aesthetic field. This is an important change and development. My works *On Chinese Classical Aesthetics* and *The Main Trends of Chinese Aesthetics* are parts of the incarnation of this new change. We must admit that western aesthetic thought and culture, especially the modern aesthetics and arts are more important and significant to our nationality whose modern society did not develop full well. Here I do neither mean blind worship nor total exclusion. We need analyses and differentiation. Every harmful element should be rejected and sublated, every beneficial element should be absorbed and used for reference. In short, we should base ourselves upon Chinese reality, use western aesthetics for reference, and blend the aesthetic thoughts of China and the West to a higher degree. Only depending on this, can we establish Chinese new aesthetics and aesthetic culture.

The above is my individual opinion, if inappropriate, please oblige me with your valuable comments.

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