

Thinking of Traditional Literati Painting and Its Contemporary Development

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Abstract—After the 20th century, the development of traditional Literati Paintings underwent setbacks. People's cognition of such painting also had some bias under the impact of Western culture. Up to now, some of the cognitions have obviously become an intrinsic cognitive perspective and impression that people have on such painting. This cognition is also exposed to the current painting and calligraphy circle, and even has a certain impact on the main trend of Chinese painting and calligraphy. And the core of those problems is necessary to return to the cognition of the traditional Literati Painting concept itself. Therefore, after explaining the modern development background at the beginning, this paper firstly discusses Literati Painting and its related issues, and makes specific discussion on the relationships between "Literati Painting and realistic painting", "Literati Painting, imperial-court decorative painting and meticulous painting". On the basis of the discussion, the paper further overviews the times and the current status and proposes some specific thinking about the development of Literati Painting. The thinking is addressed from the perspectives of painter and the public in combination with typical cases of contemporary artists and the contents as aforementioned in the paper.

Keywords—*Literati Painting; realism; free sketch; contemporary; innovation*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-19th century, China has gradually become a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Although the 1911 Revolution was successful and the Republic of China was established, China still faced the chaos brought by foreign aggression and civil strife. In 1915, the magazine "New Youth" was born, and a group of intellectuals who wanted to make renovation began to show their opinions. Hence, the New Culture Movement began at the moment. The waves of learning the "democracy" and "science" from the West tumbled, and ruthlessly impacted the value of Chinese traditional culture until being exhausted. Even the opinion of "complete westernization" was raised. Chen Xujing indicated in his "The Way Out for Chinese Culture" that "thorough westernization" is the only way to save the nation from peril. Meanwhile, the battle of confrontation between Chinese and Western cultures had gradually entered the art field.

At first, Kang Youwei recklessly criticized the free-sketch Literati Paintings in the "Preface of Collected Paintings in Wanmu Caotang". He believed that imperial-

court decorative painting was the authentic Chinese painting; "is it ridiculous to say that specially focusing on morale is the authenticity of free sketch painting? It is hereby to correct it as follows: painting should mainly focus on the body and spirit other than free sketch; rendered ruler painting should be regarded as the authentic painting, while the painting drawn in rough and simple writing brush should be regarded as other sect of painting; the morale is really precious, but imperial-court decorative painting should be regarded as the authentic painting. This is to rescue the biased theory of painting in the past five hundred years, while Chinese paintings are still treatable and have enterprising space"¹. In addition to taking imperial-court decorative painting as the ruler, Kang Youwei strongly advocated learning western realistic painting, and western classical oil painting, and proposed to "combine Chinese and Western paintings to create a new era of painting"². His student Xu Beihong also raised the opinion on retrogression of Chinese painting at the beginning of the speech "Improvement of Chinese Painting" as given on the Peking University Painting Research Meeting. In the speech, Xu Beihong also praised imperial-court decorative painting and criticized Literati Painting, and advocated using the theory of realistic painting in the West to reform Chinese painting. Later on "New Youth", Chen Duxiu proposed "art revolution", extremely advocated that "The realistic spirit in paintings of the West may never be used for improving Chinese painting"³, and even held that "Since scholars criticize imperial-court decorative painting, pay more attention to free sketch, and do not advocate drawing things; this fashion was advocated by Ni Zan and Huang Gongwang at the end of Yuan Dynasty, again advocated by Wen Zhengming and Shen Zhou in Ming Dynasty, and even more crazily advocated by Wang Shimin, Wang Jian, Wang Yuanqi in Qing Dynasty; Wang Shigu was called the master of Chinese painting; but in the author's opinion, Wang Shigu's painting is a general ending of a sect of Chinese painting represented by Ni Zan, Huang Gongwang, Wen

¹ Kang Youwei. Collected Paintings in Wanmu Caotang. China Art Weekly. 1918.

² Kang Youwei. Collected Paintings in Wanmu Caotang. China Art Weekly. 1918.

³ Chen Duxiu. Art revolution — a reply to Lv Cheng. New Youth. Vol.6, No. 1, 1918-1-15.

Zhengming and Shen Zhou"⁴. From then on, the believing that Chinese painting is not scientific and the fanaticism of Western paintings is unrestricted quickly became the mainstream of the painting circle. This also led to the extreme decline of traditional Literati Painting.

Until the 1920s and 1930s, Guangdong Traditional Chinese Painting Research Association represented by Huang Banruo emerged in the south of China, and Chen Shizeng issued relevant articles in the north of China, beginning the way to vigorously maintain and correctly treat Literati Painting. Among them, Chen Shizeng used the development course of Western paintings to prove that China's "Literati Painting doesn't seek for similarity in shape, which makes the progress in painting"⁵ and Chinese Literati Painting is scientific. Actually, the Chinese Literati Painting as mentioned in Huang Banruo's "Expressionism and Chinese Painting", also has the characteristics of expressionism. In addition, Zheng Wuchang, the author of "The Whole History of Studies of Chinese Painting", once also said that "the so-called art must have certain principles. Adhering to this principle, any painting no matter from China or the West can be considered as valuable. Therefore, in order to promote the studies of Chinese painting, one only needs to consider whether the studies of Chinese painting adhere to this principle or not. If being researched on this artistic principle, Chinese painting will surely not inevitable to be extinct. The artistic principle of painting is not in the appearance and spirit..."⁶; the value of Chinese Literati Painting is constantly being re-recognized and spread. Interestingly, this is exactly corresponding to the so-called "world vision". At this time, Western painting has gradually moved from traditional classical realism to symbolism and expressionism, while symbolism and expressionism are relatively consistent with Chinese Literati Painting in some viewpoints and theories. It seems finding a new so-called value of Literati Painting if Chinese Literati Painting is still evaluated in accordance with the judging system of the West.

With the development of the society, the western style is constantly involved in Chinese Literati Painting. Up to the time of the "85 New Wave", Li Xiaoshan proposed that "Chinese painting has reached the end of its way"⁷; followed by, another wave of denying Chinese painting was raised among young painters. After the reform and opening up, with the large amount of introduction to Western thoughts and modernism thinking into China, painters began a series of new "innovations" on traditional ink painting, and new forms of expression such as experimental ink paintings constantly emerged and developed. Regardless of the good or bad, advantage or disadvantage of these new forms of expression, this article emphasizes that those new

"innovations" finally often deviated from the direction of traditional Chinese painting itself, and gradually move toward a trend of using Chinese painting tools to express a thing no longer belonging to traditional Chinese painting both in form and concept. However, the innovation should not be treated purely from a critical or even negative perspective, because this attempt still has its precious side and still has its unique value which however is no longer limited to the narrow meaning of traditional Chinese painting.

II. ABOUT TRADITIONAL LITERATI PAINTING

Throughout the development course of traditional Literati Painting in the context of modern times, it can be seen that the criticizing and denying of Literati Painting mainly focus on its deviation from realism, but is Literati Painting really not realistic? Or do literati really have not any factor of realism? Maybe not! The next will discuss the topic of "traditional Literati Painting and realism". Later, on this basis, the relation between Literati Painting and imperial-court decorative painting will be reconsidered after thinking about "meticulous" and "free sketch" techniques, namely the "meticulous" and "free sketch" techniques relative in certain sense. Namely, it is expected to consider the relation between the "meticulous" and "free sketch" techniques and get a new cognition of the relation from a larger dimension. This content will be presented in the section mentioned the relationship between Literati Painting, imperial-court decorative painting and meticulous painting.

A. Traditional Literati Painting and Free Sketch Painting

First of all, before talking about the topic of "traditional Literati Painting and realism", it is necessary to firstly make clear the pure concept of traditional Literati Painting. Traditional Literati Painting, namely the so-called Literati Painting in general, is distinguished from the new Literati Painting that appears later. Hereinafter, traditional Literati Painting is referred to as "Literati Painting". Then, what is Literati Painting? In simple terms, it is the traditional Chinese painting works painted by literati for the main purpose of expressing the literati's spirit and pursuit. First, it is painted by literati other than by craftsman. From this point of view, Literati Painting can be traced back to Gu Kaizhi and Zong Bing and et al in the Six Dynasties. Before Qin and Han Dynasties, most Literati Paintings were painted by commercial painter.

Then, what is the core of Literati Painting? Is it the core to fully copy an object or precisely express an object? Neither. Literati Painting emphasizes creating the artistic conception of spirit. It is a work "having the nature of literati, containing the taste of literati, no concern of art skills in painting, but having to show the feelings of many literati beyond the painting"⁸. In other words, it is the presentation of "the literati's spirit, personality and feelings"⁹. That is what people often say "do not seek resemblance to form, but

⁴ Chen Duxiu. Art revolution — a reply to Lv Cheng. New Youth. Vol.6, No. 1, 1918-1-15.

⁵ Sourced from Chen Hengke's "The Value of Literati Paintings" (Yu Jianhua. Selected Readings of Chinese Painting Theory [M]. Nanjing: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007, p 486.)

⁶ Zheng Wuchang. Understanding of Chinese Painting. The Eastern Miscellanies. Vol. 28, No. 1, 1931.

⁷ Li Xiaoshan. Chinese Painting Has Come to the End of the Road. China Art Weekly. Issue No.14, 1985.

⁸ Sourced from Chen Hengke's "The Value of Literati Paintings" (Yu Jianhua. Selected Readings of Chinese Painting Theory [M]. Nanjing: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007, p 472.)

⁹ Ibid.

seek resemblance to spirit "so that "art is close to the way of nature". If one only seeks resemblance to form, he will be like Su Shi's saying of "his views are about the same as those of children"¹⁰. When it comes to the resemblance to spirit, namely when emphasizing the creation and expression of the literati's spirit and pursuit, the painting will look not that exquisite and even look "rough"¹¹. Therefore, this often leads people to misunderstand that Literati Painting is purely "free sketch" without requirement for form, having no relation with any realistic factors, and is just freely drawn to express literati's true feeling. But in fact, it is not the case. Literati Painting not only has requirements for form, just like Chen Shizeng once said, "The paintings of ancient and modern literati are so strict in pattern and so precise in conception and so careful in drawing"¹², but also this requirements are actually the more essential requirements. It is an expression in concise language form of the most essential things as extracted from the original object after getting a precise cognition of the object. The details will be further explained below. Therefore, it cannot be said that Literati Painting has no physical requirements and is not realistic; it just "pays more attention to the expression in spirit than in form"¹³. Therefore, Literati Painting is neither completely separated from nor completely opposite to realism. The next further discusses the relation between Literati Painting and realism.

As one of the important and mainstream categories in traditional Chinese painting, Literati Painting also has some characteristics of traditional Chinese painting. Actually, "realism" is also a feature of traditional Chinese painting. But as a kind of painting paying more attention to expressing the pursuit in spiritual connotation, "Literati Painting" is easier to give people an impression of metaphysical connotation, and hence its other characteristics appear to be more implicit than not exist. After all, the impression that any thing gives people in the end is often the most important expression or embodiment, but this does not mean that the thing has not any other contents than this impression. In people's mind, the word "realism" is often associated with

Western paintings, and seems to have nothing to do with traditional Chinese painting; but actually, it is not so. At the very beginning, Chinese painting had got the characteristics of "writing in shape" or "pictogram"; or it can be said that "writing in shape" or "pictogram" itself is one of the characteristics or attributes of Chinese painting. In a certain sense, those two terms also correspond to the word "realism", or have certain realistic factors.

As early as recorded in "Guang Ya", "painting should be similar to an object"; as also stated in "Er Ya", "painting should be similar to a shape"; it is also mentioned in (East Han Dynasty) Xu Shen's *Shuowen Jiezi* (literally: 'Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters') that "The original intention of painting is to delimit a boundary or border, just like the boundaries in field formed by ridges"¹⁴. Up to West Jin Dynasty, Lu Ji once also said that "the best way to describe a thing is to use words. Picture contains three levels of connotations: the divinatory symbol reflecting its argumentation, the mark and cognition expressed by Chinese words and the image rendered by painting. But no matter understanding from which level, it is always a visual expression having the dual-connotation of image and spirit as extracted by ancestors in the process of observing the nature"¹⁵. Even (Tang Dynasty) Zhang Yanyuan also clearly wrote in the "Narrative of famous paintings in past dynasties" that "With no way to show a shape, people created painting"¹⁶. It can be seen that the depiction of a shape is one of the basic features of Chinese painting. "Having its image" and "carrying its shape" are also basic functions of Chinese painting. Just after Wang Wei's works emerged, Literati Paintings were produced and developed continuously and gradually became the mainstream of Chinese painting, and the expression of subjective spirits such as "drafting in mind", "free sketch", "expressing the spirit" and "speaking in opinion" became more and more important, and gradually concealed other characteristics.

There are obvious traces of realism in the original traditional figure paintings such as Gu Kaizhi's "The Admonitions Scroll" and (South Tang Dynasty) Gu Hongzhong's "Night Banquet in Han Xizai's Home". Flower and bird paintings also like so. During the Tang and Five Dynasties and even the South and North Song Dynasties, flower and bird paintings gradually matured and reached a peak. Painters sketched much from nature, and there were Huang Quan's noble and wealthy painting style and Xu Xi's wild leisure painting style. Emperor Huizong of Song Dynasty once called imperial-court decorative painters to draw the scene of the peacock going to climbing up and

¹⁰ It is sourced from one of Su Shi's Poems Inscribed on Paintings "Two poems for the folded branches painted by of clerical staff of Yanling King". "It is very naive to measure the quality of a painting only by looking at its simple appearance. It is the child's insight. Just like writing poetry, if one only focuses on the superficial image and stay in the literal sense, he is definitely not a good poet. The principles of poetry and painting are the same in essence, and are the similarity in both natural and artificial appearance and the similarity in spiritual pursuit. For example, the bird sketched by Bian Luan and the flower painted by Zhao Chang are very vivid. Their paintings not only realize the similarity in appearance but more express a kind of spirit and charm. Su Shi here emphasized more on the expression of inner spirit."

¹¹ Sourced from the "Yunlin's Discussion on Painting of Landscapes" painted by Ni Yunlin in Yuan Dynasty (see the six methods (South Qi Dynasty) Xie He's "Catalog of ancient paintings"; 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p702').

¹² Sourced from Chen Hengke's "The Value of Literati Paintings" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Selected Readings of Chinese Painting Theory. Nanjing, Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007, p 472').

¹³ Sourced from Chen Hengke's "The Value of Literati Paintings" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Selected Readings of Chinese Painting Theory. Nanjing, Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007, p 472').

¹⁴ Both recorded in (Tang Dynasty) Zhang Yanyuan's "Narrative theory of famous paintings in past dynasties" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p28').

¹⁵ This sentence was spoken by Imperial Minister Yan, and recorded in (Tang Dynasty) Zhang Yanyuan's "Narrative theory of famous paintings in past dynasties" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p27').

¹⁶ Sourced from (Tang Dynasty) Zhang Yanyuan's "Narrative theory of famous paintings in past dynasties" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p27').

sitting on a vine in front of Xuanhe Hall. The picture painted by them show that the peacock raised right foot first. But quickly, Huizong put forward corrective opinion that "when climbing up, the peacock surely raises left foot first"¹⁷. It can be seen that Chinese flower and bird paintings focuses on shape, and treats the depiction of object very rigorously; meanwhile, it also pays attention to expression of spirit. Through the "sketching from nature", the depiction of flowers, birds, insets and animals, and drawing their situations, painters of flower and bird paintings may get their shape and state shown on paper vividly, showing the vitality of life itself. And this also contains the expression of the natural upward passion of lives of both human beings and the nature.

Perhaps the subjects such as flower and bird painting and figure painting is intrinsically more likely to be associated with realism, regardless of the subsequently-derived free sketch of flowers and birds and inked characters. Landscape painting always seems somewhat far and/or near similar to realism, and is also precisely a very important part of Literati Painting. As for why landscape painting and realism always give people a vague sense between them, it should be discussed from the particularity of the materials drawn from landscape.

With respect to the expression of landscapes, it is often the true landscapes but looks like other landscapes. This is also a unique aspect represented by natural landscapes. After traveling through thousands of landscapes, it seems to return to one landscape. Of course, the concept of landscape here will be gradually transformed into the realm of great landscape, but it still has the natural characteristics of landscape and just has more intense nature being of the landscape. That's precisely why different landscapes painted by different painters generally look somewhat similar especially when the painted landscape is a half or part of a landscape and nature, apart from some obvious characteristics of different landscapes, such as the obvious physical characteristics of Hua Mountain and Que Mountain shown in the "Que Hua Qiu Se Tu (The Autumn in Que and Hua Mountains)", and some special mountainous mechanism. Of course, when looking at the mechanism and shape of the landscape and the categories of trees in the landscape as drawn in a painting, it may be easy to find the region or area where the landscape it in on the basis of personal knowledge; but it is hard to tell the name of the specific landscape provided that there is not any supporting explanation including signature and notes; and this is often not what the painter wants the viewers to further explore.

Therefore, this paper emphasizes that landscape paintings may look like a combination of mountains, stones and trees, and seem somewhat similar; but this does not mean that they do not have the characteristics of realism. As early as mentioned in the theory of landscape painting such as (Southern Dynasty) Zong Bing's "Preface to Landscape Painting", the creation of landscape painting still pursues

"drawing shape by the appearance shape" and "rendering color by the appearance color"¹⁸, as well as "expressing the spirit"¹⁹. It can be seen that landscape painting still has requirements for the combination of physical structure and situation, and should conform to nature. Each piece of rock is not painted without principle but is painted as a constitutional summary of block structure; the formation of texturing method is not a random creation, but a linear refinement from the nature of the mechanisms of different natural mountain bodies. Texturing method is not used at random choice, and different regions or regions have different characteristics, as different region has different characteristics; the expression of trees is also not arbitrary, but is in line with the geographical characteristics. Therefore, landscape painter still focuses on "grasping the law of nature in mind"²⁰ and drafting it on paper. Merely in it, the landscape attracts people to enjoy within its overwhelming atmosphere, and the painter's expect and pursuit is merged into the landscape and fused into the "realm of sky and earth"; and this is also an expression of mind and reflection of fugitive spirit, just as Wang Wei said in his work "On Painting", "depicting the ethereal status of a landscape by using a brush"²¹. However, all foundations must return to the depiction of the landscape itself. Spirit and emotions must be expressed under and in the shape other than at random. Taking Huang Gongwang's "Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains"²² as an example, it was created over 7 years, wherein 3 days were spent on drawing a stone and 5 days were spent on drawing a scene of water. The whole painting was formed and presented after an in-depth experience in the natural scene. At this time, Huang Gongwang had lived in Fuchun Mountain for a long time and Fuchun Mountain had already been naturalized in his mind. The landscapes in real word and in his mind had long been integrated and entered a realm of "grasping and presenting the law of nature" and "maintaining a harmony between art and the nature"²³. Thereby in the final presentation, a painting often gives people a state of calm, an atmosphere of freedom, and a realm of harmony between human beings and nature.

At the same time, this is also the mien that the painter ultimately pursues. But this kind of emotional and spiritual experience is often easier to enter and stay in the mind of the viewer. This is also easy for future generations to

¹⁸ Sourced from (Southern Dynasty) Zong Bing's "Preface to Landscape Painting" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p583').

¹⁹ Sourced from (Southern Dynasty) Zong Bing's "Preface to Landscape Painting" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p584').

²⁰ Sourced from (Southern Chen Dynasty) Dai Yaozui's "Preface the quality of painting" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p369').

²¹ Sourced from (Southern Dynasty) Song Wangwei's "On Painting" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p586').

²² The paintings mentioned in this article will be presented in the attached pictures; for the painter or artist whose specific works are not mentioned in this paper, some of their works will also be selected and attached in the attached pictures of the paper.

²³ Sourced from Mr. Zong Baihua's "On Aesthetics".

¹⁷ Sourced from (Song Dynasty) Deng Chun's "different versions of stories of paintings" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p79').

misunderstand it after constantly ignoring the shape itself. Coupled with the rapid development of Literati Painting, it is easier for people to think that landscape painting has no requirement for shape; but actually, it is not so. Zheng Ji, a painter of Qing Dynasty, once said that "When learning landscape paintings, it is surely needed to inherit the learning handed down in a family and learn from the techniques of the predecessors; but this does not mean that the study of landscape painting is only to learn and grasp brush and ink techniques. In landscape paintings, there are very strict rules in grasping the physical shape of the object depicted. But today many people ignore the physical shape of the object depicted, namely they don't know what they are painting, and hence deviates from the painting itself! So, whether it is painting mountains, stones or trees, it is necessary to firstly make a complete investigation on the object and understand their laws of growth, such as the height, orientation, angle, straightness, opening or closing, main or auxiliary part of the trunk branch. Only after making clear the basic laws, can it be possible to apply different painting methods and texturing techniques to paint. The selection and use of painting methods depends on the grasping of pen and ink and the control of the texture. But, the grasping and cognition of the image of the expressed object is the foundation of painting which cannot be ignored"²⁴. Landscape painting merely pays more attention to the expression and pursuit of artistic conception in addition to shape expression.

In addition, regarding landscape painting, there is one more point worth of mentioning, namely, the unique perspective principle of Chinese landscape painting: cavalier perspective. Different from Western paintings adopting camera perspective, Chinese landscape painting uses multi-point perspective, as well as simultaneous translational perspective. But this does not mean that Chinese landscape painting does not understand perspective, is not scientific, and does not conform to the nature. As early as in Southern Dynasty, Zong Bing once said, "Kunlun Mountain is so big and our eyes are so small. When look at it from a close distance, it will not be available to have a full view of the appearance of Kunlun Mountain. But when look at it from a place several miles away from the mountain, the physical shape and momentum of the whole mountain will be in sight. That is to say, the farther away from the mountains, the smaller the shape you see, the more you can see the landscape. Now you can unfold a silk, and depict the mountain far away; such a huge shape of Kunlun Mountain can be reflected on several square inches of silk. As long as you draw three inches vertically, you can reflect a mountain with a height of several thousand feet on the silk; When you draw a few feet horizontally, you can experience hundreds of miles of scenery...so the expression of the momentum of the depicted landscape may not be affected by the small scale in the drawing and the difference in size from the actual size. The natural momentum is contained in the landscape. If this momentum can be expressed, both the beauty of Song

Mountain and Hua Mountain and the aura of the long valley can be revealed in a picture"²⁵. This perspective was generated about a thousand years earlier than the Western paintings' focus perspective. Merely later, Chinese landscape paintings emphasized more on the feeling of "personally experiencing the landscape"²⁶, and the feeling of "a feasible, expectable, accessible and livable landscape"²⁷. And this kind of experience can't be brought about by pure camera perspective. It requires for expressing the feeling of far away in height, depth and horizon, representing the moving of view points and reflecting the shifting to different scenes. It is also precisely the multi-dimensional representation of this single time and space that gives the space and platform for generating and expressing the natural realm between nature and human beings.

Above all, traditional Chinese painting has the characteristics of realism, but merely pays more attention to the expression of artistic conception under the combination of expressions of physical shape and spirit. As a result, the free-sketch feature of Chinese painting becomes more obvious, and the characteristics and factors of realism in it are easily ignored. Literati Painting, as an expression focusing on reflecting the literati's spirit and pursuit, is more like so. However, it cannot be said that literati has no realistic features and factors at all.

B. The Relationship Between Literati Painting, Imperial-court Decorative Painting and Meticulous Painting

What's the relationship between Literati Painting, imperial-court decorative painting and meticulous painting? Actually, they are not absolutely separated from and even opposite to each other by a pure limit, but are in a fused and mutually-transformed relationship. The next of this paper mainly talks about "meticulous" and "free sketch" techniques.

Firstly, Literati Painting focuses on "free sketch" technique, while both imperial-court decorative painting and meticulous painting are dominated by "meticulous" technique. Actually, this is a reflection of different focuses on form and spirit. However, it should be noted that "meticulous" and "free sketch" techniques are not absolutely in opposite positions; otherwise, there would not be the form of "the combination of craft and writing". The following talks about the initial relation between Literati Painting and imperial-court decorative painting. Ma Yuan is a representative of imperial-court decorative painters. His painting looks exquisite but it is not actually the case after someone copies from his painting. He uses a large extent of brushwork, while the use of brushwork has close relation with the final representation of his expression. At the same time, his painting is like the general landscape paintings or works in Song Dynasty. If it is necessary to determine

²⁵ Sourced from (Southern Dynasty) Zong Bing's "Preface to Landscape Painting" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p583').

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Sourced from (Northern Song Dynasty) Guo Xi and Guo Si's "The elegance of the bamboo and spring" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p631-650').

²⁴ Sourced from (Qing Dynasty) Zheng Ji's "Concise Theory of Fantasy Living Painting". (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p1195-1218').

whether his paintings belong to "meticulous" or "free sketch" technique, it is believed that it is most appropriate to say that his paintings is a combination of "meticulous" and "free sketch" techniques. Therefore, from this perspective, Ma Yuan's paintings are not absolutely imperial-court decorative paintings. Looking at the overall sense shown in his paintings, is it appropriate to say that his works such as "Ta Ge Tu" and "Mei Hua Shu Wu" do not have the senses that "only by watching the autumn clouds can it be available to release the mind; and only by enjoying the Spring breeze can it be available to be inspired by the vast nature; the beauty of landscape is incomparable to music art and precious jade ware"²⁸? Of course not! The characteristics finally presented in Ma Yuan's paintings are in the expression of "the heart of landscape" beyond the secular utilitarian view. Therefore, from this perspective, it is held that Ma Yuan's paintings are in line with the most core characteristics of Literati Painting.

Perhaps it is because his paintings belong to landscape paintings, so that the boundary between the Literati Painting created before the time of his paintings, and the imperial-court decorative painting became somewhat blurred. Hence, the next will discuss the dominant imperial-court decorative paintings: flower and bird paintings. The paintings created by Zhao Ji and Cui Bai and et al are significant meticulous flower and bird paintings. However, the spirit expressed after being extracted from the original object still hinders under the exquisite appearance of their works. It is not appropriate to deny the presentation of their spiritual pursuits, and of course also not appropriate to erase the connotation of their pursuit for resemblance to form. Here, this article does not aim at doubting such boundary between Literati Painting and imperial-court decorative painting as surely existing, and merely highlights that the spirit of literati expressed by the two kinds of paintings can be consistent with each other at certain level.

Next, the paper will talk about the meticulous painting. First of all, meticulous painting in general form is indeed drafted by exquisite brushwork again and again to pursue the beauty of the shape; but in the process of pursuing the beauty, the core of Literati Painting is not lost for this reason, but just the meticulous appearance brings too profound original impact on people. The modern meticulous figure painter He Jiaying himself once said that "nature provides us with infinitely beautiful shape and realm, and beauty is around us. But whether it can be perceived depends on one's feeling to nature and life. From the universe to tiny things, there is full of natural harmony and order and full of the laws of life movement between nature and human beings..." In the works of He Jiaying, in addition to seeing the melancholy and feminine woman, people can also have a broader natural, worldly experience, understanding and persuasion. Just as painted in his "Meditation in autumn (Qiu Ming)", some free-sketch expression also constantly hinders below the fine appearance. Therefore, it is believed that Literati Painting is not contradictory to meticulous painting. In a certain sense, the development of Literati Painting can draw on and draw

the expression form of meticulous painting. He Jiaying's works are a good demonstration.

In addition, there is also a special form of expression in the meticulous paintings, namely the "mogu (literally means 'boneless') painting represented by Chen Chun. It can also be regarded as a form of expression combined "meticulous" and "free sketch" techniques. This kind of meticulous painting has more obvious characteristics of Literati Painting characteristics. This technique of expression also provides a good directional guidance for painters in the current environment; but many people ignore its existence. Nowadays, less and less painters draw mogu paintings and much less of them can draw it well and show the modern sense in it.

In summary, by discussing the relationship between Literati Painting, imperial-court decorative painting and meticulous painting, this paper intends to emphasize that Literati Painting should not be regarded as having too much limit. Literati Painting can also be presented in the form of imperial-court decorative painting and meticulous painting techniques and the types is not necessarily to be expressed in landscapes, flowers and birds. Characters are also a good subject, such as Liang Kai's "Drawing of spirit by splashing technique (Po Mo Xian Ren Tu)". And all the foundation is that it emphasizes expressing the core of Literati Painting, namely emphasizes literati's spirit and pursuit and also presenting the realm of "Nature". In other words, traditional Literati Painting actually emphasizes spiritual resemblance, is the presentation of spiritual pursuit, and is the expression of the charm of "harmony between nature and human beings". But the similarity and dissimilarity in shape can both exist, because they are actually not contradictory to each other and merely painter may not pursuit for them deliberately. It is precisely this context that provides a better platform for continuous development of traditional Literati Paintings in the modern and contemporary environment.

III. THINKING OF THE CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL LITERATI PAINTING

In a certain sense, the development of traditional Literati Painting also needs to combine the contemporary environment and modern factors, and make some breakthrough and development under reasonable innovation. This is not only conducive to better development of Literati Painting, but also very beneficial to itself and its development. Surely, the premise is to revive from the traditional Literati Painting, namely following the core of traditional Literati Painting and inherit the foundation of the traditional Literati Painting. After all, this is also the source of vitality of painting. However, some modern painters often ignore the fundamental factors while pursuing innovation; and some of them even go to the extremes of innovation. Regardless of the specific status quo of traditional Literati Painting's development, this paper will discuss how to better develop traditional Literati Painting in the contemporary context from the perspective of painters and viewers (the public).

²⁸ Sourced from (Southern Dynasty) Song Wangwei's "On Painting" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p585').

A. From the Perspective of Painters

First of all, from the perspective of painters, no matter how to make specific innovation and expression, the first thing to be done is to inherit the tradition, namely the core of traditional Literati Painting cannot be lost; otherwise, the foundation for further development may be lost. Hence, how to uphold the core of traditional Literati Painting (namely the pursuit of literati's spirit, law of nature and man, realm between substance and man) has become the first problem to be solved.

At the end of Chen Hengke's "The Value of Literati Paintings", he once put forward four elements of Literati Painting: "first, moral quality; second, knowledge; third, talent; fourth, thought. Only after having those four elements can a painting be complete. All arts are things that can touch people with similar feeling and spirit. Only after having similar feeling and spirit can it be possible to touch people and self"²⁹. That is to say, in order to inherit Literati Painting, painters need to cultivate their abilities in the above four aspects. However, Pan Tianshou gave even more relaxed requirements: "...Painters must pay attention to inner cultivation and travel around famous mountains and rivers to incorporate some texture in their painting; however those who can reflect the texture on painting may not have high moral quality, good thought and excellent knowledge foundation"³⁰. Of course, moral quality, thought and knowledge are important. Pan Tianshou only emphasized more on the inner mind cultivation and spiritual pursuit. It is ridiculous that painters even do not know what spiritual pursuit is after having learnt all knowledge and techniques related. Therefore, how to better develop traditional Literati Painting in the new era, the first requirement is that painters needs to enhance their self cultivation and knowledge, learn traditional culture and constantly improve their spiritual realm; only in this way can the foundation of Literati Painting be maintained. Otherwise, the so-called innovation is only a random drafting outwardly, and the final works may be nothing and similar to neither the Chinese or Western painting, nor the ancient or modern painting.

Therefore, it is needed to firstly grasp the law of painting and then make applicable innovation. Otherwise, innovation would be nonsense without making clear the most fundamental content. The following three points are proposed with respect to the development and innovation in modern and contemporary context.

First, as aforementioned, it can be found that Literati Painting as a Chinese painting has its own realistic foundation. However, the corresponding realism feature shown in Literati Painting becomes relatively weak, because Literati Painting especially focuses on resemblance to spirit, and with the development of Literati Painting, the inner core of literati spirit is highlighted more and more greatly; this

also provides a very large space for development of resemblance to shape in painting, but painters may not treat this aspect too strictly in expression. Meanwhile, this platform still has certain space for current painters to make innovation. After all, many of the current Chinese painters have received Western painting related training since childhood. They can sketch, while the ancients can not. This is actually an advantage of present painters. Both Chinese and Western paintings emphasize contrast relationship. As modern painters have ever received sketching related training, they have certain advantages in seeking and processing the contrast relationship and building of the shape and surface. But it depends on how the painter uses it. All things should be treated appropriately; otherwise, a perfect effect may not be reached. Of course, in this aspect, Xu Beihong and Li Keran and et al have already made some exploration. Li Keran's ink accumulation method can also be regarded as a kind of sketching presentation; merely the line at this time is changed into a dot-unit structure to be stacked, and finally presents a magnificent image of mountains and rivers. This method is similar to "Black Gong" method. However, when using sketching method to create an object, it is needed to pay attention to control the extent. If the sketching method is used to a too much extent, the painting may appear to be too complicated and sometimes may give viewers an inner feeling of depression. Therefore, if the extent can be well controlled, the Western realistic painting method can also be incorporated into Literati Painting. As mentioned above, Literati Painting itself does not exclude realism and has the realistic characteristics of "corresponding to the object in shape" and "rendering color on the basis of the object"³¹. It just does not strictly seek the realism.

Second, Literati Painting organically integrates with appropriate performance factors and forms of modern arts. With the development of the times, the tradition also needs to follow up if only its core is not lost. For the tradition, integrating with applicable new factors in the new context is also positive to make its vitality livelier. The attempts of contemporary painters Yao Mingjing, Xu Jun, and He Jiaying were very successful.

At first glance, Yao Mingjing's paintings give people a strong sense of modernity. The colorful rendering, extruded trees, thick and straight branches inserted directly onto the transparent trunk, twisted kiosks, and nest-shaped stones scattered around in water, as well as Guanyin (a Bodhisattva) sitting around and on the front and the fishing or boating person or the woodcutter on the way home after cutting firewood, constitute the typical painting style (not including his recent attempt in abstraction and large composition of landscape series of painting) of Yao Mingjing. These modern styles and expressions are not found in traditional Literati Painting. However, while using them innovatively, his painting also shows the joy of leisure, the great feelings in landscapes and the longings of ancient literati. In addition, he also incorporates Zen factors which he believes in. Therefore,

²⁹ Sourced from Chen Hengke's "The Value of Literati Paintings" (Yu Jianhua. Selected Readings of Chinese Painting Theory [M]. Nanjing: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007, p 493.)

³⁰ Sourced from "The original singing of painting quatrains" (see 'Huang Binhong, Deng Shi (editor). Art series. Nanjing: Jiangsu Ancient Books Publishing House, Vol.1, 1986. p264-266.')

³¹ See the six methods shown in (South Qi Dynasty) Xie He's "Catalog of ancient paintings" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Theory and types of Chinese paintings. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986. p355').

it can be said that his painting is a kind of Literati Painting with modern characteristics and is more simple and distant under the humor appearance.

Xu Jun's paintings are more modern. His painting is mainly composed of translucent "bubble cloud" with strong stereo sense, matched with its bright and straight green or blue stones on mountain, showing a landscape with modern decorative sense. The interesting point is that his paintings contain both the traditional characteristics and modern flavors.

He Jiaying's meticulous figure paintings have been described above. In his painting, the young woman wearing modern clothes, with a melancholy and feminine face, gives people a direct touching feeling. Under the realistic appearance, it discloses a lingering emotion, which is an expression of a spirit-contained posture. While adhering to the traditional features, their paintings also interestingly combine the expression in the contemporary art environment. It may not be appropriate to say that their way of painting is the most appropriate innovation, but at least their paintings are also a good attempt and change.

Many modern experimental ink paintings mainly refer to simple large-scale product and collage paintings. In fact, they have completely lost the foundation of Literati Painting in a certain sense, which means that their final presentation often tends to be beyond the category of traditional Chinese paintings both in form and concept. It may not be appropriate to fully deny their new brushwork idea and art concept reform, but the basic elements of traditional painting should be inherited firstly before making inner breakthrough. A painting should not be disorderly constituted just in order to cater to the internationalization trend and to enhance contemporary nature; otherwise, the final painting may have no root and cannot survive over times. There are too many examples of this kind of experimental ink painting. As everyone is familiar with it, no specific example will be listed here. Of course, it has its unique value in other aspects; but this paper mainly aims at the category of Literati Painting.

In addition, some explorations on experimental ink paintings are still very interesting. For example, Professor Chen Hui's painting is an exploration on the ink painting, and shows a taste of watercolor painting, just like his "Chinese culture" series, "Southern Anhui" series and other series of painting. On the basis of realism, his painting is a watercolor painting presenting a translucent environment of water and light by using Chinese ink. It is believed that watercolor painting is the form of Western painting similar to Chinese painting the most, because in a certain sense, some of its content is expressed by grasping the fusion, collision and combination between water and color. And Chen Hui's paintings have shown the charm of watercolor in the form of ink. This is also a new attempt and exploration.

Third, the aforementioned "mogu" painting technique brings new development space for Literati Painting. Huo Chunyang's mogu flowers give a sense of elegance and tranquility. Although it is a small scale of free-sketch painting, it reflects the great feelings of nature. The expression of mogu can make the painting meticulous and

free-sketch. Matched with the colorful rendering, the painting also contains the elegant artistic conception of Chinese Literati Painting. Considering this, it is thought that the mogu painting method actually gives a better opportunity for integrating with the Western painting's color and shape expression techniques. This technique can be used for reflecting the realistic characteristics without losing the free-sketch nature. It can be used for enriching the rendering without losing the elegant and peace atmosphere. It can also be used for presenting new elements or picture style without losing the style and realm of Chinese Literati Painting. It is maintained that the use and exploration of mogu painting method may also be a development direction for better expression of traditional Literati Painting in the contemporary environment.

Fourth, it is about the abstract refinement and modernity presentation of brushwork structure. Huang Binhong's traditional Chinese painting has brought a new look to Literati Painting. Since then, no painter has been able to break through it temporarily. His thoughts, such as "writing in picture", "five strokes and seven inks", "diagram of the universe", etc., are to write the structure of landscape on the picture in form of stick figure, while emphasizing the spirit of brushwork. As a result, his painting not only shows in an extremely simple and strict form but also writes down the literati's spirit and the realm of nature and man in the landscape under the constant generation of brushwork spirit. And this form, on the whole, also gives a modern sense.

But no matter how it makes innovation, the first necessary thing is to inherit the most essential nature of traditional Literati Painting, and then make innovation on the interior of the tradition after mastering the law of traditional painting. Only in this way can the innovation be rooted and vital. And only in this way can Literati Painting be revived in the times without losing its tradition and become a long lasting work. Taking the music band Polish Mozart String Four Musketeers³² as an example, they mixed the classical music with the current popular songs, rock music, dances, simple literary or artistic creation, and dramas and many other forms, and get them linked in the playing of classical music in a manner of Cabaret³³. Consequently, the originally serious classical music environment was transformed into a livelier concert. However, their works did not lose the classic feature, did not lose the most essential things of classical music, but only innovatively integrated the currently more popular elements into its music, making the whole atmosphere a new look. Such humorous classical concerts created by them are also very popular internationally. Their music always gave people an impression of unique and attractive charming after finishing a playing each time. This kind of innovation in classical music is also a good cue for the development of traditional Chinese Literati Painting in the era.

³² MozART Group (Chinese name: Mozart Kabale String Quartet, also known as the Polish Mozart String Four Musketeers, is a classical music band from Poland and its members include Filip Jaslar, Michal Sikorski, Pawel Kowaluk, and Bolek Blaszczyk.

³³ Cabaret is a form of musical expression, namely a karaoke-style music drama.

B. From the Perspective of Viewers

The next will discuss Literati Painting from the perspective of the public. Because the development of things often does not merely rely on one-way power, but require everyone to work hard jointly Chen Shi once said that "in order to popularize Literati Painting, it is necessary to firstly cultivate the public's ideological and moral qualities; only after the view of the public is guided to a high level as close as to the level literati can the public be able to understand and enjoy Literati Paintings"³⁴. That is to say, it is necessary to exert the ideological and moral qualities of Literati Painting to enhance the appreciation level of the public, instead of lowering the moral quality of Literati Painting to seek popularization. Regardless of the rationality of his saying, he raised a very important point: to improve the public's view. If the general aesthetic level and appreciation level of the public goes further toward the level of literati, it is actually a reverse push for better development of traditional Literati Painting in the current context, and may lead to a larger level of surging, such as spreading and marketing. The "reverse" mentioned here only refers to the positive push toward the painter, and eventually the convergence point promoted by both sides can result in better development of traditional Literati Painting in current context. It is also a kind of revival. Therefore, it is also especially important for the popularization of Chinese traditional culture and aesthetic pursuit.

IV. CONCLUSION

Above all, Literati Painting as one of the traditional Chinese paintings still regards spirit as the core and still has the basic characteristics of realistic painting. It still shows vivid and fugitive spirit³⁵ on the basis of certain image and shape. However, its subjective emphasis and pursuit play a more dominant role in Literati Painting, so that it is often easy to make people ignore the objective factors that have always existed in itself, its expression, and its presentation form.

On this basis, with respect to the discussion of the relationship between Literati Painting, imperial-court decorative painting, and meticulous painting, this paper mainly wants to emphasize that any two kinds of paintings among them should not be treated in a completely opposite or isolated relationship, because after all, whether it is a Literati Painting or imperial-court decorative painting or meticulous painting, their ultimate goals are often the same; even if the extents of the final presentations are different, the goal is to use express the aspiration, understanding, and nature. It is precisely because of the existence of the blending between the two kinds of paintings, a bigger space for development is brought on the basis of mutual reference.

Then, back to the times, how should Literati Painting develop or revive? After all, the development of things is influenced by the times, and it is necessary to develop under the times to continue blooming its vitality. As for painters, it is still necessary to inherit the inner core of traditional Literati Painting. After mastering the law of the painting, they can make innovation from the internal of the tradition, and get some appropriate contemporary factors and performances of the times integrated into the tradition, to make the traditional Literati Painting better developed in the new environment. For the public, it is needed to improve their universal literacy to provide a broader and solid foundation for the development of traditional Literati Painting.

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³⁴ Sourced from Chen Hengke's "The Value of Literati Paintings" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Selected Readings of Chinese Painting Theory. Nanjing: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007, p 491.')

³⁵ Sourced from Qing Shitao's "The record of kugua monk drawing language" (see 'Yu Jianhua. Selected Readings of Chinese Painting Theory. Nanjing: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007, p147-161.')