



Real-life Emotional Expression in "Lady Guo Guo's Spring Outing"

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Abstract: Tang Dynasty was the golden age of feudal China. Chinese politics, economy, and culture grew unprecedentedly during this period, and fine brushwork figure painting also developed rapidly at the same time. As an important branch of Chinese painting, fine brushwork figure painting has an important and special position and profound connotation in traditional Chinese painting art. The emotional expression in the fine brushwork figure painting also plays a central role in expressing the painter's intention perception of real life and the pursuit of a yearning life.

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"Lady Guo Guo's Spring Outing" is a representative work of the Tang era fine brushwork figure paintings. Its composition, character dynamics, and coloring not only show the painting characteristics of the Tang Dynasty meticulous figures in a simple and concise manner, but also vividly reflect the luxurious and pleasant characteristics of the Tang Dynasty.

1 The Importance of Emotional Expression in Fine Brushwork Figure Painting

1.1 Creating a posh character and storyline

When it comes to fine brushwork figure painting, there is no doubt that people are the main subjects of the picture and the most concentrated expression of the painter. If the person is not well-crafted in the

work, the soul of the entire work will no longer exist. There are many emotional carriers. Daily items can be carriers, but in figure painting, characters play a decisive role. The emotional communication of the fine brushwork figure paintings makes the characters posh but not empty, and vivid^[1]. The concepts of "penning down the spirit in form" and "combining form and spirit" are also extremely important to reflecting true feelings in traditional fine brushwork figure painting.

In He Jiaying's work "Dancing Rest (Wu Zhi Qi)", several dancers are depicted resting. A dancer leaned on the bar to fix his dancing shoes. Two dancers sitting on chairs nearby, where one of them was drinking a cup of water with both hands, and the other was in a daze with his hands on his legs. The viewer can experience the hardships of the practicing dancers in this painting, as well as the worn-out dancing shoes placed on the windowsill, and let the viewers appreciate the heavy workload of the dancers' practice tasks. In the work, the content of the characters and story scenes, as well as the emotions to be expressed, complement each other and are indispensable, forming a beautiful picture.

1.2 Depicting the social phenomenon of the character's era

As a kind of attitude, "emotion" is a more complex yet stable being in its own right. Emotions can be roughly divided into two interrelated facets, namely morality and value. Sadness, happiness, and beauty etc, all reflect the two aspects." The Dictionary of Psychology" believes that "emotion is the attitude and experience of production and research on whether objective things meet their needs." To sum up, people's attitude experience towards objective things,

or the attitude experience reflected by the influence of social phenomena, are all emotions. "The unity of nature and man" is the realm of Chinese painting's pursuit of "emotion". The painter often uses the characteristics of his/her time as the theme to express his/her certain attitudes towards the society when he created the work to let viewers experience the social phenomenon at that time.

In Gu Hongzhong's "Han Xizai Night Banquet", the painter recorded the scenes of Han Xizai's drunken revelry in the form of paintings through depicting a series of Han's nightlife (night banquet, dance, rest, music, and entertainment) and Han's dynamics and expressions in several pictures. When Li Yu, the last Emperor of the Southern Tang Dynasty came to the throne, he deliberately restored Han Xizai to power and ordered Gu Hongzhong to participate in a series of activities held by Han with the ministers.

2 Emotional Expression in "Lady Guo Guo's Spring Outing"

2.1 The reflection of the style and characteristics of the Tang Dynasty fine brushwork figure painting in the work

Before talking about this work, we must first understand the painting characteristics of Tang Dynasty fine brushwork figure painting. Before the Tang Dynasty, most of the fine brushwork figure paintings were in line style. This is particularly prominent in the "Admonitions of the Court Instructress (Nv Shi Zhen Tu)" by Gu Kaizhi in the Eastern Jin Dynasty. In the Tang Dynasty, with China's national power at its peak, the art of fine brushwork figure painting matured. Zhang Xuan and Zhou Fang's techniques in court paintings of ladies established a unique style. The ladies in Zhang Xuan's paintings have graceful postures with delicate and beautiful painting techniques. It is well known that babies are difficult to master in the paintings, but Zhang Xuan can deal with them freely, as if they have a lively and agile vitality. Zhang Xuan is also being recognized as the forerunner of female portraits according to the history of the China. His painting style directly influenced the philosophy and related techniques of later Chinese figure painters^[2].

The composition, lines, and coloring of this work fully reflect the artistic characteristics of the Tang Dynasty fine brushwork figure painting: elegant

coloring and vivid style. The work is full of elegance, confidence and optimism of the Tang Dynasty. The background of the portrait is covered and depicted in pure colors, and only a combination of several characters and a running horse is used to express the breath of spring. The central position of Lady Guo Guo is also highlighted in the composition with sparse front and tight back. In the work, the viewer cannot find a straight line. All the lines are curved and expressive. This kind of lines gives people a soft, flowing, and graceful feeling and reveals the rhythm of "Bone Styled Brush" in it. Lady Guo Guo's clothes are light and elegant, which forms a strong visual contrast with the bright red dress, giving a sense of rhythm and space.

2.2 Factors Affecting the Aesthetics of Tang Dynasty Fine Brushwork Figure Paintings in the Works

2.2.1 Changes in social norms

During the Wei, Jin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties, wars and regime change were constant, and it was difficult to establish a stable regime, not to mention developing art. Therefore, metaphysics rose to prominence, Buddhism was introduced, Taoism flourished, and cultural fusion occurred during this period. In the Tang Dynasty, art emerged as superstratum with stable political power and strong national power in place. This painting was completed in the period of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty, which is the early stage of the Tang Dynasty's decline from prosperity before Anshi Rebellion. As a model of the "Qiluo figure painting" in the Tang Dynasty, this work reflects that the art of the Tang Dynasty is not only a depiction of external features, but more importantly, the inner and philosophical thoughts, which is the depiction and feeling of vivid real emotions in life. Although the social norm of the Tang Dynasty is full of elements of decadence, pleasure, and cosiness, it is also full of freedom, enthusiasm, and youthful vigor. This contrast has always been depicted in the long history of Tang Dynasty art.

2.2.2 Changes in people's lives and psychology

"Recalling the heyday of the early days of the Kaiyuan, even small districts had thousands of houses. The rice was flowing with fat and the corn was white, and both the public and private warehouses were abundant." This poem is titled

"Recalling the Past (Yi Xi)" and was written by Du Fu to describe the living conditions of the people in the Tang Dynasty. It can be seen that in the Tang Dynasty, the people lived very well and they had the opportunity to explore higher art and culture. People had no worries with art, so they could naturally think about the direction and meaning of art in a stable social environment. This work penned the feeling of youth and freedom on paper, without the sorrow of tragedies. Psychologically, the people were accustomed to a prosperous life and a stable pace, and they didn't want to see too much negative social themes in paintings. Naturally, folk painters naturally expressed more positive aspects in order to cater to the mainstream trend of the society. Through the gradual changes in life and psychology, the aesthetic trend of fine brushwork figure painting in the Tang Dynasty gradually became established and popular.

2.2.3 The secular and political meaning in the works

During the Tang Dynasty, the fine brushwork figure painting was influenced by the people's life and psychology and was closer to the ordinary life, and the work clearly showed the true and essential characteristics of this era. In a sense, this work cannot be regarded as a political subject but more of a folk painting reflecting real life. It was exaggerated but the artist did not deliberately show it to emphasize the importance of a certain political figure. Rather, it was only indirectly expressed from the scene of a group of people's activities^[3].

If we carefully examine the relationship between the painter and the characters, we can see that the painter Zhang Xuan and Lady Guo Guo lived in the same period of time. When Zhang Xuan painted this work, he must have thought that Lady Guo Guo, as a new star in the political arena at that time, would have extremely great political influence in the future. Against the backdrop of a minimalist background, the use of the character's context highlights the important position of Lady Guo and put her in the backmost position.

3 The Influences of "Lady Guo Guo's Spring Outing" Today

From the initial understanding of fine brushwork figure painting, to understanding its various ways of emotional expression, on to the study of the artistic characteristics of the Tang Dynasty "Lady Guo Guo's Spring Outing" through its composition, lines, colors, emotional expressions, as well as the deeper political overtone in it, not only has beneficial influence on the production of contemporary Chinese paintings, but also gives more perspectives of thinking and review when engaging in the art industry and aesthetic works, instead of just superficially commenting "good-looking or not" in laymen's terms.

The fine brushwork figure painting works are always accompanied by the emotion of the painter. This kind of emotion comes from life, and the composition can highlight the main character, dynamically reflect the character of the persona and the painter's subtle observation, while the color can reflect the painter's general attitude towards the event. The life customs and prosperous national power of the Tang Dynasty directly affected the emotional tone of the "Lady Guo Guo's Spring Outing"; the joy of spring outing and the emotions were concisely expressed with just the characters as main subjects and brisk coloring.

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