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ANALYSIS OF THE FEMALE PERSPECTIVE IN BOUDOIR PAINTINGS IN THE LATE MING AND EARLY QING DYNASTIES

Abstract: *the art of Chinese painting is a product of the joint creation of men and women. However, based on the differences in the physiological structure and psychological feelings of male and female subjects, female painters naturally reveal their delicate feelings and unique perspectives in their paintings. Especially in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, boudoir painters, by virtue of their close ties with family life, made introspective observations of life through a unique female perspective. In their works, they often presented subjects such as motherhood, love, and life in the boudoir, which were neglected by male painters, thus expanding the spiritual and perceptual realm of the art of painting in a way that was difficult for mainstream male painters to reach. Therefore, it is of great significance to explore the contribution of women's perspectives to Chinese painting, and to provide a new way of thinking about the status of women in the field of art.*

Keywords: *late Ming dynasty, early Qing dynasty, boudoir painting, female perspective.*

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АНАЛИЗ ЖЕНСКОЙ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ НА БУДУАРНЫХ КАРТИНАХ ПОЗДНИХ ДИНАСТИЙ МИН И РАННЯЯ ДИНАСТИЯ ЦИН

Аннотация: искусство китайской живописи – результат совместного творчества мужчин и женщин. Однако, учитывая различия в физиологическом строении и психологических ощущениях мужчин и женщин, женщины-художницы естественным образом раскрывают свои тонкие чувства и уникальные перспективы в своих картинах. Особенно в эпоху поздних династий Мин и ранней династии Цин будуарные художники, в силу своей тесной связи с семейной жизнью, проводили интроспективные наблюдения за жизнью с уникальной женской точки зрения. В своих работах они часто затрагивали такие темы, как материнство, любовь и будуарная жизнь, которыми художники-мужчины пренебрегали, тем самым расширяя духовную сферу и сферу восприятия искусства живописи таким образом, который был труднодоступен для обычных художников-мужчин. Поэтому очень важно изучить вклад женской точки зрения в китайскую живопись и по-новому взглянуть на положение женщин в области искусства.

Ключевые слова: династия поздний Мин, династия ранний Цин, будуарная живопись, женская точка зрения.

I. Female Perspectives and the Development of Boudoir Painting in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties

During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, Chinese society experienced political upheavals and changes, which not only affected politics and economy, but also had far-reaching impacts on culture and art. With the transformation of society and the liberation of ideas, boudoir painting ushered in an unprecedented opportunity for development.

1. Transformation of Social Background.

During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the change of dynasties brought political instability and turmoil, but also promoted the development of social economy and culture. The prosperity of the commodity economy and the affluence of material life provided artists with broader creative space and richer subject matter. At the same time, the opening up of ideas and culture also created favorable conditions for the development of the art of painting.

2. The rise of cultural families.

During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, with political changes and socio-economic prosperity, China entered a completely new era. This era nurtured an atmosphere of material affluence and intellectual and cultural openness, especially in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions, where many cultural families were formed, such as the Wen family and the Yun family. These families mainly specialized in poetry, calligraphy and painting, injecting new vitality into the literature and art of the time. In such a cultural environment, whether or not ancient women's talents were displayed and recognized was influenced by their own factors as well as by the status and upbringing of the men closest to them. In Tang Shuyu's *History of Yutai Painting*, a record of the history of good women's painting in ancient China, it can be seen that there were only a few boudoir painters from the Yu and Wu to Yuan dynasties, while in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the number of boudoir painters suddenly increased to about eighty, with a total of close to four hundred pieces of work surviving. This shows that boudoir painting made great progress in quantity and quality in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, and female painters showed the same artistic height as men.

3. The prominence of female perspectives.

During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the number of boudoir painters increased dramatically, and the quantity and quality of female painters' works reached unprecedented heights. This shows that female painters were somewhat recognized and affirmed in the field of painting. Through their own delicate feelings and unique perspectives, they demonstrated different artistic expressions from those of male painters, injecting new vitality and connotation into the art of painting. They not only

participated in family affairs, but also actively engaged in artistic creation activities such as calligraphy, painting, poetry and literature, and established a conscious awareness of women's gender identity.

When creating art, boudoir painters preferred to use the inward-looking perspective of women, focusing on the subtle and mundane things in life rather than grand political, historical and philosophical themes. Therefore, the works of boudoir painters have an independent character and cultural orientation, showing a spiritual and perceptual field that is beyond the reach of male artists. However, influenced by the physiology, psychology, and history and culture of men and women, boudoir painters gradually discovered a delicate and beautiful way of expression in their paintings that was different from that of mainstream male artists. They focused on integrating their personal experiences and rich emotional experiences in family life into their works, highlighting female perspectives such as maternal feelings, love experiences, and life in the boudoir. These works show an independent character and cultural orientation, and open up a spiritual and perceptual field that is difficult for male artists to reach.

II. The Specific Expression of Female Perspective in Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasty Boudoir Paintings.

When creating art, boudoir painters often utilize the unique aesthetic perspective of women. By looking inward and focusing on the mundane and subtle events of life, as well as the flowers and birds commonly found in the boudoir environment, they used painting to present women's perceptions and experiences of life, nature, and themselves. At the same time, women's roles in family life, such as mother and wife, give them more direct feelings, and these personal experiences and inner feelings are also expressed in their artworks. Meanwhile, female artists are also unique in their understanding and expression of the natural world. They often express their reverence for nature and praise for life by depicting natural elements such as flowers, birds, insects and fish.

1. Female Perspectives on the Expression of Maternal Subjects.

Maternal themes from a female perspective play an important role in late Ming and early Qing Dynasty boudoir paintings, reflecting female artists' understanding and

expression of motherhood and the important role they play in the family. female artists often choose the subject of motherhood as one of the themes of their creations. Through delicate strokes and touching emotional expressions, they express their love and cherish for family and affection by depicting emotional scenes such as mother-child emotions and mother-daughter bonding, and integrate their emotional experiences into their paintings, making the works more vivid and touching and showing the unique aesthetic and emotional expression ability of female artists.

Wen Chu was a native of Changzhou, Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, from the family of Wen Congjian. When she came of age, she married Zhao Lingjun, the son of the local seal-collector Zhao Huanguang, and lived in seclusion with her in-laws in the Cold Mountain. Despite her seclusion, with the tacit approval of her in-laws and the support of her husband, The colorful surroundings of Cold Mountain and the vibrant flowers, birds, insects, and fish in front of and behind the house inspired Wen-chu's imagination and creativity. Fumihara became famous for her works of flowers and birds, which were characterized by her increasingly sophisticated painting skills, and which displayed a delicate and elegant feminine beauty. Her works won the praise of many scholars and art critics of the time. Zhang Geng of the Qing Dynasty described Wen Chu as one of the "ladies of Wuzhong who practiced painting" and considered her unique in the field of bird and flower painting.

Through her works, one can clearly feel the joys and sorrows she experienced as a mother. This delicate maternal emotion is fully expressed in her works, allowing the viewer to empathize and feel the sincerity of the emotions contained therein. In contrast, this kind of understanding and expression of motherhood may be unfamiliar to male painters, because only women who are mothers can deeply understand the emotional connotation.

2. Women's Perspectives on the Expression of Love Themes.

In the boudoir paintings of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the expression of love from a female perspective is particularly striking. In the social context of that time, marriage was regarded as a means of family continuity and social advancement, but at the same time, it was also given a deeper emotional significance. Marriage was

regarded as a good union between the two sexes, not only for the sake of serving the patriarchal temple and following in the footsteps of the next generation, but also for the pursuit of sincere love and a happy life. Therefore, artists in the boudoir usually depicted love themes such as "love and affection" and "growing old together" between husband and wife, showing their yearning and desire for a good marriage and a happy life. These works convey a strong atmosphere of love and a beautiful vision of family happiness by depicting scenes of husband and wife in deep love, supporting each other and living together.

Li Yin, character Jinsheng, No. Yesan, Niche Mountain, was a native of Qiantang (present-day Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province), and a servant of Ge Zhengqi. Li Yin talent, poetry and painting, in nearly seventeen years of life together as husband and wife, affectionate, very strong feelings. However, when Ge Zhengqi passed away, Li, who claimed to be a survivor, lived a difficult and miserable life, but never remarried. In ancient traditional society, boudoir painters generally do not directly express their feelings of love. In order to express their state of mind and emotions towards conjugal love and a happy married life, they usually chose certain symbolic imagery in their paintings to express them implicitly.

Through the art of painting, Li Yin's works skillfully express her yearning for and cherishing of love and family. With delicate brushstrokes and subtle imagery, she conveys her deep blessings and expectations for her husband. This expression of emotion in painting not only shows Li Yin's unique perspective as a female artist, but also deeply touches the viewer's heart, making it a bright landscape in boudoir paintings of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties.

3. Women's perspectives on the subject of boudoir life

In *The Second Sex*, Simon Beauvoir states, "Women have more personal experience of the past, of death, and of the passage of time than men. They can easily describe their inner life, their experiences and heaven and earth". Boudoir painters who have lived in traditional homes for a long time are more likely to turn their unique perspective on their own boudoir life. They are good at drawing inspiration from the comfort of the boudoir, and boudoir paintings are in fact a presentation of female

painters' real lives. For example, Qiu Zhu's "Women's Music" depicts women having fun in their boudoirs, showing their elegance and serenity. The painting of Ladies with Blowing Pipes shows women in their chambers blowing pipes in the courtyard, highlighting their desire and pursuit of a better life. Zhang Ling Tired of Embroidery shows women in their chambers embroidering, demonstrating their skill and patience. The "Sucking Brush and Knocking Poem" shows women practicing poetry and painting in their chambers, demonstrating their love and pursuit of literature and art. These works are not only realistic representations of life in the boudoir, but also expressions of female painters' emotions and aesthetic pursuit of their own lives. Through these paintings, the viewer can not only get a glimpse of the life in the boudoir, but also feel the female painters' yearning for and cherishing of the family and the good life.

Qiu Zhu, known as Duling Neishi, was born in Taicang, Jiangsu Province, the daughter of Qiu Ying. She was born in Taicang, Jiangsu Province, the daughter of Qiu Ying, and from an early age she demonstrated intelligence and learning, following her father's study of calligraphy and painting, and acquired a high level of painting skill, especially in the depiction of fine and delicate figures, and was praised for being able to inherit her father's artistic style. One of her masterpieces in heavy brushstrokes and heavy colors is the painting of "Women in Music" in the Palace Museum, which vividly depicts scenes of recreation in a lady's chamber. The scene is set against the backdrop of a palace, in which three women playing musical instruments, two whispering, and one listening are vividly depicted in the courtyard. The ornate and solemn structure of the temple, the trees and lakes in the courtyard outlined in green and green, and the smooth and colorful clothing patterns of the figures create an elegant and dynamic atmosphere for listening to music, showing the colorful and varied recreational life of the lady's quarters in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties.

Conclusion

Looking at the history of women's painting in ancient China, it is easy to realize that it is a history of silence and loss. Although there were some so-called "female painters" in the ancient society, they often followed the male painters silently and lacked independent status and voice. Ancient society had strict restrictions on women's

education and career development, and women's living space was mainly confined to their families and concubines, lacking opportunities to participate in social and cultural activities. It was not until the late Ming and early Qing dynasties that boudoir painters began to gradually free themselves from the constraints of the feudal society, experience life and observe society from the unique perspective of women, and actively participate in painting and calligraphy creation activities. During this period, female painters began to express their own "self-voices", expressing their unique understanding and feelings about life and the world. They were brave enough to break through the traditional constraints and explore new ways of expression and themes, creating a field that was hard for male painters to reach, and demonstrating the unique charm of women's personalities and emotions. Through their works, they show the world from women's point of view, presenting women's unique aesthetic and attitude towards life. They drew inspiration from the life of the boudoir and incorporated the themes of motherhood, love and family into their paintings, injecting new vigor and meaning into the history of ancient female painting. Therefore, the late Ming and early Qing dynasties can be regarded as the period when women's painting became self-conscious, and the emergence of women painters opened a new chapter in the history of women's painting in ancient China. Their works not only have unique value in art, but also reexamine and reinterpret the status and value of women in ancient times. Through their efforts, the status and influence of female painting was gradually enhanced, paving the way for future generations of female artists and injecting the female perspective among the boudoir painters of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties reinterpreted the art of boudoir painting, giving new connotations and meanings to the art form. In their paintings, the boudoir painters looked at the world from a uniquely female perspective, and through an inward-looking perspective and an intimate relationship with family life, they expressed a series of themes usually ignored by male painters to the fullest extent.

Overall, the late Ming and early Qing boudoir painters reinterpreted the art of boudoir painting from a female perspective, integrating women's life experience and emotional experience into their works, giving the paintings richer connotations and

emotional expression. Only when female painters truly realize artistic self-awareness and female perspectives are fully developed will female painting be able to get rid of the shackles of history and move towards a more brilliant future. May we be full of courage to explore and open up the new realm of women's painting together, and add more colorful colors to the art world.

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