

The Analysis of China's Sounds of Aesthetics and "Cultural Soil" in the Basis of "Natural Sound"

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Abstract. This paper argues that for thousands of years, Chinese people has shown their musical aesthetic habits and aesthetic psychological structure in the pursuing the nature of sound. This paper has two aspects of detailed argumentation: "analysis from 'the cultural soil' of Chinese people's 'natural sound' is beautiful", "'natural sound' is the most beautiful sound"; this article also introduced the representative demonstration material from the history of western aesthetics to illustrate that "natural sound is the tradition of Chinese people's aesthetic tradition, and it is the common pursuit of all human beings". The aesthetic ideas of the "natural sound" of the Chinese nation not only embodies the national character but also have the nature of the world.

Introduction

For thousands of years, though people's musical aesthetic habits and the aesthetic psychological pursuit of the nature of sound is still continuously developing and changing, there are some relatively stable, "less changing", "not changing" factors. These less changing or not changing factors are the basis of Chinese music's aesthetic culture. So, in music aesthetics, what is the relatively stable and less changing culture basis? We think that the relatively stable, less changing or not changing factors forms the Chinese people's mental set of aesthetics habit and music appreciation of music and sound. This is Chinese's aesthetics tradition of music.

In this regard, we believe that firstly we should study this: over thousands of year, what are Chinese's aesthetic habits and traditional aesthetic psychology of music?

Vocal Educator Jin Tielin said: "Chinese contemporary national vocal music is from China's traditional vocal art which is rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese music, so it is suitable for the Chinese audience. The nationality of 'sound' in the selection of the tone and the use of sound." that, insightful.

So what are the deep reasons of Chinese's fondness for timbre and sound in music appreciation?

We believe that this is because of Chinese's holistic thinking and their "natural" and "native" aesthetic habits. In the sound of music, it means: respect and love the natural sound of the human being and nature. This can be demonstrated from three aspects.

The Holistic Thinking Mode of “Integration of Life “in Chinese Philosophy has Led to the Idea and Attitude of “Natural Way”

The overall concept of the Chinese philosophy of “the integration of life” has at least includes the following four aspects:

“The concept of harmony between man and nature”. Chinese ancient book Lao Zi said: “all things are combined by Ying and Yang, they are opposite and unified.” The book Zhuangzi Qiwu said: “Heaven and earth come together with me, and all things and I are one.” Han Dynasty Dong Zhongshu proposed the “heaven and man as a whole body” theor; Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao of Song Dynasty demonstrated “heaven and man as a whole spirit”; Zhang Zai proposed “harmony between man and nature” theory, are all attempts to explain that the universe and all life are a whole, the nature of everything is the same, and the only difference is their forms.

The Holistic concept in Chinese philosophy also contains the identity and obedience of the rules of life. Chinese ancient philosophy of the laws and rules of the existence of life is: “creation-death-recreation”. It is the fundamental law of the generation and existence of everything. The life of the universe, the life of the earth and the life of all things all follows this rule.

“The dynamic balance rule” of everything: there are energy exchange and life transform (reincarnation, regeneration) between all forms of life. This is the “life and material is eternal” theory from original period of China.

Everything has rhythm and rhyme of life. Not only the universe itself has rhythm and rhyme (passing of night: Dou Zhuan Xin Yi), the earth has its own too which is (passing of four seasons: Si Ji Geng Ti). Everything and human being’s born, growth, death and other forms of regeneration is the life’s rhythm and rhyme.

Above four points are the whole idea of Chinese ancient philosophy of “the integration of life”. Therefore, the overall philosophy of ancient Chinese view one the one hand it contains what all aspects of the life on earth have which are their common characteristics and rules of survival and developing; on the other hand also contains the principle of everything’s developing and changing: universal connection, interdependence, and mutual transformation.

This is what the ancient Chinese sages of “rule of heaven”, “rule of earth”, “rule of human” and “rule of everything”. The ancient Chinese thinkers discussed the “Yin and Yang” and “five elements” which emphasizes the universal connection and the conversion of the theory of the universe’s reciprocating cycle, and what the Chuang-tzu said “Tao” which is the theory about the survive and change of all life.

Everything is from the Tao, and after the demise, it returns to Tao; Tao is the destined way of movement of Yin and Yang; there are rules and principles in Tao. The “Tao” is what Zhuang-Tzu calls the “the Tao of nature” and “natural way”, which is what Chuang-tzu calls “inaction”. “Inaction” means that the existence and operation of heaven and earth and all things are not dominated and they are natural movement of things. Man can not dominate the existence and operation of the universe; the existence and operation of heaven and earth can not be changed by the will of the human.

In Chinese ancient philosophy, the holistic thinking mode of “the integration of life” and “Dao” and “Qi” has a very important proposition which is: All things are equal; all things and humans has interdependence and mutual transformation. This idea results that Chinese

see the relationship between man and nature as a whole concept; see nature and man's aesthetic relations with "sympathy" and excludes "anthropocentrism" or "ecocentrism". This idea puts man and everything in equal status.

The Ancient Chinese Philosophy of "Dao" and "Inaction" Brings out the Aesthetic Principle of "Natural Beauty"

The ancient aesthetic Chinese tradition treats the human life and ecological environment as aesthetic objects. It is not only the recognition of the value of human life and the respect of natural life, but the integration of human life into natural life and become part of natural life. Ancient Chinese people have realized that human life is in the universal connection of the network of natural life. The aesthetic contemplation of life is the basis of natural beauty; the beauty of ecology is the aesthetic effect of the coexistence of human beings and all things in the universe. As the poem says "Eagles cleave the sky; fish wandering in the deep of the sea; everything competes freely in this world".

The Chinese nation agrees with the beauty of a healthy, vibrant life form; treats the vital spirit as the basis of life's existence. Therefore, life's spirit is considered beautiful in aesthetics. In art, human and nature are important elements of the artist's ideas; they can not only be imitated in art but also can be used to represent and metaphor the beauty of human body. It can be said that the Chinese people's view of beautify of life includes the overall nature of life. This idea is embodied in the Chinese people's natural aesthetic idea "sympathy". This so-called "sympathy concept" refers to that human and nature have the same emotion, thought, character and same elements and structure of life. Therefore, people have emotional infiltration and resonance with everything and have mutual transformation and reincarnation with everything in way of life.

Guo Xi and Guo Si of the Song Dynasty say in *Lin Quan Gao Zhi · Shanshui Xun*: "Spring mountains are tranquil like smiles; summer mountains are shiningly dripping; Spring mountains are clear as adornment; Winter mountains are dismal as sleeping. "The beauty of landscape lies in their different life forms in different times and space and also lies in the rhythm of life. The landscape has life, air, aura, emotion. The emotion of human and emotion of nature are in harmony and they have resonance. The ancient Chinese art all take the "human" and "things" to metaphors and symbols. This is a way of the "Bi De" expression. Such as "eyebrows are like spring mountain", "eyes are like autumn water", "mouth is like cherry", "hands are soft as bud", "eyes are like fire and light", etc.

Ancient Chinese has made a long-term practice of comparing and matching of human and natural things. During these activities, they constantly expand the relations of human and natural things; constantly increase the numbers of this kind of relations. Not only the network of the relationship between things are established, but also the general contact concept has been formed between human and things. The concept of human being becomes a part of the network of nature.

For example, the ancient Chinese philosophy "Yin and yang" and "the five elements" are kind of conceptual network system. From the concept of "Yin and Yang", the matching concepts are Qian and Kun; Heaven and earth; Tai Yin and Tai Yang; male and female; men and women; feminine and masculine; water and fire; Yin Jie and Yang Jie...

From the concept of the "five elements", there is an analogy of similar nature: five colors, Five spirits, Five sounds, Five timings, Five tastes, etc and later expanded into human

organs of five organs, five orifices, five honors and five chronicles. And this formatted the basic Chinese physiology and medical science. Except that, there are new concepts generated during the interpretation of the specific concept by the form of matching and analogy. For the sample, “Mu” matches out: green, acid, liver, tendons, claws. In addition, the “five elements” theory describes: There are six spirits. Jiang is five flavors, Fa is five colors, Zheng is five sounds. This shows that in the eyes of the ancients, the voice of nature and natural spirit are the same and are both the most basic character of nature.

Since ancient times, the Chinese people has been advocating nature and following the laws of nature and life.

In aesthetics, ancient Chinese had formed two different aesthetic taste and aesthetic rules.

In artistic expression, they respect the natural and simple beauty and dislike the intense showing off of beauty.

Taoism advocates natural ways and objects to artificial things. So in the art, they tend to appreciate nature. Lao Tzu advocated “Human and earth”, “earth and heaven”, “Heaven and Tao” ,”Dao is a natural way”. Dao is a natural way. (Lao Zi- twenty-fifth chapter) Zhuang-Tzu also said: heaven and earth have great beauty without saying out. The four times has the right law and not inconsistent sense. All things have the reason not to say its righteousness. (Zhuang Zi- Zhi Bei You) “be simple then the world cannot match your beauty”. (Zhuang Zi- Tiandao) says in “The world”, that Zhuang Zi emphasizes “no decorative material” and “no particular asking”. We can see that Lao, Zhuang treats the natural points and simpleness as the characteristics of beauty.

Surely there is another import aesthetic principle in ancient China which is represented by the Confucianist: “Decoration” Confucian concerned about personal doings and appreciated the beauty of artificial things and decoration. Confucius expressed this clearly in his thought. Confucius said: “No decoration, no long-lasting.” The decoration here means ornament. (Zuo Zhuan- Xian Gong twenty-fifth year), Confucius describes in The analects of Confucius-Xianwen: “When Zheng is to publish diplomatic documents, firstly Bi Chen formulate the manuscripts, and then discuss with Shi Shu, and then modify by Zi Yu, at last, do the polishing by Zi Chan from Dong Li.” Confucius said in The analects of Confucius-Eight Yi: “The culture of the Zhou dynasty is built on the basis of Xia and Shang dynasties. It pays more attention to humanistic education and I want to shine this spirit.” We can see that Confucius treat the “decoration” and “beauty of ornaments” as the representation of the progress of human civilization. Xunzi also said: “beauty is artificial”. The scholar Dong Zhongshu in Han dynasty advocated “Ban from hundred philosophers, venerate Confucianism”. In the aesthetics of Han Confucianism’s “decoration”, the literature of Han Dynasty is sumptuous and prosperous. So as the buildings, tall and beautiful with bright color and exquisite decoration. Based on Sima Xiangru’s work Zi Xu and Shang Lin, the Han poems and Chu bells ornamentation, and the painting instruments fully demonstrates the Han Dynasty’s “ornamentation is beauty” aesthetic fashion. The future generations are influenced by Confucianism deeply so they mostly lay particular stress on artificial objects of beauty.

When comes to Wei and Jin Dynasties, the Confucianism domination pattern is broken, and Taoism gradually occupies a prominent position. So the advocating of natural beauty and simplicity had been widely spread and developed. As time passed by, the literature

style changed a lot: those gorgeous and extravagant Han poems have to make a place for the concise and comprehensive Wei and Jin Dynasties. From this moment on, Chinese's taste of beauty is in a new direction which is the "natural beauty" and "the beauty of simplicity" other than the "gorgeous beauty" and "dazzling beauty". The natural beauty is at a higher level of beauty. The best example of this change in aesthetic taste and principle is the Poetry taste from the writer Zhongrong. The book has Tang Huixiu's evaluation record of poems of Yan Yanzhi and Xie Lingyun. Tang Huixiu thinks that: "Xie Lingyun's poem is gorgeously wrought and is like colorfully and dazzlingly embellished hibiscus right out of the water and is as lovable as the gorgeous clothes. His poems last long." Tang Huixiu believes that Xie Lingyun's poem is as lovely as the hibiscus rising out of the water. Xie Lingyun's poetry expressed the natural beauty and the beauty of simplicity and freshness which was significantly at a higher level than that of Yan Yanzhi's gaudy decorations of beauty. Tang Huixiu's point of view is a reflection of the great change of people's aesthetic ideas.

Although the two kinds of aesthetic ideas which are the natural beauty and decorated beauty are seemingly contradictory, while in fact, they are complementary. In the history of Chinese aesthetics, their primary and secondary status is constantly changing and shows the historical development process of "negation of negation". It is worth noting that the two aesthetic concepts are not only in different categories of art but also have the different emphasis. For example, in the ancient Chinese architecture, carving beauty has been in the main position. In the painting, the beauty of nature and beauty of simplicity occupy a dominant position. In the temple music, gorgeous beauty is the main form of music, while in scholars, the beauty of simplicity is the main form of art aesthetics in piano art. These two kinds of aesthetic interest have change and difference in their category, emphasis and status.

While since the Tang Dynasty, especially Buddhism come throughout the world, the influence of the Zen philosophy "by means of non-literature" concept have spread and then Chinese think natural beauty is the best and are fond of things with natural forms and with simple style. This simple and concise aesthetic beauty thought firmly rooted in people's ideas. The natural and fresh beauty of the Chinese aesthetics became the highest aesthetic principles and aesthetic blueprint.

The Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai during all his life admired the Jin Dynasty poet Xie Lingyun. Li Bai wrote the poem in praise of Xie Lingyun's poetry: "It's like lotus comes coming from the clear water, natural without carving."

For ancient Chinese, beautiful poem is the manifestation of human mind's natural feelings. This kind of poem is fresh and plain and without carving lines. "lotus from clear water, lovely and natural" is the most important aesthetic standard and the most outstanding aesthetic habit of the ancient Chinese. Relatively speaking, Yan Yanzhi advocated "shiny clothes" and "astonishing ornaments", which had been neglected and marginalized. Here refers to the ancient Chinese people's natural and artificial aesthetic taste, as well as their aesthetic value in the judgmental and selecting criteria. The so-called "natural", is without modification or change and keeps the natural, ecological and morphological characteristics of nature. For artistic creation and artistic works, it is necessary to recreate the natural and original state and taste of things and to show the nature of things and the breath of life as well as the spirit of the state. "artificial" refers to the

things that have been changed by artificial technology. It loses the original natural state and becomes an unnatural thing. Since ancient times, Chinese has formed a prominent tendency in the aesthetics: the more change the less value; the more natural the more valuable. The ancient fable of the “copycat” story means that in the aesthetic judgment, the artificial things are not good. Therefore, in the ancient music books, there is a new criterion for judging the different aesthetic value of the artificial or altered musical instrument and the non-artificial voice.

Since Ancient Times, China has Established the Aesthetic Thoughts “Art Comes from Nature; Music and Nature are in Unity”

In the last period of the warring state of times, the famous politician and thinker Lu Buwei (?- 235 BC) organized compiling *Lu Shi Chun Qiu*, and the book is divided into twelve periods. The words of music in this book are more than those of pre-Qin Dynasty philosophers. Famous musical aesthetician Mr. Cai Zhongde in his *The history of Chinese music aesthetics- Twelve Ji* matches five sounds with five Hang, Five voice with five timings; twelve law and the twelve phases of the moon. Chapter *Law of sound* even explains the rules: twelve article law is based on nature in twelve months’ different wind. Such as secondary sound (November) the longest as the yellow bell; midsummer (May) as the longest as the Rui Bin. Likewise, the five sound and five timings also depend on the nature of the wind, namely: the spring breeze sound determines the angle of the sound; the fierce of cold winter generated the light feather sound. This discourse not only constitutes the unity of the common law of the motion of human and nature, unity of music and nature, but also shows that art is from nature. This philosophy can also be found in the works of *Big Music*: “music is originated long ago which is because it was born of measurements and its nature is Tai Yi”. The Tai Yi is the Yin and Yang from Taoist. This measurement is a standard to measure the volume. This standard comes from the “moderate” and “peace” of Taoism. We can see that the aesthetic idea “sound of music comes from nature” was established in Qin Dynasty. This philosophy and the “Tai Yi” has an important position which decided that the concept of vocal music aesthetics would be using until today.

Duan Anjie from Tang Dynasty said in *Yuefu Miscellany*: “Singer is the essence of sound. So pipe instrument is better than those plays by hand, and pipe instrument is no better than the human voice.” Famous poet Bai Juyi says in *Yongyue poetry Willow Twenty Rhyme*: “singing is better than pipe sound.” This shows that Bai Juyi also agrees with the Music aesthetics essay proposition. Music record, Song history says that “Rites say ‘human voice is most valuable; singing performers is upper than instrument players.’” Human voice is the best from all sound in lobby. Instruments are put on the left and right.

Zhu Quan in Ming Dynasty says in his *Ci Lin Xu Zhi*: “For singing, the most important thing is being stable. Don't overact.....The singer sings as if he is flying happily in the sky. It is natural and not any hinder is there. When listening to it, people feel easy and comfortable.

Famous drama theorist Li Yu in Qing Dynasty says in his work *Xian Qing Ou Ji*. Yin Ji ‘vegetable comes first’:” For sound, hand instrument is not good as pipe instrument. Pipe instrument is not good as a human voice which is the most natural one. For diet, minced meat is not good as normal meat. Normal meat is not good as the vegetable. As the more natural the better.

Summary

So we can see that the value of aesthetics of music from all dynasties is: the most beautiful one is the most natural one. Among the most natural sounds, the human voice is the best. The artificial sound is secondary.

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