

Research on the "Useless Use" of Art

Shiwei Cao

Academy of Fine Arts, Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang, 330022, China.

Abstract

As an important part of Chuang-tzu's thought, Chuang-tzu's "useless use" discusses the relationship between man and society and between man and things. In the topic of people and things, the criticism of alienation of people and the maintenance of human nature are two aspects. From the perspective of Chuang-tzu's "human servitude", we can have a better understanding of the alienation theory in western philosophy. This article will discuss the "useless use" of art from three aspects: the spirit of art, the relationship between art and human, and artistic creation.

Keywords

Chuang-tzu; Useless Use; Human Servitude.

1. The spirit of art is anti alienation

Art and science are the ways of human understanding and reflecting the world, and science reflects the regularity of the world with the help of human rationality. Science is more about "discovery", while art is more about "creation". Science and technology itself will not cause human alienation, and the spirit of pursuing rationality itself is in line with humanism. Industrialization and huge wealth accumulation brought about by the development of science and technology will stimulate the material desire of human nature and make people fall into alienation. While enjoying the external "things", one's spiritual temperament is also distorted by the "things".

In a sound society, psychologist Fromm said:

"We are no longer facing the risk of becoming slaves, but we are facing the risk of becoming robots; we are no longer threatened by public authority, but we are still involuntarily afraid of the invisible ruling authority; we do not submit to anyone, and we do not conflict with any authority, but we have lost our faith in ourselves, almost lost our personality and self-consciousness".

In order to maintain this state, people's potential and nature are forced to suppress. At the beginning, people strive to develop technology and create social wealth in order to "use". But in the end, because of the psychological instinct impulse received the excessive suppression of material civilization and science and technology, many people are mentally numb and enslaved by the power of alienation.

On the other hand, art is a way to reflect the world with the help of human sensibility, and its spirit is the expression of human nature. People reflect their spirit and perceptual knowledge of the world in the carrier of objective existence through artistic means. However, art can not directly create wealth for society, and its influence on other objects except human is also very limited. Art can't satisfy people's material desire directly. When appreciating art, people are not tired by "things" and do not lose themselves. "Things" do not lose themselves because of human control, and people live in harmony with nature. As Chuang-tzu said, "people who do not hurt things can not be hurt." It can be seen that art, as a product of human's spiritual sensibility, has no materialized conditions in itself.

2. The effect of art on human beings

Wang Guowei thinks that "the beauty of art" is better than "the beauty of nature". He regards art as "the religion of the upper class society". In order to cultivate "complete characters" needed by modern education, he needs to give full play to the emotional and aesthetic significance of art. On the whole, the aim of modern Chinese art education is to transform social life. It combines the non utilitarian of art aesthetics with the utilitarian of education, and forms a functional mechanism that guides the realization of social life goal by the perceptual cultivation of art aesthetics, which has no interest. It has the theoretical connotation of "useless use". From this point of view, art is involved in utilitarian education as a kind of "useless use", in order to cultivate people's "useless" ability. A complete person must possess two abilities: useful and useless. The lack of the former will lead to the lack of human survival ability in society, while the lack of the latter will lead to the servitude of human nature. As a tool of anti alienation, art, with its "useless" value, has a comforting effect on people's spirit and nature. For example, poetry, film and music can always arouse people's spiritual resonance. Painting, sculpture and literature can always free people from the bondage of the external world and obtain the pleasure of the heart. Abstract painting, graffiti art, science fiction and other schools and forms are part of the art world. The existence of art makes people's spirit repose. By using the "truth" and "beauty" of art to wash the "false" and "evil" in life, the glorious side of human nature can be displayed. Man is a highly intelligent life body, and the same as other animals have a trunk, but the reason why man is human is that we have a vast spiritual world unmatched by other creatures. Art is just like the limbs of one's spiritual body. If one's legs are not diligent, one can hardly move in the spiritual world. There is only one corner of the world that one can see. Hands inconvenient, unable to build a spiritual building, where they live, Peng Piper mud wall. For a person who does not understand any art, his "human nature" is flawed.

3. "Useless use" in artistic creation

The main body of artistic creation is artists, and the object is their artistic works. Although the spirit of art is "useless", great works of art and artists are usually "useful". To become artists, it is necessary to learn their skills and swim in art. The growth process of a great artist must also go through three processes: useless-useful-useless. Take calligraphy learning as an example. Beginners can't read and write, and they can't read and write, which is useless. Many masters are bound by legal posts all their lives, which is difficult to break through. Great calligraphers can turn "useful" into "useless", thus creating their own style. Badashan people are a good example. The calligraphy style of the Eighth National Congress was deeply influenced by Erwang and Dong Qichang. It was not until later years that they gradually abandoned "Dong" because of their breakthrough in artistic accomplishment and sublimation of personality. It is precisely because of this that his calligraphy has been highly praised by future generations. Huang Binhong once commented on the eight major arts: "Book is the first, painting is the second."

Chuang-tzu Shanmu records the dialectical discussion between Chuang-tzu and his students about "useless use"

Tomorrow, the disciple asked Yu Chuang Tzu, "yesterday, the trees in the mountains were not made to die; today's master's geese are not made to die. Where will you be, sir?" Chuang Tzu said with a smile, "the general of Zhou Dynasty is between material and non material. It's not easy to be tired because of the similarity between material and non material. If a man floats by virtue, he is not. He has no reputation, no Zi, no dragon, and no snake. He keeps pace with the times, but is not willing to be dedicated to it. If he floats up and down, he takes harmony as the quantity, and floats in the ancestor of all things. If things are not in things, he can get them and accumulate evil. "

The "between timber and non-timber" mentioned in Chuang-tzu's mountain articles reflects Chuang-tzu's attitude towards the change of "use", and also denies the opposition between "use" and "uselessness". The two can be transformed into each other, but the premise is that they have both talents. It is never conclusive that people can change with the times. It is necessary to achieve "one

dragon and one snake". It can be both "useful" and "useless", and it can save itself, achieve itself, and end well. Isn't it true that artists grow up?

The style of a work of art usually has little to do with the artist's identity, wealth, status and character. Even with the best materials and the most advanced tools, it is impossible for an ordinary stonemason to carve works like David or laocoon, and a top-level modeling master may not be able to master cubist painting. Superb works know how to cut the complexity and simplify it, abstract painters' sense of space, impressionism's messy brushwork, and Chinese traditional painting and calligraphy all reflect the idea of "useless use" in creation. Therefore, when creating a highly demanding work, it is necessary for artists to break away from the shackles of inherent experience and explore the "useless" boundary in their own thoughts. This process is difficult, because it is difficult to face up to the question of the direction of externalization, not to bring fame and benefit to oneself in a short time, and even suffer contempt and destruction. This process is also great. It is greater than the spiritual independence of being human. It is as simple and innocent as the Seven Sages of Bamboo Forest, and it is rare to be confused. Whether it is successful or not in the end, the emotional explosion of people in this process is a tribute to human nature. On the contrary, blindly admiring imitation will easily lead people to fall into dogmatism and stylization, and eventually become a kind of poor copy.

4. Conclusions

The "useless use" of art is to use the early humanism of Taoism to explain art. In my opinion, the existence of art is like a mirror of human civilization. Mirrors can't be used as production tools, but they can make people who look in the mirror know beauty and ugliness and dress up. As a mirror of civilization, art not only reflects the existence of this civilization, but also constantly reminds it to adjust its existing posture.

References

- [1] Ren Ai. Criticism and Reflection: An Analysis of Frankfurt School's "Contemporary Capitalist Theory". [M] Anhui: Anhui University Press, 1998.
- [2] Chuang-tzu. Chuang-tzu Jin Jin translation. Chen Guying, Note. [M] Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2009.
- [3] Lu Chenchen. Uselessness: the generalized function of Chuang-tzu's thought and architecture. [C] School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, 2012.5.
- [4] Zhang Jing. The two levels of uselessness of the world and uselessness of gods and men—uselessness. [J] History of Chinese Philosophy, 2017.1.
- [5] Yin Bo, the development process of Chinese modern art education thought. [J]. Journal of Shandong University Academy of Fine Arts.