

On the Category of Ancient Calligraphy Theory "Fat" and "Thin"

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Abstract

At the beginning, the "fat" and "thin" calligraphy criticism categories took the thickness of calligraphy strokes and font size as the visual aesthetic objects. With the trend of the development of the times and the psychological changes of people's love for beauty, they were given new aesthetic connotation and spiritual significance, which was also reflected in the style characteristics and spiritual charm embodied in Calligraphers' calligraphy. On the one hand, this was related to the era background of Calligraphers' life, on the other hand, it was related to the personality of calligraphers. With the extension of these two concepts gradually expanded, the aesthetic style of calligraphy gradually tends to be dialectical unity.

Keywords

Fat; Thin; Dialectical unity.

1. Introduction

"Form" and "spirit" are one of the most important theoretical categories of ancient Chinese philosophy, which have long affected the development of Chinese calligraphy, painting and literary thought. The concept of "form" tends to form, which is the basic element of plastic arts; While "spirit" is extremely abstract, inclined to the spiritual level, and mostly belongs to the category of philosophy. The concepts of "fat" and "thin" existed at the level of "form" at the beginning. In calligraphy, they were initially embodied in the intuitive feeling of the thickness of the strokes and the density of the shape of the calligraphy. Later, they were endowed with the tendency of aesthetic meaning, gradually reflecting the style characteristics and spiritual appearance of Calligraphers' calligraphy under the change of the world, thus gradually approaching the realm of "spirit". And the unity of opposites between "form" and "spirit" also promoted the development of the concepts of "fat" and "thin" in the category of ancient calligraphy criticism, which promoted the expansion of the extension of the category of calligraphy criticism in the development of inheritance, innovation and style transformation. On the other hand, it also reflected the dialectical unity in the style of calligraphy aesthetics.

2. "Fat" and "Thin" on the "Shape" Level

The "fat" and "thin" calligraphy criticism categories take the thickness of calligraphy strokes and font size as the visual aesthetic objects. Chinese traditional aesthetic consciousness emphasizes the two senses of vision and taste. In vision, such as Mencius · Gaozi, "the eyes are on color, and there is the same beauty"; In taste, such as the concepts of "taste" and "charm", as well as Calligraphy Appreciation, Painting Appreciation, Poetry Appreciation and other works. As for the calligraphy style, the oracle bone inscriptions, gold inscriptions and small seal characters in the seal character system have pictographic properties, the lines are thin, hard and crisp, and the calligraphy shape tends to be concrete beauty; As for the calligraphy theory, Yang Xin, a calligrapher of the Southern Song Dynasty, first proposed the calligraphy criticism category of "fat" and "thin" in his book "the names of ancient calligraphers", commented on

Zhong Yao's calligraphy that "both of them learned from Desheng, while Hu's calligraphy was fat and Zhong's calligraphy was thin", and commented on Wei Ji: "cursive calligraphy was slightly thin, but the handwriting was exquisite". Wei Heng of the Western Jin Dynasty said in "Si Ti Shu Shi": "Du Du, Prime Minister of the state of Qi, is good at cursive writing. His writing is very stable and his calligraphy is slightly thin." The concepts of "fat" and "thin" are relatively intuitive visual effects. Sensory Du Du and Wei Ji are "slightly thin", and Zhong Yao's calligraphy is thinner than Hu Zhao's calligraphy, which is not necessarily true. Later, it was commented that Zhong Yao's calligraphy "has the style of Han Li, so its physique is high and ancient", its body is slightly flat, and its style is ancient and elegant. Moreover, some calligraphy works in the Wei and Jin dynasties also confirmed the tendency of strokes from thick to thin, from fat to thin. This change can be seen by comparing Zhong Yao's "Huanshi table", Wang Xizhi's "Huang Ting Jing" and Wang Xianzhi's "Thirteen elements in jade edition". In addition, Huang Tingjian of the Song Dynasty praised, "Zhang Xu is better than fat, and Zang Zhen is better than thin; these two calligraphers are also the crown of cursive calligraphy of a generation." From the perspective of calligraphy handwriting, huaisu's wild cursive lines tend to be thin, thin and round compared with Zhang Xu's texture, and his autobiography says: "my (calligraphy) original intention is novel and has no fixed rules, the handwriting is ancient, thin and dripping, and the ink is thick and light." The word "ancient thin" is the aesthetic pursuit of his own calligraphy creation.

3. "Fat" and "Thin" on the "Spiritual" Level

The categories of calligraphy criticism "fat" and "thin" will be endowed with new aesthetic connotation and spiritual significance with the trend of the development of the times and people's psychological changes of loving beauty and rejecting simplicity. For example, Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty, that is, Xiao Yan, said in "viewing the twelve meanings of Zhong Yao's calligraphy": "Yuan Chang's calligraphy is called ancient fat, and Zi Jing's calligraphy is called today thin. Today and ancient times are different, but fat and thin are quite opposite, such as self-examination, there are different theories." He believes that the "ancient fat" of Zhong Yao's calligraphy is not what people call fat at that time, but "smart, interesting and precise"; Xiao Wang's calligraphy "today thin" is not what predecessors called muscles and bones, but actually "the meaning is sparse and the words are slow". The former is ingenious and interesting, and the latter is loose and scattered between lines. Moreover, "fat" and "thin" as the categories of ancient calligraphy theory criticism, initially a visual description of human body shape, style and temperament, and then widely cited in art criticism. In plastic arts, there is the morbid beauty of "thin bones and clear appearance", while in poetry art, there is the style beauty of "Meng Jiao is poor and Jia Dao is thin and hard". Later, Zhang Xian inherited the style of "thin and hard" words from Meng Jiao and Jia Dao, which enriched the category of classical aesthetics. This tendency to apply the concepts of "fat" and "thin" to the aesthetic category of calligraphy, which describe the physical appearance of characters, was first related to the character taste style formed under the joint influence of the political system of "nine grades for people" in the Wei and Jin Dynasties and the metaphysical thought of advocating the beauty of nature. These elements that originally belonged to the performance of external physical characteristics obtained new aesthetic connotation and expressed the internal spirit of the objective object. Zong Baihua, a modern scholar, once said, "Chinese aesthetics actually starts from the aesthetics of 'characters tasting algae'. The concept, category and adjectives of beauty originate from the appreciation of personality beauty." [1] According to Shi Shuo Xinyu, "Duke Yu visited Zhou Boren. Boren said, 'why is the gentleman so happy and suddenly fat?' Yu said: 'why is the gentleman so sad and suddenly thin?' (Xue Xianchao) the fat and thin body of the Chinese and foreign characters corresponds to the joy and sorrow of the internal mental state, and has the spiritual meaning of "feeling things and moving". As for calligraphy, "Du Fu's poetry

'calligraphy should write a sense of thin and hard, and the lines should have bone strength, so that it can be called a masterpiece', this is the old standard before Yan Zhenqing's calligraphy came into the world; Su Shi's poetry 'Du Fu commented that calligraphy pays special attention to thin and hard, and I can't agree with this view', this is the new standard after Yan Zhenqing's calligraphy became popular." [2] With the development of the times, the Calligraphers' aesthetic tastes and artistic standards in the eyes of different dynasties are changing.

The categories of calligraphy criticism "fat" and "thin" are also reflected in the style and spirit of Calligraphers' calligraphy. On the one hand, this is related to the era background of Calligraphers' life, on the other hand, it is related to the personality of calligraphers. In "philosophy of art", Dana examines the development of art from three aspects: race, environment and era, and he puts forward that "the final interpretation of art is also the basic reason for everything" should be attributed to "the spirit and customs of the times". [3] As for the Oriental Calligraphy Art, the Calligraphers' creation in different periods was colorful. In the early Tang Dynasty, the calligrapher Xue Ji's calligraphy was born out of Chu suiliang's "thin and hard" calligraphy and was famous for its "thin and hard" calligraphy aesthetic style. Dong Yun's "Guangchuan calligraphy postscript" records that "his blood is closely followed by Chu suiliang. As for the slender strokes, the sparse and smooth knots, and formed his own style." Du Fu also wrote a poem praising Xue Ji, "calligraphy can be called a divine product only if it is written with a thin and hard feeling."; The Mid Tang Dynasty advocates "plumpness", and the calligraphy style of "vigorous and boundless" prevails. It pursues a broad and gentle atmosphere. Yan Lugong, the representative of "the voice of the prosperous Tang Dynasty", is honest and upright, so his calligraphy is broad and rich, dignified and strong, completely shaking off the "purity" of the calligraphy style of the early Tang Dynasty, and replacing it with the magnificence that complements the prosperity of the Tang Dynasty, Ouyangxiu praised him as "the festival of loyalty is as bright as the sun and the moon, and his dignity and strength are like his strokes." (the postscript of Ji Gu Lu); In the late Tang Dynasty, "Qingjin", Liu Gongquan's style of writing was clear and straight, as thin as bone. His "Liu ti" and "Yan ti" were called "Yan Jin Liu Gu". When he was in life, he was upright and loyal, and admonished Tang Mu Zong in the words of "his mind was upright, and the words he wrote were correct". Dongpo's calligraphy in the Northern Song Dynasty was flat and slightly fat, round and heavy. He ridiculed his calligraphy as "stone pressing toad body", and called Huang Tingjian's calligraphy "dead snake hanging on a tree". Huang Tingjian's calligraphy strokes are like spears and halberds, and his words are like towering peaks. Just as he is frank and upright, neither humble nor arrogant, the poetic style he created is new, thin, hard, strange and stubborn. The territory of the Southern Song Dynasty was divided and lived in a precarious way on the remaining land. Zhao Ji, Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty, first learned the thin gluten body of the valley, traced back to Xue Ji, changed his method, and created a "thin gold body", which was as vigorous and sharp as cutting gold and jade; Wen Tianxiang, a famous general of the anti Yuan Dynasty, was as thin and towering as Lu gong at the loyalty Festival. Calligraphy was like his calligrapher himself.

4. Dialectical Unity of "Fat" and "Thin"

The extension of the concept of "fat" and "thin" in calligraphy criticism has gradually expanded. "ShuoWenJieZi" said: "fat is fleshy. The shape of the word adopts the meaning of" meat "and" Jie ". "Fu" and "fei" compound pronunciation. " "Thin means lean. The shape is derived from the word" ji". The pronunciation is the same as that of"sou " (Shuowen Jiezi) Later, the words "Kuteng", "thin and hard" and "thin and vigorous" go beyond the "thin" that purely describes human body morphology. They are the visualization of human emotion, the visualization and concretization of spirit, and they are mostly adhered to "bone" in style, containing the beauty of "character" and "vigorous" style of "generous to be free"; On the other hand, compared with

"fat" and "meat", the meaning of "fat" is hidden in the sense of vitality and prosperity, which extends to the beauty of "fat", "abundant meat", "plump", "vigorous" and "substantial". In terms of calligraphy aesthetic style, there are "ink pig" and "meat duck", which are opposite to "abundant meat". The concepts of "fat" and "thin" in the critical category are innovated in succession, and their extension continues to expand, gradually developing into the categories of "bone" and "meat", and reflecting different aesthetic style characteristics in different historical periods. Wei and Jin Dynasties advocated a vigorous and straight style of calligraphy. Lady Wei's "brush array": "those who are good at writing have more bones, and those who are not good at writing have more meat; those who are more bone and meat are called tendon calligraphy, and those who are more meat and bone are called ink pigs; those who are more powerful and have more tendons are holy, and those who are weak and have no tendons are sick." Advocate the aesthetic standard of "multi strength and abundant tendons" and abandon the "ink pig"; Plump and plump calligraphy style is popular in the prosperous Tang Dynasty, Xu Hao's "on calligraphy" said: "eagles and falcons lack colored feathers and fly high into the sky because of their bone strength and ferocity; colorful long tailed pheasants fly no more than a hundred steps because of their plumpness and heavy physical strength." Emphasize the combination of plumpness and bone strength. In addition, from the "law of form and style change - another form of expression of the development of art self-discipline" [4] to the self-discipline of calligraphy, changes in aesthetic taste or artistic concepts will naturally lead to the transformation of calligraphy style. For a single calligrapher, Su Dongpo of the Song Dynasty "has a critical attitude of betrayal", [5] proposed that "people are tall, short, fat, and thin, with their own bodies. Yang Yuhuan is plump, and Zhao Feiyan is thin. Who dares to say that they are not beautiful and hate them?" He believes that the aesthetic categories of "fat" and "thin" have their own characteristics and should be treated differently, which is different from Du Fu's adherence to the aesthetic ideal of "thin and hard" calligraphy; However, Mi Fu and Ouyangxiu at the same time tended to suppress fat. The former attacked the fat and vulgar style of Calligraphy: "since the beginning of the Kaiyuan Dynasty, Xu Hao began to appear due to the fat and vulgar font of the Ming emperor. In order to keep up with the times, the new words have become fat since then. Before the beginning of the Kaiyuan Dynasty, the ancient spirit has disappeared." The latter regards the word "fat" as a vulgar thing: "the world likes to make fat words, just like thick skin steamed bread, it may not be bad to eat, but regard it as a shape, and you can already know its vulgar thing." For the spring tide of the whole era, the development of calligraphy from Song Yuan style, Ming Tai style to Qing Guan style, although contrary to the mainstream calligraphy, eroded the calligrapher's personality to a certain extent, and made calligraphy lose artistic interest and personal style, but its practical significance of standardization and integrity still has value.

The critical categories "fat" and "thin" gradually tend to be dialectical unity in the aesthetic style of calligraphy. Confucius' saying that "too much is not enough" reflects the beauty of "Neutralization" of Confucian culture, and the "golden mean" contained in it also finds a balance for the combination of "fat" and "thin". The aesthetic tendencies of different calligraphers in different times are biased, as Ye Xie, a Qing Dynasty man, said: "about both ends of the treatment, there are beauty and evil, and non beauty and evil are biased towards one." In terms of the artistic characteristics of calligraphy, Huang Tingjian of Song Dynasty and Wang Shizhen of Ming Dynasty hold their own views. The former advocates "fat strength", which says: "huaisu's cursive calligraphy is thin, while Zhang Xu's cursive calligraphy is fat, thin and hard, easy to work, and fat strength is rare"; The latter tends to be "thin" and difficult to form a body. It says, "if the brush is fat, the structure is easy to be dense, and if the brush is thin, the structure is easy to be sparse. This thin is difficult and fat is easy.". In terms of the style orientation of the times, Wang Shizhen said in the postscript written for Zhong Yao's "tablet of Zen reception" and "tablet of persuasion": "the Han method is square and thin, strong and neat, affectionate and

bony; the Tang method is broad and fat, charming and slow, bony and polymorphic." Reflecting the collocation between fat and thin, Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty pointed out that bone strength was strong, and put forward the aesthetic view of "pure bone is not beautiful, pure meat is weak"; Song Cao of the Qing Dynasty advocated "uniformity of bone and flesh", saying: "too thin will wither, too fat will be muddy, muscles and bones will not stand, fat and meat are not healthy, where do you get your spirit? Those with more meat and less bone are called ink pigs, and those with more bone and less meat are called dead rattan." Some calligraphers have also adopted the analytical method of unity of opposites in their book theories, and put forward aesthetic requirements such as "abundant bone and meat", "abundant bone and meat", "fat and thin are harmonious, and bone and strength are commensurate", emphasizing the mutual benefit and inheritance of the two: Jiang Kui's "continued calligraphy manual" requires the use of a brush "not too fat, fat will be muddy; not too thin, thin will be withered"; Liu Xizai's "art concept • calligraphy concept" believes that the conclusion "where there are few strokes, the strength should be enough to be more; where the strokes are thin, the strength should be enough to be fat. How much you believe, fat and thin, different in shape but identical in reality; Xiang Mu of the Ming Dynasty put forward the word "Neutralization" in his treatise on fat and thin in calligraphy Ya Yan, so it is more complete and profound: "so people are handy in calligraphy, in thousands of forms, but they are called neutralization, fat and thin".

Acknowledgments

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