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Themes and Styles of Li Fangying's Works from the Perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's "Habits", and on the Causes of the Painting Styles of the Eight Eccentrics Yangzhou

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Abstract

By quoting French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu on "habits", this paper examines the formal language in Li Fangying's paintings, especially the titles in his works, and through comparative analysis studies, it holds that his creative habits form the formation of Li Fangying's painting style, habit is the habitual expression of the painter's experience, and the formation of the painter's painting style is the pattern produced by his history. It also points out that the formation of the painting style of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou results from the display of the collective habit.

Key Words

Habit, titles, painting style

Introduction

Gombrich points out: "Image reproduction is not simply a question of copying what we see. It is a complex process of formulating stylized 'schemes' that must be manipulated in their way to express customary forms before 'matching' the visible."¹ Gombrich believes that to probe into the style of a painter's works is not only to describe the characteristics of his works through the style formed by his works, but should be more extensive to seek the formation of this style through the dominant factors (such as the painter's teacher and self-narrative or other related text) and hidden factors. Among the hidden factors are the collective and historical habits mentioned below, which Gombrich called "A set of words in the form of custom".

1. The Traditional View of Li Fangying's Painting Style and the Deep Reason for its "Habit"

A painter's works show some stable characteristics (painting style); that is, they show different characteristics from other artists or different periods from their own, and a large part of them are presented in a steady state (part of the painting style). Li Fangying painted Mei throughout his life. His expression on the subject of Mei was stable but in the early years and the late years, whether from brushwork, form or the deep meaning given to the work, was constantly changing; the causes of these changes are closely related to the development of the artist's circumstances, and it contains many factors, such as the fate of the painter, making friends, learning and so on. The painter constantly selects these factors, and precipitate and form their different painting language, forming the

characteristics of their painting in different periods. To use the French sociologist Durkheim's² explanation, "Every one of us has a person from the past to some extent, only to some extent, he is an unconscious part of us. Therefore, people tend to ignore their existence and not consider their legitimate claims. On the contrary, we all have a strong feeling about the latest achievements of civilization, which is because they are the latest, so it is not time to take root in the unconscious."³ Human development results from the stability of the past and the confrontation of the present. In contrast, the new confrontation is the process of accepting and recombining the new and the style of oneself, which can be expressed as the process of deconstruction and reconstruction. Once the artist's style is restructured, it becomes what Durkheim called the "unconscious" part of us, and what the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called the "Habit"; in its concrete creation, it will be replaced by the unconscious habit, rather than as we now consciously assert our style. Habit is the result of falling into history after selection, slipping into the unconscious state of the painter, so the painter or the calligrapher will not consciously reveal their creative characteristics.

According to Durkheim, "Habits are the products of history, which produce individual and collective and therefore historical practices by the patterns of history; they ensure the effective existence of past experiences, which are stored in each person in the form of perception, thought and behavior patterns, and which more reliably guarantee the consistency of practices and their constant character over time than do formal rules and clear norms."⁴ The style and composition of a painter's works are the schema of their history. It is the habitual expression of the painter's experience, that is, the habit. But the habit in the work is the product of history, which is not limited to the painter himself, but also includes the collective habit—the collective interaction—and becomes the unconscious part of the process of his works. The works of Zheng Xie, Li Fangying and Li Shan, for example, are similar in theme and composition, and we can also find their mutual identity from their postscript. In this way, the habits presented in a piece of work and the sources of their formation will present a more complex state. The first is the more direct part that influences the style of Li Fangying's work and constitutes his creative habits: "Most of his paintings are of plum, orchid, bamboo, chrysanthemum, stone, miscellaneous flowers and fish, especially plum blossom, but he doesn't do much with figures or landscapes."⁵ "Li Fangying's achievements in the painting are concentrated on the plum blossom, both skillful and unfamiliar in the expression of brush and ink, and his ways and methods are



Figure 1. Li Fangying. *Ink and Plum Blossom Painting*. Ink on paper, 125.6×42.9cm. Qing Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing. Shows "Ten days in the kitchen smoke break rice cooking, ancient plum a few strokes will Shu eyebrow. Ice flowers and snow pistil family meal, a belly full of spring always not hungry. Written in October of the 19th year of the Qianlong reign at the Jinling Borrowed Garden. Li Fangying. 十日廚煙斷米炊，古梅幾筆便舒眉。冰花雪蕊家常飯，滿肚春風總不饑。乾隆十有九年十月寫於金陵借園。李方膺。" Seals include "A dream within a dream 夢中之夢" "A change of bread 換米糊口" "Ying 膺" "Plum blossom's tricks" "A small window of rain 小窗風雨", etc., and the identification seal "Chu Zhen 楚珍".

changeable. Painting style vertical and horizontal ups and downs, not to let the Ivy Baiyang. He imitates nature, advocates momentum, and rejects Nothing in Common.”⁶ said Qian Zhiyang.

Li Fangying’s painting style is analyzed in terms of the composition of his poems, letters, and so on, which are the more direct factors affecting his creative habits. However, it needs further discussion whether it can form the habit of his style exactly.

A painter’s inheritance, communication and social environment may directly affect his style and become a factor in forming his habit. We should also consider the indirect factors that affect his style and constitute his creative habit, i.e., the possible impact of being in a historical context. There are two ways of thinking about forming a painter’s style in studying art history. First, through the painter in the historical background of the investigation, to explore the formation of their creative habits through indirect factors such as the painting characteristics of the early Qing dynasty; the large historical background is the same, but there are different characteristics of regionalization. If the scope is a little narrow—just based on the region—such as the group of Yangzhou artists, painting does not have the same characteristics; different artists in Yangzhou have their own characteristics. The second is to analyze the painter’s style or intention by carefully excavating the literary material, which may constitute a more direct factor in the painter’s creative habits. Either way, the formation of the painter’s style cannot be fully understood; it is composed of his creation habit, and the habit itself constantly changes. This paper aims to provide a new viewpoint for studying the painter’s painting style by discussing the forming process and the changing process of his creative habits.

2. The Self-Expression of Li Fangying’s Painting Styles

Most of Li Fangying’s paintings are composed of poems, commonly known as poems on paintings. Li Fangying did not create painting poems, nor are they unique to Li Fangying’s paintings. They are on almost all the paintings of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou, and it is the painting style of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou, which is also one of the characteristics of Li Fangying’s paintings. Li Fangying’s works on the same subject matter differ from those in the past, and his works on the same subject matter are different in content.

2.1 Li Fangying’s inscription is different from the previous inscription

Li Fangying’s inscription forms are different, i.e., not only by the topic’s name, since Emperor Huizong of Song Dynasty liked it, or literati painting after the development of more and more; there is more painting poetry, and long prose is not common.⁷ The works of Xu Wei, a painter of the Ming Dynasty who influenced the paintings of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou, are also mostly poetic. Li Fangying’s inscription on a painting is the same as Xu Wei’s inscription on a painting, but slightly different. It is mainly manifested in the appearance of a long narrative text, but similar to that of other painters in Yangzhou, particularly in Jin Nong and Zheng Xie where it was also common. This shows that long non-poetic forms of writing in Yangzhou had become a habit. But who was responsible for this habit? Perhaps more directly, Shi Tao, was an early Qing Dynasty painter who influenced the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou. Judging from Shi Tao’s sayings and the form of his works, the long-form titles are common and can be regarded as an example. However, judging from the title of Li Fangying’s painting of plum blossom,⁸ “Don’t learn from Yang Wujiu”, Li Fangying himself had nothing to do with Yang, and there was a possibility of enlightenment. If Li Fangying does not learn first, how can he talk about not learning? The title of Yang’s song “Four Plum Blossoms” says: “Fan Duanbo wants to give the painted plum blossom four branches, one not to open, one to open, one to open, one to open and one to close. He still has to write one poem each, but the poem’s meaning is difficult to comprehend. He has forced himself to give the old ten songs of spring on the willow tree, also made by the Plum Tree, and now he is using this tone again to sing this song happily recently.”⁹ Nor is it clear whether it influenced the style of Li Fangying’s paintings. On the other hand, in addition to the influence of historical factors on painters’ habits or the habits of Yangzhou’s eight eccentric painters, group identity is an important reason for the fixation on this habit, according to Pierre Bourdieu’s description of habits: “The production of a system of works or a system of practices resulting from the same habits (or some similar habits, such as the habit of unifying the way of life of a certain group or social class) can not be described as an autonomous development of a single essence that is always self-identical. Habits tend to generate a variety of ‘Rational’ and ‘Common sense’ behaviors.”¹⁰ Whether it is the inscription of Li Fangying, the inscription of Zheng Xie, or the similarity of the inscription of the paintings of Yangzhou’s eight

eccentrics, one is the habit of historical factors; Yang is not to blame, but Xu Wei and the direct influence of Shi Tao, on the other hand, results from the friendly habits formed by the identification between groups. In this section, I pay more attention to the form of the painter's works; I think the form behind the cognitive identity is fundamental.

2.2 Works on the same subject matter have different topics

Regarding Yangzhou's weird paintings, Zheng Xie says, "Don't treat it as a picture". Yuan Mei says Li Fangying paints "From life".¹¹ Therefore, is the title of the notes to the picture, the picture of the consciousness, or both? However, the form of his works should be directed against the ideological identity of the group of painters. In the 1980s, Cui Jin and Sun Baofa described the ideological foundations of Yangzhou's eight eccentrics as a time of intense and complex conflicts, with an internal ruling class and extreme political corruption to describe economic conditions; to describe Yangzhou's salt merchants as living extravagantly and lavishly requires arcane elegance. Some obvious gaps need further explanation: during the early Qing Dynasty and even the Qianlong period, when the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou were active, the literary inquisition was also quite severe, so why did the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou dare to satirize the social reality? Why did the salt merchants choose the Eight Eccentrics as their vassals if not "Eight Eccentrics" that refers to elegance?

Although Li Fangying said in his poem that bamboo painting was an expression of the so-called fresh and refined taste of the literati, the opposite is true. The art of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou is quite different from the aesthetic taste of traditional literati painting. Their plum blossom, orchid, bamboo, chrysanthemum, four gentlemen to play to the suffering of the people and the concern for real life, is very much a part of the world. Zheng Xie, a friend of Li Fangying's and one of the Eight Eccentrics, is also good at drawing bamboo. However, the two have different artistic styles, each with their methods.

3. Exploring the Foundations of the Self-Expression "Habit" of the Yangzhou School of Painting

The author has pointed to the early Qing Dynasty adherents of this problem. In "Adherents and Circumstances: A Study of Bian Shoumin's Artistic Thought", the author points out that although the adherent's political significance only exists at the time of 'rising and falling', the

social customs and aesthetic fashions, which are not political, have gradually matured and settled down to continue the inheritance and development. This is clear evidence of the direct influence of the "wannabe" painter Shi Tao, one of the eccentrics of Yangzhou; some scholars believe that Zheng Xie got some kind of resonance from "Qu Dajun, Shi Tao, Shi Xi, Zhu Da"¹² and other adherents of the Ming Dynasty. From the perspective of similar habits, or directly benefiting from Shi Tao's historical factors, it is quite possible that the adherents' culture, from the early political struggle to the later social struggle, influenced the stylistic features of the works of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou. As far as Shi Tao's works are concerned, the implication of his works in his early years and the deep meaning of his works in his later years have already shown a change from political injustice to the cognition of life. On the other hand the Qing Dynasty's literary inquisition was harsh, but very few literati because their paintings criticized the politics of the whole family. The four monks in the early Qing Dynasty are self-evident excellent examples. In this sense, it must be an excellent imitation of the form and content of Yangzhou's slightly better-written and kindred spirits.

Moreover, from the point of view of cultural resistance, "the pan-adherents" approach to Yangzhou—the Han people, accustomed to Confucianism and Taoism, even if they cannot read, with its ideological and cognitive sources—is still based on the Confucian-influenced "Han culture", in which Yangzhou's group in the early Qing dynasty relative to the Manchu rulers' group was in fact groups of cultural adherents. In addition, Yangzhou had the tragic history of the "Ten Days of Yangzhou" in the early Qing Dynasty which pushed the Yangzhou people, who were forced to surrender, into a cultural opposition; this makes Yangzhou even more receptive to the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou who directly benefited from Shi Tao, a painter who was an ancient man, rather than the salt merchants of Yangzhou, who depended on the people of Yangzhou for their survival. The tradition of the salt merchants was not only in the Qing Dynasty but also in the Han Dynasty. From the perspective of the people of Yangzhou, the acceptance and tolerance of the adherents' culture in the early Qing Dynasty, with time and in the form and content of his paintings, show he has habitually accepted the group of Yangzhou's eight eccentric painters who originated from Shi Tao, and also aligned with the feelings of accession to criticize the current situation.¹³ In my opinion, this kind of criticism is directly related to Yangzhou's acceptance and tolerance of the adherents of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou and the acceptance and



Figure 2. Li Fangying. *Bamboo and Stone Painting axis*. Ink on paper, 139.5×54.5 cm. Qing Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing. Has "I don't know how to make a bamboo branch with light ink in a house with meat. God is so worried about the common people on earth that he told the wind to entrust it to the painter. Written in June of the 18th year of the Qianlong reign in a deep alley in Wanghegang, Jinling. Li Fangying. 有肉之家竹不知，何堪淡墨一枝枝。老天愁煞人間俗，吩咐清風托畫師。乾隆十八年六月寫於金陵望鶴岡深巷。李方膺。" The 18th year of the Qianlong reign is 1753.



Figure 3. Zheng Xie. *Bamboo and Stone Drawing*. Ink brush, Ink on paper, 127×57.7 cm. Qing Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing. Another bamboo and stone drawing with an ink brush, axis, has this: "Drinking Bull's fourth elder brother is as strong as bamboo, as clear as orchid, and as firm as stone, and there is no such person in his lineage. He repeatedly asked me to paint, but I did not answer him. Qianlong five years in the autumn of nine over the Yu apartment fasting, because the inspection of the home of the old frame gift. Bamboo no pole, orchid leaf bias, stone potential narrow, I'm afraid not enough when the gentleman's intention, his day as a good picture of redemption over the ear. Banqiao brother Zheng Xie. 飲牛四長兄其勁如竹，其清如蘭，其堅如石，行輩中無此人也。屢索予畫，未有應之。乾隆五年九秋過子寓齋，因檢家中舊幅奉贈。竹無竿，蘭葉偏，石勢仄，恐不足當君子之意，他日當作好幅贖過耳。板橋弟鄭燮。" Emperor Qianlong was in 1740 for five years.

tolerance of the adherents of the literati.

Based on the above narrative, the group of Yangzhou's eight eccentrics, which originated from Shi Tao's lineage, have made their paintings in a specific process, whether based on their direct inheritance from Shi Tao or the interaction of group habits. The Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou formed a habit of using paintings to express their circumstances or their satire and dissatisfaction with social reality. His choice of subject matter was marked by the Han culture, which was based on Confucianism and Taoism. Take the subject matter of Li Fangying's painting, for example; it involves plum, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum, is not inferior to other painters, and works the subject repeatedly in the creation, but conveys a different topic and extends the same subject matter work with a rich connotation possibility. Just like drawing a plum, the difference between Filial mourning at home and his resignation is obvious: "The plum blossoms are the most pleasant when the paper falls and the marks are fresh, and I would like to take advantage of the east wind to blow far away and make the streets of my home spring" (in 1737, Filial mourning was at home); "Even if you plant on the hedgerow, the leader will have twenty-four strokes of the East Wind"¹⁴ (after the official strike in Hefei). Similar motifs can be seen everywhere in Li Fangying's paintings and are also found in the works of the Yangzhou eccentrics. Almost a painting per topic, although the same theme, but with different meanings, the works are given the theme of the character in a stable form of personalization, and the works are given a different title similar to the human situation, i.e., Yuan Mei's evaluation of Li Fangying's work, "Painting for his own life", is not only about the painter's thoughts and character, but also about the artist's living circumstances (like *Bamboo and Stone Painting* by Li Fangying).

The works of the subject matter are relatively fixed and have the artist's cognitive habits in the composition. But as Pierre Bourdieu says, each person also follows his own rules and coordinates with others.¹⁵ This coordination, in addition to the interaction of collective habits, clearly makes the individual intentionally different from the group and history—such as Li Fangying painting plum—in addition to the plum character of self-affirmation, regardless of the print, logo or alias on the plum embedded content in fact, but also the group of self-affirmation and prominent performance. Zheng Xie is also a prominent example of this phenomenon (like *Bamboo and Stone Painting*). Another argument is the exclusivity of Li Fangying's plum painting for Yang Wugui. According to the title of his work, "Don't learn from Yang Wujiu", in addition to his interpretation of nature as a teacher, it is obvious that he knows history

and arranges history, and his tendency to affirm himself cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, scholars often mention Li Fangying's paintings of wind and bamboo. Look at his poems: "The history of painting has never been a style of painting, and I am extremely skilled in difficult tasks." "After a few years of being allowed to float in the wind, I closed my door to work as a painter; I am full of courage when I smile to myself, but I still love the wind when I wave my hair."¹⁶ Obviously, he knew a lot about the history of painting: "Don't learn and carry on without blame" when knowing the person, "The history of painting never painting style" when knowing the history of painting; one both knows and recognizes the differences, this self-styled emphasis and recognition is obvious, and this personal awareness of the emphasis is normal. In Carl Jung's interpretation of the individual consciousness, "The formation of the individual consciousness is a natural destiny, so it is still not the goal of the collective"¹⁷, and his constant self-affirmation in his works is the important reason for the formation of the characteristics of his works. In Pierre Bourdieu's language of artistic style, this is the result of "The truth of an artistic style is defined and constantly redefined in the dialectic between objective intention and already objective intention, rather than arising out of original inspiration."¹⁸

4. Conclusion

From the point of view of the painter's creation, the characteristics of the painter's works are often the result of habit acquisition. The image of a work is represented by the artist's habit of self-struggle, such as Li Fangying's "Don't learn from Yang Wujiu" when painting plum and his "painting history and no style" when painting bamboo; some scholars attribute Li Fangying's spirit of continuous innovation to the artist's habit, which can also be interpreted as the painter's intention to distinguish the painting features formed by history in the process of creation, and a process of self-awareness. This process of repeated presentation in the works, both into the artist's creative habits, but also into the style of the artist's works. On another level, another aspect of the style of the painter's works is the style characteristics of his works, which are formed by his habits of learning from, making friends with, and copying from others, such as the painter's brushwork, composition, style and content of the topic. This habit results from the selection and acceptance of historical habits; on the surface, these are the painter's characteristics, but those are characteristics of historical habits. However, such characteristics are

not a direct inheritance of a person's style and habits in history, but a comprehensive precipitation of many historical habits. For example, Li Fangying's painting features were influenced by Shi Tao as much as the other painters in Yangzhou, but he was also influenced by such artists as Yang Wuyuan and Xu Wei; even within the eight eccentrics, Zheng Xie and Li Jin interacted with him. On the other hand, the painter's inscription in his works, especially in Li Fangying's works, also has the same habitual source as his pattern, that is, the habit of imitation from history and the habit of choice from self-consciousness in specific historical situations, which is

not a painting characteristic of any of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou, but a group of style display.

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Editor: Yang Haojie

ENDNOTES

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4. *Ibid.*, 76.

5. Chou Jiyou, "No obstacles, no surprises: Li Fangying and his art of painting [不逢摧折不離奇—李方膺及其繪畫藝術]", *Journal of Nanjing University of the Arts* (music and performance edition), no. 2(1983): 59.

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由布迪厄的“習性”看李方膺作品中的款題與風格——兼論揚州八怪繪畫風格的成因

韓士連

摘要：通過引用法國社會學家布迪厄關於“習性”闡述，審視李方膺繪畫中的形式語言，尤其是作品中的款題，通過對比分析研究的方式，認為李方膺繪畫作品風格的形成是由其創作“習性”構成，而“習性”是畫家以往經驗的慣性表達，畫家的作品的風格的構成是其歷史產生的圖式，並且習性本身也在不斷的變化之中，因此指出揚州八怪繪畫風格現象的形成是集體“習性”展現的結果。

關鍵詞：習性；款題；風格