

# The modern expression of Hongdao Yuan 's aesthetic thought in Art

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**Abstract.** Since the middle of the Ming Dynasty, a romantic trend of thought has been aroused in the field of literature and art, baptized by Yangming Wang's mind study, the self-centered aesthetic trend advocated by scholars and officials, affirmed the natural emotions of individuals, publicized the individuality, and constructed the artistic creation principles and evaluation system with self-centered. This aesthetic ideological trend develops a secular movement based on the affirmation of the natural needs of people, which can be summarized as "transforming elegance into vulgarity", advocates sexual spirit, attaches importance to individual and freedom, and has the atmosphere of ideological liberation. Hongdao Yuan's one of the representatives of this ideological movement. This paper explores Hongdao Yuan's modernity in art through the study of his aesthetic thoughts.

**Keywords:** Hongdao Yuan; aesthetic thought; sex spirit theory; modernity.

## 1. Introduction

The Ming Dynasty was a very glorious era of humanism. With the germination of capitalism and the development of material life, people gradually began to pay attention to the "self". The Ming rulers hoped to establish a centralized state body with the Confucian system as the core and promote Neo-Confucianism. However, the consequence of the extreme repression of "nature" and "human desire" is that the imperial power is vacant and the government is low. In order to get rid of this bondage, the literati began to pursue the "self", choose the secular life of the hidden world, and pursue the liberation of free personality. An aesthetic trend of thought with the atmosphere of modern ideological liberation was thus opened, and many scholars followed it. Hongdao Yuan's sexual spirit theory and his display outlook on life were also born in line with the trend of The Times.

## 2. Hongdao Yuan's aesthetic thought research

Hongdao Yuan(1568 —— 1610), courtesy name Zhong Lang, named Shi Gong, a famous writer in the late Ming Dynasty, and his brothers Yuan Zongdao and Yuan Zhongdao, known as the "public security three Yuan". It advocates the aesthetic concept of "leisurely life", and puts forward the sexual spirit theory of "expressing the sexual spirit alone".

### 2.1 The historical origin of Hongdao Yuan's aesthetic thought

The difficult situation of the literati in the Ming Dynasty. At the beginning of the founding of the Ming Dynasty, Taizu Yuanzhang Zhu created a political situation of killing and terror for the literati of the Ming Dynasty, and set up new crimes of "the scholars of the literati". The punishment for this crime was "not punished". After Yuanzhang Zhu, although the superficial cool politics was reduced, the corruption within the court and the party imprisoned the disaster, the ideal of serving the country and the low current situation of the government, led to the literary people to retire or choose a free life. In this era, scholars did not have the rise and downs of Juyi Bai and Shi Su in the Tang and Song Dynasties to become officials, and they did not have the freedom for Gongwang Huang and Zan Ni to retire to the mountains and forests in the Yuan Dynasty. Under such a political environment, the literati of the Ming Dynasty had trained a cautious and conservative style and an introspective personality, and formed a cosmology that paid attention to inner thinking[1]. The disappointment in politics made them begin to attach importance to their own introspection to their self-awakening. However, the style of literati rhetoric in the late Ming Dynasty prevailed, and they began to be an independent innovation process.

The prosperity of commodity economy has brought about the rise of civic literature and art, and the wind of enjoyment is popular in the society. At the level of life, the social turn of "abandoning Confucianism" and "confluence of scholars and businessmen" begins. [2] People identify with vulgar culture and enjoy leisure interest in secular life. They believe that the difference between vulgar and not vulgar is not whether to leave the secular, but to standard whether from the true feelings, they oppose the hypocrisy and affectation of hypocrisy.

Hongdao Yuan became three leading officials in his political career. During his tenure, his governance was excellent and popular. However, the imperial court in the late Ming Dynasty was chronic for a long time. He cared about the world, but he was unable to change his official life

Like a yoke bound him, so he can only seek physical and mental relief. In seclusion in the mountains, but he can not really forget the world, "advised me to be an official knowledge is not stable, then it is difficult to leave the world", such a contradiction let him choose to integrate into the secular leisure life.

## 2.2 The cultural background of Hongdao Yuan's aesthetic thought formation

Philosophy is the soul of The Times. The romantic aesthetic ideological trend of the Ming Dynasty was accompanied by the more advanced philosophical thoughts at that time. Yangming Wang's mind advocated "cause conscience" and "invent self-heart", which set off a revolution in the ideological circle of the Ming Dynasty. He opposed the "existence and destroy human desire" in Neo-Confucianism, and advocated self-centered and breaking the imprisonment of Neo-Confucianism.

Zhi Li inherited and carried forward the king's mind learning. He refused to accept the way of Confucius and Mencius and preached his childlike innocence. "A childlike innocence, true also. Husband childlike innocence, absolutely false pure, the original thought of the heart also. "[3] Zhi Li's childlike innocence was sincerity. He advocated being based on the spiritual awakening, truly advocating his own "original heart", and rejecting all external dogma and moral affectation. The essence of "childlike innocence said" is to get rid of the shackles of the secular tradition, with the true feelings of life as the article. This aesthetic concept of expressing sincerity, advocating real sense and advocating free expression of temperament has stimulated a trend of realistic feelings and individual consciousness. This trend of thought has broke through the aesthetic principles of "gentle" and "gentle and honest" since Confucius, and paved the way for romantic literature and art on the basis of the liberation of individual soul. Zhi Li's childlike innocence was the source of Yuan Lang's thought. Hongdao Yuan used Zhi Li's philosophical thought to effectively attack the retro simulation idea of the first and last seven children. [4]

In the middle and late Ming dynasty, Yangming Wang, Zhi Li, soup, Wei Xu, Qichang Dong, Hongdao Yuana's typical, of the self-centered aesthetic trend, with the commodity economic prosperity and the personalized self citizen age, spiritual recipients of the dominant "day" to "heart" value axis, the late Ming rhetoric, literati generally pursue the leisure value orientation of life.

## 2.3 The humanistic connotation of Hongdao Yuan's aesthetic thought

The word "sexual spirit" began to see in the Six Dynasties, including Rong Zhang, Xie Liu and Zhitui Yan, but the word "sexual spirit" was different from Hongdao Yuan's concept of "sexual spirit". At this time, it was full of this classical aesthetic color, mainly referring to "emotion", "spiritual understanding" and "nature". What Hongdao Yuan's sexual spirit wants to express is the free expression of self-true feelings from the human point of view.

"Most express spirit, informal, not from his chest, refused to write", this sentence from the yuan macro "narrative," the first paragraph, is his evaluation of his brother yuan middle way is done, is also the declaration of the yuan macro spirit, its purpose is unique freedom of self expression, his essence is form is not subject to specification, on the content is self true performance.

### 3. The modern expression of Hongdao Yuan's aesthetic thought

In the work, comprehensive materials (acrylic, fine sand, loofah, gold foil, oil paint, 3D hot melt glue, etc. ) are used to spread a pair ink freehand painting —— playing chess under a tree(Fig1). The image of the tree is combined with loofah, grass powder and propylene pigment to make the lush leaf effect of the tree, and the trunk is part with 3D hot melt glue to show concave and convex texture. The gray rocks under the tree are a mixture of acrylic paint and fine sand, creating a rough texture of the concrete, and they are decorated with wood dust, red sand, and transparent white sand. In the middle of the picture is a photographic picture of a modern old man playing chess. In the blank space behind the photo, is the burning Analects of Confucius. The red, yellow and blue three colors in the picture, the original single black, white and ash break, make it lively.

The green landscape of the Ming Dynasty courtyard, the Women School of Painting, the civic literature, such as woodcut prints, and the secular literature, all reflect the changes of the aesthetic thought of an era. Hongdao Yuan is the flag of the late Ming dynasty,[5] his ideas——spirit by wang xue, Zhi Li's childlike innocence, Wei Xu said ideas, although Hongdao Yuan claim is in the field of literary creation, but his idea has certain progress significance, and the ideological trend of the era.



Fig. 1 The picture is playing chess under a tree

The image of the tree is taken from a passage in "Zhuangzi • Free Tour", " today there is a tree, it is useless, why not the tree in no land, wide mo wild. free sleep under it. Do not die jin ax, harmless things, nothing available, Ann trapped bitter zai!"Hongdao Yuan pursued leisure life, while the ancient Chinese literati pursued leisure interest since Zhuangzi. Isn't the " free and free "and" useless " mentioned by Zhuangzi the essence of leisure?See a paragraph of the brain this sea conceived a game under the tree picture. The change of black, white and gray under the tree shows the shade of ink.

The burned book in the background is the Analects of Confucius, taken from Zhi Li's Burning Books. In childlike Innocence, Zhi Li advocated opposing the shackles of all traditional ideas, including Confucius, the supreme authority. This work expresses the ideological liberation brilliance of the literati in the pursuit of personality, freedom and direct-expressing life under the popular romantic ideological trend since the middle of the Ming Dynasty. [6]

The sport of chess became popular thousands of years ago, and most of them are literati. When playing chess today, the sport of chess has become a popular public entertainment. Such a secular life and the background of the ink painting integration, elegant into the vulgar, elegant and vulgar alternate.

The whole picture is positioned in black and white colors, and the interest of splash-ink and freehand brushwork in traditional Chinese painting is expressed with modern materials. The collision between classical and modern painting focuses on showing Hongdao Yuan's leisurely and spiritual outlook on life and aesthetic view.

#### 4. Conclusion

As an innovator in the late Ming Dynasty, Hongdao Yuan's ideas were all nourished by the humanistic trend of thought at that time, and they also helped him rise in the tide of humanistic spirit, which greatly expanded its influence. As an important part of the romantic trend of thought in the late Ming Dynasty, Hongdao Yuan's sexual and spiritual theory set off a cultural life movement that broke through the two basic themes of traditional Chinese aesthetics (Confucian ethics theme and Taoist natural practice theme), marking the transformation of Chinese classical aesthetics to secularization, and has a deep and wide influence. To explore the trajectory of Hongdao Yuan's aesthetic thoughts, to refine and transform them into visual language expression, and to enlighten the contemporary young people with the prevailing trend of the inner volume today.

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