

COMMENT ON “THEORETICAL EVALUATION OF ART EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY”


Ximei Zhang

Ph. D. School of Theatre Film and Television, Communication University of China, Beijing 100024 – China.

 zxmsyby@qq.com

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COMMENT ON “THEORETICAL EVALUATION OF ART EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY”

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Proceeding from an internationalized vision, Zheng (2024) cites philosophical ideas of the famous German philosophers Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, modern Denmark existentialism philosophical founder, and postmodernism pioneer Kierkegaard to dialectically discuss about the relationship between “the traditional and the modern”, namely the relationship between “the past and the present”. This can provide sufficient philosophical bases for the correlation between “traditional Chinese philosophy” and “modern art educational theories”.

Chinese art expresses its pursuit of infinite spirit through a description of finite things. Such pursuit has shaped the unique realm of Chinese art and culture (Liu, 2006, p. 535). Zheng (2024) systematically summarizes philosophical ideas of fine traditional Chinese culture through three highly representative phrases, chiefly “harmony but difference”, “consistent and consistent”, “holding the two and using the middle”, as well as combines the core words and phrases of Confucius with his philosophical ideas. Zheng (2024) believes that the contemporary art education should not try to standardize the creativity of academic circles but should encourage the uniqueness and diversity of all students in art creation.

Traditional Chinese philosophy is a general term for all kinds of philosophical ideas in ancient China, including Confucianism, Taoism, legalism, Mohism, and Buddhism. These philosophical schools are formed under the specific historical and cultural background in

¹ Ph. D. School of Theatre Film and Television, Communication University of China, Beijing 100024 – China. E-mail: zxmsyby@qq.com.

China. They can, to a large extent, mold the outlook on moralism, values and world in China. Among them, Confucian and Taoist ideas are the most influential in China. Founded by Confucius, Confucianism is the mainstream of traditional Chinese philosophy.

Art education in ancient China can be traced back to the “Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors”. At that time, art education was known as the “ritual and music education”. By the Western Zhou dynasty (11th century – 771 B. C.), ritual and music education has reached a stage of maturity (Nie, 2015, p. 238). The so-called Confucian code of ethics, in the speak of modern education, is moral education, including ethical education and political education. Ethical education pursues self-cultivation, while political education emphasizes on self-cultivation. The essential function of political education is to maintain the stability between interpersonal relationship and social structure.

As to “music education”, it is similar to today’s “aesthetic education”, which functions to cultivate human emotions and enhance entertainment and self-spirit. Rite and music are two weapons to govern the people and the state in a Confucian way. *The Rites of Zhou* formed a systematic art education and training system. (Meng; Gan, 1996, p. 25-30).

Zheng stated four methods and models, including “secret education”, “moral education tradition”, “quality education” and “probation education”, which not only originated from the ancient art education, but also went through the whole history of the art education history in China. They have been playing a dominant role in the past and the modern art education, particularly in terms of moral traditions and moral orientation. Especially in recent years, moral education traditions have been highly valued, and promoting outstanding traditional culture and fostering cultural confidence have become important cultural guidelines and policies in contemporary Chinese society. Under the guidance of traditional philosophical thoughts, modernized artistic education theories and ideologies with Chinese characteristics are gradually taking shape. Modern arts education, through mutual learning between Chinese and Western cultures, has achieved a relative balance between globalization and nationalization.

It is worth mentioning that the discussion of artistic education theories in this context is primarily focused on the practice of fine arts education, which involves visual and sculptural arts. There are certain differences in inheritance and cultivation when compared to the performing arts that rely on language and sound, such as traditional Chinese music, dance, folk music, and others. Depending on the artistic characteristics and the medium of transmission, these forms of art education exhibit more diversity and variety in the process of modernization than fine arts education.

Zheng (2024) expounds on the instructive significance of traditional Chinese philosophy to modern art educational theories through the interpretation of traditional

Chinese philosophy and the philosophical essence of art educational theories. I think to integrate traditional Chinese philosophical ideas into modern art education is an essential condition for the smooth development of modern art education. Undoubtedly, traditional Chinese philosophy can provide important guidance for the positioning, methods and instructional goals of modern art education. In my opinion, traditional Chinese philosophy has the following instructive significances, other than those stated in the article.

1. Development of the humanistic spirit. Traditional Chinese philosophy stresses on all-around development and humanistic spirit cultivation. According to concepts of “harmony”, “equilibrium” and “human orientation” and pursuit of expressive aesthetics in traditional Chinese philosophy, art education should, in addition to imparting skills, more importantly explore how to help teachers and students establish their aesthetic perspectives, moral sentiments, and overall humanistic qualities.
2. 2. Guidance for formation of creation concepts and shaping of unique aesthetic views. Traditional Chinese philosophical ideas, such as Confucianism’s “harmony but difference” and “consistent and consistent” as well as Taoism’s “conforming to nature”, can all serve as theoretical guidance for contemporary artistic creation. This helps in developing students’ artistic appreciation and creative abilities.
3. 3. Reinforcement of cultural consciousness. Traditional Chinese philosophy is an indispensable part of the fine traditional Chinese history and culture. Under the global context, modern art education has been shouldered with the mission to carry forward the fine traditional culture and strengthen the national cultural confidence. The role of art education in disseminating social culture and national art is irreplaceable. Artistic and aesthetic ideas of traditional Chinese philosophy can theoretically foster the cultural awareness and confidence of art education workers and students.

What’s more, accounting for the current state, issues and characteristics of modern art education in the context of globalization, Zheng (2024) proposes suggestions from a traditional-modern perspective. The analysis provides specific guidance using a combination of traditional and modern perspectives, with a highly international outlook. Grounded in the dialectical thinking of traditional Chinese philosophy, the article focuses on concepts like balance, harmony, consistency, rational judgment, inclusiveness, and openness.

With an inclusive attitude, the theory of art education should neither try to rigidity its own thinking nor blindly imitate Western approaches but should engage in continuous

internal reflection and external exploration. Through constant absorption, it should find a balance point between inheriting Chinese traditions and learning from the West, embodying the concept of “harmony” from traditional philosophy. Alongside achieving “harmony”, it should also embrace the inherent development laws of Chinese art education, fostering continuous innovative development, representing the concept of “difference”.

Zheng (2024) also indirectly expresses the need for art education development in a globalized context to pursue persistence, adhere to principles, and strive for comprehensive development in theoretical exploration. It points out the importance of long-term vision and firm determination. Art education should seek its own balance amidst the increasingly diverse global art education trends, avoiding dichotomies and ultimately achieving “balance and harmony”.

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