

To See the Visibility of Painting

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Abstract: The present paper deems painting as a type of visible representation with the aim of revealing its invisibility beyond its representation. With regard to the expression modes of painting representation, three types of modes are highlighted in the present paper: the first is the optical illusion mode, the second is the pure non-referential flatness mode, and the third refers to the postmodern mode featuring the use of daily symbols. Consequently, this paper sought to describe the visibility and invisibility of painting representation.

Keywords: Painting; Representation; Mode; Visibility and Invisibility

Introduction

Painting has already appeared as well as been seen. However, the unappeared are waiting to be seen, and the illusion of seeing and being seen is waiting to be transcended. In this way, painting somehow owns its body, which is either covered or naked, light or dark, far or near. Standing and wavering in their own situation, some people, other people, and some people in the future come to appreciate paintings. In this regard, painting can be regarded as a sad and desolate folding screen which shows a visual feast and is isolated from the human world. Later on, through that viewing, it is uncertain whether they go beyond the screen and go towards somewhere.

Lacan claimed a statement on self-construction. He commented on the “identification process” during the mirror stage that “this form situates the agency known as the ego, prior to its social determination, in a fictional direction that will forever remain irreducible for any single individual”.^[1] If we accept this statement, then it is clear that we have been already in a fictional existence. From the perspective of another world view, this kind of fiction can be understood as “all representations are fictional”, which accords with the general Buddhist point of view. It seems that the two viewpoints mentioned above share a common structure. They all seem to claim that the current place is fictional, and whether it is stated explicitly or not, there is a direction that is not the only one. But this direction cannot and will not be a notional reference.

It is undoubted that painting exists in the fictional world firstly recognized above. Furthermore, painting is always something concerning people, and also always the result of fictions through fictional people. Whether from the biological level of painting or her possible transcendental level, painting must be seen. But what do people see from her? Are they visible things and scenes seen by people, or some certain situations that may never be visible for people? In other words, what painting shows are likely to be more than something visually visible, including where people go and arrive, what people love, or what exist that are unrelated with people’s minds. These appear and disappear from time to time, which are not fixed. Finally, these go away from the sad and desolate painting as well as the sorrow of painting. Therefore, the first thing we encounter most frequently is the visibility of painting, which, in other words, refers to the biological aspect resorting to the picture itself. The current paper suggests that painting in the overall fictional world mainly makes use of three modes to construct the picture itself: the first mode is to reproduce the natural world through approaches characterized with illusion, including focal perspective, cavalier perspective, and even non-perspective methods which still attempt to demonstrate the spatiality of painting; the second mode returns its focus to the two-dimensional picture itself, which means that the spatial illusion structure is no longer relied, and strives to present the two-dimensional picture itself like a white wall; the third mode is similar with the second one in resorting to the picture itself rather than the construction of the illusion space. But for the third mode, the surfaces of daily things which are characterized with cultural symbols are selected to construct and cover the whole two-dimensional picture. Focusing on these three painting modes, this paper can only demonstrate some rough intuitive experiences, so that not every single detail can be covered.

1. The optical illusion mode

Why do we organize a picture? And how do we organize a picture? As long as we open our eyes, the world with focal perspective will spread out, so that we can enter the world, where we experience love and hate, as well as sorrow and joy. This may be the first work to complete the fictional three-dimensional illusion painting in the two-dimensional picture. Everyone creates this kind of work, so everyone is an artist. This is a definitely correct claim. Then what’s the reason why eyes organize such a picture. Is where we strive to go

the limit of painting itself? Is it the remote limit that humans can reach? For us who set off at this moment, the reason mentioned above is all we can propose. Please stop talking about calling, bird whispers, as well as auditory hallucinations. This is unarguable and the only thing we can do is to strive to reach there. Know first and then act, and act for knowing. Thus, do we need a world that is unfolded here? Do we need a space where single person dances? A beam of light comes in, some sceneries are carefully described, some things happen flatly or passionately, and the moods of some people in paintings constantly empathize and are empathized. We enter this kind of visibility, looking around and presenting duplicity. I planned to stay for a while in the front of the place of gods, and the sun happened to set. Which gods live in this place? Why does light exist there? Everything is fleeting in an instant. In this regard, we need to organize the three-dimensional visual illusion again and again with the purpose of knowing why.

What make a picture possible on a paper? There is indeed no perspective for the earth itself? It is human beings' visual actions that result in the necessity of perspective. In this regard, human abilities as well as limitations are both shown at the same time. The effort to construct an illusion space is actually a kind of self-directed and self-acted behavior. However, this does not mean that all visible and invisible behaviors are covered. It is not so much a almighty-like fictional behavior as that we have to and can only complete fictions in this way given our capabilities as well as limitations. Therefore, this kind of painting relies only on the abilities we already own. We are able to make it happen again. Those paintings appear in the human world, which also portray the human world. The human world floats, spreads, and flutters in the fog-like inhuman existence. This situation is like sleepy eyes, which intend to be open but still close. Some gossips linger in the meantime. For those who enjoy the paintings, they are both seeing paintings and being seen. Meanwhile, paintings viewers also function as the subjects of painting. When they enter paintings, they are also separate from paintings, crying but happy. Where are people? What are people? They are like pebbles in the mud and grass silkworms. Clouds and rains are empty.

2. The pure non-referential flatness mode

Striving to overcome such the perspective is an effort of human subjective control. Meanwhile, it is also an act concerning eagerness to approach something. This behavior is an art itself. The question is what they are approaching? Let nature take its course, feeling neither happy nor fearful. For the changes of nature, it is difficult for us to describe and discuss. Here, we intend to portray the surface which is almost pure, and we think we are getting infinitely close to it. As a result, such a picture appears to be empty and there is nothing to say. The whole picture is painted, with, however, it almost unpainted at the same time. The picture is like a lost bird that has nowhere to go and has nothing to rely on. So, does such a painting look like a mirror surface? The answer is No. In a sense, the illusion space painting is more like a mirror image. Here, the second painting mode is to present a both colored and colorless surface. In other words, this kind of visibility tries to function as the weakest visibility. This picture itself is also striving to completely overcome itself and become invisible. I have to admit that this is a paradox. It is not a metaphor, or even a symbol, either. It is the purpose of its existence, and the reason why it has to be presented is also committed to its purpose. A sense of tiredness is suggested by the picture.

After closing our eyes, the world has darkened. We can still see something, but temporarily say goodbye to the things during the day, with a kind of winter-like light isolated. With our eyes closed, the dark side is visible to us. Without the organized world, a kind of unknown space characterized with chaos, vastness and primitive nature is shown, which is like an inconstant abyss. But at this moment, we know what we see is just the eyelid rejecting light. Is that picture like the eyelid? What about the abyss mentioned above? They are also the result of the physicality and physiology. But what do the viewers think of due to them? Maybe there is nothing. However, people tend to fall into infinite grief. In front of the fictional and visible painting, people feel stagnant and lost.

3. The postmodern mode featuring the use of daily symbols

The third mode of painting also mainly resorts to flatness, but the picture itself is not pure. In other words, under the premise of relying on flatness, this kind of painting also introduces a cultural semioticalness in daily life. The surface patterns of some daily things are used to reach the goal required for this type of painting. Some works by Jasper Jones can be regarded as the typical representatives of this type of painting. Some objects selected to be drew in his paintings are in line with such the situation. For example, in a work by Jones, the Stars and the Stripes was portrayed in an entire picture on the basis of flatness. Albeit some traces of representational painting techniques shown in this work, the flatness of the entire picture and the daily representation of the painted content were not reduced at all. Consequently, what viewers see is the flat American flag. "Jones drew *The Flag*. The work has a moderate size and no outer frame, with

the edge of the painting as the edge of the painted flag in the picture. The work does not show the illusory nature that people would expect to see when people suppose the work is originated from the artist's subconscious mind. *The Flag* is like a mystery, which is not an expression of patriotism or the outcome of a subconscious revelation. In many ways, it indicates some profound senses of challenging, with the mystery itself as a completely daily image. It seems that apart from this, there is nothing else shown in this work."^[2] It seems inappropriate for us to interpret the work as the pure expression of such the texture effect and cultural semioticalness. Something more is supposed to be shown, which causes a certain mystery. These flags or daily image symbols are only a kind of visibility, and are also seen by every single viewer. Is there anything else? Such a painting method should be recognized as a kind of concealing painting, that is, it uses a common surface with the purpose of concealing the existence on the other side. It functions like a door which is closed. And even though the door is closed, the closed door still suggests the people outside that there is an existence inside the door. Whether this door is opened or not, the existence behind that door will always be there. The painting makes use of a certain surface in daily life to suggest an existence behind it. At that time, the painting itself, as a boundary existence, will no longer exist. Then, will the unseen be seen? Can they be seen? The painting only shows a daily seeing. People look at the painting but not see something behind. Or people see something without looking?

4. Conclusion

Visibility suggests our finiteness. The era of flooding seas also showed such the finiteness. This is like a wooden boat, due to which some people can be rescued. The significance of the boat is to drift, to travel, and to carry. Facing the terrifying sea, we just escaped by chance. Odyssey indeed went back, but there were also countless Odysseys dying on voyage. The visibility also lies in the day and night we get along with her. We ask her why we are like this, and why we suffer from this. Does she ever answer? Maybe not. Perhaps what matters is not the significance of obtaining answers, but the significance of the act of "seeking and asking" itself. Language itself is not argumentation, and painting itself is not understanding, either.

"In essence, existence is peculiar, which hits us. It also functions like the night to engulf us tightly, suffocate us and make us suffering, but does not offer us an answer. This shows the evil of existence. If Philosophy is understood as a discipline about the question of existence, then it meanwhile means the undertaking of existence. If Philosophy concerns more than this question, it is because it allows us to transcend this question rather than answer it. Transcending the question of existence, what we get is not the truth, but goodness."^[3]

References

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