

Aesthetic Taste

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Abstract. Aesthetic taste shows the human interest in aesthetic and reveals their capacity of mental selection and evaluation in front of aesthetic phenomena. Personal factor in aesthetic taste is represented in the selection and evaluation of objects for perception which are subject to each person's preference. Aesthetic taste always is the expression of personal ego and personality. When each subject evaluates aesthetic taste, he/she reveals their perception at different levels. Aesthetic taste not only contains unique personal imprint but also hides popular concept in a certain community, society, and age. Dialectical relationship between individual and society in the aesthetic taste is both personal and social relationship in each person, the harmonious metabolism between private and public, individual and popularity. The popularity is dissolved, absorbed and becomes stable in each person's uniqueness. Therefore, a proper and healthy aesthetic taste must harmonize two factors: individual and society.

Introduction

From ancient times, Liu Xie - a well-known scholar of China - has found that "The persons who have knowledge of literature usually have their own favorite, so nobody realizes the perfection. For example, when the persons who are chivalrous hear epic sound, they immediately clap their hands. When the persons who are implicit see the subtle words, they are rapturous. When the persons who are intellectually shallow see beautiful sentence, they are beside oneself with happiness. The persons who like the strange and new things see the weird things, they are amazed. They praise what fits their favorite, and they dispose and despise what does not fit their favorite" [1-3]. Although it is only limited to perception of literature, it is also considered as general aesthetic perception.

In Vietnam, in the previous century, in the first lines of discussion on aesthetics - "What is Beauty?" - Scholar Pham Quynh has made a profound statement: "Aesthetic perception is usually considered as the perception of each person. With the same scene, the same picture, the same essay, and the same melody, perhaps this person sees it nice but the other thinks it ugly, or this person finds it good, but the other considers it bad, depending on the preference, depending on the habits of each person. However, if so, the concept of beauty has no certain standard? It is agreed that people have different hobbies which are impossible to be forced to be the same, but with the same essay and the same painting why does everyone praise it good and thinks it beautiful?" Pham Quynh is absolutely right when he says: "In consideration of this point, it does not mean the beauty does not have any rule, the beauty not only depends on each person's feeling but also has relationship with society"[4]. Although Pham Quynh just talks about beauty, he more or less sets the dialectical relationship between the individual and the society in the assessment of aesthetics.

Individual Elements of Aesthetic Taste

There are many different notions of aesthetic taste. Every individual, every nation, every class in different times has different aesthetic taste. This shows the richness and complexity of the aesthetic taste.

Personal factor in aesthetic taste is represented in the selection and evaluation of objects for perception which are subject to each person's preference. Basis for the selection of this object or the other object is whether the object satisfies us or not. This selection is "for us" not "for it". Consequently, aesthetic perception is the impartial, transparent and voluntary perception. Nikolai Chernyshevsky writes in "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality": "The beauty gives people feelings of joy in the morning, like the feeling when we meet our lover. We love beauty impartially, we enjoy it; we are happy to see it as well as happy to see our loved ones" [5-6]. The impartiality of aesthetic taste refuses all constraints of perception and evaluation.

In art creation, aesthetic value is made of the world of "I". They can compose about the same subject, but the works are not the same. And everybody knows that the taboo in art is to repeat and follow the available path. As a result, it is not coincident for many people to assert that it is impossible to argue about taste because it is the preference of each person. Each person, each nation, each class in different times has different evaluation of aesthetics. The freedom to choose and follow their own concept of aesthetics creates the richness, diversity and vividness of the aesthetic life today.

Furthermore, aesthetic taste is the expression of the personal ego and personality. In front of the same aesthetic phenomenon, different subjects have different perception. In front of the same art works, one person perceives quickly, correctly and thoroughly, but another person only can understand the appearance or even receive wrongly. Mentally and physically healthy person may feel elated and excited, but physically and mentally weak may feel tired and exhausted.

In short, aesthetic taste expresses clearly the personal color. The diversity of aesthetic taste makes up the richness in the social aesthetics.

So what makes the difference in the aesthetic taste? Are people's aesthetic preferences different because of their different physiology and anatomy?

Aesthetic taste of each person is able not only to be argued but also to be explained. Aesthetic taste not only is the personal taste but also contains social factors. In fact, an aesthetic form can't help bringing society. Besides, an individual exists in society, whether likes it or not, still under the domination of society which is characterized by the national, class, age and humanity. The unique characteristics of aesthetic taste can be explained from the social environment. On the other hand, society is formed by the individual, aesthetic taste of each individual make aesthetic taste of the society more diverse and abundant.

Social Elements of Aesthetic Taste

Social factor of aesthetic taste is shown in the class. In society with cleavage, a person's aesthetic taste is always influenced by the class where he/she is a member, such as conditions, living conditions, moral ideals, political ideals, and aesthetic ideal. Chernyshevsky, a Russian revolutionary aesthete in the Sixth century, talks about the class difference in the concept of beauty. He gives examples that the labor in the rural areas thinks a beautiful girl is strong, solid, and able to work well, but also for the high society, a beautiful girl is slender, willowy, and "blown by wind". He writes that "A rural woman is solid because of having to work a lot and healthy because of eating well – it is a necessary condition of a beauty in the countryside. The village people see the "blown by wind", slender, and willowy beauty from the pompous society "ridiculous" and even unpleasant because they think "slender" results from sickness or "bitter destiny" [7-9].

Ethnic factor is also a major impact on the formation of individual aesthetic taste. Each nation has its own characteristics of the living standards, natural conditions, socio-economy, customs, psychology and cultural traditions, so aesthetic taste is various among peoples. This is represented in many fields such as ethnic dress, forms of communication, emotional expression ... and particularly evident in the typical national art works [10].

It is impossible not to mention the age factor dominates aesthetic taste. The change of the conditions, socio-economic circumstances of each era makes the aesthetic concept and assessment of human change. Today, with the impact of science and technology aesthetic taste is also partly dominated by

industrial society and driven by the media. Internet which is constantly evolving globally changes the fundamental thinking about the aesthetic perception of each individual leading to much more diverse, multidimensional, and multilateral perception of aesthetic taste.

In addition to the ethnic, class, and age factor, the humanity also affects the aesthetic taste. Personal preferences may be different, but the standard "Truthfulness-Compassion - Beauty" is the destination that everyone wants to reach. Humanity is the highest criteria for assessing the value of the aesthetic phenomena, as well as contributing to the differentiation of good and bad taste, of the mediocrity and the sublime, and of art and non-art. Regardless of country, skin color, and language, people admire the beauty of Venus in ancient Greek art, think before the mysterious smile of Mona Lisa - Leonardo de Vinci's masterpiece, love peace with statue of pigeon wings in Pablo Picasso's paintings, and feel the beauty of nature through painting "Golden Autumn" by Isaac Leviton.

As a result, aesthetic taste strongly reveals the "I" color but is directly governed by social factors (class, ethnicity, age, and human) which impact on perception, evaluation and aesthetic creativity. In other words, aesthetic taste reveals the dialectical relationship between the individual and society, the subjective and the objective, the general and the particular. Aesthetic taste not only contains unique personal imprint but also hides popular concept in a certain community, society, and age. Dialectical relationship between individual and society in the aesthetic taste is both personal and social relationship. The popularity is dissolved, absorbed and becomes stable in each person's uniqueness. Only on this standpoint we can explain why each subject in the peoples, class, age, and generation has different aesthetic taste, but it is still easy to find a common voice, especially in front of an aesthetic phenomenon related to nature, objects or art works. It is also the basis for explaining why the individual's aesthetic taste is not immutable but can change with the change of society.

Therefore, a proper and healthy aesthetic taste must harmonize two factors: individual and society. It is not recommended to absolute any factor. If personal factor is absolutized, timely and proper intervention of the society against the exotic, eccentric, and unhealthy aesthetic taste is denied. If social factor is absolutized, people's preferences become homogeneous and creativity is abrogated, which makes the aesthetic life of the individuals and society poor, boring and unable to develop.

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