On Innovation of Aesthetic Education in Chinese Universities in the New Media Age

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Abstract
With the popularity of Internet, new media have replaced traditional media and become the main channel of information communication. The new media age has arrived. The information communication has become quicker, wider, more diverse and interactive. Art creation, appreciation and aesthetics had new characteristics also, which required aesthetic education in universities to keep pace with the times. Aesthetic education need to breakthrough the traditional mode and to innovate in both theory research and practice mode. The freedom, individuality and interaction in aesthetics need be paid more attention by aesthetic educators in universities.

Keywords: Innovation; Aesthetic Education; Chinese Universities; the New Media Age

Introduction

With the popularity of Internet, new media, including websites, community forums, mobile TV, 4G networks, mobile terminals, micro-blog, we-media and APPs etc., gradually occupied the market of traditional media. The releasing and receiving of news, messages and information became more dependent on network than before. The means of information dissemination became diversified. New media have replaced traditional media and become the main channel of information communication. The new media age has arrived.

Under the threshold of the new media, the information communication has become quicker, wider, more diverse and interactive. Art creation, appreciation and aesthetics had new characteristics also. Millions of art works were well known by people through network. The art creation and appreciation became interactive, and both could influence each other. Art works online brought the new field of appreciation, and gave aesthetics the virtual feature. Although aesthetic experience became fragmented, the individual aesthetics was affirmed unprecedented.

The art creation, appreciation and aesthetics in new media age required aesthetic education in universities to keep pace with the times. Aesthetic education need to breakthrough the traditional mode and to innovate in both theory research and practice mode. The freedom, individuality and interaction in aesthetics need be paid more attention by aesthetic educators in universities.

Aesthetics in The New Media Age

The so-called new media was relative to the traditional media, which appeared after newspapers, radio, television, etc.. New media used digital technology, wireless communication network and Internet to provide information and entertainment services to users, through computers, mobile phones, digital TV and other terminals. Strictly speaking, new media should be called digital media. Today, with the rapid development of Internet, the new media, centered on individuals, have been from the edge to the mainstream.

The new media age brought a tremendous impact on art creation, appreciation and aesthetics. Interactive art, based on the new media platform, would continuously increase. Art creation and appreciation affected each other, which made the art criticism become a part of art creation. At the same time, the new media platform guided people to focus their attention on more diverse, individual, personalized and popular aesthetic experience. The traditional, unique and unified aesthetic standard was deconstructed.

With the help of new media, the number of well-known art works reached the top, and the information of art works spread quickly. The volume of art works became transfinite. Information technology, network, computer and mobile terminal provided users a virtual aesthetic situation, beyond the reality and material. Individual aesthetic experience was affirmed and was concerned about. New media platform brought the personalized aesthetic experience, according to the data of users' preference. Compared with the traditional elite aesthetics, popular aesthetic experience was highly respected by the public.

The art and aesthetics in the new period put forward new requirements for aesthetic education in universities.

Importance of Aesthetic Education

Aesthetic education was an important part of university curriculum. It was an important platform for teachers to improve students' aesthetic ability, and to enhance their aesthetic taste. Its core was to cultivate students' humanistic qualities, and its key point was to cultivate students' creative ability. Aesthetic education guided students to find the meaning of life, to pursue spiritual freedom and pleasure, and to know the universal values.

Due to the aesthetic experience in art creation and appreciation was very individual, it differed from man to man. Also, it was very difficult for art appreciators to get rid of the prejudice. As a result, aesthetic education need take into account the individualized, targeted and personalized education, based on group education. On the one hand, aesthetic education in universities need improve the aesthetic qualities and ability of all the students, keeping pace with the development of times and society. On the other hand, aesthetic education need to pay attention to the aesthetic ability, aesthetic tendency and aesthetic characteristics of individual student, so as to help students understand their own uniqueness, and to stimulate and achieve their potentials ultimately.

In 2015, the general office of the State Council issued a document, *The Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools*, which referred aesthetic education to an unprecedented height. In the new media age, researchers need focus on the question how to innovate the aesthetic education mode, realize the aesthetic education purpose, enhance the aesthetic education ideal and perfect the aesthetic education system.

Traditional Mode of Aesthetic Education

At present, aesthetic education system in universities was composed of art courses, art lectures, art activities, art communities and campus culture. Art courses were the main positions of aesthetic education. Through the knowledge learning and creative practice in courses, students could understand and grasp art theories, and get the skills of design and creation. Art lectures and art activities were important ways of aesthetic education. Lectures brought students the opportunities to touch the latest information of art, while students could experience the art fascination in art activities. Art community provided a circle for students who were interested in or loved art. They could make friends with other art lovers, and show their talent and skill in various activities. And campus culture played a subtle role, which brought students art air unconsciously and cultivated their interest and love for art.

Although the means of aesthetic education in universities were diverse, there were still some problems need to be solved urgently.

First of all, in universities, students accepted aesthetic education more passively rather than proactively. In the opinion of traditional educators, aesthetic education was the carrier of ideological and political education, and art had the function of educating. In universities, teachers and administrators were the subjects of education, while students were just the objects of educating and cultivating. Aesthetic education was the way of "indoctrination" and "persuasion", and was one-way information transmission. Students received education passively. This way of aesthetic education easily caused students to feel bored, and then refused or avoided aesthetic activities. They laughed at elite aesthetics and indulged in public aesthetics and fashion life.

Second, students' personalized aesthetic experience was not praised. Many the contents of aesthetic education in universities were unitary, and they could not embody the aesthetic individuality. Many of the contents were old and could not keep pace with the times, which students were not interested in. The artistic critique given by the teachers was too simple, which weakened the process and individuality of aesthetic experience. Personalized aesthetic attitude, aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgment were not paid attention to. The teaching method of aesthetic education was simple, and the examination standard of artistic comment was unique and fixed. In order to get good Grade Point Average, students must answer the teachers' questions in accordance with the given answers. The traditional aesthetic education led to solidify students' thinking and strangle their personalities.

Last but not least, interactive aesthetic education has not been paid attention to. Interactive art required the audience to participate in art creation, which could change the final state or the meaning of the art works. Art appreciation and criticism became a part of art creation, which made art works unique and impossible to copy. At the same time, interactive art expanded the content of aesthetics, and made the aesthetic consciousness of artists and audiences unified. However, the traditional one-way aesthetic education ignored the interactive process of education. There was no enough communication between teachers and students about art and aesthetics. The aesthetic appeal, aesthetic tendency, aesthetic taste and aesthetic individuality of the students were not paid attention to and understood. It greatly influenced the effect of aesthetic education in universities.

Innovation of Aesthetic Education

The new media communication called for new aesthetics theories, while the new aesthetics theory has led to changes in aesthetic education. The so-called "new aesthetics" referred to the aesthetics aiming at the digital art and digital aesthetic experience, which was caused by the interaction and virtuality of new media. New aesthetics held the opinion that creators and audiences of art linked closely, and participated in the aesthetic experience together. Aesthetic education in universities need be adjusted accordingly.

Firstly, with the help of new media, the content of aesthetic education would be much richer and more virtual. There were multitudes of art works spread through new media, which would be appreciation objects and the useful data for aesthetics research. As well, they provided numerous useful cases for aesthetic education. At the same time, new media presented the images through colors, shapes, sound and so on, which made them become the best carriers for aesthetic education. Because the art image was an important standpoint of aesthetic education, and the visual and perceptible images were the most acceptable by audience. The art works that students touched needed no longer be the material objects, but the online images. New media could deliver content to students in the image way, and exerted a subtle influence on students. Expanding the field of vision, enriching the content and paying close attention to the art works that the students contacted with were the aesthetic educators obliged to do.

Secondly, with the help of new media, the means of aesthetic education would be more digitized and more interactive. Traditional aesthetic education was mainly based on class teaching, which was difficult to teach students in accordance with their aptitude. Digital media could make up for this deficiency. Many new media could be the second classroom for teaching, and easily accepted by students. For example, through live video streaming, teachers could not only give lessons to many students at one time, but also coach and answer questions one to one. Besides live video streaming, instant messaging terminals such as WeChat, micro-blog and QQ could be the communication ways between teachers and students. Digital media have

become the auxiliary means of teaching, and set up a platform for interaction between teaching and learning. Through the digital media, students could express and feedback their views and ideas timely, and had more in-depth interaction with teachers. Educators should take into account the open, interactive and timely features of new media, and create new possibilities for traditional aesthetic education.

Thirdly, with the help of new media, the assessment of aesthetic education would be much diverse and more personalized. Aesthetic education aimed at cultivating students' quality, so educators should abolish the only and fixed standard of related examination. Assessment could be carried out according to the tasks of study, and be integrated into the teaching process. The form of assessment should also be flexible. For example, on the platform of new media, students could be the initiators or leaders of learning, discussion and activity. The record of their aesthetic experience and comment could be the object of assessment, rather than only the research papers. Because both the experience and the evaluation of art were very personal, teachers needed accept different aesthetic behaviors, aesthetic experiences and aesthetic tastes. On the one hand, teachers should guide the students' aesthetic tendency and interest. On the other hand, teachers should also affirm the diversity of aesthetic feeling and the aesthetic personality of students. Education administrators should provide more diverse art lessons for students to choose in accordance with their hobbies. Only in this way can students arouse their enthusiasm and be more active to accept aesthetic education.

Summary

In new media age, aesthetic educators need overcome the traditional prejudice, broaden educational vision and mind, face the development of society, and pay attention to the popular aesthetic experience. Aesthetic education in universities needs constant innovation to meet the needs of the new age. New media communication must be thought about in aesthetic education innovation, because of the multiple advantages of new media and the close relationship between new media and students. It is the key to the innovation of aesthetic education that students should become the subject of aesthetic education and have full interactive power with educators. Only through taking into account the new characteristics of aesthetic experience in the new media age, deepening aesthetic education theory, and innovating education practice, can the aesthetic education in universities achieve effective results.

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