

The Aesthetics of Gardens in “Six Records of a Floating Life”

Chenyun Liao^{1*}, Lei Zhang¹

¹ College of Art Design, Zhengzhou University of Light Industry, Zhengzhou, China

Email Address

226747410@qq.com (Chenyun Liao)

*Correspondence: 226747410@qq.com

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Abstract:

“Six Records of a Floating Life” is a collection of essays written by Shen Fu, a literati from Jiangnan during the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods of the Qing Dynasty, mainly describing the author’s personal emotions, family life, travels and experiences, etc., which also includes a record of a tour of a famous garden, and the author has put forward his own unique insights on garden creation techniques and aesthetic imagery. This paper attempts to sort out and summarize the characteristics and descriptions of the garden appreciation stage in this book for the benefit of present-day people.

Keywords:

Six Records of a Floating Life , Shen Fu, Gardens, Garden Appreciation

1. Introduction

The Six Records of a Floating Life was written in the thirteenth year of the Jiaqing period (1808), and is of a personal essay nature, which was not published during the author’s lifetime. Shen Fu, called Sanbai and Meiyi, was born in 1763, and died in 1825. The book contains detailed descriptions of the life of husband and wife, family chores, as well as the author's descriptions of garden appreciation, landscape architecture and his unique appreciation of Xin's evaluation, which have important historical and theoretical values for the study of Qing Dynasty gardens.

The so-called garden appreciation refers to viewing the external image of the garden on the basis of its beauty and participating in the creation of the garden through a series of mental activities such as association and imagination. Appreciation activities are not a passive acceptance of the creation, but in the acceptance of the creation of the induction at the same time, they also play an active and dynamic role in the garden scenery to appreciate the tasting process. The descriptions of the gardens in “Six Records of a Floating Life” show more clearly the stages of garden appreciation for tourists: viewing - tasting - understanding.

2. Observation

This section should contain sufficient details so that methods can be appropriately cited and readers can assess whether the materials and methods justify the conclusions

or not. [2] It can be divided into subsections if several other methods need to be described. You need explain how you studied the topic, identify the procedures you followed, and structure this information as logically as possible. [3]

As the first stage of garden appreciation, “view” is mainly manifested as the appreciation of the overall intuitive feeling of the garden. Garden in its external form such as: shape, color, lines, including flowers, wind and lightning, etc., to the visitors convey a certain aesthetic information. Appreciators of garden scenes of visual perception and auditory, olfactory and other comprehensive perceptual ability to participate is also an essential link.

In “Six Chronicles of a Floating Life”, Shen Fu and his wife were touring the Canglang Pavilion, in the center of the pavilion, looking around, looking into the distance, only to see the lake on all sides of the slowly rising smoke from the fires of farmers cooking, the brilliant sunset reflected in the sparkling water. Waiting for the evening bright moon climbing up the treetops, a gust of evening wind blowing in the face, sleeves fluttering up and down. Here the so-called “view” is not only visual for the visual experience of the scene, but also includes the evening breeze blowing slightly cool to the touch, so that the body, bones are fresh and refreshing. In July, the couple took refuge in the old dilapidated site of the royal residence. In the hot summer, the flaming sun shone in the sky, and Shen Fu and his wife sat in the shade of the trees to escape the heat of the sun, and the cool breeze blew from the water, and their ears were filled with the sound of summer cicadas, which were noisy and disturbing, a peaceful and satisfying natural idyll.

Chongwenshuyuan summer on the broken bridge, in the morning time, everything is silent and no sound, the morning bright sunset reflected in the lush green willow branches, the breeze Xu sent a burst of lotus fragrance, visual, tactile, olfactory joint participation. Another example is the visit to Laihean, the hedge around the winding path, the wind swept the green bamboo ripples, everything is quiet, silent and frank. In Chen’s An Lan Garden, there are pavilions on high places, with corridors on both sides and twisting and winding bridges, hidden and layered. The dense vines cover the stone walls, the towering ancient trees seem to reach to the sky, birds cry incessantly, flower petals fall silently, the realm of birdsong and flowers requires the participation of the viewer's visual and olfactory organs. The garden tour is based on the senses, not only requires the most direct sensory - visual participation, but also the comprehensive use of auditory, olfactory, tactile and other sensory functions and psychological induction. “View” this stage, the general visitors can reach, but the second stage of garden appreciation Pin needs visitors to further deepen.

3. Tasting

Compared to the “view” will be the garden of the existing scenery simply as an object to understand, “Pin” is the swimmer in the “view” based on their own life experience, cultural literacy, etc. Proactive use of association, imagination, empathy and other mental activities to expand and enrich the process of garden scenery. For example, when staying at the former site of the royal palace, it was a hot summer day in July, “green trees, wind on the water, cicadas chirping”, Shen Fu copied the scenery in white, not describing the feelings of the traveler, but the reader can feel a sense of peace and calm.

At sunset, he climbs to a high place to see the sunset reflected in the evening sun, chanting verses and imagining the strange-shaped clouds as beasts about to swallow

the sunset; the curved crescent moon in the evening is seen as a bow and arrow, and meteors are ejected into the air one by one by it. It is difficult for the viewer to appreciate such meaningful art without a rich imagination and ability to make associations. The Baiyun Refuge is located close to a cliff, and a small pond is cut below, surrounded by a stone fence. The deep and vast rippling water of the pond swirls back and forth against the wall of the pond, the stone wall of the cliff is full of vines and green leaves, and the walls are covered with moss and ringworm. Sitting in the small xuan, only to hear the sound of falling leaves Xiao Xiao fall, and no half human sound. A few numbers, a simple description of the scene. Shen Fu had a banquet in the Laurel House guests, the fragrance of cinnamon will be the wine banquet on the taste of various delicacies are covered, but only the taste of ginger has not changed. The older the taste of ginger, the spicier it is, so in ancient times people compared the loyalty of Zhijie to ginger, which is also a common metaphorical association technique.

Garden appreciation in the association, imagination, empathy can only be induced by the true aesthetic scene in line with the visitor, such as the famous Lion Grove, Shen Fu commented that although it is everyone's handwriting, and important building elements in the garden, none of the material is a million miles. The stones are exquisite and ingenious, the trees are mostly ancient trees, however, in terms of the overall trend, more like a haphazard pile of cinder blocks, simply accumulate some moss, chisel through some caves, the forest is only a lively, all without any semblance of the natural momentum of the mountains and forests. Therefore, visitors to the garden scenery to produce associations, empathy is the result of the joint role of visitors and garden makers superb skills.

Taste of the garden stage, the visitor's association and imagination dominate, so the visitor's own life experience, cultural literacy, artistic pursuit, etc. can affect the appreciation of the results. The same spot in different time and season nodes present a very different state, coupled with the different personalities of visitors, taste, perception to the meaning of the garden scene is also very different.

4. Conclusions

Compared to the previous two stages of "view" and "taste", "enlightenment" is a more complex process of the mind. The "view" and "taste" are appreciation, experience and empathy, based on the viewing and taste, the emotional link that the swimmer has to the landscape. The "enlightenment" is the philosophical thinking in the appreciation and taste of the garden scenery, combined with their own emotional experience, artistic literacy, life pursuit, etc., in order to obtain a deeper grasp of the meaning of the garden.

In "Six Chronicles of a Floating Life", when Shen Fu and his wife visit the Canglang Pavilion at night, the breeze is slow, the moon climbs to the treetops, glistening with light, making the visitors feel transcendent, forgetting the mundane and relieved of everything. Being in a clear and pure environment, the worries and sorrows around you are regarded as dust. The natural scenery of the outside world is shown in front of Shen Fu, from small space to large space, breaking through the infinite, leading to the future, a sense of release of life, the infection of the scene of the swimmer to reach the realm of the pursuit of garden art.

When Shen Fu and his wife swam together in Taihu Lake, the sails sand birds, water light and distant sky a color, so that people can not easily distinguish their

boundaries. Chen Yun saw this scene and could not help but sigh at the generosity of heaven and earth, thinking that the whole day confined to the family's boudoir can see the scenery of not many people, sighing that they are not in vain. The couple made a fake rock bonsai, stacking rocks and water, planting flowers and pines, setting up a pavilion, chiseling the wall inscriptions, all the gullies and rocks in their chests were moved here, and they couldn't help but imagine themselves in the scene, floating in the air. The cat fought and accidentally knocked down the basin and broke it, thinking of various encounters and situations, Shen Fu and his wife could not help but sigh: even small as a bonsai also attracts jealousy, and could not help but sigh for this. Shen Fu's attitude towards nature reflects the content of his social life, showing his philosophical thinking and philosophy of life.

Shen Fu and his friends travel to Jigong Mountain only feel that the mountain peaks stand, standing on a flat boulder, looking up at the distant peaks and mountains, overlooking the garden pavilion, both open and far-reaching, but also feel elegant and secluded, is a good place to have a drink. When Shen Fu traveled here alone, he saw that the scenery remained the same, but his friends and soulmates had passed away. The passage of time, the world is not normal, personnel changes can not help but give rise to a thousand sighs, a sense of sorrow. Shen Fu sinks from reality into a memory, a quest, philosophical thinking on the basis of taste and experience, in order to obtain a deep rational grasp of the meaning of the garden.

It can be seen that different garden scenes to the visitor different feelings taste, with the increase in life experience, the same scene can also give the visitor different feelings, garden appreciation is the visitor according to their own life experience, thoughts and feelings, the use of association, imagination to expand, enrich the process of perception of the artistic image of garden works. Thus also gained more artistic feelings.

5. Conclusions

Although garden appreciation is a garden scene based on artistic and aesthetic activities, but appreciation activities are not only passive acceptance of garden creation, but also the viewer both to accept the induction of garden scenes, but also to play an active subjective initiative activities. Shen Fu traveled as a scholar to many beautiful gardens, and in "Six Records of a Floating Life" he described many garden scenes, not only in literature, but also in gardening and appreciation of the great achievements, so although a century has passed, it is still worthwhile for today's people to read carefully, taste and appreciate.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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