



Chinese mythology and its impact on Chinese painting.

Assistant Professor. Esam
Nadhum Salih

Al -Mustansiriya University - College of Basic Education -
Department of Art Education
Iraq – Baghdad
esartam.g@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

ABSTRACT

This research highlights the Chinese mythology and its representation in the art of Chinese painting, this research be of four chapters

Keywords:

Research Summary

This research highlights the Chinese mythology and its representation in the art of Chinese painting, this research be of four chapters :

The first chapter is the methodological framework, But the problem, according to researcher, lies in the concept of mythology and the statement of its effect on the cultures of peoples and as China is one of the most important civilizations in the history of mankind and the knowledge construction of civilization discussed the issues of the universe and mankind and how these structures were represented in mythology and myths, which later became beliefs .

These structures are still to this day in the groups' cultures of the Chinese people, as the researcher raised the question of the problem: How did these myths affect Chinese painting?

The researcher selected the research time between (2000 - 2019) as this period represents contemporary artistic productions and how the mythology was reflected in these productions, which represent a social activity

that expresses the culture of that people and show how these beliefs affected Chinese paintings in China.

The second chapter included two topics: the first topic is the intellectual construction of the Chinese myth The second was the representations of mythology in the arts of Chinese civilization.

Then the researcher talked about the most important indicators of the theoretical framework.

In the third chapter (research procedures), it involved the research community, which included contemporary paintings where the researcher chose three samples.

The fourth chapter included the most important findings and conclusions reached by the researcher.

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Chapter One: Methodological Framework

Search problem:

Mythology is one of the foundations of human civilization and is the heritage of nations and peoples, and one of the most important resources of creativity and intellectual and literary activity. Mythology deals with issues of the universe and man, and is man's primary means of knowledge and is considered a resource of the human sciences. It involved values that man follows in to stay existent.

Mythology of the peoples that expressed their ideas and perceptions that governed their culture. It is a reflection of the social and popular order, they presented universe stories based on the local environmental and cultural perceptions of a people. With the development of the human sciences in the past centuries, anthropologists began to study human behavior in backward societies and its connection with previous societies, of which myth is part of its culture. As science searches between myths and their symbols to understand the civilizations of peoples and their cultures in previous times, as this mythology was inspiring to many artists from the modern era. This was clear in the achievements of researchers and writers. It was also embodied in the works of artists in the mythology of peoples, including the Chinese civilization, which is considered an important civilizations. Which left a great legacy of inspiring legends that show us how the ancient Chinese understood the world. Chinese mythology also illustrates their view of the universe and its phenomena. As well as their human activity, and among these activities is the art of drawing with deep roots... Therefore, the research raised the following question, (how mythology represented in Chinese painting).

The importance of research / it is good for students and researchers in the field of fine arts.

Research Objectives/ disclosure the Chinese Mythology in Contemporary Painting.

Search Limits/

The objective limit/drawings representing Chinese mythology.

The temporal limit / by studying the works of contemporary fine artists for the period between (2019-2000).

Spatial limits/ People's China.

1/The definition of terms.

Mythology is the science that is concerned with the study of myths developed by man in the past in an attempt to find an explanation for various universe phenomena and proceeds mostly from the instinct that leads man to his Creator to know him through meditation and thinking about how the universe originated, so many myths were woven on the basis of the existence of a god that carries a supernatural power and controls the natural universe manifestations and imposes its authority on creatures through it (1).

The first topic (The intellectual construction of the Chinese myth)

The emergence of any civilization is undoubtedly often related to its natural environment (man builds his civilization on earth with its natural and environmental conditions and is linked to its nature to the extent that man seems to be associated with the environment, history is together with geography.(1)

The environment plays a crucial role in the formation of civilization as it is one of the basic factors in life. The main material of man is the natural and environmental conditions surrounding him. Other factors that give culture a certain attitude to that environment (because it provides a climate that contributes to the emergence of the economic factor that promotes the permanence and renaissance of civilization)(2). Karl Marx (1818-1883) believes that the economic conditions of a group determine its political system. or even the nature of his religious belief and his artistic and intellectual production) (3).

The Chinese environment has contributed to the development of Chinese civilization because it contains natural elements with its vast size, which had fertile lands and river basins that helped in the establishment of population centers, in addition to the impact of stunning scenery greatly on cultural psychology and basis of beauty. China is also surrounded by a great natural wall of mountains and stations that covered the area in which Chinese civilization became the

multiplicity of its cultures that emerged along the route of its civilization .

As opposed to what some think that this wall isolated China, on the contrary, history has proven that the Chinese tide reached all neighboring provinces. However there are non-Chinese countries that originated inside China and settled in it and even became part of it. It is well known that the language and the mechanism of writing has played a crucial role in the Chinese citizen's sense of identity as well as promoting continuity and communication. Historians believe that the beginning of Chinese writing dates back to the third millennium BC.

At first they used the decade system in writing and then resorted to pictorial writing. Chinese writing can be considered the only one in the world still together with primitive pictorial writing.

(It is a writing based on symbols and signs, for example, in writing the word tears, two signs must be drawn, one symbolizing the shape of the eye, the other a drop of water, the mouth symbolizing chattering, and so on).(4)

The Chinese civilization presented a lot of innovations to mankind, including the invention of the wheel that moves vehicles, as well as their invention of the iron, paper and printing industry. It also created another group of inventions in the field of agriculture and industry. Which the Chinese attribute to the yellow and red Empires. who are considered part of Chinese mythology.(5)

Chinese mythology has its origins in the impact of nature on the Chinese citizen life. Just as it affected the rest of the population in other parts of the world. As nature caught the Chinese citizen and made him confused and what is going on around of phenomena introduced fear to his heart and pushed him to search for the origins of these phenomena (which led him to believe that all these phenomena are caused by hidden beings that move those phenomena. He called them (spirits of the forces of nature or (dragon) or spirits ancestor) (6). Hence, the idea of gods began when the Chinese concept of natural phenomena and elements of the universe, so we find that there are gods who manage the

affairs of the earth as well as the earth has its own goddess. (The inability of Chinese man to face natural disasters or find a reasonable explanation for them led to the worship of that supernatural force behind those disasters, represented by the gods).(7)

The worship of these phenomena was a ritual worship performed to gain the approval of these supernatural powers. This was the beginning of Chinese human worship. Therefore, the environment or nature was the first factor from which the mythological ideas emerged to control and tame nature by reaching those who responsible for it gods and human beings that can be considered a link with the gods (and the Chinese character, which is referred to by the term (D) refers to the gods after that it became referring to the emperors, who are the five semi-gods responsible for the universe in the sky (east) (south) (west) (north) (center) and are the gods in charge of the sky and there are their counterparts on earth and they are the five emperors. Emperor (Huangri), (Zwansu),(Deco),(Yao) and (Shan)) (8).

It seems that these elements have pushed the Chinese to think a lot, like the rest of the peoples in the world. His thought dealt with the origin of existence, and therefore the myths of creation have emerged since the beginning of Chinese civilization, which was inherited orally thousands of years ago and the emergence of writing. The concept of spirits among the Chinese and their control over phenomena. The first Chinese beliefs since the dawn of history and then taken by later dynasties as the official religion of the country, Chinese mythology sees spirits as the energy of thought and feeling. After death, man performs the same activities. Hence the worship and sanctification of ancestors. Doing rituals and prayers. The god of mountains and rivers were the responsible for (rain, epidemics and droughts), and prayers should be given to them. This indicates that the worship of the gods and the appearance of nature were among the first gods to appear and be worshiped by the Chinese and then sanctified 9)(

Here, it should be noted the Chinese myth that attributed creation, which holds that the world

was a mess (there was no difference between heaven and earth before the birth of the universe, no light or darkness, and there was only chaos that filled all space) (10).

It was in the form of an egg within it a living creature was found (Pangu) and the hero slept while his body grew little by little until the chaos no longer absorbed it. His presence in the universe became uncomfortable. After Pangu was troubled by the distress of the universe, his feet were planted in the earth and his hands in the sky.

In 18 years, the sky rose ten feet every day, and the earth grew ten feet of density. Pangu increases ten feet in size every day(11), and Pangu thus becomes, the creator of the universe according to legend. In China, the gods were not limited to metaphysical beings and natural phenomena, but some heroes were immortalized. According to Chinese mythology, the human being (Huang Di) or the Yellow Emperor, who was born according to legend, was immortalized as a teacher of all sciences or able to solve all problems, and he was the first to have the ability to manufacture dinnerware, war machines, spears, self-defense and other things that no one was able to do except him. According to legends, the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di) claimed a tribe that inhabited the cliff of the Yellow River (12) and on this basis Chinese rituals and decrees arose towards the names The phenomena of universe and barons have propelled Chinese society towards progress. The Chinese sanctified those who thought that he provided aid and development, which helped the development of inventions and these actions gave them the status of sanctity and divine, and therefore this goddess occupied a place among the Chinese and they had to celebrate it through their rituals and occupied most of their arts.

2/The second topic

Representations of mythology in the arts of Chinese civilization

Chinese photography is one of the most distinctive features of Chinese culture, as it has artistic characteristics of a distinctive and unique character that other peoples don't have, this is what made the Chinese artist an imprint

and style that no one else has. Its history dates back to pre- writing down times, that is to say, to those symbolic forms that made up the Chinese language. The source of Chinese writing goes back to ancient drawings, which developed over time to become the current Chinese writing. As Chinese calligraphy is considered an art because it blends with drawn paintings (both painting and calligraphy were taught and revealed to people by spiritual beings and through characters connected to the gods. Because of its importance in transmitting the teachings and symbols of religion, it has also become a method of recording historical events at the same time gaining the character of beauty and adornment) (13).This writing over time took another form as this writing began to be engraved on household and ritual utensils what we observe on archaeological pottery in the Neolithic period. These utensils were discovered by peoples who inhabited the basin of the Yellow River, and they were characterized by two colors (black and red) and were represented by geometric decorations and drawings and were distinguished by their quality in terms of materials and method of drawing (many colorful pictures appeared that include people, fish, animals, flowers and other subjects extracted from nature, as well as drawings of ceremonies and rituals) (14).

The dynastic period witnessed the interest of barons in the art of painting and gave it an important place along with their interest in painters within inside royal court. Certainly, this interest contributed to the development of the art of painting, although the dynastic period but we have only a few pictorial works. The artists' drawings were distributed between walls, coffins and boxes, and the drawings were mythological beings from Chinese mythology, as the materials used in the painting varied from brushes made of animal fur and silk was used. As the paintings were not limited to tiles and coffins, but were used on many occasions and in home decorations (as brushes made of animal hair were used for coloring). Inks produced from rubbing a dried cake from animal or vegetable materials mixed with metal and fur were also used with a wet stone. Each

artist made his own ink where it was not a commercial production) (15).

It can be observed that one of the most prestigious subjects in Chinese painting is natural subjects. With the appearance of some human characters in it. Most of the drawings are panoramic views of nature represented by mountains and rivers. Scenes of getting the particular seasons of the year are often painted in specific colors. Observing a lack of attention to perspective. This was found in palaces and temples that were filled with drawings of legendary kings and drawings of sky and earth, rivers, mountains and gods (and included people and girls with bright scenes, including what was found in the era of (Chu) of drawing a girl painted on silk and pictures of a girl with drooping hair in a prayer position ,carrying over her head a dragon and a phoenix , leading to the souls of the dead) (16).

Meaning that painting in China traces its references back to the ancient mythology of China. Painting was the limited to power and aristocracy, and this is clear through what is reflected in the structure of the class that existed at the time (as the arts were produced by unknown craftsmen subject to royal and feudal courts, which had a role in the development of Chinese art as a result of its support for artists and carried the character of each period and dynasty because of its political, economic and social changes) 19.(

In the period of the warring states, artists turned to drawing portraits of the character, and the beginning was limited to pictures of monks or the aristocratic classes, which calls for the need to define the painted character, that is, it must be a respectable figure and have a prestigious position, meaning that the beginnings of painting in China had moral and educational implications emphasized by ancient Chinese painting (drawing a good person makes one feel respected and take him as a role model, Drawing an evil person makes one reject him and thus makes him a model(20)

Faces are usually passing just by referring to the emotion or character that is skillfully drawn, and sometimes the personality of the subject is expressed in relation to other people

in the picture, and this is what we notice especially in the pictures of emperors.

The painting at that time expressed the Chinese view of objects and creatures as evidenced by what was found in ancient records describes most of the Chinese paintings, and this is what appeared during the painting of the first dynasties, which were executed on pieces of silk that are damaged over time, since silk is known for its weakness.

It should be noted that ancient Chinese paintings dealt with themes of public life (flashy colors were also used in funerary statues and realistic scenes from Chinese life that are usually in the garden, as the natural landscape has dominated the mind of the Chinese artist and has become a major subject to be painted more than character paintings)(1).

It should also be noticed that Chinese art has been influenced by Taoist teachings because it is considered one of the first general concepts that influenced art and painting in particular, as art is not considered art unless it is together with (the Tao) or as it is known as the great universe system As a sublime spiritual principle ,the Tao calls for a noble goal for the art of Chinese painting other than decorative and educational purposes (and you cannot achieve the revelation of (Tao), so looking at the moral and spiritual philosophy of the artist is no less important than artistic skills. In measuring the extent of his technical achievement) (2).

At that time there were two groups of people practicing painting, craftsmen who adhered to their religious and secular themes according to the wishes of their clients. And amateur painters who made drawing their activity as well as a space or place to express their feelings (Nature, especially the mountains, were considered pure and remote places where one could encounter the immortals, and the elements of nature such as water, pine, rocks and trees represented a symbol of values, including strength and morals) (1).

Despite the stations that Chinese art generally witnessed of the development and new additions that carried with it the beliefs and legends contained in those periods, clearly

Chinese art has expressed the representation of the soul and the self that was throughout the period of the ruling dynasties that China went through until the stage of modern art.

Theoretical framework indicators :

1- Mythology, based on its treatment of universe phenomena and causes of existence, is the first thought that appeared throughout history.

2-Throughout human history, mythology represents the first attempts to develop philosophical concepts that dealt with the universe and the relationship of man with what is surrounding him.

3- The Chinese considered mythological and legendary characters as a good example for them to be dealt with artistically.

4-The idea of embodying high places and mountains in Chinese thought is an indication of transcendence and elevation.

5- The Chinese sanctified the colors, especially the yellow one, and made it a central color as it is related to their yellow race.

6-The Chinese artist's expression of his sense of color was linked to his subjectivity in nature and under the auspices of the Taoist faith.

Chapter Three: Research Procedures

First: Research Methodology: The researcher used the descriptive analytical approach in representing his samples.

Second: Research Tool: The researcher adopted the observation tool as well as the indicators of the theoretical framework.

Analysis



Model (1)

Painting Name (Pangu)

Artist: Xu Bin

Materials: Colored Inks, Notebooks.

Year: 2000

him. It seems to the recipient that this model has embodied the The work is an oval shape that highlights circular zigzag lines inside it that look like clouds or smoke columns and appear to the recipient as if they are in constant motion, and inside it appears a man with a strong structure raising his hand up as if lifting these clouds, while his other hand is leaning on a bench, and his foot appears in the same direction and it seems that he is trying to get up from the middle of these clouds that wrap mythological Chinese mythology of the legendary hero Pangu who works to break the universe egg and pave the way for the emergence of the world. Through this work, the artist deals with the mechanism of the emergence of the universe as he deals with the Chinese creation myth, as the work presented us with a scene of the hero (Pangu), evoking his muscular strength, which appears to the recipient in the form of a front view while he is inside the oval mass, trying to get out of the middle of the chaos as depicted by the legend, leaning with his left hand on a tree trunk as in (picture) and his foot goes down strongly while his right hand rises upwards in a way that suggests to get rid of the chaos of clouds and to

separate the two blocks that One of them is the sky and the second is the earth, as the features of the earth emerge under the foot of Pangu.

According to the Chinese legend this painting is dominated by the yellow color, which was inspired by the artist from the color of the earth or (yellow soil), as this color is considered a significance that makes its position unique according to the Chinese creation legend, while the black color was used by the artist to identify shapes as well as to mislead. The artist wants to isolate or show the features of the hardened earth. As the colors divided the painting into two parts, the upper colors of the painting appear in (sky blue) for the purpose of showing the composition of the sky.

This painting is the embodiment of the imagined image of a mythical being presented to us by the artist, highlighting the god (Pangu) in the form of a human man with strong and thick features, and this appears by using his hands and feet to create the world.

The artist's ingenuity in giving a muscular body structure is reminiscent of Greek sculptures or as an athletic body. This is to keep the image of God present in the mind of the recipient. The artist's realistic style of appreciating the painting, which approached the human being, gave a picture of the event that employed connotations to highlight Chinese mythology.



Model (2)

painting Name: The Eight Immortals Cross the Sea

Artist: Wang Jiajun

Year: 2006

Material: Colors on paper

The artist (Wang Jiajun) tells us one of the legends from the Chinese mythology (the eight immortals) and it talks about a group of individuals who acquired immortality for followers (Taoism) as they were able to obtain an advantage that makes them in the meanings of God as they were able to challenge death. This myth is one of the most important myths in symbolic mythology that reflects the desire for immortality. In this painting, a group of people appears in the middle of a sea of crashing waves, each of whom holds what indicates a character within the legend.

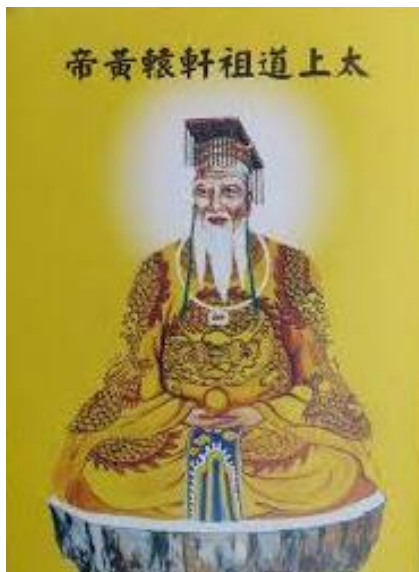
These characters emerge within a boat-like shape, as these characters fill the space of the painting, while the artist intends to scale the background, intending to focus on the characters only, which represent the depth of the painting, so the artist has been reduced to the space of the painting, as the characters occupied the whole painting. The artist deliberately used signs that indicate people according to their importance and role. According to Chinese mythology. According to legend the one who carries the scepter is the character of Sanogogyo, who is called the patron of the drama, while the character of Wuhan Xian Guri carries the flute, which is the character of the patron of musicians. The big man on the right of the painting refers to Zhang Gula, who intercedes for the elderly, and Li Tiegua, the patron of the sick, is shown sitting on the lap of one of the mythological figures of Chinese mythology. And a herbal plant comes out under his head.

According to legend ,The florist holds a basket of roses over her head. The shepherd of the poor, who holds the lotus flower in her hand, is Cai Hu, and Lu Dongin, the patron saint of barbers. Leading them is John Glee Chuan, a leader who has the ability to turn metals into silver.

In this work, the artist evokes symbols with references from Chinese mythology and in terms of supporting the subject of the work, represented by birds with white color. It carries the meaning of wisdom and longevity in Chinese myth when it hovers over the heads of

immortals. The artist deliberately in this work to evoke mythology filling his imagination for the purpose of bringing elements embodying the myth, so the painting carried mythical contents with an explanation of the characters presented.

The artist used symbolism for mythological poses and in a traditional Chinese painting style, most notably through the use of a flat brush and sideways. In the sides of the painting appears a text that may be poetry, since most of the Chinese paintings are supported by poetic texts to strengthen the painting, what distinguishes the painting is that the artist has invested the five primary colors, which represent the basic elements of the universe, with a clear emergence of the Chinese robe, which represents the Chinese identity in the painting. Chinese mythology is evident in this painting through the artist's memory and the evocation of symbols that reinforced the theme of immortality in the painting.



Model (3)

Painting Name: Yellow Emperor

Artist: Cheng Doodoo

Dimensions :47× 60 cm

Material: Colours on Paper

Year : 2009

Analysis:

This work deals with one of the most important figures of Chinese mythology, which is the figure of the yellow emperor (the universe ruler) The emperor emerges to us in the form of an old man in a visible range of shape and

clearly has emerged on the area of the painting as the artist depicted the emperor in a sitting position. This situation is the position of meditation has emerged connotations of personal expressive energy, which gives the impression of the recipient as if in a representative scene has deliberately put a large mystique on the head and a smiling face, refer the recipient to the legendary holiness on the personality of the emperor, the work included a set of connotations that refer to the personality of the emperor. The most important of which is the hat on his head of a rectangle and hanging from the edges of chains and this hat is considered one of the features of the robe of kings and personalities with holiness As for the colors in the painting, the artist did not exceed the five basic colors in Chinese thought with a clear emergence of the yellow color for its association with the personality and being a symbol used by the emperor for his empire and the artist did not go out of the circle of mythology, he has entered a legendary single is (dragon) and decorated on the king's robe as this single shipped the memory of the recipient of the dragon as it was imagined This single (dragon) reinforced the artwork. The emperor and the dragon are two of the most important symbols of the Chinese nation. In this painting, the artist expressed the basic principles when he invoked the emperor and the dragon, and because the art of painting carries moral implications, Chinese painters had to employ mythological figures such as the emperor. It is respected and appreciated and is present with its achievements and represents to the Chinese an important part of their heritage and faith. They are absent present personalities

Chapter Four: Conclusions and findings

Results and their discussion:

1- The two samples (1 and 3) achieved the noble goals of the art of painting by evoking the mythological figures of holiness.

2- The words (reduction and abstraction) emerged as features through which a mystical tendency rooted in Chinese art was achieved, and this is what appeared in all models .

3 - The color of all samples had symbolic connotations in Chinese mythology The five basic colors were in the samples and together with the nature of thought and myth.

4- Artists used their imagination in all samples and their mythological reservoir to evoke the connotations to embody the elements of the painting in a way that embodies the mythological potentials and transforms them into an explanatory language that achieves the content.

Conclusions:

1 -Mythology, with its universal and ethical concepts, has formed a presence in contemporary Chinese art by embodying its mythological figures and calling for being friends with nature.

2- For the artist, Chinese painting is the practice of a ritual belief through the representation of the mythological characters driving evil, in addition to performing a functional body that carries ideological goals by evoking a mythical vocabulary of an idea or a mythical figure, which was employed in painting for moral and value reasons.

4 -There are many dimensions of Chinese painting, in addition to providing aesthetic qualities, it provides dimensions that make the painting is the practice of dogmatic works of Chinese society, as the artist evokes dogmatic thought

4 -Chinese paintings carried a huge amount of symbols, which contained mythological contexts, and sometimes the artist mixes in one painting more than one legend, and considering the painting is a ritual belief, the goal is to revive the personality of the emperor because of its impact on the rituals of the Chinese.

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