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Culture and Affect in Aesthetic Experience of Pictorial Realism: An Eighteenth-Century Korean Literatus' Reception of Western Religious Painting in Beijing¹

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Abstract. Cultural factors are operating in the aesthetic experience of pictorial realism, occurring in a transcultural manner, and their effects are salient in beholder's affective reaction correlated with perceptual-cognitive operation. This paper aims to demonstrate this hypothesis, by developing two analytical tools that might explain the anti-hedonic valence of Hong Taeyong, an eighteenth-century Korean literatus' aesthetic experience of a Western religious fresco depicting the Lamentation of Christ in a Jesuit Catholic church in Beijing. First, a complex multifold conflict between «actual affect» and culturally modeled «ideal affect», operating simultaneously in his visual experience, might be translated into a highly negative valence of his global affective state. Second, the variance of processing fluencies at different levels would have made his global processing operation less fluid, and it might play a role in his negative affective valence, since the affect is inherent in processing fluency signal.

Keywords. Aesthetic experience of pictorial realism, «ideal affect» and «actual affect», «perceptual fluency» and «conceptual fluency», Hong Taeyong.

Pictorial realism is usually understood in terms of picture's visual quality or subject matter, but it can also be conceived of as a perceiver's aesthetic experience of the feeling of seeing the real in the picture. Still life paintings by the famous seventeenth-century Dutch artist Cornelis de Heem, for instance, are «realistic» mainly by virtue of their detailed description and three-dimensional rendering of flowers, fruits, foods, etc., though the depicted objects might inadvertently suggest symbolic meanings or contents. Courbet's monumental painting *A Burial at Ornans* is «realistic», as it represents an ordinary, but actual scene, gathering together the clergy, a mayor, and people from all works of life, without any idealization or «evident rhetoric of classical or romantic beauty» (Schapiro [1941-1942]:

¹ I am very grateful for the comments by Jean-Marie Schaeffer, Bence Nanay, and Daeyeol Kim.

181). The realism of each painting is explained, in the European art tradition, as two different types of matter. But this does not necessarily imply that it is experienced as two distinctive affairs in our mind. A beholder, European or not, may have the impression of seeing *real* beautiful and vivid flowers in de Heem's paintings, and *real* men and women attending a burial ceremony in Courbet's painting, even without fully realizing the visual quality of the Flemish still life paintings, nor having any information about the nineteenth-century French Realism. These two paintings would be *commonly* realistic for *this* beholder, whatever the philosophical foundations of their visual languages are, or whatever the cultural and social contexts of their originations and developments are. This cognitive feeling of seeing the real is not an automatic consequence of picture's visual quality or subject matter, nor a delusion about picture's status as representations. It might be rather a token of the easiness or fluency of perceptual-cognitive operations whose dynamics can also be affected by variables irrelevant to the picture's quality or subject, such as presentation duration. This paper does not concern pictorial realism as a matter of picture's properties or symbolic systems, but as a subjective visual experience.

However, the term «aesthetic» may blur what is meant by this psychological conception of realism, as it carries in our ordinary language some connotations rooted in the European philosophical tradition, such as «objective beauty», «passive reception of sense impression». The reader will then be invited to bear in mind that aesthetic experience, in this paper, does not refer to any passive sensory experience of beauty objectified in the picture qualified as realist or naturalist by art historians or artists themselves, but to the subjective experience characterized by a particular type of cognitive conduct differentiated from other non-aesthetic cognitive conducts in its functional self-sufficiency (Schaeffer [1996]). In other words, a beholder's perceptual experience of pictorial realism will be *aesthetic* when his cognitive conduct is regulated by affective or hedonic valence resulting from his perceptual-cognitive opera-

tion (Winkielman, *et al.* [2003], and Reber, *et al.* [2004]).

Based on these ideas, I will bring forward two main arguments. Firstly, the subjective experience of pictorial realism has a *transcultural* dimension, as perceptual-cognitive processing fluency underpins beholder's feeling of seeing the real, consciously or not consciously experienced. Secondly, cultural factors are operating in this transcultural experience, and it seems to be salient in perceiver's affective reaction, rather than in his perceptual or cognitive abilities alone. These arguments will be supported by the analytical observation of the eighteenth-century Korean literati's reception of Western paintings created by European Jesuit painters working in China. The case of Hong Taeyong will constitute a particular field to study, in order to conceive a possible function of cultural factors in affective reaction.

1. KOREAN ENVOYS TO BEIJING AND WESTERN «ILLUSIONISTIC» PAINTINGS

Many of eighteenth-century Korean envoys to the capital of Qing dynasty visited Catholic churches, called «Hall of Heavenly Lord(天主堂)». The most frequented ones are the *Nantang*(南堂), South Church, and the *Dontang*(東堂), East Church. Almost all of those who looked in on these curious places, according to their travelogues, are reported to have been surprised, to varying degrees, by their visual experiences of Western paintings, especially pictorial images of Christ, marked by their feelings of seeing a *real* person or place, or *living* creatures (Shin, Ik-Cheol [2006]: 23-24). It raises two preliminary questions: one about the characteristics of the Western paintings perceived by them, and one about the eighteenth-century social and historical settings that permitted them these exotic experiences.

First, what kind of Western paintings did Korean envoys in Beijing perceive? Unfortunately, these paintings don't exist any longer. But we can conjecture them, relying upon their literary descriptions. Kim Ch'angöp(金昌業, 1658-

1721), a Korean literatus who visited the *Nantang* in 1713 briefly recorded in his travelogue *Nogajae yonhaeng ilgi* (老稼齋燕行日記, *Nogajae's Diary of Travel to Beijing*) that he saw in the church «a little image hanging on the north wall», depicting a person «holding a fire-pearl with their hair down and naked shoulder», and that the «face» of this person «looked alive».² Another Korean literatus Yi Kiji (李器之, 1690 – 1722), according to his travelogue *Iram yonggi* (一庵燕記, *Iram's Records of Travel to Beijing*), visited the same Catholic church about seven years later, and also saw a painting of Christ on the north wall. He wrote that one person «wearing in red», «surrounded by six persons popping in and out», «standing in the middle of clouds» with which «the niche was filled» (Yi, Kiji [2016]: 247). These two records suggest that the picture of Christ decorating the north wall of the South Church had changed. The image perceived by Kim Ch'angöp would be painted on canvas or wood, and the one by Yi Kiji would be *quadratura* of mimetic fresco. This change does not simply mean the modification of materiality, but the introduction of a new, more «illusionistic» or theatrical style. The illusionistic painting described by Yi Kiji can be supposed to have been painted by G. Castiglione (1688-1766, known as «Lang Shining (郎世寧)» in China, and as «Nang Senyöng» in Korea), as this famous Milanese painter would have decorated all four walls of the *Nantang* with *quadratura* after his arrival in Beijing in 1715 on (Kleutghen [2015]: 81, and Musillo [2016]: 98). Trained in the tradition of Milanese Baroque developed during the seventeenth century, Castiglione had «a sensitivity to texture, color, and light», an exceptional skill to «mimic the appearance of a wide range of textures», and a sufficient ability to use perspective. These technical qualities permitted him to «realistically render any type of object», or to realize *quadratura* (Musillo [2016]: 78-79). The Western paintings perceived by Korean literati in Catholic churches after Castiglione's arrival in Beijing, therefore, would be more «illu-

sionistic», yet slightly adapted to the Chinese pictorial tradition³, and their visual experiences of these paintings were marked by the cognitive feeling of seeing the real.

Second, what was the social or historical factors of the eighteenth century that fostered Korean literati's visual experiences of the Western paintings in Beijing's Catholic churches? In fact, throughout the Chosön dynasty (1392-1897) in Korea traveling abroad was a privilege granted only to a small number of men by government (Lim, Jongtae [2009]: 381). It relied largely upon the Sino-Korean political and diplomatic relations that shaped two countries' tributary practice functioning also as the main medium for the reception of Western civilization in the Chosön society. Korean intellectuals in tributary missions traveled to Beijing where European Jesuit missionaries had established their foothold from the very beginning of the seventeenth century. They could seldomly meet and discuss with these westerners, but often see and get books on European sciences and Christianity, and exotic Western cultural objects such as scientific instruments, Catholic iconography, European-style world map.

However, the Sino-Korean relations underwent an antagonistic period in the seventeenth century, following the transition from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) of the Han Chinese to the Qing dynasty (1636-1912) of the Manchu. On the one hand, an anti-Qing sentiment prevailed in the late Chosön society that suffered from the Qing's invasion of 1637, and that considered itself as the only legitimate successor of the Ming dynasty or its «noble legacy». On the other hand, suffering from political instability mainly caused by various rebellions, the Qing dynasty doubted the loyalty of Chosön court, and thus «imposed strict regulations on the behavior of the Korean envoys in Beijing» until the late seventeenth century (Lim, Jongtae [2013]: 94). With little freedom to move

² 北壁掛一像。其人散髮袒臂。持火珠。面如生。(Kim, Ch'angöp [1712])

³ It is well known that Castiglione did not use a strong chiaroscuro in painting the imperial couple, for instance, because it «represented in Chinese eyes an unfortunate omen». (Musillo [2008]: 46)

about the city, they could not make a significant contact with Jesuit missionaries, nor visit freely Catholic churches. These mutual antagonisms and skepticisms had gradually weakened, as the Qing's political situation had been stabilized in the early eighteenth century. «More freedom to tour the city» was then allowed to Chosŏn envoys in Beijing, especially to a special group of young literati, called *chaje kun'gwan*(子弟軍官, younger relatives as military officer). Taken by three top officials of diplomatic mission(三使) as private attendants free from formal duties, *chaje kun'gwan* were in fact literary scholars having an opportunity of a lifetime to visit China. They had an intellectual curiosity in Western learning, and a literary talent to record their experiences (Shin, Ik-Cheol [2006]: 14-18). The relaxed climate during the eighteenth century could foster their more active contact with the Western civilization, and the enrichment of their travel report in number and in style. Korean intellectuals visiting Beijing on their tributary missions used to write a travelogue as a documented report, focusing on official affairs such as itineraries and assigned duties. But from the early eighteenth century, they, notably *chaje kun'gwan* began to narrate their personal experiences during the travel, and to describe social and cultural features observed in Beijing. This kind of literary works is generically called *Yŏnhaeng rok*(燕行錄, *Record of Travel to Beijing*) (Lim, Jongtae [2016]: 186).

Given these preliminary overviews, this paper will only focus on the case of Hong Taeyong(洪大容, 1731-1783), an eighteenth-century Korean scholar, as described in his travelogue *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaeng rok*(*Records of Travel to Beijing between 1765 and 1766*), for two reasons. Firstly, the paintings perceived by Hong Taeyong in Beijing in 1766 were located in *Nantang* and *Dontang* that had been commonly decorated by Castiglione. Furthermore, Korean envoys' visits to Catholic churches in Beijing, according to their travel writings, occurred chiefly during the second half of the eighteenth century, and were practically limited to these two places that were located nearest their official residence, *Ok'agwan*(玉河館, *Yuheguan* in Chinese). The aesthetic experiences of Hong

Taeyong, triggered by his visual perception of Western paintings in Beijing, may thus well exemplify to a certain extent Korean visitors' reception of these European «illusionistic» paintings. Secondly, his travelogue *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaeng rok*, one of the most popular travel literatures during the late Chosŏn period, contains relatively detailed description of his personal experiences, including some sensory and emotional episodes. He wrote two books on his travel to Beijing. One is *Tamhŏn yŏngi*(*Tamhŏn's Records of Travel to Beijing*, 湛軒燕記) written in classical Chinese for Korean literati. It describes his journey as well as Chinese cultures by topics in an objective manner. The other is *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaeng rok* written in Korean for his mother who never visited Beijing like the majority of Koreans during the Chosŏn period. It is a personal diary. The latter may therefore provide us with a more subjective dimension of his visual experiences of Western paintings.

When he accompanied his uncle Hong Ōk(1722-1809) as *chaje kun'gwan* in a tribute mission to the Qing court between 1765 and 1766, Hong Taeyong visited the South Church three times and the East Church one time, and saw European paintings decorating the interior of these sacred places. His visual experiences are marked by spectacular feelings of seeing the real, like those of many other Korean envoys to Beijing. On his first visit to the South Church on the lunar January 9, 1766, he saw an illusionistic mural painting. According to his description:

Entering (the Hall) by a big door, (I saw that) there existed another door in the West. In the East, there existed a beautiful brick wall in which a half-open door was, while houses appeared indistinctly through the door. I asked a question to (my coachman) Sepal. He laughed and answered that it was not an actual door, but a mural painting realized in order to show (Western painters') skills off. Marveled, I approached the wall and found that it was not a real door, but a mural painting. It sufficed me to imagine Western painter's dexterity. (Hong, Taeyong [1997]: 281)

What he saw was a «scenic illusion painting(通景畫, *tongjinghua*)» by Castiglione. This mural

painting evoked the strong experience of seeing a three-dimensional scene in the perceiver's mind, to such an extent that Hong Taeyong did not recognize at first glance the conventional identity of the perceived object. This unawareness lasted only for an extremely short lapse of time. He could identify the three-dimensional scene perceived as a mural painting, immediately after Sepal's simple remark. Then what seems important in this anecdote is that he could experience the feeling of pictorial realism in perceiving a painting whose basic visual languages were emerged and developed in European culture totally unfamiliar to this Korean literatus of the late eighteenth century. This belongs to the global transcultural phenomena that D. Lopes (1995) called «revelatory realism» for the novelty or unfamiliarity of the system of representation used. Lopes accounts it in terms of «appropriate informativeness». Pictures from an «unfamiliar system of representation», according to him, may deliver «unexpected» but «required» information, so it can «sometimes be more realistic than pictures belonging to the habitual systems». (Lopes[1995]: 279-280) But this theory does not seem to explain why unfamiliarity may sometimes cause the cognitive experience of realism. Do the appropriate information of an «unfamiliar» system operate in viewer's perceptual processing fluency? In fact, the cultural unfamiliarity of Hong Taeyong did not prevent the occurrence of this experience. It was rather easy for him to recognize what is represented in the picture surface, a three dimensional construction of architectural scene. Actually, he was not unaware of the fact that the «law of proportion based on the mathematical calculation» is underpinning this «illusionistic» painting⁴. But the possession of this vague knowledge may not disprove that the Western cultures apparently or implicitly embodied in this picture were foreign to him.

However, one may wonder about this transcultural dimension, in supposing that the architectural scene perceived in the mural painting may

be less biased by cultural factors. Wouldn't he had lived the perceptual experience of pictorial realism, if the perceived object had more symbolic content culturally specified? But, as we have already seen in the visual experiences of Kim Ch'angöp and of Yi Kiji, the higher degree of cultural specificity of the Western religious paintings had actually not prevent Chosön literati from experiencing this subjective feeling of pictorial realism in their mind. It was also the case for Hong Taeyong. When he visited the South Church on the lunar January 19, 1766, almost half a century after Yi Kiji's visit, he saw:

In the middle of the north wall, there was a picture of a person wearing women's clothes and their hair down. With the half-closed eyes, looking far away, this person appeared worried. They is who we call the Heavenly Lord. Their form and clothes gave the impression that they stood in the air, and it seemed that they was in a deep niche. Then, at first glance, I took them as a statue, but after getting closer to it, I realized that they was a painting. The pupils of their eyes however gave the feeling of seeing a living person. That was a bizarre art of painting. (Hong, Taeyong [1997]: 285)

On perceiving this religious painting probably also painted by Castiglione, Hong Taeyong had easily and quickly recognized its three-dimensional description. He perceived a person «wearing women's clothes and their hair down», «standing in the air», «in a deep niche». His visual awareness was not limited to its physical identification. It also reached the identification of this person's emotional state embodied in their corporeal form, and the recognition of the cultural identity of the portrayed. A «strange» human figure looking like a woman, gazing into the air «with the half-closed eyes», gave him the impression of being «worried» about something, and this person is the «Heavenly Lord».

Hong Taeyong had some detailed knowledges of Beijing's Catholic churches, previously acquainted through Yi Kiji's travelogue, and would have looked forward to see the famous image of the «Heavenly Lord» painted on the north wall in

⁴ 盖聞洋畫之妙。不惟巧思過人。有裁割比例之法。專出於算術也。(Hong, Taeyong [1939])

the South Church(Lim, Jongtae [2009]: 383). This from-the-book knowledge would help him to recognize easily the cultural identity of the portrayed, but it did not suffice to make him more familiar to the European cultures incorporated in the picture perceived. He found this picture «bizarre». This cultural «strangeness» did not however prevent him from perceiving immediately the corporal and facial expression of the portrayed human figure. The emotional state of Christ, a compassion or a grief, visualized in the «symbolic form» of this Western painting, might be transmitted to this young Korean Confucian literatus, without any linguistic mediation. He could have «the feeling of seeing a living person», and perceive this person's emotional state, in spite of his lacking knowledge about Christian religion or Catholic iconography, or of the strong cultural heterogeneity underlying the feeling of «bizarreness» or «strangeness».

2. ANTI-HEDONIC EXPERIENCE OF THE LAMENTATION PAINTING

Saying that the experience of pictorial realism occurs in a transcultural manner does certainly not imply that this experience is acultural, nor deny that culture affects it. It simply supposes that the perceiver's cultural specificity could function as a differentiating factor of his transcultural experience, and that this differentiation would be more salient in the affective or emotional dimension than in the perceptual or cognitive dimension, without any opposition nor impermeability between these two dimensions. When a beholder experiences a pictorial realism in a transcultural manner, his affective or emotional state triggered by this experience may vary according to the interrelation between his cultural background and the «symbolic forms» embodied in the picture perceived. In other words, culturally heterogenous perceivers might undergo different emotional states, with varying degrees, in their perceptual experiences of pictorial realism.

Another story written down by Hong Taeyong

on his visual experience of the Lamentation painting seems to show well that the affective dimension inherent to this transcultural experience could be differentiated by cultural factors. When he visited the *Dongtang* on the lunar January 24, 1766, he saw some frescoes of religious subjects on the north, east, and west walls. On the north wall was painted an image of Christ, and on the east wall a picture representing a «princely» scene composed of a «multi-floor building», «a crowd of people sitting down», «flags», and other decorations. The visual experience of these two paintings seems to have been pleasing for him to a certain extent, although he evaluated them as «bizarre» or «strange» probably owing to his unfamiliarity with the Western culture operating in them. His brief description revealed slightly his admiration or positive appreciation of their visual quality to realistically render figures, buildings, objects: «Looking at them from a distance», he could not have realized that the perceived scene was a picture. But the picture on the west wall was highly «disgusting» for him. He wrote that:

On the west wall was painted the corpse of a man laid on a coffin of which dolefully crying men and women were standing or throwing themselves down (on the ground) by the side. I was so much disgusted that I could not look at this picture squarely. I asked Wang the reason (for their mourning), and he answered me «This is a picture depicting the corpse of Heavenly Lord». (Hong, Taeyong [1997]: 403)

The perception of this picture representing the Lamentation of Christ stimulated in his mind a highly negative affect, so that he lost the desire to continue to pay his visual attention to it, and turned his eyes away from it. This experience was anti-hedonic for him. But it was not in conflict with his experience of pictorial realism. He would have the vivid feeling of seeing a mournful scene with his own eyes, in which people «cried» pathetically around «the corpse of a man laid on a coffin». In other words, all of the three religious frescoes perceived in the East Church seem to have commonly triggered in his mind the conscious or non-conscious experience of pictorial realism, but

only the one painted on the west wall stirred up an extremely negative affect.

The painting described above apparently representing the Lamentation, one of the major moments of the Passion of Christ, is not extant any longer. It is therefore impossible to examine or analyse its visual characteristics that would be operative in his affective reaction correlated with his psychological process. We can, however, conjecture them to a certain extent by supposing its author and social context of production. The East Church where Hong Taeyong saw these religious paintings underwent an important modification of architecture and decoration in the 1720s. Originally founded in 1655, it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1720, and then the Jesuit order commissioned its renovation to Castiglione who had already been working on the mural paintings of this Portuguese church from 1715 on. This Italian painter did not work alone. He collaborated with a Florentine architect Ferdinando Bonaventura Moggi (1684-1761, known as «Li Boming (利博明)» in China), and certainly received the help of Chinese artisans in preparing the decoration, such as making «a smooth foundation» on which he painted pictures as well as faux marbles and bronzes (Musillo [2015]: 313, and Musillo [2016]: 98). The East Church was reopened in 1728, and seems to have had no major architectural change until it was damaged by fire in 1807, and finally demolished in 1811 by imperial decree. Hence, the mural paintings perceived by Hong Taeyong in the East Church in 1766, it could be surmised, were painted by Castiglione during this period of renovation from 1720 to 1728 for the Jesuit commission, and they were different in their style from the previous Western religious paintings produced in accordance with Ricci's policy of accommodation, and still probably from his other surviving paintings produced for the commissions of the Qing emperors. They would be painted rather in the seventeenth-century Italian Baroque style, where paintings, architectures, and sculptures were integrated into decorative ensembles.

Having «received the artistic training outside the Order» in his native city Milan before

his departure for China, Castiglione was a professional painter as well as a member of the Jesuit order (Musillo [2008]: 48-49). He would be able to work for various commissions offered by different clients, religious or not, and the quality of his paintings relied in part upon what these clients or patrons demanded and afforded. In other words, accepting the Jesuit commission, he did not create religious paintings merely for decorative purpose. They should meet the institutional ends of Catholic church constructed in a foreign land, i.e., the proselytization of the Chinese and eventually the other East Asians. Furthermore, this Italian Jesuit missionary-painter executed the decoration of the East Church during the period in which the Qing government began to take hostile actions against Catholicism. In spite of some Jesuit missionaries' presence at court thanks to their scientific knowledge or artistic skill and to their policy of accommodation, this Western religion had to confront the anti-Catholic measures taken by the Qing government from the very beginning of the eighteenth century, resulting in restriction on the Jesuit missionaries from preaching in public places (Loewe [1988]). It might have then exerted influence on the religious paintings decorating the interior of the Catholic churches in Beijing, so that their visual forms should be as much eloquent as verbal means for the East Asian visitors ignoring the principles of Christianity (Jeong, Eun-joo [2014]: 219-220). In short, the Western pictures perceived by Hong Taeyong in the East Church would be in the Baroque style not or less accommodated to the Chinese cultures and pictorial conventions, and they would be very *expressive* in order to deeply move the local beholder's ignorant mind, with visual quality characterized by realistic rendering of objects, materials, buildings, human figures.

However, these three mural paintings did not arouse the same affective value in his mind. He experienced a strong feeling of revulsion in perceiving the picture representing the scene of Lamentation over the dead Christ, whereas he enjoyed perceiving two other «strange» Western religious paintings, yet probably painted in the same style.

What did generate this difference of affective reaction? One possible and attractive answer is that he shared the negative emotions of the mourners, and this empathic experience is quite unpleasant for him. This account does not seem to be effective in understanding the highly anti-hedonic nature of his visual experience of the Lamentation painting. The event of Lamentation itself is certainly sad or doleful, whether it is fictitious or not. An empathic onlooker would eventually feel deep sorrow or grief, and dislike this negative emotional experience. But once this event is painted in the religious or proselytical context, its affective content may be altered. In other words, it is not necessarily identified with the painting's affective content that would be intended to be transmitted to beholder's mind, and this purposed affective content may be enjoyed by beholders aware or not of this intentionality. Furthermore, it has been well known that a beholder's affective reaction is directed toward «what represents» (i.e., the picture of the Lamentation), rather than toward «what is represented» (i.e., the event of Lamentation itself), since Aristotle indicates in his *Poetics* that we get pleasure from perceiving visual representations of things unpleasant to see such as «the most repulsive animals» or «corpses» (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1448b). The anti-hedonic valence of Hong Taeyong's affective reaction was thus not due to the negative affective content of the mournful event itself, but it was triggered by his visual experience of the painting that anyway deals with highly negative emotion. However, «empathic experience of negatively emotional art» is generally «valued» or «desired», as we can easily see in appreciation of tragedy (Levinson [2006]: 51). This eighteenth-century Korean literatus, on the contrary, eagerly wanted to avoid it. Thus, at first sight, there seems to be no puzzling «paradox» to resolve or explain in his anti-hedonic experience occurred in a cross-cultural context. But this case suggests that cultural factors are operating in our emotional reaction, paradoxical or not. His anti-hedonic valence could be therefore explained to a significant degree only in conceiving the complex correlation operated by perception, affect, and culture.

3. CONFLICT BETWEEN «IDEAL AFFECT» AND «ACTUAL AFFECT»

Admitting the distinction between «ideal affect» and «actual affect» formulated by Affect Valuation Theory, this paper argues that a conflict between affective states might be translated into negative hedonic valence in beholder's visual experience. This recent psychological study differentiates two affective states, the «ideal» one and the «actual» one, that can be commonly estimated by a combination of two underlying dimensions, «valence(positive/negative)» and «arousal(high/low)». For example, enthusiastic is high-arousal positive affective state, whereas dull is low-arousal negative affective state. «Ideal affect» refers to «the affective state that people value and would ideally like to feel», whereas «actual affect» refers to «the affective state that people actually feel», measurable in physiological terms like heart rate, skin conductances. «Cultural factors» such as norms, beliefs, rituals, religions, artifacts, shape «ideal affect» more than «actual affect», whereas «temperamental factors» such as neuroticism, extraversion, sensation seeking, shape «actual affect» more than «ideal affect». These two affective states constitute two «distinct entities» that may «interact» (Tsai, *et al.* [2006], and Tsai [2007]). When one values serenity, low-arousal positive affective state, in visiting a Buddhist temple, for instance, he may actually feel serene, but also sleepy, low-arousal negative affective state, or excited, high-arousal positive affective state. The anticipated or desired «ideal» affective state relative to this place is shaped by cultural factors specific to a given social group historically derived. It may be shared within a same cultural group, and its variation can be explained in terms of cultural differences. But the «actual» affective state is not modeled by cultural factors. It can be similar or same despite cultural differences. The global affective state would be affected by the interaction of these two affective states that may be discordant to varying degrees, and the highly negative hedonic valence of Hong Taeyong's visual experience might be explained as underlying conflict between «ideal affects» and

«actual affects». This conflict is however multiple and complex. At least, three kinds are working in his experience of the Lamentation painting.

Firstly, his «actual affect» is conflict with the picture's «ideal affect» embodied through culturally specific visual forms such as gesticulations, facial configurations, postures, color. The picture perceived by Hong Taeyong is religious painting. It would represent, probably in the Baroque style, a scene of Lamentation of Christ, occupied by a group of mourning persons who are presumably making pathetic or dramatic gestures and patterns of body. Their corporeal forms might be perceived as an externalization of their deep and impassioned grief, a high-arousal negative affective state. But this is not the «ideal affect» that the author or the religious institution would like to make beholder feel. Religious painting displayed in the missionary context cannot be simply decorative or artistic. It is highly «intentional», with the pedagogic function of illustrating or teaching the Christianity, and also with the spiritual function of arousing in beholder's mind a kind of the devout sentiment, or a strong feeling of piety. Figures' actions or movements depicting the event charged with negative strong emotion would be intended to ideally evoke a positive affective state in beholder's mind. This discordance of two opposite affective states embodied in the same visual image would induce a kind of invisible affective tension in the picture. Hong Taeyong seems to have responded to this tension implicitly underpinning the picture, yet without being aware of its «ideal» affective dimension having a positive valence, and he «actually» felt «disgusted», high-arousal negative affective state that was in conflict with the positive «ideal» affect.

Secondly, his «ideal affect» in funerary rituals was in conflict with the «actual» affective state of the grieving figures represented in the painting, whether these figures were fictives or not. «Men and women», according to his description, were «dolefully crying» over a man's corpse probably naked and visibly wounded or having suffered. It suggests that they were actually feeling intense sorrow, and expressing it in a passionate way with-

out seemingly any prescribed restriction on their behaviors or actions of mourning. Their «actual» affective state may be described as high-arousal negative, and *presentificated* in the mind of an eighteenth-century Korean perceiver totally unfamiliar to the Western Catholic culture.

Hong Taeyong lived and had grown up in the late Chosŏn society which had been firmly ordered by Confucian values such as filial piety(孝), humaneness(仁), rituals(禮). The Chosŏn dynasty was founded in the very late fourteenth century by the Neo-Confucians who had «a commitment to transforming their own society into a Confucian society» profoundly different from the Buddhist society of the previous Koryŏ dynasty(918-1392). These Chosŏn Confucian literati were willing to constitute «a model for perfect ritual behavior and a sound sociopolitical order», mainly depending on the ancient «Chinese» canonical works such as *Yegi*(禮記, *Book of Rites*, in Chinese *Liji*), *Ŭirye*(儀禮, *Book of Etiquette and Ceremony*, in Chinese *Yili*), already known in Korea for centuries, that depict in great detail an ideal Confucian society. They also particularly relied on the *Chuja karye*(朱子家禮, *Family Rituals of Master Zhu Xi*, in Chinese *Zhuzijiali*) written in the twelfth century as commentaries on these ancient canonical works on rituals, and as «guidebook» for normalization of major social rituals like wedding, funeral, ancestor worship (Deuchler [1992]: 25). But this transformation had been only gradually realized, as the rites deeply connected with people's daily life. The Confucian ideology about ritual behaviors or actions had thus established in the Chosŏn society only by the late seventeenth century. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the age of Hong Taeyong, Confucian ritual norms were performed and shared by all social classes from commoners to Kings. In other words, all funeral-related rituals of the Chosŏn society were organized by Confucian idealized ethical values. They were characterized by a long series of interconnected complex actions that should be progressively performed during twenty-seven months, although the actual mortuary process did not comprise every single action.

However, this long and complex funerary ritual based upon filial piety, one of the most important Confucian values, might be intended to properly control or regulate the mourning of the offspring who «lost(喪)» their parent. Surely, according to *Books of Rites*⁵, «grieving over the dead is the most important in funerary rites», but it should be conducted in such a way that the mourners «retain their grief» and «accept the change», passing from one ritual action to another⁶. They were advised against passionate expression of their sorrow for the dead person⁷, as this kind of action, according to the Confucian teaching of filial piety, is harmful to the health of the bodies received from their parents. It never implies that all Koreans of the late Chosŏn period did not actually feel deep and intense sorrow, nor express it in an impassioned manner, but that the Korean Confucian norms valued the properly restrained grief through complex funerary rituals organizing actions or bodies. Accordingly, the «ideal affect» of Hong Taeyong, relative to the funeral, may be qualified as negative with low-arousal, and collide with the «actual affect» of the mourners depicted in the picture perceived.

Thirdly, how he would ideally like to feel in appreciating picture was in conflict with his own actual affective state triggered by the perception of this Western religious painting. The art played a specific role for the Korean literati of the Chosŏn society, educated in the Confucian tradition that insists on the ethical effect of artistic activities and aesthetic experiences in developing, cultivating, and improving individual's human nature harmonious with the social order or life. They enjoyed

playing a musical instrument, writing a poem, making brushstrokes in calligraphing or painting, and appreciating works of art, not just for their «inner pleasure», but as an important practical means of moral education that may improve both their personal character and the orderly society (Huang, Siu-Chi [1963]: 55-57, and Shusterman [2009]: 20). Appreciating a picture did not consist, for them, in evaluating the picture's purely formal quality, but in recognizing and savoring the moral quality or mental state of the author or of the portrayed, «transmitted» through the visible traces of brushstrokes in an allusive manner. It is conceived of as a pleasurable psychological journey that guides the beholder toward the ideal of sagehood. When a Confucian literatus sees a bamboo painting done by Ni Zan(倪瓚, 1301 – 1374), a Chinese literatus-painter during the Yuan, for instance, he is invited to live or presentificate in his mind the hermit-like spirit of the painter who withdrew to live a reclusive life, refusing to serve the Mongol dynasty (See Escande [2000]). Grown up as elite of the Chosŏn society, Hong Taeyong would be trained to enjoy a serene but pleasant state of mind in appreciating pictures. It does not, however, imply that he actually experienced this kind of mental state, whenever he perceived them. He might have a cultural habit of anticipating an idealized visual experience with low-arousal positive affective state, and his «ideal affect» and «actual affect» would thus be conflictual in his experience of the Lamentation painting.

Cultural factors are underpinning these multiple and complex conflictual affective states, by shaping «ideal affects» through education, circulation of «symbolic forms», rituals. This multi-fold conflict between «ideal affects» and «actual affects» would be simultaneously operating in the visual experience of Hong Taeyong perceiving the Lamentation of Christ. It might be translated into anti-hedonic valence of his global affective state that he verbalized in terms of «disgust». The anti-hedonic valence of his visual experience is not a supplemental value subsequently attributed by him. It is immediately elicited in his mind.

⁵ *Book of Rites*, one of the Five Classics of Confucian literature, is a collection of descriptions of ritual matters which are said to have been taught by the ancient sage Confucius(551-479 BC). During the first century BC, books on ritual matters were extensively reworked and arranged by the Confucian scholar Dai De(戴德), and also by his nephew Dai Sheng(戴聖). The compilation by Dai Sheng, according to historians, would become later the classic on rituals. (*Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*)

⁶ 喪禮 哀戚之至也。節哀 順變也。(Yegi: 203)

⁷ 哀毀 (Yegi: 247)

4. VARIANCE OF PROCESSING FLUENCIES

Admitting the distinction between «perceptual fluency» and «conceptual fluency» proposed by the hedonic marking theory, this paper argues that a highly negative hedonic valence of Hong Taeyong's visual experience may also be consciously or not consciously reinforced by the discordance between these two processing fluencies. According to this recent psychophysiological research on the fluency-affect-evaluation link, a hedonic valence is intrinsically associated to the processing fluency signal (Winkielman *et al.* [2003], and Reber *et al.* [2004]). The processing of any stimulus can generate a fluency signal available also to the affect system, via some internal feedback meta-cognitive mechanism. A processing fluency signal itself is so «hedonically marked» without being necessarily experienced in a conscious manner, and a high operational fluency can elicit a positive affect that contributes to a more positive evaluation of a given stimulus. In other words, the processing fluency itself can be a source of perceiver's affect or hedonic valence. It implies two significant points that seem to improve our understanding of the affective reaction of Hong Taeyong. Firstly, a perceiver's affective reaction can be triggered without an intellectual operation like analysis or inference, that consists in attributing a hedonic value to stimulus' certain features or to the experience of fluency itself. It can immediately result from his processing fluency, though it may be experienced as a result of an intentional action in our conscious mind. Second, as the dynamics of information processing are not specific to the stimulus, a perceiver's affective reaction is not determined by the stimulus, contrary to our ordinary linguistic habits that externalize it as being oriented to the perceived thing. In fact, the same stimulus can be processed with high or low fluency, following the changes of variables that affect just the processing manipulation, like presentation duration, figure-ground contrast, and a perceiver's affective reaction brought about by its perception can accordingly be positive or negative.

The proponents of this theory propose distinguishing «perceptual fluency» from «conceptual fluency», as processing fluency can «reflect processes and manipulations occurring at different levels». Perceptual fluency «reflects the ease of low-level, data-driven operations dealing primarily with» physical features of the stimulus, whereas conceptual fluency «reflects the ease of high-level operations concerned primarily with categorization and processing of a stimulus' relation to semantic variables». These two processes of low-level and of high-level «usually operate in concert, and support each other», but they can also be «dissociated» (Winkielman *et al.* [2003]: 193-194). Their possible dissociation may involve a discordance between «perceptual fluency» and «conceptual fluency», that comes to reduce the global processing fluency, and as a result, the affective reaction would be less positive. It therefore seems to offer a useful conceptual device to explain the negative hedonic valence of certain visual experiences, in which the physical features and semantic structures of the perceived object are not processed with the same fluencies or easiness.

Perceiving the Lamentation painting, Hong Taeyong experienced a highly negative affective reaction. He said that he was «so much disgusted». This anti-hedonic value of his visual experience may be strengthened by the low processing fluency resulting from the discordance between the «perceptual fluency» of low-level operation and the «conceptual fluency» of high-level operation. A meaning of the picture perceived, simple or complex, physical or abstract, seems to be situated in or constructed by a web of multiple information that are not simply data-driven, but also knowledge-driven or experience-driven. All these information would not always be processed with the same easiness or operational fluency. Hong Taeyong was actually in the situation of processing fluency discordance. On the one hand, he easily and immediately identified the physical or formal configuration structured by lines, dots, colors, textures, etc., as «men and women», «standing or throwing themselves down», «crying dolefully over the corpse of a man laid on a coffin».

His perceptual recognition is however not a simple physical identification. It also implies a certain semantic categorization whose degree is yet relatively low. He successfully categorized the painting's visual configuration as a meaningful scene of funerary action, in which «men and women» were experiencing an intense feeling of grief for the dead «man». It can therefore be said that the data-driven information were processed with high fluency in the low-level operation, and that some conceptual information embodied in the figures' gestures and actions, the coffin, the corpse, were processed also with high fluency in the high-level operation. But on the other hand, it can also be said that he had a considerable difficulty to recognize the painting's whole semantic structure supported by the information visible on and in the picture, and also by the underlying information about cultural, historical, or conceptual factors working in it. The Lamentation painting is, foremost, religious one. Its most fundamental semantic values that the supposed author Castiglione and the commissioning Jesuit order would have intended to embody or foreground in the painting were surely spiritual or proselytical: In perceiving a picture depicting one of the central episodes of the Passion, beholders would have been stimulated to meditate on the life of Christ and the Bible, and to experience a feeling of zeal for Christ. This religious intention is not transparent to all beholders to the same degree. It is salient to those who have sufficient conceptual or symbolic access to this underlying semantic layer, whereas it is silent or opaque to those who don't have it, like Hong Taeyong. This eighteenth-century Korean literatus was not habituated to the European Catholic paintings, nor to the Christian doctrines or practices, though he was not totally ignorant of the Western cultures including paintings, sciences, and missionaries. (See Shin, Ik-Cheol [2006], and Baker [1982]) Neither did he possess any knowledge, highly symbolic or simply experience-driven, enough to properly and easily process the picture's intentional information. His semantic exploration of this painting was limited, and his high-level categorization remained incomplete. He

was, however, on the spot, informed by a Chinese man named Wang, probably a simple doorkeeper of the church, that the dead man in the middle of the mournful scene was the «Heavenly Lord». But this simple knowledge did not improve his conceptual processing fluency, nor trigger in his mind a cognitive interest sufficient to reorient his visual attention to the picture. When he perceived it, the «conceptual processing» of high-level was much less fluid than his «perceptual processing» of low-level. This variance of processing fluencies at different levels seems to have made slow down or obstructed the *global* processing operation, and the low processing fluency thus generated would play a role in his anti-hedonic experience.

5. CONCLUSION

The perceptual experience of pictorial realism occurs in a transcultural manner, as illustrated in the eighteenth-century Korean literati's reception of the Western «illusionistic» paintings located in the Beijing's Catholic churches. But it does not imply at all that every beholder has the same experience regardless of cultural particularity. This experience may be differentiated by cultural factors historically derived, and this differentiation would be salient in beholder's affective or emotional reaction triggered by his perceptual-cognitive activities, more than in his perceptual or cognitive abilities themselves. It is demonstrated by conceiving two possible analytical tools that might explain the highly negative affective reaction of Hong Taeyong, elicited by his perception of a Western religious fresco depicting the Lamentation of Christ. The first tool is constructed in terms of conflictual affective states. A multiple and complex conflict between «ideal affects» and «actual affects», simultaneously operating in his visual experience, might immediately elicit an anti-hedonic reaction marking his global affective state. His cultural factors such as rituals, social values, artifacts, educations, are underpinning this affective reaction, by shaping his «ideal affects». It may then be derived that the hedonic valence of

aesthetic experience would be inversely proportional to the degree of conflictuality of these two affective states. When they are highly conflictual, the global hedonic or affective valence would be negative. When they are harmonious or well coordinated, it would be positive. The second tool is constructed in terms of discordant processing fluencies at different levels. Hong Taeyong processed very easily low-level information of the Lamentation painting. He recognized a mournful scene of funerary actions by human figures in intense grief. But he had not sufficient access to properly process its high-level information underpinning its semantic structure relative to the religious intention of its authors. The «conceptual fluency» is relatively low, whereas the «perceptual fluency» is very high. This variance of different processing fluencies would have slowed down his global processing operation. It would affect the global affective state of his visual experience, as the affect is inherent in processing fluency signal.

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