

A moment of truth

For there is 'such cognition independent of all experience and even of all impressions of the sense'¹, could it mean that such cognition does not depend on the continuity of space and time in order to recognize itself, and is not restricted by sensibilities and intuition so that it can always turn all objects to become intuitions?

'A moment of truth' is a series of drawing which takes a point of view that in a dimension there is no determination about all space, time, objects, perceptions and intuitions. Space and time have become independent fragments of instants. In the drawing, they are represented by different appearances of fragmented objects according to the way we perceive their existence in space and time; intuitions take the form of line drawings and plexus of fragments. None of them is dependent on each other in the drawing, and none of such formations represents a necessity for such combinations. The clustered whole instantly removes all empirical concepts carried within the fragments. This establishes an indispensability, in a form of drawing, for our visual sense to experience in a domain where our judgements could be beyond bounds of space, time and our perceptions. Thus it might form a domain where could pertain to the attainment of truth. The connections of these fragments might rely on the supposition that each fragment of objects has acted as an independent intuition. In light of Kant's 'The Transcendental Aesthetic First Section On Space',

All things, as outer intuitions, are next to one another in space.²

No draft and no sketch is used. Spontaneity is employed as a response to intuition which thus itself offers a hint to the presence of intuition. References in this series are to images of nature. When an object is reduced to a fragment, its identity of its whole will also be reduced. The effect of our subjective condition of sensibility towards them would be minimized. The instants of space and time which are in these fragments would be exposed, then intuitions might arise in them.

The synthesis of these fragments could be thought through their identities before and after the fragmentation. Before they are reduced to fragments, the dissonance that exists or arises from these disparate and diverse components of matter could also have established tensions which could cohere themselves as a whole. Giacomo Leopardi wrote,

Nature has many qualities and principles that are at once harmonious and dissonant, rather, that harmonize and that mutually sustain one another by virtue of their contrariety. And one contrary not only does not destroy the theory of another but in fact proves it (Zibaldone, 2046).³

Even though the fragmentation has reduced the effect of perceptions, the simultaneously dissonant and harmonious character of the fragments might be retained, which would also permit bonding for connections besides the supposition that they might act as independent intuitions.

The selection of nature images and their arrangement as fragment-objects are in accordance with many different feelings: awe and contempt; confusion and admiration; dolefulness and

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.136.

² *ibid.*, p.177.

³ 'La natura ha parecchie qualità e principii armonici a un tempo e contrarii, anzi armonizzanti e sostenenti scambievolmente in virtù della loro contrarietà: e l'uno de' contrarii non solo non distrugge la teoria dell'altro, ma anzi la dimostra.' Giacomo Leopardi, Zibaldone, trans. Kathleen Baldwin, Richard Dixon, David Gibbons, Ann Goldstein, Gerard Slowey, Martin Thom, and Pamela Williams, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015, p.896.

cheerfulness. This could lead to bizarre compositions, unappealing to conventional visual appetites. But fulfilling a visual temptation is not considered as an objective. The contradictions of these feelings are not revealed, as the drawings are executed under the same attitude in this meticulous production.

However a harmonized situation does not necessarily imply a predetermined destination for this series of drawing. The manifestation of distinctiveness of individual parts plays an important role in reflecting the tensions which separate and connect themselves as a whole. The result of this amalgamation may not be permanent, or may only last for a short while. This instability could suggest that it might take place at the boundary of existence and non-existence in our world. Italian theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli talks about his view on seeing the world,

So, for the moment we have to stay with the Standard Model. It may not be very elegant, but it works remarkably well at describing the world around us. And who knows? Perhaps on closer inspection it is not the model that lacks elegance. Perhaps it is we who have not yet learnt to look at it from just the right point of view; one which would reveal its hidden simplicity. For now, this is what we know of matter:

A handful of types of elementary particles, which vibrate and fluctuate constantly between existence and non-existence and swarm in space even when it seems that there is nothing there, combine together to infinity like the letters of a cosmic alphabet to tell the immense history of galaxies, of the innumerable starts of sunlight, of mountains, woods and fields of grain, of the smiling faces of the young at parties, and of the night sky studded with stars.⁴

This transient state could have encompassed the totality of the cycle of universe in an inclusive glance. Each drawing in this series can be viewed as an independent transient domain or as the next transient state after its antecedent. Thus there can be an infinite set of different possible drawings in this series.

18th century painter Shen Zongqian 沈宗騫 has this concept, 'opening-closing' (kaihe 開合)⁵, which relies on a pictorial scheme to reflect the progression of time, and thus the cycle of universe. The lower part, or the foreground is considered as the 'opening' where landscape objects are placed 'to produce inexhaustible sensations'⁶. This corresponds to spring when ten thousand beings are born and develop. 'Closing' refers to the upper part which should 'make the painting concrete by forming a whole without excess'⁷. It is comparable with winter 'showing the myriad things in contemplation and repose'⁸.

In contrast to this 'opening-closing' concept, 'a moment of truth' series is not created under a scheme of pictorial organisation. Objects do not get allocated in order to match their attributes and spatial meanings. Attributes (space, time, objects, perceptions and intuitions) are neglected once the objects are clustered together. A sense of a continuing cycle of the universe is created in

⁴ Carlo Rovelli, *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, trans. Simon Carnell and Erica Segre, U.K., Penguin Books, 2016, pp. 35-36.

⁵ Frank Vigneron, *Shen Zongqian, porte-parole de la tradition lettrée au dix-huitième siècle*, Lille, Septentrion, 1998, p.167. The text is from the chapter 'Capturing the Impetus' (取勢) of the treatise *The Study on Painting by Mustard Seed-Boat* (芥舟學畫編).

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

Shen's pictorial scheme, while this series of drawings might draw an attention to a special moment in this cycle.

In addition to the cruel tension between existence and non-existence, 'line drawings' representing emotions in early drawings are incorporated. This sets a contrast to the Chinese literati paintings where literati sentiments can be expressed in the brush-ink through the outlines of nature objects. As they draw trees, rocks, water, and mountains, their sentiments flow together to create an atmosphere of eternity. While in 'a moment of truth', a sense of deconstruction is embraced in order to identify those components in tensions of contrarities.

Recent developments in this series involve the removal of elements of individual distinctiveness. They are replaced by line drawings, where each bit on a line can be seen as 'A Moment of Truth'. Thus a line can contain infinite variation of 'A Moment of Truth'. Continuity and a rhythmic movement suggest a further point of view as in the way of a harmonious whole is seen from higher altitude. Physical and representational contrarities in drawing are considered: wet and dry surfaces, upper and lower sheet of papers, colours, a photographical image taken in a dimension where space and time are continuous and imagination beyond space and time. Hence a sense of physicality can be represented and be placed against abstract ideas of the drawing.