

Typological features of Chinese culture in the Ming Dynasty (1398-1644)

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Abstract

The article deals with the typology of Chinese culture during the Ming Dynasty (1398-1644). Study of the cultural complex of this period is important because Chinese tradition, characterised by cultivation of a symbolic world view, had entered its final stage, but still had not yet been subject to conscious "conservation" by the authorities. In the Ming Dynasty, spiritual and artistic synthesis, cultivated by a symbolic world view, reached perfection but also showed signs of stagnation, which became determinative in the following centuries. The obliteration of symbolic reality and the replacement of a symbolic world view by a naturalistic one characterises the development of Chinese cultural process in the Modern age. This study of symbolic reality is based on functionalistic methodology, which proposes that the roots of symbolism can be found in the premises of human activity, which correspond to the history of sociality as a set of moments of experience. The Universe in the Chinese tradition has organic integrity; a man is equal to the cosmic forces of heaven and earth and occupies a central place among them. Chinese behavioural norms operate according to specific limitations: every deed and action of the individual is evaluated in terms of etiquette and morality. Thus naturalism, vitalism, holism, humanism and ethical imperative form the philosophical and cultural foundations of the Chinese world view. From this it follows that a correlated - rather than a cause-and-effect - principle is typical of Chinese culture, capturing the relationship between phenomena, revealing their likeness or kinship. A condition of attribution to a particular type means belonging to the positive or negative sphere of being (yang-yin), to one or another archetype. From this follows the idea of transformation, providing a basis for further specialisation and complexity within the artistic experience.

Keywords

Artistry, Correlativism, Cultural art, Dong Yue, Symbolism, The Ming Dynasty