

A Functional Study of Chinese and Western Painting in the 13th Century

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Abstract

In the 13th century, China and the West were in different historical periods. The destruction of the Southern Song Dynasty by the Yuan Dynasty in 1279 caused unprecedented difficulties and torture to the intellectuals of the Yuan Dynasty. Therefore, the literati paintings of the Yuan Dynasty mostly conveyed the pain of losing the country and their fate through the use of pen and ink. The rulers also used painting to publicize their power, and more literati hermits made a living by painting. In the West, the Middle Ages were the era of religious rule, and the holy portrait was the representative work of medieval painting. The picture focused on propagating doctrines and symbolizing power. At the same time, painting played a significant role in shaping society and had a profound impact on future generations.

Keywords

Yuan Dynasty; the Middle Ages; painting

1. The function of Chinese painting in the Yuan Dynasty

In a significant role in shaping society and had a profound 1279, the Yuan Dynasty destroyed the Southern Song Dynasty, forming several social stratification, such as Mongolian nobles, local officials of the Han nationality, eunuchs, etc. as the only unified dynasty established by nomadic people in Chinese history, the Mongolian nobles enjoyed the highest status and power, while the Han people were in a relatively low position, making the refugees almost throughout the rule of the imperial dynasty. Research found that the intellectuals of the Yuan Dynasty suffered unprecedented difficulties and torture. The fragmentation of their homes and the pain in their hearts made them restless, sad, and lonely.

1.1. The expression of ambition in the obscure and complex era

Literati painting in the Yuan Dynasty is a world full of metaphors, which is reflected in the pain of losing the country, national governance, the literati's fate, and their acceptance of Buddhism and Taoism at the time of the change of generation. In the

turbulent era of the change of dynasties, the Confucian scholar bu-reaucrats and literati who used to work in the imperial court or local government were carefully reclusive. Even after the restoration of peace, most of them still re-fused to take office under the rule of other nationalities to show loyalty to the Song Dynasty or for different reasons. A scholar-bureaucrat society composed of "hermits" began to take shape. Many intellectuals who once became officials in the Song Dynasty now realize that fame is hopeless, so they turn from officialdom to self-entertainment, thus expressing their resistance and dissatisfaction with the new court.

Zhaocangyun used the line drawing technique to create the painting of Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao entering Tiantai Mountain. This work mainly depicts the legendary story of Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao entering Tiantai Mountain and meeting Fairies in the Han Dynasty. The alienated and uncomfortable mood is the same as that of the adherents of the Song Dynasty under the Mongolian rule. Through the brush, he expressed his fantasy of "fairyland" and ridiculed his inability to change the un-satisfactory reality; Most of the figure painters who worked for the imperial court, such as ho Cheng and Liu Guandao, sang praises for the imperial portraits on the one hand, and on the other hand, like Zhao Mengfu, used mountains and rivers to express their inner pure land. For example, the painting of the water village and the painting of the autumn scenery of magpies and flowers were all written and painted for entertainment, which showed their patriotic feelings in twists and turns. The painting of returning to the village by He Cheng was a long scroll figure painting centered on the theme of Tao Yuanming. Liu Guandao's painting of spending the summer was the unrestrained subject of "spending the summer" ad-vocated by literati of all ages. Huang Gongwang's painting of residence in Fuchun mountain "showed that the word" Mountain Residence "is the symbol of seclusion; In addition, in the painting of Moran by Zheng Sixiao in 1306 at the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty, the Earthless and rooted Moran implied that his family and country no longer existed, and Moran's humble posture symbolized a noble man in the wilderness, and the specific theme of this literary man's work was generally intended to highlight his wisdom, virtue and indifference to worldly achievements and material interests; The reason why Qian Xuan chose the painting of steed bones was the abolition of the imperial examination, which was an expression of underachievement. It can be seen that the metaphor in the literati paintings in the Yuan Dynasty ran through the whole dynasty.

1.2. The political nature of the Yuan Dynasty

The Yuan Dynasty was ruled by the Mongols, whose paintings were often used to show power and status. The works created by court painters for the royal family often have a strong political color, aiming to highlight the majesty and glory of the rulers. In the Yuan Dynasty, painters generally linked the painting style of the Southern Song Dynasty with the decline of politics and the court at that time, and

turned to explore the painting tradition of the Northern Song Dynasty and before. Whether these paintings contained positive implications of supporting imperial power and legitimate rule, or implied negative emotions of criticism and protest, they skillfully used rich visual modifications to guide the viewer to believe in imperial power, to highlight the virtues of the rulers, and the prosperity and development of society. In the early Yuan Dynasty, the "farming and weaving map" funded by the Mongolian rulers not only represents the support for the Han people's agriculture and other traditional industries, but also serves as a tool to consolidate the legitimate ruling position of the Mongols to win the trust and obedience of the Han people. In the era of Emperor Kangxi, the court painter Jiaobingzhen created a series of "Geng Zhi Tu", as well as the engravings widely circulated during the reign of Emperor Qianlong. At this time, the royal family fostered, copied, and spread it to strengthen the imperial power and further consolidate its ruling foundation.

In addition, the painting of two horses by Ren Renfa, a painter of the Yuan Dynasty, shows that the fat horse has "strange skeleton and power", which has "the honor of hating ruminant beans". It refers to a corrupt official with a lot of money in his pocket, and a thin horse "stands up in the wind and frost after eating withered grass". He is loyal to his duties, but is worthless. He refers to honest and clean officials who are weak and exhausted due to administrative tiredness, satirizing corrupt officials, complaining about grievances for those honest and diligent scholars and bureaucrats who are not important, and pointing directly to the problem of corruption in imperial politics.

1.3. Exchangeability and appreciation in social life

Living a semi-reclusive life, Wuzhen is a model of making a living by presenting and exchanging gifts with friends through calligraphy and painting creation. His representative work "The Fisherman Painting" series, therefore, the Yuan Dynasty painting gradually became the object of aesthetic appreciation and collection, and was deeply loved by the scholar-bureaucrat class. By collecting paintings, literati can show their taste and cultural accomplishment. Duanyuming pointed out that in the late Yuan Dynasty, the social moral system tended to disintegrate, and many people of insight chose to resign and retire, waiting for the situation to return to calm. Among them, Wuzhen maintained his life by giving friends calligraphy and painting, and exchanging gifts. His representative work "The Picture of a fisherman" takes "fisherman in the boat" as the theme, showing a variety of variations: the fisherman sleeping in the boat, enjoying the scenery, or singing poems. In one painting, the fisherman sits in the center of the picture and stares at the three slightly sunken peaks in front of him. Behind the mountains are continuous hills shaped like waves. The whole picture is permeated with a sense of indifference and tranquility. Nowadays, Coleger's book "Elegant Debt: Wen Zhengming's Social Art" deeply discusses

how Wen Zhengming constructs his identity and self-consciousness in a variety of activities. At the same time, the book also reevaluates Wen Zhengming's personal life from a new perspective of social interaction, to discover the connotation of human obligations and gift exchange hidden in his paintings.

Based on inheriting the essence of predecessors and peers, the paintings of the Yuan Dynasty formed a unique artistic style. They were brave to innovate while learning the tradition, and contained unique aesthetic significance and aesthetic quality, which made the paintings of the Yuan Dynasty gradually become the objects of aesthetics and collection. Many paintings were regarded as works of art and loved by the literati and officialdom. By collecting paintings, literati can show their taste and accomplishment. These paintings are often given as gifts to others in exchange for political or other support, or as bribes instead of money, which are hung on the wall on specific occasions. Duanyuming pointed out that the loyalty to the monarch and pessimism held by the adherents of the Southern Song Dynasty in the early Yuan Dynasty made them achieve high achievements in literature, and their words and deeds became a model for future generations to follow. Many literati impart knowledge and culture through painting and cultivate the artistic accomplishments of their descendants. The paintings of this period not only have artistic value, but also have important cultural heritage significance.

2. Western painting in the Middle Ages

2.1. The religiousness of the painting theme

"Religion often uses art to make us feel better about the religious truth, or uses images to illustrate the religious truth for imagination. In this case, art is indeed serving a different department." The paintings in the Middle Ages of Europe are an important medium for information dissemination. Most of their paintings are based on religious themes, and most of their works are used to decorate churches, monasteries, or other religious places. The themes of Christ and the Virgin Mary are classic in this period. Altarpieces, murals, and manuscripts often depict Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, and other religious scenes. They are portrayed as holy models and incarnations of human ideals, designed to convey religious beliefs, doctrines, and biblical stories, to guide believers' worship and prayer.

In medieval European paintings, simple lines and exaggerated, flat painted large color blocks were used to create strong contrast effects, depicting biblical stories and rendering a religious atmosphere. For example, the religious theme story painting in the new Saint Apollina temple in Ravenna extols the noble character and life story of saints by introducing the scenes of Christ Jesus' life and suffering in the world, to carry out moral education for believers. In the composition, it mostly adopts a symmetrical pattern to highlight the nave and altar, so that the viewer's line of sight naturally focuses on Jesus and the virgin; Bright white, light yellow and dark olive green are widely used in color to enhance the vitality of the picture; In

character modeling, it focuses on depicting the inner mental state of the characters, and strives to better convey religious information. While paying attention to the formal beauty and religious atmosphere, medieval paintings more deeply capture the expression of the characters to depict piety and reverence for religion. Just as Jesus and the Virgin are often depicted as peaceful and stable images, painters do not want to truly reproduce real images, but use painting language to convey religious stories and religious essence to the believers, to render the sacred sense of religion and achieve the external expression of respect for religious philosophy.

2.2. The symbolic power of the superior

Rulers reflect their power and status through their paintings, especially in the context of the interweaving of church and secular power. The Pope, the king, and the nobility often entrust artists to create portraits and historical scenes to demonstrate their authority and influence. Therefore, the figure of rulers or nobility often appears in the paintings. They are depicted as juxtaposed with saints or gods to demonstrate the sanctity and legitimacy of their power. In the religious drawing theory of the Middle Ages, the size of objects is directly proportional to their importance. The small ball tightly held by the mighty monarch is the image expression of the sanctity of monarchical power. Therefore, the symbolic elements of the widely used crown, scepter, shield, and other items are the symbols of the ruler's power and status. Behind him, castles, palaces, and churches are not only places where rulers live and rule, it is also the object of their power and status. Located in the Basilica of St. Francis in the city of Assisi in central Italy, the most famous fresco in the vast area of the upper and middle churches is the 28 master-pieces about the life of Francis painted by Giotto. These frescoes vividly show the life story and spiritual style of Francis, creating an impressive climax painting, showing the glorious ascension of Francis and the three virtues of poverty, purity, and obedience of Francis. In addition, 13th-century paintings are also used for personal commemoration and expression. Many wealthy priests and nobles would entrust artists to create portraits as symbols of personal identity and status. In addition to emperors or monarchs at the king level, the Duke also liked to add the royal power ball to the portraits. In addition, the paintings on tombstones and monuments are also used to commemorate the deceased and convey their respect.

3. The decoration of the painting itself

Influenced by Christian thought and centered on the Byzantine Empire, medieval art has the characteristics of extensive application of commemorative horizontal decorative plates and mosaic patterns, and then the upsurge of closely combining architectural style and sculpture style has emerged, forming the so-called "Gothic architectural style". Painting has also begun to play an important role in architecture and interior decoration. As an artistic entity, the church, light is an indispensable ele-

ment. Colored glass windows, murals, and decorative illustrations not only play a religious role but also enhance the aesthetic feeling and atmosphere of the space. The use of high-rise minarets, pointed arches, and other elements in the Middle Ages allowed the church to leave a wider range to be embedded in windows, thus forming an open interior space. Colored glass windows painted with biblical stories render light. A strong religious atmosphere. The painted windows of Winchester Cathedral in England are magnificent. There are more colorful painted windows on the north and south sides of the church. The Notre Dame de Paris, which was destroyed in the fire, is one of the best examples of French Gothic architecture. It took the lead in using rib arches, flying columns, huge and colorful rose windows, and rich sculpture decoration. The internal space is open and mysterious. These buildings not only have rich religious and symbolic significance, but also contain unique aesthetic value.

In the 13th century, Chinese and Western Fine Arts played their respective roles under the influence of their respective time backgrounds. At the same time, their own aesthetic and decorative qualities also formed their unique charm under their respective time and space backgrounds, and played a decisive role in the long history, which played an important role in the development of later and even contemporary Chinese and Western fine arts.

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