

Research on the Influence of the Abstract Aesthetic Characteristics of Eastern and Western Paintings on the Development of Chinese Paintings in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Taking the Comparison of Abstract Aesthetic Characteristics Between Zhang Daqian and Picasso's Paintings as an Example

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ABSTRACT

This article takes the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Zhang Daqian and Picasso's paintings as the starting point, and compares the differences in aesthetic categories between Zhang Daqian and Picasso's paintings from their cultural backgrounds, aesthetic psychology, creative techniques and other aspects. Through a comparative research, the influence and role of the blending of Eastern and Western arts on the development of Chinese painting in the second half of the 20th century are further explored, and that painting should be based on inheriting the tradition, seeking breakthroughs, and finding its own artistic language expression way to have more meaning of inheritance is pointed out.

Keywords: Eastern and Western paintings, Abstract aesthetic characteristics, Zhang Daqian, Picasso, Comparison.

1. INTRODUCTION

Zhang Daqian holds an important position in the modern Chinese painting world, and Picasso is also an outstanding figure in the Western modern painting world. A comparative study of the abstract aesthetic characteristics of these two top-level art masters' paintings can bring many inspirations to current artists and can make it possible to further explore the impact and role of the integration of Eastern and Western art on the development path of Chinese painting.

2. THE ABSTRACT AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EASTERN AND WESTERN PAINTINGS

In modern painting art, the concept of abstract originated in the late 19th century, expressing painters' attempts to pursue aesthetic consciousness

in a new way. Although there were various discussions and criticisms during this period, it still gradually formed a theoretical system with a certain aesthetic foundation and became an important language for fine arts representation. The emergence of the concept of abstract as aesthetic characteristics of painting implies the deconstruction and reconstruction of objective objects in painting. In the Modern Chinese Dictionary, abstract refers to "abandoning individual non-essential attributes from many things and extracting common essential attributes, which is a necessary means of forming concepts. It can't be specifically experienced, and is generalized and empty." [1] In the History of Western Painting, the explanation of the abstract aesthetic characteristics of painting is that "Any painting that draws its essence from objective natural images or geometric figures with the creativity and imagination of the author, but only uses lines or colors to form pictures of 'beauty', belongs to

abstract art." [2] Compared to traditional concrete and realistic painting, abstract painting goes beyond the habit of visual perception in art appreciation and is a subject that requires expert explanation. In this art of painting, forms and structures, lines, and colors are nothing and represent nothing, without specific imagery.

The abstract aesthetic characteristics of painting have undergone a gradual development process. In China, during the Qin Dynasty, there was "Yipin Style of Painting" that pursued spiritual expression, emphasizing the need for painters to abandon the secular world, regulate their own aura, and integrate self-reflection with nature. After the Tang Dynasty, the Southern and Northern Painting Schools emerged, and abstract forms of expression that pursued spiritual supremacy were commonly found in the paintings of man-of-letters of Southern Sect. In the Song Dynasty, paintings of man-of-letters were based on the natural detachment spirit of Neo-Confucianism and paid more attention to the image out of images. At the beginning of the 20th century, a large number of Chinese painters went abroad to Europe to explore the combination of Chinese and Western paintings, and some modern painters combined the brush and ink temperament and interest of Chinese paintings with the Western abstract painting elements of point, line and plane, creating Chinese paintings with abstract aesthetic characteristics. In the West, the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Cubism painting emphasizes a special space display, which doesn't stick to the limitations of form and structure, deconstructs and constructs the form and structure again, and attaches importance to *deja vu* of the picture. The abstract aesthetic characteristics of fauvism paintings are the further artistic creation of colors. With the continuous development of abstract aesthetic characteristics in painting, two-dimensional flat structures have become the main form of painting that people draw, and art is gradually moving towards a flat direction. And the early expressionism pushes the abstract aesthetic characteristics of painting to an extreme, expressing the subjective feelings and self feelings of the mind through distortion and abstraction of reality. While the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Eastern and Western paintings are developing forward, they also bring new ideas and vitality to the development of modern Chinese painting.

3. THE DIFFERENCES IN ABSTRACT AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN ZHANG DAQIAN AND PICASSO'S PAINTINGS

The splash-ink and splash-color painting art created by Zhang Daqian in his later period enhances the abstract nature of his works through the use of a large amount of splash-ink and splash-color, forming a non-clear narrative block language of freehand brushwork, with abstract aesthetic characteristics. And Picasso's paintings pursue the two-dimensional flatness of the picture through deconstruction and reconstruction, which also has abstract aesthetic characteristics. Due to the differences in the background, creative psychology, and use techniques of abstract aesthetic characteristics between the East and the West, there are significant differences between the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Zhang Daqian and Picasso's paintings.

3.1 Different Cultural Backgrounds of Producing Abstract Aesthetic Characteristics

As a master of modern Chinese painting, Zhang Daqian had a deep understanding of traditional Chinese aesthetics. His abstract landscape was a truly traditional modern interpretation and traditional Chinese paintings with modern abstract aesthetic characteristics. The formation of abstract aesthetic characteristics in landscape painting was closely related to Zhang Daqian's being influenced by traditional Chinese culture. At the beginning of learning painting, Zhang Daqian first copied and studied Shi Tao's paintings, laying the foundation. Later, he also copied and studied the works of Zhao Mengfu, Li Gonglin, Dong Yuan, Ju Ran, and others, especially delving into Dunhuang murals from the Six Dynasties and Sui and Tang Dynasties. Zhang Daqian was deeply influenced by Shi Tao. Although Shi Tao was a monk, he was still an inheritor of Taoist thought. The Quotations of Shi Tao records: "In ancient times, there were no laws and regulations because people were chaotic and ignorant at that time. When the state of chaos and ignorance dissipated, laws and regulations began to be established... The method of establishing a painting (original mind) is to derive ten thousand laws from the original subject of the mind without a single law, and the laws formed from this are integrated into all laws".[3] This abstract thinking

mode gave great inspiration to Zhang Daqian. In his later years, his splash-ink and splash-color landscape paintings, in terms of pen and ink, lines, and colors and schemes, demonstrated the harmony between man and nature of mind and nature-created environment, reaching the realm of landscape painting where mountains are no longer mountains, and rivers are no longer rivers. At the same time, the formation of abstract aesthetic characteristics in Zhang Daqian's paintings was also deeply influenced by Dunhuang murals. Dunhuang murals attach great importance to the expression of colors. During his copying period, Zhang Daqian extensively used mineral pigments and developed the art of skillfully using mineral blue and mineral green, accumulating the expressive techniques of traditional Chinese painting such as outlining, color filling and ink elaboration for his later abstract painting style of splash-ink and splash-color.

Picasso was often brought to an art museum by his father for cultivation from a young age. His father was passionate about using various methods for painting creation, and Picasso benefited greatly from his father's subtle influence. Any object could be created into a work of art by him. As a Spaniard, Picasso was deeply influenced by Spanish culture, and the spirit of bullfighting in Spain gave him the courage to challenge traditional aesthetic concepts. In 1895, Picasso moved to Barcelona. At that time, Barcelona was filled with a rebellious thinking, and various new cultural trends of thought prevailed, such as symbolism, critical realism, impressionism, etc. These trends of thought deeply affected Picasso. In 1904, Picasso settled in Paris. The fanaticism and passion of Paris sparked Picasso's creative desire. The prevalence of capitalism and the alienation of society and nature led to the alienation of human thinking. In this social reality, Picasso vividly portrayed the "alienated" thinking of society at that time in the form of painting, just as he himself said, "I will always paint for my era". [4] In his paintings, the traditional aesthetic characteristics of the object world have disappeared, replaced by abstract aesthetic characteristics that are anti-traditional and anti-harmonious.

3.2 Different Aesthetic Psychologies for Forming Abstract Aesthetic Characteristics

Creation originates from the expression of inner emotions, and Zhang Daqian's splash-ink and splash-color works also truly reflect his inner world.

The inner nature of mind and cultivation are one of the important reasons for the formation of the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Zhang Daqian's splash-ink and splash-color landscape paintings. The inner nature of mind and cultivation refer to the painter's morality and knowledge, which includes the painter's temperament, hobbies, knowledge reserves, and so on. Zhang Daqian loved life and had strong emotions for every detail of it. He enjoyed various experiences in life and constantly learned from the ancients to enrich his painting skills and knowledge. He always maintained a relaxed and free spirited psychological state, so his paintings also present a graceful and refined aesthetic connotation, which is in line with the aesthetic pursuit of modern people. At the same time, Zhang Daqian had a high level of literary cultivation, and each of his works has inscriptions that blend poetry and painting, complementing each other. It is precisely because of his high literary attainments that his works can break free from vulgarity, wash away flippancy, remove craftsmanship, and sublimate an aesthetic atmosphere that suits both refined and popular tastes. Zhang Daqian's "wild stock and floating clouds like lifestyle and free pursuit of thought" made his life extremely artistic, in order to achieve the state of "mind's traveling with things". Then, he "washed away the dust on the soul", "migrated subjective emotions into objective objects to obtain artistic feelings", and "created the environment based on the mind", so as to create many astonishing artistic works.

And Picasso's aesthetic psychology originated from the Western spiritual tradition. In the 20th century, irrationalism was prevalent in the West. Nietzsche praised the Greek tragic spirit of the combination of Dionysus and Helios, and put forward the slogan "God is dead" to attack rationalism. Picasso began to read Nietzsche's works of irrationalism during the Barcelona period. The history of Western aesthetics believes that "The intoxication of Helios first excites the eyes, thus acquiring the ability to hallucinate... In the state of Dionysus, the entire emotional system is stimulated and excited..." [5] The spirit of Helios, with a restrained and calm attitude, transforms individual appearances into illusions, which is an external manifestation of the spiritual world, while the state of Dionysus is a primitive impulse that surges to its extreme point of self-abandonment, and it is the stimulation and release of emotions at the highest point, intertwined with ecstasy and pain, with its characteristic being drunkenness. Nietzsche's theory

of combining the spirit of Dionysus and the spirit of Helios was integrated in Picasso's heart and intertwined with Picasso's creative passion, allowing Picasso to freely use the spirit of Helios to deconstruct and construct space, and integrate various Dionysus emotions such as wildness, impulse, indulgence, fear, and anger into his works, breaking free from the constraints of traditional aesthetic characteristics, showing a naked subconscious with abstract aesthetic characteristics in painting works with pure spontaneity and unrestrained spirit of freedom.

3.3 Different Creative Techniques for Expressing Abstract Aesthetic Characteristics

Zhang Daqian's splash-ink and splash-color painting was inspired by the Western abstract expressionism art at the early stage of creation. After returning from Europe in 1956, Zhang Daqian changed his previous painting process of first sketching and then coloring. Following his own ideas, he casually sprinkled ink on paper that had been boiled, beaten, or waxed or silk. Then, based on the main outline and basic structure of the ink naturally forming on the paper, he used a pen to guide the ink to naturally dye, forming a large area of abstract ink blocks. Later, he splashed colors on the ink blocks, using the entire splash-color block to determine the overall color tone of the picture, allowing the ink blocks and colors to collide with each other in a natural flow to create brilliant patterns. Next, he created the trend according to the shape, outlining the external contour and trend of the mountain, and then stippled characters in the blank space, adding houses and trees, and using fine brushwork techniques to render cloud and mist. The combination of fine brushwork and freehand brushwork techniques makes this abstract aesthetic characteristic of Chinese painting more meaningful and imaginative, forming a strong visual contrast between nihility and reality, as well as thickness and fineness. In addition, Zhang Daqian's splash-ink and splash-color landscape paintings are also adept at utilizing the magical use of "water" to create rich and meaningful levels of painting through various variations such as concentration, lightness, dryness, and wetness.

Picasso presented multiple abstract aesthetic characteristics with rebellious spirit and deconstructive meaning through the unique creative techniques of Cubism. He abandoned the traditional method of painting from a single perspective point

and observed the objects from multiple angles. He deconstructed and reconstructed the images of objects seen at different time and angles into the painting, replacing the changes in light and shadow in three-dimensional space with blocks composed of straight lines and curves in two-dimensional space. He summarized the three-dimensional space into a two-dimensional plane space, exceeding the limitations of time and space, showing a "dignified overlap, interlocking beauty". By dissecting the structure of objective objects and applying subjective concepts, Picasso connected the spatial and temporal aspects of painting creation with the static and abstract aspects of the picture, disrupting all principles of reproducibility and abandoning realistic elements, forming his unique semioticness and symbolism in painting.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF THE ABSTRACT AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ZHANG DAQIAN AND PICASSO'S PAINTINGS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE PAINTINGS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Abstract aesthetic characteristics, as an opportunity for painting, have become a means of showcasing the emotional state of the soul, using lines and colors to push modern fine arts into a richer spiritual world. The abstract aesthetic characteristics of Zhang Daqian and Picasso's paintings both express their perceptions of the human spiritual world. They advocate for fully venting their spiritual consciousness and constructing their own spiritual space through their own paintings. Their paintings all break through and innovate traditional painting techniques. In their paintings, the external natural images are weakened, and the pictures have a more rhythmic, noble, and balanced abstract aesthetic sense, bringing new feelings to the aesthetic receiver in theory, form, and environment. The abstract aesthetic characteristics of their paintings have also had a significant impact on the development path of Chinese painting.

4.1 The Influence of Abstract Aesthetic Characteristics of Zhang Daqian's Splash-ink and Splash-color Paintings on the Development of Chinese Paintings

The abstract aesthetic characteristics of Zhang Daqian's paintings are discovered and expressed through his own aesthetic taste on the basis of traditional Chinese painting, with distinct Chinese national characteristics. The splash-color expression form he created has a significant impact on later generations and attracts the admiration of a large number of scholars and painters. From the perspective of the artistic concept of "harmony between man and nature", painting is neither a complete depiction of external and objective things, nor a speculative expression of internal emotions and ideas. "Specific and complete images are rare in Mr. Zhang Daqian's splash-color landscape paintings." [6] His paintings are not limited to the complete expression of objective things, nor are they completely influenced by emotions. The subject and object are integrated, presenting a life state of "harmony between man and nature". In terms of technical structure, Zhang Daqian's splash-ink landscape painting adopts traditional splash-ink techniques and blue and green colors, using mineral blue and mineral green on a large scale. Splash-color converts ink into water color on the basis of splash-ink, and before it dries up, Zhang Daqian guides his brushwork under the influence of water, blending blue and green to form a rich texture effect, breaking the boundary between traditional ink freehand brushwork and fine brushwork heavy-color painting, and integrating the freehand brushwork and fine brushwork techniques of Chinese painting. The combination of freehand brushwork and fine brushwork results in a more concise brushstroke, a more symbolic and formal design, and a highly integrated, flat, and abstract visual structure. From the perspective of color application, Zhang Daqian's splash-ink and splash-color landscape paintings, starting from the needs of the painter's emotional expression, sweep away the decoloration and black and white colors of paintings of man-of-letters over the centuries, greatly promoting the charm of colors, injecting subjective imagery from the height of aesthetic psychological pleasure, making color expression more emotional and poetic.

Zhang Daqian creates a new painting form that combines freehand brushwork and fine brushwork, weakening the use of lines in splash-color

landscape paintings, breaking the traditional color filling method, enriching the expression techniques of Chinese painting, further promoting the planar modeling of traditional Chinese imagery, and creating a new era in the history of Chinese landscape painting.

4.2 The Influence of the Abstract Aesthetic Characteristics of Picasso's Cubism Paintings on the Development of Chinese Paintings

Picasso said, "A good painting should have the sharpness of a blade".[7] Picasso's paintings transcend plasticism of the reality through deconstruction and construction, showcasing his profound soul and revealing the full energy of life by examining the essence of all things on earth. This idealized painting form has changed the development process of Western plastic arts, and has had a profound impact on the development of modern art like a sharp blade. The combination of essence extracted from the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Picasso's paintings with traditional Chinese painting elements and the breaking of traditional Chinese painting concepts are of great significance for the integration of Chinese painting with the world.

In terms of painting style, the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Picasso's paintings are unique among various artistic styles. Personalized expression and bright color scheme, in line with the popular art and atmosphere of expressing self vitality and individuality in current society, have allowed many Chinese painters to recreate based on Picasso's artistic style, subtly influencing the development of Chinese painting art.

In terms of rich presentation methods, combining the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Picasso's paintings with elements of medieval traditional painting increases the sense of space, movement, and rhythm in Chinese painting. Featuring bold lines and contours, gorgeous and harmonious color schemes, and full composition, combined with the creative concept of "ethnic, abstract, and traditional", it embodies the organic combination of modernity and tradition in painting, which not only meets the aesthetic needs of modern young people but also enriches the expressive forms of painting.

In terms of integration and innovation, modern Chinese painting has absorbed abstract elements from Picasso's paintings in cultural theory research,

traditional element focus, cultural connotation transformation, and practical verification and dissemination. For example, Tianjin New-year Pictures in Yangliuqing use design elements such as New-year dolls, peaches, and flowers as the main visual language, and use thick and thin lines to demonstrate the connection between new and old folk culture. The characteristic of cross-domain integration and innovation between tradition and abstraction has broken the inherent stereotype of New-year Pictures in Yangliuqing.

Chinese painting also has a sharp blade, but it doesn't give people the fatal shock like Picasso's paintings, but slowly permeates people's hearts in warmth like water. For modern Chinese painting, the surreal abstract aesthetic characteristics in Picasso's paintings, as well as his continuous exploration and innovative spirit in artistic creation, are highly worthy of reference and imitation.

5. CONCLUSION

The concept of modern fine arts is constantly changing, with more emphasis on pursuing "meaningful forms" than visual beauty and techniques. The audience has gone beyond the stage of viewing the work while feeling and understanding it, and is more concerned with the inner voice flowing between thinking and consciousness than the completeness of the modelling. Although the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Zhang Daqian and Picasso's paintings are based on different cultural backgrounds, aesthetic psychology and creative techniques, they both lived in the era of the blending of Eastern and Western cultures, and were both affected by the common influence of Eastern and Western cultures, constantly seeking breakthroughs and innovations on the basis of inheriting and absorbing the essence of traditional art. Through the comparison of the abstract aesthetic characteristics of Zhang Daqian and Picasso's paintings, it brings many inspirations: in the process of artistic creation, the most important thing is inheritance and innovation. Creators should absorb the essence of Eastern and Western cultures, seek breakthroughs on the basis of inheriting the tradition, and finally find their own artistic language expression. Artistic works should have both originality and nationality. Art can have no national boundaries, but can't be without characteristics.

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