

On the Concrete and Abstract in Chinese Painting based on the Theory of Northern and Southern Buddhism

Sihan Zhao*

School of Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Bengbu 233000, China

*390097223@qq.com

Abstract

Under the influence of Zen's "Southern and northward spread", Dong Qichang of the Ming Dynasty put forward the "theory of northern and Southern Buddhism", which divided the main painters in history since the Tang Dynasty into northern meticulous painting and southern literati painting. Chinese meticulous painting has the beauty of concrete and literati painting has the beauty of freehand and abstract. Both of them are reasonable forms of artistic expression. Two different forms of expression can bring aesthetic experience to the viewer and create different emotions. They both have incomparable aesthetic value.

Keywords

Literati Painting; Artistic Conception; Claborate-style Painting.

1. Introduction

China's long-standing historical tradition has created a unique development of Chinese painting. Mr. Qi Baishi once said that the beauty of painting lies in its similarity and dissimilarity. The ancient Chinese divided Chinese painting into two schools. Influenced by the saying of Buddhism and Zen "spreading from south to North" in the middle of the Tang Dynasty, it can be roughly divided into the concrete expression of northern meticulous painting and the abstract expression of Southern literati painting. The emergence of the theory of northern and southern sects has its special historical background. The concept of the theory of northern and southern sects has been praised and criticized by scholars and scholars in history.

2. The Formation of the Theory of Northern and Southern Buddhism

Dong Qichang, a famous calligrapher and painter and connoisseur in the Ming Dynasty, first put forward the distribution of "North South sect". Referring to the saying of "Southern and northward spread" of Buddhist Zen, the South sect is called "epiphany school", and the opposite north sect is called "progressive school". Dong Qichang once wrote in his essays on painting Zen room that "Zen has two sects, North and south, which began to be divided in the Tang Dynasty...". The representatives of the "gradual cultivation school" of the northern sect include Li sixun and his son, Zhao Gan to Ma yuanxia GUI, and the representatives of the "epiphany school" of the Southern Sect began to use rice paper and changed their pens from Wang Mojie to the famous Jing Hao, Guan Tong, two meters and four yuan families. Dong Qichang divided the main painters in history since the Tang Dynasty into beizong meticulous painting and Nanzong literati painting, which also reflects the development trend of "literati painting" in the development process of Chinese painting. The southern school pays attention to artistic conception and charm while the northern school pays attention to rigorous form. Ancient Chinese traditional aesthetics and scholars are deeply influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Zen. Tranquility and a paradise have always been the highest ideal pursuit of ancient Chinese literati. Therefore, the Southern School of painting often does not accept the Northern School

of painting and believes that literati painting is the mainstream pursuit. Therefore, Dong Qichang said, "this school of painting is not easy to learn.[1]

In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, the society was turbulent, and the literati who were born in the imperial examination were also suffering a lot if they wanted to change the current situation. The literati gradually shifted their focus from national ambition to Lyric through painting. He began to tend to express his resentment towards society with pen and ink, and expressed the pursuit of peace in his paintings. As a result, scholars and scholars respected the Nanzong School of painting. Due to the long-term political orientation, Chinese literati painting was regarded as the mainstream of Chinese painting for a long time, even in modern times. Dong Qichang was not the first to put forward this view. Du Qiong, a master of the Ming Dynasty, summarized Wang Wei's landscape painting as early as 200 years ago in Dong Qichang, and Li sixun's green landscape painting. In addition, Zheng Yuanxun and Zhan Jingfeng of the Ming Dynasty have summarized the theory of "North South sect". On the basis of his predecessors, Dong Qichang wrote in the book "the purpose of Rongtai special collection painting": "Zen has two sects: the north and the south, which began in the Tang Dynasty, and the north and the south are also in the Tang Dynasty. However, his people are not North and South ears, but the north is small." In fact, the sentence "people are not North and South ears" is also based, which can be traced back to Yang Wanli's "poetry Jiangxi is also non-human Jiangxi is also" in the Southern Song Dynasty. It can be concluded that Dong Qichang's division of Chinese painting into North and south is not without historical basis.[2]

The emergence of the concept of "North South sect" is influenced by the theory and practice of poetry, calligraphy and painting of the times and its Buddhist Zen. The influence on future generations can not be ignored. For a long time, even in today's era, it has affected the aesthetic style and creative direction of Chinese painting.

3. Figurative and Abstract in Painting

The concrete in painting refers to the imitation and reproduction of the real scenery. The abstraction in painting tends to the emotional expression when the painter creates. Figurative and abstract are just one of many expressive techniques in painting. Herbert reed once said, "in one special case, we should call it 'realism' without thinking; in another case, it is another style. Although we are not very sure, we might as well call it 'abstractionism'.". Contrary to the concrete, abstraction does not express the scientific and natural concrete things, but conveys the artist's concept and spirit. There is a secret relationship between abstractionism and philosophy. By observing the structure, lines and color contrast of the picture, the viewer can feel the expression required by the painter, which leads to the resonance of the viewer.

There is no standard line between concrete and abstract concepts. To some extent, abstraction comes from concrete. They can also find an interdependent relationship in their works. They exist at the same time, and painters can use them to express the beauty of creation. Abstraction often depends on concrete, and concrete also covers abstraction. The overall composition, expression form and artistic conception of Chinese painting are integrated in abstraction and concretion, or creation and experience.[3]

Looking at the history of Western painting, before the end of the 19th century, the West maintained the concept of "art imitates nature". Leonardo da Vinci, a famous painting master in the Renaissance, said that painting is "a unique imitation of all things in nature", and France reached the concrete peak in the 19th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, abstractionism emerged in various art schools of western modern painting, and painters began to fall into abstract creation. Matisse believed that "accurate description is not equal to reality", and Impressionist master Picasso also proposed that "I do not imitate nature, I face nature and make use of nature". The reason why Chinese painting is unique is that it has not been a period

of pure concrete and pure abstraction. Chinese painting is both abstract and concrete. It has its own unique development. It skillfully uses concrete and abstract to form its own unique national style.

4. The Concrete and Abstract of Chinese Painting Seen in the Theory of Northern and Southern Buddhism

Chinese painting with unique national style can now be divided into three painting branches: landscape painting, flower and bird painting and figure painting, each of which can be subdivided into freehand painting and meticulous painting. Chinese painting has a rich tradition and history, and its works are also full of national spirit. Looking at western painting, we can know that Western painting includes oil painting, watercolor and sculpture. It has experienced representational and abstract expression techniques and developed into modern realism and abstraction.

Gu Kaizhi, a painter in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, said that "writing God in form" corresponds to the "vivid charm" in the "six methods" of Sheik in Southern Qi. Meticulous painting in Chinese painting is the beauty of concrete images. The charm of a work of art lies in the rich emotional experience it brings to the viewer after it is embodied. This emotional experience not only includes the pen and ink scene of the work itself, but also contains the real emotion of the painter. Therefore, the embodiment of Chinese painting is the integration of painting and painter noumenon. Meticulous painting first brings us a concrete feeling, while freehand landscape tends to be abstract. Meticulous painting highlights its integrity and authenticity as a whole. For example, the famous painter of the Tang Dynasty Zhou Fang's painting of beautiful women with hairpin flowers and Zhang Xuan's painting of Mrs. Guo's spring outing all came from the real world. They not only have strong realism, but also leave precious materials and references for our contemporary historical research.

The position of artistic conception in Chinese classical aesthetic tradition can be said to be incomparable. Chinese traditional poetry, painting and writing all pay great attention to the creation of artistic conception. Artistic conception refers to a kind of artistic work, which can be described as the work reaching the realm of blending feelings and scenes. The artistic conception not only comes from the "emotion" that the artist's subjective emotion wants to express, but also from the "environment" created after the sublimation of objective reality. The integration and unity of "emotion" and "environment" forms the realm of emotion and environment in the environment. Artistic conception is an aesthetic ideal realm formed by the Chinese nation in long-term artistic practice. Abstract is a manifestation of the artistic conception of Chinese painting. In a sense, Buddhism and Zen have a direct and significant impact on the formation of the category of Chinese artistic conception. Zong Bing of the Southern Dynasty mentioned in his book preface to landscape painting that when creating, he should "focus on the eyes", and the creator must integrate his subjective emotion in order to create a realm of "ten thousand interests and their thoughts". In the Northern Song Dynasty, painting academies liked to test painters with proposition painting creation. In fact, it was depicted by creating an abstract expression of artistic conception. For example, in the sentence "no one crosses the wild water, and the lonely boat crosses the sun", in the work, there is only a boatman lying in the bow of the boat, holding a flute, the artistic conception is self-evident, and the picture is all out. "Ancient Tibetan temple in the mountains", there is no temple at all. Only a little monk carrying water at the foot of the mountain is enough. Zhang Yanyuan, a minister and painting theorist of the Tang Dynasty, mentioned in the records of famous paintings of past dynasties that "if you get its shape, you will lose its charm, and if you have its color, you will lose its brushwork"; Su Shi's "on painting is similar in shape, but adjacent to

children"; Then to modern Fu Baoshi and Huang Binhong, we can feel the infinite artistic charm of Chinese painting from abstraction.

Chinese painting often uses to create artistic conception, a highly abstract expression, so that the viewer can obtain meaningful and memorable artistic experience, and make the work itself produce its unique aesthetic value and artistic charm.

Chinese painting pays attention to the use of pen and ink interest, which is the result of the integration of concrete and abstract. Whether it is the famous painter Zhang Zhen of the Tang Dynasty's "external teacher nature, the source of the heart in China" or the modern painting master Qi Baishi's "beauty lies between similarity and dissimilarity" is to show that there is no need to pursue whether it is concrete or abstract. In the face of the current state of Chinese painting, a hundred flowers bloom, which has caused the experimental characteristics of painting forms, making both abstract and concrete forms of artistic expression have new possibilities. For Chinese painting, whether abstract art or concrete art, it is not only a reasonable art form, but also our precious spiritual wealth. Two different forms of expression can bring aesthetic experience to the viewer and create different emotions. They both have incomparable aesthetic value.

References

- [1] Yu Jianhua: Research on traditional Chinese painting [M], Guangxi: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2005.
- [2] Xu Wandu: on the influence of Dong Qichang's "North South sect" theory on the creation of Chinese landscape painting [J], popular literature and art, No. 8, 2020.
- [3] Chen Congjing: abstraction and representativeness of Chinese painting [J] Grand View of art, issue 2, 2012.