

The Habitat of the Heart

The Spirit of Art from the Medieval Paintings

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Abstract—Painting art is the presentation of emotional art, and emotional expression in painting art is closely related to the specific cultural background of the times. The medieval painting art originated from Christianity, reflecting the emotional orientation of religious mysticism. The emotional expression of painting art shows the characteristics of changing from objective mentality to subjective mentality, from God to man. In the new era, new media art develops, and people's lifestyle and values have also undergone tremendous changes, which will affect the presentation and emotional expression of painting art.

Keywords—medieval; painting art; spiritual characteristics; Christianity

I. INTRODUCTION

"To understand the art of any period, the key is to understand the spiritual history of this period", which is a unique method for the study of art history for Dvorak, a rising star of Vienna art school. It is this concept that inspired the author's interest in the study of medieval art history. Author's understanding of medieval art history has been stuck in the "traditional" and "dull" adjectives and slide church. As with most of art lovers, the author deliberately ignored the existence of beauty in medieval paintings until the appearance of the word "spirit". It likes a spring breeze and makes the originally barren medieval impression green. The medieval Christian painting art directly reflects this spirit, and it is a communication medium between believers and God in different forms and at different times.

II. THE DEFINITION OF MEDIEVAL ART HISTORY AND CHRISTIAN AESTHETICS

A. *The Medieval Art History*

As for the history of medieval art, the history of Western art did not give a special explanation. It is generally believed that it was a period from the year of 476 when the Empire of Western Rome collapsed to the start of the Renaissance in fifteenth Century. No matter what kind of definition is adopted, the art of European Middle Ages generally belongs to Christian art, and its occurrence and development are closely linked with the history and culture of Christianity.

B. *Christian Aesthetics*

Christianity was born in the first century. Her predecessor is Judaism. Roman rulers' cruel slavery made Jews in Palestinians and Asia Minor unhappy all day long. In desperation, their beliefs support them. They believed a savior would be born to save them, Jesus born, and Christianity emerges. In the early period, Christianity was illegal. It was not developed and spread widely and completely. Christian could only hold ceremony in private house. Later, to escape the search of the ruler, they moved to underground tombs. Christians were against cremation and insisted on burial. These tombs became the spiritual Eden of Christian in a direct sense after death. In the channel of tomb is an arch hall where there are a lot of murals. The contents of the murals generally come from the Bible. They mostly use the expressive methods of implication and symbolization. There are a few descriptions. Story plots and environment are omitted. There are a lot of preaching and abstract elements in the picture.

This interpretation emphasizing the absolute spirit runs counter to the modeling art principles of ancient Greece and Rome. Volume and space relations Greek care completely disappear. In Christian aesthetics, image is simplified to untrue plane. The disappearance of the sense of volume drove the lack of perspective. Early Christianity seemed to have returned to the ancient view of things used in primitive art: the composition of layers of overlapping pictures. The aesthetic system avoids space and displays subverted perspective, which seeks the unity of thought and thing by the simple intuition of the mind rather than the rational analysis. Felix, the earliest Latin Christian apologist, once stated: "we must fear God from heart", so Christians at that time could seek the divine from the heaven. It is not likely to seek true worship from image and sculpture. We shouldn't understand the religious sentiment as negation and abandon of art. Christian believers were against the spiritualism and religious worship of idols. Their opposition is such a kind of artistic conception: a piece of art should be objective description of Greek lofty beauty; it depends on not a human subjectivity but pure sensory experience. However, their arts are more touching. We didn't see their passion, the highlight and attractive expression force of Greek art from the murals they painted painstakingly. Each mural seems to be a pure and simple painting of a child. But if we try to experience the true mind of the artisans in my painting, a faith will arise spontaneously.

III. BYZANTINE ART AND ROMAN ART

In 330, Emperor Constantine established Constantinople in the eastern Byzantine. His original purpose was to adjust the economic place through moving capital. But this measure inadvertently became a behavior of dividing country. The gradual disintegration of the Rome Empire led to the division of Christianity into two denominations: the western Catholicism centered in Rome and the orthodox church dominated by Byzantium, including Eastern European countries and even Russia.

A. Byzantine Art

Byzantine art created a system with its "Eastern" decoration and abstraction, separating from the Western European art. When the Western art was submerged in the wars of barbarian conquest, the Byzantine art has maintained its own independent style in the development for about 1000 years. Luckily, Greco-Roman mosaic art has been preserved completely. We can find traces of mosaic technology from walls and decoration of churches, patio and indoor decoration of buildings at that time.

1) Mosaic technology

The mosaic is a design tiled by stained glass stone. In order to show clear characters to viewers, colors of image is not to imitate the colors of the object. It uses colors fitting to the content of theme. For example, Jesus Christ was generally with the red, blue or gold background. Mary was completely decorated with blue. Saints were with yellow or light blue. St Paul was with purple red. In the image of most characters and scenes, it used complementary or similar colors to contrast or reflect the effect of overall image. Byzantine mosaics mostly use the golden background and cover the golden stone with a slice of glass to create a shimmering visual effect. This unreal effect is an ideal medium for Byzantine art to free them from all naturalistic illusions, thereby implying the existence of the supernatural. Byzantine art pursues the supernatural realm of zero, which attempts to bring the viewers into a transcendental realm.

B. Roman Art

Opposite to the Oriental Byzantine, the Western was invaded by the nomadic. But the invasion of the barbarians has injected fresh blood to the Western civilization. The Germans quickly embraced Christianity. They mixed the Christian content and folk fantasy, and made a strange image. For example, many natural gods became demon, the symbol of the gospel and the magic image of ancient worship. These fantasy color images gave art a strong expressive force. Roman art had a great influence on the medieval art of Europe, and it was gradually developed throughout Europe.

1) Roman codex painting

Roman codex painting is a typical art in the Roman art period, and occupies an important position. Codex painting was a private art at the time, service to the Pope, emperors, archbishops, abbots and priests. It extensively reflected a lot of contents, including both the religion and the earthly things. The theme of public art could be displayed according to the requirement of a person and expressed in the painting.

IV. THE RISE OF GOTHIC ART

In the second half of the twelfth Century, the Roman art gradually faded, and Gothic art came into being. This style first originated in France and was popular in Europe from thirteen to fifteenth Century. The rise of Gothic architecture increased the area of window, and the internal church should be with supernatural lighting effect, so that the color glass mosaic has a great development and become an indispensable part of the gothic art.

A. Glass mosaic Murals

The casting process of stained glass is complicated. It is formed by adding many chemical agents in glass smelting furnace, such as manganese and cobalt. It could gives glass a transparent effect with light and shadow. Different materials could show different colors. Colorful glass mosaics are in various forms, and different forms of windows have different stories and themes. It includes portraits of biblical figures and stories, saints, bishops, kings and other patrons.

The description directly coming from the brain and book seems to have unreal effect, because this description of art characteristics only runs counter to the beautiful heart and the yearning for God in the medieval period. I was really touched by them. Imagine if you stand before a Gothic church: it is a famous medieval church and it doesn't matter if you know its name or not. I'm sure you will feel as if touching the sky. The sharp-angled arch door, ribbed arch and arch buttress are amazing. Your longings and reverence will well up in your heart. A large area of glass window and colors give a gorgeous and mysterious sense, as if God is here. The cover of a light may let you feel a sense of happiness. You may be enchanted in it. Then you may wonder how to knock these pieces of glass on the building and who design them. The craftsmen may take several years or even decades of efforts to complete a stained glass window. They did not leave their names. What kind of a perseverance supporting them to complete this arduous task.

View medieval art works in each period. It is not difficult to find that figures in murals, codex painting and mosaic murals, seemed to cut off all relationship with life. So, its image inevitably is dull and rigid. The rigidity doesn't come from motionless of idols, like the early Egyptian figures. Contrary to the turmoil environment at that time, the static medieval figures can remind us of the sublime original power. Body and actions of Christian figures have controlled by spiritual elements, so it is obviously redundant to shape body image in the eyes of the people at that time. This new art concept and form were not abandoned by the trend of aesthetics as time goes by. It has been endowed with a spiritual creation providing infinite inspirations for the art creation of later generations.

A series of painters represented by Greco, in the latter half of the sixteenth Century, found their creative ideas in medieval art. The beauty of the soul emphasized in Greco's painting comes from the idea that the emotion completely conquers the world, which is the heritage of the medieval art. In his "St. Joseph", Christ is surrounded by a group of angels. It is not a ordinary portrait like lots of painters painted before or after him. A carpenter with no beautiful appearance became great under the guidance of God. What people see is a unrealistic and pure

idea, which will not remind people of nature but lead to an inner experience of life. It can wake up a harmony and perfect emotion of painters. Greco represents the summit of the European art movement the goal of which is to replace the materiality of Renaissance with a pure spirit. As for modern and post-modern art, the artist's thinking will unify human activities to an anti-materialism era of high spirit. Can we think that the medieval spiritual prophecy is before its times?

V. CONCLUSION

In modern society, most people are impetuous, especially for college students about to enter the society in the belief-lacking Asian country. The spiritual emptiness and increasingly clear social reality fades once pure will. This is not a fuss about an imaginary illness or a subjective idealism, but a need of a spiritual Eden to nourish the pure heart and achieve the sublimation of the spirit.

REFERENCES

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