

The "Similarities and Differences" between Art Nouveau Movement and Modernist Design from the Perspective of Democratization of Design

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Abstract: Democratization of design is an important criterion to distinguish traditional design from modern design. Art nouveau movement and modernist design are the inevitable outcome of the democratization process in the history of western modern design. It is of great historical and practical significance to examine their "similarities and differences" from the perspective of history and design democratization. In terms of the contribution to human beings, the humanistic care of design and the advancement of design, the two have the same original intention and different results, but achieve the "harmony but difference" of Confucius.

1. Introduction

As for the "Similarities", there is a saying in zhang jing's ode on astrologers in the wei, jin and six dynasties: "although the three poles are different, the wonderful origin is the same". Han yu, a great scholar in the tang dynasty, also wrote Fu reading in the south of city, "At the very beginning, everyone's ability to learn is the same, there is no wisdom; Because some people cannot diligently study, then steps the different gate path". In these two sentences, "similarities" means "same, no difference". As for "difference", Liu xie, a famous literary critic in Chinese history, said in his book of the literary mind and the carving of dragons: "If different things are learned and done, different words are spoken." In the five dynasties, Wei zhuang, the prime minister of the former shu state, also wrote in the a poem of walking on the guan river road: "No matter walk a thousand miles, the road is always there, but ten years passed, all old friends have gone." "Difference" means "different, unlike." Both art nouveau movement and modernist design belong to the design movement in the history of western modern design. However, there are many similarities between these two different design movements. This paper attempts to analyze their "similarities and differences" from the perspective of design democratization.

2. Interpretation of the concept of "design democratization"

The connotation of "design democratization" including two levels: one is "people-oriented", and the other is "design for the public".

In Chinese traditional creational thought, people have paid attention to the subjectivity of human beings in the relationship between human beings and things. For example, Xunzi, the thinker in the pre-qin period, put forward the creation thought [1] of "Emphasis on people, making use of tools". It is pointed out that "in the process of creation, we should attach importance to the essence of life and pursue a realm of self-environment and self-use of things". He also stressed that "any skill is the service of people as the subject, and the relationship between people and things should be handled with a positive attitude". There is a saying [2] in the book of "shang shu": "This world is the matrix that gave birth to us, but in this world human is the only one that has a soul." The explanation of "people" in the book of "Analytical Dictionary of Characters" is as follows [3]: "All living creatures between heaven and earth are formed by the gas of heaven and earth, But man is the noblest." The great ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras famously said [4], "man is the measure of all things." Danish furniture designer kai boesen said [5]: "what we make should be living with a heart beating in it... They should be humanized, alive and warm." The famous American designer Pross also said

[6]: "people always think that design has three dimensions: aesthetics, technology and economy, but the more important is the fourth dimension -- humanity." Therefore, the core of design is human, which should be based on human scale or needs. "People-oriented" is one of the cores of the democratization of design.

Furthermore, the democratization of design is also manifested as "design for the public". Democracy is a set of principles and ways to protect human freedom. It is the institutionalized expression of freedom. Hang Jian said that the democratic design is "of the people, by the people and for the people" [7]. Therefore, the basic way to realize the democratization of design is to insist on the equality of everyone in design, advocate serving the laboring masses and create beautiful design for all the people.

3. Art nouveau movement and modernist design

"Art nouveau movement" is a design movement produced and developed in Europe and America during the period from the end of 19th century to the beginning of 20th century. It was centered in Belgium and France, gradually spread to a dozen of euramerican countries, such as Germany, Netherlands, Spain, England, the United States, and so on. The movement content involves construction, furniture, products, jewelry, clothing, graphic design, book illustrations, and many other design fields, the duration is more than ten years. It is the most important and quite influential international design movement in western design history, and has unique historical significance in European social and cultural development.

Modernist design is a new trend of design thought emerging simultaneously in Europe and America in the 1920s after the art nouveau movement. It gradually became mature in the Germany Bauhaus period, and reached the peak in the United States of 1960s and 1970s after world war II. It also gradually formed another new internationalist design movement in all over the world. The new design movement after the 1960s mainly was a response to modernism including negation attempts and reinterpretation. In other words, the modernist design is the core of modern design in the 20th century, which has profound impacts on people's ideas and lifestyles. Meantime, it also has decisive impacts on all kinds of art and design activities in the whole 20th century.

4. "Similarities and differences" between art nouveau movement and modernist design from the perspective of "design democratization"

4.1 Similarities

Democratization of design is an important criterion to distinguish traditional design from modern design. In the 17-18th century, European design activity is based on the craft design, design and production are not isolated, and designer and maker are often the same one. To a large extent, artists and designers are mainly dependent on funding from the church and aristocracy, the support strength of design movement mainly is the kingship, the church and the new assets, and design service object only is power, wealth and the upper class. Therefore, in order to cater to the aesthetic taste of the upper class society and meet their luxury requirements, the pretentious, artificial atmosphere became the main characteristics of the design of this period. The palace of Versailles of Louis XIV of France is a typical representative work of the 18th century baroque style. It has geometrically symmetrical structure, symbolic layout, extremely luxurious and tedious decoration, is full of obvious class characteristics, and is inevitably endowed obvious religious and court nature. Such designs are not available to the general public. An American critic, Robert Hughes said: [8] "In this day and age, there is no design for the poor." Mr. Wang shouzhi, a famous design theorist in China, said that "the human design civilization history of near 5,000 years is actually a history of design for dignitary.

However, since the outbreak of the industrial revolution in 1750, the industrial society has changed a lot from technologies and production modes to people's behavior mode and ideology compared with the handicraft era. Designers with a sense of social responsibility began to reflect

and criticize the idea of designing for the powerful. They hoped that the products they designed could be affordable for most people, and proposed firstly that design should be shifted to serve the general public. John Ruskin, the leader of the arts and crafts movement, said: "in the past, fine arts were controlled by the egoism of the aristocracy, whose scope is never expanded, never to make the masses happy or to benefit them. Please stop making textiles to please the duchess. You should make them for the workers in the countryside." Morris also declared: "all the creation of beauty is art, and art belongs to the people."

Therefore, the art nouveau movement and modernist design are the modern design movement rising in western countries in the second half of the 19th century, but both emphasize the democratization of design and have strong democratic and socialist characteristics.

4.2 Differences

The art nouveau movement and modernist design are related to the progressive significance of "design democratization", and their similarities exist only in the ideological level and the change of design concepts. They have the same original intention and goal, and both hope that design can serve the public. However, in the process of realizing democratization, the adopted methods, the direction of design exploration, the degree and depth of experiments, and even the experimental results are different.

Although the designers of the art nouveau movement advocated that design should serve the public, they still stood on the opposite side of industrialization, held a negative attitude towards industrialization, and still insisted on the production mode of handicraft. In order to solve the problem of crude design of industrial products, they put forward the slogan of "learning from nature" [9], and declared clearly [10] that "Our design roots exist deep in the forest, beside the spring water, and above the moss." In this movement, natural elements became the basis of all designs. Stylist did not only directly use the animal and plant figure in nature to undertake the design, but also made abstraction, refinement, and generalization from the flowers and trees to undertake adornment with a kind of luxuriant curve. Such as the "swan" wallpaper designed by Crane, the jewelry box designed by Wolff, the Paris metro station designed by Hecht gemard, Victor Horta hotel, Mila apartment designed by Anthony gaudy, and so on. These arts and crafts designs, elegant and luxuriant adornment, deluxe and luxury design can not be enjoyed by the masses and still serve for a few privileged socialites. Therefore, in essence, art nouveau movement still belongs to the category of traditional design, and the contradiction between its thoughts and behaviors makes it fail to truly realize the democratization of design.

However, modernist design is different. It is a democratization design movement from theory to practice, truly serves the public, and is democratic, socialist and idealistic. For example, the representative works of modernism, such as German pavilion of Barcelona world expo, lanchamp church, electric kettle of AEG Company, red, yellow and blue chair and attacking white army with red wedge, etc., completely abandon the tedious decoration and adopt the concise geometric shape. From a practical point of view, they emphasize the functionality of design, conform to the characteristics of industrialization, adapt to the mass and standardized production, and also greatly reduce the cost of products. Obviously, they are the basic guarantee to achieve the democratization of design. Corbusier, a master of modernist design, said [11]: "a house is a living machine." Louis Sullivan, a representative of the Chicago school of architecture in the United States, also made a famous point [12]: "Form follows function." He believed that "decoration is a spiritual luxury, not a necessity, and the design form should be determined by the function it has. Therefore, the design that attaches importance to practical functions is in line with the needs of the public, and it can meet the needs of the majority of people. Furthermore, the new industrialized materials, such as steel, cement and glass, adopted in the modernist design can make the modern design abandon the traditional architectural structure and the traditional design method, and further create a new style that is both concise and practical, ultimately realize the democratization of design.

5. Conclusion

Confucius, founder of the Confucian school, has a famous saying: "the gentleman is harmonious but different, while the villain is the same but not at peace." [13] The correct way to do is to refuse to the agreement without giving serious thought, and to come to an understanding in the arguments. In ancient China, "harmony without uniformity" was also an important principle to deal with the relationship between different schools of academic thought and different cultures. And it was the driving force, approach and basic law for the development of academic culture. Today, we stand on the historical high point, look at the new art movement and democratization modernistic design from a design perspective. Although they have a same purpose and goal, but they realize the Confucius view point of "harmony without uniformity" by considering the contribution to the human, the humanistic care and progressiveness of design.

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