



The Great Wave Off Kanagawa, Hokusai



Old Trees, Level Distance, Guo Xi

Introduction

- Poems are written as a form opinion and evaluation
- However, poems reveal that Chinese art landscape suggests intimacy and is specific with intention while Japanese art landscape opens to many interpretations
- For instance, the pair of trees in Old Trees mirror the comparison between the wave and Mount Fuji in Hokusai's work
- Hokusai "seduces the viewer by theatricalizing the wave" and when looked upon was "linked to Mount Fuji" and "gave it a heroic persona imbued with a sense of both strength and menace."
- The pair of birds flying where "one bird flies behind, the other leads" emphasizes the "hierarchical position" when one "assumes the role of leader, the other that of follower"
- Here, we see a similar pattern where there is use of comparison
- Although both paintings use elements of comparison in the painting which induces meaning, the functions of both paintings are very different. [Thesis Statement]

Plan for the essay

1. Introduction
2. Similar – use of comparison but Difference in meaning
 - We start to see the similar use of comparison in each painting that induces meanings
 - Pair of birds, travellers, fishermen, trees, woodcutter – old trees (VE)
 - Can be looked as a follower and a leader, close relationship between patron and artist
 - Woodcutter and fishermen – Wen Yanbo desire for eremitic existence
 - Battered old tree – refusal to die and his high moral principles that remain constant
 - Bird that seeks to return home – long for retirement
 - The other can be read as an equivalent of Guo Xi – curved over not only in old age and exhaustion but bowing deeply in respect to Wen Yanbo

- Comparison between the wave and Mount Fuji – Hokusai's
 - The sheer scale of the wave compared to Mount Fuji (VE)
 - "How Hokusai used comparison to show the heroic persona of the wave (strength and menace) and how it shared in both the national significance and the reassuring presence of Mount Fuji"
 - Explain the many interpretations of the wave
3. Difference in functions, materials and production (Old Trees)
 - To show appreciation, respect, acknowledgement to his patron
 - Intimate – ink on small handscroll
 4. Difference in functions, materials and production (The Great Wave Off Kanagawa)
 - No clear function although it could represent Hokusai's desire for immortality
 - Bringing to representation a fashionable new empiricism
 - Could be mass produced – woodblock prints
 - Economic
5. Conclusion

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