

works to adapt to changing social and cultural needs and bloom unique brilliance on the world art stage.

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THE AESTHETIC CORE OF "WENQI" IN CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY

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The concept of "literary style" has long been central to Chinese calligraphy aesthetics, embodying the interplay between textual content, artistic expression, and cultural philosophy. Rooted in classical literary criticism and Confucian-Taoist thought, wenqi transcends mere technical skill to represent the spiritual vitality and rhythmic harmony inherent in brushwork. This study investigates the historical evolution, aesthetic principles, and contemporary reinterpretations of wenqi in calligraphy, aiming to bridge classical theory with modern artistic practices. Through interdisciplinary analysis of canonical texts, masterworks, and contemporary innovations, this research seeks to redefine wenqi as a dynamic framework for understanding calligraphy's role in cultural identity and global art discourse.

The term wenqi, literally "literary breath" or "cultural vitality," originated in classical Chinese literary criticism (e.g., Cao Pi's Discourse on Literature) and was later adopted into calligraphy theory during the Tang and Song dynasties. It encapsulates the fusion of textual meaning, rhythmic brushstrokes, and the artist's moral cultivation. For instance, Sun Guoting's Treatise on Calligraphy (7th century) emphasizes wenqi as the "spiritual resonance" that elevates script beyond formalism [1]. In contemporary practice, wenqi remains a contested yet indispensable criterion for evaluating calligraphic excellence, reflecting tensions between tradition and modernity.

The research included the following aspects:

1. To trace the conceptual evolution of wenqi from literary theory to calligraphy aesthetics.
2. To analyze how wenqi manifests in iconic works (e.g., Wang Xizhi's Preface to the Orchid Pavilion and Yan Zhenqing's stele inscriptions).
3. To explore its adaptation in modern calligraphy, including digital and cross-cultural contexts.

Material and Methods. In the exploration of this research, the materials draw from a comprehensive range of sources. Classical texts, including "Shu Pu", "Yi Zhou Shu", and Ming-Qing calligraphy critiques, form the theoretical bedrock, offering valuable insights into the historical development of calligraphic concepts and aesthetic standards. Masterworks, such as the renowned Tang-Song period scrolls, Qing dynasty rubbings that preserve traditional calligraphic essence, and 20th-century innovative creations, vividly represent the evolution of calligraphic styles and techniques, embodying the cultural and aesthetic values of different eras. Contemporary case studies, like Xu Bing's revolutionary Square Word Calligraphy and digital calligraphy installations that integrate modern technology, showcase the emerging trends and possibilities in the field.

Regarding the research methodology, a Historical-Genetic Analysis is applied to map the evolution of the "wenqi" concept from the Han Dynasty to the Digital Age, elucidating how it has been shaped by historical, cultural, and social factors. A Formal-Stylistic Analysis is utilized to meticulously analyze brushstroke techniques, compositional balance, and ink dynamics in selected works, uncovering their unique aesthetic qualities. Semiotic Interpretation is employed to reveal the cultural symbols, such as the yin-yang balance, hidden within "wenqi" expressions. Finally, a Comparative Study is conducted to contrast "wenqi" with Western aesthetics, like "sprezzatura" in Renaissance art, facilitating a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences between Eastern and Western aesthetic ideals in the context of calligraphic art.

Findings and their Discussion. This research anticipates uncovering significant insights into the concept of wenqi in calligraphy, exploring its philosophical roots, practical manifestations, and modern reinterpretations. Wenqi is deeply rooted in Chinese philosophy, being a synthesis of Confucian and Taoist ideas. In Zhao Mengfu's works, wenqi embodies the integration of Confucian ren (仁) emphasizing moral virtue and humanity, and Taoist ziran (自然) representing naturalness and spontaneity, as his calligraphy combines traditional form rigor with spontaneity, reflecting these ideals [2]. The concept of qi (气) is crucial in wenqi philosophy; as in Fu Shan's "script as personhood" theory [3], it links calligraphic rhythm to the cosmic order, suggesting calligraphic energy and rhythm connect to the universal order. In practical calligraphic expression, wenqi has diverse forms. Wang Duo's wild cursive script (狂草) is a prime example, with its seemingly chaotic yet harmonious composition, bold brushstrokes, and intricate rhythm powerfully expressing wenqi. Lin Fengmian's modernist experiments, balancing ink wash fluidity with structural precision [4], re-interpret traditional wenqi in a modern context, showing its adaptability. In the modern era, technological advancements and cross-cultural exchanges have led to new interpretations of wenqi. Digital calligraphy tools like VR brushwork redefine wenqi through interactivity and algorithmic randomness, blurring the boundaries between artist, work, and viewer. There's also a resonance between wenqi and Abstract Expressionism's "gestural energy" as seen in Franz Kline's works [5], indicating wenqi has universal elements, opening new ways for its exploration and evolution. Overall, these findings will deepen our understanding of wenqi and its potential for development and cross-cultural exchange in the contemporary art world.

Conclusion. This study posits that wenqi serves not only as a historical aesthetic standard but also as a living philosophy adaptable to technological and cultural shifts. By recontextualizing wenqi within global art narratives, calligraphy can transcend its ethnocentric confines and contribute to universal discourses on creativity and humanistic expression. Future research will focus on developing a wenqi-based evaluation framework for digital art preservation.

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