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On the Aesthetic Core and Contemporary Translation of Ceramic Art Creation from the Perspective of China's Traditional View of Nature

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Abstract: The traditional view of nature in China is the unity of man and nature, and Taoism is natural. It is deeply rooted in the philosophy system of Confucianism, Taoism and Zen, and has always led the aesthetic orientation of ceramic art creation for a long time. Because of the natural properties of soil, fire, and water, ceramic art has become the material carrier that can best represent traditional natural aesthetics. In this paper, the aesthetic core of the traditional view of nature in ceramic creation is comprehensively sorted out, and the aesthetic logic of traditional ceramic art is analyzed from multiple dimensions. Combined with the realistic dilemma of contemporary ceramic art creation, this paper explores the contemporary translation path of traditional natural aesthetics from symbol reproduction to spiritual internalization, in order to provide a reference for contemporary ceramic art to tap the roots of local culture and build a creative language with oriental characteristics.

Keywords: Traditional view of nature; Ceramic art creation; Aesthetic core; Realistic dilemma; Aesthetic logic; Contemporary translation

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1. Introduction

Everything is born in the earth, and fire becomes porcelain rhyme. Ceramic art originated from nature since its birth. Traditional pottery has never been a simple craft creation, but a spiritual practice of the ancients to understand nature, from the rough pottery made by prehistoric ancestors to the pursuit of azure in Song porcelain. Every artifact contains the unique thinking of Chinese people on the relationship between man and nature. Today, foreign artistic ideas have impacted the creative context of local ceramic art, and many ceramic works are in an embarrassing situation. They either misappropriate traditional natural symbols, making them superficial and archaic, or follow Western art forms, losing the spiritual core of the traditional view of nature. Deeply excavating the aesthetic value of the traditional view of nature has become a realistic proposition

faced by contemporary ceramic artists. Based on this, this paper analyzes the aesthetic core of traditional ceramic art from the ideological origin of the traditional view of nature, and explores the translation methods based on contemporary ceramic art creation practices, so that the ceramic art aesthetics rooted in the oriental natural thought can regain its vitality in the modern context.

2. The ideological origin of China's traditional view of nature and the natural fit of ceramic art

China's traditional view of nature is a value system formed by the long-term blending of Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen. Its core is to promote the harmonious coexistence between man and nature, and it advocates that man, as a part of nature, should respect the nature of all things, conform to the laws of heaven and earth, and realize the spiritual connection between man and nature in creation and aesthetics. Different from the Western view that nature is the objective object of transformation and conquest, China's traditional thought always holds that nature is not only the material environment, but also the source of spiritual value.

Taoism advocates the law of nature, while Laozi puts forward that man should follow the law of earth, the law of heaven, the law of heaven and the law of nature, emphasizing that everything has its own natural laws, and creation should not be deliberately carved and violated. Zhuangzi further put forward that heaven and earth coexist with me, and all things are one with me, advocating spiritual freedom in nature and advocating simplicity and genuine beauty. The Confucian view of nature has a humanistic temperature. Confucius put forward that the wise enjoy water and the benevolent enjoy Leshan, reflecting the natural scenery and people's moral character, and advocating that people's ethical feelings should be integrated on the basis of conforming to nature. The Zen thought, on the other hand, looks at everything in the world from the perspective of emptiness and fate, attaches importance to the instantaneous natural vitality, accepts the incomplete and accidental natural state, and forms the aesthetic orientation of being quiet and distant [1]. Ceramic art itself is formed by three natural elements: soil, water, and fire, which is highly consistent with the traditional view of nature. The mud is taken from the wilderness, and the water harmonizes the mud. The fire gives the final shape to the utensils, and the whole production process always follows the objective laws of natural materials. In the whole process of blank making, glaze application, and kiln entry, craftsmen should not only show their own skills, but also respect the natural characteristics of mud shrinkage, glaze flow, and kiln fire changes. No matter how skilled the craftsman is, he can't completely control all the changes in the kiln fire. The accidental effects such as kiln changes and ash falling are all traces left by natural forces. This cooperation between man and nature is precisely the most intuitive material practice of the traditional view of nature, and it also makes ceramic art the most suitable art medium for bearing the oriental natural aesthetics. The ancient craftsmen were not constrained by materials, but followed the trend after they were familiar with the laws of nature, and poured their own feelings about the universe into the soil, eventually forming an aesthetic system that belonged to China's ceramics.

3. The aesthetic core of ceramic art creation under the traditional view of nature

3.1. The authenticity of physical properties

On the basis of the traditional view of nature, the aesthetic expression in ceramic art is the authenticity of physical properties, the core of which is to respect the natural properties of materials, not to cover up the true

texture of clay and glaze, and to pursue simplicity and naturalness. Taoism's ingenious thinking points out that the highest craft is not to show off skills and carving, but to let the materials release their true beauty. Painted pottery in the Neolithic Age, although painted with decorative patterns, still retains the crude and simple fetal quality of clay [2]. In the Song Dynasty, it was the peak of true aesthetics. The azure glaze of the Ru kiln was moist and subtle, and the glaze color imitated the natural color of a clear sky after rain. In the Ge kiln, the split cracks produced during firing were transformed from process defects into unique aesthetics, and craftsmen no longer deliberately avoided the natural defects during firing, thinking that this trace from heaven and earth was far better than manual carving. Traditional porcelain making attaches great importance to the true colors of clay, and purple sand pottery is the most representative. The purple clay itself is warm and rich in color, and craftsmen rarely apply heavy colored glaze, retaining the natural texture of sand particles. The pot body is simple and concise, imitating the natural shape and pursuing a simple and quiet texture. This aesthetic core conveys the value that beauty lies not in gorgeous and complicated decorations, but in the innate true nature of things. All the creations of craftsmen are aimed at releasing the hidden natural beauty of the materials themselves.

3.2. Virtual and real artistic conception

We say that the physical property is really the material aesthetic of the surface layer of ceramic art, while the artistic conception of the virtual and the real highlights the spiritual aesthetic of the middle layer. The traditional view of nature in China does not stick to the external form of things, but pays more attention to the vitality behind the images, and pays attention to the combination of reality and falsehood, with tangible objects and boundless artistic conception. Traditional ceramic art rarely reproduces nature realistically, but condenses the spiritual temperament of mountains and rivers, vegetation, rain, and snow, and creates a distant imaginative space through modeling, glaze color, and ornamentation. In particular, Song porcelain, in its overall aesthetic, best reflects the artistic conception of reality. Celadon is like water and white porcelain is like snow, leaving a lot of blankness in simplicity, and there is no complicated decoration. However, the viewer can think of lakes, mountains, and clear clouds from the glaze color. The change of Jun porcelain kiln is a typical aesthetic of reality. The glaze color freely flows and smudges at high temperatures, forming unpredictable pictures such as clouds and mountains, and there is no fixed figurative outline, giving viewers more room to interpret and realize the aesthetic effect outside the image [3]. During the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties, a large number of landscape porcelain decorated with flowers and birds appeared, and it was not simply to describe the shapes of flowers and birds. The painting of rocks and the lines of water waves all drew lessons from the freehand thinking of traditional Chinese painting, and the decoration was only the "real" carrier, and the natural flowing vitality was the virtual artistic conception. Therefore, the object is no longer just a container, but a tiny natural world, which allows the viewer to wander in the square-inch porcelain surface and realize the endless charm of nature. The artistic conception aesthetics transforms nature from realistic objective scenery into a spiritual picture of people, and realizes the blending of natural images and subjective feelings [4].

3.3. Symbiosis between things and self

Symbiosis between things and self is the highest level of ceramic aesthetics in the traditional view of nature, and it is also the embodiment of the idea of harmony between man and nature. According to

the traditional thinking of creation, people, utensils, and nature are not independent of each other. The craftsman will carefully cast ceramic works, and the utensils bear the natural charm. The viewer will finally reflect on himself in the utensils, forming a spiritual resonance of the integration of things and self [5]. Confucianism compares natural scenery with human virtue, and craftsmen shape plum, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum patterns, relying on the natural properties of vegetation to reflect the gentleman's character; After the literati participated in the aesthetics of purple sand and porcelain, they even integrated their personal life feelings into ceramic art creation. In traditional ceramic art, people seek reconciliation with nature, and the creators regard themselves as a part of nature, expose themselves to nature to describe nature, and inject their understanding of the four seasons, mountains, and vegetation into their creation. The aesthetic experience brought by a good porcelain is not only beautiful glaze color and exquisite decoration, but also a peaceful and relaxed state of mind that blends with heaven and earth. As a medium, artifacts open the boundary between people's inner world and external nature, which is precisely the aesthetic core of the traditional view of nature that everything and I are one [6]. Looking at the development history of traditional ceramic art, whether it's folk daily-use coarse pottery or exquisite display porcelain in official kilns, the logic of respecting materials, creating artistic conception, and placing emotion runs through its aesthetic bottom, which also provides a profound cultural foundation for the translation of contemporary ceramic art.

4. The realistic dilemma of translating the traditional view of nature in contemporary ceramic art creation

4.1. Lack of spiritual core

Today, when some ceramic works want to reflect the natural theme, most of them directly copy the classic patterns such as traditional landscapes, flowers and birds, and moire patterns, simply draw the patterns on the surface of new-style utensils, or simply imitate the shape of natural scenery to make bionic modeling [7]. These creations only reproduce the external appearance of nature, but do not deeply understand the core idea of the ancients to conform to the nature of materials and to be realistic and enjoyable. It seems that the works have a traditional appearance, but there is no corresponding spiritual connotation, so it is easy to fall into a homogeneous creative routine.

4.2. The original natural texture of lost materials

Today, there are more and more varieties of colored glazes and molding techniques, which broaden the thinking and space for ceramic art creation. However, some creators blindly pursue visual impact, forcibly change the characteristics of mud and glaze itself in order to make novel effects, and use a large number of chemical colored glazes to pile up strong colors and deliberately carve exaggerated textures. In this kind of creation, soil is only the raw material for shaping, and it is no longer the carrier with its own natural attributes, which is slightly different from the traditional idea of conforming to physical properties. Overweight artificial traces cover up the sense of nature of the mud fire kiln transformation, and the works lack the rustic and natural atmosphere. There are also creators who blindly compete for the difficulty of craftsmanship, focusing on dazzling skills, but ignoring the expression of natural thoughts.

4.3. Traditional narrative divorced from modern life

In ancient times, people lived in nature every day. Farming and sightseeing were the norm, and their

understanding of nature came from real daily life. But at present, most people have lived in cities for a long time, and the ways to contact nature are completely different. If the creator still copies the routine of ancient literati sending their feelings to the mountains and rivers, and breaks away from the real life experience of modern people, the works will be easy to be empty.

5. Contemporary translation path of ceramic art creation from the perspective of traditional view of nature.

5.1. Regression material ontology

The material is the origin of ceramic art and the most direct carrier of natural spirit. In translating the traditional view of nature, the core of contemporary ceramic art is to return to the soil itself, re-examine the natural attributes of mud, water, and fire, respect the nature of materials in the creative process, and accept the natural traces accidentally generated in the technological process, rather than forcibly controlling all the details [8]. The creator should establish a correct view of nature, try to reduce artificial over-modification, and plan the form of works according to the thickness, color, and shrinkage characteristics of different clay materials. For example, coarse clay can retain the coarse texture of sandy particles and reflect the boundless texture of Shan Ye. The delicate porcelain clay echoes the softness of water, highlighting the characteristics of warmth and permeability. Take the initiative to take advantage of the random effects in the firing process, such as kiln changes, ash falling, fire marks, etc., and incorporate the natural power of fire into the creation, continuing the creative wisdom of the traditional symbiosis of nature and human ingenuity. It is worth noting that returning to physical properties does not mean being conservative, and contemporary creators can expand material experiments and innovate moderately on the premise of conforming to the nature of clay. Mud of different thicknesses can be twisted to simulate the natural texture of earth strata and water flow lines. Or control the flow speed of glaze and combine the current aesthetics to develop a warm and soft new glaze color. When touching and appreciating the works, the core of physical aesthetics is to let the audience intuitively feel the protoplasm of the soil from the earth, awaken people's perception of the true beauty of nature from the material level, and jump out of the creative misunderstanding that only picture decoration is valued.

5.2. Reconstruction of image narrative

The traditional expression of nature in ceramic art focuses on freehand brushwork and artistic conception. Contemporary translation should move beyond the reproduction of concrete symbols, abstract and refine natural images, and shift from describing natural shapes to capturing natural inner charm [9]. Creators don't have to stick to the classic themes of traditional landscapes, flowers, and birds. They can start with the natural things that can be perceived at the moment: the dynamics of wind passing through branches and leaves, the wet land after rain, the rhythm of wave stacking, the traces of rock weathering, and all kinds of natural signs, all of which show different charm. We can extract the lines, textures, and rhythms of natural things from these scenes and transform the realistic natural feelings into the modeling and texture language of ceramic art. Besides, in the artistic conception, we should continue the oriental thinking of the coexistence of reality and reality, and make good use of the blank and simple spatial relationship. Leave empty space in utensils and pottery installations, instead of filling up the picture and guiding the viewer to produce infinite associations with limited forms. A lot of young ceramists have made this a practice. They no longer

completely shape the realistic outline of the mountains, but stack the ups and downs of the mountains with twisted mud pieces, express the reality of the clouds with the depth of glaze color, peel off the details of objects, and retain the charm of natural mountains and rivers. It is the key to image translation that both form and spirit should be combined. Grasping the core of traditional natural aesthetics that emphasizes artistic conception and charm, the traditional freehand thinking should be transformed into the abstract visual language of modern ceramic art, which not only retains the oriental aesthetic characteristics, but also has the form freshness of contemporary art.

5.3. docking realistic context

The traditional view of nature is people's perception of life in the face of nature. When the environment of the times changes, people's mood and life experience change accordingly, and the emotional expression of ceramic art creation also needs to fit the current reality [10]. The relationship between modern people and nature has long been different from that in ancient times. Urban people often live in buildings, and they have a longing for nature, relaxation, and a sense of original life. At the same time, the whole society has begun to pay attention to the practical issues of ecological protection and the sustainable symbiosis between man and nature. These are unique natural experiences in contemporary times and can become a new starting point for ceramic art creation. Nature is the essence of the traditional view of nature. When the environment changes, people's mood and life experience change, and the emotional expression of ceramic art creation also needs to fit the current reality [10]. When ceramic works become the carrier of modern people's true and natural understanding, the traditional idea of harmony between man and nature is no longer a distant classical philosophy, but can be expressed by the spirit of empathy of contemporary audiences. At the same time, contemporary pottery can broaden the creative space, no longer limited to small desk objects, and can create large-scale pottery installations in combination with the space environment, combining the natural texture of the soil with the public space, so that the audience can immerse themselves in the power of the soil, build a medium for dialogue between man and nature in the modern space, and expand the expression boundary of the traditional view of nature.

6. Conclusion

The traditional view of nature has been developed over thousands of years, containing the spiritual core of harmonious coexistence between man and nature and building a complete aesthetic system for ceramic art creation. Taking the authenticity of clay materials as the base, the artistic conception of virtual reality as the skeleton, and the spiritual pursuit of unity of things and self as the core, it is an extremely precious local cultural resource of contemporary ceramic art. At present, with the interweaving of multiple ideological trends, ceramic art creation needs to break the dilemma of homogenization and deeply understand the core spirit of respecting physical properties and caring for the world in the traditional view of nature. From returning to the true nature of materials, to reconstructing natural images in a freehand manner, and then to completing emotional translation based on contemporary real life, it is a feasible path for traditional natural aesthetics to land in contemporary ceramic art. Artists should take root in the traditional natural spirit, face up to people's living experience, transform natural wisdom into contemporary ceramic language, continuously respond to modern people's spiritual demands, and push China's contemporary ceramic art out of its own cultural context.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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