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A Study on Chinese Folk Paper-Cutting Modeling in the Field of Primitive Thinking

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Abstract

Artistic creation is a cognitive endeavor, with primitive art embodying early human thought and forming the foundation of folk art. Chinese folk art, particularly paper-cutting, preserves primitive art's essence due to cultural originality and regional distinctiveness. This paper examines how primitive thinking shapes Chinese folk paper-cutting. The "direct image" aspect of primitive thinking enables transcendent imagery, inspired by nature and employing techniques like transparent perspective and decorative symbolism. The "interosmotic" characteristic fosters creative overlap in designs, seen in composite shapes like the "Chickenhead Fish," and imbues works with anthropomorphic traits. The belief that "all things have spirituality" integrates themes of worship and totemic symbolism, such as the "Tree of Life" and dragon patterns, reflecting cosmic harmony. Additionally, the yin-yang-inspired "binary opposites" principle creates balance and dynamism through contrasting techniques like "yin shear" and "yang shear." Lastly, "group consciousness" is evident in recurring cultural motifs like suns and fish, symbolizing collective memory while enabling creative variation. Primitive thinking reveals the vitality and cultural depth of Chinese folk paper-cutting.

Keywords: primitive art and Chinese paper cutting, paper cutting modeling, comparative research

1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese folk art has an inextricable relationship with primitive thinking and primitive art, and it can even be said that Chinese aesthetic thinking is a natural extension and development of primitive thinking. The starting point of the creative study of Chinese folk art modeling is the way of thinking of folk artists. Folk art has developed and passed down in a relatively closed environment for thousands of years, and primitive thinking still dominates the production group of folk art workers in the countryside, and in turn, folk art still reflects primitive thinking in its modeling. Chinese folk paper-cutting is a kind of folk art, which is the foundation of folk art, some people call it "sketch in folk art", which embodies the concept of Chinese folk art in a comprehensive way and releases its unique artistic charm. This paper explores the originality of Chinese folk paper-cutting art from the perspective of primitive thinking.

2. EXPERIMENTS

Below, let's explore some of the main theories of primitive thinking in academic history : by Edward Burnett Tylor. *Primitive Culture* (1832-1917) expounds animism. Tylor argues that the most striking feature of primitive man is animism as a universal belief in souls and elves. Arguing "animism" as the central idea of primitive thought and primitive natural religion, the complete system consists of two main tenets: all living souls can survive the destruction of the body; all gods rise from the elves themselves. by James George Frazer. (1854-1941) "*Golden Branch*" uses the historical comparison method to comb the primitive beliefs of the peoples of the world, and obtains the theory that the ancient concept of primitive man is the concept of witchcraft. The laws of similarity and contact and sympathetic witchcraft are also proposed, explaining that primitive characters can interact with each other over time and over distance through some mysterious sense. The relationship between natural phenomena develops between man and nature in his heart. Natural phenomena become psychological phenomena, and finally psychological phenomena rise to social convention, and the characteristic of primitive thinking is natural socialization. by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. (1857-1939), "*Intellectual Function in Low Society*", "*Primitive Man's Mind*", and "*Primitive Man's Soul*" series of studies have formed a systematic theory about "primitive thinking". It is affirmed that civilized and primitive people share the same cognitive functions, but their structural types of thinking differ, with particular emphasis on the distinctive "concrete thinking" characteristic of primitive people. He emphasized "collective representation" and "primitive logical thinking." by Claude Lévi-Strauss(1908-2009) used philosophy to study primitive culture and primitive thinking, and to enter the subconscious realm of primitive culture. In "*Wild Thinking*", he pointed out that the logic of primitive thinking is a "concrete logic", that is, the logic of "operating through actions and images". He dissected "wild thinking" in a set of logical terms, abandoning the term "primitive thinking." He believes that primitive and scientific thinking have a synchronous relationship, in which the two survive and produce each other on the same intellectual plane, and are parallel and juxtaposed. by Carl Gustav Jung(1875-1961) discovered an important component of human primitive psychology - the collective unconscious. Jung developed Freud's theory of the unconscious, developed the individual unconscious into the human unconscious, and proposed the concept of the collective unconscious (also known as the collective unconscious). He believes that the subconscious is divided into two kinds, one is the individual unconscious and the other is the collective unconscious. The so-called collective unconscious refers to the part of the human mind that exists in the depths of everyone's heart, and the collective unconscious is the psychological and historical experience of human ancestors obtained through heredity. The individual unconscious comes from the individual experience, and the collective unconscious comes from the experience of human history. Individual unconsciousness varies with each individual, while collective unconsciousness is common to all human beings. It is interracial and interracial [6].

3. RESULTS

Throughout the above scholars' theory, the author summarizes the characteristics of primitive thinking in five aspects: direct image, permeability, animism, binomial opposition and group consciousness representation.

In fact, the direct image of primitive thinking includes two aspects: direct image and image. Direct perception is "direct perception." Primitive people perceive all things not by logical thinking but by direct thinking, by direct contact and interaction with things and phenomena that are closely related to their lives. The concept of chaos is formed in the brain, the subject and the object have not been completely clearly separated, because primitive people always know things with intuitive feelings, and things through intuitive feelings are inevitably linked to familiar things in daily life.

The so-called interosmotic nature of primitive thinking, Levi-Bureur believes that in primitive thinking, consciousness and existence, subject and object are permeated, integrated and interacted with each other. Primitive man foresees the possibility of another phenomenon from one phenomenon, and deduces the possible outcome of another from the outcome of one thing. Although there may be no intrinsic connection between these two phenomena and two things, there may be no causal relationship at all. In primitive thinking, primitive people can often produce causal associations in phenomena that are very far apart in space and time, where we do not even think of looking for causes and roots. Primitive thinking recognizes another phenomenon from

one phenomenon, deduces the possibility of another thing from one thing, and applies the way of thinking to each other. In primitive people's thinking, things can be transferred by proximity, similarity, transfer, contact.

The spirituality of primitive thinking consists of two aspects, one is that any living thing in the world has a spirit or soul, the soul can be separated from the body and does not die with the death of the body. The second is that the souls themselves can rise to the ranks of the mighty gods.

With regard to the binomial opposition of primitive thinking, cultural anthropologist Levi Strauss put forward the theory of "conceptual schematics" by "structural analysis". This schematic system can act as an intermediary for consciousness and vice versa. In his view, the binomial antagonism is the "eternal structure of the mind," the initial fact of an uncertain mode of existence that precedes society, mental activity, and even organisms—as an intermediary between man and the world, culture, and nature.

The group consciousness representation of primitive thinking manifests itself in the collective activities of primitive people forming collective representative thinking containing value identification, common belief and group worship. Collective representation is a collective consensus that can be remembered, passed on and passed on through image consciousness activities. It can not only integrate individual consciousness and emotions, but also strengthen collective excitement and maintain collective activities.

4. DISCUSSION

Any artistic activity, in the sense of origin, can be said to be an activity of thinking and understanding. Primitive art embodies and contains the cognitive achievements of early human thought. The source and matrix of folk art is primitive art.

Therefore, in the creative thinking can be interpreted and verified. Since the primitive society has gone through a long period of time, the originality of culture and the closed nature of many regions make the Chinese folk art built on the primitive art still retain a lot of primitive art characteristics. Chinese folk paper-cutting art is an important representative of Chinese folk art, so summarizing the influence of original thinking on Chinese folk paper-cutting modeling can further explore the vitality of Chinese folk paper-cutting art.

4.1 The influence of the original thinking "direct image" on the Chinese folk paper-cutting modeling.

The direct sensibility and image characteristics of the original thinking are also reflected in the modeling of Chinese paper-cutting art. In the process of their creation, the external image of objective things is no longer a simulation reference, but only an evoked body of creative association, but a medium of expression through objects. The image is another existence that transcends the subjective and objective existence.

Folk paper-cut artists and primitive humans have similar ways of thinking, not abstract conceptuality, but concrete image, and have a rich collection of "image" in their simple inner world. Therefore, the basis of paper-cut image modeling is "image", and the creators create by "image", and the richness of "image" of Chinese folk paper-cut is difficult to enumerate. There are three categories of natural objects, such as lotus, peony, chrysanthemum, pomegranate, grape and peach, as well as birds, beasts, fish and insects such as horses and cows and monkeys. Chinese folk paper-cut artists have long used direct image modeling thinking to create art.[9]

The concept of image modeling from the original visual aesthetic mode has the following characteristics: to highlight the psychological space-time. Papercut artists are not limited by the time and space of the moment, nor by the perspective of the point of view, Shaanxi Yijun area shows the ordinary life of the countryside, such as "horse grazing", "donkey pulling mill", "grazing map". The second is transparent perspective, and the objects depicted by folk paper cutting overlap or overlap back and forth, without blocking each other. For example, if a pregnant cow sees a baby in her belly, she can see the inside of the house through the walls of the house. The third is to replace the natural form with meaningful decoration. Many of the decorative patterns in the art of paper-cutting are decorative and structural. Shandong high-density paper-cut "Downhill Tiger"

uses flower patterns to express the texture of the tiger's fur, and uses crescent patterns to express the muscle tension of the tiger's upright legs.

Folk paper-cut artists create a wonderful and honest art world beyond the archetypes of natural life through the use of direct and figurative modeling thinking.

4.2 The influence of the original thinking "interosmotic" characteristics on the Chinese folk paper-cutting modeling.

There are two types of permeation modeling in Chinese paper cutting: image permeation modeling and spirit permeation modeling.

Image permeation modeling is through the original thought of the principle of "interpermeability", where the subjective creativity has been surpassed, the image in the paper-cut works is no longer the shape of nature but the shape of the heart. The image permeation modeling method creates strange patterns that are not found in natural objects such as "compound shape", "common shape", and "middle shape". There are many composite shapes in Chinese paper cutting, that is, the characteristics of different objects are extracted and reconstructed again, thus creating a new image. For example, "Chickenhead Fish" in northern Shaanxi Province, China, is a fusion of chicken head and fish tail, which is the paper-cutter took the auspicious meaning of Ji (chicken) Qingyu (fish). The common form is the partial overlap of form and form, and the form and form borrow from each other to produce a new image. For example, the paper-cut "Three Fish Co-head" of Yunnan ethnic minorities uses the illusion of people to overlap the same shape into a part of the common shape, and then controls the whole structure. "Shape in shape" is a set of images in the image. Henan paper cut tiger pattern, eyebrows are petals, nose is peach. Suzhou Papercut "Eight Fairies Happy Birthday" depicts the story of the eight fairies in a big "life".

Spiritual permeation is based on the outline of one object to permeate the spirit of another object into the outline so that it can appear as object B in the form of armor. Such as the paper cut in the common "companion tiger" is the children's childishness and cuteness poured into the tiger's appearance, completely changed the tiger's original fierce, vigorous. Shandong Gaomi paper-cut "Rats Marry", with the wedding ceremony of rats to show the wedding customs of human beings, full of vivid romantic childhood.

4.3 The influence of the original thinking "all things have spirituality" on the Chinese folk paper-cutting modeling.

The primitive fetishism of the Chinese ancestors is accompanied by ancient religious sacrifices and folk activities, which is the foundation of Chinese folk paper-cutting art creation. The worship creation concept in Chinese paper-cutting art modeling is mainly divided into nature worship, reproduction worship, witchcraft worship, totem worship.

Chinese paper cutting shows the characteristics of worshipping animals and plants in the natural world as gods, such as the appearance of heaven and earth, sun and moon, animals and plants, which is obviously the continuation of primitive man's nature worship. "The Tree of Life" in Zhongyang, China: The trunk of the tree is thick, and the tree power is like a phoenix with wings and like the light of the sun. People and monkeys and other gods live together on it, sharing peace and tranquility.

In ancient China, fish and frog patterns were symbols of female yin worship in matrilineal clan society, and bird patterns and dragon patterns were symbols of male root worship in matrilineal clan society. This original thought of reproduction and life worship is also reflected in the Chinese paper-cutting theme, "grabbing the bun doll", "fish lotus giving birth", "during durations giving birth", and "Kylin giving birth" all reflect the original concept of reproduction worship. In addition, in China, folk paper cutting also has a direct expression of sexual reproductive image programs, such as the symbol of male and female intersection of "fowl plum", "butterfly love flower", "fish through lotus" and so on. For example, in the folk wedding in Zhenyuan County, Qingyang, China, there are two bowls of paper-cut paper-cut composition, the upper bowl cut out butterfly image, symbolizing the male, the lower bowl cut lotus image, symbolizing the female. In the lotus center will be cut female yin pattern, fully expressing the public's desire for reproduction.

Witchcraft is the product of primitive religions, which use fictional "supernatural" forces to communicate various relationships between people and spirits to achieve a certain desire. In Chinese witchcraft, paper-cutting often appears as a talisman, a fuji, or a "messenger" to communicate with God. Rooster, tiger, gourd paper cuttings on doors and windows to curb pests, eliminate diseases, and predict natural disasters. There is also a paper cut for the farm's sorry old-year-old lantern. In northern China, there is another "disease doll" paper cut pattern, a doll with peach in one hand and knife in the other, which plays the role of magic charm, is the survival of primitive human soul immortal concept in folk life.

The Chinese folk paper-cut totem pattern is a reflection of the image of totem worship and other primitive religious consciousness transmitted, compounded and mutated in national folk culture. Ancient China could be said to be a "Totem Kingdom". All ethnic groups in China have their own colorful paper-cut totem patterns. Dragon and phoenix patterns are two mysterious totem symbols of great significance in Chinese culture. Chinese Hezhe people fish skin cut paper totem pattern "hawk", usually adopts eagle mouth fish shape, eagle wings and tail are decorated with spiral pattern, symmetrical double-headed modeling style, has a unique artistic effect.

4.4 Influence of the characteristics of "binary opposites" of primitive thinking on Chinese folk paper-cutting modeling.

From ancient times to the present, a large number of Chinese folklore events can make people feel a universal and abstract "binary opposition" of the eternal structure of the mind. This bipolar "eternal structure of the mind" is expressed by the Chinese with the empirical concepts of "yin" and "yang". The Chinese nation has always believed that all things in the universe are promoted and incarnated by the two contradictions of "yin" and "yang" and complementary forces, potential energy, nature or factors. "Yin and Yang" signifies the opposition of change. At the same time, the binomial is not the unity of the stationary state, but the unity of change, that is, the universality and circulation of life.

The "yin shear" and "yang shear" of Chinese folk paper-cutting reflect the unity of these opposites. In the paper-cutting art, the modeling methods of male, female, and female-yang combine to form the beauty of the pattern, symmetry and virtual composition of the paper-cutting dot line. The female shear method is to cut off the outline of the figure, leaving only the face around the outline to shape the image of the object, and its paper cutting screen "line and line broken, block connected" form of strong artistic effect. It forms a kind of "positive" effect, the overall feeling of the picture is strong, do not pay attention to detail carving, only emphasizing the overall divine appearance of the picture.

4.5 Influence of primitive thinking "group consciousness representation" on Chinese folk paper-cutting modeling.

Collective appearance is the existence of social unconsciousness that has been formed for a long time and has a certain inheritance genealogy in a social collective. Chinese folk paper-cutting art is born out of primitive art, because of the stable cultural environment in rural China, many paper-cutting patterns are the remnants of primitive art, with the same or similar expression forms. "such as \odot shape, \oplus shape, \times shape, \otimes shape, \ominus shape, \oplus shape, + word are symbols of the sun, cross pattern is still used in folk paper cutting, but also symbolizes the sun and life, often used in decorative patterns." From primitive people to Chinese folk paper-cutting artists, after a long history, how many generations of collective "mouth-to-mouth", the objectives related to people's vital interests form a specific symbolic pattern in folk paper-cutting. Paper-cutting is when a particular meaning is chosen to express it in a particular symbol. Pomegranate symbolizes reproduction, bats symbolizes good luck, pine cranes symbolizes longevity, etc. These have gradually hardened into alternatives to ideas.

When the same pattern is created in the hands of paper cutters at different times and in different regions, the meanings of the symbols are arranged and combined subjectively. The paper-cut artists also handle the paper-cut form flexibly according to their own understanding and interests, and even if they cut it wrong,

they will make small personalized changes in the pattern.

Chinese fish-patterned paper cutting has a long history and is widely distributed, although there are many kinds of themes, but paper cutting in various places is generally expressed through natural objects such as "fish". During Yangshao culture, the half-slope colored ceramic decorations were mostly decorated with fish patterns. Shaanxi, Shanxi, Anhui, Gansu and other traditional folk paper-cutting patterns such as "Pisces Human Face", "Pisces Grasping Bun Doll", "Fish Doll" and "Herringhead Fish" are very similar to those of the Banpo clan.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chinese folk paper-cutting exemplifies how primitive thinking continues to shape artistic creation by preserving deep cultural and cognitive roots. The art form reflects a profound connection to nature, spirituality, and collective memory, showcasing unique techniques such as direct imagery, permeation modeling, and the harmonious interplay of binary opposites. These elements not only highlight the legacy of primitive thought but also reinforce its enduring relevance in modern artistic expression. In the development of Chinese folk paper-cutting art in thousands of years, the overall "stubborn" maintained its own modeling thinking and modeling characteristics. For a long time, the original thinking component has dominated the understanding and thinking of Chinese folk paper-cut artists in rural China, and has also influenced the folk paper-cut modeling. Exploring the original thought component of Chinese folk paper-cutting art and its influence on the shape image of folk paper-cutting art will help us to understand and protect the treasure of Chinese folk paper-cutting art. As we reflect on these connections, we recognize the collective ingenuity and shared heritage that define humanity's artistic journey.

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