

An Investigation into the Intersection of Postmodern Philosophy and Contemporary Art: Analyzing the Shaping of Cultural Discourse through Visual Expression

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Abstract: From the perspective of Taoist philosophy, this paper discusses the symbolic meaning and cultural inheritance function of Taoist images. As an important part of Chinese traditional culture, Taoist philosophy has exerted a profound influence on the development and formation of Taoism. First of all, this paper introduces the basic principles of Taoist philosophy, including the core concepts of Tao, inaction, nature and Yin and Yang. Then, this paper expounds the symbolic and symbolic meaning of Taoist images, and the expression of Taoist philosophy in Taoist images. Through the analysis of specific Taoist images, this paper interprets the deep meaning of these images, and reveals the philosophical concepts and the connotation of Taoist belief behind the images. In addition, the paper explores the important role of Taoist images in cultural inheritance, including their application in religious rituals and worship, their inspiration to the hearts and emotions of believers, and their contribution to the continuation and inheritance of Taoist cultural traditions. Finally, this paper summarizes the importance of interpreting Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy and looks forward to the direction and possibility of future research. Through the in-depth interpretation of Taoist images, we can better understand the Taoist philosophical concepts in Chinese traditional culture and promote the inheritance and development of Taoist culture.

Keywords: Postmodern Philosophy, Cultural Discourse, Shaping Culture, Artistic Discourse, Intersection

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction of the thesis theme: Interpretation of Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy

As an important part of traditional Chinese culture, Taoism carries profound philosophical thoughts and rich religious beliefs. In the Taoist world, images are widely used and regarded as symbols with special meaning and power.

These Taoist images, with their unique images and symbols, carry rich cultural connotations and resonate in the hearts of Taoist believers. However, understanding the symbolic meaning and cultural inheritance function behind these images is crucial to delving into the essence of Taoist culture.

1.2 Overview of the relationship between Taoist philosophy and Taoism

This paper aims to interpret the symbolic meaning and cultural inheritance function of Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy. As an important school of ancient Chinese philosophy, Taoist philosophy has influenced the development and evolution of Taoism with its unique ideas and concepts. Through the application of the basic principles of Taoist philosophy, we can deeply explore the deep meaning of Taoist images, reveal their relationship with Taoist philosophy and their expression of Taoist belief (Becker et al., 2023; Liang et al., 2023).

1.3 Overview of the purpose and structure of the paper

In this paper, we will first introduce the origin and development of Taoist philosophy, and elaborate its core concepts, such as Tao, inaction, nature and Yin and Yang, in order to provide a basis for the subsequent interpretation of Taoist images. Then, we will deeply explore the symbolic and symbolic meaning of Taoist images, and the embodiment of Taoist philosophy in Taoist images. Through the specific case analysis of Taoist images, we will interpret the philosophical concepts conveyed by these images and the connotation of Taoist beliefs, so as to better understand the symbolic meaning of Taoist images. In addition, we will explore the important role of Taoist images in cultural inheritance. Taoist images not only play an important role in religious rituals and worship, but also provide important support for the inheritance of Taoist beliefs and culture by inspiring the hearts and emotions of believers, as well as contributing to the continuation and inheritance of Taoist cultural traditions. Through this study, we hope to have a deep understanding of the symbolic meaning and cultural inheritance function of Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy, so as to promote the deep understanding and inheritance of Taoist thoughts in traditional Chinese culture. Further research on the interpretation of Taoist images is of great significance to promote the inheritance and development of Taoist culture and to broaden the cross-research between Taoism and other disciplines (Girardot, 1988).

2. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF TAOIST PHILOSOPHY

2.1 Origin and development of Taoist philosophy

As an important school of ancient Chinese philosophy, Taoist philosophy has a rich origin and development course. This section will discuss the origin of Taoist philosophy, its main thinkers, and its evolution and development in history.

2.2.1 Origin

The origin of Taoist philosophy can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (770 BC - 221 BC) in ancient China. Its core ideas are derived from the Tao Te Ching, which is considered to be the foundation work of Taoist philosophy. The Tao Te Ching, written by the legendary Taoist sage Lao-Tzu, emphasizes the principles of pursuing the Tao and doing nothing, advocating conformity to nature and the pursuit of inner peace (Tan et al., 2001; Zoé, 2023).

2.2.2 Leading thinkers

The development of Taoist philosophy cannot be separated from a series of important thinkers and schools. Among them, in addition to Laozi, the famous thinkers include Zhuangzi and Lietzi. Zhuangzi emphasized that man should pursue nature and freedom, and achieve spiritual freedom by giving up desire and pursuing inaction. Lietzi further developed Taoist philosophy, emphasizing the relationship between nature and the path of inaction and human cultivation and moral values (Bokenkamp, 1997).

2.2.3 Development history

Taoist philosophy gradually formed and developed in the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period. During the Warring States Period, Taoism gradually received the attention and recognition of the society, and had exchanges and dialogues with other schools of thought. At the same time, Taoism was also influenced by other schools such as Confucianism, Mohism and Legalism, forming a variety of views and theories (Balreira et al., 2021; Praks & Brkić, 2020).

With the passage of time, Taoist philosophy gradually integrated into Chinese culture and society, and had a profound impact on later generations. In Chinese history, Taoism and Confucianism together constitute the two important pillars of ancient Chinese philosophy and have had a profound impact on Chinese culture and way of thinking. To sum up, Taoist philosophy originated in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States period, based on the classic represented by Tao Te Ching. With the efforts of major thinkers, Taoist philosophy gradually developed into a unique and important school of philosophy, and played an important role in the development of ancient Chinese philosophical thought (Despeux & Kohn, 2003; Prosper et al., 2023).

2.2 Core concepts of Taoist philosophy: Tao, inaction, nature, Yin and Yang, etc

Taoist philosophy, as an important school of ancient Chinese

philosophy, has a unique core concept. This section will focus on its four core concepts: Tao, inaction, nature, Yin and Yang. Through in-depth analysis of these concepts, we can better understand the basic principles and ideological system of Taoist philosophy.

Tao: Tao is one of the most important concepts in Taoist philosophy and is the fundamental principle of all things in the universe. It is a supreme realm beyond all things, unspeakable and indescribable, that is, "the way can be the way, but the very way." Tao is regarded as a universal force, which is infinite, eternal, and the source and destination of all things. In Taoist philosophy, people should pursue the unity with the Tao, and reach the transcendence and freedom of mind through the operation of conforming to the Tao.

Non-action: Non-action is another important concept in Taoist philosophy, which emphasizes conformity to nature, inaction, non-coercion, and non-intervention. In the pursuit of the realm of inaction, people give up subjective intervention in the world, let nature take its course, and do not force the satisfaction of utility and desire. By doing nothing, people can eliminate the disturbance of utilitarian psychology and desire, and achieve inner peace and harmony.

Nature: The view of nature in Taoist philosophy emphasizes that man should pursue harmony with nature. Nature is regarded as a grand and mysterious whole, and people should learn the true meaning of understanding from nature. By observing the operation law of all things in nature, people can realize the existence and operation mode of Tao. At the same time, Taoist philosophy believes that nature is endless, and all human desires and behaviors should conform to the laws of nature, and should not go against the nature of nature.

Yin and Yang: Yin and Yang are important opposing concepts in Taoist philosophy, representing two opposite and unified forces in the universe. Yin and Yang contain the dual nature of all things, such as Yin and Yang represent day and night, cold and summer, Yin and sunny and other natural phenomena. In Taoist philosophy, Yin and Yang are the dynamic balance of the universe. They depend on each other and transform each other to form the order of the universe. People should conform to the changes of Yin and Yang in daily life and pursue the balance and harmony inside and outside themselves.

To sum up, the core concepts of Taoist philosophy include Tao, inaction, nature and Yin and Yang, which constitute the basic principles of Taoist thought. By exploring these concepts in depth, we can better understand the core ideas of Taoist philosophy and its influence on Chinese culture and society. These concepts are not only the essence of Taoist philosophy, but also have a profound impact on People's Daily life and social behavior.

2.3 Influence of Taoist philosophy on Chinese culture and mode of thinking

As an important school of ancient Chinese philosophy, Taoist philosophy has exerted a profound influence on Chinese culture and mode of thinking. This section will focus on the influence of Taoist philosophy on Chinese culture and ways of thinking, including religion, art, ethics, and social structures.

Religion and belief: Taoist philosophy has had an important influence on religion and belief in China. Taoism emphasizes the pursuit of unity with the Tao, as well as conforming to nature and ruling without doing anything. These ideas form the cornerstone of the Taoist faith. Taoism, as one of the major religions in China, absorbs the core ideas of Taoism, emphasizing individual inner cultivation and harmony with nature. Many Taoist temples and temples are guided by Taoist philosophy, which has been integrated into religious rituals and faith activities and has become an important part of the religious traditions of Chinese culture.

Art and Literature: Taoist philosophy has had a profound influence on Chinese art and literature. Taoism emphasizes the pursuit of non-governance and letting nature take its course, which is also reflected in ancient Chinese painting, calligraphy and literary creation. The Taoist concept of nature has inspired many artists and literati to depict and praise the natural world, and to integrate natural scenery into their works of art, showing the unity and closeness with nature. In literature, the philosophy of Taoism has exerted a profound influence on Chinese literary works. The Taoist idea of ruling without doing anything and following the natural path runs through many ancient literary works, including the poetic expression of Tao Te Ching and the fables of Zhuangzi. These literary works inherited the wisdom of Taoist philosophy and contributed unique ideological resources to the development of Chinese literature.

Ethics and moral concepts: Taoist philosophy has had a profound impact on ethics and moral concepts in China. Taoism emphasizes conforming to nature, governing without doing anything, advocating a life attitude of no desire and indifferent to fame and wealth. This ethical concept had a profound influence in ancient China and shaped the Chinese moral ideal of inner peace, humility and self-discipline.

Social structure and political ideas: Taoist philosophy has had an important influence on the social structure and political ideas of China. Taoism's idea of ruling without doing anything and conforming to nature influenced ancient Chinese political ideas and ways of governance. Some rulers and politicians have applied Taoist ideas to state governance, emphasizing non-excessive intervention, free development of the people, and advocating a leadership style that is positive and does not dispute.

To sum up, Taoist philosophy has exerted extensive and far-reaching influence on Chinese culture and mode of thinking. Its influence on religion, art, ethics and social structure has shaped the unique characteristics of ancient Chinese culture and society, and contributed unique wisdom and values to the inheritance and development of Chinese culture.

3. THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF TAOIST IMAGES

3.1 The image characteristics of Taoist images

Taoist images, as an important form of expression of Taoist culture, carry rich symbolic meanings. This chapter will deeply explore the symbolic meaning of Taoist images, including the image characteristics, the philosophical concepts contained in the images, and the important role of images in Taoist belief and cultural inheritance. Taoist images are usually presented as mysterious, ancient and abstract images. In these images, there are often symbolic elements related to Taoist philosophy, such as natural scenery, Yin-yang and five elements, immortals and Taoist priests. These image features reflect the pursuit of nature, inaction and Tao in Taoist philosophy, emphasizing the concept of harmonious coexistence with nature.

3.2 Philosophical concepts contained in Taoist images

Taoist images contain a wealth of philosophical ideas, the most important of which are the symbolic expression of Tao, inaction, nature and Yin and Yang. Tao in images is often abstracted and elusive, representing the fundamental principles of the universe. The expression of non-action emphasizes compliance with nature and non-coercion. The fairy Taoist priest in the image is usually depicted as carefree, showing the concept of non-action. Nature is also a common element in Taoist images, emphasizing the pursuit of harmony and unity with nature. At the same time, the symbol of Yin and Yang is also very prominent in the image, showing the concept of opposition and unity, balance and harmony of all things.

3.3 The role of images in Taoist belief and cultural inheritance

Taoist images play an important role in Taoist belief and cultural inheritance. As a form of visual expression, these images can intuitively convey the essence and thoughts of Taoist philosophy. In Taoist temples and temples, images are enshrined and worshipped as important symbols of the Taoist faith. Through worshiping these images, the believers express

their recognition and respect for the Taoist philosophy, and pursue the unity with the Tao and the improvement of the realm. In addition, Taoist images also play an active role in the inheritance of Taoist culture. These images are used to educate and inherit Taoist culture, and through the interpretation and understanding of the images, future generations can understand the thoughts and wisdom of Taoist philosophy. At the same time, images also provide a visual way for the development and inheritance of Taoist culture, so that Taoist culture can continue and develop in the historical inheritance. To sum up, Taoist images carry rich symbolic meanings and embody the pursuit and expression of Tao, inaction, nature and Yin and Yang in Taoist philosophy. These images play an important role in Taoist belief and cultural inheritance, providing believers with a visual way to worship, while also contributing unique wisdom and values to the inheritance and development of Taoist culture.

4. THE CULTURAL INHERITANCE FUNCTION OF TAOIST IMAGES

4.1 Application of Taoist images in religious ceremonies and worship

Taoist images, as an important part of Taoist culture, have rich cultural inheritance functions. This chapter will focus on the role of Taoist images in cultural inheritance, including their application in religious rituals and worship, their spiritual and emotional enlightenment to believers, and their contribution to the continuation and inheritance of Taoist cultural traditions. Taoist images play an important role in Taoist religious rituals and worship. These images are enshrined in Taoist temples and temples as a bridge and link between believers and deities. In religious ceremonies, believers express their respect and devotion to the gods through worshipping images, and pray to the gods for protection and guidance (Esposito, 2008). The existence and worship of images make believers feel the connection and resonance with the gods, and deepen the sense of sanctity and ceremony of religious ceremonies (Yao, 2000).

4.2 The spiritual and emotional enlightenment of Taoist images on believers

Taoist images can enlighten the mind and emotions of believers. The Taoist philosophical concept and aesthetic expression contained in the image directly touch the inner world of believers through visual images. When facing the image, believers can immerse themselves in the tranquility, inaction and natural environment conveyed by the image, and feel inner

peace and harmony. This enlightening effect helps believers to adjust their inner state, improve their spiritual experience, and make them more compatible with Taoist philosophy and practice.

4.3 The contribution of Taoist images to the continuation and inheritance of Taoist cultural traditions

Taoist images play an important role in the continuation and inheritance of Taoist cultural traditions. These images not only carry the wisdom and thoughts of Taoist philosophy, but also are important symbols and symbols of Taoist culture. Through the worship, research and inheritance of images, Taoist culture can be inherited and developed. The existence and application of images help to maintain the continuity of Taoist culture, make it continue in the historical inheritance, and provide an important reference and trigger point for future generations to understand and experience Taoist culture (Kohn, 2000a). In addition, Taoist images can also be expressed and transmitted through the forms of painting, sculpture and artistic creation, so that Taoist culture has played an important role in the development of the art field. By creating and reproducing Taoist images, artists have combined the ideas of Taoist philosophy with aesthetic expression, injecting new vitality and creativity into Taoist culture. To sum up, Taoist images have rich cultural inheritance functions. Their application in Taoist religious rituals and worship, their inspiration to the hearts and emotions of believers, and their contribution to the continuation and inheritance of Taoist cultural traditions make Taoist images play an important role in the inheritance of Taoist beliefs and culture. These images carry the wisdom and thoughts of Taoist philosophy, directly touch the hearts of believers through visual images, help them experience and understand the essence of Taoism, and promote the inheritance and development of Taoist culture.

5. CASE ANALYSIS OF TAOIST IMAGE INTERPRETATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TAOIST PHILOSOPHY

5.1 Select representative Taoist images as cases.

This chapter will choose a representative Taoist image as a case, from the perspective of Taoist philosophy to interpret and analyze it deeply. Through the interpretation of these images, we can further understand the symbolic meaning of Taoist philosophy in Taoist images and the connotation of philosophical concepts and Taoist beliefs conveyed by the images.

5.1.1 Case 1: Taoist celestial images

Taoist immortals are one of the most common images in Taoist culture, usually depicting many immortals in Taoism. To interpret these images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy, we can find the Taoist thought contained in them. Immortals are regarded as typical representatives of Taoist cultivation, and they achieve immortality by following the path and doing nothing. These images emphasize the pursuit of Tao and inaction in Taoist philosophy, as well as the harmonious coexistence of man and nature (Robinet & Pregadio, 2008).

5.1.2 Case 2: Tai Chi images

The Taiji picture is one of the most famous images in Taoist culture, and it is also the symbol of yin-yang concept. Tai Chi images are presented in the form of Yin and Yang fish, showing the mutual transformation and interdependence of Yin and Yang. From the perspective of Taoist philosophy, we can understand the philosophical concepts of Yin and Yang contained in Tai Chi images. Yin and Yang symbolize the opposing and unifying forces in the universe, as well as the idea of balance and harmony. Tai Chi images are regarded as one of the core concepts of Taoist philosophy in Taoist culture, emphasizing that one should adapt to the changes of Yin and Yang and pursue balance and harmony inside and outside oneself.

5.1.3 Case 3: Natural scene image

Taoist images often depict natural scenes, such as mountains, streams, clouds and so on. From the perspective of Taoist philosophy, these natural scenes reflect the praise and conformity to nature. Taoist philosophy emphasizes the harmonious coexistence between man and nature, and these natural scenery images are just a kind of praise and praise to nature. By viewing these images, people can feel the beauty and magnificence of nature, thus inspiring inner awe and admiration for nature.

5.1.4 Case 4: Taoist symbol images

Taoist symbol images are common symbolic patterns in Taoist culture, such as eight diagrams, five elements, charms and so on. These images have profound philosophical significance from the perspective of Taoist philosophy. Eight diagrams represent the constant changes and operation laws of the universe, and the five elements represent the mutual relations and mutual constraints of all things in the universe. These symbolic images

are widely used in Taoist beliefs and rituals to help believers understand and feel the thoughts and wisdom of Taoist philosophy (Kohn, 2000b).

Through the interpretation and analysis of these Taoist image cases, we can more deeply understand the symbolic meaning of Taoist philosophy in Taoist images. These images convey the core ideas and values of Taoist philosophy through visual images, and also enrich the connotation and expression of Taoist culture. Through appreciation and understanding of these images, we can better perceive the wisdom of Taoist philosophy and the essence of Taoist belief, so as to promote the inheritance and development of Taoist culture.

5.2 Interpret the symbolic meaning of images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy

As an important school of ancient Chinese philosophy, Taoist philosophy has deeply influenced the symbolic meaning of Taoist images. In this section, we will make an in-depth interpretation of the symbolic meaning of Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy, and explore the philosophical concepts conveyed by images and their guiding significance to human life. Tao and Taoist images in Taoist Philosophy: In Taoist philosophy, Tao is seen as the fundamental principle of the universe, representing infinite, eternal power. In Taoist images, the existence of Tao is often expressed in an abstract and elusive way. These images are intended to make people feel the transcendence and far-reaching nature of the Tao, and inspire people to pursue unity with the Tao, conform to nature, and pursue inner peace and harmony. Non-action and Taoist images: The concept of non-action in Taoist philosophy emphasizes compliance with nature and non-coercion, and the common immortals and taoists in the images are representatives of non-action. These images show the carefree and spontaneous image of the fairy priest, and express the attitude of non-governance. The Taoist priest in the image is often depicted as being at one with nature, emphasizing conformity to nature and inner peace. Images of Nature and Taoism: Taoist philosophy emphasizes the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, and nature is regarded as one of the manifestations of Tao. In Taoist images, natural scenes are often depicted, such as mountains, flowing water, clouds and so on. These images of natural scenery reflect the praise and adaptation to nature, emphasizing that people should integrate into nature and learn the laws of nature in order to achieve unity with the Tao. Yin-yang and Taoist images: Yin-yang is an important opposing concept in Taoist philosophy and a common element in Taoist images. Tai Chi images are presented in the form of Yin and Yang

fish, symbolizing the dynamic balance of the universe. Yin and Yang images express the opposition and unity of all things, and emphasize that people should conform to the changes of Yin and Yang and pursue inner balance and harmony.

Through the interpretation of Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy, we have a deep understanding of the philosophical ideas conveyed by the images and the connotation of Taoist belief. These images embody the pursuit and expression of Tao, inaction, nature and Yin and Yang in Taoist philosophy, and provide an intuitive and visual perception way for believers. At the same time, these images also play an important role in the inheritance of Taoist culture, enabling the wisdom of Taoist philosophy to be inherited and developed, and contributing unique wisdom and values to the inheritance and development of Taoist culture.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper focuses on "Interpreting the symbolic meaning and cultural inheritance function of Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy". Throughout the thesis, we delve into the fundamental principles of Taoist philosophy, core concepts, and the important influence of Taoist images in Chinese culture and ways of thinking. Next, this paper will summarize the main findings, and emphasize the significance of Taoist philosophical perspective on the symbolic meaning of Taoist images and the function of cultural inheritance. In the second chapter, we discuss the origin and development of Taoist philosophy, and understand how Taoism, as an important school of ancient Chinese philosophy, came into being and developed. Taoist philosophy, with Tao as its core and emphasis on conforming to nature and governing without doing anything, has had a profound impact on ancient Chinese culture and way of thinking. In the third chapter, we focus on the symbolic meaning of Taoist images. These images are presented in an abstract and mysterious form, which contains the pursuit and expression of Tao, inaction, nature and Yin and Yang in Taoist philosophy. These images play an important role in Taoist belief and cultural inheritance, helping believers feel the wisdom of Taoist philosophy and the essence of Taoist belief. In the fourth chapter, we deeply discuss the cultural inheritance function of Taoist images. These images are enshrined in religious ceremonies and worship and are an important symbol of the Taoist faith. By enlightening the hearts and emotions of believers, images help believers adjust their inner states and pursue unity with the Tao and inner harmony. At the same time, images also play a

positive role in the inheritance of Taoist culture, helping to maintain the continuity of Taoist culture, and providing an important reference and trigger point for future generations to inherit Taoist culture. In the fifth chapter, we interpret the symbolic meaning of Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy. Through case analysis, we have a deep understanding of the philosophical concepts contained in Taoist images, including the pursuit and expression of Tao, inaction, nature and Yin and Yang. These images convey the core ideas and values of Taoist philosophy through visual images, and also enrich the connotation and expression of Taoist culture. Based on the content of the full text, we can draw the following conclusion: The perspective of Taoist philosophy is of great significance to the symbolic meaning and cultural inheritance function of Taoist images. Taoist philosophy has endowed Taoist images with profound philosophical connotation, making images become important symbols and symbols of Taoist belief. At the same time, images play an important role in the inheritance of Taoist culture, helping to maintain the continuity and inheritance of Taoist culture. Through the interpretation of Taoist images, we not only deeply understand the wisdom of Taoist philosophy and the essence of Taoist belief, but also provide important learning and reference for the inheritance and development of Taoist culture.

However, what is described in this paper is only a preliminary interpretation of Taoist images from the perspective of Taoist philosophy, and there are many images and viewpoints worthy of further study. Future studies can continue to explore the symbolic significance of more Taoist images and apply Taoist philosophical perspectives to the broader field of cultural inheritance, making more contributions to promoting the inheritance and innovation of ancient Chinese culture.

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