

Research on Modern Sofa Design Based on the Idea of “Yi” in Huainanzi

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Abstract:

As an important part of furniture products, sofa occupies a central position, is an important visual focus of the home space, and is also one of the furniture with the highest rate of daily use in the family. At the same time, with the changes in lifestyle and space utilisation, the concept and scope of sofas are also being generalised. However, despite the rapid development of society, sofa products on the market still adopt standardised, superficial and homogeneous designs, which are obviously anachronistic and a waste of social resources. As the largest collection and integration of ancient cultures before the Han Dynasty, “Huainanzi” is a Taoist work, and the idea of “appropriate” is the essence of its design ideas. Therefore, this paper combines the idea of “Yi” with sofa product design to break through the above dilemma faced by sofa design in the current market, and also provides theoretical guidance for sofa products to cope with the fast-changing user scenarios.

Keywords:

Huainanzi, Yi, Modern Sofa Design

1. Introduction

In today’s social context, people’s pursuit of life has shifted from basic material needs to the pursuit of a better and happier life. They pay more attention to the quality, meaning and value of life, and this pursuit is also reflected in the choice of daily items. For sofas and other household items, people no longer only focus on their functionality and practicality, but also pay more attention to the meaning and value it brings.

As a profound Taoist work that combines the ideas of Taoism, Yin-Yang, Mohism, Legalism and Confucianism, the Huainanzi has a profound influence on the understanding and interpretation of design. Among them, the sentence “Use it where it suits, apply it where it is appropriate” accurately summarises the core viewpoints of the Huainanzi in terms of design thinking. The word “appropriate” in this sentence means appropriate, i.e. in accordance with the objective laws of nature and society, and is mentioned many times in the Huainanzi when discussing the design of objects.

This thesis combines the Huainanzi idea of “Yi” with modern sofa design to provide a new strategy for modern sofa design.

2. The Design of the Huainanzi’s Idea of “Yi”

“Yi” is interpreted in Shuowen Jiezi as “it is appropriate to be at ease”, in Dictionary as “should”, “suitable”, and in Huainanzi as “in accordance with the law”, and in the Huainanzi refers to conformity with the law. The idea of “use it for what it is suitable for, and give it for what it is appropriate for” first came from “Huainanzi - Qi Customs Training”: “Horses can’t serve heavy, oxen can’t chase after speed, lead can’t be used for knives, copper can’t be used for crossbows, iron can’t be used for boats, and wood can’t be used for kettles. all things are one and the same, and there is no reason for them to be over each other.” [1] The substances in nature have their own characteristics and laws, in the process of making things designed to follow these characteristics and laws, or else it is not “appropriate”, lose its “original”, lose its “original”. Otherwise, it will not be “appropriate” and will lose its “origin”, and if it loses its “origin”, it will be “chaotic” [2].

The word “appropriate” here conveys the meaning of being just right and conforming to objective laws. For design, it means that in the process of creation and implementation, the laws of nature and society need to be fully considered and complied with to ensure that all aspects of the design, such as function, form and materials, are optimally matched and adapted. In the Huainanzi, this idea is fully embodied and realised. It emphasises that design should be carried out in accordance with the actual situation and objective laws, rather than arbitrarily or subjectively. This idea had a profound impact on the design of artefacts in the Han Dynasty and beyond, prompting designers to pay more attention to observation and reflection on nature and society, and to pursue the rationality and adaptability of design.

All in all, the idea of “appropriate” is the essence of the design thinking of the Huainanzi, which emphasises that design should be in line with the objective laws of nature and society, and pursues the right balance and harmony. This idea has had a far-reaching impact on the design practice and theory of later generations, providing important guiding principles for designers.

3. The Inspiration of Huai Nan Zi’s idea of “Yi” to Modern Sofa Design

The idea of “appropriate” in Huainanzi has a wide range of applications and embodiments in design, which can include: functional appropriateness, aesthetic appropriateness and ecological appropriateness. In modern design, designers need to fully consider the requirements of this idea, to ensure that the design of the function is appropriate, form is appropriate, material is appropriate and aesthetics is appropriate, in order to meet the needs and expectations of users. For sofa products, on the one hand, the sofa is a very important part of furniture products, with the important role of the centre, in the space where the sofa exists, the sofa is the visual centre, and one of the furniture products with the highest usage rate; on the other hand, the concept and scope of the sofa have been generalised recently. [3] combines the idea of “desirability” with sofa product design, breaks through the dilemma of homogenisation, superficiality and homogenisation of sofa design in the current market, and also provides theoretical guidance for sofa products to cope with the fast-changing user scenarios.

3.1. Functional appropriateness and modern sofa design

Huai Nan Zi - Miao called training: “All things have to give, no small can not be; for no use, Bi Yu dung also.” [4] The meaning of this sentence is that; all things are useful, there is nothing that can't be used because it is small, if you don't know what it is used for, it is the best thing is just scrap. This reflects the core concept of the ancient thought of making things is practical, that is, “things need”. A good product, the core is to meet the functional needs of people, to help people overcome the problems encountered in real life. Functionality refers to a particular efficacy and performance of a product, which is the decisive factor of a product. Whether it is a material product or a digital product, its most basic function is to meet people's needs and improve their quality of life.

On the one hand, sofas are considered a necessity and an important place for family members to rest, talk and relax. Therefore, its design needs to take into account a number of aspects such as ergonomics, comfort and durability. The material, structure and appearance design of the sofa need to be coordinated with the overall style of the home in order to create a warm and harmonious home environment. On the other hand, artefacts are often created in response to people's needs. The huainanzi - SixunLun: “the ancient civil Ze in the compound cave, winter is not win frost, snow, fog and dew, summer is not win summer heat mosquito, the saint is made, for the construction of soil and wood, as a palace, on the building under the building, in order to shelter the wind and rain, in order to avoid the cold and heat, and hundreds of surnames of the security of the often the reason is not to be followed, the device can not be due to also, then the law of the former king, there is a shift in the carry on.” [4] From this sentence, it can be seen that human beings rely on their wisdom to create things to solve the problems and difficulties encountered in life, with a view to improving the standard of living. As people's living environment changes, their functional needs for artefacts also change. Changes in the living environment include social, economic, technological, cultural and other aspects of development, and these factors will have an impact on people's needs. Therefore, in terms of functionality, sofa products may need to be more versatile and flexible. For example, sofas in offices or workplaces may need to have the comfort to support prolonged sitting, with sockets and USB ports for charging; sofas for use in public places or restaurants may need easy-to-clean and wear-resistant materials, as well as hygiene-compliant designs; and sofas for use in outdoor areas may need to be water-resistant and made of durable materials to withstand a variety of weather conditions.

In addition, with the development of artificial intelligence technology, human physiological indicators can reflect the comfort of the sofa function use, test the human comfort data obtained how to use technical means, intelligent systems, to achieve intelligent interaction between people and sofas, so that the intelligent function into the household sofa is an urgent need to solve the problem. [5]

3.2. Aesthetic Appropriateness and Modern Sofa Design

Appropriate decoration can increase the beauty of the object, and the function of the object itself is also a kind of beauty, that is, “practical beauty”. “Huai Nan Zi - time training” said: “the order of the women officials dyeing and embroidery articles, green, yellow, white and black, all quality good, to the temple of the service, will be declared to the Ming.” [4] This passage emphasises the importance of the gowns in the zongmiao rituals and their proper qualities. The patterns on the gowns were not only decorative, but also a symbol of people's inner piety, and the existence of this “text” was justified. At the same time, the craftsmanship and texture of the dress must also be excellent, which means that the dress must not only have a beautiful appearance,

but also be supported by high-quality materials and craftsmanship, and that both text and quality are indispensable.

In the design and production of modern sofas, practicality and decoration should complement each other, to show the beauty and value of the sofa. Sofa products gradually develop in the direction of sofa artwork after satisfying the basic functional needs. This is mainly due to people's pursuit of home aesthetics and the improvement of quality of life. By means of exquisite design, clever craftsmanship and gorgeous materials, sofas can be made more beautiful, elegant and tasteful. The decoration can highlight the characteristics and personality of the sofa, making it more visually appealing and giving people the enjoyment of beauty. In addition, the material of the sofa is more diversified, in addition to the traditional materials such as leather and fabric, there are also sofas made of solid wood, glass, metal and other materials, which make the sofa more rich in appearance and texture. The materials and colours of sofas can also convey cultural messages. For example, wooden sofas give a warm, natural feeling and are suitable for Chinese and Japanese styles, while metal and glass materials are more modern and suitable for modern minimalist styles. In terms of colour, warm colours such as red, yellow and orange often give people a feeling of enthusiasm and vitality, which is suitable for the enthusiastic Mediterranean style; while cool colours such as blue, green and purple give people a feeling of tranquillity and freshness, which is suitable for the Scandinavian style.

3.3. Eco-friendly and modern sofa design

The Huainanzi - original Road training said: "Therefore, the orange tree of the north of the river, then turned into Hovenia; robin not over the Ji; raccoon across the Wen and die; form of nature can not be changed, the potential to live can not be moved." When the orange tree is moved to the north of the river, it becomes Hovenia, the mynah cannot cross the water of Ji, and the raccoon will die once it crosses the water of Wen. Their characteristics cannot be changed, and their living environment cannot be shifted. The Huainanzi follows the doctrine of Taoism, in which "suitable" and "appropriate" must be in line with the laws of nature, i.e., the idea of "following the nature of things". Therefore, its deeper connotation is: no matter who designs and produces it, the natural law of the material itself should be respected, so that it can benefit mankind. [6] In addition, the more serious problem facing the society nowadays is the resource problem. The use of resources in the design process directly affects the ecology. If the design is unreasonable, it may lead to the over-exploitation and waste of resources and destroy the ecological balance. And if the design can take into account the recycling and economical use of resources, the impact on the ecology can be reduced.

Scandinavian furniture, including sofa design can be said to be more in line with the preferences of modern people. Scandinavian design follows the design of "people-oriented, take the law of nature", is practical rather than decorative point of view to do the design, all the design from the occupants of the actual life of the comfort, pay attention to pragmatism and environmental protection. [7] Scandinavian design emphasises the harmonious symbiosis with the natural environment. Designers are good at using local natural materials, such as wood, leather, ceramics and so on, and through careful design and processing, these materials are given a new lease of life in modern design. This respect for and use of natural materials not only reflects the environmental friendliness of the design, but also makes the design closer to nature and brings people a warm and comfortable feeling.

4. Conclusions

In order to launch products as soon as possible and meet the market demand, some manufacturers may choose to follow the trend of design, resulting in homogenisation; in order to improve production efficiency and reduce costs, some manufacturers may adopt a standardised production model, resulting in a homogenised product design; some manufacturers may excessively pursue the appearance of the showy or novelty, while ignoring the actual functionality and practicability of the product, resulting in superficiality. The combination of the idea of “appropriate” and sofa design can effectively solve these problems. The development of the idea of “appropriate” to the present day, has been not only the theory of in the objective grasp of the law of things, but also evolved into a design concept of a cultural root, “appropriate” in the field of contemporary design guidance, both for product design, processing, The guidance of “Yi” in the field of contemporary design can be both for product design, processing, production, not to violate the laws of nature, to play the objective characteristics of their own, but also the traditional Chinese culture of the natural way of nature, the elephant invisible and other craft ideas into modern design, so that the design products are more endowed with traditional connotations. [8] A good sofa design should be functional, aesthetic and ecological, in order to meet the requirements of the public and not be eliminated by society. To solve these problems need to work on research and development and design, encourage innovation, focus on the actual function of the product and user experience, while advocating sustainable development, and promote personalised and customised design concepts.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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