

Inheritance and Innovation of Traditional Culture in Design From the Perspective of Semiotics

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ABSTRACT

The inheritance of traditional culture lies in innovation, and the innovation of design lies in the creation of new symbols. Symbols are the carriers of ideas and culture. In the field of design, the inheritance and development of traditional culture is mainly reflected in the creation of new symbol. Acting on people's intentionality towards "artificiality", symbols are narrative, and the designed "artificiality" serves as the intermediary for the interaction between man and nature, and expresses themselves openly in the form of self-speaking. The expression of this natural language is closer to the truth. Design modeling symbols have their own unique grammar of vition. Using this natural grammar, the modeling symbols are coded closer to the designers' intended point, so as to realize the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture.

Keywords: *Semiotics, Design science, Inheritance, Narrative design, Cultural and creative design.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Semiotics, as a theory of meaning expression, is of great significance in contemporary culture. It can be said that our era is a symbol era. According to Zhao Yiheng's views, symbol production exceeds the production of materials and symbol consumption exceeds the consumption of the material. At present, the struggle among countries and cultures is concentrated on the scramble for symbolic power (i.e. discourse power). As a production and manufacturing power and a cultural country with a long history, to tell story well in such a competitive environment, that is, to inherit the original culture, absorb the essence of other cultures, and strive for our own right of symbol, has become an important topic in current design industry. "There are endless stories in the world... stories appear in all times, all regions, and societies in many forms... Stories exist everywhere across countries, history, and culture." [1] The reason why human beings are different from animals lies in their ability of language and storytelling. The most important function of language and writing is to convey personal thoughts and feelings. With its unique formal language, the "artificiality" design can also convey the designers' ideas in interactive ways such as vision and touch. In the field of

design, it is not the designer who speaks to the public, but the design, the "artificiality", speaks to the public. Therefore, it is suggested to take design as the creative process of symbols. In particular, Saussure divides language activities into language and parole. In his structuralist linguistics, he examines language from the synchronic perspective, that is, the internal structure of language, rather than from the perspectives of diachronic perspective and historical evolution. This research idea has a great impact on the production of semiotics.

2. NARRATIVE METHOD OF DESIGN

In Chinese Buddhism, there is a discussion about "the wind, flags or heart moving". Here, the heart moving is similar to Husserl's "intentionality". Human beings not only have the consciousness of external objects through many senses such as "eyes, ears, mouth, nose, body and mind" in Buddhism, but also make objects have their own meanings. These meanings are the self-expression of objects and also the natural expression. Different from the human language, the self-parole of objects refers to the self-reference and self-explanation of objects.

Due to the self-explanation of "artificiality", the narrative of design can be produced.

Gerald Prince believes that there must be a narrator in the narrative. "Artificiality is narrated by artificiality itself. As the narrator of design, the creator (being similar to the author of articles) is not only the designer, but also the cooperation and game between the designer and organizations and teams such as enterprises. In most cases, the narrative of the design usually reflects the culture of the enterprise brand. As shown in "Figure 1", even if the trademark is erased, its shape can convey the culture of the brand. Considering the dissemination of a strong corporate culture, an important part of the country's grand narrative is shown in "Figure 2". Its shape has become the benchmark of congeneric product, and its brand can be known only by the modeling symbol. With the blessing of commercial marketing, the modeling symbols make the brand culture ubiquitous and influence consumers subtly. The modeling symbol can make it known to the world under the condition of carrying and spreading the brand value with the help of the strong diffusion and appeal of the business, and at the same time spread the values of the national culture.



Figure 1 Mineral water bottle of a certain brand. (Even if we can't see the trademark, people can know the brand only by the design of the bottle body).



Figure 2 Smartphone of a certain brand (Even if the outlooks of the smartphones are similar, people can identify the brand from the outlook design).

Design can only communicate with consumers through modeling symbols. "Designers' product activities and consumers' cognition of product modeling should be based on the consistency of understanding the meaning concept and emotional concept of modeling elements, that is, both parties have the common sense, and they should be "coded" and "decoded" respectively." [2] The cognition and preference of consumers usually changes with the changes in social trends and the promotion of repeated business trends. However, the ambition of designers won't be limited to the communication with the common sense of consumers, and they will make a breakthrough in the original concept. The so-called viewpoint is to find the meaning of objects from the perspective of one's own position, and objects are composed of different perspectives. Therefore, general viewpoint will have certain subjectivity and one-sidedness due to different positions. The original concept of objects will be covered by the position. Only when designers get rid of the bondage of the position and respect the objective laws can they reveal the concept of objects. On this basis, they can find the concept boundary of objects to create new concepts. Therefore, good design can often be the promoter of social trends and business trends. While breaking through the original concepts, it can change consumers' behavior habits and make consumers gain new experience. In other words, designers must create a new market instead of waiting for the market to emerge and then occupying it. Taking the product shown in "Figure 2" as an example, while changing the original concept of mobile phones (compared to 2G mobile phones), it has changed many lifestyles, weakened the original phone functions, and subverted people's understanding of

mobile phones, thus making people more dependent on phones.

Liu Guanzhong believes that design is the projection of man's purposefulness and ideality through the cognition of nature, in order to adapt to nature and transform nature at the same time, with the purpose of manufacturing and producing "artificiality". As the main body of design, man coordinates the relationship with "artificiality", society and nature through the creation of "artificiality". This way of contact and coordination is summarized as "affair" by Liu Guanzhong. It should be emphasized here that "affairs" are not artificially added between people and objects. As long as people or objects exist objectively, "affairs" will also occur. People's use of "objects" not only reveals the existence of people, but also reveals the existence of objects. "Affair" is also the universal connection between this object and other object, and even the related element of the whole material world. At the same time, when people and objects or people interact with each other in behavior or information, there are three different meanings: the intention meaning sent by the sender, the text meaning carried by the media, and the interpretation meaning interpreted by the receiver. Here, it is particularly emphasized that "artificiality" does not belong to "strong decoding", and ambiguity arises therefrom. Time and space are the background of "affairs", existing in the past, present and future. "Affairs" not only transcend time, but also space. Different spaces make people's behavior, heart and consciousness change, and "affairs" will also change. Different space and time make "affairs" be in different states, the three meanings are not present at the same time, and the three meanings are mutually exclusive and replace each other. This makes the true interpretation of the sender hidden, and the reader finds the meaning and expands the meaning of the work. As the projection of man's ideas in the real world, "artificiality" carries the structural information of "affairs" to a great extent, and the modeling of "objects" is also determined by "affairs", which is equivalent to "signifier" and "signified" in semiotics. There is no "signified" without "signifier" and no "signifier" without "signified". Both of them are just like the front and back of paper, and they are indispensable. Usually, designers need to make clear the concept of new things, i.e. there is the "signifier", they can create the physical objects bearing the new concepts, i.e. the "signified". [3] Designers express "objects" through "artificiality", and the goal of design (molding) is people, society, and nature

associated with them. Designers embody people's pursuit of "truth" through the pursuit of function and objective laws. Through the expression of emotion and the experience of the process, designers can dig out people's persistence in "goodness". People's worship of "beauty" is reflected by moral restraint and observing the laws of nature. "Design seems to create things, but it is actually narrative, lyrical and rational." [3]

3. SYMBOLIC RHETORIC AND COMMUNICATION MODE OF DESIGN

Rhetoric refers to the general "means to strengthen the persuasive ability or artistic effect of words or sentences", which is also the recognized source of semiotics. [4] Metaphor, as a rhetorical means and form of symbols, refers to the mean of replacing one image with another without losing its essential meaning [5]. The designed symbol is to convey the narrative expression of the design through figurative rhetoric modeling symbols, to show the function of the design, and to refer to the emotional meaning of the connotation, so as to bring the users into the context set by the designer, that is, the viscera. In addition, it also allows users to understand how to interact with the product, which is the behavior layer. Only such modeling symbols of design can make the user experience on the reflective level in the communication with modeling symbols of design.

Metaphor, as a means of replacing one thing with another, has certain rationality and logic. With the help of metaphor, simile, synecdoche and metonymy, modeling symbols can be transformed into specific symbols, highlighting the interactive function and narrative expression of design. And then, the design will be more convincing and artistic. However, metaphor is based on culture. Because of different cultures, all people have different understandings. (see "Figure 3")



Figure 3 "Musicians in Bremen", Bremen, Germany.

It is believed that only those who have read the "Musicians in Bremen" can understand the meaning of this sculpture. Cultural differences and differences in personal cognition have to some extent hindered consumers' cognition and understanding of "artificiality". In order to bridge these gaps in design, it is necessary to talk about Bauhaus' "internationalism" ("Figure 4"). Based on the modernist art modeling, the Bauhaus' design uses simple geometric composition, and these symbols belong to the well-known symbols, transcending culture and region and becoming the meta symbol of Bauhaus' design. However, Bauhaus' design is not divorced from the original German tradition and culture. As shown in "Figure 5", the Protestant church built by Germany in Qingdao City is mainly linear, also has the ideology of eliminating luxury and advocating simplicity of German Protestantism, which has a cultural connection with the simple and generous design semantics of Bauhaus.



Figure 4 Bauhaus' Design.



Figure 5 Church in Qingdao City.

This design and modeling symbol that transcends culture has also been developed in Japan. As shown in "Figure 6", Liu Zongli is deeply influenced by the design concept of Bauhaus Institute in Germany. While advocating functionalism, the application of simple curves can also make people feel the ideology and modeling beauty of Japanese culture. The manifestation of this culture is the natural expression of designers' consciousness, rather than the simple and crude application of existing cultural symbols. While designing objects, designers are also designing new symbols.



Figure 6 "Butterfly-shaped chair", Liu Zongli.

Although the so-called "internationalism" uses the symbols commonly known by all cultures, it is difficult to bridge the gap among different cultures. Only using these commonly known symbols has become a constraint on design modeling, forming a uniform template and routine. However, with the

exchange of cultures in the world, some simple impressions of each other have been formed among cultures, and novelty hunting has become an effective means to attract consumers. Instead of trying to bridge the gap between cultures, it is better to find different design inspiration between them, that is, to find different meanings and aesthetic design symbols based on the differences of different cultures. It is the existence of cultural differences that makes the form of design more dynamic and convincing.

4. INTERACTION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND AFFAIRS IN DESIGN

The design narrative is a collection of symbols of various groups, which constitute the sign of the narrative. While there is at least one layer of narration, there can usually be multiple layers of narration. Referring to Saussure's semiotic dualism, the Danish linguist Hjelmslev puts forward four levels of language with the form (signifier) and content (signified) of narration: the essence of expression, various media used for communication, the form of expression, which constitutes the narrative mode of narration, and the essence of content, that is, to reproduce the behavior of the object in the work, and content form, the constituent elements of the story. [7] On the basis of Saussure's "language" and "parole", Greimas defines the "intermediary" between them, which embodies the "inner layer" of signifier and theme, the "expressive layer" of signifier and function, and the "intermediary layer" of behavior. [5]

Donald A. Norman thinks that design can be divided into three levels: viscera level, behavior level and reflective level. "The design at viscera level focuses on appearance; the design at behavioral level focuses on operation; and the design at reflective level focuses on image and impression. The viscera level and behavior level are the same all over the world, but there are very different cultures. Only the reflective level varies greatly between cultures." The viscera level drives the audience's subconscious. When the audience sees a dazzling array of commodities on the shelf and these commodities are basically similar in function, the audience will generally choose such commodities under the subconscious drive, being attracted by the shape, color and material of the commodities. Therefore, the viscera directly hits the audience's intuitive feelings. The viscera here is very similar to the first impression given by the

narrative, and is also similar to the "start" of the article. It determines whether the audience can contact and interact with the product at the first time, and also determines whether the subsequent "events" occur. The behavior level is the next interaction process between people and "artificiality". Through physical contact, people can get satisfaction and pleasure. The connotation of the goods can reach people's hearts. From the intuitive emotional contact in the previous stage to the rational feeling of the functionality, interactivity and readability of the goods, the audience begins to carefully "read" the narrative of the design. But what really completes the whole narrative process is at the reflective level, and the audience can understand and feel the designers' concept and good intentions, and complete the narrative process of design. "Only being at the reflective level can there be the highest level of consciousness, emotion, and cognition. Only here can you experience all the potential effects of thinking and emotion. At a lower level of viscera and behavior, there is only emotion, no explanation or consciousness." Without the reflective level, it won't happen at neither the viscera level nor the behavior layer. And the reflective level is the foundation of the three levels. The reflective level directly determines all the forms and details of the viscera level and the behavior level. The first two levels can only be the reflection of the reflective level. As the core of the three levels, the reflective level is more like the "central idea" of the article. Generally speaking, there are three levels of design. If there is only one level that must be retained, that should be the reflection level. However, the reflective level may have extension or misunderstanding of its connotation due to the constraints of the audience's culture, region, cognition and experience. [7]

According to the model of information dissemination proposed by the linguist Roman Jakobson, when information is sent, it will be affected by six factors: the sender, the addressee, the context, the message, the contact and the code. Jakobson believes that in any given state, any one of these factors is dominant, and its dominant function affects the general characteristics of information. If it focuses on the sender, it expresses subjective emotionality and emotion; if it focuses on the receiver, it emphasizes the initiative; for example, the emphasis on media means the emphasis on communication, that is, to maintain or occupy the channel of information through repeated "exposure"; focusing on the object, it is indicative and extensible and conveys clear meaning; if it

focuses on symbols, it has no language tendency and focuses on "metalanguage"; the emphasis on the text is to emphasize "poetic", the quality of the symbol itself occupies the dominant position, and the forms the signification. It is "poetic" that makes the symbols have the style characteristics and show a certain "artistry". [4]

The design modeling also has its unique "metalanguage", which is different from the text. Although the modeling is a three-dimensional modeling, it is also derived from two-dimensional graphics. Therefore, the concept of "meta-image" can also be applied to the design modeling symbols. As shown in "Figure 7", the author skillfully uses Chinese knots as a combination of meta-images and snowflakes, which not only expresses Chinese traditional culture, but also reflects the characteristics of the Olympic Winter Games.

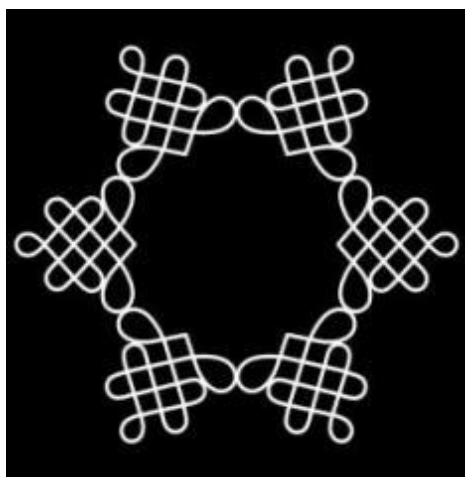


Figure 7 The snowflake pattern of Beijing Olympic Winter Games.

The meta-image is equal to words, which is the turn from words to images. An image appears in other images through other media, generally in the form of metaphors (icons). The meta-image can be a form (modeling symbol) that transcends the image in the visual imagination or in the material. Images have the ability of self-reference, which can self-define and breakthrough in meaning without the involvement of words. Foucault believes that the parole of images refuses interpretation and conclusion, preferring surface description. There are also broad terms describing images. There is a strange feeling of being moved in front of the image, which seems to reach a state of acceptance so that the image can speak for itself. Being similar to the narrative, the meta-image has the characteristics of hierarchy, nesting and multiple-stability, and maintains its hierarchical and indirect

framework. Although the composite image may have ambiguity and non-stereotype, which may obscure the meaning, it will realize the open expression of the meaning with the thinking mode, logic and directionality of the viewer. The composite graphics will contact the information of the organization and processing graphics, and make a response and interpretation consistent with the inner feelings of the viewer, constituting the unique grammar of vision of visual graphics. As semiotics emphasizes, the signifier is not exactly equal to the signified. As a weakly decoded image, it cannot be interpreted in the form of strong decoding. [11] Under such circumstances, the designer should determine the intention point of the design modeling symbol, so that the receiver can generally accept the intention meaning of the design, and make the specific interpretation behavior stop at a certain point.

5. DESIGN CODING

Donald A. Norman believes that a good design must have visibility and ease of communication, and visibility means that people are aware of how to operate and how the product works. He proposes six principles, namely, affordance, signifier, constraint, mapping, feedback and conceptual model. Among them, affordance is the relationship between the characteristics of the object and the ability of the subject that determines the intended use of the object. The manifestation of affordance is determined by the quality of the object and the ability of the subject interacting with it. The presence or absence of the affordance depends on the subject property of the article. Just like the fact a table is a table is because it has the function of a table, showing affordance is like the discussion of "reality" and "name", and showing affordance is the part of "reality", which is the essence of objects. And the affordance prompts must be represented by symbols, that is, "ideogram". Ideogram refers to the possible interactions between people and the environment. At the same time, ideogram is more important than affordance. In most cases, designers can focus on the design of ideogram. [8] The constraint must be around the design intention point, and is also the anchor point that determines the concrete concept and shape symbol of the "artificiality" in the design process. Donald has proposed four constraints: physics, culture, semantics, and logic. Here this study focuses on culture and semantics. Culture is a specific social behavior that determines the context in which an "artificiality" is used, and context is the most

important factor that determinines the meaning of symbols, which is usually considered as "situation". In a specific context, even if the symbolic text is incomplete, the receiver will reconstruct the intended meaning in the given context. [9] The context needs to be marked with meta-images. The specific method is shown in "Figure 7". Under the action of meta-images, culture can be reflected in the secondary narrative of modeling symbols. At the same time, combined with the rhetoric of symbols, it is closely integrated with other meta-images in the form of synonyms and metonymy. It can also be combined with Roman Jacquesson's six elements of information dissemination as the basis to formulate the design modeling symbol code. It is especially common that coding leans towards text to emphasize the poetic nature of design modeling symbols. [9]

Culture is an intangible concept and collective memory of a nation, just like the signified in semiotics. The signified can be carried by tangible "artificiality", and the sign is generated from it. Whether it is a commercial symbol or a cultural symbol, the values and worldview behind it is the essence of the design modeling, and consumers can have a new experience in the process of purchasing and using. Just like Naoto Fukasawa's unconscious design, the shape is simple and easy to understand, users can understand the use of the design in a very short period of time, and can make corresponding interactive behaviors through the subconscious. The simpler the symbol, the faster the message is conveyed. What behind this is the embodiment of Japanese Zen culture and thought. And the less word is used to reflect the more information. The best way to inherit traditional culture is to develop it, not to copy it. Keeping pace with the times is the correct way of traditional existence. Traditional culture should be a rich source of creativity, not a heavy burden. As the actual manifestation of the human spiritual world in the real world, "artificiality" is the way for human beings to recognize and transform nature, and is also a natural language expression beyond human language, which is open and closer to the truth.

6. CONCLUSION

Culture belongs to the collective narrative of the nation and is the basic link of national unity and cooperation and collective identity. Inheriting traditional culture means enriching and continuing it while strengthening this link. Tradition needs inheritance and innovation. The culture on abstract

concepts can be embodied by modeling symbols, while the only thing that can carry and spread modeling symbols is "artificiality". Designing new cultural "artificiality" is to create new cultural symbols. The new cultural symbol is not a rigid copy of the traditional cultural symbol, but an innovation on this basis. The cultural expression of design is not deliberate but the natural expression of designers' thoughts. The new design modeling symbol is not a reference to the appearance of the traditional symbol, but a signifier to the new modeling symbol, which inherits and develops the traditional culture and carries the new definition and narrative signified

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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