

# Inheritance and Innovation of Mohism Culture from the Perspective of Digital Information\*

Yuan Liu  
Zaozhuang University  
Zaozhuang, China 277100

**Abstract**—The researches on Mohism culture has always been attached great importance to. In particular, Zaozhuang University, located in the hometown of Mozi, even runs school based on the school motto of "universal love, advancing talents, exploring humanity and nature, and always loving the people and benefiting the people" and has held various academic activities under this theme. But currently, how to better communicate Mohism culture in the digital information society is still a difficult problem. Based on the theory of Mohism research in Zaozhuang University, this paper explores the inheritance and innovation of Mohism culture in the big background of digital information from the perspective of communication and visualization. In view of the lack of visual information on Mohism, this paper makes a discussion on Mohism from the perspective of visualization, such as the visual image of Mozi, "universal love", "Condemnation of Offensive War" and other auxiliary graphics, primarily visualizes the theory into practice and puts forward the aspects to be noted in the future.

**Keywords**—digital information; Mohism; innovation; visualization

## I. INTRODUCTION

During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, Confucianism and Mohism led the contention of a hundred schools of thought. Until the 21st century, the national "fever of Mohism", Zaozhuang University, and the Mozi Institute of Tengzhou and many other scholars and institutions are still conducting in-depth research on Mohism. However, most of the researches are oriented to the theoretical content of the connotation, extension, and history of the rise and fall of Mohism. Therefore, this paper focuses on discussing the inheritance and innovation of Mohism culture in the background of current digital information and gives brief opinions on that.

## II. STATUS QUO OF THE COMMUNICATION OF MOHISM CULTURE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DIGITAL INFORMATION

In today's digital age, information transmission is fast and convenient. People are accustomed to obtaining information and more convenient life through various data terminals.

Taking Confucian culture as an example, from the beginning of Confucius, this culture had been communicated in by oral communication and editing classics. Up to now, there are cartloads and housefuls of Confucian classics; and there are countless paper books and online electronic books. This culture has been communicated to all ages of people. At the same time, as an era of visual culture, Confucius's visualized solid statues and many types of cartoon image designs are more widely spread. A very influential and attractive all-round culture inheritance and innovation was fully realized from entity to the digital fields.

On the contrary, even in the context of the national "fever of Mohism", the current communication channels of Mohism are still paper books — in the two thousand years of time, Mohism is merely reflected in the book Mozi, associated with the electronic materials collections and books written by later generations. The main communication bodies of modern Mohism are various research institutions. In the communication content, there is very little innovation in visual digital information, and the coverage of the audience is relatively simple — mainly the middle-aged educated people. At present, there are few communication platforms about Mohism and few communications about digital information of Mohism, which greatly has hindered the mass communication. As a result, Mohism research becomes a fever in the middle-aged educated people, while a fracture phenomenon appears for reason that teenagers can get in touch with extremely few digital information about Mohism.

## III. ANALYSIS ON THE INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION OF MOHISM CULTURE

With respect to Mohism, in the contemporary media environment, especially against the background of rapid development of new media, it is available to expand the main communication bodies and audiences by virtue of the extensiveness and mass attributes of media channels, enrich the content and means of communication by virtue of the diversity of media expression forms<sup>1</sup>; it is also available to improve the effect of communication, open up many applications such as education, entertainment and commercial tourism, enhance self-building of culture and build cultural confidence by virtue of the interactivity of new

\*Fund: 2018 Shandong Provincial Key Project of Art Science "Research on Innovation of Mohism's Visualization — Based on the Achievements of Zaozhuang University's Researches on Mohism Culture" (Project No.: 201806297).

<sup>1</sup> Cao Shengqiang, Sun Zhuocai. Mozi Research [M]. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2008.

media. This way is to take the positive meaning and value of Mohism as the main body participating in the global cultural construction so as to properly carry forward Mohism from all aspects of contemporary life.

At present, the main communication body is no longer limited to a specific individual or an organization. The network becomes more and more decentralized. With the emergence and development of "We-Media", each individual can be a media source. So theoretically, each individual can become the main body of communication. In terms of the inheritance and innovation of Mohism, it is properly available to take advantage of this feature of new media to break through the previous bottlenecks and limitations in the main bodies of communication such as school and teaching research institutions. In this way, all those individuals or organizations who are interested in and have ideas on Mohism can assume the responsibility of carrying forward contemporary Mohism. At the same time, each individual's communication audience and focus are different, so that it can better cover a larger number of audiences.

In addition to the said "We-Media" public platforms, the diversified communication channels also include there are also E-Zine, e-books, TV, broadcast Internet and mobile data terminals that share resources. Those platforms may be used for carrying forward Mohism culture to the largest extent by virtue of their features of wide communication scope, timeliness and high integration. And each media has its own characteristics. But they all provide good interactive spaces for both the communication body and the communication audience. This kind of interaction can not only increase the diversity of the communicated content of Mohism information, but also bringing guarantee for the communication effect. For example, in the process of communication on official account platforms, interactivity is its most prominent feature. Via such platform, after receiving information, the communication audience can give feedback and express their opinions in real time, while the communication body (i.e., the official account) can also enrich and perfect its knowledge framework by virtue of such communication so as to transfer a value of the times more suitable for appeals of the mass.

In terms of the content of Mohist thoughts communicated, it is available to make full use of and draw on many innovations on the visual digital information of Confucius to sort out the innovative visual image of Mozi, which can fully stimulate people's imagination and game psychology instead of previous theoretical implanting. A richer visual experience and unconstrained visual expression for may inspire people's new feelings, new experiences and new emotions, and be more easily to arise their sense of closeness and temperature in body. In addition to the rich dynamic and static visual digital media resources, hearing is also a very important field to enrich the Mohism culture. The combination of visual and hearing effects can provide a comprehensive and overall audience control ability, forming a more intense sensory impact and experience, not only adaptable to reader's traditional reading habits but also helpful to explore, cultivate and form new reading habits. The combination of visual and hearing effects may generate more power, and

activate Mohism to provide infinite development space for its communication design, so that it can better conform to the spirit of the times and build a content that conforms to the value of the times.

#### IV. VISUALIZED INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION OF MOHISM

Inheritance and innovation are always oriented to the demands of people. People in different periods may have different physiological and psychological demands, and those demands are always in a state of continuous development. Against the demand for researches on the theory system of Mohism, many scholars and experts in China and foreign countries have made unceasing exploration. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the demand for communication of visual digital information, and get the currently relatively-abstract Mohism culture reflected and expanded visually, to change the extremely few innovation in visualization of Mohism, cover more teenagers and youths in a down-top sequence and realize a profound communication of the excellent traditional culture.

The visual inheritance and innovation of Mohism carries three aspects of content: cultural communication, artistic expression and mass consumption. It is a process of discovering and creating visualized Mohism, and requires a complete process of conveying visual information. First of all, the team needs to create eye-catching Mohism images composed of many elements such as colors and points, lines and faces. This is the starting point for the visual communication of Mohism. Second, the team needs to convey relevant visual information to the audience through medium such as the Internet, television and mobile phones. Third, it depends on the audience's choice, reception, perception and understanding on the visual information of Mohism. The ultimate goal is to let the audience keep the communicated content in mind.

##### A. Visual Entry Point of Mohism

The exploration on visualization of Mohism can be made in explicit direction and implicit direction<sup>2 3</sup>. In explicit direction, it may include the exploration on the existing sculptures and paintings of Mozi. In implicit direction, it may include the exploration on the visualization of the relevant text theory knowledge and the diversified shapes of Mozi. This chapter focuses on the exploration in implicit direction. With respect to audiences of visual communication, their age levels can be divided on the basis of the following points: first, Mozi, as a thinker and educator, valued the unity of words and deeds and advocated the unity of knowledge and practice in education. "Promise must be kept and action must be resolute; the combination of promise and action is like abiding by a command; all promises will be put into practice". Second, he attached importance to skill education, and advocated production labor and technological innovation. Third, he advocated that "the purpose of debate

<sup>2</sup> Huang Liang. Research on Mozi's Ideal Society [M]. 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Liu Shuyu. Exploring Mozi's Education Innovation Thought [J]. China Adult Education, 2011.

is to distinguish the difference between right and wrong, examine the law of chaos control, find out the same point and different point, use words to express thinking..." focused on the education of debate and the cultivation of students' logical thinking ability. Fourth, he emphasized teaching students in accordance with their aptitude and learning individual differences, and cultivating students' strengths based on actual conditions. Fifth, he paid attention to interactive teaching and advocated active teaching and attached importance to the two-way interaction between teacher and students, "the learning effect may not be reached if there is only teaching without response; if students lack the enthusiasm of learning, the effectiveness of education will be inevitably small; ..." This is completely consistent with the quality education thoughts to give full play the subjective initiative of students in the dual activities of teaching and learning as advocated by modern education. From the above five points, it can be concluded that the target audience of this innovation on visual Mohism is adolescents, around 6-20 years old, so that traditional culture can grow with the development of the times. The enlightenment concept of the main ideas of the design is "education" and "bottom-up communication", and finally the design theme is determined as "Mozi" cartoon visual image design. The ideal state is to design a series of Mozi branded cultural innovation products.

### B. The Combing of Available Resources of Mohism

The combing of available resources of Mohism emphasizes making specific investigation and summary on the existing, figurative and representative graphics and sculpture resources. It is not simply collecting the existing shapes and sculptures related but screening the elements representing the characteristics and spirits of Mozi by classifying and analyzing relevant resources, and finally determining the available resources of Mohism from the perspective of visual art, as shown in the following "Table I".

TABLE I. COMBING OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES OF MOHISM

| Resources of Mohism   | Extractable visual elements   |
|---|---|
| Line drawing, pencil sketch and other various styles of portrayal of Mozi | Facial characteristics, clothing characteristics, visual details, etc.                    |
| Various sculptures of Mozi  | Body characteristics, visual details, etc.  |
| Existing cartoon images of Mozi   | Painting style, dynamic vision, etc.  |
| Various cartoon images of Confucius                                       | Analyzing and drawing on the experience of the body characteristics, painting style, etc. |

### C. Extraction of Visual Innovation on Mohism

Based on the said combing of available resources, the overall visual graphics should be such graphics as reconstructed having modern characteristics and targeting to teenager audiences, on the basis of correctly extracted features of Mohism. This way can not only help people intuitively understanding the content to be expressed by the shapes, but also realize a high degree of image recognition, give the audience a new visual impact, make the Mohism culture become alive and fresh, become a localized human IP

based on the researches made in Zaozhuang University, and expand the extent of influence and inheritance of Mohism research.

Mozi lived in the lower level of the society at that time; his life was close to "common farmer and workers" and was the representative of laboring people. On the basis of collecting and analyzing the existing cartoon images of Mozi, the shaping characteristics of the visual image of Mozi himself are transformed to the following features: namely, the overall shape more tends to square visual elements in geometric figure so as to transfer a strong solemn, restrained and simple psychological suggestion through the charm of square geometry. In order to avoid the Mohism communicated from being too serious and not easily accepted by the audience, the round corners often appeared in Q-version model are added into the square, so as to show an image round and full of affinity. In detail, the square is added with the "bonded legs, and sunburned face", highlighting the vitality and interest of the "civilian saint" in the visual image of Mozi. With respect to the five sense organs, because different reference materials have different focuses, the first draft adopts relatively abstract and generalized lines and blocks to represent the five sense organs. It does not pursue the deliberate highlighting of the facial features, and strives to render the idea represented by Mozi itself instead of the design effect of the photo.

The body characteristics of the visual image draw more on the shapes mostly shown on the sculpture of Mozi, namely: Mozi stand with tree branch held in hand; this reflects one of the identities of Mozi, craftsmen, representing the craftsmen and small privates at that time. This choice is to highlight the difference from Confucius, namely, Mozi is not only an educator, a thinker, but also a social activist.

The auxiliary graphics are derived from the level represented by Mozi in the history of human civilization, and his outstanding contributions in many fields such as education, science and military defense. There are abstract auxiliary graphics in words, such as the "universal love", "savings", "advancing talents", "condemnation of offensive war" which are used as school mottos by Zaozhuang University; there are also figurative auxiliary graphics such as pigeons representing peace, anti-war logo, the mountain of Tianzhiguan representing Mohist, and the classic deeds of "preventing state Chu from attacking state Song". It is of great practical significance to intuitively express the main ideas of Mozi to the audience and to get it directly linked with the current theme of promoting social justice and harmony and building a harmonious society and harmonious world. The image of Mozi itself is a big "block". In addition, many auxiliary graphics are used as "points and lines" to construct a complete visual image of Mohism, as shown in "Fig. 1".





Fig. 1. First draft of line drawing of the visual image of Mozi.

#### D. Extraction of the Color of Mohism

The color of Mohism is more extracted intentionally to understand, digest and transform culture. In the design of the visual image of Mozi itself, it also defines the extraction of color. For example, his background of being working people and practitioners determine that the color of his visual image tends to be brown. The auxiliary graphics have their own attribute colors. But based on their educational significance, the overall color, brightness and purity of the first draft are relatively low, and the color selected is not too bright, as shown in "Fig. 2".

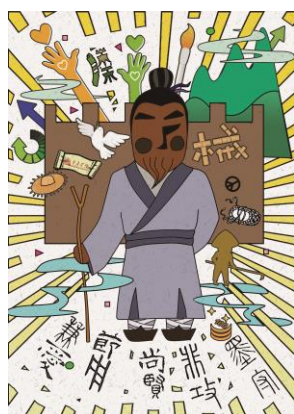


Fig. 2. First draft of the visual image of Mohism.

At this point, the digital design of the image of Mozi has been completed and can be applied to the design of cross-border art product from this complete local culture IP. This design adds the traditional Mohism with such content as adaptable to communicating in modern life context, breaks the traditional channels of communication, and enables Mohism to be communicated to teenagers, improves the masses' frequency of using digital image of Mohism and obtained real local culture experience. In this way, the Mohism culture is actively inherited and applied in modern life of Chinese, so that this excellent Chinese culture enters the present life and the international vision.

#### E. Current Problems in Visual Communication of Mohism

In the process of investigation and writing of this paper, many practical difficulties and deficiencies have been discovered. For example, in the realization of the visual communication channels of Mohism, the team lacks professional and technical personnel and cannot truly expand the frequency, speed and breadth of communication. Therefore, it is needed to pay attention to team construction involving both technical requirements and theoretical requirements, strengthen their own quality construction, and grasp the direction of information communication via new media. At present, a team with high theoretical level and superb technical level has not yet been established. Many information tools or media such as newspapers, networks, and mobile communication terminals have not been combined together to play a role in constructing a more comprehensively linked information platform and maximizing information dissemination and benefits.

In terms of the content of Mohism communicated, there are many problems to be solved due to the project duration: first, how to design the digital platform user interface is not involved. Second, there is lack of in-depth exploration on the creative concept of Mozi's visual image and the artistic form of the visual words, such as the pattern version, the variety in color matching, whether to add fun, three-dimensional modeling and more modern visual version; currently, there are only two-dimensional images and posters related, lacking relevant dynamic graphics, physical forms, etc.; the materials are not complete. In the future, it is needed to settle down and continue making relevant innovation and revision in order to bring a delicate aesthetic to the audience.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Mozi's ideological thoughts have an important position in the history of Chinese education. It is a huge wealth in the history of Chinese national culture, and worthy of continuous exploration. In terms of the digitalization of Mohism, its development lies in inheritance, and its lifeline lies in innovation. The discussion on the first draft of Mozi's visual image expands the direction of Mohism research from the visual perspective based on Zaozhuang College's researches on Mohism. It aims to try the best to create relevant visual innovations with distinctive local cultural characteristics, strengthen the construction of local Mohism data, participate in cultural competition in the globalization pattern and realize cultural inheritance and innovation in a vivid and diverse form, and has improved people's cultural confidence and sense of cultural pride.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Su Jia. The decline and modern inheritance of Mohism — from the perspective of communication [M]. 2013. (in Chinese)
- [2] Li Wenkui. The Intrinsic Unification in "Universal Loving" and "Multilateral Benefiting" [J]. Journal of Jining Teachers College, 2007. (in Chinese)
- [3] Yang Guoqiang. On Translation of Mozi in the Context of Cultural Globalization [J]. Journal of Langfang Teachers College, 2011. (in Chinese)

- [4] Zhou Lei. The Mohism Origin of the Construction of Harmonious Society [J]. Journal of Zaozhuang University, 2008. (in Chinese)
- [5] Liu Shuyu. Discussion on the Spread of Mohism in the Pre-Qin Period [J]. Journal of Nanchang University, 2011. (in Chinese)
- [6] Sun Zhuocai. Cultural Characteristics and Contemporary Value of Mohism [J]. Theory Journal, 2006. (in Chinese)
- [7] Jia Xiuqing. The application of digital means in the field of inheritance and innovation of Chinese cultural heritage [J]. Modern Communication, 2012. (in Chinese)
- [8] Standard Committee of Classic Book Series Necessary to Be Read in Adolescent Growth time. Mozi [M]. Henan: Henan Science and Technology Press, 2013. (in Chinese)
- [9] Cao Shengqiang, Liu Shuyu. Research on Mozi's Scientific and Technological Thoughts — Mohism Culture Research Series of Zaozhuang University [M]. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2015. (in Chinese)
- [10] Sun Junheng. Research on Mozi's Ethical Thoughts — Mohism Culture Research Series of Zaozhuang University [M]. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2014. (in Chinese)
- [11] Ding Lei. Visual Art Innovation in the Context of Digital Media [M]. 2013. (in Chinese)
- [12] Hu Xiaomei. Information Visualization Design and Public Behavior Research [M]. 2014. (in Chinese)