

# Artistic Imagery of “Form, Spirit and Meaning” in Advertising Design

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**Abstract**—This article summarizes and sorts out diversified elements of Chinese traditional culture from multiple outstanding Chinese animation works, and following the clue of the practical application of Central Plains traditional cultural elements in animation making, explores the approach of realizing nationalization and localization for the new cultural industry – animation.

**Keywords**—form; spirit; meaning; artistic imagery; advertising design

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the process of guiding consumption and transmitting ideas, advertising design, as an important method for the realization of commercial and cultural value, plays an important role integrated the commodities, services and ideas. Beside representing the material demands to guide consumption, it can construct imagery expressing the beauty of “form, spirit and meaning” to promote the style and value of the commodity. This article starts with the concepts of “form, spirit and meaning”, focuses on advertising design, explores the beauty and method of “artistic imagery” of “form, spirit and meaning”, for operation in practice and the purpose of guiding consumption and following consciousness effectively.

## II. “FORM, SPIRIT AND MEANING” AND ARTISTIC IMAGERY

### A. Definition of “Form, Spirit and Meaning”

“Form” refers to the external physical characteristic of image and rule of image constitution. In advertising design, “form” is a materialized factor and a design language, the advertisement shall pay attention to the integrality, decoration and symbolism of “form”, focus on the mutual correspondence and comity cross between forms and emphasize the variety and unity as well as the symmetry and balance.

“Spirit, the soul” means the place of spirit, which is a deep comprehension on the culture and spirit as well as the epitome of the tolerance, temper, cultural connotation and romantic charm, and based on which, it can recall the audiences’ association and emotion resonance and make them be personally on the scene and feel the emotion.

“Meaning”, the will, means hearing one’s words from the heart, then master one’s will, focus on thinking and voice. Since “meaning” starts from heart, examine one’s words from the heart, and then know one’s will. From the view of advertising design, “meaning” is the information transmitting to the audiences through “form” and “spirit”, which is also the appeal and sense.

“Form, spirit and meaning” are Trinitarian, hence, taking the “form”, transmitting the “spirit” and reaching the “meaning” are required in advertising design.

### B. Relationship between “Form, Spirit and Meaning” and Artistic Imagery

“Artistic imagery” means constructing the artistic imagery. *The Comments on Ci Poetry* of Wang Guowei said that, artistic imagery and realistic imagery are the basis of demarcation for idealism and realism. This shows that artistic imagery is an ideal and sentient imagery with artistic color, constructed by the author through smelting the concrete image, pursuing one’s heart to express the feelings and awareness.

The “artistic conception” created by artistic imagery is, in Chinese traditional esthetics, not only the objective the authors pursue, but also the standard for evaluating the works. In the age that life level rises, the object and mechanical realistic imagery type advertising design is unable to meet the demands of customer, but only the artistic imagery advertising design rich in humanized feelings and cultural deposits can resonate the audiences and acquire popularity.

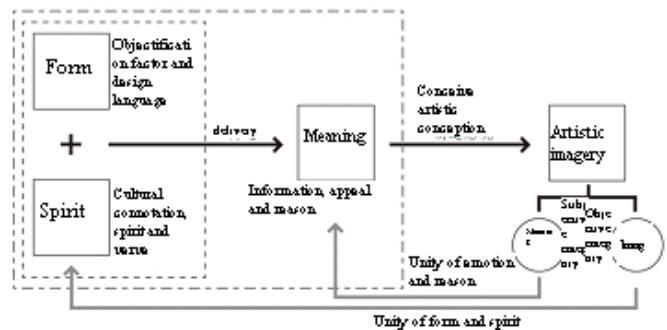


Fig. 1. Relation of artistic imagery and “form, spirit and meaning”

As shown in Fig.1, in the process of “artistic imagery” in advertising design, “imagery” is the expression method and means while the “artistic” is the purpose and result as well as one of the basic categories of artistic dialectics, a kind of artistic state integrating the “idealistic” in subjective category and the “imagery” in objective category, and the “idealistic” is the unification of emotion and reason while “imagery” is the unification of form and spirit. In the two unification processes, the “form, spirit and meaning” provide element, content and other carriers for “artistic imagery”, permeate mutually, restrict mutually, to present the beauty of artistic imagery.

### III. METHOD OF ARTISTIC IMAGERY IN ADVERTISING DESIGN

The “artistic conception” in advertising design is “imaginable”, which is more the unification of “form, spirit and meaning” in “artistic imagery” than a combination of factors, and reaches the purpose of artistic imagery under the function of “form, spirit and meaning”.

#### A. *Conceiving Imagery with “Form”*

The beauty of artistic imagery in advertising design firstly depends on concrete “form”, making the style, pattern, words and colors combined in and out of the advertising to present “form”.

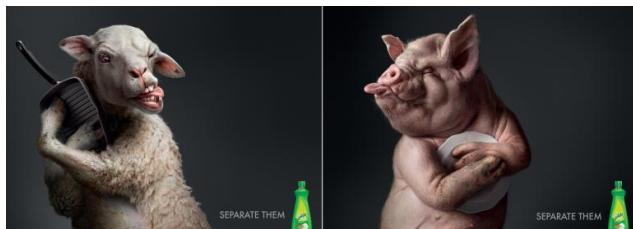


Fig. 2. Sunlight washing-u liquid ad

As shown in fig.2, in daily life, mutton or pork, no matter by means of frying, stir-frying or toasting, will leave grease difficult to clean attaching to the tableware. Hence, in the Sunlight washing-up liquid ad, it ingeniously adopts the form of sheep and pig overbearing or unwilling to leave to express the stubbornness of meat food; the combination of Sunlight washing-up liquid image with the copywriting “Separate them” at the lower right corner clearly and simply tells the customers the function of Sunlight washing-up liquid. The application and quality of product are embodied through advertising design and recall the customers’ experiences when cleaning the grease left by meat dish, so as to reach the objectives of publicity and sales.

Advertisement is like the coat of information transmission, and the style, pattern, words and colors of which are closely bound up with the contents of product, service and conception. Different product, service and conception need different “forms” of advertisement to match, so as to embody the style, characteristics and value of the product, service and conception. And for the artistic imagery of advertisement, “form” is the foundation and starting point, which can present the quality and style of the advertisement through style, pattern,

words and colors, and is the basic method of building the beauty of artistic conception in advertising design.

#### B. *Conceiving Imagery with “Spirit”*

The beauty of artistic imagery in advertising design relies on the rendering of “spirit”, focuses on the cultural connotation and romantic charm and recall the customers’ association and emotional resonance.

*1) Conceiving imagery with the “spirit” of national culture:* National culture influences the design of advertisement, meanwhile, as culture medium, advertisement design more bears the spirit of national culture, such as social ideology, aesthetic tendency, ethics and folk custom in addition to meeting its original function in the unification of form and content, so as to reach the purpose of transmitting “spirit” through “form”.



Fig. 3. WO 3G advertisement of China Unicom

As shown in fig. 3, in Chinese folk art, it pays attention to the special psychological implied meaning of specific image combination, and the images of Sun Wukong, Cao Cao, Mu Guiying, the god of wealth and Xiang Yu respectively imply many charges, high speed, master of pen and sword, pinch pennies and wide coverage. The “spirits” of these national culture factors agree with the related services of China Unicom 3G, and the application in advertising design not only embodies the “spirit” of oriental culture, but also greatly enriches the languages of advertising design and satisfies the aesthetic taste of the customers as well as the requirements for cultural identity.

*2) Conceiving imagery with the “spirit” of popular culture:* Since the advertising culture faces vast customers, the “artistic imagery” of advertising design needs to satisfy the public general interest and aesthetics law. Popular culture is to express the social culture of situation of mass psychology and value orientation, and advertisement is the carrier of culture, hence it shall naturally depend on the “spirit” of popular culture and form tacit effective interaction with the objective consumption.

As shown in fig.4, in the popular net culture, thumbing up for “liking” is an important popular cultural symbols, which is adopted in the Crisis Relief foundation public service advertising to present mass’s attention on children injured in the war. But only “liking” is not enough, just like the copywriting of the advertisement (Liking isn't helping. Be a volunteer. Change a life), children injured in the war require for rescue and help. The property of “liking” popular net

culture strengthens the emotion connection between audience and foundation conception, and greatly recall the mass's emotional resonance.



Fig. 4. Crisis Relief foundation public service advertisement

For the advertisement designer, not only attentions shall be paid on national culture, but also shall be inherited based on deeply understanding, and apply the national culture in advertising design taking advantage of absorption and reference. Meanwhile, it is required to master the age information, grasp the tendency of fashion pop culture as well as set up the bridge of pop culture among the products, services and conceptions in advertising design, so that conceive the beauty of "imagery" with the "spirit" of national culture and popular culture.

### C. Conceiving Imagery of "Meaning"

The beauty of artistic imagery in advertising design stimulates the consumption demands of the mass through transmitting "meaning" and promotes the information transmitted by advertising design to acquire the audiences' acknowledgement. The "meaning" of advertising design is appeal and reason. Under the bearing of "form" and "spirit", "meaning" works on the excitement of audiences' demands with emotion-filled language, image and background, or increasing psychical additional value or utilizing "halo effect" to realize "artistic imagery", so as to influence the impression of audiences on products, services and ideas, produce great power and social impact as well as realize purchasing behavior or follow consciousness.

#### 1) Conceiving imagery with "meaning" of emotion

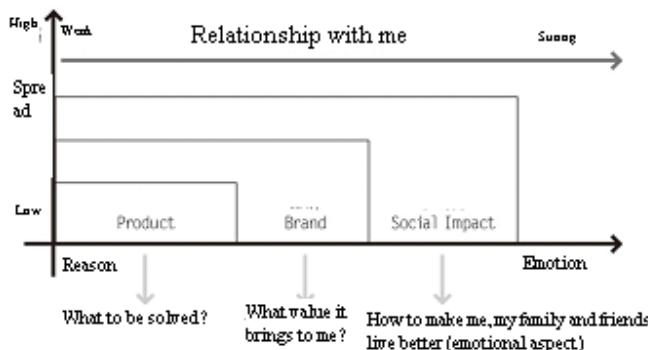


Fig. 5. The communication between advertisement and audience can be divided into three levels

As shown in Fig.5, the communication between advertisement and audience can be divided into three levels:

product, brand and social impact. The said three levels, from within, more peripheral is more emotional and has higher diffusivity, meanwhile has stronger relationship with the audiences. In advertising design, it clearly presents the rational content directly influencing the product, which is very important. However, in the meantime, what the audiences more need is the advertisement's skillful, emotional and perceptual guidance from the view of audience, so as to interest them in the advertisement and produce emotion relationship and resonance.

**2) Conceiving imagery with the "meaning" of psychical additional value:** The product does not possess the function of psychical additional value due to its physical form, but through transited by the "meaning" of advertising design, this psychical additional value will arise spontaneously. The human demands have multiplicity in both physical and mental aspects, and both of which are in blending status that the satisfaction with physic may bring mental joviality; while the psychical satisfaction needs to base on physic and can substitute the physical satisfaction.



Fig. 6. Dove brand advertisement

As shown in Fig.6, according to the investigation of Unilever (the owner of Dove brand), only 4% females consider themselves as beauties. Dove invites American criminal portrait artist Gil Zamora for cooperation, to respectively draw two portraits separated by the cloth only according to the description of himself and others. The amazing thing is that most people are described more beautiful, outgoing and confident in others' description than theirs. Dove tells customers that, through advertising originality, the opinion review that beauty is same is not true, actually there is no beauty or ugly but different beauties, and we are just one of them. And the copywriting "You are more beautiful than your think" tells out the worry of most female and brings them heartbeat. The "True beauty" conception of Dove rebuild the female's confidence, which causes the audience's emotional resonance by the "meaning" of "self-confidence beauty", so as to realize the beauty of artistic imagery.



Fig. 7. LV travel bag advertisement

As a first well-known international brand, LV consistently adopts the form inviting super stars shooting fashion films to make its advertisement, so as to express the high-end, fashion and foppish characteristics of LV brand and products. But in the autumn and winter advertisement of 2007-2008, uncharacteristically, stiff and rigid, the tragic character Mikhail Gorbachev in striola suit and overcoat holds the door handle and sits at the back of the outdated black car with a LV luggage bag beside him. Through the window, he sees the ramshackle Berlin wall, the wall President Ronald Reagan of USA required to dismantle. In this advertisement image that a outdated politician is in a outdated environment, LV is not the representative of high-end and foppish anymore, but symbolizes the historical classic and calm instead, hence, when selecting to purchase, “psychological scale” of male elites of mature, calm and legendary and high-rank will incline this product with no doubt. In this advertising design, product is the foundation, “meaning” transmits the additional value required for additional spirit, and the customer more intends to purchase products with additional value, so as to obtain a double satisfaction of both spiritual and material.

3) Conceiving imagery with the “meaning” of halo effect: Halo effect is a concept in social psychology, referring to that if one person/object is considered having some merit, then it will be also considered having many other merits.



Fig. 8. RayBan glass advertisement (partial)

As shown in Fig.8, RayBan glass, as one of American culture symbols, issues ten theme advertisements of “Never hide” at its 75th anniversary of establishment. In the advertising image, it fabricates the classic moment created by the braves who was wearing RayBan: wearing sexy mini-skirt at the age of gentlewomen or perform seductively dressed jazz in conservatism prevailing age etc. The “meaning” of the whole advertising design is highlighted in the seditious historical image, and the culture and fashion of freedom and

pioneer witness RayBan’s 75 years of leading the trend. Under the halo effect, all these time characteristics are easily understood the characteristics and culture of RayBan glass by the audience, so as to conceive the imagery.

#### IV. INTEGRATING “FORM”, “SPIRIT”, AND “MEANING”, CONCEIVING THE SUBLIMATE IMAGERY

The process of advertising design is to “conceive imagery”, and through “form”, “spirit”, and “meaning”, the “imagery” of advertising design makes the psychological distance between customers and products more closer and stimulates purchasing behavior.

The “artistic imagery” of advertising design is to create emotion and thoughts with proper product characteristic, age feature and cultural feature and it is a aesthetic production process based on artistic mode of thinking.

Firstly, the designer shall give an insight into the product’s related information, so as to use the factors of “form”, “spirit”, and “meaning” corresponding to the product’s characteristics and appeal, and then shape the advertisement’s entire form. Only a perfect pair of “form”, “spirit”, and “meaning”, can the advertising design form “artistic imagery” the unity of form and spirit.

Secondly, creativity can make advertising design transmit proposition more rapidly, vividly even more effectively. An outstanding advertising design needs none other than remarkable creativity instead of gaudy performance form. Skillfully applying and combining the factors of “form” and “spirit”, appropriately presenting the appeal of “meaning” as well as perfectly transmitting the product value and brand value, will sublimate the “form”, “spirit”, and “meaning” of advertising design in artistic imagery.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Advertising design transmits more a kind of cultural information than the information of product, service and thought. It builds deep artistic conception with art language of “form”, “spirit”, and “meaning” to effectively exhibit the abundant connotation and implication of product to the audience and promote purchasing behavior and follow consciousness. As an excellent designer, one shall be good at the artistic imagery method of advertising design and strengthen the beauty of advertisement imagery by means of “form”, “spirit”, and “meaning”.

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