

The Sublimation of the Image Narration in Advertisement

When Myth Meets Design*

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Abstract—In the context of visual culture, advertising image narration is widely spread and quickly integrated into people's life. Fairy tales themselves are also a kind of narrative culture. It is like a treasure trove of knowledge left by our ancestors, balancing nature and history, fantasy and reality, and achieving a blending of them. Symbolic fairy tales abound. The use of eastern and western myths as visual symbols in advertisement image narration symbolizes the collection of collective consciousness and the recognition of common emotions. Myth and advertising image narration complement each other, and their integration transcends language barriers. Inspired by the mythological theme, the creative content of advertisement is more abundant and enriched, which ignites the influence of the brand.

Keywords—myth; advertising design; image language; narrative; resonance

I. INTRODUCTION

The earliest known advertising dates back to 3000 BC. On papyrus, found in the ruins of the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes, is an advertisement offering a reward with golden coins for the capture of Shem, a fugitive slave. At that time, advertisements were expressed in the form of written narration. Until the industrial revolution, as photography, modern art and modern technology gradually entered people's life, narrative stories in advertisements were gradually replaced by narrative images and advertising image narration has been integrated into daily life. Myth is the decoding way of the connection of all human beings, and it is a narrative type of human collective oral creation which has been widely spread by people in the early stage. Due to its great popularity and visualization, its application in advertising image narration is a highlight for advertising design works, which enhanced brand effect, brand influence and affinity. From another point of view, modern advertisement image narration endows mythological stories with innovative interpretation and connotation.

II. MYTH MEETS ADVERTISEMENT DESIGN — THE TYPE OF MYTH REFLECTED IN ADVERTISEMENT IMAGE NARRATION

Myth is the understanding and imagination of early human beings about natural and cultural phenomena. As Richard Howells said: "It is in myths that both ancient and modern societies encode their hopes, dreams, needs, fears and cultural values, though they may openly take the form of other things, such as heroes, dragons or waxed wings in stories. For a symbolic scholar, symbols have the same function. We know they are symbols of things." The myth embodies the desire of the ancestors to dominate the natural forces and is the crystallization of wisdom in the life experience of the ancestors. Myths enter the visual field of advertisement image narration, which makes the advertising creative and communication dimensions more diversified. The types of myths reflected in advertisement image narration mainly include the following types.

A. Myths About the Creation

Creation myth is a type of myth about the creation of the world humans and origins of all things that describes human's concept of the universe and explains the origin of the world. European and American advertisements are especially fond of using myth about the Creation as the subject matter and creativity. For example, in 2012, the advertisement of Lynx—"Noah's ark" was based on the story of Noah's ark, an ancient Hebrew myth in the old testament. The gods flooded the world and disciplined the humans. The world was saved because Noah built the ark and survived by hiding his family and the world's wild animals and birds inside. Lynx's advertising adapts this myth and integrates it into real life with a strong sense of substitution. It tells the story of a man who built the ark at the end of the century. When he finished building the ark alone, he spread Lynx perfume on his body calmly, and then many beautiful girls came to Noah's ark. The advertisement shows the charm of Lynx perfume with exaggeration and humor. As the world's largest men's daily fragrance brand, Lynx's advertising borrows the world's familiar "Noah's ark" myth story skillfully, showing its brand influence and marketing strategy. In 2014, the creative advertising of Mercedes Benz in Beijing "Noah's ark", describes that there was a vacancy left on the ark, and Noah invites passers-by to get aboard on the ark, but was refused for his friends were at

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home waiting for him to drink. Noah's ark means a once in a lifetime opportunity, and so does the promotion of Beijing Benz c-class cars. Please cherish the rare opportunity and leave yourselves no regrets. At this point, in addition to being a signifier, Noah's ark was given a deeper symbolic meaning, which is a signified "opportunity". Advertising design works take ark as a starting point, infused with the collective consciousness of the audience, arousing our emotional resonance. In 2017, a humorous advertisement "the unicorn has gone"--- created by the so-called most humorous advertising company in France --- BETC, uniquely integrated into the story of Noah's ark, giving people rich imagination. It tells the story of god giving Noah an oracle before he sent the flood to the world, and Noah devoted all his efforts to build the ark to protect life on earth. But at the critical time of the flood, Noah mistakenly brought two male unicorns into the boat. This advertising design uses a humorous story to describe the reason for the disappearance of unicorns, it also implies that the quality of the program of this radio station is excellent more than you can imagine, arousing the audience's curiosity and sense of identity to the radio station, which wins our applause for its propriety.

B. Natural Myths

Natural mythology is a myth that explains all kinds of phenomena in nature in the early stage of human's history, which adds a bright color to Chinese advertising visual art. "Jingwei filling up the sea", an advertising campaign for baidu take-out in 2017, borrows the mythical bird jingwei from another perspective. Jingwei came with a wooden stone, determined to fill the sea. However, Jingwei feels embarrassed because she cannot fill up the sea, as baidu take-out's campaign for the whole app. This advertisement design work uses "Jingwei filling up the sea, a well-known fairy tale in Chinese, to convey the discount activity and the brand effect humorously. In 2017, the golden award advertisement of "Wang Yu governing the water" in the spring competition of the academy award of the 15th China university students advertising arts festival, which was adapted from the fairy tale "Yu the great governing the water", using a metaphor, takes the embodiment of the seven-degree space product is transformed into Yu the great to control the flood. The advertisement pertains to the characteristics of the products and is more conformed to its extraordinary brand tone. It breaks through the monotonous expression form and infuses unique features into the products. In 2017, the fairy tale symbol of the Mountain and Sea classics is reproduced in the ancient style drama "ten miles of peach blossom in three samsara". The mythological elements are imbued with fairy tones and applied to the brand implantation advertisement of BE&CHEERY. While the audience has endless aftertaste of the classic mythological elements, they are also deeply impressed by this brand's food. "I am a fairy," the audience said to themselves, "because I eat the food of BE&CHEERY just like the fairy in the heaven." The brand value of nearly 8 billion super high audience rating to BE&CHEERY is inestimable.

C. The Heroical Myths

"Whatever the myth from any nation, whatever its content, whatever its uniqueness, it is a reflection of reality and the struggle for human existence. The theme is nothing more than the struggle against the flood, fire, beast and other natural forces, all of which reflects the workers' pursuit and yearning for mastering the natural forces.² In heroical myth narrative, people will solve difficulties and the heavy responsibility of changing the fate was put on important figures, adding exaggerate imagination to create an omnipotent heroical image, thus build the theme of heroical tales. In 2011, the public service advertisement of the German Olympic sports federation, "Persist in Sports and Refuse to Be Fat", it uses exaggerated artistic expression to portray the biblical hero David as a fat, middle-aged man, the ideal image of beauty disappeared. "If you don't move, you get fat." The advertisement explains that even if you have the perfect image, you will never look good without exercising. Another example is the Levi's men's jeans advertisement. David is dressed in Levi's men's jeans to convey the charm of Levi's products. It is a creation that David became the spokesman for Levi's jeans and began to teach customers how to be popular in a relaxed and cheerful atmosphere. The creative advertisement of Budweiser beer in 2006, "the birth of Venus", takes us back to the great moment of witnessing the mystery of Venus' broken arm. Venus holds one bottle of Budweiser in each hand, and two apprentices were attempted by the beer and take the advantage of the absence of the master to steal the beer. As a result, they broke her arm, giving Venus a reasonable explanation for why she broke her arm. This advertisement design work is self-consistent and humorous, the brand image of Budweiser beer is deeply imprinted in consumers' hearts.

III. MYTHOLOGY MEETS ADVERTISING DESIGN — THE EMOTIONAL RESONANCE IN THE INTEGRATION OF THE MYTHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS INTO THE ADVERTISEMENT IMAGE NARRATION

The application of mythological elements in advertisement image narration not only enriches the artistic connotation of advertisement, but also enhances the visual highlights of advertisement beauty, and even is a kind of inner spiritual touch of beauty. In terms of time, it has extended the communication effect and the value of advertising and has been unailing for a long time. In terms of the space, it increased the heavy sense and the modern sense of the advertisement culture. At the same time, the excellent myth and its implication of traditional culture can be spread and developed. The theme and inspiration of advertisement come from the well-known mythological elements, or rooted in a particular culture, or being the fusion and collision of different cultures, striking a chord with consumers and realizing the double value of the advertisement.

A. Specific Cultural Environment

"The myths of different nationalities are not only conceived differently, but also have different characters, different ways of fantasy, and even the environment reflected by the myths shows its own characteristics according to the different environments of different nationalities."³ Thus, it can

be seen that the elements of myths and stories rooted in the soil of their own national culture have been most effectively spread in advertising image narration and touched the collective consciousness and memory of their own nation. For example, in 2017, Shenzhen DiDi station carpooling advertisement "journey to the west" skillfully placed Tang Monk, Sun Wukong, Pigsy, Sha Gojyo into the modern language text to experience various troubles brought by traditional taxi rides. One is to convey the image of the past carpooling costs a long time, such as the Wukong stuck in the hill for five hundred years. DiDi carpooling wins with the advantages of regular departure, smooth carpooling and more convenient points. Second, it is so difficult for customers to communicate with car owners. For example, Pigsy had a bad communication because of the poor signal in remote old village, while DiDi wins with the advantages of fixed meeting places, no matter where the road is, and no need of extra talking. Third, traditional carpooling always takes a detouring long way. For example, Sha Gojyo waits to get on the car by the River of Quick Sand, but he also has to wait for his master Tang Monk to go around the Five-Finger Mountains and Gaolaozhuang village. DiDi station wins with the advantages to optimize the site and save the time. The fairy tales of Journey to the West are highly popular and familiar in China. They are well known to all people, young and old. It is irreplaceable to any fairy tales. Consumers will pay attention to the three big values of set time, set parking sites and no detours when they watch the advertisement and laugh about it. Similarly, the creative advertisement The Journey to the West in Shenzhen 2015, the master and his apprentices go to the west in the form of speedy transportation instead of walking and thus been appointed as the set massager in the Buddhist world. In 2017, Indian advertisement for the helmets "even the god needs protection" presents three gods wearing helmets. Even the god needs to wear the helmets, let alone us the ordinary. When we carry out activities in daily life related to it, we need to wear helmets to protect ourselves. This advertisement plays the spiritual value of public service advertising in the soil of Indian culture.

B. Integration of Different Cultural Environments

"The myths of all nations, like their cultures, are not handed down in absolute isolation. But with the passage of time and the spread of culture, they are constantly influenced by foreign cultures and gradually undergo changes, evolving from the singleness to richness.⁴ In the context of globalization, cultural integration has become the norm. Advertising images have become an important visual language in the integration of our contemporary culture. In 2017, the Thailand weight-loss public service advertisement "only you can change yourself" combines the mythological elements of the Chinese fairy tale Journey to the West to build the brand image. A fat girl was laughed at for looking like a pig. Grandma told her that there was a well on the hill behind the village, and that if the well was filled with water, the emperor in the heaven would help her realize a wish. In order to realize the wish of no longer being laughed at, the girl carried water to fill the dry well day after day. When she filled the dead well, the emperor did not appear, but then she found that she had changed her body. This advertisement explains the idea that only by working hard can we change ourselves. No matter in Thailand or in China,

people can reach a consensus on this, which is due to the power of myths as the world language for advertising communication. While satisfying the demands of cultural integration, we must be familiar with the differences of cultures and etiquette of different ethnic groups. If it touches some taboos, it will bring negative feelings to consumers and make it more difficult to realize its advertising value. For example, in the creative advertisement of the Australian Meat and Livestock Association in 2017, "you are not the only one who eats mutton", the world's religious gods gather together to raise their glasses to "toast for the mutton". Aimed at uniting modern consumers in diverse cultural settings to fall in love with Australian lamb, the ads have drawn protests from Hindus all around the world. In Hinduism, the god is a vegetarian and does not eat meat. The advertisement received more than 50 complaints from different religions.

IV. MYTH MEETS ADVERTISEMENT DESIGN — THE THINKING OF MYTH ENDOWS ADVERTISEMENT IMAGE NARRATIVE WITH A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

Mythological thinking is the most important way for primitive people to understand the mysterious and unknown world. It is a symbolic or metaphorical thinking and a way of thinking in the early stage of human beings. The primitive people were good at imagination. Vico said: "In the childhood of the world, people are all noble poets by nature."⁵ Advertising design process itself is a creative imagination thinking activity. The deep excavation of myth thinking method is applied to advertisement creation and It is helpful to enhance the cultural connotation and value of advertisement image narration, adding extra credit for brand strategy.

A. The True and Childlike Imagination of the Mythological Thinking

Mythological thinking reveals the original imagination of the primitive people, which is the source of human creativity and the thinking ability to add splendor to advertising creativity. But as society progresses, this is fading. Mencius said in Mencius Lilou: "the great man will never lose its pure heart." Childlike innocence is the characteristic of many famous characters. For example, one of the contemporary "world's three graphic designers", Futian Fumio has always kept true to his heart. His pure imagination is a great help to his great works. But now the originality and design of the advertisements are a bit more edgy, a bit more utilitarian. Li Zhi, a philosopher of the Ming dynasty, also said in the theory of childlike innocence: "the childlike heart is namely the true heart." "The childlike innocence is to completely eradicate the fake and keep the true things. The original thought of it is people's true heart." "You lose your true heart if you lose your childlike heart. And you lose yourself if you lose your true heart." Childlike heart is the original thought of human beings, it is the pure state without any whitewash or pollution afterwards. The mythological thinking has something in common with the childlike heart, it is the original imagination of fantasy, showing a myth world that is colorful and absurd. The contemporary advertisement creativity contains the fairy thinking like a child's heart, which plays a key role in

stimulating the inspiration of the advertiser and protecting the spiritual ecology of the audience.

E.H.贡布里希著，杨小京译：《偏爱原始性》，广西美术出版社 2016 年 9 月第 1 版，第 22 页。

B. Modern Extension of Mythological Thinking

"Any man of genius, whether a poet or a physicist, must rely on the inspiration of his predecessors to realize his full potential and to contribute to the generation to the biggest extent.⁶ Advertisers should attach importance to absorbing the essence of myths when they integrate the elements of myths into the design and creation of advertisements. For example, in the advertisement image narration, the inspiration of the use of different graphic representation techniques comes from the image of god in the fairy tale. For example, the Eastern Sutra of Mountain and Sea Classics said: "there is a god of the thunder, he has the body of the dragon but the head of the human." The classic of mountains and seas - the great Wild West also said: "there is a five-colored bird with a human's face and hair." "There is a god with human's face and a tiger's body." "There is a god with human's face and bird's body." "There is a song bird with yellow body, red feet and six heads." Guo Pu has rated that: "Nuwa, an ancient goddess as the emperor, has a human's face and a snake's body. She changes her body state for seventy times in a day." These images of gods shaped by mythological thinking have inspired new ideas for contemporary advertising creativity and expression. The famous American cartoonist Saul Steinberg uses the method of cross-plane graphic composition to create a large number of works. In addition to the cross-sectional figures, there are also many ways of expression of design influenced by mythological thinking, such as irrational graphics. Especially in the information society, the novel image and unique shape make the advertisement more attractive and have a better visual communication effect and bring high added value.

V. CONCLUSION

For advertisers who are close to myths, myths also speak in the same familiar language and strike each other's hearts.

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