Visual Communication of Ideology and its Problems

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Abstract. With the development of network information technology, visualization is becoming the mainstream communication. In this "Vision Turn", our life is more and more surrounded and infiltrated by perceptual forms of ideology. Visual symbols are more attractive than words and theories. Ideology is pervasive and constructive in visual communication, because individuals can be attracted easily by the construction of meaning, and their lifestyles are more likely to be replicated. In the visual environment, the freedom of expression is realized, and self-worth and social identity have also been greatly enhanced. However, visual communication has also brought a strong subjectivity and ambiguousness of standards. Meanwhile the stability of ideology is challenged, and the social values and social spirits are gradually dominated by commerce.

Introduction

The Internet is becoming a modern way of life. Network communication revolution has its particularity, and the core of the revolution we are now experiencing is the technology of information processing. [1] New media based on digitization and interactivity has exacerbated the collisions among different cultures, and the collisions are forming a cyberspace community. In this community, communication is more active and ideology is more agitating. This kind of agitation is not the ideal state that "gentleman gets along with others, but does not necessarily agree with them". On the contrary, it often plays a perilous drama phagocytosis and conquest. In particular, the motivation and capacity of ideological communication in new media on the Internet have been unprecedentedly enhanced because of the high degree of integration of internet communication and commercial economy.

1. The Characteristics of Visual Communication of Ideology

The concept of Visual communication is that, with the technique of simulation, characters and concepts are replaced by an alternative intuition and image. In the process of network communication, ideology always combines with the daily life of people through the "daily cognitive interpretation", and updates and changes accordingly. Visual communication is an important manifestation of the era of online new media. It has effectively achieved perceptual communication, and has mediated the combination of ideology and daily life.

1.1 Visual culture has become an explicit way of life in the era of new media. Visual symbols, as a message themselves or an interpretation of the message, can be easily grasped by the audience, because of their vividness and intuitiveness. They can’t be affected by cultural differences and academic differences and can be spreaded more widely than the text. Under the influence of visual culture, people are gradually accustomed to image thinking. Instead of rationalism features language and argumentation, people have turned to perceptual intuition which is image-centered. Nowadays, visual culture has fully dominated our society in forms of television, movies, the Internet, advertisements and the like. In this "visual turn", visual factors such as images and videos have gained the superiority and "hegemony", and they have become the core elements of contemporary culture, and an important means of creating and representing.

1.2 Visual communication has become the most important and effective way of ideological infiltration. Western media is good at controlling and instilling ideology in a "living" and
"visualized" way. Hollywood implicitly conveyed their mainstream ideology via different business
elements. Western movies and television cultures have strong ideology properties, and they tend to
have an influence on individuals’ values. Films and Televisions are not simply neutral machines
which work mechanically, but invisible cultural machines. So we can draw a conclusion: Media,
such as films and televisions, are cultural strategies for realizing ideology, because ideological and
cultural values are hidden in film and television productions. They infiltrate ideology by means of
cultural consumption, shaping the national image and strengthening the cultural identity.

1.3 All online new media users are both recipients and producers of visual elements and visual
cultures. All participants have become the main body of ideology and the propagation
characteristics between the subjects are especially obvious. Therefore, the visual transmission of
ideology has greatly changed the traditional methods of communication.

2. The Problems of Visual Communication

Today, with the rapid development of new online media, people's values, opinions and beliefs
have been increasingly and explicitly influenced by the visual culture. The reason is that pictures
are intuitive and realistic. Compared with the text, image is obviously more attractive. The most
prominent problems visual communication brings are:

2.1 The subjectivity and uncertainty of ideology have increased.

Perceptual communication of ideology has a strong subjectivity. The interpretation of ideology
can be different due to individual differences, which leads to the disunity and fragmentation of
concepts. Therefore, Lawrence Grossberg considered that, "Culture has fallen into an endless
struggle between ideological codes. Everyone could individually experience the world by using the
concept of his own ideology. The composition of ideology is not as coherent and systematic as we
discussed earlier." [2]

The stability of ideology has also been challenged, and some of its basic categories are becoming
uncertain. Mark Poster said: "The phase of electronic communication, the continued instability
make oneself become no-center, decentralization and pluralism."[3] Therefore, many people
advocate that visual culture is a post-modern culture. [4] As such, "instability, decentralization,
diversification and no-center" come together with the new online media. This is exactly the
dilemma that ideology is facing under the new media conditions.

2.2 The domination of commerce leads to the inclination towards entertainment. The visual
"revolution" of communication essentially is the triumph of commercial operations and packaging
strategies which has greatly influenced the audience. No one can get rid of the manipulation of
business operations. Therefore, visual culture itself is an effective carrier for the commercial capital
to proliferate. To some extent, it can’t escape the ultimate goal of pursuing the interests of
commercial capital. Therefore, the balance between dominance and diversity, responsibility and
entertainment, social ethics and audience rating is hard to achieve in visual communication.

In the mode of "On the spot" communication, because of the complex sources of information, it
is hard to distinguish between true and false. So, social events such as "the trial by public opinion",
"the whirlpool by the situation" often take place.

In the uncontrolled new media environment, this kind of entertainment culture with no serious
ideological connotations or disjointed to the mainstream ideology, often becomes the dominant
form of youth culture. Entertainment often follows the pleasure principle, which leads to
inappropriate behavior online. Unhealthy entertainment works would distort and erode people's
values and moral minds. In particular, the spoof of the red classic culture is itself an anti-ideological
act which must be resolutely stopped.

2.3 Plural coexistence weakens the leadership, authority and discourse power.

The online media also provides a brand new space for various values to be spread and developed.
The Internet integrates texts, images and sounds into an organic whole while spreading ideology. It
has become the most important means of communication and an important tool for the current
diversified values to compete for the freedom of expression. Therefore, western politicians publicly
declare that, influencing the new generation of internet users is an effective way of changing
China’s political system, and whereby bring down China. In order to achieve peaceful evolution, there is no need to rely on the fourth generation or fifth generation leaders of China, but the Internet.

In the online media environment, the ways and paths of people's identification have also changed. Jean Baudrillard once said that, image culture has become a self-contained culture. People often achieve their own-self by obtaining a kind of self-satisfaction and self-identity in the consumption of visuals. The personalized, humanized and queried characteristics have become the typical identity path in visual era. Therefore, People's cognition and understanding of ideology considers the "self" as the center. In the current social moral field there appear a culture of distrust, and there are many social events, such as "70 yards", "hide and seek", and so on. These social events reflect the problem of mistrust between the officials and the people. To A certain extent, it reflects the identity crisis in ideology area.

General Secretary Xi Jinping pays great attention to the reform of the communication law of online new media. He pointed out: The Internet is driving an unprecedented change in the media. Cyberspace is a major domain for publicity, thus a focus of competition. Therefore, we must take the initiative in this field and win over the two groups-new media professionals and social media “opinion leaders”. [5] He also pointed out that we must maintain the right tone in all aspects of publicity, and we must firmly grasp the leadership, authority and discourse power in ideological area in our hands at any time. Otherwise, we will make irrecoverable historical mistakes.

Visual communication of ideology is an irreversible development trend, but it is a double-edged sword with both advantages and disadvantages. This requires us to make full use of the law of network communication, to build a common virtual home for millions of people in the cyberspace. Inspired by a sense of duty to society and the people, we must step up our law-based governance of cyberspace, develop better online content, strengthen positive publicity, and work to foster a positive, healthy, upright online culture. We need to use our core socialist values and profit from the best achievements of human civilization to nurture people’s minds and nourish society, ensuring that positive energy and mainstream values prevail. By doing so, we will be able to create a clean and upright cyberspace for internet users, especially young ones.

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References