

THE SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISING POSTER

Professional paper

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Abstract

To a visual information, has always accorded great importance, maybe because the man has always been easier to show his thoughts, desires, fears, aspirations and feelings by drawing or painting, than to put into words, and in addition to understanding or interpretation of drawings did not or not required language skills. The public information was and still is transmitting in a written shape for thousands of years. The poster begins his life when multiplies, overwhelmed the public space and audiences. Production of posters has always flourished in times of war and social upheaval. Their main role was to raise morale, collecting war bank loans, recruitment of soldiers or inflaming national pride thru media.

Keywords: semiotic, poster, advertising, war

Introduction

Well known is thought to be preparing for the future by drawing on the experience and wisdom of the past. Design has its roots in the arts and various crafts, even thousands of years ago. This is witnessed extraordinary examples of art and everyday objects back to ancient Egypt and ancient Greece. Development of industrial production at the end of the XIX century brought about a series production, which is the market offers a great quantity of products that were functional but monotonous and unimaginative. Therefore, first in France and then in other countries in 1905, originated the theory of rational aesthetics. It is meant to everyday objects become both functional and beautiful.¹

Start design development marked a movement called Art Nouveau, which appeared in Vienna in the early XX century, and the head of this movement was a group of artists, architects and designers (most important was Josef Hoffmann). At the same time, the United States changed their views on architecture and design defined by Louis Sullivan, which is particularly promoted that the shape of the product should follow its function, and this attitude is particularly pronounced in contemporary design.²

In Germany in 1907 was founded the movement Verkbund, with Peter Behrens at the on forehead, which is considered the first industrial designer in Europe to 1919 in Weimar (Germany) famous architect and designer Walter Gropius founded a famous

school "Bauhaus". It was very successful nursery for designers and significantly influenced the development and application of design in the world. For further development amounts design great influence conducted the School for Industrial Design in Ulm (Germany), which was founded in 1953 and aimed to continue the tradition of the Bauhaus. In the development process, especially from the 70s of XX century when it starts wider use of computers, design becomes an integral creative disciplines. He includes in itself, in addition to computers, various scientific and technical disciplines, such as engineering, technology, economics, art, ergonomics, sociology, psychology and others.

They differ in different disciplines within the general design: "industrial design, fashion design, stage design, interior and exterior design, web design, graphic design, etc. In the contemporary theory of popular media culture deals with the meta-design or design of the information post-industrial society that deals with the public or media events, everyday life, that is, the notion of design extends to the different areas of the organization, promotion, and the political and Marketing talking about designing a work of art, design information, the design of public opinion, the design character of politicians, designing in behavior.³

Graphic design is the art of selection and arrangement of visual elements (such as typographic elements, images, illustrations, symbols, colors)

¹ Vasiljević, M., Dizajn, Borba, Beograd, 1996., str. 32
² Ibid, str. 33

³ Šuvaković, M., Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti, Horetzky, Zagreb, 2005, str. 149

in order to transfer certain messages. That is why graphic design is often called visual communication. Development of graphic design through history has always been closely associated with the development of technology and social needs. Graphic design traces its roots back to ancient times, illustrated manuscripts were made in ancient Egypt, China, ancient Greece, Rome. The most beautiful examples of early graphic design can be seen in the form of the Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. Book of the Dead was made in order to be a help to bypass obstacles deceased in the afterlife. It is usually written on papyrus and placed in a coffin or the tomb of the deceased. Pictures, images and text illustrated in the form of various hymns, spells and instructions were mandatory part of the book.

The subject of my research is semiotic analysis of graphic design respectively posters as a medium for propagandu and reporting. The research will be based on an interdisciplinary approach, because the very concept and practice of design are the cultural, social and economic phenomenon and an indispensable part of the creative industry in each segment, as part of popular culture and the arts. I'll make a special reference to the war / propaganda poster as a communication channel or medium, which must meet several conditions in order to achieve the ultimate goal, which is the call to action.

1. Art designed Poster

The poster as a means of informing belongs to the mass communication media. It allows for easier social interaction, and thus affect social change. By integrating its elements, creating a visual organization by some impact on the perception and interpretation vizulne messages. The way in which the designer uses his visual composition, the way watching and shapes, different from how it is observed and experienced man in whose field of action is not design. For this reason it is difficult to define the rules of designing posters, because every person perceives visual messages and visual environment on the basis of their visual experience.

Art designed poster has long been recognized not only as an important testimony about what informs, but also has artistic value, unavoidable in the assessment work of an artist. That is why the artist retrospectives include equal involvement in the illustration of books or making posters, permanent exhibition with sections achievements of an epoch

or direction exhibit posters, and cultural institutions such as museums and libraries have collections of posters in their collections as a cultural and historical material.

The emergence of artistic design posters associated with the emergence of a series of lithographs by French painter and graphic artist Honore Daumier in the first half of the XIX century, which produces a range of theatrical, literary, political and satirical posters. Development and improvement of graphic and printing techniques creates the conditions for high quality reproduction, and acceptance of artists to try in this new medium with the result that the poster next to the utilitarian function and advertising character, becomes a kind of form of artistic achievement.⁴ At the beginning artistic poster is shaped through drawing and coloristic effect that brings topical brevity, and thus provide greater impressiveness notice that the poster is transferred.

Poster design, as an autonomous art works is mostly supported by Henri Toulouse Lautrec and his posters which advertised programs Parisian theaters, circuses, etc., which still represent a significant part of his artistic creativity, artistic design posters through time monitors properties and aesthetics of the prevailing artistic trends, particularly evident in the period of Art Nouveau, through the works of Austrian painter Gustav Klimt.

2. Semiotic Analysis of advertising Poster

Studying posters issignificant because of their informative and illustrative value. They are, at the same time, historical documents, important for the history of art and iconography of a time, and the holders of the aesthetic and artistic values. Posters have a special place in society because of their functional roles. Content and text posters, as well as their artistic treatment are focused on what convincing performance. The poster remains in memory (it is simply impossible not to notice the posters pasted to different places while walking down the street), and on the other side, the printed word may be unread, and television / radio we can simply switch off and do not look / do not listen.

Billboard as a special kind of historical source has its own specific language, created by merging the iconographic characters and text messages, so he

⁴ H.V. Janson, Entoni F. Janson, Istorija umetnosti, Abrams (Stanek Varaždin, & Prometej Novi Sad, 2005.

needs to devote a lot of attention and apply specific methodology to decipher the layers of propaganda messages, their origin, parallels and specifics.

Contemporary political poster was created during World War II, when it played an important role in communicating with the people of the state. The poster was, first, incited patriotism and national morale, referring to the aid of the fatherland.⁵ Posters from this period were characterized by cruelty motive because it should provoke strong emotions and reactions in people. The enemies were represented as grotesque, evil beings, as opposed to their own personifications of goodness, honesty and courage.⁶

During the second and third decades of the XX century there was a massive use of posters for political purposes, particularly in the former USSR and Germany. The poster is formed on an ideological exclusion for forced from state institutions, when there was one of the biggest changes in the development of political posters.⁷ Due to the richness and diversity of ideological content, mobilizing forces, prevalence and popularity, has become an indispensable psychological weapon. A specific type of promotional action included the organized and deliberate dissemination and explanation of political and ideological goals. The main function of such propaganda is in limiting the cognitive abilities of those who receive the message and create a distorted, unrealistic images of current events.

One of the main roles of the poster was to be associated with the already known events, shapes and controls collective opinion. Of course, the basic sense of artistic design is completed by the message that the poster was wearing. The language used was exclusive, especially for ideological explanations. Concepts are changing the meaning and in placing the appropriate propaganda framework.⁸

Henri-Pierre Jeudy believes that the symbolism of the object based upon the function and is reduced to a monovalent structure that can reproduce the performance and community values. The symbol becomes a reference character that goes beyond the function

and meaning obtained exclusively from the game different relationship that governs its conception and role in space. Upon execution of the design, his creation (building), facing the environment as a whole, establishing the best possible relationship between the functions and needs of reality and becomes a symbol. Then the symbol coincides with ideology.⁹ Design is looking for a symbol to be rooted in the world in order to fulfill its task of intermediaries and agents of change. The symbolic person or function design provides meaning-making by providing basic support facilities-signs.

According to Umberto Eco "Aesthetic function gives us something we did not know nor expected, and it gives us because parts of the information delivered through the levels of the message; because in an unexpected way and combines levels; because it leads us to look at new idiolet which represents the structural legality of individual acts; because it calls into question the code, and even codes from the background, and reveals its unexpected opportunities."¹⁰

In everyday life, from political propaganda to religious incentives, from advertising to ordinary speech, convince us or to something contradictory allegations places such as: "there is no man in the world who would not do: therefore, you should do the same do", or the opposite, "everybody did that, if you do otherwise, you'll be the only one who stands out."¹¹ But the rhetorical figures do not operate only within the verbal language, but can be found, for example, at the level of visual messages.

The study of communication techniques of propaganda posters showing us how a whole series of classical rhetorical figure reconstitute the image. In them we find a metaphor, metonymy and so on. It's amazing how one advertisement/ propaganda image is always used with signs already adopted iconographic value that would cause the connotation rhetorical premise of which are known throughout the community.¹²

Nations and national communities and national identities, as contemporary historical phenomena, they are modern phenomena. Created and built up

5 Rikards, M., *Uspon i pad plakata*, Beograd, 1972, str.3

6 Ibid., str.27

7 Barnicot, J., *A concise history of posters*, London, 1972, str.226

8 Nikolić, K., *Nemački ratni plakat u Srbiji 1941-1944*, Bonart, Nova Pazova, 2000, str.85

9 Henri-Pierre Jeudy, „Simbolička funkcija i dizajn“, *Kultura i dizajn*, Ješa Denegri, ur. (Beograd: SIC, 1985), 139-147.

10 Eko, U., *Kultura, informacija, komunikacija*, pdf, str.45

11 Ibid, str.107

12 Ibid, str.102

during the process of social change and of long duration, in the modern era and modern society not only as individual and group identities, but also as a modern national ones and at the same time as the collective identities. Both (the modern nation) and second (modern ethnic and national identities) and third (modern ethnic and national ones) and fourth (collective identities) appear in Europe in the late 18th century, with the beginning of the modern era, and build up and constantly changing during the 19th and 20th centuries. This is the period when European nations, within modern society (and of industrial civilization) achieved relative progress in all areas of life, creating new national values and searching for multiple social identities that arise in the process of construction. It is a process of constant social and national changes, but also the social, ethnic and national antagonisms, which is not yet finished.¹³ Modern society through social systems, social relations, social interaction and institutional order significantly influences the construction of modern nations and nation.

The word “nation” connotes the whole sphere of moral and political views, because certain ways of understanding social relations and the importance of “the state” into a certain way of his expression. One fascists and nationalists recognizes their co in that they “land” in which they live as “nation”. But ideology, too, can affect the context of communication and to completely distort its action. “Sign the camera indicates the ideological apparatus, and vice versa, and semiotics, as the science of relations between the codes and messages, while turning into continuous disclosure ideology that lies beneath the rhetoric. Semiotics us in the sphere of signs, organized in systems of codes and sub-code, a sphere reveals the ideology, which is reflected as it is predetermined in the language.”¹⁴

For example, in Nazi Germany overall creativity in culture was strongly influenced by the extreme right. The Nazis wanted to, in accordance with its racist and irrational aspirations, create a national culture, strongly politicized and without independence and human content in it.¹⁵ They insisted on the nation and the race as a starting point for the creation of cultural

values. Outlined are the only “cultural” values that were in absolute service of ideology. Thus, the poster was an ideal vehicle for their goals especially when it comes to any and uneducated population to which it could not reach otherwise. The poster had to be overwhelming and full of passion, in which nothing is not a distraction from the main message he was wearing and was not allowed to forget. The most common motives were peasant working in a field which called for persistence in agricultural work, due to their country, as well as performances of soldiers proclaiming, “He is the ideal German.” His willingness to fight for the nation is presented as the highest virtue.

Benedict Anderson in his book, *Nation, imagined community* encourages analysis of nationalism as a narrative. In his opinion, the nation is an “imagined political community and designed as both inherently limited and contemporary” is conceived because some member of a particular nation will never know most of the other members of their nation.¹⁶ Despite every member can imagine your own fellowship with other members. The nation is the result of a creative, collective social imagination in different parts of the world.

Different ethnic groups and classes are included in the joint imagining, as a consequence of symbolic processing time and space, as well as the choice of those elements of the cultural past that at a given moment can provide the confirmation of the idea of belonging to the national community. The idea of the nation as imaginary community refers to the problem of its neuhvatljivosti or inability to grasp its objective basis. Thesis that the nation is a community conceived in the minds of its members Anderson stood up to the earlier theories that are also defined with respect to the objective characteristics such as language, origin, common history and territory. Instead, he offered a theory which advocates the idea of socially constructed national identity. Anderson’s analysis played a significant role in the framework of postcolonial theory and the study of nationalism, in which each story of unity and identity in a networked imperialism.¹⁷

The main feature of the German propaganda was simplicity. The messages are emphasized or repeated one or two basic facts with a maximum simplification

13 Korunić, P., *Nacija i nacionalni identiteti*, Zgodovinski časopis, Ljubljana, 2003, pdf

14 Ibid, str. 105

15 Mitrović, A., *Angažovano i lepo. Umetnost u doba svetskih ratova 1914-1945*, Beograd, 1983, str.161

16 Anderson, Benedict, *Nacija: zamišljena zajednica*.

Razmatranja o porijeklu i širenju nacionalizma, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1990. str18.

17 ibid

and displaying events such conflict between good and evil, making them concrete and personal. In addition, we used the positive and negative stereotypes. The positive is implied that is what the propaganda advocating good, useful and necessary, and negative all German opponents nejravličijim indoctrinated with negative characteristics. Of course, depending on the state where the leading propaganda against the German enemy they are portrayed as enemies of the state. Advertising messages on billboards consisted of basic symbols, messages and buzz words, sometimes it is used only a poignant word, phrase, character or symbol. Such messages are supposed to produce emotional reactions with an association of a certain specific meaning of symbols, images, cartoons or illustrations.¹⁸

On the other hand, the British posters had the feeling of romantic militancy and called for a nostalgic responsibility to oneself, and thus the state. The most famous is the poster Your contry needs you, in which a Marine who finger pointing at the viewer call-up. Later this motif over and the Americans, under the slogan I want youfor US army, to which are added elements of American patriotism.

Over time, a complete art, and especially the poster has become an everyday and ordinary. It has become a tool for roughing political propaganda and manipulation. Art symbols that should provoke in the viewer's deepest and noblest feelings, served for causing a sensation of ideological and political primitivism.

Engaged poster, as a form of propaganda summary presentations of political and ideological messages sppecifičan the source because it contains visual and typographical elements. He has to communicate a specific message in the proper art form. To do this, it uses its dual power: the power of the printed word and the power of artistic expression or to form specific unity of the written word and the visual forms. One of the features posters that do not have other forms of advertising is extended exposure time and repeatability over a wide area. In this way, the poster is integrated into the life of passers-by. Propaganda poster must be concrete, realistic and mobilizing. It has to be omnipresent, that calls on all sides to replace the speaker.

3. Conclusion

The modern world is in many ways a phenomenon visible. Area visible today takes on new dimensions

of the object, ie. our world, new technologies (telescope, microscope, plane, space letielica ...), new media (posters, commercials, photography, television, film, advertising, Internet, etc.) or new ways of communication which prevails exactly visually. Visual world and the way we see it is not possible itself rationally understand and explain the world to us before the eyes occurs enigmatic and symbolic role, leading us to ask endless questions: "Is what we're seeing the equivalent of truthfulness? To what extent do we need to believe in what you see? Is this element of the visible and the means by which we come to know him sociallyconditioned? Most theorists attempts to answer these sometimes difficult odgovoriva, questions. In this regard, theobservation is the basis of all social and cultural studies, and visual language becomes the way we approach understanding.¹⁹

The essence of the author's approach is that in order to say something, or in any way disclose crucial fact. The posters, some idea or a current social problem is housed in an authentic visual content, which its simple visual language does not jeopardize the clarity and readability of the basic visual messages. Design has always been, and still is, resp. poster, as one of the most important forms of mass communication, was obliged to take an active social role, criticizing the world around them. Design is not just a process that is associated with mechanical production, it is also a means of conveying a convincing ideas, attitudes and values about how to make the individual, corporate, institutional or national objectives something could or should look like.

I will conclude with the sentence J.Bergera: "The vision precedes words. Child visually recognize things before they learn to speak. Seeing, however, preceded him in another sense. It is seeing what defines our place in the world that surrounds us. The world explain the words, but words can never undo its existence around us. The relationship between what we see and what we know is never fully established."²⁰

19 Čačinović, N., esej Vidljivo i spoznaja, sa skupa Vizualna konstrukcija kulture, Centar za vizualne studije, Zagreb 2007.

20 Jenks, Chris, , "Središnja uloga oka u zapadnoj kulturi", u zborniku Vizualna kultura, Jesenski I Turk, Zagreb 2002., str 11.

18 Barnicot, J., A concise history of posters, London, 1972. str.226-230

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SEMILOŠKA ANALIZA PROPAGANDNOG PLAKATA

Sažetak

Vizuelnoj informaciji oduvek se pridavala velika važnost, verovatno zato što je čoveku oduvek bilo lakše prikazati svoje misli, želje, strahovanja, težnje i osećanja slikom/crtežom nego ih pretočiti u reči, a osim toga za shvatanje/interpretaciju crteža nije bilo/nije potrebno poznavanje jezika. Bez obzira nude li robu ili informacije, prenose li snažnu političku poruku ili su tek lepe slike, zahvaljujući napretku štamparstva i reprodukovanja u boji – plakati su više od stotinu godina stara umetnost. Javnosti se razna obaveštenja u pismenom obliku prenose već hiljadama godina. Plakat započinje svoj život kad se multiciplira, osvaja prostor i publiku. Proizvodnja plakata oduvek je cvetala u doba rata i društvenih previranja. Njihova glavna uloga je bila podizanje morala, skupljanje ratnih zajmova, regrutacija ili raspaljivanje nacionalnog ponosa.

Ključne reči: semiologija, plakat, propaganda, rat

Received: October 11, 2015

Accepted: December 15, 2015

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