

The Application of Stream of Consciousness in Design

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Abstract: Using the concept of stream of consciousness in design, then elaborating stream of consciousness with the background, concept and philosophical basis. The design idea of stream of consciousness is put up: Zen aesthetic, montage idea and naturalism, In the end, combining with concrete examples, explanation is advanced: although the stream of consciousness is proposed in the literature field, but its philosophy is based on Zen aesthetics, it will be used in the design, in such doing, the spirit of the products can branded in stream of consciousness of consumers, which can make design cultural.

Keywords: stream of consciousness; design; Zen

1 Introduction

The stream of consciousness was proposed as the psychology in glossary, its idea has been widely used in the literature field, the stream of consciousness is sub-conscious, flowing, intrinsic and real, this is conforms to the Zen esthetics' essence. Using the idea of stream of consciousness in the design will produce strong feelings of flowing, or poetic image as to express the design in unique way.

2 Stream of consciousness

2.1 The origin of stream of consciousness

The terminology of “stream of consciousness” is early raised in 20 century by American philosopher and psychologist William James, he believed that consciousness is flowing, the phrase as “the river”, “the class” can naturally elaborate it. Afterwards the thought of stream of consciousness is used in literature.

2.2 Stream of consciousness's concept

One of the most renowned psychologists Floyd in 20 century divides consciousness into consciousness and ex-consciousness and subconscious. Therefore the stream of consciousness design is to dig person's subconscious idea deeply, making the work which does with the audience to achieve subconscious the sympathetic chord.^[1]

2.3 Stream of consciousness's philosophy

Stream of consciousness novels aim at man's inner world, opening character, making it all as a true consciousness.

Woolf said: for this changeable and strange of the inner spirit, whether or not it behave how detached from the track, intricate, to minimize the chance of any foreign bodies being mixed in order to show itself.

In Chinese traditional esthetics, Zen esthetics has explained the stream of consciousness philosophy theory. It advocated that seeking the Buddha-nature from person's innermost feelings, thinking that “heart is Buddha”. Hui-neng pointed out that “in the original nature, all creatures all sees, all law is in the original nature, which named “FaShen purity”, “all creatures” all-embracing, nothing which is not refer to, but actually all presenting in “original nature”, because “contains all creatures from the performance, all creatures are in various human natures”, “the original nature” are intrinsic essences, but existed in all things of the world, but “all creatures actually display in “various human natures”. “All creatures” are expressions of things. Therefore, tracking down “the original nature” does not to resort to outside, also does not aim at “all creatures”, but should find “the self-awareness and the self-sensation” from inner heart, so as to learning essence nature of inner heart.^[2]

3 Design idea of stream of consciousness

3.1 Zen aesthetics

The main spirit of Zen aesthetic is: first, beauty is in its conception, which is the word structured by artistic or spiritual, image in the mirror, moon in the water, antelope horns, cold hanging. Second, the beauty is epiphany. “Buddha flowers, Kassapa smile” means epiphany.

Stream of consciousness writers exploit human’s inner world deeply, especially in the field of exploration of the human subconscious mind, heart, so that the characters remain independent in spirit. They show undercurrent of unbroken merged by person’s various feelings, thoughts, memories, hallucinations, association at a specific point and specific environment. This is the meaning of stream of consciousness. Apply this concept to product design, making the spirit of product deeply in the stream of consciousness. Nathalie Dewez’s lamps design makes sense of the past emergence, mixing with present consciousness and this will reorganize the sense of time, forming a subjective sense of time with direct relevance. (As in Figure 1)

The epiphany is one kind of consciousness thought or inspiration thought that is one kind of “unconsciousness” ability. It stems from person’s subconscious, but has surmounted subconscious. Joyes has given a definition to epiphany: “one kind of understanding suddenly, only then a piece, actually contains the life the complete significance.”^[3]

Zen art is the method of seeking epiphany, the aesthetic features of Zen is not equal, simple, nature, silenc-

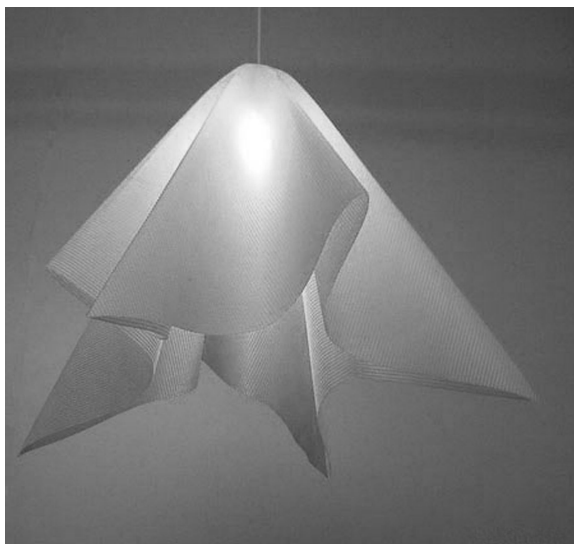


Figure 1. Nathalie Dewez lamp

ing, refined, quiet unreliable, a kind of flowing beauty of dry high. Zong Baihua said that China’s art has beauty of the line, which named beauty of moving. Zen esthetics said flowing beauty is the moving beauty which Zong Baihua says. This kind of esthetics characteristic can display in the Chinese calligraphy element. As in the furniture design (e.g. Figure 2), the beauty of flowing is not just showed by the dynamic idea in the stream of consciousness?

We can see from the picture, the chairs taking “the Chinese character” as the design element, are one kind of organic shape, with poetic image, between the introduction and elucidation, transposition and summary, it is full of beauty of flowing, sometimes weak, sometimes strong, rich in the level change, as writing with out ease. Beauty of flowing said by Zong Baihua was actually the expression of Chinese ancient esthetic ideal of “he”. This “he” refers to the harmony, the unity of diversity, also one kind of dynamical equilibrium. The organic shape can make the stiff geometry line soften, the sculpture of mole is a good example of organic shape, his sculpture is similar to is free physique full of life energy, in the growth, in the change, in the fusion, moving and static are alternate.

3.2 Montage thought’s reflection

There are Chinese poets like “Chicken sound rural inn month, person mark plank bridge frost” , and there is other “Trail westerly thin horse, vine veteran dark Crow”, but it’s stacking a succession of nouns, no subjects, no verbs, this is rarely seen, maybe this is also stream of



Figure 2-1: Chairs designed by calligraphy element

consciousness, Wang Zengqi said so in “The west window rain”.^[4]

Stream of consciousness is a kind of display of dynamic images, as a group of slowly moving lens. Also, there is “line in mother’s hands, wandering on decoy’s clothing”, the same with a series of nouns, no subject, no verb, through combination of those nominal images, building a loving and warm atmosphere. This images combination of conscious stream is similar to pieces combination of montage.

The montage is translated from French, the primary meaning is “constitution”, “assemble”. As the movie terminology, it refers to the lens splice, as to products, as for extruding product's historical arrangement, using some special materials or the visual mark, through designer's decomposition, abstract, processing and distortion, forming historical or the environment product mark, to have a dialog with the history.^[5]

Fragment combination divorce is a kind of application of the montage technique in the product, in the expression means, dividing and combining spaces of historical and the place traditional manifestation, either utilizing some traditional form mark ornamentally, either displaying the traditional component form with the modern technology and the new material.^[6] Expressing the whole product into historical elements unfit to logic to establish some order to the traditional aberrance, which produces human interest, such as BenQ’s passion for planes calligraphy Edition Joybook8000 notebook — “cursive Chinoiserie”(as in Figure 3-1).

We can see from the picture: based on white space of Chinese monochromes, appearing the subtle Chinese calligraphy, using further Montage idea, to offset sole void in natural way.

3.3 Nature’s influence on design

The important subversion of stream of consciousness novel to the one of tradition is transiting from the esthetic discovery the outside world to “the clown” of the inner world. Quite a part of stream of consciousness novels not only describes person's confusion, anxious, lonely, the depressed psychology, moreover also described the human ugly, vulgar, false, the dirty thought

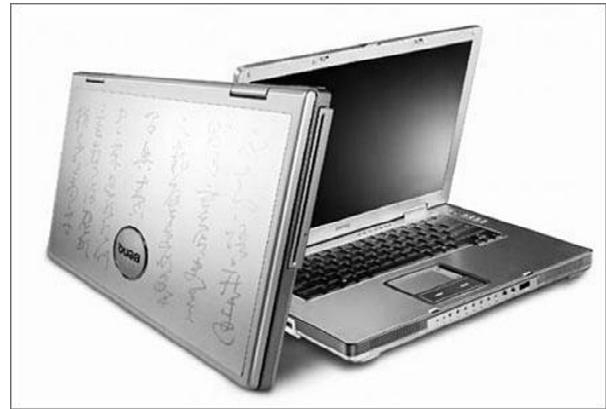


Figure 3-1: BenQ’s Joybook8000 notebook

and the appetite deep in subconscious. These artistic works, taking “the clown” as the artistic content, obviously breach the esthetic standard. If the literature must be able to reflect the real life according to the form of the life itself, then lifelike and persuasive performances of person's covert consciousness world must use this form of “psychological reality”.^[7]

This creation technique is similar to “art should display the real personality” advocated by Zhuangzi. In the opinion of Zhuang-zi: the true beauty does not contain any artificial factor, it is natural simple, indifferent limitless, “Simplicity, then there’s nothing can struggle with it”.^[8] “Morbid state” “incomplete” “abnormal” “ugly incomparable”, such images are very difficult for the human by the esthetic sense, but to the writing of his, they have actually become the outstanding artistic images, this happened to hold the same view with a sentence said by Rodin: In the nature the clown often reveals its disposition better compared to the beauty, because intrinsic reality is more obvious in anxiety sickly appearances, in each abnormal and incomplete ones, than that in perfect facial features.^[9] This is to say, the face with no. prinking wins more natural esthetic sense than that with dressing.

This kind of esthetics interest requests that beauty is naive, no reality and no natural are lack of the esthetic sense. In Chinese tradition esthetics art, “real” does not refer to the imitation lifelike, but refers to the real spirit, that is to say, performance should be sincere.

As the advocate of native design, more and more Chinese elements are integrated in design, to show the culture meaning. However, this method is not simple

quote of context, it is intrinsic logic brought by originality. In another words, it is the expression of intrinsic spirit. The Hong Kong Designer association president Mr. Jin Daiqiang's design works express the "similar spirit" excellently. His design has thick Chinese tradition meaning.

4 Conclusions

During the time full of materials, it is getting higher and higher of the request of product's non-material attribute, so the people start to pursue the mental enjoyment. However, between human and technology, the people have been paying great attention to the technology, but neglecting person's psychology and the emotion as well as the role they play, in fact, the human is the product's inventor and designer, simultaneously is also the final user, "people oriented" should be taken as the focus of the design. The design starts by the demand, integrating the idea of stream of consciousness into design, can take person's psychological demand as the starting point, also, in such doing it values much of eliminating solitude and strengthening the communication between person and the products.

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