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## SYMBOLIC CONNOTATIONS AS AN INPUT TO THE DESIGN OF THE ADVERTISING POSTER

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### ABSTRACT

The research dealt with the background of the research, the research problem, the importance of the research, the research objectives, the research hypotheses, the research limits, the research methodology, and the research terms. The first chapter dealt with the visual perception of shapes, the symbolic semantic formulation of the shape, the formulation of visually created shapes, the visual perception of shapes, the physiology of shape perception, the visual formulation, and the structural composition of the visual message, including the representative level, the abstract level, and the symbolic level, the semantic properties of images. The second chapter included the semantic meaning of shapes, the stages of the emergence of semantics, and the types of semantic meanings, which represent the basic cognitive meaning, the additional or secondary meaning, the stylistic meaning, the psychological meaning, and the suggestive meaning. Forms of meaning change include the specialization of meaning, generalization, and transfer of meaning. The third chapter dealt with the research experience, the intellectual aspect of the experience, the technical aspect of the experience, and the technical analysis of the results of the experience. The fourth chapter dealt with the results, recommendations, and references.

### KEYWORDS

Symbolic Meanings, Design, Advertising Poster.

### INTRODUCTION

## First: Research Background

Symbolic connotations in advertising poster design play an essential role due to their incredible power in confirming the attractive factors in the recipient guiding, educational, or aesthetic meanings and concepts. If the poster includes two aspects, one functional and concerned with the content and the other aesthetic and concerned with the physical environment in terms of its size, the type of written letters and their colors and their effect on it, and the type of shape and expressive symbols, then there is a third aspect related to the meanings and concepts intended to be conveyed to the recipient in a way that contributes to conveying the advertising message in the best way, which is the aspect that the researcher focused on in studying this research due to its essential positive aspect towards what it provides from different approaches to designing the advertising poster.

## Second: Research Problem:

The research problem can be formulated in the following question:

Is it possible to add meaning to the advertising poster and benefit from symbolic connotations when designing it?

## Third: Importance of the research:

1. Stimulating the interactive aspect by identifying symbolic connotations and their responses in arousing attention.

## Fourth: Research objectives:

1. Identify the concept of symbolic meaning in general and visual meaning in particular.
2. Find new approaches to employ visual meanings in the advertising poster.

## Fifth: Research hypotheses:

1. Symbolic meanings can be used in the design of the advertising poster.
2. Symbolic meanings can be employed to design the advertising poster.

## Sixth: Research limits:

Objective limits: Designing advertising posters through symbolic meanings.

Time limits: Advertising posters 2024

## Seventh: Research methodology:

The research follows the descriptive, experimental approach to investigate the hypotheses and objectives of the study.

## Eighth: Search terms:

Symbolic connotations

## - Symbol

The word symbol represents a term given to a visual, visible thing that is presented to the mind, so an attempt is made to create a similarity between it and another unclear thing. Still, it is perceived through the associations related to it. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines the symbol as not indicating its intended meaning, but other circumstances and factors must be used to visualize its meaning. Hence, the symbol is the form with the meaning that a person uses to deduce something or a meaning, and this meaning may be specific or absolute. The origin of the word symbol in English is taken from the Greek word Symbolon. It is a visual reference to something that is not generally visible, such as an idea or a characteristic. It can be just a logo or a sign, and the symbol can indicate multiple meanings according to the surrounding context. For example, the crossed bones symbol, if placed on a store sign, suggests the danger of using the place, and on the other hand, when placed on the clothing of motorcycle riders, it indicates boldness and acceptance of taking risks. Many artists consider the symbol to mediate between the visible and the invisible and between the conscious and the subconscious.

In many cases, pictorial symbols turn into abstract symbols, as in drawing religious places, where there are now symbols for these places instead of drawing them, as with the crescent and cross symbols. The sign

is defined as something with specific and known features, and it is nothing but something that we act upon and a means to serve a particular purpose, as Zaki Naguib Mahmoud (1905-1993) explains in his interpretation of the sign, saying that the sign is the thing that we take as an indication or sign of the existence of something other than it because the two things are found linked, such as smoke, which is a sign indicating the existence of fire or a fire, and this agrees with the opinion of Herbert Read\*\*) Herbert Read (1893-1968), in his interpretation of the concept of the sign, where says that all that the sign aims to do is to make us deal with what it indicates or signifies.

## Advertising Posters

"The design of advertising posters is based on applying a set of principles and working on a set of elements to create a visual communicative artwork based on a fixed image and taking a printed form or displayed on a two-dimensional surface" (Musa, 2011, p. 23).

"The art of the advertising poster in its general meaning is the art of cutting, engraving or processing wooden or metal panels or any other material with the aim of achieving printed surfaces and obtaining different artistic formative effects through printing them" (14 October Foundation, 2012, p. 41).

## Ninth: Related studies:

1- The study of Muhammad Yassin Abu Al-Ainain: The cognitive implications of space in two-dimensional artworks in a selection of contemporary art to enrich decorative designs.

This study aims to identify the cognitive connotations of space in two-dimensional artworks in a selection of contemporary art as an introduction to enriching decorative designs. It addressed the role of the teacher in revealing the cognitive factors and connotations in space and the impact of some scientific trends and philosophical theories. It addressed space in two-dimensional artworks in some eras of fine art. It discussed also the structural elements of design and classification, types of space, and analytical study of some two-dimensional artworks.

This study benefits current research by identifying the cognitive connotations of space and the methods of employing these connotations to suggest depth.

This study differs from the current research in addressing the visual connotations of formulating the natural form.

2- Jihan Fawzy's study: Symbolic connotations of color and its functional importance in contemporary decorative designs.

This study aims to study colors and their symbolic connotations in the field of visual communication by extracting new approaches to color based on the

analytical study of the works of contemporary artists and investing in the symbolism of color in supporting the aesthetic concept of the dimensions of color on the design surface and reaching a deeper understanding and importance of color and how the connotation controls the construction of the design.

This study benefits current research on symbolic connotation and perception, the importance of color, and how connotation controls design creation.

This study differs from current research in its examination of the visual connotations of the natural form as a source for poster design. 3-Qasim Muhammad Ali Issa's study: The art of posters and its educational effectiveness.

Through his study, the researcher addresses the nature of the poster by defining it. The sequential exposure to its history and design in terms of its rules and formation, the psychological factors that affect its effectiveness, the poster as a means of communication with the masses, and the educational application of the poster as a means of communication in the field of education, and its role in different societies, especially in Egyptian culture, and the researcher presented a practical model for designing a commercial poster and a model for evaluating the effectiveness of a poster.

This study helps the current research identify the historical part of the poster and the aspects of benefiting from it as a means of communication with

the public. This study differs from the current research in its emphasis on the role of the visual significance of the natural form in conveying the advertising message and making it a starting point for designing contemporary posters.

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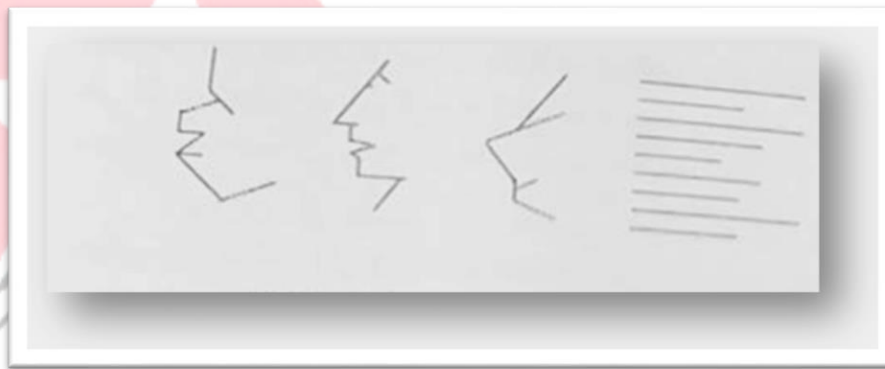


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**Figure (1) How the recipient perceives the form**

Visual formulation We now live in a world that is permeated by images, in particular in all fields, as images fill newspapers, magazines, books, billboards, television, computers, the Internet, and mobile phones in a way that has never happened before in the history of humanity in general. It is natural for humans to express themselves through images and symbols. Since the beginning of humanity, humans have used

sign language and different types of signs and symbols to communicate. Prehistoric humans made wall and rock drawings, which developed into letters, symbols, and numbers. Images helped humans communicate before using writing in messages, as shown in Figure (3-4). The role of the visual message in advertising is more influential and effective than the role of words, so the visual message has become an expressive,

formative, and organic part of all advertisements of all kinds due to its ability to attract the eye and create an impression in the mind of the recipient in a way that words and direct slogans do not have, even if they are surprising or have a distinctive verbal rhythm. The visual message contains an overlapping structure of images, symbols, and graphic drawings. Images are the

essential element of the visual message, characterized by being dual-functional, as they contain implicit truth and, simultaneously, are the primary source for creating a world of imagination. Images derive strength from the embodiment of truth and feelings they evoke in the recipient's soul through their imaginary properties.

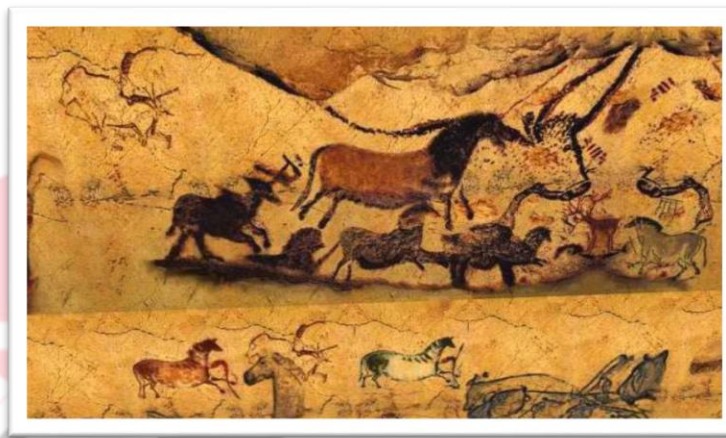


Figure (3) Drawings on rocks from Lascaux Cave, France



Figure (4) Rock drawings of a rhinoceros fighting a group of horses, from Chavaux Cave, France

The structural composition of the visual message

"Visual messages are received and expressed through three levels" (Al-Khawli, 2007, p. 14):

The representational level is what is seen and distinguished from the environment and previous experiences.

The abstract level consists of the dynamic qualities of the visual event that have been summarized to the most concise meanings of clarification and feelings in the form of a simple message.

The symbolic level is the encoded symbolic system that man invented and attached special meanings to.

### Semantic properties of images:

Impersonal images representing some aspects of reality are clear examples of iconic signs that combine to create a specific semantic world. This significance comes from the thinking and contemplation that the image has established for the recipient. Iconic signs have been attributed to the symmetry between them and the reality they represent, but they do not need to provide an identical copy of them. For example, drawing maps of a line that shows a river is considered an iconic embodiment of the natural river despite the lack of symmetry of the line shape with the river. Similarly, a child's drawings of a human being in the form of a stick are considered an iconic sign because they fit with the basic structure of the human body

despite the absence of realistic details. Full-color photographs cannot match some features in aspects of reality, such as the sense of third-dimensional space that we perceive in our vision of what is around us through our eyes.

Recent studies in perception and knowledge have proven that even with the initial or primitive version of the image, for example (a schematic drawing) and an attempt to match it with reality, this representation is sufficient for the mind to employ the mental processes specific to visual perception to perceive the actual image.

## Chapter Two

### The Semantic Meaning of Forms

#### Stages of the Emergence of Semantics

Semantics is called "semiology," and by definition, it is the science of the indicative sign, regardless of its type and origin. This means that the cosmic system, with all its signs and symbols, is a system with meaning. Thus, semiology is the science that studies the structure of signs and their relationship in this universe, and consequently studies their internal and external functions" (Ayash, 1992, p. 9).

Some scholars also call semantics semiotics, as some of them define it as the study of meaning or the science that studies meaning, or that branch of linguistics that deals with the theory of meaning, or that branch that



studies the conditions that must be met in a symbol in order for it to be able to carry meaning. The latter definition requires that the subject of semantics be anything or everything that plays the role of a sign or symbol. These relationships or symbols may be signs on the road, a hand gesture, or a head gesture, as well as words and sentences. In other words, they may be non-linguistic signs or symbols that carry meaning, as well as linguistic signs or symbols.

The subject of the relationship between the word and its meaning was one of the issues that Plato addressed in his dialogues about Socrates. In the Middle Ages, the question was whether meaning was the idea or something else. In historical times, it was found that thinking about the sign had affected the patterns of meaning, so thinking about the sign entered through the framework of philosophies influenced by religions that believed in monotheism and the existence of God. Meaning moved from ancient formalism and religious ideas in the Middle Ages to the modern world through pronunciation and linguistics, and how it moved from the fixed concept of producing a formal meaning for a single meaning to recognizing the existence of different semantic practices that have their own systems governed by a qualitative relationship between meaning and reality (Omar, 2009, pp. 17-18). We find the definition of semantics as the science that is more comprehensively concerned with the study of signs, meaning, and systems of meanings. More simply,

semantics studies how meanings are assigned to signs, i.e., the relationship between the sign and its issues and the way signs are linked. The essential feature of symbolic semantics constantly includes the image of the idea within it. Thus, scenes of nature, movements of people, and material phenomena are not intended for themselves but as superficial manifestations intended to represent their hidden relationships with essential ideas.

Types of semantic meanings (Qasim, 2001, p. 322)

Primary cognitive meaning: This type of meaning has a sophisticated, complex organization; its means is the level of understanding to convey ideas.

Additional or secondary meaning: This type of meaning is in addition to the primary meaning, i.e., it is not final and does not have the characteristics of permanence and comprehensiveness but rather changes with changes in culture, time, or experience.

Stylistic meaning: This type of meaning is not just about individual expression, but also about the influence of social circumstances on language use, making it a fascinating area of study.

Psychological meaning: It refers to the connotations of the individual, i.e. an individual, subjective meaning that is deeply personal and not characterized by generality, adding a layer of personal connection to the study of semantics.

Suggestive meaning: It is a type with a unique ability to suggest.

These semantic meanings clarify the psychological and mental concepts of individuals in society, which the individual resorts to in an attempt to describe and explain something, and the semantic meaning can be subject to a type of change as a result of social and cultural transformation or as a result of the need to express new meanings to suit frequent use.

Forms of meaning change

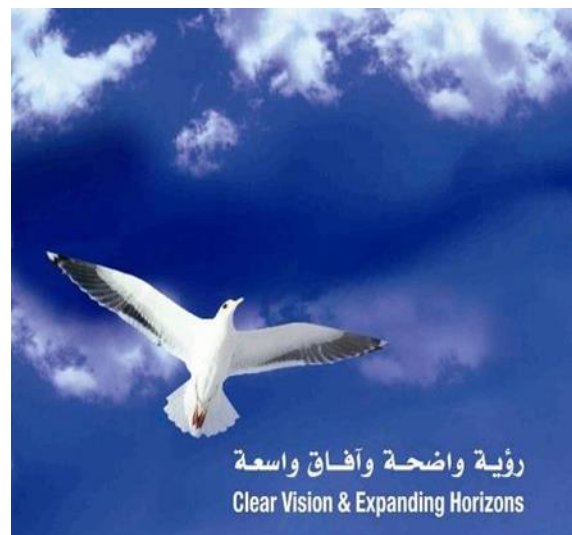
A. Specifying the meaning: where the meanings are transformed from a general meaning to a partial meaning as a result of adding some distinguishing features to it, and as we find in Figure (5), the shape of the handcuff carries many meanings and connotations, as it was specified here to drugs, although the meaning can be transformed to something else by changing the written phrase.



**Figure (5) A poster showing the allocation of significance**

A. Generalization of meaning: It is the opposite of the previous specialization, where the meanings are transformed from a partial meaning to a general meaning, i.e., the meanings of many meanings, as we find in Figure (6) where we see a background of the sky

and the shape of a flying dove, so we find that the designer has customized the shape of the dove as he wanted, although it carries the meaning of peace, he placed it in a symbol that indicates many other meanings and connotations.



**Figure (6) A poster illustrating the Generalization of meaning**

B. Transfer of meaning: It depends on a similar relationship through metaphor and a dissimilar relationship through design, as we find in Figure (7) where we see a realistic picture of a woman carrying a doll and crying, and instead of the designer depicting traffic accidents, we find that he has resorted to

another meaning, which is separation and pain after these accidents, so he described the woman crying over separation and pain for loved ones, which results from traffic accidents, so the viewer carries many connotations and meanings in the design.



**Figure (7) A poster showing the transfer of meaning.**

## Chapter Three

### Research Experience

First: The intellectual aspect of the experiment

The graphic designer and the computer deal with the purpose of producing graphic designs through primary stages, starting with the idea where the designer explains some considerations in the form of drawings on which he builds what he wants to express and obtain and collects elements and images from natural forms to put them in the design, then he formulates in computer language the elements of shapes and color and controls his design which includes modification, to prepare the final formulation of the essential elements of the advertising design, and choose the appropriate program for each design and work on it.

Second: The technical aspect of the experiment

The concepts and meanings of technology are determined according to its position in use in various fields and activities in life, and in the field of art, some see that "technology means skill in using tools, and there are those who see technology as an artistic method, i.e., the process followed to produce the artwork in industrial origins.

Third: Technical analysis of the results of the experiment

By reviewing the group of posters produced by the computer and designed by the researcher,

Poster No. (1) Investment Tree. The shape of a tree in nature

### Poster No. (1) Investment Tree. The shape of a tree in nature



Poster (1) Investment Tree, by the researcher



Tree shape in nature



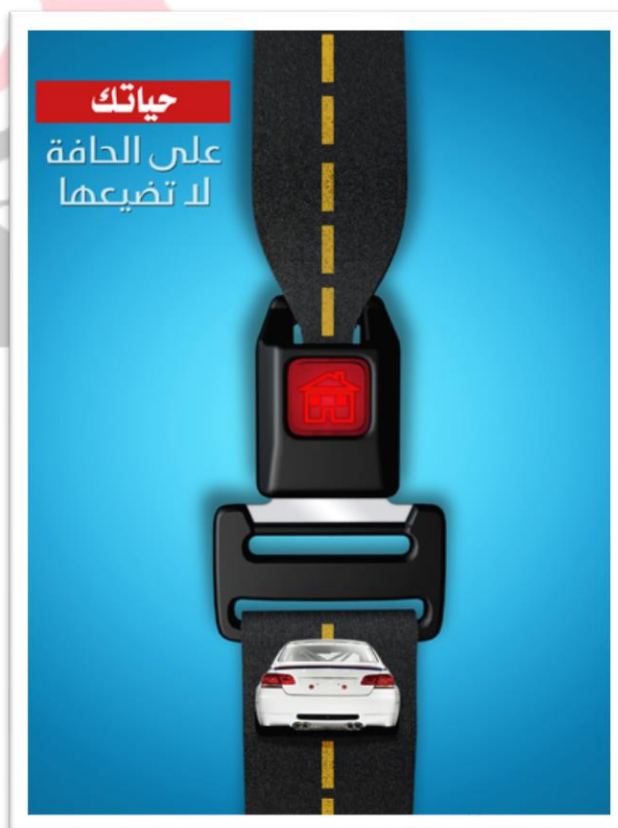








seat belt shape



Poster (3) Seat belt, by the researcher.





2. The importance of deepening the role of the computer as an auxiliary mediator for the poster designer in experimentation and employing the computer's graphic capabilities as an unconventional alternative to create aesthetic effects with different sensory connotations related to deepening and developing his innovative idea.

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