

Research on Illustration Design Strategies based on Visual Narrative

-- Taking Cantonese Cultural Themed Illustrations as an Example

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Abstract: Based on the theory of visual narrative, explore innovative ideas for Cantonese culture-themed illustrations to help spread Cantonese culture. Analyze the creative themes and existing problems of illustrations, grasp the inner connection between material, behavioral and spiritual levels in the themes, and reflect the unity of narrative connotation and visual presentation. From six aspects: mining narrative content, determining narrative method, constructing narrative grid, extracting visual elements, establishing picture content, and giving narrative meaning, a design strategy for Cantonese cultural themed illustrations based on visual narrative is proposed to promote the interaction between viewers and illustrations. Visual connections, associative thinking and spiritual resonance. Integrating visual narrative strategies into Cantonese cultural themed illustrations can improve the communication efficiency of Cantonese cultural themed illustrations and better promote and spread positive social energy and sense of responsibility to the public.

Keywords: Visual Narrative; Visual Symbols; Cantonese Culture; Illustration Design.

1. Introduction

The Cantonese culture-themed illustrations are based on Cantonese history, humanities, nature, social life style and other themes as the source of creation, and are designed to spread Cantonese culture. They reflect the traditional culture of Canton region in an intuitive artistic form. Because illustrations can both carry spiritual style and visual beauty, they are increasingly appreciated and recognized by the public. However, there are still problems in narrative mode and visual expression in the current development process of Cantonese cultural-themed illustrations. As the public's aesthetic taste improves, problems such as single narrative ideas and outdated visual styles will lead to a lack of novelty in Cantonese cultural themed illustrations, making it difficult to attract the public's attention, and thus difficult to arouse the viewer's association and thinking. This makes Cantonese cultural themed illustrations in the in the modern environment, it is labeled as boring.

2. Current Status of Cantonese Cultural-themed Illustrations

2.1. Over Cantonese View of Cantonese Cultural Themes

Cantonese culture is subordinate to Lingnan culture, represented by: Cantonese opera, Cantonese cuisine, Cantonese morning tea, lion dance, dragon boat racing, Cantonese embroidery, Cantonese color, etc. Cantonese culture themed illustrations are not only a form of artistic expression, but also a medium of cultural exchange. They cannot exist apart from social life and are rooted in a specific social and cultural environment. Their emergence and prosperity are both social and cultural development. The results will also reflect and give back to the development of social culture.

2.2. Analysis of Existing Problems

Due to the flexibility of its form, Cantonese culture themed illustrations can be widely used in the production and dissemination of cross-media such as new media, paper media and cultural and creative products. It can be seen that its wide range of application and wide range of influence are very important to the outside world. An important way to showcase Cantonese culture.

First of all, the current narrative connotation of Cantonese culture themed illustrations is single and lacks in-depth investigation of Cantonese themes. The illustrations are based on empty descriptions of external shapes, and there is no revelatory narrative clue in the picture. This kind of drawing idea makes the content of the picture visible at a glance, so that the viewer does not establish an emotional connection with the illustration after appreciating the illustration. It also arouses thinking about the content of the illustration, forming a forgettable viewing experience.

Secondly, the visual presentation of Cantonese culture themed illustrations lacks novelty. At present, many Cantonese culture themed illustrations have stereotyped expressions and outdated picture styles. Therefore, the creativity and aesthetics of visual symbols have become the top priority to win eyeballs. Old design ideas and boring visual symbols are difficult to integrate into the current social context, and it is even more difficult to resonate emotionally with viewers.

3. The Concept of Visual Narrative and Visual Symbols

3.1. Visual Narrative

Roland Barthes once emphasized that narrative and human history have the same origin. There is no nation without narrative anywhere in the world. All nations have their own narrative works, and the narrative works they create are diverse in form and rich in subject matter[1].

From a narrative perspective, a narrative is the telling of at least two real or fictional events in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or includes the other[2]. From the perspective of narrative performance, public welfare cultural themed illustrations belong to the category of visual narrative. As the oldest narrative form used by humans, visual narrative existed long before the advent of writing. It was the main means of communication for people at that time. It was a process of communicating information through the association of visual symbols and imagination[3]. In visual narrative, visual symbols are only carriers. The most important thing is the background story of the design work and the spiritual connotation behind the visual symbols, because good design will become a "resonator of thoughts, feelings and hopes"[4].

The purpose of disseminating the Cantonese culture themed illustrations is to spread the spirit and connotation of Cantonese culture to the public and create spiritual resonance with the viewers. The resonance between the viewer and the illustration is a process from the outside to the inside: (1) The outer layer is the visual connection stage, where the viewer is attracted by the visual effects of the illustration design work. (2) The middle level is the associative thinking stage. In the process of appreciating the illustrations, the viewer becomes interested in understanding Cantonese culture, and then forms associations and thoughts about the content of the illustrations. (3) The inner layer is the spiritual perception stage. When the viewer understands the ideological meaning conveyed by the illustration, he or she will have a spiritual resonance with the illustration. After three stages from the outside to the inside, viewers will take the initiative to pay attention to Cantonese culture and understand the spirit of Cantonese culture in their lives in the future, and experience Cantonese culture subtly. It can be seen that Cantonese culture themed illustrations must not only grasp the aesthetic attributes at the visual level, but also pay attention to the associative attributes at the content level, and also consolidate the spiritual attributes at the ideological level.

3.2. Visual Symbols

Symbols are media that carry and transmit information. When visual functions interact with symbols, people can make associations through symbolic images. It often conveys its meaning through visual experience and association [5]. With the advent of the era of picture reading, images have gradually become the main source for people to obtain information, and visual narratives have also been used in multiple channels. Illustrations are one of the important visual narrative methods [6]. Visual narrative is inseparable from images, and symbols are the condensation of images. The narrative meaning is expressed in the form of symbols. The characteristic of this expression is that the static images on the screen are extended into dynamic behaviors and events. The signification function of the symbols shows the inherent dynamic characteristics of the image, which enhances the narrative and interpretation meaning of the work[7]. Visual narrative uses a two-dimensional plane as a medium to visualize what is being said and express it as symbols. In visual narrative, symbols are a comprehensive composition of formal elements and media in space. Its formal elements include image, color, texture, etc. Symbols exist in all fields of visual narrative and have distinctive performance characteristics. The viewer has a clear understanding of symbols. The diverse interpretations enhance the artistic

appeal and experiential effect of the work[8]. Guided by Peirce's semiotic theory, the role of visual symbols in Cantonese cultural themed illustrations is analyzed from two aspects.

First, analyze the correspondence between the three-part structure of semiotics and the creation themes of Cantonese cultural themed illustrations. The visual symbols are compared with the representation, the ideological meaning is compared with the interpretant, and the descriptive object is the object, from which three pairs of functions are analyzed: (1) The evolution of the object to the interpretant. The ideological meaning contained in the interpretant is derived from the behavior and behavior of the object. What is condensed in emotions can only be expressed to the viewer through visual symbols. (2) The representation carries the meaning of the interpretant. As an external expression of ideological meaning, the representation plays a role in establishing visual contact with the viewer and spreading Cantonese culture in illustration works. (3) The transformation of objects into representations is influenced by descriptive objects such as "people, scenery, objects, things, emotions". The creator refines the formal characteristics of the objects to form visual symbols such as "Cantonese Morning tea, Dancing Lion, Arcade Building" etc, which can not only reflect the background story and spiritual connotation in the picture to the viewer, but also help enrich the picture effect and build narrative clues. The model architecture is shown in Figure 1.

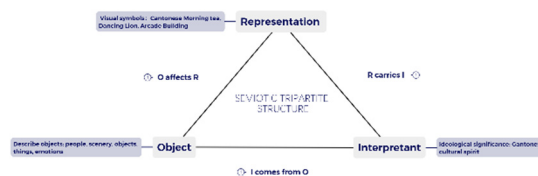


Figure 1. Model of correspondence between Peirce's semiotic tripartite structure and Cantonese cultural themes.

Secondly, analyze the way visual symbols are presented in Cantonese culture themed illustrations. Cantonese culture themed illustrations are an art form that contains culture, education and entertainment. During the creation process, special attention needs to be paid to the social values and regional characteristics conveyed by the illustrations, and the refining and presentation of visual symbols must be rigorous. This has led most illustrations to present the following effects in the picture in order to objectively and rigorously reflect Cantonese culture. (1) The painting method that expresses one's feelings directly lacks beauty in shape. (2) Conventional color matching is visually unattractive and can easily cause aesthetic fatigue in viewers. (3) Ignore the role of texture effects in flat media, and there is a lack of decorative details in the picture. In order to refresh the visual effect of Cantonese culture themed illustrations, improvements should be made from three aspects: image, color and texture to enhance the expressiveness of the picture.

4. Design Strategy for Cantonese Culture Themed Illustrations

The construction of narrative clues is based on the "6W" narrative communication model, that is, "narrator - narrative content - narrative method - narrative discourse - narratee -

narrative effect" [9]. Among them, the narrative content and method are the most important. The narrative content, that is, "what story to tell" is the information conveyed to the audience, and the narrative method, that is, "how to tell the story" is the means to convey the information. The narrative content of Cantonese culture themed illustrations has a wide range of topics, including social life, natural landscapes, historical monuments, etc. The narrative method is visual narrative, which requires first establishing a visual image and then building a narrative grid around this visual image. In the drawing of visual symbols, based on the three-part structural relationship proposed by Peirce's semiotic theory, the formal characteristics of the objective object are summarized, and then the formal characteristics are condensed into symbols and given narrative meaning. The article integrates and innovates based on the above narrative modes and expression forms, and starts the creation with visual narrative and visual symbols as the starting point. It is divided into mining narrative content, determining narrative method, constructing narrative grid, extracting visual elements, establishing picture content, The six steps of giving narrative meaning are specifically advanced, and a design strategy for Cantonese culture themed illustrations based on visual narrative is proposed to trigger a spiritual resonance between the illustrations and the viewers.

Based on the above assumptions, the theoretical model of this paper is shown in Figure 2.

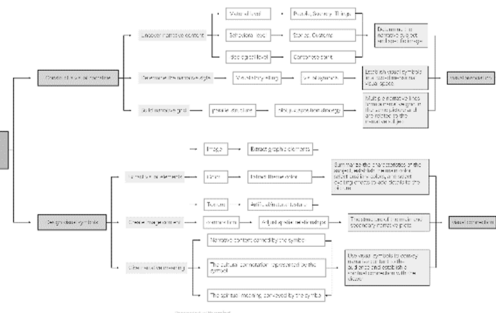


Figure 2. Model of design strategy for Cantonese culture themed illustrations

4.1. Construct a Visual Narrative

Steps to construct visual narrative: (1) Mining narrative content. The specific content is the first step in unfolding the narrative and is also the core of the narrative. The subsequent series of plot construction and visual performance will all revolve around the narrative content. Determining the specific narrative content requires full exploration at the three levels of material, behavior, and thought, understanding the spiritual connotation behind Cantonese culture, and grasping the intrinsic connection between symbols and Cantonese culture, such as: morning tea, arcades, and street scenes. They are closely connected, and together form the narrative line of Cantonese culture tea culture, forming a connection between borrowing things to express feelings and conveying things with feelings. (2) Determine the narrative style. The Cantonese culture themed illustrations studied in this article belong to the field of visual narrative. Its expression space is a two-dimensional static plane and its expression form is visual symbols. (3) Construct a narrative grid. This part is the foundation for building a bridge between the Cantonese culture themed illustrations and the viewers, and determines whether the illustrations can establish a good association and thinking process with the viewers. This article mainly studies the integration of narrative plot structure into Cantonese

culture themed illustrations, and uses the design strategy of plot juxtaposition to form a synchronic spatial narrative. The plot juxtaposition strategy is to place the narrative plots of different stories or different plot fragments of the same story under a unified narrative theme on the same two-dimensional plane. Various spatial divisions and arrangements are often used to combine several different plots. The scenes of the plot are organized in an image to achieve narrative purposes [10]. Multiple narrative clues can not only connect with the narrative subject through time and space, but also arouse the viewer's association and thinking.

4.2. Draw Visual Symbols

Steps to draw visual symbols: (1) Extract visual elements. In order to make the picture attractive to viewers, it is key to draw creative and aesthetic visual symbols. Image, color, and texture are the three most basic elements in illustration creation. The process of transforming elements into symbols is the selection and refinement of image, color, and texture. First, graphic elements that fit the narrative content are extracted from the creative themes of Cantonese culture themed illustrations, and the external characteristics of the narrative subject are summarized in the image. Secondly, in terms of color, we refine the main theme color that conforms to the narrative emotion, establish the main tone, spread the saturation of the main color in the picture, subdivide the saturation relationship of the colors, and create rich light and dark levels. Then according to the adjacent colors or contrasting colors of the main color in the hue circle, the auxiliary colors and embellishment colors of the picture are determined. The combination of main color, auxiliary color and embellishment color is helpful to distinguish the relationship between objects and form a sense of rhythm in the picture. Select texture effects according to the texture of the object and the needs of the picture to enrich the decorative details of the picture. For example, artificial textures such as scratching, rubbing, and mottled textures can express the historical vicissitudes of an object, or natural textures such as wood grain, ripples, and stone patterns can reflect the material of an object. (2) Give narrative meaning. Integrating narrative meaning into visual symbols means that the visual symbols in the picture have become the carrier of narrative clues, which can refer to the nature, humanity, and history included in the narrative content, arouse the viewer's interest in finding narrative clues in the picture, and make the viewer Through the recognition of visual symbols, readers can continue to think about the narrative content.

4.3. Comparison of Picture Effects

From the perspective of the process of establishing a connection between Cantonese culture themed illustrations and viewers, there is a significant difference between single illustration design and narrative illustration design. The single picture lacks narrative clues and visual symbols, making it difficult for the illustration to leave a memory point for the viewer, and the spiritual connotation is even more difficult to penetrate into people's hearts. The connection between a single picture and the viewer is a single line, leaving the viewer with a shorter thinking process. The narrative picture contains a main line visual symbol and multiple branch line visual symbols. The content expressed in the picture is combined with the viewer's own understanding to trigger associations, forming an interactive thinking process, leaving a deep impression on the viewer. It is precisely because

narrative pictures are very general. Specifically, an illustration presents a certain type of established facts and includes many behavioral characteristics. However, it does not contain a single expression meaning, but is described as a universal Adaptable mapping leaves space for the viewer to understand, so it can arouse the viewer's inner reverie. In the process of appreciating the narrative pictures, the viewers are visually attracted, understand the narrative connotation, and are subtly infected by Cantonese culture.

5. Conclusion and Management Enlightenment

Visual narrative and visual symbols complement each other and play a key role in the Cantonese cultural themed illustrations studied in this article. Visual narrative builds the inner framework of Cantonese culture themed illustrations, injects rich narrative connotation into the illustrations, introduces the viewer into the narrative situation of the illustration, and enables the viewer to gradually establish visual connection, associative thinking and spiritual resonance with the illustration. Visual symbols are an indispensable language of expression in illustration creation. They are the external presentation of illustrations, allowing them to show a novel artistic style and enhance the visual effect. The illustration design strategy based on visual narrative breaks through the previous creation model and incorporates more spiritual connotations into the picture. This model is not only an innovation in the visual appeal of the picture, but also an attempt to promote the ideological interaction between the viewer and the illustration. It is also a link between the viewer and the illustration. The exploration of establishing spiritual ties with Cantonese culture helps

Cantonese culture themed illustrations shed their boring labels, enhance visual effects, deepen narrative connotations, better spread Cantonese culture, and promote the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

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