

Research on the Narrative Value of Illustration in Packaging Design of Time-Honored Brands Taking the Packaging Design of Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles as an Example

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ABSTRACT

Based on the current situation of packaging design of time-honored brands, this paper explores the narrative value of illustration in packaging design of time-honored brands and its application strategy in the packaging design of Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles. Illustration in packaging design of time-honored brands is not only a simple kind of auxiliary visual graphics, but also achieves narrative value in packaging design from three dimensions of text visualization, product differentiation and symbol emotionalization. Taking the innovative application in the packaging design case of time-honored brand Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles as an example, the paper explores the narrative value expression of illustration and its advantages in cultural inheritance.

Keywords: illustration, packaging design, time-honored brands, narrative value

I. INTRODUCTION

The word "illustration" stems from the Latin word "illustratio", which originally means enlightenment and illumination. As an important way of visual communication in contemporary times, illustration has been widely used in packaging design in recent years. Compared with pure text, illustration has a great advantage in narration. According to the development status of time-honored brand packaging in China, the author finds that the use of illustration in packaging design can highlight product characteristics, increase the richness of external forms and the narrative of internal information. It can not only promote the sales of products, but also increase the cultural added value of them. Especially for the traditional time-honored products, it is more necessary to spread the cultural connotation through the narrative value of illustration, so as to win the product image great popular support.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE ILLUSTRATION PACKAGING DESIGN OF TIME-HONORED BRANDS

As the "living fossils" of history and culture, Chinese traditional time-honored brands carry profound historical traditions and cultural deposits. In recent years, there are some common problems in the packaging design of most time-honored brands in China. First of all, the attributes and "locality" of the

goods are not reflected in the design elements. Many physical pictures of the pattern of cutting, typesetting, plus the name of the product, looking at the same style, stereotyped, packaging design cannot reflect the traditional characteristics of time-famous products, cannot leave a deep impression on consumers. Patterned clipping of multiple physical images with typesetting plus product name makes the designs almost the same and all in a rut. Such packaging design cannot reflect the traditional characteristics of time-honored brands, nor can it leave a deep impression on consumers. Secondly, the use of color in the packaging design is slightly monotonous. With colors mostly limited to red, yellow, gold and green and other common color combination and collocation, there is a lack of change in the color level. Thirdly, most of the less well-known products, adopt the simple plastic sealing or carton packaging. From the perspective of packaging grade, more market demands are not developed, and the diversified needs of the audience are not met through packaging design. More attention is paid to the simple protection function of packaging, while the importance of packaging design for product sales is ignored. (See "Fig. 1")



Fig. 1. Wangxin Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles.

According to the changing trend of time-honored products packaging on the market in recent years, the above problems have been gradually improved, but the overall process is slow. Major breakthroughs have been made in the products packaging design of some time-honored wine and tea brands. For example, in the packaging design of Hui Liu Gua Pian (a kind of tea produced in Anhui province) (see "Fig. 2"), the commonly used green is discarded; instead, "sky-blue" is used, and the design reflects the authenticity of the

product from the packaging picture — the core ecological producing area of gua pian is used to draw illustrations for packaging pictures, and the representative symbols of Anhui were extracted: the integration of elements such as the pine trees and Ma Tau Wall. The visualization of the information can highlight the regional and cultural attributes of the product, arouse the added value of people's perception of the product, and use the established "sense of fact" of the package to prove the authenticity of the product.



Fig. 2. "Hui Liu Gua Pian" designed by Rongbrand.

III. MULTIDIMENSIONAL REPRESENTATION OF THE ILLUSTRATION NARRATIVE VALUE

A. Text visualization

Text, as a literary entity composed of language and words, has a single and fixed way of expression and thus has certain limitations. Narrative illustration, on the other hand, can not only retell the story of the text through the picture, but also express a social phenomenon and a kind of emotion, so as to activate the text. According to the description of the text, the creator creates narrative illustrations. And with the intuition and vividness of the visual image, the original single or abstract text content becomes a concrete and sensible image. At the same time, excellent illustration works not only fully demonstrate the visualization of text, activate the meaning of text, and inspire different responses and opinions of the viewer, but also can give

the viewer the enjoyment and pleasure of visual beauty through the perfect combination of graphics, color and composition.

In the packaging design of the brand "Yunguan Orange" designed by Pan Hu ("Fig. 3"), an illustration was used to create a "tree of life" representing the life of this respected old man. In addition, the traditional paper-cut style endowed the illustration with a visual sense of "penetration" and "emptiness", the figures recorded the legendary experience of the old man's life, and the relationship between the small sapling and the big tree is a kind of inheritance and relay. The creator inherits the feasibility of text visualization in packaging design and visually transforms the product text through clear and vivid illustrations. In this way, through reading the illustrations, viewers can clearly see the history of the product, feel the connotation of the packaging design, and further strengthen the cultural character of the brand.



Fig. 3. "Yunguan Orange" designed by Pan Hu.

B. Product differentiation

Up to now, differentiation has become the basic principle of packaging design. This is because modern business competition is becoming more and more fierce, and especially with the advancement of economic globalization, consumers often come into contact with a large number of packaging designs in their daily life, so only highly recognizable ones is more likely to leave a deep impression on consumers. This is of great significance to enhance the commercial competitiveness of the brand. It is often difficult to differentiate a product. Especially in the case of a lot of fierce competition in the market, there is undoubtedly a certain difficulty in making a certain product stand out. According to the current situation of packaging design analyzed above, it can be seen that changes in packaging structure are considered in most packaging designs. However, considering production and transportation costs, the application of overly complex packaging structure is often not feasible in most cases. However, as an art of free creation, illustration often has a strong personality and a high degree of identification. Especially in the packaging of time-honored brands, it's more necessary to give play of the narrative function of illustration to bring people a strong impact from the visual level, to reflect the cultural connotation of the product from the illustration, in order to highlight the characteristics of the packaging design, so as to achieve the goal of product differentiation.

C. Symbol emotionalization

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, human needs are divided into five levels. The lower level needs are the most basic material needs, while the higher level needs rise to the emotional aspects and self-realization. In modern society, as people have been basically satisfied in terms of material life, they gradually pay attention to and pursue spiritual and emotional satisfaction. The time-honored products themselves have a deep "historical and cultural" characteristic. As the reservoir of collective memory of a nation, "history and culture" is the most primitive part mentioned by Jung in "collective unconscious", which is easy to arouse people's emotions. By shaping the scene, illustration

can more easily reflect the "history and culture" of the product itself in the packaging of time-honored brands.

In the economic structure of commodities, time-honored brands are no longer a simple product, but a kind of "symbol", namely "cultural symbol". "Symbol" is the world's most concise way of expression, and the transmission cost of illustration graphics is often lower than text. In semiotic terms, graphs (illustrations) are visual signifiers, which are the psychological footnotes formed by symbol users on the objects involved in the symbols¹.

The "historical and cultural" characteristic in the time-honored products are represented by illustration, which is the "signifier" of "culture symbol". In the spread of this symbol, the role of "signifier" can be given play, so as to promote the role of a certain ideology. In this way, it satisfies the emotional resonance of consumers, goes deep into people's heart, and enables people to have a sense of spiritual identity and belonging to a certain extent. Culture is the motivation for consumers to buy products of time-honored brands. By understanding the products and being engaged in its cultural history, illustrators can shape the scene and analyze the context of the illustration to extract representative or topical symbols, including graphics, text, color and other information elements, to attract consumers ("Fig. 4"). On the other side, consumers can stimulate the "collective unconscious", generate emotional resonance, and form their recognition and favorable impression of time-famous products through reading illustrations ("Fig. 5").

¹ [US] John Fiske. Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies. Xinhua Publishing House, 2004.

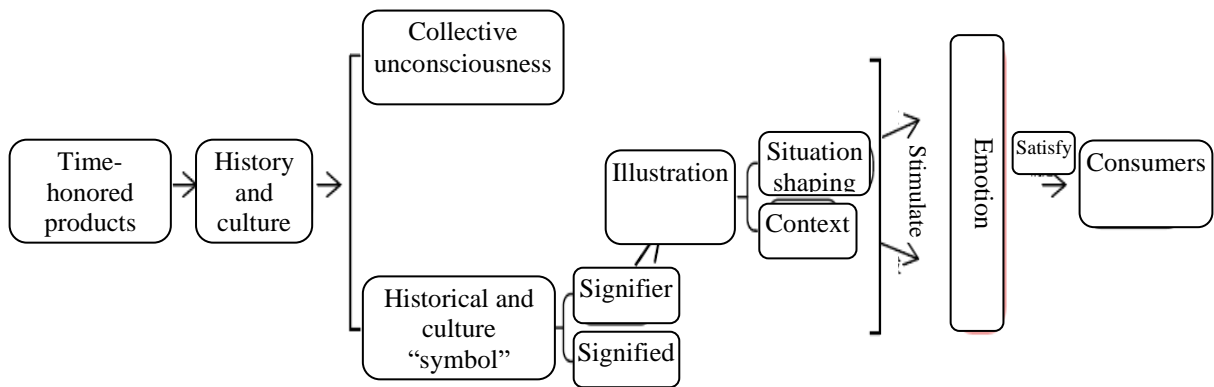


Fig. 4. Chart of symbolic emotionalization process 1, drawn by the author.

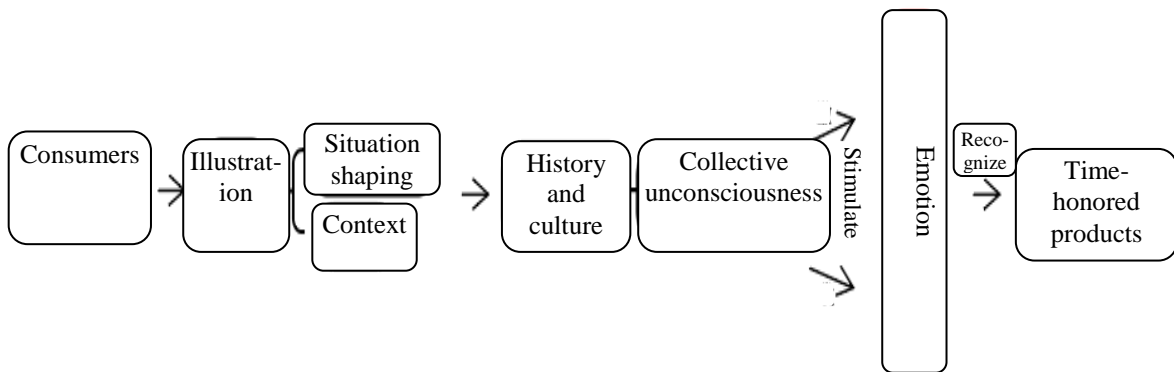


Fig. 5. Chart of symbolic emotionalization process 2, drawn by the author.

IV. PACKAGING DESIGN OF THE TIME-HONORED BRAND HUANGCHUAN HOLLOW GONG NOODLES

A. The packaging design concept of Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles

Known as Xinyang specialty and "Henan Time-honored Brand" and boasting a history of more than 1,300 years, Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles used to be tribute to the court in past dynasties. With the features of being slim as hair and the tube-like center, unique taste and production techniques, the product has been handed down to this day and become a must-have food for every family and the best choice to present friends and relatives during the festival. The package designed by the author is divided into gift set (the gift box is enclosed with two item packs with vertical up-bottom cover) and drawer-type open window box with one item pack (as shown in "Fig. 6"). As for the gift set, which is in the style of wood print picture, the packaging image is presented in the form of illustration. According to the geological features of Huangchuan in

Xinyang lying against Dabie Mountain in the south and seeing the Yellow River in the north and thus having the name of "a land flowing with milk and honey", the illustration fully display the characteristics of the product in combination with the production process of the Gong Noodles. As for the drawer-type box with one item pack, in the form of an open window, the illustration in unified style shows the noodles in the bowl and the whole picture is perfectly integrated with the window opening. The overall style of the work is traditional without losing its connotations, integrating product characteristics, production process and so on. Such packaging design, mainly aimed at the middle-aged market, which is convenient for people to present their relatives and friends on festivals, makes the time-honored brand go to the higher-end market.



Fig. 6. The packaging design of Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles, drawn by the author.

B. The cultural expression of illustration in packaging design of Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles

What belongs to a nation belongs to the world. The culture with unique national connotation has been handed down through the baptism of history, and it must have its shining points, bearing the wisdom of the working people and the memory of each generation. Since it is difficult for the brain to receive and remember new things, in order to be quickly accepted, the existing old things must be integrated in an appropriate way, that is, cultural innovation. And, illustration can successfully bring culture into sight through its superior narrative. With the "root" of national culture, illustration can present the cultural connotation of Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles more vividly in the packaging design. This work shows the production process of Gong Noodles by illustration, which not only highlights the complexity and delicacy of the production, reflects the characteristics of pure manual production of the product, but also realizes the function of cultural inheritance, realizing the unity of modern and national culture in the packaging design.

C. The narrative representation of illustration in packaging design of the Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles

The author carries on the design practice to this time-honored brand packaging according to the above analysis and summary. As a time-honored brand, the Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles should "sing the old song in a new tune", and make its taste authentic and original while getting away from the coarse appearance. Therefore, the author chooses the form of illustration to achieve product differentiation, adopts a variety of packaging methods to meet different market demands, and uses gift sets to increase the added value of products, making the time-honored brand products different from other products of the same type.

The author chose the form of illustration for visual presentation, coupled with the painting techniques of prints, to increase the sense of product culture. The content is presented as the production process of the

Gong Noodles. Through the "process visualization" of pure manual production, it inspires people's awe for the traditional technology. In combination with the local landscape characteristics, the illustration stimulates Xinyang people's feelings towards their hometown with the landscape, and connects people's taste buds with the traditional craftsmanship of Gong Noodles, which not only achieves the purpose of text visualization, but also maximizes everyone's emotions to stimulate the "collective unconsciousness" of their hometown. In the illustration of open-window packaging, landscape characteristic images are integrated into the scene. The proper hollowed-out parts of noodles can also intuitively display the product. The element of wheat, as a foil, indirectly reflects the raw materials of the production. The whole illustration of the scene can stimulate the intuitive association of "authentic" and "original" product.

Considering that the applicable scenes of the product mostly being sent daily and on festival occasions to the middle-aged group at around 45, the dark red with a heavy texture and white are selected as the main colors, in order to awaken the "collective unconscious" of the local people (the Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles have been peddled in bundles with the noodles properly cut and tied up with narrow strips of red paper since the ancient times), strike people's emotional resonance and sense of identity from home, and thus increase the historical and cultural nature of packaging. As the most acceptable color for Chinese people, red not only conforms to the aesthetic taste of the public, but also can increase the dissemination of products (see "Fig. 7").

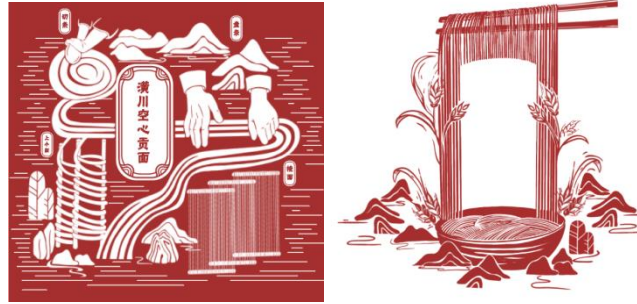


Fig. 7. Illustration of the Huangchuan Hollow Gong Noodles, drawn by the author.

V. CONCLUSION

In the context of fierce competition in modern business, the time-honored packaging design realize text visualization the, product differentiation and symbol emotionalization through the narrative function of illustration, so as to convey the cultural connotation behind the product. This requires a designer to further explore the historical and cultural connotation of the product in the process of packaging design, take the above narrative multi-dimensional expression analysis of illustration as the principle of design, win broader market with illustration through ingenious conception, so as to make the products of time-honored brands accepted by thousands of homes.

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