

Development on Visualization as Storytelling

Focusing on Charactergram

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Abstract: The Classical literatures have been transmitted by word of mouth and later recorded with words, and Illustration also has been developed more effectively in various media. While People can easily understand the exact meaning of the story with written language, they can expand their imagination by decoding the illustrations. Illustration can convey certain story or message without text, and this is the function of Visual Storytelling. Then we have to consider the obstruction by the written language in that some explanations can even deteriorate the range of imaginations by adding information more than it needs. That is, people easily interpret and understand a book only with illustrative images. Furthermore, Illustration which represents certain contents can produce different interpretations as it opens to the imagination.

This study is focused on the creating illustrative style and communicative method of Storytelling based on classical subject matters. The audience is able to assume designer's intention and background from the illustration, if it is a good design. Additionally, Illustration has multipurpose in that it conveys various messages from different media and method. Especially, Illustration can be expanded to merchandising, such as educational products and public design. Furthermore, many historical Characters from the classical literature, can be represented by Illustration, and all through these process, audience can derive certain mutual understanding by recognizing its periodical and cultural by the historical evidence.

In this study, With these characteristics of illustration, I suggest new concept of the storytelling, that is "Charactergram". Charactergram is a new illustrative and representational method which suggests certain messages without text and it creates different interpretations with rearrangement by various audiences. To achieve these possibilities, it needs to signify the key-words or main theme of Story. For this project, I chose, 'A Filial daughter Shim-Chung', a classical literature of Korea, and also, create this illustration by rearranging of the basic elements, such as time, space, characters, events, and the objects of Charactergram. Moreover, audiences could play with the Charactergram, and imagine its storyline by visualization. Finally, Charactergram can be applied to merchandise through every media for an educational material so that it conveys the same value of original sources.

Key words: *Visualization, Storytelling, Illustration, Charactergram*

1. Introduction

Illustration or image has been a communicative method for the illiterate. The Function of Illustration seemed to maintain as it had been applied to the wide range of Communications Design such as commercial or merchandising in these days. For example, Illustrative image in Product is not only selling the idea but also conveying specific messages to the consumer. The connection between decorative style of illustration and text in Art Nouveau was more like artistic illustration. While in Art Nouveau, Illustrational style helped audiences to understand the meaning of the story in Book with compacted pictorial idea, present illustration explores a symbolic message in terms of cultural aspects. The function of Illustration is divided into two categories, One is for giving comprehensive and objective information, such as Editorial Illustration, and the other is for giving an educational pleasure including Children's Book and Book Cover Design.

This Study is for Visualizing the illustrative image which is based on the Story of Korean Classical literature. Representative images itself can convey certain story or message without text, and that is the purpose of the Illustration and Visual storytelling. Additionally, readers are able to infer illustrator's intention and cultural background from the image. Therefore, it is important to create illustrative images by a historical point of view, because the images dominate our lives and have significant influence on lifestyle in certain degree.

2. Concept of Design and Theory

2.1 Definition

In this Study, Charactergram is a new compounded word for suggesting new illustration method. The Charactergram is the combination of 'Character' and 'Gram' which have never been used in the field of Communications design before. It is similar to 'telegram' and 'pictogram' or 'Ideogram'. Referring to the French meaning of 'Caractérogramme', the Charactergram have been dealt with a Visual diagram in Characterology.

However it is hard to find the proper definition in the dictionary. According to the book of 'The Secret Meaning of Names', the diagram of Charactergram seems a sort of polygon which is composed of many axes[1]. It is also called 'Enneagram' in professional term in the field of Characterology. The literal meaning of 'Character' is a letter, sign and symbol, but in this study, it symbolizes the model of a person, an animal and an object from mythology, story such a fiction and play. These Characters have been used as Character Design and Trade Character for the commercial purpose, also visually represented as cultural symbols in the global world. Carl G. Jung (1875-1961) said in his 'Man and His Symbols' that Cultural Symbol becomes the collective image which had adapted in civilized society[2]. Therefore, fictional characters in cartoon or novel can be the cultural symbol even if they are in imaginary story. Moreover, fictional characters can be recreated by the designer' method and thoughts. Characters in the Charactergram are arranged by liner or non-linear composition, that is sequential illustration. As a suffix, 'Gram' has multiple functions and one of them is a measurement as abbreviation, but 'gram' in 'Charactergram' stands for the message, and communications as Telegram and Pictogram[3]. Therefore, We can define Charactergram as a message that created by Characters, and it becomes a pictorial image without letter such as Pictogram. The Charactergrams distinguished from Pictogram are giving emotional appearance in representational symbol.

2.2 Comparison of Charactergram and Illustration

Historically, Charactergram as a ‘Pictorial language’ played a crucial role in a range of Illustration and the Communications Design field. The term, *Illustration* is derived from the meaning of ‘to make light’, and ‘illumination’[4]. Different from the drawing or Picture, today’s illustration explores to the extent of symbolic and suggestive representation. The connection between Illustration and Charactergram can be placed within the context of the visual language.

Table 1. Sequential Illustration/Pictorial Storytelling with or without words

Picture book / Narrative Illustration	Storyboard	Storybook
Narrative Illustration is the telling method through pictorial images and texts, or pictures alone in a linear structure such as a Picture book, Graphic Novel and Comic strips.	Story board is showing a story through Sequential Illustration in time order.	Storybook is the depiction of Storytelling through Allegorical images whether it is a Fiction or non-fiction.

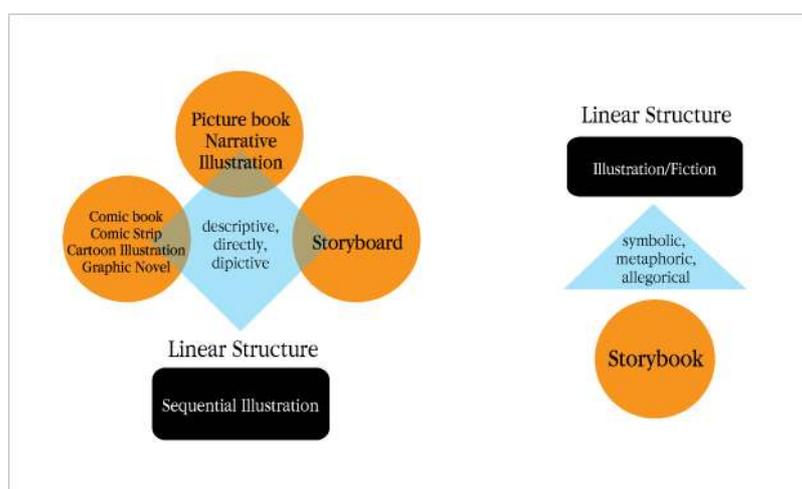


Figure.1 Sequential Illustration and Storybook

2.3 Comparison of Charactergram and the Other Grams

For the comparison of Charactergram and other grams, I summarized the distinctive features of compounded words for indicating picture without texts, including Pictogram, Ideogram, and so on. Consequently, there is common elements that ‘Gram’ implies the state of delivering messages.

Table 2. Design terms with the word ‘Gram’

-gram	Meaning
Pictogram	A Pictorial language from by diagramming of objects, letter, and action.
Petrogram	A painted Pictorial language on Rock
Ideogram	A Semantic Symbol, added ideas of objects but impossible to deduce
Logogram	A Metaphorical sign for an abstract value
Phonogram	A Phonetic sign, represented only sound
Epigram	A Satiric Poem, represented by a pictorial language

Telegram	A message of information/data that is sent by telegraph
Calligram	A poem which is represented by artistic style of Typeface
Monogram	A single line, letter trademarks as a decorative Pattern (ex. Signs of something on coins, seals, flags)[5].
Stereogram	A Flat(2-dimensional)image but viewed as 3-dimensional by optical illusion
Hologram	3-dimensional photographic image represented by recorded image on film
Storygram	A method of diagramming of characters by storyline

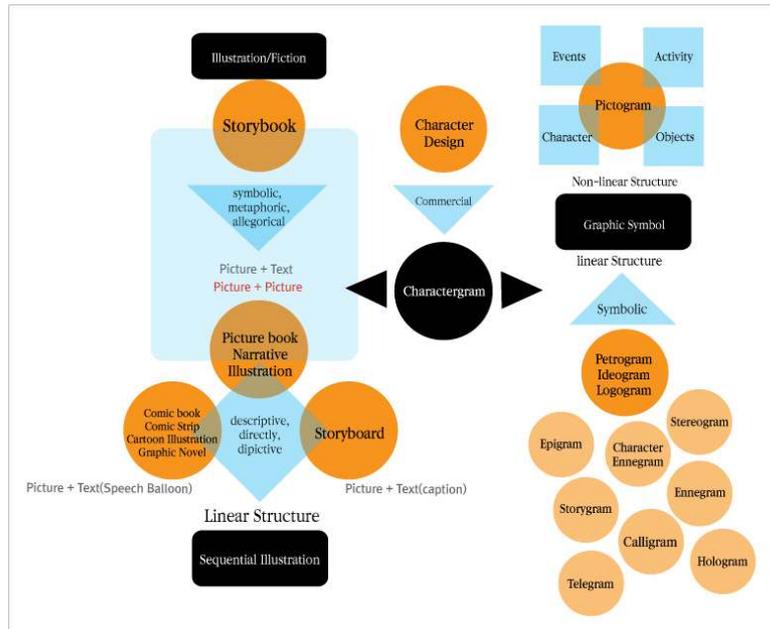


Figure.2 The Status of Charactergram and the other grams

2.4 Visualization for storytelling of Charactergram

In this study, I developed three methods of visualization for storytelling in Charactergram based on a non-fiction such as a novel, and folktale. First, the Charactergram is a part of a sequential illustration based on linear structure. Charactergram is a conveying message through pictorial symbol and various media such as a Pictogram or Petrogram. Although Charactergram cannot directly convey interpretative idea, it tells a story like a metaphoric illustration without texts. Secondly, Charactergram evolves into great intention of designer. The way of rearranging of character is achieved by non-linear structure. Therefore, the Charactergram itself can convey certain story or new message. Thirdly, Charactergram can be also arranged by both linear and non-linear structures. The Application of Charactergram in terms of storytelling is possibly communicated by various messages through Merchandising.

3. Design Process

For the Charactergram study, I chose a famous Korean Classical literature, 'A Filial daughter of Shim-Chung' which is originally from the 'Gyeongpanbon ; a book printed from wood blocks'. I maintain original, but changed its plot of the story. The main point of the reorganized Synopsis is that every supporting character has particular status in the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392). For example, I focus on recreating the supporting character

of ‘Seo, Wang Mo’, the Goddess of immortality and the messenger between heroine and supporting characters. At the end of the story part, I visualized the scene of the religious rite, what is called ‘Pal-Gwan-Whoe(八關會)’ and ‘Lotus Lantern Festival’ in the Imperial City. Therefore, audiences could imagine the Buddhism of the Goryeo Dynasty. For the guardian of the main character, I inspired by the Buddhist animal guard from the temple, such as lion and tortoise. Lastly, I started to categorize the Characters for the Charactergram according to the Aristoteles’ three unities ; Time, Place, and Action. In other words, I rearranged the characters in group with time, space, characters, events, and the objects of Charactergram.

3.1 Method of Visualization as Storytelling based on Historical Research

3.1.1 Time

In the story of ‘Shim-Chung’ Charactergram, I arrange the direction of the sun and moon, and a rooster for the meaning of Time. The various color of space is also symbolic which is based on the function of ‘Color script’, and show the mood of a specific story and event.



Figure.3 Time of Charactergram

3.1.2 Space(Place)

For specific space in story, I chose the main five places, such as Shim Chung’s hometown (Hwang Joo, Doh Wha-Dong), brook, Sea (Indangsu), the palace of the Sea King, and the city of the King. I put every object in a frame one by one such as a Pictogram, and the background of the space depicted as a one color with the patterns. The Characteristic of the house in Goryeo period, is a supported by the Entasis style columns, and ‘八(Eight in Chinese)’ shaped roof. For the reference of these architectural ideas are from the Mooryang Soojeon in Buseok-temple which is located in Gyeong sang buk-do, the legendary village of Shim-Chung in Kok-Sung and the Maeng’s residence under the Ginkgo trees in Baebang Myeon, Chungcheongnam-do, Korea[6]. In case of the Royal palace, and the Palace of the Sea King are the symbolized places: the land of Happiness as fantastic world inspired by the Buddhist Painting in Goryeo (1312).



Figure.4 Space of Charactergram

3.1.3 Characters

For individual Characters, Designers have to care insightfully about detailed elements, such as the dress and ornaments, features or facial expression, pose, movement, and the different elements of social position visually.

In Goryeo Period, there is less sexual discrimination than other periods, so that I focus on father's love of a daughter, and the gender quality. For Shim-Chung, I intended that she lived in Buddhist background, so she is depicted as an young child with holding a lotus from the 'Drawing on the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy who is watching the Moon reflected in the still water (So Wol Kwan Eum Do, 14c)' and a gilt bronze statue of the Buddha's young child from Mt. Guemgang[7]. For supporting female characters, there are flying fairies, dancers or performers and court ladies in the palace of the King. I applied dancing image from the drawing of 'Oh yang sun', and 'Ga-In-Jun Mok-Dan' from the Song Dynasty (960-1279)for these characters. Especially, in the scene of the party for the blind at the end of 'Shim-Chung' Story, there were many dancers, so I gave the atmosphere of the ritual dancing from the Song Dynasty. For the male Characters, with reference to the book of 'Goryeo DoKyung (1123)' and 'Samjae Dowhoe (1607)', I gave the various main colors on every custom to show differences of the class in Goryeo : monk, merchant, the Lord, the highest government official, Emperor, servant, the blind, the aristocratic blind people. In the place of the Sea King, the image of the Sea God is from the ancient painting of Yellow Dragon, and the Lord is from the highest of the heavenly Gods of Taoism.



Figure.5 Characters of Charactergram

3.1.4 Events(Action)

The main events of the story of Shim-Chung are divided into four facets, such as Sacrificial offering, the Land of Happiness (Paradise), Reincarnation, and the religious rite at the Imperial City (Hwang-Sung). These events are focused on the historical events and research.



Figure.6 Main Events of Charactergram

3.1.5 Objects

The term, 'Objects' in this Charactergram is related to the Animals and Plant : Rabbit, Crane, Phoenix, Butterfly, Lotus, Lion, Rooster, Sea horse, Tortoise, the God of the four Seas, Fish, Pine Tree, Floral tribute, Flower-shaped rice cake, Horse, Transportation : Ship, Sedan Chair, Wagon Wheel, Article and Supplies : Iron pot with a three legs, Liquor bottle, Bronze spoon, Flag and Folding fan, Musical instruments, Bamboo flute and Emotional

Quotient/Pattern, Symbolic Color : Visual Identity between human and object and the Visualization of the sense of smell. Every element is followed by repetition, ornamentation, and consistency. For the part of Animal, they are depicted as a mythological symbol based on the Eastern myth, and Buddhist culture. For the Article and Supplies, I chose representative ceramic in Goryeo such as a lacquerware inlaid with mother of pearl for creating decorative patterns and color, so that people can cognize the floral patterns which can refer to the symbol of Goryeo. There are four directions to create patterns for the style of the Charactergram. First, the pattern identifies the space. Secondly, it represents the direction of the character's movement. Thirdly, it tells characters and emotional atmosphere. Lastly, it is shaped by the sense of smell. The structure of pattern is made of a unit as the basic structure of the Charactergram. It could be an element which is conveying the meaning of the object. When the unit of Pattern is in a row as grouping, it means the emotional quotient, and direction of the storytelling. Moreover, there is a pattern which is symbolized the events of the story with using question marks or punctuation marks, so that audiences could understand the storyline. According to Umberto Eco (1932-), Symbol must be interpreted multiple meanings by the context[8]. Therefore, the symbolic patterns in Charactergram as Storytelling could be interpreted by various taste or understanding of people (reader or audience). The indicating patterns are applied in Ms. Jang(supporter of Shim-Chung), Lion, River, the Azalea, Clouds, Tears, Seo, WangMo(the Goddess of immortality), after life of Shim-Chung, the Empress, Shim-Chung in Early Childhood and Teenage, the Palace of the Sea King, the scent of a lotus, Eyes, the Royal Palace.



Figure.7 Object of Charactergram

For the Color system, every color is a compromise between positive and negative meanings of a specific character(Ex. Father of Shim-Chung: PANTONE DS 328-5C, Shim-Chung: PANTONE DS 141-1 U, Ms. Jang : PANTONE DS 5-1 U). Every unit of frame has its own color and let people remind of an oriental seal.



Figure.8 Decoration, Pattern, Color, and the Frame of Charactergram

3.2 Rearrangement of Charactergram and Application

A method of Visualization as Charactergram is designed by historical research. First, the Story is visually arranged by linear structure as the flowing of time. Secondly, Characters in Story, is rearranged in space which is related to the events. Thirdly, Composing of Characters and objects are followed by the main subject of the story in a non-linear structure. Therefore, Charactergram suggests certain messages and created different interpretation with rearrangements by various accepters. To achieve these possibilities, it should maintain the key-words or main subject in Story.

3.2.1 Visualization of Events

The method of visualization of Events is conveying the storyline, atmosphere, color, time, suggestive event in a linear structure. Finally, I made three hundreds twenty four frames with integrated thoughts and rules of model of pictorial language. Charactergram has a visual structure so that it has visual literacy.



Figure.9 Charactergram I ; Focused on the Events, 324 frame, Size: 2m x 55cm

3.2.2 Visualization of Characters and Space

Every space has an implied meaning symbolized certain event. I rearrange the characters into the space sequentially by periodical order, but try to maintain the storyline. The background of Shim-Chung story is surrealistic space, such as this life, and the after life. Sometimes, characters go back and forth between two worlds. The palace of the Sea King is like a Chaos, because it seems to be unreal world which is the combination of this world and after world. Therefore, it needs to be arranged by the space to put every character, and the project was based on the diagram like figure 12. Although it is surrealistic space, the land of Happiness represented as a dramatic world of fantasy. The movement of the Sun and Moon depicted as sequentially at the same time in a space.

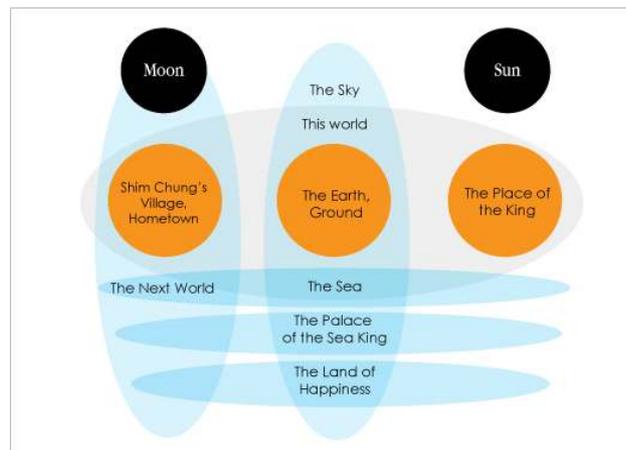


Figure.10 Composition of Space



Figure.11 Charactergram II ; Focused on the Space, Size: 2m x 55cm

3.2.3 Visualization of Transmigration/Reincarnation

This study is related to the Third Method of the Charactergram. The interesting thing of this method is that it has no limitation of expression of space. What I emphasize on the third method is about the composition of the transmigration which is like a radial symmetry. All circular composition is meant to be Reincarnation. The transmigration in Buddhism is made of the Hell, Demon, Devildom, Battling giant demon, a Human, and the Heaven (the world of Six)[9]. To the Six world, I made six Charactergram based on the main subject and key-world ; 1)Mission : Hyo/孝(Faithful to the Parents, 2)Religious : Buddhism, 3)Culture : Religious Rite (Festival at the Royal Palace), 4) A View of the world : Transmigration/Reincarnation/輪廻, 5)Formality/Ceremony : A Wedding, 6)Seasonal Food : Flower-Shaped Rice Cake.



Figure.12 Charactergram III ; Focused on the Rearrangement, Size: 17.78cm x 17.78cm

4. Result of Design and Application

4.1 Illustration Book and Playing Games

The Charactergram of Shim-Chung could produce the book for all age of audiences. According to Andrew Wright[10], He suggests many ways of creating storytelling visually with Elementary students for educational purpose. Finally, I create the contents of the Book with Charactergram, and let people arrange these cards to rearrange the story.

- 1) Design Concept of the Book : For the education to all ages of readers, Charactergrams make them imagine or think the storyline visually and creative.
- 2) Function of the Book : People can organize the story or create it with their own taste and understanding.
- 3) Target of the Book : There is no limitation of Ages.
- 4) Application for the education; A Method of Playing Card Game :
 - ① Arrange Cards by storyline.
 - ② Arrange it randomly so that Story can be produced by the accepters.
 - ③ Categorize by the elements of it : Time, Space, Character, Event, Object.
 - ④ Arrange it by main subjects in a chronological order.
 - ⑤ Rearrange it by any method so that the people visualize and interpret something new story.

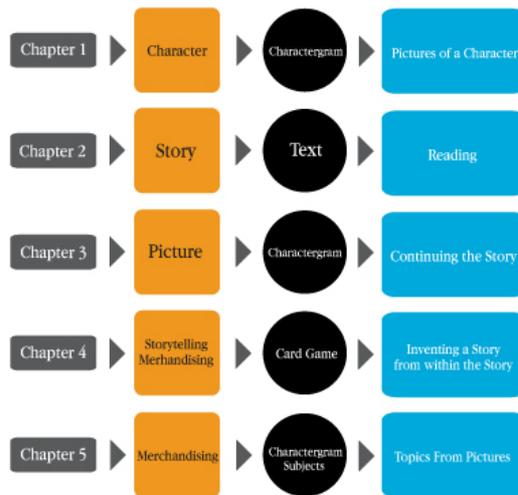


Figure.13 Contents of Book



Figure.14 Application of Charactergram, Size : 10.5cm x 29.7cm

4.2 Tourism Products and Public Design

In this Design project, Charactergram can be reproduced in many ways, especially for Merchandising. For example, it can be used as a tourism product for telling the story more effectively ways. In case of the Classical subject matter such as a literature, or folktales, contained the meaning of the historical background of the culture. Therefore, People can learn cultural code or message of the storytelling through the product. Otherwise, Charactergram can lead the people to find more information about the cultural history and mythologies of a specific Story. If Charactergram can be displayed outside in public space, it can be 'Public Design'. For instance, it can be a piece of artwork such as a mural painting in global spaces like subway station or airport. Public Design is 'of the public, by the public, for the people.' In other words, it is not for the profit, but for everybody and the socio-cultural value[11]. Furthermore, public design must be concerned about the environmental and aesthetic factors.

5. Conclusions

Charactergram has not been used in design study before. The basic idea of visualization with designing. Charactergram is based on its origin in Pictogram, Petrogram, and Ideogram from Cave drawings in prehistoric time. The function of Charactergram is similar to the texts so that it should be interpreted within its context. Also, it conveys various messages to the viewers as a graphic symbol, but it can not convey direct messages.

Charactergram in this study is one of the graphic symbol as well as illustration in visual communications design methods. I intend that Charactergram can help various people communicate through various media and genres, and Viewers can interpret the motif or intention of visual storytelling without texts.

On the other hand, classical literature or traditional folktale should maintain its lessons of the storytelling. If a designer depict the image in their own subjective point of view, viewers can misunderstand its meaning. Charactergram contains visual message, symbolic icons and story with historical evidence for all ages. The subject matter of the Charactergram can be anything whether is based on the classical or modern literature.

Unlike Pictogram, Charactergram can be applied to the various field of design, and it is not necessary convey direct meaning of the message rapidly. Consequently, the main point of the Charactergram is that designers and audiences could create more creative methods with imaginative thoughts and concepts within the story.

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