

# An Exploration on the Integration of Chinese Nationalization Elements and Modern Animation Art

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**Abstract**—China has 5,000 years of splendid civilization, and 56 ethnic groups have their own different cultural characteristics. National culture and art can be glorious, accumulating a rich national and folk cultural heritage. The animation of the theme of ethnic cultural elements has been developing rapidly in recent years, attracting widespread attention and praise in China and overseas. There are many works in contemporary anime films that draw on the elements of excellent traditional national culture, which not only add features to the works but also better spread and promote the traditional Chinese national elements.

**Keywords**—national culture; animation; development

## I. INTRODUCTION

Chinese national culture has a long history and it is a treasure of artistic creation. Early Chinese animation won high praise in the international animation industry with its strong and unique national culture style. However, with the impact of marketization and trend, Chinese traditional national elements gradually faded out of animation production. In recent years, with the warming of animation, the level of production of Chinese animation has been brand-new, and national culture has appeared in front of the audience with a new look. This article mainly starts from the integration of national culture and animation art, and studies how to satisfactorily present Chinese deep cultural heritage and cultural traditions in cartoons. It is necessary to show the artistic characteristics and humanistic feelings of traditional cultural resources, and to conform to the rules of the commercialization of the market. The application of the traditional national cultural elements of Chinese traditional national cultural elements, while not abandoning the cultural characteristics of the nationality when taking the pioneering and innovative into account, can achieve the long-term development of Chinese animation and make it embark on the road of innovation and development.

## II. THE GLORY OF NATIONAL ANIMATION

The development of animation has been more than 100 years old. Whether it is European and American anime, Japanese and Korean anime or Chinese anime, each has its own development style and characteristics. China has more than 5,000 years of historical and cultural heritage, and there are many kinds of national cultural elements. Chinese animation works have different national styles from other

countries. The history of animation development in China has a long history. The traditional cultural elements in early domestic animation works have been widely used. Both the story and the style have a strong national flavor.

### A. *The Embodiment of National Elements in Animation Works*

From the beginning of the development of Chinese animation in the 1920s, it has gone through a hundred years of wind and rain. After the founding of New China, the slogan of "Exploring the Road of National Style" was proposed in Chinese animation production. Under this policy, from the 1960s to the 1980s, Chinese animators have created a large number of domestic animation works with the characteristics of national style and full of unique aesthetics in both content and form. During this period, the animation works in the three major aspects of spiritual culture, visual elements and music scores.

In terms of spiritual culture, it mainly forms unique Chinese national cultural characteristics in the creation of scripts and the expression of works. The scripts of the works are based on ancient Chinese myths, legends, allegorical stories, Buddhist Taoist ideas, etc. Most of the script structures use the linear structure of Chinese literature. The clues are clear and the plot is simple, and the performance of the plot is mostly educational. For example, the animation of "The Nine-Colored Deer" produced by the Shanghai Fine Arts Film Studio in 1981 is based on the Dunhuang mural "The Original Life of the King Deer". The short film is very Buddhist, with a bright color and a soothing rhythm to slowly convey to the audience the Zen and light of good and evil in Chinese Buddhism. The artistic taste and aesthetic orientation of the national tradition are loaded with the unique spiritual and cultural values of the Chinese nation.

The diversity of traditional Chinese art forms provides a variety of styles for visual elements in animation. The art forms such as shadow, puppet, new year painting and paper-cutting in Chinese folk art are exaggerated, concise, and the colors are bright and simple. These features are more suitable for animated elements. The character styling in this period focuses on the decorativeness of the image and the typical characterization of the character. In the scene design, the animation works extract the artistic elements and artistic elements on the basis of the national style. In the drawing of the animated background, a virtual reality layout design is

used to express the depth of the scene and the visual impact of the nationalized elements. Among the visual elements, the most characteristic of the ink painting is the most prominent, the ink painting has strong artistic expression, and the flowing black and white lines are closely related to the Chinese philosophical ideology. The ink animated film "Feelings of Mountains and Waters" produced by the Shanghai Fine Arts Film Studio in 1988 is a major innovation in Chinese animation production. The short film introduces traditional Chinese ink painting into the animation production, and the virtual and artistic conception and the light and elegant picture enhance the artistic style of the animation work. Each frame in the short film is a smart ink painting. The background of the splashing ink landscape is magnificent and the soft brush is full of poetry and profound artistic conception.

The audio-visual linguistics in animation production is the essence of the works. Music dubbing is also essential in animation. The soundtracks in this period are mostly based on the traditional Chinese folk instruments, and even the national operas are used as soundtracks as well as the spoken parts of the opera are used as the dubbing lines. For example, the work "Proud General", which was published in 1956, draws on many elements of Chinese traditional opera, especially Peking Opera. In the short film, a lot of music uses gongs and drums in Beijing opera. The characters in the film are accompanied by the drum beats and beat one step at a time. The lines are sometimes elongated and sometimes swayed. The spoken parts of Beijing opera are mixed with dialogues making the dialogues rich and interesting.

#### *B. The Influence of the Use of Ethnic Elements on Domestic Animation*

As the art communication medium and art symbol, anime works, in addition to teaching and learning, also bear the function of cultural communication. The elements of Chinese nationalization not only add creative elements to animation, but also let the world see the profoundness of Chinese traditional culture. National animation has established the position of Chinese animation in the animation industry. The Chinese animation with ethnic characteristics in the period of 1960s to 1980s is unique in the animation industry. Both the story creation and the character modeling are artistic and aesthetic.

The national element is not only the performance of national art features, but also promotes the development of domestic animation. For example, the ink animation "Little Owl Finds Mom", this 14-minute animated short film is famous all over the world. Le Monde commented on this short film: "Chinese ink paintings, the soft scenery of the paintings, the meticulous style of the paintings, and the movements of anxiety, hesitation and happiness make this short film have charm and poetry." This animation also influenced the creation of early Japanese cartoons. The emergence of the national-style ink animation shocked the world's film world, making the world know the characteristics of Chinese animation and the different artistic conception of Chinese national culture, and laid the position of Chinese animation in the world of film.

The nationalization element also has a lot of influence on the creative style of domestic animation works, especially for the production elements of short films. In addition to the more common paper-based animation, the domestic animation also draws on the Chinese folk art form, combining the folk art style with the animation form to create a rich animation of the "Chinese style". China's first paper-cut animation "Zhubajie Eats Watermelon" draws on the folk paper-cutting art. All the elements in the picture absorb the shape of the paper-cut and the New Year's painting. The animated image is simple and clear, showing the auspicious joyful atmosphere with high-saturation color. The artistic style is simple and has a beautiful national aesthetics.

### **III. THE PERFORMANCE OF NATIONALIZATION ELEMENTS IN THE CONTEMPORARY ANIMATION INDUSTRY**

#### *A. The Second Creation of Nationalization Elements in Contemporary Animation Works*

Since the 1960s, Chinese animation has influenced a generation. The cartoons of this period have won many awards in China and overseas. The artistic level has been internationally recognized. The characteristics of Chinese nationalization culture are deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. At the same time, the elements of nationalization and animation are more mature stage. However, from the 1980s to the 1990s, Chinese animation creation has a slow trend relative to the development of animation in the world. Under the impact of European, American and Japanese animation works, "Doraemon", "Slam Dunk" and some animation works like this are well-made and different from traditional Chinese style, which caught the attention of the audience. Chinese animation gradually entered the dilemma of weak competition and low market share. In order to cater to the development of the market, domestic animation has gradually become "Japanized" and "Americanized". Although there are also animated images such as Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf, which are popular with the audience, compared with the earlier animated works, there are many animation works. However, the cultural and national characteristics of these animated images are obviously insufficient, lacking the unique charm of China.

This year, with the rapid development of China's economy and the consumption structure in the direction of culture and entertainment, the Chinese animation industry is also keeping pace with the pace of economic development, gathering the local market environment and the stage and characteristics of the industry, and constantly exploring a business model and profit method suitable for itself. It not only absorbs the excellence of American and Japanese anime works, but also re-examines the importance of nationalization elements in domestic works. While absorbing the traditional Chinese national elements, the animators also keep pace with the times and improve the nationalization elements to adapt to the development of the times and the aesthetic needs of contemporary audiences.

In the plot, it is not purely based on ancient myths, fables, etc., but mostly self-created scripts. However, the theme of

the story and the meaning of the story still draw the essence of the national elements, such as the animation of the same name, "Rakshasa Street", which is based on the comics. The plot has both the family's affection and friendship, as well as the soulful fantasy creation. The various "fetters" are the common characters in modern animation, but they are also the expressions of "loyalty" and "righteousness" in traditional Chinese thought. The design of human's world, Rakshasa Street and spiritual domain in the animated plot also includes the universal value and world value of Chinese nation since ancient times. The setting of the spiritual domain in the animation is also based on the extension of the concept of "Zhouyi and the Eight Diagrams" in traditional culture. In terms of character design, the production of modern animation captures the audience's preferences and the trend of the times. While drawing on the Japanese animated character style design, it also adds Chinese unique ethnic elements. The animated film "Big Fish & Begonia" is called the conscience of Chinese animation. The drama reveals the mystery of the oriental elements. In the styling aspect, the design source of the character "moving without wind" uses Chinese murals and Chinese paintings to make the characters more visually "ethereal", the protagonist "椿" (Chun) adopts traditional Chinese costumes — left lapel, the costumes are mainly red and black, red symbolizes persistent pursuit, and black gives people a calm feeling. It can be seen of the character's personalities: stubbornness, obsession, and redemption. And the left lapel design of the costumes is also the ancient Chinese tradition. The left lapel means dead and the right lapel means alive, suggesting the difference between the big fish world and the human world in the film. There are also recurrent cycles, embodying the oriental philosophy of life and death and the unity of nature and man in the film.

In the contemporary animation works, the national elements are not as pure and vivid as in the early works. They are based on the actual creation of the works, while the elements are improved, and better integrated into the plot and bold innovation based on the traditional cultural elements. These make the traditional cultural elements meet the aesthetics and needs of the people today, and combine the tradition and the modern perfection, which not only has the traditional cultural characteristics, but also meets the needs of the audience.

#### *B. The Promotion of the Nationalization Element to the Animation Industry*

In recent years, China's animation industry has maintained a relatively fast growth momentum, and the concept of animation aging has gradually changed. More people have gradually realized that animation is not only the exclusive use of children, and it is a cultural embodiment and a cultural industry. When it comes to the animation industry and animation culture, Japan has to be mentioned. Japan is known as the "Anime Kingdom". Its animation industry has become Japan's third largest industry. As a developed country of animation, Japan has a wide range of animation viewing. Animation is not just for children. Young adults are very popular with animation. Japanese traditional culture is

mainly based on the spirit of Bushido and local Shinto. The Japanese youthful blood animation is full of the spirit of Bushido, especially the emphasis on loyalty and bravery. Many cartoon characters in the plot for the ideal and unyielding spirit, which is very similar to the spirit of Bushido. Japan is a small country with a shortage of resources. The pace of modern life is tense. While the work pressure is enormous, suicide and various psychological problems frequently occur. Many young Japanese people pin their own pressures and emotions on illusory animations. The bloody road flies for the sake of faith and keeps fighting. The beautiful Sailor Moon, long hair fluttering, colorful skirts flying, makes everyone in the pressure looking forward to the life in the animation. Such as the current idol culture, the animation captures the psychology of the young people, shaping the virtual idol of the animation, and conforming to the narcissism, admiring the object of worship of the person who wants to become, and then wanting to become a character in the animation, and make the anime characters surround the people in the real life at any time, so that the culture surrounding the two dimensions came into being

With the use of ethnic elements in Chinese animation, the vivid animations have made the Chinese animation surrounding culture independent and original from simple imitation. The appearance of animation has realized the possibility of virtual animation appearing in real life. The surrounding product categories also derive from the single life school supplies to other objects full of traditional Chinese elements. Such as the animation "The Founder of Diabolism", which is adapted from the popular IP, is positioned as "new ancient style, true Chinese animation", and uses a lot of traditional Chinese culture in the service of chemistry and vocal music. The elements make the work full of cultural charm and the beauty of the ancient style. "The Founder of Diabolism" broke the wall of the two dimensions, which well integrated the two dimensions with the three dimensions. Before the animation was broadcast, it announced that it cooperated with the "Cornetto" brand, launched the exclusive flavor ice cream for the animated characters, and produced an advertisement for the same person in the animation. In addition, "The Founder of Diabolism" has also carried out a large number of offline activities in more than a dozen cities. After the official announcement of the animation, the official immediately launched the same paragraph of anime characters, while using the innate advantages of the ancient theme to dock the Yuxian paper-cut, Gufeng oil paper umbrella, Jingdezhen tea pot and many other traditional Chinese intangible cultural heritage crafts. While developing the animation industry, it also promoted the spread of Chinese traditional culture and found a balance between expanding business value and achieving social value.

The modern animation works of ethnic elements have been extended and developed, and brought a new development point for the Chinese animation industry. With the rapid development of the animation industry culture, the application of nationalization elements is bound to become more common and form a normal state.

#### IV. THE DEVELOPMENT SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL SENTIMENT IN ANIMATION WORKS

##### A. *The Inheritance of Nationalization Elements in Animation*

The animation of the theme of ethnic cultural elements has been developing rapidly in recent years, attracting widespread attention and praise in China and overseas. As a traditional culture, national traditional culture and art contains rich material and spiritual life. The animation industry belongs to the cultural industry, and the core of the cultural industry aims to inherit and develop traditional culture, integrate traditional ethnic elements with modern animation works, and not only promote the development of the animation industry but also promote the national culture.

China is developing at a rapid pace. In addition to economic growth, there have also been leaps and bounds in the development of soft power such as culture. Under the strategy of cultural power and cultural export, Chinese animation, as part of the cultural industry, will eventually compete with other international animation powers, and the core of competition lies in the cultural connotation and spiritual significance of the work itself. In addition to the excellent production and beautiful visual effects, an animation works can deeply penetrate the hearts of the people or the unique cultural connotation of the works. Only by continuously digging into the essence and connotation of the culture, applying the essence of the works to the theme of the works in the creation, the development energy of animation works can be stimulated.

The reason why Chinese national culture can be a long-standing and has become a unique culture and national significance culture in the world culture is fundamentally the effective inheritance of national culture from generation to generation. At this stage, the development of animation industry is that the national culture of China in the two dimensions has found an important inheritance channel. The national elements in the animation can play a positive role in promoting the audience. While enjoying the joyful atmosphere brought by the wonderful animation works, the audience can also feel the charm of the national culture.

##### B. *Cultural Innovation Value of Nationalization Animation Works*

How to make Chinese animation go to the world and create Chinese-style anime works is particularly important in grasping and designing national elements and combining traditional Chinese cultural connotations with modern animation art. Any animation works have a single or diverse theme. The Chinese civilization has thousands of histories and rich cultural resources and heritage. The treasure house of Chinese national elements provides unlimited creative themes for animation works. The expression of national cultural elements in the early animated works mainly focused on the use of traditional folk art works. The rich traditional national craftsmanship in the film has received wide attention. With the development of the times and culture, the national elements should also advance with the

times and innovate a new national form suitable for contemporary civilization.

First of all, to find out the intrinsic attributes of national culture, to eliminate the mindset, the nation is not equal to the people and the ancient. The use of ethnic elements in animation works mainly lies in the mining of certain spiritual connotations behind cultural elements. Secondly, the national elements should conform to the context of the times. The traditional forms of national elements give people a sense of national pride, while the spiritual power in the national elements conveys people's positive or deeper spiritual meaning. It will be necessary to integrate national elements into animation works in a way that suits contemporary cultural concepts, and make the national culture in animation realize the value of cultural innovation of the times.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The development of national elements must advance with the times to conform to the development trend of the animation industry. It will be of great significance to make modern animation and traditional national culture combine to find a path suitable for the development of the country's animation art, and form an anime style that has a strong sense of the times and the profound national culture. Culture needs inheritance and innovation, and the introduction of traditional national elements in modern animation can make Chinese national culture spread through the medium of animation art. It is more influential in the world animation stage and also plays a positive role in promoting Chinese traditional culture.

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