

The Rise, Development and Turning of Chinese National Animation*

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Abstract—Chinese animation after 1949 has mainly experienced three stages of development. During the "Seventeen Years" Chinese animation period, the basic tone of the development of Chinese national animation and children's animation was basically established. After 1979, with the gradual opening up of animation creation ideas and the deepening of foreign exchanges, Chinese national animation began to show a richer and more diverse face. Beginning in the 1990s, with the end of the national planned economy era, under the influence of animation outsourcing and foundry, a large number of animation talents flowed out from the animation studios in the state-owned system, and Chinese national animation began to lose its independence, has become a part of global animation production.

Keywords—Chinese animation; national animation; Chinese film

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the establishment of the art film group on the basis of the cartoon art stocks of the Northeast Film Studio in 1949, Chinese animation has entered a new stage of development. Since then, Chinese animation has basically experienced three major stages of development.

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ANIMATION STYLE WITH NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The first stage was the period of Chinese animation development from 1949 to 1976. In July 1949, the National Congress of Literary and Art Workers was held in Beijing. In August of the same year, the Ministry of Culture issued a document stating that the development direction of Chinese animation (art film) should serve "children". Since then, the main tone of Chinese animation has been determined, that is, children's animation creation is the Main content. In October 1949, Teweï, who was sent from Beijing to the Northeast Film Studio to lead the organization of art film production, began a preliminary adaptation of the "Thank You Little Cat" created by the children's writer Jin Jin, and in the second year, the art group successfully moved to Shanghai, the follow-up work will be completed. The "Thank You Little Cat" completed in September 1950, which became the

first domestically produced animated film after the founding of New China. After that, although Chinese animation has experienced a series of political movements such as "the three evils and the five evils", " literary and artistic rectification", "anti-right enlargement" and "great leap forward", it also produced animation production for Shanghai Fine Arts Film Studio in individual years. Some influences, such as the suspension of animation production caused by "the three evils and the five evils" in 1951, only one 18 minutes animated short film "Small Iron Pillar" was completed in the whole year, and the literary rectification in 1952, there was only one 15 minutes of "The Kitten Who Went Fishing" was established and filmed. But overall, before 1966, the development of Chinese animation has been on the fast track of national animation. Various new animation forms and animation techniques have been created and used in practice during these seventeen years. In particular, some new animation forms based on the original Chinese art of the Chinese nation have made the animation of the "Chinese Film" an art type independent of other animation types in the world. New stop motion animations and two-dimensional animations based on Chinese puppets, shadows puppetry, origami and ink art are constantly emerging. Especially since the "Proud of the General" shot in 1955, the fusion of traditional Chinese art and animation has become very mature. In this work, Chinese traditional architectural art such as pavilions, carved beams and paintings, the art of Chinese paintings with heavy paintings, the theatrical art of facial characters, and the seamless integration of Peking Opera performing arts have become a new work. After that, after "The God of the Pen (1955)", "Cross Monkey Mountain (1958)", "Pig Bajie Eat Watermelon (1958)" and "Fishing Boy", after a short period of time Within five years, all the traditional Chinese art and folk art in China have been " animated ". For example, the "Pig Bajie Eat Watermelon" directed by Wan Guchan not only tells a folk story of Journey to the West, but more importantly, it makes the folk art of paper-cutting a property of the film, and it has become the first paper-cut stop-animation film in the history of Chinese animation.

The issue of the nationalization of Chinese animation has been widely discussed and identified as the unique attribute of Chinese animation. But why, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese animation that was not a climate before can quickly become a unique cultural

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temperament from the stage of learning and imitating Disney? Of course, the first thing to do is to benefit from the pioneering Chinese animation and their long-term learning and life experiences in China. For example, when filming "Pig Bajie Eat Watermelon", Mr. Wan Guchan thought that "can you make some articles on reducing the inherent workload of cartoons? The huge workload of cartoons lies in too many planes, and an animation is broken down into many more pictures, if the picture itself changes by frame, the workload will be greatly reduced, but how does the plane itself change? The shadow play and puppet show that I loved to watch in my childhood, and the experience of animation creation for many years inspired me. If you use paper as a flat puppet, then shoot it by frame, and take a few short shots in the studio, the screening effect is better, which increases my confidence. The idea of a new type of art is in my mind." Te Wei, founder of including Shanghai Animation Film Studio, also said, "Most of our director was born in a military art, like the art form to do all kinds of exploration, which is very natural" [1]. In addition, the national help is an important reasons of national animation so bright era in 1950s. For example, the successful development of the most representative ink animation in the "Chinese Film" animation has benefited from the leadership and promotion at the national level. In 1960, Chen Yi, Vice Premier of the State Council, inspected the China Art Film Production Exhibition, he heard that the Shanghai Art Film Studio had the idea of trial production of ink animation, and positively affirmed and encouraged this innovative idea. Later, under the direction of Vice Premier Chen Yi, the Ink Cartoons Trial Team was established. After the trial team made a copy of Rongbaozhai's watermark technology, he found innovative ideas for ink animation. In April of that year, he successfully tested a cartoon animation of a frog jumping into the water. Then on the basis of this short film, after repeated experiments, finally in 1960 at the end of the year, he has been possible to shoot a color ink animation of about ten minutes. The sports passages including "fish and shrimp", "frog" and "chicken" have been successfully trial-produced. This 10-minute short film, which is not well known to future generations, marks the establishment of an animated style that is unique to Chinese nationality. It also means that the "Chinese Film" has the most typical animated style. After the reform and open policy, the development of ink and wash animation has won the first prize of the National Scientific and Technological Achievements in 1984, and the second prize of the National Invention in 1987. From 1949 to 1960, after eleven years of development, Chinese animation finally ushered in the successful release of the absolute peak "The Monkey King". It can be said that the development of Chinese animation in the past seventeen years has basically laid the foundation for Chinese animation, and has also enabled Chinese animation to stand at the foundation of the world's animation forest. The glory of Chinese animation in the past seventeen years has basically ended since the Agricultural Revolution in 1966. Since then, the good momentum of Chinese animation development has been severely blocked, and a large number of creative talents have been implicated. Within ten years, except for some political animated films such as "The Great Statement (1968)" and

"The Ten Thousands of Hydraulic Press Wars (1972)", the development of Chinese animation has basically fallen into stagnation.

III. THE DIVERSIFIED DEVELOPMENT AND ENRICHMENT OF NATIONAL ANIMATION

Despite the stagnation of the Agricultural Revolution for ten years, from the reform and open policy in 1978 to more than a decade in 1990, Chinese animation has regained its vitality and entered the second stage of rapid development after the founding of the People's Republic. After 1979, the first ushered in was the comprehensive lifting of the banned excellent animation during the Agricultural Revolution. With the expansion of opening up, these works have also greatly subverted the cognition of Chinese animation in other countries. A large number of animators began to communicate externally and sent the works to foreign exhibitions.

The most important cooperation countries are Japan and Yugoslavia. In 1981, the Tianjin Arts and Crafts Design Institute also collaborated with the Japanese Panda Production Committee to film the first Sino-Japanese co-production animation "The Story of Panda." The exchanges between China and Yugoslavia are mainly based on the Zagreb Animation Festival held in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Many Chinese directors, including Ada, Zhang Songlin and Lin Wenxiao, have participated in the Zagreb International Animation Festival many times. In addition, the Chinese animators at this stage have close ties and exchanges with the animation counterparts of France, Britain, Germany, the United States, Australia and Canada, many films are playing overseas including "The Monkey King", "Golden Conch", "A fanti", "Pipe" and "Na Zha Nao Hai". Some of these films also actively participated in foreign animated film festival, and there have been 24-films won international awards 37 as many as [2].

Especially after the election of the 22nd London International Film Festival and "The Monkey King" won the best film in 1978, the publishers of the countries have been interested in buying the film distribution rights or TV broadcast rights. Throughout the 20th century, "The Monkey King" has become the most representative works and symbols of Chinese animation. As of 1984, it has been distributed in 44 countries and regions and has been widely recognized by audiences around the world [3]. After 1978, in addition to the full restoration and re-enactment of the previous works, the production of the Shanghai Fine Arts Film Studio was fully restored.

Another obvious feature of Chinese animation during this period was that the first generation of animation directors who had undergone training in the class began to grow rapidly and gradually became the main force of the animation director group.

For example, director Lin Wenxiao of "Snow Kids", director Ada of "Three Monks", director Zhan Tong of "True and False Li Wei", director Zhou Keqin of "Monkey Grasp for the Moon", director Wang Bairong of "Mouse of the Marriage" and "Fire Boy". Most of them graduated from the

animation department of Shanghai Film Academy in the early 1960s. After graduating, they directly entered the Shanghai Art Film Studio and gradually grew into animation directors after starting from art design, original painting design and animation design. At the same time, thanks to the expansion of external communication and the liberation of ideas, a large number of previously negated topics were approved for filming. For example, in 1958, Mr. Yu Zhanguang imagined that the animation changed according to the story of Liaozhai, "The Laoshan Taoist" was denied because it involved feudal superstitions. In 1981, it was finally re-established, and finally completed the puppet animation "Laoshan Taoist", and before the animated "A Deer of Nine-Color" based on the mural of the 257th Cave of Dunhuang Frescoes, "Lu Wang Ben Sheng", was finally completed in 1981.

IV. THE DECLINE OF NATIONAL ANIMATION

In addition, since the late 1970s, the popularity of television has begun to shift the viewing medium of animation from the big screen to the small screen, and viewers have become accustomed to watching animation through television. However, the filming method of Shanghai Art Studio still follows the inertia of the planned economy era. The filming plan was issued by the state, and the film was completed and then purchased by the state. Because the plans issued by the previous countries are all based on the number of movies, if the series of TV animations are taken, the amount of shooting will be seriously insufficient, and there will be many cases where the director has no film to shoot. However, because TV has been opened to foreign countries at this time, a large number of Japanese and American animations such as "Astro Boy", "Saint Seiya", "Popeye", "Transformers" and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" have begun to occupy Chinese TV screens. Under the pressure of foreign animation, Shanghai Meichang realized the value of the animated series. Since 1984, a group of high-quality TV series cartoons have been filmed, a series of excellent TV animation series were filmed and screened, such as "Iden Mo nkey Subdued the Evil" (1985), "Black Sergeant" (1983-1987), "Long" (1983-1987), "San Mao Liu Lang Ji" (1984), "La Ta Da Wang Qi Yu Ji" (1986), "Calabash Brothers" (1986). Especially Since 1988, the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television has begun to expressly demand that the production of art films should reduce the output of a single episode, actively develop the number of series, strive for the right amount of co-productions, and strive to develop a policy of foreign labor processing. Since then, the production pattern of Chinese animation has undergone a complete transformation. Since 1989, Shanghai Fine Arts Film Studio has produced short films, but the basic quality is not too high. Since 1993, the state has stopped the policy of unified purchase and sale of art films, and the release of the Shanghai Art Film Studio has been responsible for itself. Plus from in the late 1980s, a large number of private animation companies began to be established in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. For example, the Jade Animation Design and Production Company, which was established in Shenzhen in 1985, and the Pacific Animation, which was established in 1988, began to receive

a large number of foundries, but there is a serious lack of technical talent. Therefore, a large number of animation directors and animation backbones have flowed into these private enterprises from Shanghai Meiying Factory, Dalian Avatar Art Film Factory, Changchun Film Studio and other state-owned art film studios, which directly led to the serious loss of talents of these state-owned factories [4]. Although led by these senior directors, the quality of these animation companies is not bad, a group of young animators have also grown rapidly. However, because animation processing can only touch the intermediate link of animation production for a long time, it is inevitable that there is a lack of work experience in a series of animations such as pre-planning, character design, and animation scriptwriting, so the young animators who grew up from the animation foundry company animation production lacks a comprehensive understanding. It also makes a brilliant decades of Chinese animation in the 1990's late in the decade began to decline. So for a while, Chinese animation has become synonymous with poor animation.

V. CONCLUSION

In fact, this situation does not only appear in China. In the entire socialist camp, the excellent national animations produced by the countries of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia are as fast as the Chinese animation. For example, once in a puppet animation and distinctive features have a significant impact on the pattern of world animation in Czechoslovakia in 1993 after the split of the country into two independent sovereign states, animation production and quality rapid decline in the short term, from 1990 to 1996, the number of animated films produced in the Czech and Slovak countries had dropped from an average of 140 to about 50[5]. The reason is also roughly the same as the dilemma of Chinese animation. In the case of the original planned appropriation, Czechoslovakia animation, like other commodities, fully implements the planned economic system of integrated production. The state issues production plans and sets production targets. After the completion of production, it is acquired by the state. Therefore, the animation studio does not worry about sales, but is fully committed to creation. But in the 1990s, when television began to replace the mainstream way of film consumption as a mass consumer, there was no national allocation and budget, and market-oriented TV stations were more inclined to buy cheaper American animation. The sluggish market has allowed a large number of animated talents to leave the United States and Western Europe, and it has added to the difficulties of Czechoslovakia animation. In the new historical journey, the outstanding art of the Zagreb animation school of the former Soviet Union, China, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia began to become history.

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