

Rooting in Traditional Culture, Innovative Expression

Research on TV Animation Creation of the Inheritance and Innovative Concepts of Folktales in Eastern Hubei

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ABSTRACT

From the very beginning, TV animation in China has been committed to creating a road with its own national characteristics, with distinctive national traditional culture and educational orientation. In the 70 years since New China, in the process of the national character of Chinese TV animation, Chinese traditional folktales have been particularly closely related to it, and important classics have been presented in all historical stages. Eastern Hubei is located on the north bank of the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, at the southern foot of the Ta-pieh Mountains. It connects the south to the north and connects the east to the west. It is rich in resources such as national culture and folktales. It is a good theme for TV animation creation and adaptation. This article will study from the perspective of the inheritance of folktales, combined with the research methods and related results of art and ethnology, to interpret the relevant theories of the creation and inheritance of the TV animation of the folktales of the eastern Hubei in the new era.

Keywords: TV animation, Eastern Hubei folktales, Inheritance and innovation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is the blood of a nation and the spiritual home of the people. The excellent Chinese traditional culture conceived in the development of more than 5,000 years of civilization accumulates the spiritual pursuit of the Chinese nation, and is of great significance to the continuation and development of Chinese civilization and the promotion of human civilization. Folktales are prose-style oral literary works created by the working people, one of the important categories of folk literature, and an important part of Chinese excellent traditional culture, which have an important influence on entertainment, education, culture and art. In January 2017, the Central Office and the Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on the Implementation of the Inheritance

and Development Project of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture", and proposed the implementation of the "Animation Creation Project for Chinese Classic Folktales". After the deployment of the National Radio and Television Administration (NRTA), a total of 21 online cartoons were funded in 2017, 2018 and 2019. China is striving to promote the inheritance of Chinese cultural genes and point out the direction for the creation of folktale TV animations. This article will study the use of TV animation as an art form to conduct targeted research on the creation of TV animation for the folktales of eastern Hubei, and conduct research on the creation of animation in terms of story content, animation IP, narrative expression, art form, theme connotation, etc., in order to provide a certain theoretical reference for the creation of TV animation in the new era.

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2. LOOKING FOR THE "MEMORY POINT" OF NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS: THE CONTENT MINING AND VALUE RESEARCH OF THE FOLKTALES OF EASTERN HUBEI

2.1 *Excavation and Arrangement of Folktales in Eastern Hubei*

The eastern Hubei is located on the north bank of the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, at the southern foot of the Dabie Mountains[3], linking south to north, connecting east to west. Different historical periods are infiltrated by foreign cultures, forming a unique cultural form integrating Chu culture, Wu culture and Central Plains culture. There are strong folk customs and many celebrities generation by generation, where a large number of folktales were born in the development of this area. Especially the folk tales of eastern Hubei represented by Magu, Zen patriarch, Su Dongpo, Li Shizhen, Xing Xiuniang, etc., have special historical memory points and cultural character. These folktales are close to life, carry the historical memory of the times and the nation, and contain profound cultural connotations and national spirits. They reproduce certain essential features of human society in various periods in eastern Hubei, and they are truly valuable national wealth in eastern Hubei culture.

Folktales in the eastern Hubei are scattered all over the country. In addition to folk communication, many books have included large numbers of the folktales, such as: Liu Shouhua, Jiang Yun, Han Zhizhong, and Li Huifang's "Chinese Folktales Collected Hubei Volume" (1999); Liu Shouhua's "Overview of Hubei Folklore in 50 Years" (1999) and "History of Chinese Folktales" (2012); Rao Xuegang's "Su Dongpo in Huangzhou" (2000); Zheng Bocheng's "Folk Tales of Huanggang Area" (1989), "Legend of Li Shizhen" (1983) and "Mr. Xiguai" (1996); Liu Kuili's "Chinese Folk Culture Series" (1995); "The Magical Doctor Li Shizhen" (1993) compiled by Zheng Bocheng and others; Lin Jifu's "Chinese Folktales" (2006); "Collection of Hubei Folktales and Legends" (1991) "Huanggang Region Volume", "Ezhou Region Volume", "Huangshi Region Volume" compiled by Hubei Branch of Chinese Folk Art Research Association and Hubei Provincial Mass Art Museum; and 75 pieces of stories of Su Dongpo edited by local scholar Ding Yonghuai "The Legend of Su Dongpo" (1986).

There are historical figures, legends, life stories, folk jokes, myths and legends, animal stories, etc. These folktales condense the wisdom of the people of eastern Hubei. They are simple and beautiful, rich in imagination, full of wit, rich in philosophy and educational value, and have strong national and local characteristics. They give people the enjoyment of the beauty of folk art, which is very suitable for the re-creation of TV animation, and has a high value of adaptation and reference.

2.2 *The Status and Value of Folktales in Eastern Hubei*

In 2003, the Chinese government launched the "government-led, social participation" intangible cultural heritage protection project, and folktales were included in the intangible cultural heritage protection project. The current national intangible cultural heritage has a total of 1,372 items, including 143 folktales, which the eastern Hubei region has 3 items. They are the "Legend of Li Shizhen" declared by Qichun County of Hubei Province, which was approved by the State Council to be included in the third batch of National Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2011, "Legend of Zen Patriarch" declared by Huangmei County, Hubei Province, and the "Legend of Su Dongpo" declared by Huanggang City, Hubei Province, which was approved by the State Council to be included in the fourth batch of National Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2014. In addition, there are seven provincial intangible cultural heritage, including: "The Story of Eighteen Laozi" in Hong'an County, "Legend of Wanmizhai" in Luotian County, "Legend of Huangmei Zen Patriarch" in Huangmei County, "Legend of Li Shizhen" in Qichun County, "Legend of Su Dongpo" in Huanggang City, "Legend of Zen Patriarch" in Wuxue City, and "Legend of Chen Xiwei" in Qichun County, which are the most typical folk historical figures and legends in the eastern Hubei, and they have national popularity and mass foundation.

3. THE TRANSFORMATION AND VALUE EXTENSION OF TV ANIMATION SYMBOLS IN THE FOLKTALES OF EASTERN HUBEI

From the perspective of multiple visual comparisons between the formation of the "Chinese School" and the development of TV animation in developed countries, the development of TV animation should draw nourishment from the

traditional culture of the nation, dig out cultural elements that fit the development of the times, innovate animation styles, and create animation images. Only in this way can it be possible to create more excellent classic works that resonate with the audience and promote the prosperity and progress of China's TV animation industry. The early Chinese TV cartoons "Nezha Conquers the Dragon King", "The River Snail Maiden", "Zhang Fei Interrogating the Melon", "Calabash Brothers", "Oriental God Baby" and "Afanti's Story" are all based on folktales or adapted from myths and legends. While conveying national stories and national spirit, these TV cartoons also draw on Chinese traditional artistic expressions such as shadow puppets, paper-cutting and opera, and combine the painting and modeling design characteristics of Chinese folk art, which are very national characteristics.

3.1 TV Animation IP Creation of Eastern Hubei Folktales

Distinctive animated characters are the soul of a TV cartoon, and they are responsible for the narrative function of the entire film. The excavation and re-creation of representative folktale characters is an important factor for the success of a TV animation creation. There are many celebrities in the eastern Hubei. According to the literature, there are more than 1,600 celebrities in Huanggang area alone, involving politics, economy, military, science and technology, culture, art, medicine, Buddhism and many other fields [2], leaving a large number of celebrity biography, character story, etc., such as, well-known eminent monk the fifth ancestor Hongren and sixth ancestor Huineng in the Tang Dynasty; Bi Sheng, the inventor of movable type printing, and the famous litterateur Su Dongpo in the Song Dynasty; the famous medical sage Li Shizhen during the Ming Dynasty; Li Siguang, known as the giant of modern geological sciences, and patriotic poet and scholar Wen Yiduo. They were all born in eastern Hubei. These celebrities have a strong influence and mass base. Creating animations on well-known characters can quickly grab everyone's attention and make resonance. The deeds of many celebrities in the eastern Hubei region have left an irreplaceable mark on the development history of China throughout the ages. The excavation of typical celebrity images has laid a firm foundation for the creation of TV animation IP. For example, the 52-episode large-scale children's cartoon "Herb Family" recently broadcast by CCTV is based on a great medical scientist Li

Shizhen who was born in Qichun, Hubei, in the eastern Hubei, having the title of "Sage of Medicine". The cartoon is a magical herb world created by the concept of the second element. In order to realize the mystery contained in each herb in detail, the production team gives medicinal materials life, and creates many vivid and lively herb elf characters, such as Herbal Aberdeen, Yam Aberdeen, Wolfberry Aberdeen, Momordica grosvenori, Rose Sister, etc. Through these cute little cartoon images, the previously difficult knowledge of Chinese herbal medicine is processed artistically and transformed into vivid and interesting stories, allowing children to subtly learn the knowledge of Chinese herbal medicine and pursue a healthy lifestyle in a happy atmosphere. The successful creation of the character IP of "Herb Family" has firmly established the foundation for the success of the film.

3.2 TV Animation Content Transformation and Narrative Expression of Folktales in Eastern Hubei

As a comprehensive art, the success of TV animation contains many factors, and to a certain extent depends on the output of other art forms. For example, folk literature based on linear narrative methods — folktales, folk legends, novels, operas, etc. These art works are themselves a treasure house of art. They can not only provide specific themes, characters, stories, and classic cultural characteristics, but also integrate their own artistic expressions into TV animation creation. Folktales, as folk literature that was born and circulated independently by a region or nation, have inherently high literary and educational value. Many widely circulated folktales have complete characters, stories, plots and other drama structures. They are excellent themes adapted from TV animation. Recent TV animations, such as "The Marine Map of the Silk Road", which tells the thrilling voyage story of Wang Dayuan, a navigator in the Yuan Dynasty, reappearance of Zhang Qian's "Legend of Silk Road Special Envoy Zhang Qian" and "Legend of Nezha", have transformed and reconstructed traditional folk materials. In addition, there are "King Yu Tamed the Flood", "Stories in the Forest", "Legend of a Rabbit", "Lovely China" and "New Calabash Brothers" are also adapted from folktales. The integration of TV animation and folk tales presents a profound national culture, has a strong educational significance, and is widely welcomed by the public.

The folktales of the eastern Hubei are rich in resources, distinctive features, various types of themes, strong national and regional cultural atmosphere, high visibility, high integrity, and extensive and solid mass foundation and educational value. They mostly use linear narrative methods, and then have a great fit with the linear narrative-based TV animation. For example, the widely known, famous Huangmei actress grandmaster "Xing Xiuniang", who "no money, no home, listen to Xiuniang singing and picking tea", is the originator of Huangmei Opera. She has performed for Qianlong four times. She has gone through ups and downs in her life and left a large number of folktales, which are very suitable for TV animation adaptation. At the same time, the art of Huangmei Opera can be integrated into it to further enrich the artistic expression of TV animation. The TV animation "Herb Family" is adapted from the life story of the medical scientist Li Shizhen, and runs through the essence of the country-herbal knowledge. In the process of compiling the masterpiece "Compendium of Materia Medica", he went through hardships, traveled all over the country and listened to the opinions of tens of thousands of people. He visited doctors all over the country to collect medicines, read up to 800 kinds of books during 27 years, and formed a large number of linear stories during the period. The play highly integrates the complete linear character story with the drama structure of TV animation. It is a fusion of tradition and science, and it is the inheritance of an era of national quintessence. The narrative form of the cartoon played an important reference role for the development of this article.

3.3 TV Animation Art Form of Folktales in Eastern Hubei

In the new era, the creation of TV animation must demonstrate the national character. The adaptation of the TV animation of the folktales of eastern Hubei must reflect the national and regional characteristics and highlight the national charm. It is to pay attention to the embodiment of the national artistic elements and the use of traditional aesthetics and artistic language. The natural and cultural aspects of eastern Hubei are beautiful, with beautiful scenery and many celebrities and relics, and the national cultural heritage is profound. The region has rich folk art resources, and has formed unique regional and folk characteristics in the development process of spread, change and inheritance. For example, the well-known intangible cultural heritage "Huanggang Folk

Painting", a mass folk painting form with characteristics of Chu culture. It mainly depicts folk customs, pastoral life and the yearning and pursuit of modern new life. It adopts modern painting language, piles colors, and has unique characteristics of Chu folk art. In addition, there are folk crafts such as "Yingshan Carving", "Huangmei Picking Flowers", "Hong'an Embroidery", "Qichun Cloth Pasting" and so on. The unique painting style and artistic expression form play an important reference role for the setting of TV animation aesthetics. In addition, there are a large number of local traditional dramas circulating in eastern Hubei. In addition to the "Huangmei Opera" and "Chu Opera" that have developed from folk dramas to provincial and even national levels, there are also classic dramas such as "Han Opera", "Tea Picking Opera", "Quilt Opera", "Eastern Tune Flower Drum Opera", "Wenqu Opera", "Ganliu Opera" and "Shadow Play", etc. In particular, Huangmei Opera, one of the five major Chinese opera genres, has strong regional and ethnic characteristics for its unique modeling, decoration, performance and soundtrack. In addition, the folktales of eastern Hubei are generally mixed with traditional cultural forms such as nursery rhymes and chanting. This cultural element can be properly integrated in the adaptation and production of animation works, which can not only shorten the distance and intimacy with the audience, but also greatly enhance the cultural and artistic value of the work. In short, the painting and modeling characteristics of these national crafts, folk arts, folk dramas and folk art provide a lot of reference elements for the artistic expression and painting style of the TV animation of the folktales of the eastern Hubei.

3.4 Dissemination of the Theme of the TV Animation of the Folktales

In December 2020, the National Radio and Television Administration (NRTA) announced the list of outstanding Chinese TV cartoons in the fourth quarter of 2020. One of the most important Chinese TV cartoons selected this time is to focus on traditional culture. Eastern Hubei has a profound historical and cultural heritage. The development in the past dynasties has made this region form multiple forms such as red culture, Dongpo culture, opera culture, Taoism culture, medical culture, and embroidery culture, forming a unique "eastern Hubei culture" [2]. In addition to high literary and aesthetic values, these eastern Hubei cultures also have important scientific, practical, historical, and political values. They are simply the

"encyclopedia" of the eastern version of Hubei. They are the cultural treasures of the people of eastern Hubei and the whole country, and are worthy of inheritance, study and development from the majority of people. TV animation in China has been committed to a national development path from the beginning to the end, and it is entertaining through education. Television animation is an important carrier for the dissemination of folk culture, folk literature, and folktales. It has a great advantage in disseminating and promoting national culture, regional culture, and folk literature. Zhang Qiongjie and Liu Sen's "Analysis of Exploring the Development of Chinese Animation from Folktales", Xu Kun's "American TV Animation Research and Its Enlightenment to Chinese Animation", Yin Cun's "Analysis of the Ways of TV Animation Inheriting Traditional Culture" propose that the foundation of domestic cartoons lies in traditional culture and folk art, and the development of TV animation must infiltrate traditional culture, inherit and carry forward Chinese traditional culture, so that it has national flavor and Chinese characteristics. Nationalization will become the fundamental direction of China's animation development in the future. "Research on the Development of China's TV Animation and the Path of Inheriting National Culture" written by Wan Qing and "On the Path of Inheriting National Culture in China's TV Animation" written by Yao Guiping propose that TV animation is an important carrier for the inheritance of traditional culture and an important channel for the spread of national culture, playing an important role in the spread of Chinese culture. The creation of TV animation of eastern Hubei folktales is an important way to guard the tradition, carry forward the folk culture of eastern Hubei people, and realize the spiritual value, artistic value and aesthetic value. The inheritance, promotion and protection of folktales, arousing people's self-identification of Chinese traditional culture and spirit, constructing animation national aesthetic characteristics, and safeguarding national cultural security are of practical significance. In addition, it has certain reference significance for the inheritance, dissemination and protection of China's intangible cultural heritage.

4. CONCLUSION

The use of folktales in TV animation is not only the telling of story content, but more importantly, a kind of cultural inheritance. The inheritance and breakthrough of TV animation art to the folktales of eastern Hubei will not only enrich the themes of TV

animation art, but also enable more people to have a deeper understanding of the traditional culture of the eastern Hubei, playing a vital role in the inheritance and development of traditional culture and folk art in the eastern Hubei. Traditional culture and folk art are the foundation of TV animation creation. While adhering to the inheritance of national traditional culture, it is necessary to constantly explore and innovate the style and form of animation, explore the era of TV animation in the real context and local culture, and make excellent works with Chinese national characteristics, entertaining, telling Chinese stories, and spreading Chinese culture.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This article is independently completed by Yunpeng Tang.

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