



The Influence of Chinese Animated Films on the Moral Education of Chinese Teenagers

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Abstract. As an art form, animated films bear a rich communication function, while the expression and narrative content of Chinese animated films shoulders the function of moral education. Chinese animated films are one of the effective ways to implement moral education for teenagers. Excellent Chinese animated films must be created in combination with the laws of physical and mental development of teenagers and the quality of the film itself. Through continuous introduction of excellent Chinese animated films, the spiritual needs of teenagers can be continuously met, so as to realize the moral education function of Chinese animated films.

Keywords: Chinese Animated Film · Teenager · Morality · Education

1 Introduction

Animated films are one of the art forms that are deeply loved by teenagers, not only because they have unique forms of artistic presentation, but more importantly, they contain rich humanistic emotions. On this basis, Chinese animated films play a subtle role in the moral education of teenagers. [1][2].

2 Development and Status Quo of Chinese Animated Films

Chinese animated films refer to animated works that are independently created and produced by China and express the Chinese people's own humanistic thoughts, customs and aesthetic characteristics. [3].

2.1 The Development of Chinese Animated Films

In 1926, China's first animated film "Studio Scene", produced by the Wan brothers, came out, and Chinese animated films experienced a tortuous growth process. With the rapid development of the information age, Chinese animated films are also ushering in the spring. In 2009, "Plesant Goat and Big Big Wolf: Soaring" with a box office of 86.21 million yuan, made Chinese animated films show a favorable development trend. From

2009 to 2017, China released a total of 241 domestic animated films, achieving a total box office of 8.62 billion yuan. From 2009 to 2017, there were 15 domestic animated films that exceeded 100 million yuan at the box office. [4].

With the continuous reform and deepening of the Chinese animated film industry, there are more and more works with increased investment and improved quality, and the quality of Chinese animated films has been greatly improved. Compared with the investment and cycle of Hollywood animated films, which occupy a considerable proportion of the animated film market, Chinese animated films such as “Dragon Nest”, “Monkey King: Hero is Back” and “Big Fish & Begonia” still have deficiencies, but they still occupy a certain share of film viewing in the Chinese market. With the reform and development of Chinese production technology, the visual effects of the works presented by the production technology of Chinese animated films are not inferior to those of American animated films. [5].

2.2 The Status Quo of Chinese Animated Films

Chinese animated films advance triumphantly all the way, breaking records one after another, but at the same time, problems in creation and creativity, production and planning, and publicity and distribution are gradually exposed. Although the high box office cannot be used to measure the quality of a film, the box office is still an important indicator to measure the development of Chinese animated films.

The box office of Chinese animated films shows a trend of polarization. Among the 241 Chinese animated films released from 2009 to 2017, a total of 15 films grossed over 100 million yuan at the box office, with a total of 4.928 billion yuan at the box office. However, the box office profits of other Chinese animated films were mediocre. The emergence of such a situation is not unrelated to the scatter of the box office caused by the cluster of release schedule of Chinese animated films. The traditional “Spring Festival schedule”, “Labor Day schedule”, “Children’s Day schedule”, “summer vacation schedule”, and “National Day schedule” have always been “a place of military and strategic importance”. The release of high-density films will inevitably lead to the compression of the film row piece volume of a single film, and the number of moviegoers will inevitably get shunted.

To break through this “internal friction” development situation, in addition to broadening the schedule and implementing targeted publicity and distribution strategies, the more important thing is to improve the quality of the works. The development of Chinese animated films has always advocated “promoting the Chinese spirit, well telling Chinese stories, showing Chinese style, and building Chinese brands”, but it is often difficult to achieve this in the actual creation of works. Due to blind propaganda and education, and sluggish and boring narrative, the essence of Chinese culture is difficult to be presented in Chinese animated films. The vulgar, mischievous and out-of-context plots deviate from the spirit and aesthetics of traditional culture. Excellent traditional Chinese culture is a valuable asset for the creation of Chinese animated films. In the creation of Chinese animated films, it is necessary to expound Chinese stories, explain Chinese culture, and organically combine cultural heritage and film creation, so that Chinese stories of unique flavor can be presented in Chinese animated films.

3 The Moral Education Function of Chinese Animated Films

In September 2016, the “Core Competencies and Values for Chinese Students” was officially released. The “Core Competencies and Values for Chinese Students” is centered on cultivating “full-developed people”. It is a concrete interpretation of the connotation of quality-oriented education from 3 aspects, 6 core literacy and 18 basic points. Among them, “critical questioning”, “information consciousness” and “technology application” all involve the content of improving media literacy. Media literacy means that people are active media users, and people with media literacy are both content recipients and content creators, are able to understand socio-political content, can effectively use coding reproduction system, and live responsibly in society. [6][7][8].

Film is an important medium, and teenagers’ ability to interpret information in film media urgently needs to be improved. With unique advantages, Chinese animated films have become an important carrier of moral education and a refractor of moral education.

Excellent Chinese animated films can help teenagers absorb the essence of traditional Chinese culture, guide them to form a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values, and achieve the role of moral education for teenagers. [9].

3.1 Helping Teenagers Better Understand Themselves

Teenagers are still in an uncoordinated period of physical and mental development, and their self-awareness is still unclear. Relying on Chinese animated films and applying them to the moral education of teenagers can help them better understand themselves.

The Chinese animated film “The Wind Guardians” can be taken as an example. The story tells the heroic story of Lang Ming, a blind boy who used the long-lost occult — “the wind guardians” to subdue and seal the ancient ferocious beast “Taotie” at the critical moment when it returned to the world to destroy lives. Although the protagonist of the film, Lang Ming, was blind, he was bright and cheerful in disposition and lived on with his mother. The two of them gagged every day, but they had a deep affection toward each other. Lang Ming’s father had been missing for many years, but Lang Ming always remembered the secrets taught by his father. From blindness in both eyes, to accidental sight rehabilitating, and then to self-destruction of both eyes, the young boy Lang Ming grew up throughout the journey, stumbled all the way to find his mother, turned from an ordinary boy to a brave “Lan Xia”, and defeated the ferocious beast “Taotie”. Along the way, it was the growth process of the protagonist Lang Ming’s self-cognition.

At present, most teenagers grow up in an uncoordinated single-child environment. The family’s doting on teenagers often makes them subconsciously carefree and do not need to take responsibility for themselves, and the development of online games also makes teenagers escape from reality and do not accept the reality of their own growth. A series of youth problems have aroused the attention of the society, and it is necessary to look at the essence through the phenomenon. Through watching the Chinese animated film “The Wind Guardians”, in the stunning human landscape, under the influence of traditional culture, teenagers are guided to correctly recognize, face, and accept themselves. Teenagers will also touch the subconscious deep in their hearts while watching the film. With the development of the plot, teenagers are allowed to integrate

into their actual life, think of their own experiences, release themselves, and calmly face a different self from the past.

3.2 Helping Teenagers Better Understand Others

Seeing a film can be understood, from one aspect, as an appreciation for a new reenactment of real life. Films not only help teenagers to know themselves, but also help them to know others better.

The Chinese animated film “Monkey King: Hero is Back” can be taken as an example, which tells a story that Monkey King, who had been silent and still for five hundred years at the foot of Five Elements Mountain and whose spell was accidentally broken by Jiang Liuer, the little Tang Monk, was accompanied by the little monk Jiang Liuer, solving lots of difficulties. Through the journey, Monkey King fought the demon king, rescued many virgin boys and girls, regained his original intention and completed the redemption. The film takes the well-known character Monkey King as the main clue, but the plot shown by the little monk Jiang Liuer is also quite meaningful. The little monk Jiang Liuer went from being fascinated by Monkey King at the beginning to his disappointment with Monkey King, and finally rekindled his respect for Monkey King. A series of changes are the little monk Jiang Liuer’s recognition and transformation of Monkey King again and again, and this process is the process of knowing others.

For teenagers who are still in the physical and mental development stage, their understanding of others is often one-sided, and they cannot view others well and comprehensively. Teenagers are often affected by the “ceiling effect”, “primacy effect” and “recency effect” in the process of getting along with people, knowing people, and making friends. Their “shading the eyes with a leaf” has a bad impact on their own growth. By watching the Chinese animated film “Monkey King: Hero is Back”, while enjoying the visual impact and wonderful content brought by the film, it can also guide teenagers to understand others more correctly, think from others’ perspectives, and look at others comprehensively. When teenagers watch movies, the sense of immersion in the plot allows them to put themselves in the shoes of others to understand what others think and do, so that they can bring inspiration back to real life through watching movies. This enables teenagers to better deal with interpersonal relationships in real life and better understand others.

3.3 Helping Teenagers Better Understand the Environment

As an independent individual, it is difficult for each individual to survive in real life without the surrounding environment, and each individual is constantly affected by his own growth environment. Films can help teenagers better understand their environment while helping them understand themselves and others.

The Chinese animated film “Boonie Bears III” can be taken as an example. Briar Bear, who lived in the forest, was swept away by a mudslide, but was rescued and taken in by the circus. The star Briar Bear started a new circus life, but faced with the mysterious disappearance of forest animals and the secret behind the circus, Briar Bear made a choice and returned to the forest. In the film, Briar Bear led the animals to repair and reinforce the dam before the rainy season every year, but the laziness of the animals made

Briar Bear dissatisfied. One day a heavy rain hit, the dam collapsed, and Briar Bear was accidentally swept away by a mudslide. However, the Briar Bear, who woke up again, became a star of the circus by chance. After becoming a big star, Briar Bear gradually adapted to the comfortable and easeful new environment. But the disappearance of forest animals and the clues of the circus made Briar Bear re-examine the current environment and make a choice. From the initial dissatisfaction with the forest environment, to the satisfaction with the comfortable life of the circus, to the re-understanding of the circus and the forest, and then to the returning to the forest, it is the process of Briar Bear's re-understanding of his own living environment.

The impact of multiculture and the great abundance of material make it easy for teenagers to get lost in their own environment, unable to find their own growth goals and directions. Teenagers' understanding of the environment is affected by their own growth. Being content with enjoyment and escaping from reality can make teenagers unable to grow up well and healthily, trapped in the environment, unable to extricate themselves, and difficult to struggle to free themselves. By watching the Chinese animated film "Boonie Bears III", while feeling the gag dialogues and humorous plot stories, it helps teenagers to correctly understand and look at the environment, and have a better understanding and analysis of their own environment. In the process of watching films of teenagers, the development of the plot and reasonable plot logic allow teenagers to better connect with real life, better reflect on themselves, examine their own environment, enable them to better and correctly handle the relationship with the environment, and help them better understand the environment.

4 The Integration of Chinese Animated Films and the Moral Education of Teenagers

Since Chinese animated films have the function of moral education for teenagers, how do Chinese animated films implement moral education for teenagers? It can be discussed from two aspects: the creation of Chinese animated films and the teenagers as the moral education audience of Chinese animated films.

4.1 The Creation of Chinese Animated Films

It can be studied from the creation of Chinese animated films. First of all, today's society cares about the physical and mental development of teenagers and pays more attention to the moral development and education of them. Therefore, attention should be paid to the impact of Chinese animated films on the moral development of teenagers. In particular, professionals engaged in the creation of Chinese animated films need to be good at having an insight into the inner world of teenagers, observe life, interpret the world, and appreciate feelings from the perspective of teenagers. It is also necessary for professionals to start from the rationality of education, integrate the true feelings into the creation of Chinese animated films, and strive to create good works that teenagers love. And this has higher requirements for the filmmakers of Chinese animated films. Filmmakers should not only have a background in film creation, painting, etc., but also have an understanding of the physical and mental development characteristics of

teenagers, and master the relevant knowledge of psychology and pedagogy, which is exactly what the filmmakers lack today. Filmmakers often interpret the world of teenagers from the perspective of adults when creating, and no matter how good the visual effect is, it cannot meet the needs of teenagers' moral cognition. Therefore, only professional filmmakers with comprehensive quality can make the creation of Chinese animated films have a better scale and healthy sustainable development.

In addition, the selection of the subject matter and theme of Chinese animated films must meet the needs of teenagers' physical and mental development, avoid blindly drawing materials and making a point, analyze problems from the perspective of teenagers, and meet the cognitive level of them. When selecting materials, Chinese animated films should consider whether it can meet the harmonious physical and mental development of teenager. It is necessary for Chinese animated films to draw materials from the excellent traditional Chinese culture, integrate the precious essence of culture and content into the creation of animated films, and dig out themes suitable for the creation of youth animated films from the rich content of allusions, myths, and legends.

Furthermore, the characters in Chinese animated films should be more able to reflect excellent personality images. In the creation of animated film texts, it is necessary to sublimate traditional culture, select the essence and discard the gross, combine the spirit of the times, and closely connect with the actual life of teenagers, showing a positive, civilized and open spiritual concept. In this way, the moral education in animated films can naturally and subtly penetrate into the consciousness of teenagers.

Of course, Chinese animated films should also learn from countries with more mature animated films development, learn their advanced animated production technology and creation, boldly absorb, and be brave in reform and innovation. But copying from others indiscriminately should be avoided, and it is needed to create Chinese animated films that meet the aesthetic needs of Chinese teenagers.

The current Chinese animated films have a serious tendency of "entertainment", and the creative process blindly emphasizes the interestingness of animated films, ignoring the ideological and educational nature of the films. Of course, the opposite form of expression is not desirable either. Chinese animated films should combine interestingness, ideology and education, guide teenagers to get the correct development of cognition through watching Chinese animated films, help teenagers establish a correct outlook on life, world outlook, values, and achieve "edutainment". Only when entertainment and education are handled well, Chinese animated films can prosper and develop better.

4.2 Teenagers as the Moral Education Audience of Chinese Animated Films

It can be discussed from the perspective of teenagers receiving the moral education of Chinese animated films. Morality is a social phenomenon and an important component in the process of teenager socialization. As an independent individual, teenagers act according to the moral quality composed of moral cognition, moral emotion and moral behavior. The moral education of teenagers of Chinese animated films belongs to the external stimulation of society, and the external stimulation of society is the concrete embodiment of the moral development of teenagers. Under the influence of Chinese animated films, teenagers will be influenced by them to have moral cognition, moral emotion and moral behavior. Human cognition is a kind of psychological activity and a

response to objective reality. The process of watching animated films by teenagers is a kind of awareness for teenagers about the content and ideas shown in the films.

When teenagers watch a Chinese animated film, it can be understood that the form of Chinese animated film stimulates the senses of teenagers, and the senses give teenagers an emotional experience, so that teenagers can feel the connotation ideas conveyed by the animated film. [10] Through external sensory stimuli, it promotes the development of teenagers' moral cognition. Through the reprocessing of the information conveyed by the animated film, teenagers analyze the personality characteristics of the characters in different films through visual effect and film content, and then make judgments on the characters and events shown in the film. The "good guys" and "bad guys" presented in animated films will give teenagers a positive or negative emotional experience. Emotional responses to different characters can help teenagers gradually recognize the right and wrong of morality. During the sublimation from representation to abstraction, animated films internalize moral cognition and emotion into teenagers themselves, and bring moral norms to practice in real life.

5 Conclusion

With the rapid development of the information age, teenagers have been exposed to too much adult information, making them lose their innocence. When films in the adult world occupy the screen of teenagers, Chinese animated films should even more make a difference. Faced with the current problems of Chinese animated films, film practitioners should strive to reform and innovate and continue to explore, so that excellent Chinese animated films can continue to play the role of moral education for teenagers and shoulder social responsibilities.

Authors' Contributions. Haoyu Wang wrote the manuscript and contributed to revising and editing. Lei Fu contributed to revising and editing.

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