# Development Trends and Prospects of China's Animation Industry and Art

**Linzheng Wen**

**Guangzhou Huashang College, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China 510000**

*Abstract:* The similarities and differences between today's domestic animation films and the 'Chinese School' animation of several decades ago are neither accidental nor coincidental. Through sorting out the history of Chinese animation, especially examining the emergence and development of China's animation industry, and conducting in-depth analysis of its historical changes and realistic choices, we can grasp the internal mechanism and law of animation art and industry development, and analyse the trend and direction of China's animation creation.

*Keywords:* Animation industry; Chinese animation; Cultural products

## 1. Definition and historical development of animation art

Animation art, which is a unique form of visual art, refers to the art form of forming a continuous motion image effect visually through a series of static images or pictures, which are played rapidly according to a specific speed and time. It has a long history. Its development is colourful, which contains countless story narratives, character performances and visual effects, allowing countless people to witness the breakthroughs in creativity and technology time and time again.

The history of the art of animation can be traced back to ancient times, however, the technology of animation in its true sense was gradually developed and perfected in recent times. Early animated films originated in the late 19th century and began to consist of simple hand-drawn images. After years of refinement and polishing, the art of animation began to show diversity, and in 1907, the American animator Wenzel Marks created 'McQueen's animation' using continuous images, which laid the foundation of modern animation.

In 1928, Walt Disney launched the world's first sound animation 'Steamboat Willie', the animated film into the sound era. 1937, another masterpiece of his - 'Self-talking Princess' came out, becoming the first full-colour animated feature film. The style of cartoons in this period was mostly classic animation, characterised by exaggerated characters and funny plots.

From the 1950s, with the popularity of television, the animation gradually emerged. During this period, there appeared many influential works, such as 'Speck', 'Cat and Mouse' and so on. These works are mostly short films, humorous and popular with the audience.

In the late 1970s, Japan began to rise as a major animation power. The works of masters, such as Hayao Miyazaki, Osamu Tezuka, 'Valley of the Winds', 'Iron Arm Astro Boy', led the trend of Japanese animation. Focusing on storyline and characterisation, these works have had a profound impact on the world of animation.

Entering the 21st century, with the development of computer technology, one-dimensional animation gradually dominates. At the same time, independent animation and experimental animation also came into prominence, injecting new vigour into the art of animation. Until now, animated films have become an important part of the global entertainment industry, and continue to provide audiences with new visual experiences. From hand-drawn to one-dimensional, from short films to feature-length, the history of animated film development history is constantly innovating and breaking through.

## 2. The status and role of animation in modern design

### 2.1 Driving force for innovation in the field of design

It opens up new horizons for artists and creates a new field of image work. There are many artists full of innovative ideas suffer from the lack of a stage to express their ideas, and the emergence of animated films has become an important way for them to realise themselves. People are visually driven and tend to be keenly aware of the important frames of animation that delivers thousands of images per second and leave deep memories in their minds. Therefore, with the evolvement of digital media and mobile devices, animation has become progressively more vivid and deeper in people's minds. Since the twentieth century, the world animation presents diversified development, each alignes to the characteristics of the famous ethnicity and the spirit of the times. It is mainly divided into experimental animation led by old Europe and

Canada, industrial animation of the United States, Chinese art film, and limited animation of Japan. Steamboat Willie was released on 18 November 1928 at the Colonial Grand Theatre on Seventy-ninth Street in New York City, and it was the first animated feature film to be released with sound. So at the time many audiences came to the theatre for a glimpse of Mickey in real life rather than being interested in the film proper. And after just eight minutes, Mickey manages to amuse Americans to no end. 'The music and the action work together seamlessly' was undoubtedly the highest praise for sound animation at the time.

## 2.2 The core of the art field

Animation, as a set of painting, sculpture, photography, music, literature in one form, is the core component of the modern art field. It not only presents us with a variety of visual effects, and conveys profound thoughts and emotions to people. Animation elements are very distinctive in advertising, design, product packaging and other fields, it usually attractive for the masses, enhancing the overall effect.

## 2.3 Transmitting emotions and ideas to the masses

Animation can both have visual effects, and conveys values to people through the internal plot and performance. As an animation designer, you can add your own thoughts and ideas into it to build a good emotional emphaty with the audience.

In short, the status and role of animation in modern design can not be ignored, with the continuous progress of technology and the market's non-stop development, the animation will gain still momentum.

# 3. Animation creation theory

## 3.1 Creativity of Animation

In the process of creation, works with good creativity often attractspeople's emotional resonance. The scene switching and background music interspersed create a smooth dynamic effect, making the audience unknowingly intoxicated. From the creator's point of view, the works that are made with love and seriousness are made from their own experience; if they don't put in enough effort, it means that the creators didn't put in enough effort to lead to the road to success, and they didn't make the audience feel the kernel of the emotion that you want to express. Therefore, creativity is also a sign of sincerity, and imaginative storytelling is more likely to get feedback and resonance from the audience.

## 3.2 Character Design and Scene Design

Character design is an important part of animation design, in which the conception of the character, the design of the costume and the characterisation are all parts that should be considered as an animation designer. A successful character design can add rich colours and depth to the story, and readers can feel a different charm from it. Character image design is the most important first step in character design, including the character's appearance, age, gender and race, etc. Designers should create a distinctive image for their characters according to the background and setting of the story. Meanwhile, for the future development and change of the character, a good foundation should be laid in the character personality and costume shaping to make the character more distinctive and vivid.

Scene design, as an important part of artistic creation, contains the conception, layout and atmosphere of the place where the story takes place. Good scenic design can add more enjoyment and authenticity to the story, allowing the audience and readers to better integrate into the story. Designers need to plan a more appropriate stage layout and props placement to create a scene and atmosphere that suits the context of the story.

Whether it is character design or emotional design, the highest goal is to convey the creator's emotions and themes to the audience. In the process of characterisation creating, an 'individual' with life and vitality is finally finished. It brings completeness and depth to the whole story, so that readers can feel revelation and resonance in the process of reading.

## 3.3 Cultural elements in animation creation

Adding cultural elements in animation is a very challenging and creative task, because it represents not only a work, but also the spread of a cultural characteristic, which is much easy to attract more interested groups and bring more depth and connotation to the animation work. Showing the deeper meaning of Chinese culture in animation leads every reader to have more understanding and independent thinking seriously, transmits positive messages and improves the social value of animation works.

# 4. Integration of animation creation and cultural elements

## 4.1 Insertion of cultural elements in background stories in animation

As we all know, in the past thousands of years, there appeared in Chinese culture countless popular stories recorded by ancestors or the real cases happened in a certain historical period, or the ancient legends compiled by the predecessors, regional characteristics and ethnic customs and so on. The injection of all of them can make the storytelling more dimensional, add colourful cultural colours to the whole animation work, and make readers feel the unique charm of Chinese culture.

### 4.2 The cultural connotation of verbal communication in animation

In an animation, the narration of words and dialogues between characters could increase the cultural diversity and interest. For example, idioms, sayings, poems and so on in Chinese culture, the insertion of the correct order can make the animation work rendered with the smell of books. At the same time, we should also pay attention to the accuracy and expression of language to avoid cultural misunderstanding between regions and even countries due to different cultures and habits.

### 4.3 Rendering of music as well as sound effects in animation

The inclusion of music and sound effects in an animation work is also an issue that needs to be taken seriously too. With the help of many traditional musical instruments, animation can add a sense of rhythm. Erhu, pipa, guzheng and so on are all famous traditional musical instruments in China. The 'High Mountains and Flowing Water' in the top ten famous classical Chinese songs is based on the story of 'Boya's encounter with his soulmate through his drums and qin'(Boya, a famous chinese acient musician), and there are many kinds of music scores handbooks, which is the story of the woodcutter Zhong Ziqi(who is the hearer of Boya' music and they are good friends), who heard the player of the qin master Yu Boya playing in the wilderness, and learnt that this is the story that depicts the 'lofty aspirations of high mountains'and 'oceanic aspire to flowing water', and from then on, the two of them became soulmates. From this, it can be seen that the choice of music and sound effects is in harmony with the scene, emotion and atmosphere, and an audio-visual effect that resonates with people can be achieved.

## 5. The future development of animation

In China, perhaps the development of animation still needs the promotion of external forces and the trend of hype in the news media. But it is undeniable that the development of domestic animation is moving towards a new stage. We need to have more creators to lead us to open a new road. The blind imitation of foreign works is always just a borrowed works, it may be able to indiscriminately get some awards, but if we want to make Chinese animation out of the country, we need to relying on our own hands. At present, the domestic technology, compared with the United States and Japan, have small gap, although the lack of newborn original artist talentin the creation of 2D animation, however, with the prosperity of the market as well as a large number of excellent newcomers who influxed, the gap will be slowly made up. Not to mention that there are also 'Return of the Great Sage', 'Little Door God' and other high-quality 3D animation works, which showing that China is completely qualified to do a good job of animation. A big reason for the slower development of animation in China is the prototype of the older generation. They always feel that animation is for the younger generation, and they also decide what kind of work young children will watch. In order to cater to their tastes, the market produces works of varying quality based on the concept of younger children. Admittedly, this is also a big piece of cake, but which also makes the art of animation has never been able to enter the mainstream vision of the public. In this regard, we need to learn from foreign countries, 'animation is not just a prop for children's entertainment', we need to produce works with substance and storytelling, change the world's view of traditional Chinese animation, tell a good story belonging to the Chinese style, and set off a new trend.

## 6. Conclusion

China needs to exchange culturewith the wold while developing economically, and cultural export is an important way of export, and animation industry is a good carrier as an emerging force of cultural industry, so the development of China's animation industry is thriving, and the future is promising. In the future, there will be more high-quality animation works to lift people's spirits. The lesson we have learnrd lies in how to improve the technology. We also need to learn the advantages of foreign animation works, take the essence of the dregs, American animation or Japanese animation, drawing style, storytelling, etc. Are what we can use as reference, I believe that a few years later there will much more master in China's animation industry. In the midst of the exploring period, a tiny ray of light can be so dazzling, even if there is still a long way to go, the tiny ray of light will brings us hope!

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