

From Havoc in Heaven to Big Fish and Begonia: The Fusion of Tradition and Modernity in Chinese Animation

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Abstract

Chinese animation has experienced the evolution from tradition to modernity in its development course. As a classic animation work, "Havoc in Heaven" has laid the foundation of Chinese animation. Its rich cultural connotation and unique artistic style make it become a representative of national animation. And "Big Fish & Begonia" is a successful attempt of modern animation, reflecting the progress of contemporary animation production technology and narrative techniques. This paper will discuss how these two works integrate the expression form and narrative skills of modern animation under the framework of Chinese traditional culture, and show the balance between inheritance and innovation of Chinese animation.

Keywords: *Ink Animation, Artistic Expression, Traditional Culture, Modern Technology*

INTRODUCTION

Foreword

The history of Chinese animation can date back to the early 20th century, with the development of society and the progress of technology, Chinese animation gradually formed its own unique style and language. In this process, the influence of traditional culture always runs through. By comparing "Havoc in Heaven" and "Big Fish & Begonia", we can see the integration and development of Chinese animation between tradition and modernity.

Representative of traditional animation: "Havoc in Heaven"

"Havoc in Heaven" is 1959 An animated film, produced by the Shanghai Art Film Studio, is adapted from the Chinese classic Journey to the West. The work adopts traditional Chinese ink painting and traditional Chinese painting elements in its artistic style, showing the charm of ancient Chinese mythology with its distinctive Chinese style and rich story plot.

Cultural Connotation

Through the portrayal of the Monkey King, it conveys the theme of resistance to oppression and the pursuit of freedom. This theme is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture and reflects the people's unyielding commitment to authority and their yearning for a better life.

As one of the main characters in Journey to the West, Sun Wukong is full of the resistance to injustice and the desire for freedom. In fact, his act in Heaven is actually a challenge to authority and bondage. This spirit of resistance echoes the stories of "Yugong removing mountains" and "Jingwei reclamation from the sea" in traditional Chinese culture, showing the indomitable national spirit of the pursuit of freedom. In Chinese history, a similar spirit of resistance is often expressed through myths and legends. Sun Wukong was dissatisfied with the bondage of heaven and even dared to challenge the Emperor of Heaven, which showed the resistance to the power and the pursuit of individual freedom, which was in line with the desire of the ancient Chinese people to strive for freedom under the feudal system.

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Cultural Inheritance and Yearning for a Better Life: The Story of Sun Wukong is deeply rooted in the "heroism" and "folk stories" in ancient China, representing the pursuit of freedom and justice by ordinary people. In particular, through continuous cultivation and unyielding efforts, Sun Wukong finally won the title of "The Great Sage of Heaven". This spirit of pursuing dreams and forging ahead reflects the tradition of pursuing self-perfection and social equity in Chinese culture.

Artistic Expression

"Havoc in Heaven" adopts the traditional Chinese ink painting style, especially in the background design and atmosphere creation, using different ink colors and ink rendering techniques, and successfully integrates the artistic conception of Chinese landscape painting. This ink painting style is not only a visual decoration, but also a profound transmission of traditional Chinese culture.

In the animation, the scene of the Monkey King leaping from the Huaguo Mountain to the heavenly palace is a very visual impact moment. The background of the scene adopts the technique of ink rendering, and through different shades of ink, the distant mountains, sea of clouds, tiangong and other distinct and magnificent scenes are shaped.

In the background design of "Havoc in Heaven", the picture uses the alternation of thick ink and light ink, reflecting the common "white space" technique in ink painting. For example, in the scene where the Monkey King jumps to the heavenly palace, the background uses thick ink to outline the mountains and clouds, while the heavenly palace architecture in the distance is rendered with light ink, creating a profound sense of space with a combination of reality and reality. Such a design technique not only enhances the sense of hierarchy of the picture, but also shows the aesthetic characteristics of emphasizing "far and near" and "ethereal" in Chinese landscape painting.



Graph 1. "Havoc in Heaven"

When presenting the natural landscape in "Havoc in Heaven", the mobility and sense of nature of the ink painting are well displayed. Especially in the performance of natural scenes such as Flower and Fruit Mountain, the mountains, woods, clouds and other elements in the background of the picture adopt the faint effect of ink painting, and the color changes are soft, giving the audience a flowing and constantly changing feeling. For example, the stone walls and trees of Huaguo Mountain show a "moist" effect in the picture, just like the splash-ink technique in the ink painting, full of poetry.

The effect of ink dyeing: This scene adopts the technique of ink dyeing. Through the gradient and interweaving of ink, the mountains and clouds of Huaguo Mountain are full of flow in the picture. The heavenly palace in the distance uses lighter ink, in a profound contrast to the close-up mountains. This way of ink painting expresses the concept of "reality and reality" in Oriental aesthetics, making the audience feel a both concrete and abstract visual effect.



Graph 2. "Havoc in Heaven"

The "the unity of nature and man" in Oriental aesthetics: from the philosophical point of view, the fluidity, empty inspiration and natural sense of ink painting are just in line with the Oriental philosophy of "the unity of nature and man". The movement of Sun Wukong to heaven is not only a physical leap, but also a cultural and spiritual sublimation. At this moment, the image of Sun Wukong, as a "rebel" and "freedom", integrates with the nature of heaven and earth shown in the background of ink painting, reflecting the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature.

Ink painting often conveys the beauty of the combination of static and static through the contrast between the fluidity of ink and the static state. In "Havoc in Heaven", the flow of the ink background forms a strong contrast to the dynamics of the characters. For example, when Sun Wukong fights with the gods, although the movements of the characters in the picture are fast and intense, the landscape and clouds in the background are always kept quiet and mobile. This effect of movement and movement makes the whole picture present an aesthetic effect that is both intense and distant.

Chinese landscape painting often expresses the infinite vastness of heaven and earth and the smallness of human beings through the "combination of reality and reality". In "Havoc in Heaven", especially in the scenes of Tiangong and Flower and Fruit Mountain, the background of the ink painting uses a lot of virtual and real alternation, showing the mystery of Tiangong and the vigour of Flower and Fruit Mountain. This technique not only strengthens the sense of space and far-reaching sense, but also reflects the philosophical thinking of heaven and earth, nature and the universe in Chinese culture. Through the ink painting style in the animation, the audience can not only appreciate the beautiful pictures, but also appreciate the idea of "the unity of man and nature" in Chinese culture.

An Exploration of Modern Animation: "Big Fish & Begonia"

"Big Fish & Begonia" is a 2016 animated film produced by Color House Pictures in 2000 shows the perfect combination of traditional Chinese culture and modern animation technology with exquisite pictures and profound emotional depiction.

Innovation in the Forms of Expression

"Big Fish & Begonia" skillfully integrates traditional Chinese artistic elements and modern animation technology in its artistic style to create a unique visual effect. The background and character design in the film not only include traditional Chinese landscape painting, meticulous painting and other elements, but also use modern animation technology to make it more vivid and three-dimensional. For example, the expression mode of the sea and the sky combines the traditional Chinese "ink painting" style with the CGI technology in modern animation, presenting a picture with both Oriental charm and modern sense. The natural landscapes in the film,

such as the sea, heaven and the forest, all reproduce the artistic conception of traditional Chinese landscape painting through exquisite color rendering and light and shadow effects, reflecting the mystery and depth of nature.

Especially in the use of light and shadow and color, the film uses a rich sense of layers of colors, making the whole picture has a poetic and dreamy sense. This innovative visual language not only makes the audience feel the strong atmosphere of Chinese culture, but also loses the fluency and agility of modern animation. Through this artistic style that spans time and space, *Big Fish & Begonia* pays tribute to traditional culture and injects new vitality into modern animation art.



Graph 3. "Big Fish & Begonia"

The character design in the film breaks through the more simplified modeling in the traditional hand-drawn animation, and the character image is more three-dimensional and complex. For example, the image of the protagonist Chun retains both the delicacy and elegance of traditional painting and passes through 3D technology shows the three-dimensional sense and delicate expression changes of the characters. This design makes the character more alive, but also makes the emotional expression more delicate and rich. In terms of the dynamic performance of the characters, especially the interaction between Chun and Qiu, the smooth motion capture technology in modern animation is adopted to enhance the nature and expression of the characters' movements.

Technical Progress

"Big Fish & Begonia" skillfully combines modern animation technology with traditional artistic style. Unlike the pure CG animation, the characters and scenes in the film still retain the softness and artistry of the traditional hand-drawn animation. By using 3D technology, the ocean world, skyline and biological form in the film have been greatly expanded, and the scene is more three-dimensional and full of layers. Especially in representing the ocean world, using the 3D animation technology creates a vast underwater scene and dynamic sea creatures, and the audience can feel the visual shock and immersive immersion.



Graph 4. "Big Fish & Begonia"

The character design and part of the background in the film still adopt the traditional hand-painted style, especially in the detail performance, the hand-painted texture and ink style background design and 3D elements complement each other. For example, in some plots in the underwater world, the background still retains the hand-painted ink rendering effect, making the picture both modern and has a strong Chinese style. This combination of tradition and modernity not only enhances the cultural texture of the film, but also gives it a unique visual artistic characteristics.

The Fusion of Tradition And Modernity

As a typical traditional animation, the expression form is mainly reflected in the use of traditional Chinese ink painting style. The background and character design in the film directly draw lessons from the style of ancient Chinese painting, especially the elements of landscape painting and fine brush painting. The background picture shows the aesthetic feeling of mythological scenes such as Tiangong and Huaguo Mountain through the changes of ink color and exquisite brush strokes. This ink painting style not only conveys the charm of traditional Chinese art, but also enhances the cultural atmosphere of the film, which makes the audience feel the strong Chinese style. The overall picture presents a kind of "freehand brushwork" beauty, combined with the rebellious story of Sun Wukong, shows a strong national integrity.

"Big Fish & Begonia" combines traditional Chinese cultural elements with modern animation technology in its artistic expression, forming a unique visual style. The film was adopted 3D animation technology, through the computer-drawn characters and backgrounds, combined with hand-painted elements, to create a visual effect that is both modern and retains the traditional artistic flavor. For example, the natural landscapes in the film, such as the underwater world and tiangong, combine the traditional Chinese "landscape" elements with a modern three-dimensional space construction. Water surface, the sky, mysterious trees, and other details, present both classical and modern effects. Through these innovations, Big Fish and Begonia further expands its layers of visual language and artistic expression while retaining the traditional culture.

"Havoc in Heaven" was made in 1959, the animation technology was relatively simple, and the film mainly relied on the traditional hand-drawn technology to show the characters and scenes. Despite the limited technology, the film successfully presents fairy tales from traditional culture through fine hand drawing and clever use of shots. Although the action scenes in the animation are limited, the visual impact is enhanced through the cooperation between the character dynamics and the picture. The music and dubbing parts also retain the strong traditional Chinese color, further deepening the cultural atmosphere of the film.

Local Culture in The Context of Globalization

In the context of globalization, Chinese animation is facing the impact of foreign culture, but through the uniqueness and profound cultural heritage of the works, Chinese animation gradually emerges on the international stage. Big Fish & Begonia has not only been a success at home, but also won recognition

internationally, reflecting the potential of combining tradition and modernity.

In terms of cultural inheritance, *Uproar in Heaven* is mainly to respect and restore traditional Chinese myths. The film faithfully presents the fairy tales in *Journey to the West*, especially in the shaping of the classic role of Sun Wukong, which conveys the heroic spirit and resistance spirit in traditional Chinese culture. The inheritance of this traditional culture has been deepened through the traditional artistic expression techniques, making it have strong local cultural characteristics.

"*Big Fish and Begonia*" inherits the traditional Chinese culture on the basis of more open innovation. The film not only makes a modern exploration in the visual and emotional expression, but also caters to the emotional needs of the global audience through a more complex narrative structure and emotional expression. Its profound emotional level and exquisite picture design make the film not only achieve success in China, but also gain recognition in the international animation festival. This shows that Chinese animation can successfully break through the boundaries of culture and attract more global audiences through its unique cultural symbols and innovative forms of expression.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, from "*Havoc in Heaven*" to "*Big Fish & Begonia*", Chinese animation is constantly developing in the integration of traditional culture and modern technology. In the future, Chinese animation is expected to make a global progress and contribute its unique artistic charm to world culture by paying equal attention to innovation and inheritance. With the progress of technology and the continuous efforts of the creators, Chinese animation will certainly show a more gorgeous style on a broader stage.

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