The portrayal of Chinese traditional mythological stories and the application of modern visual effects in film and television animation

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the role shaping and application of modern visual effects in Chinese traditional mythological stories portrayed in film and animation. Through the analysis of multiple film and animation works, it is found that the application of modern visual effects can better showcase the mysterious atmosphere and magical elements in mythological stories, thereby enhancing the audience's visual experience. At the same time, character shaping has also been portrayed in a more diverse form in film and animation, enabling the audience to gain a deeper understanding of the characters in mythological stories and the cultural connotations behind them. Therefore, this paper believes that in the process of integrating traditional culture into film and animation, the application of modern visual effects and character shaping play crucial roles.

Keywords: Chinese traditional mythological stories; film and animation; character shaping; modern visual effects

1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese traditional mythology stories, as an important part of Chinese culture, have been widely applied and developed in animation films. As an important form of modern popular culture, animation films have broad influence and attraction. In the process of bringing Chinese traditional mythology stories onto the screen, how to shape the characters and apply modern visual effects has become a key issue. This paper will analyze multiple animation films from these two aspects, exploring the forms of expression and artistic characteristics of Chinese traditional mythology stories in animation films, as well as the application and development of modern visual effects.

It is hoped that through this research, a better understanding of the inheritance and development of Chinese traditional culture in modern popular culture can be achieved. The portrayal of Chinese traditional mythological stories in film and television animation involves a careful blend of fidelity to cultural heritage and creative adaptation. Modern visual effects play a pivotal role in bringing these stories to life, offering filmmakers new tools to create visually captivating and culturally rich

animated narratives.

2. THE IMPACT OF THE APPLICATION OF MODERN VISUAL EFFECTS IN FILM AND TELEVISION ANIMATION ON THE PRESENTATION AND AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES.

2.1 The application of modern visual effects in film and television animation.

With the continuous development of modern technology, visual effects are being widely used in film and animation (Heng & Wan, 2021). Chinese mythology, as a cultural heritage, is widely applied in film and animation. With the application of modern visual effects, Chinese mythology in film and animation has become more vivid and exciting.

In Chinese mythology, various mythological characters have their unique images and features. The application of modern visual effects can better express these features. For example, special effects can show the magical abilities of mythological characters and demonstrate their extraordinary powers. At the same time, special effects can also make the characters more vivid and lifelike, enhancing the audience's sense of immersion.

Secondly, in Chinese mythology, scenes and backgrounds also play an important role (Si, 2021). Through the application of modern visual effects, the fantasy and mystery in mythological stories can be better presented. For example, special effects can show the scenery of the mythological world and make the audience feel a sense of wonder. Meanwhile, through the use of lighting, color, and other technical means, the scenes can be made more three-dimensional and realistic, enhancing the audience's visual effect and experience.

Additionally, in Chinese mythology, the plot and storyline are also crucial. Through the application of modern visual effects, the storylines and plots in mythology can be better demonstrated (Sun, 2021). For example, special effects can depict the battles and struggles in mythology, allowing the audience to feel tense and excited. Meanwhile, through the framing and composition of shots and images, the pacing and rhythm of the story can also be better expressed.

Overall, the application of modern visual effects has enabled Chinese mythological stories to be better presented and displayed in film and animation. This not only allows audiences to better appreciate the charm of mythological stories, but also promotes the inheritance and

development of traditional Chinese culture.

2.2 The impact of modern visual effects on the presentation and audience experience of Chinese mythological stories

Chinese traditional mythologies are one of the treasures of Chinese culture and have been passed down for thousands of years. These mythologies reflect the ancient Chinese people's way of life, thoughts, and values. As an important part of Chinese culture, they not only provide valuable historical information for future generations but also have significant implications for the moral construction and cultural inheritance of modern society.

Chinese traditional mythology has been widely applied and portrayed in film and animation. Due to its rich character images, plot settings, and moral significance, it has become a common material in movie and TV show production. Moreover, with the development of modern visual technology, the portrayal of mythology in film and animation has become increasingly diverse and vivid.

Firstly, the importance of Chinese traditional mythology in film and animation lies in its ability to attract the audience's visual and emotional attention. Due to the characteristics of mythology itself, such as the elements of immortals, monsters and demons, it can arouse people's curiosity and imagination.

At the same time, mythology often involves the relationship between humans and nature, or between people, or touches upon moral concepts, which have universal significance and can resonate with the audience. Secondly, in the application of modern visual effects, the portrayal of mythology is more vivid and gorgeous.

With the use of high-tech production methods and techniques, production teams can create more realistic, meticulous, and beautiful character images and scene settings from mythology (Shi & Zhang). For example, in the movie "Fengshen Yanyi," the design of various gods and demons, scene arrangements, and action performances fully demonstrate the charm of modern visual effects, providing viewers with an excellent visual experience.

In summary, the portrayal of Chinese traditional mythological stories in animated films and the use of modern visual effects can not only enrich the content and form of film and television works but also help more people understand and recognize traditional Chinese culture. Through the dissemination of film and television works, these mythological stories will receive wider inheritance and development, making greater contributions

to the inheritance and development of Chinese culture.

3. THE INHERITANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES

3.1 Overview of Chinese Mythological Stories

Chinese traditional mythological stories have a long history, covering various fields such as myth and legend, religious belief, and historical events. These stories play an important role in traditional Chinese culture, providing people with spiritual sustenance and cultural identity, and have had a profound impact on later culture and thought. The most famous mythological stories in Chinese traditional myths are found in the "Shanhaijing", an early geographical work that records a large number of mythological legends and geographical information.

Among them, various creatures such as gods, ghosts, humans, beasts, etc. are involved, depicting the ancient Chinese cosmology and the legend of human origins. These stories are shrouded in mystery, showcasing both the fantasies and imaginations of ancient people as well as reflecting the political, economic, and cultural conditions of ancient society (Ding, 2020). Additionally, Chinese traditional mythology includes various myths and folk tales, such as "The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl," "The Legend of the White Snake," and "Journey to the West."

These stories have been passed down to this day and have become classic works in Chinese culture. The characters in these stories are deeply ingrained in people's hearts, becoming symbols of Chinese culture and reflecting people's pursuit and yearning for beauty and the spiritual world. In traditional Chinese culture, mythological stories are closely related to religious beliefs.

For example, Taoism, Buddhism, and other religions have played important roles in Chinese history, and the mythological stories within them have become important components of religious culture. These stories vividly illustrate religious beliefs and moral concepts in an imaginative way, becoming an important means for people to understand religious culture and social ethics.

Overall, traditional Chinese mythological stories have rich and diverse content and profound significance. They are not only an important part of Chinese culture but also an important resource for people to understand history, religion, and pursue spiritual fulfillment. At the same time, these mythological stories have also had a significant impact on later culture and

thought, becoming an important heritage of human culture.

3.2 The role of Chinese mythological stories in cultural inheritance.

Chinese mythological stories are an important part of the cultural heritage of China. These stories have been passed down through the ages and, after enduring the test of time, have become an integral part of Chinese culture, playing an important role in its inheritance and development.

Firstly, Chinese mythological stories are important symbols and representations in Chinese culture. The figures of gods, heroes, and monsters in these stories represent the values and spiritual characteristics of Chinese culture. For example, the mythological stories in the "Classic of Mountains and Seas" showcase ancient Chinese cosmology and legends of human origins, reflecting the political, economic, and cultural situation of ancient China.

Meanwhile, Sun Wukong in "Journey to the West" represents the heroic image in Chinese culture, demonstrating the brave, intelligent, and righteous spirit of the Chinese people. These mythological stories have become classic works in Chinese culture and serve as important means for people to understand and inherit Chinese culture.Secondly, Chinese mythological stories have significant importance in the spiritual inheritance of Chinese culture (Yang, 2020). The moral concepts, philosophical principles, and other spiritual treasures conveyed in Chinese mythological stories have a profound impact on the moral education and guidance of future generations. For example, the values of love, family, and responsibility depicted in the story of "The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl" reflect the family ethics and moral concepts of Chinese culture, which have positive significance for the moral construction and value inheritance of contemporary society.

Additionally, Chinese mythological stories also play a crucial role in the integration of traditional and modern Chinese culture. With the development of society and the diversification of culture, the fusion of traditional and modern Chinese culture has become an important topic.The mythological figures and legendary stories in Chinese mythology, as an important part of Chinese culture, have also become important creative materials for modern cultural forms such as film and animation. For example, works like "Journey to the West" and "The Legend of White Snake" combine traditional mythological stories with modern visual effects, injecting new vitality into the inheritance and development of Chinese culture. Overall, Chinese mythology plays an important role in the

inheritance of Chinese culture.

4. VISUAL DEPICTION OF CHINESE MYTHOLOGY IN ANIMATED FILMS AND TV SERIES

The application of Chinese historical and mythological stories in film and animation has become a widely-discussed topic. As an important component of Chinese culture, mythological stories have been extensively used in film and animation to create character images, establish atmosphere, and convey ideological meanings. They have become essential tools in the process of adapting these stories to the screen.Since the Wan brothers opened the door to Chinese animation history, China has embarked on a path of nationalization of animation (Yang & Jia, 2020). Characters with local characteristics have also entered the public's view, with a focus on "following the path of nationalization, exploring the characteristics of our own nation, and inheriting and developing our own artistic traditions."

Chinese animated films and TV shows have been heavily influenced by painting and opera from Chinese mythology, with unique and vivid character designs that prioritize rhythm and musicality. The design styles widely incorporate elements from traditional Chinese folk arts such as painting, paper-cutting, and opera, fully integrating the traditional cultural elements and connotations from Chinese mythology into animation, as seen in works such as "Havoc in Heaven" and "Nezha Conquers the Dragon King."

4.1 The definition and function of character design in animation.

In the early stages of creating an animated film, character design is a crucial element and serves as the foundation for all other design work. Character design involves setting and creating the visual image for each character in an animated film, including unique clothing, props, actions, and interactions with the surrounding environment. In an animated film, every character plays a critical role in driving the plot, revealing their personality, destiny, and the overall theme of the film. Therefore, creating well-suited characters is a prerequisite for any successful animation film. Aside from having rich humanistic and artistic connotations, excellent character design can also generate diverse merchandise and products.

When creating characters for an animated film, it is essential to highlight their personalities and ensure that they leave a lasting impression on the

audience. The characters should be relatable to the audience's lives, allowing them to resonate with the story. In character design, the characters should be given more vitality, which can help drive the plot better. The animator should unleash their creativity and artistry, creating unique and compelling characters that can work well with the intricate plot of the animation.

4.2 The presentation form of Chinese mythology in film and animation.

Chinese mythology is an important part of Chinese culture, and with the development of the film and animation industry, more and more Chinese mythological stories have been adapted to the screen. These stories are presented in various forms in film and animation, including character design, scene setting, use of color, and visual effects. The first form of representation of Chinese mythology in film and animation is scene design. The scene design of Chinese mythological stories in film and animation is often very elaborate. For example, the scenes of the Jade Emperor's throne, the heavenly palace, and the Yellow Springs Road in "Fengshen Yanyi", as well as the scenes of Flower Fruit Mountain, Water Curtain Cave, and Dragon Palace in "Journey to the West" have been carefully designed and produced. These scenes are often closely related to the plot and characters of the mythological stories, allowing the audience to better experience the atmosphere and emotions of the story. Another important aspect is the use of color. In film and animation, the use of color is also very important. The scenes and characters in Chinese mythological stories often have their own unique ways of color representation (Lai, 2020). For example, in "Havoc in Heaven", Sun Wukong's golden armor and staff, the Jade Emperor's dragon robe and sword, and Taishang Laojun's Taoist robe and peachwood sword all have their own color characteristics. In "Fengshen Yanyi", the images and costumes of the various gods and demons are also rich and colorful.The application of Chinese historical and mythological stories in film and animation serves multiple purposes, helping audiences to better understand and appreciate the essence and features of traditional Chinese culture. By presenting the characters, settings, and plots of these myths and legends, viewers can gain a deeper understanding of the unique charm of Chinese culture and thus enhance their knowledge and recognition of traditional Chinese culture.

4.3The Visual Presentation of Chinese Mythology in Film and Animation

As a widely popular form of visual entertainment, film and animation

often feature characters based on traditional Chinese mythological stories. These characters are often derived from the figures of ancient myths and legends, such as gods, immortals, demons, and monsters, and their roles, personality traits, and physical appearances are created according to the original works. Among these characters, some have strong representational and symbolic significance, such as the gods of the Five Sacred Mountains and the Four Divine Beasts, and their portrayal in film and animation reflects the essence of traditional Chinese mythological culture.In film and animation, characters from Chinese mythology are often depicted with rich and colorful imagery. Mythological characters often have unique personalities and traits, which can be skillfully applied in character portrayal in film and animation to help audiences better understand and appreciate their personalities and behavior. For example, characters such as Sun Wukong, Tang Sanzang, Zhu Bajie, and Sha Wujing in "Journey to the West" are all very distinctive and have strong personalities. Sun Wukong, who has a golden cudgel and can transform into 72 different forms, is one of the most iconic characters in the story. Zhu Bajie's image, on the other hand, is that of a chubby gluttonous and lazy character, which endears him to audiences.

Furthermore, the portrayal of mythological characters in film and animation usually needs to conform to the original story plot, with reasonable expansion and innovation based on the original work. For example, in "Fengshen Yanyi," Jiang Ziya is described as both wise and brave, and often uses his intelligence to defeat his enemies in war. In the film and animation adaptations, greater emphasis is placed on his spiritual qualities, highlighting his sense of justice and moral courage. Finally, the key to portraying mythological characters in film and animation lies in capturing their unique personality traits.Some characters in Chinese mythology-based films and animations need to exhibit divine and haughty traits, such as Marshal Tianpeng and King Zhou in "Fengshen Yanyi", whose images require portraying their arrogant and vicious sides. Meanwhile, other characters require exhibiting human-like and vivid characteristics, such as Sun Wukong in "Journey to the West", who not only possesses godly powers but also has emotions and thoughts like a human, making him more relatable to the audience. "Ne Zha" is adapted from the novel "Fengshen Yanyi" and heavily incorporates traditional Chinese art elements such as door-god paintings and murals, as well as decorative styles. In the film, Ne Zha's eyes brim with divinity, with his red ribbon fluttering in the wind and the seven-colored divine light swirling around him, while his Kunglong steed leaps under him, creating an awe-

inspiring and unique teenage hero image. The overall character design and decoration style of the film are quite ornate, with many characters having almond-shaped or phoenix-eye shaped eyes, a design technique commonly used in Chinese folk paintings and theatrical stages, which not only embodies the charm of Chinese localization but also has regional characteristics.

4.4 The visual presentation of the storylines of Chinese mythological tales in film and animation

Chinese mythological stories in film and animation are a cultural form with a long history, featuring diverse and colorful plotlines that often carry profound meanings, and are considered an important component of Chinese culture. In film and animation, Chinese mythological storylines have unique characteristics in their portrayal and presentation. Firstly, these storylines often contain rich connotations and implications, with deeper levels of thought and cultural significance beyond simple narration.For example, the story of "Journey to the West" portrays the theme of the pursuit of power and freedom through Sun Wukong's "Great Rebellion Against Heaven," expressing the spirit of rebellion and human awakening in Chinese traditional culture. Additionally, the depiction of natural and social phenomena, such as heaven, earth, and humans in the story, showcases the ancient people's understanding and perception of nature and society.Furthermore, Chinese mythology in film and animation often features fantastical and mysterious elements. The portrayal of characters such as immortals, demons, and mythical beasts often transcends human knowledge and perception. This fantastical and mysterious representation not only provides viewers with visual impact and stimulation, but also inspires exploration and yearning for the unknown and mysterious realms, having a positive influence on people's spiritual world.In addition, the depiction of Chinese mythology in film and animation also demonstrates cultural diversity and inclusiveness.

These storylines come from different regions and ethnic groups, encompassing many different cultural elements and concepts. Film and animation integrate and portray these elements, showcasing the diversity and inclusiveness of Chinese culture and helping viewers better understand and accept these cultural elements.The depiction of Chinese mythology in film and animation is not just for simple entertainment and leisure, but is also an important component of Chinese culture. The rich and diverse storylines and profound connotations, coupled with the fantastical and mysterious elements and cultural diversity, make these storylines fully

expressed and showcased in film and animation.

In conclusion, the application of Chinese historical and mythological stories in film and television animation is a continuation and promotion of Chinese traditional culture. The Chinese animation characters with traditional cultural charm have entered the hearts of the people, helping the audience to better understand and experience the connotation and characteristics of Chinese traditional culture. They can also be used to shape character images, create atmospheres, present storylines, and convey ideological meaning.

5. CONCLUSION

As a popular form of culture, film and television animation plays a positive role in inheriting and developing Chinese traditional culture. Chinese traditional culture is not only a cultural feature but also a national sentiment that has been integrated into the inheritance of the Chinese nation. Traditional Chinese culture itself contains an irreplaceable "cultural tradition". By showcasing traditional culture through film and television animation, it can inspire audiences' patriotic emotions and cultural confidence, making them love their country and culture even more. Within Chinese traditional culture, there are rich myths, legends, and stories that are beloved by people. However, the transmission of traditional cultural knowledge faces many difficulties.

Through film and television animation, these stories can be presented in a more vivid and tangible way, attracting more people to learn and understand traditional culture, and they have been widely disseminated and interpreted in film and television animation.

As society continues to develop and progress, people's aesthetic demands for film and television works are constantly changing. By combining traditional culture with modern elements, film and television animation combines the connotations of traditional culture with the aesthetic needs of modern people, thus achieving better inheritance and development of traditional culture.

Through film and television animation, traditional culture has received wider dissemination and interpretation, incorporating cultural traditional connotations into modern film and television language, designing characters and story scenes with strong Chinese characteristics, producing works that are more suitable for modern times, while also incorporating modern elements, injecting new vitality into traditional culture, and

allowing traditional culture to radiate new charm in the new era.

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Bioprofile

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