A study on the presentation and influence of pan-anime culture in Chinese animated films

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Abstract. Taking the influence of pan-anime process on the animation creation and animation industry in China as the research object, through the multi-angle analysis of the trend in the works in recent years by domestic animation creators, the study attempted to provide some advice for integrating pan-anime culture more naturally into the creation of the current domestic animation film and narrative mode and provide some help for catering to the preferences of pan-anime audience under the new pattern.

1. Introduction
In recent years, Chinese animated films are undergoing an unprecedented transformation, and children’s animation is no longer the main choice in the market. At the same time, with the passage of time and the change of social structure, 2-dimension users and part of 3-dimension users are gradually transforming to the pan-anime group, which had a new impact on the domestic animation industry, and also brought new opportunities. At present, the most significant changes brought by the pan-anime to China’s animation film industry are mainly reflected in the content production, marketing and distribution, market structure and other aspects of the industrial chain. As a high-risk field with high investment, the creators and investors of animation films must fully understand the audience and their viewing needs and consumption characteristics.

The demand of the pan-anime audience is diversified, which tends to be works conforming to the aesthetic value of teenagers and adults. Based on this demand, in the past few years, creators and producers have begun to consciously carry out the exploration of Pan Anime, and have made gratifying achievements, but then come the rigidity of neta and the insertion of collage elements.

Taking the influence of pan-anime process on the animation creation and animation industry in China as the research object, through the multi-angle analysis of the trend in the works in recent years by domestic animation creators, the study attempted to provide some advice for integrating pan-anime culture more naturally into the creation of the current domestic animation film and narrative mode and provide some help for catering to the preferences of pan-anime audience under the new pattern.

2. The Concept and Formation of Pan-anime
“Ci Yuan” means “dimension” in Japanese, and the Anime is “two-dimensional” in terms of our real and tangible three-dimensional world. It is used as a term for the “virtual world” in the cultural circle consisting of Animation, Comic, Game and Novel (short for “ACGN”). Since the early animation and game works are composed of two-dimensional images, whose picture is a plane, which is called “the
world of two dimension” as “2 dimension” for short. The generalized anime is mainly represented by ACGN and also refers to the group that loves ACGN [1].

“Anime culture” refers to the unique values and concepts formed by ACGN products in the plane world where ACGN is the main carrier. The anime culture here is not just limited to ACGN, but also including Garage Kits, COSPLAY and other derivatives. 3-dimension refers to the real world and daily life, including stars, live-action movies and TV series, and traditional literary works, etc [2].

Pan-Anime is an extended concept with both openness and fluidity. Pan-anime users have a basic understanding of animation and will watch popular comics or animated movies, but they will not put too much energy and financial resources in them. In the whole anime industry, the role of anime users is multivariate. They are audiences, readers, players, and recipients of the anime world. They are also consumers, spending their time, energy and money on all kinds of works and peripheral products regardless of the cost. In particular, they are the creators and producers of the anime culture. In other words, anime users have multiple attributes such as producer/consumer and creator/receiver, forming certain consumption habits and cultural practice inertia. The data show that the data model of age distribution, concentrated between 16 and 24 years old, is stable for a long time in China for the core anime users, that is, heavy users of anime text. The important characteristics of this group are that they have sufficient time, low income or no income source and are easy to convert. But as shown in figure 1, when they entered the society, after the collision and integration between the 2-dimension world and the 3-dimension world, this group comes into differentiation: part of the anime users perform well like a duck to water in the 3-dimensional world, gradually away from the 2-dimensional one; part of users could not adapt to the rule of the 3-dimensional world, choosing to continue to be indulged in the 2-dimensional world; However, most of the users, with the growing age, constrained by the lack of time for pressure from school work, job and family, have to adapt to the new social roles with the mark of anime and transform into pan-anime users.

It is worth noting that the pan-anime group generally has no source of income, which makes them form a certain consumption habit because of their limited consumption ability. When this group enters the 3-dimensional world, their consumption ability and cultural practice ability are constantly released with the improvement of economic conditions [4].

3. The Presentation and Influence of Pan-Anime in Animation Creation

3.1. A cross-media trend with an anime mark

Nowadays, as the concept of Anime is sweeping the world, IP has become a hot research topic. Driven by this symbol with value-added cultural effect, and supported by the anime feature symbol, domestic animation creation and narration have, to some extent, opened a new path for the union movement of film, game and novel [5].

In this situation, the domestic original animation film also come into transformation and circulation in anime media such as animation, comics, games and so on, bringing the phenomenon of a large
amount of cross-media narrative. As the core narrative text is widely acknowledged [6], it can be spread in a variety of narrative carrier, thus the domestic animation film is set in nodes location of the whole industry chain, implementing the exchange and mutual derivative with other media content.

3.2 The re-creation of traditional culture under the pan-anime
How to carry forward Chinese traditional culture in animation films and thus playing a positive role in cultural communication has always been a key research issue in the field of animation creation. To some extent, China’s long-standing and incomparable folk cultural resources provide rich soil for domestic animation creation [7]. In recent years, with the transition of pan-anime culture from subculture to mass culture, a series of re-creation upsurge of traditional culture has been triggered. For example, Pixar’s film “Round Trip of Seeking Dreams” in 2017 is a successful case for reference. The background derives from Mexico’s Day of the Dead, whose importance in their traditional culture approximates the Spring Festival in China, and Qingming Festival on the cultural connotation. Therefore it is required that either overall film world view or a single character or scene should be taken from inherent customs and rules in traditional culture, whose kernel is the very continuation of tradition. In various forms of expression, the film adds a unique extension—stylization, localization, nationalization and considerable modernization. While continuing the tradition, the film is quite different from the tradition and successfully completed the creative transformation of traditional culture [8]. In a word, in the domestic environment of pan-anime users, the integration of ACG elements has become a new point cut.

Take another film as an example, “White Snake: Origin” is an animation film released in January, 2019. Based on the reinterpretation of the legendary story of Xu Xian and White Snake, whether in the scene details or the narrative, the film is an effective attempt of re-creation for the traditional culture by adding ACG elements as dimensional ideographic codes and constructing new storyline with the help of the ACG culture exaggeration and deformation performance so as to satisfy the user’s pan-anime imagination, and then forms alternative viewing pleasure different from that of an animated film showing traditional culture before[9]. It received a lot of praise on its first day of release.

3.3 The deliberate bundling of symbols brought about by the trend of pan-anime
In animation films, the most direct information is mainly from the visual symbol of the image, which is composed of colour, shape, form, light and visual psychological elements, etc. Once established, the symbolization of animation image will eventually become a cultural symbol. When this symbol endowed with cultural connotation by animation creators forms a conventional cognition in people’s consciousness, it will also promote the development of animation and form a very large cultural and commercial value as well as animated films [10].

The consumption culture of pan-anime is bound to implement marketing and production with the business logic, which leads to a direct result, that is, mosaic neta, embedding element and symbol bundled. Therefore the inevitable influence on the animation creators in the early period of exploration is that there is no detailed understanding of the real connotation of ACGN culture but superficial catering to the audience and deliberately-made selling point.

4. Current Situation and Future Trend of Pan-Anime
Pan Anime provides a different path from that of the mature animation industry in United States and Japan for all ages of domestic animation creation. One of the most representatives is the emergence of the “Family Joy” type of animated movies, which discuss the topic of adult world, and take the orientation of children’s movie watching into account so that the adults with their children do not have to be drowsy any more while they are watching the movie.

The two main conversion sources of pan-anime are the conversion of the original pan-anime audience and joining of 3-dimensional audience. They have a distinct brand of pan-anime, which makes the current animation creation introduce adult elements to the original children’s animation in order to cater to this part of the population. Pan-Anime has the impact not only on people’s thought,
but also on the animation film creation, production, marketing and culture and other aspects, causing the reform of the whole industry ecological chain. It breaks the long-term monopoly of children’s animation in the market of animated films, changes the industrial pattern of animated films, which indicates that Chinese animated films are on a new development track. In the foreseeable future, children’s animation will be more and more powerfully shocked, and domestic animation films will also usher in a new situation of a vibrant and plural development.

5. Conclusion
To sum up, from the perspective of pan-anime audience, this study further analyzed pan-anime transformation in animation creation, and studied the presentation and influence of pan-anime culture in Chinese animation films combining with previous research experience. When analyzing the overall impact of the expansion of the pan-anime audience group on the animation industry, the impact on content production, marketing, etc. are included. At the same time, in the analysis of the influence on content production and animation creation, it tends to analyze animation narration and elements but ignore other parts, such as animation technology, animation sound effect, and comparative analysis of similar situations experienced by foreign animation industry, which would be the research contents of future sub-topics.

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