

# A Review on Cultural Globalization Theories and its Impact on 3D Animation Movies

Yuan Wei, Vimala Perumal, Roopesh Sitharan

Multimedia University, Malaysia

## Abstract

In this study, the causes of the 3D animation phenomenon are thoroughly investigated and researched using the cultural imperialism, cultural flow, and cultural hybridization models. The animation is a blend of technology and art. This study claims that cultural imperialism in the animation industry is mainly reflected by animation technology, with 3D animation being especially evident. Cultural exchange and cultural identity are mainly reflected in the artistic creation of animation, which is classified into five categories: storytelling, character design, scene design, and audiovisual language, all of which readily reveal the effect of cultural exchange and cultural identity. Globalization as a hybridization process is reflected in the animation through subcontracting, co-production, and independent production. This article is an effort to establish a theoretical foundation for the growth of the animation industry.

**Keywords:** Cultural Globalisation, 3D Animation, Cultural Imperialism, Cultural Flow, Cultural Hybridization

## Introduction

Globalization is the cross-cultural diffusion of goods, technologies, information, and employment opportunities. It refers to the production, distribution, and consumption of media products on a worldwide scale, which facilitates the exchange and dissemination of ideas across media. In modern media studies, it has become conventional wisdom to evaluate the phenomenon of globalization from an economic, political, technological, and cultural perspective (Dreher et al., 2008; Flew et al., 2016; Rennen & Martens, 2003).

Cultural globalization has become an inexorable trend with the development of information technology. Given this context, it is no surprise that countries all over the world respect cultural soft power and has incorporated its promotion into their national development policies. As a kind of consumer visual culture and popular culture, animation is more easily spread and accepted by audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds due to its unique properties.

Cultural Globalization Theory can be classified into Cultural Imperialism, Cultural Flow and Cultural Hybridization for this research: (Boman, 2021; Crane, 2002, 2014; Flew et al., 2016; Mirrlees, 2013; Pieterse & Nederveen, 2000; Raj, 2012; Ritzer & Dean, 2019; Smith, 2012; Turner, 2016) and trying to explain how it involve in 3D animation.

## Literature Review

This section narrates several themes that relate to the topic of investigation, which include cultural imperialism model, cultural flow model and cultural hybridization model and it also narrates how these three models have influenced and its effect on 3d animated movies.

## Cultural Imperialism Model

The idea of cultural imperialism places special emphasis on the cultural aspects of dependence and servitude. Dominant country promotes its ideology and cultural ideas by popularizing its cultural sensibility and consuming concepts through cultural export to less culturally developed countries in order to cultivate and build a particular consumer mentality and achieve its political goals “imperial,” the “empire” of a country (Adum et al., 2015; Kraidy, 2002; Lechner & Boli, 2020).

This global logic of cultural imperialism is reflected in the global spread of 3D animation, which exemplifies the “colonization” of the world by the new American animation form.

The process of globalization of 3D animation in the United States is carried out in the form of technology export to the rest of the world, and the majority of the technologies involved in the creation of 3D animation are developed and designed in the United States. Such examples can be seen in the animated films of DreamWorks Pictures: Shrek (2001), Kung Fu Panda (2008), Sony Pictures Entertainment: Vivo (2021), Open Season (2006), Hotel Transylvania Series, Pixar Animation Studios: Brave (2012), Ratatouille (2007), and Sony Pictures Imageworks: the work of Pixar Animation Studios: Brave (2012) and Ratatouille (2007) “The Spirits Within: Final Fantasy (2001), etc.

In the field of 3D animation technology, the United States continues to maintain uncontested dominance. The global expansion of 3D animation in the United States is also reflected in technological advancement, i.e. the widespread adoption of 3D animation technology in global animation production.

Postman (2003), a well-known American media theorist and cultural critic, argues in his book *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* that technopoly is the most recent of three distinct types of cultures differentiated by alterations in their attitude towards technology: tool-using cultures, technocracies, and technopolies. During the phase of technopoly culture, technology overwhelms information and eradicates conventional worldviews. Technopoly is the dictatorial form of technocracy (Postman, 2003). If we adopt the logic of Neil Bozeman's discourse, in the instance of 3D animation it is the domination and monopoly of digital technology over the art of animation, and at its roots, it is the domination and monopoly of culture by the logic of the operation of the instrumental rationality of modernity.

The global expansion of the technology used in 3D animation may appear to be an expansion of technology, but in reality it is a global expansion of American consumer culture and aesthetic sensibilities, which have been unwittingly promoted and popularized around the world as the popularity of 3D animated films increased. Lechner and Boli (2020) considers the online and offline Western media, led by the United States, and their different forms – information, infotainment, and entertainment – have a global reach and influence.

The globalization of Western or Western-influenced media has helped to the development of jobs in the media and cultural industries. The localisation of media content and the outsourcing of digital media for transnational enterprises – from Hollywood post-production to animation and digital data management – have spurred the establishment of significant global centres for creative industries (Adum et al., 2015; Boyd-Barrett & Mirrlees, 2019).

The rapid rise of 3D animation over the past few years has made it the most appealing form of animation, and countries all over the world are producing their own 3D animated films in imitation of American 3D animation. The original animation styles, which were the greatest during the conventional animation era and were known for their diversity and richness, such as puppet animation and paper cut-out animation, are being phased out of the market in favor of the 3D animation industry.

This review refers feature-length animated films, but not short animated films, which are extremely personalized and expressive and are subject to relatively little public and financial pressure. The short animated art film, on the other hand, has a place in all eras because it does not have a direct public appeal and does not seek profit.

In contrast, feature-length animated films do not have the same freedom as short animated films, as they are subjected to public scrutiny in theaters and on the audio-visual market and are consequently heavily influenced by the aesthetic preferences of the audience. As 3D animation has grown to be the most widely used type of animation, “formatting” and “homogenization” have changed the aesthetic sensibility of the global audience, and the expectation of audio-visual spectacle and new sensuality has now taken precedence over all other expectations. In this aesthetic context, animation genres that are incapable or inappropriate for the production of audiovisual spectacle, such as paper cut-outs and origami films, have lost their fundamental ability to survive.

### **Cultural Flow Model**

Global cultural flow refers to the flow of individuals, artifacts, and ideas across national boundaries as a result of globalization (Appadurai, 1996; Lechner & Boli, 2020; Mirrlees, 2020; Ritzer & Dean, 2019).

If the imperialist model involves a one-way flow of people from a dominant country to less developed countries (Iordache et al., 2018), then cultural flow is reciprocal (Crane, 2002). It is extensively employed in the globalization literature. The cultural flows or network model provides an alternate picture of the transmission process, as influences that do not necessarily start from the same location or flow in the same direction. Originators may also be receivers. (Pieterse & Nederveen, 2000).

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937), Cinderella (1950), and Aladdin (1992), which was an Arabian tale, were all based on myths and legends or classics of European culture. Then, in 1996, there emerged the animation film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, based on the French classic literature. *The Lion King* (1994), which was based on Shakespeare's well known tragedy *Hamlet* (1602) and *Mulan* (1998), which was based on China's Northern and Southern Dynasties and the *Kung Fu Panda* films, are two other significant examples.

American animation movie production companies integrate other countries' literary masterpieces, folklore, culture and cultural structure habits and the needs of audiences of all ages, it uses an international perspective to learn the essence of foreign cultures, such as form, content, subject matter, music, expression, and even aesthetics, are incorporated into a complete commercial system operation, and use to nationalized elements as a commercial selling point., so as to bring both cultural identity and psychological resonance to the mainstream American market into foreign markets.

American animation culture production firms incorporate the literary masterpieces, folklore, customs, and cultural norms of other countries as well as the demands of

viewers of all ages. It employs a global viewpoint to understand the essence of other cultures, including form, substance, subject matter, music, expression, and even aesthetics. These concepts are then merged into a full commercial system operation and used to nationalize aspects as a point of sale so as to provide both cultural identity and psychological resonance to the mainstream American market into foreign markets.

Yoon (2017) asserts that the animation of new characters, stages, and images have added to the most value to the industry, and — occurs mainly in the planning and pre-production stages of the project. It can be divided into the four key categories of animation, characterization, set design, audio-visual language, and storytelling. Most cultural flow takes place in these five types of creation.

Cultural flows are an expression of the processes of globalization since they allow for the movement, interaction, and confrontations of various five types.

### **Hybridization Model**

As a perspective, hybridization belongs to the fluid end of intercultural relations: the blending of cultures, not their separation, is stressed (Smith, 2012) and cultural blending through borrowing; blending and process are known as hybridity (Sanchez-Stockhammer, 2012; Stockhammer, 2011). Subcontracting, Co-production, and Independent Production are the steps in the hybridization process in 3D animation.

### ***Borrowing-Subcontracting***

Three stages—early planning, mid-production, and post-operation—can be used to describe the entire animation process. The animation process can be broken down into four stages: idea generation in the first stage, processing and production in the

second stage, post-production in the third stage, and development of new technology in the fourth. The first stage, which entails writing scripts and storyboards, is a highly creative stage. The second stage is post-production and technical re-formation while the third and fourth stages, are technically intensive since they entail the usage and development of intensive high-end technologies.

The tracing, coloring, dubbing, and filming processes are the key components of the second stage of production processing. As opposed to conventional or “traditional” filming, which is a very labor-intensive process, the creative and technical content is low and the criteria for personnel quality are comparatively low. Therefore, developed countries typically outsource this kind of animation to countries with a low outsourcing force, establishing outsourcing businesses for the outsourcing party to run animation processing enterprises and turn those businesses into animation processing enterprises.

This is a long-term process that is inevitable for the globalization and integration of animation across boundaries. China is in the early stages of its transition and needs the state market and education to make significant, practical efforts to reform the industry.

### ***Mixing Co-production***

A co-production is an investment made jointly by two or more film production firms that split the film's copyright and market profits. In other words, the major distinction between a transnational co-production and one involving animated films is that a transnational co production involves two or more national film production companies co-investing in the production and sharing the copyright.



In animation production, transnational co-productions represent the second stage of the transnational division of labor and are more likely to result in a win-win situation than transnational OEMs since they offer complementing benefits. Countries in the early stages of original animation benefit more from transnational co-productions.

It can lessen the risks involved with investing alone in addition to being able to absorb foreign capital investment. It is also possible to adopt the most innovative international production techniques and concepts. It is possible to draw lessons from them and incorporate them into the creative process, which is also known as blending cultures. Exposure to international competition at a young age will aid in the understanding of one's own strengths and limitations, as well as the present circumstances. This procedure aids in the restructuring of the industry.

Transnational joint ventures, which are formed for solely business purposes with the main goal of maximising international markets and chasing global profits, represent a deeper form of collaboration for these strong animation monopolies. However, it cannot be denied that the market's prosperity has resulted in a subtle blending of cultures.

### ***Translating- Independent Production***

In the creative process, it is essential to explore the core of culture from an international perspective as well as the renewal in the development of nationalization from a modern perspective. Cultural self-awareness is a slow process. The form of animated films, including those that are produced for commercial purposes, such as "Monkey King: Hero is Back (2015), "Big Fish Begonia (2016)," "The Wind Guardians (2018)," and "Green Snake (2021)," more or less reflect the creators' sense of national identity.

All of these instances of commercially successful Chinese animated films, from scriptwriting to 3D modeling, reflect a Chinese perspective on the cosmos.

Even in science fiction, there is an awareness of narrative problems and cutting of subject matter. This review investigates the nationalization vehicle from two levels with a sufficiently global perspective: one is acceptance and integration with the present, and the other is a marketization and popularization mindset. When studying film and animation, it is easy to feel distanced from the general public; therefore, it is essential to consciously and actively examine how animation is generated in the popular and cross-cultural sphere in order to broaden the context of animation.

### **Conclusion**

Globalisation is taking place as a process of technology imperialism and the integration of cultural flow elements in animation. The main reason why globalization integration in animation has been inevitable is that it is already a trend that cannot be stopped. The phenomenon of globalisation is on the rise, and it is a catalyst and an accelerant for the development of human civilisation. As a result, international integration of animation is an inevitable thing and a growing trend. However, there are also disadvantages to globalisation and fusion that must be disregarded, particularly the transfer of animation from powerful to weak countries via a means of simple cross-cultural communication, which results in a certain amount of “cultural imperialism.”

Animation combines technology with the arts. This article makes the case that “cultural imperialism” is particularly perceptible in animation's technical facets. In the creative field of animation, globalisation strengthens cultural identity as a process

reflected in culture, character design, scene design, and audio-visual language. The globalisation of the animation industry is reflected in the mutual effect of animation technology and the unique qualities of cultural elements, such as visual elements of storytelling, in the sphere of creativity. Finally, globalisation as a hybridization process in 3D animation: subcontracting, co-production, and independent production which is also an inevitable process.

## Reference

- Adum, A. N., Kenekwukwu, S., & Abuah, F. (2015). Media technology and cultural imperialism in developing countries. *Communication Panorama African and Global Perspectives*, 1(1), 1–13.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Boman, B. (2021). Parallelization: the fourth leg of cultural globalization theory. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 55(2), 354–370. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-021-09600-4>
- Boyd-Barrett, O., & Mirrlees, T. (2019). *Media imperialism: Continuity and change*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Crane, D. (2002). Culture and globalization: Theoretical models and emerging trends. In D. Crane, N. Kawashima, & K. Kawasaki (Eds.), *Global culture: Media, arts, policy, and globalization* (pp. 1–25). Routledge.
- Crane, D. (2014). Cultural globalization and the dominance of the American film industry: cultural policies, national film industries, and transnational film. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 20(4), 365–382. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2013.832233>
- Dreher, A., Gaston, N., & Martens, P. (2008). *Measuring globalisation*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-74069-0>

- Flew, T., Iosifidis, P., & Steemers, J. (2016). *Global media and national policies: The return of the state*. In T. Flew, P. Iosifidis, & J. Steemers (Eds.), *Global media and national policies* (pp. 1–15). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137493958\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137493958_1)
- lordache, C., Van Audenhove, L., & Loisen, J. (2018). Global media flows: A qualitative review of research methods in audio-visual flow studies. *International Communication Gazette*, 81(6-8), 748–767. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048518808650>
- Kraidy, M. M. (2002). Hybridity in cultural globalization. *Communication Theory*, 12(3), 316–339. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00272.x>
- Lechner, F. J., & Boli, J. (2020). *The globalization reader*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Mirrlees, T. (2013). *Global entertainment media: Between cultural imperialism and cultural globalization*. Routledge.
- Mirrlees, T. (2020). Global culture. In M. Filimowicz & V. Tzankova (Eds.), *Reimagining communication: meaning* (pp. 117–133). Routledge.
- Pieterse, J. N., & Nederveen, J. (2000). *Global futures: shaping globalization*. Zed Books.
- Postman, N. (2003). *Technopoly*. Bollati Boringhieri.
- Raj, T. (2012). Cultural recognition in this era of globalization. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 73(4), 569–586.
- Rennen, W., & Martens, P. (2003). The globalisation timeline. *Integrated Assessment*, 4(3), 137–144. <https://doi.org/10.1076/iaij.4.3.137.23768>
- Ritzer, G., & Dean, P. (2019). *Globalization: The essentials*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sanchez-Stockhammer, C. (2012). Hybridization in language. In P. W. Stockhammer (Ed.), *Conceptualizing cultural hybridization: A transdisciplinary approach* (pp. 133–157). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-21846-0\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-21846-0_9)
- Smith, K. E. I. (2012). *Sociology of globalization: Cultures, economies, and politics*. Westview Press.

- Stockhammer, P. W. (2011). *Conceptualizing cultural hybridization: a transdisciplinary approach*. Springer.
- Turner, G. (2016). The nation-state and media globalisation: has the nation-state returned — Or did it never leave? In T. Flew, P. Iosifidis, & J. Steemers (Eds.), *Global media and national policies: The return of the state* (pp. 92–105). Palgrave Macmillan UK. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137493958\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137493958_6)
- Yoon, H. (2017). Globalization of the animation industry: Multi-scalar linkages of six animation production centers. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 23(5), 634–651. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2015.1084298>