

The Research on the Transformations in "Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf" and Attitudes Towards the Animation Industry in China

Binrui Lyu^{1,†}, Xinyi Song^{2,a,*,†} and Jingyang Zhou^{3,†}

¹Chongqing DEPU Foreign Language School, Chongqing, 400000, China

²School of Foreign Languages, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, 212000, China

³Guangzhou Yucai High School, Guangzhou, Guangdong, 510062, China
a. 212241811514@stu.just.edu.cn

*corresponding author

[†]These authors contributed equally.

Abstract: China experienced a period of rapid development on entertainment domain. While some animations became extremely famous in a short time but quickly disappeared at the market, others could keep on track with the alteration of society. In this paper, the researchers will focus on an animation called *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* and alterations of the culture and society in China behind its changes. The authors discuss reasons leading to changes of the animation and estimate alterations happened on society through researching developments of Chinese animation industry during last 15 years and making comparisons in its characters, plots, and painting styles between different editions of the animation published in last 15 years. In this paper, people could find out some reasons about changes of this animations in last 15 years and changes of people's attitudes toward animation industry on society.

Keywords: animation, animation industry, animated film

1. Introduction

From national coordination in the past to industrial transformation, Chinese animation producers have been tirelessly exploring the reasonable development path of original anime. Since its release in 2005, *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* has been popular across the country, standing out among the generally sluggish domestic animations, creating astonishing box office revenue, developing rich derivatives, and bringing huge economic benefits. Not only did it achieve profitability with anime as its core, but it also gained popularity among the public with its humorous plot and vivid image, creating a wide range of social topics, all of which are closely related to the success of the work. As a classic symbol of Chinese original anime, this anime continuously improves its visuals, language, plot, and more with the development of Chinese culture and social progress.

Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf is an original animation series produced by Guangdong Original Power Culture Communication Co., Ltd., with themes of friendship, humor, and fairy tales. The animation revolves around the witty story between the two major groups of sheep and wolves, telling

the story of the struggle between the sheep and wolves toward peace. As of January 2023, *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* has aired a total of 38 works and 2779 episodes. *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* premiered on August 3, 2005, on Hangzhou TV's Children's Channel (now Hangzhou TV's Youth Sports Channel). Played on Golden Eagle Cartoon in 2023.

Wu Dun, Director of the Publicity and Public Relations Department of Guangdong Original Power Culture Communication Co., Ltd., stated in an interview with the First Financial Daily that the reasons for Joy Sheep's success are multifaceted. A successful anime work and cartoon image must possess rich cultural connotations and humanistic charm. Guangdong Original Power Culture Communication Co., Ltd. adheres to the principle of the story as the king in the creation of Pleasant Goat. Following the rules of art, doing a good job in story content, and breaking the previous preaching pattern in plot arrangement. Emphasizing the need for joy, not preaching, refreshing, and refreshing, praised as childlike but not childish, enlightening but not dogmatic. The character images they create are cute, with simple lines, bright colors, and distinctive personalities, which are also prerequisites for the development of subsequent products. At the same time, the creator is very clear that their audience is between the ages of 4 and 14. Although domestic public opinion has always called for domestic anime to not be mature enough, in fact, there has always been a lack of anime works that are truly intended for young children. And this anime just fills this gap.

This animated film has received many awards since its broadcast, recently won the Most Correct Animation Brand Award at the First Chinese Culture and Art Government Award on December 1, 2021, the Most Correctly Viewed Animation Award at the Western Animation Festival on September 1, 2021, and the World Intellectual Property Organization Copyright [Animation Category] Gold Award for *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* on November 1, 2021, On July 1, 2021, he was awarded the "Most Correct Viewing Performance" award at the 6th China International Animation Game Expo and 2021 Cartoon General Launch (CCGE XPO), the "Youku Index Annual Film and Television Drama Award" in 2021, the "Top 10 Most Industrial Value Film and Television Animation Works Award" at the 1st China International Film and Television Animation Copyright Protection and Trade Expo on December 1, 2021. On October 1, 2021, he was awarded the "Five One Projects" for the establishment of spiritual civilization at the 7th Provincial Propaganda Department Excellent Works Award.

2. Literature Review

With the population of education and improvement of people's physical lives, parents not only focus on the education of children's physical health, but also pay attention to their mental health. According to Zheng Liu's study, the animation industry of China experienced a quick-expanding period in the last few decades with different government policies [1]. Moreover, the animation industry is also part of the creative economy. The creative industries, which are the lifeblood of the of the creative economy containing arts and crafts, media and publishing, and animation make great contribution to both economies and changes of social culture. In addition to be a simply commercial goods, the creative economy is also a conductor of culture and social recognition. Marisa Henderson, who is the chief of UNCTAD's creative economy program, also claims that creative economy is being continuously encouraged, leading to a dramatic prosperity of multiple diverse domains such as culture, technology, business, and innovation. Furthermore, China is undoubtedly the largest importer and exporter of the creative economy. They made huge contribution to the growth of creative economy. With the help of China, the combined accounting of creative exports for South East Asia and China increased to \$228 billion, which is almost the twice as Europe accounting [2]. In addition, even though usually people may distinguish the social culture and economy into two different things, there is a close connection between them. Some incorporation in some domains such as music, art, media and so on have well demonstrated this [3]. Meanwhile, there are also some obvious changes of China's

animation industry like *New God: Nezha Reborn*, a new animation movie published in 2021. Its special images and new topics about hero have motivated a lot of discussion about the changes of Chinese animation industry [4]. There are also another animation IP made a huge success, which is called *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*. This animation IP have published a series of animation movie from 2008 to 2015 and brought Chinese animation industry into a new high peak. In 2009, according to Huayan Sun, a movie called *The Super Snail Adventure* was published as a movie belong to the movie series about the *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* IP and become the most popular animation movie in that Spring Festive with 80 million RMB box office. The article thoughtfully evaluated the movie and gave a few reasons about its success. The author argue asserts that this movie caught audiences' attention and its story make people feel sincere and familiar with it [5]. But there are also some criticize of this animation IP. In 2013, it was criticized by CCTV 1, the authoritative television channel in China [6,7]. At the same time, there is another very popular animation IP called Boonie Bears [8]. This animation IP almost face with the same problems. Consequently, without surprise, Chinese government published an array of polices tried to confine them. Moreover, besides government's policies, changing of social recognition may also be another may reason why people are unsatisfied with the animation [9]. However, this IP was continuously creating new movies and cartoons, which was still very popular and attractive [10].

The researchers also notice that in 2015 the IP *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* suddenly stopped their plan of publishing a series of animation movies. After being reported by some parents, this IP have slowly fade out of people's view for a long time. But when they published a new series of cartoon in 2022, they again caused some heated discussion about it because there are multiple changes of this animation series. However, the authors also notice that have found that there are only few studies of consequences simultaneously happened with these unexpected changes of this IP, such as some culture changes and changes of people's attention took place in last 15 years. Therefore, this research is dedicated to find out what happened to this animation IP, what changes that they made in last 20 years, and what led to such changes happened? Furthermore, this research will also focus on transformation of the culture and society, which probably motivated these changes.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this study involves conducting a qualitative analysis through observation to examine the changes in the animation industry regarding the content of *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* cartoon series between a span of 15 years. The aim is to analyze the variations in the animation and the underlying reasons behind them. The research involves collecting old and new versions of the *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* cartoon series, as well as related video materials. By watching these animations, detailed records will be made regarding changes in artistic style, character design, storylines, and dialogues. A comparative analysis will be conducted between the old and new versions of *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*. Regarding artistic style, the differences in background scenery, character depiction (including color usage, line style, and scene design), will be compared between the two versions. In terms of plot analysis, the changes in character relationships and interaction patterns among the main characters will be observed, including alterations in friendship or hostility, and different expressions of added humor elements. Additionally, the transformation of character designs will be examined, encompassing changes in physical appearance, facial expressions, and costume designs. The study will also investigate the influence of socio-cultural contexts in different years on animation production. Factors such as societal environment, audience demands, and changes in animation production companies will be analyzed to understand the potential reasons for variations in the animation's art style and plot. Relevant academic literature, professional critiques, and interviews will be consulted to gain expert opinions and interpretations. By integrating the findings from data collection and analysis with considerations of cultural backgrounds and literature research,

a comprehensive analysis will be conducted to identify the reasons behind the changes in the art style and plot of the *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* cartoon series. Following data collection and analysis, a discussion will be conducted to delve deeper into the reasons for these changes and provide a conclusive summary. Through the application of the research methods, this research expects to reveal a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for the changes in the art style and plot of the *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* cartoon series. Furthermore, valuable insights and recommendations will be provided for the development of this animated series.

4. Result

First, this cartoon changes the painting style, is in line with the aesthetics of the public, conforms to the trend of the times, and conforms to the development of society. In the past, the painting style was a realistic style, but now it is biased towards the young style, and the picture has changed the audience of cartoons.

Then, in recent years, an animation called *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* has gone through many trials and tribulations through the ages, has had to make changes to its plot because of malicious reports and events that have occurred: changing the all-age orientation to a more youthful one. The plot of the animation has also received restrictions and many images have been cut down.

Finally, the authors also found that the audience rating of the *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* have decreased within last 15 years.

5. Discussion

First, the characters in the picture were compared. When comparing the pictures of *Pleasant Goat and Grey Wolf* in 2010 and 2020, the new version highlights the characteristics of each character itself and makes corresponding adjustments to the character's hair color and dress according to the character setting. The abandonment of the old print style is just an image upgrade of the animation transformation.

The characters in this animation released in 2020 are more anthropomorphic, and the eyes of the characters are brighter. The overall tone of the picture becomes bright. The horns of the characters have also become rounder. The image of Pleasant Goat is smoother. When comparing the 2020 cartoon with the 2010 cartoon, there is a big difference between the old and the new. The new version of Pleasant Goat not only has his eyes become bigger, but also has no previous stiff expression, and his bells have also changed. The lazy sheep's eyes have become bigger, and they are no longer squinting. They look cuter. Grey Wolf is the villain in the cartoon, and he has changed the most. The gray wolf not only changed a lot in appearance, but also changed his personality and positioning. He has become an auxiliary role from his former protagonist position. And the new version of Grey Wolf has lost its evil expression, and now it is more like a decent character.

In the past, the picture production was relatively rough in all aspects, so there are many details that cannot be better expressed. Nowadays, everyone can highlight their own characteristics in the image of cartoons, and people will find that every character is very cute when watching. For children, they all like cute images very much, so such happy sheep will be more popular with them.

This animation always thinks like a child, closely follows the actual needs of children, constantly innovates, and faces the current challenges with a positive attitude. Animation producers scientifically analyze difficulties and make decisions to shape their own characteristics in terms of animation content innovation and precise positioning and gain the recognition of the audience. Childhood is an important moment in a person's life, and its characteristics are also more distinct, including strong imitation, enthusiasm for new things, strong rebelliousness, etc. In the process of development, this animation has made its audience clearer and more targeted the age of the audience. In the previous

animation broadcast survey, a large part of the audience was not young children. However, after gradually clarifying that the audience group is young children, the animation has changed accordingly, thus changing or deleting many pictures and plots.

In the 2010 *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* movie "The Adventure of the Lost Totem", when the people in the Green Grassland wanted to escape through the roller coaster, the motherly love shown by Woline who put down her dignity in order to let her son Wilie escape together touched the audience; when everyone was trapped in the hole, Tibbie sang a song to inspire everyone not to give up, there is always a way to escape as long as they are united; and When Wolffy was pulling a heavy iron block, he heard the cry for help from Woline, who loved his wife so much that he burst out with great strength to save everyone, reflecting Wolffy's responsibility. All these dramas contain educational meaning and set up a good image for children, which is deep and not restricted. However, after investigation, it was found that the "roasted sheep incident" occurred in 2013: children imitated the scene of roasted sheep in *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*, resulting in serious burns. The media maliciously smears, public opinion is in an uproar, and the destruction of capital has dealt a huge blow to *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*, which has entered a three-year low period. With the influence of public opinion on the one hand and the intervention of capital on the other, *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* could only change the plot to be more juvenile and boring. Weapons that might be risky were deleted in the new version of *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*. For example, Woline's classic pan and Blady's knife are unable to pass the review. The knife of the Blady became a green onion, the rope of Wolffy kidnapping lambs was also processed, and the fighting weapons became more virtual and not close to real life tools. And the wise fighting scenes are reduced, and the relationship between wolves and sheep becomes more and more harmonious, sending wrong signals to children: wolves and sheep are good friends, not in line with the laws of nature, and the plot becomes more under-aged. The old version of *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* also deleted scenes that could easily cause accidents, and the forced modifications became illogical. Until after 2019, with the relaxation of industry opinion, *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* re-emerged as an all-ages animation. Many interesting internet stems were added: the classic expressions of professional wrestler D'Angelo Dinero, Zhu Ziqing's "Backdrop", Detective Conan, etc.

The researchers also found that the audience rating of the *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* have decreased within last 15 years.

In the past, this animation was one of the most famous one in China. Most children, who was born from 1995 to 2005 are familiar with this animation IP and its audience rating was once up to 17.3% at the peak of its popularity, which is the highest within the contemporary animation. The animation was stuck in a series of criticizing problems between 2015 and 2016. Afterward, even though the animation IP kept on publishing new works, these new animation works are not as popular as before. Thus, the researchers raised several reasons for this depression.

Firstly, the animation disappeared for a while because it was reported by some parents, forced to change their animation style. Meanwhile, because of the rapid popularity of televisions and mobile phones, many other famous animation IP quickly attracted audiences' attention. When this animation again showed up in people's view, new audiences lost interests in this old-school animation. Also, the digitalization and development of new technologies caused to the variety of entertainment. Nowadays, young people could spend their spare time on diverse entertained activities such as short videos, video games on smart phones. Thus, they may not only focus on a TV program like before.

In addition, with the decrease of the audience rating of *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*, there are multiple of conclusions could be made from it. People are more sensitive about new information. In the past, people only have very limited access to new information; thus, they may still be interested to an animation or a topic despite a long-time disappearance that they have been in. On the other hand, people today are easily influenced by new messages. They are more favored by new topics or

animations which could attract their attentions in the vast ocean of information. Therefore, even a short-time disappearance may cause an unreversed damage of its reputation. Moreover, people are not only focusing on mental entertainment. Before, young people are attracted by new electricity devices such as mobile phones and televisions. In contrast, people in today would like to pay more attention on physical entertainment. For example, the increasing popularity of travelling after COVID-19 and gym is attracting more and more young people's attention. They no longer choose to stay at home and watching tv in their free time.

6. Conclusion

Before the arguments of the animation started, this IP shown great inspirations of mother love, persistence, and unification. Producers spread positive senses to children and parents through their wonderful animation works. However, with several alterations on society occurred in last 15 years, the old animation style is no longer fit with the new trend on the society. In 2013, the “roasted sheep incident” caused some problems to this animation so afterward producers made an array of changes of this animation. The painting style of Pleasant Goat has been adjusted for many times to meet audiences' changing requirements. Producers are constantly improving the animation, through imagining themselves as children and looking for pictures in kid's world. Later, this animation IP again published new series of work as a family welcome animation. The progress of the picture and the carefulness of the producer were unanimously praised by the society. Generally, the reformation indicates changes of social attitude toward animation industry, as well as developments of technology and transformations of audiences' recognition.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

References

- [1] Liu, Z.: *The impact of government policy on macro dynamic innovation of the creative industries: Studies of the UK's and China's animation sectors. Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity* 7(3), 168, (2021).
- [2] UNCTAD: *Creative Economy Bucks the Trend. Grows Despite Slowdown in Global Trade*, (2019).
- [3] Boccella Nicola., Irene Salerno.: *Creative economy, cultural industries and local development. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 223 (2016): 291-296, (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.370>.
- [4] Whyke, T.W., Mugica, J.L.: *Calling for a Hero: The Displacement of the Nezha Archetypal Image from Chinese Animated Film Nezha Naohai (1979) to New Gods: Nezha Reborn (2021). Fudan J. Hum. Soc. Sci.* 15, 389–409 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40647-021-00335-5>.
- [5] Huayan Sun.: *Brand marketing of local animation—discussion about the success of Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf. Contemporary Cinema*(4) 3, (2009). CNKI:SUN:DDDY.0.2009-04-032.
- [6] Yu Jiang., Xingpei Shen.: *the narrative chaos of current domestic animation and its breakthrough point--Reflections on the Incidents of Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf and Boonie Bears Criticized by the Media. Chinese Television*(4) 4, (2014). CNKI:SUN:ZGDD.0.2014-04-020.
- [7] Lingfei Zhang.: *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf and Boonie Bears were criticized by the News Broadcast in CCTV. National Excellent Essay Selection: Comprehensive Reading for Primary Schools* (12) 1, (2013).
- [8] Xiaoting Wang., Yubo Li.: *the originality of domestic animation—taking Boonie Bear: To the Rescue as an example. Movie Review* 000(009) 97-99, (2016). 10.3969/j.issn.1002-6916.2016.09.032.
- [9] Pengjie Zhu.: *the performance elements of adult-oriented animation. Cuiyuan* 000(001) P.83-86, (2021).
- [10] Jiefu Chen.: *the innovation and development of domestic animation and movie---take Boonie Bear: The Big Shrink as an example. news dissemination* 352(07) 24-27, (2019). CNKI:SUN:YWCB.0.2019-07-007.