

**Redefining *Nymph of the Luo River*: A
practice-based investigation into a
feminist reinterpretation of a
traditional Chinese painting through
the creation of animations**

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Abstract

Since the last century, in mainland China, an interest in adapting classic stories into animated films, notably *Princess Iron Fan* (1941) and *Lotus Lantern* (1999), has developed, in order to promote Chinese history and traditional culture (Gu, 2013 and Fu, 2015). However, few of these adaptations reflect equal gender relations, and female characters have been generally written from a masculine point of view (Qin, 2012). This study thus aims to explore how aspects of the process of creating animation, including character design and the use of camera perspective, can be used to both analyse a traditional painting and propose an alternative model for the representation of female characters.

This practice-based project also focuses on an analysis of female representation in the story *Nymph of the Luo River*, a traditional Chinese love story set in the Wei and Jin dynasties (220-589 BC), that was adapted from a famous scroll painting by the artist Gu Kaizhi (348-409 BC). Although Gu Kaizhi challenged the stereotypical portrayal of women in the past in terms of its emphasis on feminine beauty, the concept of which was influenced by Taoism, he was also affected by a Confucianist view. Because of this, he still portrayed the goddess from a male perspective, and created the stereotype of the goddess as an object of a man's desire. This painting can be also viewed as reflecting John Berger's (1972) argument that the depictions of women in traditional European paintings were created to satisfy a male audience, which has been further explored by a visual analysis in this study.

Visual analysis is also used to critique the image of women in animated adaptations of traditional Chinese stories. The theoretical research then focuses on film-making: two animated adaptations (hereafter referred to as Film 1 and Film 2) were created, based on the *Nymph of the Luo River* story, demonstrating two different gender perspectives. It draws upon the theories of contemporary scholars of feminism, such as Laura Mulvey (1975), and traditional Chinese philosophy, Taoism, which supports gender equality. Through the reflected practice of making animation, progress and decisions were made that convey the reasons for making the changes between the two films. A focus group interview and quantitative survey were conducted as evaluation for this research by showing the two animated films to Chinese audiences for them to compare.

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Author's declaration

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Signature: 

Date: 03/07/2016

Introduction

Aims and objectives

This research aims to propose an alternative model for the representation of female characters in Chinese animation by drawing upon traditional material, such as traditional Chinese literature, religion and psychology. As a young female animator who was born in China, my experience of living in the UK for a number of years has changed my manner of thinking. I started to consider the possibility that men and women might be equal in dialogue, as well as the possibility of creating female role-models in Chinese animation.

One of my objectives was to analyse the painting and the original story¹ of *Nymph of the Luo River*, and critically examine representations of female divinity in historical and contemporary Chinese visual culture. Another objective is to conduct practice-based research by creating 3D CGI animated adaptations, exploring the possibility of showcasing two different gender perspectives through the use of different character designs and camera techniques².

Background

From the 1940s, China began adapting traditional Chinese stories into animated films. China's first animated feature film, *Princess Iron Fan* (1941) (Huang and Che, 2012), and one of the most recent, *Monkey King: Hero is Back* (2015) (Li, 2015), were both adapted from *Journey to the West*, a classic Chinese novel. Other examples include *Gold Conch* (1963), *Lotus Princess* (1992), and *Female Deer* (1993). Professor Wenxia Ding ((2013) claims that due to a strong economy, China can pursue its interest in exporting Chinese culture internationally through various media³.

¹ Murck and Fong (1991) state that both traditional Chinese poetry and painting emerge from emotions and the environment of daily life. Both of these art forms contain attributes, including narrative elements and the power to move people (Murck and Fong, 1991), which can contribute to the production of animation. Therefore, painting and poetry are the chosen resources for my research.

² The intention of this object is to demonstrate “critical assessment of knowledge and understanding in the field of research” (Royal College of Art, n.d; 55).

³ Ding (2013) explains that because China is a country with a long history, China has plenty of traditional cultural resources that can be applied to cultural production, especially in commercial media production. Thus, by exporting these media productions to other countries, China can reap economic

One such medium currently being heavily promoted is animation, which, by referencing Chinese traditions, is being used to represent Chinese culture. Recently more adaptations have emerged, due in part to a large-scale government-sponsored project in which traditional Chinese operas are being adapted for animation. For example, *The Butterfly Lovers* (Chopra, 2011), a traditional Chinese tragic love story that dates from the Jin Dynasty (265-420 AD), was made into an opera. In 2003, director Tsai Ming-chin created a 95-minute full-length animated film, *Butterfly Lovers: Leon and Jo*, based on this story, which was also influenced by Chinese opera⁴ ('Animated Lovers' 2004). Pan and Han (2007) note that the Drama Animation Project, sponsored by the Chinese National Academy of Arts⁵, has provisionally pre-selected 100 titles that cover 54 traditional theatrical genres, 32 of which include a total of 72 titles and which belong to the first collection of intangible cultural heritage at a national level, accounting for two-thirds of all the 100 opera titles. Of these 100 titles, the design phase of sixteen have been completed and some have already completed production. The art college, China Academy of Art, was involved in this programme as well⁶.

Animated adaptations can be used as a means to not only retell classic stories, but also create modern interpretations of ancient Chinese paintings, and bring these paintings to life through animation. In particular, this study focuses on 3D CGI (three-dimensional computer-generated imagery) animation to explore alternative versions of traditional Chinese stories and paintings. Animation is often

benefits as well as international regard.

⁴ Tsai explains that he was influenced by the Chinese opera. 'I first knew the story from a 1963 Taiwan movie, *Leon and Jo*,' he recalls. 'I've watched the movie six times. Even now, the traditional huangmei xi (an opera popular in Anhui Province) and the poetic gestures of the butterfly lovers remain with me.' ('Animated Lovers', 2004).

⁵ Founded in 1951, the Chinese National Academy of Arts has been the only national-level integrative academic institute integrating art research, art education and art creation in China. It is the first Chinese first-class subject-conferring unit of art study reviewed and approved by the Academic Commission of the State Council of China (Zgysyjj.org.cn, 2014).

⁶ X. Zhang (2008) notes that as part of the Drama Animation Project a DVD was produced, which includes many animated adaptations of Chinese operas created by students and teachers from the China Academy of Art. These animations were referenced from traditional Chinese stories, such as the story of White Snake (details of this story are given on Page 68) and *The Butterfly Lovers*.

considered to be associated with young audiences (Cotte, 2006), and 3D animation exposes a younger demographic that enjoys this medium and that may not otherwise be interested in historical paintings to traditional Chinese art. Turner (2002) notes that animation can create objects that do not exist in reality and are not limited by real-world attributes such as the laws of physics. In his PhD dissertation (2011), Sun differentiates between 3D animated film and traditional live-action film by stating that the former is essentially a creation of virtual space, whereas the filming process of the latter is a copy of a moment and time in reality. Moreover, the 3D environment allows for greater spatial awareness and more control over the virtual camera, which results in a variety of camera angles and movements. Professor Xinru Nie (2011) from East China Normal University argues that the graphical texture that is used in 3D CGI animation can be selected and even created by the animators, whereas in traditional live action films, this texture is pre-determined. Although the creation of sets, principal photography and in-camera special effects can be achieved solely by using live-action, a project would be significantly more costly and time-consuming and nearly impossible for one person alone to produce. Animation grants me complete control as a visual director, making it easier to translate my imagination into imagery that more accurately represents the artistry of an original Chinese painting. From this perspective, the process of creating 3D CGI animation is closer to painting than live action film and thus has been chosen as the art form for this research.

In China, several 3D CGI animations by individuals and commercial companies have been created to represent Chinese painting effects. For example, Ron Hui's *Ode to Summer* (2003), which was showcased at Siggraph⁷, re-creates the atmosphere of an old Chinese painting (Kim, 2012).

Another example, which was created by the Crystal CG company, is the 3D animated film *Riverside Scene during the Qingming Festival*⁸, which was screened in the Chinese pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, and in Hong Kong at the Asia World Expo 2010. One visitor in

⁷ Siggraph is a leading conference on computer graphics, and the proceedings of the conference are published as an issue of *ACM Computer Graphics* (Kent, 1998).

⁸ The animation is based on an 800-year old ink painting by Zhang Zeduan from the Song Dynasty (Expo Treasure *Riverside Scene at the Displayed* in Hong Kong, 2010). The film lasts for 4 minutes, and depicts both daytime and night-time scenes in an ancient city, during the Song Dynasty.

Hong Kong compared the animated version favourably to the original, claiming that it was even more vivid (Expo Treasure *Riverside Scene at the Displayed* in Hong Kong, 2010). Pallant (2015) describes this animation as showing a transformation of a day and night cycle to convey a sense of time, which indicates that digital animation technology can provide a fourth dimension: time. A third example is the advertisement *Believe the Power of Brand–Ink Chapter* (2009), which was the product of a partnership between the production company ‘Troublemakers’ and the MMIA Beijing agency. The advertisement attempted to simulate the process of ink soaked in water via 3D techniques⁹ to achieve a Chinese ink painting effect.

Moreover, Chinese scholars made an effort to develop technology to digitally simulate the Chinese ink painting style. For example, Meijun Sun (2009) conducted a PhD study¹⁰ on designing a system for rendering Chinese ink paintings in 3D, allowing for the reproduction of elements, such as colour, texture and stroke. Sun subsequently worked at the Media Technology and Systems Research Lab at Tianjin University's School of Computer Science and Technology, continuing to develop 3D Chinese ink painting rendering techniques. Working with other researchers, she published major articles, such as ‘Multi-layer rendering based Chinese Ink-Wash Painting styled 3D generation’ (2010)¹¹ and ‘2D Texture Library Based Fast 3D Ink Style Rendering’ (2012). The purpose of her research on 3D Chinese ink painting rendering techniques is to resolve technical problems and to create a system that can render 3D ink painting effects.

Rather than focus only on the technological aspect, however, this study is concerned more with content

⁹ Zhou (2011) suggests that 3D techniques can simulate ink scenes, and demonstrate the characteristics of becoming heavy, light, dry, wet, or soaked when the ink meets the water, thereby attaining the distinct aesthetic effect caused by the ink spreading across and drenching the paper.

¹⁰ Sun (2009) states that in her research, she put forward a pigment model based on KM colour optical theory, and she combined Fick’s Law and the Einstein-Brown Equation to achieve the real time rendering. The final proposed algorithm results in a stylistic 3D Chinese ink-style rendering technique.

¹¹ Regarding the technology they developed to render Chinese art style, Sun, M., Wang, Z., Ren, G. and Zhao, L. (2010: 4594) note that: “We abstract some special renders, and each of them represents a kind of special art effect. Components of the input object model could be rendered and blended by multiple renders. During the whole rendering process the Chinese painting pigments model and particular diffusion algorithm are combined and implemented.”

and values when adapting and bringing traditional Chinese elements to animation. My life experience in the UK has caused me to realise that in Chinese society, the status of women is often lower than that of men. However, I firmly believe that women should not serve as an appendage to men or live based on men's expectations. Hence, the primary focus of this study is the role of the female image in Chinese animation, because some female images remain stereotyped in Chinese animation, such as the Snake Spirit¹² in the *Calabash Brothers* (also known as *Calabash Boys*, 1986). Another example is the Red Wolf¹³ in the Chinese animated series *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* (2005). Similar negative female images can be found in animated adaptations of traditional Chinese stories, such as the eponymous heroine in *Princess Iron Fan* and the goddess in *Lotus Lantern*, who need to rely on men rather than control their own lives. Lecturer Jianan Qin from Sichuan Technology & Business College (2012) comments that depictions of the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* show women as subordinate to and marginalised by men.

One of my objectives was to break through the stereotypes that have been linked to the female image by creating animated adaptations. By redefining the traditional characteristics of femininity, animation can express ideologies that work against patriarchal norms (Nicholls, 2015). Because particular animated adaptations of traditional characters in traditional Chinese stories are familiar to Chinese audiences, the comparison between the adaptation and the original image can allow them to consider the potential of the role of women in contemporary society.

For example, *Mulan*¹⁴, an animated adaptation that is based on a traditional Chinese story, was created by the American company Disney. It can be argued that female characters in animated

¹² The Snake Spirit becomes a villainous leader by flaunting her feminine features. She holds a high level of power and control over others, and is even shown to be more dominant than her male partner Scorpion. Her evil activities ultimately result in her suffering a fatal ending, as she is killed by the Calabash Brothers.

¹³ Red Wolf's role embodied a stereotypical image of women as housewives who conform to traditional Chinese social norms. Portrayed as a villain, Red Wolf is the product of her own demonisation in a patriarchal society, where women's struggle is doomed to failure.

¹⁴ The traditional Chinese version of *Mulan* originated from *Mulanshi* in the Northern dynasty. *Mulanshi* tells a story in which Mulan disguised herself as a man and took her father's place on the battlefield (Quan, 2010). In *Mulanshi*, Mulan's father was supposed to enrol in the army, according to the decree. However, Mulan's father was too old to join the army and Mulan did not have any brothers. To complete her family's recruitment task, Mulan chose to disguise herself as a man and take her father's place in the army.

adaptations can become role-models. K. Wang (2011) notes that in the traditional story *Mulan*, Mulan is portrayed as a practitioner of Confucian values, which determine the traditional cultural expectations of the female image and female social status. According to K. Wang, instead of merely duplicating the image of Mulan as it is constructed in the Chinese legend, some Western elements, such as liberalism and feminism, were incorporated into *Mulan*. Lecturer Fang Zheng from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (2011) and lecturer Haibo Sun from Jilin University (2014) suggest that the image of Mulan attempts to demonstrate the value of individual independence. They state that Mulan takes her father's place in the Chinese army to prove to herself that she can fight as well as men and become their equal in combat. Therefore, Mulan was perceived as a female role-model for Chinese audiences. On the other hand, in the West, there are different opinions about the image of Mulan. Lecturer Hoi Cheu from Laurentian University (2008) states that although the film *Mulan* manifests female independence and spirit, it still lowers the status of women. Rather than achieving her goals while maintaining her femininity, Mulan conforms to the patriarchal society in which she lives by visually pretending to be a man.

Overall, it could be argued that by challenging the stereotype of the female image in traditional Chinese stories, animated adaptations can influence contemporary Chinese audiences to rethink female roles in the Chinese animation industry.

It can be asserted that traditional culture inform a modern feminism that is rooted in Chinese culture, although prejudice against women is present in Chinese philosophy. Most anthologies of traditional Chinese religions are organised by the logic of three teachings: Confucianism¹⁵, Taoism¹⁶, and

¹⁵ Qiu (2016) notes that Confucianism was founded by Confucius (551-479 BC). Confucianism advocates for "ritual" and "virtue" and promotes "loyalty and forbearance". She concludes that Confucianism also advocates for a "benevolent government" and "governance by virtue", emphasising the ethical relationship between the two.

¹⁶ Native to China, and with the 'Tao' as its highest faith, Taoism is a traditional religion and philosophy. According to *Chinese Taoism* (1994), by Xitai Qing, Taoism is based on ancient Chinese religions and follows several religious ideas and practices, such as Fangxian Tao and Huanglao Tao; Taoism formed gradually during the Eastern Han Dynasty in 25-220 AD. The ideas of Laozi (571-471 BC) and his *Daodejing* were incorporated into the religion, with Laozi as the Lord and the *Daodejing* as the classic religious doctrine. Taoism has exerted a positive impact on all aspects of Chinese society, including politics, the economy, philosophy, literature, art, social psychology, and social customs. Taoism maintains an important position in Chinese traditional culture (ibid).

Buddhism (Lopez, 1996). Historically, traditional Chinese values have been less established from the female point of view, and philosophies such as Confucianism have focused more on the man's moral character. Dr Weiwei Liu from the school of humanities at Tianjin Medical University (2012) notes that Confucianism denies women's independent personality and emphasises submissive obedience as women's supreme virtue.

However, in Taoism, gender equality is considered to be a strong value. Taoism advocates the equal importance of 'yin' and 'yang'¹⁷, which gives women equal status to men on the metaphysical basis of 'Tao', which is the system's highest domain. Professor Lan Zhang from the school of humanities at Zhejiang Ocean University (2008) proposes that this Taoist ideal of harmony between the genders was established based on neither men nor women maintaining hegemony. Instead, gender relationships should be based on balance and the harmony of 'yin' and 'yang'. Some other Taoist aspects has also been drawn upon in this research. For example, Kuan Yin, an originally Indian male god¹⁸, was later adapted into a female figure by the Chinese in Han Dynasty (BC202–AD220), reflecting a view held among Chinese people that female images more accurately represent god (Zhang and Zhang, 2013). Ichimura (2001) notes that the Taoist concept of female deities was established in China before Kuan Yin. Then, Kuan Yin, as a new form of god, re-emerged and was influenced by the Chinese divine and feminine¹⁹. Because Buddhists represent the meaning of Buddhism in visual symbols, the same as in

¹⁷ From the viewpoint of Chinese metaphysics, 'yin' and 'yang' exist in every phenomenon at every level in the universe. In the case of human beings, males generally manifest 'yang' energy, and females generally manifest 'yin' energy (Hsu, 2003).

¹⁸ Ichimura (2001:274) explains that: "Kuan-yin as Avalokitasvara in India was a male figure and remained to be so throughout the millennia wherever the image was transmitted."

¹⁹ Except for the argument that Kuan Yin's transformation was related to Taoism, another explanation is that the transformation could also be related to the ancient Chinese tradition of goddess worship. Tong (2002) states that the original goddess worship from remote antiquity in China has been deeply rooted in the Chinese people's memory. Therefore, the original goddess worship merged with Buddhism and resulted in the transformation of Kuan Yin. The belief in the female version of Kuan Yin is characterised by the worship of maternal power and feminine charms (Tong, 2002).

With regard to this statement, there is a lack of evidence to prove this theory, because there was a huge gap between the ancient Chinese goddess worship (an example of early worship is Nugua in the Shang period, BC1600–BC1046. (Lee, 1990)) and when Buddhism was introduced to China (BC202–AD220). However, it is asserted that Taoism is influenced by the tradition of goddess worship, as Wang (1995) suggests that Taoism inherited traditions of goddess worship from the ancient matriarchal society and developed its own goddess systems.

written text and spoken teaching (Cabezón, 1992), when Kuan Yin show her compassion as a female, it can draw the conclusion that the visual reinforcement of Kuan Yin's femininity has made her seem directly relevant to Chinese women (Bailey, 2009). Therefore, her appearance, especially her clothing design representing her female feature has been borrowed in this research.

This research also draws upon traditional Chinese textual and visual cultural elements to explore the image of female representations. The story of *Nymph of the Luo River*, is a romance in which the author encounters a goddess, originally created by Cao Zhi²⁰ (192-232). The illusory image of the woman as a goddess in the poet's mind indicates the fantastical nature of the Chinese-style fairy tale (K. Wang, 2011). The story was later adapted into a famous scroll painting by Gu Kaizhi²¹, who was influenced by both Confucianism and Taoism. He contributed to the representation of the female image in Chinese art history; however, he still portrayed women from a male perspective. Compositional interpretation analysis was used in this research (page 46) to show that in Gu's adaptation, the female image of the goddess in the painting is portrayed from a male perspective, one in which women are expected to be appreciated and pursued by the male character. In response to Gu's rendition, associate professor Xiaoling Li from East China Normal University (2002) notes that the image of the Luo River goddess became renowned in China, and stereotypes of the goddess have been presented as incarnations of beautiful goddesses. Upon examining the spatial distance between the characters, the painting adaptation was found to be based on a male view of the ideal image of women, which is similar to John Berger's (1972) argument that the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male in classical European oil paintings; that is, the woman is viewed as the object, and images of women in these paintings are designed to please and flatter men (ibid).

²⁰ Cao Zhi (192-232), a prince and poet of the late Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) and Three Kingdoms period (220–280 AD), wrote the poem *Luo shen Fu* (refer as *Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River*), the poem became one of the most renowned literature depictions of a romance between a goddess and a mortal. (Cai, 2008).

²¹ Gu Kaizhi (348-409) was one of the earliest famous artists in China. He was excellent in drawing long scrolls, and was accomplished in painting, poetry and calligraphy (Pan, 2012).

British feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey's (1975) theory of the 'male gaze'²² from cinematography, which is similar to Berger's view of art, was applied in this research because this theory can be extended to observe the cultural construct of the female's representation, both historically and contemporarily²³. However, her theory has been challenged in subsequent studies, and it has been suggested that a 'female gaze' exists (Jacobsson, 1992). For example, the film *Green Snake* (1993) tells the story of a traditional Chinese myth from the female perspective rather than the male perspective of the original story. This study also conducted a film analysis (page 70) to examine the adaptation from the perspective of film language. A similar experimental approach to changing an original story and adapting it into a short film has been applied in practice.

Methodology

First, a compositional interpretation analysis was conducted on the animations *Princess Iron Fan* and *Lotus Lantern*, and different adaptations of *Nymph of the Luo River* (including Gu Kaizhi's painting adaptation, TV series adaptations, and my animated adaptations). Rose (2012) notes that compositional interpretation analysis²⁴ offers ways of describing the content, colour, special organisation, light of various types of still and moving images. Therefore, in this research, all of these different art forms can be analysed and compared under a common system. In addition, according to Rose, another advantage of compositional interpretation is that it can describe the visual impact of an image and explain the image's effects on a spectator. However, Rose (2012) notes that one of the shortcomings of compositional interpretation analysis is the difficulty of engaging the border cultural meanings and resonances of a particular film. Therefore, to further examine the narrative development in relevant

²² Mulvey (1975) demonstrates that in classic Hollywood films, men are the subjects and women are the objects of the gaze, which is similar to Berger's view of art. More importantly, Mulvey emphasises that Hollywood cinema usually positions the male as the active protagonist who drives the narrative.

²³ Professor Daria Berg, (the Chair of Chinese Culture and Society at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of St. Gallen) (2013) claims that Mulvey's 'male gaze' theory for Western cinema can be adapted to a Chinese historical cultural context. She uses the 'male gaze' theory as an analytical tool to trace how the gaze relates to the way woman were seen as an object in Chinese literature during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. In addition, in contemporary Chinese society, to some extent, women play the role of serving male approval and gratification (the male gaze) (Berik, Dong and Summerfield, 2010).

²⁴ The key components of a still image in compositional analysis are its content, colour, spatial organisation, light and expressive content (Rose, 2012). I have tried to cover all of these components. In addition, one of the key components of a moving image, *mise-en-scène*, has also been covered in this research.

films, additional film analysis was conducted on *Princess Iron Fan*, *Lotus Lantern*, *Green Snake* and my animated adaptations. More specifically, camera techniques were analysed to identify the point of view and to explain the relationship between the male and female characters.

After exploring the female image in Chinese animated adaptations, a practical demonstration was required based on the knowledge that had been obtained. It could be argued that one of the problems of ground theory is the lack of theoretical input derived from practice (Friedmana, 2008). Scrivener and Chapman (2004) note a positive correlation between reflective practice and productive excellence. Additionally, they specify that within the field of visual arts and design, certain aspects of academic research, including frameworks and methodology, can only be resolved through practice-based research. Carden (2015) further explains that reflective practice provides researchers with extensive documentation and knowledge that inevitably contributes to detailed outcomes and conclusions. Therefore, my study not only highlights the problems associated with the female image in Chinese animation, but it also cites a specific example of a traditional Chinese story, upon which I based two 3D CGI animated adaptations. After investigating different forms of visual representation, two versions of the image of the Luo River goddess were re-created as animated works. In terms of character design, the first version follows the image of the goddess that is portrayed in the poem and Gu Kaizhi's painting to depict the Luo River goddess. In the second animation, the goddess's appearance, dress and body movements were changed based on the apparel of Kuan Yin and other aspects that were influenced by Taoism to shape a stronger and more independent female image. An experimental approach to changing an original story and adapting it into a short film was applied in film 2, in which the focus is to tell this traditional Chinese story from the female perspective through the use of film language rather than from the male perspective of the original story. My reflective practice shows that it is possible to challenge the stereotypical female image, and the generated results directly affected the decision-making process.

Lastly, to evaluate the effectiveness of this research, I used a qualitative method. A focus group interview was conducted with Chinese women with animation backgrounds who were currently living in the United Kingdom. Qualitative data were collected through a group discussion regarding female representations in Chinese animation and questionnaires that were completed by the participants. An

identical questionnaire was used in another qualitative survey in which the target audience was young Chinese adults who are studying different art subjects at a Chinese art college. Because the qualitative method can contribute to the understanding and description of the participants' personal experiences (Frost, 2011), this approach helps to generate a deeper understanding of how a Chinese audience views my practical work. By collecting all the data and analysing the results, these evaluation practices contributed to the refinement and validation of the research findings.

The background introduced the current development of 3D CGI animated adaptations of traditional Chinese stories and the development of techniques using 3D CGI effects to render Chinese ink painting style. Furthermore, by creating 3D CGI animated adaptations, my intention was to present equal gender relationships and build a female role-model in Chinese animation. To achieve this, both Western theories and traditional Chinese culture and philosophy elements were drawn upon. In the next section, specific methods are selected and reasons are given.

Chapter 1: The Stereotype of the female image in Chinese animated adaptations of traditional stories

Since the World Women's Conference²⁵ was convened in 1995, feminist theory and work from the West have been gradually introduced to China, and Chinese scholars have started to establish their own literary criticism using Western feminist theory in line with the actual reality of China (Huang and Zhuge, 2007). Jiang (2014) states that contemporary Chinese women's fiction has developed significantly since the 21st century, which has seen the development of a more feminist perspective. In live-action film, Sun (2008) states that *Fish and Elephant* (2001) by Li Yu²⁶ is regarded as the first film to represent lesbian relationships in mainland China. Li Yu's other feminist films, including *Dam Street* (2005) and *Lost in Beijing* (2007), along with feminist films by other directors such as *Perpetual Motion*²⁷ (2005), sparked an influx of films with a feminist agenda.

However, compared to other media, Chinese animation has been shown to frequently reproduce biased images of women. In Chinese animated adaptations of traditional stories, women are represented as weak and in need of male protection. Wu's research (2013) discusses female characters who, though beautiful, are otherwise inferior to men. To demonstrate their appreciation of having been given help, women marry the men, as seen in *Lotus Princess* (1992) and *Female Deer* (1993). Thus, because Chinese animations often show unequal gender relations, it is necessary to study the representations of women in Chinese animation and to identify potential

²⁵ Agrawal (2001) states that The United Nations organised the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September, 1995, which focused on the theme of equality development and peace. Agrawal highlights that "The overriding message of the Fourth World Conference on Woman was that the issues addressed in the Platform for action are global and universal." (2001:260) It implies the conference suggested that the scope of feminist theorising has been broadened internationally.

²⁶ An assistant professor of East Asian studies at Brown University, Lingzhen Wang (2011) notes in her book *Chinese Women's Cinema* that Li Yu directed films contains feminist elements. For example, she comments that "From *Fish and Elephant* to *Dam Street*, Li Yu's films clearly take women and sexuality as central concerns." *Lost in Beijing*, "locates female sexuality against a commercial society in which the female body is commodified for its exchange value." (Wang, L. 2011:224)

²⁷ "Ning Ying's film *Wu Qiong Dong* (*Perpetual Motion* 2005) captures middle-aged women from a particular class (educated, urban, professional, and apparently 'liberated') in 'perpetual motion' in Beijing as they confront these enormous social, political, economic and ideological changes." "*Perpetual Motion* explores the contradictions between the public and the private in the lives of Chinese women." (ibid: 192)

problems in adopting a feminist perspective in future productions.

Two examples are used to outline the stereotypical female image shown in Chinese animated adaptations of traditional stories. In *Gold Conch* (1963), a snail girl falls in love with a fisherman (Giesen, 2015). However, the snail girl's mother, the goddess of the sea, does not approve of their relationship. Eventually, the fisherman's loyalty and courage convince the mother, who allows him to stay with the snail girl, and they end up marrying. From one perspective, it is the fisherman who exerts the effort to make the relationship possible, rather than the snail girl. However, the snail girl's mother represents the Chinese tradition that a young couple's marriage depends on the discretion of the elders. Though superficially the film is presented a love story, it is also rooted in traditional concepts that prevent the snail girl from controlling her own destiny. Wu explains that the stereotypical set-up in Chinese animation depicts female characters getting help from male characters when they are in trouble. Supporting this view, Ti (2012) describes the storyline of *Gold Conch*, in which a young man pursues and overcomes difficulties so that he can stay with the snail girl. Such a plot suggests that women cannot decide their own destiny and have to rely on men. It can be argued that in some Chinese animated adaptations, as Qin (2012) emphasises, men continue to play the active role of protagonist, and women remain dependent on male support.

Ti (2012) offers two examples in which female roles are slightly more significant: *The Peacock Princess* (1963) and *Butterfly Spring* (1983). However, she concludes that, although these two films eulogise the pure love between men and women, they still reflect the social constraints placed on women. The films reflect a power struggle between men in which the woman is regarded as the prize. *Butterfly Spring*, is a love story in which a young man saves a woman from the aristocratic hunters who have kidnapped her (ibid). Though there is an incident early in the film in which the woman tries to save a wounded fawn, the main plot focuses on the young man's efforts to save her from the villains, which reveals the same problem of women needing to rely on men to protect them, rather than controlling their own destiny.

In this research, two additional case studies are analysed to illustrate how female characters are represented in China. *Princess Iron Fan* (1941) was China's first animated feature film (Song, 2012)

and is considered to be a masterpiece in Chinese animation history (Giesen, 2015). *Lotus Lantern* (1999) is another famous animation in China which has won many awards²⁸. The selected films and their respective female characters are famous in China, resulting in greater exposure to Chinese audiences and critics, which is the reason they were chosen.

As the first Chinese animated feature film (Song, 2012), in *Princess Iron Fan*, many of the production's elements reveal the traditional Chinese inhibition of female agency typical of the period. Ti (2012) analyses two female images in the film: Princess Iron Fan is the wife of the Bull Demon King, and the fox girl, Yumian, is his concubine. Ti claims (2012:46) that "The inclusion of the two spouses setting in the film, reflects the Chinese feudal custom of polygamy". Huang and Che (2012) have indicated that in Princess Iron Fan's mind, a wall of ethics and ethical norms has been established, and she does not dare to take a step beyond the prescribed limits, believing it would be outrageous to violate dogma and rules. Thus, it is suggested that the image of Princess Iron Fan represents a stereotypical Chinese female character portrayed in early Chinese animated films.

Chang (2010) reveals that the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* represents the stereotypical female commonly portrayed in animated adaptations of Chinese traditional stories: a weak being who needs male protection. Ti (2012) argues that this depiction is due to the need to be faithful to the spirit of the original story. Therefore, though the goddess acts bravely in eloping for love, she still must rely on her son to achieve freedom. Based on observations, *Lotus Lantern*, which was made 50 years after *Princess Iron Fan*, exhibits differences in its characterisation of women and could be a useful resource to see how female character's becoming more independent through character design and the use of film language. An analysis of the visual representations of these two female characters in the next section contribute to understand the typical female images in animated adaptations of Chinese traditional stories.

²⁸ *Lotus Lantern* won many awards, both in China and internationally: Award for Excellent Animation Film, Nineteenth Chinese "Golden Rooster" competition, 1999 and the Bai Hua Prize competition, 2000; Special Prize, First Mal del Plata Children and Teenage Film Festival – Sweet Dream Category, Argentina, 2003 (Giesen, 2015).

Even though the above critics have analysed the female image in these two animations, the narrative storyline was their main focus. As part of my research, I explored their character design and the use of film language in the next section.

1.1 Analysis of *Princess Iron Fan* and *Lotus Lantern*

To observe how the male and female images have been represented in these two animation, the selected scenes to analysis are of the heroine in her first encounter with her partner. Because in both scenes, there are only the hero and heroine, the interaction between the characters can show the relationship between only the male and female without other characters' interaction. Both of these scenes contain a romantic element between the female and male characters, which could be relevant to my practical adaptation.

Compositional interpretation analysis has been conducted to analyse character features, costumes, colour and light. The aim is to show how character designs draw upon traditional Chinese culture, such as the Chinese opera. Moreover, a film analysis has been conducted to explain how film language, such as camera angles, has been used in these two animations. The selected approach of analysis was 'six levels of tele-film analysis'²⁹ written in the *Handbook of Visual Analysis* (Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2000), as it allows to analyse the meanings of characters' activities and interactions, by referring to particular scenes and sequences. Other films analysis theories involving film techniques and their effect on the spectators, are described in Chapter 4.

1.1.1 *Princess Iron Fan in Princess Iron Fan*

The character Princess Iron Fan also plays a key role in the animation and is voiced by a famous female singer³⁰ of the time. Because of the film's historical status and the focus on the female role of Princess

²⁹ The 'six levels of tele-film analysis' bring together analytical categories often used in film theory (frame, shot, scene, sequence) with categories used in genre analysis (Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2000).

³⁰ According to Laiming Wan, Guchan Wan and Chaochen Wan (2015), Princess Iron Fan was voiced by Bai Hong, who was a famous singer during 1930s and 1940s in China.

Iron Fan, *Princess Iron Fan* was selected as the first case study.

Princess Iron Fan tells the story of Master Tang Seng and his apprentice monk on a Western pilgrimage seeking Buddhist scriptures through the Flaming Mountain. They attempted to borrow a fan from Princess Iron Fan to ward off the fire, but experienced repeated failure. The character modelling and shaping in the film are consistent with the settings of the original novel, *Journey to the West* (Macdonald, 2015). The film premiered in 1941 and was directed and produced by the Wan brothers (Wan Guchan and Wan Laiming). Song (2012) believes that the Wan brothers were determined to produce a Chinese animation film after being inspired by early American animation.³¹ In addition, this animation expressed the essence of traditional ethnic arts. For example, the animation used the style of Chinese ink painting for the background design. (ibid.).

The scenes in which Princess Iron Fan first speaks with her husband, the Bull Demon King, were discussed. This scene starts 44 minutes in. Selected scenes show the interaction between Princess Iron Fan and the Bull Demon King. In the beginning, the Bull Demon King notices the sleeping Princess Iron Fan, and they later have a long conversation. The development of the narrative is clear to the audience.

Compositional Interpretation Analysis

A single frame (Figure 1.1.1) of the film was selected for compositional interpretation analysis, because that Princess Iron Fan and the Bull Demon King stand in the foreground with their faces exposed, where both their character features and costumes can be seen clearly.

³¹ Giesen (2015) states *Princess Iron Fan* is somewhere between the cartoons by Van Beuren and those by Max Fleischer, where they used similar the technology of rotoscoping in case of human actors, which contribute to the smooth character movement.



Figure 1.1.1 A shot from *Princess Iron Fan* (1941) by Wan Guchan and Wan Laiming

Character Features and Costume

Princess Iron Fan is depicted with exaggerated eyes, long eyebrows, a small mouth and long black hair. These traits adhere to the stereotypical Chinese definition of feminine beauty. In the film's depiction of the Bull Demon King, the head is disproportionately large for the body, and all of the facial features are exaggerated and enlarged for comedic effect. The figure of the Bull Demon King is intended to appear physically much stronger than Princess Iron Fan.

The appearance of the characters reference the costumes of the Beijing Opera. It is possible that the clothing of Princess Iron Fan borrows from the style used for the depiction of 'Yuntaiyi'³² (Figure 1.1.2).

³² Tan (1992:130) describes in his book *Chinese Opera Clothing Design* the features of the 'Yuntaiyi' style as follows: the "clothes are tailor fit, whereby the upper outer garment is short and pleated, and the skirt is tied outside with a belt at the waist; the sleeves alternate from wide and roomy to narrow and tight".



Figure 1.1.2 Example of 'Yuntaiyi' (1992) by Tan Yuanjie

As can be seen, in the 'Yuntaiyi' costume, the upper outer garment is a jacket, wrapped by a shawl with an oversized collar; the lower outer garment is a 'waist skirt'. The overall structure of the dress, collar and cuffs worn by Princess Iron Fan is borrowed from the style of the 'Yuntaiyi' costume. The effect is to emphasise the appearance of Princess Iron Fan as tall, slim and beautiful. In contrast, the clothing of the Bull Demon King references the 'Kao' dress style of the Beijing Opera (Figure 1.1.3).



Figure 1.1.3 Example of 'Kao' (1992) by Tan Yuanjie

Although the details are simplified, the numerous armour-based structures are retained; for example, the collar consists of two large pieces of armour, and at the waist there are two more armour pieces. As the 'Kao' dress is commonly worn by generals in the Beijing Opera (Tan 1992), by using a similar cloth design, it can be argued that The Bull Demon King presents the character as a powerful male figure.

Colour and light

In terms of the use of a monochromatic colour palette, the Bull Demon King's face is white in order to draw the viewer's attention, whilst his clothes are dark. In relation to light, there is an area of illumination where the two characters stand, making this location brighter than the rest of the scene, and also making the wall behind Princess Iron Fan appear brighter than the wall to the right of the Bull Demon King.

The scene below (Figure 1.1.4) is broken down into seven shots, followed by a film analysis. A description of each shot is presented in Table 1.1.1 in the appendices on page 105.

Shot1



Shot 2



Shot 3



Shot 4



Shot 5



Shot 6



Shot 7



Figure 1.1.4 Scene from *Princess Iron Fan* (1941) by Wan Guchan and Wan Laiming

Film Analysis

For this analysis, the mise-en-scène will first be discussed. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2008), there are four aspects of mise-en-scène: setting, costume and makeup, lighting and staging (the latter consisting of movement and performance). It is worth noting that the setting takes place exclusively indoors. The main two characters wear traditional Chinese costumes. The lighting highlights the characters on the stage to a small extent. The acting is slightly exaggerated, which in parts reflects the style of Chinese opera, where expressions and motions are amplified to be clearer to the audience. Overall, this creates an old-fashioned animation style.

Secondly, from the perspective of individual frames and shots, there are more shots of the Bull Demon King than those of Princess Iron Fan. Generally, Princess Iron Fan only appears together with Bull Demon King in medium-long or medium shots, whereas the Bull Demon King receives more solo medium shots, in addition to the shots in which he is shown together with Princess Iron Fan. Generally, the Bull Demon King receives more screen time than Princess Iron Fan, and he occupies the centre of the frame. In the solo medium shot, his facial expressions are clearly shown. By contrast, Princess Iron

Fan always occupies the background (e.g. in the sleeping scene) or a secondary position.

Lastly, from the perspective of the story development, these shots comprise the first scene in which the couple appear together. These shots appear 44 minutes into the film. On the surface, they appear to have a stable marriage. Prior to this point, there is a scene in which the Bull Demon King was with his lover, the fox girl Yumian. It is made clear that Princess Iron Fan is aware of the rendezvous between them. However, Princess Iron Fan is delighted (albeit somewhat surprised) at the Bull Demon King's visit, and does not display much bitterness over his negligence of her. For example, she smiles and hugs him (shot 3, Page 29) immediately when she sees him. Princess Iron Fan shows love to, and cooperation with, her unfaithful husband, signifying that she occupies a disadvantaged position in the marital relationship.

1.1.2 *The goddess in Lotus Lantern*

This film is based on the traditional Chinese story *The Magic Lotus Lantern*³³. This film was directed by Guangxi Chang, with Yigong Wu as the art director. The film began pre-production in 1995, and premiered in 1999 (Du, 2015). The selected scene starts 30 seconds in, in which the goddess and the mortal Liu Yanchang meet. In these senses, although there is no dialogue between the two characters, the attraction between these two characters can still be reflected from their interactions through movement.

Compositional Interpretation Analysis

Because there is not a single frame can capture both the facial features and the figure of the goddess and Liu Yanchang, two separate frames were chosen for analysis, a mid-shot of the goddess (Figure 1.1.5) and a long-shot of Liu Yanchang (Figure 1.1.6). The scene begins with the appearance of the

³³ Theatrical performances of this tale *The Magic Lotus Lantern* appeared as early as the Song (960–1126) and Yuan (1280–1368) dynasties (Yuan, 2006). Yuan notes that the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* lives in a temple on top of the Hua mountain in mid-western China. People worship her because they believe that she helps people of the region fighting a strange epidemic with the magic power of her *baoliandeng* (Magic Lotus Lantern).

The storyline of the film is that: A goddess fell in love with a mortal man and gave birth to Chenxiang after eloping to earth. However, her whereabouts were discovered by her brother, god Erlang, and she was eventually imprisoned under the mountain Hua. After Chenxiang grew up, he underwent a series of struggles to save his mother, whom he is ultimately reunited with (Hong Kong Filmography, 1952).

goddess.

Character Features and Costume

The appearances of the goddess and Liu Yanchang are both characterised by a similarly long face.

Their eyes are raised at the outer edges with epicanthic folds, emphasising a distinguishing feature of Asian eyes. In terms of differences, the goddess has finer eyebrows and a pointed chin, whereas Liu Yanchang has thick eyebrows and a square chin.



Figure 1.1.5 A mid-shot of the goddess from *Lotus Lantern* (1999) by Chang Guangxi.

It can be argued that the goddess's costume design still draws somewhat on the 'Yuntaiyi' style mentioned above, but it is simplified. The borrowed elements include the rather short upper garment, two winding ribbons that hang on the shoulders and the elevated position of the waistband, which emphasises her well-proportioned figure. The reason for referring to this particular costume is that it suggests her ability to fly, an attribute of her divinity. Unlike 'Yuntaiyi', the goddess's dress has a low neckline opening in the upper garment to partially reveal her cleavage, displaying her femininity.



Figure 1.1.6 A mid-shot of Liu Yanchang from *Lotus Lantern* (1999) by Chang Guangxi.

It appears that Liu Yanchang's dress design is derived from an older brick painting (Figure 1.1.7) from the Wei and Jin Dynasties that was discovered in Jiayuguan city,³⁴ with similarities such as the oblique collar design on the neckline. Overall, these clothes are loose and long.

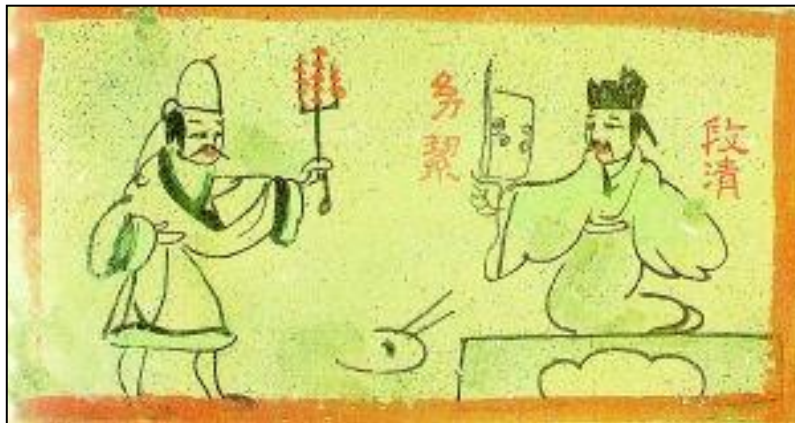


Figure 1.1.7 A colour painting on bricks (220-419 AD) located in Jiayuguan City

Colour and light

Regarding the colour of the goddess's costume, her upper garment is predominantly yellow in colour,

³⁴ On the official Chinese government website, it says Jiayuguan is located in the northwestern Gansu Province and in the middle of the Hexi Corridor. More than 1400 brick tombs were found in the Gobi Desert, 20 km to the northeast of Jiayuguan City. Most of the tombs contained fresco paintings of the Wei and Jin Dynasties (220-419), hence they are known as 'the largest underground gallery in the world'. Among those excavated, eight tombs contain paintings painted on bricks, and over 700 pieces were unearthed (*Jiayuguan City*, 2016).

with a contrasting scarlet skirt decorated with dark green ribbons and a blue belt.

In traditional Chinese opera, colours indicate one's personality and hierarchical distinctions. In her doctoral dissertation 'A Study on the Use and Significance of Colour in Classical Chinese Plays', Lei (2013) gave a detailed explanation of the significance of colour in such dramas. She explains that in Chinese opera there is a distinction between primary colours, known as the upper five colours, and supplementary colours, known as the lower five colours. The primary colours are blue, red, yellow, white and black, whereas the supplementary colours, generated by mixing various primary colours, include bright green, pink, cerise, and jade green.

Among the primary colours, yellow represents aristocratic status and is symbolic of emperors and kings; yellow also serves as the main tone for dramatic scenes that relate to royal palaces and courts. Viewed as an auspicious colour, red has been used as a special tone for major celebratory events, such as weddings, and symbolises success in an imperial examination. Red is the symbolic sign of celebration and happiness on the opera stage (ibid, 2011).

In traditional opera, the relations between the identity, status and colour of the embroidered robes and the intended mood can be shown. Xu (2013) described in detail the application of colours to the roles in opera (Table 1.1.2). The upper five colours are generally used to identify the main characters in the play. In contrast, the lower five colours are used to identify the minor characters in the play. Thus, the colours of the goddess and her temple are mostly red and yellow, signifying deity. The lower five colours are mainly used for the character of Liu Yanchang, Green and blue represent characters with a lower status.

Table 1.1.2 The link between colour and characterise used in Chinese opera

Identity or status	Emperor, Empress	Champion, young man	Generals, loyal officials	Rough character	Handsome Young man	Seniors
Colour of the embroidered robes	Yellow	Red	Green	Black or blue	White	Bronze-coloured, bronze-yellow
Intended mood	Noble, privileged	Aristocrat	Resolute	Upright	Youthful, vigorous	Respected

In the animation shots selected, most of the scenes use frontal lighting, and the only scenes that are backlit are those when the goddess and Liu Yanchang are about to embrace (Figure 1.1.8). In this scene, Liu Yanchang's back is to the camera. He is in shadow, whereas the goddess faces the camera and is in the light.

The scene below (Figure 1.1.8) is broken down into eight shots, followed by a film analysis. A description of each shot is presented in Table 1.1.3 (page 107) in the appendices.

Shot 1



Shot 2



Shot 3



Shot 4



Shot 5



Shot 6



Shot 7



Shot 8



Figure 1.1.8 Scene of *Lotus Lantern* (1999) Chang Guangxi.

Film Analysis

Regarding the mise-en-scène, the setting is exterior, with shots of both the front door of the goddess's temple and a side view of the main entrance steps. The two main characters wear traditional Chinese costumes. At one point there is a beam of light shining down on just the goddess, indicating that she is a supreme being. The acting appears more natural than that in *Princess Iron Fan*.

At the beginning of the scene, from the perspective of individual frames and shots, more are focused on portraying Liu Yanchang. In particular, the mid- and close-up shots of Liu Yanchang are used to reflect Liu Yanchang gazing at the goddess, whereas the goddess does not feature in any close-up shots. However, because the two meet and embrace, Liu Yanchang and the goddess share the shots equally, and each person accounts for one half of the shots.

A complex and variable long shot is used when Liu Yanchang gazes at the goddess for the first time. The shot lasts approximately 12 seconds, starting from a high overhead angle above Liu Yanchang. The camera then follows the waving scarf in the sky and changes direction to zoom in to a medium shot of Liu Yanchang. After he receives the scarf, the shot zooms in on Liu Yanchang in a close-up of his facial expressions. As Liu turns around, the camera moves to the right and focuses on the building above and behind him. However, when the goddess looks at Liu Yanchang, only one long shot and zoom-in medium shot are used. This reveals that the viewers are more engaged with the feelings of Liu

Yanchang than those of the goddess³⁵. Throughout the entirety of the animation Liu Yanchang plays a supporting role, whereas the goddess has more scenes and plays the main role. However, in the selected scenes, Liu Yanchang appears in more shots.

The female images in these two films are represented with certain differences, and the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* is a more independent figure than Princess Iron Fan, which can be reflected from the performance and movement. Princess Iron Fan is appealing to Chinese men with more masculinist views, as her actions display inferiority. For example, in shot 5 (page 37), she pretends to cry in front of her husband in an effort to appear weak and to seek consolation from him. In comparison, the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* does not attempt to fake emotions in order to gain male attention. As shown in shot 5, she looks towards Liu Yanchang without an expression intended to flatter him, and as a result appears she is spontaneous without premeditation.

The use of camera perspective also distinguishes the two films. Princess Iron Fan is never in a single frame by herself, but appears with the male character in every shot. Moreover, even when she appears with the Bull Demon King, Princess Iron Fan is always at the side of the screen, never in the centre. In contrast, the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* has a zoom-in mid-shot that places her in the centre of the screen. In addition, when the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* is shown with Liu Yanchang, the proportion of screen space is relatively evenly distributed between them, indicating greater gender equality.

By analysing and comparing these two female images, focusing on character design and camera perspective, this research thus traces the way that the portrayal of female characters in Chinese animation has developed. In terms of their costumes, both character designs draw upon elements of traditional Chinese opera, which has been proven in the research. More specifically, in *Princess Iron Fan* there is a focus on costume design to show the different gender identities, whereas in *Lotus Lantern*, colour differences are used to distinguish between the divine and the mortal. In terms of acting and camera work, these two films are directed in different ways. In *Princess Iron Fan*, more shots are

³⁵ A 'close-up' social distance, where the depicted characters appear in close-up, can convey a sense of closeness and intimacy to the viewers (Unsworth and Thomas, 2014). More details about the camera techniques being used to imply the viewer and the depicted character's point of view are discussed in Chapter 4.

focused on the Bull Demon King, and he is more active and plays the central role in the selected scenes. This reflects Mulvey's theory of the male gaze, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, (Page 67). Although the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* represents a comparatively more liberated female image than Princess Iron Fan, there is the potential to create a stronger female character. In this research, two animated adaptations of a specific traditional Chinese story were created to demonstrate this possibility. In the next chapter, a Chinese story will be chosen as the main source, and it provides the background to the films that I have produced that draw inspiration from the poem and painting of *Nymph of the Luo River*. In addition, a visual analysis of the selected section in the painting has been conducted in order to reveal the relationship between the male and female characters, and reflect Berger's theory of the way women are represented in traditional Western art history.

Chapter 2: Study of the *Nymph of the Luo River* poem by Cao Zhi and painting by Gu Kaizhi

2.1 Background of *Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River* poem and *Nymph of the Luo River* painting

The specific traditional Chinese story I chose to adapt into animated films is ‘Nymph of the Luo River’. The scroll painting *Nymph of the Luo River* (Figure 2.1.1) was created by the major artist Gu Kaizhi during the Jin Dynasty (265 AD–420 AD), based on a poem, *Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River*, by the prince Cao Zhi, who lived during the late Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) and Three Kingdoms period (220–280 AD). His approach to telling this story involves a complicated relationship between the writer and the goddess. The story depicts the pursuit of love and the disillusionment stemming from the frustration that comes with it. Additionally, this type of ancient scroll painting in China depicted the chronology of events through time (Huhtamo, 2013), suggesting a connection between narrative paintings and animated film³⁶. *Nymph of the Luo River* therefore provides an ideal source for creating an animated adaptation.



Figure 2.1.1 *Nymph of the Luo River* (960-1279) Beijing Palace Museum

³⁶ Huhtamo (2013) observes, for example, that scroll paintings are normally enjoyed in private, opening from the left-hand side and rolled around the right-hand side. Only a small portion is visible at any one time: this way of seeing the painting thus creates visual surprises and dynamic effects (ibid).

According to Lin (2001), the original *Nymph of the Luo River* painting by Gu Kaizhi was not preserved, but replicas remain³⁷. In this study, the primary reference was the replica held at the Beijing Palace Museum³⁸.

This copy, unlike other versions, has been maintained in a relatively good condition, and most parts are clear enough to see the details. For example, the copy in the British Museum is not preserved particularly well (Figure 2.1.2). As the figure shows, some parts are missing, such as half of the goddess's body, and some of the trees are covered in what appears to be grease.



Figure 2.1.2 *Nymph of the Luo River* Possibly Jin Dynasty (1115-1234 AD) or late Ming/early Qing dynasties (16th–18th centuries AD) British Museum

After introducing the poem and painting of *Nymph of the Luo River*, in the next section, more background regarding the artist Gu Kai will be discussed to explore how he represented the image of females in his painting.

³⁷ The versions currently available in the Liaoning Provincial Museum, the Beijing Palace Museum, the British Museum, the Freer Gallery of Art, and the Taipei Palace Museum.

³⁸ Professor Jin Weinuo suggests (1981: 93) that the replica of *Nymph of the Luo River* in the Beijing Palace Museum is the closest to the original for two reasons (Zhou, 2008). Firstly, the shapes of the character Cao Zhi and his servants are close to the Buddha statues in the Longmen Grottoes and the Binyang Hole (500–616). Secondly, the way of treating the entire painting in *Nymph of the Luo River* is also close to that of the portrait stone carvings in the Southern Dynasty (386–589).

2.2 The opposition between the ethics of Taoism and Confucianism in relation to women, and their influence on Gu Kaizhi

The female image has remained a signifier of masculine power in traditional Chinese painting, and the bias towards male dominance has deep roots in Chinese literature in general (Fong, 1996).

Because Confucianism was the dominant intellectual tradition in China (Chang and Kalmanson, 2010), historically, under the constraints of traditional Confucian culture, Chinese women were deprived of an independent personality³⁹.

On the other hand, the positive Taoist attitude towards female attributes could be said to compensate for flaws in the Confucian belittling of women's attributes, enabling women's invaluable qualities to be widely recognised. Regarding the concept of 'yin' and 'yang' (symbolising female and male), Nie states that 'yin' and 'yang' should be considered completely equal in Taoism and that one cannot exist without the other. He states: "They originate in each other, depend on each other, and nourish each other" (Nie, 2011: 1931). However, Taoism was less influential than Confucianism in Chinese history. In the development of traditional Chinese culture, Taoism originally emerged as a system in complementary opposition to Confucianism, with a different ideological thrust, inevitably resulting in various differences between Taoism and Confucianism in the area of ethics related to women (W. Liu, 2012).

Gu Kaizhi's painting of *Nymph of the Luo River* reflects both Confucianism and Taoism. It should be noticed that he was in Wei and Jin Dynasty, where the Taoism was considered even more popular than Confucianism⁴⁰. In Fan's (2011) argument, regarding the female image in ancient Chinese art, before

³⁹ Littlejohn (2010) notes, in Han Dynasty, Ban Zhao wrote *Precepts for Women*, that was considered a manual for proper feminine virtue and behaviour in the Confucian way.

Here is the translation of the section of *Precepts for Women* related to the virtue of woman qualifications: "A woman ought to have four qualifications: (1) womanly virtue; (2) womanly words; (3) womanly bearing; and (4) womanly work. Now what is called womanly virtue need not be brilliant ability, exceptionally different from others. Womanly words need be neither clever in debate nor keen in conversation. Womanly appearance requires neither a pretty nor a perfect face and form. Womanly work need not be work done more skillfully than that of others" (ibid: 178)

⁴⁰ Compared to Han dynasty, In Wei and Jin dynasty, Confucianism lost its impact, which was replaced

the Jin Dynasty (265-420), women were more often portrayed on bricks rather than on scroll paintings. Hence before Gu Kaizhi's painting, fewer details could be shown to depict the female image in Chinese traditional painting. Additionally, the content of those paintings usually reflects women's common daily life, rather than emphasising feminine beauty (Fan, 2011). Fan points out it was because of Confucianism, women in Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) were mostly shown as men's possessions. Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, was against female beauty⁴¹. Cho (2012) states that under the Confucian view of women, ugliness was praised as noble and virtuous⁴², and that beauty implies the source of sin. Therefore, women had to perform their obligations, such as manual labour rather than showing their beauty. In contrast, Gu Kaizhi's focuses on portraying feminine beauty in his painting, which might be influenced by Taoism. Liu and Wang (2008) cite the assertion by Taoist philosopher Zhuang Zi⁴³ that both the external and internal beauty of women should be appreciated. K. Wang (2011) maintains that Gu Kaizhi's *Nymph of the Luo River* serves as a precedent for China's scroll painting because it is famous and is one of the earliest scroll paintings to contain portraits. The depictions of slender eyebrows and a willowy waist have had a profound impact on the portrayals of females throughout Chinese history. This indicates that Gu Kaizhi challenges the stereotype of the female image during the Han Dynasty, where women were encouraged not to show their beauty, by emphasising that women's beautiful appearance should be considered as a good quality.

Although Gu Kaizhi pays more attention to women's appearance, he still portrayed women from a male perspective. Another of his paintings, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*⁴⁴ (344-

by Taoism. (Ye, Fei and Wang, 2007)

⁴¹ One of Confucius's famous quotations is that: "Beauty is dangerous." (Wang and Chee, 2011). Rainey (2010:55) also states that: "Confucius also said that he had yet to meet a man who is as fond of virtue as he is of beautiful women, and Confucius' students were warned to guard themselves against female beauty when young."

⁴² Cho (2012) notes that Liu Xiang wrote *Biographies of Exemplary* during the Han Dynasty, which was considered the origin of the praise of ugly women. Gradually, the concept that being a beautiful woman is cruel, was established in China.

⁴³ Zhuangzi (399-295 BC) is regarded as one of the greatest of Taoist writers and his collection of stories *The book of Zhuangzi* expanded Taoist theory (Harper et al, 2007).

⁴⁴ *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* is drawn by Gu Kaizhi and the original painting is now in British Museum. "Handscroll painting in nine scenes (originally twelve) illustrating the 'Nüshì zhen' (Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies), a text composed by Zhang Hua (AD 232-

405), describes the correct attitude and behaviour of a female member of the royal household (Zito and Barlow, 1994). This painting reflects the Confucianist-influenced expectation that women were expected to adhere to a high standard of behaviour, which restrained their freedom (Richey, 2008). Murray (2007) comments that another example is the use of text⁴⁵, which is from Zhang Hua's maxims on feminine conduct on the fourth section of the painting (Figure 2.2.1). In this section, one woman is applying cosmetics and another woman has her hair combed while she watches in a mirror.



Figure 2.2.1 A Section of *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* (344-405) British Museum

The quotation from Zhang Hua in this section indicates although a woman can improve her appearance through make-up, she needs to follow moral standards to become an outstanding woman. Therefore, Gu Kaizhi's painting, even if it reflects Taoist theory to some extent, still cannot enable women's own voices. In the next section, the way that Gu Kaizhi illustrates the relationship between men and women will be examined through a visual analysis of the section in which the stereotype of the goddess's image is created.

2.3 Analysis of the selected section of *Nymph of the Luo River* painting

300). It bears many seals and long colophons in the hands of the Huizong and Qianlong emperors." "The scroll consists of quotations from the text by Zhang Hua, followed in each case by figure illustrations without any background or at most slight suggestions of setting." (British Museum, n.d.).

⁴⁵ Murray (2007: 14) translates Zhang Hua's writing shown in Gu's painting: "People all know how to embellish their faces. But no one knows how to embellish their character. A character that is not embellished may be faulty in ritual and propriety. Cut it, adorn it; And you can think of becoming a sage."

In the following section, the scene in the painting *Nymph of the Luo River* (Figure 2.3.1) in which Cao Zhi and the goddess meet for the first time has been interpreted, as it is the main source for the animated adaptation. Although many sections of the painting show the goddess and Cao Zhi together, the selected section reflects the part in the original poem (page 50) in which the writer used a large, detailed paragraph to explain how amazed he is by the goddess's beauty. This is one of the indications that the poem is clearly written from a male perspective. The image of the goddess was subsequently analysed, as well as the relationship between this goddess and Cao Zhi.



Figure 2.3.1 A Section of *Nymph of the Luo River* (960–1279) Beijing Palace Museum

The selected section of the painting is a panoramic drawing depicting a full image of the relevant characters and background. On the right-hand side of the painting stand Cao Zhi and his seven servants on the river bank, with several willow trees in the background. On the left-hand side of the painting is the river, dotted with rocks and small plants. The Goddess appears left of the river, between the junction of the river and the rocks. She is looking in Cao Zhi's direction. Between the goddess and Cao Zhi, there is a dragon and two geese in the sky.

The relationship between the goddess and Cao Zhi seems to be portrayed from a male perspective. Cao Zhi and his servants constitute a crowd of men, and occupy a large proportion of space on the right-hand side, where they face in the direction of the goddess. However, the goddess is displayed as if a large space surrounds her, highlighting that she is set apart from others. Therefore, the painting clearly shows that Cao Zhi and his servants are looking at the goddess.

When Cao Zhi discovers the goddess, he halts his entourage by blocking their movement with his arm, so he can focus at looking at her. The goddess detects their presence, and looks back. The significance of a dragon and two geese in the sky could be associated with the original poem *Ode to the goddess of the Luo River*. In Minford and Lau's *Classical Chinese Literature* (2000), the full-length English translation of the poem by Burton Watson is included. The appearance of the goddess is described as follows (ibid:315): "her form is like a startled goose⁴⁶ that flies fast and a wandering dragon that moves elegantly." When Gu Kaizhi translated these verses into painting, one could interpret his inclusion of the dragon and two geese as an expression the goddess's beauty and divinity.

In interpreting the meaning of female nude images in traditional European oil paintings, Berger (1972) suggested that "the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male, and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him". Similarly, a brief analysis of the scene in *Nymph of the Luo River* reveals that the man, Cao Zhi is the gazer and the goddess is seen through Cao Zhi's eyes. K. Wang, (2011) comments that men long for female beauty and elegance, and pursue women for their beauty. The female image in *Nymph of the Luo River* appeals to a male's sexual desires. However, the aim of this animated adaptation is to present a stronger, more positive and independent image of the goddess.

From the two case studies in Chapter 1, it can be seen through the use of space that women are not the main focus in Chinese animated adaptations, and men play more active roles. In *Princess Iron Fan*, the man is always shown in the centre of the shot, whereas Princess Iron Fan is shown to the side. This shares similarities to the painting *Nymph of the Luo River*; the group of men are painted towards the bottom, indicating they are in the foreground. An observer's eyes would naturally be drawn to them first, and then the goddess, who is higher up and thus at more of a distance, resulting in the men being more noticeable. This viewing sequence is also important as it parallels the perspective of the men. Together, these observations indicate that it is a male centric scene.

To conclude, the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*, as well as Princess Iron Fan, are depicted as the

⁴⁶ In China, a goose symbolises the delivery of married bliss and resourcefulness. A dragon symbolises the Emperor and is a divine mystical creature. (Nationsonline.org, n.d.)

subjects of men's regard through the characters' behaviours and the use of space. In *Nymph of the Luo River*, the use of space involves the space arranged in the still image, whereas in *Princess Iron Fan*, the use of space involves the space arranged in shots. This use of space indicates that in traditional Chinese painting, women were portrayed as passive, which is similar to the depiction in animated films.

Throughout history, *Nymph of the Luo River* has been influential in the practice of Chinese portrait painting (ibid, 2011). Many adaptations of this story have been made, such as the early opera film *Luo Shen* (1957) by Law Chi-hung, the dance drama *Legend of the Luo River Goddess* (2009) directed by Liu Lingli and the Sunshine Game Company's online game *Luo Shen* (2015). In the next chapter, an analysis of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*, in different art forms will be undertaken to enable a deeper understanding of how the goddess has been portrayed historically and contemporarily.

Chapter 3: Visual analysis of different representations of the goddess of Luo River and character designs

Using the traditional Chinese love story *Nymph of the Luo River* as the resource of study, two animated films were created, based on the scene of Cao Zhi and the goddess's first meeting. Film 1 presents a traditional approach, retaining the spirit of the original poem and of Gu Kaizhi's painting. It retains many attributes from the original painting, including the characters' figures, clothing designs, and background colours. To feed into the character design of the second animated adaptation, a compositional interpretation analysis was conducted of how the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* is represented in other art forms to gain a more comprehensive understanding of her image. As a result, in addition to the original poem by Cao Zhi and the painting adaptation by Gu Kaizhi, two TV series were selected, *Where The Legend Begins*, which was made in mainland China, and *Legend of Goddess Luo*, which was made in Hong Kong. The costume of the actress who portrayed the goddess in *Legend of Goddess Luo* reminded me of Kuan Yin, a strong female divinity image in China, and her image become another important reference for the character design. Based on this research, at the end of the chapter, the final character design of the two versions of the goddess will be analysed by applying the same analytic systems.

3.1 Visual analysis of the image of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* as it appears in different art forms.

A compositional interpretation analysis of the goddess as she appears in different art forms was conducted, including the original poem, the painting adaptation and the two TV series. The following categories were used to discuss their visual representation: character features, figure and costume, and performance and movement⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ To examine the different depictions of this goddess in different art forms, the theory described in *Reading Visual Narratives: Image Analysis of Children's Picture Books* (Painter et al, 2013) was applied to define the categories to be analysed. Painter et al assert that character manifestation can take two forms: one is complete manifestation (Painter et al., 2013), which includes, for example, a character's head, facial features and hair; the other is metonymic manifestation, which includes a body part and/or a shadow/silhouette. Although this method was developed to examine images whose primary audience is children, Fryer (2015) suggests that Painter et al.'s methods can be applied not only to the analysis of narrative in children's picture books but also has implications for the development of social semiotics and systemic-functional theory. Therefore, character features, figure and costume, and performance and movement were chosen as categories.

The goddess in *Ode to the goddess of the Luo River*

Ode to the goddess of the Luo River is a romantic poem about the author's dream encounter with the goddess of the Luo river, written by Cao Zhi. In the translated version, the specific description of the appearance of the goddess is as follows (Minford and Lau, 2000:315):

Her body soars lightly like a startled swan,
Gracefully, like a dragon in flight,
In splendor brighter than the autumn chrysanthemum,
In bloom more flourishing than the pine in spring;
Dim as the moon mantled in filmy clouds,
Restless as snow whirled by the driving wind
Gaze far off from a distance:
She sparkles like the sun rising from morning mists;
Press closer to examine:
She flames like the lotus flower topping the green wave
She strikes a balance between plump and frail;
The tall and short of her are justly proportioned,
With shoulders shaped as if by carving,
Waist narrow as though bound with white cords;
At her slim throat and curving neck
The pale flesh lies open to view,
No scented ointments overlaying it,
No coat of leaden powder applied.
Cloud-bank coiffure rising steeply,
Long eyebrows delicately arched,
Red lips that shed their light abroad,
White teeth gleaming within,
Bright eyes skilled at glances,
A dimple to round off the base of the cheek—

Her rare form wonderfully enchanting,
Her manner quiet, her pose demure.
Gentle-hearted, broad of mind,
She entrances with every word she speaks;
Her robes are of a strangeness seldom seen,
Her face and figure live up to her paintings.
Wrapped in the soft rustle of silken garments,
She decks herself with flowery earrings of jasper and jade,
Gold and kingfisher hairpins adorning her head,
Strings of bright pearls to make her body shine
She treads in figured slippers fashioned for distant wandering,
Airy trains of mistlike gauze in tow,
Dimmed by the odorous haze of unseen orchids,
Pacing uncertainly beside the corner of the hill.

At the start of the poem, the poet uses numerous metaphors to describe the appearance of the goddess of the Luo river. Information on the appearance, dress and movements of the goddess of the Luo river is also included in the poem.

Analysis

Character features: The goddess has 'bright eyes', arched long eyebrows, 'red lips', 'white teeth' and 'pale skin'. There is a dimple on her cheek, and her coiffure rises steeply. These are all referenced in the poem.

Figure and costume: Her figure is of an average height. She has a 'slim throat and curving neck' and her shoulders are 'shaped as if by carving'. She wears 'silken garments', 'flowery earrings of jasper and jade', 'Gold and kingfisher hairpins' and 'strings of bright pearls'.

Performance and movement: ‘She treads in figured slippers fashioned for distant wandering’, ‘Pacing uncertainly beside the corner of the hill’, ‘then suddenly she puts on a freer air”, and ‘ready for rambling, for pleasant diversion.’

Image of the goddess in the painting *Nymph of the Luo River*

A portion of the scroll painting by Gu Kaizhi was sampled (Figure 3.1.1), that depicts the first encounter between Cao Zhi and the goddess of the Luo river, in which a full image of the goddess is shown. Despite a loss of certain details, her overall profile and general appearance are clearly visible.



Figure 3.1.1 A sample image of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* (960-1279) Beijing Palace Museum

Analysis

Character features: She has a rather pale complexion. Her face is slightly oblong with a round chin. Her eyes and eyebrows are slender, and her lips are small and reddish. Her hair is made up in two looped buns that are suspended on top of her head.

Figure and costume: Her physique looks slim with sloping shoulders. She wears a long garment that is primarily yellow and white, with green seams on the cuffs and along the chest area. She wears a red skirt on her waist. She wears red, green and white streamers that flap in the upper right-hand direction together with her left sleeve. There are red hair decorations tied to her hair buns.

Performance and movement: She is standing while raising her left hand and holding a green and red ornament in her right hand. She turns her head in the lower right-hand direction of the painting while gazing in the same direction.

Lighting: The tone of this painting is mainly light yellow and warm in colour, and there are no shadow effects in the painting.

Image of the goddess in the TV series *Where The Legend Begins*

Where The Legend Begins (Figure 3.1.2) is a 27-episode costume drama produced by Hong Kong Television Broadcasts Limited, Hong Kong, in 2002, directed by Mei Xiaoqing. Here, a scene was described that presents an image of the goddess of the Luo river, in which Cao Zhi has a dream that the goddess dances by a river. Due to pixel quality issues, two shots were used: a screenshot of face of the goddess that supports a facial analysis, and a panoramic shot of her that supports an analysis of the goddess's figure, dress and movements.



Figure 3.1.2 *Where The Legend Begins* (2002) by Mei Xiaoqing

Analysis

Character features: Her facial contours are angular, strongly defined, and she has a pointed chin. Her eyes and eyebrows are slim, her eyebrows arch in the middle, and she has rather flat eye contours.

There is natural make-up on her face. Her lips are soft red, and her teeth are white. Her hair is partially coiffured and hangs down.

Figure and costume: She has a slim figure and wears a white robe with a white waist belt. She wears yellow and white flowers in her hair. Her hands seem to hold a rectangular strip that is wrapped in white ribbons.

Performance and movement: In the dance component, she floats over water while facing the upper right-hand corner of the screen, gazing at a 45-degree angle toward the upper right-hand section of the screen. Her right hand is raised at eye level, and her left arm bends inward with her left fist positioned near her chest. Her right arm gestures outwardly with the white ribbon naturally hanging on the long strip in her hand.

Lighting: In this scene, the lighting is yellow, soft and warm. Frontal lighting illuminates her face and body without obvious shadowing effects.

In terms of the mise-en-scène, the setting is a scenic flora filled valley with a river running through it. High-key lighting is shown on the goddess's face, making her skin glow and hiding wrinkles with the intention of making the goddess appear younger. Her dancing style is more akin to what is commonly performed in Chinese opera, but uses more modern innovations.

Image of the goddess in the TV series *Legend of Goddess Luo*

Legend of Goddess Luo (Figure 3.1.3, 49) is a TV series that was produced in Mainland China in 2013. According to Wang (2013), *Legend of Goddess Luo*, a creative costume drama TV series jointly produced by Yuanxin Jian, an award-winning screenwriter and producer, and it was directed by Zhu Lili and Wang Shuzhi.

At the press conference for the *Legend of Goddess Luo* TV series, the producer Yuanxin Jian⁴⁸ questions the Hong Kong version, *Where The Legend Begins*, arguing that it is not faithful to the original story (Jin, 2013). It can be suggested that *Legend of Goddess Luo* was made as a response to *Where The Legend Begins*, where it aims to respect the traditional Chinese value.

Screenshots were sampled from this series depicting various meetings between the Luo river goddess and Cao Zhi. One is a close-up shot of the goddess' face, the other is a panoramic shot of the goddess.

⁴⁸ Yuanxin Jian states, "Historical dramas made in Hong Kong have been rudimentary: they were all shot in studios, and the producers were not familiar with ancient history. For example, the seven-step poem was created after the death of Zhen Fu (referring to the goddess), but in the Hong Kong version, this fact is neglected, and Zhen Fu is not only depicted as alive, but she even helps Cao Zhi overcome difficulties, which is disrespectful of history." (Jin, 2013)



Figure 3.1.3 *Legend of Goddess Luo* (2013) by Zhu Lili and Wang Shuzhi

Analysis

Character features: The goddess's face is more oval shaped. Although she has a pointed chin, the overall contours of her face are rounded. Her eyes are almond-shaped, with eyeliner and eye shadow on her eyelids and in the corners of her eyes. She has red lips and white teeth and wears a high bun with part of her hair combed to the back, with two hair tufts hanging down her front.

Figure and costume: The goddess has a slim figure. Her hair is decorated with numerous petal-like ornaments. She wears a long robe, and her clothes are mainly light blue, yellow, pink and green in colour. The collar, chest area and cuffs of her robe are yellow, with complex patterns made from red flowers and green leaves. Her sleeves are substantial and long, and hang down from her wrists.

Performance and movement: In this scene, Cao Zhi and the goddess are walking; she walks in front at a leisurely pace, whilst he rushes to catch up. Her right hand is placed on her chest, and her left hand holds the edge of her right sleeve. She faces the ground with her eyes cast downward, with smiling lips.

Lighting: In this shot, the lighting is yellow and warm. At the same time, a strong light is cast on the goddess, creating significant shadow on her right side. The colour saturation of the overall shot is quite high.

Regarding the mise-en-scène, the setting is an exterior, in a Chinese garden with some plants in the background. The late afternoon sunlight illuminates the left side of both actors with a warm yellow glow, casting a shadow on the right half of their faces. The acting is also referencing traditional Chinese opera, for example the goddess uses her finger to touch her sleeves, a common visual in older operas to convey a conservative personality.

Comparisons

The goddess's facial features differ in the selected art forms. In her book, *Female action heroes*, Gladys L. Knight (2010) claims that the curvation of the female features, such as round eyes and round faces, is a classic marker for femininity, innocence, kindness, and openness. The narrowed face and squinty glare represent the traditional masculine hero. The goddess in *Legend of Goddess Luo* has rounder eyes and facial contours to symbolise her innocence. However in the painting adaptation and in *Where The Legend Begins*, the goddess's eyes are thinner with more raised corners, reminiscent of realistic Chinese eye features. Additionally, the goddess depicted in *Where The Legend Begins* has a rather angular face, compared to other adaptations, representing less femininity, but more heroic characteristics.

The goddess's costumes are similar in matters of style and design, but are different in terms of colour and texture. In the painting, the goddess's dress is mainly jade green and yellow. In *Legend of Goddess Luo*, the dress consists of brighter and more saturated colours, and has many decorative patterns. These result in the goddess being gazed at by men as an object. In *Where The Legend Begins*, the actress's dress is predominantly white with little decoration on it, a costume distinctly different from the one in the original poem and in *Legend of Goddess Luo*. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002) suggest that different colours signify different meanings, depending on the culture and historical influence. The white robe resembles that of a famous powerful female divinity in China known as Kuan Yin⁴⁹. The simplicity of

⁴⁹ Dr Irwin Lee (1990) mentions that female divinities always play an important part of Chinese folk belief. Among all female divinities, four of them are the most popular from ancient times to the present, who are Nügua, the ancient Zhou dynasty creatress; Xi Wangmu, the Queen Mother of the West; Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy; and Tianhou, the Empress of Heaven. Lee (1990:53) explains the importance of these four female divinities that "...they represent the presence of the feminine element, divinized to the highest degree, in an almost unbroken continuity of spiritual potency and significance for both the masses of China, as well as for various religious and political groups." As her significant

the colour white which evokes purity, as well as the lack of decoration, allows the audience to focus on the goddess's behaviour and facial expressions, rather than on her beautiful clothes.

3.2 Costume design inspired by Kuan Yin and Taoism

Kuan Yin⁵⁰ represents a strong female image in the Chinese culture, and her historical transformation from male to female reflects the embrace of her strong female image by Chinese people.

Kuan Yin was originally a male god in Indian Buddhism. Indian Buddhism was introduced into China in the Han Dynasty, and was later adapted to include Taoism elements, ensuring a better integration into the Chinese society whilst shaping Chinese Buddhism (Lian 2004). Being the god of Mercy, Kuan Yin connected with people, blessing them with healthy children and prosperity. However, Taoism holds strong female values because of their reproductive powers and people find it easier to relate reproduction with the female entity, who is the one to control pregnancy in reality. Therefore, the perception of Kuan Yin shifted from male to female (Lian, 2004).

According to Zhang and Zhang (2013), art forms depicting Buddhism also underwent a process of localisation and secularisation, resulting in visual changes. The most remarkable changes in the depiction of Kuan Yin are presented in the content analysis⁵¹. These include facial and body feature changes, such as rounder face, thinner eyebrows at the ends, intense red lips and narrowed shoulders. They also include costume design changes such as the introduction of a white robe with sleeves covering the once naked chest and shoulders.

Professor Duan Yuwen from Shanxi Normal University (1998) explains that Kuan Yin is one of the Bodhisattvas⁵² who saves all sentient beings, and her special virtue is mercy, similar to how a loving

status in Chinese society, Kuan Yin is chosen as one of the main recourse in my research.

⁵⁰ Kuan Yin, Guan Yin, and Kwan Yin are Chinese names for Goddess of Mercy. In Japan she is called Kannon. In other countries, she is Kwan Im in Thailand and Indonesia, Gwan-eum in Korea and Quan Am in Vietnam (Gelinis, 2015)

⁵¹ A content analysis has been conducted to demonstrate the change in gender and appearance, which is located in the appendices on page 108.

⁵² Bodhisattva is a Buddhist word for a person who forgoes enlightenment to save others. (LeMin, 2008)

mother cares for her children. Kuan Yin assumes a female bodily form, spreads selfless love, and loves all beings equally. Tong (2002) expresses another view, that the tender mercifulness, great compassion and self-sacrifice reflected by the feminine Kuan Yin evoke memories of motherly love, thus satisfying psychological needs. In Western societies, there has been an increased interest on Kuan Yin . Dr. Angela Yarber, published a book including Kuan Yin's story and taught the compassion and mercy of Kuan Yin in one of her courses. Yarber (2015) believes as with many others that Kuan Yin can take on the form of any sentient being, as she is androgynous. Western Michigan University Professor Cathryn Bailey's article (2009: 187) *Embracing the Icon: The Feminist Potential of the Trans Bodhisattva, Kuan Yin* argues that historically, 'Kuan Yin's iconography "...has resulted in lessons about gender roles, both in teaching women to fulfill traditional roles of mother and wife, and also to transcend them."

Taoism worships goddesses and emphasizes on the respect and value of women⁵³, a major feature that distinguishes it from many other religions. Therefore, aside from Kuan Yin, another Taoist goddess, Magu⁵⁴ has been used as an additional reference for analysis. Below is *A portrait of the goddess Magu* by Hezhi Ma of the Southern Song Dynasty.

⁵³ Liu, H. (2009) claims that in Taoism, the goddesses are not only vast in number, but also occupy many important positions.

⁵⁴ Magu's biography is written in text entitled *Biographies of the Divine Immortals* (Shenxian Zhunan) by Ge Hong (283-343). As a Taoist goddess, Magu has the appearance of an 18 year-old girl. It is said since becoming a goddess after turning 18, she was said to have seen the Eastern Ocean turn to mulberry fields (idiom), an indication of her transcendence of time. (Little and Eichman, 2000)



Figure 3.2.13 *A portrait of the goddess Magu* (12th century) by Ma Hezhi displayed in the Taipei Palace Museum collection

In this painting, Magu appears to be a young girl. She has fluffy, long and bountiful hair, tied by a hairpin. Magu's upper garment is primarily purple, with blue touches on the collar, cuffs and waistband. The purple colour is advocated in Taoism when used in clothing, as it represents auspiciousness (Zhu and Zhu, 2009). Overall, Magu appears full of youthful vigour, and is high in spirits. The band that she wears is blowing in the wind, making the painting appear more vibrant.

For the goddess's design, a red Chinese knot⁵⁵ was added to her waist as decoration. Yan (2014) notes that the Chinese knot is influenced by Taoism because only one piece of rope is required no matter how complicated the design and shape may be. This reflects the Taoist cosmological theory that "One gives birth to Two. Two give birth to Three. Three give birth to ten thousand things." (Gottlieb, 2006:224), which also indicates the power of women becoming mothers. In addition, the colour red in Taoism represents happiness (Eng, 2014), which can provide the goddess with a more positive image .

After analysing the selected reference for the costume design, I will elaborate in the next section on the character designs through a compositional interpretation analysis.

⁵⁵ The Chinese knot is known as a blind or forbidden knot, which is used extensively in old Chinese embroideries (Bauer, 2005)

3.3 Character design of the two goddesses in the two animations

3.3.1 The image of the goddess of the Luo river in film 1

This section further explains the character design in the two animation works. In film 1(Figure 3.3.1), a scene was portrayed in which Cao Zhi first sees the goddess of the Luo river. Due to low pixel-related concerns, two shots were selected: a close-up of her face to show her expressions, and another shot that shows her sitting next to two flowers, on which she uses her divine powers to make them bloom. These clips were used to analyse her figure, clothing and movements.



Figure 3.3.1 The goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* film 1 by Chunhui Meng

Analysis

Character features: The goddess's face is slightly oblong with soft fair skin, slight yellow tones, and a slightly pointed but rounded chin. Her facial form is neither soft nor angular. She has moderately thick eyebrows that are light in colour. Her eyes are slightly rounded into an almond shape, and she wears eyeliner and eye shadow. Her lips have a touch of red pigment. Her hair is styled into two buns towering on top of her head.

Figure and costume: She has an average height and wears a long robe: its upper half is yellow, and the lower half light brown. The sleeve openings and collared edges of her robe display green stripes and decorative patterns. She wears red head ornaments and yellow-green coloured streamers that are angular rather than soft.

Performance and movement: Her head is positioned towards the lower right-hand direction, She kneels upright and gazes in the direction of the flower.

Lighting: In this image, with a spotlight shining from the left side of the screen, half of the goddess of the Luo river's body is in shadow, and the entire picture has a warm yellow hue.

The mise-en-scène shows a riverbank setting, surrounded by tall, jagged rocks. The goddess is wearing a dress that is close in appearance to the original in the *Nymph of the Luo River* painting, and features yellow and brown colours, with green embroidery. High-key lighting is directed towards the right-side of her face, casting soft shadows to her left. Her actions are slow and passive.

3.3.2 *The image of the goddess of the Luo river in film 2*

In this animation, due to the aforementioned pixel-related concerns, two shots were analysed (Figure 3.3.2): one close-up of her face, showing her expressions, and another of her napping.



Figure 3.3.2 The goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* film 2 by Chunhui Meng

Analysis

Character features: The goddess's face is oblong, with a slightly pointed chin that is somewhat angular. Her skin is pale. She has long and slender eyes and eyebrows that arch in the middle. The corners of her eyes are raised, and no eye shadow is worn. Her lips are bright red, and her hair is styled into two buns on top of her head. Two strands of hair hang over her chest, with some hanging behind her head.

Figure and costume: She appears taller than the first goddess, and wears a long white robe made from material that is of a soft texture. She wears a purple belt on her waist. The sleeve openings and collared edges of her robe include decorative purple stripes, and ties her hair back with a purple band. She wears

smooth white streamers on her arms that hang to the ground. She wears grey shoes, and a red Chinese knot hangs from her waist.

Performance and movement: She lies on the ground on her side, and raises her right hand up to her head. Her left hand rests on her leg. Her head is facing upper right-hand direction with her eyes closed.

The mise-en-scène features her in a riverbank setting with darkly coloured rocks and trees in the background, contrasting with the brightly clothed goddess in the foreground. The goddess is wearing a dress that differs from the original in the *Nymph of the Luo River* painting, this time being white with purple decorative highlights. Harsh lighting is shone from a high angle, casting shadows on the goddess with well-defined edges. The goddess sleeps in a confident, content pose.

Comparisons

These two goddesses design are similar in that both are dressed in a Chinese traditional costume. However, there are some differences. The first goddess, like the actress in *Legend of Goddess Luo*, has round eyes, with eye liner and eye shadow, which makes her innocent⁵⁶. The angular facial feature and thinner eyes with raised corners of the second goddess, like the actress in *Where The Legend Begins*, were intended to make her appear more powerful and less innocent compared to the first goddess.

The first goddess's costume colour design is based on the dress in Gu's painting; the colour of the dress is also similar to the background. In addition, the dress draws upon the decorative style in *Legend of Goddess Luo*, which looks delicate and has elaborate patterns. However, the second goddess's dress draws upon three dresses: the one worn by the goddess in *Where The Legend Begins*, Kuan Yin's long white robe and Magu's dress. These have a less complicated design that showcases her charm. Additionally, the purple colour used and the red Chinese knot reflect Taoist values.

⁵⁶ As mentioned before, Gladys L. Knight (2010) notes that the curvation of the female features, such as round eyes and round face represents femininity. By contrast, the narrowed face and squinty glare represent the features of masculine hero.

The physical elements of the first goddess's design were intended to imply her feminine characteristics to the audience. This can be seen from her upright kneeling position, suggesting a submissive pose that are generally performed by servants. The second goddess acts more at ease, which can be reflected from her resting position, which could be perceived as displaying self-confidence and having an open personality.

Based on the discussion above, in film 1 the goddess draws upon the facial features from *Legend of Goddess Luo*. The clothing design is referenced from the painting adaptation and TV adaptation *Legend of Goddess Luo*. In addition, her posture suggests a submissive personality. These features give her a feminine appearance. In film 2, the goddess's facial features draw upon *Where The Legend Begins*, which gives her a more heroic personality. Her clothing design draws upon: the goddess from *Where The Legend Begins*, Kuan Yin and Magu, which bring her powerful and active personalities. Through these changes, the second goddess has been given a stronger image than the first goddess. Next, the film language that would allow the female's perspective to be used to tell the story was further explored.

Chapter 4: Directing from a female point of view

This chapter explains how perspective was used in films to show the action from a female protagonist's viewpoint. Laura Mulvey proposed the 'male gaze' theory in her 1975 essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. Her theory consists of three different gazes, from the camera, that of the audience, and that of the characters. She demonstrates that in classic Hollywood films, women are the passive objects of the 'male gaze'. Because they control the camera, men are spectators and possessors. As a result, the audience views the world of the film from a heterosexual male perspective. In response of male 'castration anxiety', Mulvey suggests two distinct modes of looking for the film spectator: voyeuristic and fetishistic⁵⁷(ibid), which will be addressed as a tool in the following film analysis in this research.

Mulvey's theory is considered by many scholars to be out of date. Gamman and Marshment (1989) note that Mulvey's theory appears to suggest that certain pleasures should be repressed in favour of a feminist morality. Werckmeister (2013) cites two factors related to women's current status in contemporary society: firstly, women are now more active, and, like male spectators, they also watch films for desire and visual pleasure. Secondly, contemporary women live in an environment that supports their involvement in the film industry better than in the past; this environment allows female filmmakers to express and represent themselves. Kearney (2006) notes that because a considerable number of contemporary women are gaining access to technology and education, they are successfully negotiating the male-dominated world of film production, enabling the emergence of the 'female gaze' and its acceptance. For example, Gamman and Marshment (1989) suggest that the television series *Cagney and Lacey* (1982-1988) was popular with female audiences because the female gaze provided opportunities for female spectatorship, which was rare at that time. Moreover, Werckmeister (2013) argues that contemporary women

⁵⁷ Mulvey claims her theory is developed from Freudian analysis of scopophilia, associated with taking pleasure in looking at other people as sex objects. 'Voyeuristic looking' involves the action of male actor's peeping on the female actor, as well as the camera lens, representing the gaze of the actor, engaging the viewers to join in the voyeuristic activity. 'Voyeuristic looking' associates with sadism, where pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt. On the other hand, another way of concealing the anxiety is to substitute the threat into a fetish of female beauty. A women's lack of a penis signifies the threat of male castration. 'Fetishistic looking' results in overvaluation of the female image (ibid).

actively identify with female actors. Likewise, Kwa and Idema (2010) note that towards the end of the 20th century, Chinese women were increasingly looking for native independent female role-models and women in the West were also looking eastwards for strong female characters. They give *Mulan* (1998) as an example that she is the first Chinese heroine in a feature-length animated film, chosen by the American Disney company. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, the men take more action whilst the women are in passive roles, implicating an inequality in the gender roles shown. Therefore, it could be argued there is a necessity to establish role-models who take more action, for female audiences to emulate.

4.1 Study of the film language of *Green Snake*

A successful example that uses the female perspective to tell a traditional Chinese story is *Green Snake*, a film directed by Xu Ke that was adapted from ‘Madam White is Kept Forever under the Thunder Peak Tower’. Xu Ke did not completely reproduce the traditional storyline. He invited Li Bihua, a Hong Kong-based feminist writer, to serve as a screenwriter, as she had written a novel with the same title from a female perspective (Zhu, 2011). Rather than retelling the original story, where the protagonist Xu Xian is a man, the film *Green Snake* is told from the perspective of two women, White Snake and Green Snake (Morton, 2001). This film stresses the sexual desire of human beings. Instead of being simply about the relationship between Xu Xian and White Snake, Xu Ke explored female bonding, and the ties between Green Snake and White Snake. The two women are supernaturally powerful, to the point that they have a psychic connection between them and can share each other’s feelings.

When White Snake first meets Xu Xian, the film plot completely diverges from that of the original. Feng, Yang and Yang (2005), in translating the *Stories to Caution the World* trilogy originally published in 1624, used the story ‘Madam White is Kept Forever under the Thunder Peak Tower’. In describing the initial encounter between White Snake and Xu Xuan, the text⁵⁸ is written from a male perspective.

⁵⁸ The original text on which the translation in *Stories to Caution the World* trilogy, that was written in 1624, is: “Xu Xuan turned to look and saw a woman wearing a white silk blouse, a fine flaxen skirt, and white hairpins in her jet-black hair, which was arranged in a chignon covered in mourning white. By her side stood her maid, dressed all in green. Her hair was fastened in two knots, each tied with a bright red string and adorned with a piece of jewellery. She was carrying a package in her hand. Both appeared eager to get on the

It is clearly evident that Xu Xian here describes his experience of noticing the presence of White Snake and Green Snake. White Snake's appearance is described from his point of view. However, in the *Green Snake*, White Snake sees Xu Xian for the first time roughly 15 minutes after the start of the movie. As Xu Xian teaches in a classroom on the shore, White Snake watches Xu Xian from a distance whilst he continues teaching, unaware of her gaze. This scene is clearly shown from White Snake's point of view, not Xu Xian's. The film analysis below examines this further.

The scene below (Figure 4.1.1) is broken down into 16 shots. A description of each shot is presented in Table 4.1.1 in the appendices on page 110. Film analysis was outlined to explain how the scene is directed from White Snake's perspective.

Shot 1



Shot 2



Shot 3



Shot 4



Shot 5



Shot 6



boat.” (Feng, Yang and Yang, 2005:476). In ‘Madam White is Kept Forever under the Thunder Peak Tower’, the main male protagonist is called Xu Xuan. But in later adaptations in Chinese history, he is better known as Xu Xian.

Shot 7



Shot 8



Shot 9



Shot 10



Shot 11



Shot 12



Shot 13



Shot 14



Shot 15



Shot 16



Figure 4.1.1 Scene of *Green Snake* (1993) by Xu Ke

Film Analysis

In order to better apply Mulvey's theory when examining *Green Snake*, a multimodal discourse

analysis was applied to deconstruct the viewer/character relationship, with a greater emphasis on the use of the camera. This includes Involvement, Contact and Social Distance (Unsworth and Thomas, 2014). To be more specific, in terms of Involvement, Unsworth and Thomas (2014) suggest if the horizontal frontal plane of the viewer and that of the character are parallel rather than at an oblique angle, the viewer will be more involved with the character depicted. The system of Contact is defined by Painter et al. (2013) and taken up and elaborated by Unsworth and Thomas (2014). When a depicted character gazes at the camera, this is defined as a 'contact' image, whereas when a depicted character does not make eye contact with the viewer, this is referred to as an 'observe' image. A 'contact' image makes more interpersonal contact with the viewer than an 'observe' image. When it comes to Social Distance, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) and Unsworth and Thomas (2014) summarise that depicted characters appear in close up, with his or her face occupying most of the frame. This references a 'close-up' social distance, which can convey a sense of closeness and intimacy. In addition, Unsworth and Thomas (2014) and Painter et al. (2013) observe that the rear view can also establish alignment between the viewer and the depicted character's point of view.

For the *mise-en-scène*, the setting is night time, with both indoor (where Xu Xian and his students are located) and outdoor (where White Snake swims in the river) environments. Xu Xian wears traditional academic Chinese costume consisting of black robes that distinguish him from the white robes of the students, whilst White Snake is half-naked. The low key light envelops White Snake almost completely in shadow for the purpose of hiding. Although White Snake doesn't speak, her desire for Xu Xian can be observed from her smile expression.

Secondly, from the perspective of individual frames and shots, more close-up contact shots with frontal planes are used for scenes with White Snake, such as shot 13 and shot 16. In these two shots, White Snake gazes at the camera, which indicates that she can engage with viewer. There are also two rear view shots, shot 1 and shot 8, used to capture her. However, more medium and long shots, and only one rear view shot, are used on Xu Xian. There is even one close-up shot (shot 15) that shows the details of his facial expression from an oblique angle, but it is still clear that Xu Xian does not make eye contact with the viewer, which positions the viewer as further away from Xu Xian.

This analysis can prove the confronting of voyeurism in Mulvey's male gaze theory. Rather than the male spectator doing the spying, it is White Snake who does it. Whilst hidden in the dark environment, the action of White Snake gazing at Xun Xian has been presented through the control of the camera. As a result, it is obvious that the viewer can more easily engage with White Snake compared to Xu Xian. A similar approach was applied to film 2, where the female goddess is also the character doing the gazing.

4.2 Film analysis of the two animations

In this section, both films were analysed to explain how the story was adapted to create different gendered perspectives. Similarly, individual shots of these two animations were described and the analysis was summarised based on the comparison. Each shot of these two animations were examined. The images are shown in Figure 4.2.1 and Figure 4.2.2 below, and a description of each shot is shown in Table 4.2.1 and Table 4.2.2 in the appendices at page 111 and page 113.

Shot 1



Shot 2



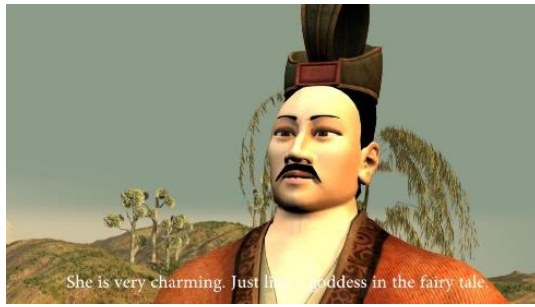
Shot 3



Shot 4



Shot 5



Shot 6



Shot 7



Shot 8



Shot 9

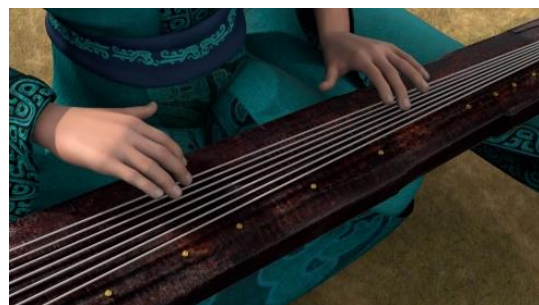


Figure 4.2.1 Scenes of *Nymph of the Luo River* film 1 by Chunhui Meng

Shot 1



Shot 2



Shot 3



Shot 4



Shot 5



Shot 6



Shot 7



Shot 8



Shot 9



Shot 10



Shot 11



Shot 12



Shot 13



Shot 14



Shot 15



Shot 16



Shot 17



Shot 18



Figure 4.2.2 Scenes of *Nymph of the Luo River* film 2 by Chunhui Meng

Film Analysis

By and large, more shots featuring Cao Zhi rather than the goddess are used in film 1; the opposite is true of film 2.

In film 1, the goddess was shown only 3 times in shots 6, 7 and 8. Shot 6 is a long shot, and shot 7 shows only her hands. The only close-up shot of the goddess is shot 8. She is positioned at an oblique angle from the viewer. When there is an eye contact between the goddess and the viewer, she quickly turns her head and looks away. However, more close-up shots show Cao Zhi expressing his feelings. This can be seen especially clearly in shot 9, beginning with a close-up view of Cao Zhi's face with frontal planes, and the 'contact' image, in which Cao Zhi stares at the viewer, showing amazement at the goddess's beauty.

By contrast, in film 2, when the goddess meets Cao Zhi, 'contact' close-up shots 17 and 18 with frontal planes are used to imply that the goddess is examining Cao Zhi. Furthermore, one rear view, shot 11, also allows the story to be told from her perspective. However, Cao Zhi has given a single close-up shot showing his facial expression. He always appears in 'observe' images where a greater social distance from the viewer is depicted by angles such as a medium or long shot.

Through this analysis, it can be concluded that these two animations are created from different gender perspectives. Film 1 employs a male perspective, which uses more mid-shots and close-up shots in the animation to describe how Cao Zhi is surprised and amazed by the goddess, through the focus on Cao Zhi's facial reactions to the goddess. For example, both shot 3 and shot 9 describe Cao Zhi as gazing at the goddess. By contrast, the goddess in film 1 is passive, and limited shots are used to show her expression. Rather, she is the object of his gaze. In regard to testing the relationship between the viewer and character, According to the visual analysis systems by Painter et al. (2013) and Unsworth and Thomas (2014), I will explain how the control of the camera can also be used to reflect different gender perspectives. For example, more 'contact'

images, containing frontal planes and a rear view, are used to depict the goddess in film 2. Instead of using a male perspective as in film 1, the narrative unfolds and is explored from a female perspective. In addition, from the acting perspective, the second goddess, who can not only walk but also fly, is more active and she takes the initiative in approaching Cao Zhi. By contrast, the first goddess stays in one place and does not move around.

Film 1 suggests Mulvey's theory of 'voyeuristic looking', as well as 'fetishistic looking', where a man's desire is built on the fantasies of feminine beauty. The actions and shots of Cao Zhi gazing at the goddess reflects Mulvey's theory of the male gaze, in that the male character is active. It can also be reflected from the dialogue between Cao Zhi and his servant⁵⁹, where their curiosity of her beauty implies the goddess as a spectacle⁶⁰. In shot 6, the luminous glow around the goddess implies an illusion, created to present fantasies and desires of the male character. In contrast, film 2 uses a similar approach to *Green Snake*, where it is the female character who gazes upon the male character, and the viewers engage more with the goddess rather than Cao Zhi, through the use of the film language. This contributes to confront the Mulvey's voyeurism theory. In film 2, the only time that Cao Zhi looks at the goddess is shown his quick glances of her in shot 17, which cannot support the assumption of him having a fetish for the goddess. Therefore, Mulvey's fetishism theory has been denied in film 2.

In the next chapter, reflections on the practical work will be presented to explain my creative process during the creation of these two animations. An evaluation on the effectiveness of the practical work in the research will also be conducted.

⁵⁹ Relevant dialogue states: "Cao Zhi: Do you see that lady over there? Who is she? She is so beautiful! Servant: Master, can you see that lady? I have heard there is a goddess of the Luo River. I cannot believe that you can see her. What does she look like? I am so curious."

⁶⁰ Mulvey (1975) states that curiosity and the wish to look brings pleasure to men, subjecting women to a controlling and curious gaze and as well as objectifying them for the men's sexual desire.

Chapter 5: Reflection on, and evaluation of, the practical work

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the practical work and analyse how the decisions were made, as well as to engage with Chinese audiences and evaluate the final practical using a focus group interview and questionnaire survey.

5.1 Reflection on the work

This section explains how the research process helped to explore more possibilities, and decide which path to follow, especially during the character design. In addition, this section also reflects on several technical problems encountered that were resolved.

The main aim of making a visual design for the first goddess is to show a traditional female image, similar to the one in the original *Nymph of the Luo River*.



Figure 5.1.1 An image of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* and a modern interpretation by Chunhui Meng

Before making the visual design for the first goddess, the first task was to recreate a concept artwork (Figure 5.1.1) of the scene depicted in the original painting. In the process of creating this,

the costume, make-up and movement of the goddess were similar to those in the original painting.

However, in terms of figure and face, adjustments were made in order for this figure to fit with modern Chinese aesthetics. In the process of making a 3D design of the character, two models of the face were applied: the first was designed to be closer to the original painting, and the second was intended to be a more modern Chinese face.

In terms of the design of the face, the goddess's image is based on her depiction in the painting.

This design is shown below (Figure 5.1.2):



Figure 5.1.2 A previous 3D design of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* film 1 by Chunhui Meng

After examining the face of the goddess in the original painting, it was noticed that her face did not fit a contemporary Chinese aesthetic, meaning that a contemporary Chinese audience would be likely to have little appreciation of the goddess and her significance. Therefore, with the intention of bringing this traditional figure to a wider audience, her face was changed into one that is likely to be more appreciated by a contemporary Chinese audience.

Based on this decision, a method was used that is described in ‘Attractive Composite Faces of Different

Races', in which the faces of 20 female Chinese celebrities were used to generate a composite image by computer.



Figure 5.1.3 A computer generated image of a Chinese female face in “Attractive Composite Faces of Different Races” (2010) by Seung Chul Rhee and Soo Hyang Lee

This experiment was conducted by Seung Chul Rhee and Soo Hyang Lee (2010). In their research, there was a quantitative investigation into the faces of 20 female celebrities in China, in which several common features were found. Through making a composite of these features, the perfect Chinese female face could be found (Figure 5.1.3). They claim that for a female Chinese face to be attractive, it needs to have the features of a relatively narrow, slim and thin face, and a lantern jaw. The image also highlights other features, such as large eyes, double eyelids, high and rising nose ridge, and slightly thick lips. Taking these results into account, some modifications to the face of the goddess in film 1 have been made, in order to make her face more appealing to a Chinese audience⁶¹ (Figure 5.1.4).

⁶¹ A downside to this was that some distinctive features in the original facial design were lost. However, making alterations to cater to a modern Chinese audience is more important than being faithful to the original artwork.



Figure 5.1.4 The final 3D design of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* film 1 Chunhui Meng

The dresses of the goddess were designed to be dignified and elegant. Within the details of the collar and cuffs, some exquisite decorative patterns were added to accentuate the fashion of that time period. When selecting the colours for the clothes, a warm green with a yellowish hue was used, mirroring the colour scheme of *Nymph of the Luo River*.

Another attribute of the goddess's image is her voice, in that she is not given one. A reason for this is that this reinforces the idea that film 1 is shown from the perspective of a traditional male; a female way of thinking is not necessarily important. Being mute also evokes a sense of mystery here, especially given that her presence is only visible to the protagonist.

During the design process for the second goddess, the intention was to make her convey a higher degree of independence. Her clothing was made to be more natural and simplistic, featuring less embellishment and colour. The 3D model height was slightly raised so as to appear more imposing, and the body size and curvature was increased to provide a sense of athleticism. The visual appearance of the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* was also incorporated. The eyes of the goddess in both these adaptations are thinner and raised in the corners, making her appear more Asian and more stern. The profile of the goddess's head was intentionally sharper and less curved in film 2, attributes that would traditionally be considered more masculine, and as a direct result provide the masculine traits of courage and

assertiveness. The figure below (Figure 5.1.5) shows these key facial attributes, on which the 3D model was based.



Figure 5.1.5 2D Draft for the design of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* film 2 by Chunhui Meng



Figure 5.1.6 3D character design of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* film 2 by Chunhui Meng

In terms of clothing, the goddess's dress (Figure 5.1.6) appears to be unrestricting, smooth and light. These attributes also reflect the goddess Magu's clothing, which appear light and loose. They are meant

to parallel the goddess's freedom, in that she is more independent, and not bound by social conformities, unlike the goddess in film 1. The dress itself is much less decorative compared to the one in film 1, and the colours are less saturated. These convey a greater simplicity in her character, reinforcing the idea of independence and of not conforming to fashion. The dress is white in colour to reference the appearance of goddess Kuan Yin.

When considering the actions taken by the goddess in film 2, a key intention was to show the idea that rather than generally being passive, she is confident enough to act, not simply react. During the whole of film 1, the goddess remains stationary, and with the exception of eye contact, does not interact with the protagonist. However in film 2, much more action is taken; she is firstly seen questioning a bird, then seeking out the mortal man, and finally playing the man's song on the flute whilst flying towards him. The goddess is constantly in control, and demonstrates her independence by acting on her own choices.

The goddess in film 2 plays a flute. Not only does this show her artistry, as she talented in music, but also self-assurance in that she doesn't hesitate to perform in front of the mortal man. It's worth noting that the flute here becomes the dominant instrument over the guqin played by the man, indicated by its louder dynamics and use of a higher octave. Clearly the goddess becomes the one who is in control of the song, effectively displaying superiority over him.

In order to enhance the realism of the character motions during the instrumental performance, the real musician was video-taped whilst recording the music for the animation. During video playback, the musician's movements were replicated into Maya (3D animation software) via the use of key-framing. The dubbing was performed by two Chinese women, one for goddess and the other for the bird. It was a creative decision that the goddess should have a deeper voice to that of the bird, in order to emphasise her maturity and power.

Finally, I would like to describe the overall process of producing the animation. I collaborated with an animation company from mainland China throughout the production of my project. First, in the pre-production stage, I completed the major tasks, including directing, writing the script, and drawing the

storyboard. In the middle stage, I first used software to establish all the 3D models, including the basic colouring work. The animation company helped by adding details, such as textures, to the models to make them look more realistic. Then, the animation company helped me process the rigging and weights of the animal and character models. During the production of the roles in the animation, I first positioned the camera in the scene and then created the key frames for each role in the animation. Based on these frames, the animation company adjusted the transition frames to make the animation look smoother and more natural overall. In the post-production stage, the animation company simulated clothing on the models. As for the rendering process, I tested a rendered thumbnail of each scene and then asked the animation company to render all the frames of the animation. I added late-stage special effects to the rendered images, including merging the audio and video and English subtitles.

5.2 Evaluation of the study

For the final study, a focus group interview (Figure 5.2.1) and qualitative survey⁶² were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the research. The focus group interview was held on the 30th of April 2016 at the Royal College of Art. The purpose was to gather Chinese female animators for a discussion. Five Chinese women⁶³ with animation backgrounds who reside in London attended the focus group. They watched the two animations from the practical study and then engaged in a group discussion and completed a questionnaire.



Figure 5.2.1 Focus group interview (2016)

In the focus group interview, the participants took part in a discussion about what this research can contribute to the contemporary Chinese animation industry. Firstly, because many of them had lived in the UK for a long period of time, some argued that compared to the female status in the West, Chinese women remain in a lower position than men in many aspects in Chinese society. Secondly, many agreed that it is a good idea to establish a female role-model in Chinese animation that a Chinese female audience can admire and appreciate. In current Chinese animation works, and even in TV and film, there is a lack of this type of Chinese female role-model. They provided some examples of female role-models, such as the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* and the little sisters in *Heroic Sisters from the Grassland* (1965)⁶⁴. In addition, they agreed that it was a beneficial

⁶² Transcripts of the questionnaires from the group interview and qualitative survey are in the appendices on pages 115.

⁶³ Among these five people, four are animation students in their 20s, and one is a visiting lecturer in her 30s.

⁶⁴ Giesen (2015) states that the animation, *Heroic Sisters from the Grassland*, is based on a true story about two little sisters who risked their lives to protect their commune's sheep herd during a sudden snowstorm in the 1960s.

approach to create two separate animations to compare the traditional conservative female image in one animation with the more independent and stronger female image in the other.

On May 5th 2016, a qualitative survey was conducted in China to provide additional feedback. Firstly, the practical components of the research, namely, the two films, were screened at Jiangsu Normal University. The same questionnaire⁶⁵ that was used in the focus group was then sent to the participating students. By May 6th, 20 questionnaires had been completed and collected. The 20 students (13 female, 7 male), aged between 18 and 25, were not majoring in animation but in other art and design fields, such as environmental design and decorative art.

For the current study, an analysis was conducted based on questionnaires from both the focus group interview and the qualitative survey. In total, 25 participants (18 female, 7 male) filled out a short questionnaire as part of the qualitative research process. Describing their first impression of the two animations, 7 participants noted that film 1 suggested that it is the man who meets or sees the goddess. In addition, 3 of the participants mentioned that the male character is attracted to the goddess's beauty. By contrast, for film 2, 4 participants stated that it is the goddess who approaches or meets the man. Moreover, 6 participants noted that the goddess is attracted to the music that is played by the man. Therefore, regarding the point of the view that is shown in the practical work, the participants determined that the story in film 1 is told from a male perspective, while that of film 2 is told from a female perspective.

Moreover, words that the participants used to describe the three images of the goddess (the original

⁶⁵ The two questionnaires that were used in the focus group interview and qualitative survey are identical, except in the qualitative survey, the participants were asked to state their gender.

The questionnaires include 6 open-ended questions. Firstly, the participants were requested to describe their impressions of the two animated adaptations. Secondly, they were asked to explain what they associate with *Nymph of the Luo River* and how they generally view the goddess. The participants described the differences in personality between these two goddesses. They were also asked to select their preferred animated adaptation and to justify their preference. The participants were also asked to give an example of female role-models in Chinese animation and to justify their choice. Finally, they were requested to make any suggestions on how the animations could be improved.

goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*, the goddess in film 1 and the goddess in film 2) were selected based on high frequency occurrences in the collected data. These words were coded and organised into categories, and a bar chart was created to illustrate the data (Figure 5.2.2).

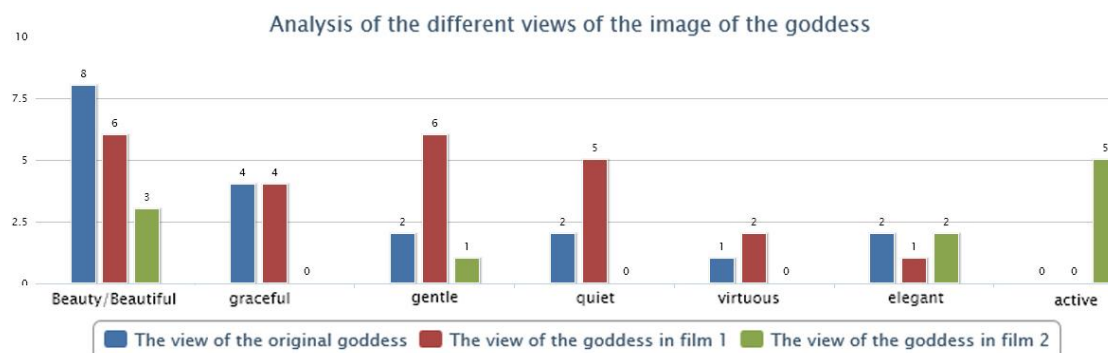


Figure 5.2.2 Analysis of the different views of the image of the goddess by Chunhui Meng

With regard to the impression of the original goddess, it was found that 8 people consider ‘beautiful/beauty’ as her distinguishing feature, making it the most-described feature. This result indicates that young Chinese audiences believe that the stereotype of the goddess of the Luo River is that she was portrayed as a man’s desire because of her feminine beauty⁶⁶. The goddess in film 1 and film 2 was also described as beautiful, although this quality was mentioned more frequently regarding the goddess in film 1 than in film 2.

To further explore this issue, the goddess in film 1 shares more similarities with the original goddess in the story and the painting than the goddess in film 2 in terms of personality. For instance, the words ‘graceful’, ‘quiet’, and ‘virtuous’ were used to describe the image of both the original goddess and the goddess in film 1, but not the goddess in film 2. However, this stereotype resulted in her personality being perceived as less attractive than the second goddess. One of the comments criticises the image of the first goddess, stating that “...the first one fails to describe the

⁶⁶ Relative comments regarding the goddess is treated as a feminine beauty are: “She’s extremely beautiful but not unreachable, she’s the literary character deeply excavated and shaped by the author who could best represent the ideal beautiful lady to the ancient Chinese excellent gifted scholars, and she’s the high degree of unity of the most beautiful features of the eastern females.” “...the most beautiful images in the Chinese Gods of water...” “...all men will lose their hearts to her.”

goddess as perfect and flawless as people have expected the Goddess of the Luo River should be, but instead leaves a proud and indifferent impression of an otherworldly young lady”. This comment indicates that her exaggerated beauty, resulting in the goddess in film 1 being less charismatic, and is perceived as an object. By contrast, some comments suggest that the goddess in film 2 has a more confident personality, describing her as being ‘brave’, ‘more independent’, and ‘stronger’. The word ‘active’ is used to describe the goddess in film 2 5 times, but only with this particular interpretation of her. These types of comments suggest the perception of a more liberated image of the goddess in film 2.

Although some participants argued that the goddess in film 2 was less ‘feminine’⁶⁷ based on her behaviours, the second goddess was still considered beautiful based on her feminine appearance to some extent. It was mentioned twice by participants that she was elegant. It may be because of differences between the character design⁶⁸. In contrast, it may be because the ‘active’ personality of the second goddess makes her appear more powerful, and in Chinese traditional values, power is more of a masculine quality. Taoism is oriented towards developing balance and harmony of the feminine and masculine of each individual⁶⁹ (Sharma and Young, 1999). Therefore, a female character with a certain feminine appearance, who presents more independent and powerful characteristic, would be supported by the values of Taoism.

Furthermore, Taoism also strongly purports that the balance and harmony of feminine and masculine aspects in the practices of society can benefit both females and males (Raines and Maguire, 2001). In Taoist thought, ‘yin’ and ‘yang’ (which represent male and female qualities)

⁶⁷ Relative comment state: “The second animation: the goddess is a little bit masculine.” “In the second animation, the second goddess is less feminine, which can be seen in her actions — for example, the way she sleeps and the way she talks to the bird.”

⁶⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 3, the goddess in film 1 has a rounder face and eyes, which represents feminine elements. In contrast, the goddess in film 2 has angular facial feature and thinner eyes, which represent a masculine hero.

⁶⁹ Sharma and Young (1999:170) further explain that “Though some traditionally feminine qualities are valued, and indeed, to be cultivated, they are seen as fully equal— not superior—to their masculine counterparts.”

should be treated equally and support each other⁷⁰. This concept is reflected in the goddess's respect and admiration for the mortal man Cao Zhi in film 2, especially when they play music together. Some of the participants noted that this setting represents the harmony that is shown between the female and male in film 2, and they appreciate this interpretation⁷¹. Therefore, film 2 reflects an equal gender relationship from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy.

Regarding improvements that could be made to both animations, it was commented that more Chinese elements could be implemented, for example: "I think you can add some Chinese elements in 3D pictures." "...more factors of Chinese fine brushwork painting can be added." These results suggest that when adapting traditional Chinese stories into animation, incorporating maintaining traditional Chinese elements could make the film more enjoyable for a typical Chinese audience.

Overall, a diverse array of feedback was collected from the focus group interview and the qualitative survey, which helped in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the study. However, one drawback is that the participant sample (especially the group with an animation background) was relatively small. This resulted in the problem that many participants could not express their opinions about the direction of the films, such as the use of camera techniques, because they lacked experience in animation production. Another weakness is that with the open-ended questions, the data that were collected from the participants were highly subjective. Therefore, the number of useful responses was limited. However, the evaluation serves as supporting evidence to confirm that the initial aim of the project was achieved: two adaptations were produced to showcase two different gender perspectives. An alternative female role-model in film 2 was established through the adaption of a traditional Chinese story that can be appreciated by Chinese audiences.

⁷⁰ Raines and Maguire (2001) summarise that Taoist philosophy presents the fundamental principle of femininity, and the equality and harmony of 'yin' and 'yang' provides a symbol of justice for gender relationships.

⁷¹ Relevant comments include, "The second animation: The leisurely and free goddess is attracted by the beautiful wonderful music played by a mortal, and she arises to play music together with him, both of them are immersed in the harmonious melody" and "...in the second animation, the goddess meets the mortal, they interact with birds and it is more harmonious than the first one."

Conclusions

This study has discussed the limitations of the female imagery typically portrayed in animated adaptations of traditional Chinese stories. Through the case studies of *Princess Iron Fan* and *Lotus Lantern*, two well-known Chinese animations, it can be demonstrated that the image of the goddess in *Lotus Lantern* is more independent than Princess Iron Fan both from the character's facial design and from her behaviour. Additionally, in terms of the control of camera, in both *Lotus Lantern* and *Princess Iron Fan* the story is demonstrably told from the male perspective; this research aims to challenge this and to direct the animation from a female viewpoint through practice. Moreover, this analysis also contributes to a consideration of the way in which traditional Chinese elements can be selected and applied to the animated adaptations.

A specific story and painting, *Nymph of the Luo River*, was chosen as the main source. The backgrounds of the poet and the artist were introduced. More importantly, the way that Confucianism and Taoism influenced the representation of women in Chinese art history, particularly from the Han Dynasty to the Jin Dynasty, was demonstrated, and it was noted that a Taoist approach tends to support gender equality. Influenced by both philosophies, the artist Gu Kaizhi's contribution, and his failings, in his portrayal of women have been discussed. The reason for the selection of this painting has been introduced: i.e. a visual analysis has validated the fact that the goddess is represented from a male perspective and portrayed as men's desire.

The image of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* was further investigated through compositional interpretation analysis of the character in several art forms, including the original poem, Gu's painting and TV series adaptations. In the Hong Kong TV series, the goddess's costume design may reference the image of Kuan Yin, a Chinese goddess influenced by Taoism. This inspired me to experiment further with the costume design and to adopt Taoist elements.

Based on the painting, two animated films were created to represent the different gender perspectives. In the process of rendering a female visual image, this study shows the complementary relationship between theory and practical work. Drawing upon the theories of Berger, as well as Mulvey and other contemporary feminist thinkers, an attempt was made to

challenge the stereotype of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*. This was accomplished by making changes of the character design, and using a virtual camera to portray the story first from a male, and then from a female, perspective.

Film 1 aims to keep the stereotype of the goddess being of a man's desire, which can be accepted by a contemporary audience. The dress of the goddess in film 1 keeps to the original tone of the painting, whilst drawing upon the decorative style from the dress in *Legend of Goddess Luo*. In addition, the facial expressions draw upon the actress's face from *Legend of Goddess Luo*, and the CG face in Figure 5.1.3. All these elements contribute to making her look more feminine, and help build up her beauty. The control of the camera showing the male gaze, the dialogue between the male characters, the lighting used, as well as the highlights of the goddess's feminine beauty, all reflect Mulvey's theory of fetishism.

In film 2, a more active goddess could be constructed, who can be brave enough to pursue her love. The clothing design of the second goddess draws on the dress of Kuan Yin and some other aspects of Taoism, such as the goddess Magu and the Chinese knot. As mentioned, Taoism supports gender equality by encouraging the balance and harmony between 'yin' and 'yang' in both individuals and in society. This can be reflected from the combination of feminine beauty and masculine heroic elements shown in the goddess, as well as from the narrative story shows the appreciation between the male and female characters. By using similar camera techniques in *Green Snake*, film 2 describes the goddess takes the action to gazing on the male character, which denies Mulvey's male gaze theory and establishes a female spectator.

After the project was complete, feedback was collected to evaluate the film. According to both the focus group interview and the qualitative survey, film 1 is suggested to be seen from a male perspective, in contrast, film 2 is told from a female perspective. In addition, the general audience feedback was that the behaviour and image of the goddess in film 1 is more like that of the goddess from the original story and painting, who is passive and could be perceived as object. In Film 2, the goddess is confident, independent, and has more vitality, which indicates a potential female role-model would be built.

There are some limitations or problems with this research that should be discussed. In regards to challenging the gender perspective in animation, other aspects such as script writing should be further explored, not only character design and film language. In terms of the choice of art forms for practical research, it can be argued that hand-drawn 2D animation might better represent the visual style of traditional Chinese paintings, rather than using 3D CGI animation. Additionally, the assumed target audience is only Chinese and may be too restrictive, which may reduce the likelihood that a Western audience would also appreciate this animation piece. All of these assumptions can be further discussed, and lead to more possibilities for future study.

Above all, the outcome of this research has established a potential Chinese female role-model through an animated adaption of a traditional Chinese story, that differs from the female image in *Princess Iron Fan* and *Lotus Lantern*. More than simply perpetuating traditional Chinese culture, the comparison of the visual representations of these two female images may encourage a female Chinese audience to rethink the role of Chinese women in contemporary society. More strong and independent female images should be created in the Chinese animation industry.

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Appendices

Table 1.1.1 Description of scene in *Princess Iron Fan*

Shot No.	Shot	Visuals	Dialogue
1	The Bull Demon King finds Princess Iron Fan asleep. He intends to wake her up.	Princess Iron Fan lies in bed. The Bull Demon King walks to the left side of the room from the right side, then observes Princess Iron Fan. Removing a feather that decorates the vase, the Bull Demon King walks toward Princess Iron Fan.	
2	The Bull Demon King tickles Princess Iron Fan using the feather he removed from the vase.	Princess Iron Fan is lying in the bed. The Bull Demon King tickles her with the feather. Princess Iron Fan sneezes twice, rubs her eyes and wakes up.	
3	The Bull Demon King and Princess Iron Fan look at one another.	The Bull Demon King sees that Princess Iron Fan has awoken, lays down the feather and laughs loudly. Princess Iron Fan discovers that her visitor is the Bull Demon King, jumps into his arms and stands after a long embrace.	Princess Iron Fan: “What is the wind today, blowing the king to this place?”
4	The Bull Demon King tells Princess Iron Fan that Monkey King is coming and that he hopes to capture him.	The camera cuts to a medium shot of the Bull Demon King. While talking, the Bull Demon King picks up the feather.	The Bull Demon King: “I heard Monkey King is about to arrive here while guarding the Monk Tang Seng. I guess the monkey wants

			to borrow the palm-leaf fan to extinguish the Fire Mountain. We and that monkey have a vendetta. It is he who murdered our son. Sooner or later, we will capture him. Let us, husband and wife, take our revenge.”
5	Princess Iron Fan tells the Bull Demon King that she has already met the monkey and lent him the fan.	The camera cuts back to the medium shot of the two characters. First, Princess Iron Fan cries, her hands covering her face. The Bull Demon King asks why she is crying. Princess Iron Fan explains while walking from the left side of the screen to the right. When she describes how the monkey sneaked inside her stomach, her back is to the Bull Demon King, who is laughing while trying to hide the laugh by covering his mouth with his hand.	The Bull Demon King: ‘Madam, why are you crying?’ Princess Iron Fan: ‘That monkey has been here. I will not lend him the fan’. However, he somehow sneaked into my stomach and made it ache terribly. I could do nothing to prevent him hurting me but to lend him the fan.”
6	The Bull Demon King criticises Princess Iron Fan for lending Monkey King the fan.	The camera cuts to a medium shot of the Bull Demon King. The Bull Demon King tells Princess Iron Fan that it is a pity to have lent the monkey the fan. No image of Princess Iron Fan appears on the	The Bull Demon King: “Oh, pity, such a pity! How could you lend him the fan?”

		screen. However, her weeping voice can be heard.	
7	Princess Iron Fan tells the Bull Demon King that the fan she has lent the monkey was a fake.	Princess Iron Fan hides her crying from the Bull Demon King. Then, she turns around, stops crying and tells the Bull Demon King that the fan she has lent the monkey was a counterfeit fan. The Bull Demon King throws the feather into the vase, laughs loudly and takes Princess Iron Fan in his arms.	Princess Iron Fan: “What the monkey took is a counterfeit fan!”

Table 1.1.3 Description of scene in *Lotus Lantern*




Shot No.	Shot	Visuals
1	A scarf is flying in the sky, and Liu Yanchang catches the scarf.	A scarf is flying in the sky. Liu Yanchang catches the scarf and turns around.
2	Liu Yanchang looks upward.	In a high-angle shot, Liu Yanchang looks upward while holding the scarf.
3	Before the building above the stairs, Goddess suddenly appears and descends from heaven.	Before the building, a beam of golden light flashes. Goddess descends and lands before the building.
4	Liu Yanchang looks at Goddess.	A scarf is flying in the sky. Liu Yanchang catches the scarf and turns around.
5	Goddess looks at Liu Yanchang.	In a high-angle shot, Liu Yanchang looks upward while holding the scarf.
6	Liu Yanchang runs from the bottom up, whereas Goddess runs from the top down.	Before the building, a beam of golden light flashes. Goddess descends and lands before the building.




7	Liu Yanchang and Goddess continue running and are about to meet.	A scarf is flying in the sky. Liu Yanchang catches the scarf and turns around.
8	Liu Yanchang and Goddess come together and embrace. Goddess leans against Liu Yanchang's arms.	In a high-angle shot, Liu Yanchang looks upward while holding the scarf.

Content analysis of Kuan Yin's gender transformation through history

To explain the specific changes involved in the transformation of Kuan Yin from a man to a woman, the content analysis method developed by Gillian Rose (2012) was used to investigate this occurrence throughout history. Six sculptures or paintings of Kuan Yin are presented in the following table in chronological order, ranging from Kuan Yin statues in India in the fourth century to contemporary Chinese paintings.

Table 3.2.1 Kuan Yin as represented in sculptures and paintings

		
1) Figure 3.2.1 A stone statue of Kuan Yin (400-499), National Museum, New Delhi, India	2) Figure 3.2.2 A statue of Water-Moon Kuan Yin, (907-1125), Metropolitan Museum of Art	3) Figure 3.2.3 A painting of Guanyin (1127-1279) by Shigu Jia, National Palace Museum, Taipei

		
<p>4) Figure 3.2.4 An ink painting on silk of Kuan Yin in white (1300-1400) by Zhenwu, Kyoto National Museum</p>	<p>5) Figure 3.2.5 A Statue of Kuan Yin with baby (1368-1644), Beijing Palace Museum</p>	<p>6) Figure 3.2.6 A painting of Kuan Yin with a fish basket (1988) by Huixian Ma</p>

Using the content analysis method, these pictures were categorised by code. Kuan Yin in the pictures is based on the outstanding male and female characteristics used in a further detailed investigation. I coded the male characteristics for the classification are a bare and masculine chest, wide shoulders, and thick eyebrows; the female characteristics for the classification are narrow shoulders, a round chin, thinner eyebrows, and red lips. Each image was given an identification number for representation in the table below, and the characteristics in turn were observed row by row. For the table legend, a blue dot indicates male characteristics, a red dot female characteristics, and lastly a purple dot an ambiguous gender.

Table 3.2.2 Observations of the various depictions of Kuan Yin

	Observations					
Image Identification No.	1)	4)	6)	7)	8)	12)
Male characteristics						
A bare and masculine chest	•	•				

Wider shoulders relative to the waist	•	•	•			
A wide and square chin	•		•			
Thicker eyebrows, squared end of eyebrows	•	•				
Female characteristics						
Shoulders covered by sleeves of white robe or slender shoulders				•	•	•
A round chin		•		•	•	•
Thinner eyebrows with pointed ends			•	•	•	•
Red lips						•

As shown in the table, the masculinity, represented by the blue dot, gradually decreases over time, whereas the femininity, represented by the red dot, gradually increases. The first two artefacts originated from India, which often has different artistic styles from those from China. Nevertheless, the male characteristics in the two artefacts are conspicuous. Overall, as the investigation shows, the image of Kuan Yin in China had fewer male characteristics and more noticeable female characteristics over time.

Table 4.1.1 Description of scene in *Green Snake*

Shot No.	Shot	Visuals	Dialogue
1	White snake approaches Xu Xian.	White snake swims at night-time in the river.	Students: 'Flowers fly everywhere in the spring city. East wind blows the willow. The candles light up in the palace. The smoke blows into the courtiers' homes. The red beans are grown in the South.'
2	Xu Xuan teaches students poems.	Students recite some old poems together in the building Xu Xian stands up and walks towards the students.	

3-6	Xu Xian interrupts the class to read the student's erotic poem, and the student rebukes	Xu Xian snatches the poem and reads it aloud. The students laugh, and the poem's author looks embarrassed. Xu Xian rips apart the poem.	Xu Xian asks the student who wrote the poem: 'What were you writing?' Then he reads: 'How many of them blossom in spring? As pretty as the flower as weak as the willow. The harlot peeped. The gentleman plays on. They are deliriously happy.' Xu Xian shoots: 'What a lustful poetry, who's it for?' Xu Xian says: 'You'll soon sit for the examination, although I don't expect you to get good grades. You should never concentrate on lust. It wastes time and worsens your studies. Do you understand?'
7-9	White snake observes Xu Xian from the river.	White snake grasps a wooden pillar and looks at Xu Xian through willow branches. Her sideways head motion and facial expression indicate curiosity.	
10	Xu Xian rebukes the students and continues teaching	Xu Xian throws the poem into the river. Students resume reciting poems.	
11-12	Xu Xian and students stare in amazement at cherry blossoms.	Pink cherry blossom petals rapidly fill the air. Xu Xian and students stop the class, and rush to the balcony edge to look at them.	Students answer together: 'Yes.' Xu Xian asks the student who wrote the poem: 'Chun Tsun, how about you?' The student answers: 'I understand.' Xu Xian says to all the students: 'Keep on reciting.'
13-16	Xu Xian enjoys the cherry blossoms whilst continuing to be observed by White Snake.	Xu Xian smiles as he tries to catch cherry blossoms. White Snake looks at him and smiles with sexual desire.	Students keep reciting together: 'Flowers fly everywhere in the spring city.'

Table 4.2.1 Description of scenes in film 1

Shot	Shot	Visuals	Dialogue
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No.			
1	Horses are resting on the grass and being cared for by servants.	Three horses are grazing and resting on the grassy field. Two servants are caring for the horses.	
2	Cao Zhi walks in the woods with a servant.	Cao Zhi walks in the woods with a servant.	
3	Cao Zhi looks up.	A close-up shot shows Cao Zhi looking surprised.	
4	Cao Zhi asks the servant a question.	Cao Zhi looks back and asks the servant if he can see the lady. The servant answers that he cannot.	Cao Zhi: Do you see that lady over there? Who is she? She is so beautiful! Servant: Master, can you see that lady? I have heard there is a goddess of the Luo River. I cannot believe that you can see her. What does she look like? I am so curious.
5	Cao Zhi describes what he sees.	A low angle camera shows Cao Zhi's face.	Cao Zhi: She is so beautiful. Just like a goddess in a fairy tale.
6	The goddess sits at the riverside.	The goddess kneels on a stone near the river. She looks down at the flowers and waves her arm.	
7	Flowers blossom from the goddess's magic.	The goddess waves her hand over the flowers, and the flowers blossom.	
8	The goddess smiles.	A close-up shot of the goddess's face. She smiles,	

		looks away and looks back again.	
9	Cao Zhi looks shocked.	A close-up shot of Cao Zhi's face, and the camera then zooms out. Cao Zhi's eyes are wide open as if in surprise.	

Table 4.2.2 Description of scenes in film 2

Shot No.	Shot	Visuals	Dialogue
1	A young man, Cao Zhi, plays the guqin.	Under a tree, Cao Zhi kneels on the ground and plays the guqin, which is positioned on his leg.	
2	Cao Zhi plays the guqin.	Cao Zhi moves his hands and plays the guqin.	
3	Cao Zhi plays the guqin. Two birds on a tree fly away.	A medium shot shows Cao Zhi playing the guqin, and 2 birds are flying away from a tree in the background.	
4	Two birds are flying across the sky.	Two birds fly across the sky.	
5	The goddess takes a nap.	The goddess lies down and takes a nap.	
6	The goddess wakes up.	A medium shot shows the goddess opening her eyes.	
7	The goddess asks a bird what the sound is.	A bird flies and lands on the goddess's fingertip. The goddess looks at the bird and talks to her.	Goddess: What is that sound?
8	The bird tells the goddess that it is a	The camera shows the bird answering the goddess's question.	The bird: It is a mortal playing

	mortal playing the guqin.		the guqin.
9	The goddess stands up.	A long shot shows the goddess standing up.	
10	The goddess crosses the river.	The goddess walks on the river to the other side.	
11	The goddess moves a willow branch.	A rear view shot shows the goddess moving a willow branch aside with her right hand.	
12	The goddess looks surprised and happy.	A close-up shot show the goddess's face. She looks surprised and smiles.	
13	Cao Zhi plays the guqin.	A long shot shows Cao Zhi playing the guqin.	
14	The goddess plays the xiao.	The goddess takes out a xiao and plays it.	
15	Cao Zhi plays the guqin, and the goddess plays the xiao.	The camera shows the goddess jumping up and playing the xiao first. The camera then zooms out and shows Cao Zhi playing the guqin and the goddess playing the xiao.	
16	The goddess flies over Cao Zhi.	A long shot shows the goddess flying over Cao Zhi.	
17	The goddess lands to the right of Cao Zhi, and Cao Zhi notices her.	The goddess lands to the right of Cao Zhi, and Cao Zhi glances at her.	
18	Cao Zhi plays the guqin, and the goddess plays the xiao.	The camera shows the goddess in the middle of the shot playing the xiao and Cao Zhi to the side playing the guqin.	

Transcripts of the questionnaire responses from the focus group interview and the qualitative survey

Research questionnaire

Name: CL

Age: 23

School or agency: Central Saint Martins

Nationality: Chinese

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: A traditional beginning, an official fell in love with a lady at the first sight. The second animation: It is more like myths and legends, especially the scene that the goddess walks through the water.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

I have never heard of the *Nymph of the Luo River* before.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

Personally, the second animation gives me more expectations.

A. First animation B. Second animation

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

In the first animation, the goddess is more like a girl next door. She is a quiet lady, similar to a mortal.

In the second animation, the second goddess is less feminine, which can be seen in her actions — for example, the way she sleeps and the way she talks to the bird

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

To tell you the truth, I have the slightest idea about 3D animation. I think such a story should be attractive. Technically I'm unable to propose improvements for you. I'm sorry.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

Sorry, I don't know much about the female images of Chinese traditional animation. I think Miss Snail is similar to this image.

Research questionnaire

Name: YW

Age: 25

School or agency: Central Saint Martins

Nationality: Chinese

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: The first one gives me a very traditional feeling with a peaceful rhythm. The second animation: The second one, with a more active style, will make the audience have more expectations.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

I know something about the *Nymph of the Luo River*. I think it is a classical and traditional Chinese female image.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first shows a standard character design. The female image in the second story is a combination of modern and classic. She not only has the graceful beauty of ancient women, but also has the vitality of modern ladies.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The queen of the Women's Kingdom, Hero Sisters of Grassland

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

I think you can add some Chinese elements in 3D pictures.

Research questionnaire

Name: DW

Age: 24

School or agency: Central Saint Martins

Nationality: Chinese

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: The shaping of the character is good. The second animation: The character has a more nymph-like style with more colourful and distinct personalities.

2. What do you associate with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

Everyone has its own image of goddess.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

The second animation doesn't focus on the description of the character but highlights the personality of the image.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

In the first animation, the goddess is in a typical traditional Chinese female image, gentle and graceful. It starts the beginning of a typical traditional Chinese story, where a rich man falls in love with a woman

In the second animation, The character design stands out more and the goddess has more characteristics of a mortal.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The goddess in *Lotus Lantern*, she gives up her identity in heaven and descends to the world for her true love with a mortal.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

You can add more emotions for the image.

Research questionnaire

Name: JY

Age:37

School or agency: China Academy of Art

Nationality: Chinese

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: The structure and description are based on the original version. The second

animation: It is an adaptation and the beginning is like another story.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

It is a classical and beautiful Chinese female image.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

The second animation is better in the character modelling and picture effect.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The image of the second goddess is stronger and more independent

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Madam White Snake, a classic Chinese female image who dares to love and hate.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

Introduction of the story is missing, so the audiences who don't know the story will find it hard to understand the plot. You can add a synopsis in the form of literature narration. The personality and emotion of the character can be highlighted and I think they are the key points of the story.

Research questionnaire

Name: YC

Age: 27

School or agency: Central Saint Martins

Nationality: Chinese

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: The picture is clear; the colour is simple and elegant. The second animation: The character is more vivid.

2. What do you associate with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

I had never seen the *Nymph of the Luo River*; the story gives me a dreamy feeling.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The goddess in the first animation is really beautiful and unworldly.

The goddess in the second animation is a more life-like and serious lady.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Lady Meng Jiang, a gentle, strong-minded and persistent woman.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

For the animation rendering, more factors of Chinese fine brushwork painting can be added and the animation can be further made into an animated feature.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: LL

Gender: Female

Age: 19

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Visual Communication Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: it is identical to the poem. The story has been clearly expressed, and the scene of the emperor meeting the goddess has been presented with strong sense of scene. The second animation: the goddess is attracted by the music, and shows herself to the musician. This sense of scene is pretty good, and the characters are more exquisite than the first animation, however the scene is a little bit simple.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

I know the original story, and the two animations are relatively similar to the pictures I can imagine, therefore I link them together naturally.

She has not only the attractive appearance, but also the moving emotions. She's beautiful as the combination of mortal and goddess, she's smart and elegant externally, gentle and tender internally. The boundless miracles enables her to be capable of flying, however she also has the unfinished love debt. She's extremely beautiful but not unreachable, she's the literary character deeply excavated and shaped by the author who could best represent the ideal beautiful lady to the ancient Chinese excellent gifted scholars, and she's the high degree of unity of the most beautiful features of the eastern females.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

In the first animation, it has strong sense of scene and good plot. The content is rich and the details are better described. While in the second animation, the scene and characters are somewhat opposed to each other, and the movements are a little bit stiff.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The second goddess shows herself to the musician upon hearing the music, and plays music together with him. Compared to the first goddess, the second one is more sentimental and close to the human life.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The goddess in *Lotus Lantern*, she's smart, beautiful and kind-hearted. She summons wind and calls for rain in the drought, and casts spell to control water logging, the folks come to her for help when they are in trouble, and all her divinations are turned to be realized, being taken good care by her, the wind and rain come in their time, and produce good harvest. Ignoring the laws of God in Heaven, she marries Liu Yanchang. She's not only the Lucky Goddess in hearts of the common people, but also the Love Goddess in their hearts.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The production techniques could be more exquisite, the folding of the sleeves and the expressions of characters are too stiff. The face of each character is featureless but too identical to each other, the goddess shall be highlighted in her facial features and hair style, and the character shapes shall be described more delicate. The background is too monotonous and it shall be enriched.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: NY

Gender: Female

Age: 21

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Oil Painting

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: it is simply produced without deep story line. The second animation: it is simply produced however the character images are better and the background music is pretty good.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

The goddess in the story is a beautiful lady, she's both active and quiet, beautiful and generous.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

The second one: the second one is better than the first one in processing the characters, and the movements of the fingers when the characters are playing zither in the second animation are much comfortable than in the first one, and the clothing and facial features are all better than the first one.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first one is quiet, and she doesn't have too many language and movements, which makes people feel she's gentle and graceful; the second one is active, she asks the bird where the music comes from, and plays music with the man, she's passionate and generous.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

In the Chinese animations, the positive female image with model shall be Nuwa, and many animations are based on fairy tales, and the myth of Nuwa making human beings is extraordinarily widespread, she is streaked with myth and is a positive image.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

It could be changed in terms of effects of scenes, and the scenes are too single and simple, which make the animation inanimate and unappealing.

Questionnaire Survey

Name; QJ

Gender: Female

Age: 20

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: 15 Fine Arts Class 81 Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: the picture is blurred when I just open the animation, however its dynamics are strong. The second animation: The picture quality is more exquisite than the first one. The budding dubbing is pretty good and increases my curiosity to go on watching.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

In the first animation, the man actively strikes up a conversation, the woman is shy and they both have admirations for each other. In the second animation, the goddess in my opinion is beautiful, fairy-like; has etiquette and good at speech.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer B, the second one.

Because there are more details in the second one; the character images in the second one are more flexible, more delicate; the colours are more comfortable.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

I think the goddess in the first animation is gentle and graceful, and she belongs to the type of noble

ladies, who are more virtuous and introverted.

The goddess in the second animation is amiable; she has her own personalities and is not so shy; she's good at speech and generous.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Nuwa—she's the Goddess of Creation in the Chinese ancient myths, human ancestor of the Chinese nation, who had created the human society and established marriage system, and heron who had repaired the sky.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

First, clothing of the characters (sleeves of the brown dress in the first animation) could be described more delicate; facial expressions of characters could be more abundant, and there shall be some more complicated emotions to highlight the personalities of characters; body movements of characters (walk-posture of the lady in the second animation, or is she drifting in the air?); character images (there are no differences between the neck and fore breast of the brown dress). When the lady appears in the first animation, the sense of picture is a little bit rough. Generally speaking they are good animations, and I hope the animators could be more careful and delicate. Second, the colours are too dull.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: WL

Gender: Female

Age: 19

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: It is streaked with myth, he meets up with Concubine Fu, the goddess who falling down into the water, and attracted by her beauty and elegance. The second animation: The leisure and free goddess is attracted by the beautiful wonderful music played by a mortal, and arise to play music together with him, both of them are immersed in the harmonious melody.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

They are both streaked with myth, have the images of goddess, interested in lingering affection. They have goddess-like appearances, extraordinary remarkable qualities, and they are smart, gentle, kind-hearted and generous.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer B , the second one. The heroin is attracted by the man because of his music. For such feelings are worth thousands and thousands of words and they are tacit and immersed in the melody.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The goddess in the first animation is otherworldly, and different from the mortal. The goddess in

the second animation is more willing to contact with mortal.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Hua Mulan, who had joined the army on behalf of her father, her compassion for her father and loyalty for her nation are the natural expressions of the female heroic girl.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The story line is too simple, and the character images of the animations are not elaborately produced.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: HX

Gender: Female

Age: 21

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: it's too short to contain the complete story line. The second animation: the goddess is a little bit masculine.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

The goddess is the most beautiful images in the Chinese Gods of water because of her beauty of image and beauty of tragedy.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the second one. Its story line is more complete, and the production is better than the first one however still needs to be improved.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

Yes, there are differences, in the first animation, the goddess has light, noble and elegant figure, which makes people feel she's proud and indifferent. In the second animation, the goddess is amiable and leisure and it is easy to get along well with her.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Hua Mulan, who had joined the army on behalf of her father, the goodness in *Lotus Lantern*, Red ginseng and Snow ginseng in *Ginseng Kingdom* are like the heroic women in the Kung fu novels.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

There are large room for improvement in terms of character figures, environmental atmosphere, picture quality, dubbing, background music etc.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: TY

Gender: Female

Age: 20

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: the story of the animation is too simple and the plot is not highlighted, and fails to attract people's attentions. It tells the story of Cao Zhi meeting with Concubine Fu on his way back to his fief, and exclaiming her beauty and unique temperament. The second animation: the animation story is too simple, the plot is not highlighted, and it is a little bit confusing. It tells a story that bird of goddess brings forth a news that there is a man playing zither from not far away, and the goddess is moved by his music after seeing him in person, and plays flute and zither together with him.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

I will link the animations with *Nymph of the Luo River* in terms of story line, because they both express the unique temperament of the goddess as well as truth, kindness, beauty and positive energy.

She's slim and graceful, shining as the Autumn Chrysanthemum, young as the Spring pine. She's just like the light cloud blocking out the moon, and drifting like the snow blew by the wind.

Seeing from afar, she's bright as the rising sun from the morning glow; shining and brilliant like the lotus growing up from the green waters. Her speech and deportment are generous and elegant.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the first one. Because it's more storytelling, and the story is more complete, and could enable the audiences to understand and feel the meaning expressed by the author.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

Goddess in the first animation is more introverted, generous, shy and elegant and graceful in behaviours and figure.

Goddess in the second animation is much more extroverted, and easy to be moved by the touching music, she's generous and elegant, which makes her a sentimental person.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The goddess in *Lotus Lantern*, she was beautiful, kind-hearted, gorgeous and elegant. She summons wind and calls for rain in the draught, and casts spell to control water logging, the folks come to her for help when they are in trouble, and all her divinations are turned to be realized, being taken good care by her, the wind and rain come in their time, and produce good harvest.

Hua Mulan, she was the heroic woman in the ancient China, who was loyal and obedient. She was eternally praised for joining in the army on behalf of her father and defeating the invaders, she had strong will, feared no difficulties and dangers, and was made the "General of obedience and loyalty" by emperor of Tang Dynasty after she died.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The two animations could be longer, and stories are incomplete and a little bit confusing. The story line shall be more delicate and richer, but not to be mentioned in one or two sentences, it fails to express the thoughts the author wants to express. What's more, they could be more perfect in terms of styles of the animation works as well as the productions, they could be more exquisite.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: YS

Gender: Female

Age: 21

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Fine Art

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: A man in Confucian robe meets with a graceful goddess, and is astonished by her beauty. The second animation: The woman is deeply touched by the music of the man, and plays music together with him.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

Just as it is said in *Ode to the goddess of the Luo River*, she's slim and graceful, shining as the Autumn Chrysanthemum, young as the Spring pine. She's just like the light cloud blocking out the moon, and drifting like the snow blew by the wind.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer A the first one. In the original work, I think the goddess shall be a gentler lady, and in the first animation, the image of the goddess has such unique temperament of women, and her movements are kind of flexible, however in the second animation, it urges me, and makes me feel she's brave, including the movements of flying.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

Yes, they are different. The first goddess touches the flowers lying leisurely, and the flowers bloom, she has the unique gentleness of women, while the second goddess resolutely comes to search for the one who is playing the music upon hearing the charming music, and plays music together with him. We could say she's free and forthright from her movements.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Kuan Yin (Goddess of Mercy), who exists in many Chinese animations, this might be because she's the mercy herself, and she's honest, fair and impartial, she would bring forth luck to people and turn danger into safety, she's belief of the ancient people rather than a character.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The movements of characters could be more fluent, and the details of the characters' dresses could be more delicate, and the dubbing and lines could be more ancient-style.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: WP

Gender: Male

Age: 19

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: it has the style of traditional Chinese painting, it has Chinese characteristics, however the picture is not exquisite enough. And the character details are not well described. The second animation: the sensory impressions expressed through music instruments are more prominent than the visual effects.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

I may connect the image of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* with the dynamic image, languages and movements of the goddess through the interpretation of *Nymph of the Luo River*. Cao Zhi's description of the image of the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River* is pretty meticulous, and therefore the original work could be used as the original version, it is recommended to make appropriate reversion. I think the image of goddess shall be more dignified and graceful, as well as gentle and cultured, grand and soft, introverted and generous; she's delicate but not glamorous.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

B, I prefer the second one, because the entire effect of the combination of picture and music in the second animation is stronger than the first animation.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

Yes, there are differences between them. Goddess in the first animation is gentle, delicate, and the entire dynamic image of the character is combined with the blooming lotus, which makes people feel the refined sense. Goddess in the second animation is active, and the combination of the flying image and the flute makes people feel generous.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The goddess in the animation *Lotus Lantern*, because her personalities of being brave to love, and her courage to break through the rigid and conventional rules.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

Descriptions in terms of character details and environment etc, what's more the continuity and depth of the story are insufficient.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: WZ

Gender: Male

Age: 21

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: it feels like that there are no shadows because there are no light resources, and the objects are a little bit drifting. The entire picture is grey and depressive. But the some movements of the horse and characters are expressed more naturally and harmoniously, and the facial expression changes of the major characters also perfectly manifest the psychological changes of the characters, and the female in the animation is not well described and emphasized. What's more, the character voice is emotionless and relatively stiff. The second animation: this animation looks more harmonious, however the movement of "flying" of the fairy is made a little bit stiff, and fails to manifest that feelings of the fairy, what's more, the fingers are not well-produced when the character is playing the flute.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

In the first animation, a man came back to the eastern fief from the capital city. The sun was going down and both the horses and cart driver were exhausted. Therefore we stopped the cart beside the river bank overspread with sweet grasses, and let the horses eat the grass and have rest freely in the grass land. He was wandering in the forest and laying his eyes on the beautiful sceneries of the Luo River. All of a sudden, he raised his head and saw a straight sight: a fairy-like beautiful lady was right there beside the cliff.

The beautiful music played by the man in the second animation was heard by the goddess, and she asked the bird what the voice was, and then she played flute together with the man.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the second one, because its picture feels more real.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first goddess is more implicative, more introverted and weaker.

The second goddess likes to communicate with others, and she's beautiful and smart.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The Zhuos became rich by smelting iron, and when the First Emperor of Qin Dynasty was exterminating the Zhao State to conduct the Great Unification, he forced the rich families of Zhao State to move to the districts such as Chuanxia, and the Zhuos of Hnadan city were driven to Linqiong. Zhuo Wenjun, who was beautiful and smart and good at playing zither she was born in a rich family as the granddaughter of Zhuowang, the rich businessman of Linqiong. The love story of Zhuo Wenjun and the famous scholar of Han Dynasty Simaxiangru has still been talked about by people till now. She also had many fine pieces of writings spread in the later generations, among which the most well-known is "Wish to meet someone with true love, and never depart till death".

Li Qingzhao was the rare gifted scholar woman in the ancient China, she was good at writing, painting, and knew well about epigaphy, especially had a good command of poetry. Her poetry was once incomparable in a certain time, and spread through the ages, she was honored as "Master of Poetry". Her poetry was divided into the previous phase and later phase. In which the previous works mainly described her leisure life, including love life, natural sceneries in beautiful tone. For instance *Yijianmei Hong ou xiang can yu dianqiu* etc. In the later phase, she had always sighed for her miserable life experiences, yarned for her hometown and recalled the old days in sad mood. For

instance Shengshengman ·Xun xun mi mi. Her moral qualities were as admirable as her works. She had not only the virtues of heroic women but also the strong will of men; she had the cynical feelings of the ordinary people and the lofty patriotic feelings. She had not only the extraordinary talents, profound knowledge, but also the great expectations and heroic ambitions.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

First of all, it should be improved in terms of the entire picture, there must be heavy colours to hold the entire picture, otherwise the picture is really too drifting.

And then the animator shall observe the movements of real people more carefully, and the colours could be lighter.

The details of human bodies need to be improved.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: ZZ

Gender: Female

Age: 21

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: the story content is too simple and short, it's a little bit rigid, and lack of feeling of consciences. The second animation: the story content is too simple and short, however the entire visual effects are better.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

They could be linked to the story in *Nymph of the Luo River* from the character expressions and scenes shaped in the animations.

In my opinion, the female image of the goddess is: we could know that she's gentle, graceful and fairy-like from the man's description for her in the animation, all men will lose their hearts to her.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer B, the second one, because from the view point of the animation, the second one is more abundant than the first one, and it's more pleasing in visual sense. The character images are ore open-and-shut than those in the first one. The second one is also better than the first one in clothing decoration.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

We could say the first goddess is quiet, composed, just like a beauty daughter form a small family from her sitting posture and movements of touching the flowers; The second goddess is bolder and freer from her sitting posture and movements of skimming over the water surface with light body skill.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The goddess in the animation of *Lotus Lantern*.

Reason: The goddess is smart, beautiful, and kind-hearted. She summons wind and calls for rain in the draught, and casts spell to control water logging, the folks come to her for help when they are in

trouble, as beautiful and dignified as she is, the common people regard her not only the Love Goddess, but also the Lucky Goddess in their hearts.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

Both the two animations are too simple and short in terms of time, people who haven't read this story will get confused; there shall be more details so that the antecedents and consequences could be open-and-shut for people, and the animation production is too rigid, which makes it difficult to attract people's attentions.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: YN

Gender: Female

Age: 18

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: This is an animation about the ancient Chinese legend and story, whose pictures are with Chinese characteristics, however the picture colours are singular, and the characters' movements and expressions are rigid. The second animation: The picture colours are ugly, the heroine's dress is ok, but the hero is dull in movements and has no facial expressions. The picture looks unnatural.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

The first animation is the plot content in *Nymph of the Luo River*, and the second animation might be the scene after Goddess had left, and Cao Zhi missed her so much that he met with her in dream one more time. The goddess should be a perfect woman with tenderness, beauty and elegant manners.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

B, because the appearance and dress of the heroine in the second animation are more beautiful, and the music is pleasing.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first one is gentler and more retiring. The second is generous and beautiful. The second is confident to pipe to echo with the music she heard.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Hua Mu Lan, who joined the army to on behalf of her father, she's wise, brave and obedient. Chenxiang's mother in *Lotus Lantern*, who's brave to pursue true love, and get rid of fetter of feudal ethics and rites.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

Picture effect, picture colour, expressions and movements of characters, projection could be made more realistic and natural.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: XY

Gender: Female

Age: 19

School or company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Visual Communication Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

First animation: I have read this story in *Selected Works of Zhaoming* before, which generally tells the story of a girl who is daughter of Fuxi in Chinese myth, died for drawing in Luo River, and became Goddess of Luo River.

The second animation: comparing with the first one, this animation has some changes in expressions of the characters, but as the animation which is soon coming into the market, I hope its characters could be smarter, and I hope the subtitles could be shown in both Chinese and English.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

It is said that *Nymph of the Luo River* was written by Cao Zhi to pay homepage to the complex feelings between him and Lady Zhen, concubine of Cao Pi. Of course the goddess is absolutely a goddess in the modern times, however she shall have miserable life experience otherwise she wouldn't have been drawn. Beautiful women have their troubles, prototype of the goddess, Lady Zhen was wife of Yuan Xi, however lost her family in wars, the more miserable was that she was robbed by someone, someone she didn't like, and had to be together with murder of her husband, and later on she was with Cao Zhi, with whom she had an love story, but finally came to an end because of death of Lady Zhen, which was indescribably miserable.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the second one, because the story line is more complete, and leaves room for imagination, and its production is also better than the first one.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first goddess is a little bit proud and indifferent, and turns her back on her admirers.

The second goddess is different, she's close and independent with him, it's obviously a happy ending.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why? Give your reasons.

Hua Mu Lan, who joined the army to on behalf of her father

Wang Zhaojun, who sacrificed her life to the country

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

You need to improve the aspects of the backgrounds, expressions and voices of characters, subtitles, and dresses.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: MJ

Gender: Male

Age: 20

School and company: Jiangsu Normal University

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: my first impression on this animation is that I'm not pretty attracted by its picture, and the features of characters are not clear. The second animation: it is better than the first one, and I'm curious to watch the following plot.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

Link the two animations with this story through dialogues between the animation characters and the character images. The goddess is a female image close to nature with curiosity about new things.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the second one, it attracts me more and could express the female image of the goddess more clearly.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first one is somewhat traditional, cultured and elegant.

The second one is more easy-going and extrovert.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Luo zu. She's very virtuous, quietly handles the daily routines, works on silkworm breeding, not

looking into other social affairs, but just fulfills obligations as a wife. Such image represents the broad Chinese female images.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The two animations could be improved in terms of vividness of theme and quality of picture.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: LY

Gender: Male

Age: 18

School and company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: it has obvious Chinese style however the entire picture effect is not pretty good.

The second animation: it gives people visual and auditory perceptions by combining the story line and melody. And it has the same problem with the first animation.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

Nymph of the Luo River makes me feel it has described the elegant and simple female image to express the author's state of mind, and I think image of the goddess could be described from aspect of picture to express the state of mind of the character. And in my opinion, the female image of the goddess is quiet, elegant, and friendly.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer B, the second one, because it combines with Chinese traditional music, which attracts my attention.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

No, I do think there are that much difference.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The goddess in *Lotus Lantern*. She is a strong and kind woman.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The animations can be improved from the aspects of image quality, characters' features and personalities.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: XJ

Gender: Male

Age: 20

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: the horse at the beginning is pretty good; however it has exposed the features such as insufficient texture of picture and attraction when it turns to the characters. It is roughly produced with incomplete story line. The lines and character dynamics are stiff. The second animation: it is a little bit better than the first one, but the picture is also rough, however the story line is more complete, the environment of the entire picture is too rough.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

Nymph of the Luo River is very similar to the lies in the first animation if being translated into modern vernacular Chinese. People get to know it is *Nymph of the Luo River* upon hearing the first line of the hero. For me, I will certainly pay attention to express the dress, living environment and etiquette in this era, and let people know of which era the story is first.

I think her movements are harmonious with the nature, she wanders around the mountains; jumps occasionally, walks while playing; she has colored flags leaning against her on the left side, and cinnamon twig on the right side for sun shield; she's rolling up her sleeves and putting her white and delicate arms into the water of the Luo River to pick the black plants from the torrential river. She's just like the spirit in among the mountains and river, releasing the glory of "collecting the aura

of heaven and earth, picking essence of the sun and moon”, she’s gorgeous and brilliant.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the second one, because the second one is better at describing the image of goddess than the first one, the first one fails to describe the goddess as perfect and flawless as people have expected the Goddess of the Luo River should be, but instead leaves a proud and indifferent impression of an otherworldly young lady.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first one is reasonable and the second one is emotional. The second goddess likes the music when upon hearing it and plays music together with the musician. From this, we can see she’s a person full of sentiment that could get along well with the ordinary people.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Hua Mulan, who joined the army on behalf of her father, killed enemies to protect the nation, she’s excellent as their male soldiers.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

Actually in my opinion there are many things need to be improved, for instance the picture quality, the production, the dubbing and background music, character dynamics, as well as the echoing relationship between the picture style and era of the story.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: WM

Gender: Female

Age: 20

School and company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Environmental Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: its picture quality is not strong, and the attraction is weak. Character dynamics are relatively stiff, and the production and story line are rough without atmospheres of that age. The second animation: it's a little bit better than the first one, and the story line is completer than the first one, however the rest are the same with the first one.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

If I am producing this animation, I will start from the character images, atmospheres of era, social etiquette, so as to make people feel the atmospheres of this era. And then link them closely to the story line of *Nymph of the Luo River*:

“She’s just like a goddess, she has light and flexible figure, she’s slim and graceful; she has beauty like chrysanthemum blooming in the autumn, she has forceful youth like thick pines in spring; her movements are as light as the thin cloud blocking out the moon, her figure is as drifting as the wind blowing snows; seeing from afar, she’s as glabrous as rising sun form the morning glow, taking a close look, she’s as shining as the graceful lotus in the clear waters.” This is the overall impression she has left on people.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the second one, for goddess in the second one is described more delicately, and conforms to the character image in the original work; it is more mature compared with the first one.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

One is reasonable and the other one is sentimental, the second goddess plays music together with the musician upon hearing the music touching her heart (and her changes in heart could also be seen from her facial expressions, however the movements are insufficient), we could see that she's a sentimental goddess.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Hua Mulan, who joined the army on behalf of her father, killed enemies to protect the nation, she's excellent as their male soldiers. Nuwa, who made human beings and repaired the sky, etc.,

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The quality of picture, the production, the dubbing and background music, character dynamics, age elements, the relationship between the animation and the original work.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: YT

Gender: Female

Age: 23

School or company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Decorative Art Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The two animations are like the educational films explaining encyclopaedia of idioms and their stories before, however the stories are not educational; the animation effects are similar to the online game scenes, but lack of interactive fun of the online games, therefore this animation makes me feel like a kind of 3D animation between the educational animation and online game animation.

The first animation: what is expressed in the first animation is the admiration of mortals for goddess, however dialogues between characters are relatively straightforward, and the hero starts praising the goddess of the Luo River without any foreshadowing, this has confused me, and it is not natural in shaping beauty of the goddess. Secondly, characters in the animation only have interactions of dialogues, without no body interactions, which seems too solemn and alienated, the hero could be more exaggerated when he saw the goddess, for example when he happened to see her, he could unconsciously pulled the servant's arms to ask out of excitement pointing at afar, so as to make the character more lively and animate.

The second animation: the second animation expresses the appreciations of the goddess for the mortal, as the servants of goddess of the Luo River, the birds are hiding besides the mortals, and alight on the fingertips of the goddess after being summoned by the goddess, goddess of the Luo River is linked to the mortal through birds, and goddess and the mortal are echoed with each other

through instruments, which has closed the distance between the goddess and the mortal, in the second animation, the goddess、 the mortal、 birds are interacted, and it is more harmonious than the first one.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

The mortal has a strong admiration for the goddess, and in order to attract her attention, he unconsciously starts playing the zither, and the goddess comes on hearing the music. There must be differences between the goddess and the mortal, she's glorious and elegant, slim and graceful, looks like rising sun in the morning glow from afar, and new lotus among the green waters at the close-up; she has medium figure and moderate height, her shoulders are as narrow as being cut, and her waist is as if girthed with rope, her skin on the graceful neck is fair. She wears no makeup, and her bun is pretty high, and her eyebrows are curved and slender, she has red and flesh lips, white teeth, her charming eyes are shining, and there is a pair of sweet dimples on her cheek, she's elegant and charming, her behaviours are gentle and quiet, she has soft and amiable mood, as well as decent and graceful style of conversation. Clothing of the goddess is gorgeous and refined, and her physical character is the same as on the painting.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the second one. In the second animation there are interactions among the goddess、 the mortal and birds, especially the birds, which have manifested the differences between the goddess and the mortal, and make me feel that in the second animation, the goddess is a real goddess.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

In the first animation, the goddess is just half-laying on the stone, which makes her more introverted, quiet and passive, while in the second animation, the goddess could be capable of flying, and relatively lively and active.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Hua Mulan, she has always been the brave、 strong and responsible character in my heart, what's more she has the style of female general, who could be capable of fighting and making decisions like the male do, and tender and delicate as the girls, she's the typical able woman in the modern time.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

I think it might be better if the quality of picture could be expressed virtually and actually.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: DQ

Gender: Female

Age: 23

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Digital Media

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: characters in this animation product have appropriate expressions, this is commendable, and the dubbing is also good, however the shape and movement of the characters are not good enough, the scene modeling is too stiff, and the quality hasn't been expressed well. The second animation: The character shape details also haven't been fully expressed, the story line is just blindly copying the ancient fairy tale without innovation.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

The Goddess of the Luo River is a beautiful and virtuous lady.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I prefer the first one. Its story line is more attractive to me, because the goddess is a beautiful and honorable lady in the mind of the mortal.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first goddess lays her hands on flowers and the flowers bloom, it means she's gentle, virtuous and kind-hearted. The second goddess is intellectual; she's attracted by playing music to accompany

it, which means she also is a gentle and cultivated lady.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Nuwa, who repaired the sky. The Butterfly Sister in *Calabash Brothers*, who had never done any wicked thing even if she's a demon.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The character shape details could be deeper, and the movements could also be more natural, the scene expressions could be richer.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: HX

Gender: Male

Age: 24

School or company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Digital Media

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: the effects of blooming is extraordinarily beautiful, however generally speaking the scene and characters are somewhat stiff and not lively enough, they could be more natural. The second animation: the budding is pretty good, and the scholar playing the zither is very calm.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

I link them together because what the leading characters are doing is identical to the scene described in *Nymph of the Luo River*. I think the goddess is a lady attractive to her beauty, and advocating beautiful things, she's just like the goddess Venus in the West.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

I choose B, because the music is better.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The first one is relatively shy, she's just sitting up from afar cross the river; the second one is much more active, she actively appears in front of the mortal.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

Hua Mulan, who joined the army on behalf of her father; Princess Wencheng, who married to Songtsen Gampo

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The shot transitions could be changed, the full-length shots are somewhat stiff, and the character expressions could be slightly adjusted.

Questionnaire Survey

Name: CC

Gender: Male

Age; 22

School or Company: Jiangsu Normal University

Major: Art Design

1. What is your impression of these two animated adaptations?

The first animation: the movements are a little bit stiff, and the details of characters and scenes are not meticulous enough. The second animation: it's better in the material processing; however the goddess looks weird when she's flying, not flexible.

2. What do you associated with *Nymph of the Luo River*? How do you view the goddess in *Nymph of the Luo River*?

The image of the goddess shall be brave to think and act, full of spirit of exploration.

3. In general, which animation do you prefer, and why?

A. First animation B. Second animation

B. The second one, because it's better in details than the first one, and the characters are more lively.

4. What, to you, are the differences between these two goddesses in terms of personality?

The goddess in the first animation is quiet and virtuous, and she's more like a Peach Garden discovered by people, which is full of charms. The goddess in the second animation is lively and active, and she's full of spirit of adventure.

5. Can you give an example of a female role-model in Chinese animation and why?

The goddess, Chen Xiang's mother, in *Lotus Lantern*, who is gentle and graceful, where the Chinese traditional beauty of female could be found on her. Despite being educated by the traditional thought of the three obedience's and the four virtues since her childhood, she's different from others as being brave and resolute. She's enthusiastic, brave, and could sacrifice everything for love. We also could see the glory of motherhood of the Chinese women on her.

6. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve my animation?

The animations could be more flexible and comfortable in processing the expressions and movements of the characters, and the scenes are too simple and the texture is pretty stiff.

List of accompanying material

DVD of *Nymph of the Luo River* film 1 and film 2