Folklore and New Media communications: an exploration of *Journey to the West*, its modern orality and traditional storytelling in contemporary online spaces.

By

Mat Sillett

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Abstract

This paper is the study of *Journey to the West* as a medium and cultural commodity rather than merely a novel; one that has been continuously told in one form or another for over a thousand years. I examine the story diachronically, through a media ecology lens, in an effort to understand the story's traditions through temporal synchronic studies. I propose that the study of the book has largely overshadowed the true scope of the story's cultural importance. I posit that *Journey to the West* is a medium that should be considered separately from the technologies and media that use it as content. I assert that its components and structural elements are deeply rooted in the Chinese oral tradition, which is reliant on the interplay of orality and literacy. I complete a content analysis of film and television texts to validate this hypothesis. I use the results to identify patterns across the texts that can be explored more deeply across historical texts in the *Journey to the West* canon. The aim of this analysis is to identify storytelling motifs that can be traced back to the popularised novel and its antecedents. I also look at the discourse surrounding online culture and storytelling relating to the milieu of pre-literate societies, and how modern devices may also mimic elements of storytelling experience in *Journey to the West's* past. The evidence points to a complex relationship between medium, technology and audience, the investigation of which, I argue, demonstrates culturally contextual episteme within the story.

I finally assert that the story and the Monkey King are an environment that is immersive due to the multitude of texts and representations within Chinese culture. This I state, is why the story has such substantive cultural value; it goes almost unnoticed and therefore becomes a powerful medium to tell stories laden with messages that the storyteller wishes to make.

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Introduction

This thesis is a diachronic analysis of the Chinese story Xī Yóu Jì (西游记), hereafter referred to as *Journey to the West*. Through a media ecology framework, I look to claim that the story is a medium, and despite its vast number of versions across different platforms, it is not bound to any single technology or medium. This I posit, is due to its historical relationship to the Chinese oral tradition which I believe is evidenced throughout its textual versions in written and audio-visual incarnations. The elements of the Chinese oral tradition, I suggest, are structural elements of the story and are specific to a Chinese oral-literate episteme. Following the position of Sheila J. Nayar (2010), I propose that the structures found within film and television have coalesced from previous forms within an oral-literate framework to sustain the "oral" element of the tradition:

> Visual storytelling has not only been significantly contoured by the resources that literacy has made available to human consciousness, but in some cases, by the lack of those resources. The implication of course is that orality cannot be ascribed to a precursory or "primitive"- and certainly not "tribal" - way of thinking, let alone to a worldview frozen in time. Sometimes orality may even be the *favoured* mode of engagement in literate communities, reproducing as it does our more spontaneous, and perhaps more "natural," mode of human articulation. (Nayar 2010, p.5)

I explore this notion by taking a sample of film and television texts of *Journey to the West* and completing a content analysis to identify patterns in the repetitions of visual, aural and narrative features related to the study of oral traditions. The result of this is used as a starting point for a qualitative analysis of the story across multiple media, from Tang dynasty biographies, written stories, the Ming dynasty novel, transcripts of oral performances, film, television, home movies and mobile applications. The presence of the features found in the content analysis within these different media are used as a basis to make certain claims about the story as a medium. Primarily, these are that the interplay of orality and literacy within the Chinese oral tradition has continued throughout the story's production and have in fact become structural elements of the story as a medium. The continuation of these features suggest that the story has an oral episteme, specific to China. That the Multiplicity of the story constitutes it as an environment, and as such is usable to all

storytellers through repetition within the cultural milieu, and not as literary adaptation, which is often suggested. I posit that the story has traversed across such a large amount of time, and through so many media and cultural interplays that it is a deeply layered, palimpsest medium. Therefore, we must excavate *Journey to the West* for its many textual multi-modalities with the media ecology framework – some of them, structurally intertwined – which have accreted over its long history. This research is then an archaeological dig, as we go back through the layers to better understand the complexities of the story in its contemporary guises.

The primary outcomes of the research are that *Journey to the West* is proved to be a medium that is used time and time again for storytellers to implant their own content and messages. The popularity of this medium would suggest that this seems to go unnoticed in both audience appreciation, as well as general scholarship. I suggest that its structures as a medium are largely related to the Chinese oral tradition and that these traditional features of storytelling can still be seen in the text today. These features, unlike the notions of the great divide and the complete separation of orality and literacy, are actually reliant on an interplay of orality and literacy. I propose that this interplay, which I describe as an oral-literate symbiosis, impacts not only the structure of the story but it also privileges a cultural episteme of oral-literate interplay. I suggest that the very specific history of *Journey to the West* and the Chinese storytelling traditions, make understanding its codes and value a matter of cultural immersion; without being in the culture it is impossible to fully understand and appreciate its importance.

The development of the story as a medium is also thoroughly investigated, and the outcomes of this investigation help to aid the field of media ecology as well. The analysis of *Journey to the West* is completed in a chronological approach from orality, literacy, electronic media and then digital media. However, I suggest that the story cannot actually be appreciated through a linear format, and that the diachronic analysis of the text needs to look at how the story interacts with other versions in the story in different media. I make two claims in relation to this, firstly, that no single medium has greater cultural weight than another when analysing the story and they are all of

the same value, even the medium of *Journey to the West.* I develop my own model in which to explore this notion in a non-linear way, to show the interactions and interplay between media and the story. Second, I suggest that the repetition of features across different versions of *Journey to the West* is not a phenomenon of film and television but has always happened in the story. This is the nature of storytelling. I instead propose that the immersive environment of the story and the culture of storytelling itself is where these repetitions come from. It is not a mere 'copying' of one text from another, in some linear fashion from oral performance to book to film. Instead, they all take influence from the same place, the existence of the story in multiple forms that are around them in the past and in the present, storytellers and texts use their own experience of *Journey to the West* to build their own versions of it. This is an environmental process, not a linear one. These ideas are a shift in traditional readings of story's and certainly *Journey to the West.* As such they form part of my claim to new knowledge.

Context

Journey to the West has had a long history in China and is an important cultural commodity that has been told in almost every media platform for at least a thousand years. It is a story that has its source in religious history, as in the 7th century a Buddhist monk named Xuanzang, unsatisfied with the Buddhist doctrine available to him, travelled to India to learn and collect holy scriptures. He left China a criminal, as he disobeyed an imperial mandate that banned foreign travel. However, his travels and devotion made him a cultural hero, and upon his return to China some 17 years later he had an imperial procession to greet him. He spent the remainder of his years translating the 1300 scriptures and scrolls he returned with, some of which are still used today. His influence on Buddhism and indeed on the stories within the Buddhist Canon, made him an integral cultural

figure in Tang dynasty China. His importance made him the focus of Saint[1] worship in both China and Japan, and his image littered murals and scrolls for centuries.

In the late 1800's and early 1900s a Chinese Taoist named Wang Yuanlu uncovered and restored the Magao caves in Dunhuang, which contained hundreds of caves and grottos filled with Buddhist relics and wall paintings dating from the 4th to 14th century, including some depictions relating to Xuanzang. Most importantly in 1900 he discovered cave 17, the library cave, which contained thousands of documents and picture scrolls depicting Buddhist and cultural stories and histories. This attracted the attention of western scholars such as Aurel Stein, whose way of convincing Wang, the guardian of the caves, to allow him access to the grottos, was by telling him that Xuanzang was his patron saint (Kane 2006). The documents and manuscripts uncovered by Stein have led to many discussions regarding images associated with Xuanzang and Chinese storytelling. The thousands of manuscripts have informed the study of both the Chinese oral tradition, as well as Xuanzang himself. In these caves were hundreds of representations of the priest, along with traditional Buddhist stories. It is known that the story of Xuanzang in both oral and written forms was extolled again and again, until it developed into a myth which saw the priest gain a monkey disciple, now commonly known as Sun Wukong or the Monkey King. This character overshadowed the priest in stories, taking centre stage as a trickster and often humorous anti-hero and rebel.

During the Song and Ming dynasty, the story was told in stage plays, operas and novels. One such novel was a Ming dynasty epic of 100 chapters. This book is attributed to the scholar Wu Cheng-en and is considered one of the four classic Chinese vernacular novel[2]s. It is with the novel

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[1] Buddhist saints are similar to those in other religions; any living person who has made a considerable journey toward enlightenment may be held in such high esteem that they are considered saints on earth. Arhats, who have not achieved full enlightenment but are far along the way, and Bodhisattvas, those on the way to Buddhahood, are both often considered saints living on earth. For his commitment to Buddhism, and knowledge and understanding of the sankskrit sutras in translation, Xuanzang was considered a Buddhist saint.

[2] Vernacular novels in China are those written in spoken Chinese. Traditionally, classical Chinese was used for all official and artistic written documents. Vernacular stories were developed through oral traditions to entertain the lay people. They were later then written for these audiences, however many considered them vulgar as they were in opposition to the traditional Chinese writings. In the Song and Ming dynasties, the vernacular stories grew in such

that most scholarly concern is centred; from here onward the terms 100-chapter novel or Ming novel will refer to the popularised adaptation attributed to Wu Cheng-en. While there are many studies on Cheng en's novel as a singular text (Yu 2008; Hsia 1968; Li 2004), analysis of the stories within the novel (Levy 1987, Li-Yu-Lin 2008, Song 2008), and indeed discussions of the story as oral tradition and folklore preceding the Ming dynasty novel (Dudbridge 1970; Liu 1964; Cai 2010). There seems to be little emphasis on the phenomenon surrounding the continuation of the story even though the story of *Journey to the West* did not die out in other media with its publication, but in fact continued to flourish in other performative media. In fact, we know that around the time of the Ming novels publication, the Yangzhou oral storytelling tradition was being established (Bordahl 1996), one which still includes *Journey to the West* as a story theme today. Similarly, the opera and performative genres in puppetry and stage also grew in popularity.

Despite these facts, focus has still tended primarily to lie with the Ming Dynasty novel as a centre point for the story, and all other media as 'adapting' from the novel. In contemporary media, the story has appeared in film and television texts hundreds of times, and almost all the texts are attributed to novel, having labels such as *based on the Sixteenth century novel*. Therefore, examinations of these incarnations in film and television still tend to examine them either in relation to the novel, or through synchronic Semiotic analysis. Those that do exist tend to examine single adaptations (Zeng 2012) or the aesthetic values and socio-political readings (Wu 2017). Until recently, virtually no research has attempted to look at film and television adaptations as a collective. However, a very recent publication by Hongmei Sun (2018), examines the changing vision of the Monkey King through history, and the cultural significance of the character in both Chinese and international adaptations. Sun shares and validates my own concern: that research has focused for too long on the repetitions of the story in relation to the novel, rather than on the repetition itself. There is a need to abandon the view of the book as the original story as it "falls in

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popularity that epic novels known as the four classic novels such as *Journey to the West, The Water Margin, Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Dream of the Red Chambe*r were all written in the vernacular style.

the middle of a long chain of adaptations and exists in multiple forms" (Sun 2018 p.6). Although our investigations of this gap in knowledge are very different, we draw concern from the same areas:

> Much of the existing scholarly research on this classic story is focused on authorship and formative history of the sixteenth century novel...Little has been written about the Monkey King image in contemporary settings from the approach of adaptation, despite the obvious importance of this approach for Journey to the West, which is the product of repeated adaptations (Sun 2018 p.5-6)

Despite the fact that Sun's research, along with my own, has begun to be concerned with the importance of the story, there has been no attempt in research to look at the full development of the story from historical fact through to modern versions, to appreciate the cultural nuances of the story's repetitions. In scholarly research, the main focus in studying *Journey to the West* has been centralised on the Ming dynasty novel attributed to Wu Cheng-en, or its antecedents (Bantley 1989, Dudbridge 1970). However, if one looks at the film and television texts in relation to the novel and its antecedents, a better understanding of the culture around the story, the storytelling traditions, as well the importance of its repetition, will be understood.

The similarities with Sun's research and my own are that we are both focused on the story of *Journey to the West*, and to some extent the image of the Monkey King, however that is where the comparisons depart. Sun is approaching individual film texts as case studies to evaluate the changing representation of the Monkey King and the socio-political implications of the production of those representations and their reception. This study is focusing on the invariants between audio-visual texts and the value of these invariants to the structure of the story and the culture of storytelling. Sun examines differences, and I examine similarities. Sun examines social readings, I posit that these are less important than the continuation of the story itself being used to explore these given socio-political messages, of any given time, by any given film or television director. This is where the media ecology framework allows for a shift in perspective, as unlike my contemporaries I am not examining the story within a specific medium, I am examining the story *as a medium*, and one which continues to be used and continues to change and grow. In this respect,

my research offers new knowledge in its approach to the analysis of the story. No other scholar has attempted this kind of appreciation of *Journey to the West* before. I suggest that the story is not merely the content for other media and technologies but as McLuhan (1964) has suggested, is its own medium within them: "the "content" of any medium is always another medium." (McLuhan 1994, p.8). In being so, *Journey to the West* feeds off the conventions of these other technologies, assimilating cultural storytelling practices to become part of an ever-expanding technology.

This then is the reason for a media ecology approach, and yet the media ecology methodology in the analysis of the story reveals many complexities. When watching the film and television texts related to *Journey to the West*, it is easy to see commonalities in character and story, but further to this, there are systematic similarities between texts that span decades. Many of these could be put down to intertextual reference or homage, however I believe there is a more complex cultural tradition taking place. I believe many of the similarities between texts have been continuing for centuries in one way or another and are traced to environmental and technological influences. This could be a form of remediation (Bolter and Grusin 1990) in the story itself, as each new version told in a new technological form and environment includes the elements of the last technology in some way.

Media Ecology – Field of Research

Media ecology, as a field research, often seems to be considered the 'new kid on the block' in general academia; and its explicit study in named programmes is often limited to institutions in the United States of America, Canada and a handful of European countries. However, it is a field that nestles across many disciplines and stretches back many centuries or even millennia, as many consider Plato's *Phaedrus* (1973) the first discussion of the field's major concerns (Postman 1992). The term Media ecology is perhaps the only 'new' element of the field itself. However, scholars who consider themselves media ecologists find defining the field a complex procedure (Anton

2016). Lance Strate, one of the foremost contemporary scholars in the field defined it as such in his

presidential address of the inaugural issue of the *Media Ecology Associations* newsletter:

> It is the study of media environments, the idea that technology and techniques, modes of information and codes of communication play a leading role in human affairs. Media ecology is the Toronto School, and the New York School. It is technological determinism, hard and soft, and technological evolution. It is media logic, medium theory, mediology. It is McLuhan Studies, orality-literacy studies, American cultural studies. It is grammar and rhetoric, semiotics and systems theory, the history and the philosophy of technology. It is the postindustrial and the postmodern, and the preliterate and prehistoric. (Strate 1999, p.1)

As a field of study, it engages with so many other areas of study at a level that the term

interdisciplinary does not cover. The field, as Strate (2017) explains "might better be characterized

as *multidisciplinary,* as scholarship in our field does require the use of multiple disciplines" (p. 10).

In the same way that intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989), examines the individual experience of

oppression within feminism in relation to factors such as gender, ethnicity, religion or sexuality, the

overlapping of media ecology within multiple fields allows any study to approach analysis at

specific intersections. For this examination, it is at the intersection of McLuhan, Ong, the oral

tradition and semiology which offers a very specific interpretation of narrative under investigation.

Some of the most common discussions regarding media ecology come from the metaphors

related to its sheer size. Often discussed as 'branches' or 'pathways'. In fact, it considers one of the

major concerns of the field; to investigate and discuss the connections and intersections of media

and environments. The analysis of communication technologies and their ever-expanding reach and

development make it "an almost inexplicable forest" as Gamaleri (2019) explains in his review of

Dennis G. Calli's introduction to the field.

To situate the study of *Journey to the West* within this "inexplicable forest" of "branches"

and "pathways" is a complex task. The analysis of the story primarily utilises the orality and

literacy framework as a philosophical underpinning, as so much of the primary concern is around

the interplay of oral and literate storytelling traditions. Therefore, it is within this framework, and

the conceptual work of Walter J. Ong that I focus.

Orality and Literacy

In the examination of media and communication environments and their effects on human cognition, there are few scholars who have approached the issue in as much detail as Walter. J. Ong. Ong's work on the orality-literacy model can be looked at and examined in three major ways: The diachronic, the synchronic and the deep functional analysis. The first of these is the diachronic; meaning the study and focus of the development of media technology and its influence on human cognition and society over a period of time, in this case the development of *Journey the West* across the entire research. The second is the synchronic study, which looks at one moment in time, focusing on the singular time in history and exploring the media environment that it inhabits; analysing the nuances of cultural and social communication traits and their place against artistic output.

This, in essence is what each individual chapter of this research will do, examine the synchronic moments of the story, however, we will always be looking through the diachronic layers in this study. The final way of examining the orality-literacy model, is in the deep functional analysis of the concepts, examining the functions of orality and literacy themselves; of sound and visual typographic symbols. This is the study of finer details of the oral tradition within certain texts of *Journey to the West.*

Looking at each of these in more detail, the overarching thesis to the orality-literacy framework in the diachronic model is that literacy or writing changed the way humans think:

> Without writing, the literate mind would not and could not think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but normally even when it is composing its thoughts in oral form. More than any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness. (Ong 2012 p.77)

This suggests that oral societies - cultures who had no knowledge of writing - shared knowledge outwardly, sharing ideas, repeating histories as a community to keep them alive. Ong asserts that the advent of writing altered this, making humankind look inward in the silent act of reading and writing; relying on typographic symbols to share knowledge and ideas. This was cemented by the advent of moveable type in the printing press, when ideas were shared but came from a single

person, and they became authoritative and owned in copyright. Ong described the print as encouraging "a sense of closure, a sense that what is found in a text has been finalized, has reached a state of completion." (Ong 2012 p.129). This sense of completion affected the way that we understand and share ideas and altered the way we conceive of them; focusing knowledge and legitimacy onto the printed word as "Records and messages displaced the collective memory" (Innis 2007 p.31).

In the synchronic study, periods that were in the transition from oral culture into literacy have been examined for their insights on the cross-over. The transition itself was consciously discussed by noteworthy individuals: Socrates is said by Plato to have called writing "inhuman" (Ong 2012 p.78) because of its manufacturing of what should only be in the mind, to something physical. The transitional period of a scribal culture in Ancient Greece, according to Havelock in *Preface to Plato* (1963) lasted for hundreds of years. The features of oral composition have been examined within literature and other primary sources up until the middle ages (Lord 1960, Ong 2012, Coleman 1996). This transition from one communication technology to the next, is the current focus on digital culture in the cross over from the literacy of print culture to a sharing culture of knowledge online (Pettit 2007, Sauerberg 2009).

The deep functional analysis, has tended to examine how the features of any given media technology or communication experience, hold the features of orality and literacy. This has engaged not only with primary sources within the development of literacy, but has most recently been concerned with electronic and digital examples. There have been various studies on the oral features of film (Nayar 2012, Ara 2018) and the reflections of oral culture within online forums (Bounegru 2008) and communications tools (Kibby 2005, Soffer 2010, 2016, 2019). The analysis within these examples focus on elements of orality and oral culture which are then applied to the functions of the communication media, as well as the culture and experience they create for someone using and communicating with them (McNeil 2009). This latest trend in scholarship looks to assert that these instances and comparisons of orality and literacy in contemporary media are evidence of a shift

away from print dominance and a return to a community centred sharing of knowledge (Sauerberg 2009). Although, like Nayar (2004), I believe that in some ways we do not need to return, as orality is not something that is only in existence in the past.

This overview of the orality-literacy argument outlines the very way in which I will approach the analysis of *Journey to the West*: looking at the development over time, in a given time, and in textual detail. This approach against the backdrop of the orality-literacy argument will not only interrogate the reasons for the story's repetition but will examine how this argument in media ecology may have helped structure the legitimacy of the novel as the central point in the study of *Journey to the West*. In both implicit and explicit ways, the orality-literacy dichotomy is a large scholarly concern in the other fields of research: Oral tradition, Chinese storytelling, Folkloristics, Film adaptation. All of the areas touch on and investigate the dichotomy in some way, and it forms a major concern throughout the analysis of *Journey to the West*.

Journey to the West as a medium within Media Ecology: Contributing to New Knowledge

The use of a content analysis in exploring repetitions in the orality–literacy paradigm is the most pragmatic approach for this study. Although the numerical data in the form of basic percentages will give some important insight into the story, the major concern of thesis is qualitative in nature. This is due in part to the nature of media ecology being 'open ended' as Lance Strate (2017) suggests - definitive answers to questions do not seem plausible in this model, instead establishing the important questions and seeing where they lead is the primary concern in media ecology. In this respect the qualitative interpretation of the content analysis is the best way of reflecting this approach. Approaching the study of film and television texts with this stance allows a greater continuity in the analysis of the story's tradition across a large span of time. This must also be complimented with techniques relevant to the medium and the textual analysis of the audio-visual texts will also include an interpretive reading of the construction of moving image. As many

of the visual and audio codes in the texts can be seen as continued motifs and iconography of the single story, they will need to be analysed as holding importance and indeed representing messages to an audience. This form of filmic semiology will help to interpret these 'signs' in image and sound as to how the repetition of characters, locations, action, props, events and narrative aid the viewers understanding of the text. Using basic methods associated with semiotics such as the role of denotation and connotation, the role of the supposed literal and the ideological messages within texts (Barthes 1970, 1977), allows for a better treatment of how and why the repetitive images in the texts are important to the viewer and the story. Although the repetition of these 'signs' such as the representation of repeated characters and related iconography could be studied as elements of an 'icon mode' which are recognisable and viewed as 'natural' and 'habitual' rather than having symbolic meaning (Chandler 2007 pp.40-41), here the repetition of instantly recognised features can also be viewed as symbolic. The symbolic meaning behind the representation of props, characters, actions etc. can be discussed in their relationship to the story of *Journey to the West* and how they create meaning for an audience through this context. Therefore, some use of semiotics, specifically associated with the works of Roland Barthes, will be used in the thesis, using a media ecology stance. The use of semiotics will not be as widespread as would be expected, as although the meanings of the repeated symbols that we see in the story are of a concern, the major emphasis on their reading will be set around the concerns of orality and literacy and the wider scope of Media ecology. However, the works of Barthes in both structural semiotics and his move toward poststructuralism bridge the use of semiotics within the media ecology stance.

The fundamentals of media ecology are not set around a discipline or overriding approach, but moreover the approach or media ecology of key scholars in the field (Strate 2017). Although I will primarily be using the media ecology of Walter Ong as an anchor and focal point for the study and interpretation of *Journey to the West*, I also rely heavily on Nayar's (2004, 2008, 20010, 2012, 2020) method of analysisng audio-visual media in the orality and literacy framework. In another manner, will also be using some of the driving and core principles of Media ecology derived from

the work of Marshal McLuhan, namely the debated concept and often quoted 'The Medium is the message' (McLuhan 1964).

This single quotation is not a quotation at all, but a driving concept that has become a core principle in the investigation and analytical approaches of media ecology. It is often considered to mean that simply, the 'media' itself is the message or the technology itself is the message and not the messages that it carries. This oversimplification misses the purpose of McLuhan's insight, instead focusing on the surface meaning of the commentary. Instead, we need to consider the different levels of meaning and purpose to McLuhan's famous saying. McLuhan, in the simplest of interpretation wanted to highlight that messages are not born out of thin air, that they are affixed, developed, chewed up and spewed out by something that is not seemingly as visible to us as the message itself. McLuhan wanted to study the medium - separate to the messages that it pervades, before considering the relationship at all. The messages are fleeting, dependent on temporal aspects of culture, whereas the medium that the messages are carried, these help form the culture itself. Ultimately, the process of trying to deliver a message is more lasting than the message itself, McLuhan wanted society to be conscious of this; not to allow the medium to silently go unnoticed, but for humanity to see 'it' and what was going on within our environment. The medium itself can determine the message, and the same message delivered in different media will result in different messages. Moreover, the medium itself often promotes the need for messages; with every new technology comes a desire to fill it with content (Boorstin 1978).

So, in many ways, the media ecology approach is not concerned with the messages, the symbolism and component value of any given 'sign' as an overarching concern. Instead, the symbols and signs of *Journey to the West*, for the most part, will be examined as part of component part of a medium, as the story itself within this study *is* a medium. On reflection I should have renamed the thesis with more purpose as the *Monkey is the medium*, or perhaps the *Medium is the Monkey* as this is the stance that this investigation takes. I am less concerned with how the story is valued symbolically within given periods, this is well appreciated by Sun (2018), therefore the

symbolic interpretation of these repeated motifs and signs found in the content analysis are so diverse for each time period or technological environment, that it becomes a mere game of defining the value of each of them. The story has been repeated so many times, in so many different contexts, that the cultural messages they were carrying are not only lost, but largely unimportant in this investigation. What is important is how these messages were transferred and transmitted: through a medium, in this case the medium of *Journey to the West.*

This in itself is constitutes a new form of analysis in *Journey to the West,* but is not an entirely new concept. Reflections have been made by Lance Strate (2014a) that narratives are indeed media:

> Simply put, narrative is a medium of communication, mediating between sources and receivers. There is no narrative without a narrator. And narrative also requires a narratee, although it is possible for the narrator to take on that role as well. It becomes easy to lose sight of this fact because we tend to focus on texts rather than contexts, to pay attention to the content and ignore the medium, which brings us back to "the medium is the message" as a call to pay attention. For this reason, Postman described the media ecology approach as context analysis (2006). (Strate 2014, p.9)

Here Strate pulls together a number of important media ecological concepts to suggest that narrative, is definitely a medium. However, despite this claim there has to date been no formal assessment of this suggestion. Within media ecology, this thesis looks to deeply interrogate Strate's notion to show not only that it is true, but that it is a highly complex realisation. Not only does this bring new knowledge to the study of *Journey to the West*, which has never been assessed under such circumstances, but it is also new knowledge in the field of media ecology. I propose that by studying *Journey to the West* through a diachronic model, which negates the linearity of traditional orality and literacy models, we can make original contributions to the idea that the story or narratives are on a level playing field with the medium's that utilise them as content. We could argue that this model or form of analysis could be used for any number of stories, and in some ways it could. However, there are few stories around the globe that have had the same national cultural impact as *Journey to the West*. it is a myth driven story that has been transposed into every medium, something we could easily say about the Grimm fairytales which have hundreds of different

versions across all types of media. *Journey to the West* is also a quest narrative, an epic journey, much like the *Iliad*, or the *Odyssey* or *Gilgamesh*. All of these comparisons could be examined in the same way, but what makes this process with *Journey to the West* different to these other examples is that J*ourney to the West* is based on the travels of a historical figure that had a direct impact on the development of his own story. Xuanzang's influence on Buddhism, the story's that were told about him, and the story's he himself told, had a lasting impact on the Chinese storytelling tradition itself. This means that the story of *Journey to the West* is culturally important on many different levels, and there are few stories in which the protagonist help to structure not only the narrative, but influence some of the iconography and performative traditions that structure the story as well. There are few examples of epics that are based on historical accounts, which occurred within a scribal culture, and the historical figure himself not only influenced the story, the storytelling traditions as well. So although the basis of narrative being a medium is, of course, applicable to every story, within the excavation of *Journey to the West*, we have something very specific and very bespoke.

Research Questions

The primary thesis of this research is that *Journey to the West* is a medium. As such, the research questions are like nodes that branch out from the primary thesis to give greater depth and understanding to its claim. The research questions are as follows:

1. In what ways is the relationship between orality-literacy important to the story's success and survival?

2. How does the number of texts relating to *Journey to the West* add to the understanding of the story as a medium and a tradition of storytelling?

3. In what ways does the experience and access of *Journey to the West* texts online reflect traditions outside of print?

4. In what ways does the story create an environment?

The design of the questions is to engage and facilitate the open-ended nature of Media ecology, that looks to probe the current issues at hand. The first question focuses on the orality-literacy model that dominates the analysis of the development of storytelling and story traditions, but also addresses the relationship and interplay of orality and literacy in the texts themselves. As any discussion of orality is also a discussion of literacy. It is apparent from both the literary and audio-visual texts that there are oral motifs which reflect the traditions of oral storytelling. Moreover, this research also looks to establish clear links between the continued practises of the oral and performative traditions within the varying media platforms of the story, and how this has helped sustain the story through the changing landscapes of communication. I intend to look beyond issues of mere adaptation and examine the evidence of oral storytelling and specifically elements of Chinese storytelling that are apparent through the various texts. The orality discussed is not merely an understanding of the oral recitation of the text but the tradition surrounding this orality, and the multiple forms and influence of this tradition on even the written versions of the story. It is discussed that the duality of orality and literacy is key in the Chinese tradition of storytelling, as with the popularity of literature in Ming China also came a popularity in oral storytelling; both influencing one another (Bordahl 1999; 2002; 2010, Dudbridge 1970). This question was developed through the similarities seen between audio-visual texts found in the content analysis of film and television programmes, evidence of these recurring elements is also found in the Ming novel, and in some cases in pre-dating texts. This represents a continued tradition of orality which seems upheld throughout the modern adaptations and may be evidence of a continued tradition; the repetition and oral motifs within these contemporary texts may be reflective of a cultural story continuously retold, specifically for an audience attuned to an oral episteme.

The second of these questions is directly linked to the phenomenon of the story and its multiple versions. The sheer volume of texts seems to be a phenomenon, but when considering the

reasons behind the phenomena, I posit that this is directly linked to the tradition behind the story and its storytelling. The content of the texts in film and television is of high importance, especially how they relate to the oral tradition, or more specifically and contextually, the Chinese oral tradition. This context is key, as the study of what we know about the Chinese oral tradition through historical investigation and contemporary ethnographic studies breathes more insights into the story of *Journey to the West* and contextualises the features as the normal way in which the story has been told. The question helps to probe the very nature of the culture in which the storytelling takes place and how this environment establishes these traditions.

Unlike texts like *Hamlet* or *Snow White* or indeed an epic like the *Ramayana*, *Journey to the West* has few narrative restrictions: it has a clear beginning and a clear ending but the events and 'episodes' of the story between these are potentially endless, whereas the former examples have more developing linear narratives. Unlike these other examples *Journey to the West* can be told as a single story in film (adapting a single episode from the story) or an entire story arc across a television series; the structural format of these episodes allows for an assimilation into multiple media for multiple storytellers. The multiplicity of these versions, I believe, reveal a great deal about the story of *Journey to the West* beyond the comprehension of literary adaptation, and reveal far more about the story as a cultural commodity.

This evidence in turn has led onto the next research question. Certainly, if the modern adaptations hold evidence of a long-standing tradition, the digital advances on the internet and media technology itself in the form of video streaming sites and touch screen technology, seems to hold parallels in the way that the story was told and received in the past. The storytelling experience of *Journey to the West* has evolved through a changing communicative climate and been assimilated into the various technological advances. Unlike any other synchronic study available in the story cycle, the modern age of the internet offers more similarities with the oral tradition that the story grew from. I envision that the analysis of texts in the digital age will reveal new insights into the culture of storytelling in *Journey to the West*, and online culture itself.

The final research question probes the very idea of the story of *Journey to the West* as a medium, as it utilises the idea that the word medium is interchangeable with the word environment in media ecology (Strate 2017). This area of concern looks to shed light on how exactly the text functions as a medium culturally and what elements of the story or narrative are immersive for its storytellers and its audiences. Responding to these notions will help to reveal the cultural value of the text in China.

Approach

In investigating the research questions, I will adopt a design and method previously unused in the analysis of the story. Most research into *Journey to the West* has used historiographical approaches in the searching and dating of sources (Dudbridge 1970) or close textual analysis of sources (Mair 1985, Yu 1972, Yen 1979). I will employ the latter of these methods when investigating the texts but intend on combining the background knowledge above to establish a versatile way to analyse the features of primary sources related to the story. The textual analysis is framed within a diachronic approach to analysis. Although this research uses film and television as a focal point for contemporary texts of *Journey to the West*, these are one component piece of a larger analysis of the story as a medium. The study of *Journey to the West* as a medium has meant approaching the analysis of features found within modern texts as a starting point to look back through history. This has meant taking, what Nayar (2019) described as a *panoramic approach*, viewing how the evidence in modern texts have previous existences, and how the structures of the narrative are formed through the environment of storytelling in China. This approach means looking at the story sequentially, through a chronological approach. However, this is also in opposition to some of the analysis and findings in the study of the story. Despite the reforming and development of the narrative as a medium through time, one of its primary features is its non-linear existence and

so constant reference to other media and examples garners a greater understanding of the text as a whole.

The result of the content analysis will be approached quantitatively (through basic frequency percentages) in what the results may bring to legitimising the hypothesis, but will predominantly be examined through a qualitative approach, to establish answers to the research questions. This approach will enlighten research on the traditions of film and television texts of the story leading onto deeper textual analysis of primary sources from the Tang dynasty onward, looking at how oral motifs have developed and are part of the story's palimpsest nature, rather than being features just adapted from the novel. The context of the Chinese oral tradition will also be used in conjunction with the findings of the content analysis to examine the parallels between how the story is viewed online, to traditional storytelling experiences. This will help give a wide-angle view of how the story has developed over time in a diachronic study. The deep textual analysis will also examine the functional features of orality and literacy within the story, across different media, attempting to examine how these elements feature in the traditions of telling the story.

As well as deep textual analysis, I will be utilising methods more closely aligned with the study of folklore: mainly the analysis of traditions and the content of such traditions in a structural analysis (Waugh 28 1966). This approach must be contextualised as the main component of research, used to validate my hypothesis, is a content analysis of a sample of 30 texts taken from the compiled filmography of *Journey to the West*. In the case of studying elements of film as folklore I will employ what Mikel Koven (2003) describes as 'motif spotting' by which a folklorist examines the popular tale types, iconography and myths associated with given traditions (Fimi 2012). The motifs in question will be those related specifically to the story of *Journey to the West* which have been found across varying sources of the story including the Ming novel, the audio-visual texts themselves, stories, paintings and evidence prior to the Ming dynasty novel. These visual and audio motifs will be divided into subcategories that have contextualised to features of the oral tradition discussed above, namely those associated with the telling of traditional epics (Foley

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and Gejin 2012) and specifically those which are closely associated with Chinese storytelling in both the oral tradition and the Chinese vernacular novel (Bordahl 1999, 2003, 2013, Mair 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989). The use of folktale tale types can be seen as a form of cultural structure within narratives. In the same way I assert that *Journey to the West* is a medium, so too are all stories, especially those seen in the folk. These have been used for many centuries to intertwine and insert the messages of social morality within the tried and tested structures of tale types as structures. *Journey to the West* does the same, but folklore is used as a mirror for the approach to examine the story's structure, rather than a field with which to study the story in. The study of *Journey to the West* as a medium is not a new idea per se, as all narratives are media. Certainly, the folktale is a long-standing example of this, as the different tale types and motifs have their own metonymic value as well. However, the study of *Journey to the West* as a medium will breathe new insight into the importance of the story, as it enables a understanding of the contextual cultural episteme of the story and its functionality as an environment beyond its story structures.

The thesis represents both synchronic and diachronic views of the story. The research conducted within the thesis is a synchronic study, looking at the features of a tradition in film, television and digital technology and how elements from these texts are weighted in the historical traditions of telling the story; by comparing them with evidence in past texts. The evidence and result of this research also allows for a diachronic analysis of the story and the media environments it has inhabited.

The diachronic analysis of the story focuses first on the most recent evidence available to us. This is in the form of the film and television texts, not because they are of greater value, but because they constitute a large body of work which is now accessible. Oral stories, opera performances and plays, do not have the same degree of evidence available. In film and television, there is now a tradition of telling the *Journey to the West* story which has lasted nearly 100 years, and they, unlike these other examples, are also artefacts. Therefore, they are the most prevalent and tangible medium in which to focus an investigation, to then apply the findings to other media. The

hypothesis is that the repetitive features seen in film and television are far closer related to the formulas and techniques of oral storytelling than they are to traditional techniques of print or literary adaptation. I propose, following lines of enquiry established by Sheila J. Nayar (2010) that the repetitive aural, visual and narrative features are designed for an oral episteme. Meaning that the features found in the audio-visual texts reveal contours of oral storytelling designed for audiences that do not privilege literacy. In fact, I suggest that specific to Chinese storytelling traditions, they contain an oral-literate episteme that is culturally responsive to the interplay between orality and literacy within Chinese storytelling. My hypothesis is that these features are a blueprint for the story as a medium, and that any storyteller in any medium is able to use these features of aural, visual and narrative structure to assemble their own version of *Journey to West*, and encode whatever cultural, social or political message that they wish. Due to the cultural understanding of the text, these messages and new content are easily weaved and digested by an audience well versed in the cultural oral-literate contours of the story.

I make a further reflection on this, by discussing the multiplicity of the story. Not only does this multiplicity demonstrate the cultural importance of the story, it also suggests the medium is most definitely an environment, one that functions in two ways. Firstly, I suggest that the amount of texts related to *Journey to the West* can be seen as a culture of storytelling itself, outside of any medium. This is to say that the films and television series are not adaptations of a book, but themselves get their features from a multitude of cultural reference points in written, performative and audio-visual media. I suggest there is no primary or definitive version of the story, and that all versions of the story pool from the same source: the cultural milieu of storytelling that has existed before and is happening now.

The second manner in which the story functions as a medium, I posit is due to the immersive nature of the story within China. The number of texts related to *Journey to the West,* across multiple media and platforms has begun to seep into the everyday surroundings of China.

Therefore, the story has become a truly immersive environment and one that is so common and relevant to Chinese cultural identity, that it goes unnoticed.

Chapters

I have structured the thesis to allow for a diachronic appreciation of the story. Chapter 1 is the literature review, which examines the field of media ecology in relation to *Journey to the West.* This is followed by chapter 2; the methodology chapter, which outlines the approach within the field of media ecology and describes the method of the content analysis of films.

Chapter 3 is the first analysis chapter and looks to examine the issues relating to research question 1. The chapter reviews the role of Xuanzang within the story's development. The chapter looks to achieve two major goals: First is that Xuanzang himself is a medium of change as a historical figure. His literal fetching and translation of scripts had a direct impact on the environment of Buddhism and China, and his position as a figurehead meant that traditions relating to iconography and stories grew around him. Second to this, is that Xuanzang's own biographical account, *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions,* and the text written about him from the Tang dynasty, *The Life of Hsuan-Tsang, The Tripitaka-Master of the Great Tzu En Monastery,* show evidence of an interplay with orality and literacy that has continued until today. This is seen in the analysis of written texts, iconography and film.

Chapter 4 builds on from the investigation in Chapter 1 and looks to identify the continuation of the oral-literate interplay and symbiosis in the Ming dynasty novel. This is achieved by examining the novel not as a central, original, and monolithic text, but as a compilation of cultural stories that came before it. I use the work of Vibeke Bordahl to interrogate the notion that the interplay of orality and literacy is structural in the vernacular novels of China. I do this by applying Bordahl's assessment of 'the storyteller' s manner' to the novel, and cross compare this to transcripts of an oral performance. I also examine how the storyteller's manner is still seen in the film and television

texts. This begins to suggest that the medium of *Journey to the West* does not hold the bias associated with the literate mind, as even the novel holds an oral epistemic contour.

Chapter 5 builds on the work relating to the oral-literate interplay within the structures of the text, continuing this assessment. It also examines research question two, regarding the multiplicity of the story. It looks to examine what can be learnt by examining the story as a medium through McLuhan and McLuhan's (1988) tetrad of media effects, before assessing it in more detail through Strate's (2017) reappraisal of the model. This establishes the focus points for further analysis which follows with an in-depth analysis of the Monkey King character that looks to establish his role structurally in relation to the Chinese oral tradition and an oral episteme. This is done by using Foley's (1985) traditional referentiality, considering the metonymic value of the Monkey King in Chinese culture.

Chapter 6 builds on from the multiplicity examined in the previous chapter and looks to examine the value of present online manifestations of the story through a diachronic model. I first reassess the media ecology literature in relation to diachronic models in the orality and literacy framework, and then apply *Journey to the West* to my own model. This helps to answer the remaining research questions about both the reflection of online media in relation to oral traditions, as well as examining how the story as a medium establishes an environment.

In the conclusion I pull together the different ideas looked at throughout the thesis to briefly restate my position. I suggest that *Journey to the West* is a complex medium, the structures and components of which are made up of ever-growing manifestations of the Chinese oral tradition. These components have been developed in a culturally significant interplay of orality and literacy, which even in modern audio-visual texts privilege a Chinese oral-literate episteme. I argue that the

features of orality and literacy and components of the medium are layered and ever growing, as the story is an environment which shares features with other *Journey to the West* texts, and features of other media, through a culture of storytelling.

Chapter 1
Literature Review

1.1 Media Ecology: The Key Concepts

Media ecology, in its simplest form, is the study of media technologies and their lasting impact on society, cultural development, and human cognition. It is an area that focuses not on just the content of any given medium, but the medium itself, and how the structure and adoption of such a medium may impact the environments in which we live. Unlike many scholars, I am examining *Journey to the West* not as a story or a novel or a film, but a medium. The story has never been examined as a medium, nor in this breadth before. Using media ecology as a field in which to examine the story allows an insight into how it is structured, and how it functions as a medium that any storyteller can pick up and add their own content to. As a narrative, *Journey to the West* is a medium that has traversed through manuscript, print, and electronic cultures right up into the digital age. Many of its structures, episodes, scenes and characters remain similar or unchanged through these periods. So, the importance of the story lies not with its meaning or value as individual texts in the form of a novel or film, but in its cultural value as a medium. Media ecology allows an investigation such as this to focus on a holistic diachronic analysis of the story.

Current discourse and trends in media ecology still use several founding concepts as their primary concerns of study or foci. Although many of these have already been mentioned in the above introduction and methodology chapters, it is important to unpack some of these concepts again to outline their lasting influence on media ecology and in turn, my own assessment and analysis of *Journey to the West* through the field. Undoubtedly, the core concepts centralise around the works of Marshall McLuhan, Neil Postman and in relation to orality and literacy, Walter J. Ong. I will attempt to outline some of the more relevant and lasting influences of these scholars before approaching the finer details of Ong's thesis in its relationship to the study of *Journey to the West.* Media ecology, as discussed in the introduction, is a field that relies on the work of key scholars and

their concepts to use as a philosophical underpinning. State's (2017) assertion that to study media ecology, is to study the media ecology of a certain scholar, is certainly true of this study. The major concerns of this thesis surround the key concepts of the study of orality and literacy most associated with Walter Ong, whose work in this study is situated within the media ecology framework. In addition to this, primary features of Ong's work are directly linked to the foundation studies of Marshall McLuhan, Ong's teacher. Therefore, a focus and investigation of Ong's work and its conceptual application to *Journey to the West*, must also be framed by other elements of media ecology, namely those relating to the concept of a *medium* itself.

1.1.1 The Medium is the Message

Before discussing the definitions of media or media themselves, we must look back and unpack the *concern* of the 'medium', in what it conceptually brings to a society. One of the major concepts already mentioned in the introduction is McLuhan's most lasting aphorism, which is very much at the core of this study, and the core of Ong's thesis. 'The Medium is the message' is McLuhan's most lasting and loaded pun that in its simplicity, holds many complexities about technology, their messages, and the environments they help shape. McLuhan (1994), in his seminal work *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* wrote:

> "the medium is the message" because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action. The content or uses of such media are as diverse as they are ineffectual in shaping the form of human association. Indeed, it is only too typical that the "content" of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium. (p.9)

In one of its most simple forms then, McLuhan's aphorism was concerned with the impact a medium may have on a culture, rather than on the content that it sends. McLuhan felt that people spent too long considering the sender-receiver relationship in the encoding and decoding of messages and content, and less time on how, or through what, the messages were being sent. McLuhan meant for us to wake up to the concept of studying media *as media*, entirely separated from their messages (Strate 2008, 2017). Culkin (1967), defines McLuhan's words most directly,

defining his use of the *medium* as "the thing to study. The medium is the thing you're missing. Everybody's hooked on content; pay attention to form, structure, framework, medium." (p.52). It is the *form*, *structure*, *framework* and *medium* that Culkin references that are the major focal point of this study of *Journey to the West,* developing passed the standard analysis of content. Culkin's passion for the implications of McLuhan's strain of study is clear, but Culkin believed that the reason to study the medium itself, was derived from his other interpretations of *the medium is the message*:

> Meaning number two stresses the relation of the medium to the content... Content always exists in some form and is, therefore, to some degree governed by the dynamics of that form. If you don't know the medium, you don't know the message... The third meaning for the M-M formula emphasizes the relation of the medium to the individual psyche. The medium alters the perceptual habits of its users. Independent of the content, the medium itself gets through. Pre-literate, literate, and post-literate cultures see the world through different colored glasses... The fourth meaning underscores the relation of the medium to society. Whitehead said, "The major advances in civilization are processes that all but wreck the societies in which they occur." The media massage the society as well as the individual. The results pass unnoticed for long periods of time because people tend to view the new as just a little bit more of the old. (pp. 52-53)

Culkin assesses four major meaning to the medium is the message: the medium is the subject of study, separate from content; content is influenced by any given medium, and may change its reception; the medium alters individual perception; the medium alters societal perceptions, resulting in lasting cultural changes. The multiple interpretations of this founding concept are diverse to say the least. Culkin's early assessment is the beginning of a long line of interpretation; Strate (2017) adds a further 8 potential meanings to *the medium is the message*, many of which conceptually underpin the major features under study in *Journey to the West.* I will very briefly reduce them here I have added the numbers in parentheses:

> [1] First of all, it is a wake up call! Stop sleep walking through the invisible environment! Pay attention!... [2] The medium must precede the content. the medium is what we construct the meaning out of... [3] there is no content without a medium... [4] the medium motivates the content... [5] McLuhan (1964) also stated that "the content of a medium is always another medium" (p. 7)…[6] *the user is the content...* [7] the medium has a leading role in human history, leading to revolutionary change... [8] the medium is the environment (pp. 54-57)

I will not endeavour to explore all of these meanings now as they will be looked at in turn throughout the research. They do, at this stage, serve as a base introduction to the open-ended

interpretation of McLuhan's point. However, McLuhan's words have been interpreted with different levels of fervour some scholars as Strate (2017) explains, take a literal interpretation of McLuhan's words:

> ...time after time I have seen critics of McLuhan make statements along the lines of, *of course the medium isn't the message*. In doing so, they completely miss the point of what McLuhan was trying to get across... I have also seen critics claim that McLuhan says that messages do not exist...
> (p.50)

There are always examples of oversimplifications to t*he medium is the message*, even in the evaluations of its standing in modern discourse and research: "McLuhan simply meant that interpretations and perceptions of content can be influenced by the channel through which that content is communicated." (Sweetser and Becktel 2017). Although Sweetser and Becktel are not entirely wrong in the partial assessment of McLuhan's aphorism, as we can see above, the inclusion of "simply meant" does not satisfy the complexities of what is under investigation. Their research looks to interrogate McLuhan's *the medium is the message* by investigating the effect of public relation campaigns on first time voters in different media, attempting to determine if the medium influences the messages received. A thoroughly worthy investigation, but with perhaps an oversimplification of McLuhan's work; the real-time reception of content is important in assessing a medium, but the use, interaction, conditioning and impact of the medium within cognition and culture is the lasting investigation of McLuhan's founding principle. Simply put, it is not just how the medium influences content, but how it establishes and sustains an unseen environment for content to be delivered. I intend on looking at the story as a functioning medium, unpacking the features that make it a medium and suggesting that scholarly enterprise has spent too long looking at the story's content, and not enough time examining the story itself. To fully appreciate the story of *Journey to the West* within the framework of media ecology, a more holistic and all together flexible approach to this concept needs to be taken. After all, if the medium *is* the message, then an important question becomes, what is the medium?

1.1.2 What is the Medium in media ecology?

In media ecology, there is no simple answer to the question: what is a medium? The complexity of answering this question begins with the naming of the field 'Media ecology' itself. Both the component parts of *media* and *ecology* within the field are notably outlined by Postman's comparison with the biological term in his inaugural speech at the first meeting of the Media Ecology Association:

> You will remember from the time when you first became acquainted with a Petri dish, that a medium was defined as a substance within which a culture grows. If you replace the word "substance" with the word "technology," the definition would stand as a fundamental principle of media ecology: a medium is a technology within which a culture grows; that is to say, it gives form to a culture's politics, social organization, and habitual ways of thinking. Beginning with that idea, we invoked still another biological metaphor, that of ecology. In its origin the word had a considerably different meaning from how we use it today. As found in Aristotle, it meant "household." He spoke of the importance to our intellectual equanimity of keeping our household in order. Its first use in its modern meaning is attributed to Ernst Haeckel, a German zoologist, in the late 19th century. He used the word as we do now, to refer to the interactions among the elements of our natural environment, with a special emphasis on how such interactions lead to a balanced and healthful environment. We put the word "media" in front of the word "ecology" to suggest that we were not simply interested in the ways in which the interaction between media and human beings give a culture its character and, one might say, help a culture maintain symbolic balance (Postman 2000 pp. 10 – 11)

The medium then, in an oversimplification of the issue, is a technology that influences culture and establishes practices and habits. In media ecology the medium is not merely the technology, but the culture that developed the technology for a purpose, as well as the impact that technology has on the culture. This allows for an understanding that in media ecology, a medium, the media, or any form of technology, is not simply an object like a computer or a telephone but something that involves a sense of presence and interaction, as all environments do. I assert that *Journey to the West* is a medium, and therefore an environment and one that is active in the cultural milieu of China. This seems directly linked with McLuhan's statement that "environments are not passive wrappings, but active processes" (2003 p.12) the media we utilise are not merely technologies but processes themselves interacting with cognition; technologies facilitate action and therefore environmental change. Strate (2017) describes this as "a *process of mediation*" in which the medium is "the observable manifestation of a dynamic process, a process of *mediating*" (p.116). In this sense the

process of mediation is the action, presence and interaction that coalesce with the use of a medium. If we consider Lotherington (2018), in his discussion of the ball point pens usefulness when there is no one to write with it, we can better discern the process of mediation; technologies do not use themselves, establish themselves, nor develop themselves as static monoliths that influence change, but involve human interaction and cognition to begin a process of use, usefulness and development. Here then it is most important to consider the reason why *Journey to the West* has been repeated in so many guises across so may media. It is actively used and manipulated as a medium, which suggests it is an effective cultural tool.

It is important to determine these factors within media ecology as the very concept of the medium in the field is such a large part of its concern, and simplistic understandings of what the 'media' in media ecology are, distracts from the field's open-ended nature. Strate (2017) outlines the problem of the term media ecology in popular discourse, and even academic works, in phrases such as *the new media ecology* and *media ecologies.* These references to ecologies in *media* tend to be used in studies "in which media are the object of study, but these studies often are not media ecological" (Strate 2017 p.7) in that they do not focus on the environments in which the media present themselves, nor the environments they may establish. Instead, Strate proposes greater emphasis on the basics of media ecology: that it is the study of *media as environments, and environment as media,* "Simply put the words medium and environment are synonyms" (Strate 2017 p.112). In the use of the word ecology, which has begun to be used as an interchangeable word for environment, Strate suggests that it is best to "use terms like media environments to refer to the object of study. An alternate definition of media ecology, then, might be *the study of media environments*." (Strate 2017 p.8). Consider Sheila J. Nayar's (2020) introduction in her most recent book, *Before Literature; The Nature of Narrative Without the Written Word*, in which Nayar shrewdly outlines our literate environment, and our inability to see it:

> Does a fish know that it lives in water? Even more, does it know that it lives its entire life wet?
> You're probably thinking: Well, certainly a fish would register something bodily about its natural
> environment were it reeled out of the ocean and tossed onto a dry, sunbaked pier.

So, let's imagine this exiled fish were a thinking animal, voluntarily able to form thoughts and judgments. Once extracted from the water, so much it didn't know about that environment would suddenly become all too painfully apparent. The agony would be there in its registered incapacity to breathe or swim away to safety, and in its skin drying out in the aridity of the air and the heat of the sun. And, of course, the only thing that fish would want would be to get back into that environment it had never before experienced as an environment—the water it gulped, the wetness that kept its scales from withering. If you are reading this, then you are that fish, and this book, Before Literature, is the tackle and pier. This is a book intent on wresting you out of an environment that has become so natural for you, so naturalized, that you—me—we—are hardly even aware of how artificial, constructed, and unnatural it is. (pg.1)

The media environment is all encompassing, and we are unable to see it, Nayar's fish is the tool in which to see the environment for what it is. In examining *Journey to the West*, we have to always be concerned with what changes in the environment, and what stays the same in the story through these differing environments. Similarly, what environment does *Journey to the West* create as a story? The focus of the story's content and messages seems to suggest that like the water that surrounds the, many seem not to notice that the story is very much being used as a medium and environment to share these messages. Nayar's analogy is reminiscent of McLuhan's (2003) reassessment of *the medium is the message,* in the introduction in the second edition of *Understanding Media*: "Today technologies and their consequent environments succeed each other so rapidly that one environment makes us aware of the next" (pg. 14). The fluctuation of technological developments means that environments become more perceivable, but it is most difficult to take that step back to view the environment without a new environment for comparison. This then, is the focus of this study when considering the term media ecology, I will investigate how the environment a story exists in shapes its features, and how perhaps the story itself is a medium and media environment that has gone unnoticed.

These definitions begin to help shape a picture for the concerns of media ecology and what the term itself means, but we must also consider what exactly constitutes a medium? A medium is not merely a physical technology but can be an invisible force or skill, as well as a seen and tangible object. What a medium *is* ranges from a human body, to fire, to the telescope, to a window, to the printing press, to a mobile phone, to a song, to a language, to a paradigm, the list could go on (Findlay-White and Logan 2016, McLuhan and McLuhan 2017, Nayar 2019, Strate 2017). We first

consider the most obvious technologies that have helped shape the human psyche and environment, mainly the inventions of the written word, radio, television, the personal computer etc. Other than the invention of the written word, which has had the greatest cultural impact on society and which I will discuss in greater detail later, the most noted technological impact in Postman's eyes was the introduction of television. The introduction of the television overcame the mental burden of having to imagine the events and characters from the description in their voices on radio serials, as well as the geographical limitations of going to the cinema. For the first time, people across the globe could immerse themselves in an audio-visual experience in the safety of the familial environment. The global acquisition of this medium is of a great concern to Postman. It is a technology he believed lacked the intellectual activeness, dialectics, and reasoning that reading promoted. Instead, Postman discerned the passiveness of television watching was comparable to surrendering one's rights, as the technology promotes an apathetic approach to the way content is delivered. He considered this in the way that the news is 'packaged' through a process of *choosing* newsworthy stories which are then mediated through editing, camerawork and sound amongst other things. In the opening of *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* Postman compares the impact of the television to dystopian narratives, and famously discerned the major difference with the impact of television through the comparison of Orwell's *Nineteen Eight-Four* and Huxley's *Brave New World*:

> Contrary to common belief even among the educated, Huxley and Orwell did not prophesy the same thing. Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley's vision, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think. What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley remarked in Brave New World Revisited, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny "failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions." In 1984, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In Brave New World, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us. (Postman 1985 p.xix)

Postman believed that we had willingly handed over our rights in our acceptance of the

environmental shift that came with television. Most concerning in his view was the scope and accessibility of this technology, that surpassed the power and influence of the written word through its seeming lack of limitations:

> ...television is the command center of the new epistemology. There is no audience so young that it is barred from television. There is no poverty so abject that it must forgo television. There is no education so exalted that it is not modified by television. And most important of all, there is no subject of public interest—politics, news, education, religion, science, sports— that does not find its way to television. Which means that all public understanding of these subjects is shaped by the biases of television. (p.78)

The scope of the bias of television is an extraordinary thing in Postman's view, as the breadth and depth of its influence, along with its accessibility as a medium makes it a powerful environmental tool, one which Postman urges we should take notice of. It is easy when reviewing Postman's thesis to see the parallels with other media that have developed through the years, especially our current digital age of smartphones and online omnipresence. Television plays a large role in the continued survival and growth of *Journey to the West* as a story, and as we will see, the influence of the story within this medium went on to impact other media in the current technological environment. In other parallels, we can attribute Postman's concerns about television onto *Journey to the West* as a constant form of entertainment, one that no one has really understood the value of. If the story is as culturally valuable as I believe, then its use as a medium, to entertain, means that it could be a powerful social medium to wield messages and values.

This brief example of television as a medium demonstrates the media ecology approach to the context and implication of a medium. A medium is not merely a technology, it is the environment and the culture that grows within that environment. Postman here is examining the cultural implications of technology from a point of active concern, one he felt was imperative to understand and highlight. It is important to add that my study is not focusing on the ethical and moral approach to media ecology in the way that Postman does. The focus in this investigation, is on a story *as medium* and how that medium has existed within other media, through cultural change and ecological influence. The story of *Journey to the West* as a medium, has existed through the epochs in different technologies and in different environments. Each synchronic example of the

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story bares the mark of not only the contemporary practices of its environment (media) but of the environments that came before it. To add another metaphor to the media ecology mix, if time were a bus route, then the story would be the bus, stopping at each new location with its specific environmental nuances. New passengers with their cultural content and habits would mingle with the passengers from the last. Some would get dropped off along the way, but if we examine the bus at any stage along its route, it has a mixture of the different passengers it has picked up along the way, and therefore its own environment of people from different places with different traditions. The bus will then have an impact on any other environment it stops at, as it carries a unique interplay of people. In this essence the story of *Journey to the West* carries the interplay of different environments within its very structure.

1.1.3 Narrative as Medium, and Medium as Narrative

If then, in discerning that single technologies like the television can have cultural implications as active processes, and as a medium can be a dangerous distraction from the real world around us, what of the primary content of many of the media and technologies during human cultural development? I am discussing the oldest content of many technologies: the narrative. *Journey to the West* is a story, a narrative that has traversed the oral tradition, literature, musical, play, opera, circus performance, puppetry, comic, graphic novel, film, television series, animation, advertisement, fast food mascot, theme park, ride, computer game, android application, themed restaurant, and airline mascot, to name some of the more immediate examples at hand. The narrative is not merely the content to a medium, but it is itself one of the oldest media. Without risking repeating myself below - when I go into more detail about orality and oral storytelling - before the environment of literacy was the environment of orality, the content of which, by and large, was the story. The story itself is a medium, and its original content is the knowledge and history of a given culture. Nayar (2020) discusses this when dissecting the role of myth within the

literate culture, and how its role has changed between the oral and literate mind-sets. Narratives, Nayar assesses, "have always been with us: across all places, all periods, and all cultures. No society in the history of humanity has ever been found without them" (p. 23). However, many of the narratives of oral communities and their stories are considered 'mythical'. The word myth, as Nayar discusses is,

> ...employed and thereby conjures something untrue or untrustworthy: an implication of confabulation, of exaggeration or, worse yet, of outright lying... Would our oral predecessors have considered this to be the case, or is it more that we readers, so removed now from the pressures that orality places on storytelling, have downgraded myth and aligned it with the fictional?

Nayar goes on to discuss the absurdity of oral cultures wanting to make their histories, events and world view fictitious in some way. This is the positioning of the literate mind-set in that the print culture, even in today's guise, often considers itself to work within the nature of truth, and truisms especially in its strict definitions between fiction and non-fiction. But as Nayar mentions, it is in Levi-Strauss' assertion that myths are simply things that we "*live by*" (p.26), that these ideologies begin to break down, and we can see in the media ecology approach to narratives: that myths are the medium in which the content of a culture's histories were kept for generations. Strate (2014a) explicitly claims that narrative is a medium and as such is one of the essential forms of media that help shape our understanding of the world and the environment we inhabit. He explores narrative structures as formal cause, in that they are confined by their form:

> As a medium, narrative has a bias that imposes certain constraints on the story's composition, which in turn leads to the tendency for narrative to follow certain recognizable patterns that distinguish it from other forms, such as lyric and lists. Form is not confined to the source or the message, but is environmental in nature (media ecology being the study of media, aka form, as environments). The storyteller does not invent narrative form, but rather lives within narrative as an environment. We are brought up with stories, receive them as part of our cultural heritage, and are guided by them; the storyteller follows a narrative tradition, and is very much influenced by the expectations of the audience or readers (in this sense, the audience or reader, as context, can be seen as the cause of the particular story, rather than the storyteller). (Strate 2014 p.7)

In Strate's assessment, the contours of the story are the environment that both storyteller and audience inhabit. The storyteller does not create the story but simply uses its form to engage an audience who have predetermined expectations, as a way of their content and messages. This is how

I am looking at *Journey to the West*, as a specific narrative form, one that has particular structural features which are utilised by storytellers. These, features of the story as a medium meet the expectations of the *Journey to the West* audience. Storytellers are led by the audience's expectations and frame whatever new content and messages within the immersive environment of the well-known story (Maring 2016). I believe that that these familiar structures in *Journey to the West* are also more culturally weighted to the point that they can only truly be appreciated by an audience trained in the story's structures and cultural reference points.

Before exploring this notion of stories in the oral tradition, and the very nature of orality itself, which are integral to the understanding of the narrative and its role in human development, it is important to discuss the manner of narrative in the context of its true creator – not orality, but language. To this end, orality is a system for language, in the same way that both orality and language are systems for communication and storytelling, and storytelling a system for storing history and culture. If we now replace the word system, with the word medium, our understanding aligns with a media ecological one. Storytelling and stories are a medium in which to store knowledge and understanding of our own culture (Ong 1982).

We must remember here, one of McLuhan's (1964) other pointed observations: "the content of a medium is always another medium" (p. 7) In this respect, language is the most significant medium, and the most significant content. The most notable change in human development, and therefore the most important medium to exist, before and beyond the impact of literacy, was the medium of language. Although language is impossible to separate from orality, as these were media that developed together, and one not without the other, the symbolic capacity of language transcends the media in which it is delivered. Lewis Mumford (1967) discussed this as the most significant difference between humans and the animal kingdom:

> ...the acquisition of articulate speech, once it was sufficiently detached from animal signals and repetitive, ritualized acts, proved his greatest leap upward into a fully human state... With the aid of vocal expression, man first increased the range of social communion and mutual sympathy. And when he finally reached the stage of intelligible speech, he created a proliferating symbolic world, partly independent of the flux of daily experience, detachable from any specific environment or

occasion, and under constant human control as no other part of the world could become for many ages. The domain of significance. Here and here alone man reigned supreme. (pp. 73-74)

The impact of symbolic communication allowed humans to develop exponentially and was the foundation of culture. Consider Hall's (1959) discussion of communication *being* culture, meaning in Strate's (2017) interpretation, that "language is culture writ large" (p. 24). To this end all elements of culture are built on the foundations of communication; the symbolic power of any given language structure impacts the culture in which the language is developed and in turn constitutes a world view. This is the very essence of what is known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, in reference to the works of both Edward Sapir (1924) and Benjamin Whorf (1956). Their work in linguistic relativism proposes that a person's perceptions of the world and noetic foundations are informed and influenced by the structures of their language. The implication of such a theory begins to structure the foundations of media ecology, and indeed *the medium is the message*, as the cognitive functioning, symbolic meaning making and cultural nuances of individual nations, provinces, towns, tribes, groups, may be subject to a fundamental media bias. This bias informs every aspect of not just understanding, but cultural output, as Edward Sapir explains:

> Language is the medium of literature as marble or bronze or clay are the materials of the sculptor. Since every language has its distinctive peculiarities, the innate formal limitations — and possibilities — of one literature are never quite the same as those of another. The literature fashioned out of the form and substance of a language has the color and the texture of its matrix. The literary artist may never be conscious of just how he is hindered or helped or otherwise guided by the matrix, but when it is a question of translating his work into another language, the nature of the original matrix manifests itself at once. All his effects have been calculated, or intuitively felt, with reference to the formal "genius" of his own language; they cannot be carried over without loss or modification. (Sapir, 2004 p.237)

Sapir's argument is that cultural reference, nuance and indeed the storehouse of clichés, idioms and syntax, are transformed when translated into another language; and therefore, the understanding of the world through language is also transformed or lost. Lampros (2019) applies the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to the Chinese language, as he believes the structure of the language actually aided philosophical thought and idea production. Similarly, when it comes to those who are learning Chinese, Hu (2015) believes the context of the language is key to progressing, especially in reference to learning the written language. Hu suggests that people learn the written language better

with the context of folk stories and metaphor. The importance of cultural context and understanding to be able to fully understand a text, is what John Miles Foley refers to as *tradition referentiality* in the study of the oral tradition. This is a concept that suggests that audiences of an oral tradition, understand the cultural nuances affixed to elements like scenes, epithet, and phrases for their deeper cultural references. In essence, Foley suggests that to truly understand the stories of an oral tradition, one must understand the cultural context of the story, its structures, and its storytelling. If this were entirely true, then our ability to fully appreciate a story and its context would be impossible for someone living outside of the language structures of the culture, which seems slightly too deterministic (Neuliep 2017). For an investigation of a Chinese story, this would seem to be something of a problem. However, although it would be true to consider the fact that one may not fully be able to appreciate the richness of a story due to language, nor some of the cultural competencies required to appreciate linguistic references inherit to given societies, language is not merely restricted to the *word.* The structures and *language* of *Journey to the West* as a medium, have their own referential contexts.

When considering the impact of language on the appreciation of narrative, we also have to remember that with the symbolic meaning making that came with oral language, came the meaning making of other symbolic forms. The visual language of storytelling has such vast cultural meaning that it has established its own field of study in semiotics. Although I will outline the restricted use of semiotics in the methodology chapter, it is still a field intertwined with media ecology and how content carries meaning. In the study of the story as a medium, and what component parts make up this medium, it does become important to discuss the implication of the meaning of these component parts at different points within the thesis. Although I am clear on the use of media ecology to focus on medium itself, separate from the messages it may convey, there are moments where we must acknowledge McLuhan's figure/ground relationship and endeavor to understand why the medium is important through the messages it has purveyed. To this end, the primary ways in which these messages are examined are through semiotics. Semiotics is, in its simplest definition,

the study of signs, whether visual or conceptual, and how these signs have different meanings. The linguist Ferdinand De Saussure laid the foundation for the study of semiotics in his posthumously published work *The Course in General Linguistics* (1916). In this work Saussure outlines many of the founding concepts of semiotic study that have shaped the analysis of cultural texts. Importantly, Saussure suggests that every sign has two major elements to it that function within a culture, the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the sign itself that stands in for any literal or abstract idea, the signifier may be a word, image, action, representation or symbol. The signified is the meaning, the idea that the communicator is attempting to evoke in the recipient. Suassure suggested that there was no fundamental link between the signifier and the signified and that the coded linguistic signs are cultural and relational and not strictly natural. The importance of cultural attribution onto signs was echoed by Saussure's contemporary, Charles Sanders Pierce (1931), who suggested about human beings, that "we only think in signs" and these signs have to be attributed meaning by a society or culture. Pierce suggested that there were three types of signs that are utilised for the creation of meaning: iconic, indexical and symbolic. The icon sign has a direct link to what it signifies, such as a picture or photograph; the index sign is relational and shows evidence of what is being represented. The last, the symbolic sign, are those that have no relationship or resemblance to the signifier or signified and must be learnt through naturalisation. Most important in examining the 'signs' of *Journey to the West* in terms of the repetition of component parts, is the work of the seminal semiotician Roland Barthes. Barthes expansion of Saussure's work has been utilised in the examination and study of almost all media. In specific relevance to this study, the application to film and television texts is well established. Barthes essentially expanded upon the variations of signs that could be interpreted by an audience. In *S/Z,* his influential study of Balzac's *Sarrasin,* Barthes (1970) moved passed the work of Pierce to consider five major codes in the semiotic analysis of narrative, that receivers of communication could decode. These are the Hermeneutic code; the Proairetic code; Semantic codes; Symbolic code; and Cultural/Referential codes. In

brief summation, the Hermeneutic code, also referred to as the enigma code, is a narrative device that withholds information and facts to cause suspense for the reader or audience. It is a narrative sign that holds unknown meaning to the audience in that the true meaning is a driving force of interest to get to the end of the narrative, to have all questions answered. Similarly, the proairetic code, also known as the action code, is another narrative device to establish suspense for the receiver. They are signs that are directly related to action, and importantly signal a further or foreshadowed action, for instance a suitcase signaling an impending trip, journey or quest. These two codes within a narrative are directly related to temporal readings of texts and often relate to some degree of chronology within the accessing of a story, as the result of action and revelations of enigma tend to be used sequentially within narratives.

The Semantic codes are essentially the connotations or additional meanings that are layered or intertwined within any given sign. These are the meanings that are beyond the literal denotation and are often subconscious rather than explicit, such as the use of red to associate with danger, or in the case of *Journey to the West*, the Monkey King wearing red may have the connotation of luck for Chinese audiences. Symbolic codes, similar in many ways to the semantic code and difficult to distinguish, are broader structural codes. The connotations that are often subconscious in the semantic codes are more broadly grouped and categorised. These groups or categories are often reliant on antithesis, conflicts and oppositions. These broad categories and the mediations between these oppositions, help to establish clear meaning, such as the thematic layered meanings in the image of a crucifix within the horror genre.

The final code, the referential or cultural code, is of particular importance in this study. This code relates to, and relies on, the cultural competence or shared knowledge of an audience to be understood. The context of the referential code is entirely dependent on the shared experience or understanding often associated with a specific group of people. This is seen in a texts cultural reference point, be that nationality, age, gender, ethnicity or ideology. This code is closely related to the structures of traditional stories within texts related to folklore, and in this study, that of the oral

tradition. As will be seen, this code, once explored in more detail, forms one of the overriding

principles in the study of the oral tradition related to the work of John Miles Foley (1985). In the

study of *Journey to the West* as a medium, these reference points become the foundations of

meaning making for the story as a narrative, and the narrative a s a medium. Barthes five

codes together help form the basis of a sign system within the study of narrative, a system of

meaning making, much like language itself.

The visual language of narrative as a medium cannot be ignored and from a media ecology

approach we can see the lasting impact through different cultural means; the most influential being

that of religion: "Since the literacy of the so-called common folk is a relatively recent development

in world history, for millennia the average person has formed his or her world view through

religious sculptures, mosaics and paintings" (Kortti 2019 p. 3). Kortti here pinpoints one of the

most important aspects of the he Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, that language – despite in what form –

influence the noetic of a given culture. Religious narratives are so influential in developing cultural

values and environments, that it is easy to forget how the impact of visual symbolism in religion

was based in an oral noetic, often unrelated to the word, but instead - the image. As Kortti goes on

to explain:

> Medieval cathedrals in particular have functioned as a strong form of communication, and the
> events of the Bible have been narrated to the faithful in the form of images (icons) and sculptures.
> Up until medieval times, art was largely didactic or educational. Pictures taught people everything
> that was important about the history of creation, religious dogmas, saints and virtues. (Kortti 2019
> p.3)

As is investigated in Chapter 3, *Journey to the West* is a story that was in content, style and

delivery, reliant on Buddhism to tell its story. The visual narratives of religion then help to shape a

world view in the early environments of humankind, which still keep their symbolism and potency

today. This form of visual meaning making can be seen in the cultural reading of visual narratives

even today. Nayar (2010b) asserts that in Bollywood films, it is the form and reception of a film that

determines its religious symbolism. In her investigation of the religious experience of viewers of

films that depict deities, despite the seeming crudeness of their narratives and representations,

Nayar suggests that "how viewers experience hierophany (as well as how critics have traditionally differentiated the hierophanically good from the hierophanically bad) is significantly contoured by those viewers' (and critics') relationship to the written word." (Nayar 2010b, p.103). By this token, Nayar suggests that a person who lives without influence of literacy, experience these narratives with religious symbolism differently due to their grounding in a traditional oral noetic. Here we can begin to see the layering effect of media ecology when examining the medium; the story is a medium, the content of which is another medium (for now let's say the image), which in its appreciation by an audience may contain a coded way of knowing the world through symbolic form of language, a language which is in itself another medium. When it comes to considering J*ourney to the West* as a medium, the language and symbolic meaning can be seen in the oral, literate and visual structures that form a way of understanding the story, from repetitive characters, scenes and motifs.

Whether the creation of symbolic meaning in language is expressed through images or words, the fundamentals of meaning making in so many of our technologies and the environments they inhabit and create, are anchored by the importance of narrative. Strate (2014a) sees narrative not merely as an external medium like a technology, but as medium tuned into the human condition in the way that we think, remember and understand our own experiences. Consider the way that you may recount your day, the events that took place, or perhaps when you replay memories in your mind, giving them a start middle and end. For Strate, the narrative is a medium of knowing:

> Narrative form is by necessity a simplification of the complexity of reality, a means of making our experiences easy to convey, easy to share with others, and easy to understand. Narrative also makes our experiences easy to remember... And just as we internalize spoken language in the form of silent thought, we internalize narratives, making ourselves the heroes of our own stories, modelled after the narrative archetypes of our culture...Narrative helps us to make sense out of our own lives, to explain our past, and to provide a sense of what we might be in store for us in the future. The stories we tell help us to understand, in simplified fashion, what it means to be living in time, with memory and anticipation, following a journey from childhood to adulthood, for youth to old age, and from life to death. Is it any wonder that all forms of religion and spirituality are grounded in storytelling, whether we refer to such stories as myth, or as scripture? (Strate 2014 pp. 8-9)

Strate believes that narrative is a medium as it is both an individual and a community activity that involves participation and exchange from storyteller to audience. This interaction, whether in oral

stories or written stories, is sometimes forgotten as it is often the 'text' that gets focus, rather than the story itself as a medium. *Journey to the West* in this regard is a medium, as its existence in different guises has placed it as a form in which storytellers and audiences can engage with different content and messages. Whether or not it is being experienced through another technology is just a matter of remediation (Bolter and Grusin 1999) and not evidence of the story itself only being considered *content*. It is perhaps the culture of print that has suggested that the narrative, and therefore *Journey to the West,* is a book – a particular medium – rather than a formal cause, an environment, and a medium in its own right.

1.2 The Big Picture – Media Ecology and the Epochs of Technology

My thesis is a study of a single text across varying stages of communication, from 7th century oral traditions through to modern day electronic and digital modes of storytelling, a very broad period to cover. The story of *Journey to the West* began with the historical journey of a monk which was then popularised in storytelling before being penned down in the form of a novel. This process is not just one of storytelling but is also due to effect of the development of human communication and technological environments in storytelling. There is a need to understand the nature of orality and storytelling in the development of human communication to fully appreciate the development of *Journey to the West* as a medium, and how these motifs of oral communication may be evidenced throughout the texts through to contemporary adaptations. Within media ecology, there is a wider view or diachronic study of the effects of media and communication technologies on human experience and understanding. It is generally studied through McLuhan's 'epochs' or stages of human development which focus on what are considered the most influential technologies in human history and on the human psyche. McLuhan (1962) outlined four epochs in human development, the oral tribal culture, the manuscript culture, the Gutenberg galaxy or Print culture,

and electronic culture. These epochs to McLuhan, represented the greatest changes in human development.

However, the processes that human communication has gone through within these epochs, are best explored in the works of Walter J Ong. Ong's work has been fundamental not just in the investigation of the synchronic dimensions of human communication, but in his study of the diachronic changes in human communication as well. This is to say that Ong's work not only investigates the individual characteristics of communicative moments in history; it also evaluates the effect of communication technologies on human development. Ong's central thesis is best outlined in what is known as the 'trilogy' of the word (Raymond 1980) in which he explores the nature of the 'word' across three core texts: *The Presence of the word* (1967), *Rhetoric, Romance and technology studies in the interaction of expression and culture (*1971) and *Interfaces of the word* (1977). These three texts along with Ong's seminal 1982 study *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word,* explore the effect of print on the human conscious and how the internal nature of script altered humanity's life-world from one of communal memory to the 'inward' as writing "restructured consciousness, affecting men's and women's presence to the world and to themselves and creating new interior distances within the psyche." (Ong 1977 p.17). Ong goes on to discuss how the change from a scribal culture - meaning the culture of writing as individuals, without standardisation or literary perspective - to moveable type advanced this alienation even further as the "advent of print intensified the inwardness fostered by script" (Ong 1982 p.149). Although I intend to look at Ong's study on the effect of print, it is in his synchronic studies of the *word* that I will focus on: specifically, his studies on the primary oral/aural culture, residual orality, typographic culture and most importantly, secondary orality. These individual studies of the 'moments' of the human word establish the links between the forms and changes in the story of *Journey to the West*. By using Ong's concepts below we can begin to break down the features of orality and literacy, as well as electronic media to determine the features and aspects of *Journey to the West* that may be attributed to different media environments over its millennial development.

This research approach will determine *Journey to the West* as a medium through this analysis but will also look at how this approach may highlight new approaches in media ecology itself. The epochs, or stages in human development can be viewed in diachronic analysis to determine key changes in cognition and development. However, I will examine the epochs individually, to better gain insight into their environmental features and storytelling traditions, and their impact in relation to the 'narrative as medium' and will look to examine the fifth epoch in the form of the digital age.

1.2.1 Orality

Orality, in media ecology, is a concept that has arguably been designed by scholars to discuss the preliterate society. Ong along with his contemporaries, such as Harold Innis (1949), Eric Havelock (1963), Jack Goody (1977) and Marshall McLuhan (1962), have discussed the nature of pre-literate societies and the concept of orality. However, Ong's writing has become the most widely studied and cited in scholarly works, perhaps due to his detailed study of the nuances of orality, literacy and electronic media (Sterne 2011). For the appreciation of *Journey to the West,* the concept of orality plays a large role in understanding its component features and how it has been formed.

Ong asserts that the primary oral culture (the pre-literate culture) is the human communication process of the spoken word and its reception: the oral/aural process. This process is defined by its relationship with *presence* and the society of primary orality was a "culture with a relationship to time different from ours" (Ong 1967 p.23). Presence becomes important in Ong's assessment of orality, whether this is in relation to the momentary temporal field of sound in the spoken word, or in the situation of the oral/aural process, as "Communication begins with presence and ultimately makes one's interior available to another" (Soukup 2014 p.16). This is to say that for Ong and followers of his thesis the concept of orality is the discussion of the importance of words as sounds to both the speaker and receiver, especially in a pre-literate culture. Petricini's (2017)

assessment of Ong's time consciousness sums up the transience in the presence of spoken word over literature:

> Spoken words are what draw us out of our individual interiors to a shared present. Spoken words are sounds and sounds are events... Spoken words cannot be reversed. They come into being and go out of existence in the moment. Speech 'decays' as it progresses. The difference between the spoken and written word is a difference in time through space... For although the text we might read does exist in time, it persists through time. It exists in space. Sound exists in time. It does not persist, and it has no existence in a spatial sense. (2017 p197)

The formation of words in speech establishes a momentary audible sound for its receiver to decipher through a cultural oral hermeneutic process, as "all verbal communication... was oral, effectively limited to sound, but also… the economy of thought was oral" (Ong 1982 p.2). The transience of these words is paramount as they exist in time for only a moment and then they are gone; the aural reception of these words relates to their receiver through the context of their environment, and their sense of presence (Ong 1982).

The primary oral culture by Ong's thesis was a society with no record, a society of transience. The oral/aural process was the basis of all communication and indeed the first communication technology. The oral culture had no permanent way of recording events or establishing a history:

> ...the entire oral noetic world or thought world relied upon the formulaic constitution of thought. In an oral culture, knowledge, once acquired, had to be constantly repeated or it would be lost: fixed, formulaic thought patterns were essential for wisdom and effective administration. (Ong 1982 p.23)

It is with the oral storyteller that oral histories and accounts begin to be passed down generationally; oral cultures share through a tradition of communal (community) memory or experience "Primary orality fosters personality structures that in certain ways are more communal and externalized, and less introspective than those common among literates. Oral communication unites people in groups." (Ong 1982 p.68). This is where the structures of the oral tradition begin; the orality of storytelling is born from the necessity of passing down historical events. Stories or community histories are passed down from generation to generation as a way of preserving knowledge (Vansina

1985). This is what is known as Time-binding, coined by the father of general semantics, Alfred Korzybski. Time-binding is a part of Korzybski's classification system from his 1921 book *Manhood of Humanity,* in which he classes plant life as chemistry-binding due to their conversion of sunlight; animal life as space-binding as they are able to spatially move, and humans as "the "time-binding" form of life because through their symbol-making abilities they are able to preserve their knowledge and pass it on to future generations. As a result, human beings can potentially develop and progress from generation to generation." (Forsberg 2010 p 145). To this end, Korzybski saw, like Mumford, that human beings were separated from other animals not by our use of tools, but our ability to make use of symbol making. This level of abstraction from reality and the natural environment around us, led to an ability to share knowledge generationally through an oral-aural process. These ideas in general semantics have often placed Korzybski as one of the more influential figures in media ecology, who sit within their own defined field (Forsberg 2010, Postman 1974, Strate 2010, 2017).

When looking at the various primary sources surrounding *Journey to the West,* and the historical figure of Xuanzang, the importance of 'orality' as a concept seems multi-layered. The quest of Xuanzang to fetch Buddhist scriptures is a quest for literate artefacts, but in Buddhist Sutras it is the oral recitation that is the foci for religious transmission (Berkwitz 2004, Partridge 2013). Although Xuanzang was alive in the 7th century and therefore not involved within a primary oral culture, but a scribal one, it is in the nature of orality as a concept that I will be utilising. The role of *orality* in Xuanzang's text and those written about him seem to be of the upmost importance in its creation and tradition. It is in the spoken word that Xuanzang's own story has a reliance on; his own biography is an anecdotal account of the stories he learned along the Silk Road. After which a tradition of Buddhist and secular oral stories developed around the figure of the priest (Jenner 1993); the orality, or oral story, of Xuanzang's exploits after the event helped preserve his quest and establish his importance in a tradition of time-binding. As a figure, Xuanzang was a cultural hero in China for his travels: he broke imperial mandate by leaving China, spent seventeen

years travelling to and around India collecting scriptures, before returning to China with Buddhist texts of which his translations are still used today (Nattier 1992). It is easy to see how his journey became a focus of Buddhist and then secular stories.

It would also then seem strange to attribute the oral hermeneutic processes to a medium like film and television in the texts of *Journey to the West*, but the existence of the story in this form has structured a parallel with this form of orality and time-binding (Strate 2014a). The experience of audience members to the visuals and events in the texts is multi-layered. Although the texts are artefacts, the experience of watching a film of *Journey to the West* means that the audience experience the decay of sound and the decay of image. As they experience a film in similar fashion to experiencing a stage or live performance. The permanence of the experience and sense of presence mimics this form of orality. It is in the repetition of features across all the texts that I argue, like those features of the oral tradition, become more permanent.

1.2.2 The Great Divide and Technological Determinism

One of the more disputed elements of Ong's thesis is in his binary approach to orality and literacy or what is known in the field as 'the great divide'. This is essentially the oppositional features of the primary oral society and the literate society. In Ong's thesis he examines this divide and how the advent of literature changes the human psyche from an immediate consciousness of recall to a logical and analytical mind. These opposing features are often used as a starting point to identify or analyse oral features in modern film and television texts (Koven 2008, Nayar 2010). I suggest the divide is less obvious in the study of *Journey to the West*, due to the interplay of orality and literacy within the Chinese storytelling tradition. The divide itself is best laid out in Ong's work through the nine characteristics of orally based thought, of which Ong explicitly outlines four oppositions between the oral and literate cultures and defines five states of human cognition that seem restrictive due to the absence of literature. He asserts that oral culture is:

> Additive rather than subordinate... Aggregative rather than analytic...Redundant or
> 'copious'...Conservative or traditionalist...Close to the human life world...Agonistically toned...
> Empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced... Homeostatic...Situational rather
> than abstract... (Ong 1982 pp. 37-49)

But rather than discussing these features individually it seems more prudent to discuss Ong's comparison of these oppositions as a design. Ong asserts a set of binary oppositions to explore the change in the different cultures of communication. However, such a structuralist idea opens the discussion of culture - even if it is focused only on linguistic or communicative properties - up to major bias, as well as a generalist view that ignores the intricacies of human communication across multiple cultures. In fact, it has been argued that Ong's work is primarily engaged with a Western, Christian spiritualist view of orality (Sterne 2011). Although it is a truth that a print-based culture is something different to a culture without print, it is in the development from one to the other that evidences the bridge in the divide and therefore insinuates a continuing process of change rather than a static concept of a communicative environment. This is to say that Ong's outline suggests to many that there is no interlinking or interplay, but two single states of being: one oral and one literate. These oppositional notions seem to approach two sets of cultures with blanket assumptions. It is very hard to make such precise assertions about a culture that no longer exists, especially from Ong's own understanding that we "are so literate that it is very difficult for us to conceive of an oral universe of communication or thought except as a variant of a literate universe." (Ong 1982 p.2). With this in mind it easy to understand oppositions to Ong's own understanding of the subject, as Street argues:

> if he is right that writing has such deep effects on consciousness as to distort our view of orality,
> then Ong, too, is trapped in his own literate mentality: an effort of the will, or imagination,
> seems hardly enough to counteract the profound effects he himself attributes to this (Street 1995
> p.155).

The study could then be considered to fall prey to a synchronic communicative ethnocentrism, rendering Ong's hypothesis questionable in its definitive answers. By Street's argument, there is not necessarily the evidence to assert that a primary oral culture was not capable of skills such as analysis, which are often considered to be associated with literacy (Coleman 1996, Scribner and

Cole 1981, Street 1995). However, in all these criticisms of Ong's concepts and assertions exists an oversimplification of Ong's work within the field of Media ecology. When considering media ecology, the field is supposed to be an ongoing process, an open-ended system (Strate 2017), it would seem insufficient to assume that Ong's work was so 'cut and dry'. Although there are certainly aspects of binarism in his assessments of orality and literacy, binaries which I would not necessarily agree with, it cannot be assumed that Ong merely worked within this paradigm. In fact, Cali (2017) discusses that Ong's theorising was largely seen as dialogic in nature, and quotes one of Ong's students and contemporaries, Thomas Zlatic, who discusses Ong's attitude toward binary oppositions:

> He said he was most interested not in rigid categories but in the "interfaces" and overlappings between media stages that exhibit themselves differently at different times and places. He also saw the explanation for change to be one of "relationism" not of single-directional, mechanistic determinism (quoted in Cali 2017 p85)

Similarly, Harp (2018) calls for an entirely different appreciation of Ong's thinking:

> Given Ong's commitment to resolutely open-ended procedures of thought and exploration, it is unfortunate that a debate surrounding his work has focused on whether he succumbed to a ''great divide theory'' that would turn orality and literacy into yet another binary opposition in need of deconstruction.. .Wherever one might land in this debate, if one engages in it at all, we do ourselves and Ong a disservice if we read him exclusively as a theorist of orality–literacy dynamics...we would do well to read him as a cultural critic along the lines of such figures as Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag... (Harp 2018 p. 349)

Many of the criticisms of Ong's work, as being definitive rather than dialogic, feed into the fundamental issues with readings of media ecology. The recurring criticism around media ecology issues centre around technological determinism. In its simplest form, technological determinism is a concept that suggests that the technologies in society determine the cultural, social and historical development of a civilization (Chandler 2011). It is a common criticism of all media ecology scholars, as the founding principles of the field suggest that the media impact our cognitive developments and world-view. The hard determinism associated with theories like the great divide in the orality –literacy model, critics have a tendency to consider these concepts as rigid definitives. Ironically, they tend to see the words of Ong and McLuhan as systematically immovable, as they

exist in the printed word. The dialogic nature of these scholars' discussions and their open-ended nature are all but lost in the finite nature of the book. The determinism of Ong and McLuhan tend to align more with a soft determinism in reality, no matter how rigid they seem; the cognitive programming of the brain due to media, is ultimately about societal adoption and participation, and not the other way around. Let's consider Lotherington's (2018) assessment of modern mobile technology: "Digital devices, though, must be operated by people to be useful: the device on its own is simply an object. Working with a device technologically extends the individual's potential, but it is indeed what one does with the machine that is the message" (p.211). Here, Lotherignton harks back to McLuhan's aphorism to anchor his opposition to deterministic thinking. We can also consider the view of literacy, in this instance, in the way that Nayar (2019) approached the impact of print, gunpowder and compass in *Renaissance Responses to Technological Change:*

> ...this book's tonally panoramic approach...has served effectively in assessing wide-ranging responses to technological change and that assessing these genres or modes as networked—as either responding to, or rebuking, or skirting each other—has allowed us to glean contradictory responses to social and ontological uprooting due to technological change: the potentially oppressive or tyrannical, coterminous with the potentially empowering or liberative; the capacity to extend one's reach, but also to amputate it; to contain, but no less to subvert containment. So much depends on where and how we look, and by looking in more places than one—more than a single dramatic genre or author's oeuvre, more than prose, or poetry, or even text alone—we have been able to quarry a diversity of responses to three radical, and radically different, instruments. (p. 313)

Nayar's approach is simple; look in different places, extend the scope of texts and elements under study, in different times and their different potential impacts, and it is easier to avoid deterministic results. In this sense, the study of *Journey to the West* conforms to this in its sheer scope across media, times, and contexts - a *panoramic approach* in Nayar's words. This I hope will help to set the middle ground within the great divide.

I want to use Ong's work to shed light on J*ourney to the West*, but I will do this in such a way that does not totally separate oral and written traditions. Many interpret Ong as making a hard distinction between the two, but I disagree, an instead align with the views of Cali (2017) Harp (2018) and Zlatic (2012) that his work should be seen as more dialogical in nature. I will use Ong's work as a starting point in which to examine overlap between orality and literacy in *Journey to the*

West, as I believe this interaction is fundamental in the structure of the narrative as a medium. Although Ong discussed the cross-over from orality to literacy in his concept of residual orality, namely the oral features that are evident in the composition or language of a written text, I believe this fall short in the context of Chinese storytelling. Ong asserts that in the scribal culture "composition as such remained an oral matter. Early written prose is more or less like a transcribed oration, and early poetry is even more oral in its economy" (Ong 1967 p.3). despite this fact there is a tendency as Coleman (1996) explains to use Ong's oral residue as a generalised term that is utilised to "explain any seemingly "oral" traits... that persisted into a later stage of development" (Coleman 1996 p.4). Here Coleman highlights the tendency to use oral residue as a stage or process within a society bound for literacy. When it comes to the analysis of *Journey to the West* it is not the intention to view the interplay orality and literacy as a form of oral residue, but structural elements within the story that are based on a long historic tradition of storytelling. Therefore, the issues of the great divide are naturally explored in the examination of an oral-literate interplay within the story.

1.2.3 Tradition Over Orality - Context, Determinism and *Journey to the West*

In the discussion of orality and literacy, the field of the oral tradition offers more insights on the view of the dichotomy of orality and literacy. Here it is wise to consider the work of John Miles Foley and his thoughts on 'tradition' as within the study of orality and literacy, with defining *Journey to the West* as a medium I am suggesting it is also a tradition within a cultural framework. Within much of Foley's work he discusses bridging the gap of the great divide - or perhaps negating it entirely- by examining both textual (literature) and ethnographic studies from the standpoint that we are not merely analysing the linguistic or performance led features of a text, but are looking at the text as a cultural tradition spanning long before the evidence in front of us (Foley 1995). His understanding of the scholarly enterprise surrounding the 'oral tradition' is that the emphasis and

concentration has been far too concerned with the 'oral' and less so with the 'tradition' (Foley 1999).

This tradition of the oral storytelling medium is where the context of all storytelling lies, as this is where the features of orality concentrate; the encoded messages of a storyteller - including features such as performance, location, register etc. - can only be decoded and properly appreciated by an audience immersed in the cultural context (Foley 1999). This is what Foley calls 'Traditional Referentiality', in which the audience listen to a storyteller, they know of the whole story cycle: what came before this episode, what will come after, and references to other stories, characters and traditions inside and outside of the cycle. The audience understand all of the story's references and codes, and signs of both the story cycle and the storytelling technique. Foley (1991) studied the metonymy in oral traditions, this is a figure of speech - a name or term - that is a point of reference that represents an entire concept or idea: "a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole . . . a situation in which a text or version is enriched by an unspoken context that dwarfs the textual artifact" (cited in Quick 2011). *Journey to the West* as a story, must be viewed through a culturally contextualised understanding, as its structures as a medium may be linked to this 'unspoken context'. Many of the features of *Journey to the West* can represent a wider context of storytelling, and not just the feature itself. We can begin to see the overlaps between the fields of oral tradition and media ecology – the context of the performance is the context of environment, a concept at the heart of the field of media ecology (Postman 2006). The context, in this case the tradition and its culture, is the ground in which the figure of the story is set. It is the environment that the storyteller and audience inhabit. The references and codes in traditional referentiality seem to relate to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and indeed the effect of time-binding (Strate 2010, 2014a), as a culture has developed a language in storytelling which has established a group reference system for understanding the diegesis of the story world through a process of repetition. As Nayar (2020) suggests:

> ...because any discrete performance of an oral epic is always part and parcel of a preknown story—of a story that is neither new nor concocted but already communally shared and being carried forward through time—that epic is always, in a manner of speaking, already in progress!

Therefore, and paradoxically to the literate mind, the act of telling a story, and listening to a story, in the oral tradition is understanding that there is no original, only what has been told before, and that's how one knows and understands it. In this instance it is not permissible to merely utilise Ong's or even Foley's concepts without first understanding the historic and cultural make-up of the story. These elements help formulate the narrative of *Journey to the West* as a medium, as they are part of the structure and reference points for the audience.

Unlike the processes found in Homer's Antiquity, Chinese storytelling is a tradition that flourishes during the literate society (Bordahl 1999). In fact, as a tradition Chinese storytelling has a very complex relationship with literature. Many of the stories told in Chinese oral tradition not only hold comparable features of the Parry-Lord thesis but also the features of Ong's oral residue as the lines and influences of oral and literate practices in Chinese history blur. Unlike the West's own 15th century self-vision of the triumphs of literacy, print, and the modern sciences, China had long had literacy and the West's 'sciences' for centuries before the European renaissance (Nayar 2019). Despite these advances, the context of Chinese storytelling is very different to western history, as modernity interacted with the established traditions, rather than overriding it. Vibeke Bordahl has studied the living oral traditions of China since the 1970's and has traced modern forms back to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) these Ming traditions developed from customs found as early as the Tang dynasty. The tradition of Chinese oral storytelling in itself is the study of the relationship between oral and literate traditions, this is a major focus of Bordahl's work. In her 2013 publication *Wu Song Fights the Tiger: The Interaction of Oral and Written Traditions in the Chinese Novel, Drama and Storytelling* Bordahl analyses a single story across oral and literate traditions in China. In the introduction Bordahl suggests that the Chinese oral tradition evidentially makes a fallacy of the 'Great Divide' as

> The dichotomy does not have an essential place in Chinese studies of oral traditions…[as]… a binary rhetoric should not lead us to overlook characteristics that are common to oral and written literatures or to underestimate the complexity of the relationship between oral and written manifestations of verbal art traditions… Storytelling [in China] is… a relatively 'young' phenomenon as a professional genre with certain conventions, existing in a society where writing and written culture has had a strong and privileged position for about three thousand years. There has been a constant diffusion of ideas, styles and formulas between the written and oral genres. This is in marked contrast to the Homeric tradition existing – so it is generally assumed – as orally performed professional entertainment in a largely pre-literate society with little use of writing during the first half of the first millennium b.c. While the Iliad and Odyssey have sprung from a 'primary oral tradition', the Chinese storytelling genres under study all belong to oral culture coexisting with literate culture (Bordahl 2013 pp. 4-5).

Therefore, in the study of Chinese storytelling there is a clear acknowledgement of the influence of not only oral features on literature but also literature on oral performance. This can be seen in the use of the term 'oral literature' (Gray 1971) within the field; the interplay of orality and literacy is an interesting phenomenon in Chinese literature. The discussion in chapter four of *Journey to the West* examines how the novel demonstrates features of orality, as the various texts of the story invariably have the same 'episodes' or stories in them and themselves were developed from traditional stories. The entire basis of this investigation is formed around the interplay of orality and literacy within Chinese oral traditions, as these are what I believe have structured *Journey to the West* as a story and medium, and what have invariably lasted through the ages. Moreover, Dudbridge (1970) even makes reference to the competition between the storytellers and publishing houses of the Ming dynasty, as writers would pen down storytellers' tales, storytellers would in turn have to produce new stories to keep the audiences interest. However, oral literature is a term that Ong finds difficult to accept within his own study of the word. It is within the first chapter of *Orality and Literacy, the Technologizing of the Word* (1982) that Ong vehemently accuses scholars of their inability to approach orality from the correct standpoint. He clearly outlines the absurdity of "monstrous concepts" such as that of 'oral literature'. A term he asserts as revealing "our inability to represent to our own minds a heritage of verbally organized materials except as some variant of writing..." (Ong 2004 p.11). However, there may be some value in such a concept. Even in Ong's own appreciation of Milman Parry's work on the Homeric verses, there must be an acknowledgement that, in a detailed assessment of Homeric poetry, Parry's understanding and discovery that their

features were fundamentally composed through oral methods (Ong 1982), was theoretically achieved through the medium of literature. The Homeric poetry has after all been passed down through not just oral tradition but also print. In this study I intend to explore the concept of *Journey to the West* as an oral text, a text inherently related to oral communication as tradition. Unlike many oral epics, *Journey to the West* was based on a documented historical event that took place within an established chirographic society. However, its re-telling was in the form of oral storytelling before the 100-chapter novel was penned down (Dudbridge 1970, Jenner 1993). This written text has neither stopped the story being told in the oral tradition nor confined it to the page; in fact, further forms of the story, based on the written adaptation, have been told and retold. I instead align more with Norm Friesen's (2018) approach to the problem that scholars tend to assert...

> that the media environments of orality and literacy are fundamentally at odds or are competing in a kind of zero sum game. The most prominent scholars in media ecology (e.g. McLuhan, Ong and Havelock) have long argued that orality has been gradually ceding ground to literacy over the course of Western history, starting with Classical Greece. (p.412)

Friesen believes that "oral and written forms have long been intertwined with and indispensable to one another – and that their interrelationship is uniquely structured..." (p413). This 'interrelationship' is what is evident in the study of the Chinese tradition – the context here is key – as this relationship in the environment of the story is what I discuss as an oral-literate symbiosis. The oral-literate symbiosis, is in opposition to any deterministic or definitive understanding of a great divide theory. It is more than the coexisting of orality and literacy, but their co-dependency in the storytelling tradition of *Journey to the West.* This thesis does not intend on disagreeing with the fundamentals of Ong's argument, but merely looks to readjust the focal point; although the term 'oral literature' is a contradiction in terms, perhaps a text that has a historical process of both orality and literature may bridge the gap. The term 'oral text' in reference to *Journey to the West*, does not mean that as a story it always embodies the oral-aural process. Instead, we will take the view of this type of 'orality' is a complex and multi-sensory concept, in which the oral tradition involves visual stimuli and artefacts, and the books and manuscripts embody traditions of orality.

Unlike many of my contemporaries I am looking at *Journey to the West* not as a work of literature but as a story, one that has undergone a process of fluctuating media and formats; a story that is intrinsically linked to an oral tradition. It would seem plausible that with Ong's own concepts of oral residue, coupled with the phenomenon of the Chinese oral tradition, that a gap for 'oral literature' or an 'oral text' may lay. For instance, the storybooks of the Ming dynasty are considered prompt books, written for oral recitation to aid memory and structure (Hsun 1964). Although this would seem simply to be oral residue, there may be a more complex relationship in Chinese storytelling; the novelization of *Journey to the West* may have been heavily influenced and taken from oral storytellers (Jenner 1993), but it also may have preserved it for a tradition that still continues in China today. The story of *Journey to the West* has gone through the processes of orality and storytelling discussed above, but the contextualised history of the story allows for a greater understanding of how the story developed through tradition and ultimately flourished within the great divide of orality and literacy to maintain its vitality through to modern media. The context of the Chinese tradition of storytelling will be explored and integrated in the study of the story. However, the concepts outlined above in the assessment of Ong's treatment of human communication are important in the analysis of *Journey to the West* as a developing story. I will utilise Ong's work as a form of communication morphology, to gain insight into the nature of the story's relationship to human communication and storytelling, whilst giving it context to the communicative environment that it was told. I will not necessarily view Ong's thesis of the shifting cognition of the human psyche from oral-aural to literate as a 'truth' when discussing *Journey to the West.* I intend to interpret Ong's ideas of orality and literacy as structural ideas in which to analyse features of storytelling in the *Journey to the West* cycle, not as actualities in human development.

1.3 Secondary Orality and Oral traditions

It is in the digital age that the way in which the story is both *told* and *heard* reflects the traditional form of performance and reception in *Journey to the West*. The story began in the

storytelling traditions of Buddhist Monks and developed into a secular trade of oral performance. Although, ideologically, it is believed these elements have been subverted and silenced by the written word of the print age, elements of these performative aspects seem to have been reborn into the electronic and digital age, with the re-imagination of sound in storytelling. It is in Ong's explorations of the post-typographic landscape, in his seminal work *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982) that the notion of a 'secondary orality' is cemented[3]. Here 'Secondary orality' is explored as seemingly the final (or at least latest) stage of orality. Its fundamentals lie in the emergence of electronic devices in which oral speech may be recorded or projected. Ong discusses the reflection of primary orality in this new form, as it holds much of the same sensory elements and has the same immediacy and concentration on the present moment. In all the use of electronic equipment such as the telephone, television, film and radio, there is a direct link to the transient nature of the 'primary' oral/aural culture, however this new orality is self-aware and deliberate (Ong, 1982). The ability to record speech and utterance has enabled a mass distribution of the oral tradition, enabling people across the world to listen to debates, conversation and oral narratives, seemingly succumbing to McLuhan's (1962) 'Global Village'. However, Ong is quick to note that as much of a reflection of primary orality that this contemporary electronic communication creates; it is still entirely reliant on the literate world of print and technology for its production and maintenance (Ong, 1982). There are also marked differences in our modern mass production and accumulation of equipment and technology to utilise this orality, rather than simply being organically communicative. This is however the layering effect of evolution, as different technologies and media were being established, the old technologies were not abandoned. Within this new 'secondary orality' there is very much an establishment of a new psyche and medium, using the old as a platform, as Ong states on the subject: "...this is not to say that we are returning to an earlier oral-aural world. There is no return to the past. The successive verbal media do not abolish one another but overlie one another" (Ong, 1967 p.9).

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[3] Ong had outlined secondary orality in previous works: see Ong 1967, 1971, 1977

Secondary orality has become a loaded theory that seems to represent a new way of thinking about the modern age of communication in the orality and literacy model. Abigail Lambke (2012) has attempted to establish a unified theory of secondary orality to make its use more definitive and straightforward, mainly due to the large amount of interpretation of the term and theory. Lambke establishes three main features of secondary orality to help guide on its use in analysis: "(1) a merger of dynamics of primary orality and typographic literacy (2) an emphasis on the social and participatory nature of sound and (3) a tension between the spontaneity of orality and the planned structure of literacy." (p209). These areas tend to encompass most issues pertaining to the orality-literacy paradigm and establish better parameters to work within.

Walter J. Ong passed away in 2003, and although the internet was well established, society's immersion in its technology was not at the scale that it is today. Although Ong makes comparisons between the cultures of primary and secondary orality there is very much a distinction of *orality* and *aurality*, something that on occasion is misinterpreted in modern discourse. Some scholars seem to attribute the term of 'Secondary orality' to online practice and culture. Although these cultural comparisons between pre-literate and digital communities have great validity, it is not necessarily permissible to apply Ong's idea of a 'secondary orality' to something that is not entirely oral. This is much in the same way that scholars criticised Ong for interpreting all oral features in writing 'oral residue' (Coleman 1996), it therefore seems inappropriate to claim that all modern forms of electronic communication that hold forms of orality as secondary orality. These instances of using secondary orality as a term or starting point to discuss online or digital practices which do not include an oral-aural process always contain fascinating features, but often miss Ong's process of definition. These contemporary ideas asserted by Kibby (2005), Morehouse and Crandell (2014) and Bounegru (2008), tend to emphasise the participatory event of text based communication online being inherently oral in practice. This relationship, although entirely tangible, can still not be considered secondary orality. Scholars such as Kibby (2005 p.771) claim email forwardables are a form of secondary orality. Kibby argues that digital communication such as email, due to a sense of

immediacy, although written, still 'privileges orality'. Morehouse and Crandall (2014 p.28) similarly

assert that social media, and specifically Facebook, is a form of secondary orality due to its 'traces

of oral culture'. Soffer (2016) makes similar comparisons in his discussion of the social media

application Snapchat in which the features of immediacy and transience are seen as being more

aligned with the constructs found in the oral-aural process than those of literacy (Soffer 2016).

Similar discussions are also made in online spaces, like Bounegru's (2008) discussion of secondary

orality in microblogging in which there is a fusion of oral and literate features, as microblogging is

both ephemeral and vernacular whilst being textual in form, resulting in features of secondary

orality. Similarly, Stewart (2016) compares the secondary oral dynamic of academics on twitter,

and how they mix the traditions of academic literacy with the more casual and immediate dialogic

nature of digital communication.

All these reflections hold similar interpretations of orality and secondary orality, but many

of these examples only briefly touch on, or completely miss, the defining features of Ong's concept.

Although these examples exhibit the transience, sense of community, grouped audiences and

essence of vernacular storytelling, there is no sense of orality in the sounding out of words. No

oral/aural process has been re-established in this new media practice, and therefore does not

constitute a secondary orality. It could be argued that these assertions are too rigid and it is the

progression of theoretical discourse that is asserted in these discussions, but there may also be

missed opportunities to go beyond the concept of secondary orality in developing new definitions

for these contemporary media occurrences. As Lambke (2012) explains:

> Ong's theory of secondary orality was meant to be introductory, with the understanding that stages
> in human communication evolve over time... secondary orality must continue to be refined as
> innovations in mediated – technologized – sound continues. Ong's term is worthwhile because it
> engages with the more developed parts of his communication paradigm: primary orality,
> chirographic literacy and print literacy. By using the term secondary orality to discuss current
> sound artefacts, whether it is Siri, audiobooks or podcasts, there is an implicit comparison with
> earlier moments of orality. This comparison is crucial, because it gives a historical understanding
> to emerging artefacts, like Siri, that might otherwise become lost in the jumble of 'new media'.
> Refinement of Ong's secondary orality offers to place the dynamics of sound in emerging media at
> the fore-front, so the 'word as sound' can continue to be explained. (p.214)

It is then in the recurrence of orality in electronic media that secondary orality aids the analysis of

spoken word, and not in the analysis of instances of text based communication, this should be

something different; something that is developed beyond Ong's concepts and into something new.

Therefore, it is by Ong's terms that we will view secondary orality as the rebirth of sound through electronic media, and so we will choose to consider the audio-visual adaptations of *Journey to the West* as secondary oral texts, in which the storytelling of the tradition has been reborn into sound. But as well as being secondary oral texts, they are distinctly visual, and so much of the description of both orality and literacy have been transposed into something different. There are then several layers that must be considered, first is the oral contours of these texts; second is the oral features of storytelling that have been transposed - by which I mean the oral culture and not the orality of the oral/aural process; third is the influence of other audio-visual storytelling techniques.

1.3.1 Secondary Orality and Audio-visual Texts

Attempting to utilise Ong's term within the confines of its definition, whilst simultaneously trying to expand it into other directions, is a very difficult balancing act. Above I have been critical of other scholar's application of secondary orality into spheres that are not oral. It is then with trepidation that I now attempt to do something similar, and so we must tread carefully and approach the discussion in a metacognitive manner. One of the ways we can view Ong's conception of secondary orality within his own terms is to not merely consider the re-introduction of sound in electronic media as secondary orality, but also the functions, narrative themes and structures being born from the orality of pre-print storytelling. But it is impossible to deconstruct scholars' interpretations of Ong's secondary orality and then myself ignore the same rules. Below I examine the visual aspects of film being a part of the oral tradition, and in turn the result of secondary orality. Obviously, visuality is not an aspect of orality, and I have clearly stated this in regard to the works on secondary orality above. It is instead, a reintroduction, or in fact continuation, of oral *culture* and not *orality*. Orality is, in function, the spoken word, but storytelling as a medium is not and can be many things. The oral-literate symbiosis can be seen in film and television texts through many layers: screenwriting, direction, storyboarding, repetition and rehearsal, etc. However, the

finished texts are what can be investigated within a single story or a story cycle. Sheila J. Nayar (2004a, 2004b, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2020), unlike any other scholar, discusses the oral dynamics of audio-visual texts and how everything from genre formula to active audience engagement make the study of film a concern of media ecology. In many ways, Nayar's study of film in this light, points to something different to secondary orality. Nayar takes the opinion that much of Ong's work on secondary orality is biased in its western focus and appreciation of oral dynamics, in fact Nayar argues against Ong's attitude of embedded literacy within secondary orality:

> The argument here then, contra Ong, is that modern storytelling forms highly inflected by orality may exist; and that, if one extends one's boundaries beyond the confines of the western literary tradition and of the voice as the major locus of orality, one can indubitably recognize that 'often-told oral stor[ies]' (Ong 1982: 11) – or, at least, differently mediated descendants of such stories – have persisted in film narrative. (Nayar 2012. P.223)

Within film, Nayar (2010) asserts that there is an under appreciation for the transposing of voice into cinematic techniques such as sound, score, editing and cinematography, and that Ong, or perhaps his contemporaries, are too stringent with his concepts of literacy and *the literate* in the term of secondary orality. The assertion is that the technology itself can be separated from the literacy that created it and can be appreciated outside of this paradigm. These texts, in Nayar's thesis, need to be appreciated for their oral features, which do not necessarily contain 'orality' per se. Instead, it is the consideration of the concepts of oral composition and oral thinking that may be applied to audio-visual texts, rather than the actuality of orality. The formulaic expression of narrative, the recognition of narrative tropes and their repetition are seen as the oral contours of the film world, as these are clear descendants of ancient oral stories (Nayar 2012, 2020). Nayar also proposes that the weight of literacy assigned to these films do not consider the enjoyment of the audio-visual medium by those who are not literate; Nayar poses the question of Indian Masala films that are exceptionally popular exports around the world: "Why might a Nigerian villager who has never left his or her village call a film like *Mother India* culturally familiar and completely comprehensible?" (Nayar 2004 p.14). It is proposed that it is in fact the "psychodynamics of

orality" within non-literate audience members that enables the appreciation of these films (Koven 2008, Nayar 2020). The films themselves "do not take the form of a literacy-driven object." Nayar explains that as Indian cinema

> …possesses clear characteristics of oral performance and orally transmitted narratives, conspicuously sharing traits with, for example, Homeric epic and the Indian *Mahabharata*… it is a product that employs specific devices and motifs that are traditionally part of orally based storytelling. (Nayar 2004 p.14).

Here Nayar claims that the song, narrative, visual tropes, and sound of Indian cinema transcend cultural boundaries and literacy through their formulaic oral expressions. These are by Nayar's understanding the true continuation of orality, the idea that secondary orality is in some way a second coming of sound, rather than perhaps the redistribution of the oral contours, and not the orality itself. Ong's belief that in electronic media environments, societies are unable to understand nor engage with primary orality, is for Nayar, a fiction: "High-technology cultures – or cultures that make ample use of high technologies in popular-cultural ways – do not always preclude an embrace of formulas or clichés. This misconception was born of Ong's unfamiliarity with popular cultures from around the world" (Nayar 2012, p224). Nayar believes, as I do, that primary orality in its noetic aesthetic, still pervades in the formula of film. In fact, the very results of the content analysis of *Journey to the West* evidences a direct relationship between the visual repetitions and those associated with the oral tradition.

Other scholars have been examining film with similar ideas to Nayar, most notably in the field of folklore. Mikel Koven, has investigated the importance of film in its representation of folklore as well as its facility as folklore text (Sherman and Koven 2007, Koven 2008). In fact, Koven's own 2003 assessment of the literature surrounding the study of film and folklore (*Folklore Studies and Popular Film and Television: A Necessary Critical Survey)* enabled a starting point in which to assess the broad issues and concerns within the field. Koven has gone on to extensively investigate the medium as a conduit of folklore and has successfully examined motifs and tale types

associated with the Aarne Thompson classification system[4], revealing traditional narratives,

characters and tropes within modern filmic adaptations.

     In his 2008 book *Film, Folklore and Urban Legends* Koven examines *Weekend at Bernie's*

(1989) as a film in successful utilisation of folk tale-types. Importantly to this study, Koven also

goes on to interweave elements of Ong's thesis within the analysis: applying Ong's

psychodynamics of the oral mind to the narratology of the film. Koven asserts that the binarism

within the film's characters is reminiscent of the binary oppositions found in the psychodynamics of

orality:

> The characterizations in *Weekend at Bernie's*, painted in broad strokes, also demonstrate
> further verisimilitude with the psychodynamics of orality. To a literary audience, the "crude"
> polarizations within the film seem simplistic: neat, hardworking, responsible Rich/sloppy, lazy,
> irresponsible Larry; Rich's virtuous girlfriend, Gwen (Catherine Mary Stewart)/Bernie's
> adulterous gangster's moll, Tina; live Rich and Larry/dead Bernie; and so on. But these binary
> oppositions, beyond Lévi-Strauss's (1993) paradigmatic structuralism, are also one of the
> psychodynamics of orality (Koven 2008 p.61)

Here Koven looks at how the basics of what he calls 'vernacular cinema', mirror the sign systems

adopted by entertainment which place little value on literate views to understand meaning. This

approach coincides with Nayar's view on the 'primary oral' reading of films, where the literate

mind-set is not needed in engagement and understanding of filmic narratives. Koven goes on:

> We experience cinema, whether elite "art cinema" or vernacular cinema, through time...
> although we can purchase a videocassette and fast-forward or rewind to specific sections…to
> experience a film requires an ordered sequence of narrative processes. Skipping ahead or
> going back to what one may have missed, although possible, is not part of general filmgoing.
> In other words, cinema is a largely homeostatic phenomenon. It is always experienced in the
> present, and references to the past are not referred to or demanded unless they have direct
> relevance to the present, just like primary orality, according to Ong (1982). (Koven 2008
> p.63)

Koven considers film as an artefact, produced for specific audiences; film as narrative entertainment

has not changed from the oral story, play or book, it has a temporal existence which is akin to the

primary oral culture. Of equal importance is Koven's discussion of imagery within film and how

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[4] The Aarne –Thompson motif index is a systematic index of folktale motifs and tale types. This approach to analysing
    and identifying folklore has been in use for over a century, and has established a formalised manner in which to
    examine motifs and narrative repetitions.

repeated images that are associated with folk tales are assimilated within the medium of film. He uses Harold Schechter's evaluation of the horror image of an arm bursting out of a grave, which Schechter traces across multiple cases in cinema and back to the Grimm brothers. This type of continuation, Koven suggests "regardless of a film's sophistication or its technical complexity, the images a filmmaker uses to tell his or her story are often analogues to traditional folk-tales." (Koven 2008 pp12-13). This suggests that the filmic representation of traditional images is a continuation of folklore and not merely the use of folklore as a source or focal point. If we reconsider Nayar's (2020) discussions on myth as being the truth of an oral peoples, the structures, motifs and even visual elements will have been passed down along with the oral history in myth. These visual tropes are the structures of time-binding through storytelling, and themselves are elements of primary orality in their *use* and an audience's reading of them. For some audiences, the use of these visual motifs will need cultural competencies akin to Foley's traditional referentiality; some national films, although accessible to wide audiences due to their oral noetic, may only be fully understood by those embedded in that tradition.

Nayar's interpretation of orality in popular cinema makes for a very transferable concept in studying the texts of *Journey to the West* as the motifs found in the texts are the transpositions of storytelling features that are found in the cycle – whether they are oral, literate or visual – these features are transposed into different forms, they still exist, as they are the contours of the story's traditional story-telling. It is my intention then to use Ong's discussion of secondary orality as a starting point, to aid discussions of the dynamics of orality and literacy within *Journey to the West*, and not as a primary concept or concern.

The difference in approach to the application of secondary orality, to those pre-mentioned applications by other scholars, is that I am analysing the performative oral-visual features and contours of a tradition through traditional performance, literature and then film and television. Unlike others (Kibby 2005, Bonnegru 2008, Crandell and Morehouse 2014), I am not applying secondary orality to a non-oral medium, but instead considering how contours or orality and oral

features have altered and transposed in electronic 'oral-aural-visual' media texts. Following closer perhaps to Nayar's interpretation of 'orality' than Ong's.

My approach to orality and literacy dynamics within the texts of *Journey to the West*, whether written or in television and film, will approached in the context of Chinese storytelling traditions. Like Nayar and Koven, I will approach the analysis of texts with the stance that structural and visual features of the story in film and television are accessible to an oral noetic, but I will go further with this in the context of *Journey to the West*. I believe these structures to be embedded with the interplay of orality and literacy within Chinese storytelling, and therefore do not represent oral contours, but the contours of an oral-literate symbiosis. In the following chapters, I examine this oral-literate symbiosis in the manuscript, print and electronic evidence surrounding the story. I use this to determine a non-linear approach to orality and literacy within the structure of the story, in that one element does not override the other over time or due to the development of technology. Instead, I propose a constant flux and influence between the two that are embedded in the structures and features of the story. These repetitive features that appear across texts in multiple media, establish the narrative of *Journey to the West* as a medium itself, one that can be used include new content with every retelling.

Chapter 2
Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the approach and methodology taken in this study. The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, however this is weighted primarily to a qualitative approach. A content analysis of audio-visual texts is used to highlight basic percentage frequencies of recurring features in the story as a starting point for in-depth qualitative analysis. The research design has been informed by approaches in the field of the study of the oral tradition, as this is a primary concern of the thesis. A media ecology approach is taken in the analysis and interpretation of results and in the further investigations and qualitative analysis.

2.1.1 Research Approach

The research looks to evaluate the story of *Journey to the West* as a medium, and the lasting structural impact of the Chinese oral tradition on this medium. Therefore, a media ecology approach is taken to evaluate the story as functioning as such. This approach has been used to qualitatively evaluate the development, structures and impact of the medium. Strate (2017) suggests that Media ecology as a philosophical approach is multidisciplinary in nature, meaning unlike interdisciplinary studies, it uses approaches and philosophies from a multitude of standpoints and fields of research to approach a wide appreciation of media and technology as they give "form to a culture's politics, social organization, and habitual ways of thinking" (Postman 2000 p.10). Strate suggests of this multidisciplinary nature that:

> "the field of media ecology can be understood as a philosophical pursuit... Some areas of intersection include Aristotelian metaphysics, especially causality; stoicism; Thomism; Descartes and Kant's question of subjectivity; the dialectical views of history associated with Hegel and Marx; pragmatism; phenomenology; process philosophy; the philosophy of symbolic logic and form; aesthetics; the philosophy of science and technology; and existentialism and personalise." (p31)

The breadth of crossovers and intersections reveals the complexity of the field, as research can be conducted through multiple channels that aid the study and interpretation of media. Islas and Bernal (2016) suggest that as a field media ecology has been too often demarcated as a subfield in

communication theory: "media ecology should be recognized as a complex and systemic metadiscipline that transcends... the science of communication" (p. 190). As a complex multidisciplinary field of research, media ecology offers a number of approaches outside of the confines of communication studies and so a pragmatic approach is best suited to answering the research questions at hand.

The focal point of this research is to distinguish what remains of the traditions of oral storytelling within the modern texts related to *Journey to the West*, the central point of reference being the film and television texts. The approach of investigating oral characteristics in film is not a new approach, Mikel Koven (2008) successfully approaches this from a folkloristic angle, and most relevant here, Sheila J. Nayar (2004, 2008, 2010, 2020) approaches this from a media ecology stance. Nayar investigates film in this manner through the orality and literacy paradigm of media ecology, which looks to evaluate the lasting effect of these two human technologies and their impact on society and cognition. Fundamental in Nayar's (2004) approach is that she proposes that even traditional orality and literacy studies present oral characteristics as being strictly from the past...

> "...receding (though perhaps residually still apparent in modern times), this may not be the case. It may simply be that, up till now, there has been no comprehensive application of the orality-literacy paradigm to visual media. Studies have been limited more or less exclusively to the anthropological study of oral peoples and to the investigation of the oral presence as it appears (or is disappearing) in written texts. (p.14)

Nayar goes on to point out that many scholars seem to *skip-over* the visual medium for this type of reflection and analysis, yet have proceeded to discuss written based communication in recent online and digital media practices. Unlike traditional approaches to the study of film, that look at the art of cinema (Bordwell 1985) and the finer analysis of meaning through semiotic approaches (Metz 1982, Buckland 2000) or the intelligible nature of the image of film (Bordwell and Carroll 1996, Carroll 1988), Nayar refocuses to discuss how technologies "significantly impact these processes" (Nayar 2015, p.2). She argues that many scholars suggest visual narratives tend to require a mindset

like that used to absorbing narratives through a written form, however Nayar poses the question: "what if an individual does not possess such a mindset? What if, due to her or his functioning in a non-literate or low-literate or oral-privileging environment, s/he does not have the cognitive skills required?" (p. 15). This is at the crux of the media ecology approach to audio-visual texts, especially in use of the orality and literacy framework, that cultural cognition, within one or the other, impacts the spectators experience of visual narrative. Similarly, I am looking not merely at what traces of the Chinese oral tradition found in the audio-visual texts of *Journey to the West,* but also the oral episteme contextual to the reception of such traditions. Nayar's (2008) media ecology approach in the study of film focuses on these epistemic concerns of orality and literacy:

> I refer here neither to visual literacy nor to anything related to optics, images, or camera eyes. (All these ideas tend parametrically to constrict discussion by focusing too exclusively on competencies of vision.) Nor do I draw on linguistics or on classifications familiar to the semiotic study of film... its approach is decidedly media ecological... Specifically, it proposes that how people can engage with storytelling (as both a spectatorial and a generative act) is fundamentally contoured by their capacity to engage with the written word. (Nayar 2008, p.141)

My own approach follows Nayar's, in that the narrative function of film and television should not be considered as purely visual, but in relation to orality and literacy, and that these visuals can be considered less formally linked to synchronic interpretations in semiotics or psychoanalysis, but more widely in terms of oral-literate episteme. This then, is not an unusual methodological approach and a justifiable form of research given the similarities in research design between Nayar's and my own. The difference in the work of Nayar's and this research stems in the films under study. Nayar, throughout her years of investigation, has examined Bollywood films as a primary concern. I on the other hand, am considering one story or narrative across a multitude of texts. It was imperative that I was able to approach the film and television texts with the same stance in orality and literacy, as my hypothesis is that the Chinese storytelling traditions that help shape the story were still embedded in the story itself, and this was weighted more to an oral episteme. Fundamentally this approach comes back to McLuhan's understanding that *the medium is the message*. In this instance, McLuhan's (1964) aphorism *is* the media ecology approach to

research, to focus not just on content and messages within media, but on the media themselves. This refocuses qualitative approaches to film and visual analysis away from psychoanalytic, semiotic, or Marxist models, to examine visual and structural features through a technological framework, that of the oral-literate episteme. For this research, the structural features of the Chinese oral tradition found in the texts, along with their repetition in specific ways across the texts related to *Journey to the West,* suggest that they are component parts of the story as a medium.

Building on from Nayar's work and her comparisons of formula in *Homer* to the repetitive formulaic features of film (Nayar 2001, 2004, 2010, 2020), I specifically use the Chinese oral tradition as a frame of reference for investigating *Journey to the West*. This form of context is essential to understanding the story as a medium, as its visual and aural elements, its narrative functions, and its epistemic features within the orality and literacy framework, are culturally linked to the Chinese storytelling tradition. I have used theory related to the study of this oral tradition to then apply to both the coding of the content analysis as well as the interpretation of these codes. The use of the oral tradition to identify repetitions in the audio-visual texts is then replicated in identifying similar patterns in the study of the story within different media, be they written, oral transcripts or online games. This way, the evaluation of the oral tradition and its episteme are contextualised across the breadth of different texts from 8th century onward. So although one of the methods I use is a content analysis of a sample of films related to *Journey to the West*, the approach is in *context analysis*.

Context analysis is what Neil Postman (2006) described as the primary approach of media ecology. The manner in which to analyse not merely the content, but all the intersections and relationships of that content to a medium, environment and culture.

> What matters to us is context, and to the extent that media ecology has, as yet, a methodology, that methodology might be called context analysis. This implies looking at communication environments as systems within systems within systems. It means trying to identify the significant characteristics of each system as a whole, the subsystems of which it is composed, the larger system within which it functions, and all the significant relationships among them. To make things even more confusing, context analysis takes as its subject matter the transactions between individual and reality, individual and individual, individual and group, group and group, group and culture, culture and culture, and

tries to see them all as functions of one another. Moreover, context analysis, or media ecology, gives special attention to the roles played in each of these transactions by the media through which they are conducted. By "medium," we mean any agent or agency through which two or more discrete elements are linked in a transacting system. (p.8)

Journey to the West as a medium is a 'transacting system' by which the different content, whether it be socio-political, artistic or emotionally driven messages, are weaved by storytellers into a pre-existing structure. As a story it is a system within systems, as it is the medium of a narrative told within other media, whether they be oral, written, audio-visual, analogue, or digital. The context of these systems and how they interact with the story are imperative to understanding it as a medium. As such, the context of the Chinese oral tradition through the historical culture of storytelling in China is important. It seems strange to then say that this context analysis is what drove the need for a content analysis within the study. A content analysis is often seen as a quantitative way of evaluating repetitions and patterns in texts that may contain notable meaning (Hodder 1994). I have used this as a starting point in assessing the repetitive features across texts of film and television, to then use context analysis to evaluate where the repetitions stem from, in what medium or tradition did they develop, when this tradition or medium surfaced, who interacted with the repetitions and media, and importantly, why have they continued? The content analysis was imperative to identifying, probing and focusing these questions about *Journey to the West*.

2.1.2 Using a Content analysis

Although content analysis is a method of research most related to the social sciences (Weber 1990), it has been used in the analysis of Film and Media in multiple dimensions (Salt 2009; Monk-Turner et al 2004; Johnson and Holmes 2009; Parasecoli 2009). Content analysis in its basic sense is "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (Holsti 1969 p.14) or similarly "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (Patton, 2002, p.453). It is widely used as a method of replicable technique; the validation of which is that different researchers approaching the same content will

find the same data and results. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) discuss three main approaches to content analysis: conventional, directed and summative. The conventional approach of content analysis is when researchers develop codes after observations and during the analysis of data, approaching the research itself without preconceived categories in mind. The directed approach involves researches approaching the analysis of data based on a pre-existing theory which helps to formulate research questions and coding systems. The summative approach involves researchers counting, quantifying and comparing the content of texts, going on to analyse the usage and context of this content. I decided to formulate the research from a mix of both the directed and summative approaches. Due to the nature of the content analysed being set around the multiple texts of the same story, and the extensive review of the literature and secondary sources, the conventional approach would not suit the research design. However, the research is modelled around the current work and theory surrounding the Chinese storytelling tradition and discussions of developing communications and so it is in many ways a directed approach analysis. The categories and coding of data were focussed on the areas of interest within these fields as they are contextually relevant to the story and its development; the audio-visual information was coded into categories that were relevant to the theoretical framework of the study. The summative approach is also relevant in analysing the data as the qualitative analysis of the quantitative content concentrates on "identifying and quantifying certain... content in text[s] with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of the... content... to explore usage." (Hsieh and Shannon 2005 p.1283). In this sense the analysis of the content across the multiple film and television texts is counted and categorised through the context of the secondary sources and literature; and the usage and context of this content across the texts is the primary focus of analysis. This means that the research involves the study of both manifest (the elements that are physically present and quantifiable) and latent content (the interpretive analysis of symbolic meanings behind the physical elements) within the adaptations to help enrich the understanding of the phenomenon (Berg 2001). The content analysis followed more along the lines of similar research into genre specific content analysis such as *A Content Analysis of Violence in*

American War Movies (Monk-Turner et al 2004) or Johnson and Holmes's (2009) content analysis on the mixed messages found across 40 Hollywood romantic comedy films. Both examples look at elements found in a specific genre and look to analyse their implications. The former looks to investigate the progressive amount and graphic representation of violence in American war films from the 1970's through to 2002; the latter investigates the mixed messages within the fictitious relationships represented in romantic comedies and the implications on audience interpretations. Although the research conducted in this thesis approaches the audio-visual texts of *Journey to the West* in a similar fashion, the story being analysed is not a genre in the strictest sense; the texts naturally have shared generic features due to the narrative. Therefore, it is important to view the content analysis as something similar to a genre study but similarly something with its own set of generic conventions and occurrences. It was a method that would highlight the important repetitive motifs, scenes and representations within the story which would act as a framework in which to focus analysis.

The use of a content analysis as a structural tool for analysing both film and story structures related to the Chinese storytelling traditions, seems validated by the continued use in the study of film and television. In this research, it is important not just in what it may tell us about the films and television texts of *Journey to the West*, but what it tells us about the story across all media. Although the content analysis is imperative in determining the repeated forms of the story and what has survived from the traditional storytelling traditions of China throughout the story's existence, this is not a study of film and television. This is a quantifiable starting point in which to structure a theoretical framework in media ecology, to discuss the complexities and nuances of *Journey to the West* as a medium, and the interactions it has had with technology and culture throughout its thousand-year history.

2.2 Method: Compiling the Filmography

The research began around the data received from compiling the Filmography of *Journey to the*

West found in Appendix A. As discussed above the number of film and television texts were vast and the number has grown considerably since the research began. The filmography itself was limited to film and television (including animated texts) and did not include school projects, music videos, and advertisements; as the availability of information surrounding some of these texts is limited. Instead, these were to be considered as separate items for consideration and analysis. Although comics and graphic novels also present us with great evidence on visual representation and iconography, they do not appear in the sample as they are still anchored in the physicality and make-up of print. For the opposite reason, online texts such as fan made videos, videos made for the internet, one off specials, recordings of video gameplay, home movie recordings of productions of the story, have not been included in the sample. They are anchored by very little, their presence online is effervescent and un-static, and there is no list or catalogue in which to verify and account for the amount of texts available. Personal recordings also have their own issues as the amount of these texts (for instance recordings of Chinese operatic adaptations of the story) available on video streaming sites are abundant and therefore simply keeping a record of these texts would be an incredibly challenging task. Film and television represent a middle ground between these two media - a technology that has oral/aural and visual communication at its centre but is still a static countable artefact. It includes the performative elements of the story that are common to street performers, storytellers, puppeteers, and yet it is an unchangeable and examinable artefact. The history of the medium means that there are clear traditions visible within the texts, as well as a definable cultural importance in the medium as production has continued. The sample taken from this filmography is a balance of older texts to newer, with each national output represented.

The filmography was compiled through extensive online research. This began in 2013 and has been ongoing throughout the research, as new texts are being produced each year. The online research has relied on information found on various websites including:

http://www.hkmdb.com/
http://www.chinesemirror.com/
http://www.imdb.com/

http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/HKFA/index.html
http://catalog.digitalarchives.tw/item/00/44/e4/f7.html
http://m.hupu.com/bbs/9962313.html

These were also complimented by searches on video streaming sites such as:

youtube.com
dailymotion.com
youku.com
tudou.com
baike.baidu.com
56.com
viki.com
vidrope.com

Due to the large number of adaptations available, a long period of verification followed the

compiling of the filmography, as texts were available under multiple titles as well as in the Chinese

script. After film texts were verified – multiple titles confirmed - they were compiled into

chronological order of release year and categorised into Chinese texts (including Hong Kong,

Mainland and Taiwanese texts), international texts, and television and animated series. The texts

were then tested for availability online. This involved further searches on video streaming sites

looking for a text's availability in full or part online. There have been difficulties in sustaining

availability due to copyright infringements and many texts that were available on sites such as

YouTube have subsequently been removed. Those texts that were available online but have since

been removed have been sourced on DVD wherever possible. The titles within the filmography in

Appendix A also have the web address links underneath them, although not all will now be active.

2.2.1 Identifying the film and television sample from the filmography

This is outlined further below but the deciding factors where based on the availability of texts. As

the sample texts are based around a single story, the analysis of texts from as early as 1941 to

contemporary texts, from mainland China, and other nations, and from film and television texts,

will add to the validity of the findings and help test the hypothesis more rigorously. The majority of

film texts (over 66%) were from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong; those from other countries were significantly lower, less than 9%. The remaining 30 texts (24%) in the filmography were television series. Of these series 16 of them (just below 13% of the sample) are Chinese language, 10 are Japanese (8%) and the remaining four texts (just over 3%) are from other nations. The balance in the sample represents this division in texts with an attempt to include more Chinese film and television texts, followed by Japanese and international texts.

2.2.2 The Foundation Concepts for Categorising the Content

To be able to fully validate any findings within a content analysis of the texts, it was first important to review the literature to contextualise the idea of storytelling and the oral tradition around *Journey to the West*. This included not just the review of literature but also a review of secondary sources within the Chinese tradition of storytelling. I closely examined the work of Vibeke Bordahl (1999, 2002, 2003, 2010, and 2013) whose research into the Chinese oral tradition, and that related to a *Journey to the West* school of storytelling, is incredibly detailed and systematic. Few scholars other than Bordahl have investigated the nuances of the Chinese oral tradition of storytelling in conjunction with the Chinese vernacular novel in quite so much detail. As a scholar, Bordahl has conducted extensive fieldwork on oral storytelling in China, cataloguing the storyteller's technique and repertoire, and has applied the evidence to the history of Chinese storytelling in older performative arts and literature. This allows for a greater validity of the findings within the analysis of data, as they can be contextualised to a specific tradition, rather than a generalist idea of the traditions of storytelling.

To establish categories in the sample I decided to use wider generalist categories associated with oral storytelling to initially group the findings. These categories were then coded into smaller categories based on the evidence found in Vibeke Bordahl's work, and the commonalities in texts from the first viewings. I will briefly outline this process below.

I used a contextualised method to help outline the common traits of an oral epic with the

traits of audio-visual texts. Although I am viewing a body of work as a continuation of a tradition, creatively founded in the oral tradition, the texts are still entities completely removed from the traditional act of storytelling. Unlike an oral recitation, there is not a single orator playing multiple characters but multiple actors playing individual characters. Unlike a storyteller describing the visualisation of characters; action, setting and visual representations are silently presenting them in audio-visual texts. Unlike a storyteller playing an authorial voice, film and television texts have their own authorities in the use of cinematography, sound and editing which position and dictate what an audience experience. Therefore, these marked differences must be approached in an alternative fashion.

I have used the empirical data presented in ethnographic research to reveal similarities in the study of the performer and elements found in audio-visual texts. By identifying the repetitive tropes in the story of *Journey to the West,* from one text to the next, I have been able to develop areas of analysis that link to both the story and areas associated with the study of oral performance and oral epic. Elements such as the *register* of a storyteller, which are implicitly interlinked with performance, have been reassessed and transferred into another format to see how elements of storytelling may be retrieved from texts that are artefacts rather than singular actualities of performance. Unlike looking at an artefact like the *Odyssey*, in the form of a book, there is little that can be gained from film and television texts in terms of register; in the Homeric verses there is evidence of metrical composition, in a film there is a no temporal need for such devices. It then becomes evident that the focus shifts from traditional storytelling tropes to contemporary storytelling forms that echo these traditional devices.

Through examining the various texts I have identified the following as repetitive traits within the story itself. These have been transposed from a study of oral epics by Foley and Gejin's (2012). Their study outlines the common traits of the oral epic across different nationalities, making it a worthwhile starting point for exploring the common features in *Journey to the West*. Foley and Gejin's study essentially outlines the similarities in oral traditions of four different national

traditions to establish a usable holistic system to analyse texts, regardless of national origin. They include the following areas:

The Poem in oral epic– a poem is a story in itself but one that exists in a larger story cycle – generally as well as being part of a similar metric framework – being part of a poetic composition tradition.

*The Scene or Theme in oral epi*c– broadly speaking this refers to the repetition in descriptions of similar events in different stories such as staple beginnings setting the scene etc. for example in Homeric verses the repetition of the scene: feasting.

The Poetic Line in oral epic – this is to do with the storyteller's metric systems which is not applicable to study within this research but Foley and Gejin do mention prosimetrum: the mix of prose and verse, a common trait of Chinese vernacular fiction from as early as the seventh century.

The Formula in oral epic– this relates to the storytellers use of formulas and stock phrases to meet the criteria of metric lines such as the use of noun-epithet "swift-footed Achilles"

The Register in oral epic– this is (culturally) idiosyncratic to the storytelling tradition, in a culmination of the above, a storyteller will have a way or manner of telling a story which is familiar to the audience.

I used Foley and Gejin's morphology as a way to ground the content analysis categories to help contextualise the commonalities against standardised storytelling techniques associated with oral storytelling. I then transposed these areas in their morphology to the film and television medium, to help make the areas relevant to the sample. The bold text represents areas that they have identified as recurring areas of storytelling across different oral epics from various nationalities. The text to the right represents the repetitive motifs from *Journey to the West* that can be transposed to fit the audio-visual medium:

The Poem in oral epic - The recurring story cycle or episode.

The Scene or Theme in oral epic– The recurring structure and event: narrative repetition of a scene.

The Poetic Line in oral epic – The interplay of song, dialogue and narration.

The Formula in oral epic– Visual motif and iconography: the continuation of character representation, weapons and objects as iconography.

The Register in oral epic – Verbal traits: the importance of vernacular, fliting and boast.

These story specific structures allow a reasonable transferral of the elements studied in Foley and Gejin's outline, to a mix of both traditional and contemporary elements of storytelling. Several of the areas are much the same and can be studied in much the same manner; both *the poem* and *the scene or theme*, essentially remain as similar structures of investigation. *The poetic line*; instead of investigating the literary idea of prosimetrum (the mix of prose and verse, a common trait of Chinese vernacular fiction), the examination is refocused as many of the audio-visual texts have recurring uses of song and narration which is interspersed with the dialogue of the diegesis. *The Formula* is a complex transferral as the use of mnemonic devises may be evidenced in the repetition of visual representations associated with the story itself which is evident across the multiple audio-visual texts. Lastly, *the register* has been examined as the textual recurrences of oral features within the story (from literature to audio-visual texts), these culminate in the common use of verbal disputes, boasting and the vernacular language of the characters within the story. The method of analysis that I have employed in this manner is anchored and validated by a contextual interdisciplinary technique in the use of secondary studies.

For instance, although *Journey to the West* is considered a *theme* in itself within the study of Chinese storytelling, the repetition of story cycles or episodes from the narrative seems to suggest that these are *Poems* of a wider oral epic. So by investigating the modern adaptations and the

number of times a single story cycle (or *poem)* appears, allows me a better idea of which case studies to investigate.

2.2.3 The Process of Categorising units in the Final Sample

After compiling the filmography, there was a need to set limitations and define themes with the analysis of content. The television and film texts themselves equate to 124 texts[5], however, if each episode of a television series were considered a separate text, the number of texts in the filmography would equate to over 1000 separate audio-visual adaptations. Therefore, adaptations in television series are limited to a single text status. The individual texts within the filmography had to then be identified with some distinguishing features to analyse the differences and similarities in content before selecting a smaller sample for deeper analysis. Each text was researched and the content categorised. The first theme identified was source material; whether or not the overarching narrative in the text also appeared in the Ming novel or was a new story. The colour coding denotes this within the filmography in appendix A: green is a text in which the narrative also appeared within the novel; blue is an original story; grey denotes a television series which has both narratives appearing in the novel and original stories; pink texts are considered appropriation[6]; red are erotic adaptations and yellow texts are unknown due to a lack of information regarding narrative. The definition of a new story against an adaptation is sometimes difficult; the identifying features that differentiate stories within the novel tend be based around antagonists; each antagonist constituting a different story. However, in film adaptations there are trends to telling more than one 'episode' that appear the novel. However, if a Film such as *Monkey goes West* (Shaw 1966 CH) tells the episode of the Monkey King's release from the mountain; the meeting of Zhu Bajie; The fight at Flowing Sands River, three separate episodes appearing in the book – it will still be treated as a having a direct relationship to the novel as there is a repetition of episodes and events, even if they

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[5]This is not a definitive amount. I am aware of several other texts that exist but which I am unable to verify. Within the nature of the story itself there are bound to be adaptations that I am also unaware of as a single researcher.

[6]Appropriation here is determined as a text that has been inspired by or pays homage to a pre-existing text but is not necessarily a direct adaptation. See Sanders 2006

have been short-handed. However, texts such as *Scarlett Boy rescue his Mother from the Dragon Palace* (Cheuk-Sang 1959) although directly uses characters that appear in the novel– Princess Iron fan and the Red Boy - it tells a new episode and does not follow any sequence of events from the novel and therefore will be viewed as an original story.

The final list of texts analysed in the content analysis due to their availability online are as follows:

Chinese (Including Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan)

1. Princess Iron Fan (1941)

2. Pigsy Eats Watermelon (1958)

3. How Princess Iron Fan Burnt Down the Heavenly Gate (1959)

4. How Scarlet Boy Rescued His Mother from the Dragon King's Palace (1959)

5. Monkey King and Skeleton (1962)

6. Havoc in Heaven (1964)

7. Which One Is Which (1965)

8. The Monkey Goes West (1966)

9. Cave of the silken web (1967)

10. Monkey King with 72 Magic (1976)

11. Ginseng Fruit (1981).

12. New Pilgrims to the West or Monkey War (1982)

13. Chinese Odyssey - Pandora 's Box (1995)

14. Conquering the demons (2013)

15. The Monkey King (2014)

16. Monkey King Hero is Back (2015) animation

17. The Monkey King 2 (2016)

18. Journey to the West: Demons Strike Back (2017)

International Films

  19. Alakazam the Great (Japan 1960)

  20. Forbidden Kingdom (USA 2008)

Television and animation series (both Chinese and international)
  21. Saiyuki (Monkey!) (Japan 1978)

  22. Saiyuki Starzinger (Japan 1978-1979)

  23. Dragonball (Japan 1984-1988)

  24. *Journey to the West* (China 1986)

  25. Legends of the Monkey King (China 1999)

  26. Shinzo (Japan 2002)

  27. Monkey Typhoon (Japan 2002)

  28. Monkey King: Quest for the Sutra (China 2002)

  29. Saiyuki (Japan 2006)

  30. Monkey King (China 2009)

Once the texts were compiled within the filmography and the source material verified, further analysis took place. The next stage of analysis was much like 'open coding' as it had a broad focus looking merely at the similarities and recurring motifs found in the texts. This analysis focused less on deeper textual analysis but instead looked merely at sustained numerical occurrences across different texts. This involved the recording of repetitive audio and visual codes such as character representations, dress code, props, setting, fight sequences, colour, dialogue, song, and music (both diegetic and non-diegetic). Once this content had been broadly categorised the occurrences were then categorised or coded using Foley and Gejin's breakdown of the oral epic.

However, as presented above, this was contextualised against the story of *Journey to the West*; as this is the only text being studied, the approach had to be entirely relevant to the material itself. After the initial categorising of source material, this second analysis broke down the categories into:

Episode/book chapter – the apparent source of the individual story

Recurring scene – The repetitive scenes that occur across different episodes

Song/Narration – The use of singing and narration in presenting narrative information

Visual motif and iconography – the repetitive representations of characters and objects

Verbal traits – the use of colloquial language, boast and fliting

Each of these categories has a specific relationship to the storytelling of *Journey to the West* and allowed for further subcategories for coding. These subcategories, or coded units, merely expanded from the original categories from the multiple repetition of certain elements. For instance, the *recurring scenes* from the texts established new coded units such as:

- Attack from within - in which characters transform and attack antagonists from within their stomach
- Fight at the gates – protagonists and antagonists engage in a fight outside the antagonist's lair
- Fight in the Lair - Protagonists, after sneaking into the lair fight with the antagonists
- Fighting on the road (to the west) - protagonists meet and fight antagonists on the road west.
- The feast - the pilgrims are given food by villagers/Antagonists have a banquet
- The pilgrims converse with villagers about their woes
- The Chase - the Protagonist Chases and fights the antagonist (usually airborne) or vice versa
- The lookalike – characters have a doppelgänger
- Shape-shifting – characters transform into other characters to confuse their enemies
- Transformation – characters turn into other objects such as insects or food
- Seeking celestial help – protagonists seek advice and aid from various celestial beings
- In Media res – the story begins with the character already on their journey with no explicit exposition.
- Continuing with the journey – after solving a problem the protagonists continue on their journey.
- Life in Heaven – the life and occupant of heaven are depicted

- Buddha's hand/5 Elements mountain – Buddha uses his hand to imprison Monkey/Monkey is seen imprisoned under 5 elements mountain
- Caught in a Gourd - a character is sucked into a gourd
- Fighting in choreographed circus dancing

After the viewing of the texts, the establishing of further subcategories and coding of units had taken place, I was able to isolate the repetitive motifs found in the texts for deeper analysis. These subcategories and the numerical data results can be seen in Appendix B. The discussion of the texts is presented in more detail and discussed throughout the chapters, with a focus on chapter five.

The categorising and subcategorising of these units, based on their repetition is based on the structural analysis of traditional folk tales related to folkloristics. I am using what Mikel Koven refers to "Motif Spotting" (Koven 2008 p.3) - I looked for the "invariances" between the different adaptations *of Journey to the West.* In the simplest of forms, I looked at the visual, audio and narrative commonalities between texts. This is very similar in fashion to the descriptions of structuralism in both literary criticism and film analysis, but it also coincides with the form of structuralism associate with folkloristics. Alan Dundes, for instance, described structuralism within the field of folklore as the: "study of the interrelationships or organization of the component parts of an item of folklore" (Dundes 2007 p.123). The process of refining folktales to component elements or units such as suggested by Dundes, has long been the technique of folkloristics. For instance, the Aarne-Thompson classification system or index is the tale-type categorisation system first developed by Antti Aarne as a way of categorising tale types, and was translated and added to in 1961 by Stith Thompson, allocating each index entry a unique AT number. This classification index systematised the identification of folktales and their motifs. It was amended again in 2004 by Uther, who added greater detail and depth to the catalogue, and transformed the system to the AarneThompson-Uther index. This catalogue has become a standard tool for folklorists conducting field work and research analysis; as the identification of tale types and motifs have become the essential components by which researchers examine folklore (Dundes 1997). It is a structuralist approach to unitising motifs across all folktales; allowing researchers

to categorise stories by their commonalities. This type of structuralist approach to folklore was also

employed by Vladimir Propp in his analysis of Russian Fairy Tales. Here we also begin to see

the cross-over between film and folklore. Propp's study of fairy tales in *Morphology of the*

Folktale (1968) has been used as a structuralist approach in the analysis of folklore (Dundes 2007)

and film (Murphy 2012) and almost any form or medium which constitutes a sense of narratology.

It is a move to more specific functions within the fairy tale, rather than generic units associated with

works like the Aarne -Thompson classification system. Although there have been arguments against

the use of Proppian functions within the analysis of film, as Propp's work should not be applied

universally and it is in fact the morphology of a synchronic and specific form of fairy-tale, not a

design for all narratives (Bordwell 1988). However, in my study of audio-visual texts it is a valued

source of reference, as the texts represent a single story, the breakdown of the story's functions

through this type of Proppian analysis allows insight into the representation of the story's traditions.

The continued narrative functions seen within the audio-visual texts suggest a tradition, related back

to a storytelling process beyond the Ming novel.

The audio-visual texts have so many common repetitions, in motif and type scene that it is

easy to assimilate the principles of analysis put in place by both nationalistic and comparative

folklorists and systems like the Aarne-Thompson classification index. This type

of categorisation, albeit in a much more minor sense, was used as a basis to identify and classify

repetitions in the *Journey to the West* cycle. Specifically, within this study is how the 'motif

spotting' techniques of folkloristics may be used to study audio-visual texts. Although the study

of the oral tradition has helped to intially categorise units, it is with the folktale classification model

that forms the basis of studying the structure of *Journey to the West* as a medium. In Richard

Dorson's (1963) article *Current Theories in Folklore,* Dorson argues that this form of analysis

allows folklorists to "reconstruct the history of a complex folktale..." as "The method was designed

to thwart rash generalizations about the origin and meaning of folktales, through a thorough

and unprejudiced examination of each individual tale." (Dorson 1963 p.94). Therefore, using the model of the Aarne-Thompson-Uther classification system helps to identify the repetitive motifs without bias, and investigate their use and history in relation to the story.

2.2.4 Oral storytelling within the texts

As discussed above, I will attempt to find evidence of oral storytelling and the traditions of Chinese storytelling within all the texts, from Tang dynasty texts, Cheng-en's novel all the way to contemporary films and online applications. By looking at secondary sources regarding the ethnographic study of oral storytelling, it allows an insight into the patterns and formulas of storytelling. Once these patterns were assessed and used, the analysis of filmic and televisual elements may be reviewed as progressive elements of an established national tradition and folklore. This form of analysis is not unusual in the study of oral traditions. Most ethnographers within the field use the data gathered from fieldwork of living oral traditions to analyse the written texts of historical oral traditions; much like Albert B. Lord and Milman Parry used their discoveries from the Yugoslavian tradition to analyse the Homeric verses. This is a standardised system when reviewing works of literature and is manner in which I will also view the Ming novel ascribed to Wu Cheng-en as well as the audio-visual texts. By using the various studies on Chinese storytelling I will attempt to find evidence of oral storytelling within the multiple versions of *Journey to the West*. This is again a fairly widespread (pre-existing) practice, even within the field of the Chinese vernacular fiction. The best case is Vibeke Bordahl's work *The Storyteller's Manner in Chinese Storytelling* (Bordahl 2003) in which Bordahl attempts to investigate the evidence of an oral storyteller's manner within a work of literature. The methodology relies on the basic premise that by using studies of contemporary (living) oral traditions in China, evidence of the manner of the storyteller can be found within the Ming novel *Shuihu zhuan*[7].

Therefore, I will use Bordahl's process as well as her own ethnographic and textual studies

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[7] Commonly this title is known as *The Water Margin* or *Outlaws of the Marsh* in the West

of both oral tradition and vernacular fiction and apply it to Cheng-en's novel. I will also utilise Bordahl's (and other contemporary scholars) work on the study of the relationship between orality and literacy in Chinese storytelling (and vernacular fiction) as this culturally specific area of research allows for even greater understanding of the story's *storytelling* tropes. When approaching the analysis of the audio-visual texts, I will also attempt to utilise this mode of examination, but with minor changes in approach. This last element is especially important in ascertaining prior to analysis, as the tropes of this relationship can be seen across all communicative modes from oral storytelling, literature and film and television. This culturally contextualised information is key in analysing all of the texts.

2.3 Analysing and Interpreting the Data

The resultant numerical frequencies from the content analysis are used throughout the analysis of *Journey to the West* as reference points for the importance of certain elements under focus. However, they are interpreted through qualitative approaches and are important in highlighting the patterns of repetition within the story that have not been discussed in detail before now. The identification of these patterns are essential in determining a framework for discussing *Journey to the West* as a medium, as the repetitions themselves are viewed as structural features. The approach to analysis will follow the basic principles that the patterns within the content analysis are akin to the patterns found in oral traditions. the structural elements, epithet, type-scene, prosimetrum and register, are all found in the texts of *Journey to the West*. Their evidence here is read as the formal structures in which a medium is built around. The formulaic composition of the story within these structures will be analysed as privileging audiences in China accustomed to the oral-literate episteme of the Chinese oral tradition, still found in the *Journey to the West* medium.

The approach to analysing data within the content analysis is approached from a less traditional stance than is often associated with the study of film and television. The numerical

frequencies of patterns such as the narrative events, type-scenes and visual representations of characters, are viewed as the most obvious places to focus attention for further, deeper analysis. These focal points are both within film and television texts, as well as in the wider analysis of other written and visual texts, as well as the historic traditions within which they have appeared. As the instances of repetition within the content analysis have value outside of the medium in which they are studied, the approach for analysing them was set around the orality-literacy paradigm, similar to studies completed by Nayar (2001, 2004, 2010, 2011). Rather than taking an overtly symbolic meaning in the textual analysis of the film and television texts, a decision was taken to move away from a semiotic framework. Although much of the analysis is working on from semiotics, it is not quite the correct lens to view the texts through. The hypothesis and reading of texts is more related to diachronic than synchronic analysis and there is a focus on the epistemic make-up of the texts over their symbolism.

So with the interpretation of the results of the content analysis, there was a desire to examine the oral episteme that remained in the patterns found. Like Nayar (2010) I approached the analysis of this with a focus on the construction and interpretation of texts based on oral-literate interpretations. This was fundamentally informed by Ong's approach to orality and literacy and his approach to oral hermeneutics. Zlatic (2017) has suggested that "historically, hermeneutics most often has been situated within a visualist, textual tradition, which, while productive, can eclipse the possibility of an oral hermeneutic, that is, interpretation based not upon text but voice and dialogue." (p.371). This form of interpretation is what this research has intended to investigate, and as an approach to analysing the texts and results of the content analysis it suggests a way to view these repetitions as relating to a cultural system of interpretation. Ong (2017) in the posthumously released *Language as Hermeneutics: A Primer on the Word and Digitization* built on from oral hermeneutics and suggested that two distinct differences existed between the oral and written forms of language, which he explored through the concepts of *Logos* and *Mythos*, as Zlatic explains:

"Logos," related etymologically to spatialization, is fractioning and decontextualizing, whereas

"mythos" in Greek was something uttered, a story. "Narrative, a story, a sequence of happenings, is somehow involved in all utterance, for all utterance in one way or another emerges from our experience in the temporal sequence in which we live." [Ong 2017] Historically, logos had dominated hermeneutics, resulting in textual biases regarding the nature of interpretation. Mythos is related to an oral hermeneutic (Zlatic 2017, p.372)

Ong believe that, whether explicit or subconscious, mythos was a needed element of human understanding. Mythos is the understanding of the world, our environment, through a form of orality and narrative. To analyse and understand the results of the content analysis and their deeper qualitative value, an approach to orality or language as hermeneutics needed to be taken. Mixing the oral and visual seems less in line with Ong's discussions, however the interpretation of texts takes Nayar's approach to this form of hermeneutics in audio-visual media:

spectators who are non-literate, or who have not received sufficient tutoring in the higher order skills associated with high literacy, are, for purposes of engagement and retention, more likely to privilege oral characteristics of narrative. Here, I do not mean characteristics that are only acoustically presented. Rather, I mean that individuals who are accustomed to a story's transmission by word of mouth - arguably the more "natural" mode of narrative articulation and assimilation- will privilege stories that have been shaped for easy enlistment to the mind and that satisfy the more collective orientation that is the inherent byproduct of a communication that requires at least two persons for transmission. (Nayar 2010, p.103)

The repeated patterns in *Journey to the West* evident in the content analysis would seem *shaped for easy enlistment to the mind.* Moreover, the construction of texts using these patterns suggests that they are inherently linked to an oral way of knowing through an oral tradition. These oral traditions of storytelling are what help deepen the understanding of the texts in finer analysis.

The deeper analysis of individual texts uses seemingly more traditional modes of semiotic analysis, in that there is an approach to Saussurian principles that repeated imagery suggest a signifier and a signified. In approaching this form of content analysis and the repetitions of motifs and narrative in the audio-visual texts, it is important to address the concept of structuralism within the research. It is clear that the methods attached to media ecology and the study of film, folklore and the oral tradition, utilise structuralism as a functional paradigm for analysis. Structuralism as a philosophy is primary associated with the fields of anthropology, linguistics and sociology, and the works of Ferdinand de Saussure. In essence Saussure's philosophy focused on the structures of language that could be categorised and classified; he asserted that speech was fluid

and varied, but the rules and structures of language, that governed speech, allowed for a logical system in which to analyse and understand its meaning (Blackburn 2008). Claude Lévi-Strauss popularised structuralism further within academic discourse in anthropology by considering the human condition, and mind, as being made up of structured binary oppositions such as light-dark, male-female, love-hate, asserting that without these oppositions, neither concept had meaning or semantic value (Lacey 2000). In structuralism it is considered that these rules and relationships establish systems of meaning that allow humankind to understand the logic of the universe "the structuralist approach... is the quest for the invariant, or for the invariant elements among superficial differences" (Levi-Strauss 1978 p.2). The study of these structures and "invariant elements" suggest the understanding of the human condition is through deciphering the patterns and systems that govern human culture and thought. Levi-Strauss took Saussure's structural linguistics and applied it to anthropology; he suggested that through structural analysis in anthropology, the commonality of myths and legends across cultures, nations and centuries, could be explained. He asserted that myths could be unitised structurally like language but gained significance not from the individual units and their relationships in a myth, but the "bundles of such relationships" (Levi-Strauss 1963 p.210). These "bundles" of relationships are only properly understood in relation to the other myths existing around it, and the traditions and social practices it exists within. This form of structural analysis is useful when considering the repeated motifs and tale types - or "bundles" - in *Journey to the West*, and their context against the traditions of storytelling. This form of structural analysis in myth was then easily applied to literary theory in the analysis of broad structures such as genre, narrative, and motif that allow readers to easily navigate the reading experience (Ramen et al 2005). Scholars such as Tzvetan Todorov (1969) further suggested that the structural analysis of literature makes a greater objective science of its study. Todorov suggested that by analysing the structured formation of literary plots and narrative, we could begin to see the same patterns arise across different stories. His approach to the study of the "equilibrium" as a concept in literary plots has formed a typology in which to analyse across literary genres. The

equilibrium being the unstable state of balance in any given literary world or diegesis, which the story begins in and ultimately ends in. Todorov describes the basic plot schema as: "The two moments of equilibrium, similar and different, are separated by a period of imbalance, which is composed of a process of degeneration and a process of improvement." (Todorov 1969 p.75). Again, this form of structural analysis in literature naturally was then applied to film analysis, in the consideration of how these literary elements have been transposed into the audio-visual medium. Structuralism and film analysis has had a long history, most notably in the study of genre. The patterns and structures established by scholars like Levi-Strauss and Todorov suggested a more valid and 'scientific' approach to film analysis. Both the Western and Gangster film as genres were the initial focus of many scholars, as they seemed to have a highly repetitive

and systematised structures of codes, iconography and narrative (Kitses 1969, Wright

1975, Frayling 1981, McArthur 1970, Alloway 1972). Similarly, the structural analysis

of auteurism was a focus, as scholars saw an opportunity to identify motifs associated with

directorial style and themes in the analysis of scenes (Nowell-Smith

1967, Wollen 1969, Bellour 1972).

Here, again we find the importance of a structuralist approach is not only seen in the

approach of the field of folklore but very much in Barthes

semiotics. Barthes approach to analysing the coded meaning of signs through his five codes is very much a structural approach to the analysis of texts. Barthes however, makes further contributions outside of these structures to discuss further elements associated with meaning making in the analysis of cultural texts. Barthes work also makes for a good meeting of the medium and the message within media ecology, as his work bridged between the structuralist

and poststructuralist ideas. Barthes also determined, away from the structures of binary oppositions, that within semiotics there were vast incompatibilities with these structures. Most familiar to McLuhan's discussion of both the figure/ground relationship, and the notion that the medium is overshadowed by its messages, is Barthes discussion of the photograph in *Camera Lucida:*

Reflections on Photography. In which Barthes comments on the signifier/signified dynamic of the medium as he exclaims "Whatever it grants to vision and whatever its manner, a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see." (Barthes 1982, p. 6). In this respect, Barthes suggest that when the viewer looks at a photograph, they are looking at a different signifier/signified dynamic: that of the image within a photograph. No one is ever looking at a photograph, the medium of the photograph itself, this is hidden from view in plain sight, and itself has nothing *signified* as a *sign*. Similarly, in my own argument regarding he study of *Journey to the West* often ascribing too much time and credit to single author, Barthes principals in his seminal article *Death of the Author* (1967) make for a parallel methodology. This article itself is often cited as Barthes transition from structuralism to poststructuralism. Barthes argued that if structuralism was suggesting that scholars should take a step backwards to appreciate the codes and signs related to large structures like genre, we should take this further to suggest that assigning credit to individuals for such coded and reused structures should not occur. Barthes suggests: "a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message of the author - God") but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash' (Barthes 1977 p. 146) he goes on to pronounce that the author's "only power is to mix writings... The inner "thing" he [sic] thinks to "translate" is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words' (Barthes 1977 p. 146). Much like the discussion of folklore and the singer of tales in the study of the oral tradition, Barthes considers the author a patchwork maker who brings together old material to form a "new" story. In this manner, Barthes approach and influence in both structuralism, and beyond, makes his analysis of cultural texts very much in line with the approach of analysis associated with media ecology and postmodernism.

Postmodernism, in this research, is the critical discipline that examines art and cultural criticism through a 'postmodernist' methodology. As a discipline, it is a field of study that looked to move away from, and indeed work in opposition to, the traditions of modernism. The term was first popularized in architecture as a movement sought to rekindle the elements and designs of past

structures which many felt modernist buildings lacked, as they were instead cold and lackluster. The concept of creating something new, out of something old, and seemingly not original in design, are still fundamental principles of both postmodern work and the theoretical stance of postmodern scholarship. At its foundation it holds a deep mistrust of 'truths' and looks to dismantle and examine *grand narratives* and ideologies. The very notion of 'art' is also troubling under the postmodernist view, as there is a disassociation with the value of Art and cultural products, as it views that no cultural product or text can have more value than another. It looks to break down ideas of originality and high and low culture in the examination of art and media. Instead, postmodernism suggests that originality is a fiction, and that all media products are a collection of preexisting material; every new product, piece of art, media, is essentially a collection of influences and pre-existing codes which are put together by someone, this is referred to as bricolage. Bricolage plays an important theoretical underpinning in this thesis as a concept as it suggests, in opposition to the notion of originality, that all texts are made from other texts or pre-existing material. This form of thought and suggestion is very much the basis of oral formulaic theory as well, that storytellers use pre-existing material as a way of creating new material, as though searching around for something of use that exists around them, rather than creating something new.

The concept of originality within postmodernism is therefore of importance to this study, as throughout the analysis, I will suggest that almost all texts of *Journey to the West* hold the same elements and are always referring to the culture of the story and its retellings. This form of bricolage and repetition of story elements as a form of constant copying and simulation, is heavily related to postmodernist thought. Theorists such as Baudrillard go even further to suggests that due to the ongoing 'copying' and simulation of real material, that virtually nothing around us is real, and we live in a state of hyperreality, unaware of the simulation around us:

> The imaginary was the alibi of the real, in a world dominated by the reality principle. Today, it is the real that has become the alibi of the model, in a world controlled by the principle of simulation. And, paradoxically, it is the real that has become our true Utopia - but a Utopia that is no longer in the realm of the possible, that can only be dreamt of as one would dream of a lost object. (Baudrillard 1994 pp.122 – 123)

This state that Baudrillard discusses as simulacra, in which something has been copied so much it has no original, not even a tangible reality by this principle. This notion of a copy of a copy of a copy directly relates to the notion of Barthes *Death of the Author*, as well as the very nature and function of the tale types and poems of the singers of the oral tradition, who relied on pre-existing stories and metric devices, motifs, epithet and themes to create something new, out of something old. Here we can begin to see the overlap between semiotics, poststructuralism and postmodernsim within the media ecology framework. The concept of hyperreality plays a role in the discussion of *Journey to the West*, as many of the images associated with the story in film and television are so heavily repeated through the story's canon that there is no sense of the original left.

Postmodernism is an easy intersection to media ecology, as the process of questioning reality, the status quo, and the cultural output of societies is of great importance in media ecology. Similarly, postmodernism is intersected with semiotics, structuralism, and poststructuralism. All of which bear relevance to the focus of media ecology and indeed this thesis. Although, as a media ecology stance, I wish to avoid detailed discussion of meaning within the texts of *Journey to the West*, and instead focus on its functionality and components as a medium, there is still a need to discuss the cultural meaning of elements through Barthes semiotics. I wish to evaluate and examine the folk structures of the story as a medium through a structuralist model, before making more poststructuralist suggestions about the role of the 'author' and the multimodality of the story's meaning and culture. Much of the analysis of *Journey to the West* as a medium and its cultural significance draws on the ideas and methodology of postmodernism. However, this continuous multidisciplinary intersectionalism is at the heart of media ecology. This is not a postmodern thesis, nor a semiotic, structuralist or poststructuralist one, it is a media ecology study; a field of study that utilises and overlaps all of these other fields and disciplines to examine the role of a medium within society and culture.

In some ways the meaning of *Journey to the West* as a medium finds further value in

naturalisation; Hodge and Kress (1988) suggest that the narratives themselves have become so well utilised as a way to deliver content that the familiar narrative structures and codes go unnoticed. The familiarity and natural status of the narrative helps "to naturalize the content of the narrative itself" (Hodge & Kress 1988, p. 230). By this tone, *Journey to the West* as a medium has naturalised whatever the individual messages and content are in any given story. However, in this analysis even these reflections are taken from a media ecology approach, more akin to the study of the oral tradition. Instead viewing the narrative features and images as metonymic symbols related to a cultural understanding of the story as a tradition. John Miles Foley (1995) refers to this as *traditional referentiality*, the ability of an audience member to understand that any given element of a story from epithet to type scene, not only represents a function within the story, but also represents the entire story as a reference point, and the tradition of telling the story itself. In this respect, an analysis closer to that taken by scholars in the study of the oral tradition is used.

I looked not to discuss single texts in too much detail, but instead wanted to focus on the repetition of features across multiple texts. This is a shift from synchronic study to diachronic analysis. Gregory Nagy (2017) in his article *Diachronic Homer and a Cretan Odyssey* Looks at this method within the context of oral tradition studies, focusing on two diachronic approaches, specifically the difference between studying a single myth against a tradition:

> ...a genealogical comparison involves a study of parallels between structures that can be traced back to a protostructure. By contrast, a typological comparison involves a study of parallels between structures that are not necessarily related to each other. Typological comparison can be applied to parallelisms between structures as structures pure and simple, without any presuppositions about a common origin. (Nagy 2017 p.18)

In Nagy's definition, a typological comparison examines the recurring patterns in structures do not infer a relational value of origin, whereas the genealogical approach is the examination of these structures with a commonality. The approach adopted for this analysis was primarily genealogic in that all of the texts analysed, whether from the sample, or in written or performative genres, were seeking to investigate their commonality with *Journey to the West* as a story, as an origin. There are instances of typological analysis as well, when looking at the origins of *Journey to*

the West, an analysis of how its features of storytelling and features of narrative were developed looks at comparisons with other texts unrelated to *Journey to the West* that have the same features. Overall, this is a diachronic genealogical analysis of the story that attempts to analyse the multiple texts to conclude how these repetitions and patterns form the structure that is a medium.

Various methods of approach were taken in theorising the visual repetitions in texts, most of these were associated with the works of McLuhan. McLuhan suggested several approaches in the analysis of media. One of the most noted that I intend to deploy specifically in the analysis of the film and television texts, is the use of his tetrad of media effects. First published in 1988 in the *Laws of Media* co-written with his son Eric McLuhan, the tetrad was outlined as a probe for analysing different media technologies and media. The tetrad is consistently used in media ecology as a diachronic method of analysis when discussing media and technology, something I suggest *Journey to the West* should be considered. The tetrad essentially asks four questions about the medium: What does the medium enhance? What does the medium reverse? What does the medium retrieve? What does the medium obsolesce? These questions are used as probes to reflect on the functions of the medium and its relationship and interconnectedness to other media and environments from the past and present. It has been used in multiple manners to examine technology devices and media such as the cinema (Gouzouasis and LaMonde 2005) Research and Development (Euchner 2016) screens (Hildebrand 2018) and communication research (Dall'Agnese et al 2020). The tetrad is an important tool for the analysis of media, as unlike other models and discussions, it allows for a deconstruction of a technology, its use, and its relationship to the past and the future. I use the tetrad as a manner in which to probe *Journey to the West* as a medium, within film and television as audio-visual media. This form of ecological analysis looks to evaluate the results of the content analysis as a whole, using a diachronic approach to discuss what is evident within the story from this medium. This means that we are able to evaluate the story's function and development in relation to its function in other media. The tetrad is a traditional model in media ecology for analysing media and is therefore a valid method of analysis within the thesis. I have

also engaged with Lance Strate's (2017) updated assessment of McLuhan's tetrad, as a way of utilising both founding and contemporary research in the tetrad's use. The tetrad itself essentially is used as a method of analysis – a structure for what to examine and what connections a scholar should make when analysisng media in a media ecology framework.

2.4 Issues with Primary sources

As the dominant method of data collection and analysis is grounded in textual analysis there is a great deal manoeuvrability in the interpretation of audio-visual texts (McKee 2003). However, when approaching the analysis of both literature and historical texts, there are more concerning issues.

Being a scholar in a western country, examining a Chinese text, without being able to read, write or speak the language, establishes many issues of bias and prejudice. It also means that I have to be especially reflective of my own positioning in regards to textual examination. Other issues also arise in the source of texts for examination; I am reliant on the English translations of Chinese scripts, some of which will have their own contextual problems as there may be cultural, historical and ideological bias (Lefevere 2004). For instance, Samuel Beal's translation of Xuanzang's account of his travels was completed in 1880, in which the social, cultural and scientific ontological state was something very different from either that of Xuanzang in the 7th century as well as my own understanding of the nature of things in the 21st century. Therefore, I must be very careful in my positioning and assumptions when analysing texts, as there must be an understanding that I am presenting *insights* rather than *definitives* in my research. The validity of my research when concerning these philosophical issues is that there is a long history of scholarly work, from multiple national positions (both western and eastern), that examine both *Journey to the West* and the texts of Xuanzang. It is therefore my responsibility to examine multiple interpretations of the literature. One way in which the issues of translation may be addressed is through cross-referencing translations, to see if syntax, lexicon and importantly content and meaning has been affected. Multiple versions of *Journey to the West* have been used in the research (see bibliography) as well as multiple

translations of historical texts: most interesting are the differences between Samuel Beale's translation of Hui-Li's biography of Xuanzang's from 1880, against Yung-hsi's in 1959. There are few differences in passages themselves and for the purposes of this study, the structure of speeches within both texts are in sync with one another. However, when comparing Xuanzang's text against his biography written by Hui-Li, it was decided to use Beale's and Yung-shi's respectively. It would most definitely seem too limited to use Beale's translation of both. What will be even more interesting will be the publication of Xuanzang's account of his travels by Professor Max Deeg which will be the first extensive English translation since Beale's.

Although the text, its setting and the majority of its adaptations are either Chinese or from non-English speaking countries, there is still a validity to the analysis of their similarities. Especially if these are contextualised into the structures of a tradition, such as that of a Chinese oral tradition. Importantly, this research does not attempt to make definite statements about the culture that the tradition inhabits, but instead looks to enlighten on the structures of a single story within that cultural milieu. As I am positioned outside of the cultural context of the tradition it is essential that (throughout the research) I retain a reflexive approach, as my own western ideological values should not undervalue the data (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995).

Chapter 3
Speaking text and listening paintings:
Orality and Literacy in the Xuanzang cycle

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks to address research question one, relating to the interplay of orality and literacy. I will investigate this within the early texts related to *Journey to the West*, and examine how integral this interplay is to the structure of the story and its continued retelling. If we take a media ecology approach to the study of texts related to *Journey to the West* and the environments of communication that they existed in, we can begin to unpick this interplay. Orality and literacy are often considered at odds with one another; in fact, they are continuously explored as oppositional features of communication, in which one will always supersede the other (Ong 1982). However, I will be establishing their relationship in the texts related to the Monk Xuanzang as overlapping and interconnected. I propose that within the earliest written texts related to the Monk, there are layers of orality and literacy present that suggest something very different to a relationship of opposing forces. I posit that in these texts, and in the stories that developed after them, there is a reliance between the two that help structure the story; an oral-literate symbiosis. I believe this symbiosis is an integral structure of *Journey to the West* when investigating the story as a medium. I will be examining three major texts: Xuanzang's own biographical account of his travels: *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions*; a biography written about the monk by his disciple Hui-li: *The Life of Hsuan-Tsang, The Tripitaka-Master of the Great Tzu En Monastery;* and the images and iconography of Xuanzang that developed on account of these texts. I will examine how the orality and literacy within the texts, and within the tradition of storytelling in Tang dynasty China, became an integral part of the structure of *Journey to the West*.

I will first look at the nature of Xuanzang's role in the development of Buddhism, storytelling, and the oral-literate symbiosis of *Journey to the West.* I do this by exploring the idea that Xuanzang was a medium before the story of *Journey to the West* was. I do not mean this in the

literal sense of a medium, but in the manner in which he acted as a medium for Buddhism, storytelling and the development of *Journey to the West* to grow. The extent of this comparison helps to examine the overarching importance of the Monk beyond the inspiration for *Journey to the West*, or being simply considered as the main protagonist of the story. This is followed by a cross analysis of the oral-literate features of Xuanzang's biography against Hui-li's. The purpose and importance of this analysis is to establish key features of oral traditions in the written form, and establish how these are used throughout the development of the story. Alongside this, I also examine how we can see the impact of an oral-literate noetic in the changes made between the two texts by examining the same event in both. I then examine the images related to Xuanzang, revealing that the development of the priest's image in the story cycle is linked to the earliest written texts as well as the storytellers who must have told his narrative. This helps to establish the nuanced overlapping of orality-literacy practices at the beginning of the story cycle, which I argue, set a structural foundation for the story as a medium. I do this by exploring how these oral-literate motifs can still be found as structural elements in modern audio-visual texts.

To understand *Journey to the West* as a medium, we must understand the structures that allow the story to function as a medium. These structures are the primary elements that are repeated again and again in versions of the story, and throughout the content analysis. These structures are the skeleton and the content of each adaptation is the meat and sinew. The structures are related to characters, events and motifs within the story, many of which stem from the figure of Xuanzang as a cultural and Buddhist icon. In fact, his role as a Buddhist priest and his subsequent icon-ism and figurehead of saint worship, directly relate to the orality and literacy dichotomy within Media ecology. The dichotomy, or by my stance, relationship of orality and literacy is seen layered through every aspect of the priest's history; from his role fetching written sutras to be read aloud, to the written record of his travels, recited orally to his disciple (Xuewie 1999), which was the basis for ongoing oral stories and myths surrounding the priest. Although many feel that the impact of the historical figurehead is minimal to the novel and modern adaptations (Dudbridge 1970, Jenner

1993, Yu 2006), as the latter texts very much have a fantastical life of their own centered around the Monkey King, I posit a different stance. I suggest that Xuanzang is one of the most important elements to the structure of *Journey to the West* as a story and medium. Many of these structural elements were born from the environment of storytelling specific to the Chinese oral tradition, that happened to develop in the Tang dynasty around the time of Xuanzang's journey. This is complimented by the role the Monk played in orality-literacy models in China's religious texts and secular tales. Below I will outline the ways these elements in a Media ecology framework establish the Monk as a medium, and I will follow with a deep analysis of the written texts related to Xuanzang, and the iconography that surrounded him. These two elements are intrinsically linked to the oral noetic and interplay of orality and literacy practices and structures that helped form the Medium of *Journey to the West*. I will discuss key elements from the results of the content analysis to contextualize them away from mere filmic convention or literary adaptation. The two major texts that tell us about Xuanzang, his journey and his life are his own account of his travels, and a biography written about his life by one of his disciples Hui-Li. Unless scholars are investigating the antecedents of *Journey to the West*, or are looking at the historical figure of Xuanzang, these texts are rarely mentioned by scholars in the appreciation of the story, especially in its modern form.

3.1.1 The Medium is the Monk

To examine *Journey to the West* as a medium, we need to understand the role of Xuanzang himself within the story's structure. Many have attributed the historical figure of Xuanzang as being the primary influence on the story, and of course the initial protagonist of the narrative. However, I believe the Monk had a far greater influence on the story of *Journey to the West*, to the point that the monk himself could be considered the first medium in the story cycle. It may seem strange to assert that a human being be considered a medium, however this is not an unusual metaphor in media ecology. The human body in Strate's (2017) assessment, has long been a medium for communication. Strate asserts this in relation to the ability to process external factors and internal cognition to be externally reformed in sound and movement; especially those sounds and visual elements of body language and facial cues that are separate to language structures. We can also consider McLuhan's (1964) point that technologies and media are extensions of the human body; their very function is to exemplify or simplify the biological actions of the human form. Therefore, our biological human functions and processes are structures of a biological medium. Similarly, Mumford (1967) suggested that the purpose of the 'machine' as a medium was to replace the mass organization of human labor, to make it more reliable and sustainable. Xuanzang not only constitutes a medium in the biological sense, but deeper than this, his influence on religious and social and political spheres impacted the environment of storytelling in the Tang dynasty. Xuanzang had three major impacts: first, the social change of China in the acceptance of Buddhism, down mainly to his influence. Secondly, the textual influence he had on Buddhism and the Buddhist texts – his translations are still used today. Finally, the influence Xuanzang himself had on storytelling practices related to orality and literacy in the Tang dynasty. I will explore these impacts whilst examining the idea that Xuanzang is a medium.

As Strate (2017) asserts about McLuhan's aphorism, *the medium is the message*: "The medium must precede the content. The medium is what we construct the meaning out of." (p.54). In the story of *Journey to the West*, Xuanzang precedes the Journey. Without Xuanzang, the story is never told, whether in his own words or from those Buddhist and secular storytellers that used his story. I am not necessarily claiming Xuanzang as a medium in the literal sense. Instead, I am looking to establish the role he played in the developments of the media of orality and literacy within both Buddhism and storytelling practices that had a direct impact on the development of *Journey to the West*. Xuanzang as figurehead was responsible for far more than simply inspiring the *Journey to the West* story, but is in fact a fundamental influence on storytelling through the Buddhist tradition. Looking back over Strate's various assessments of t*he medium is the message,* help establish Xuanzang as a foundation structure to the story as a medium. He is of course the influence and central human character in the narrative itself, but beyond this, Xuanzang is influential in the development of storytelling practices that give rise to the structures of the *Journey to the West* story. There has been no explicit media ecology assessment of Xuanzang nor *Journey to the West* before, and so this examination will review different layers of importance in the historical figure. These range from the orality-literacy models in Xuanzang's own biographical account, to how his journey shaped the spread of such oral-literate practices. This also includes how the image and representations of Xuanzang became a staple in the storytelling of Buddhism that passed through a thousand years of texts.

If we consider some of Strate's further assertions on the meaning of McLuhan's work, we can unpack the role of Xuanzang further. "The medium motivates the content" (Strate 2017 p.56) is an interpretation of media ecology that helps us establish Xuanzang's principle role as a medium. Xuanzang, in every respect, is a religious medium, who wishes his messages to be related to a Buddhist worldview. His recounting of his journey in his written text is not simply an account, but is heavily influenced by a Buddhist worldview, which alters the message from the beginning. The very fabric of how the priest retells his story through the oral-aural process to a disciple to be written down, establishes a new environment to experience the journey. Consider Xuanzang the medium of which traditions begin to be set down in, as what he records about his travels and Buddhism are consistently re-used in other media. Again, Hui-li's biography of Xuanzang approaches the representation of the priest as a Buddhist saint. Although Dudbridge (1970) acknowledges that the Buddhist biographies "tend to regard their subjects with a pious awe close to pure superstition" (Dudbridge 1970 p.12), there is to date, little investigation into how this fact aided the development of the story over time, or in its modern forms. Ultimately, the traditions that grew after, and from, Hui-Li's biography in the oral tradition became the lasting influence of Xuanzang as a medium, and they were highly motivated through the medium of the Buddhist storyteller.

The impact of Xuanzang's journey in the minds of the Chinese public, his imperial pardon by the Emperor, and his translation of over a thousand Sanskrit scrolls, changed the environment of Buddhism in China. Xuanzang, was very much the medium under another one of Strate's guises: "the medium has a leading role in human history, leading to revolutionary change..." (p.57) as Xuanzang most definitely had a role in human history and societal change. Prior to the priests return to China, Buddhism was not well accepted by the emperor Taizong. Although Buddhist storytelling had long been a tradition in Chinese society, Xuanzang's own relationship and influence with Emperor Taizong (who ruled from 626 to 649) led the way for the acceptance and reverence of Buddhism in the Tang dynasty (Mote 1996). The emperor was originally only interested in

Xuanzang's knowledge of the kingdoms surrounding China and initially refused to write a preface to his translations of Buddhist scriptures. It was only later in Taizong's life, in ill health, that he grew interested in Buddhism and then agreed to write the preface. Xuanzang's influence on the growth of Buddhism during this period is of great of importance, "Xuanzang's most momentous accomplishment was to secure the support critical for the religion to flourish in China" (Wong 2002 p.50). It is then easy to see why in the Buddhist cannon he became an important figure in stories; not only did his travels make for a quest narrative, the priest's devotion to translation gave the religion a multitude of Sutras, and his relationship with the Emperor paved the way for a national acceptance of the faith. As a medium, the priest impacted the social acceptance and adoption of the religion, he mediated the political landscape – his knowledge of the geography and societies outside of China made him a resource, yet his written account (mandated by the Emperor) is woven with Buddhist doctrine. Xuanzang's account, through his own noetic, shaped the image and understanding of the world outside China, and his influence on the emperor officiated the acceptance of Buddhism for the masses.

It is understandable then, how Xuanzang would perhaps be considered an important factor in the environmental change of China. Not only did he impact social change with the adoption of Buddhism, but also impacted the very understanding of Buddhism in China. As a medium for the religion, he spent 17 years in India learning Sanskrit and collecting teachings in the Buddhist faith. The translation of over a thousand scrolls of Buddhist writings, some translations of which are still used today (Yu 2006) has meant that he personally impacted the understanding of the religion in China, and his personal noetic became the noetic of the faith. He also impacted the interrelationship of orality and literacy; his translations of written religious texts were used to be read aloud, and his own account of his travels in many ways is a series Buddhist stories he has heard along the silk road on his journey.

Returning to Strate's summary of McLuhan's seminal work we can address one of the most lasting and important ideas in media ecology: "The Medium is the environment" (Strate 2017 p.). It

is important to remember that it was not just Xuanzang's journey that influenced *Journey to the West*, but what he achieved after returning to China. I believe this had a longer influence on the storytelling structures of *Journey to the West* than has been considered before. We must remember that Xuanzang was not the only priest to make these journeys, in fact many had made them before and after Xuanzang, so his narrative was not uncommon, yet his influence clearly was. This can be seen in the texts that are written about him, and the traditions that grew around him. The images on scrolls and adorning the walls in the Dunhuang caves tell the story of Xuanzang, and his impact on the environment of Buddhism. Xuanzang's literal representation in Buddhist iconography makes him part of the formal cause of orality and literacy practices (McLuhan and McLuhan 2011 Strate 2014). Related to Aristotelian metaphysics, formal cause in media ecology is seen as the guide to how narrative and communication is formed: "Before I chisel my message onto stone, I have the ability to draw on linguistic form, my language, to construct a message, and I know how to represent my language and the message I have composed in written form, via a writing system. In this sense, the form enables the communication, and therefore is a cause of the message I send" (Strate 2017, p.161). Xuanzang's impact on the very understanding of Buddhism, and his placement within the narrative of Buddhism, makes him a part of the formal cause of its communication and understanding; his presence and image are a representation of the system of the Buddhism, as though he was a component part, a letter or word that helped form the sentences of the Buddhist narrative in Tang China. His appearance amongst the caves also makes Xuanzang an agent of change in the environment of Buddhism, being a very part of its narrative in China. This not only places Xuanzang as part of the environment of Buddhism, but as a part of the *story* of Buddhism; he is in his representation a figurehead of the narrative, a way in which to understand the world through the storytelling of Buddhist doctrine. After all, Religious imagery is a fundamental part of the oral world and plays a key role in the worldview and understanding of the environment (Kortti 2016, 2019). Therefore, Xuanzang was not only part of the environment, but part of the storytelling about that environment.

These factors not only help to understand how Xuanzang could be seen as a medium, but also in turn how *Journey to the West* can also be seen in this vein. Despite the major differences between the narrative of Xuanzang and the tales of the Monkey King, the impact of Xuanzang on the environment of Buddhism and indeed storytelling has a lasting impact on how the story develops. A closer examination of the oral-literate symbiosis in the texts of Xuanzang will help to tease out some the structures seen in the modern texts and content analysis. These will help establish the importance of the story's features beyond the idea of literary adaptation.

3.2 Oriteracy or Lirality? Defining the Terms of the Oral Literate Interplay in Xuanzang's Historical Texts.

Below I will be looking at extracts of Xuanzang's own account of his journey, and comparing it with a biography about the monk written by one of his disciples Hui-Li. This analysis looks at the evidence of oral traditions within the writings, as well as how certain storytelling tropes begin to arise from one text to another regarding the narrative of Xuanzang. The interplay of orality and literacy within these texts is also important in discussing the environment of storytelling and communication in the Chinese context. Ong (1984) discusses this interplay in his concept of oral residue; looking to see the lasting effect of the oral culture on the written word. Oral residue is a term Ong uses when discussing the diachronic moment in which the early chirographic, or manuscript culture, takes influence from the traditions of orality. He sees the development of the scribal culture into the print culture as having various stages of orality intertwined within its productions. Orren Soffer (2020) suggests that "In this stage, writing as a communication technology has developed and become routine, but the hegemony of the oral culture continues and it strongly influences the use and characteristics of written texts" (Soffer 2020, p.929). The residual features of orality can be seen in early texts, as well as the cultural balance of orality and literacy within these societies; for example, the importance of oral recitation and of reading texts aloud in scribal cultures evidences that humans' psyche had not ventured 'inward' in the way that Ong

believes print cultures have: "composition as such remained an oral matter. Early written prose is more or less like a transcribed oration, and early poetry is even more oral in its economy" (Ong 1967 p.3). This form of oral composition and the 'hegemony of the oral culture' is what I believe may be ingrained within *Journey to West,* not as a compositional feature in a specific period of time, but a specific compositional feature *throughout* time.

However, there is still a large portion of development which seems to be overlooked, especially when considering the effect of this change on human cognition. For a long period, the primary oral culture continued as the scribes began to write, and the majority of humankind ignored the process (Havelock 1963). Joyce Coleman asserts that scholarly debate places too much focus on the oral/literate dichotomy and that Ong's oral and literate characteristics are too readily utilised as an authoritative means to examine the development of human communication (Coleman 1996). Coleman's study of medieval public reading looks at the dichotomy from a different stance, stating that:

> oral cultures, procedures and texts seem capable of individualism, self-awareness, irony, metalanguage, fictionality, fixity, and even scholarship and criticism - suggesting that while writing may indeed promote or otherwise affect these capacities in many ways, it does not create them, (Coleman 1996 p.11)

There is however, in Coleman's work, a note on the use of Ong's oral residue as a generalised term that is utilised to "explain any seemingly "oral" traits... that persisted into a later stage of development" (Coleman 1996 p.4). Here Coleman highlights the tendency to use oral residue as a stage or process within a society bound for literacy. Oral residue could serve as a very useful concept within this study, but when it comes to the analysis of *Journey to the West* it is not the intention to view these 'moments' of oral residue strictly as a transitional diachronic stage within the Chinese tradition, but moreover a structural element of Chinese storytelling. The relationship that the story has with orality and literacy is key to its survival in production and reception. This is to say that the relationship between orality and literacy will always mean that the story holds features of both, whichever medium it is told in. This is a fact that scholars studying the living oral tradition

in China (Bordahl 1999, 2013) and those examining the historic texts and vernacular novels of China (Bordahl 2013, Ge 1991, McLaren 1998) also see as a standard in both oral and written traditions over hundreds of years. This interplay between orality and literacy is not a superseding of one medium over another, nor a residue of one into another, but a more balanced relationship: "print and orality have played highly differentiated but closely interdependent roles, with long periods of synergy or symbiosis" (Friesen 2018 p.431). In examining this very interplay in *Journey to the West* and the context of the Chinese tradition of storytelling, much like Friesen's description I am suggesting that the relationship of orality and literacy is not merely an interplay, but a mutually beneficial partnership. I describe this partnership as an oral-literate symbiosis, in which both technologies or media themselves feed and support the other to grow within the *Journey to the West* cycle. If we examine this symbiosis in the environment of Xuanzang's narrative, the texts related to his journey, and their subsequent influence on stories and storytelling traditions, a balance between orality and literacy is one of the primary structural elements of the story as a medium. However, as we will see, this balance and partnership begins with the historical figure of Xuanzang, before the fictional story even comes into fruition.

Journey to the West is a story that has continually been communicated through oral recitation. However, the discussion of orality within this story is also the discussion of the relationship between orality, literacy and the visual medium of an oral noetic – the oral-literate symbiosis. The storytellers who went on to reshape the historical event into fantasy used both the oral-aural process of storytelling as well as visual aids. These visual representations were in the form of picture scrolls, but it is likely they also included physical and facial cues of performance seen in the contemporary oral tradition (Bordahl 2013). The storytelling process and environment therefore took advantage of dual sensory experiences as well as tapping into the changing communicative landscape towards literature. Unlike the discussions of ancient storytelling from the epics of Gilgamesh to the Homeric verses, Chinese storytelling in its popular form is a

comparatively modern phenomenon (Bordahl 1996); especially in its growth within a literate society. As a *story* and not merely a piece of literature, *Journey to the West* developed through a fluctuating process of orality and literacy from storyteller to storyteller and medium to medium. It is an ever changing and reforming text which is adapted by every storyteller (Sun 2018). The research conducted in the content analysis of audio-visual texts is merely the contemporary analysis of the latter end of a story cycle. The recurring motifs, characters and themes found in these audio-visual texts evidences the continuation of a long-standing storytelling tradition, that in the analysis of primary sources pre-dating the Ming novel, finds its beginnings. The analysis below intends to examine the history of the story and the start of the adaptation cycle, pinpointing the foundation structures of the story as medium.

These are all in a sense related to the interplay of orality and literacy in the Chinese noetic. The study of Xuanzang's account of his travels to and from India, evidences some of the more common tropes of oral traditions; some are stories Xuanzang is told on his journey and constitute oral traditions themselves. Others are events that happened to the priest, that become stories that Xuanzang retells in his record. It is true that Xuanzang's life and travels "passed into legend almost in his own time." (Dudbridge 1970 p.12), in part this is due to stories Xuanzang himself told. This fact is apparent when examining Xuanzang's own account of his travels against a biography of his life, written by one of his own disciples. This biography is thought to have been (at least partly) dictated by Xuanzang to Hui-li (Hanson 2012) and yet it bares considerable difference to his own account. The examples in both texts are evidence of a specific oral-literate noetic, in which the changes made by Hui-li can be seen as a form of myth-making, not to delineate from the truth, but to keep the cultural truth about his master alive for a primarily preliterate people (Nayar 2020). Despite the already marked version of events penned by Xuanzang, Hui-li is of a specific noetic in which the nature of language and the repetition of events is a process of interpretation by a storyteller. The detailed factual accuracy is less important than the fact that these stories continue to be told.

For example, Hui-li's reinterpretation of Xuanzang's travels are evident when looking at just a small section from each piece of work. By looking at the same event in each piece of writing there seem to be glaring differences within dialogue, authorial voice and tone. The sequence in question is the meeting between Xuanzang and King Siladitya in which the two discuss the story of King Ts'in – a historical Chinese figure. Certain content in the conversation between Xuanzang and the king differs. In Xuanzang's version (*Great Tang Records on the Western Regions)* the king has heard of Ts'in and states that he has heard tales of his reign:

> The king answered, "I have heard that the country of Mahachina has a king called Ts'in, the son of heaven, *when* young distinguished for his spiritual abilities, when old then (called) 'divine warrior'. The empire in former generations was in disorder and confusion, everywhere divided and in disunion; soldiers were in conflict, and all the people were afflicted with calamity. Then the king of Ts'in, son of heaven, who had conceived from the first vast purposes, brought into exercise all his pity and love; he brought about a right understanding, and pacified and settled all within the seas. His laws and instruction spread on every side. People from other countries brought under his influence declared themselves ready to submit to his rule. The multitude whom he nourished generously sang in their songs of the prowess of the king of Ts'in. I have learned long since his praises sung thus in verse. Are the records *{laudatory hymns)* of his great *(complete)* qualities well founded? Is this the king of the great Tang, of which you speak? " (Beal 1884 pp. 216-217)

In this account from Xuanzang, the songs and oral tradition of King Ts'in had widely spread across land to India. This is first significant in its evidences of the diaspora of Chinese oral tradition along the Silk Road, but consequently within this study it highlights the very area of examination. It is through this primary written history of Xuanzang's journey that other histories of the region are remembered through oral recitation and song; thus, highlighting the important progress of history into legend through myth making. It also highlights aspects of the Parry-Lord formula in its use of epithet, "son of heaven"[8] linking the king's character to celestial being or divine rite, whilst also signposting to the possible metric or mnemonic tradition or use of epithet in verse making. The opening to the line "Then the King of Ts'in, son of heaven..." for instance demonstrates both the use of epithet to extend the verse as well as demonstrating Ong's oppositions between the oral and literate worlds, namely that oral culture is additive rather than subordinate. The use of "Then"

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[8]   Son of heaven was also a popular epithet associated with emperors of China see Harper Parker 1908 or Skaff 2012 p.122

followed by the additive listing of accomplishments is a technique of the oral tale. By Siladitya's recitation there is again more evidence to the tradition of singing tales, "The multitude whom he nourished ... sang in their songs of the prowess of the king of Ts'in" within the telling of the tale suggests a tradition of oral song. Of particular note are the terms "sang in their songs" within the recitation itself, which is then followed by Siladitya's own experience: "I have learned long since his praises sung thus in verse". This again may evidence the oral tradition as both a living tradition as well as a process of oral history, as Vansina distinguishes "...to a historian the truly distinctive characteristic of oral tradition is its transmission by word of mouth over a period longer than the contemporary generation. This means that a tradition should be seen as a series of successive historical documents all lost except for the last one..." (Vansina 1985 p.29). Here we could argue that Xuanzang's written account documents 'the last one', the historical tradition of King Ts'in, one that was long told in China and evidences a historical event in its history, and cementing the importance of an oral noetic in a culture imbued with literacy.

The textual evidence becomes of greater interest when looking at Hui-li's biography of Xuanzang, as King Siladitya has never heard of the 'Prince of Chin' – meaning the story of King Ts'in:

> The king asked again: "You came from China, and I have heard that you have a musical composition called as the 'Triumph of the Prince of Chin' in your country. I do not know who this Prince of Chin is and what meritorious deeds he has done so as to earn such praises for himself."
> (Yung-hsi 1959 p. 170)

The difference in the King's knowledge is evident as in Xuanzang's account, not only has he heard of the King Ts'in, he is able to recount elements of the legend himself. These discrepancies between the texts seem to begin the validation that the 'myth' of Xuanzang began in his own lifetime (Dudbridge 1970). The differences between the conversations between Xuanzang and the king not only highlight variants in content but also in tone. The difference in author inevitably delivers an entirely alternative authorial voice. Hui-li's presentation of events seems to hold the signs of a 'story' or narrative rather than the historical, educational account of Xuanzang's own recount. This can be

seen in the choice of language and figurative technique. Again, this is best explored between the two texts in Xuanzang's reply to king Siladitya in Hui-Li's text regarding the story of Ts'in. Xuanzang's recital of Ts'in's restoration of the empire involves various noteworthy traits.

> The Master said: "It is the custom of my country that the people composed songs in praise of those sagacious and virtuous persons who could suppress evil powers for the people and be advantageous to all. These songs are either sung on ceremonial occasions in the ancestral temple, or sung by the common people as folk-songs. The Prince of Chin is the present emperor of China, and he was made the Prince of Chin before he ascended the throne. At that time the whole country was in a condition of complete tumult without a lord to rule over the people. Human corpses piled high in the wild fields and human blood flowed in the rivers. Evil stars appeared in the sky at night and an ominous atmosphere condensed during the day. The three rivers were suffering under avaricious pigs and the four seas were troubled by poisonous snakes. Being a son of the emperor, the prince led his troops personally and suppressed the rebellious forces, in compliance with the order of Heaven. With his military power he established peace in the whole country and restored tranquillity in the universe, making the sun, the moon and the stars shine brightly again. As the people in the whole country felt grateful to him, they composed that music in praise of him"
> (Yung-hsi 1959 p. 170)

At the very beginning of the excerpt we have the title character Xuanzang being referred to as 'The Master', which places the Buddhist monk as a figure of worship by the authorial voice, allowing an insight into how he was elevated in status. It may also be evidence to the fictionalisation of his character, Hui-li's desire to make Xuanzang a figure of worship is the first step away from historical figure into the Xuanzang *character*. Much like Xuanzang's own text there is evidence in Hui-li's of the nature of oral stories and folk-songs. The fact that these stories are stated as being "sung on ceremonial occasions in the ancestral temple or sung by the common people as folk-songs" allows an insight into the tradition. The text evidences the oppositions of formal tales told in ceremony and in formal surrounding against the informal songs of the everyday layman. It is of note that it is with the 'common people' that the term "folk-songs" is associated, it becomes easy to imagine that Xuanzang's own story could have been told through the oral tradition of Tang China. There is also the use of dramatic imagery in Xuanzang's recitation in Hui-li's text, namely in the description of the troubles that China was facing before the intervention of Prince Chin. Descriptions such as "Human corpses piled high in the wild fields and human blood flowed in the rivers" may create quite an evocative image in the readers' minds. This seems more like the authorial methods of a

storyteller rather than historian or biographer, especially compared with Xuanzang's description within his own text: "...the people had no ruler, civil war raged on every hand and caused confusion, the people were destroyed" (Beal 1884 p.217). This has far less imagery than Hui-li's interpretation of the conversation which seems to set up Xuanzang as an accomplished and engaging storyteller. However, in each description we have the additive feature of storytelling in the listing of information in Xuanzang's account and the repetition of *and* in Hui-li's account. We can begin to argue that the differences between the two texts start to evidence an oral-literate symbiosis, as despite the formalities and potential for verbatim accounts that written texts offer, the content is different and more in line with an oral mode of storytelling; utilising the myth making process of oral history rather than a literate approach of copying (Nayar 2020). At its centre, the message is still the same, but the technique is different.

Hui-li's biography was published some 24 years after Xuanzang's death and its author was living whilst Xuanzang was. However, as seen above it seems to hold the hallmarks of a story rather than a historical biography. Xuanzang's text uses more formal language; in fact, the officialdom that is present in Xuanzang's text, due perhaps to the nature of his pilgrimage and the order of imperial mandate to record it, seems to have been lost in Hui-li's version. The choice of figurative language and importantly the use of metaphor, especially that of the *pig* and the *snake*, may be a cultural indication to the manifestation of certain characters that develop in the story cycle, in particular that of the Pig (Pigsy or Zhu Bajie) and Friar Sand (Sha Wujing). This is not to say that their origin is found as early as this excerpt within the biography or that this was the foundation of their characterisation, rather that there is a possible signpost to oral motif and tradition in which the characters were born from. Within Hui-li's text, in Xuanzang's telling of King Ts'in, he discusses how the story is passed down through folk song. He then recites the tale using the pig and snake metaphors to describe the exploitation of the land. The use of "The three rivers were suffering under avaricious pigs" (Yung-hsi 1959 p.170) displays the use of the pig metaphor to account for the greed and corruption suffered in China. Pigs have played a long-standing role in Chinese mythology

and philosophy and boar were often seen negatively as they destroyed farmland and crops (Tsang 1996). However the use of the pig in this way may indicate that it was a well versed metaphor in folk stories; it could be that Hui-li has utilised oral motif within his work to replicate the common folk song in print – Tsang (1996) evidences a strikingly similar motif in the depiction of a government: "Zjiozhuan, a text that records events between 722 and 454 B.C., the state of Wu was likened to *fengshi changshe*, or "an enormous wild boar and a long snake," two animals well known for their greed, violence, and aggressiveness." (Tsang 1996 p 54). The continuation of both the pig and the snake is suggestive when considering continued oral motif. This form of interplay of orality and literacy could be seen as an example of Ong's residual orality, however it is not necessarily the technique of writing that produces the oral residue, but instead the process of Hui-li writing about a figure, who is reciting a folk song; this establishes certain layers within the oral residue as it occurs firstly within the 'tradition' being carried out by a historical figure within a biography, and then the technique used within that tradition.

The image of the "avaricious pigs" exploiting the resources of the country seems easily comparable to the disciple of Xuanzang in Cheng-en's Ming novel of *Journey to the West*. The introduction of Pigsy in the book places the character in an opulent household in which he has married the daughter of a regarded landowner; who in fact comments on the initial hard-working nature of the demon, until he soon becomes both lazy and forthright. After the initial demonstration of commitment, Pigsy displays a sense of undeserved entitlement; possible representative of the symbolic sense of greed similarly explored in Hui-li's recounting of Xuanzang's conversation. This could be similarly implied when examine the introduction of Friar Sand at the Sands river. This tale involves the pilgrims being forced to stop on their journey due to the impassable river. The river in question could be a reference to Xuanzang's own recounting of the sand river (desert) an ever-present obstacle on his journey to India and perhaps as impossible to cross as an actual river, due to the length and arduous nature of a desert. The metaphor in Hui-li's recitation of Prince Chin's triumph pronounces that the "four seas were troubled by poisonous snakes" (Yung-hsi 1959 p.170).

This could signpost, if only tenuously, to the presence of a river demon, a bad or unsavoury spirit within the water. However, in Chinese mythology the mention of snakes in the four seas may allude to the dragon kings of the four seas, mythological characters from China that do appear within the Ming novel. If we consider this established parable/metaphor again this could be the materialisation of characters through the nature of oral tales evidenced in Hui-li's text. The appearance or presence of Friar Sand in the novel is told as if he is the occupancy of the river, a cannibal or man-eater. This could be a reflection of the snake affecting the seas – Friar Sand being a water demon devouring the people who venture near the water. These metaphors are by no means solid evidence of the development of these characters, however, they do demonstrate possible tropes of the Tang oral narratives, evidence instead of how there may be a reason for the characters' of Pigsy or even Friar Sand having the physical manifestations that they do.

As seen above between the two written texts there are noticeable differences between events. This could easily be attributed to interpretation or Hui-li's desire to 'create' a divine vision of Xuanzang. The fact that in his biography of the monk it is Xuanzang that tells the story rather than king Siladitya may be due to the desire to make his old master appear as the source of culture and to be the primary focus of all others within the story. This sustains Xuanzang as a figure of reverence and cultural knowledge. Also of note, is the importance of king Siladitya's knowledge of King Ts'in in Xuanzang's own text as it highlights the importance of stories along the Silk Road. The fact that king Siladitya has heard of the story and is able to recite the legendary accomplishments of the figure suggests an established tradition of storytelling and legend from China along the Silk Road and likely vice versa. The recitation within the text offers interesting layers for consideration. Namely, that king Siladitya has heard the tale from an unknown source; due to his social rank it would be plausible to consider that he has heard the story from either another eminent person or guest, or perhaps a storyteller, sustaining the notion of a tradition of verbal tales.

The use of descriptions in Hui-li's text such as "Evil stars" within the recitation also adds to the power of the story; rather than the factual account of Ts'in's enemies or foes there is the

manifestation of unworldly evils, this could also be the result of an oral history as the facts and details have been omitted and replaced with an easily accessible metaphor for the troubles that Ts'in faced. This compressing of his trials and reign into a short overview of his entire triumph, in which all evils faced are reduced to a supernatural force, is the process of creating a legend. As these forces are subdued by a single being within the story, Ts'in, his status is elevated, propelling him in to a legendary figure. It is within Xuanzang's own text that the evidence can be found of how his journey and accomplishments may have formed into a legend. The importance of his own journey as discussed above can easily be assimilated into the same pattern of compression. The individual events and details of his journey could have been omitted in the storytelling process. Like Ts'in's story, the trials, bandits and dangers that Xuanzang himself faced, can be easily assimilated under the descriptions of 'demons' or 'spirits'. This is evident throughout Hui-li's biography as Xuanzang is consistently warned about demons and spirits "The road to the West is dangerous and one has to cross the desert in which there are demons and hot wind. Whoever encounters them cannot be spared from death." (Yung-hsi 1959 p. 17). This indicates a catalyst for the development of the 'demons' often found within the mountains and forests in the Ming novel and various versions of the story, the use of metaphor in Hui-li's text becomes through the oral tradition, an actual manifestation of adversaries by the novelization.

Hui-li's biography is in essence one of the first examples of how Xuanzang, as a historical figure, began to become a legendary character. It is pertinent to consider Hui-li's position as a Buddhist monk as it is considered that Buddhist monks are responsible for much of the oral tradition within China (Mair 1988). This makes for compelling evidence when considering the importance of orality on the text. Xuanzang's journey was not just important culturally but was an important event in Chinese Buddhism; his accomplishments were especially important to the Buddhist canon. It is therefore not improbable that as a figurehead for many Buddhist writings, he became the focus of oral stories.

It is clear from comparison of the texts that both evidence aspects of an oral tradition in

explicit reference to 'verse, 'song' and 'folk', but also in the construction of their own writing through the use of epithet, metaphor, motif and additive structure. An examination of texts as early as this begin to shed light on the orality that played a part in the story's tradition, as well as its relationship and influence on literary practices. The role of the storyteller is also evidently an important factor in the fictionalising of Xuanzang early on in the story cycle, making it clear that the impact of oral storytelling techniques and environments may have a big impact on the development of the story as a whole. Most importantly about these texts, is that they became the source that helps to popularise the story of Xuanzang. The stories that Xuanzang himself tells in the account of his travels, begin to shape his own story. Hui-Li's biography is the first literary adaptation of 'the journey' which embodies an oral-literate symbiosis, which in turn influences the image and function of the Xuanzang narrative in Tang China, and indeed the story of *Journey to the West* in the modern texts.

These instances within the two texts example the lasting influence of Xuanzang as a medium. His own autobiographical account shares oral stories told both from the Buddhist canon, and Chinese culture. In telling these stories in manuscript form, Xuanzang is one of the original media of the oral-literate symbiosis. The literacy rates within China in the Tang Dynasty would have primarily been limited to the educated classes and religious or philosophical schools. Therefore, Xuanzang in writing this text is forming an influential document that helps shape his culture's understanding of geography, anthropology and Buddhism. Xuanzang is helping to create an oral-literate episteme within the texts related to Buddhism. His ability to pen down what he has heard on his travels, means that he is saving storytelling traditions and tropes for further transpositions. This can be seen in Hui-Li's reinterpretation of Xuanzang's account. Xuanzang begins to impact China's understanding of the world across its boarders and it is fundamentally driven by storytelling, this is something I believe goes on to influence the very environment of storytelling in China, and therefore as a medium Xuanzang privileges the interplay of orality and literacy.

3.3 A Visual Environment of the Oral-Literate Symbiosis

Before looking at the Ming novel and the interplay of orality and literacy in chapter 4, it is first important to consider the large gap between Hui-li's biography and the first written evidence we have of the fictional telling of the story *Journey to the West* in the 13th century – the text known as the Kosanji version (Mair 1987, Dudbridge 1970). This is a large gap in time to consider as the space of nearly six hundred years of largely unexplained development. Although this is certainly the period in which the transformation from fact to fiction of the story takes place, no claims can ever be fully substantiated. Instead I intend to piece together a broad theory in terms of how the story may have developed through what is known about the culture of storytelling in the periods, along with the pictographic evidence available. This will help shed light on the importance of orality and literacy in the story and how they developed into the motifs and techniques still found in the film and television sample of the content analysis.

Along with the oral traditions that may be evidenced within the texts of both Xuanzang and Hui-li, and the evidence of the progression of Xuanzang's story from fact to fiction, there is another tradition that surrounds the Buddhist monk. This is in the pictorial representations that are available in which he is a central figure; these artefacts are in many ways the lasting evidence we have of a developing environment of storytelling before the written stories and are closely related to the Chinese oral tradition and its development and influence on the Chinese vernacular fiction (Mair 1989). The iconography within these representations evidences some continuing visual motifs that are still found in modern versions of the story, in fact the pictorial representations from the Tang dynasty onwards suggests a continued relationship between the 'visual medium' of an oral noetic and the story cycle of Xuanzang, whether in oral or written traditions. This suggests that in the Chinese context, the oral noetic was interlinked with the influence of literacy, and as explored in chapter 4, the culture of print in China was too a balance between the oral and written traditions. Significantly, this means that in the context of J*ourney to the West*, it has from its beginnings been a

story that is told and experienced through an oral-literate noetic, not the binary of one or the other. This is significant when analysing the modern adaptations of *Journey to the West* as there is a clear connection between the iconography of Xuanzang presented before the Ming novel, and his representation in audio-visual adaptations; this evidences an embedded practice of traditional oral storytelling in textual and filmic form. The visual representations of Xuanzang and the evidence of storytelling during the Tang dynasty have been found in Buddhist sites along the Silk Road, and in the structures of *Journey to the West* as a medium.

Amongst the images found at the sites at Dunhuang were a dozen or so very similar pictorial representations of itinerant monks (see figures 3.1-3.3 below). These images have bought about much scholarly discussion as they seem to suggest an influx of travelling monks and storytellers before and in the Tang Dynasty. The itinerant monks or pilgrims are accompanied by a tiger and have with them bamboo scroll packs, a fly whisk and in some (figure 3.2 and 3.3) there is a Buddha seated on a cloud which appears to lead from their staff. The image of the Buddha not only reaffirms the relationship between the travellers and the preaching of the Buddhist cannon but Mair has also suggested that the "attribute of a small transformation Buddha seated on a cloud above... makes sense as a symbol of their creative powers of illusion." (Mair 1986 p.31). We can take several readings of this interpretation, firstly that the paintings themselves represent an enterprise of storytelling during the years in which the story of Xuanzang had begun developing into legend. Secondly, we can see distinct similarities in the representation of these figures with Xuanzang himself. Examining these ideas separately it is easy to see and fashion an overview of the fictionalisation of the Xuanzang story and identify elemental parallels to contemporary adaptations of *Journey to the West t*hat indicate their presence a features of the story as a medium, and the continuation of the oral-literate symbiosis.

Figure 3.1
Pilgrim Monk accompanied by tiger 9th c.

Figure 3.2
Pilgrim Monk accompanied by tiger 9th c. Tang Dynasty Dunhuang cave

Figure 3.3
Pilgrim Monk accompanied by tiger 9th c.

The figures in these paintings have often been identified as storytellers (Mair 1986, Wong 2002) and therefore evidence the storytelling tradition of *chuan-pien,* in which picture scrolls depicting events from the narrative were shown to an audience whilst a story was told. This tradition affirms the importance of the visual medium in the tradition of Chinese oral storytelling and perhaps the duality of image and sound as well. If we utilise Ong's notion of the sensorium – not perhaps as a biological actuality but more concept in which to discuss the nuances of exhibition and reception in oral communication – there is already a clear balance in the aural-visual senses of an audience's engagement with stories. The fact that the oral stories themselves were accompanied by picture scrolls demonstrating scenes from the stories being told (Mair 2014), in itself adds another level to the art of oral storytelling; although I have discussed this in terms of the storyteller's performance (nonverbal communication) this is a different matter altogether. As the trade was not merely an oral-aural process but a visual one as well; performance aside there seems to be a marriage of senses involved in the reception of an oral performance during the Tang Dynasty. This oral/aural and indeed visual medium of Chinese storytelling establishes a variable in the oral-literate dichotomy and the great divide that Ong explores, as there seems to be a new order for both visual

and aural reception by audiences who could be made up of both literate and preliterate personages. This is not to say that during the development of the literate world, in all cultures, that there weren't both literate and preliterate audiences listening to oral tales, moreover that in the Tang Chinese storytelling of a scribal culture, there was a visual counterpart, beside that of performance, to contextualise the transience of orality into single immovable form. These flat, singular representations may have been used as a stimulus to work a story from or perhaps to compliment events from within the story, however the importance lies in the solidification of the oral story into artefact. The added involvement of these picture scrolls to the storytelling process seems to relate to Ong's discussion of the sensorium as well as any discussion of an oral/literate divide. After all the discussions around this dichotomy often seem to remove the pictographic element of communication from the equation. However, the discussion of storytelling in any process be it oral-aural, written, stage play or television programme, rarely is there an instance in which the visual is not a primary concern within the supposed 'sensorium' of an individual's reception. Although Ong is correct that with the advent and popularisation of print the human cognition may have developed towards a dominance in the visual, in the accommodation of inferring meaning to text, there is also an under appreciation of the role of the visual in a largely oral culture. To assert that "writing, and most particularly the alphabet, shifts the balance of the senses away from the aural to the visual..." (Ong 1967 p. 8) demonstrates that the importance of orality and literacy seems in some way to negate the nuances of the visual dialogue in performance and pictographic representation; the latter in the form of cave paintings, being the oldest evidence of human communication and possibly narrative. I suggest that in this tradition, contextual to China and its development of storytelling, that the image and focus on the visual is an element of the oral-literate symbiosis. The images of storytellers are suggestive of this, not merely in the fact that such storytellers existed, but also in the fact that so common were they, artists repeatedly committed their image to paintings.

These images of storytelling travellers have in the past also been mistaken as images of

Xuanzang (Mair 1986, Feltham 2012). It is understandable when looking at the images of Xuanzang that we have today (see figure 3.7), in comparison to these figures of storytellers, that these mistakes have been made. Feltham in her study of these images has argued that

> Xuanzhang, who travelled with a considerable retinue, including an elephant, and horseloads of scrolls and gifts, as in the Tang dynasty mural in Dunhuang Cave 103 (Whitfield 2000, 25) is, however, not likely to be shown as a lone pilgrim on foot with a pack on his back" (Feltham 2012 p.6).

I do not necessarily agree with Feltham that Xuanzang is unlikely to have been depicted as a lone traveller simply because he is seen in other paintings accompanied by a cohort of followers. Although it is true that he was accompanied in most of his journey, especially on his way back to China, his path to India was a secret affair successfully aided by allies but was at least in the beginning a solemn and individual act. Therefore, I see it as quite plausible that he would be depicted as a lone traveller. Although I agree that these depictions are not of Xuanzang, I believe his depiction as a lone traveller is in fact far more likely as Xuanzang's own account, and Hui-li's biography, for the most part seem to be the story of a single traveller. The scroll packs themselves certainly do not have to be an indication of the historical journey back from India but are more likely a staple icon of his fictitious depiction, signalling his quest; the image is Xuanzang on his way to or back from collecting scriptures, which has become a recognisable trait to an audience. However, as Mair has pointed out, it is tangible that these images of itinerant storytellers became assimilated into the iconography of Xuanzang (Mair 1986). This could in part be due to the role of Xuanzang as a storyteller along the Silk Road which is evident in both his own account and Hui-li's. In the story of Prince Ts'in and indeed multiple other examples in Xuanzang's text, his entire narrative of the countries he visits are in fact transmissions of stories relating to the Buddhist faith.

3.3.1 Japanese Influence and the Visual Storytelling of Xuanzang

The image of Xuanzang has clearly been modelled after the images of these itinerant storytellers. Japanese paintings of the monk show Xuanzang with the same elements including the

bamboo scroll pack. It is certainly true that the historic Xuanzang would not have needed such a pack as the scriptures would have been inscribed on dried palm leaf, however as early as the ninth century this fictitious image of Xuanzang had been established in picture and most likely story. One of the most notable transitions from the images of itinerant storytellers into Xuanzang is in the role that Japanese travellers had in this metamorphosis. It seems that the popularity and rise of Buddhism in Japan during the Tang dynasty led to pilgrimages to China. These resulted in the acquisition of pictures and stories surrounding Xuanzang from China that were taken back to Japan. Most notable is the imagery and story that developed around the demon/spirit Shensha Shen. This is a figure that developed from one of the more fantastic elements of Hui-Li's biography in which Xuanzang is unconscious in the desert and is awoken by a giant figure holding a halberd who urges him to continue on his journey[9]. This character in the desert later developed through a process of storytelling into a repetitive figure in the Xuanzang popular cycle. He appears in many drawings and statues; there is evidence of this iconography as early as the 9th century when Jogyo, a Japanese pilgrim who travelled to China in the 9th century, brought back with him a statue of Shensha Shen, claiming it to be the figure that awoke Xuanzang in the desert (Wong 2002). The image of Shensha Shen has been repeated in several paintings and murals with Xuanzang such as those seen in figures 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

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[9] I discuss this episode in more detail below under the heading *The oral tradition from the autobiographical account to modern texts: Case study on continuing motifs*

Figure 3.4	Figure 3.5	Figure 3.6
The Buddha and the sixteen protectors 14th c.	*Buddha with Sixteen Benign Deities 18th c.*	*Ikyamunl with two divas, and sixteen benign deities 14th c.*

These demonstrate the full fictionalisation of the priest within a Buddhist storytelling tradition, as the element of fantasy found in the literature of Hui-Li's biography has been transposed into the aural-visual dialogue of the Chinese and Japanese oral storytelling traditions. The oral-literate symbiosis of Xuanzang's narrative is not just in the oral features of written texts, but in the textual features found in the oral tradition, in this case the images of stories based on written content.

The image of Shensha Shen himself is of note as he wears a skull necklace. This particular imagery has carried forward to the iconography of Sha Wujing or Friar Sand in the story of *Journey to the West* and continues to remain a part of the character's visual representation (figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7

Sandy / Friar Sand from Saiyuki 1978 -1980

In fact, visual elements of the Japanese tradition may have even taken more inspiration from the

culturally situated iconography that migrated from China in the 9th century than just the skull

necklace as a motif. The Saint worship of Xuanzang in Japan developed many visual murals and

scroll stories, and Xuanzang was often accompanied by the demon figure Shensha Shen or in

Japanese Jinja Taishou. This demon figure was well established in Japanese art, and although was

clearly the archetype for the appearance of Friar Sand (Sha Wujing), with his often large monster

like demeanour and skull necklace, in Japan the iconography of Shensha Shen continued in its own

right. Statues and painting can be found in the 21st century still. The figures below show various

images of similar iconography in Japanese appropriations of *Journey to the West* (figures 3.8 and

3.9) and earlier and later portrayals of Shensha Shen in Japan (Figures 3.10 and 3.11). Figure 3.10 is

an ink on silk Japanese painting from 13th – 14th century, in which the spirit is depicted as usual

with red skin and a skull necklace. This imagery is repeated in the collector's figurine in figure 3.11

which is manufactured and sold by Kaiyodo in Japan. Notably the Japanese appropriations of the

story have a tendency to repeat these features as distinctly Japanese features. The characters in both

figures 3.8 and 3.9 represent features of Shensha Shen iconography; figure 3.8 clearly shows the

continued use of red skin, metal arm bands/bracelets and fang like teeth. Whereas figure 3.9 is slightly different in appearance, it retains the imposing stature of the demon and includes the skull necklace motif. As these are both appropriations, the standard representation of Friar Sand is not used, and so the Shensha Shen iconography is used for alternative characters – both serve as antagonists in the texts. These examples of national appropriations of the story cycle are important features to the de-linearity of print media within the diachronic study of *Journey to the West*. Here we have the national assimilation of the Chinese story, first through the saint worship of Xuanzang and then through the cultural repetition of iconography from the artefacts of this movement. Their representation in audio-visual texts suggests that the visual motifs and construction of *Journey to the West* as a story is not about the adaptation of print at all, but about the repetition of story iconography and motif – structural features of the *Journey to the West* medium. In this instance the iconography itself predate the novel and print version of *Journey to the West.* This doesn't suggest that the novel wasn't a leading player in the influence of these appropriations at all, but merely highlights that cultural repetitions of the story are of equal weighting when considering the production of the story. The novel and the audio-visual texts have the same cultural and traditional inspirations at their core, all stemming from the oral-literate interplay of Chinese storytelling from as far back as the Tang dynasty.

3.8	3.9	3.10
Shen-sha Shen like monster from Dragonball Japan 1984	*Shen-sha Shen like monster from Starzinger Japan 1974*	*Shen-sha Shen* ink on silk Japanese painting from 13th – 14th

Figure **3.11**

Shen-sha Shen
collectors figurine
made by Kaiyodo Japan

Table 3.1 *The depictions of Friar Sand and Xuanzang from the results of the content analysis*

Code	Description	%
F1	Friar Sand -conventional representation (skull necklace, often bearded)	30
F2	Friar Sand -operatic representation (ball necklace)	23.3
F3	Alternative representation	30
X1	Xuanzang -Traditional representation (white and/or red robes, traditional hat, staff)	63.3
X2	Xuanzang -carrying a scroll pack	6.6
X3	Xuanzang as female	26.6

Table 1 shows the depictions of both Friar Sand and Xuanzang in the content analysis. We can see

that Friar Sand is represented as having a skull necklace in at least 30% of the texts in the sample. It

is important to clarify the 'ball necklace' in the operatic representations as being the development of

the iconography away from the skulls. However, if we include these with representations of the

skull necklace and account for their frequency only in texts that the character appears, he is

represented this way in over 69% of the texts. This suggests that the iconography of Shensha Shen

from as far back as the 9th century, has had a lasting impact on the story cycle. The idea that

Shensha Shen is the prototype of this character has long been discussed (Dudbridge 1970) but it is

also the distinguishing feature that enables us to see how the images of itinerant storytellers' blend

into the image of Xuanzang, and become a definitive element of the story.

The Japanese images of Xuanzang from the 14th century (Figure 3.12) clearly show the

monk in the same guise as the itinerant storytellers; holding a flywhisk with a bamboo scroll pack

and incense burner. Yet around his neck are the skulls associated with the encounter with Shensha

Shen, meaning there is a clear repetition of this iconography with Xuanzang in a storytelling cycle.

The murals of Xuanzang alongside Shensha Shen (figures 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6) show the monks

association with the demonic looking figure, an association which carries through to the written and

filmic fictions of Xuanzang. In fact, I believe that the images of itinerant storytellers have a far

greater implication in the influence of Xuanzang into fiction and indeed his representation.

Figure 3.12

Xuanzang Japan Kamakura Period 14th c.

The storytellers in figures 3.1,3.2 and 3.3 have the flywhisk and scroll packs that are replicated in

figures 3.4-3.6 and 3.12 but this trope also appears in figures 3.13 and 3.14 (*New Pilgrims to the

West* 1982) and 3.15 (*Monkey Goes West* 1966) below in examples of modern audio-visual

representations of the priest. The continuation of this visual motif in storytelling is a direct result of

not merely the representations of itinerant monks, but their tradition of oral storytelling itself. If we

again examine this representation in table 3.1 in context, Xuanzang appears in 26 of the 30 texts in

the sample. Of the texts he does appear in, 63% of these begin *in media res*, meaning that the

character is already accompanied by his disciples who carry his things for him, and they are already

on their journey. Of the texts that Xuanzang is represented in before meeting his disciples. 29%,

represent him with a scroll pack. This suggests that the cultural repetition of this image has

imbedded into the modern audio-visual story cycle despite the image's absence from the Ming

novel. The tradition of *Pien-wen* and *Chuan-pien* have directly influenced the representation of

Xuanzang in contemporary adaptations; the Tang artefacts that document a living oral-visual

tradition have in turn developed into the audio-visual tradition available today. The images from

figures 3.13-3.15 all carry the scroll pack as a staple motif of Xuanzang's iconography along with a

staff much like that seen in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.13

*Xuanzang carrying scroll pack from
New Pilgrims to the West 1982*

Figure 3.14

*Xuanzang carrying scroll pack 2
from New Pilgrims to the
West 1982*

Figure 3.15

Xuanzang carrying a scroll pack
from Monkey Goes West 1966

The addition of the tiger with the storytellers in figure 3.1-3.3 may also have originally been

a representation for the search for enlightenment and righteousness that has its roots in Buddhist

mythology (Feltham 2012). However, the accompaniment of a tiger, a fierce beast to escort a

storyteller along the Silk Road, is easily transferable as a spiritual protector on a pilgrimage; tigers

in China also have strong links to the supernatural (Bordahl 2013). It would seem quite possible that

if the culturally repeated imagery of itinerant storytellers has been transposed into the figure of

Xuanzang, that the same may also apply to the tiger. One of the earliest representations of the image

of Xuanzang in what we would consider the most like the fictional Xuanzang of the Ming novel

was discovered in 1980 (figure 3.16) in Cave 3 of the Yulin Caves (Tucker 2015). The mural is

dated to the 11th or 12th century and depicts Xuanzang by a river carrying scriptures illuminated by

light and he is accompanied by a white horse and a monkey. The white horse has also become a

staple visual motif of the story cycle, but the accompaniment of a Monkey figure with Xuanzang

not only presents us with the evidence of an oral tradition that developed the monkey disciple prior

to the literary character, but also mirrors the tradition of a Buddhist figure, with the visual

components of Buddhist scrolls and an animal companion. This mural, known as Pien-hsian - a

transformation scene or tableaux (Mair 1988b) - is again evidence of the nature of the visual noetic that accompanies the structure and understanding to the Xuanzang story, and *Journey to the West*.

The fictionalisation of Xuanzang began within Hui-li's biography of his life and travels. However as seen above in an analysis of his own record, it would seem that Xuanzang himself could be seen as a Buddhist storyteller bringing back with him tales of the Buddhist canon along the Silk road. The scribing of these stories to paper has placed them within the literary canon and has again reinforced the duality and symbiotic relationship of orality, literacy and indeed the visual of the Chinese storytelling tradition. This process can be found within the grottos themselves in which Xuanzang's own record has helped influenced the murals found within the caves, and quite possibly a Buddhist story tradition. The mural of a Buddha image bending forward to offer a thief the pearl from its forehead is shown in one cave with several similar images found in others, this is a story told in Xuanzang's *Record of the Western Regions* (Ning 2004). This clearly demonstrates the process of the fluctuating communication media of an oral tradition; Xuanzang has been involved in a storytelling process on his travels, he has penned it down and it has been re-imagined in the Buddhist cannon of storytelling in the repetition of images. The development of the imagery surrounding Xuanzang has gone through a similar process of cross-media influence and established a set of visual motifs that have continued through to fictitious stories of his journey. The similarities of the images above show the layering effect of time and the nuances of the artefacts within the images may suggest the tropes of the oral songs and Buddhist re-telling's of the Xuanzang's story. As his story evolved, his image refined to include certain iconographic staples, in themselves related to storytelling. These iconographic staples are the structures of an oral tradition, the visual mnemonics of a popular story cycle in which Xuanzang is recognised. The important thing to take away from these comparisons is the lasting impact of them as key structures in the *Journey to the West* Medium. The image of Xuanzang and Shensha Shen have developed together from two places; the traditions of storytelling based on the Buddhist canon – quite literary in the

representation of those telling these stories. Second is the written biography by Hui-Li, that established the Shensha Shen event, to be used in oral stories and visual representations, again exemplifying the oral-literate symbiosis.

3.4 Oral-literate structures, from Xuanzang to film

The duality of the relationship between orality and literacy can be seen further within Xuanzang's record, as the account of his travels is the account of the cultures he encountered along the way. This in many ways was why the Tang emperor was so interested in the priest's travels; as he wished to understand the regions and cultures that surrounded his empire. Much of the information in *the Great Tang Records on the Western Regions* is not merely a chronicle of Xuanzang's journey but the histories and stories of the cultures that he encountered along the way. In fact, the manuscripts section or chapters are organised and identified by the countries or regions that the priest goes through. The record in many ways evidences the traditions and stories which are allocated to the foundations of kingdoms and cultural establishment of 'place'. By this I mean to say that most 'places' within the kingdoms that Xuanzang travelled had their own traditional stories, mythologies and traditions explaining the establishment of civilisations or developments of locations. Here I will identify some of the motifs from these stories that have carried through to Hui-Li's text and can be evidenced even in the contemporary text *New Pilgrims to the West.*

The above analysis highlights the differences between both Hui-li's and Xuanzang's texts. It is clear in Hui-li's account of Xuanzang's life that a storyteller's process has taken place; a practise of adapting information to be re-presented to an audience. This in itself seems to reflect on Ong's discussion of oral noetic, in terms of poetics and narrative, in Hui-li's use of the "formulary, ceremonial appropriation of history" (Ong 1977 p.421). Hui-li appropriates the life of Xuanzang, even single moments from Xuanzang's own account, and layers over narrative formulas and depicts the development of his master's character ceremonially. The two texts also clearly demonstrate a

symbiotic relationship between *orality* and literacy, as they are both recorded documents – penned down for future generations - however much of what is penned down seems to evidence a strong reliance on the oral tradition to pass on the *law* of Buddhism. This is ever present in Xuanzang's text as not only did he orally recite his journey to his disciple, but he also utilises the oral tradition in his discussions of culture and geography; as he describes places that he visited along the Silk Road and in India he does so with accompanying folk tales and traditional Buddhist stories. Many landmarks and natural formations that he sees in his travels have ancient stories attached to them. These, it can be assumed, had been told to Xuanzang by locals and guides as he passed through the areas.

It therefore seems that both texts, despite their disparities, hold similarities in their repetition of *orality*; there seems to be a continuation of the tradition and even motifs between the texts that arguably continue to modern adaptations. The analysis of audio-visual texts has revealed a close relationship between the modern forms of storytelling in the production of *Journey to the West* and the traditional aspects of Chinese oral storytelling. These have progressed through the developing communication settings from Tang dynasty to modern day, but communicative context aside, some of the storytelling tropes have arguably survived from Xuanzang's initial record. This is to say that the above analysis of 'King of Ts'in' is just one example of how a tradition develops and adapts from one text to another; there is also a set of narrative repetitions that appear to continue through to Huili's biography and a modern text.

In particular, there is a repetition with the motif of *thirst* and celestial deliverance. In Xuanzang's text when discussing multiple mythologies that are connected to locations or places in the countries he visits, this particular motif appears to occur several times suggesting at the very least a correlation of storytelling motifs between the cultural traditions along the Silk Road. There are several accounts in which a group of travellers are without water and are saved by a spirit or deity who leads them to a spring or well:

> In old time Tathagata was the king of peacocks; on one occasion he came to this place with his followers. Being afflicted with tormenting thirst, they sought for water on every side without success. The king of the peacocks with his beak struck the rock, and forthwith there flowed out an abundant stream which now forms a lake. Those who are afflicted on tasting or washing in the water are healed. (Beale p.126)

Here we have several features which are established: a company are stricken with thirst, a Buddhist figure, in this case Tathagata, through religious or spiritual intervention relieves the afflicted. Again, this motif can be seen with a group of merchants afflicted with thirst; explaining the establishment of a well:

> Within the southern gate of the wall is a large well. Formerly, when Buddha was alive, a great company of merchants parched with thirst came here to the spot where Buddha was. The Lord of the World, pointing to this place, said, "You will find water there." The chief of the merchants, piercing the earth with the end of the axle of his cart, immediately water rushed out from the ground. Having drunk and heard the law, they all obtained the fruit of holiness. (Beale p.175)

This repetition is found several other times in Xuanzang's text, including an episode in which merchants are blown by a storm to a remote island where there is a large statue of Buddha. They are dying of thirst but when the moon shines on the statue water begins to trickle from the head of the statue, saving the men. In another tale a group of merchants are lost at sea and in need of water but upon finding what they believe to be land, they realise it is a giant and monstrous fish:

> "The merchant - master said, "It is no mountain; it is the *Makara* fish; the high crags and scarped precipices are but its fins and mane; the double suns are its eyes as they shine." Scarce had he finished when the sails of the ship began to draw; on which the merchant-master said to his companions, " I have heard say that Kwan-tsz'-tsai Bodhisattva is able to come to the help of those in difficulties and give them rest; we ought then with all faith to call upon that name." So with one accord and voice they paid their adorations and called on the name. The high mountains disappeared, the two suns were swallowed up" (Beale pp.125-126)

Upon praying to a Bodhisattva, they are saved from the monster. The frequency of this repetition could be seen as a 'theme' or 'scene' if transposed by Foley and Gejin's discussion of the oral epic. The continued use of *thirst* and *deliverance* could also be seen as a sequence of repetition within an oral tradition[10]. There are several features which are always present, the characters of the story are afflicted by thirst, they seek help from a Buddhist deity or image and they are saved. Of special note

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[10] Under *temporary magic characteristics*, in Thompson's (1955-1958) index D2033 is *Thirst magically caused to disappear.*

in the above extract is the calling of the name of the Bodhisattva for help *Kwan-tsz' tsai* or

Guanzizai also known as Guanyin from the Sanskrit Avalokitesvara. Guanyin is the Chinese

goddess of mercy and is repetitive figure in Cheng-en's novel and appears in 77% of the texts in the

sample. As a character in the story, the main protagonists rely on her for divine assistance, and in

these original texts we see the beginning of this motif. The act of calling upon a deity reinforces the

importance of the oral-aural process in the Buddhist cannon as it seems that prayer is actively said

aloud, especially in requiring an active response. This motif can also be found in Hui-li's text as

Xuanzang journeys across the desert:

> At last owing to thirst, he could proceed no more. For a period of four nights and five days, he did not drink a single drop of water and both his mouth and stomach became dried up. He was unable to move forward, being at the brink of death. He lay down on the sand and repeated the name of the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva despite his desperate condition. He prayed to the Bodhisattva, saying: "The journey of Hsuan-tsang is not for the purpose of gaining wealth or personal reputation, but simply for the purpose of obtaining the supreme Law. With his compassion the Bodhisattva's duty is to save those who are in distress. I am now in distress indeed. Can't you hear my prayers?" In this manner he prayed incessantly. At midnight of the fifth day came a cool breeze which made him feel as if taking a bath in cold water. He was able to open his eyes and his horse got to its feet. Invigorated by the cold air, he fell into a doze, in which he dreamed of a giant deity of several tens of feet high, holding a spear in his hand. The deity said to him: "why are you sleeping here instead of trying to go onward?" The Master was startled and wakened from his dream. He continued his journey. When he had gone for ten *li*, his horse suddenly changed its course and would not turn back, although he pulled hard at the reins. A few *li* further on, he saw a stretch of pasture several *mou* wide. He dismounted and let his horse feed on the grass. Ten paces beyond the pasture, he came to a pond of clean and sweet water. He lay down at the edge and drank and thus his life, as well as that of his horse, was preserved. In conjecture, this pasture and the pond of water had not been there before, but were produced out of the compassion of the Bodhisattva. His sincerity of mind often communicated with the gods and there were in his life many instances like this. (Yung-hsi 1959 pp. 24-25)

Here again there are many traits that seem to resemble the mythologies recounted in Xuanzang's

text. The narrative repetition of thirst is again used and yet it has been projected onto Xuanzang

himself, ailing in the hot desert. Again, we see the calling of Avalokitesvara or Guanyin for help

followed by the dream of a deity urging him to continue on his journey. The active prayer said

aloud to the bodhisattva again insights an active response. The oral/aural process resolves the

priest's anguish as the sounding out of his words insinuates an aural reception by the receiver (the

bodhisattva) who instigates an action. The relationship of sound and action is important as the

celestial intervention is not simply expected or entitled but needs to be called for, as Walter Ong

posits about the oral culture "The fact that oral peoples commonly and in all likelihood universally consider words to have magical potency is clearly tied in, at least unconsciously, with their sense of the word as necessarily spoken, sounded, and hence power-driven" (Ong 1984 p.32). Although this is clearly a work of literature, there is in Buddhism a sustained importance on the power of words; sutras are recited aloud and not quietly read. The 'magic' attached to words as oral utterance seems to run throughout the examples above, as the results in themselves are 'magical'. The apparition of the giant deity is the first action to take place and suggests divine intervention. The deity or apparition itself is the origin Shensha Shen, which as previously discussed is the starting point of the storytelling motif of meeting demons along the journey to India, which developed visually from this occurrence. But the addition of the horse escorting Xuanzang to the pasture also serves as the deliverance of thirst by divine intervention; the horse being led by Guanyin to sustenance. These motifs have been transcribed from Xuanzang's own text into his own narrative, and the events in Hui-Li's biography have been transcribed into the mythological story cycle. However, there are more modern repetitions of these motifs in the story cycle that can be seen in *New Pilgrims to the West* (1982). In this audio-visual text Xuanzang again is stricken with thirst and exhaustion in the desert where he falls unconscious, however in the visualist medium of film it is Guanyin who appears to revive him (figures 3.11 and 3.12 respectively). In this version all the elements remain except for the oral call for assistance, instead this is replaced with the visual language of film. As audiences may have become accustomed with both the narrative short-handed of cinematic narratives there is also the inference of what can be *seen* on screen by audiences familiar with the narrative of the story. A possible cultural exposition of Xuanzang's struggles may subsume the need for the character calling for help; unlike the Xuanzang of Hui-Li's text, this Xuanzang is deserving and fated to have celestial aid - instead of oral utterance the visual suffering of the priest infers enough.

Figure 3.16

Guanyin revives Xuanzang from
New Pilgrims to the West (1982)

Figure 3.17

Xuanzang being revived from New
Pilgrims to the West (1982)

It is of particular note that although elements of the motifs remain in the audio-visual texts, the narrative event does not take place in Cheng-en's novel. Instead there are instances in which Guanyin delivers the company from anguish, however the instance in this filmic text seems more explicitly related to Hui-li's. This could merely be by happenstance that the text holds the same features, however conjecturally it could be that the episode in Hui-li's text is well known in relation to the *Journey to the West* story cycle. This could insinuate a cultural repetition of story features as the setting of the desert, the unconscious priest and the rescue by a deity who is "giant" and "several tens of feet high" and urges the priest on. In Hui-li's text Xuanzang prays to Guanyin and in *New Pilgrim's to the West* he is saved by Guanyin, again repeating the ongoing role the Bodhisattva plays in the motif. Although the priest is not led to water but instead revived through a visualisation of divine power (figure 3.12), the process is still the same. In Hui-Li's text is the beginning of folk fantasy but by the time we get to the audio-visual text in 1982, the historical Xuanzang was abandoned for the fictitious priest of the Ming novel. Therefore, the instant revival is a difference of the priest is based on nearly 1200 years of story development, not to mention communicative development. Yet the essence of the motif remains intact, the celestial aid is there to move Xuanzang on with his journey. Although there are differences, there is a clear evolution through the

texts from the historical document of Xuanzang, to a biography and then film. Although the narrative of the film is adapted from the Ming novel, this moment seems to be a momentary flash of the past, a story trope that seems to have rippled through the texts. It marries together not only the oral tropes of Tang storytelling, as well as the literary drive of the Ming narrative but also the Tang visual iconography of the priest.

However, there are other instances of this theme or motif in Hui-li's biography which seem to carry through to the Ming novel. One instance is when Xuanzang is aided by a foreigner – his first disciple along his journey. The aid, named Shih Pan-to, is converted to Buddhism and helps Xuanzang escape from a city across a river. But on the other side whilst resting Shih Pan-to seems to want to kill Xuanzang:

> After a little while the foreigner got up and slowly advanced towards the Master with his sword in hand. But he retreated at a distance of about ten paces from the Master, and the purpose of his act was unknown. Suspecting that he might have some evil intent, the Master got up and recited the scriptures and repeated the name of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. Whereupon the man lay down and slept.

This again uses the motif of praying to Avalokitesvara for aid. This instance is of particular interest as not only does it have the repetition of calling upon celestial aid but there is the introduction of an untrustworthy disciple. The fact that Shih Pan-to seems to have evil intent and is then subdued through reciting scriptures is a well-established motif in the Ming novel and further adaptations. In Cheng-en's novel Guanyin gives Xuanzang a gold headband which is placed around his first disciple Sun Wukong's (the Monkey King) head and when Xuanzang recites a spell aloud the band tightens causing his disciple agonising pain:

> "Will you misbehave again in future?"
>
> "I certainly won't," said Monkey.
>
> Although he had made this verbal promise, he was still nurturing evil thoughts, and he shook his needle in the wind till it was as thick as a rice bowl. He turned on the Tang Priest, and was on the point of finishing him off when the terrified Sanzang recited the spell two or three more times.
>
> The monkey dropped his cudgel and fell to the ground, unable to raise his arm, "Master," he shouted, "I've seen the light. Stop saying the spell, please stop." (Jenner p. 1955 chapter 14 end)

In the Ming novel we can see the repetition of the disciple being subdued by reciting aloud a spell. Shih Pan-to becomes a menacing figure, restrained by the oral recitation of scriptures and Guanyin's name. Sun Wukong, rebellious and murderous in nature is controlled and pacified by the reciting of a spell – given to Xuanzang by Guanyin. Again, the power of spoken words seems to resonate as part of the oral noetic, the magic attributed to words in the oral/aural process is a staple of the storytelling process. This form of oral residue seems common across the historical texts and the continued story cycle of *Journey to the West*, be this in novel or televisual or filmic adaptation. Again, in figures 3.11 and 3.12 (respectively) we can see the visualisation of this event, however it is in these instances, unlike the oral residue found in these examples of literature, that the motif actually exists in sound and acoustic space; the oral/aural process of the motif is actioned rather than described.

3.5 Conclusion

McLuhan (1964) said that "The content of a medium is always another medium" (cited in Strate 2017). Strate uses this as another definition for McLuhan's Medium/Message aphorism. The story of Hui-Li's biography is Xuanzang's account, the storytellers' renditions of Xuanzang's journey used Hui-Li's biography, even the visual representation of Xuanzang uses the image of storytellers as a medium for their own development. Similarly, the iconography in murals become the content for further media in manga and television. We began this chapter by establishing Xuanzang as a medium, and it seems only fitting to conclude in the same manner.

It is in the individual aspects - time, synchronic communication development, diasporic cultural and religious exchange – occurring simultaneously that cause the unusual tradition of Chinese oral storytelling surrounding the historical figure of Xuanzang. As the evidence demonstrates the high level of activity in storytelling in this period (Mair 1988, Xuewei 1999), it is most likely that Xuanzang's journey offered the Buddhist and secular Chuan-pien and *pien-wen* storytellers the perfect opportunity to expand their repertoire of tales. The journey itself was open to

much creative interpretation due to the multiple communities' storytellers could imagine along the Silk Road between China and India, as well as the potential for an episodic narrative. This coupled with the storyteller's manner and spiritual elements of Hui-li's biography make the beginnings of an engaging, and importantly, faith driven adventure. Unlike Ong's assertions (1977 p.17) that writing "restructured consciousness, affecting men's and women's presence to the world and to themselves and creating new interior distances within the psyche" in this period we have a scribal/chirographic culture heading towards a print culture, which has established an oral tradition, one that grows and continues through to the modern age (Bordahl 2013).

In the above discussions we can see that multiple elements of Chinese oral storytelling can be identified in historical written texts and pictographic murals predating the Ming novel. These elements, or motifs tell us several things about the culture and environment during the period that Xuanzang was a prominent figure. Firstly, the written texts clearly show evidence of oral-literate interplay in not only their composition and content but in their narrative events. Secondly the pictographic evidence presents us with evidence of storytelling traditions of this period, which Xuanzang is clearly a figurehead of. The storytelling motifs found in both the written and visual evidence also demonstrate that the Xuanzang story cycle became embedded in storytelling practices and traditions; the same motifs that Xuanzang uses to describe Buddhist stories, begin to appear in the narrative of his own life. The storytelling motifs and the story of Xuanzang begin to synergise and the priest's travels become a cultural commodity, as both a Buddhist and then secular canonical story cycle. The historical figure of Xuanzang becomes a fiction under the influence of Buddhism and its oral traditions of storytelling, yet we find evidence of this from written sources.

The synergy of orality, literacy and indeed the visual dialogue of storytelling is evident from the very beginning of the story cycle and is not merely an occurrence of modern adaptations. It is fundamental in the diachronic study of *Journey to the West* to see that the oral motifs found in audio-visual texts as late as 2018, hold reflections of traditions from Tang China. The oral-literate symbiosis that I discuss as an important feature to this story is multi-layered and not simplistically

defined. The above analysis outlines my theorem to the development of the oral storytelling tradition of *Journey to the West*. Rather than accepting that the historical event was merely the influence of the story, we can see oral storytelling motifs developing through historical texts, ever influenced by the storytelling traditions that are developing around them in Tang society. The events, oral/aural and visual representations found in modern television and film adaptations are not merely a reflection of their time but are in fact a reflection of past oral practice, and a story that has become a medium. Xuanzang was the original medium, impacting his environment and becoming the structural element of a bigger medium – the story itself. The medium's original content was related to Buddhism but this in turn becomes a structural element of the medium as it grows and develops.

The oral-literate symbiosis is something that may seem somewhat obvious in the early texts often associated with Ong's oral residue, but would it seem more unusual in texts 600 years later? If we take the same approach to the Ming novel of *Journey to the West*, perhaps we can interrogate this interplay further to see how it functions within the story after a long period of establishment.

<center>**Chapter 4**</center>

<center>**The Monkey meets Gutenberg:**</center>

<center>**The Oral-Literate Symbiosis is Formalised in Print**</center>

4.1 Introduction

The last chapter explored the development of the story of *Journey to the West* by examining the role of the oral-literate symbiosis in the storytelling around the figure of Xuanzang. This chapter will explore the same interplay with a focus on the popular Ming dynasty novel of *Journey to the West*. I will explore several layers of this interplay; first I will look at the interplay of orality and literacy in the compiling of the novel, as a great deal of its content is not from the novel's *author*, but traditional stories from oral and scribal traditions, evidenced in the Dunhuang grottos. These stories, tropes and motifs are found in multiple audio-visual texts in the research sample, and therefore add a further element to this interplay due to their continued existence outside of print – before and after the Ming publication. Secondly, I will look at the interplay of the symbiosis in the structural and textual elements of the writing in the book itself, as these are heavily informed by the Chinese oral tradition. Lastly, from a media ecology approach, I will explore how the bias experienced in print culture and the focus on this one novel as a singular and original work, may have formalised its existence as a medium. This is not to say that the story was not a medium before, during, and after the publication of the printed book, but the focus on 'print' as a central medium of change itself, formalised the elements needed to continue the *Journey to the West* medium as an easily utilised commodity for social and political commentary. The purpose of this examination is to establish that the novel's interplay of orality and literacy in these areas suggests that the story is not singular work or story, attributed to the medium of print, but is itself a medium found within other media as content (McLuhan 1964). This in turn allows a re-examination of the Ming novel to demonstrate that in the Chinese context, the authority of print culture experienced in the west, is not necessarily paralleled here. Ultimately, through the examination of the evidence from the research sample we

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are able to determine that the Ming novel was not an *original* book, but the work of an original storyteller. Unpacking this idea is essential to the understanding that the story of Journey to the West is a medium, one that needs to be separated from its storytellers.

Below I examine the role of print in the wider context of communication and within the Chinese tradition of storytelling; which, as previously suggested, seems to infer something different to Ong's exploration of the great divide. This will be complemented with the analysis of the novel and its context as a cultural story in which the oral-literate noetic of storytelling was captured onto the page. This is examined as a traditional process of the storytellers of that time, borrowing and sharing stories, and that the novel was no different. The Ming novel is just another version of the story on a long line of versions; in fact, I look to suggest that the evidence presented below proves that the book, a product of print culture, is in a sense evidence of a very strong storytelling tradition outside of the print medium.

The study of the 100-chapter novel of *Journey to the West*, is a highly explored area. Scholars have discussed the allegorical, spiritual and religious aspects of the story and have looked into the debates around authorship and authentication. Unlike other scholars, I do not wish to investigate these well considered issues, however the latter debates will be discussed as evidence of some of the limitations in examining the story in a wider scope. Instead, I will be contributing to new knowledge in suggesting that the novel showcases structures of the oral-literate symbiosis in its construction, composition and intended reading. This chapter looks to study the novel as a single text within a broader cultural storytelling process. However, the novel will be explored as a key text in the development of *Journey to the West* and one that was integral to the survival of the story.

Below I utilise work on Chinese storytelling and evidence amassed by ethnographers and researchers in Chinese vernacular fiction, to establish that *Journey to the West* is an oral text, in as much as its marrying of oral and literate techniques demonstrates. Its symbiosis of orality and literacy through storytelling - specifically within the Chinese tradition - is evidence that challenges

its status as a singular authoritative novel (Sun 2018). In opposition to Ong's primary thesis, that literacy changed the way think, I will look to establish a clear balance between the opposing communications of orality and literacy within *Journey to the West* and suggest something more significant than mere oral residual. I will instead explore how it demonstrates the oral-literate symbiosis. This will be seen through the investigation of several elements. The first of these is the existence of multiple stories that pre-date the novel and seem to make up many of its sequences - this is equally complimented by the plethora of texts evidenced that tell the *Journey to the West* story cycle before the 100-chapter novel. I will briefly look at the arguments surrounding authorship and authentication, cementing some of Ong's notions of the effect of print culture on the human psyche, and how this has potentially impacted the study of the novel in context. Finally, I will examine the symbiosis of orality within the novel itself, focussing on its structure, form and content in relation to the study of the Chinese oral tradition. I will do this by applying Bordahl's (1999) study of the *Water Margin*, in which a deconstruction of the storyteller's traits is applied to written versions of a story.

The focus on the interplay of orality and literacy in the novel, is to interrogate the claim that Journey to the West is not a novel but is separate from any given media technology and any storyteller, as it is itself a medium. The evidence of the oral-literate symbiosis through traditional features of Chinese storytelling within the printed novel, suggests that it privileges an epistemic reading more weighted to an oral economy. As such, the story cannot be definitively a book, no more than it can be a film – it is the content of these, as it is a stand-alone medium. *Journey to the West* is a medium, the fact that it is often regarded as a story found within the medium of a novel is a misconception rooted in the view that the printed text supersedes everything. By showing how the novel does not 'stand-alone' from any preceding, contemporary or subsequent versions of the narrative, I hope to show that *Journey to the West* is as distinct a storytelling form as novels are from plays, or oral stories are from films.

4.2 Original or Just Published?

The study of the novel of *Journey to the West* has to be approached with Postman's context analysis in mind. The examination of print culture and print bias in media ecology tends to explore primarily European and north American developments, without considering the differences experienced in Asia. China's experience of print is especially important, as it is the birthplace of print, something often at odds with the Western experience. Nayar (2019) succinctly explains this disparity in *Renaissance Response to Technological Change,* in the discussion of the impact of gunpowder, compass and print:

> Of course, one discovery the previous European century had made was that China had long ago invented all three of Bacon's privileged technologies. In short, Jesuit missionaries to East Asia had, in Michel de Montaigne's telling, spread word of the "miracles" of print, powder, and compass, only to discover that they were not so miraculous; for, at the world's other end, "men had been enjoying them over a thousand years earlier." (Nayar 2019 p.310)

Most apt for this study is the fact that the first known printed work is a Buddhist text, The Diamond sutra, printed in China and dated around 868 in the Tang dynasty. In a media ecology study, China's development of orality and literacy is very different to what is discussed in the works of Ong and McLuhan. Chinese language and literacy have a very complex relationship to begin with; up until the 20th century the written language was still dominated by what is known as classical Chinese, a script system that bore no relationship to the spoken language. In fact, it was almost another language completely; monosyllabic, rhythmic and often memorised before even understood. This allowed for the widespread dissemination of Confucian ideals, allowing ruling classes opportunities to retain a degree of power through strict moral codes (Ze 1995). Classical Chinese was in essence an elitist system of writing (Ge 2001, Ze 1995). It became a social and political structure that Goody (1968) refers to as restricted literacy, in which a society's literacy is "restricted by factors other than the technique of writing itself" (Goody 1968 p.198) in an effort to either protect knowledge or restrict the skills and potential of literacy to a select group or the elite. Although the

classical style was very much for the elite, there were still folk tales being told orally in the market places alongside food stalls, which must have extolled their own moral tales (Xuewei 1999, Mair 1988).

The common vernacular stories flourished in the marketplaces of China and these could potentially have been outside of the imperial ideology, and definitely more suited to the tastes of the lay people. Certainly, the vernacular written Chinese was in use by the Tang dynasty, the Dunhuang manuscripts found in the grottos are proof of this. There developed a storytelling tradition in literate forms that were designed to be read to audiences and were in colloquial tongue so that the preliterate could enjoy them. These stories must have held a great interest of the lay people through their vernacular tongue and enjoyable adventures; there seem to be enough official doctrines banning storytelling to prove this (Mair 1989, Dudbridge 1970). Ge, in *Out of the Margins* (2001) suggests that the style of the Chinese vernacular novel is not imitating features of oral storytelling, but actually went through what he calls "textualization". By this he refers to the long process that the extant and popular vernacular novels went through to become the finished books; he focuses on the *Shuiba Zhuin*, hereafter *The Water Margin (1589)*. Ge suggests that to arrive at the vernacular novels still popular today, they first went through a long process involving multiple versions of "oral-literacy reciprocation" by which "A written version at a certain point of the evolutionary process was the destination of a textualizing movement as well as the starting point for another oralizing movement" (Ge 2001 pp.109-110). Here Ge is referring to the event in Chinese storytelling by which literature did not create a linear transgression as popularised by scholars like Ong, but instead established a cultural symbiosis in which each communication aids the other. This is evident in the printing houses of China, as Ze discusses:

> the Yu Family, which was in the printing business in Fujian from the twelfth to nineteenth centuries, printed fictions based on storytellers' prompt books and their editions spread far and wide for other storytellers to provide public narrations. This process meant that written text served as a bridge between the oral communication in different regions. (Ze 1995)

This degree of sharing stories and practices created a working relationship of texts which pushed narratives forward and created multiple manuscripts and oral tales. This development led to plays, books, and prompt books – short notes or story outlines to remind storytellers of their narrative - which all used similar stories. It is this process that Ge argues leads to the vernacular novel, as the story slowly develops into the novel, yet still holds in it the previous versions, themes, events and even structures. So unlike Ong's oral residue, the Chinese vernacular novel is part of a repeated pattern that grew with each version as the popularity of print grew. However, we cannot presume that Ge's textualization reinforces Ong's notion of literature and print replacing the oral tale. If we look at McLaren's work on the Ming chantefable, we can see that this is simply not the case. In her book *Chinese popular culture and Ming chantefables* (1998), McLaren examines the discovery of prosimetric chantefable texts that were discovered in a tomb near Shanghai in 1967. The contents of which suggest that during the Ming dynasty around the 15th century, a form of oral tradition was growing amongst the uneducated. The implications of this are that just as China was moving toward the adoption of writing and print as a dominant communication function, oral traditions and genres were being developed alongside it.

So, although classical Chinese remained the official script of the country until the 20th century, the vernacular script had gained momentum amongst the masses some 1400 years prior to the retirement of classical Chinese in officialdom. The relationship of the lay people of China to literacy is important in the specific communicative journey that Xuanzang's narrative went through. Even after classical Chinese began to lose favour in the twentieth century, literacy rates were incredibly low. At the turn of the century, literacy rates in China were as low as ten to fifteen percent and stayed as such until around 1950 (Ross et al 2005, Plafka 2001) whereas Europe had not seen this degree of illiteracy since the turn of the nineteenth century (Buringh and Zanden 2009). It was in fact Mao's cultural revolution that focused on improving literacy levels across the country. However, Purtle et al (2016) suggest that this was again, another form of control over the masses; Mao's party set about printing millions of copies of his little red book, accompanied by

copious amounts of propaganda posters which were text heavy and visually portrayed the importance of reading; especially the quotations of Chairman Mao. This fact is important in considering the oral-literate symbiosis in the novel, as the noetic of the masses throughout the story's history has largely been weighted to orality. It is only in the mid-20th century that this begins to shift. This means that the story, in any media form, needs to be attuned to an audience less likely to be able to access high levels of literacy nor this form of cognitive processing. Instead we can make an important observation, that the noetic of the masses in China was largely oral-literate; weighted to orality but influenced by literacy. This impacts the composition of Journey to the West in writing, as its reception cannot be for a purely literate noetic. Therefore, the context of orality and literacy within China is unlike many and constitute a very specific cultural experience and way of knowing.

The discussion below looks to evaluate the tropes and motifs that can be found in literary texts that came before the novel, to substantiate the fact that the Ming novel is a mix of pre-existing stories, and a storytelling tradition. The evidencing of this helps to again investigate the research question which asks in what ways the relationship between orality-literacy is important to the story's success and survival. This analysis also helps probe the second research question, that looks to understand *Journey to the West* as a medium and a tradition of storytelling due to its multitude of versions. The evidence below helps evaluate the various versions of the story prior to the Ming novel, revealing insights to the tradition of the story as a medium. Similarly, the analysis of structural elements of the Ming novel itself suggests that the interplay of orality and literacy may well be a driving force in the production of the story across media.

Following on from Ge's concept of textualisation we will now look at the various versions of stories in the Ming novel that have occurred in previous incarnations. The following analysis relies heavily on the works of Dudbridge (1970), Mair (1987), Yu (2006) and others in their detailed investigations of the antecedents of the 100-chapter novel. The existing discussions on

previous versions of the story are re-evaluated here, as I look to shed new light on them, as I use them as a basis to formulate a clear theory of how the novel was established. It is important here to outline the previous versions of the text and discuss their implications in relation to the 100-chapter novel, to determine their existence as evidence for my own thesis. The texts will be interpreted as evidence of a culture of storytelling outside of print (oral and written) and of course the ongoing tradition of the story's repetition within the Chinese storytelling tradition. The similarity of instances and structure will be viewed as evidence of 'orality' within the novel, and prove that perhaps, this evidence does not represent the authority of print, copyright and authorship that is often afforded it. I will instead catalogue some of the examples of pre-existing tales that appear in the 100-chapter novel, and audio-visual texts, but have clear previous versions. This will help to establish a picture and overview of the novel, not as a single piece of work, but as a collection of oral-literate stories stitched together.

4.2.1 The First Printed Text of *Journey the West*: The Kosanji

The Kosanji text is considered the most important evidence of the development of how the 100-chapter novel came to be. The Kosanji is in essence a collection of two wood block printed texts that date from the thirteenth century and are kept in the Kyoto Monastery in Japan. Of all of the versions that predate it, these represent the fullest and closest text to the 100-chapter novel. It is a key text for scholars that have studied the antecedents to the novel, and it contains a wealth of evidence in the storytelling motifs and tales that helped shape the Ming novel. The very existence of the Kosanji cements the importance of the story within the Chinese storytelling tradition and reinforces the story's cultural importance as it transcended oral tale and manuscript into print culture in China. This is not merely evidence of the story transcending from oral, into written, into print, but instead provides evidence that before the popular Ming novel, the story and medium of *Journey to the West* was a *trade* across all platforms.

Many motifs, episodes and tales from the Kosanji appear in the 100-chapter novel, something which is at odds with the idea of originality and ownership in print culture (Brent 1991). These parallels between the texts vary from motifs and themes to entire episodes. For instance, there is a sequence in the Kosanji which contains several elements which appear in the Ming novel. The Monkey disciple, called Hou Hsing-che in the Kosanji, has a fight with a white tiger. The tiger or tiger spirit is clearly a continued motif in Chinese storytelling and one that keeps reappearing in the *Journey to the West* cycle. However, in this sequence there are two further motifs which are of note. During the fight, the Tiger demon refuses to submit, and the Monkey disciple turns his "gold ringed staff into a *yaksa*...Its body was blue as indigo, its hair as red a vermilion" (Dudbridge 1970 p.35). Here the description of the staff is instantly familiar as the Monkey King's gold banded cudgel, which changes size in the Ming novel. This item is a staple in the structure of the story and is inseparable from the Monkey King character in modern versions of the story; appearing in 100% of the texts in the research sample. Not only is the yaksa (a large and fierce spiritual guardian or warrior) a common image within the Chinese and Buddhist storytelling canon, but the description of the blue skin, red hair and often 'protruding fangs' is a common image on silk paintings in the Dunhuang grottos (Dudbridge 1970 p.36). Although Dudbridge investigates this image no further, it seems to have some repetition in the story cycle: in the Ming novel, it serves as a description for at least three of the demons that the group must face on their journey west. At least three appear in verse descriptions, one demon is described on two separate occasions, first as:

> A dark blue face,
> white fangs,
> a huge gaping mouth.
> (Jenner 1993 p.408)

Secondly as:

> A blue face, a red beard, and scarlett hair blowing free; (Jenner 1993 p.412)

Both of these descriptions share similarities with the description of the *yaksa,* the further two instances describe a group of bandits that Xuanzang encounters, and the servant of an old man respectively:

> One's blue face and protruding fangs were worse than an evil gods:
>
> The other's bulging eyes were like the Star of Death.
>
> The red hair at their temples seemed ablaze; (Jenner 1993 p.784)

and then the demon servant: "He was accompanied by a devil servant with a blue face, terrible fangs, red whiskers and a red body" (Jenner 1993 p.889). All the examples in the Ming novel share the description of the blue face, red hair and fangs, suggesting a common motif in storytelling and the cycle. In fact, the motif appears in the living oral tradition many hundreds of years later, in a transcript from a storytelling session from the 1980's, the storyteller Dai Buzhang describes Friar Sand in a similar way:

> Friar Sand, however, had to be extremely careful about his blue cheeks and red whiskers. His face, an indigo-blue face, neither black nor green, how awful it looked! Uh! It is impossible for me to describe that colour! (Bordahl 1996 p.426)

Here the traditional visual description has been attributed to one of the heroes rather than an antagonist. However, it is the continuous repetition of this description that seems to last in the stories surrounding *Journey to the West* that is of note - it seems that this is the continued tradition of Buddhist storytelling that has lasted for many hundreds of years. This visual, albeit descriptive motif, is something that began before the Ming novel and continued after it.

In the same instance in this story, after the tiger demon still refuses to submit, the monkey disciple Hou Hsing-che enters the belly of the tiger, attacking and killing her from within. This is a hugely popular motif which has been found in the folk stories of many Asian countries (Dudbridge 1970) and one which is seen here in the *Journey to the West* cycle. Again, this is a motif that begins in oral stories, is here seen in the Kosanji text perpetrated by the monkey disciple, and then appears

on many occasions in the Ming novel. This particular motif is also found many times in the various audio-visual versions of the story. Looking at table 4.1 we can see that the motif is found in at least 30% of the sample, cementing it as one of the key ingredients within the cycle, often appearing in the Princess Iron Fan story, seen in the novel.

Table 4.1 *Selection of Scene types from the results of content analysis*

Code	Description	%
S1	Attack from within - in which characters transform and attack antagonists from within their stomach	30
S8	The lookalike - characters have a doppelganger	16.6
S9	Shape-shifting - characters transform into other characters to confuse their enemies	
S10	Transformation - characters turn into other objects such as insects or food or Monsters	73.3
S15	5 elements mountain - Monkey is subdued under Buddha's hand/5 Elements mountain	26.6

The use of this particular motif is a good example of the Ming novel formalising the structures of oral and scribal stories within a medium. The attack from within motif is seen in many stories, is found in the Journey to the West cycle of the Kosanji, and then appears in a specific episode in the Ming novel. The use of the motif in this episode is then seen in a large amount of audio-visual representations of the story.

Again in the Kosanji, there is mention from the Monkey disciple of a time in which he was in heaven and stole some peaches. This story has been found in various forms before the Kosanji version and is often associated with the legend of Tung-Fang Shuo, an historical figure who had various stories that surrounded him, including an episode where he steals some heavenly peaches (Vos 1979, Po-jen 1995). This has since become a major tale in the Monkey King story, and is a large part of the sequence of the character wreaking havoc in heaven. This type of motif within the story happens on several more occasions in the Kosanji text, including motifs related to the spirit of the Sands, the Heart sutra and the Land of Women which are all common themes and episodes that appear in the Ming novel and the audio-visual texts that follow it.

The previous versions of the story, before the 100-chapter novel, themselves show evidence of using previously existing tales in the Chinese storytelling canon. Several examples can be seen in the Kosanji text which seem to echo traditional motifs from familiar stories. For instance, the final chapter of the Kosanji recalls an episode of Daffy: a son who, whilst his father is away, is subjected to three gruelling trials in his stepmother's attempts to kill him. He is protected and saved by divine forces all three times. The third time by Xuanzang, who on cutting open the belly of a fish, finds the boy alive inside. The tale, as Mair (1987) has investigated, has incredibly similar narrative tropes with stories relating to Emperor Shun as a boy. These tales are in several manuscripts found in the Dunhuang grottos and are dated from 946 and 949 AD (Mair 1987 p43). Mair traces the story in these manuscripts back to an Indian source, and then traces its path to China with a manuscript from the sixth century, that contains all the elements from the Kosanji text: three trials, a wicked stepmother and being saved from a belly of a fish. Similarly, in the Kosanji text there is an instance in which Xuanzang ascends to heaven and expounds the Lotus Sutra. Again, this is paralleled by a similar tale in a Mu-lien cycle - a popular Chinese story in which filial son rescues his mother from hell - and corresponds even closer to a Hung-Fan legend[11] in which a monk is summoned to heaven to deliver a sermon. Although these instances do not occur in the 100-chapter novel as we know it, they do evidence a long line of traditional stories and motifs that are continually coveted by different storytellers. Even in the written evidence of these stories we find the traditional blending of oral traits in the storyteller's practice of using well established motifs, tales and narrative techniques. Of particular note is one of the motifs from the Emperor Shun versions of the story as it has Shun's father's blindness being cured by Shun licking his eyes (Mair 1987 p.47). Although the Ming novel has no comparative story as that of Shun, or more correctly, Daffy in the Kosanji, the motif of curing blindness from licking the eyes does appear in the novel. In chapter 9, Xuanzang finds his blind Grandmother and after licking her eyes, she can see again. This motif is also found in the television text of *Saiyuki* (1978) but instead it is Monkey who has been cursed with blindness,

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[11] for more detail on these texts see Dudbridge 1970 pages 33-35

and Xuanzang who again relieves his blindness by kissing his eyes. It is one of the more unusual

motifs to survive from the story cycle, but these instances clearly focus on the story motifs that

continue through the Chinese tradition.

4.2.2 Cultural Borrowing Continues: Popular Motifs from the Environment Outside the Novel

Although in Ong's thesis the novel itself is a printed work and therefore holds the authority of a

single author, *Journey to the West* is in fact a mix of cultural and traditional stories weaved together

by another storyteller. The ideological power of print means that we have to attribute an author to

the work and, regardless of the fact that much of the work is traditional, we see it as an original

whole. The authority and copyright of print tends to cloud the fact that the writer of *Journey to the*

West, although undoubtedly talented, was a weaver of oral tales. Many of the more common

episodes of the   novel that appear in audio-visual texts are not Cheng-en's but traditional cultural

stories that had been passed down.

Table 4.2 *Selection of episodes that appear in the novel, from the results of the content analysis the*

frequency represents how many times the episodes also appear in the audio-visual texts

CODE	DESCRIPTION	%
E2	Havoc in heaven	36.6
E3	Princess Iron Fan	23.3
E5	Cave of the silken web	26.6
E6	Land of women	6.6
E8	Meeting Pigsy	13.3
E9	Meeting Sandy	13.3
E17	Red boy	13.3
E18	Bone demon	13.3
E19	Scorpion demon	10
E20	Monkey banished	23.3

For instance, the story of Sun Wukong, after wreaking havoc in heaven, being chased and

caught by Er-Lang Shen appears numerous times in the compiled filmography. In table 4.2 we can

see that the episode of *havoc in heaven* appears in over 36% of the texts in the sample. Again this frequency has more impact if we consider the fact that 63% of the texts begin *In media res* and therefore do not depict the Monkey King's story prior to meeting Xuanzang. Yet it is a story that is dated back to the 9th Century, before the first written evidence of the story's narrative and 300 years before even the first visual representation of a Monkey Disciple in the Xuanzang narrative (Cai 2010, Hung 1987). According to Wu Hung (1987) the tradition of this story cycle can be traced back to pre-Tang China and some of the common motifs in the cycle can be found as far back as B.C. Hung asserts that the pictorial evidence of Er-Lang Shen dating back as far as Song or Yuan dynasties in which the character's entourage have an ape tied up "as an important capture" (Hung 1987 p.108), begin the storytelling motif which evolved into the print narrative of *Journey to the West*. Hung goes on to evidence that there was also a

> "Yuan- Ming play, entitled … The god Er-lang locks up the ape-demon "Great Sage-Equal to Heaven"….It begins with an ape-demon stealing Taoist elixir…Er-Lang is summoned to capture him… [who]…effects the capture and surrenders the ape" (Hung 1987 p.109).

Several aspects are again important here as there is the use of the name and title 'Great Sage-Equal of Heaven' which not only is an important narrative plot within the novel but is also used by the authorial voice as an epithet for the character of Sun Wukong. This title has also continued to be used in audio-visual adaptations of the story and is even the domain name address for an English fan site of the 1970's Nippon version *Saiyuki called* greatsage.net. The epithet, which is so engrained within the story's structure and narrative are in fact from a separate story outside of the *Journey to the West* tradition (Cai 2010). Secondly, the narrative structure of the play has been lifted as a structure in the Ming novel, suggesting that the narrative was a popular story cycle of the time and that the authority of literacy and print in Ming China was also an industry of borrowing and reshaping oral-literate narratives. The fact that this very iconic scene from the Ming novel that has been reimagined time and time again in art and audio-visual adaptations, found it's beginning – at least in its most developed form – in a play predating the novel, seems to suggests a transient

process of storytelling. In fact, Dudbridge suggests that from the various dramatic plays that predate the novel demonstrate common themes most of which are found in Table 4.2 - the Monkey King's havoc in heaven; stealing of peaches, wine and elixir; battle with the armies of heaven; capture by Er-Lang Shen and refinement in a furnace; being subdued under a mountain; being freed by Xuanzang and an iron hoop being placed on his head by Guanyin after he becomes murderous; the Red boy; Princess Iron Fan dousing the flames; the Dragon horse; The Land of Women; Meeting both Pigsy and Friar Sand - are all sourced before the Ming novel (Andersen 2001, Dudbridge 1970, Sun 2018). This also seems to suggest that due to the unique relationship between orality and literacy in Chinese storytelling, that oral stories were at once ephemeral as well as fixed within the canon of literacy. However, the repetition of all these episodes in audio-visual texts are only attributed to the Ming novel, and not the tradition of *Journey to the West*.

Similarly, one of the most famous motifs of Monkey King's punishment for wreaking havoc in heaven is to be trapped under the five elements mountain by Buddha. This motif has been traced back to two separate texts recounting the same story; one from the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and one form the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Both texts tell the tale of a fisherman who hooks an ancient iron chain but cannot get it out of the water. Upon getting help from many men and cattle they pull out a giant Monkey monster with a chain around its neck. It goes back into the sea with the cattle in tow, never to be seen again. The Monkey is called Wuzhiqi, and was subdued by Yu the Great in ancient times, who chained the monkey up underneath a mountain in the river (Anderson 2001). The motif developed into the Monkey King being subdued under Five Elements Mountain, and appears in the Zaju play *Journey to the West* by Yang Jingxian, in which Guanyin places him under the mountain (Dudbridge 1970). This motif again appears in over 26% of the sample in the content analysis (see table 4.1) of audio-visual texts, cementing the fact that a great many elements of folk narratives from centuries before the Ming novel.

The 100-chapter novel also employs the borrowing and utilising of cultural stories and verse. The book in itself is not original in its essence - in fact the author has engaged with various forms of cultural borrowing from the white ape story to poetic verses which are taken from pre-existing poems. In chapter 64 of the book, Xuanzang is stolen away by spirits - this time not with the intention of being eaten, but instead by tree spirits who wish to hear his ability in poetic verse. This poetry reading in *Journey to the West* has striking resemblance to a story by P'ei Hsing in which a scholar/poet is visited by two people, they spend the evening drinking and composing poetry before leaving (Yen 1979). In the light of day, the poet realises that his visitors were in fact a bull and a tiger. Not only is the motif of the poetry reading very comparable, but the two spirits of a tiger and bull also appear as important demon spirits in the Ming novel (Yen 1979). Similarly, Koss (1979) concludes that the *Journey to the West* and *Investiture of the Gods* share several very similar poems and looks to examine the possibility that the *Journey to the West* was perhaps written first and then influenced the *Investiture of the Gods.* This again reinforces the storytellers' trait of borrowing and stitching together existing work in new ways. Regardless of who originally wrote the poems, the act of borrowing, an oral storytellers' trait, is still used in the 16th century vernacular novels of a print culture.

The compiling of evidence above represents only a small amount of the motifs and story cycles related to the *Journey to the West* theme. However, what it does demonstrate is the extent to which the content of the Ming novel was readily available in one way or another. The author, or more fittingly the storyteller, of the novel has used a great deal of popular material from the storytelling culture that surrounded them - to the point that some of the most well-known and long lasting episodes from the story are traditional, and not from the 16th Century novel.

4.3 The Environment and Authority of Print: The Assumed Author and Chapter 9

The age of Gutenberg and print is by and large dominated by the pursuit of copyright and authorial attribution (Ong 1982, Pettit 2007). With the establishment of 'ideas' having authority in the printed word, and those ideas being the result of a singular individual, rather than a 'process' driven by a community of individuals, it is not strange to see the number of scholarly works that discuss the issues of authorship in the 100-chapter version of *Journey to the West*. The book has long been attributed to the Scholar Wu Cheng-en, for many reasons. Not least the attributions of the people of his hometown, and the fact that a document from the 17th century regarding local history, reported that Cheng-en authored the *Journey to the West* (Shih 1942). This has been rebutted as it lacks context of anything other than the fact Cheng-en authored a story of the same name, and as we have seen above, there were many numbers of manuscripts relating the story cycle (Yu 2006). Much like the discussion of Shakespeare as sole playwright of the associated works - or indeed, the Homeric question itself - the attribution of Cheng-en has come under academic scrutiny, debate, and hypotheses.

It is a concern of print culture to try and place authorial credit to the novel; it is certainly not something that would have happened in the oral or scribal cultures that preceded it (Pettit 2009). The pre-occupation of this attribution established other theories in the analysis of the text, namely the issue of Chapter 9. Chapter 9 of *Journey to the West* tells the tale of Xuanzang's father's death, Xuanzang's abandonment, being raised in a temple and eventual revenge for his parents. Whomever the true author of *Journey to the West* really was, scholars are largely convinced that chapter 9 was not written by the same writer (Dudbridge 1970, Yu 1975). It is largely considered that it was an amendment after the original publication of 1592 that does not contain Chapter 9. Dudbridge largely considers the chapter to offer no value to the rest of the book as it is "alien" and argues that it serves no great purpose nor effect to the remainder of the narrative. Similarly, both Yen and Yu find evidence in opposition to Dudbridge, that the chapter does not affect the chapters that follow,

as they point out textual evidence within prose and verse later in the book that seem to make reference to the actions within the chapter. However, Yu does contend that the chapter was likely added by another author, perhaps an editor, as the style of the chapter is at odds with the rest of the book: "in a work that is estimated to contain some seventeen hundred poems in the other ninety-nine chapters, this chapter alone does not have a single independent verse" (Yu 1975 p.310). More importantly within this study, whether these scholars agree or disagree with one another, there are two very clear and pertinent points that leverage the very existence of these scholarly debates as evidence for aspects of my own thesis: that the story is a medium, embedded in a storytelling tradition that fosters oral-literate symbiosis. The first issue is the lack of a definitive author. The ascribing of this, as stated above, is the occupation of a highly literate, print culture. This culture places high importance on the ownership of ideas and work. It is therefore a great irony that the author of *Journey to the West* did not want to be associated with the work, as it was considered vulgar in its vernacular street tongue, and yet it is now considered a pillar of Chinese literature. The lack of an author places this work as a story, written by a culture of storytelling. We do not need to know who the author was, as the evidence above largely dispels the originality of the content. It is in fact the telling of a story by a talented weaver of tales that is important, and this is what we have with *Journey to the West*. Although there would be a great deal of original detail from the author or storyteller of the book – the talent really lies in the way it is told, not the events that happen; these are evidenced as traditional tales elsewhere. The author is just another storyteller along a very long line of storytellers. The author/s of the *tales* within the novel are intangible, as the oral tradition makes attribution of content impossible and transient in nature; they have become strictly folklore. The contents of the story had largely developed over centuries of oral and written traditions, which worked hand in hand to develop both the stories, and the tradition of telling them as well. These storytellers are who formed *the* structure of *Journey to the West*, and most of the Chinese vernacular novels (Chang 1983).

The second point is that the debates around chapter 9 allow us to view even the novel itself as a commodity. The story is most definitely a cultural commodity of China, the evidence found in history that pre-date the novel is proof of this as are the volumes of work that follow the novel. However, chapter 9, as it is interpreted here, sees even the ideological power of print is subject to the principles of the oral-literate symbiosis. The very act of another author adding to the novel cements and augments the story as a cultural commodity. One storyteller, adopting another storyteller's work, adds their own *stamp* to improve the work. The fact that this process continued after the publication of the novel provides an even greater sense of the oral tradition. The novel was clearly popular, unlike other versions it survived in popular print, but it became a definitive version of the story within the psyche of a print culture. But this did not stop the oral-literate storytelling traditions that surrounded the story. Print storytelling in relation to *Journey to the West* continued after the novel's publication, to the point that some relied on a reader's familiarity with the Ming novel. *The tale of the Myriad Mirror,* by Dong Yue in 1640 is one of the most complete novels that sets itself within the story arc of the Ming novel. It is essentially an added episode that places itself in between chapters 61 and 62. The specificity of this within the work makes it both an impressive piece of fiction but also an important addition to a storytelling cycle. It is the first major work that gained cultural momentum and introduces the idea of new 'episodes' or adventures outside of the 100-chapter novel. Other works used the characters in minor adventures as well as utilising the characters outside of the storytelling arc, several humorous stories by Wu Jianwen use the Monkey King character or in the case of a *Ridiculous Journey to the West,* utilise all three of Xuanzang's disciples (Der-wei 1997). Similarly, the Ming novel *Investiture of the Gods* has a character that is a monkey God, carrying a staff. This novel was in similar style to *Journey to the West* in its subject matter and genre placement of Shenmo (relating to Gods and Demons).

In another way the textualisation that Ge (2001) suggests certainly did nothing to stop the momentum of *Journey to the West* as an oral tradition, neither in the modern sense, nor the traditional. Bordahl has studied the Dai school of Xi yu-Chi (*Journey to the West*), which up until

his death in 2003 was led by Dai Buzhang. The storytelling school refers to a group, and often family, of storytellers who tell only a small amount of story themes (such as *Journey to the West*) and each 'master' in charge of the school teaches the next generation of storytellers. The Dai school is part of the Yangzhou storytelling tradition; a tradition mainly located in the Lower Yangtze Delta which has been established since the late Ming dynasty. The stories relating to the *Journey to the West* theme in the Dai school have been handed down generationally from master to student. In this Yangzhou tradition there is a single storyteller delivering a session (the telling of a story or art of a story in one sitting) to his or her audience. The training within this Yangzhou storytelling tradition does not rely on students learning from the novel but instead from memorising through an oral/aural process. Although there exists a similarity in structure and content of episodes; the telling, description and dialogue represent something totally original and removed from the novel. This particular school is relatively contemporary in Chinese terms, as there would have been many other storytellers in other areas and traditions that would have told the story. The Wang School, for instance, which tells the tales from *the Water Margin* can be traced back to the 16th century (Bordahl 1996). Again we have the extensive research of Bordahl to thank for the insights into the living oral tradition. Although the tradition is on the decline due to competition from modern media, the evidence Bordahl amassed in the 1980's and 1990's has paved way for a great deal of discourse on not just Chinese storytelling but also the orality and literacy discussion. Bordahl's study, interviews, and documentation of the tradition show that it is subversive of the common assumptions to the orality and literacy divide, proposed by scholars like Ong. But importantly here, Bordahl published both the interviews with Dai Buzhang, and the transcriptions of storytelling sessions that he performed. These allow a good insight into the process a traditional storyteller goes through as well the ability to look at the textual comparisons between novel and performance.

Dai Buzhang's experience in the 1930's and 40's, learning to be a storyteller, enlighten us on the process in a communication context. Although it would be relatively easy to assume that a storyteller learning *Journey to the West* would read the novel, Buzhang proudly confesses that he

did not (Bordahl 2002 p.129). In fact, he believes he may have only read it once as a child, instead he grew up around storytellers, listening to the story; his father and three uncles were all storytellers. Buzhang recalls that whilst learning how to become a storyteller with his uncle: "In the morning I had to 'return the texts' and rehearse with him. In the afternoon I listened to his performances. Directly after each performance he wanted me to 'return the text'." (Bordahl 2004 p.131). The act of 'returning the text' is literally the concept of a storytelling disciple repeating the story back to his teacher. Here we see that print in many ways cemented the story as a commodity.

The prompt books for storytellers dating back to the Qing dynasty evidence the *Journey to West* cycle as a recurring theme. There are far more prompt books associated with the four great novels of Chinese literature, than there are of original stories. It is therefore far more likely that storytellers preferred a tried and tested model, in which it was very easy to build a story from an existing skeleton. Storytellers would lengthen episodes considerably, recreating much more than the source material offered. The various prompt books also show the extent of the divergence from their novel counterparts as new characters, plots and structures are added to existing stories (Bordahl 2009).

The lack of a definitive author aligns the story with the traditions of cultural repetition. Even with the authority of print there is the absence of true author, much like the transient nature of the oral performance, the storyteller is important in their role, they must have talent and skill, but their identity is second to this. Good storytellers would have been favoured, and their name would be important to build on their trade, but what evidence remains is the story and not the storyteller. The story has survived through repetition and has continued through the cultural consciousness of China. The preoccupation of attributing the work to sole author, is a preoccupation of a literate age; there is an overarching need to assign authorship to a work of literature. The author of *Journey to the West* is in many respects unimportant, though there are many scholarly works that build arguments regarding the evidence of author, I will not look to add to this argument, nor hypothesise an alternate view. Instead I believe the absence of definitive answers to be a continued trend in the

repetition of the story. Much like the storytellers that we can never know and listen to, who may have told the story in the Sung and Ming dynasty markets, the storyteller's identity now seems less important than what they have left behind. It is evident that whoever did pen *Journey to the West*, Cheng-en or not, they were a skilled storyteller, and it is this that has allowed the story to continue being told. When considering *Journey to the West*, perhaps the fact that the novel is largely a compendium of cultural tales and stories laced together, which is then used as a basis for oral stories, means that it is not simply a form of textualisation. Instead, perhaps it is just a case of formalisation; the story's fluid structures, and motifs of the past 800 years are captured through the bias of print culture, and then formally used for further 'fluid' storytelling. Here we can again begin to see mirrors with Barthes (1967) *The Death of the Author.*

In this form, the oral-literate interplay within the novel and the oral performances of *Journey to the West* begin to negate the importance of the storyteller, the author, or the director as well as whatever media they chose to tell the story in. Instead, what is important is the medium that is used by these individuals: *Journey to the West.* As a medium, it needs a storyteller to use it, but this person is only responsible for some original features of content or style. The component structures of the medium are found easily in the content analysis for any storyteller to use, and further elements even of the manner in which storytellers deliver that content are explored below.

4.4 Beyond Oral Residue: The Chinese Vernacular Novel and the Storyteller's Manner

Oral storytelling is at the heart of the development of *Journey to the West*, and the Chinese oral tradition has been tentatively marked as the basis for the style and structure of the Chinese vernacular novel (Bordahl 2003, Ge 2001, Jenner 1993). The basis of this is not merely assumption but also a case of stylistic similarities in language, tone and authorial voice - or the *storyteller's manner* as Bordahl's terms it. Although there can be no way of knowing if this is the case, much of the evidenced amassed by ethnography and literary analysis highlight convincing tropes shared between the two. Bordahl's work on Chinese storytelling brings together all aspects of the

symbiosis of orality and literacy within Chinese storytelling. Bordahl has studied both the living oral tradition of the Yangtze Delta and the vernacular works of fiction within the Chinese literary canon. The studies focus on the manner of storytelling within the tradition and the evidence of the oral storytelling traits within the classic vernacular fictions. The result of Bordahl's research suggests an opposition to the great divide theory and a far greater complexity in the relationship of orality and literacy. Bordahl argues that the main differences lay in the cultures themselves, and the fact that most discussions on the oral literate divide are in regard to western culture.

Bordahl's work on the Chinese vernacular novel along with the ethnographic studies, have given a great deal of insight into not only the oral tradition in modern China, but in the art of Chinese storytelling itself. Of importance in this study is Bordahl's work on bridging the gap between orality and literacy within Chinese storytelling. In the 2003 Journal article *The Storyteller's Manner* Bordahl examines the echo of an oral storyteller within the conventions of the vernacular novel in the Ming novel, *The Water Margin*. The Storyteller's Manner as a concept, is in essence a storytelling style that is found in texts handed down from the Ming dynasty in which the "narrative style implies that the narrator's persona is inevitably cast in the mould of a professional storyteller who apparently "tells" his tales for a "listening" audience" (Bordahl 2013 p.66). This is the presence of an oral storyteller as narrator in written fiction; rather than the traditional authorial voice that is well established in western novels. This style of vernacular fiction lasted in China up until the 20th century and the influence of the western novel. Bordahl studied the living tradition of Chinese oral storytelling in the 80's and 90's, and analysed the "storyteller's manner" first hand, and through recordings. Bordahl then compared them with the written genres of vernacular fiction, in an attempt to examine the correlations and potential symbiosis. In doing so, Bordahl established the major areas of structural correlation between the storyteller in oral performances and what is found in the written vernacular genres. This was achieved by focussing on a single story which is told in live performance and is a narrative instance in the storytelling cycle of *The Water Margin* namely*: Wu Song Fights a Tiger in Jingyang Ridge*. Bordahl witnessed this one story repeatedly

told in different ways and its existence in written texts is in abundance. The primary aspects that Bordahl broke the storytelling down into are: The division into sessions, Narrators type, Narrator's comments and simulated dialogue, Prose and Poetry, and Stock Phrases. Although these elements informed the methodological approach to the research and analysis of the audio-visual texts, I will again use them here in a similar way as Bordahl has. Although this is extensively investigated in the versions of the *Water Margin*, there is no extent analysis of *Journey to the West* in the same manner. The data drawn from such an analysis will be insightful to understanding the issues of orality and literacy within the story, as well as deciphering the motifs akin to both Chinses storytelling and *Journey to the West*. I will use the same structure and focus that Bordahl has established in analysing the *Wu Song cycle*, to analyse the 100-chapter novel of *Journey to the West*. The features that Bordahl describes in storytelling have many parallels in the novel, and seem to resurface in texts after the novel. I will investigate the novel's symbiosis of communications using Bordahl's research and then I will examine other features that seem to be present in the novel which move past the role of the storyteller or author and focus on the content and language.

4.4.1 Divisions into Sessions

In the Chinese storytelling that Bordahl has studied in the Yangtze Delta, the *sessions* of oral storytelling are the 'sittings' of storytelling. This is the act of telling a story, whether it be a 40-minute session or a day session. These sessions do not necessarily tell entire episodes, and commonly storyteller's end on a suspenseful note in an effort to bring audience members back to listen again (McLaren 1998). Bordahl indicates the vernacular novels share the structure of these sessions in a similar manner to the oral tradition. *Journey to the West* follows this structure in several ways. Most notably and easily adapted is the episodic narrative of the novel itself. The story begins with the introduction of the monkey King and then Xuanzang, but from Chapter 14 until 100 it is a simple quest narrative, which follows an incredibly formulaic episodic narrative. This episodic structure is almost obviously linked to the formulaic tools or oral storytelling. The fact that

we have four characters journeying from one place to another, allows for endless possibilities in the way of episodes. The novel, which is over 2,000 pages, at times seems monotonous in its repetition of formula. In fact C.T. Hsia, the noted scholar on Chinese literature, perhaps describes the effect of this formula best: "Despite their abundant humor and satire, the many adventures of Tripitaka and his animal disciples follow the same narrative pattern and can become tedious." (Hsia 2004 pp.9-10). What Hsia taps into here is perhaps the difference in a reader's expectations of a novel, the difference between formula and repetition to expecting the unexpected. There are no great surprises in the narrative of *Journey to the West*, yet its episodic narrative is a tried and tested structure of oral lore. After all, if it worked for the audiences of storytellers, why wouldn't it work for the readers of the vernacular novel in the Ming? The episodes themselves seem formulaic in their events and structures, this is because it was largely written for an oral based episteme. This epistemic weight helps structure the novel; in keeping with the sessions discussed by Bordahl, the chapters of *Journey to the West* often end on a suspenseful note, enticing the reader to move on to the next chapter. Similarly, and in concurrence with Bordahl's discussion of the *Water Margin*, *Journey to the West* begins each chapter with a couplet title. For example, chapter 14 of *Journey to the West*, in which the Monkey King is freed to serve Xuanzang and then kills a group of Bandits that attempt to rob them, begins with the following couplet:

The Mind Ape Returns to Truth

The Bandits Disappear Without Trace

(Cheng-en, Jenner Trans. 1993 p.319)

This is a traditional element of the vernacular novel and although it is not widely evidenced in the modern living tradition, it is often thought to be a continued trope of the oral tradition Bordahl 2003).

This neat packaging of the novel's episodic structure, as well as function of the narrator's

type at the end of each chapter seem to fit almost too well into the television serial writers' hands: endless possibilities for adventures and obstacles, on a seemingly endless journey westward; and in the reflection of the storyteller in the authorial voice of the vernacular novel, the similar narrator of television narratives can be heard. In the novel, the narrators type acts a structural device to introduce either verse, in the pseudo prosimetric style, or act as suspense builder, enticing the reader to move on to the next chapter. In the audio-visual texts there are similar oral motifs within the structure of many adaptations.

The functionality of these structures is in many cases extremely similar to the vernacular novel. If we take for instance the role of the narrator or storyteller in the novel, many texts utilise the similar storyteller in the opening and closing of episodes, and occasionally intermittently throughout. The use of the storyteller is interesting as several texts feature similar textual and functional parallels to the novel. The text *Saiyuki* (1978) for instance begins each episode with an oral epilogue before commencing with the title credits. This is the same for every episode and is utilised as an exposition for the birth of the Monkey King:

> In the worlds before Monkey, Primal Chaos reigned,
> Heaven sought order.
> But the Phoenix can fly only when its feathers are grown.
> The four worlds formed again and yet again,
> As endless aeons wheeled and passed.
> Time and the pure essences of Heaven,
> The moisture of the Earth,
> And the powers of the sun and the moon,
> All worked upon a certain rock – old as creation,
> And it magically became fertile.
> That first egg was named Thought.
> Tathagata Buddha, the father Buddha,
> Said, "with our thoughts we make the world."
> Elemental forces caused the egg to hatch,

from it came a stone monkey.

The nature of Monkey was irrepressible!

This repeated exposition is similar to the first chapter of the novel, as though it were a mixture of

the information from the first few pages:

Before Chaos was divided, Heaven and Earth were one…
On the red cliffs phoenixes sing in pairs…
The Earth's root, unchanged through a myriad aeons…

There was once a magic stone on the top of this mountain…Ever since Creation began it had been
receiving the truth of Heaven, the beauty of Earth, the essence of the Sun and the splendour of the
Moon; and as it had been influenced by them for so long it had miraculous powers. It developed a
magic womb, which burst open one day to produce a stone egg about the size of a ball.
When the wind blew on this egg it turned into a stone monkey… (Cheng-en 1993 pp. 1-5)

We can see clear parallels between the novel's opening and the exposition at the start of the

television series. The mention of words such as the *phoenix*, *Chaos* and *aeons* certainly suggest that

the first chapter's use of language was of direct consequence to the scripting of the pre-credits

sequence. Similarly, the use of and rhythm of the extract "the truth of Heaven, the beauty of Earth,

the essence of the Sun and the splendour of the Moon" seems very similar in turn to "Time and the

pure essences of Heaven, The moisture of the Earth, And the powers of the sun and the moon".

These instances seem simply to represent the act of adaptation from source material, but on closer

reflection they may represent the transposition of tradition again. The audio-visual text, although it

may have come from the print source, establishes an entirely oral/aural functionality and is used as

such with the audience. The novel presents the information in Chapter 1 of 100, it is not a consistent

reference point. However, in this television series it becomes used within the oral noetic of

storytelling as it is a repeated, rhythmic exposition for every episode. This repetition is more in line

with an oral episteme than a literate one. Those audiences that watched the series again and again

would have become accustomed to the words and rhythm of the opening, which is then followed by

the opening credits and theme song. This song again embedded the use of the oral/aural process and

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cemented the narrative ideas from the exposition:

> Born from an egg on a mountain top,
> Funkiest Monkey that ever popped,
> He knew every magic trick under the sun,
> Tease the Gods and everyone can have some fun.
>
> What a cocky, saucy Monkey this one is,
> All the gods were angry and they punished him.
> Until he was saved by a kindly priest.
> And that was the start of their pilgrimage quest.

Here again we can see the functionality of the song being reminiscent of the verse from the novel, as though a short summation in verse is needed to cement the narrative within the text. The use of repetition with both the pre-credit voice-over and the song, create a consistent, repeated exposition for the audience that establishes a homeostatic involvement with the narrative as an entirely oral/aural process. If regular viewers experience this use of oral verse, such as I experienced in my childhood, it begins to cement in the memory. Not only are the music and song catchy and easy to remember, but the opening narrative verse becomes part of this, and is memorised and appreciated in the same way. This parallels perhaps with the audience revisiting their favourite storyteller, listening to the familiar verse and prose and becoming accustomed to the words and rhythms, as though part of Foley's (1985) traditional referentiality, those familiar with the opening understand its context in the story. Although unlike the storyteller's verse, the audio-visual text never changes and is fixed, much like the words in the novel, its function is entirely in-line with the oral contours of storytelling; as the oral-literate symbiosis is important in creation, but not necessarily in reception. The storyteller in *Saiyuki*, behaves as such for the audience, introducing the story in the same manner in every episode and then offering an introductory feature at the start of the episode (after the credits), re-establishing that we are joining the heroes *in-media-res*, part way through a quest. This is balanced between intermittent explanations for the audience during the narrative, and always ends with a philosophical thought at the end of the episode to consider the trials and lessons that may have been learned by the characters. This structure places the narrator's voice as

extradiegetic storyteller, illuminating the audience on certain features of the narrative through an oral/aural process. Here we see a multi-layered version on Ong's secondary orality: in the first instance orality has been re-established and distributed by electronic media, and its features from the written vernacular novel, seem to create and sustain it. In the second instance, the re-imagination of the oral/aural process rekindles the story's *oral/aural* storytelling features, meaning that a literal *secondary orality* has taken place; the re-establishment of particular 'oral traditions' of a single story are recreated by electronic media. As well as the secondary orality related to sound, we have the secondary orality related to tradition – the second coming of the oral traditions of a story.

4.4.2 Narrators Type, Comments and Simulated Dialogue

Here I have decided to combine two of the areas that Bordahl focusses on in the study. They are closely interlinked and *Journey to the West* seems to hold more evidence relating to the "narrator's type" than the "narrator's comments and simulated dialogue". It therefore does not seem relevant to discuss them separately in regard to the text. The Narrator's type is the difference between the authorial voice in the Chinese vernacular novel and what is considered the authorial voice in the western novel. In the Chinese vernacular, there is no author, but a narrator. This is to say that the novel is told rather than written, and that the voice of the narrative is from a pseudo storyteller, and not the unknowable authorial "voice of God". The narrator's type in oral storytelling tends to be in the third person as a covert narrator, meaning they do not have an opinion on the story themselves and are extradiegetic (Gerund 1980)[12]. In the vernacular novel the narrative voice is more akin to someone telling an audience what they know, as though a storyteller, rather than author. The narrator can on occasion, but very rarely, point to themselves as a storyteller. In this case they become an "overt narrator". These instances set the vernacular fiction apart from other novel styles, as they seem to carry on the oral tradition transmission, without a second thought for the change in

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[12] For further information on the Narrator types see Gerad Gerund, 1980 pp 228–248

medium. In the very first chapter of *Journey to the West* we can find a few examples that place the narrator's type as that of an oral storyteller, rather than authorial voice. After the chapter's introduction of how the world was created, it focuses on the location of the mountain of flowers and fruit, in which the Monkey king is born. The description is an instance of verse as description. But before the verse there is a prose description:

> "This mountain is the ancestral artery of the Ten Continents, the origin of the Three Islands; it was formed when the clear and impure were separated and the Enormous Vagueness was divided. It is a really splendid mountain and there are some verses to prove it" (Cheng-en 1993 p.3).

Here we have a description of the importance of the mountain by the storyteller, as an overt extradiegetic teller of a tale. But after the description and before the verse, we have a common trope or stock phrase: "there are some verses to prove it". This in itself seems to work as a literary convention, however it is the convention of a storyteller, not an author. The "to prove it" trope suggests a motif of rhetoric, a justification to an assumed audience. By identifying this audience, and indeed their assumed doubt of the storyteller, it is as if the storyteller seamlessly shifts into an overt narrator and then back out again. Although there is no claim to be a storyteller, the conventional stock "to prove it" assumes that the storyteller as having to demonstrate evidence for their statement; this in some ways highlights them as a storyteller, and an overt one, if only for a moment. Although perhaps a convention of vernacular literature, similarities can be found in the oral tradition. In Bordahl's transcription of Dai Buzhang's rendition of a *Journey to the West* episode "Seeking Shelter in a Farm of Immortals" Dai Buzhang introduces a verse with incredibly similar implications:

> The part to be told today is about how the master Tripitaka from Tang and his disciples, four people, along with the horse, altogether five living creatures, were on their way. We have a common saying, see, everyone knows it:

> > Master and disciple, four people
> > along with the horse, altogether five living creature,
> > Day after day they marched towards the west.
> > Day in and day out they hastened towards the west.   (Bordahl 1996 p.423)

Two important occurrences happen in this extract of storytelling: firstly, is the comparability to our vernacular trope "there is a verse to prove it". Here Buzhang, describes the characters of the narrative he is telling, in the same way that the storyteller of the novel describes the mountain. He then, as a storytelling trope, assumes proof of the description is needed. "we have a common saying" delivers the same semantic value as "there is a verse" in which there is a previously existing literary or oral verse that confirms the storyteller's statement. In the novel the term "to prove it" again performs the same task in Buzhang's "see, everyone knows it". The latter is a more colloquial addition, in which the storyteller assumes a friendly, conversational and inclusive introduction to verse; however, its intentions are the same, to "prove" his own description as true. The idea that the descriptions need proof is a fiction that serves a performance style, however it's repetition in both novel and oral tradition is evidence that it may not be a trait of one or the other - but both. Secondly, the verbatim repetition within Buzhang's description and the verse of the lines "four people, along with the horse, altogether five living creature" seems unusual in this instance, as the verses in the novel tend to offer more whimsical and altogether different descriptions than those supposedly offered by the storyteller. However, in this case we could argue that the verbatim use of these lines adds power to the storyteller's knowledge of the story and skill in telling it. Similarly, repetition in these sort of degrees is often considered at the heart of oral verse (Vansina 1980).

The narrator's comment and simulated dialogue is when in the vernacular text, passages are interrupted, as if an imagined audience member has interrupted the storytelling and has asked the storyteller a question, which they in turn comment on and offer an explanation. This form of interaction does not take place often in Ming novel *Journey to the West*, and yet there are moments - similar to that discussed above, which infers an interaction of sorts - however these are not explicit, but implied. There are more instances of the assumed audience in the address of the storyteller in the novel, the use of pronouns and inviting the audience to "look" at spectacles in the story. These implicit moments suggest that the live audience is present, watching the story being

told and unfold. The imagined "you could see" (Cheng-en 1993 p16) brings the audience into the description of the story directly involving them in the process. Similarly, there are incidents in which the storyteller refers to the narrative directly as a story - implying that it is a commodity that existed before the current retelling. The term "the story goes on to tell…" is used consistently throughout the novel as a self-referential to the storytelling process. This is suggestive, as though the storyteller is referring to a pre-existing story, which is merely being repeated. Similarly, is the repetition of the invitation at the end of each chapter: "if you don't know what happened… listen to the explanation in the next chapter". This is a more explicit form of simulated dialogue as it directly asks the audience a question and invites them to listen further (Bordahl 2013).

In similar fashion, we could explore the storyteller's role in contemporary versions of the story like *Dragonball* (1984), one of the most successful and popular appropriations of the story. In this text the protagonist, Son Goku[2], is a young boy who it is later discovered is from another planet. He turns into a giant ape monster in the full moon; carries a staff that can change size at will; rides a flying cloud; and is unusually strong and seemingly indestructible. The similarities between *Dragonball* and *Journey to the West* are easy to find if one is looking. The original television series, *Dragonball,* based on the Manga of the same name, is most comparable within this study. In the original series, the storytelling structure contains a very excitable storyteller narrating at the beginning and end of each episode. It plays the same purpose as most narrative voice-overs: to recap on previous episodes and 'wrap up' at the end of episodes, but this function is highly important within the framework of the *Journey to the West* corpus. It is the function of, not the authorial voice, nor just the storyteller's manner in the vernacular novel, but also of the storyteller in the Chinese tradition. Chinese storytellers in the tea houses of Yangzhou would often end on a note of suspense (McLaren 1998) and, after ending a story with a character in crisis, would leave their audience on tenterhooks, allowing the tea master to end a session shouting for the audience to return the following day. And as Fei Li describes:

> The audience, though still kept in suspense and with a strong desire to know the outcome, would get up and promptly leave the storyhouse. Some guests had already decided to come back the next

day, this was called 'to be enticed by storytelling' (Li 2009 p.283)

This action of being 'enticed by the storyteller' is reminiscent of the cliff-hanger at the end of popular television shows that contain an overarching narrative arc. But with *Journey to the West,* it goes even deeper into the cultural structuring of storytelling. Not only was this note of suspense and enticing ending a tradition of the oral performer, but it grew into the staple formula at the end of the vernacular novel: "if you don't know how…. Then listen to the next chapter….". These common stock phrases at the end of chapters are part of the formal structures of the vernacular novel, mimicking the storyteller urging the audience to 'listen' to another session. However, this type of stock phrase at the beginning of verse and at the end of a story are not largely evidenced in the living tradition (Bordahl and Olivová 2009, Bordahl 2013), nor do they necessarily represent hard evidence of literature taking influence from oral traditions (Mair 1983), and yet in the audio-visual texts, elements of these stock phrases begin to appear in the oral/aural process. We can assume that the stock phrases in the novels evolved from the oral tradition – but we have no proof of this – so let us assume that this was in fact a written storytelling tradition for the moment. It is then of increasing importance that with texts like *Dragonball* the storyteller or voice-over poses direct questions to the audience and ends with the modern vernacular call for the viewer to 'listen' to the next session:

> Will Goku return to his normal self?
> Or will he unknowingly be responsible for the destruction of
> Bulma, Yamcha, and the others?
> Find out next time on Dragon Ball!
> (*Dragon Ball*, season 1, episode 10)

The use of rhetorical questions to entice the viewers' attention, creating suggestive foreshadowing to the possible outcomes in the next episode, is the modern form of being 'enticed by storytelling'. The use of the 'Find out next time…' phrase also mirrors the 'listen to the explanation in the next

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chapter' stock phrase from the Ming novel. Its function is the same and yet, although it is not widely evidenced in the living tradition, here it is in the modern oral/aural tradition of television. Within the secondary oral texts, we can find evidence of a progressive transition between literature and orality; between vernacular novel and television series, this is in some ways the reversal of Ge's textualisation. Rather than the traditions of orality slowly being adopted by new literate functions, we have the stock phrases and aspects of the vernacular novel appearing in new forms of storytelling; transposing from literature into the secondary orality of electric media. In the way that radio shows would ask us to 'tune in next time', *Dragon Ball* entices its audience to 'find out'; each asks an action of its audience but with *Dragon Ball*, we can trace a tradition of storytelling in which this is an explicit act of structural composition.

4.4.3 Prose and Poetry

The balance of prose and poetry, or prosimetrum, has a long tradition in Chinese storytelling. The continued inclusion of verse within the vernacular novel has often led to connections with the tradition of previous prosimetric texts. However, Bordahl suggests that it may not be so clear cut to refer to the novels as prosimetric in the traditional sense, but instead only if in reference simply to the inclusion of alternating forms of storytelling, or "the various manifestations of the intermingling of prose and verse - prosimetrum as a feature of Chinese literature - the case of the Ming and Qing novels would be important." (Bordahl pg. 70). The inclusion of both forms in the vernacular novels still highlights the structure as an important tradition. The feature is prevalent in the Ming novel of *Journey to the West*, and even with Bordahl's warning in mind, it seems easy to begin classing it as a prosimetric text. The prosimetric Bianwen texts, an early literary form of picture scroll, found in the Dunhuang grottos, have a balanced structure between prose and verse and were written in the vernacular 'street tongue' for largely illiterate street performers and storytellers. The vernacular novels in name represent the common spoken language and would have appealed to the lower classes. They also still hold the echoes of the prosimetric structure; perhaps this is again evidence of

Ge's textualisation. This is also aided by Bordahl's study of the living tradition as the balance and style of prose and verse within the novel, is largely the same in the modern day Yangzhou tradition of oral performance. The balance in the Ming novel is fairly consistent throughout its 100 chapters; some chapters have considerable amounts of verses included while others are far more heavily weighted to prose. However, it is not an occasional structure but a consistent one. The following example tells of the Monkey King being subdued by Buddha's hand in prose, and then a verse summarises the events:

> The dear Great Sage hurriedly braced himself to jump, but the Buddha turned his hand over and pushed the Monkey King out through the Western Gate of Heaven. He turned his five fingers into a mountain chain belonging to the elements Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, renamed them the Five Elements Mountain, and gently held him down. All the thunder gods and the disciples Ananda and Kasyapa put their hands together to praise the Buddha: "Wonderful, wonderful,
>
> An egg learned to be a man,
> Cultivated his conduct, and achieved the Way.
> Heaven had been undisturbed for the thousand kalpas,
> Until one day the spirits and gods were scattered.
>
> "The rebel against Heaven, wanting high position,
> Insulted Immortals, stole the pills, and destroyed morality.
> Today his terrible sins are being punished,
> Who knows when he will be able to rise again?"
>
> When he had eliminated the monkey fiend the Buddha told Ananda and Kasyapa to return with him to the Western paradise. (Cheng-en pp.151-152)

The verse is used not as a device, important to the narrative drive or understanding of the story, but as a tradition of storytelling.

This structure is embedded within the story's oral-literate interplay, and it continues in the audio-visual texts of film and television. The echoes of prosimetric in the Chinese vernacular novel of *Journey to the West* use a constant back and forth of prose and verse, which is heavily weighted on the side of prose. This has a tendency to continue in filmic representation in China with the use of dialogue and song. Although the uses and structures of this balance have altered from the vernacular novel, there is an abundance of evidence that suggests this was a tradition of the *Journey to the West* performative genres. In the content analysis of the audio-visual texts, 30% of the texts include either characters singing to one another or to themselves. The balance of this evidence is

weighted more on earlier audio-visual texts, predominantly from the 1940's until the 1960's, however the operatic films from the 1980's also use this technique, and some more contemporary texts still use songs as structural elements to the story. The story of *Journey to the West, Conquering the Demons* (2013) for instance, uses song and poetic verse as a narrative device within the diegesis; proposing that the demons themselves are enticed by verse. It is most likely that this balance of dialogue and song began in opera itself, before moving to the 'big screen'. The song in *Journey to the West's* audio-visual versions occur in most texts between 1941 and 1966, in fact there are very few texts that don't use song at all. The functions of these modern forms of prosimetrum can differ greatly from text to text, but significantly they evidence other traditions of oral performance. In some texts the song is used as a verbal exchange between characters, initiating the traditional roles of boast, insult and fliting (Ong 1971, 1982). In other texts it is used as a tool in which characters explain their inner thoughts or commentary on an event – allowing the audience an insight into the character's thoughts, feelings, and plans. Traditionally this would be done by the storyteller, in performance and novel, but in film, this tradition had to be transposed yet again. In this instance it is placed both in the realm of song. The song here holds the same function as verse, further enlightening the audience on elements of the narrative – as proof and evidence of what the viewers were already thinking. This is directly related to the influence of Chinese opera on Chinese cinema (Teo 2013) and is evidence again of the external sources of entertainment influencing the story's production. The song is used as a traditional form of storytelling, one that the audience is used to in live drama and opera. The audio-visual texts then use a mix of oral traditions that are associated with the story itself, and which have grown from the continued telling of the story outside of the novelisation. The structure of prosimetrum seems to have entered the storytelling of a multitude of Chinese traditions, and the audio-visual texts are a meeting point for some of these. It is not difficult to see the culturally specific development of this oral tradition; the oral narratives of Buddhist preaching in the Tang "led to secular narratives, both oral and written, and also formed the basis for theatrical forms such as so called Chinese opera" (Tokita 2015 p.24). This development

from oral narratives into vernacular script and opera is very specific to Chinese traditions and Mair notes that:

> the alteration between sung or intoned verse and spoken or declaimed prose is typical of a wide variety of Chinese oral and performing arts as well as the written genres that derive from them. Anyone who listens to Peking opera… will immediately be struck by the regular shift between spoken or declaimed prose and sung or intoned verse passages (Mair 1997 p.365)

The continuation of prosimetric within the texts suggests that a tradition of Chinese storytelling, one that is over a thousand years old, has continued into the electronic age. Most fascinating is that this particular structural form of storytelling not only seems to embody the oral-literate symbiosis in its evidence across media, but that it is a tradition that began in the Tang dynasty (Mair 1997), the very period in which the *Journey to the West* cycle began to develop. Not only does the story establish new traditions in contemporary media, it also sustains ancient traditions as well.

4.4.4 Stock Phrases

Stock phrases within the vernacular novels are discussed in Bordahl's study of the storyteller's manner, as the greatest bone of contention; they are one of the most notable elements of oral composition in the field, and yet Bordahl has found no evidence of them in the living tradition of the Yangtze Delta. There are simply no comparable features specific to the novel that appear in the various instances of live performance that Bordahl witnessed. Stock phrases are a staple of mnemonic device and appear throughout *Journey to the West*, but in the Chinese vernacular novel they are seen as a 'simulacrum' of storytelling, a stylistic simulation of storytelling from a storyteller rather than the influence of the tradition itself. This is largely due to not merely the lack of evidence in the living tradition, but also the lack of examples seen in earlier written versions of vernacular stories, which were arguably closer to the oral traditions of the stories (McLaren 1998, Bordahl 2013). However, there is not enough evidence to suggest that the oral tradition directly influenced the conventions of vernacular fiction, nor is there enough evidence to suggest that it did

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not. However, the absence of stock phrases within living oral tradition does not necessarily mean that we are dealing with written convention only; as the relationship with both oral and written traditions are so tied to one another, we may make assumptions that the development of both traditions during this time affected each other. There is evidence in a preface to an edition of the *Water Margin* written in 1589 from Tiandu Waichen (pseudonym) at the time of the rise of the vernacular fiction in the Song dynasty, the Emperor would get the musicians of his court to "collect" and "compile" the most famous and liked stories from the time, and perform them set to music (Ge 2001 p.50). This, according to the preface, grew in popularity in all social circles, including the working classes. The context of the documents and stories is unclear, as Ge discusses, but it certainly suggests that there were developing tradition between the oral and the written, and that there is no certainty in discounting the inclusion of stock phrases from oral traditions.

If we take the view that perhaps the ongoing influence of the traditions on one another helped shape the vernacular novels, and indeed the oral traditions that surrounded them, there is scope to discuss stock phrases and other features as reflecting the storytelling traditions of their time: both oral and written. The repetition of stock phrases in the novel, may therefore be seen perhaps as a development of the oral-literate symbiosis, as the vernacular fiction may have developed with the oral and performative traditions around it. Throughout the novel, chapters contain several instances of stock phrases which include the verse introductions when changing between the written forms (prose to verse), or the diverting, progressing and concluding of narratives within the novel (Bordahl 2013). We have discussed instances of the verse introductions already whilst examining the narrator's type, so we will instead focus on some of the other instances within the novel. There are often introductions to new chapters within the story. Phrases such as 'the story tells', 'the story goes on to tell', 'the story goes on to relate' appear on over 85 occasions in the novel to either reintroduce the point of the story or introduce a new episode. Similarly, if the storyteller wishes to switch between narrative strands, this is explicitly done

through further fixed phrases like 'the story switches to/back', the story returns', 'the story turns to', all of which seem to echo formulas and mnemonic devices to aid structure and recall. However, the amount and repetition of these stock phrases may simply suggest a literary convention, but they are also suggestive of a storytelling cycle perhaps new in use. The repetition of phrase and structure in this degree are not often considered a trope of developed literature, and so the early vernacular novel is perhaps more implicitly linked to orality or oral performance through its use of repetition. Although, undoubtedly masterful in many literary techniques and functions, *Journey to the West* exhibits many instances of overt repetition in this way, which perhaps may not be the verbatim transposition of oral technique in its use of stock phrases, but instead in its *functional* repetition instead. That is to say that the structure and function of repetition is the interplay of orality and literacy, and that perhaps focusing on the occurrence of specific and similarly worded repetitions may be honing the focus too much.

4.4.5 Further Instances of Symbiosis in the Novel

Although the use of stock phrases is very difficult to discuss without making generalist statements, there are other aspects of the stock phrases that can be considered when discussing the oral-literate symbiosis. For instance, if we reconsider the stock phrases at the end of each chapter in the novel: "if you don't know what happened to…. then please listen to the explanation in the next instalment/chapter". These stock phrases have several features of discussion within the symbiosis. Firstly, they appear as a stock phrase that seems to be reminiscent of the 'suspenseful note' of oral storytelling mentioned earlier - that is to say that the reader must 'return' to find out what happened to the characters. Secondly is the sensory use of words throughout the narrator's dialogue. This is most notable in these final phrases at the end of chapters with the use of 'listen', which immediately imitates the very nature of oral storytelling. Asking the reader to listen, has become a standard motif of the Chinese vernacular novel, however it could be considered the textualisation of the storytelling tradition. Similarly, the fixed tags and introductions to poems or to prefix action that

include sensory words as if describing to a living audience. Phrases such as "just look" and "watch them" appear multiple times in the novel when exclaiming at the visual grace, splendour or spectacle of the characters in the story. These again insinuate not merely an oral storyteller but a sensory focus unlike the structures and systems known in the western novel. Of course, this form of Chinese vernacular is arguable just different to that of the Western novel, as it has no reason or need to conform to these standards, but it most definitely seems to be conforming to relevant, cultural storytelling routines.

The functions of the novel itself, within the story and its content, demonstrates the importance of orality and literacy within the culture and society of storytelling. If we look at the story and some of the roles that both orality and literacy take and their importance in progressing the narrative, we can make assumptions about the importance of this within the story cycle itself. It is not merely about the manner in which the story is told, but the actual story itself.

After the first seven chapters in which the Monkey King is born, and wreaks havoc in heaven the primary plot of the story begins to take shape. There are a few instances of orality and literacy within these first seven chapters: The Monkey King's gold banded cudgel transforms if he expresses it verbally; the officials in heaven are most perturbed by his banner that reads 'Great sage equal of heaven' – suggesting that this proclamation in written form has some degree of power; and of course when the Monkey King is subdued and placed under the five elements mountain, it is Buddha's written seal that keeps him from breaking free. The written word in this last instance seems to reinforce the importance and power of written proclamations, as they have authority and truth on their side. In the chapter after this, several events occur that lead to the primary plot of the narrative: The Journey west. This takes place after Emperor Taizong visits hell, and like Monkey before him, has his date of death changed in the book of deaths – again reinforcing the power of the written word in life and the afterlife. The central quest is also a theme that embraces the oral-literate symbiosis; the act of Xuanzang going to fetch scriptures places great importance and power on the written word, yet establishes power of the dichotomy as the power of such scriptures come not from

their written form, but from being read or chanted aloud. Even the manner in which the quest is presented exemplifies this; Guanyin reveals herself to Xuanzang whilst he is delivering a mass to bring the tormented ghosts that Emperor Taizong met in hell, to rebirth. Guanyin tells Xuanzang that the scriptures that he uses are not good enough:

> That doctrine of the Little Vehicle of yours will never bring the dead rebirth; it's only good enough for a vulgar sort of enlightenment. Now I have the Three Stores of the Buddha's Law of the Great Vehicle that will raise the dead up to Heaven, deliver sufferers forom their torment, and free souls from the eternal coming and going (Cheng en 1993 p.186)

Here is the first insinuation that the written word holds the power to enlightenment and freedom within the Buddhist canon. Guanyin then leaves after explaining where the scriptures are, the following description and verse follows:

> The Bodhisattva's magic cloud faded into the distance…All that was visible was a note drifting down from the sky on which could be read the following brief address in verse:
> "Greetings to the lord of the Great Tang.
> In the West are miraculous scriptures
> Although the road is sixty thousand miles long,
> The Great Vehicle will offer its help.
> When scriptures are brought back to your country
> They will save devils and deliver masses.
> If anyone is willing to go for them,
> His reward will be a golden body. (Cheng en1993 p.188)

Here we have the instigation of the quest which provides the rest of the narrative within the story. The interplay of orality and literacy is found even here, although Guanyin spoke directly to both Xuanzang and the Tang emperor about the scriptures, it is in the form of the written word that establishes the officialdom of the quest; everything before in the spoken word, it seems, is concealed in ambiguity, only in writing is the meaning clear to the characters. This is a common theme throughout their journey, as the Tang Emperor has supplied Xuanzang with a written passport that he must show in every city to get a permit to leave, representing a thoroughly bureaucratic system that relies heavily on the need of written documents and permission. This back and forth, or power play between writing and speech continues throughout the novel, many instances seem to suggest it is the spoken word that is most powerful. For instance, the chant that,

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when Xuanzang speaks out loud, causes the golden band around Monkey's head to tighten - so that his aggressive nature can be controlled. Here no doctrine or written order can subdue the Monkey King, only the 'word' that Guanyin has taught Xuanzang.

A similar theme can be seen in the process of identifying demons and spirits throughout the novel. In fact, many of the demons that Xuanzang and the Monkey king meet along the road to the west can only be subdued once their identity has been discovered, often by asking for celestial assistance in the identifying itself. This recurring motif in the novel is related to several important features of the oral epic, namely in relation to fliting. Fliting is perhaps best outlined by Ong in the Presence of the word (1967):

> One of the characteristics verbal institutions of an oral culture, polarized as this is around personal tensions, is that of fliting... the concerted exchange of personal abuse, combined often with boast and challenge, which forms a staple of oral performance especially not exclusively to the epic (Ong p. 207)

Here Ong's description of the fliting found in the oral epic is at once recognisable in *Journey to the West.* In fact, this is a continuous practice of the characters in the novel before and during battles. Often this begins with the Monkey King outside of a demon's lair, knocking on the door and calling them outside to fight. The demon usually reciprocates and the pair begin to fight, often airborne. During these fights 'fliting' occurs on many levels, in insult, boast and verbal history. These exchanges often occur in a formulaic patter: A monster kidnaps Xuanzang and returns to their cave/lair – the Monkey King follows and knocks at the gate calling the monster out to fight – the monster comes out and the two insult one another, boasting about their own strength and threatening to kill the other – they fight:

> "Come out, damned demon," shouted Monkey, "and fight with me."… The news caused the rhinoceros monster great alarm. He noisily ground his teeth of steel, his eyes bulged with fury, and he went out holding his spear and his treasure, pouring out insults: "I'll get you, you thieving arsonist of an ape. What sort of powers do you have that give you the right to treat me with such contempt?"
> "Damned devil," retorted Monkey with a smile on his face, "if you want to know my powers I'll tell you:... (Cheng-en 1993 p.723)

This process happens again and again in the story; the most pertinent point here though is the insult and boast in fliting. Whenever a fight is about to take place, the two subjects always throw insults at the other, whether it be about their insolence, height or stature. This is then followed by a boast, often in verse that explains a verbal history to one another. These histories often include the history of their weapons as a way of exaggerating their power and might. This verbal history in fliting serves the narrative in multiple ways; most notable is that the action of fliting is associated with oral composition and storytelling, so although certain aspects of stock phrases possibly suggest a Chinese literary convention, the repetitive content of fliting suggests a motif of oral storytelling: "Standard in oral societies across the world, reciprocal name-calling has been fitted with a specific name in linguistics: flyting (or fliting)." (Ong 2012 p.44).

In further analysis of the process there are also the issues of the verbal histories which act as a form of, not just boast, but identification. Many of the monsters that the Monkey King fights are individuals that he knew when he too was a monster - killing and eating humans. Ong posits that the verbal abuse by characters in the oral epics like *Beowulf* and the Homeric epics, lies some "reluctant or wry attraction, even admiration..." (Ong 1967 p.193). There could still be some admiration in the case of *Journey to the West* or perhaps the Monkey King still sees some of himself in these monsters, essentially his abuse of these individuals could be an attack on his own past and wrongdoings. For those characters that the Monkey King has not met before there are several other issues at hand, firstly the fact that his powers and past, his reputation, always proceeds him; the monsters unfamiliar to the Monkey King have always heard of his great strength and tell one another of how Monkey wreaked havoc in heaven. Here in the novel the tradition that the story itself had been passed down through oral/aural means, it has also done so within the story's narrative. Secondly, many of the monsters he faces are heavenly figures that have escaped to earth for worldly pleasures. It is after he subdues them, that they are often taken back to their heavenly post and punished. The Monkey King knows that all monsters have a previous identity, a root, whether they are animal spirits or deities, they are all akin to him in some way – the latter

supposedly on the side of the Monk he is escorting. Here the verbal abuse often takes part in the process of investigation, the way in which identity is pursued. As Ong discusses, there is often an inadvertent attraction or sense of admiration between the characters, but it is the assertion of power that becomes dominant in this story, whether it is through past glories or the boasting of a weapon – which often the history of such a divine weapon leads an investigation of identity. It is through an oral/aural exchange that the 'truth' is ascertained and action is able to occur – in the oral noetic, sound is deeply connected to power, movement and action (Ong 1967) and hear the sound of boast leads the characters to discovering and subduing the monsters.

4.4.6 The Use of Repetition

Journey to the West is an episodic narrative that is filled with the formulaic devices associated with oral storytelling. As Hsia discussed the occasional tedium associated with reading *Journey to the West*, due to its repetitive nature, in this study it is the calling card of the oral storyteller. Unlike Bordahl's work on The *Water Margin*, once *Journey to the West* has established its characters and the Journey has begun in Chapter 13, the remaining 87 chapters follow the quest narrative, and repetitive, episodic features. Few episodes deviate from the simplistic overcoming of an obstacle and most contain some of the following ingredients: Xuanzang being kidnapped/villagers are facing a problem; all problems being at the influence of a spirit or demon; Monkey King attempts to subdue the demon; if he fails to subdue the demon, Monkey King resorts to trickery for success; if this fails, Monkey King asks for celestial help; the demon is identified either before being subdued with celestial help, or after their death when they return to their natural form; after the demon is subdued they continue westward. Each episode tends to use these fairly formulaic themes, stitched together in different ways; they make up the major narrative morphology of the story cycle's episodes.

Within these episodes' various other forms of repetition take place which we can relate to features of the oral tradition. One is the use of epithet, although we have discussed the use of stock

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phrases within the novel as being a grey area for identifying the influence of oral storytelling, the use of epithet can be easily seen as a part of Ge's textualisation. Although it may become an element associated with Chinese vernacular literature, the use of epithet has been passed down as a feature of oral composition (Lord 1960, Parry 1971, Ong 1977). These appear in various forms within the novel, most notable are Great Sage – the shortening of the title Monkey King bestowed upon himself, Great Sage Equal of Heaven. This is further added to with the prefix 'dear' in introduction or exclamation, other forms include 'Our dear Great Sage…", "Splendid Monkey" "The Handsome Monkey king", all of which are repeated throughout the novel.

Another feature is the repetitive use of storytelling within the novel. This is in the characters experiencing of an event, and then retelling of these events to another character. This occurs continuously throughout the novel, to the point that the character may tell the same story/event three or four times. This level of repetition is an unusual trait for the established novel, as once an event has taken place for the reader, an author will find other ways for it to be recounted to other characters, as to not repeat things over and over for the reader. However, *in Journey to the West* this is not the case, as it is seemingly either a convention of the vernacular style, or a residue of oral storytelling – or perhaps both. It seems that the repetition or stories could relate to some of the features associated with the oral noetic. This seems to be compounded by the fact that the main theme of the novel is the symbiosis of orality and literacy - all power in the characters comes from their voice and yet all narrative drive is within the written. Xuanzang controls Monkey through the band tightening spell - which has to be recited aloud to work, reigniting the oral world's power of words. Yet the drive of the entire quest is to fetch scriptures - written documents, however these scriptures are to be read aloud in teachings to give them true power. The end of the story has the greatest example of collaboration, and in some ways a justification of Ong's view of literacy - when the troupe are given the scriptures, they are given blank ones by the attendants as they are offended that they were not given a gift by Xuanzang and his company. On being told this the troupe are upset that they have been given empty scriptures and complain to Buddha, but he explains that:

"The blank texts are true, wordless scriptures, and they really are good. But as you living beings in the East are so deluded and have not achieved enlightenment we'll have to give you these ones instead" (Cheng-en, Yu trans. P.1377). This statement in itself suggests that the written word is in some way secondary to 'knowing' the scriptures, or maybe it is the 'wordless' element that holds the greatest weight in the story. The pilgrims have travelled for 17 years to get scriptures that they cannot read and so cannot reproduce into sound- this perhaps truly reinforces the duality of the oral-literate symbiosis.

4.5 Conclusion

These first two chapters clearly demonstrate the dauntingly large amount of texts and evidence that shows the progress of the story of *Journey to the West*. It is clear that by studying the Buddhist canon, biographies, accounts, imagery and the various manuscripts and stories predating the Ming novel, that it was not simply the invention of a single mind. *Journey to the West* is in essence a story of cultural lore. If we were able to lay out all the evidence of antecedent out on a table, we would be able to see how the storyteller is able to stitch together narratives from different times and create a new whole. This is the tradition of the oral storyteller and in China it is also very much a tradition of the vernacular novel *Journey to the West*. The borrowing of previous narratives, tales and motifs allowed for a talented writer to throw his or her version on to the top of a very full pile of stories. However, the talent of that writer caught the imagination of the Ming readers more so than other versions, and with the cultural pre-occupation of print, it was made a success. It was also the print culture that made a business of literary criticism, and with it came the pre-occupation of attribution.

But even within the canonical texts of literature in China, elements of the oral remain. Here we have the borrowing of information and stories as an inherently oral practice, within the pantheon of literature. The great irony of this being the culture that evolved around print communication and

the authority of print, cemented this novel as a definitive version, as it was what survived. The 'storyteller's manner' and the authorial voice mix together within the novel to make it distinct, however the content is largely stitched together from traditional stories. It is the psyche, and inability of those within the confines of print culture to see the texts that preceded the novel to be anything other than adaptations of the book, rather than a continuation of traditions. By looking at the plethora of work and research produced by Bordahl on the Chinese vernacular novel and storytelling, there is most definitely space to consider *Journey to the West*, a novel driven within the oral-literate symbiosis. The argument that many of the 'oral' features found in the novel may simply be conventions of the vernacular novel, is a compelling one. Especially if we consider the identical use of stock phrases between *Journey to the West*, and those found by Bordahl in the written evidence of stories associated with the *Water Margin* cycle. Yet, it may be possible to view these occurrences of exact duplication across separate written sources as evidence to the contrary. Although they clearly represent a standardised practice in the vernacular novel – it certainly could also represent standardised stock phrases of 'storytelling'. This is to say that the repetition of such phrases between different story cycles could be an indication of the wider concept of storytelling rather than just literature. They make for a deliberate and formulaic approach to storytelling within literature. Moreover, the other comparable features of *Journey to the West* and Bordahl's examples, such as the prefixes to poems, the Narrators type and comments, all seem to suggest a formulaic skeleton or structure for which storytellers can weave tales over. There is even evidence that the vernacular novels themselves share scenes, such as the Monkey King changing his appearance and pretending to be Pigsy's bride, according to Ge this scene with most of the features intact, appears in several other Chinese vernacular novels.

This fluidity within the vernacular novels continues after the publication of the Ming novel; not wishing to delve too deeply into the issues surrounding translation, authorship becomes even more lucid in the versions of *Journey to the West* available in print. There have been many alternative translations and retellings in literature, most notably the unabridged translations by

Jenner (1993) and Yu (2006). These massive undertakings in translation not merely succumb to personal bias in linguistic expression but there are also potential influences on a translator based on ideology and external features: Jenner's translation has been studied in its use of popular verse composition of his time (Sun 2013). Similarly, how can we attribute full credit to Cheng-en for Waley's 1944 abridgement, described as "breezy" by Hsia (2004 Pg.9). These abridgements and edits cast so many changes and alterations to the full tale that the description of the story as a novel by Wu Cheng-en does not encompass the transient nature of the narrative. Even in literature - regardless of the oral features and folklore discussed above - it is a commodity, used as traditional folk tale, and not a single book by a single author. The ownership of an author for this story is ideologically and systematically discounted by its multiple versions. Here I am not referring to the compilation of audio-visual texts, but to the versions available in print. There are a multitude of retellings and abridgements for children available to purchase in Mandarin, Cantonese, and English - in fact many bare only the name of the storyteller on their covers and not Wu Cheng-en's. Books such as those by Ed Young (2001), Ji-Li Jiang (2004), David Khurdian (2005), Kathryn Lyn (2013), Aaron Shephard (2014), Jeff Pepper (2019) to name only a few, retell the story as a classic Chinese tale. These represent only a fragment of the authors' that are retelling the story, and can't expect to include the various literary version being read by children in China and Taiwan (Hsia 2004), nor does this include the innumerable comic strips and graphic novels centred around the story. This degree of material in literature and print seems to present a very clear move away from Ong's concept of ownership and authority, and although Ong's assessment of this fact in modern society is correct, we cannot include *Journey to the West* under the same umbrella. It is a story, which has a popular novel attached to it. We cannot discount the level of skill that the author has in telling the tale in the book, nor can we ignore the significance and impact of this print version in inspiring readers more than the other versions of the story that came before it, and ultimately ensuring the story's survival on a more global scale - although we can never know the truth behind this statement, it can be assumed to be justified. As an adaptation of the story, the book is detailed,

lengthy, and enjoyable, and therefore has stood the test of time; unlike the Kosanji version that predated it. It would seem that the timing of its publication, in a society that was placing more importance on literature and print, may have aided this survival. In fact, this focus on print made the book central reference from which further stories could be told, it became the structure and formula with which other storytelling traditions would utilise. It became more than merely a prompt book for future storytellers, but time capsule for the oral and literate traditions, motifs, cycles and themes to be stored and frozen in time, before they could be reborn into other storytelling communications.

Most importantly within these different levels of the oral-literate symbiosis, whether they be in the use of pre-existing content, or the structure and manner the novel is delivered to a reader, is that the story is clearly a separate entity to the storyteller. *Journey to the West* is a medium, which is used by storytellers to add content. This medium is not only removed from the storytellers, but from the technologies that sustain them as well.

Chapter 5
Multiplicity and the Monkey

Displacing Print Culture: The Oral-literate Episteme in the audio-visual environment

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the film and television texts related to *Journey to the Wes.* I suggest

the results of the content analysis demonstrate that the techniques and conventions of the

Chinese oral tradition can still be found in these texts. These, I believe, act as structures

which help *form Journey to the West* as a medium. Essentially, I posit that the events,

characters, representations, type-scenes and aural and visual motifs are repeated so much that

they are used by storytellers – here directors/filmmakers - to easily form a structure which is

recognized by audiences. These structures are akin to the mnemonic devices and formulas

which were utilized by oral storytellers, and that modern filmmakers and directors have a

'bank' of formulas to draw from as they create new versions of the story. These storytellers

are able to then add in their own stories, messages and content within this framework, this is

how *Journey to the West* is used as a medium. This chapter will broadly explore the second

research question; exploring what the amount of film and television adaptations available

centred around *Journey to the West* tells us about the story itself, and what it reveals about the

culture of storytelling; this. However, I will also readdress the first research question in the

discussion of orality and literacy models in contemporary media.

In Chapters three and four I examined the oral-literate symbiosis in the texts around

Xuanzang, and the Ming dynasty novel respectively. The story of *Journey to the West*

functioning as a medium is in part down to its relationship with orality and literacy. This

chapter will continue the examination of this interrelationship in the audio-visual texts of

television and film. I will look to examine the oral-literate symbiosis by examining and

applying elements of the study of the oral tradition to the film and television texts. By using

the context and study of the Chinese oral and storytelling traditions, we can see clear and evident traces of these forms of orality within the films and television series of *Journey to the West*. These are specific to the Chinese context, as there is very much interplay with literacy; some features of oral storytelling can be traced from Tang dynasty examples. Other devices such as motif, type-scene, what Nayar (2001) calls "heavy" characters, and of course a reliance on formula, are all extensions of an oral dynamic in storytelling that play a significant role in the audio-visual versions of the story. I will broadly examine these features with an analysis of their use in the film and television texts from the content analysis. I will do this by using McLuhan's Tetrad of media effects as a starting point for examining the story in film and television. I will utilise Strate's (2017) reassessment of the tetrad to focus on what elements of the story have been enhanced and retrieved, what elements have been reversed or obsolesced and finally what elements of the story in this medium are new. This analysis will be followed by an assessment of the Monkey King character and his structures within the film and television texts; this character in particular demonstrates substantial evidence of oral traditions from other media and time periods. I assert that the structures of the story as a medium are formalised in film and television, and that the Monkey King character is now the structural epicentre to this. I suggest that, much like Foley's (1985) concept of traditional referentiality, the Monkey King has now become the medium as he represents a form of metonymy, an oral-visual trope that represents both himself and the whole text.

The analysis below also reveals further evidence of the story's separation from both the storytellers and the technologies that sustain it, as *Journey to the West* can also be considered a separate medium from these technologies. The first of these issues has already been established in Chapter four with the discussion of the novel being a compilation of traditional stories, tropes and characters retold by a talented individual. This I believe

continues in the texts studied in the content analysis, as the repetition of key features demonstrate some core structural elements within the texts. The structure and coding of the content analysis, as discussed in the methodology chapter, were set around the approaches taken toward the oral tradition generally, and then contextually to the Chinese Oral tradition. I examine the findings of this broadly, by looking at some key features not previously discussed in Chapters three and four, to examine how well the features associated with the oral tradition are seen in the films and television texts of *Journey to the West*. This will help to understand how considering the story as a medium, rather than a group of chronological adaptations, may highlight the power of the story culturally beyond the novel. This is examined further by studying the techniques and tropes in the film and television texts as drawing from and being shared with other storytelling traditions outside of print like opera. This suggests that these audio-visual texts have more in common with performative traditions than the content of the, suggesting a non-linear process of storytelling in opposition to the notion that these texts are based solely on the novel.

I will then examine these ideas through the analysis of the role of the Monkey King in the audio-visual texts of *Journey to the West*; of all features in the story this is the only character to appear in 100% of the texts sampled, and therefore, as a character, has become a more important structural element than Xuanzang. The image of the Monkey King is important to the understanding of the value of the story as a medium. I use an approach closely related to Sheila J Nayar's (2010, 2020) and Mikel Koven's (2008) studies of film, by analysing these texts as being visually and structurally related to an oral noetic. I intend below to explore the notion that the texts have an oral-literate noetic which is very specific to the Chinese storytelling experience. Unlike Nayar's assessment of Masala films being able to be enjoyed by preliterate and oral peoples around the globe, due to their composition for such audiences, the films of *Journey to the West* hold a very specific cultural context. This context

is that the *Journey to the West* films and television texts are composed for all audiences, whether literate or of an oral episteme, as even the oral tradition of Ming dynasty storytellers was influenced by the interplay of both technologies. An oral story had elements of prosimetrum that continued from the scribal manuscript stories in the Buddhist canon; the interplay is a symbiosis because it becomes structural and not dependent on a specific medium. The texts of J*ourney to the West* are composed through a tradition of oral-literate interplay, and therefore the literacy of the audience does not matter, as people are culturally used to texts with this interplay as they function within an oral-literate episteme.

5.2 The Story as a Medium... in a Medium

I have established the contours of *Journey to the West* being a medium through the examination of Xuanzang, his written works, and of course the impact his story may have had on the orality-literacy practices of the Chinese oral tradition that have continued today. It is easy to see these familiar structures even in the film and television texts as briefly touched upon in the analysis in chapters three and four when considering certain tropes and the *storyteller's manner*. Yet there is something very specific about the medium of *Journey to the West* within the film and television texts. These audio-visual texts do not just represent a certain form of secondary orality in their recreation of sound, or the continuation of primary oral features, but they also represent a mutation. If we consider McLuhan's (1964) assertion that one medium becomes the content of any new succeeding medium, we can see how *Journey to the West* has travelled through so many media, from oral tale, stage play, opera and of course printed novel. Each medium that the narrative is presented through, keeps features of the previous medium. Similarly, if we consider Bolter and Grusin's (1999) concept of *remediation,* in which one medium builds on the last, we can see how each new

technology and medium begins to assimilate features and components of the last. Every new medium attempt to use, utilise and improve on its predecessor as a way of improving user experience. The advent of *Journey to the West* in film and television, I propose, has formalised the medium of the story further through this process.

Film and television, here combined in discussion as audio-visual, are media which are still contemporary and very much still relevant as a form of entertainment. Yet old enough to represent a large period of time in which to compile texts of *Journey to the West.* In fact, the span and breadth of texts available of *Journey to the West* in this form would suggest that this is a *tradition,* or a traditional way of telling the story, with its own contours and nuances. These contours still contain the oral-literate symbiosis, but they have mutated in the new medium, still recognisable but altered. They also bear evidence of oral performative traditions outside of print, such as opera. There are traditions within film and television that show us the relationship between these other media and how in their current form, audio-visual texts represent a dominant form of the story as a medium...within a medium. In essence I posit that *Journey to the West* is a framework of stock characters, representations, and events that can be expanded or truncated depending on the storyteller. The novel is merely one particular expanded telling, but the formula and its component parts are there to be reshaped by anyone, much like the component formulas of an oral tradition, this I believe is what makes the narrative a medium. I will analyse the narrative as a medium through film and television using McLuhan and McLuhan's (1988) *Laws of Media* or tetrad of media effects, this will focus on the medium of audio-visual texts of film and television and will begin interrogating the elements of the story as a medium itself. The tetrad essentially asks four questions of any medium and for *Journey to the West*: What does the medium enhance? What does the medium reverse? What does the medium retrieve? What does the medium obsolesce? For the story *of Journey to the West* we could suggest the following in this model:

- The story *enhances* the real life journey and achievements of Xuanzang, bringing it and the Buddhist and Taoist canon to a wider audience in popular form. It also extends and enhances the traditional storytelling tropes and techniques of Buddhist and Chinese storytelling.

- When *pushed to its limits*, the story makes a fiction of the priest Xuanzang and his accomplishments, focusing more on his fictitious and fantastic disciple. It uses the functions and structures associated with religious storytelling and uses them to structure a fiction, in which religion is reduced to a trope, the ground to the figure of the Monkey King.

- The story *retrieves* many Buddhist and Taoists traditional stories and tropes within its structures, which may have otherwise been forgotten or lost.

- The story makes the *facts obsolete* and makes the real life Xuanzang irrelevant in the wake of popular culture. The medium becomes more important than the original content.

These are in essence the foundation contours of *Journey to the West* as a medium, as it exists as a story about a priest's journey and its storytelling structures are also embedded in Buddhist storytelling techniques. If we examine the medium of *Journey to the West within* the media of film and television, we can see the layering effect of the media environments that it has gone through. If we were to use Gouzouasis and LaMonde's (2005) tetrad analysis of cinema as a starting point, we can see the deepening environment of storytelling, they assert that cinema:

> Enhances the art of the novel through photography and sound
>
> Transforms abstract narrative into virtual reality – like being there!
>
> Retrieves oral storytelling – drama, dance, and song. The birth of recounting through gesture, movement, posture.
>
> Pushes aside the novel . . . Who needs weeks of suspense? Watch a ninety-minute movie instead! (Gouzouasis and LaMonde 2005 p.8)

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If we detail this analysis further with the context of *Journey to the West* as a medium *within* this medium, it certainly could be said to enhance the art and structures of the Ming dynasty novel. However, it is not limited to its existence in print and enhances the communal nature of viewing the story in performative genres as well. Including the visual and cultural mnemonic of these performances and specifically opera, as well as the culture of storytelling outside of print generally. We can supersede Gouzouasis and LaMonde's idea of what the medium *Transforms* with McLuhan's traditional notion of *reversal* and suggest that the audio-visual texts of *Journey to the West*, despite their multitude in an entirely different medium, are still attributed to and centred on the print version of the story. The medium also turns the culture of storytelling outside of print into a single form, losing the nuances of these different media and centring them on being attributed to print. By this I mean that the adoption of techniques and visual motifs associated with Chinese opera for instance, lose their original value in film and television, as they become part of a medium that is connected and referenced to the work of the novel, and not the rich tapestry of oral and performative genres outside of it. The audio-visual medium of *Journey to the West* retrieves the oral storytelling in the Chinese tradition in song, prosimetrum and visual performance, as well as the oral features of visual representation seen from paintings and murals. The medium certainly 'pushes aside the novel' but specifically it pushes aside the typographic bias of print in the novel.

The tetrad analysis is a good starting point in examining *Journey to the West* as a medium within film and television, but it does have its limitations. Strate (2017) suggests that the approach is well used to probe connections between the four laws of media but doesn't allow for deeper analysis. To go into further detail Strate suggests three larger sections of discussion, more like a triad. He suggests amalgamating the four laws into two: What pre-

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existing element of the system does the medium extend or amplify? What pre-existing element does it undo, reverse, or obsolesce? The third question is an area that Strate believes the laws of media do not address significantly: What new element or phenomenon does the medium introduce to the system? (2017 p. 224). I will use this "triad" analysis to example the major findings in the content analysis in relation to the story as a medium.

5.2.1 What Pre-existing Part of the System does the Medium Extend or Amplify?

Answering this question is probably the most pertinent in the discussion of *Journey to the West* as a medium, especially when looking at the film and television texts. The content analysis has revealed many tropes, type scenes and visual signifiers that suggest the very structures of these texts are rooted in the storytelling structures of the Chinese oral tradition. The films and television texts show us so many structural repetitions that they are easily utilised by 'storytellers' to put their stamp on and include new content, messages and synchronic nuances. This is possible because the structures of these texts are the same structures in some guise or another, to those that have existed for the story for 800 years. Many of the narrative structures, characters, events, visual motifs and manner of storytelling are the common functions of the oral tradition that are extended and amplified. We can begin to understand the story's multiplicity in film and television if we reconsider some of the oral features and the purposes of these structures to a pre-literate society:

> All memory was living memory, and knowledge would die with those who held it if they did not pass it on to another person. Language itself, especially in what we would think of as its more poetic manifestations, was focused on mnemonic efficiency: proverbs, parables, vivid images, rhythmic utterances, rituals, formulaic expressions, repetitions—much of what became unpalatable to the literate sensibility. (Sacasas 2020 P.13)

This way of preserving events in time-binding is essential in the development of the oral tradition, a tradition of history into legend. Oral cultures used narrative as a way of storing,

memorising and sharing knowledge and experience and as a way of understanding the world that they inhabited "early man generated myth as his primal explanation of the universe, to represent why things are the way they are." (Ong 1977, p245). The repetitions and formulaic expressions Sacasas refers to are the structural basis of the oral tradition, and as both Nayar and Koven have demonstrated, they are very much the basis of film and television construction as well. In its modern scholarly discipline, the study of the oral tradition, as far as both textual and ethnographic study is concerned, is still reliant on the seminal studies of Albert B. Lord (1960) and Milman Parry (1971). Their field work in Yugoslavia on the oral epics in the 1930's is considered the starting point for the analysis of both current and lost oral traditions. The Parry-Lord formulaic theory (oral formulaic theory of epic composition) has become an essential starting point when considering the composition and delivery of the oral tradition. In the 1920's Parry was able to discern the oral motifs – such as formulaic epithet - found in the Homeric verses as evidence of the mnemonic devices of a primary oral culture; in other words, the works of Homer were oral compositions (Lord 1960). The use of formulaic epithet (a form of adjective describing skill, heroic quality, appearance etc.) was to allow a singer to have a stockpile of phrases that can be inserted into the metrically demanding poem. The evidence of such mnemonics in the Homeric verses led to Parry's study with Lord on a living oral tradition, who work "in a thriving tradition of unlettered song and… practice their art without reading and writing." (Parry cited in Lord 1960 p.3). Storytellers' used themes[1], events, characters, and a bank of mnemonic devices to structure a skeleton tale before filling in the gaps with information.

This study focuses predominantly on Chinese storytelling; a field in which the Parry-Lord formula still has validity and highly comparable features. For instance, Schimmelpenninck and Kouwenhoven discuss the use of the Parry-Lord formula in their study of folk-songs in Jiangsu (1999). Their study on the folk-songs of farm workers and peasants as an important

role to stave off the tedium of work, reveals many of the tropes of oral-formulaic composition, stating that "The idea of formulae is not so much that of lines or half-lines which migrate without changes from one text to the next – but rather that of a formal metrical framework in which substitutions can take place." (Schimmelpenninck and Kouwenhoven 1999 p.80). This study of oral song may be transposed to discuss elements and features of the varying texts of *Journey to the West,* as there are repetitive structures or 'frameworks' within 'episodes' in which narrative and character substitutions often take place. The narrative structure of most episodes, for instance, use repeated scenes to organise events. Schimmelpenninck and Kouwenhove go on to study lines of the most common of the folk songs and identify that "Each of these is in turn the opening phrase of different songs... applied so frequently... that they may lose their semantic value and serve only as structural elements" (Schimmelpenninck and Kouwenhove 1999 p.81). I propose that in many ways the formula of *Journey to the West* in film and television within the type-scene, character representation and stock events also tend to lose their semantic value and are instead structural elements of the story as a medium. As mentioned in the methodology section, Foley and Gejin's comparative study on *Challenges in comparative oral epic* (2012) explores both the cultural differences and commonalities of the oral epic across four different traditions: South Slavic, Mongolian, ancient Greek and old English. The study is structured around the answering of five questions:

> "What is a poem in oral epic tradition?"
> "What is a typical scene or theme in oral epic tradition?"
> "What is a poetic line in oral epic tradition?"
> "What is a formula in an oral epic tradition?"
> "What is the register in oral epic poetry?" (Foley and Gejin 2012 p.382)

Each of the questions is then explored in the analysis of the four different types of oral epic. The study is important in its exploration of not just the application of the Parry-Lord formula to traditions away from the "purely Homeric criterion of epic poetry" (ibid p.381) but also in the creation of a middle ground between the diverse traditions to establish a cohesive model to examine the oral epic. This typological approach (Nagy 2017) serves as a good manner to consider the importance of the oral features of all oral traditions. We should remember here that the features of oral stories that are used and developed in highly literate societies are often seen as cliché. Take Nayar's (2020) typological discussion of the structures of the openings to stories across the globe, that carry some formation of the 'Once upon a time' stock phrase:

> So, what accounts for the relative omnipresence of "Once upon a time …" at the outset of fairy tales, fables, and ancient myths? Why would so many narratives across so many disparate cultures begin in this identical fashion? And what, at the same time, accounts for our (somewhat forced) contemporary dislike, and even dismissal, of this opening—and here I mean beyond its smacking of something cliche? In the simplest terms, for individuals inculcated into a literate mindset, beginning a story with "Once upon a time …" draws immediate attention, even if only subconsciously, to our preliterate way of knowing, to the altogether historically opaque or cloudy nature of the past when we existed (or exist still) in an oral milieu. (Nayar 2020 p45)

In this study, the 'cloudy nature of the past' will be exactly what is looked for in the stories associated with *Journey to the West.* This is due in part to my belief that story itself has never truly left the oral episteme, or more correctly, the oral-literate episteme. Therefore, these formulaic features of the story help the appreciation of the story of *Journey to the West*, as this is what audiences want to see and experience, the well tried and tested stock formulas that they have come to know and love. It is this appreciation of oral storytelling that helps to unpack these structures and clichés as examples of a continued way of knowing available in even the most contemporary texts. The literature available analysed in chapter four from the Tang dynasty suggests that even in written form Xuanzang's work and the works surrounding the priest evidence formulaic expression such as epithet as well as storytelling themes and scenes associated with many different stories through the Chinese tradition of storytelling.

If we look at the features of the oral epic within the content analysis, the fundamentals of these oral structures are very clearly present in the overarching structures of *Journey to the West* in film and television. In fact, unlike print, this medium offers a clear view of the continued practice of the oral-literate features of the narrative, as the tradition and repetition show what are used by storytellers again and again and what are not. The texts are littered with structural devices that are associated with the oral composition of stories. The inclusion of the 'type scene' often associated with Homeric verses are heavily used as structural elements in the *Journey to the West* Film and television texts. These 'type-scenes' such as 'the feast' or 'the arming of the hero' (Parry 1971, Foley and Gejin 2012) are the repetition of the same scene or event within the storytelling or "a recurrent block of narrative with an identifiable structure" (Edwards 1992 p.285). Although many of the type-scenes seen in the content analysis are also seen in the novel, I argue that they are the structural elements of the oral tradition. I believe the extent of their use in the film and television texts are also indicative of a new tradition of storytelling, as they have little semantic value and have become merely structural in audio-visual texts. The table below demonstrates the full list of identified type-scenes for *Journey to the West* found within the content analysis.

Table 5.1 *Full scene types from the data results of the content analysis. Frequencies are in percentages based on the amount of texts in the sample that the scene appears.*

Code	Description	%
S1	Attack form within - in which characters transform and attack antagonists from within their stomach	30
S2	Fight at the gates - protagonists and antagonists engage in a fight outside the antagonists lair	63.3
S3	Fight in the Lair - Protagonists, after sneaking into the lair fight with the antagonists	70
S4	Fighting on the road (to the west) - protagonists meet and fight antagonists on the road west.	66.6
S5	The feast - the pilgrims are given food by villagers/ Antagonists have a banquet	23.3
S6	The pilgrims converse with villagers about their woes	30
S7	The Chase the Protagonist Chases and fights the antagonist (usually airborne) or vice versa	63.3
S8	The lookalike - characters have a doppelganger	16.6

S9	Shape-shifting - characters transform into other characters to confuse their enemies	30
S10	Transformation - characters turn into other objects such as insects or food or Monsters	73.3
S11	Seeking celestial help - protagonists seek advice and aid from various celestial beings	30
S12	In Media res the story begins with the character already on their journey with no explicit exposition.	63.3
S13	Continuing with the journey - after solving a problem the protagonists continue on their journey.	70
S14	Life in Heaven	30
S15	5 elements mountain - Monkey is subdued under Buddha's hand/5 Elements mountain	26.6
S16	Caught in a Gourd	23.3
S17	Dance/Circus Fighting	16.6
S18	Xuanzang kidnapped	63.3

These represent some of the major type-scenes that have developed outside the episodes from the novel and have become commonplace within different adaptations and appropriations. Many of these type scenes can be found in other stories outside of the *Journey to the West* canon, but from the novel to the audio-visual texts, they have become synonymous within the cycle. Some of the type-scenes can be traced through *Journey to the West's* storytelling history; for example, *the shapeshifter* and *transformation* type-scenes have long associations with the trickster character type, which the Monkey King is often associated with. These type-scenes are used a great deal in the audio-visual texts as regular motifs. One such structure that seems to have a great deal of representation is when a character shapeshifts into the wife or love interest of an antagonist. The Monkey King does this in the novel and the type-scene is represented multiple times in the audio-visual texts. However, as a type-scene it is very specific to the Chinese vernacular canon. In the 100-chapter novel, the most notable occurrence is when the Monkey King pretends to be Pigsy's wife, he taunts and teases his future peer before revealing himself and engaging in combat. However, it is not original to the novel in the *Journey to the West* story cycle and appears in the Zaju play of the same name (Sun 2018). Ge (2001) has traced this particular type-scene in several other vernacular

sources with Chinese literary works. The spread of the type-scene across these works suggests that it may have existed as a storytelling stock in both writing and perhaps oral tales. In the current study we see it presented again and again in the adaptations and appropriations. This suggests that the novelisation has not stopped these storytelling traditions but in fact, allowed them to continue.

Other type scenes that occur regularly across the novel, and just as regularly in the audio-visual texts, to the point that they have become important structural devices and often a narrative framework. Their importance is not merely within the audio-visual texts but stretches to other media, from shadow puppetry to the Dai Buzhang School of oral storytelling. Much of the 'immersive' experience of a narrative in Strate's (2014a) discussion of the narrative as a medium, are amplified with audio-visual texts. The environment of performance is reintroduced and amplified for *Journey to the West* in this medium, as the audience are able to experience the narrative that parallels the oral/aural over the printed word. Without question, the sense of orality within the texts is closely related to those sensory experiences of the stage play: different actors speak in rehearsed dialogue along with the sound of action and sound effects. But with the natural performative transition from stage to screen, there are also contextual sound traditions related to the art of Chinese storytelling. Further to this is the traditional art of words from the oral epic to the big screen; the roles of boast, fliting and of course the narrator's voice and type, all play a role in the modern form. Their presence highlights the continuation of traditional forms of storytelling and the oral centred noetic (Nayar 2004). The roles of orality and sound in the texts are traditional, contextual and highly functional. These in every respect have been amplified in the film and television texts as they extend their importance within the construction and reception of the story. Although they always existed in performative genres, in film and television texts we are offered artefacts like the book in which these features of orality are highly functional in

comparison to the other primary artefact, the novel. Therefore, within the tetrad, or triad,

analysis the extension and amplification of the story as an artefact, like that of the novel,

makes the audio-visual texts more culturally important as they extend the function of the

novel as an artefact but the oral-literate episteme of the performative traditions.

5.2.2 The Culture of Storytelling

One of the most important observations in what the audio-visual texts are able to amplify in

Strate's model, is the culture of storytelling that has taken place in the story's history. As a

story and a medium, *Journey to the West* has been established in multiple entertainment

outlets such as plays, oral stories, puppet shows, and most importantly, opera. The film and

television texts do not represent a linear adaptation from novel to film, but actually use the

culture of storytelling in performative genres as a source material. The cultural conventions

of different performative genres have ultimately had a greater impact on the codes associated

with the story in the audio-visual media. Chinese opera and circus genres are most notable in

this respect, especially in the mixing of sound and action in the audio-visual texts as these

have had a large impact on their aural-visual meaning. In this sense, *Journey to the West* as a

medium within film and television, amplifies and extends the culture of storytelling outside

of print. The Many texts include synchronous sound of Chinese cymbals or *jingbo*. The use

of Chinese percussion and cymbals have a long tradition in opera and are often used for battle

sequences and fighting (Yung 1989). This cultural aspect of the story has continued into

filmic representation, reinforcing the traditional and cultural value of the story's storytelling

outside of the novel. The synchronous marrying of sound to action feeds into cultural

competence of the audience and suggests that the nature of the narrative messages within its

function are not born from a literate approach nor is the literate mind needed to decode and

appreciate their meanings (Nayar 2004, Koven 2008). These instances reflect more on the cultural importance of sound and actions, the homeostatic appreciation of immediacy and cause and effect (Ong 1982). Various versions of the story use the cymbals for highly choreographed fight sequences that, despite the overall filmic feel to a text, immediately transports the text into a highly stylised acrobatic dance routine. The reflection of this trope of storytelling is not reserved merely for operatic styled texts, and many films utilise the cymbals as aural indicators to the audience that action is commencing. This system occurs in texts as late as 2015, as a form of internal culture of borrowing from text to text, and an unequivocal self-awareness of itself as a text connected to a hundred other texts.

The influence and use of the operatic and circus routines, steps and choreography itself represents the continuation of an oral tradition (Kassing 2017). These acrobatics and dances have been alive for hundreds of years, passed down from master to student, troupe to troupe in the form of pedagogical watch, listen and repeat systems. The sharing of this information, albeit the information of action, is an act of the oral/aural as well as the continuation of traditions from an oral culture. It is easy to consider the passing down of knowledge in the oral noetic as the passing of stories, histories and traditions, and in the Chinese acrobat, circus performer and operatic dancer, we have evidence of all three. The existence of the art form is not continued through literacy, but through borrowing, repetition and verbal exchange of one human to another, again and again. The influence and presence of these traditions within the films is first and foremost the influence and continuation of an oral tradition. In this instance it is therefore evidence of the story's relationship and continuation in the oral tradition and its features still play a part in the delivery and reception of the story in the oral contours of expression and thought. The oral and visual traditions of this form of theatre and entertainment have had such an impact on the texts that it has help establish sign systems with the audience, creating meaning through traditional forms in modern media. This

process allows a shift away from the tradition film and television being adaptations of print, instead focusing on the cultural borrowing of trope and performance outside of typographic systems.

By evaluating the audio-visual texts in this way, we can find a greater degree of parity between the features and motifs found in the film and television texts, and other traditions of storytelling. This is provocative in two ways: firstly, in the way that film and television texts have assimilated materials from *around* the novel, and not merely *from it* as is often assumed in adaptation. Secondly, in that perhaps the truth is slightly opposing to this, that the versions of the story have taken influence from the novel, but the transposing of these features has revealed their true nature in orality and literacy. The hegemony of print in analysing these texts can then be broken down, and the 100-chapter novel can instead be seen as one important text along a continuing pattern of texts. It is of equal weighting as other media as Print is seen as the hegemonic communication in human history. Although the audio-visual texts would have definitely pooled their influence from the book - it is only in the same characteristic fashion that the book took influence from the stories around it. The novelisation is not a subversion of oral practice, but a confirmation of its power. Whether or not the story would have survived without the 100-chapter novel is unanswerable; but it certainly didn't instil an ideological commitment to its 'true telling'. There are a few storytellers within film and television that are purists in their adaptations of the novel. If we were to simply list out the classification system adopted by the content analysis as a selection of ingredients, and we examined the episode of *Six Eared Macaque* in the novel, and then looked at the film *Which one is Which (1965)* which retells the same episode we would find two important things. Firstly, we could see that both the book and the film use a multitude of the 'ingredients' within the classification system - many of which are used in both. Secondly, we would see the audio-visual text liars little to no similarity to the novel. Both contain the same characters,

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which, in each text, contain the same visual looks and props (whether actual or in description); many of the type-scenes like *The Lookalike* and *Seeking Celestial Help* occur; there are similarities within the storytelling in the narrator's type of the book and film; the novels use of stock phrases is similar to the use of narration and verse in the audio-visual texts. Yet the dialogue, structure and even events do not resemble one another. Both texts tell the same story, use the same ingredients, but offer no consistency. We assume that the audio-visual text had merely altered the book. This is the ideology of print. What if within the study of *Journey to the West* as a medium, we offer an alternative view one that suggests that all of the versions of the story pool from the same source: 'the third text'[13]. 'The third text' is the *third* alternative where the novel and the film (and any version of the story in any medium) have taken their elements. I use the term 'text' in the naming of this concept ironically. Media ecologists are often engaged with metaphors that value sound over sight or orality over literacy. I describe the function of the third text in relation to Reed's classic 1949 film *The Third Man*, the actual *third* man, represents all of the answers and all of the contexts to the key event in the film's narrative: the death of Harry Lime. 'The third text' offers the same conceptual framework with which to analyse *Journey the West* as a story and as adaptation. 'The third text' is essentially the constant reminder that the 100-chapter novel did not spew these 'ingredients' merely from the genius of its author. Regardless of the genius of the author, the novel took them from another 'unknown' source - which is, ultimately the same source that the audio-visual texts got it from. Print culture centralised the book, but by looking at the elements of classification, we can unpick print to find it virtually no different to other storytelling. 'The third text' represents the centralisation of the story - offering the ideological context that the printed word has a source material, it is not necessarily tangible or solid but it existed. This is similar to the Aarne Thompson classification index, in the fact

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[13] This has no relation to the Art criticism journal of the same name.

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that these motifs evidence a culture of storytelling. However, the third text is more concerned

with the evidence that has not been left behind, the culture of that storytelling itself. This is

the source of all motifs and is the process of storytelling itself. With this unseen and unknown

culture at the centre, print can then be de-stabilised and contextualised. 'The third text',

unlike its name suggests, does not represent a whole or a singular but a frame of reference for

the lore found in all texts, the culture of storytelling itself. Essentially every text is part of the

third text, and every text pools from it. The *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, Grimm's fairy tales, are popularly

known to us through literature, but their lore, structure and tropes are from the folk: 'the third

text'. In the same way their story's representations in other media also source 'the third text'.

The third text in many ways is a postmodern notion, one that looks to use the work of folklore

studies in determining the long used tale types and motifs, and the epithets and themes looked at in the

field of the oral tradition. It is a media ecology model which looks to group these all together to

examine the fleeting medium, the culture which generates and preserves stories in a given time before

they are lost and forgotten. None are original, but their existence in a period makes them the

launching pad and melting pot of an assumed original. This state is best described by Baudrilliard:

> Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the
> concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or
> substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: A
> hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is
> nevertheless the map that precedes the territory - precession of simulacra - that
> engenders the territory. (Baudrilliard 1994 p.1)

The notion of the third text is in itself a copy of the postmodern idea. However, its focus is on how the

medium of *Journey to the West* is a growing and fluctuating structure. The third text represents the

image of a culture in which the story is the reference point, however, like the map it precedes the

telling of the story in any tradition. It is not real nor original, but neither is its telling, as this too is

merely an abstraction of the last telling. The third text is the unseen living tradition and the story

becomes the abstraction of that, therefore neither are anything but a simulacra of the other. If *Journey*

to the West is a medium, formed in a method of bricolage, then the third text is culture of sourcing that collection of material.

     'The third text' differs from something like genre, which shares many of the same principles, as it is the discussion of a single story across texts, not the commonality of convention; the third text is genealogical and not limited to just typological elements. The third text represents the 'other' unseen, known to be unknown, source and influence of a work. In *Journey to the West* it does not merely encompass the Kosanji or the plays that we know of, these are just part of the evidence of 'the third text', it encompasses the cultural lore, oral stories, texts and traditions that told the story around and before these texts. The Kosanji and all its stories and elements that appear in the Ming novel, tell us that 'the third text' exists. They are the heart of tropes, iconography, type-scenes and stock verse. Audio-visual texts take all of the aspects from the novel that are related to 'the third text'; they do not adapt the novel but utilise the features of storytelling that the novel took and froze from 'the third text'. Of course, there will be elements that are only within the novel, as the author was a talented writer and storyteller, but this is just the continuation of borrowing within storytelling. 'The third text' also offers a subversion of the linearity imposed by print. If we consider the centralisation of the book in synchronic studies, the novel is seen as the middle of a linear process, after oral stories and before audio-visual adaptations. This is a commonality of timelines, we consider that the linearity means the novel overlaps and becomes the source. 'The third text' decentralises this process to consider the novel and all - including audio-visual - adaptations, as pooling from the same resource. This can be seen in figure 5.2 below, which demonstrates how 'the third text' connects them all equally and without hegemony.

Figure 5.1 The Third Text
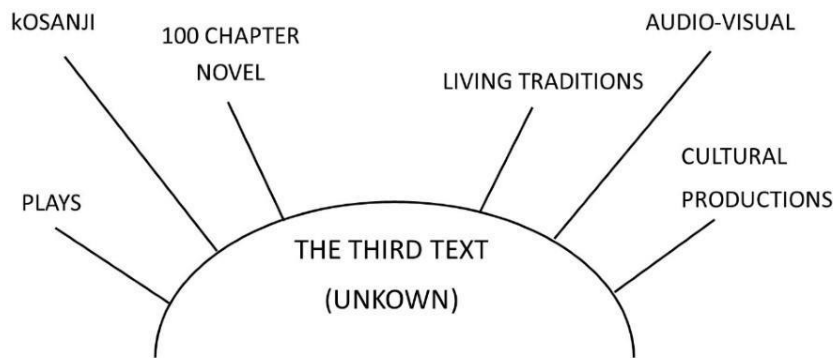
It is with the 'third text' in mind that we will look at the audio-visual texts, decoding their features into motifs and tropes in which to see their elements of traditional storytelling. These can not only be traced back to a multitude of other representations in multiple storytelling traditions, but also help to establish the oral dynamics and contours of storytelling in modern texts. They suggest that the literate mind is not essential for understanding and decoding the narrative, and that the cultural repetition of these signs in fact helps to devalue the power of the story as literature.

One of the fundamental things to gain from analysing the story through the tetrad/triad model is that the collection of film and television texts presents us with this culture of storytelling. The act of compiling the texts together extends and amplifies the

sharing of components, of structures, of characters and representations that has been going on for hundreds of years within this story cycle. The fact that these texts are not one-time orations, but artefacts means that the very nature of oral storytelling and the sharing of traditions is captured and seen through a retrieval and amplification of culture.

5.2.3 What does the Medium Obsolesce and Reverse? And What is New?

I have placed the two sections of the 'triad' together not just because they are smaller sections in this instance, but because like most things in media ecology, they are deeply interconnected. The advent of *Journey to the West* within the audio-visual medium of film and television reduced print bias to virtual non-existence. It is a strange dualism in the oral-literate symbiosis that all the stories of *Journey the West* are attributed in some way to literature, despite their true disengagement from it. There is a sense of the oral-literate symbiosis in the process of film and television, and the creation and maintenance of the electronic technologies that construct and shape them. But as stand-alone finished entities, the stories of *Journey to the West* are without typographic bias.

With this obsolescence and reversal, if we consider film and television direct adaptions of literature, there is something very new that the move away from typography offers. The elements of magic and the fantastic in *Journey to the West* are staples of its structure as a medium, yet there has never been the ability to show these elements to audiences. Print was limited by typography in the same way that orality was limited merely to sound, these both left the use of the mythical and the magical elements of the narrative based on the reader's or listener's imagination. Both had the ability to include illustration to aid the narrative – printed books could include woodblock prints and the Buddhist storytellers of the Tang could carry their picture scrolls or use the murals on walls to reference and be the central point of the story's recitation. One only has to go around the Summer Palace in

Beijing to find this element of storytelling still alive and well in China, as tour guides take groups to the murals of *Journey to the West* along the Summer pavilion and describe the episodes that are taking place on the arches. In this instance, the story begins to impact the literal environment around us – in the same way it did in the more oral existence of the Tang dynasty. These elements though, can be lost in film and television – although they use the visual repetitions and events of these stories, what is lost is the fixity of print-based culture.

What is new *is* the visualization of the fantastic – the bringing to life of the imagination. Sarcasses (2020) identified "vivid images" as a major component to oral composition and formula, and yet it is not until the existence of film and television that this oral feature is realised. This is the new element for this medium and it is the new tradition of the story. In every aspect and medium before, the fantastic could only partially be realised, yet with the use of film and television an immersive oral episteme can be realised. The spectacle of special effects is something that have only been marginally achieved through paintings and stage tricks and acrobatics. However, in the medium of film and television, and the ability to use stop-motion animation, chromakey and now CGI, the immersive ability of the fantastic elements of the story can be realised. The immersive nature of the narrative in the *vision* of the fantastic is totally encompassing and representative of the oral noetic as it conjures all the formulas and characters that were staples of the simplistic structure systems of oral tales:

> Characters in oral narrative serve a mnemonic function, as figures that vital knowledge is attached to, and for this reason they tend to be characters that facilitate audience attention and message retention, i.e., characters that are larger than life, figures that are divine, semidivine, or royalty, heroes and villains that are extraordinary if not supernatural, monsters that are bizarre and otherworldly (e.g., a cyclops, a gorgon, a minotaur). In other words, they are the characters of myth and legend, or what Northrop Frye refers to as mythic and romantic heroes (1957). (Strate 2014b, p.14)

The divine, semidivine, the supernatural and the monsters are all functional elements of *Journey to the West* throughout its existence as a medium. Within film and television, it can

set aside all oral or written description in replace of the visual coding of the image. McLuhan (1964) has suggested that all media are synonymous with language and therefore have their own grammar – Eisenstein formalised this in film theory and now the coding of mise-en-scene, editing and cinematography are all elements of narrative structure and a visual oral episteme (Koven 2020, Nayar 2020, Strate 2014b). Many scholars have suggested the immersive nature of these visual effects being a state of realism however, I tend to agree with Mikel Koven's (2020) assertion that these are not immersive in the respect of giving the audience a sense of realism, we are acutely aware of the opposite in viewing.

> … computer- generated special effects technology, rather than creating greater 'realism' in its imagined worlds, creates a greater sense of 'unreality'. While contemporary CGI may give the illusion to a unified world within the film, we, in the audience, are not invited to believe this constructed world to be 'real'. (Koven 2020, p.93).

In fact, Nayar (2010, 2020) has been clear about some of the cheaper more vulgar attempts of special effects in the Indian Bollywood Masala genre still enthral preliterate audiences with their visions of the fantastic and the divine – this is true of many *Journey to the West* audio-visual texts which often offer visual effects that are seemingly many steps behind the Hollywood counterparts, yet continue to gain high grossing numbers at the box office. It is not that they offer a sense of realism, but instead offer us the sense of oral composition, of seeing what we have been *hearing* and *reading* for so long. The structures have become visual and so we are transcending into an acutely oral-literate episteme, as we have the tropes so deeply associated with J*ourney to the West* as a medium which have only existed in either description or suggestion in performance. Film and television offer a medium which is sustained by print culture but re-establishes elements of the oral culture (Nayar 2010, 2012). More than this, the image of the *fantastic* has totally subverted the description and suggestion of oral and written incarnations of the story and has eradicated the traditional oral-literate symbiosis for a new one. The visual coding of audio-visual texts offers an entirely new form

of oral episteme, in which the tropes and structures associated with *Journey to the West*, such as the Monkey King's ability to transform, to grow his cudgel, to cloud fly, to grow himself, to chew his hair and transform it into an army of monkeys, all traits of oral storytelling, are now visually easier to read by a pre-literate society than ever before. A pre-literate audience member can learn the narrative tricks and language of film to immerse themselves in the medium's oral structures of fantastic visuals, not because they are realistic, but because they are motivated by an oral economy in structure. For those embedded in the oral-literate episteme of Chinese storytelling (whether they are literate or not) the transition of *Journey to the West* to audio-visual is exceptionally simple. It offers all the changing generational structures of the hundreds of years of oral-literate interplay in a highly visual form, one which diminishes high literacy levels required by the literary adaptations. Although Chinese literacy rates improved during Mao's revolution in the 1950s, they were not necessarily highly impactful levels of literacy. Therefore, by the time the country's levels were meeting international standards of literacy, the visual structures of the audio-visual texts had long been set in place. The sheer number of texts related to the narrative suggests that this form of the medium is the dominant form of cultural assimilation and a true representation of how it is engaged with by storytellers and audiences. Film and television texts are so frequently produced that no great sense of originality or storyteller's ownership in form or style can be lasting, as it is transient like the oral story trade. This is not to say that any film or television versions of the story do not have personal style, as they certainly do. However, it is unlikely that the personal style of a filmmaker or storyteller will last, however the repetitive components of character, event and representation are consistent, like an oral formula.

In this final element of the tetrad/triad analysis, the visualisation of the fantastic brings the story into an episteme, arguably more weighted to oral than literate, even in the Chinese context. This is because with the images and effects of film and television, the

hermeneutic process moves a step away from the written word. This is due to the even more simple manner of being able to see the formula of "flying", "transformation" or "shapeshifting". In a traditional oral episteme, the oral-aural process of storytelling relied on the listeners' ability to decode words and picture the scene in their mind's eye. Whereas the *new element* of the story within this medium is that this process is simplified. The new oral episteme is then a further step away from the written word than the oral storyteller.

5.3 The Medium is the Monkey, and the Monkey is the Metonymy

The elements discussed within the tetrad and Strate's reassessment will here be looked at in closer detail. The functional elements of 'what the story retrieves' and 'what is new' actually amount to the same thing in the study of *Journey to the West*. Below I examine the Monkey King figure in detail, this analysis is a core feature of the research thesis, that the repetitive elements of events, characters, and representation are in fact the continuation of the Chinese oral tradition, and the component parts of the medium's structure. These images are not just what the medium of film and television retrieves from the past, as we are also able to see the Monkey King transform through visual effects, something unavailable to witness with the eye before TV and film. Therefore, the pulling together of these two things - what the medium retrieves and what the medium creates – in the way of visual representation, i.e. how the Monkey King appears, and how his fantastic powers appear, are in fact both inherently oral. That is to say that these images are easily assimilated story tropes from the *Journey to the West* canon that have been played out time and time again in written, performative or "mental" images. They then constitute a part of the Chinese oral-literate hermeneutic, in that these visual tropes represent not just elements of oral traditions, but specific coded oral traditions from the *Journey to the West* cycle. The interplay of orality and literacy throughout

the different versions of the story in the past one thousand years, has established a bespoke oral-literate episteme in the construction and reception of *Journey to the West* texts. These images of the Monkey King and his fantastic powers are distinctly oral traits in storytelling (Nayar 2012, Sacasses 2020), but they privilege an audience accustomed to oral-literate interplay. This is represented in the oral-literate symbiosis, in that many of these tropes were oral before being written, or that they were separate written stories that through oral storytelling were fused to the *Journey to the West* cycle. Certainly, the repeated images and representations are distinctly oral in their formulaic nature, as if they are mnemonic devices for storytellers wishing to stitch together their own story. Yet how some of the characters are represented, exist first only in written description. Although all these elements are weighted toward an oral privileged episteme, they are all still relational to the written word.

The analysis of *Journey to the West* as a medium, and its mutation as a medium within film and television, must focus on the role of the Monkey King within this oral-literate episteme. This character within the narrative of audio-visual texts has become almost monolithic in himself, representing more than just the protagonist of the narrative, but the narrative itself. I will offer the view that the discussion of *Journey to the West's* multiple versions or texts, are largely focused on the Monkey King character for this reason, and that his meaning therefore has great cultural weight, as he is the medium to all storytellers' messages. As an image, the character can be interpreted through the tetrad analysis as extending the culture of storytelling in opera, puppetry and oral performance as well as establishing new features to the medium.

A great deal of scholarly work has investigated the adaptations of *Journey to the West* in its different literary guises (Pearson 2006); interpretations of the story in comic or graphic novel (Chaney 2011, Schieble 2014), the postmodern versions on stage (Thorpe 2010) and the political and ideological interpretations of filmic and animated adaptations of the story

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(Chiu 2015, Giesen 2014, Liang 2012, Wu 2017). Few have gone into detail in the same way as Hongmei Sun's (2018) *Transforming Monkey: Adaptation and Representation of a Chinese Epic*. The publication of Sun's book has cemented the importance of the study of the adaptations of *Journey to the West* as having cultural value. Sun's work, unlike others that have come before it, attempts to track the image and importance of the Monkey King through history. These help anchor some of my own findings in the deeper understanding of audio-visual adaptations, as Sun's work is the most detailed to date.

Like myself Sun asserts from the offset that the Ming novel of *Journey to the West* was not written but developed through means of folklore and adaptation, and that the characters within the narrative were established through this process. Sun asserts that "the Monkey King does not grow into the Sun Wukong that appears in the 1592 work and then stabilize; it continues to change and grow, reflecting the cultural and sociopolitical history through which it travels" (Sun 2018 p.36). Sun discusses that the image draws from antecedents and popular culture in adaptations but is a forever fluctuating image based on the cultural context of its creation. This is a centre point for my own research, but unlike Sun I am concerned with the diachronic value of the story as a medium and what over time has remained the same, rather than the differences and interpretation of the image within the social/political milieu. In fact, I mean to change the angle of focus on how the image of the Monkey King changes due to contextual factors. Sun discusses the content of these films and television texts to determine the impact of socio-political change on the image and representation of the character – or his reception - whereas I flip this to suggest that in some ways the Monkey King is the constant, the medium in which to explore the content and messages of *change.*

Sun uses the historical texts of the Kosanji and a 13th century Zaju drama *Journey to the West,* to begin to example the changing representations of the Monkey King figure from

the earliest evidence we have prior to the Ming novel. Sun discusses that these two versions, despite their comparative closeness in publication, show stark differences in characterisation. The former text represents the Monkey disciple as serious, solemn and dedicated to fighting to protect his master, whereas the latter finds the Monkey king to be "a sly rascal rather than a brave fighter… the language that… [he] uses is the most vulgar of all, corresponding to his role as a clown." (Sun 2018 pp.46 -47). Sun continues to trace the changes in the representation of the Monkey King across major texts and evaluates the influence of the socio-political and artistic context of these representations and characteristics.

The Monkey image has developed vastly through the years and this development is most evident in the last century as the images of comics, film and television have been saved for analysis. China's first feature length animation cements the popularity and importance of the story within China as it was an adaptation of *Journey to the West*: *Princess Iron Fan* (1941). This film depicts a famous episode from the story and was produced during the Japanese occupation of China. It is obvious that the animation of the film attempted to tap into the commercial success of Disney's *Snow White*, however, the context of the Sino-Japanese war has suggested that "The monkey king's ability to combat Princess Iron fan reflected Chinese people's undaunted determination to resist their invaders" (Chiu 2015 p.113). Sun details this even further, suggesting that:

> ...during the battle with the Bull Demon King, it is the small Sun Wukong who, without using transformation or grandiose size as he did in the novel, leads the gigantic bull into the trap prepared by the villagers. The contrast in size points to the reason for the eventual victory: individuals with little power can together form into strong bands. In such a case, the individual value of the Monkey King is represented by his size, which is just the same as that of every villager. The Monkey King remains tiny so that collective heroism can be presented as superior to individual heroism. (Sun 2018 p.61).

This representation of the Monkey King as unable to subdue the Bull king demon alone, Sun suggests is evidence of the use of the character as political prop throughout his different

representations. Although the Monkey King began as the trickster and a *Disney-like* character in 1941, Sun tracks the change in political power through the Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong's leadership, as developing the Monkey King into a revolutionary figure. The 1961-64 animation *Havoc in Heaven* depicts the episode in which the Monkey King ascends to heaven after a celestial invitation but becomes angry once he discovers his low social status. The Monkey King declares war on heaven and after many transformations and duels he is finally subdued by Buddha. In the famous animation however, Sun highlights the decision to edit the ending to have Monkey King as the victor; a hero standing up to a ruling class. Later the same image of the Monkey King is used in another short animation in 1980 *Dingding Conquers the Monkey King* which depicts the Monkey King character's traditional folklore magic bested by the science of a young primary school student. In a postmodern intertextual reference to *Havoc in Heaven*, a small boy whilst watching the animation decides to go back to studying. The Monkey King on the television cannot understand why studying would overtake storytelling and animation and so attempts to distract the student with magic. However, the Monkey King cannot compete with Dingding's use of science. Again, this representation is within the context of Maoist education that centred on the advancement of science as a major concern (Wu 2017).

Sun then establishes the 1995 film *A Chinese Odyssey* as the new turning point of the Monkey King's development, as the film seems to change him back to the role of a comical figure. The film is set within the narrative of the Ming novel but is seemingly set in-between chapters. The Monkey King is being punished by Guanyin and is sent five hundred years into the future, where he is reincarnated as a comical leader of a group of bandits named *Joker*. The character does not know he is the Monkey King but discovers this throughout the narrative. However, upon finding out, he does not wish to have this as his destiny. The film became incredibly popular among young audiences upon its release on television and DVD,

despite a poor critical reception upon initial release. Sun asserts that the character's "resolute pursuit of his individual agenda, either love or other dreams, appears to resonate with fans" (Sun 2018 p.107) according to Sun, and the large evidence she cites on fan sites and other media, the film resonated with the young audience of Hong Kong, who were unsure of their own destiny in the handover of Hong Kong to mainland China. The interpretation of the Monkey King by Sun here suggests a postmodern representation of the character, one who rebels against the very narrative and quest of *Journey to the West*.

Sun's analysis of images relating to the Monkey king clearly demonstrate how they reveal cultural, social, political, and artistic values relating to the Chinese identity throughout history. Sun clearly links the importance of the story and the character to the importance of national ideology and personal identity, suggesting that these elements help to keep the story and the Monkey King character changing and remodelling. However, I feel that despite the in-depth analysis that Sun makes, there are many questions that remain about why the Monkey King is used. Although Sun most definitely examines the key changes in texts, there is no formal appreciation of the similarities in form and function, which I believe are key to the story's continuation and importance as a medium. Sun's work on the socio-political readings of the changing Monkey King image is very revealing, but to try and understand the similarities and invariances of these images will reveal alternative readings about the story; related more to the diachronic meaning of the Monkey King and indeed the culture of his storytelling. Therefore, it is imperative that this chapter looks beyond the types of readings that Sun makes in adaptations and look deeper into the expanse of these adaptations for answers. The differences between Sun's work and my own is in our approach, Sun's examines the meaning and messages of individual texts, whereas I examine the medium that carries these messages, and why this medium is of importance.

The Monkey King has now become the overarching figure of the medium *Journey to the West*, to the point that many texts in literature, film and television name their work after the character himself over the traditional *Journey to the West* name. The character appears in 100% of the texts in the sample of the content analysis and is almost entirely the drive of every narrative. So important is the character of the Monkey King that he begins to represent not merely the central figure in the narrative but the narrative itself. Where once the historical figure of Xuanzang was the medium in a very literal sense, now the Monkey King is the central foundation structure within which the narrative is built. In fact, if we examine John Miles Foley's (1985, 1991, 1995) discussion of traditional referentiality in the oral tradition, we can synthesise this point with the Monkey King's image in relation to the oral-literate episteme. Foley's theory discusses the cultural knowledge that an audience member must have to be able to understand a story, from socio-cultural references, traditions and nuances to the internal references of the tradition of storytelling itself. An audience member must be familiar with the structures of the storytelling techniques as well as the content of the story itself.

> ...the traditional referential frame of a performance tradition not only provides the fully
> fleshed-out characters, the skein of related situations, and the unified field of tale-type context;
> it also inculcates large and necessary gaps of indeterminacy that the audience or reader is
> charged with filling. (Foley 1995 p.57)

This is true of *Journey to the West* and especially the image of the Monkey King, as he has become so loaded with meaning, that no single synchronic analysis can reveal the true function of the character as a structural element of the medium, and why he is important. The audience of a film or television series of *Journey to the West* will understand and fill in the structural gaps of the story that an audience member unfamiliar with the story may not perceive. Much like the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, traditional referentiality suggests that the language of *Journey to the West* is best understood by those who have been taught its oral-

literate structures and reference points. The Monkey King image is in fact a form of metonymy or a largely metonymic referent. Foley (1995) in his book *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, suggested that the application of Parry-Lord formulaic theory tended to reduce the storyteller to a mechanical structure, that merely used metric structures such as epithet to compose a story without a great deal of thought on the meaning and artistry in the use of such devices outside convenience. He suggested that the singer of tales is a using these not as mere structures, but deeply encoded artistic reference points through which the storyteller and audience are able to breathe life into the story.

Much of Foley's work on traditional referentiality, and the focus on *tradition* rather than the *oral* in the study of oral traditions, is centred around the use of metonymy. Foley simply defines metonymy as "a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole . . . a situation in which a text or version is enriched by an unspoken context that dwarfs the textual artefact" (1991:7). In this sense the use of oral traits such as epithet are used as heavily loaded associations that count for not just the individual structural meaning of the device, but the entire tradition itself. Catherine Quick (2011) discusses this succinctly in her examination of Foley's legacy on the subject:

> Metonymic referentiality can be viewed as a type of identificatory rhetoric—the oral traditional poet not only creates complex, traditional meaning by the use of recognized epithets, but he also creates a commonality with and among listeners. Using and understanding the associative meanings of the epithet demonstrates that an individual belongs to this traditional community. An outsider wanting to belong must come to understand not just the words, but their associative meaning. An outsider seeking to move this audience rhetorically can do so by effectively tapping into the same metonymic system of reference used by the oral traditional poet, by identifying himself or herself with the values and assumptions that the audience traditionally associates with these words... A wolf is just a large snarly dog; a big bad wolf is a metonymic reference to a tradition of fairy tales. Because children in the United States grow up experiencing multiple stories of big bad wolves, the sum total of every single example is evoked by the use of the familiar phrase. The idea is so ingrained that for the metonym to work, one does not even need to be telling a fairy tale... "Wolf" by itself can certainly work rhetorically; metaphorically, it embodies the image of a dangerous and predatory animal. But the full phrase "big bad wolf" works on a much deeper level by creating a cognitive pathway to the fairy tale tradition, perhaps long forgotten on a conscious level, but easily accessible through the familiar metonymic trigger. (pp. 598 - 599)

Quick outlines the power of the culture of storytelling, and that without being within this culture, one cannot fully understand the sum of the whole. In *Journey to the West*, this has also been true, the epithet Great Sage equal of Heaven is not merely a title for the Monkey King, it *is* the Monkey King and for the audience of traditional referentiality, it is his power, his uprising against heaven and his journey westward with Xuanzang. In the audio-visual texts, I argue that these epithets and structural metonymic devices have been transposed. They are no longer words in the visual medium, but are the functional elements associated with television and film, the mise-en-scene, the dress code, make-up, mannerisms and performance of the Monkey King. The repetition of these elements are akin to the "formula" of oral composition, in the same way epithet offered a mnemonic device for the storyteller, so too do the visual repetitions offer filmmakers an accessible blueprint that will offer access to the tradition and culture of its audience. In this respect, what the Monkey King as medium a medium extends is the cultural power of these oral features.

This form of association in the visual medium is closely related to the idea of naturalisation in semiotics. However, in this study my focus is less on naturalisation per se and more on how the images associated with the Monkey King work beyond symbolic signifier or intertextuality although both are indeed applicable, instead we are looking at how the Monkey King represent both synchronic meaning as well as the whole diachronic story and tradition. This, in essence, is how the Monkey King becomes the medium.

Examining these visual elements will help evidence that the repetition in images and structural devices across these texts is directly linked to the tradition of the story's cultural retelling, and that this has continued due to its cultural importance in the oral tradition. By this I mean that the story's relationship with storytelling is embedded within the oral-literate symbiosis, and that the audio-visual texts clearly demonstrate the continuation of this. The

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traditional motifs associated with both oral and vernacular written traditions in China are often transposed into visual representations (Sumner 2008, Nayar 2012) but still represent a form of visual mnemonic with which both storytellers and audiences instantly recognise. These become the building blocks for the *Journey to the West* morphology and the story as an accessible medium.

5.4 The Rhesus Mimeses: The Monkey as Formula

I will examine the Monkey King in relation to the aspects raised in the tetrad analysis regarding amplification. There will be a focus on how the images and representations of the Monkey King are related to an oral noetic in the amplification of oral-literate devices, and how these images act a form of metonymy. Along with this I will suggest that the Monkey King as medium fluctuates in representation through the access to the third text, and that metonymic reference is also additive in the context of audio-visual texts.

The features that are so commonly known within oral composition, such as the formula and stock phrases must be viewed in a different manner when considering the secondary oral texts of film and television. I argue that when studying the various audio-visual versions of a single story, there is significant evidence that formulaic expression has been transposed within the visual medium. Scholars have spent a great deal of time considering the residual oral-formulaic evidence in literature, that few seem concerned with the continued echoes of this residue, or indeed consider that the extent of this residue may suggest that it is not residue at all. Within audio visual texts there is not only secondary orality within the re-invention of sound through electronic communication, but in the narratives sustained by this type of orality, we find the continuation of oral traditions and formulaic expression. The following analysis of the audio-visual texts of *Journey to the West* is part of the larger schema of research that has resulted in a basic morphology of a story cycle. In analysing the multiple texts, it can be seen that there are clear formulas, events,

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characters and motifs which make up the episodes associated with *Journey to the West*. The major sections of analysis include comparisons with formula in the oral epic. In film and television, we have no need to meet the demand of metric structures, and although the use of such stock phrases and epithet seem to linger in the 100-chapter novel, in audio-visual texts it has transcended into something slightly different. Stock phrases have been replaced by stock images and representations. Rather than meeting the needs of metric lines, the storytellers must meet the demands of visual expectation. *Journey to the West* is a popular story cycle and the iconography associated with this story have become a visual mnemonic for both storyteller and audience member. These mnemonics are repeated again and again, they are all slightly different – few are identical, visual-verbatim representations - but they are immediately recognisable. These instances are what can be discussed as a form of transposed oral culture within a narrative – they are the oral contours of storytelling reimagined and retransmitted in the electronic age. This is exemplified by Koven in the assertion that: "regardless of a film's sophistication or its technical complexity, the images a filmmaker uses to tell his or her story are often analogues to traditional folk-tales." (Koven 2008 pp.11-12). To this end, the traditions of *Journey to the West's* storytelling can be found in repetition within the filmmaker's use of imagery. These images and visual mnemonics are part of the structure of the story as a medium. If we consider the images of characters, not only are they structures of the narrative in their functions *as* characters, but they are visual structures that make up the language of *Journey to the West* as a medium. These visual elements are instantly utilised by storytellers who are able to pool from the culture of storytelling that has already represented these characters for hundreds of years. Examining the Monkey King as the central contour of the medium demonstrates the layered cultural use of the figure. There are several aspects to the visual mnemonics or stock iconography: characters, props, and representation of mannerism, the breakdown of which can be seen in table 5.1. These three

major areas make up a visual repetition across the audio-visual texts which suggest a set of stock moulds which are not often deviated from. Some of these are part of the narrative description within the Ming novel, but others have become more prevalent within the visual representation of the story. The structural elements of the type scene are fleshed out with these visual mnemonics that are akin to the metric devices of the oral composition of stories.

Table 5.2 *Selection of visual motifs from the results of the content analysis*

	Code	Description	%
	MK1	**Monkey King -conventional representation (including tiger skin, head band, fur, or armour)**	46.6
	MK2	**Monkey King -Red suit**	26.6
	MK3	**Monkey King -Operatic representation - swirl patterned suit/painted face**	33.3
	MK4	**Monkey King -alternative representation**	23.3
	MK5	**Monkey King -holds hand to head**	86.6
	MK6	**Monkey King -cloud flying**	80

The Monkey King is the most iconic image related the lore of *Journey to the West.* Although the character appears different across the 124 texts, within the sample of texts used in the content analysis, there are certain features that have been culturally embedded to establish a cultural sign systems relating to the story. Within the sample four major representations of dress-code for the Monkey King were discerned:

1. Traditional dress – wearing either traditional armour with pheasant feather headdress and cudgel (prior to being subdued) or tunic (often yellow) with tiger skin, gold band around the head and cudgel (whilst on the journey west).

2. Red suit – wearing red clothes specifically, gold band around the head and cudgel– with or without tiger skin.
3. Operatic Representation – wearing either yellow or red clothes, often with swirls or wavy lines, and usually wearing or depicting a red and white face.
4. Alternative representation – character may either look completely different or a combination of some of the elements may be included: often the gold band and cudgel.

The first representation makes up the largest proportion of repetitions of the character across the texts, appearing in almost half the sample. Although we find evidence of these descriptions in the novel, they have been developed beyond these literary moments into a visual motif. Certain elements are instantly recognisable for a culturally aware Chinese audience member, and the subcategories within these major representations are also of important note. The visual elements have been developed through the repetition and culture of the storytelling in other performative genres and act as another form of traditional referentiality akin in many ways to Barthes (1970) referential code.

First we will consider the armour that the character often wears in representations. We can see from the figures below the general repetition of the armour worn by the Monkey King; it is the traditional dress originating from the "Warring state period (475-221 B.C)" were in the headdress of generals and warriors "to symbolize a bold warlike spirit" (International Business Publications USA 2013) as the pheasant like bird that the feathers came from were known for fighting. Similarly, this costume is a common symbol in Chinese opera, an art form that has a significant impact on the representations of *Journey to the West*, as will be seen. In the operatic semiotics the feathers are also worn by generals and heroes and act as a sign of expression with their movement: "the pair of feathers attached to each side of the headdress… emphatically draws attention to the wearer through line and movement" (Bonds 2009 p.44). This will then feed into an audience's cultural competence in interpreting these images and their semantic value and they are therefore used as cultural or

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referential codes; structured within the story to create meaning for this audience. There are many texts in the sample that explicitly utilise traditional features of Chinese opera, but when considering many of the visuals of texts that seem to have no connection with the form, there are still clear cultural links. We must remember that Chinese opera will have been well established, along with other entertainment arts, well before the book and audio-visual texts, and so the influence of these primarily visual and oral art forms will have a lasting impact on the morphology of the story. The feathers and armour are seen across many texts and have been embedded within the iconography of the character prior to being subdued by Buddha within the narrative of the story. Figures 5.2-5.4 show the *Monkey King* (2014), *Journey to the West* (CCTV 1986) and *Uproar in Heaven* (1965) respectively. Each depiction of the character in different guises and demonstrates the continuation of the depiction over fifty years.

Figure 5.2	Figure 5.3	Figure 5.4
Monkey King in Monkey King (2014)	*Monkey in Journey to the West* (CCTV 1986)	*Monkey King in Uproar in Heaven (1965)*

It is also important to note the influence of certain texts of the story in visual forms. The CCTV 1986 series was very popular in China, and therefore is a highly important reference point for other storytellers. In the same way that oral storytellers would have identified the popularity of other storyteller's use of description and language, so too do visual storytellers use representations of the Monkey King. These instances are beyond concepts of homage and intertextuality and are in fact traditional. The Monkey King 2014 representation of the titular

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character bears a strikingly similar representation to the 1986 character. This is evidence of the oral episteme as the repetition of his representation is an ongoing form of metonymy in the visual arena. The Monkey does not just represent himself, but the versions that came before it, and even taps into its audience's association and knowledge of this representation.

Similarly, we can see this representation with the Monkey King with a tiger skin around his waist. The tiger skin in question is from an instance in Chapter 14 of the book in which Xuanzang has released the Monkey King from beneath the five elements mountain and they are met by a tiger. The Monkey King kills the tiger and takes its skin as to cover himself:

> "It's a bit on the big size," he said, "so I could make two kilts out of it," and with these words he took his knife and cut it in two. One piece he put away, and the other he wrapped round his waist to cover the lower half of his body and tied firmly with a creeper he pulled down from beside the path" (Cheng-en, Jenner trans. 1993 pp.327-328).

For the most part, in the texts that cover the narrative of Xuanzang freeing the Monkey King, this instance is not usually seen, and yet often the character still has the tiger skin on, in many instances it is replaced with what appears to be a leopard skin. This suggests that the tiger/leopard skin kilt is either such a cultural symbol that it needs no explanation in the narrative, or in the repetition of the image, it has lost all semantic value within the narrative; it has become so embedded within the image of the Monkey King, that its presence is merely akin to the presence of the Monkey King himself. For instance, if we examine the image of the Monkey King below in figure 5.5, 5.6 and 5.8 we see that like in figure 5.7 the character wears the skin kilt in much the same manner and with the same yellow clothing. Yet, in context of the particular narrative of figure 5.6, we find that this text being *Uproar in Heaven* is set around the narrative of the Monkey King's war on heaven, some 500 years before he gets the tiger kilt in the narrative of the novel; this is the same for figure 5.6 *Which one is Which* (1965) and figure 5.8, *How Scarlet Boy Rescued His Mother from the Dragon King's Palace*

(1959) in which these stills are taken before meeting the Tang priest. It is only figure 5.7, *Pigsy Eats Watermelon* (1958) that is set after this event in the narrative. If we consider the role of stock phrases, they are meant for easy implantation of a metric framework. I argue that these images in the story cycle of *Journey to the West* hold the same value, in that they are images to be inserted within a skeleton model. The sequence of images has replaced the metric principles of the epic poem or even the prosimetric story, but the artist or director as storyteller does not have to think about fitting an image into their story to aid its structure, this is because the tiger skin represents an easily insertable stock image, which needs no extra thought. If we think back to the discussion of the Chinese metric systems in farm workers discussed by Schimmelpenninck and Kouwenhoven (1999), we can see some parallels in their discussion of the insertions of stock phrases within the metric framework of songs. Demonstrating the existence of oral formulaic composition they say that the stock phrases "may lose their semantic value and serve only as structural elements". This seems very similar to the appearance of the Kilt in figures 5.5, 5.6 and 5.8 as it is merely a stock image for the *formula* of audio-visual composition, it too holds no semantic value within the narrative, as its origin and value within the storyline and diegesis has been abandoned or culturally forgotten.

Figure 5.5

Monkey King in kilt in Uproar in Heaven (1965)

Figure 5.6

Monkey King in Which one is Which (1965)

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Figure 5.7

Monkey King in How Scarlet
Boy Rescued His Mother
from the Dragon King's
Palace (1959)

Figure 5.8

Monkey King in Pigsy Eats
Watermelon (1958)

Similar to the kilt, the repetition of the visual props of the cudgel and gold band associated with the Monkey King are not often seen missing in texts. The cudgel however, often has status within the narrative of texts as it has value in the ongoing narrative and affects other characters and events in the story. However, the gold band around the Monkey King's head is not always within the same bracket and is often seen as a form of identification of the Monkey King in texts that do not make his appearance ape-like.

Figure 5.9

Monkey King in
Conquering the Demons
(2013)

Figure 5.10

Monkey King in Starzinger
(1978-79)

Figure 5.11

Monkey King in Chinese
Tall Story (2015)

All three texts in the figures 5.9, 5.10 and 5.11– *Conquering the Demons* (2013), *Starzinger* (1978-79) and *A Chinese Tall Story* (2015) respectively – either tell new stories from the cycle or are themselves appropriations. Yet, in an effort to stabilise the narrative somehow within the story cycle, or at least adjacent to it in appropriation, the stock images and

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iconography of the gold band and cudgel are utilised. Seemingly, regardless of how explicit associations with the story cycle are, there are distinct stock images that are used. The inclusion of the cudgel and head band across appropriations like that of *Starzinger* embody the essence of metonymic function. The story is filled with new content, different representations, different spaces and locations, different character names and different content. Yet the inclusion of these elements signal to the audience not only the role of the character, but all previous incarnations of the character and the entire story of *Journey to the West,* and that the audience should use this reference as a way of understanding the character and text; negating the need to flesh out too much detail about character and back story in the new narrative.

This degree of repetition happens across the different characters within the story: Pigsy, Friar Sand, Xuanzang, Princess Iron Fan, Bull King, Guanyin, and Buddha, all have stock imagery, dress and props that are repeated across the texts. In some cases, this repetition is virtually unchanged across decades. If we look for instance at a particular episode within the cycle, we can see not only cultural repetition of images but also the inter-influence of one text on the other. But before looking more closely at the texts' effect on one another it is important to look at the implications in regard to visual influences on the audio-visual texts, as these evidence a lasting impact on the visual mnemonic of modern representations, almost more culturally powerful than the words on the page of the Ming novel itself. This influence comes from the other visual evidence of the story cycle, and most importantly, the lasting influence of Chinese opera. The imagery associated with this form of entertainment has not only become a primary source of reference culturally in China, but has been systematically repeated, becoming a visual motif within the audio-visual texts. If we look back at table 5.1, 33% of the texts in the sample represent the Monkey King in the operatic fashion, however the lasting influence of these elements goes well beyond this

percentage. Early versions of the story utilise the costume from the classic opera, using the yellow costume which includes a pattern of whorls, these can be either circular or in waved lines. These are intended to denote fur in the operatic representations (Bonds 2009) and this appears in a large proportion of texts in the sample and two thirds of all operatic representations. More iconic than this is the representation of the Monkey King's face in the popular operatic guise, which has become so embedded in Chinese cultural imagery that it seemingly has begun to transcend the narrative of *Journey to the West*. An example can be seen below in figure 5.12 which is a marketing poster for a travelling Chinese circus performance in Kent. Here we see the red and white face paint that is utilised as a common signal within audio-visual texts.

Figure 5.12

Poster advertising a Chinese Circus

The red design of the opera mask is supposed to represent a pictograph of a monkey's face; the colours are also commonly representative of bravery and intelligence within the semiotic communication of the art form. It is possible to apply far greater cultural and metonymic inference to the mask as holding in its visual value the Monkey King character, the entire

story, and the importance of the story for China, all within one representation. A cultural mnemonic has been assimilated into the ongoing existence of the character's representation in all visual media, it is one of the more important motifs in its communication to the audience as it is the most enduring and traditional form of representation, and therefore a structure of the medium that is part of the culture of storytelling. The operas and circus performances still continue today all over the world, and the current style of *Kunqu* -the most popular style of opera - began in the Ming dynasty, around the time the *Journey to the West* cycle was gaining popularity. Although we cannot make assumptions, we may speculate that part of the tradition of storytelling of *Journey to the West* was within the medium of opera, perhaps from the very beginning of the story we know today. Therefore, the current 'vision' of the Monkey King could be seen as a historical representation, at least in its continuation and growth within the medium. It then seems perfectly reasonable that this would influence the audio-visual representations of the character, after all the film and television storytellers are also pooling from the same culture of storytelling. The appearance or representation of the operatic mask is not as frequent across texts as the operatic costume of the Monkey King. This may be due to the desire to use special effects on the face rather than make-up in the medium of film. However, this is not to say that it does not hold an important place in the visual mnemonic of the texts; the repetition of this particular form of the Monkey King in pop culture is plain to see – one only has to search 'the Monkey King' or 'Sun Wukong' online to find a plethora of examples in different contexts. In animation films this representation has been used on four separate occasions and has appeared in live action per formances as well. In figures 5.13 to 5.19 we can see the continuation of the representation across different texts; clearly the repetition in figures 5.13 to 5.16 are texts made through the same studio. The most prominent of the four (figure 5.14) is again *Uproar in Heaven*, which is still considered one of the more important adaptations of the text in China. It is therefore easy to understand why

the Wan brothers would use the same style again with *Ginseng Fruit* in 1981 (Figure 5.16) and *The Monkey King Conquers the Demon* in 1985 (Figure 5.15), despite the length of years between texts.

Figure 5.13
Monkey King's face in Pigsy Eats Watermelon (1958)

Figure 5.14
Monkey King's face in Uproar in Heaven (1965)

Figure 5.15 *Monkey King's face in The Monkey King Conquers the Demon (1985)*

Figure 5.16
Monkey King's face in Ginseng Fruit (1981)

Figure 5.17
Monkey King's face in Mountain of Fire (1983)

Figure 5.18
Monkey King's face in The Bottomless Pit (1983)

Figure 5.19
Monkey King's face in The True or False Monkey King (1983)

The use of the make-up in the live action texts in Figure 5.17 *Mountain of Fire* (1983), Figure 5.18, *The Bottomless Pit* (1983); and Figure 5.19, *The True or False Monkey King* (1983), are filmic adaptations of operas themselves. This clearly tells us about the importance of the opera medium itself in the adaptation of several popular cycles of the art form. The visual motif is also made reference to in more contemporary adaptations, in which texts are utilising the culturally imprinted iconography to meet the visual expectations of audiences, and utilise the cultural mnemonic of the story. It is made reference to at the close of the trailer for *God Hunter* (Vasoon 2015), a post-apocalyptic representation of the story in which the Monkey King is completely modernised: smoking cigarettes, wearing a suit and driving a motorcycle, and yet the traditional mnemonic is used specifically to draw on audiences implicit understanding and traditional referentiality (Figure 5.20). Similarly, other nations have used the iconography in their own representations of traditional aspects of China. In *Big Bird in China*, Big Bird meets the Monkey King in the traditional operatic representation (Figure 5.21), and in *Monkey Twins* (2016) a Thai action film, two fighters represent different fighting styles in their visual presentation of mythological Monkey figures: Hanuman and the Monkey King. Here we see the migration of representations across borders, and yet no national influence has taken place, the traditional vision of the operatic image has been retained, suggesting the significance of the image within the ideology of China's cultural output.

Figure 5.20
Monkey King in God Hunter (Vasoon 2015)

Figure 5.21
Monkey King in Big Bird in China

Figure 5.22
Monkey King in Monkey Twins (2016)

In recent Chinese adaptations there has been a move to assimilate the operatic mask in subtler

representations, as well as what appear to be explicit intertextual references. In *Monkey King*

Hero is Back (2015) there are two moments which integrate the operatic mask. First is a very

obvious intertextual reference as the child Monk, Liuer, who is accompanying the Monkey

King, has a Monkey King doll that is based around the operatic representation of *Uproar in*

Heaven (Figure 5.23). This image is important as it cements the importance of *Uproar in*

Heaven within the cultural psyche of the audience, but there is also a further secondary layer

that reinforces the power of the operatic imagery with this moment as well. By including this

image in the film, not only is the film making reference to the seminal animation work on the

same story theme, but also the layers of visual storytelling that is occurring within all texts of

Journey to the West. The systematic repetition of these visual mnemonics establishes clear

interlinks between texts, not just as homage but as tradition and context. Each audio-visual

texts it ultimately aware that it is part of a larger schema of storytelling and therefore has the

ability, and the right, to use formulas from the storehouse of texts that predate it, this

borrowing is part of the tradition of oral storytellers and most definitely *Journey to the West.*

The doll seems to act as a constant reminder to the hero of who he was before he was

subdued under the Five Elements Mountain by Buddha. The doll is an emblem to the boy

Liuer, a symbol of the narrative events of *Uproar in Heaven.* It therefore acts on several

levels of representation: First, within the film's diegesis it acts as a thematic device that holds

semantic value to the characters, to Liuer it represents the mythology and folklore behind the

Monkey King, he has heard stories of his great powers and adventures in heaven. The doll

within this sense is a motif designed to integrate oral lore through imagery, the lasting

memory of the Monkey King in the world of the film is presented through the image of what

the character once was, or the projected memory of this. Secondly, the image becomes a

homodiegetic image that is suggestive of the self-awareness of the story itself. The doll

comments on the connectedness of the diegetic and non-diegetic implications of the *Monkey King Hero is Back and* suggests that the Monkey King within the diegesis is the very same character from *Uproar in Heaven.* It may suggest that in fact the 500 years under the mountain has changed the Monkey King from this playful image, to a more modernised, cynical character within the narrative. However, it could be that he is all of the Monkey Kings that came before him, each one a layer that helped shape the modern visual form. This idea is compounded in the second instance of the representation of the mask within the text. This is the representation of the Monkey King himself (Figure 5.24) which although is a modernisation of the character, still retains the design of the Monkey King from both operatic representation and the doll within the films diegesis. It is clear in the depiction of the character's face that there is a subtle remanence of the operatic design, this is through the lightly hued red skin around the eyes and leading down to the nose. Although this is a modernisation of the design, it is clear enough to see in comparison with Figure 5.23, as the form of the red eyes and nose on the doll are transposed fairly faithfully on the modern character, again reinforcing the layered use of storytelling between the texts.
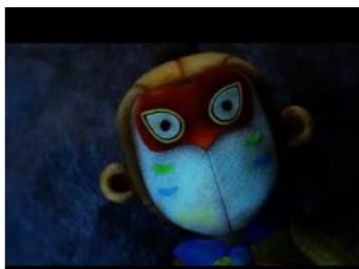
Figure 5.23
Monkey King doll from Monkey King Hero is Back (2015)

Figure 5.24
Monkey King's face in Monkey King Hero is Back (2015)

Figure 5.25
Monkey King's face in Wukong (2017)

The development of this motif in Figure 5.26 is slightly subtler. The image is taken from *Wukong* (2017), which again tells the story of the Monkey King causing havoc in heaven. This time the reflection of the narrative presents the layered effect of the mask design even more subtly, although still apparent. We can see that the representation attempts to modernise the façade of the Monkey King, making him look as though he has more defined, sharper edges, as though to exude a darker perhaps "edgier" characterisation. With this we can see that the red hue remains in the design of the face and is centrally around the eyes and again slightly down the nose. Although not immediately comparable to the other examples, it is still very much a purposeful design that utilises the visual mnemonic to easily establish characterisation. As the primary narrative is again the story of the Monkey King's adventures battling heaven, it could be that the mask design is becoming associated with this episode in particular. Either way the process of borrowing the design establishes the links with previous adaptations that came before it. The text's representation also shares similarities with a Japanese painting from 1892 by Tsukiota Yoshitoshi entitled Jade Rabbit – Sun Wukong (Figures 5.26 and 5.27) in the use of the red motif around the eyes. It is very unlikely that this is more than coincidence, however, it does reinforce the red motif within the representation of the character's face. Yoshitoshi's painting predates any of the audio-visual material by a minimum of 35 years, yet it is unlikely that it predated the Chinese opera of the story cycle. Whether the design took influence from this or not is of course impossible to determine, but it is a spectacular design coincidence within the drastic contrast of red and white of the face.

Figure 5.26
Painting of the Monkey King: *Jade Rabbit by* Tsukiota Yoshitoshi (Japan 1892)

Figure 5.27
Monkey King's face: *Jade Rabbit by* Tsukiota Yoshitoshi (Japan 1892)

 What then is the importance of this repetition? In many respects, the repetition of these operatic features pulls together all the elements explored in the tetrad analysis. The repetition of this representation firstly proves that *Journey to the West* is a medium, as its component parts or structural features are there to be used by any storyteller. The repetitions themselves are evidence of this. It also demonstrates the 'third text' in action, as all of these texts are borrowing the representations form the same place, the environment of storytelling that exists around the story. In this case not merely opera, but the films that use the operatic representation, the films that use the representations of other films that use the operatic representations, the films that use the representation of other films that use the representation of films that use the representations of opera etc. The layers could go on. The layered palimpsestic nature of *Journey to the West* texts show that what is constant, is the importance of telling the story as a part of culture, with reference points that allow access for those accustomed to the story's hermeneutics.

One of the most consistent images of the Monkey King in the audio-visual texts does not come from the props or design of characterisation, but the repetitive use of mannerism. One particular mannerism in fact: this is the image of the Monkey King looking in the distance, holding his hand to his forehead, as if protecting his eyes from the sun. This image can be complimented by the character lifting one leg off the ground and sometimes has the Monkey King holding his cudgel behind him. This is a significant part of the iconography of the character and the story of *Journey to the West* and appears in over 86% of the sample (see Table 5.1) and has a higher frequency of repetition than any other visual element. Within this patterned repetition we find the real mnemonics of formulaic storytelling. This motif is evidence of a cultural lore which transcends the ideas of copyright and authorship and cements the story as a cultural commodity. The frequency of this visual motif, both within single texts and across multiple texts within a series, culturally links them together. They are, in essence, the same text. One text is both individual and independent as it is part of all those texts that preceded it with this form of traditional referentiality. This is not merely the influence of one text on another, of one studio influencing later texts, nor a tradition onto another medium – it is all of them, all at once. Here is where we begin to see the postmodernist view of repetition and hyperreality (Baudrilliard). The repetitive imagery of the Monkey King is a form of bricolage and indeed a copy of a copy of a copy, it is in essence so layered that any one Monkey King represented in film or television is not 'real' even in the diegeses. It is so layered with other texts that it is not original but a form of simulacrum. In this section we can see the intersections between this media ecology approach and the work of postmodernist scholars. We can easily discuss what postmodernists refer to as bricolage; the mixing together of pre-existing material to form the new. This is, of course, the status quo for folk tales and stories told in the oral tradition; all stories, especially those related to traditions and cultural lore, are evidence of a postmodern methodology. Of

particular note, within the tradition of *Journey to the West* lore in the modern form, is that in previous chapters we saw how the story was a form of bricolage of pre-existing stories from Chinese storytelling canon. In the study of audio-visual texts, this borrowing is narrowed, especially when isolating visual motifs in the way this study has. We can begin to see that as more and more film and television texts were released, a visual and narrative form of bricolage of the story takes place. The medium of *Journey to the West* becomes somewhat formalised within this other medium. The film and television industries are popularised in a manner that other narrative forms could not be, and so the story sticks to this medium like glue and refines itself over a period of popularity and references itself in a postmodern manner in such a scale that it had never done before.

The phenomenal repetition of this single action reflects the sheer extent of the layering of texts into a single story, a visual lexicon. As Strate (2017) paraphrased of Hall (1959) "language is culture writ large" (Strate 2017, p.24), here *Journey to West* is part of that language. Of all the instances of visual repetition within the research, it was by far the most seen motif across the texts in the sample, and as so demonstrates something far more culturally important than mere adaptation or intertextuality; it represents the continuation of an oral noetic in the formulaic expression of storytelling motifs. The figures below demonstrate this with greater emphasis than is necessary to discuss further. But of real importance is the final figure (50) which is a mural taken from the Long Corridor of the Summer Palace in Beijing; here we see the true extent of the visual mnemonic. The murals are dated to the 1800's and yet the similarity between this and the other representations is quite remarkable. The visual influence of the Monkey King was a well-established formula by the time audio-visual electronic media was introduced.

Figure 5.28	Figure 5.29	Figure 5.30	Figure 5.31
Goku no Daiboken (1967)	Uproar in Heaven (1965)	Pigsy Eats Watermelon (1961)	Princess Iron Fan (1941)

Figure 5.32	Figure 5.33	Figure 5.34	Figure 5.35
Red boy (1962)	Monkey King stormed the Sea palace (1962)	Red Boy Rescues his Mother From the Dragon King (1959)	Which One is Which (1965)

Figure 5.36	Figure 5.37	Figure 5.38	Figure 5.39
Saiyuki (1978)	Monkey War (1982)	Fantastic Magic Baby (1975	Painting in the Palace

The use of this imagery across the sample is evidence of a formulaic mode of expression akin to oral composition. The similarities between 5.28-5.39 evidence a greater sense of 'vernacular cinema' to use Koven's term, than any other visual in the research results, as they suggest a culturally imprinted visual mnemonic. This suggests that not only are the stories of *Journey to the West* constructed through formula, but they are also more aligned with the performative traditions of the story, than the literary.

The use of this image across the different versions of the story are certainly evidence of a culture of storytelling, and certainly suggest that the traditional referentiality that Foley discusses can be seen in a form of visual metonymic system. The Monkey King's repetition

in these features of mannerism and representation are a standard of the oral storyteller and their traditions, as Sobol (2020) explains:

> ...works in the oral tradition, even works distilled from it into print or other media, are inherently homeostatic—they have built-in mechanisms to take on the coloration of their time and place... This is an elemental form of narrative thinking—adjusting details to engage a changing environment...oral traditional tales are fundamentally intertextual, or, more precisely, inter-imaginal: they tend to rely on prior performances of parallel narrative sequences by other tellers of a lineage, recalled and interpreted to fit a current audience, mood, and moment. Traditional tellers often invoke those prior performers and performances to borrow authority for their retellings. (Sobol 2020 p.310-311)

In Sobol's explanation we get the idea that the oral storyteller has a dual agenda, the referencing of the old performances of other storytellers and their traits, as well as a focus on the context of the here and now. *Journey to the West* in film and television has occupied this function, the inter-imaginal or metonymic image is a constant reminder of the tradition and stories that have come before, but they are also homeostatic in their production and finish. The images above are all the same, yet they are all different. However, the functionality of this character, his mannerisms and his metonymic power is that the Monkey King is central to the modern concept of *Journey to the West* the story, the narrative and the medium. Without the Monkey King, we lose the magic and fantastic elements of the story that have mutated *Journey to the West's* primary structure away from the priest Xuanzang.

Ultimately, we can see that the repeated images of the Monkey King act as formal structures to the story as a medium and are themselves metonymic. More importantly than this, is that the text is so layered with these references that *Journey to the West* as a medium has its own epistemic value. Nayar (2004, 2020) discusses how audiences unaccustomed to the cultural elements of Indian cinema find watching the Bollywood Masala films accessible, due to the films' privilege towards an oral episteme. For *Journey to the West*, the above analysis has suggested something slightly different; although the features of the texts also privilege an oral episteme and anyone of any culture could access the films due to this, they

are also only truly accessible to those accustomed to the *tradition* of *Journey to the West*. As this has been a study of a single story, and not a filmic movement, the results are very different to those of Nayar's. In the texts related to *Journey to the West,* a figure like the Monkey King is so culturally weighted with metonymic references that those outside of the culture can never truly understand the epistemic value of its referentiality.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has tried to discuss some of the more complex issues when discussing *Journey to the West* as a medium. The repetitive images, representations and events within the film and television texts reveal that the story is a palimpsestic text with multimodal features.

The tetrad analysis of the story as a medium demonstrated some complex relationships within the structures of the mutating story. The oral-literate symbiosis in *Journey to the West* is about the interplay, in this particular story, due to the interactions of orality and literacy in Chinese storytelling. Unlike those suggestions in Western cultures that orality and literacy and the cultures they sustain are vastly different, those examined in *Journey to the West* have had this interplay for over a thousand years. Bordahl (2013), Ge (2001), Nayar (2019), and Mair (1987) have all said this about Chinese storytelling and culture. So why then do we insist that film and television is the abandonment of literature and more like the amplification of the oral tradition? Even negating, like Nayar (2012) does, the sustaining force of literacy in electronic media suggested by Ong's secondary orality, there is still a lack of appreciation for the interplay of literacy with orality in these texts. With *Journey to the West*, and perhaps other stories of similar conditions, the interplay of spoken word and song are not merely the tropes of musicals and opera but are long standing traditions of vernacular literacy as well. These texts are not the amplification and extension or retrieval of old media (oral) over newer (literacy) but are an amplification of a culture and

tradition of storytelling which include both. We are not seeing the reinvention of the old, but a presentation of what has been going on for many years and the ongoing mutation of the same techniques.

We have similarly seen that the image of the Monkey King is not retrieval in the strictest sense, as these were not lost oral practices. I believe these elements of the Chinese oral tradition have always survived. What the repetitions in film and television do retrieve is the story's natural state of pooling from the culture of storytelling in the third text. The use of opera and *the storyteller's manner* in the structures of these film and television texts tell us that the technologies that sustain audio-visual artefacts like film and television texts, have retrieved the tradition of orality, of sharing, borrowing, and assimilating the storytelling tropes of others.

Most important within the analysis of the Monkey King figure is that he is now the primary structural figure of the medium of *Journey to the West* and is a metonymic referent. What this tells us about the story of *Journey to the West* is that it has a very specific epistemic design that is only truly understood by those within the cultural milieu.

Chapter 6

The Monkey Leaps from Buddha's Palm:

The story cycle online and its implications as traditional storytelling.

6.1 Introduction

In the current digital age of mobile devices, touch screens and voice activated applications it is easy to see how many media ecologists are making comparisons between oral cultures and their reimagination in contemporary online cultures (Albrecht and Tabone 2017, Euchner 2016, Soffer 2009, 2016, 2019). In the instance of *Journey to the West* and its very specific storytelling structures already explored, we could easily make the same comparisons. In this chapter I will suggest that being situated within the digital epoch allows a grand view of these comparisons in the story, and that being able to access and compare texts online means that we are able to see all of the interactions of orality and literacy, as well as the very culture of storytelling suggested in my notion of the third text. With this idea I believe I can validate the story of *Journey to the West* as a medium and draw evidence from the culture and experience of storytelling around *Journey to the West* online, to make conclusions about how the story was told around the time of the Ming novel's writing. This I believe helps decentralise the focus and hegemony of print, and indeed the book, as definitive. Terms such as 'based on the Chinese novel/classic novel' continue to be used when describing film or television texts (Kerr 2016). This reinforces the ideology and bias of print and does not suggest that it was based on a cultural story. By looking at what is happening online, as a reflection of what has happened in more localised instances of storytelling in the past, we can make reflections about what traditions and cultures of storytelling may have been taking place from the Tang dynasty onward. This chapter's excavation of the layers of *Journey to the West* is significant in two ways; first, as it shows us the continued importance of the story's repetition and the elements that have been repeated in the orality-literacy framework of the story, and second it

also poses questions about the importance of the story as a medium. I look here at the fundamental question of why the story should be considered a medium, and why it has such value that it *is* repeated. I assert that the story is interconnected with the media that tell the story, and that the story itself is an environment, one of vast cultural importance in China.

I will first examine the very way we look at diachronic analysis in the orality and literacy framework and will suggest that shifting the way we represent and think of history in media ecology can help excavate through the layers of *Journey to the West.* I do this by switching focus slightly from *Journey to the West* as the focus and media ecology as the background, instead reversing this relationship. I do this by suggesting, like Ong, that technologies are additive in nature, not replacing. Once I establish a way to understand the development and interconnectedness of orality and literacy through time, I will suggest that the third text is something that helps to bring these connections together through a central point – the story.

After looking at the diachronic models and the third text, I will suggest ways to examine *Journey to the West* within this framework, by analysing its existence on video streaming sites and mobile applications. I will look at the influx of mobile touchscreen devices and their implications in the storytelling of the narrative. This approach looks not merely to discuss modern texts online but also tests and interrogates the theory that online culture has more in common with preliterate culture. By analysing the highly developed space, texts and the potential for interaction with stories of *Journey to the West*, we may be able to identify a basic understanding of how these stories were developed and interacted with outside of the novel. The plethora of stories, adaptations, appropriations, recorded actualities and games online may be evidence of the 'third text' of our current cultural milieu, and therefore can enlighten us on the process and accumulation of the cultural aspects of Chinese storytelling in contemporary spaces. I suggest that elements of both construction and

reception in the Chinese oral tradition are replicated within these texts, as well as the metonymic power of the Monkey King discussed in Chapter 5.

I will finally examine *Journey to the West* and the Monkey King, not just as a medium, but as an environment itself. This will allow for a deeper appreciation for the story as a non-linear, multimodal, cultural commodity – a medium as an environment and an environment as a medium. This approach will allow me to examine the final research question, which asks how the story impacts the environment in which it is embedded, and how it establishes its own environment as a medium. By answering this question, I hope to establish the cultural importance of the Monkey King as a medium.

6.1 A Model for Excavating the Layers

When discussing *Journey to the West*, this research has utilised the figure-ground relationship in discussing the story as a medium. However, in another sense, the figure ground metaphor can be extended to the media ecology approach itself when examining the story. The analysis of the story as a medium has largely centred on the evidence within texts themselves from biographies, novels and film, making *Journey to the West* the figure and Media ecology the ground; the context in which to examine the figure. However, in this section, I will be switching the role of this relationship to examine what the analysis of *Journey to the West* has suggested about some of the features of the orality and literacy framework within the field of media ecology itself. Now the story is the ground, the backdrop that goes relatively unnoticed, as media ecology becomes the focus. This has been an organic process in which part of the results of the diachronic analysis of *Journey to the West* has revealed new areas of discussion in Media ecology. Although not an initial intended outcome of the research, the study of *Journey to the West* in this framework and my attempt to decentralise it from linear models of literary adaptation, has resulted in an assessment of how we view and represent

orality and literacy dynamics over time. Building on the literature, I believe this offers new knowledge in the way that these interactions can be understood. As such, it is prudent to discuss some of the more relevant literature in the orality and literacy framework to evaluate how the analysis of texts like *Journey to the West* can be accomplished.

Although we have discussed the concept of secondary orality and some of the misappropriations of the term in relation to modern media, it is important to revisit the concept when looking at the role of storytelling in the digital age and specifically on the internet, and why the concept is an inappropriate tool for understanding the myriad stories of the Monkey King. Secondary orality was first examined as a synchronic phenomenon, whereas now we must explore it as the starting point for a discussion of the diachronic study of communication. We have established that secondary orality is the rebirth of sound in the electronic age. It is also integral to the discussion of the concept in relation to the diachronic representation of communication, and how scholarship is just beginning to progress past the idea of secondary orality in discussing the modern digital landscape of storytelling.

When considering media ecology, secondary orality has become a concept at the centre of modern discourse about culture, communication, and the internet. It is used in reflections about how society has progressed through orality and literacy into the modern age (Hollifield 2019, Kibby 2005, Morehouse and Crandall 2014, Thomas 2000). Some scholars like Orren Soffer (2010) in his article [*"silent orality": towards the conceptualization of the digital oral features of CMC and SMS text]* use secondary orality as a starting point for further consideration of oral communication. Soffer looks at how the cultural practice of messaging on digital communication devices establishes a new form of orality. Soffer asserts that his study:

> ...puts forward the argument that although both the secondary orality of radio and
> television and the orality of CMC have evolved in typographic atmospheres and rely
> on written texts, the characteristics of these cultures and their manifestation in the

written texts differ radically. In light of the special features of the digital era, CMC and texting should be seen as an era of ''digital orality''—a new age in the history of orality. (2010: 388)

There seems to be an overriding conclusion that Ong's theory of secondary orality either *is* the final step in communication and thought process, or that it is *assumed* to be. This misconception seems to be fairly widespread, especially by scholars whose works have either become available online or have specifically been written for online articles. In an article by Trent Batson (2008) he discusses the effect of Ong's term online: "Before Gutenberg, knowledge was formed orally and, now, in this post-Gutenberg era, knowledge is formed -- increasingly -- through "secondary orality" on the Internet..." this assumption implies a finality in the staging of communication and conscience. Baston goes on to state that "The sequence is: orality --> literacy --> secondary orality as the primary locus of knowledge authority over the last 500-plus years." (Batson 2008 para 2). Although this does highlight elements of the sequential nature of Ong's work it fails to see anything past secondary orality; assuming that modern communication and the assimilation of knowledge online is in some way definable under the umbrella of Ong's term. The 'secondary orality' that Ong discusses is in modern technologies that sustain orality: television, radio etc. Therefore, the application of this idea to online culture is only permissible where sound exists; it is in these sites that enable the digital projection of the spoken word that 'secondary orality' may exist. Ong himself began to consider the application of his term to online behaviour; in an interview with Michael Kleine and Fredrick G. Gale, published in *Composition FORUM 7* Ong discusses the problem as a temporal perception:

> Although it is not exactly the same as oral communication, the network message from one person to another or others is very rapid and can in effect be in the present. Computerized communication can thus suggest the immediate experience of direct sound. I believe that is why computerized verbalization has been assimilated to secondary 'orality', even when it comes not in oral-aural format but through the eye, and thus is not directly oral at all. (Kleine and Gale 1996: 80-81)

It is therefore the immediacy, the replication of associated experiences, in which online culture reflects the processes of oral communication. The typographic interchange online is something different, something that Ong tries to apply the term 'secondary literacy' to (Kleine and Gale 1996). This in itself begins to create problems in the discussions concerning online communication; will all previous forms of communication end up being termed as *secondary*? This is not a good enough umbrella to cover the various issues arising in storytelling and communication in the current digital climate. Certainly, we have seen in the discussion of *Journey to the West's* multiple audio-visual adaptations, that although these are secondary oral texts in their rebirth of sound, secondary orality is not a robust enough concept to describe the traditions of oral-literate storytelling that exist within their content.

Secondary orality was the advent of electronic media and its reconceptualization of sound. What we experience in the current age is something wholly other. Due to our constant connectivity to the internet through mobile devices and the adoption of hypertext and synthetic sound recognition, we have become hyper-literate, in the same way that we are hyper-aural. By this I mean that our constant connection to the internet has made access to literature and the oral/aural process immediate and fluid. Where previously print was a trustworthy artefact and orality an untrustworthy transient source, now knowledge and information in both forms have become reliably 'solid' artefacts as well as transient. One form of communication is embedded in the next online, and the hypertexts that lead to the next web page or piece of information creates a form of literacy and orality that was impossible before; the symbiosis of orality and literacy through this access cannot be explored through terms that separate them too fully. Similarly, the constant connection with 4G and wireless signals has allowed us to obtain both a real world, and a digital sense of presence. In the way that our ears consistently received information aurally, our connectedness to the internet through mobile devices has extended this function; the devices

continually receive data, informing us of 'digital action' in this new state of presence. In one moment we are in several different spaces; we may interact with the primary presence of orality and the synthetic presence of digital connectivity as the media becomes an environment (Strate 2017). This connectivity to internet devices has, as Harris and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2016) suggested, changed the way we socialise, simultaneously engaging with the real world whilst communicating in the digital sphere. Our relationship with Ong's presence has changed to a hyper or multimodal presence; we are a culture in which communication collides and reveals that *the medium truly is the message.* Ong's concept of secondary orality reached a theoretical limit long before the internet, and it seems that the reflection of possible terms like 'secondary literacy', may reveal Ong's limitations in being able to evaluate contemporary communication beyond the boundaries he himself set. Instead, we must remember that Ong's process as a theorist was dialogical and therefore secondary orality should be moved passed to understand online culture, and the way that *Journey to the West* can now be viewed.

6.1.2 The Diachronic Representation of Time

To appreciate the importance of *Journey to the West* as a medium, means appreciating how that medium develops and draws its influence. To do this effectively we must examine how one story, or one text, is intrinsically linked to all the texts that came before it; it is part of a system and culture of storytelling and one which has become important in China. For this appreciation to be fully investigated, I look at how to represent and discuss the pattern of time and use of technology within the story. This has to be done by looking at the models that investigate the technological epochs up until the digital age. Ong himself missed the establishment of video streaming sites such as YouTube, websites that truly reflect a 'secondary orality'. Although he had begun to establish ideas of 'secondary orality' to the internet, and the reflection of primary communication online, it is his contemporaries that are

developing this area of research. Within all the functions of the internet there are reflections of primary culture in the electronic and digital age. Scholars such as John Miles Foley (2012), Lar s O. Sauerberg (2009) and Thomas Pettitt (2007, 2009) have all made these comparisons.

'Secondary orality' is a small part of a wider thesis that Ong was concerned with; primarily that the introduction of literature and print changed our consciousness, the way we think and understand our life-world. It is therefore plausible to consider the same shift in consciousness in the digital age and a post-literate landscape. If we consider the shift in the reception of Journey to the West for instance, we understand that as a story it is not understood through a literate episteme anymore, but one related more to oral-aural processes in audio-visual texts. Lars O. Sauerberg of the University of Southern Denmark examines this very idea; he formulated the concept of the Gutenberg Parenthesis and further studied its potential with Thomas Pettitt. The concept essentially brackets the last 500 years of communication: that of print. The idea explores the notion that digital technologies are the continuation or restoration of the primary oral culture, and as the term "parenthesis" implies, print was the interruption of the on-going process. This theory looks both at the phenomenon of the parenthesis itself as well as the similarities between the cultures before and after the production of print, as Pettit suggests: "Accordingly the "post Parenthetical" period that we are moving into may have more in common with the period before the opening of the Gutenberg Parenthesis than either has with what came between" (Pettitt 2007). By this Pettitt refers to the current online culture's similarity with the culture of the pre-literate society. For the study of J*ourney to the West,* and its oral-literate episteme outside of print, these ideas seem relevant. The commonality between cultures on either side of print, is inclusive of the transitional period of consciousness from scribal/manuscript culture to print and how we may be going through the same transition from print to digital communication now. This model essentially takes Ong's timeline and examines the relationship of the primary and secondary

oral cultures (or the digital ones since) as seemingly separate from the era of print. Although Sauerberg asserts that the parenthesis is not quite so clear cut and is "...a flexible one that allows what is outside the parenthesis to blend with what is inside, and vice versa." (Sauerberg 2009 p.3). However, both models seem to deal with communication as a timeline or chronological spectrum that pinpoints changes. Ong himself would probably not have asserted such a linearity, as he believed the communicative transitions overlie one another. It is in his contemporaries' pursuit of the progressive nature of communication that seems to have visually represented his work as a chronology. However, Ong's synchronic studies clearly mark the different time periods of human communication and the Great Divide paradigm certainly suggests a chronology in communicative development. For the purpose of weighing in on an established practice – and in fact discussing this practice - I too shall examine his thesis in this manner. Ong's chronology of communication would look something like this:

  Primary Orality > Residual Orality (scribe/manuscript culture) > Print > Secondary Orality
Or more simply

Primary Orality > Literacy/Print > Secondary Orality

Literacy in Sauerberg and Pettit's model is simply bracketed:

Pre-parenthetical {Gutenberg Parenthesis} Post-parenthetical

Unlike Ong's, Pettitt's distinctions of the three phases there are marked similarities between the pre- and post-Gutenberg parenthetical stages, namely in the sharing of information; oral cultures would share and borrow knowledge through verbalisation, the same way that knowledge and information are now shared online, oppositional to the notion of the singular authors of print (Pettitt 2007). Although these representations of communicative development

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clearly define the changing eras of communication, they fail to fully acknowledge and interpret Ong's own understanding: that these technologies or modes of communication do not override one another but build upon the last[4]. The parenthesis is seen as an interruption of an idea, and the move away to 'secondary orality', and most importantly the internet, is a restoration of the pre-parenthetical idea. Although many are keen to agree with this theorem as online culture reflects much of the preliterate culture, it does bring into question the very nature of its own existence; the restoration could not exist without the parenthesis, as the entire online experience is at the influence of print culture and literacy. We have begun to see in the diachronic analysis of *Journey to the West* that the functions and features of stories are non-linear and more cultural than medium centric.

In the same way that Ong explored the idea of residual orality - text and writing was entirely informed by oral communication - digital technology is informed by both orality and literacy. The hegemony of type or the literate mind seems inescapable by Ong's thesis, and indeed there seems to be evidence of this even in the way that we represent and view human communication. The influence of typographic symbols on human cognition is at the heart of conceptual issues being dealt with in much of media ecology, and the representation of human communication - the *image* pertaining to the diachronic process of human communication- seems in itself to follow its influence. The hegemonic status of print is described in Ong's contribution to the great divide theory, which emphasises the disparity between the minds and capabilities of preliterate and literate minds; as were previously outlined in the psychodynamics of orally based thought. This explicit influence of print culture in this paradigm has been criticised by field research such as the study of the Vai people by Scribner and Cole (1981) in which they concluded that literacy did not necessarily implement cognitive or social change. It is instead considered that "particular practices promote particular skills" (Scibner and Cole 1981 p.258) and that "it is not literacy per se but

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rather formal education which affects thought processes" (Grenoble and Whaley 2006 p.106). Therefore, the bias of print shifts perhaps away from the ideas of literacy and instead to the structures of repetition and education. This shift then arguably has a greater influence over the academic discussion of the representation of communication, possibly the hegemonic influence of literacy and type affects our exploration of the changing communicative landscape and its representation. The parenthesis in concept is a literary device and uses our understanding of the rules and standards of literacy to grasp its fundamentals. Similarly, the projection of Ong's thesis into the above process, as well as the image of the Gutenberg Parenthesis, all follow the *vision* of literacy; a linear chronology from left to right.

Studies such as that of Bergen and Chan Lau (2012) have even examined the influence of writing direction on people's understanding of space and time. By using images of temporal progression such as simple pictures of tadpole, froglet and adult frog, and asking participants to order these images chronologically, they mapped individual's representation of time and space. Those participants from Taiwan who had experience of writing with a vertical script and scripts from right to left often mapped images in these fashions. Writing scripts systems therefore seem to influence both the use of space and the representation of time; evidencing not merely an internal cognitive effect of writing, but due to the structures and repetition of the rules of different cultural systems of writing, an outward effect on the understanding and representation of spatial and temporal fields. There could arguably then be a hegemonic influence in the way that writing structures affect our representations of communication. Both Ong's diachronic study and the Gutenberg Parenthesis present themselves as linear western scripts; demonstrating the traditional time-line from left to right. The entire representation and discussion of human communication is compressed and visualised under the structures of western type. Although the Gutenberg parenthesis suggests a return to a primary culture, sharing information online, it is also an assimilation into hyper-

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literacy, in which the sharing of knowledge can only be sustained by certain limitations standardised script systems, weighted towards a western type-based hegemony. Here Sauerberg and Pettitt's restoration seems all at once an actuality and a fallacy. The sharing of knowledge online is taking place, video streaming sites and audio-visual communications over the web allow a reinvention of the oral/aural process – secondary orality – and yet it is overtly a type based medium. *Journey to the West* for example has developed over a thousand years, however as a medium it is separate from the technologies that use it as content. Viewing *Journey to the West* through the Orality-print-secondary orality model, or even the process of oral story- book – opera – film – TV does not sufficiently explore the story outside of temporal developments. These assessments focus on the technologies and not the medium of the story.

It is then feasible, when considering this hegemonic influence, that any model outlining the transitions of communication may not best fit a line of progression. *Journey to the West* for example has developed over a thousand years, however as a medium it is separate from the technologies that use it as content. As Strate (2017) succinctly outlines, the impact of print has truly restructured the world in tune with the progression of the line:

> The contrast between orality and literacy is a contrast in form between ovality to linearity, in which the cyclical nature of time yields to the arrow of chronology, and the myths and legends of oral tradition, repeated endlessly in infinite variation, yields to fixidity of written historical narrative. (pxii)

Here, Strate pinpoints that very problem with the way we think about the development of communication and the orality literacy model. If we consider Ong's diachronic timeline when discussing the synchronic study of electronic media and secondary orality, the representation seems to fall short of the inference of the word 'secondary'. Strate, like myself instead suggests that creation and cultural adoption of new technologies and media is an evolutionary model, and not a revolutionary one. Therefore, it is only in the context of specific cultures

that the additive and cumulative design of communication can be realised; the linearity of

orality and literacy models do not allow for this. To assimilate this idea Strate (2017) offers a

different model, his ziggurat, which emphasises the overlapping and transitional periods of a

culture's adoption of communication technologies starting with orality at its foundation and

growing up and out. The completed ziggurat model which is inclusive of the electronic

environment in figure 6.1, demonstrates the layered impact of the cultural adoption of

different communication technologies and the impact of all of them on one another, as Strate

explains:

> The final steps for the ziggurat model would be the addition of the electronic media
> environment, which would leave some aspects of orality, orality modified by chirography, and
> orality modified by typography unchanged, and add a new form of orality altered by electronic
> media including what Ong (1982) terms *secondary orality*; would leave some aspects of
> chirography, and some chirography modified by typography unchanged, and introduce a new
> form of chirography altered by electronics; leave some aspects of typography unchanged, and
> add new forms of typography influenced by electronics (e.g., via word processing, desktop
> publishing, print on demand, etc.) and introduce entirely new phenomena. (p.205)

Strate's model demonstrates a greater sense of the progress and overlapping of media

environments. However, there may be ways to imagine even fewer limitations in the nuances

of these environments, their technologies, and cultural intersections.
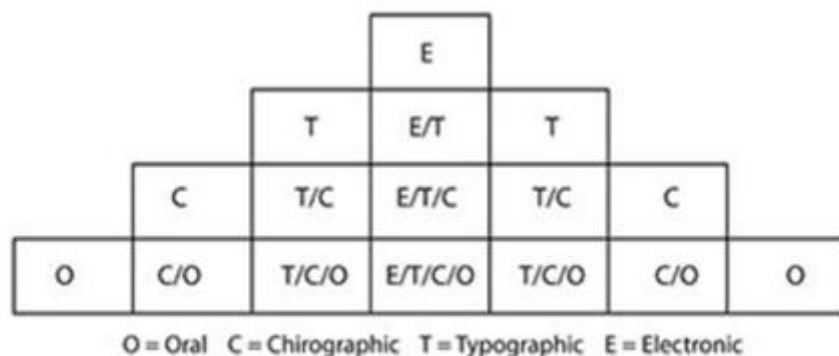
Figure 6.1 The Ziggurat model of the electronic media environment.

Copyright Lance Strate 2017

The term 'secondary orality' infers the overlapping of a previous orality: primary. The

current state of communication and their environments are not venturing backward but

merely utilising modes of communication that have always been present. I propose that

communication is not moving backward and forwards but is cyclically overlapping, building

on our own knowledge and resources again and again. Petricini's (2017) study of time

consciousness in Ong's work captures the issues pertaining to cyclical design, as although the

linearity associated with print was not cumulative in overlapping, it did not suggest

repetition. Ong did not subscribe to cyclical models, as they were structures that repeated

what could not ever be repeated;

> All phenomena experienced by the individual in an oral culture were made understood
> through the knowledge of archetypes passed down from one generation to the next.
> Individuals in oral cultures experienced the world sensuously. They observed what appeared
> to be cyclical patterns everywhere in their observable world. The sun rose, then set, then rose
> again. The seasons, the sun, the days all appeared to recur and repeat. Ong explains,
> 'Mythological rituals, more or less season in their celebration and to this extent associated
> with a cyclic pattern, draw attention from real events to mythological archetypes which are not
> referable to any real time' (1959: 556). Despite the seemingly cyclical patterns that appear in
> the natural world, human life does not cycle. The single human life ends and therefore beliefs
> about human life and the world in general are erroneous. Literacy altered human
> consciousness and, as a result, the consciousness of time. It allowed for a new sense of
> evolutionary or cumulative time in which we see that nothing repeats itself exactly. This sense
> of the past, a linear-type sense of time, continued to develop in the chirographic/typographic
> ages. (p198)

Although, as Petricini has discussed, the cyclical design is associated with the oral noetic,

there still may be something in its design that is salvageable in understanding and analysing

environments. The timeline or chronological models above do not efficiently encapsulate the

processes that we have gone through and continue to go through. *Journey to the West* clearly

evidences this; the motifs and traditions of communications that surround the story do not

disappear but get assimilated into future stories as time moves forward. Within the texts there

is not only evidence of traditions from an oral noetic, but orality influenced by literacy,

literacy influenced by orality, literacy by electronic media and so on. The story as a medium

does not get assimilated by media in a linear process of technological development, it instead

feeds off media and technology, as each technology uses the story as content, the story uses the technology to develop its own structures as a medium.

If we are to represent media environments, we must consider what is actually happening in the process of time. Communication is chronological like time, but it is neither static nor individualised; no single synchronic study of communicative events can truly ignore the antecedents of human communication. Communication, whether representing a diachronic process, or considering the context of synchronic studies, should attempt to show the development and process through time, as well as how different communication technologies relate to one another. The image of a spiral, ever moving forward but overlapping seems more logical than the traditional linear forms:
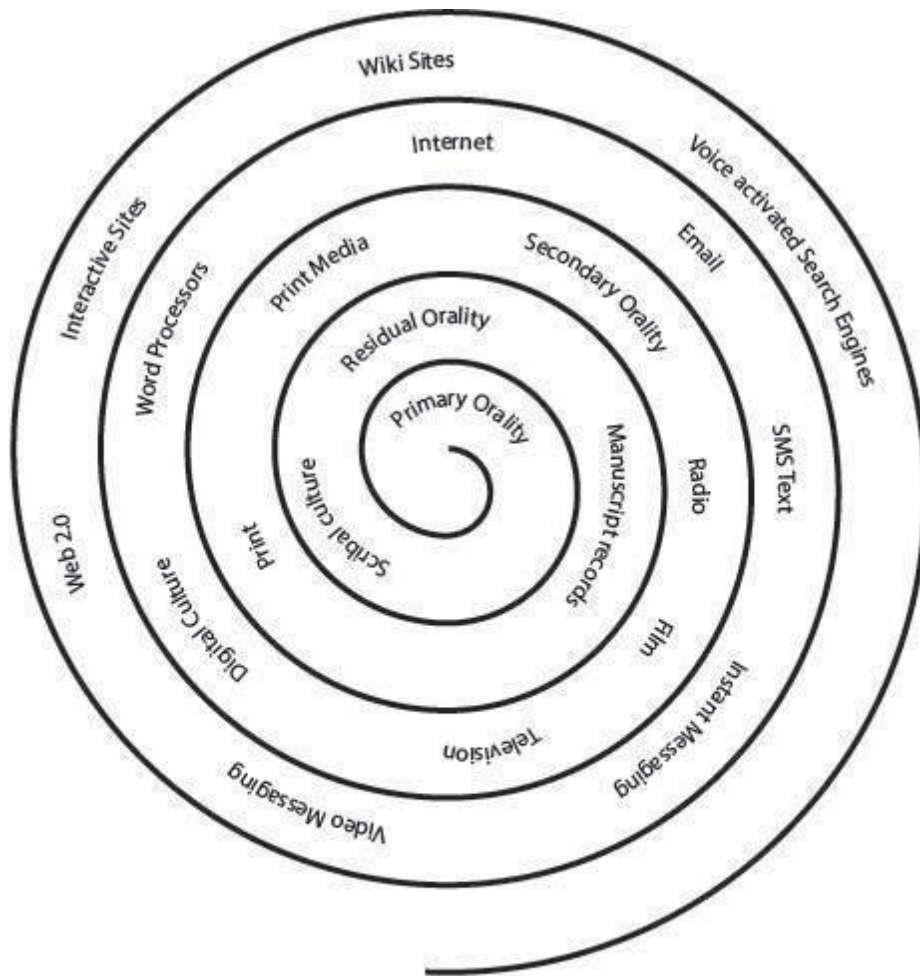
Fig. 6.2 the Communicative spiral

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Figure 6.2 is what I have called the communicative spiral, which attempts to represent human

communication. As rudimentary as this seems it involves all the processes; moving forward

but also venturing back. The model also merely gives an idea to the progression, I have

populated it with limited examples to demonstrate its use; using Ong's concepts for the time

being. The point in this representation is that it in many ways adheres to the hegemony of

script, moving along a linear chronology, however it suggests a layering of communication

that seems to be lacking in some other models. I have simply added a few technologies and

devices within the spiral to demonstrate the progression and overlap of the representation, however it could easily be tailored to analyse the nuances of synchronic communication events or perhaps technologies themselves, in relation to their antecedents, in a similar probe to the tetrad. The Spiral allows a representation of the media environments through orality and literacy, as well as the technologies, content or other media under examination and how they may interact with one another.

Although the Gutenberg parenthesis does highlight the largest change in communication and indeed Ong's ideas of the changing conscious, the spiral infers an open ended and infinite process; there is no returning to the past, but a definite reflection. Although I should not mean to dismiss the parenthesis, I find it hard to include the end bracket, as the sustainability, navigation, and format of the internet is built upon typographic culture, and although the communal nature of the internet differs vastly from the singular authority of print, it still very much contains it. By looking at the diachronic process of communication through a spiral some of the issues of studying and defining the synchronic moments, like those raised above in regard to the use and application of secondary orality, can be addressed and resolved. By continuing to view the process through a linear chronology we are not only limiting the study to a historical process but are also viewing it through the internal nature of print: from left to right as if reading a book. But by looking at the process through a spiral the arguments that arise regarding the compartmentalisation of these synchronic moments may theoretically begin to fall away.

Unlike the tetrad analysis, or even Strate's (2017) reappraisal of the probe, the spiral offers no sense that a media technology has been truly obsolesced. Instead, it suggests that they are always present through the layers of the medium that has taken shape. Like remediation, the spiral suggests an additive process of assimilation, but also a movement and process in constant flux. In many ways these simple representations seem flat and restrictive,

but I also suggest that we are not looking merely at a two-dimensional drawing of a spiral, but a tunnel. Instead of a flat representation we should consider the spiral as a helix that we look back through. From the digital age of the internet I have, like no other time before, been able to compile and find *Journey to the West* texts all in one place. Before the digital age, when we were situated in the electronic age of TV, Cinema, VHS, DVD and Blu-ray, which made the full scope of the tradition of *Journey to the West* in film and television difficult to see and appreciate. We were deep in the middle of the electronic age, and so being able to understand the cultural interactions between audio-visual texts was more difficult and involved more work in sourcing and compiling evidence. Now we have moved away from the electronic age, we are able to see the evidence all lined out in front of us. This is not limited to audio-visual texts, we are now able to see the written evidence, songs, games, performances, adverts, all in one place. In the digital environment of the internet, we are able to see the tradition of the story in film and television, and I am able to see the interactions between texts, between external traditions and written sources. These have always been there but have been hidden by the observer being situated *within* the culture. Being situated in the digital age is different, in many ways I can see and witness the interplay of the third text, the culture of storytelling, the influence of media and traditions and the sharing of the story that take place online. It is as though we are currently standing on the outer layer of the spiral – although it will continue to grow outward - and we are looking back through the layers, through the tunnel to see how other media and traditions have interacted with one another within the story of *Journey to the West*. The third text of the electronic age is only visible due to the cultural storehouse of the internet, it is here that we are able to see all the interactions of *Journey to the West* as a cultural commodity and a medium.

6.2 Instances of Layered Storytelling

Now we are able to switch the figure ground relationship back and focus back on *Journey to the West*, using this media ecology framework of the spiral. By using the same system of the spiral, keeping in Ong's sequential epochs, we can start to fill in some of the relationships that *Journey to the West* may have with the developing environments around it. We can see from figure 6.3 that along with Ong's epochs there are several interactions about *Journey to the West* recorded sequentially in relation to the layers. To the right of each epoch are thoughts on what happens to the story itself as a medium; what started as a historical event becomes legend through oral-literate storytelling, this legend becomes an artefact in the form of the novel, the story comes to life visually in film and television, and then all of these instances in some guise are shared online. The next grouping of interactions considers the media that media that the story is told within: oral tradition, vernacular fiction, printed stories, audio-visual adaptations. The third grouping discusses the cultural interactions between the different media that the story is told in; how the use of literature created competition amongst storytellers in oral and written traditions; how print assimilates and records many of the traditions of oral and written storytellers in the novel; how the audio-visual texts utilise ongoing oral traditions in Chinese storytelling within the medium. All of these groupings and the interactions they suggest are interconnected with one another and in some way engage with the oral-literate symbiosis that makes up an important element of *Journey to the West* as a story and a medium.

Labels on the spiral (from inner to outer):

Primary Orality
Oral Residue
Print
Secondary Orality
Oral Tradition
Fact Becomes Legend
Legend Becomes Artefact
Artefact comes to life Visually and Orally (Aural)
The Story is Shared and Audiences have preferences in Texts
Vernacular Fiction Stories
Book Adaptation and Abridgement
Audi-visual Texts are Adapted from the Novel
Audio-visual Texts use Traits of Oral Tradition
Printed Word Records Tradition
Literature Creates Competition

Figure 6.3. Journey to the West in the communicative spiral

By examining just a few examples of the oral-literate symbiosis of *Journey to the West* within

the spiral, we can begin to see how structures within the story of *Journey to the West* are

indistinctly linked to the media that the story has been told through, from oral stories and

performances, to print and television, these all interact with one another within *Journey to the*

West as a medium. The basis of layered communication is very old, and as stated in the

literature review, not revolutionary. However, the concept of representing and analysing texts

in relation to their communicative aspects through such a model is not often considered. The

various layers of synchronic study within a diachronic model means that we can see *Journey to the West* in a new manner; one in which the oral-literate symbiosis is represented. The spiral itself is flat and two dimensional; a real representation would move outward three dimensionally, perhaps more like a spiral helix. However, the importance of the spiral analysis is not that it merely examines the development of media or human communication technologies related to the word, but that these are part of the framework of whatever is under examination. In this case it is *Journey to the West*, and the spiral allows a rebalance of the figure-ground relationship, in which the technology media are on a level playing field with the story – the analysis in the spiral allows a sense of how each interact together rather than how one is the content of the other. In this manner, we are not just excavating the content of the medium of *Journey to the West*, but simultaneously we are excavating the media that use the story as content and can see how they all relate to the Chinese storytelling tradition. The images of the Monkey King are not only metonymic in their representation of the whole story of *Journey to the West*, but to the story in Opera, or shadow puppetry, or literature, or painting. The story is interlinked with the way it has been told and so to look back at the continuity of the story through time in terms of motif, tale-type or scene, is also to look back through time at film, stage play, comic book, novel, oral tradition.

It is in the digital age that we can find important examples which hold these interactions of storytelling in both the story within the medium, as well as the digital medium itself. Within texts online there are the elements of the visual typology demonstrated in the previous chapter, with further metonymic layers attached to them. Alongside this there are layers in which the presentation and experience of the story are related to the Chinese oral tradition as well. These layers are added to even further by the contemporary dimensions of both digital media production and distribution. I will discuss a text found on a video streaming site,

investigating how the new form is able to reinforce traditional communicative storytelling tropes, whilst creating new dimensions.

On a streaming site there exists a video of a married couple walking around a *Journey to the West* theme park in mainland China. The video is a simple moment from their time in China, visiting a local attraction, about the book that one of them is part way through reading. The video was uploaded and shared on the internet for anyone interested in the content or connected to the uploader's other web existences on other sites. The video seems innocuous in itself; however, it holds the symbiosis of orality, literacy and visuality in ways that are not represented in the storytelling cycle of *Journey to the West* before the advent of streaming sites online. It is a storytelling experience common only to the modern form of communication. A text that would have once been confined to familial events, sharing home movies to a small audience, has been allowed a global audience in which experiences and personal stories can be told. In this video we have a unique experience of *Journey to the West*; through the eyes of someone reading the text being immersed in J*ourney the West* as a physical environment.

The video begins with the couple entering the attraction, and continues to show them entering the different areas of the park depicting iconography and scenes from the story cycle. The camera acts as the uploaders eyes as it scans scenes in the park; it is not passive but clearly purposeful, and filmed by someone who is interested in the story. One of the first images depicts statues of the primary characters of the story in the common guise. Much like the film and television texts the standard iconography is present and the traditional referentiality of the images of the characters is available on several levels. The Monkey King wears a yellow costume and carries his cudgel, and is depicted holding his hand to his head, looking into the distance. Xuanzang is in traditional dress: robes and hat sat upon a white horse. Similarly, Friar Sand holds his demon quelling staff and necklace, while Zhu Bajie

wears his open hanfu and has his nine-pronged rake. Although typical iconography, the similarity between these figures and the representation of characters from the 1986 CCTV text is obvious. The 1986 CCTV series was one of the most popular versions of the story in mainland China and can still be found played on various cable channels today (*Monkey King on new journey to the west* 2016). It is then not so unusual to use these well-known versions of the characters to depict in a theme park, although it is nothing to do with attraction itself. The most prominent similarities are the colour palette of the two depictions and a few minor choices in costume, these are depicted in figure 6.3 and figure 6.4 below.

Figure 6.4	Figure 6.5
Statue of characters from a mainland China theme park, taken from a YouTube video	*Characters from Journey to the West China CCTV 1986*

First, the hat that Zhu Bajie wears is particular to the CCTV adaptation; although the character often wears a hat, the black hat with gold band is an unusual choice. Secondly, Friar Sand's necklace is a selection of black spheres, rather than skulls. Again, this depiction is not as common as the necklace of skulls, and is specific to the 1986 text. These depictions and specific features also appear in operatic renditions of the story, whether the CCTV text utilised these traditional dress features, or the opera troupes decided to make use of the popularity of the television show is unclear. What is clear is that the repetition of these

depictions has been used due to their recognisable iconography. These cultural practices, on screen, stage, theme parks and other media, reinforce the commodity of the story itself, as well as its different 'tellings'. The communicative spiral emphasises the overlapping of technologies and practices and this is also true of texts and representations. The use of iconography and depiction is not specific to any single texts. What appear as intertextual references touch on the moments in which an old age practice of Chinese storytelling takes place: the sharing and borrowing of storytelling tropes. Although this is something that is often highlighted as the practice of oral storytellers, we can see in the canon of *Journey to the West* that this is not the case, and in fact it has been a continued practice of all storytellers of the story. In fact, this may be a misrepresented instance of all film and television; often the word homage is used when perhaps it should merely be seen as the common practice of storytellers: to borrow. The images of the characters in the theme park and in the video have several layers of traditional referentiality. To the Chinese public visiting the theme park, the characters are the primary structures of the story; their metonymic reference is clear in that they are the story. The fact they are mimetic in their relationship to the CCTV version of the story may be another layer of cultural understanding. The statues have a further deeper cultural meaning, relating to the tradition of storytelling within *Journey to the West*, outside of the novel and outside of the space of the theme park. Deeper than this, the ball necklace around Friar Sand's neck on the statue not only is a mimetic reference to the CCTV text, but further excavation down the layers, is also a reference to the tradition of the story in opera. Within the tradition of *Journey to the West* storytelling this layered, palimpsestic quality of the story is an ongoing state of the story. Its repetition, and the repetition of structural features like characters and props, are not cyclical but are ever expanding layers. The cultural references that are within these layers are embedded in an audience member's understanding of the story.

For the filmmaker and uploader, the statues of the characters are a reference point to his understanding of the story as a novel. The Monkey King, Pigsy, Sandy and Xuanzang are all realisations of characters he imagined whilst reading a book. To his partner, who has not read the book, the statues have only one-layer, solid representations of characters from a story someone else is reading. The filmmaker, even with a layer of reference, lacks the full experience and immersive nature of the story as a tradition, as he is outside of the culture of that story. Like the theoretical framework of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, he lacks the culturally embedded skills of the 'language' of *Journey to the West* to fully appreciate it. Without being fully immersed in the environment of the story, despite being literally immersed in it within a theme park, he cannot access the true cultural value and traditional referentiality of the narrative as a tradition.

However, despite this fact, the filmmaker becomes a storyteller of *Journey to the West*. At the point in the video where he focuses on the statue, the filmmaker and uploader also becomes both a covert narrator, under Bordahl's classification of the Chinese storyteller, but remarkably - and specifically to this modern form of streamed storytelling - is at once an extradiegetic and an intradiegetic narrator (Gennete 1988). These roles come into being through not just the filming of the event, but also the uploader's decisions in editing the video. In filming, the uploader is established as an extradiegetic narrator, as the lens of the camera acts as the narrator tracking the narrative events (Guilemette and Levesque 2016). At the moment in which the camera focuses on the statues of the characters, the uploader decides to add explanatory captions that read "Our intrepid heroes". This decision has several implications; firstly, it is the introduction of literacy and the reflection of the print culture within the largely visual medium of the video, in which language is explored through the oral/aural and visualist form - not the written. The inclusion of this feature begins a symbiosis in the storytelling of the video, as it has changed from a family video, to a product which

imparts knowledge and narrative features through the simulation of print. The introduction of writing within the text is a purposeful addition in post-production to contextualise the story for an audience and the uploader now has two voices. Therefore, the intention of the video has changed, and the potentially global reception of the text has been considered in the construction of the narrative and narrative voice. The written addition continues the interrelationship of communications in the telling of *Journey to the West* and begins to involve the audience through purposeful storytelling. The use of the word 'our' establishes the uploader as a storyteller introducing themselves as the authorial voice to a group of listeners. It also acts as establishing the uploader as a covert extradiegetic, heterodiegetic narrator, explaining the story from the third person; much like the storyteller's manner in the Chinese vernacular novel and oral tradition. The written element of the text carries on throughout the video and introduces and explains narrative events against the images of large dioramic figures and scenes; at one-point quoting dialogue from the novel for characters and scenes within the attraction. There are several layers of storytelling taking place here: there is the visual of the events and settings whilst the camera moves around the theme park; the sound of the uploader explaining elements of the story to their partner (the real time storytelling event - for an audience of one); the sounds of music and dialogue sound-bites emitted by the attraction figures; and the post production writing/captions that explain elements of the story in more detail (post event storytelling - for a mass, unknown audience). In the editing and distribution of the text, the intended audience changes, creating structure and purpose to a recorded event, changing it into a story. As the narrative is structured in post-production, the actions within the text also change, the focus and movement of the camera is no longer about touristic interest, but a visual narrative dialogue. Here, the uploader also becomes, in part, an intradiegetic narrator - telling the narrative from within the story. This is not true in the strictest sense, but in a more literal and physical sense. The uploader

creates the narrative by the action of walking through the attraction, as a narrator, they are in the story - physically. As the camera acts as the uploader's eyes, establishing a narrative, the physical space experienced is within the diegesis. By this I mean, as an audience we are positioned with the storyteller (in this case the uploader) and as such, we are literally positioned within the physical space of the diegesis, the medium as an environment.

Considering this text and experience of *Journey to the West* online, leads us to parallels and cross-overs with participatory culture and fans. Although we are considering these interactions with the story from a media ecology stance, the notion of recreation in this guise is also closely related to theories associated with fandom. Fandom as a theoretical field has been established for many years and has grown in its breadth of study significantly over the past four decades (Gray et al 2007). Fandom research, and the investigation of fan culture, has essentially undergone a three wave development in research over the past 40 years. Its development has seen major elements of audience theory as the underpinning for its primary concerns, that audiences, or more precisely fans, are not passive in their experience of media. Since Hall's (1973) work on active audiences in his Encoding/Decoding model[14] scholarly research has favoured the notion that fans engage with media through a personal interpretative process which affords them agency in their understanding and creativity within their consumption. The first wave of major research explored the role of fans as both audiences and producers, looking at how fans are "poachers" (De Certeau 1985) of their favourite media:

> Far from being writers . . . readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves (De Certeau 1985, pg 174)

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[14] The Encoding/Decoding model suggests that audiences are active participants in their reception of media messages. It suggests that audiences take three types of 'readings' to texts and their messages; the dominant reading, in which the audience accepts the messages intended by the producers; the negotiated reading, in which the audience accepts some messages and rejects others based on their personal experience; lastly the oppositional reading, in which the messages are rejected by the audience.

The second wave of research scholars discussed fandom in modern societies, mass media culture and consumer habits. Jenkins (1992) in *Digital Poachers*, discusses how fans use mass media content to explore issues of identity, sexuality and gender through creating stories about secondary characters of a story's diegesis. They satisfy the storylines that their fan communities desire, which in turn contributes to consumer knowledge for producers. Considering the 16th century novel attributed to Wu Cheng en as the first popularised and lasting media in which *Journey to the West* was distributed, we could argue that the novel *Tower of the Myriad Mirrors* by Tung Yüeh, is a form of fan fiction in this guise. Written around 1640, around 50 years after the Ming novel, it depicts a story set between chapter 61 and 62. It tells the story of the Monkey King having to fight an enemy in which he cannot win through his strength or trickery, as the antagonist is the embodiment of desire. It is the earliest form of adaptation of this particular version of the story, and fits very clearly within the criteria of fan fiction. However, in this media ecology approach, it proves that the medium is the message, as the story within print immediately spawned another telling of the story with a different message. Even though the printed book dominated the reception of the story, the culture of telling new story's continued.

The third wave of fandom research examined the fan communities online and how they formed cultures around their shared love of a media text. This latest focus of research tends to be most relevant to some of the texts found online related to the story. If we were to consider Fiske's (1992) textual productivity and participation, in which fans create and circulate texts amongst themselves, we could see the video examined as a form of this productivity. The visitation to the theme park is a form of pilgrimage as the fan wishes to see the reference points of the story in the theme park, edit it and share it with his community online as a form of participation. Similarly, many texts on sites like YouTube are filled with fan made projects of the story. However, the wider scope is that many are fans of a particular

version of the story, whether that be the novel, CCTV adaptation, or fanfiction related to *A Chinese Odyssey* (Chow 1995); Sun (2018) suggests of this last text that "on the internet they…shared their personal interpretations of the movie or creative rewritings of the story…As an adaptation of a classic, *A Chinese Odyssey* has itself become a classic" (Sun 2018, pp.93-94). However, they are also part of a wider culture surrounding the story as an overarching concept, as it is, and has always, been a public story with multiple storytellers.

Fandom and participatory culture are two areas which are both extensively examined by Henry Jenkins (1992, 2006). Both areas of study offer a rich source of comparison for the culture of storytelling we have discussed in the tradition of *Journey to the West*. We have looked at the medium of *Journey to the West* being a cultural commodity, in which the iconography and narrative elements form a part of traditional referentiality, a cultural collective identity or cultural code. Audiences of an oral storytelling tradition could tap into this shared knowledge and collective intelligence to created new versions of the stories they heard. In the digital age, and with sites such as Youtube, this collective intelligence or identity is reinvented, engaged with, and sustained by, participation within the digital culture. In his book *Convergence Culture, Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006), Henry Jenkins investigates the implications of this participatory culture and the way that technologies have assimilated functionality. Media convergence suggests that new media devices such as mobile phones become more multidimensional in their assimilation of old technological platforms, such as computer games, music, the internet etc. Beyond this idea of convergence though, Jenkins insists that it is a more culturally embedded experience:

> convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content… Convergence does not occur through media appliances, however sophisticated they become. Convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others. (Jenkins 2006 p.3)

Here Jenkins discusses the agency and active participation of audiences with media as being the true act of convergence; audiences seek and choose media to consume, rather than having limited streams in which to consume media. Jenkins discusses the impact of participatory culture on this change to traditional forms of media consumption, suggesting that due to the power of web 2.0, the amount of data, information and products available online have increased dramatically, as consumers are becoming producers. This means that the traditional producers of media are having to work a great deal harder at meeting our needs and wants, due to the variety and amount of content made available to us through multiple production streams online. The role of the viewer begins to blur in Jenkins thesis, as consumers are also producers:

> The term, participatory culture, contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship. Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules (Jenkins 2006 p.3)

These 'rules' that Jenkins refers to can be seen in every aspect of video streaming sites such as YouTube as they represent exhibition spaces for traditional text types such as Television, Film and even oral traditions. The roles of producer and viewer become blurred on these sites as many users are both. In this sense, the value of recreations and fandoms of *Journey to the West* through this kind of participation is that they are just part of the continued practice of the story within this diachronic assessment of the *Journey to the West* as a medium. However, although the study of fandom helps to illuminate the activities of fans, which relates to the repetition and longevity of the story, it is not necessarily with the audience that the media ecology focus lies but the medium. Audiences, or fans, are generally nuanced towards specific adaptations, whereas this is the study of the story as a whole.

This kind of storytelling is becoming more common on online video streaming sites. The mixing of communications, and communication technologies, has always been a part of

the storytelling of *Journey to the West*, the prior analysis of texts from 7th century to modern day are evidence of this. But along with the discussions of symbiosis, is the modern storytelling shift which has been taking place on sites like YouTube. Texts like that discussed above, record live events, actualities and one-time storytelling moments, to be re-packaged for a global market. This is the re-distribution of recorded storytelling events, which have been altered by the act of uploading. The original experiences have their own communicative traits, but in their recording they have changed from one-time events of presence, to a static presence which may be watched and re-watched. These are texts which depict their audiences immersed within the environment of the narrative of *Journey to the West* Similar to the theme park attraction discussed above, there is has been growing trends in the recording of computer gameplay which is watched on streaming sites. The instances of those games that centre around the story of *Journey to the West* depict audiences playing characters within the story, being once again immersed in the environment of the story, of the medium.

These instances of the story demonstrate some of the interactions from within the communicative spiral. Not only can the elements of traditional referentiality be identified within the representations, but layers of the interactions between technology media within the *Journey to the West* history can be traced. The interplay of written and oral, of sound and visual, and of analogue and digital. The story of *Journey to the West* is an immersive environment itself but it also assimilates the environment of the medium it is being told in, making it part of its storytelling. The next question then, is how can the media that use the story as a form of content, help the environment of the story?

6.3 Reinventing *touch* in storytelling: The Monkey King in Mobile Devices and Apps

The internet has then begun to restructure storytelling in new ways as an immersive environment (Strate 2014b). With the potential change in thought processes comes a change

in accessing and experiencing stories. This is not to suggest that it is the technology itself that has changed this process, I take the stance that human agency is the primary component to this change; as Grusin and Bolter suggest, there is a fine balance between this affect and technological determinism "New digital media are not external agents that come to disrupt an unsuspecting culture. They emerge from within cultural contexts, and they refashion other media, which are embedded in the same or similar contexts." (Bolter and Grusin 1999 p.19). More recently, Schmitt (2018) has made similar allusions about the suggested deterministic nature of the digital age, and the idea that online culture has affected human intelligence and ability:

> ...the change in human thought and interaction documented alongside the shift to digital cultures is not a matter of better and worse, smarter and stupider, but simply of difference and change... fears about new technology are often generationally driven and...new patterns of thought and behaviour are but natural adaptations and developments to the demands of any new era. (p.65)

Instead of even Ong's soft determinism, it is in the human desire to progress and change the spaces in which they experience communication and storytelling. The affected change and developing technology merely emphasises Scribner and Cole's findings; that 'particular practices promote particular skills' (Scibner and Cole 1981 p.258), and that it is cultural adoption and repetition that places new skills and cognitive processes above others. If there is one thing that seems evident from studying *Journey to the West* over synchronic periods through time, is that many of the elements of traditional Chinese storytelling have remained the same they have merely met the needs of different technologies to continue being consumed by their listeners. The motifs, tropes, narrative have merely been transposed or 'remediated' to meet the demands of the new story outlet, and as such story also assimilates elements of the medium, or elements of the story within that medium. Postmodernists suggest that culture eats itself (Buadrillad 1994), and here we see that *Journey to the West* feeds on itself in different media. Keeping elements from itself in different media as structural pillars,

we see this in the repetition of images relating to opera and puppetry, in the novel and transcripts of oral performance. The story grows as cultural output grows, creating the layers of the spiral. So, the audience of *Journey to the West* become immersed not just in the story as a narrative, nor the medium in which the story is told, but both as a balanced whole. They also become caught within the spiral, experiencing the story as the stories that came before it, in the media that came before it.

We have seen this in the vernacular novel in the storyteller's captured on the page, rather than the author; we have seen it in film and television, when descriptive prose is transformed to the visual, the prosimetric is turned to speech and song, and the stock phrase into iconography; and now we see it online, where experience as well as storytelling is transposed. The audience do not just sit and listen to the storyteller; use their fingers to turn the pages of a book; press rewind on their remote control to re-watch their favourite scene; they now do it all through touchscreen, online technology. It is true that the storytelling has again transposed to the medium, as can be seen with the multitude of different stories of *Journey to the West* on YouTube - fictions and recorded actualities, as well as the story games and apps that react to our own touch and interaction with them. Experience though, has never been remediated quite in the same way. The experience of *Journey to the West* is both traditional, as well as entirely new. This duality is the experience of storytelling - like the symbiosis of orality and literacy, there is a symbiosis of tradition and contemporary experiences. Storytelling has never been so singular and personal, on such a global scale.

One of the latest stages of storytelling with *Journey to the West* and modern communication comes with the cultural adoption of touchscreen devices, especially mobile devices like smartphones. Without delving into the technical issues of these devices will instead consider their functions in relation to the experience of storytelling. With these devices there is the re--imagination of layered communication trends, and layered traditions.

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If the internet had assimilated all previous forms of communication, the smart phone has facilitated both their experience and existence to some extent. The smartphone is the new monolith of communication, and culture has started to establish a new hegemony, a new focal point which we gladly and consciously immerse ourselves in (De Palma 2019, Strate 2014b). Children as young as three are largely able to use touchscreen devices unaided (Kabali et al 2015), and their immersion in this form of the digital world demonstrates that digital natives see this interaction as real (McNeil 2009), as research suggests that their knowledge transfer and application from digital/tactile to physical/tactile is seamless (Huber et al 2015).

With the digital age comes generational learnt behaviours and practices: my two year old niece is unable to write, or form complex sentence structures, or fine tune motor skills to colour-in between the lines of a drawing, and yet the immersion in the modern world of digital media and the touchscreen means that she has mastered the dexterity to take my phone, slide the unlock icon left to right, swipe through my home applications; find the Monkey King story app, press it and the story of the Monkey King will be told to her in pictures and voice-over. This level of functionality suggests that perhaps a new hegemony of common practice is on the cusp of actuality. For my niece, her fingers have achieved change; she got the result she wanted. In the space and world around her, nothing has changed, except perhaps the creation of sound through the phone, and into the real-world space around her. Yet this understanding and experience of a new medium, of storytelling, is entirely pre-literate. The functional episteme and noetic of my niece at two years old can only be pre-literate and therefore the images and tactile nature of this type of storytelling, although new, clearly allows for those without access to high levels of literacy the ability to access it.

Within the landscape of mobile devices and applications that use the internet as a storehouse, there is a mirroring of the traditional forms of *Journey to the West's* storytelling. Here again the roles of storyteller and listener/watcher has been blurred due to the

remediation of the media that house the story. One of the most traditional elements of Chinese storytelling is the Shadow puppet. This form of storytelling in China is nearly 2,000 years old (Currell 2015) and *Journey to the West* appears consistently in the shadow puppet traditions across China (Chen 2007). This is a storytelling tradition, and a medium that has continued into the Chinese tradition today. It is very much an element of the cultural make-up and aesthetic of China and its storytelling. It is also common to see the characters from *Journey to the West* as shadow puppets for sale as souvenirs on street stalls in cities with high domestic and international tourism. The aesthetic style of these puppets and their association with Chinese tradition have been replicated in contemporary media, as the story has assimilated elements of the medium within its own identity and representation. The representation and interactive features of one mobile application evidences the layers of adaptation, cultural repetition and storytelling in experience. *The Monkey King* game produced by AE Games in form uses the traditional storytelling trope of the shadow puppet. This art form exemplifies the layered traditions of storytelling in China once again; the faces and images of popular characters in Chinese shadow puppets also share the design of operatic representations of characters (Kronthal 2001). All of the characters in the game are shadow puppet representations, utilising the popularity of *Journey to the West* in the art form and tradition, in a digitisation. This illusion is in effect the remediation of traditional forms of the story utilised in a new storytelling experience. Again, the representations of characters themselves are layered as they are copies of shadow puppets that utilise the operatic representation of the character, whilst referencing the popular representation of the character from *Uproar in Heaven* (1965). The relationship is seen if the figures below (figure 6.6 to 6.8), these instances reveal not only the importance of the medium of puppetry to Chinese storytelling, but to the *Journey to the West* Canon as well. Similarly, it infers that the third

text, the environment of storytelling is layered and far reaching and that the traditional referentiality of *Journey to the West* is more than textual but is cultural.

Figure *6.6*
The Monkey King Traditional Shadow Puppet

Figure *6.7*
The Monkey King from Havoc in Heaven (1965)
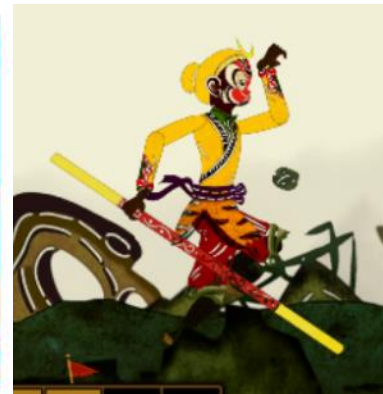
Figure *6.8*
Monkey King from The Monkey King game from AE Games

The characters in the game itself all move independently, working automatically, they appear as if being moved by a digital puppeteer. The only character that seems more fluid and erratic is the Monkey King himself, as he is controlled by the player. This fact is layered in itself, as the Monkey King's role in the narrative of the *Journey to the West* story is the trickster, the protagonist that no other character can predict. This is reapplied in the game as the character has certain automatic features - once at a certain distance from an antagonist, several automated defence/attack mechanisms begin without the player's say so. These automated features add to the other layered features of the story in the role of formula and motif. The visual mnemonic and other elements of the story's morphology outlined in chapter five, have also in part been embedded in the visual representation of the game. The automated attacks that each character possess relate to their repetitive character traits. The Monkey King has two such automated responses; the first is a long-distance attack, which occurs if an

antagonist is approaching, see figure 6.5. The Monkey King in action, lifts his hand to his head in the ever so familiar guise, the beams of light that come from the figure's eyes are reminiscent of the Ming novel and the light that shoots from the character's eyes after he is born from stone. The second attack is the use of his gold banded cudgel at close range; this is one of the most repeated objects in the entire morphology of the story. Again, this reference point demonstrates further instances of the oral-literate symbiosis as the events from the novel are actualised in the images of the digital puppets. The shadow puppet tradition is one constructed for an oral episteme, as its simplicity in design and capacity make its visual and oral codes easy to understand. The use of narrative elements from the novel in a game that remediates the oral contours of shadow puppetry, form an oral-literate balance in the experience of the story.

Figure 6.9

Monkey King holding hand to head from The Monkey King game from AE Games

Along with these automated features are *collected* attacks that can be earned and used as the game progresses. These include epitomised motifs and events from the story's morphology;

they include transforming into several Monkey Kings, as per the doppelganger and transformation motifs in which Monkey King makes many of himself. Again, there is the 'uproar in heaven' attack which calls upon many monkey disciples flying on a cloud and attacking the antagonist.

These elements again introduce the conventional motifs of the story but place their use in the player's hand. The ingredient and blueprints of the story have been given to a player to act as storyteller and puppeteer. The player becomes involved in the tradition of storytelling and is in fact the shadow puppeteer. The player plays the dual role of part storyteller, part listener, as although there is an author to the text in the form of the game designer, and a clear narrative and use of character motivation, there is no story without the interaction from the listener. The listener suddenly has agency over the outcome of the story, and their physical action of touch, affects the story. There are limits to how the story can change, but like every live performance of *Journey to the West*, each instance is individual and not solid like print. The game itself plays from left to right; Xuanzang is sat far left of the screen meditating and must be protected from demons, if he dies the game is lost. At the very far right of the rolling platform screen, demons enter through the entrance of a lair, and slowly make their way left toward Xuanzang. The player, as the Monkey King, must move right to kill the demons. As points are accrued and powers earned, players can also call on aid in the form of other disciples, monkey soldiers or celestial aid from common Chinese mythology and the story's narrative; The Dragon King, Prince Nezha and Er-Lang Shen. These aspects represent not only stock characters and representations from the story, but as players use them to subdue demons, they are actually utilising the story structures and type-scenes of the *Journey to the West* morphology.

Each level is the same: Xuanzang on the left, demons on the right; the antagonists and levels change and represent common episodes form the story. The levels, like each of the

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episode from story, are formulaic. They follow the repetitive quest narrative that all episodes of the book and television and film texts follow. This is the formulaic trope of the oral/aural story design in the modern form. The story in this tactile guise is accessible for those with an oral episteme and through its use of the layers of the story, it is also very traditional as well as very new.

The limited use of literacy, interaction and basic format of the *Money King* game also seems to draw parallels from more traditional forms of composition and consumption. The play of pictures and storytelling in *Journey to the West* and Chinese traditional storytelling is long established. In the Dunhuang grottos there are wall murals which tell stories as one walks through them. Similarly, people who visit the *Long Corridor* in the Summer Palace in Beijing can today still listen to tour guides pointing out paintings of *Journey to the West* to their tour groups, using them as stimuli to tell the story of that particular episode. Along with static wall murals there were the addition of 'mobile' storytelling aids like scrolls, as discussed in Chapters three and four. Certainly, by the Tang dynasty the use of scrolls, and in particular picture scrolls, was a long standing tradition in storytelling (Mair 1983). The Bianwen texts written in the prosimetric vernacular are largely believed to be the penned versions of the popular told transformation picture scroll stories, or *chuan-pien* (Nienhauser 1986, Mair 1983, 1989). The picture scrolls were used to tell stories on the street and were 'known simply as unrolling/unfolding/turning transformation [scrolls]' (Mair 1983 p.9). The *unrolling* of these texts revealed the picture and story to an audience accompanied by the oral performance of the storyteller. This picture scroll tradition had largely died out by the Song dynasty; however, another picture scroll tradition developed and grew in Japan. In the 12th Century the priest Bishop Toba is credited as producing the first 'comic' with what are known as the *Animal Scrolls* that feature anthropomorphised animals (Han Yu 2015). This Japanese tradition grew and notably contained a set of story scrolls that depicted the life and

pilgrimage of Xuanzang called *Genjō Sanzō-e* (Illustrated Life of Xuanzang). This fourteenth

century scroll's story spans across 12 scrolls and is part of a picture scroll tradition called

emaki or illustrated handscroll (Saunders 2012 p.174). The *emaki* are read by unrolling them

in the viewer's hand and contain illustrations and often text to tell the narrative. Saunders

describes the experience, participation and pre-knowledge of the viewing of the picture

scrolls like the *Genjō Sanzō-e*.

> …the narrative literally unfolds before the eyes as images, rather than texts, sometimes
> extending over many meters, propel the story forward… *emaki* require the active participation
> of their viewers to 'tell their stories.' In many cases readers (or those being read to), would
> already know the full narrative of the story depicted in the scroll, and so the actual inscribed
> texts and painted images before them, usually based on a pre-existing text, would likely have
> been received and intellectually activated through combination with this 'pre-knowledge.'
> (Saunders 2012 p.175)

Here Saunders clearly discusses the participation of the viewer in the literal unveiling and

progress of the visual narrative. It is also important to note the reliance on 'pre-knowledge' of

the viewer, is in essence the traditional referentiality described by Foley (1985) that is still

expected of audiences watching many films and texts related to the *Journey to the West*

canon. The active participation in the scroll storytelling is utilised again in the digital age with

touch-screen devices. When considering *Emaki* and the *Monkey King* game, both contain a

tactile form of storytelling, which involves the agency and participation of the viewer in

progressing the narrative. In the app, the player uses their fingertip to literally action the

Monkey King's progress within the narrative of the game, having agency of the way the story

is told. The game's use of tropes and elements of the morphology create what appears to be a

'static' image as the characters do not change, the boundaries left to right do not change, and

the formula of each level do not change. Each level offers a different background art and

different antagonists, but the rolling screen distance and other features remain the same.

However, despite these limitations, the use of these elements and the morphology are

completely at the disposal and use of the player, and so each 'play' will develop a unique story, a singular homeostatic telling of the tale. Similarly, with *Emaki*, the viewer can experience a sense of control and singular experience as the "viewer of a scroll effectively holds the past in his right hand, and the future in his left, and can control or even reverse the flow at any time he wishes." (Saunders 2012 pp.174-175).

The comparison with the scroll story as an act of viewing a visual story, rather than 'reading'. Although the platform element of the game involves the player physically moving the story forward – left to right – using their finger, perhaps in the way that one may turn the page of a book to progress a story, there are links to these more traditional elements that we can consider through the communicative spiral. The fact that viewers would have to roll out the scrolls slowly, unfolding the images of events and progresses the story by physically unravelling the story, is more comparable to platform gaming than to reading. The game like the scroll, and unlike the book, is a long length of, albeit digital, space – running from left to right. Each level is exactly the same 'length' and there is no physical foreground or background that the character can exist in, and the screen neither moves up nor down, it is static and confined in a two dimensional representation; like a long fixed line of scroll. The terminology for the game's format even references and imitates the traditional picture scroll. The side-scrolling video game in its name implies the action and physicality of the gameplay is based on the traditional format and physicality of unravelling and unrolling to reveal a narrative. This type of terminology is also used for computer mediated documents and internet sites that are lengthy: one has to 'scroll' up or down to reveal information. The platform computer game, especially those now sustained on mobile devices in the digital age truly encompass the action of 'scrolling'.

The app amalgamates so many of the traditions that had helped build the story to this point. The singular actuality of each experience reflects elements of the oral storytelling process. The singular exchange of events of the story are similar to the scroll storytelling as although the scrolls remained the same, with the same iconography, but each telling, no matter how similar, was an individual experience. The game uses the cultural iconography and metonymic references of the story, which are unchanged on each play and yet event outcomes, although distinctly similar will have different stories and individual experiences. The aural processes that occur whilst playing the game have similar connotations to that experienced in oral culture and the relationship of sound to presence, for example the mimicking of sound to action in the game such as the synchronous noise of the Monkey King's cudgel hitting his foe. However, the immediacy and synchronous sounding of players' physical actions, coupled with characters' actions and sound making, form part of the digital illusion of sensory experience – the visual and aural process does still exist in the real world, like the listening and watching of a scroll storyteller or shadow puppet performance. The touch screen device that allows the user to access this traditional form of storytelling is also mobile like a scroll and can be taken from one place to another. This storytelling experience truly evidences the layering of the communicative spiral, as in the text we have the layering of the iconography and puppet show, but in the technology we have the repetition of the picture scroll from the story's cycle: the remediation of tradition and technology.

6.5 Online Remediation and Traditional Referentiality

One of the more prevalent discussions of *Journey to the West's* storytelling is the multimodal approach of the medium. This multi-modality is due to the layered effect of the story's existence and is in fact a traditional form of storytelling, in the way that old stories were commodities that were repeated across media: this can clearly be seen in the paintings, plays

and stories in the *Journey to the West* story cycle. It is what Ryan (2015) calls the Snowball effect:

> In the snowball effect, certain stories enjoy so much popularity, or become culturally so prominent, that they spontaneously generate a variety of either same-medium retellings or cross-media illustrations and adaptations. (Ryan 2015 p.2)

This seems more like the storytelling that grew around the Xuanzang tradition in the Tang dynasty and into the *Journey to the West* cycle. At the heart of Ryan's thesis is that the success of a single text snowballs a transmedia experience in an effort to produce more media around the success. There is no doubt that there are texts of *Journey to the West* that are extremely successful and have cult appeal; we can see this in the repetition of imagery across texts, from the mimesis of the Monkey King figure from Havoc in Heaven, to the statues of the pilgrims in the home video studied above. The cult appeal of these, as Umberto Eco suggests, is reliant on the text providing "a completely furnished world, so that its fans can quote characters and episodes as if they were part of the beliefs of a sect, a private world of their own…and whose adepts recognize each other through a common competence." (Eco 1985 p.3). This form of common competence amongst fans is even more explored in an online culture, as discussion and production become part of the agency of being a viewer and a fan (Jenkins et al 2013). The repetition of these textual images of the 'cult' adaptations does more than simply reaffirm the cultural appeal and love for these texts. As is the nature of *Journey to the West* as being part of the Chinese cultural milieu, even these loved adaptations are part of a cultural commodity, they are freely used by new storytellers and are made reference to in other texts. These references are not just intertextuality, nor the snowball effect, but something more culturally important. Instead, these images and referents are part of the story of *Journey to the West* as a medium, as an environment. Foley's (1985) traditional referentiality is deployed as a major concern in the tradition

of *Journey to the West* storytelling; the semantic function of the characters, motifs and events do not merely reference the single text or adaptation but the entire story of *Journey to the West*, the versions of the story that came before it, and the tradition of storytelling itself.

This traditional referentiality is seen in the living 'third text' online. Each text of *Journey to the West* references the others, this is clear in chapter five, they are beyond intertextuality as they represent shared components of a medium that grow and reform within a storytelling milieu. This continues online and with the applications as well. This type of referentiality is beyond the power and hegemony of the printed novel, nor the hegemony or bias of any single medium, and engages with a deeper cultural understanding of the story's tradition and the appreciation of the 'third text'. There are several examples that demonstrate this referentiality. The first is the story of *Pigsy Eats Watermelon* which is a 1958 animation lasting just over 20 minutes long. It was produced by the influential Wan brothers and is animated in a paper cut-out technique. The animation tells the story of Zhu Bajie (Pigsy) being sent to get food for Xuanzang. The Monkey King goes in a separate direction and successfully sources some fruit. Pigsy on the other hand, gets tired and decides to sleep instead. When he awakes he finds a giant watermelon, which he decides to take back to his master. However, greed takes over, and the disciple eats the whole thing to himself. Unbeknownst to Pigsy, The Monkey King has found him and witnesses his greed. The Monkey King taunts Pigsy with magic, until he finally admits to Xuanzang that he was greedy and dishonest. The story holds similarities to Chapter 32 of the 100-chapter novel, but only marginally; it is in essence an original story, unconnected to the episodes played out in previous versions. It utilises the characters from the story in common representation, and the cut-out paper animation certainly seems to present another form of the traditional shadow puppet in style. Both these elements suggest that the story is most definitely a commodity,

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but no more so than the mobile application *Zhu Bajie ate Watermelon,* by chinababy365, a Chinese application developer which specialises in educational stories in Chinese and English. The application is based on the Wan brothers' film but offers no reference or mention of it. Instead, it's write-up for the app on the website appadvice.com describes it as "one of the series of classic stories". The app tells the story through images, writing and recorded voice-over, as seen in figure 6.6. This again begins to amalgamate the oral-literate symbiosis as seen through the spiral model. The static images of the app are like the pages of a picture book and are accompanied by written text in the same way. However, there is a pre-recorded storyteller that narrates the story as well, adding to the layers of the oral-literate symbiosis within the tex. The images themselves draw from the third text, or culture of storytelling, using the stock images of the characters from other stories. The story itself, although developed by the Wan brothers, has now become attached to the story as a medium and is therefore an oral commodity, able to be used by any storyteller.
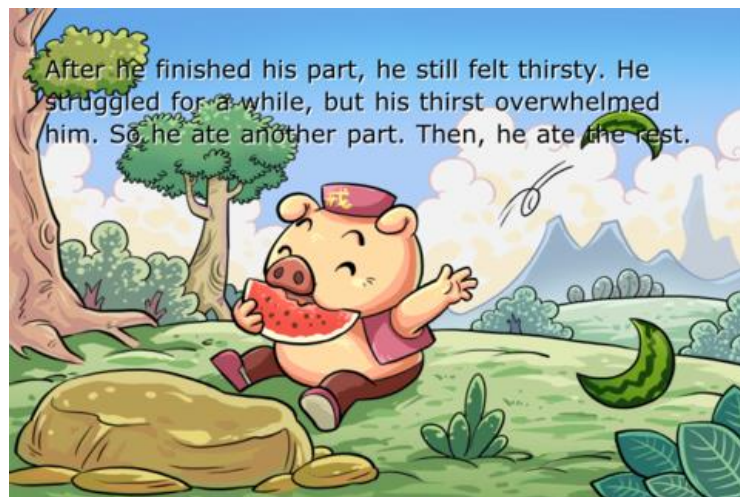
Figure 6.10

Pigsy from Zhu Bajie ate Watermelon

from the storytelling app by chinababy365

The story is presented as a traditional folk tale, or moral tale to teach children about dishonesty and sharing. Its lack of reference to the Wan brothers' film is telling of the culture of ownership over the story. There may well have been a domesticated or familial tradition of retelling the story after the film's release in China, but the application neither asserts nor offers context of ownership over the story. Instead, it assumes the same status as all other stories of *Journey to the West*: a cultural text, a commodity that does not need to explicitly reference another text. This referentiality is achieved through the tradition of the story's repetition, the story in the app represents not only itself and the Wan brothers' text, but the canon of *Journey to the West* texts.

Within the multitude of cultural texts of *Journey to the West*, not only are traditions, tropes, motifs, type scenes and oral structures from the past included, but new traditions and variations are established. Let us take for instance the musical composition of the *Dagger Group Suite 'Overture'* which has developed an association with the Monkey King character. Originally an orchestral score for the 1962 dance drama film of the same name, it has been used in several texts related to the Monkey King. Its first appearance was in Stephen Chow's *Chinese Odyssey* (1995) and was repeated by Chow in *Journey to the West Conquering the Demons* (2013) which suggests an intertextual musical style, but also established the beginnings of a leitmotif associated with the Monkey King. This is confirmed as the piece of music is used at the end of the opening credits to a Chinese animated series *Legend of the Monkey King* (1999) and most notably in 2015 release *Monkey King Hero is Back*. The last example is most notable as the moment in which the piece is used has the same narrative relevance as both Chow films. In all three of these films the music is played as the Monkey King 'returns' in the narrative. In *Chinese Odyssey*, the Monkey King returns from dormancy; in *Conquering the Demons*, he returns from being subdued under a mountain, and in *Monkey King Hero is Back* he 'returns' to defeat the antagonist, after the protagonist

believes he has abandoned him. The use of the music at the same narrative motif has established not merely a leitmotif for the Monkey King, but an aural motif associated with a new and developing type-scene within the *Journey to the West* cycle in secondary orality. It is proof that not only is the story continuing to develop but also, and most importantly, that even the modern storytelling tropes and motifs do not belong to the singular text; they are all interconnected under the cultural commodity of storytelling: the third text. After all, folklore has no author, and is in essence an owned commodity of the culture of a people (Buterbaugh 2016) and that culture collects a myriad of stories around a myth. Each text of *Journey to the West* is its own but is also every other text that preceded it as well, due in part, to the influence of the third text.

Similar to this example is the Unity application game *The Monkey King,* which is another touchscreen game. This time the player taps the screen to make the Monkey King jump over objects and gaps as he runs left to right. The images of the game again reference the 1965 text *Havoc in Heaven*, a purposeful decision as the player is navigating the Monkey King through heaven in the game. Again, the game uses elements of the morphology in its make-up as once the player has collected enough peaches, he 'transforms' into different animals. The game is again layered in both its representation and functionality, but the most notable contemporary element of referentiality, and indeed utilisation of the third text, is in the audio for the game, specifically upon opening the application. Once a player has opened the game, they are taken to the title menu in figure 6.7.

Figure 6.11

Monkey King menu screen from
The Monkey King application game from Unity

The appearance of the Monkey King is immediately accompanied by the audio track *Dagger Society Suite Overture*. The repetition of this audio track cements it as part of a modern aural tradition in the story and reinforces, along with the use of imagery, that *Journey to the West* as a medium, in all its guises, adaptations and appropriations, is a commodity. The adoption of this audio within the story cycle demonstrates that the online culture of sharing and distributing has meant that creators of new stories in the form of online games and applications, stitch together their stories from the readily available third text, where print culture and the *novel* have no central influence, they are on a level grounding with other media technologies. This repetitive audio is also evidence of the ever growing spiral and the ever-growing medium of *Journey to the West*, that pilfers techniques and structures from the media that make it content.

6.6 Monkey King as Environment

It is clear that the Monkey King is a metonymic figure, in the digital age especially. As we have seen in the inclusion of the story in digital applications, he is a central figure that often references not only the story tradition from the past in representation, but also the media that

have helped tell it. In recent years the characters' representation in applications and online computer games has been extremely high. Some of these games are following the narrative of *Journey to the West* in some way like *Black Myth: Wukong* (2020), but many are unrelated to the *Journey to the West* medium. Instead, these are games that include the Monkey King character such as League of Legends (2009). The inclusion of the Monkey King character is demonstrative of the figure's popularity and importance within popular culture. In these instances, the Monkey King is indeed metonymic as he represents not only the character, but the story and medium of *Journey to the West*. Game developers utilise the figure of the Monkey King not as a developer's personal homage to a mythological figure, but as a component of traditional referentiality, tapping into the cultural competence of their audience. He is also royalty free, as a cultural hero he has no copyright or ownership but is a cultural commodity, a medium that is freely able to be used. Audiences will know the Monkey King from the medium of *Journey to the West*, as he has been embedded in every media environment. Although every adaptation seems to include the tag: based on the sixteenth century novel, it is apparent that the authority of print culture did nothing to formalise any sense of ownership over the character. His popularity as a character offers developers' a guarantee of audience interest by using his representation. The repetition of the Monkey King in all these differing environments has established the character as the medium of *Journey to the West*, to the point that he has become an environment himself. The environment of *Journey to the West* as a medium is one that is heavily weighted with cultural importance. The story and the Monkey King have become a cultural environment that impacts the identity of Chinese culture. I have discussed how the digital age of the internet has demonstrated the interactions and traditions in *Journey to the West* that have been occurring for centuries. This is because the internet is a reflection of the real, of our society. As such it is also important to take a step back into the real world to finally understand the

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Monkey King and *Journey to the West* as a medium and an environment. In the same way we can examine the Multiplicity of the existence of the story online, and the interactions that all of these texts have had on one another over hundreds of years, this has been the case on the physical streets and tea houses and stages of China for centuries. The third text, the environment of storytelling that we can theoretically witness online, has been going on for many hundreds of years in the storytelling of *Journey to the West*. The interplay of texts and adaptations of *Journey to the West* are vast and exist in a day-to-day context in Chinese life. The inclusion of the character and the story across so many media, even in instances that do not engage with narrative itself, means that the Monkey King and *Journey to the West* appear everywhere. In the supermarket shelves, in fast food restaurants, on the streets in puppeteers, at the theatre, in the tea houses, in the circus, street performances, at the fruit stalls, in paintings, in historical sites, in temples, magazines, books, comics, computer games, and always on the television and in film theatres. This means that without considering it, to live in China is to live in an environment of the story *Journey to the West*. There is no other figure like the Monkey King in China. Other figures from history like, Confucius, Zhu Ge Liang, Bao Qing Tian, Hua Mu-Lan, and Mao Zaidong are laden with their own historical ideologies. The Monkey King however, is a transformative multimodal character, as the messages and content weaved into him can change significantly with each representation. This is the power of the character as a medium, and his popularity in China. He can be the trickster, the anti-hero, the revolutionary, the saviour, depending on what messages a storyteller wants to weave within his narrative. He does not stand for one thing, but for whatever a storyteller, advertiser, politician, wishes him to stand for, this is why he is a medium. He is an environment that goes unnoticed as he has always been there, and so we forget the Monkey King and listen to messages that he purveys.

Studying *Journey to the West* as a medium, means also studying it as an environment. Not simply in its narrative form, but how its structures as a medium are impacted by the storytelling environment it inhabited and the culture of that storytelling. There are several layers to the story as an environment, and the third text and communicative spiral are linked together in this context. Strate (2014a) well established the narrative as a medium within media ecology, and so we can easily understand both the story of *Journey to the West* and the exploits of the Monkey King as an environment in this sense. The narrative is an immersive environment in which both storyteller and audience exist and experience its content. With *Journey to the West*, the story is an environment in another sense as well. The third text is the term I have used to explain the culture of storytelling that every storyteller and story is able to draw from. This in itself is an environment, an immersive culture of differing techniques, media and styles in which both storytellers and audiences also exist. This immersion is not just within the active living culture of storytelling, but also those of the past. The excavation of the story through the layers of the communicative spiral is an act of research here, for those embedded and immersed in the storytelling of *Journey to the West*, it is an organic and natural process of retrieval.
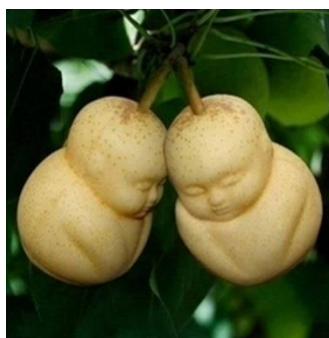
Figure 6.12 Ginseng Fruit

The final level of the story as a medium or as an environment is in its intrinsic linking to Chinese cultural identity. To travel in China's major cities, is to find oneself surrounded by

Journey to the West, and the Monkey King. As a figure, the Monkey King is most likely the best known mythological character in China. His mythology means many in China learn of him in childhood through stories unrelated to print, the story is embedded as a cultural pillar of identity in China. I believe that the Monkey King, with all of his Metonymic power, is immersive due to his Multiplicity. The power of the character in the story is his ability to transform, to remould to multiply, this too is his power as a medium. In the story he is able to chew on his hair and blow it away to transform it into an army of Monkey Kings. This is what seems to have happened in China, as the volume of Monkey Kings and references to the story are in abundance. References can be found in every walk of life; one can go to a fruit stall on the street and buy ginseng fruit, made popular from the story. As seen in figure 6.12 these are pears that have been grown in moulds to appear as the magical fruit that are shaped like a child. In J*ourney to the West* they are supposed to give the eater immortality. It seems with their existence among street sellers that the environment of the story has grown immortal in some ways. Similarly, Taoists have even allocated a day in celebration of the Monkey King. Culturally within China, whether going to a fast-food restaurant, watching television or buying fruit, one is immersed in the environment of the Monkey King. Most recently I travelled to a small island in Thailand called Koh Sichang. The island was popular among Chinese boatmen who would stop there. A temple was built at the top of one of the hills which is now popular among Chinese tourists and migrant in Thailand, and it is a favourite on Chinese New Year. Upon travelling to the top of the temple with my family on a long weekend, I was surprised to be immersed in the *Journey to the West* narrative. The temple housed a golden shrine to the Monkey King seen in figure 6.13. The statue represents the figure in a recognisable form, with his cudgel and band and knee lifted. The inclusion of this figure in a temple amongst Buddhist figures tells us several things. Firstly, that the cyclical nature of the spiral has proven that the beginnings of Xuanzang as a medium for

Buddhism and the story of *Journey to the West* was never really lost, as the Monkey King as medium still has a physical environmental impact within the Chinese identity of Buddhism. Secondly, that the Monkey King is such a strong figure of cultural identity that he shapes environments of Chinese diaspora.

Figure 6.13
Monkey King Shrine at Saan
Chao Pho Khao Yai

6.14 Monkey King
fighting Pigsy, Mural in Saan
Chao Pho Khao Yai

This discovery was seconded by the inclusion of painted murals outside of the temple caverns. As shown in figure 6.14 these depict scenes from the story of *Journey to the West*. Much like those in the Long Corridor of the Summer Palace in Beijing, the murals are not accompanied by text, but are metonymic for those culturally versed in the story. We can in this environmental element of the story see not only the folk impact of the story but also the postmodernism within the medium. The seeping of the story's iconography into religious spaces of worship and the fruit markets suggests that environment of 'reality' is a hyperreality, where fiction and non-fiction seamlessly blend. The depictions in figures 6.13 and 6.14 have embodied not merely the story and tradition of the story but have become a part of the

physical environment of Chinese cultural identity. This then is the power of the story of *Journey to the West* as a medium, that it is a cultural environment.

6.6 Conclusion

The internet is a communication tool, event and place. It is as much a new tradition in human communication and storytelling as it is a collection and archive of previous traditions. It is an impossible communication to define in the scope of this chapter, or indeed this research. However, having looked at some of the discourse, and analysing storytelling events related to *Journey to the West*, we can see how so much of its functions and the technologies that utilise it, have similarities with older forms and traditions of storytelling. The comparisons of online streaming sites and storytelling and the examination of traditional Chinese storytelling against touch screen devices, perhaps demonstrates that although new technology experiences are indeed *new*, they are also remediations of, not just technology, but traditions as well.

For *Journey to the West* this is very important, as the story does not ever reflect only its own time in communication, but all the texts previous to it. The communicative spiral demonstrates how elements of the internet are *overlappings* of pre-existing cultural nuances other than print. Along with this implication, the fact that we are able to see these texts of *Journey to the West* all in one place may have given insight into something even more important; the culture of storytelling that has developed over the centuries. So much of modern discourse makes the assumption that the internet has more in common with oral traditions or the pre-literate culture. But what if these traditions, the sharing and the authoring, were always going on - but we were simply never able to see it before. There is no doubt that the internet has created new cultural phenomena, but with this it has also just given access to what has always been going on for centuries in the environment of storytelling. It our being situated in the digital epoch that has allowed us to see that the multiplicity of the

Monkey King is the normal state of the story. McLuhan (1962) predicted the Global village that we inhabit today, the major phenomenon of which was the contraction of the world – showing us the traditions that have been going on for centuries. The sharing of texts online in the distribution of films and television programmes along with original audio-visual adaptions by uploaders, simply shows us what has always been going on in storytelling. The collection of these texts in one 'location' is like a living tradition. We can see how the adaptations take influence from one another and interact with each other; this is merely the reflection of what has always been going on with *Journey to the West*. Similarly, the very collection of all these texts online demonstrates a clear example of the 'third text'; we can see the tradition of storytelling playing out in front of us online. I believe the sharing, interaction and production of texts online shows us what was happening around the time the novel was written, the third text in the Ming dynasty has gone, we cannot see it, the puppeteers, storytellers, actors and plays have all gone, but today we can see it alive and well. The evidence we need that the Ming author picked and used elements of the folk in the book, can be seen in today's texts, evidenced online. The way that each text utilises the features of all the different texts before it, shows us exactly what an author would have done who was knee deep in a rich tradition of storytelling related to the story. The Third text that we can see in the accumulation of texts and traditions online, is merely a reflection of what has always been going on in the storytelling of *Journey to the West*, we just could never see it. Although I believe that print did change the way we think, this is largely due to its cultural hegemony and the ideology of the printed book. I do not believe that the digital age has reinvented or re-established the cultural milieu of the pre-literate age. These traditions have never really stopped; the internet has just given us a place to witness it. What is important is that *Journey to the West* is not merely a narrative but an evolving medium that takes on elements of the environments it inhabits. As a story it is in constant flux and is ever growing, adding to its

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layers of referentiality. This interplay between story and media is a part of the nature of the third text; that storytellers use the techniques found in other media within their own. This has helped establish that not only is the story a medium, but as such an environment that is immersive in its narrative and multiplicity. It surrounds so many elements of Chinese cultural identity that its importance is seen in every aspect of life. It is seen in every entertainment technology developed, as well as in the fruit of farmers and the temples of Chinese diaspora. It is more than a story but a medium for Chinese identity.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Reviewing the Research

I began the research for this thesis looking for the reflections of oral traditions in *Journey to the West* texts as the structures of the story as a medium. Part way through the research and content analysis I realised that this was an oversimplification of not only the storytelling traditions of *Journey to the West*, but also of the nuances of the orality/literacy dichotomy as well. The aims of the research then developed into a diachronic study of *Journey to the West* and how, as a story, it has been overwhelmingly underappreciated for its value in the culture of storytelling, and undervalued as anything other than a novel, adapted into other media. This development came from the compiling of the filmography as the sheer amount of 'adaptations' suggested a cultural importance beyond the concept of literary adaptation. Like most researchers, I often questioned the importance of my aims, and whether or not my view would hold validity in the study of *Journey to the West*, or indeed the implications in Media ecology. A number of these anxieties were put to rest with the publication of Hongmei Sun's *Transforming Monkey: Adaptation and Representation of a Chinese Epic* (2018), which validates many of my own ideas and beliefs related to the story and adaptation. Sun asserts:

> Much of the existing scholarly research on this classic story is focused on authorship and formative history of the sixteenth century novel...Little has been written about the Monkey King image in contemporary settings from the approach of adaptation, despite the obvious importance of this approach for Journey to the West, which is the product of repeated adaptations and maintains its influence in popular culture through ongoing adaptation today. Journey to the West is an accretive text, shaped by many hands at many times, and through interactions with many audiences. Although current readers tend to think of contemporary adaptations as "adaptations only" and the sixteenth-century version as "the original text," the latter itself falls in the middle of a long chain of adaptations and exists in multiple forms… (Sun 2018 pp.5-6)

When reading Sun's outline, it is clear that many of my own assertions are represented. Sun's publication is a source *of* validity, as my own theories are seen as a greater concern to wider scholarship than I first thought. Both Sun and I assert that there is a striking misunderstanding of the story beyond the concept of the Ming novel, but we have both taken this concern into different arenas. Although there are of course overlaps, as I discuss in chapter five, the only great similarity is in our scholarly concern. Whereas Sun has looked at the sociopolitical and cultural elements that have influenced the development of the Monkey King image, I aimed to look at the wider implications of the story as a cultural commodity: a medium, one that's influence came from the culture and context of storytelling that surrounded it at any given time. Unlike Sun, my study also aimed to evaluate the very nature of communication that we as scholars have built around such studies. By looking at the story from 7th Century to modern day through a diachronic media ecology lens, I believed I could make more valuable connections between modern versions of the story and the traditions of Chinese storytelling throughout the story's development. I feel that this intention has been met by the research and that the aims have been largely seen through, despite surprises along the journey.

The research questions have been examined through both the content analysis, and more importantly, the qualitative textual analysis of the various texts and their given storytelling environment. I will briefly reassert the questions and outline how the research has responded to these. The first asked: In what ways is the relationship between orality-literacy important to the story's success and survival? The central analysis of orality and literacy in the texts and the traditions of Chinese storytelling, are a major concern of the research. The evidence garnered from this analysis unveiled a very complex relationship between both orality and literacy within the story; within the practices of Chinese storytelling from the Tang dynasty to modern day; and within the study media ecology itself. I believe the investigation of the nature of orality and literacy, along with the thorough interrogation of the

literature that concerns itself with this study, has aided the understanding of how the Ming novel became the 'original' and 'definitive' text, due to the hegemonic status and bias of print. This ultimately ensured the survival of the story in the form of an artefact. However, the investigations and analysis of texts predating the novel, as well as the novel itself in chapters three and four, establish a complex relationship between orality and literacy within the story. I suggest that the exchange and interplay between the two within Chinese storytelling is embedded in the medium of *Journey to the West*. This, I call the oral-literate symbiosis makes up part of the structural elements of the story and its component parts and suggests that there is even an epistemic balance of orality-literacy that runs throughout the texts and is specific to the story and the Chinese context.

Question two asked: How does the number of texts relating to *Journey to the West* add to the understanding of the story as a medium and a tradition of storytelling? The results of the content analysis add a wealth of data about the frequency of story specific motifs and tales; this immediately presents data that has never been compiled before about the film and television versions of *Journey to the West*. The qualitative analysis of this data has informed us of the story, beyond that of the Ming novel, as having features akin to the tradition of Chinese storytelling. Furthermore, many of the story's motifs can be found in other storytelling media such as oral recitations, puppetry, opera and theatre; some of which pre-date the novel. These motifs strongly suggest that the story is a continued storytelling tradition that has consistently been told in different media. This analysis has been conducted throughout chapters three to six, however the primary analysis of film and television texts in chapter five help to bring all of the evidence amassed in the research together, to present the *Journey to the West* as a medium separate from the technologies that use it as content, and a continued tradition of Chinese culture, and not merely adaptations of a book (Sun 2018).

Chapter six concerns itself primary with addressing the issues in the third research question: In what ways does the experience and access of adaptations online reflect traditions outside of print? The chapter uses the research from the content analysis that established motifs and traditions in the story that exist outside the novel and investigates their continuation in online media technologies. There is also a detailed investigation of both websites and mobile applications and the way that these relate to traditions of potential experiences of storytelling from Chinese storytelling traditions that *Journey to the West* would have been told in. This looks to draw on research related to the diachronic representations of media ecology and how changing the way in which we look at Journey to the West as a medium the model of a spiral, helps to make the connections between texts and media.

The final question: In what ways does the story create an environment? Is implicitly examined throughout the thesis, and explicitly examined in the final chapter. All the chapters look to garner evidence that the story of *Journey to the West* is a medium, and one of the core media ecology philosophies is that "the words medium and environment are synonyms" (Strate 2017 p.112.) In chapter three I examined the monk Xuanzang as a medium of change in both the story of *Journey to the West,* and in the environment of Chinese culture, Buddhism and storytelling. Chapter four examined the environment of orality and literacy and its impact on both print and performance. In chapter five the analysis of film and television texts not only examined the story as an environment within these media, but also discussed the environment of storytelling itself. This was framed around the analysis of repetitive features of the story in film and television evidencing a culture of storytelling related to *Journey to the West*; the third text. Chapter six explores the question explicitly by building on the discussion of the third text to suggest that the environment of the internet and its assimilation of other media in an archive, allows us to play witness to the third text in *Journey to the West. T*his

environment of storytelling, I suggest, is what has been going on for hundreds of years, regardless of the technologies that make the story its content. Finally, the Monkey King as a metonymic figure, is examined as an environment due to his multiplicity and repetition across China. Along with other elements of the *Journey to the West* medium, the immersive environment of the story in China suggests that it is of great cultural importance to the country's identity.

This approach has been presented chronologically but is also diachronic, and cumulative. The research has certainly gone a long way to investigating these questions and interrogating the complex issues that arise in the process. Below I outline the main findings of this investigation and how the research contributes to new knowledge.

7.2 Findings and Contribution

This thesis has always been a multidisciplinary one that has looked to find evidence that will both add to the scholarly appreciation of *Journey to the West*, as well as tackle paradigmatic issues in Media ecology. The two areas have consistently complimented and overlapped one another, and neither could have been successful without the other. The findings in each chapter can be looked at synchronically and diachronically; in what they bring to the arguments and discourse in temporal discussions of the story and the communication environment, and the overall implications on the study of *Journey to the West* and media ecology models.

The research has, by and large, centred itself around the orality-literacy dichotomy that has been at the heart of a popular branch of media ecology for decades. The use of Ong's thesis, along with Nayar's methodology, helped focus the synchronic and diachronic study of

the story, and therefore the examination of *Journey to the West* as a central text, interrogated this paradigm throughout the study. The primary aim of the research was to cement *Journey to the West* as a medium and not just a novel. I believe this was achieved. By removing the story from the media that use it as content, I discerned that it was a highly complex organic narrative that utilized and assimilated the structures and conditions of other media, in the same way media use the story. These elements help to form a developing structure to the story as a medium, one which is an ongoing process. The structural elements and components of the story as a medium, are clearly linked to the traditions of Chinese oral storytelling genres. These have historically been developed by a very specific cultural interplay of orality and literacy within China. I believe I have gone a long way in suggesting that *Journey to the West* is structured for an audience through this oral-literate epistemic context. To truly appreciate the nuances and cultural value of the story, one would have to have lived in that environment within China. The metonymic function of the 'image' of the Monkey King has discerned the palimpsestic nature of the story and I am confident that I have revealed new territory for discussion in both *Journey to the West* scholarship, and in a media ecology approach to narratives as media.

The stories of Xuanzang and his early transformation into fiction, through to the study of the novel itself in chapter four, evidence a continued and complex relationship between orality and literacy. Unlike Ong's thesis on the great divide, there seems to be little evidence of the binarism discussed between the psychodynamics of orality and literacy. The evidence from the Dunhuang grottoes from the 7th Century through to the Chinese vernacular novels of the Ming Dynasty suggests an interplay of the oppositions explored by Ong. The oral-literate symbiosis, as I have referred to it, is instead the exploration of the nuances that these communications share in storytelling. Here my theories join Finnigan (2003), Foley (1998)

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and Bordahl (1999, 2002, 2013) in expressing deep anxiety about suggesting such binarism, especially in the Chinese context. My use of scholars in the field of oral traditions helps to formally situate these claims from contextual evidence. In particular, the use of Bordahl's extensive work in Chinese oral traditions is essential in bringing the study cultural and national context; proving that Ong's discussions of oral-literate dichotomies tend to marginalise oral-literate functions outside of the West (Street 1995, Sterne 2011), and therefore they miss contrary evidence. The oral-literate symbiosis is incrementally new knowledge based on the aforementioned work of these scholars, however what I believe I have added to the field is in the analysis of *Journey to the West*. Namely, that the embedded interplay of orality and literacy in Chinese storytelling is so engrained in the make-up of China and *Journey to the West*, that it may have established its own episteme. Building on Nayar's (2004, 2010, 2020) assertion that film privileges different episteme, I suggest that in the context of *Journey to the West*, both the story and its native audience, understand the narrative in film and television through a culturally contextual oral-literate episteme. That the general public, regardless of their relationship to the written word, have been culturally immersed in oral-literate interplay through a specific Chinese history and development of storytelling. This I argue, is evidenced in the story specific components of *Journey to the West* and their relationship to oral-literate traditions.

Oppositional to this evidence, I also assert that Ong's central claim, that literacy changes the way we think, is in many ways validated. In my thesis this goes beyond the understanding of individual's life-world but is more closely related to the adoption of print *culture*. It is explored early on in my research that I cite the cultural hegemony and ideology of print (Foley 2012) as the primary reason for the centralisation of the Ming novel as *authoritative*, *original* and *definitive*. This is increasingly important, as the wealth of evidence of the storytelling of *Journey to the West* before and around the publication of the

Ming novel clearly evidences the opposite. Culture and the pursuit of the *author* and *ownership* have devalued this evidence. The study of the features of the vernacular novel against contextual studies of Chinese storytelling, also prove that the novel was a commodity of tropes, traditions and motifs from a living folk culture of storytelling, which the ideology of print instead suggested are "authored" by a singular writer.

Although there have certainly been many scholars that make comparisons between film and folklore (Sherman 2005, Koven 2008) and others that have specifically looked at *Journey to the West* texts and their functions (Sun 2018), there have been no other studies of *Journey to the West* that look to isolate and analyse the story specific motifs as a morphology. No other study has attempted to investigate the story from Tang dynasty beginnings to modern audio-visual texts, as a way of examining the contextual storytelling traditions that keep the story alive, rather than merely a process of adaptation from oral to literature to film. This, I believe is a major part of the new knowledge that my research offers, that it is not the media that keeps the story alive per-se, but the repetition of the story as a medium itself. The multiplicity of the story has kept the tradition of *Journey to the West* relevant and culturally important, and this is something that is far beyond traditional literary and filmic adaptation theory. This new knowledge is explored in several ways: through the media ecology notion of orality - literacy and secondary orality; through the analysis of the texts themselves as both individual and collective traditions; and through the importance of the living culture of storytelling in what I call 'the third text'.

'The third text' is a concept that I discuss in chapter five and six. It stems from the evidence collated throughout the research in regard to the repeated storytelling motifs that form *Journey to the West*. The evidence of stories and plays before the Ming novel suggest that there must have, in some capacity, been an 'original' to the story of *Journey to the West*, in the basic form we know today. However, in chapter five I argue that this 'original' has

been lost within the culture of storytelling in the Ming dynasty, we can never 'know' the original. However, we do know from the novel, texts before it, and texts after it, that the basic story, characters and features have been largely unchanged for hundreds of years: A Buddhist priest sets off on a quest to collect scriptures from the West, accompanied by magic disciples who rescue him from woes and fend off demons along the way. I suggest that if we can ignore the linearity and chronological *line* of Ong's thesis, that centralises print and its influence on storytelling, we can see that the lasting influence on the story is the *tradition* of storytelling that surrounded these texts, Ming novel and all. The performative traditions of song, oral storytellers, opera, and puppetry, all had a great influence on the texts that have survived through time - even if these didn't survive themselves. I evidence this with the motifs of opera in audio-visual texts, along with the influence of one audio-visual text on another. The representation and motifs that are shared in theses texts, both visual and aural, demonstrate the continued influence of an 'oral' culture in the continuation of the story.

The Third text is essentially the idea that print or 'the novel' of *Journey to the West* is not the 'central text' but gets its source material from the same place as the films, television shows and games - from culture and popular arts that are not evidenced or are seen as peripheral - these *are* the third text, as they represent the culture, environment and tradition of storytelling that developed and created the story. It is a concept that decentralizing and destabilizing the bias and hegemony of print in *Journey to the West*. Like the third witness to the car accident in the *Third Man* - who offers the context of what actually happened - the third text (or culture of storytelling) that surrounded the novel would have contextualized and evidenced where a great deal of the narrative events and tropes came from. Conceptually, this theory argues that no 'original' can exist as the source material is not singular but environmental and cultural. This includes not only the content of the story, but practices of telling the story as well. The third text then represents an environmental bias, in which

storytellers explicitly use content around them but implicitly are influenced by how others'

deliver that content, which impacts the formation of their own stories. In many ways it

suggests that all content is structure and all structure is content, all of which is informed by

the environment of storytelling. In chapter six I have gone further to suggest that the evidence

of the current culture and traditions of storytelling of *Journey to the West* found online (from

films, TV shows, Games, filmed actualities, fan made videos, songs etc.) represents part of

the *third text* of today's society. Any adaptation made today gets its influence from the

multitude of texts and traditions that can be seen everywhere. I suggest that this was always

the case, but the internet has just made it available to see. If we can clearly see the 'third text'

in contemporary media, we can assume that this was taking place whilst someone penned the

novel; it was just in the form of storytellers, plays, puppet shows, operas, dances, artwork and

songs. It was merely the power of print culture that suggested the book was central - as it was

an artifact.

Although the ideas of the Third text are explored in concepts like the ATU folktale

index or Foley's traditional referentiality, unlike other scholars, I am looking to evidence a

tradition of storytelling that has been going on under our nose almost entirely unnoticed. It is

only with the use of the internet as an archive, that this evidence and culture can be seen. This

is pivotal to the research, as unlike scholars who look to view the internet as either an

example of very new culture (which it might be) or a return to a more oral noetic (which it

possibly may be), I am suggesting that it is evidence that the culture of storytelling at least,

has continued relatively unchanged for a thousand years. It is the concept of media and its

dominance and hegemony that *images* change, where consistency and stability in cultural

storytelling has largely been the case. The analysis I have completed on the audio-visual texts

are simply one dimension of *Journey to the West* texts studied, and they exhibit a

phenomenon in which a single text represents an entire culture of storytelling; imagine what a

thorough examination of all media platforms would contribute. The accumulation of these texts online has shown us a tradition that has been continuing in film and media for nearly 90 years; each text has drawn from the last, as well as drawing from the unseen third text of any given social and cultural time period. I suggest that the explicit borrowing and stitching of motifs between film and television texts over this period shows us what has been happening for hundreds of years as a continued living tradition.

In a similar fashion to the third text, I believe that my approach to the analysis the story as a medium adds new knowledge to both the study of Media ecology as well as *Journey to the West*. In the former I have built on a plethora of media ecology work that has attempted to visualise and organise the diachronic development of communication and technology (Ong 1984, Saurberg 2009, Strate 2017). However, no other scholar has approached this discussion from the same standpoint as me, evaluating the progression of time and technology as an expanding spiral. This is not just new knowledge in design, but in application as well. As a way of analysisng *Journey to the West* as a medium, it offered a non-linear method that did not marginalize nor promote any single medium but applied the same value to all, including the story itself. This allows for a layered diachronic approach and appreciation to media and their interactions with other media.

Similarly, in the latter case, *Journey to the West* being studied as a medium has never been approached before. Lance Strate (2014a) has made the case for narratives to be considered media, however to date, no detailed investigation of this claim has been undertaken. The investigation of *Journey to the West* as such, has not only added new knowledge to the field of media ecology in approach, but also in the study of *Journey to the West*. By suggesting the story is a medium, the interconnectedness of all the story's versions can be appreciated as the same thing, and the bias of media technology reassessed when discussing narrative. By taking this approach I have proved that the story of *Journey to the*

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West, and its narrative structures, are deeply immersed in the tradition of Chinese oral storytelling which is structurally informed by the cultural interplay of orality and literacy. This is an approach to the story which has not been taken before, and my application of oral tradition scholarship to the film and television texts has not been done before. The application especially of Foley's (1985) traditional referentiality to the study and proposal of the Monkey King as metonymy should add to the study and appreciation of J*ourney to the West.*

In the study of *Journey to the West*, I believe this research has contributed a great deal to the understanding of the story beyond the novel and beyond adaptation. Instead, I have suggested that there is greater cultural value to the story and the storytelling of the story, which suggests that the narrative is a cultural commodity, and important to Chinese identity and the cultural milieu. Similarly, the compiling of the morphology is a method not necessarily seen in the study of film and media texts as it is based on a single story and its cultural context of storytelling, rather than a genre or movement. No study of *Journey to West* has been completed in this way.

7.3 Reflections on Methodology

One of the main aims of this study was to decentralise the concept of print and the novel in the appreciation of Media ecology and the appreciation of *Journey to the West* as a cultural commodity of storytelling. This has been achieved through the systematic deconstruction of texts as singular entities that offer single values. Similarly, I have looked to devalue structure systems that suggest the relationships between orality, literacy and modern communication are understood through their oppositions or reinvented features. Instead, I have looked to assign the alternative view that these structures are ideological and embedded through the cultural adoption of media, and not the media's lasting change on culture. I aim to suggest

that beyond media, the culture of storytelling has largely gone on undisturbed, despite what media cultures would have us believe. It then seems at odds with this that I would adopt such structuralist methodological approaches in the research itself.

The use of Ong's thesis and indeed the diachronic and synchronic study of *Journey to the West*, has been used as a way to isolate and analyse the story in different communication environments. The media ecology approach to these stages and environments, and their assumed oppositions and relationships have then been tested through the analysis of *Journey to the West*, instead suggesting that the environments themselves are largely fallacising these binary structures. However, when studying *Journey to the West* itself, there were most definitely advantages to taking the contextual approach in using the study of oral tradition to frame the coding and results.

Compiling and transferring oral tradition methods with media ecology approaches is not an unusual method. Both disciplines have a long intertwined relationship with one another. Nayar's approach to the analysis of film texts is evidence of this and I have looked to build on this. My contextual approach to the application of the Chinese oral tradition to a film and television sample, is something that also adds to my contribution in research. My marrying of these different approaches makes for a more contextualised and culturally appropriate analysis of the data. There is a desire to move away from more general models, which I feel remained at the centre of my approach in analysisng *Journey to the West*. Without the context of Chinese storytelling and traditions, there was too much room for generalisations. Similarly, in the field of Film and Media, this approach has enabled a more valid approach to story specific storytelling - if we consider Bordwell's (1988) criticism of using Propp's structuralist morphology in the study of film. He suggested that applying the narrative morphology of the Russian folktale onto all films was methodologically unsound. In this respect I have created one which is of contextual value only, it is for the study of *Journey*

to the West, in the context of Chinese storytelling from 7th century onward. In this respect the method of analysis is quite detailed and valid.

However, there are limits with this approach in the wider thesis of the study, as the sample did not look at all media adaptations of the text such as comics, manga, games etc. In fact, the sample was limited to film and television even in its audio-visual representations of the story. A wider analysis and morphology of texts related to multiple media forms outside of the novel and film and media texts would enable even more validity to the research. This was however, outside of the scope of this study.

This method is also only usable to a specific model - not as an ideal that can be applied to all texts. The structures explored within the visual and aural motifs are not strictly applicable to other stories; each story would need to be contextualised against its own cultural storytelling traditions and specific story motifs. However, this limitation is seen as a positive thing, as this is a genealogical analysis as well as being a typological one. The more contextual and the more relevant to the individual story, the better.

My media ecology approach also looked to break down some of the dichotomies outlined by the orality-literacy focus within the field. I do not mean to say that this study is in any way paradigm shifting. However, the study of *Journey to the West* has definitely raised some questions about the lack of mobility and some of the limitations with being too strict in these models. It suggests instead that assertions about the differences between communicative ages and psychologies may need to be more flexible when they define 'stages' against one another, and that oversimplified structures such as binaries and parentheses may underrepresent cultural nuances. Studying *Journey to the West* through these models tends to highlight discrepancies with being too binary in these discussions of communications, as the fluidity of communication in the story suggests cultural nuance.

Finally, I believe the use of the content analysis was an essential component to this approach. Although it was not the primary focus of the data analysis and reflection of the text in the media ecology approach, it clearly highlighted patterns of interest and focused the qualitative study of the story as a medium, and is replicable as a process. The qualitative analysis of the data results and their application to the story in other media highlighted so many similarities that it revealed a great deal about the culture of storytelling in *Journey to the West* that was not known before.

7.4 Future research

Although I feel that this research represents new knowledge in its approach and results in the analysis of data, it is only scratching the surface of wider discussions in academic discourse surrounding media ecology and *Journey to the West*. I intend to explore the findings of this research in more detail, preparing many of the findings presented in Chapters 3-6 for publication in peer reviewed academic journals.

The data garnered from the content analysis can be further evaluated and the methodology of contextualising the content and categories by national storytelling traditions can be further tested on other traditions. Stories such as the *The Water Margin*, *Three Kingdoms* and any other story cycles that may have a multitude of texts could benefit from an analysis of their structures and functions from this point of view. The method of creating a bespoke morphology for the story could aid the understanding of many different story traditions.

One of the areas that I was not able to cover in the scope of the research was the role of the spectator in the reception of the story. It would be of great value moving forward with this model of research to ascertain what the reception of the morphology of the story was, and what that might reveal about cultural values, identity and gratifications. Being able to analyse the audience's role in the production of meaning in these motifs will surely bring further knowledge on the importance of the story and its role in society.

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Appendix A

Annotated Filmography Chinese (Including Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan)

1. Sun Xingzhe Dazhan Jin Qian Bao (1926) 孙行者大战金钱豹 (Monkey King Conquers the Leopard) The King of the Southern Hill
2. Xiyu Ji – Pan Si Dong (Cave of the Silken Web) (1927) 西游记-盘丝洞 (Journey to the West—the Spiders Cave) **Silken web**
3. The Monkey King's Struggles (1927)
4. Journey to the West: Uproar in Heaven (1928) **Monkey wreeks havoc in heaven**
1. Pigsy's Duel at Liusha River (1928) **Duel at Sands River**
2. Monkey King Conquers the Black Wind (1928) stealing the cassock
3. Journey to the West: the Bottomless Pit (1928) white faced gold nosed rat/mouse demon
4. Journey to the West: the Yellow Monster (1928) yellow robe demon or yellow wind demon
5. Journey to the West: the Kingdom of the Black Rooster (1928) king in the well
6. The True and False Monkey King (1928) the duplicate monkey
7. New Journey to the West I (1929)
8. New Journey to the West II (1930)
9. New Journey to the West III (1930)
10. Princess Iron Fan (1941) feature length animation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRPbzaV3tuo (subtitles in English put in by uploader)

11. The Big Duel Between the Monkey King and Pigsy / 孫悟空大戰豬八戒 (1948) meeting pigsy http://hkmdb.com/db/search/results/Yg5FeaOMjl9CyPrFUzwmqQ-1.mhtml
12. The Red Kid (1949) The red boy

http://hkmdb.com/db/movies/view.mhtml?id=922&display_set=eng

13. Monkey King's Adventure in Heaven / 馬騮精大鬧天宮 (1949) 1-7

http://hkmdb.com/db/movies/view.mhtml?id=999&display_set=eng

14. Pigsy Destroys the Spider Cave / 豬八戒打爛盤絲洞 (1949) cave of web

http://hkmdb.com/db/search/results/Yg5FeaOMjl9CyPrFUzwmqQ-1.mhtml

15. Monkey's Adventures in the Girls' Kingdom / 馬騮精大鬧女兒國 (1950) land of women

http://hkmdb.com/db/search/results/EOvelXy6a4vX2EPwiCSMQ-1.mhtml

16. The Battle Between Monkey and Gold Spotted Leopard / 馬騮精大戰金錢豹 (1950) King of the southern hill

http://tw.18dao.net/%E5%BD%B1%E8%A6%96%E8%B3%87%E6%96%99/%E9%A6%AC%E7%B2%BE%E5%A4%A7%E6%88%B0%E9%87%91%E9%8C%A2%E8%B1%B9_%281950%29 info

17. How Nezha Thrice Tricked the Six-eared Monkey / 哪宅三戲六耳猴 (1950) 6 eared macaque

http://www.tudou.com/programs/view/qCqOfaju7dE

18. Princess Iron Fan/ (1951)

http://hkmdb.com/db/movies/view.mhtml?id=1271&display_set=eng

19. Pigsy Takes a Wife / 豬八戒招親 (1953) meeting pigsy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZmBmE2Vbzw

http://www.56.com/u30/v_NjE5MjA5NTU.html

20. Journey to the West / 西遊記 (1956)

http://oldfish60.blog.163.com/blog/static/775725152014828112472/

http://www.systranet.com/translate/

21. Pigsy's Marriage / 豬八戒招親 (1957) meeting pigsy

http://baike.baidu.com/subview/13388085/13937559.htm

22. Red Kid and Monkey King / 紅孩兒大戰孫悟空 (1957)

http://hkmdb.com/db/search/results/34WFO3pnD8s2NzFc1s6BgQ-1.mhtml

23. Pigsy Eats Watermelon (Chinese: 猪八戒吃西瓜) (1958)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_eQc6ZDEiw

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckSYoxFttiI

24. How Princess Iron Fan Burnt Down the Heavenly Gate (1959) Princess Iron Fan

http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTE4NTkwMDEy.html

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6BA4uidPdQ

25. How Scarlet Boy Rescued His Mother from the Dragon King's Palace / 紅孩兒水晶宮救
母 (1959)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqD7S0-Axms singing

26. Monkey King and Skeleton Demon (1961/62) Shaoju Opera Troupe – Bone
Demon

http://www.1ting.com/xiqu/song/d6/4084.html

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoQiKO6xxaY

27. The Monkey King Stormed the Sea Palace / 孫悟空鬧龍宮 (1962)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLGv2K9Srms

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ORa7U6GRHA

28. The Birth of the Monkey King / 馬騮精出世(上集) (1962) 1-7
29. The Road to the West / 唐三藏取西經 (sequel to birth of the monkey king) (1962)
30. Red Boy/Scarlet boy / 紅孩兒 (1962)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9UnnwfV8xQ

31. Havoc in Heaven / 大鬧天宮 (1964) 1-7
32. The Fox hit seven monkey 孙悟空七打九尾狐 (1964)
    http://www.vidrope.com/video/3826868/1964
33. Which One Is Which / 真假猴王鬥八仙 (1965) 6 eared macaque

http://www.amazon.com/THE-MONKEY-KING-HIS-
DOUBLE/dp/B000OYNT5U/ref=sr_1_35?s=movies-tv&ie=UTF8&qid=1425747366&sr=1-
35&keywords=monkey+king

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGvTdPodGjs – possibly not the same film as above on the
varying images of Buddha – story seems to included a monkey king double – havoc in heaven –

fighting the immortals, joining the priest and spider cave (one part of singing) definitely has eight immortals underwater scenes too.

34. Monkey Saint Versus Eight Fairies / 孫悟空七鬥八大仙 (1965)
   http://gy99.org/database/dianying/413908.html
35. Monkey Saint Raids the Monastery / 孫悟空大鬧雷音寺 (1965)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EvukF13tN4 - involves dragon king

36. A Modern Monkey King / 摩登馬騮精 (1965)
37. Monkey Saint Teases the Fairy of Flowers / 孫悟空三戲百花仙 (1965) (Monkey King and the Imps / 孫悟空大戰群妖 (1966) pigsy and Xuanzang pregnant– not 100%)

http://www.56.com/u31/v_OTI5NDQ1NjQ.html

http://baike.baidu.com/view/10963414.htm

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKCM9mA7LYs

http://catalog.digitalarchives.tw/item/00/44/e4/f7.html

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW1TXot9GdE

38. The Monkey Goes West / 西遊記 (1966) monkey meets xuanzang and pigsy and
39. Princess Iron Fan (1966) – Princess Iron Fan
40. Cave of the silken web (1967) spider cave
41. Land of Many Perfumes (1968) land of women and scorpion
42. The Monkey in Hong Kong / 孫悟空大鬧香港 (1969)
http://movie.douban.com/subject/3826175/

43. Monkey Comes Again / 孫悟空再鬧香港 (1971)
44. Battles with the Red Boy (1972) - Red Boy
http://hkmdb.com/db/movies/view.mhtml?id=10883&display_set=eng

45. Fantastic Magic Baby , The 1975 – red boy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgtSqRBl8y8

46. Monkey King With 72 Magic / 新孫悟空72變 (1976) 1-7
http://www.56.com/u21/v_NjIzNzQ3NjI.html

47. Dingding conquers the Monkey King/丁丁战猴王
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2GYs0EZuNM

48. Ginseng Fruit - also known as Stealing the Ginseng Fruit (1981), a Chinese animation by Shanghai Animation Film Studio.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tFml9ohpoM&spfreload=10

49. New Pilgrims to the West / 新西遊記 or Monkey War / 孫悟空大戰飛人國 (1982) - monkey banished
http://www.tudou.com/programs/view/aWvZmyB5smo

50. The Mountain of Fire/ 火焰山 (1983) Princess Iron Fan
http://movie.mtime.com/48845/ http://www.56.com/u50/v_ODYxMzE2MjM.html

51. True and False Monkey King /真假美猴王 (1983) six eared macaque
http://xiyou.cntv.cn/v-462dfdfa-669e-11e2-b091-a4badb4696b6.html

52. The Bottomless Pit/孙悟空大闹无底洞 (1983) white faced gold nosed rat/mouse demon

http://www.tudou.com/programs/view/wLR59mkoJMw/

53. The Pig Rumour (1983)
54. The Monkey King Conquers the Demon / 金猴降妖 (1985) animation bone demon

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Rx6v44yPUI

55. Monkey Fights the Bull Demon (1989) – princess iron fan

http://www.tudou.com/programs/view/jkwl-4ULFB4

56. Journey to the West / go West and Subdue Demons大話西遊:西行平妖 (1991)
57. Chinese Odyssey - Pandora 's Box, A 1995

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1gp0xZOqUk

58. Chinese Odyssey 2 - Cinderella, A 1995

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qno2Ao7fOUY

59. Heavenly Legend 1999

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hg90zY8CSOc

60. Master Q Fantasy Zone Battle - New Journey To The West / 老夫子魔界夢戰記之新西遊記 (2003) animation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPXEMY6X0l4

61. The Fire Ball / 紅孩兒:決戰火焰山 (2005) Red Boy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hab_KzQGPDA

62. Chinese Tall Story , A (2005)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gskIgri0a8

63. Journey to the West 1 / 七彩西遊記之朱八戒招親 (2006) erotic film
64. Journey to the West 2/ (2006)   erotic film
65. Monkey King Vs. Er Lang Shen / 孫悟空大戰二郎神 (2007) CGI animation Havoc in Heaven

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monkey_King_vs._Er_Lang_Shen

66. Prequel of the Monkey King / 齊天大聖一前傳 (2009) CGI animation first 1-7

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KcK-zmKDmM

67. Xi You Ji / the Swordman's Dream (2010)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1mnVOIzGK8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEBOQ9ibOp8

68. Emperor Visits the Hell (2012)
69. Conquering the demons (2013)

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x101o47_journey-to-the-west-conquering-the-demonscd1_shortfilms

70. The monkey king (2014) chapters 1-7 but including princess iron fan and bull demon characters

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVN-sdAlEw

71. Monkey King Hero is Back (2015)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUL3u0dnrn4

72. Surprise (2015)
73. Monkey King 2 (2016) – the white Bone demon
74. Journey to the West conquering the demons 2 (2016) - bone demon, fox and red boy
75. A Chinese Odyssey Part 3 (2016)
76. Dream Journey 2 - Princess Iron Fan (2017)
77. Winning Buddha (2017)
78. Wu Kong (2017)
79. Monkey King 3 (2018)

International Films

80. Son Goku of Enoken Japanese 1940
81. Monkey Sun 1959 Japanese
82. Alakazam the Great (1960) Chapter 1-7
83. **The Tale of Osamu Tezuka – Japanese TV show film 1989**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2g3xi1ocx0

info: http://cartoonresearch.com/index.php/the-tezuka-pro-tv-specials-9-i-am-son-goku-the-osamu-tezuka-story/

84. The Monkey King, also called The Lost Empire (2001) television adaptation of the legend by Sci Fi Channel.
85. My Son Goku – Japanese TV Special (2003)

86. Saiyūki /Adventures of the Super Monkey (2007)
87. The Forbidden Kingdom (2008 USA)
88. Super Monkey Returns (2011) Korean Film
89. Monkey Wars Red Boy 孫悟空大戰紅孩兒 (UKNOWN) one off animation red boy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVbW_-8Wheo

90. Doraemon: The Record of Nobita's Parallel Visit to the West (1988)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9aszEDpsAc

Television and animation series (both Chinese and international)

91. Goku no Daiboken (1967) Japanese anime **39 episodes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXN2ExzGu3U

92. Monkey Magic (Saiyūki) (1978–1980) Japanese television series **52 episodes**
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1u7wzu_monkey-magic-saiyuuki-episode-

93. Saiyuki Starzinger (1978-1979) Japanese anime **73 episodes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOJtDSbDAZ4

94. Dragonball (1984-1988) Japanese anime **153 episodes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MP8QDBBQNHg

95. **Journey to the West (1986 and second series 1999) 41 episodes**
http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTE2NjA2OTEy.html

96. Journey to the Fantasy World西游漫记 1996 animation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGSynwRLuP8

97. Journey to the West (1996) Hong Kong television series produced by TVB is followed by a 1998 sequel, Journey to the West II.**72 episodes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbP2sK2dBg4

98. Saiyūki (1997) Japanese manga series **50 episodes**

99. Monkey Magic(1998) is a Japanese animated retelling of the legend **13 episodes**

100. Legends of the Monkey King 西游记 (1999) Chinese animation **52 episode**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOxLBk_gb9M

101. Shinzo (2000) is an anime loosely based on *Journey to the West.* 32 **episodes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGktzMpfxo4

102. The Monkey King: Quest for the Sutra (2002) Hong Kong television series loosely based on the novel. It was produced by TVB. **40 episodes**
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2737ds_monkey-king-quest-for-the-sutra-ep11-eng_shortfilms
103. Monkey Typhoon (2002) is a manga **52 episodes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUjkW0vhlOw

104. The Lotus Lamp (2005) **35 episodes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJ_O0f1kfC8

105. Saiyūki (2006) Japanese television series produced by Fuji Television. **11 episodes**

106. Iyashite Agerun Saiyūki (2007) adult anime
107. Wu Cheng-En and Journey to the West (2010) Chinese **45 episodes**
108. Journey to the West, a 2010 Chinese television series directed and produced by Cheng Lidong, starring Fei Zhenxiang as Sun Wukong. It started airing on Zhejiang Satellite TV on 14 February 2010. **52 episodes**
109. Journey to the West, a 2011 Chinese television series produced by Zhang Jizhong, starring Wu Yue as Sun Wukong. It started airing on Southern Television Guangdong on 28 July 2011. **66 episodes**
110. Happy Marshal (2011) **40 episodes**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOJP6XgorLw&list=PLVP1E9TF4V6igN6r5jgTDno53jgYnNp8t

111. *The Flying Superboard* is a Korean animated television series based on *Journey to the West*. (1990-2002) **54 episodes**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9UdRbctx88

112. Monkey King CCTV animated series 2009 **52 episodes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILXFMfOVXCE

113. Baby travel recovery began 2012 26 episodes
http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDEyODY2NzYw.html

114. The Monkey, Monk and Demons go West
http://www.viki.com/videos/170757v-monkey-monk-and-the-monsters-go-west-episode-1

115. Bajie is fallen from heaven (UNKNOWN)**104 episodes**
http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2827281390?mo_device=1

116. Into the Badlands (2015) **16 episodes**

117. God Hunter (2015) animation China
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXPUgQDynOs

118. **Stories from Journey to the West 西游记的故事**

119. **A Korean Odyssey (2017) 20 episodes**

120. ***The New Legends of Monkey 10 episodes***

Appendix B

Data Results: Frequency Percentages

Code	Description	%
Green	**Based on the novel**	42
Grey	**Episodes are based on the novel, but new episodes also occur**	10.5
Pink	**Appropriations**	7.2
Yellow	**Unknown**	10
Blue	**New Episodes**	28.2
Red	**Erotic**	2.2

The Poem / Episode

CODE	DESCRIPTION	%
E1	**Chapters 1-7**	26.6
E2	**Havoc in heaven**	36.6
E3	**Princess Iron Fan**	23.3
E4	**The King of the southern hill**	10
E5	**Cave of the silken web**	26.6
E6	**Land of women**	6.6
E7	**Ginseng Fruit**	10
E8	**Meeting Pigsy**	13.3
E9	**Meeting Sandy**	13.3
E10	**Meeting Pigsy and Sandy**	20
E11	**Chapters 1-7 and meeting Pigsy and Sandy**	13.3
E12	**stealing the cassock**	10
E13	**white faced gold nosed rat/mouse demon**	6.6
E14	**yellow robe demon or yellow wind demon**	6.6
E15	**king in the well**	6.6
E16	**6 eared macaque**	13.3
E17	**Red boy**	13.3
E18	**Bone demon**	13.3
E19	**Scorpion demon**	10
E20	**Monkey banished**	23.3
E21	**Multiple episodes**	56.6
E22	**New Episode**	66.6

Visual motif and iconography – the repetitive representations of characters and objects

Code	Description	%
MK1	**Monkey King -conventional representation (including tiger skin, head band, fur, or armour)**	46.6
MK2	**Monkey King -Red suit**	26.6
MK3	**Monkey King -Operatic representation - swirl patterned suit/painted face**	33.3

MK4	**Monkey King -alternative representation**	23.3
MK5	**Monkey King -holds hand to head**	86.6
MK6	**Monkey King -cloud flying**	80
P1	**Pigsy -conventional representation (including hanfu, snout and ears)**	36.6
P2	**Pigsy -operatic representation -dark skinned and purple clothes including hat**	16.6
P3	**Pigsy -alternative representation**	36.6
P4	**Pigsy -Sleeping**	36.6
P5	**Pigs -eating**	46.6
P6	**Pigsy -flirting with women**	36.6
P7	**Pigsy -flying as a whirlwind**	3.3
F1	**Friar Sand -conventional representation (bearded, skull necklace)**	30
F2	**Frair Sand -operatic representation (ball necklace)**	23.3
F3	**Alternative representation**	30
X1	**Xuanzang -Traditional representation (white and red robes, traditional hat, staff)**	63.3
X2	**Xuanzang -carrying a scroll pack**	6.6
X3	**Xuanzang as female**	26.6
H	**Horse -White**	46.6
G1	**Guanyin -conventional representation (white robes, holding a jar of water in one hand and a willow branch in another)**	50
G2	**Guanyin -sat/stood in a lotus**	6.6
G3	**Guanyin -appearing in the air**	20
PI	**Princess Iron Fan -conventional representation (long dress/robes, dual swords)**	33.3
BK1	**Bull King/Ox Demon -conventional representation (dark armour, horns)**	30
BK2	**Bull King/Ox demon -represented with Ox face/head**	13.3
RB	**The Red Boy -conventional representation**	13.3
PN	**Prince Nezha -conventional representation**	16.6
PP1	**Props -Gold Banded Cudgel**	100
PP2	**Props -9 Pronged rake**	60
PP3	**Prop -Demon Quelling Staff**	43.3
PP4	**Prop -Palm leaf fan**	40
PP5	**Prop -Nezha's Rings**	16.6
PP6	**Props -Red Boy's Rings and staff**	6.6
DN	**Monsters supporting the demon antagonist**	83.3

The Scene

Code	Description	%
S1	**Attack form within - in which characters transform and attack antagonists from within their stomach**	30
S2	**Fight at the gates - protagonists and antagonists engage in a fight outside the antagonists lair**	63.3
S3	**Fight in the Lair - Protagonists, after sneaking into the lair fight**	70

	with the antagonists	
S4	Fighting on the road (to the west) - protagonists meet and fight antagonists on the road west.	66.6
S5	The feast - the pilgrims are given food by villagers/Kings/Officials or Antagonists have a banquet	23.3
S6	The pilgrims converse with villagers about their woes	30
S7	The Chase the Protagonist Chases and fights the antagonist (usually airborne) or vice versa	63.3
S8	The lookalike - characters have a doppelganger	16.6
S9	Shape-shifting - characters transform into other characters to confuse their enemies	30
S10	Transformation - characters turn into other objects such as insects or food or Monsters	73.3
S11	Seeking celestial help - protagonists seek advice and aid from various celestial beings	30
S12	In Media res the story begins with the character already on their journey with no explicit exposition.	63.3
S13	Continuing with the journey - after solving a problem the protagonists continue on their journey.	70
S14	Life in Heaven	30
S15	5 elements mountain - Monkey is subdued under Buddha's hand/5 Elements mountain	26.6
S16	Caught in a Gourd	23.3
S17	Dance/Circus Fighting	16.6
S18	Xuanzang kidnapped	63.3

Song/Narration – The use of singing and narration in presenting narrative information

CODE	DESCRIPTION	%
SI1	Singing -characters sing to one another as extended dialogue	16.6
SI2	Singing -characters sing to themselves as internal narrative	13.3
N1	Narration -narration by authorial voice	30
N1A	Narration -narration by authorial voice singing	16.6
N2	Narration -Characters talk to themselves to voice concerns and thought process	26.6
N3	Narration -Characters thoughts are heard by the viewer	10
M1	Music -synchronised cymbal music to action (fighting/moving)	26.6
M2	Music -Leitmotif signalling to the audience a repetitive action	10

Verbal traits – the use of colloquial language, boast and fliting

CODE	DESCRIPTION	%
FL1	Fliting -argument and boast whilst fighting	66.6
FL2	Fliting -argument or boast through song	3.3
FL3	Fliting -MK boasting about being made of stone and being unable to be hurt	36.6
FL4	Fliting -MK scolding P or P scolding MK	40
C1	Colloquial -swearing, insults	40
C2	colloquial -use of contemporary slang	56.6

Appendix C: Example Content Grids for coding

Text number on Filmography and date

- 1941 Princess Iron Fan
- 4 1958 Pigsy Eats Watermelon
- 5 1959 Scarlet boy rescues his Mother
- 6 1959 How Princess Iron Fan Burnt Down
- 7 1961-62 Monkey King and Skeleton
- 10 1964 Havoc in Heaven
- 11 1965 Which One Is Which
- 16 1966 The Monkey Goes West
- 19 1967 Cave of the silken web
- 21 1976 Monkey King With 72 Magic
- 22 1981 Ginseng Fruit
- New Pilgrims to the West (1982)
- 31 1995 Chinese Odyssey – Pandora's Box
- 40 2013 Conquering the demons
- 41 2014 The monkey King
- 42 2015 Monkey King Hero is Back
- 42 2016 Monkey King 2
- 2017 JTTW demons strike back
- 1960 Alakazam the Great
- 46 2008 the Forbidden Kingdom
- 48 1978 Monkey Magic (Saiyuki)
- 49 1978 Saiyuki Starzinger
- 50 1984 Dragonball
- 51 1986 Journey to the West
- Legends of the Monkey King (1999)
- Shinzo (2000)
- The Monkey King: Quest for the Sutra (2002)
- 58 2002 Monkey Typhoon
- 60 2006 Saiyuki
- 2009 Monkey King

PO
EM
EPI
SO
DE
AN
D
TH
E
SC
EN

Legend (row groups, left side): VIS, UA, L, MO, TIF, AN, D, ICO, NO, GR, AP, HY

Text number on Filmography and date	MK1	MK2	MK3	MK4	MK5	MK6	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	F1	F2	F3	X1	X2	X3	H	G1	G2	G3	PI	BK1	BK2	RB	PN	PP1	PP2	PP3	PP4	PP5	PP6	DN1
1 1941 Princess Iron Fan	1				1	1		1			1	1		1			1		1	1				1	1			1		1	1		1		1
4 1958 Pigsy Eats Watermelon	1				1	1								1			1			1								1	1	1					1
5 1959 Scarlet boy rescues his Mother	1			1	1	1			1		1								1		1							1	1	1					1
6 1959 How Princess Iron Fan Burnt Down	1				1	1			1								1		1	1								1	1	1	1				1
7 1961-62 Monkey King and Skeleton		1	1	1	1	1			1			1												1				1	1	1	1				1
10 1964 Havoc in Heaven		1	1		1	1			1						1		1		1	1								1	1	1	1	1			1
11 1965 Which One Is Which	1				1																							1	1						1
16 1966 The Monkey Goes West																1					1														
19 1967 Cave of the silken web					1	1	1	1			1									1								1	1	1		1		1	
21 1976 Monkey King With 72 Magic							1	1																											
22 1981 Ginseng Fruit			1		1	1	1		1		1								1	1	1		1	1				1	1	1		1			
New Pilgrims to the West (1982)						1							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						1	1						1
31 1995 Chinese Odyssey - Pandora's Box	1	1	1		1	1			1					1		1	1			1	1			1				1	1	1			1		1
40 2013 Conquering the demons					1	1	1	1	1				1	1		1				1			1			1		1	1	1			1		1
41 2014 The monkey king				1	1				1							1			1					1				1	1	1					1
42 2015 Monkey King Hero is Back	1	1	1		1				1					1		1				1				1				1	1	1	1		1		1
42 2016 Monkey King 2		1			1	1		1												1			1			1		1	1	1		1	1		1
2017 JTTW demons strike back			1	1	1	1				1							1		1	1				1				1	1	1	1				1
1960 Alakazam the Great				1												1								1				1	1		1				1
46 2008 the Forbidden Kingdom	1			1	1	1			1							1				1	1			1				1	1	1					1
48 1978 Monkey Magic (Saiyüki)					1	1	1									1			1									1	1	1	1	1			1
49 1978 Saiyuki Starzinger						1						1				1	1						1		1			1	1	1					1
50 1984 Dragonball			1	1	1											1	1		1	1								1	1		1				1
51 1986 Journey to the West		1		1	1	1			1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1			1	1	1	1	1		1	1
Legends of the Monkey King (1999)	1								1							1	1	1	1	1	1							1	1	1	1		1		1
Shinzo (2000)			1																1										1	1					1
The Monkey King: Quest for the Sutra (2002)		1														1	1	1	1	1		1		1				1	1	1		1	1	1	1
58 2002 Monkey Typhoon				1													1			1							1		1	1	1	1			1
60 2006 Saiyüki																													1	1				1	1
2009 Monkey King																												1	1	1					1

365

Legend: RR · ATI · ON · AN · D · VE · RB · AL · TR · AIT (E S)

Text number on Filmography and date	SI1	SI2	N1	N1a	N2	N3	M1	M2	FL1	FL2	FL3	FL4	C1	C2
1 1941 Princess Iron Fan	1	1							1			1		1
4 1958 Pigsy Eats Watermelon									1				1	1
5 1959 Scarlet boy rescues his Mother	1				1				1		1	1	1	1
6 1959 How Princess Iron Fan Burnt Down	1						1		1		1	1	1	1
7 1961-62 Monkey King and Skeleton							1				1	1	1	1
10 1964 Havoc in Heaven		1		1			2		1			1	1	
11 1965 Which One Is Which									1					
16 1966 The Monkey Goes West		1		1								1	1	
19 1967 Cave of the silken web			1								1			
21 1976 Monkey King With 72 Magic				1	1				1			1		1
22 1981 Ginseng Fruit														
New Pilgrims to the West (1982)					1			1	1		1		1	1
31 1995 Chinese Odyssey - Pandora's Box	1		1		1				1		1	1	1	1
40 2013 Conquering the demons	1													
41 2014 The monkey king			1				1		1				1	1
42 2015 Monkey King Hero is Back									1					
42 2016 Monkey King 2				1					1			1		1
2017 JTTW demons strike back			1				1		1		1	1		
1960 Alakazam the Great														
46 2008 the Forbidden Kingdom			1		1				1		1			1
48 1978 Monkey Magic (Saiyuki)			1					1	1		1	1	1	1
49 1978 Saiyuki Starzinger			1					1	1		1	1	1	1
50 1984 Dragonball			1		1	1			1			1	1	1
51 1986 Journey to the West						1			1					
Legends of the Monkey King (1999)									1					
Shinzo (2000)									1					
The Monkey King: Quest for the Sutra (2002)			1						1	1	1		1	1
58 2002 Monkey Typhoon			1						1			1	1	1
60 2006 Saiyuki			1		1				1			1	1	1
2009 Monkey King									1			1		1