




A Multi-Perspective Exploration of Fables: Moral Content in Visual Narratives

Songwen Jin



Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.”

Signed: 

Date: 15th May 2018

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation to those who have encouraged and helped me in this research journey.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. King Tong Ho and Dr. Dale Fitchett, for their endless support, encouragement, invaluable practical advice and commitment throughout my studies.



Table of Contents

Attestation of Authorship.....3

Acknowledgments.....5

Table of Contents.....8

Table of Images.....10

Abstract.....15

Position Statemen.....17

Introduction.....19

Chapter One: Critical Framework

1.1 Fables.....22

1.1.1 Aesop’s Fables.....23

1.1.2 The moral content.....24

1.1.3 Yin and Yang in Fables.....25

1.2 Narrative: Textual and visual.....28

Chapter Two: Methods and Development of the Practical Works

2.1 Stream of Consciousness.....32

2.1.1 Theory.....32

2.1.2 Experiments.....34

2.1.2 (1) Transforming Abstract into Concrete.....34

2.1.2 (2) Applying Stream of Consciousness in Aesop's Fables.....37

2.2 Metaphor and Symbol.....44

2.2.1 Theory.....44

2.2.1 (1) The Relationship of Symbol and Metaphor.....45

2.2.2 Experiments.....46

2.2.2 (1) Findings.....65

2.3 The Narrative Voice System: Exploring and developing.....67

2.3.1 Theory.....67

2.3.1 (1) Narrative Voice.....67

2.3.1 (2) Developing the Narrative Voice System.....68

2.3.2 Initial Experiments.....74

2.4 Experiment with the Narrative Voice System.....76

2.5 Exhibition of Research Outcomes.....86

Conclusion.....92

References.....94

Table of Images

Figure 1. *Taijitu* [Digital]. Retrieved from <http://taiji.baike.com/article-17188.html>

Figure 2. Jin, SW. (2017). *Fables in Taijitu* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 3. Wang, W. (Tang). *Snow and River* [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.zhlzw.com/ls/huihua/102.html>

Figure 4. Jin, SW. (2017). *Experiencing Wind and Rain* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 5. Jin, SW. (2017). *Experiencing the Ocean* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 6. Jin, SW. (2017). *Alone* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 7. Jin, SW. (2017). *Experiencing the City* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 8. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Kid and the Wolf – Sketch* [Drawing]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 9. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Kid and the Wolf – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 10. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Cock and the Jewel – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 11. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Cock and the Jewel – Draft 1 – Detail 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 12. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Cock and the Jewel – Draft 1 – Detail 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 13. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 14. Chen, H K. (1920). *Strong Rock and Tree Trunk* [Painting]. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 15. Qi, B S. (1919). *Scuttling. ink on paper* [Painting]. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 16. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 17. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 18. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 19. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 20. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 21. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 22. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 23. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 24. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 25. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 26. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 27. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 28. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 29. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 30. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 6* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 31. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 32. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 33. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 34. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 35. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 36. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 37. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 38. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 39. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 40. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 41. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 42. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 43. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 44. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 45. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 46. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 6* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 47. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 7* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 48. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 8* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 49. Jin, SW. (2018). *Fables in Taijitu – A* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 50. Jin, SW. (2018). *Fables in Taijitu – B* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 51. Jin, SW. (2018). *Fables in Taijitu – C* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 52. Jin, SW. (2018). *The relationship between ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or She’* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 53. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Relationships Within the Narrative Voice System* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 54. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl-Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 55. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes-Draft 6* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 56. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Wolf and Kids-Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 57. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse-Draft 7* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 58. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow-Draft 9* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 59. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask-Draft 6* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 60. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl-Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 61. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (A) – Final Draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 62. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (B) – Final Draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 63. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (C) – Final Draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 64. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (A) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 65. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (B) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 66. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (C) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 67. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (A) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 68. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (B) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 69. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (C) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 70. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (A) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 71. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (B) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 72. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (C) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 73. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (A) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 74. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (B) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 75. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (C) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 76. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (A) – Final Draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 77. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (B) – Final Draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 78. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (C) – Final Draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 79. Jin, SW. (2018). *Colour transition – (1)* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 80. Jin, SW. (2018). *Colour transition – (2)* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 81. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (B) – Final draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 82. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (A) – Final draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 79. Jin, SW. (2018). *Colour transition – (1)* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 80. Jin, SW. (2018). *Colour transition – (2)* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 81. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (B) – Final draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 82. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (A) – Final draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 88. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 89. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (B)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 90. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (C)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 91. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 92. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (B)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 93. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (C)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 94. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 95. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (B)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 96. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (C)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 97. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 98. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (B)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 99. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (C)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 100. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-Test 1 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 101. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-Test 2 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 102. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-Test 3 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 103. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-1 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 104. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-2 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Abstract

This research explores the possibilities of narrating Aesop's fables visually to communicate the story line and the moral content. The primary aim is to transform abstract feelings and emotions of the fables, especially the moral part, to provide an opportunity to the viewers to rethink and redefine their own understanding and perspective about the fables. This is possible as I propose that the moral content of the fable is only fixed at a specific moment in time. I embark on the idea of a transformative journey to discover a narrative voice system that offers several possible perspectives to interpret and narrate the variability of the moral content. The research is informed by the Eastern and Western concepts of Yin and Yang, metaphor and stream of consciousness, which help me to explore and discover the abstract concepts involved in the fables and the moral and transform them into visual elements. The outcome is a series of illustrations presented in a triptych format to put forward a different visual narrative mode.

Position Statement

When I was a child, my parents would read fables to me. Besides the fantastic narrative content and vivid characters, I was also attracted by the moral idea of those fables. In fact, at that time, I had no idea of what a moral was. What I knew was that those fables always gave me some fuzzy inspiration or told me something, which made them intriguing. And those ‘things’ were very abstract; I could not use any concrete objects to describe them, only the characters were exceptions. Even now, I still try to figure out the ‘things’ and obtain more inspirations from those fables.

When I explored the fables, I began to find that the abstract ‘things’ are the moral content and each fable had this common feature, i.e., they used one sentence to sum up the moral lens of the fables, and readers could only try to comprehend the meanings through the words. However, the moral is beyond the mere comprehension of text. This has inspired me to find another way to depict it, such as whether we can use some concrete experience to re-present it in visual language. The illustrations can also be a medium for expressing the abstract moral visually.

Although the text part of a fable can express the collective view of the moral in an abstract way, I have a different interpretation and feeling that enlightens me every time I read a fable. In other words, fables could give me a sense of the moral rather than a fixed and concrete understanding. That sense would be changed and influenced by our individual life experiences. These thoughts stimulated me to explore and express the fables from different perspectives.

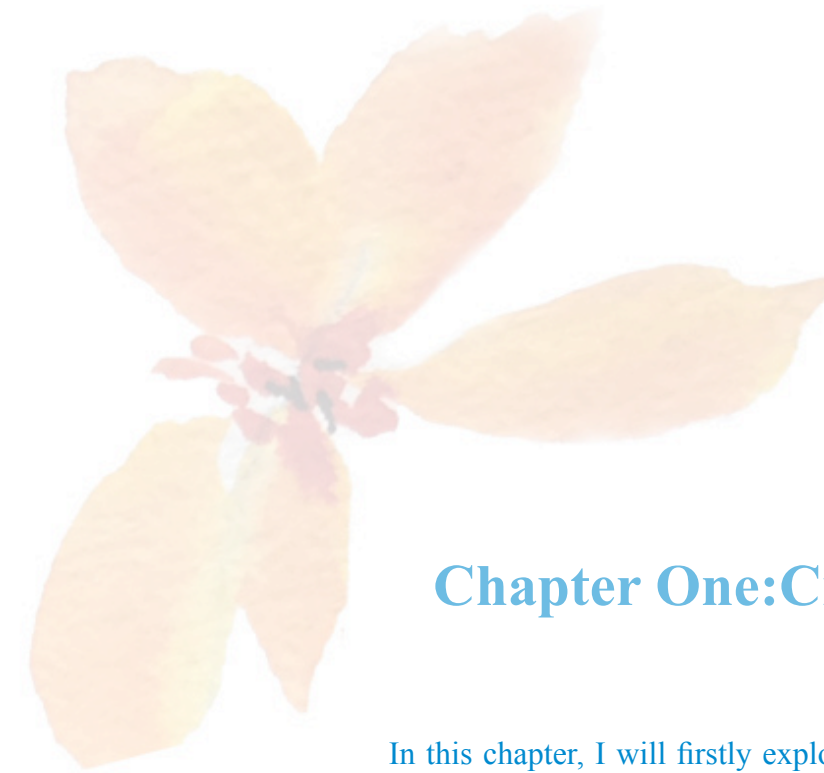
Introduction

This project explored how fables could be visualised through the aid of a narrative voice system. The final outcomes will be a series of independent illustrations, which use Aesop's fables as the narrative content. The primary focus is to present the visualisation of the author's individual views on the moral content alongside the intended collective understanding of the moral content of the fables, in order to stimulate the audience to re-think and reflect, and consequently generate a new perspective on the moral.

This project is a 'transformative journey' that explores how to transform the fables, especially the abstract moral content, to create a concrete experience and narrate through illustrations. In fact, my project suggests the moral content, narrative voices and individuals' experiences are all transformable and fluid. I will use three chapters to demonstrate the exploration process and research findings.

Chapter one discusses the core concept – the moral as the basic content of the whole project. The visual narrative as the context has formed a conceptual background for this research project.

Chapter two is the main part of the transformative process which offers an academic consideration that conceptualises and guides the method of visualising the moral content. There will be an introduction of the concepts of stream of consciousness, metaphor, and Yin and Yang; and discussion of how they inform practical works. Furthermore, I will introduce the idea of the narrative voice system, which will be used to support my exploration and discovery of how I could better connect with the fables from different perspectives; the system is developed from the concepts of stream of consciousness, metaphor, and Yin and Yang concepts to visualise the fables. I will specifically discuss the application of methodology and method.



Chapter One:Critical Framework

In this chapter, I will firstly explore and introduce the concept of fable. Then I will research the theory of the Yin and Yang philosophical concept to understand the fables, especially the moral part. In the next section, I will discuss the visual narrative and how it will be employed.

1.1 Fables

Fables are “stories about truths, with themes that link to real-life human experience” (Perreault, Pryor, Sleeper & Weldon-Lassiter, 2003, p. 9). The “truths” are philosophies learnt from life. Weiss (2011) explained that in both ancient and modern manifestations, fable is a genre that combines fantasy and social concerns. Instead of dealing with a transcendent realm, the fable focuses directly on moral and social issues, though these issues are at times approached in a satirical manner (Weiss, 2011). The fable is therefore rooted in “this world” by its very nature, no matter how much it evokes or depends upon “that world” (Weiss, 2011, p. 45).

Some fables choose animals or plants as protagonists. Weiss (2011) suggested that the purpose of animals thinking and talking like humans is not to surprise readers, but to put them in a world that differs from their own and enable them to experience fantasies and imagination (p. 46). As the conceptual basis of fables, this notion helps the audience to make sense of some exaggerated parts of the narrative, e.g., in the fable *The lion in love* (Aesop & Worthington, 2009), a lion can marry a girl. In the stories, the animals or plants maintain their animal or plant physical qualities, and their character traits, living habits and features are retained. The aim is to emphasise their characters and use personification to represent a group of people with similar characteristics. Moropa (2004) has quoted Bergman and Epstein in *Retelling the stories: the impact of Aesop's fables on the development of Xhosa children's literature*, saying that among the many ways poets make abstractions more concrete and familiar, personification is one of the easiest. One reason for using personification is for us to identify the characteristics better, as they are represented by animals (p. 182). Meanwhile, the characters are merely representative and do not refer to individuals (Weiss, 2011, p. 46). This feature enables authors to express their creativity. In other words, using typical characters to reflect the universal phenomenon can resonate with the audience easily.

1.1.1 Aesop's Fables

Aesop's Fables is a collection of fables originating from ancient Greece. By depicting animals with human characters, Aesop's fables present the moral lessons in an enlightening and enjoyable way (Perreault, Pryor, Sleeper & Weldon-Lassiter, 2003).

Aesop's fables use short simple narratives to reveal a profound truth. The simple narrative usually uses animals as the main protagonists and demonstrates the moral content of the fables with one sentence. For example, in the fable *The Fox and The Mask* (Aesop & Worthington, 2009), the author states that “A fair face is of little use without sense” at the end, which is the collective understanding of the moral idea of this fable. Aesop's fables depict animals that are clearly intended to be disguised human beings, while retaining their supposedly distinctive natural qualities. The animals in the fables are rational and able to speak, as they embody and express human qualities and attitudes.

According to Zhou (2014), Aesop's fables has the function of promoting a kind of culture instead of merely being a book, a story or a simple lesson (the moral). It contains the ancient Greeks' behaviours, beliefs, sense of the world, and involves all aspects of people's lives. Moreover, it shows how ancient Greeks recognised and changed the world, and impacted their way of thinking, behaving and living to a large degree. Unlike other fables, Aesop's fables contain characteristics of all human beings, and surmounts the universality of all nations (Zhou, 2014). In other words, Aesop's fables apply to all human beings rather than one specific ethnicity.

1.1.2 The moral content

Aesop's fables have been handed down from generation to generation, and though some of the characters and narrative content have changed, the 'centre' content behind them has not. Through a short story-line, the 'centre' teaches us a 'lesson' or provides us with a 'truth', which can be usually named as the moral of the fable.

However, it is worth emphasising that the moral is not simply teaching us a lesson, as there is no defined territory between right and wrong in the moral. The narrator of the moral content of a fable chooses to tell readers a kind of thought or a point of view that guides them to develop their own views through their life experiences and philosophical beliefs about certain moral 'truth' themselves.

A moral is concerned with a principle of behaviour, while in fables, there is usually one sentence to sum up the moral. For example, in Aesop's fable *The lion and the mouse* (Aesop & Worthington, 2009), the collective understanding of the moral sentence is "no one is too weak to do good" (p. 75). What is worth mentioning is that the morals are not defined. For instance, the moral sentence, "no one is too weak to do good", uses a very neutral and open way to convey a perspective that it may be possible to do a great thing even though you are very puny or not as good as the stronger one; however, there is no claim that although you are puny, you must still do good. Furthermore, the moral content of a fable is very abstract, as it is an idea that does not exist physically, but is emotionally instilled in a reader's mind. Therefore, each reader can also have their own perspective and understanding of the fables, and thus acquire their own moral vision.

Meanwhile, this suggests it is important to explore the fables visually, but at the same time it identifies why it is so difficult to explore them visually.

1.1.3 Yin and Yang in Fables

Yin and Yang [阴阳] is an ancient Chinese philosophical idea with a holistic, dynamic and dialectical world view. "All universal phenomena are shaped by the integration of two opposite cosmic energies, namely Yin and Yang" (Fang, 2012, p. 31).



Figure 1. Taijitu [Digital]. Retrieved from <http://taiji.baik.com/article-17188.html>

The symbol of Yin and Yang is called Taijitu [太极图]. As figure 1 shows, the black and the white parts are called Yin and Yang respectively. "The black Yin [阴] refers to the 'shady side' and represents the 'female' energy, such as the moon, weakness, and softness; while the white Yang [阳] refers to the 'sunny side' and stands for 'male' energy, such as the sun, strength and hardness" (Liu, 2011, p. 1). Taijitu has the form of a perfect circle but is divided by a flowing 'S' – like curve into two halves of black and white, which are called black and white fish respectively. The two together complete a perfect circle. The two dots inside the two fishes represent the co-existing and interactive relationship between Yin and Yang. Taijitu represents the universal balance of all things. However, in reality, there is never a balance between Yin and Yang. They are always in a chaotic state of constant interaction with each other to strive for

a balance. They are dynamic and energetic. Both sides yield to one another and push into each other, illustrating their dependence upon each other. “As Yin swells in size and height, Yang begins to emerge and vice versa” (Painter, n.d.). Each sustains the other in a never-ending circulation.

The nature of Yin and Yang flowing and changing with time is that both halves are chasing after each other as they seek a mutual balance (Liu, 2011). Because of the changes and flow, there is no absolute distinction between Yin and Yang. This works exactly like the moral content of fables because there is no absolute right or wrong (Figure 2). The journey of exploring the fables is actually to find a balance among all aspects in life.



Figure 2. Jin, SW. (2017). *Fables in Taijitu* [Digital]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

When it comes to applying the philosophy in visual works, I will take the example of Chinese landscape paintings of Shan Shui [山水] (literally “mountain-water”) (Figure 3). Ancient Chinese painters had considered the different relationships among the visual components, particularly the physical mountain and water, the conceptual emptiness [虚] or fullness [实], and the tonal brightness and darkness. Just like the two black and white fishes in Yin and Yang, the components connect and interact with each other. As Hu (1995) said, the essence of Chinese painting is based on the

balance of rationality and harmony. It is, however, the dynamic generated during the process of finding a balance that stimulates the viewers to develop their own views about the painting.



Figure 3. Wang, W. (Tang). *Snow and River* [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.zhlzw.com/ls/huihua/102.html>

1.2 Narrative: Textual and visual

Thomas (2015) quoted Porter Abbott's definition of narrative in his book *Narrative: The Basics*, as "the representation of an event or series of events" (p. 14). Authors use this way to depict the plot, introduce the characters and process issues. Thomas (2015) quoted Barthes, saying that narrative is a political activity and models our reaction to and views of the world. We not only feel entertained, but are also educated, informed and even persuaded by narratives in every aspect. Meanwhile, this is how a fable operates; it uses a simple plot to narrate and reveal a profound moral.

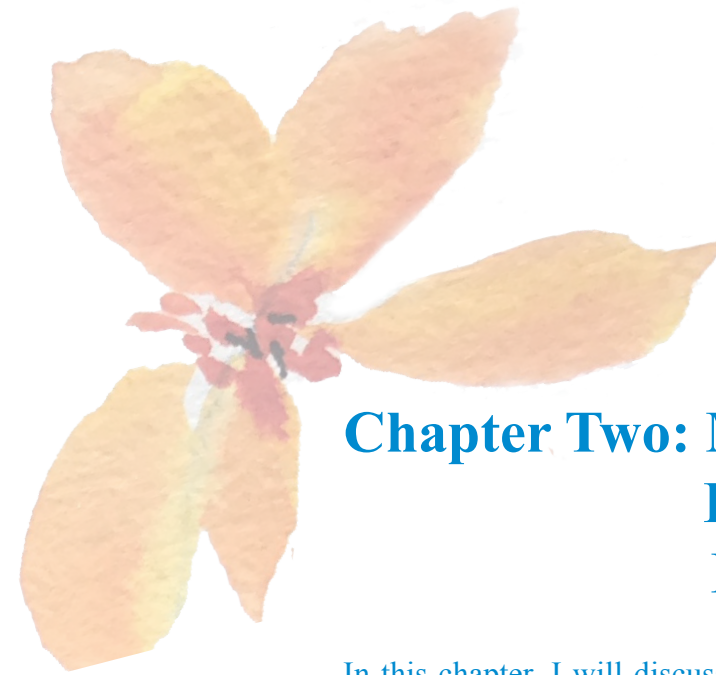
However, as Haidt and Joseph (2006) said, "moral education is accomplished by shaping emotions and intuitions, rather than by dictating explicit rationales or principles" (p. 2). 'Emotion' and 'intuition' are abstract. Normally, text can only describe a kind of emotion in general, such as 'sad', 'happy', 'peaceful', 'love', and so on, but can hardly convey the subtle emotion and changes. In this case, the visual narrative can express intangible concepts with colours or graphics in a more intuitive way.

The theme of graphic narrative can be no less complicated than other literary forms, and there is often a carefully designed relationship between the text and style (Tan, 2009). The possible combinations of illustration and words may be endless, but their alliance is far from evident because they inevitably become implicated in a "war of signs" (Mitchell, 2013). Lefèvre (2010) has mentioned a kind of phenomenon in his article that in the field of "high literature", the illustration may divert the audience's attention away from the text itself. For example, in the past, pictures were sometimes considered dangerous for children. Even nowadays, pictures are often associated with defects such as limiting the imagination of the reader (Lefèvre, 2010). However, the picture-book researcher Nodelman (1988) has argued that if pictures and words both

limit our imagination, then the only safe choice is to write or draw nothing. It should be noted that pictures and words both provide us with specific and new ideas that we can learn from (p. 245). The illustration and the words are mutually complementary. In particular, picture books should use a concise way to present a complex question (Tan, 2009). According to Nodelman (1988), illustration is unable to express views of the phenomena they present, but is capable of visualising these views, while words cannot use shape and colour to show emotions directly (p. 221).

The best explanation is the use of illustration, as we do not need to understand words, and literal meaning can be shown through visual clarification (Tan, 2009). The best illustrated stories make us reflect on subjects we already know about, and provide us with a new angle (Tan, 2009). The best fables, for example, can fascinate us with their impressive narrative content and moral lens, yet leave space for us to think on our own. Thus, visual illustrations can offer readers a better demonstration of fables' narrative while researching the abstract moral content.

Visual narrative emphasises the expression of authors' individual thoughts and intentions, and thus different narrative manners used by authors can express different intentions and cloud the effect of the readers' understanding of narrative. In other words, authors use the images to communicate the narrative; however, the narrative is also affected by the genre, techniques and tonality of the illustrations. In a word, visual narrative offers more opportunities for imagination. I will discuss a specific visual narrative method in the next chapter.



Chapter Two: Methods and Development of the Practical Works

In this chapter, I will discuss the transformative journey of this project in detail. Firstly, I will explore the concepts of stream of consciousness, metaphor and symbol, then discuss and analyse how I experiment with them in practical works. By exploring the narrative voice system, I will position myself as one of the three narrative perspectives – ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or She’, and experiment with how to apply the concepts of stream of conscious, metaphor and Yin and Yang to develop methodological guidelines to construct the visual narrative of the practice. Subsequently, I will use the system to assess the effectiveness of the visual content of my practice.

2.1 Stream of Consciousness

2.1.1 Theory

To begin the journey I investigated the idea of stream of consciousness as a way of understanding the abstract nature of the moral content of fables.

In literary criticism, stream of consciousness is a narrative mode or method that attempts to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings that pass through the mind. The term was introduced by James in his *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). Northoff (2014) describes stream of consciousness as “the temporal continuity and flow of the content of consciousness in our ‘inner time consciousness’” (p. 185). Generally speaking, stream of consciousness emphasises the depiction of the inner psychological activities and thoughts of the characters.

In his article, Wang (2012) put forward four ways to express stream of consciousness in a written narrative. The first one is “internal monologue” [内心独白]. It transforms the character’s thinking into a narrative to express the psychological activities, similar to the off-screen voice. Therefore, the narrator of internal monologue can be any one of the characters in the narrative.

Another way is “intuitive association” [原发性联想]. This method could be used to depict the psychological activities of the characters in a fictional narrative. This kind of association will capture some details from the original; instead of arranging these details logically, they often flow through the character’s thoughts. According to author Wang (2012), “association” is influenced by three factors – reminiscence, feeling and imagination. Reminiscence is the foundation of intuitive association; “feeling”

can guide “association”; imagination determines the flexibility level of intuitive association and is open-ended.

The third way is “emotional expression” [弥漫情绪], which means thought, feeling, emotion and sense are expressed via understanding. This expression is usually based on the character’s thoughts, showing emotions in a split second and using a character’s subtle facial appearance or movement to express them. This way of expression is one of the most important aesthetic features. Emotion is instantaneous and is generated from deep within a person.

The last one is “disrupting time and space” [打破时空] when narrating. The author narrates the story through different characters and from multiple angles. In a novel, the author will put different events and occasions, which happen at different times and places, together into the same time and space.

2.1.2 Experiments

2.1.2 (1) Transforming Abstract into Concrete



Figure 4. Jin, SW. (2017). *Experiencing Wind and Rain* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 5. Jin, SW. (2017). *Experiencing the Ocean* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

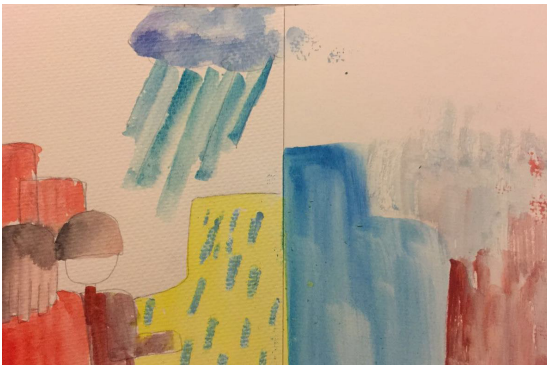


Figure 6. Jin, SW. (2017). *Alone* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 7. Jin, SW. (2017). *Experiencing the City* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

This project began as an experiment with the potential of stream of consciousness drawing. In this initial stage, I focused on ways to express some abstract concepts

through illustration, such as my thoughts, inner mind and feelings.

Through some sketches I expressed my current feelings, transforming the abstract experience to concrete objects through colour, movement and other graphic elements. During the creative process, I chose my experience of a song or a poem, or even the weather of the day as my creative content. I then put myself in the ‘present moment’ and felt it, and quickly drew the first picture that came into my mind. Figure 6, for example, illustrates a sunny day, and the nice weather invites me to go out, but I cannot find any friends to go with me. I can only sit in front of the window and look at the trees outside, imagining that I had a dog that could accompany me. Therefore, I use several bare trees and a single person to show my sense of loneliness in this illustration. This work explored the first three ways to express stream of consciousness, as discussed by Wang (2012).

Following the above process, I started to experiment with Aesop’s fables, using this method. At this stage, I tried to find some visual element that I could represent with a graphic or colour depiction in illustration to communicate the idea of the abstract moral other than the original story-line.

The Kid and the Wolf

A kid, mounted on a high rock, bestowed all manner of abuse upon a Wolf on the ground below. The Wolf, looking up, replied: “Do not think, vain creature, that you annoy me. I regard this ill language as coming not from you, but from the place on which you stand.” (Aesop & Worthington, 2009)

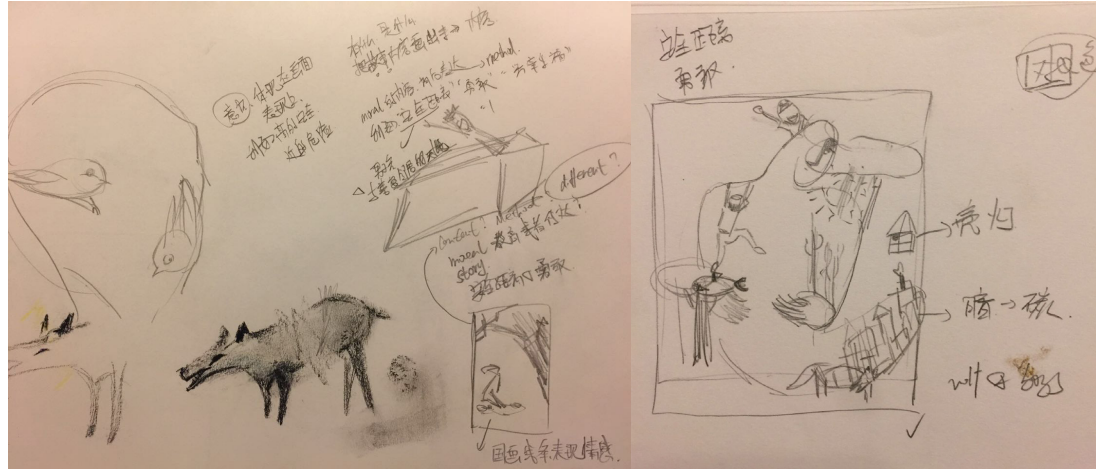


Figure 8. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Kid and the Wolf*—Sketch [Drawing]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 9. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Kid and the Wolf*—Draft 1 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

When I created the illustration from Aesop’s fable, *The Kid and the Wolf*, I wanted to show some connective ‘hidden content’ instead of representing the story-line. In other words, I think I do not need to portray what happens to the narrative or draw what the narrative really describes; maybe I could depict what and why it has happened (the cause) and what will happen next (the effect), which may have some connection with moral content. Accordingly, when I was drawing Figure 9, I firstly analysed the original narrative of the fable. I changed the character of the ‘kid’ from a baby goat to ‘kids’ or children to explore the human experience. I found out the reason the kids dare to say “ill language” to the wolf – that is because of “the place on which you stand”. From my point of view, I think it is the core idea of the fable that standing in different places will affect your behaviour and language. Therefore, I mainly emphasised depicting different reflections of kids from different positions, in order to show the kids’ slight changes of psychological activities.

2.1.2 (2) Applying Stream of Consciousness in Aesop’s Fables

Based on the initial experiments, I started a more systematic study of stream of consciousness at this stage and tested the usage of this method in more practical works.

I have discussed the four ways of expressing the stream of consciousness – “internal monologue”, “intuitive association”, “disrupting time and space” and “emotional expression”. Next, I will discuss and show how these four ways supported me when analysing the fables and attempting to visually represent them. I will take Aesop’s fable *The Cock and the Jewel* (Aesop & Worthington, 2009) as an example (Figure 10).

The Cock and the Jewel

A Cock, scratching for food for himself and his hens, found a precious stone; on which he said: "If thy owner had found thee, and not I, he would have taken thee up, and have set thee in thy first estate; but I have found thee for no purpose. I would rather have one barleycorn than all the jewels in the world."



Figure 10. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Cock and the Jewel – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

According to the fable's content, the narrative can be easily confirmed – a cock finds the jewel.

The “internal monologue” of the cock: the cock prefers the barleycorn to all other jewels, as barleycorn can cure hunger. For this part, I used the shadow to show the real thoughts of the cock, which was to hug the person who has the corn (the character in the background) (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Jin, SW. (2017). *The Cock and the Jewel – Draft 1 – Detail 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

My own “emotional expression”: the barleycorn and the jewel have their own value, and they have different meanings for different people (Figure 12). The person who already has corn (the character on the left with the telescope) wants to gain the jewel, while the person who has the jewel wants to obtain other things (the character on the right with the necklace shooting the deer); this can also be seen as my “intuitive association”.



Figure 12: Jin, SW. (2017). *The Cock and the Jewel – Draft 1 – Detail 2* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

The fourth way “disrupting time and space” was a good guide for me to build the illustration composition. I was able to experiment with these events disrupted in time and space and find a logical way to connect those fragments into one piece, and make them present a harmonious appearance, engaging the audience to trigger their thoughts.

After analysing more practices, I found that the most common one of these four methods is “intuitive association”. Next, I will discuss how I used it specifically in practical works.

The “intuitive association” guides me to imagine from here to there. For example, in figure 13, which depict the fable *The Goose with the Golden Eggs* (Aesop & Worthington, 2009), the countryman killed the goose because he wanted to get all the eggs at once but found nothing. This leads me to associate it with a Chinese proverb – “one step to heaven” [一步登天], which means hoping to succeed within a short time. By using this method, I can explain and express the abstract moral content further.

The Goose with the Golden Eggs

One day a countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But he took it home on second thoughts, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing.



Figure 13. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft I* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

What is worth mentioning is that after experimenting with stream of consciousness, I was inspired to explore the fables through examining metaphor and symbols. The link to this can be seen in the previous discussion of *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*. All these investigations laid the foundation for later research into the narrative voice system.

2.2 Metaphor and Symbol

2.2.1 Theory

“There is a multitude of ways in which people can view the world and thus a multitude of ways in which people attempt to articulate this view through imagery portrayed in metaphors” (Andriessen and Gubbins, 2009, p. 847). What is a metaphor? In my opinion, a metaphor is a figure of speech that identifies features of one thing being identical to those of another unrelated thing, and thus strongly implying similarities between the two. For example, feelings can be considered as subjective experiences and abstract notions in some way, so abstract concepts involving emotions are usually presented by concrete objects using metaphors, such as colour, movement, and so on.

McKenzie and van Winkelen (2011) proposed that when two domains are different, metaphor functions by creating connections that did not exist by moving attributes into “the blend”. In this way, readers can fill the gaps and complete the acquainted patterns via their knowledge and experience. “We elaborate from that new combination of ideas and sensory associations in many different directions exploring ‘off the beaten track’, adding events, experiences and connections which were never part of the original perceptions” (McKenzie & van Winkelen 2011, p. 141). McKenzie and van Winkelen (2011) have quoted Lakoff and Johnson’s perspective on metaphor, saying that “metaphors transfer familiar attributes of our lived experience into unfamiliar situations and concepts by bridging two meaningful domains of understanding” (p.140).

2.2.1 (1) The Relationship of Symbol and Metaphor

Image reflects the artist's mind. Eisner (2016) has stated that the works of both writers and artists are marked with their consciousness and imagination. Petrenko and Korotchenko (2012) have quoted Potebnya, saying that art means thinking creatively with illustration. After all, painters are painting the emotions of the subjects rather than subjects themselves. The meanings and morals of paintings are hidden in the symbolic figurative form, and those figurative and symbolic subjects are important media between abstract and concrete subjects. In Eastern and Western art history, it is common to use objects and colours to express emotion when applying metaphor to these kinds of approaches. For example, in our daily life, we often use the colour red to convey danger or danger-relevant notions (Pravossoudovitch, Cury, Young & Elliot, 2014).

Li (2012) proposed some methods to express abstract spiritual notions via applying metaphorical concepts. The first one is “direct metaphor”, which generally means the comparison of two things based on their resemblance or similarity, without using “like” or “as” (Li, 2012). Likewise, we can draw a subject to represent another subject or an emotion in the painting and transform the subject into a symbol. Nöth (2010) quoted Peirce's definition of symbol description in his article as “those signs which represent their objects, independently alike of any resemblance or any real connection, because dispositions or factitious habits of their interpreters insure their being so understood” (p. 83). From this viewpoint, metaphors and symbols have similar attributes in a certain way. Intangible metaphor is the foundation of symbolism and is made explicit or concrete through symbols.

The opposite of “direct metaphor” is “indirect metaphor”, where the comparison

of two subjects is implicit rather than explicit (Li, 2012).

Therefore, the audience needs to reflect on the indirect metaphor to discover the deeper meaning that resonates with the author. According to Li (2012), sometimes authors will use subjects that are seemingly irrelevant to the main characters to suggest characters' thoughts and spirits.

According to Fong (2001), in the painting of Chinese traditional scholar artist Chen Hengke (Figure 14), the “essence” of the object is purely imaginative (p. 140). He sees the dead tree as a chanting dragon. Rather than representing a real tree, he paints the tree's ‘soul’. The author expressed his emotion via the “dragon tree”, thus the ordinary become distinctive (Fong, 2001). Combining the outline of the tree and the dragon's features, Chen captures the symbolic characteristic of the dragon to depict and create an imaginary tree in his mind.

Figure 14. Chen, H K. (1920). *Strong Rock and Tree Trunk* [Painting]. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.





Similarly, in the painting *Scuttling Crab* (Figure 15), Qi Baishi depicted the gangling reed and a spirited crustacean in a metaphorical way. The descriptive brushwork expresses a sense of freedom. Fong (2001) stated that the brushwork presents sensitivity and liveliness, and the free-form strokes in the painting reveal the essence of the crab and demonstrate dynamism.

Figure 15. Qi, B S. (1919). *Scuttling*. ink on paper [Painting]. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

2.2.2 Experiments

At this stage, I used the strategy ‘keep drawing’, drawing a great amount of illustrations of Aesop’s fables to explore these ideas. During the whole experimenting process, I was not limited by tools, materials and techniques; the aim was to test and find out the methods of drawing metaphor and symbols in practical works. What follows are the fables and the practices, while findings as a result of these experiments are discussed in section 2.2.2 (1).

Table 1: *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*

One day a countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But he took it home on second thoughts, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing.



Figure 16. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 17. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 18. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 19. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 20. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with the Golden Eggs – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Table 2: *The Cock and the Pearl*

A cock was once strutting up and down the farmyard among the hens when suddenly he espied something shinning amid the straw. “Ho! Ho!” quoth he, “that’s for me,” and soon rooted it out from beneath the straw. What did it turn out to be but a Pearl that by some chance had been lost in the yard? “You may be a treasure,” quoth Master Cock, “to men that prize you, but for me I would rather have a single barley-corn than a peck of pearls.” Precious things are for those that can prize them. (Aesop & Worthington, 2009)



Figure 21. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 22. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 23. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 24. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Table 3: *The Lion and the Mouse*

Lion was awakened from sleep by a Mouse running over his face. Rising up in anger, he caught him and was about to kill him, when the Mouse piteously entreated, saying: “If you would only spare my life, I would be sure to repay your kindness.” The Lion laughed and let him go. It happened shortly after this that the Lion was caught by some hunters, who bound him by strong ropes to the ground. The Mouse, recognizing his roar, came up and gnawed the rope with his teeth, and, setting him free, exclaimed: “You ridiculed the idea of my ever being able to help you, not expecting to receive from me any repayment of your favor; but now you know that it is possible for even a Mouse to confer benefits on a Lion.” No one is too weak to do good. (Aesop & Worthington, 2009)



Figure 25. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – raft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 26. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 27. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 28. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 29. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 30. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and the Mouse – Draft 6* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Fable 4: *The Fox and the Mask*

A Fox had by some means got into the store-room of a theatre. Suddenly he observed a face glaring down on him and began to be very frightened; but looking more closely he found it was only a Mask such as actors use to put over their face. "Ah," said the Fox, "you look very fine; it is a pity you have not got any brains." Outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth. (Aesop & Worthington, 2009)



Figure 31. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 32. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 33. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 34. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 35. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Table 5: *The Fox and the Grapes*

One hot summer's day a Fox was strolling through an orchard till he came to a bunch of Grapes just ripening on a vine which had been trained over a lofty branch. "Just the thing to quench my thirst," quoth he. Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch. Turning round again with a One, Two, Three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again he tried after the tempting morsel, but at last had to give it up, and walked away with his nose in the air; saying: "I am sure they are sour." It is easy to despise what you cannot get. (Aesop & Worthington, 2009)



Figure 36. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 37. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 38. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 39. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 40. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Table 6: *The Fox and the Crow*

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. “That’s for me, as I am a Fox,” said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. “Good-day, Mistress Crow,” he cried. “How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds.” The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. “That will do,” said he. “That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future. “Do not trust flatterers.” (Aesop & Worthington, 2009)



Figure 41. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 1* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 42. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 43. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 3* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 44. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 4* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 45. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 46. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 6* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 47. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 7* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 48. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow – Draft 8* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

2.2.2 (1) Findings

a. Strategies to express characters' inner thoughts

I explored a number of different symbols as a method of expressing and reflecting the characters' inner thoughts which were different to the story-line. Drawing shadows is the major method, for example, figures 40, 42 and 47. I also used other methods such as the idea of reflection in a mirror to suggest that the characters' inner thoughts might be at odds with how they were depicted, for example, figure 48. In figure 20, graffiti on the wall of the small house was used to try and tell different and multiple narratives in the same image.

b. Strategies to express my point of view

Through the movement and facial expressions of the characters, I discovered that I could directly express my own emotion and response to the fables, presenting my point of view and participating in the narrative. For example, in figures 20, through the character's facial expression, I express my inner thoughts about the fables. In other words, I think this man wants to hide some idea of himself, so I used the hat to hide the half face of the man to express my opinion. I also used the characters' movements to show my response or imagination of the fables which may be different from the original. For example, through the movement of the mouse and the lion in figure 30, which seems to show that they want to be closer to each other, I expressed my point of view that the two animals desire a harmonious relationship. In figure 31, those foxes all face towards the mask in the middle of the illustration; some of them seem to be probing and drawing close to the mask, and some of them are afraid of it. In this way, I want to show my thoughts of this fable, i.e., those foxes are all interested in this mask, no matter how they were depicted in the fables.

c. Strategies to visually narrate fables from different angles or points of view

Based on the concept of the stream of consciousness, I tried to find other lines and elements to narrate the fables from various perspectives. In these illustrations, I bridge moral content with human sociability, using life experience to represent and explain my individual understanding of the original moral content. For example, in figures 32, 39, 41, 42, 44, 45 and 46, I inserted humans into the fables, and linked their experiences with the fables, especially the moral part, and tried to use the concrete human experience to re-explain the abstract moral content and express my individual point of view of these fables.

d. Strategies for visually narrating the two aspects of the fable

Inspired by the Yin Yang concept, I used the two different tonalities to separate the ‘moral content’ and ‘original story-line’, offering a contrasting and stimulating focus. For example, in figure 32, I explored this through the idea of the stage and theatre spotlight, to depict the original story-line under the spotlight, while depicting the human experience to show my understanding of the moral, which is in the dark background. By employing the contrast in colour, readers may tend to be attracted by the bright part – the original story-line, but the moral part, from my point of view, which is the important part of the fable, may sometimes be ignored. Similarly, I also used this strategy in figures 41 and 44, which use two different tonalities and colours to distinguish the moral part and the story-line.

2.3 The Narrative Voice System: Exploring and developing

2.3.1 Theory

The findings regarding the moral discussed in the previous section, and my personal view that the moral lens and moral content of each fable written by Aesop are not fixed, led me to consider the idea of using a different narrative voice from literature. Next, I will try to use the narrative voice system to help classify and analyse the complicated structure of the fables.

2.3.1 (1) Narrative Voice

Narrative voice tells readers through whose perspective they are reading a story. When the voice of narration is recognised in literature, it is important to take into account the narrator’s perspective. In literature, there are usually three types of narrative perspectives: the first-person narration, the second-person narration and the third-person narration. When an author uses different personal pronouns to tell the story, they may provide the reader with different perspectives, as these are thought to influence the reader’s immersion in the story (Hartung & Willems, 2017). For example, some stories are revealed through the narrator, and the narrator is a character in his or her own story who uses the first person, or ‘I’, to narrate. When the audience reads the story, they may feel they have engaged in the story as well. A third-person narrator refers to the characters in the story as ‘he’ or ‘she’. The narrator may or may not be a character in the story. The second person, ‘you’, is generally uncommon in literature.

While it’s usually traditional to have a single narrator, the Nobel Prize winner in Literature 2000 Gao Xingjian, in his experimental fiction *Soul Mountain* (2000)

uses personal pronouns ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or She’ to replace specific characters and obscures the characters at the same time. According to Lee (2012), Gao uses ‘I’ as the main narrator and depicts the author’s solitary journey; the whole fiction is ‘I’, talking to myself – a monologue; since ‘You’ experiences through ‘I’ to narrate, the second person ‘You’ is not a narrator. Lee (2012) has also mentioned that in Gao’s novel, ‘I’ created ‘You’, a soul-mate, a shadow of ‘I’, that ‘I’ can talk with, while ‘You’ is the reflection of ‘I’. Gao depicts the process of finding the soul mountain from two different lines, ‘My’ experience is true and logical, while ‘Your’ experience is actually spiritual and fragmented (Lee, 2012). The third-narration ‘He or She’ represents all kinds of people they met during the journey, as witnesses of ‘You’ and ‘I’ (Lee, 2012).

In fact, the pronouns all refer to a common subject – ‘I’, but the subject is endowed with different angles of perceptions by changing pronouns into ‘You’ and ‘He or She’ (Lee, 2012). This method inspires me to create my own narrative voice system. The aim is to explore the illustration of Aesop’s fables from different perspectives, and therefore narrate the moral content and the story-line.

2.3.1 (2) Developing the Narrative Voice System

Through the voice of the three personal pronouns, Gao depicted the different perspectives of ‘I’ to present the journey of seeking the soul mountain. The ‘You’ and ‘He or She’ are the reflections of ‘I’, which I see as a process of looking for ‘I-self’. This method not only can lead the readers to get involved in the plot, but also gives them the imagination space to create the characters’ image themselves. From my point of view, this is similar to the fables, as it is also a process of looking for ‘something’ – an abstract moral. The aim of reading fables is to find a moral suitable for us at that specific moment. As I discussed earlier, moral content is not fixed; it is not only the collective understanding of the moral content from the original narrative of fables

but can also be interpreted in different ways by different readers. Furthermore, moral content will keep changing over time.

Therefore, creating visual images of fables with their interwoven narratives and morals is complex. Gao provides a guiding method to re-organise and represent the fables in visual language. I was inspired by this idea and developed my own ‘three voices’ narrative system: ‘I’ – depicts a personal and subjective perspective and response to the fables. ‘You’ – a relatively objective perspective, of the textual moral content of the fables. It represents a collective understanding of the moral content. ‘He or She’ – other’s perspective to the fables.

Using the Taijitu of Yin and Yang, I have developed a narrative voice system which includes the three narrative perspectives (Figure 49, 50 and 51).

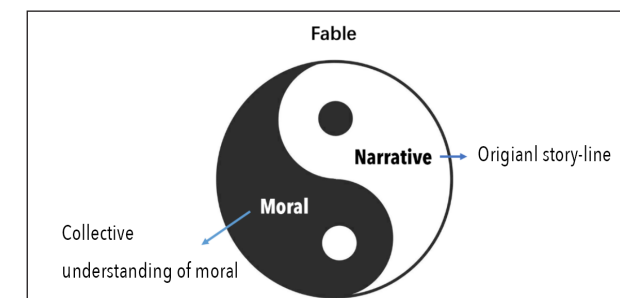


Figure 49. Jin, SW. (2018). *Fables in Taijitu – A* [Digital]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

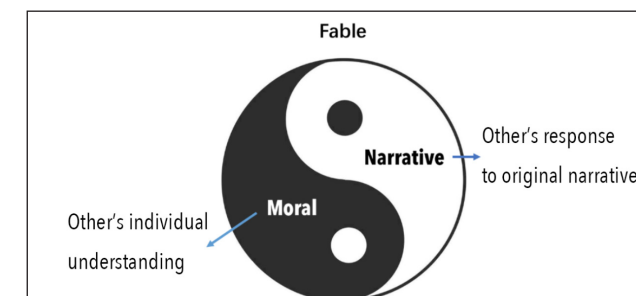


Figure 50. Jin, SW. (2018). *Fables in Taijitu – B* [Digital]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

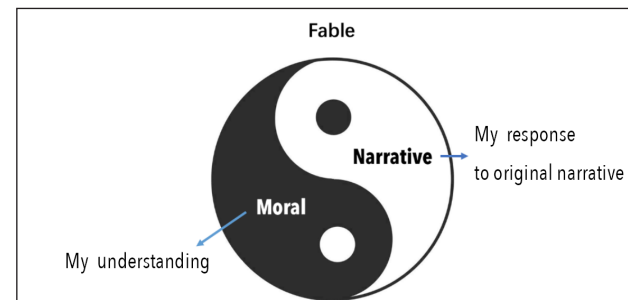


Figure 51. Jin, SW. (2018). *Fables in Taijitu – C* [Digital]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

The relationship between ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or She’ is elaborated in the structured diagram below (Figure 52).

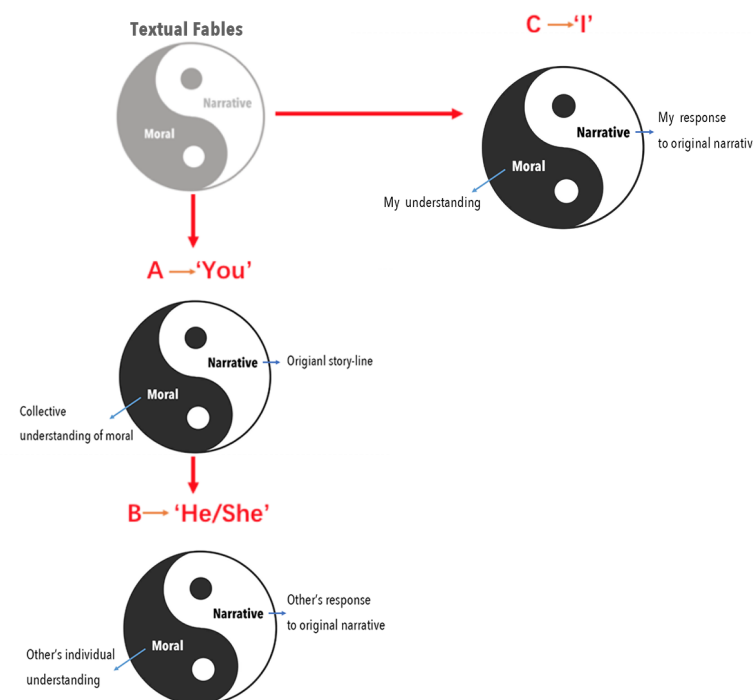


Figure 52. Jin, SW. (2018). *The relationship between ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or She’* [Digital]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

By developing the initial narrative voice system for fables, I have combined, analysed and classified different responses and understandings of fables from different perspectives. It has offered me a good structure to guide my practical work. In the next section, I shall talk about how I explore and visualise moral content in a specific way.

The ‘stream of consciousness’, ‘metaphor’ and ‘Yin and Yang concept’, which I have discussed earlier, are adapted to become methodological guidelines that structure this research. Specifically, they are also conceptual guidelines of the narrative voice system that rationalise the visual construction and interpretation of my practice. This section discusses how these three guidelines co-operate when visualising my work, and their relationship within the narrative voice system.

The narrative voice system employs three persons’ voices as an interactive method that helps me to explore the illustration of fables. In other words, this system re-organised and offered me several possible research directions to help me transform theory into practice.

The fable’s narrative voice system (Figure 52) has addressed what ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or She’ represent in the system; now I will begin exploring how to transfer the narrative voice into practical works (Figure 53).

According to the system, the narrative voice ‘You’ is responsible for presenting the original fables that are the original story-line and showing the collective understanding of the moral content (which is usually depicted in the last sentence of the textual fables). Accordingly, ‘You’ can be supported by metaphors and symbols to construct visual components (i.e., graphics, composition, tonality and so on). The text of the original fable can also be transformed into visual language; for example, fables can depict the characters, display the main plot and visualise the moral content.

Similarly, through referring to the four methods of stream of consciousness, I have

analysed and comprehended the original fables, and may generate my personal response and individual understanding of the moral content, which is different from the collective one, namely ‘I’. Then I will probe some ideas from my response that can be presented by visual language, followed by utilising metaphors and symbols to visualise those ideas in the practical works.

‘He or She’ is an extension of ‘You’ and represents other readers’ responses to the original fable, which might also be different from ‘I’. Therefore, we can explore the visual elements represented in “You” with the aid of stream of consciousness, thus creating some new ideas by extending and associating those visual elements. In the same way, I will use metaphors and symbols to visualise them, and compose the perspectives that are ‘He or She’ in a physical way.

Yin and Yang is a philosophical guide that maintains a harmonious balance between narrative and moral, as well as among the three voices – ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or She’. The Yin and Yang concept guides me when I think about and explore the fables, and the concept is then embodied in the form of a metaphor in the illustrations.

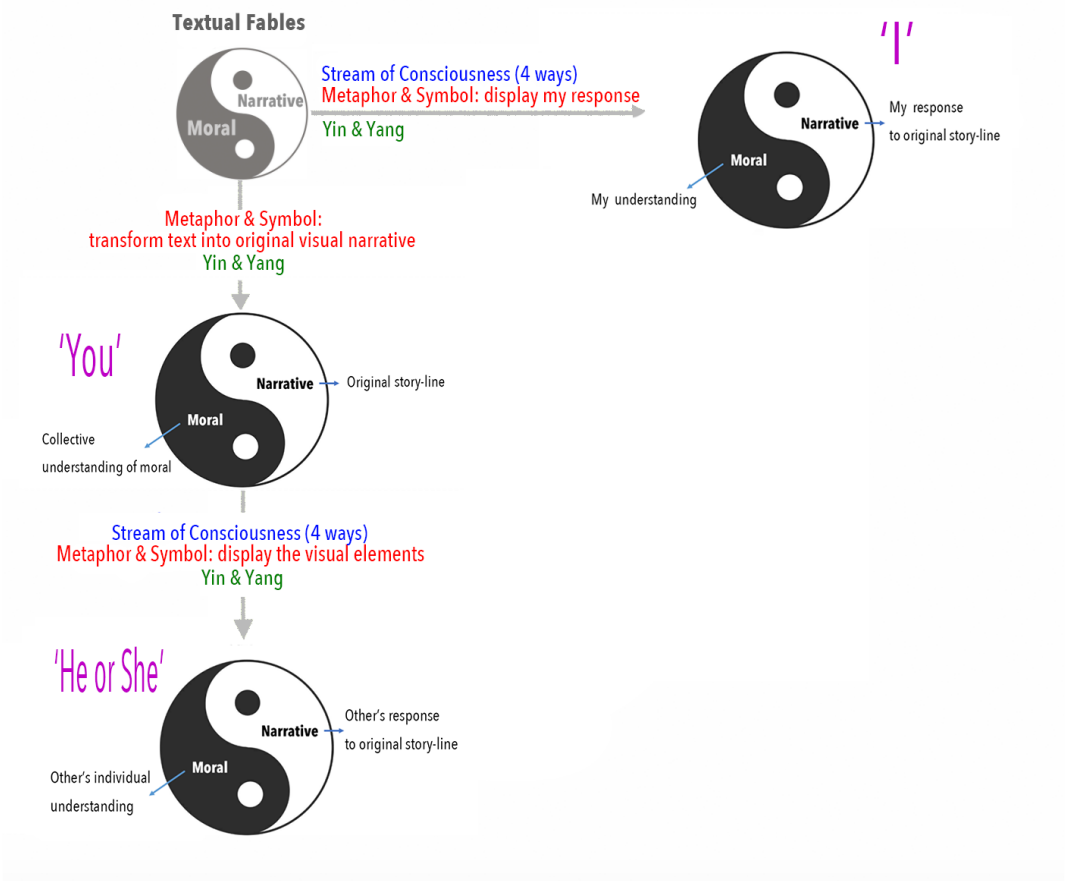


Figure 53. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Relationships Within the Narrative Voice System* [Digital]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

2.3.2 Initial Experiments

Following the early exploration, I began to research this narrative voice system and apply it to my practical works (Figure 54, 55 and 56).

Take figure 54 as an example. I confirmed ‘You’ first, which is the illustration of the original fable, *The Cock and the Pearl*. Then I expressed my individual response to this by using extreme contrast on each side of the image. On one hand, even valuable things like eyes can be useless for the snake, as its body is already full of eyes (which is used in an exaggerated way to depict the character; the aim is to lay the basis for my next comparison; on the other side, the man really wants to use the telescope but has no eyes, so he puts the telescope in his mouth and pretends it works – this is ‘I’. As we discussed earlier, ‘He or She’ comes from ‘You’ and is depicted as another response to this fable. In this artwork, according to the barley-corns, I create the ‘farmer’ who takes a hoe and prepares to harvest the barley-corns, then assume that he can sell the harvested corns and earn some money, and thus he could upgrade the small house into a bigger one.

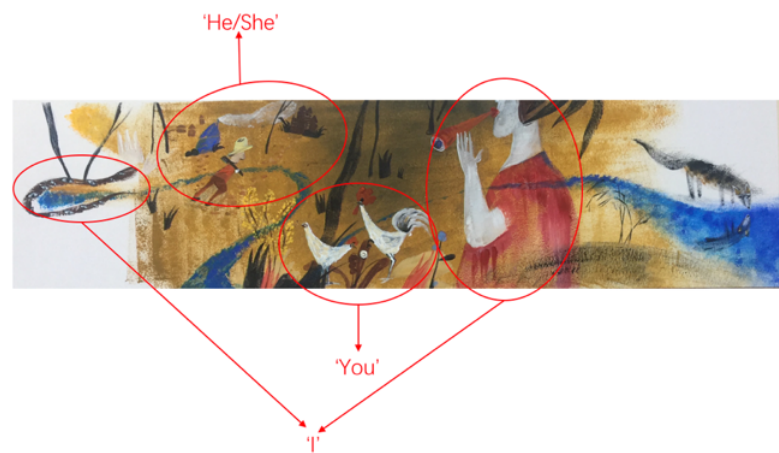


Figure 54. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl-Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

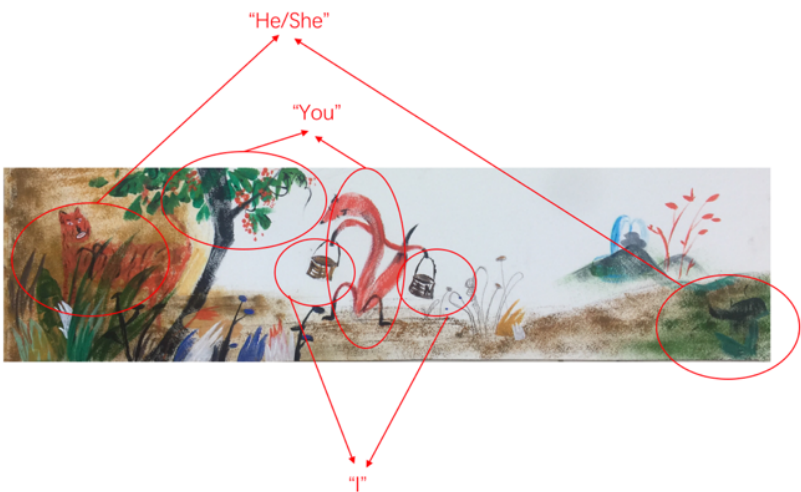


Figure 55. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Grapes-Draft 6* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

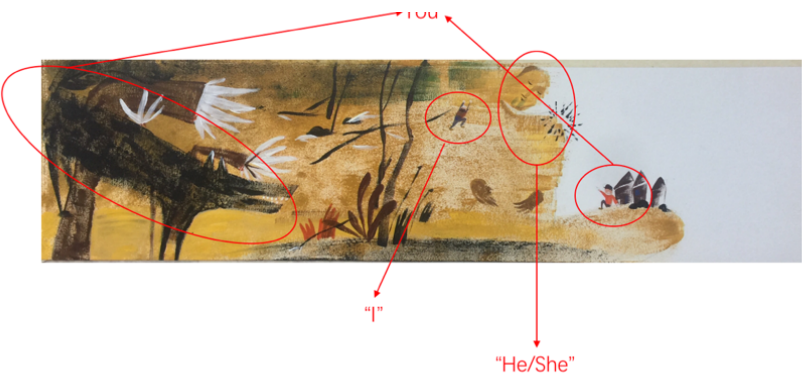


Figure 56. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Wolf and Kids-Draft 2* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

2.4 Experiment with the Narrative Voice System

In these experiments, I used the narrative voice system in single works i.e. the three perspectives in one work and reflected on the complex relationships embedded in them. I realised I needed to test it more thoroughly to see if it achieved my aims, which was to better communicate the fables. I also began thinking about my practical works for my final presentation. While I continued to use the three narrative voices in combination with stream of consciousness, metaphor and Yin and Yang, on reflection, I decided to explore the potential of the different narrative voices in individual illustrations. As a result, I referenced the Chinese folding screen, and used the triptych to explore the different perspectives and, at the same time, present one fable. I will discuss this next. Figure 57, 58, 59 and 60 are some of the results.



Figure 57. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse-Draft 7* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 58. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Crow-Draft 9* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 59. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and the Mask-Draft 6* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 60. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Cock and the Pearl-Draft 5* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 61. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (A) – Final Draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 62. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (B) – Final Draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 63. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (C) – Final Draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 64. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (A) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 65. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (B) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 66. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (C) – Final draft* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 67. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (A)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 68. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (B)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 69. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (C)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 70. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (A)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 71. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (B)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 72. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (C)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 73. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (A)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 74. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (B)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 75. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (C)* – Final draft [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

I decided to investigate five different fables and discovered that if I present series of fables in triptych format, this can help me explore the representation of the three different voices. What is worth mentioning is that when I create the narrative voice system in a series of three illustrations, I have not fixed the sequence or clearly stated which is the voice ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or She’. This is because it is important that I leave space for each viewer to develop their perspective of the fable at the specific moment they encounter the illustrations. Furthermore, the three voices are actually all connected with each other and at the same time independent from each other, and thus I designed different voices happening from different dimensions, just like parallel perspectives. In other words, it seems like different times and spaces, but all are part of the same fable. I mentioned this concept when I discussed the stream of consciousness – the disruption of time and space. For example, in figure 61, 62 and

63, the content circled in red shows how figure 61 is part of 62, and 63 may happen behind figure 61. This can show an inner relationship between narrative voices and the illustrations, and suggest causes and effects. Furthermore, metaphors are used to transform perspectives from the macroscopic to the macrocosmic in all fifteen illustrations, which are together suggesting one further moral that ‘big’ things are seen through ‘small’ ones; in other words, we can learn ‘big’ truths of life from ‘small’ fables.



Figure 85. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 77. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (B) – Final Draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 78. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (C) – Final Draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

In terms of the overall visual design structure for the final works, I used the three related illustrations to show whole fables from different voices, and finally I made fifteen illustrations for five fables. Not only are each series connected with each other, but also the fifteen illustrations are relevant through the composition and visual elements, which also correspond to the Yin and Yang concept.

In terms of the composition, I set all the fables to happen in an illusory and infinite space, linked with my understanding of the characteristic of the fables, where individuals can interpret the story-line and its moral differently. Additionally, there is not a clear sequence between the three different perspectives in the composition, which corresponds to the Yin and Yang concept that means the moral content is infinite. Then, I tried to use the colour transition to explore the Yin and Yang concept (Figure 79). I chose the five Chinese colours – black, white, red, blue and yellow as the basic colour, then further developed purple (from red and blue), and green (from blue and yellow). Therefore, apart from black (lines) and white (empty space), I used red, blue, purple, green and yellow to compose my colour transition for the practical works. The five Chinese colours can generate other colours, and they transform from one colour into another (Figure 80), just like Yin and Yang, forming an infinite colour cycle, which makes the connection among the fifteen illustrations even closer and echoes my previous discussion that together they suggest one further moral.



Figure 79. Jin, SW. (2018). *Colour transition – (1)* [Digital]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 80. Jin, SW. (2018). *Colour transition – (2)* [Digital]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 81. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (B) – Final draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Furthermore, there are other visual elements such as shadows that reflect my theories of Yin and Yang, and I have made some adjustments according to the content of the illustrations. For instance, in figure 81, I transformed the shadows into the reflection in the water, which not only reflects the inner thoughts of the character (the fox), but also delivers my own feeling that the grapes are just like the Chinese saying ‘the moon in the water and the flower in the mirror’ [水中月, 镜中花], that is only an illusion.



Figure 82. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (A) – Final draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 83. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (B) – Final draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Figure 84. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (C) – Final draft – Analysis* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Apart from that part of the work, some other parts also needed to be altered. For example, in figure 82, 83 and 83, the mask cannot easily be recognised, which will affect the reading and understanding of the fables. As well, in some of the compositions, the position and the proportion of empty space is not fluent and coherent. To sum up, those problems should be updated in the final works.

2.5 Exhibition of Research Outcomes



Figure 85. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 86. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (B)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 87. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion and The Mouse (C)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 88. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 89. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (B)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 90. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Goose with Golden Eggs (C)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 91. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 92. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (B)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 93. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Mask (C)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 94. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (A)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 95. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (B)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 96. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Fox and The Grapes (C)* [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 97. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (A)* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin



Figure 98. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (B)* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin



Figure 99. Jin, SW. (2018). *The Lion in Love (C)* [Painting]. Auckland, New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin

In terms of the final exhibition, after reviewing the previous experiments, I revised the composition of the 15 final works to bring about a more fluent visual flow with the aim of stimulating the viewers to treat all the works as a whole. Additionally, some problems that I found during the previous experiments have been modified. For example, in figures 91 and 93, I re-designed the mask to make it more easily recognisable.

Furthermore, the primary research goal is to bring the three different voices into effect to stimulate the viewers to build their own responses and views about the stories and their morals. Therefore, the visual relationship between the three voices of my response, the original story-line and the associational content is carefully considered. Taking figures 94, 95 and 96 as examples, these three works depict the fable *The fox and the grape*. The first figure narrates the fable's content that the fox wants to eat the grapes but cannot reach them. From his viewpoint, we know that the fox is envious of the bird that can reach and eat the grapes. The middle figure depicts my personal re-

sponse to this fable and shows the fox's inner mind. Additionally, I use the Tantalus, the Greek mythological figure, who was depicted standing in a pool of water beneath a fruit tree with low branches, with the fruit ever eluding his grasp, and the water always receding before he could take a drink, as a metaphor to posit my response that the fox's position is just like Tantalus – he cannot get what he wants. And from the other side, it also expresses my opinion that if you are much too eager for something, often you won't get it. The third work depicted an association of the first two works that shows a balance between the desire and the actual situation by using characters not in the fable.

The final installation of the works needed to be tested once exhibition spaces were allocated. In the final exhibition, I displayed all my works on three levels with progressive colour transitions. I also considered the relative proportion of the visual elements to guide the audience to view them as a coherent whole. For example, figure 100 is my original plan; however, given the overall height of the installation (state this) I had to consider the viewer's viewing distance and angle, which is not ideal to appreciate the works' details. So, I changed the five levels to three (see figure 102), which not only presents the colour transition more effectively, but also provides a suitable distance and space for viewers to engage with those works.

The final display is shown in figure 103. There are many limitations for this display wall, for example, the poor light and narrow space. However, those negative conditions challenged me and led me to realise some advantages of the display. For example, the isolated wall gave my works more visual space to demonstrate the concept of infinity, to connect the empty space between the works and wall.

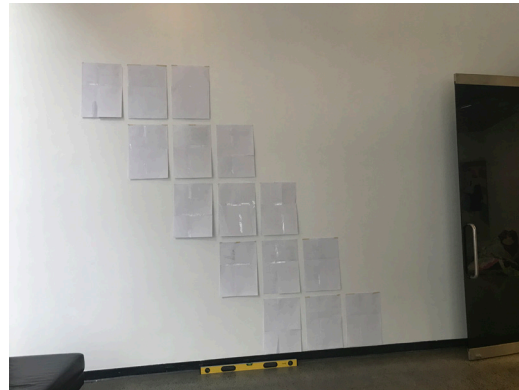


Figure 100. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-Test 1 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

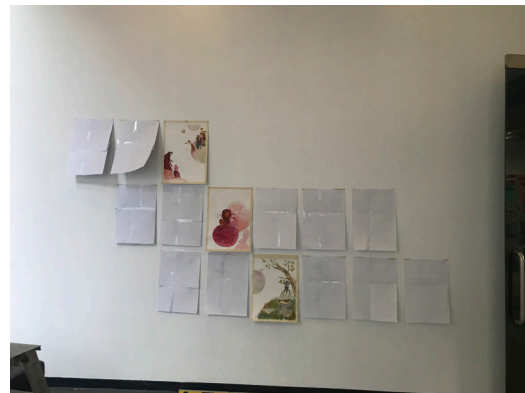


Figure 101. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-Test 2 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

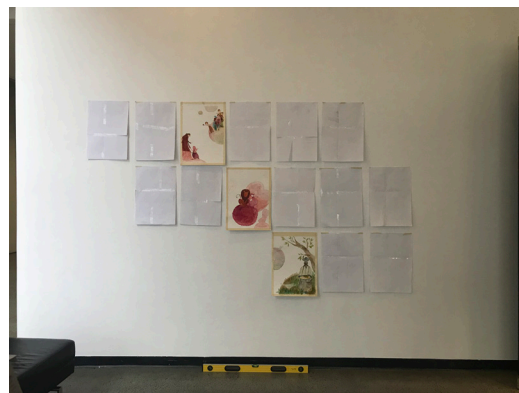


Figure 102. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-Test 3 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

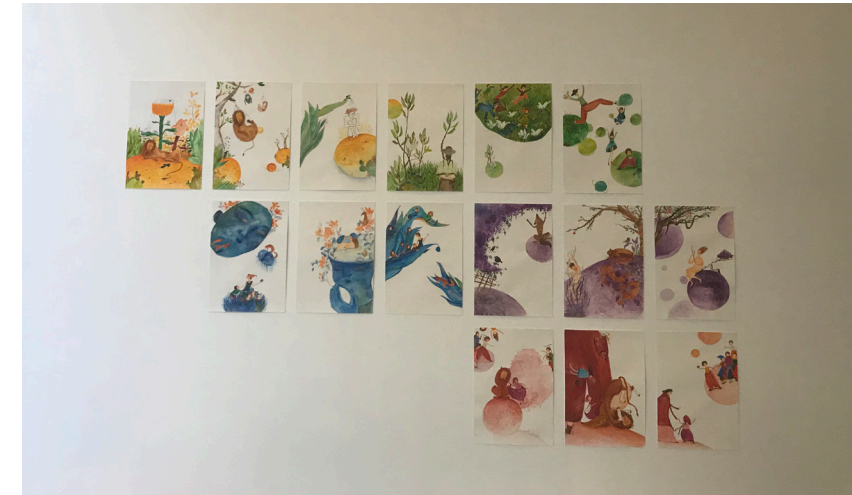


Figure 103. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-1 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.



Figure 104. Jin, SW. (2018). The final exhibition display-2 [Painting]. Auckland. New Zealand: Private collection of Songwen Jin.

Conclusion

This project is a ‘transformative journey’ that aimed to explore how to visualise fables, especially the moral content which is abstract and only fixed at a specific moment, with illustration. It was examined with the aid of Eastern and Western theories of stream of consciousness, metaphor and symbol and Yin and Yang concept. The critical framework, method and methodology have formed a rich theoretical foundation for this research; and provide guidance for me to explore and transform the abstract concept of fables into concrete experience.

As the moral content of fables is complicated and changeable, I adapted Gao’s (2000) narrative system in his fiction *Soul Mountain* and developed a narrative voice system that offers several possible perspectives to narrate and interpret the variability of the moral content. Exploring the fables from the three voices allowed me to generate a significant range of different visual content of the fables for practical works which demonstrated the complexity and variability of the fables. It also provided an opportunity to the viewers to rethink and redefine their own understanding and perspective about the fables and their moral contents.

The final outcomes of the research explored five individual fables. I employed the triptych format to explore the three voices of the narrative voice system of an individual fable after I discovered the restriction from my experiments of presenting a fable in a single illustration. Metaphors were used to compose the visual narrative and to transform the macroscopic perspective to macrocosmic perspective. This opens up another narrative connotation that all fifteen illustrations of fables are together meta-

phorically suggesting one further moral, from ‘small’ moral contents of these fables we learn ‘big’ truths of life. This was also manifested in the use of colour transition to suggest a harmony and wholeness of a new moral for the fifteen final works. Working with and investigating fables and exploring methods to visually represent the abstract moral content has led me to understand more fully the holistic nature of my own moral perspective. Furthermore, the three different personal pronouns ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘He or she’ represented by each piece of the triptych were not specifically identified. Viewers should have their own narrative thoughts to develop their own perspective of the moral content of the fables, which as the project has argued is never fixed and continues to change over time.

References

- Aesop, & Worthington, R. (2009). *Aesop's Fables: A New Revised Version from Original Sources*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=340570&query=Aesop%27s+Fables+%3A+A+New+Revised+Version+From+Original+Sources>
- Andriessen, D., & Gubbins, C. (2009). Metaphor analysis as an approach for exploring theoretical concepts: The case of social capital. *Organization Studies*, 30(8), 845-863. doi:10.1177/0170840609334952
- Eisner, C. (2016). Collagegrids: generative metaphor and emergent composition. The interplay of inherited tradition with human agency in fine art practice. *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 15(1), 50-62. doi:10.1080/14702029.2016.1141562
- Fang, T. (2012). Yin Yang: A new perspective on culture. *Management and Organization Review*, 8(1), 25-50. doi: 10.1111/j.1740-8784.2011.00221.x
- Fong, W. (2001). *Between Two Cultures: Late-nineteenth-and Twentieth-century Chinese Paintings from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Gao, X., (2000). *Soul mountain; translated from the Chinese by Mabel Lee*. Pymble, N.S.W.: Flamingo.
- Haidt, J., & Joseph, C. (2006). The moral mind: How five sets of innate intuitions guide the development of many culture-specific virtues, and perhaps even modules. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195332834.003.0019
- Hartung, F., Hagoort, P., & Willems, R. M. (2017). Readers select a comprehension mode independent of pronoun: Evidence from fMRI during narrative comprehension. *Brain and language*, 170, 29-38. doi:10.1016/j.bandl.2017.03.007
- Hu, D. (1995). The philosophical origin of the black-white system of Chinese painting. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 8(3), 453-465. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/stable/20007202?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology*. Retrieved from https://archive.org/stream/theprinciplesofp01jameuoft/theprinciplesofp01jameuoft_djvu.txt
- Lee, M. (2012). Aesthetics in Gao's Soul Mountain. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 14(4), 1. Retrieved from <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol14/iss4/1/>
- Lefèvre, P. (2010). Intertwining verbal and visual elements in printed narratives for adults. *Studies in Comics*, 1(1), 35-52. doi:10.1386/stic.1.1.35/1
- Li, J. (2012). Parable – the Expression of Spiritual Implied Meaning by Means of the Representational Form. 关于寓言—心灵寓意如何通过具象形态表达. *Fine Arts Education Research*, 20, 15-15. Retrieved from <http://www.cqvip.com/QK/70824X/201220/>
- Liu, Y. (2011). *The Analysis of the Artistic Philosophy in Diagram of Yin and Yang Fish* (Master's thesis, Northwest University for Nationalities). 剖析阴阳鱼太极图的美学内涵 (硕士论文 , 西北民族大学). Retrieved from <http://cdmd.cnki.com.cn/Article/CDMD-10742-1012282558.htm>
- Moropa, K. (2004). Retelling the stories: the impact of Aesop's fables on the development of Xhosa children's literature. *South African Journal of African Languages*, 24(3), 178-188. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline-com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/doi/abs/10.1080/02572117.2004.10587235>
- McKenzie, J., & van Winkelen, C. (2011). Beyond words: Visual metaphors that can demonstrate comprehension of KM as a paradoxical activity system. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 28(2), 138-149. doi:10.1002/sres.1078
- Mitchell, W. T. (2013). *Iconology: image, text, ideology*. University of Chicago Press.
- Nodelman, P. (1988). *Words about pictures: The narrative art of children's picture books*. University of Georgia Press.
- Northoff, G. (2014). Do cortical midline variability and low frequency fluctuations mediate William James "Stream of Consciousness"? "Neurophenomenal Balance Hypothesis" of "Inner Time Consciousness". *Consciousness and cognition*, 30, 184-200. Retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/science/article/pii/S1053810014001652?_rdoc=1&fmt=high&_origin=gateway&_docanchor=&md5=b8429449ccfc9c30159a5f9aeaa92ffb
- Nöth, W. (2010). The criterion of habit in Peirce's definitions of the symbol. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society: A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy*, 46(1), 82-93. doi:10.2979/tra.2010.46.1.82
- Painter, S. (n.d.). Yin Yang Meaning. Retrieved May 12, 2017, from https://feng-shui.lovetoknow.com/Ying_Yang_Meaning

- Perreault, S., Pryor, S., Sleeper, J., & Weldon-Lassiter, C. (2003, February 1). Aesop and Character Expectations Integrating Fables and Contemporary Stories. *Book Links*, 12(4), 9-14. Retrieved from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/10027775/aesop-character-expectations-integrating-fables-contemporary-stories>
- Petrenko, V. F., & Korotchenko, E. A. (2012). *Metaphor as a basic mechanism of art (painting)*. *Psychology in Russia: State of Art*, 1(5), 531-567. Retrieved from [https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Metaphor-as-a-Basic-Mechanism-of-Art-\(painting\)-Petrenko-Korotchenko/b626d-23de1475e23c659a783354a275f042aae65](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Metaphor-as-a-Basic-Mechanism-of-Art-(painting)-Petrenko-Korotchenko/b626d-23de1475e23c659a783354a275f042aae65)
- Pravossoudovitch, K., Cury, F., Young, S. G., & Elliot, A. J. (2014). Is red the colour of danger? Testing an implicit red–danger association. *Ergonomics*, 57(4), 503-510. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00140139.2014.889220>
- Tan, S. (2009). Silent voices: illustration and visual narrative [From the 2009 Colin Simpson Lecture.]. *Australian Author*, 41(2), 19-23. Retrieved from <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=200910268;res=IELAPA>
- Thomas, B. (2015). *Narrative: the basics*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/AUT/detail.action?docID=4542804>
- Wang, P. (2012). The Stream of Consciousness of Painting Expression (Doctoral dissertation, South China University of Technology). 意识流在绘画中的艺术体现 (博士论文 ,华南理工大学). Retrieved from <http://cdmd.cnki.com.cn/Article/CDMD-10561-1012450261.htm>
- Weiss, A. (2011). The form and function of the modern fable in Janet Frame’s short stories. *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, 33(2), 43. Retrieved from <https://search-informit-com-au.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/documentSummary;dn=817734818376714;res=IELLCC?>
- Zhou, H. (2014). Culture Communication Characteristics of “Aesop’s Fables” across the Chinese translation easy transfer. *China Media Report Overseas*, 10(2), 79-86. Retrieved from <http://cdmd.cnki.com.cn/Article/CDMD-10075-1014039541.htm>