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The Development of the Character Image of White Snake and Green Snake in The Legend of White Snake Animation Trilogy

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Abstract

This study examines the development of White Snake and Green Snake's character images in the animated trilogy White Snake (2019), Green Snake (2021), and White Snake: Afloat (2024). As one of China's most enduring folktales, The legend of white snake has undergone numerous reinterpretations, with recent animated versions reconstructing the protagonists through visual and symbolic strategies.

Adopting a qualitative research design, the study combines interviews and surveys with a semiotic analytical framework derived from Charles Sanders Peirce. Through this approach, it investigates how costume design, color symbolism, and physical movement contribute to identity construction. White Snake is transformed from a passive romantic figure into a determined and empowered protagonist, while Green Snake evolves into a central character with emotional depth and narrative agency.with a brief explanation of Peirce's triadic modelsign, object, and interpretant for interdisciplinary clarity.

Findings suggest that contemporary Chinese animation redefines traditional gender roles and deepens character identity through visual storytelling. It emphasizes that symbolic design and narrative innovation serve as powerful tools in revitalizing folklore for modern audiences. The study recommends that future animation projects continue to explore culturally rooted, symbolically rich character development in order to balance creative expression with cultural authenticity.

Keywords : The Legend of White Snake, Character Image, White Snake Image, Green Snake Image, Animation

1. Introduction

The legend of white snake is one of the Four Great Chinese Folktales, with origins in the Ming dynasty's Jing Shi Tong Yan. Over centuries, it has been adapted into various cultural formats including Kunqu opera, serialized fiction, and modern media narratives (Zhou,2022). The tale of White Snake, a snake spirit who becomes human and falls in love with a mortal man has remained central in Chinese cultural imagination, embodying recurring themes of love, transgression, and self-sacrifice (Wang, 2018).

As a narrative that blends mythology, ethical conflict, and romantic tragedy, The legend of white snake occupies a unique space in Chinese narrative traditions. It not only transmits traditional values regarding family ethics and religious belief, but also mirrors the evolution of social ideologies (Bai,2021). From Confucian family order to Buddhist karmic notions, the story has been repeatedly invested with symbolic meaning and has become a cultural emblem that reflects gender identity, social roles, and resistance to authority (Zheng, 2016).

In traditional interpretations, White Snake is idealized as a loyal and virtuous wife, embodying the Confucian ideal of womanhood. Green Snake, by contrast, has typically served a secondary or comic role, lacking independent narrative agency (Pan,2021). These portrayals reinforce gendered expectations centered on devotion and restraint, limiting the expressive range of female characters (An, 2009). As such, both White Snake and Green Snake are not merely narrative figures but highly symbolic representations of how traditional society visualizes moral, gender, and identity roles (Liu, 2022).

The legend of white snake has undergone a significant transformation through animated reinterpretation, particularly in the trilogy produced by Light Chaser Animation White Snake (2019), Green Snake (2021), and White Snake: Afloat (2024). These films reimagine the two protagonists as psychologically complex and narratively central characters, blending traditional Chinese aesthetics with global animation sensibilities. In Green Snake, the protagonist operates in a world completely removed from romantic tropes, marking a fundamental shift from dependence to narrative agency (Lu & Gong, 2023).

This transformation is not only an aesthetic innovation, but also reflects the structural shift in Chinese animation from state-centered moral storytelling to character-

centered plots and hybrid aesthetics (Wang, 2022). More importantly, it signals a conversion of character design into a visual language system, a symbolic structure that communicates power, identity, and emotional depth. As feminist cultural theory observes, the reconstruction of female identity in visual media is part of an ongoing resistance to reductive gender archetypes (Chen, 2012). The contemporary White Snake is no longer passive; she emerges as a protagonist engaged in identity conflict, memory reconstruction, and resistance to oppression (Dai & Yang, 2016).

Existing research has examined The legend of white snake through the lens of literary allegory, feminist critique in television and film, and its function in moral education (Wu, 2018). Other studies have focused on the technical innovations and globalization of Chinese animation (Lu & Gong, 2023). However, there remains a gap in examining how visual strategies, such as costume, color, and movement, operate as semiotic tools in the construction of character identity. The Peircean model of semiotics, which emphasizes the triadic relationship of representamen, object, and interpretant, offers an appropriate framework for interpreting highly visual media like animation (Yang & Ran, 2022). Yet this framework has rarely been applied to White Snake adaptations. In particular, the evolution of Green Snake's visual symbolism in the trilogy has received little scholarly attention, despite her elevated narrative role.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the development of White Snake and Green Snake's character images in the animated trilogy. Drawing on Peircean semiotics, it analyzes how costume design, color symbolism, and physical movement function as symbolic mechanisms in identity construction. By contextualizing this analysis within the broader trajectory of Chinese animation, the study aims to reveal how traditional mythologies are being reencoded in contemporary expression and disseminated through visual culture.

2.Objectives

2.1 To study the narrative transformation and visual symbolic reconstruction of The Legend of White Snake in animation.

2.2 To study the character image of White Snake and Green Snake in animation trilogy focusing on meaning making through action, costume, and symbolic props.

3.Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the development of character image in the White Snake animation trilogy. Two primary research tools were used: structured interviews and survey forms.

Structured interviews were conducted with five animation professionals involved in the trilogy's production, including directors, character designers, and visual artists. These interviews focused on their creative decision-making regarding character appearance, animation aesthetics, and storytelling structure.

Survey forms were distributed to two academic scholars. One specializes in the historical and cultural development of The legend of White Snake, and the other focuses on animation and film studies. The survey forms were designed to elicit expert perspectives on character transformation, symbolic representation, and adaptation practices in animation.

4.Research Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on structured interviews with five animation professionals and survey forms completed by two academic scholars. The analysis was guided by two research objectives: (1) to study the development of The Legend of White Snake in animation, and (2) to study the character image of White Snake and Green Snake in the animation trilogy.

Accordingly, the findings are divided into two main sections. Section 4.1 focuses on the development of the legend through narrative adaptation, audience reception, and technological innovation in animation. Section 4.2 analyzes the evolving character image of White Snake and Green Snake based on action, costume, and props as presented in the trilogy.

4.1 Development of The Legend of White Snake in Animation Trilogy

To better understand the developmental trajectory of The Legend of White Snake in animation, it is important to examine how different adaptations across historical periods have approached the story. Table 1 presents key animated adaptations from the

1920s to the 2020s, selected for their historical relevance, technical innovation, narrative reformulation, and representation of female protagonists. While early works were inspired by opera and live-action storytelling, later adaptations employed digital media and transnational production frameworks to reinterpret the legend in contemporary contexts. The table offers a comparative overview of these adaptations, highlighting shifts in technical style, narrative structure, female characterization, and socio-cultural influences. Collectively, these examples illustrate how animation has reshaped the legend's meaning across different eras and creative paradigm compilation and analysis of animated adaptations across historical periods as following.

Table 1 Timeline of Animated Adaptations of "The Legend of the White Snake"

Period	Key Works	Technical Style	Narrative Focus	Female Characterization	Cultural Context
1920s-1950s	Early opera-inspired shorts (White Snake opera excerpts)	Black-and-white ink-wash, hand-drawn 2D	Faithful retelling of folklore, emphasizing "taboo love" tragedy	White Snake: Traditional sacrificial figure, passive and love-bound	Dominance of Confucian values; patriarchal constraints on women
1960s-1980s	The White Snake (1960, Shanghai Animation Film Studio)	Color ink-wash animation	Romanticized love story, softened tragic elements	White Snake: Gentle and virtuous, yet confined by her "demon" identity	Early socialist China; tensions between conservatism and modernization
1990s	Green Snake (1993, animated tie-in to Tsui Hark's live-action film)	2D with early CGI effects	Subversion of tradition; exploration of desire and moral ambiguity	White Snake & Green Snake: Agents of desire, challenging patriarchal authority	Post-reform era; influx of Western feminist ideas

Table 2 Timeline of Animated Adaptations of "The Legend of the White Snake"

Period	Key Works	Technical Style	Narrative Focus	Female Characterization	Cultural Context
2000s	The White Snake (2001, Sino-Japanese co-production)	Japanese cel-style + Chinese motifs	Cross-cultural collaboration; universalizing "forbidden love"	White Snake: Modernized traits (independence, agency)	Globalization; blending of East Asian cultural aesthetics
2010s	White Snake: The Origin	3D CGI, hyper-realistic visuals	Prequel narrative; female self-discovery and empowerment	White Snake: Warrior-heroine, driving the plot with combat and intellect	Rise of Chinese animation industry; feminist discourse in media
2020s	Green Snake	Virtual engine, cyberpunk aesthetics	Postmodern deconstruction; gender power dynamics and survival	Green Snake: Gender-neutral protagonist; White Snake as a symbolic resistance figure	Metaverse trends; diversification of gender narratives
2024	White Snake: Afloat	Advanced 3D CGI, dynamic lighting	Identity acceptance, and societal prejudice	Balance love and supernatural identity	Debates on tradition vs. modernity

Note. Compiled and analyzed by the researcher based on animation archives and academic sources (1920s—2024). Own work.

As shown in the table, each adaptation reflects not only technological advancements but also narrative innovation and evolving cultural values. In particular, the animation trilogy produced by Light Chaser Animation between 2019 and 2024 reimagines the legend through character-driven plots and symbolic storytelling. The following section focuses on how narrative structures have shifted from traditional linear storytelling to fragmented and personalized arcs

4.1.1 Narrative Adaptation

The narrative of The Legend of White Snake has undergone significant adaptation in the animation trilogy, moving away from traditional plotlines toward more fragmented, character-driven structures. In classical versions, the story centers on White Snake's forbidden love with Xu Xian and the moral battle with the monk Fa Hai. This linear narrative often ends in tragedy, with White Snake imprisoned beneath the Leifeng

Pagoda. However, the animated adaptations shift the focus from morality to memory, identity, and individual growth.

In *White Snake (2019)*, the narrative is presented as a partial origin story. It begins with White Snake losing her memory and gradually recovering fragments of her past through interactions with Ah Xuan. The structure is non-linear, revealing plot elements through flashbacks and visions rather than chronological exposition. Interview participants noted that this approach allowed viewers to experience the story through White Snake's perspective, emphasizing emotional uncertainty and psychological depth.

Green Snake (2021) further departs from the traditional framework by removing the historical setting altogether. The narrative takes place in a dystopian, liminal realm called Asuraville, where Green Snake is forced to undergo metaphysical trials to regain her freedom. The protagonist's journey is framed as a spiritual transformation, exploring themes of loss, resistance, and self-liberation. Animation professionals emphasized that the narrative was intentionally designed to break free from romantic dependency and highlight Green Snake's autonomy.

In *White Snake: Afloat (2024)*, the story shifts to White Snake's internal struggle as she moves between spiritual realms. While traditional figures such as Fa Hai reappear, they serve more as symbolic forces rather than concrete antagonists. Scholar responses suggested that this reflects a growing trend in Chinese animation to abstract classical roles into metaphysical symbols, aligning narrative form with imaginative space.

Rather than retelling a known myth, the trilogy reconfigures narrative logic to align with contemporary values particularly individualism, agency, and emotional growth. Across the trilogy, the structure transitions from linear cause-effect storytelling to multi-perspective, character-centered arcs that explore identity through disjunction and symbolism.

The trilogy demonstrates a departure from traditional narrative structures by centering character emotion and agency over chronological fidelity. These adaptations mark a shift from moral resolution to psychological exploration, redefining how the legend is understood within the animation medium.

4.1.2 Technological Innovation

Figure 1 White Snake in a Traditional Live-Action Film Version



Note. Film still from The Legend of the White Snake (1992), directed by Tsui Hark. Source: film archives. Permission granted for academic use.

Figure 2 White Snake Rendered in CGI



Note. Film still from White Snake: Origin (2019), produced by Light Chaser Animation Studios. Source: film archives. Permission granted for academic use.

The development of The legend of white snake in animation has been closely shaped by technological advancements. Changes in tools, rendering styles, and production workflows across different periods have significantly influenced the visual expression of the legend. Early adaptations primarily relied on traditional 2D hand-drawn animation. The 1960 version by Shanghai Animation Film Studio demonstrated visual influences from Chinese ink painting and stage aesthetics, presenting a highly stylized artistic approach rooted in national culture.

By the early 21st century, digital technology gradually entered the production process. Animated adaptations from the 2000s began to show developments in camera movement, digital coloring, and visual layering. A more substantial transformation emerged in the late 2010s. White Snake (2019), produced by Light Chaser Animation, employed hybrid rendering techniques combining 3D modeling with 2D texturing and painterly lighting effects. This approach enriched spatial depth and visual dynamics while maintaining the texture and rhythm of traditional Chinese visual language.

Motion-capture technology was selectively used in emotionally intense or action-driven scenes to enhance character movement and physical nuance. According to interview participants, this technique was implemented strategically to improve realism without disrupting stylistic coherence. In Green Snake (2021), the fluid use of camera movement, complex depth of field, and multi-dimensional spatial design established a strong correlation between visual presentation and the protagonist's psychological journey.

Scholars noted that these technological enhancements reflect a shift in Chinese animation from narrative-centered expression toward an integrated emphasis on visual and emotional articulation. The advancement in rendering, modeling, and cinematic language not only improves visual appeal but also establishes a technical grammar that supports character construction and identity transformation.

The technological trajectory of the trilogy illustrates a deep integration between traditional aesthetics and contemporary tools. This convergence elevates narrative effectiveness and expands the expressive capacity of Chinese folklore within the medium of digital animation.

4.1.3 Audience Reception

Audience reception of The Legend of White Snake animation trilogy reflects a growing openness to reinterpretations of traditional folklore through modern visual and narrative strategies. According to interviewed animation professionals, the trilogy received positive feedback from younger audiences for its emotionally driven plots and stylized character design. Scholars noted that while older viewers tended to compare the adaptations with classical versions, many appreciated the trilogy's innovative use of fantasy elements and psychological depth. Several interviewees emphasized that the use of familiar cultural symbols in new narrative contexts helped bridge generational gaps and made the legend more accessible to international audiences through streaming platforms and subtitled releases.

4.2 The Character Image of White Snake and Green Snake in Animation Trilogy.

4.2.1 Action

The actions of White Snake and Green Snake in the animation trilogy reflect a significant departure from traditional portrayals, where female figures were characterized by composure, restraint, and emotional dependence. In earlier adaptations, White Snake's movements were limited to ceremonial gestures and passive positioning, embodying ideals of obedience and sacrifice associated with Confucian femininity.

In *White Snake (2019)*, however, the protagonist is reimagined through sequences of flight, magical combat, and high-speed pursuit. Her actions are physically assertive and narratively central, signaling a shift toward agency and self-definition. She is no longer moved by the narrative.she moves the narrative. This physical dynamism reinforces her autonomy and psychological transformation.

Green Snake (2021) pushes this visual shift further. Set in a liminal dystopia, the character navigates urban warfare, parkour-style evasion, and shapeshifter combat. Her tense posture, abrupt motion changes, and aggressive gestures signal emotional defiance. One interviewed animator remarked, "She doesn't explain herself,she reacts with her body action is her identity."

Figure 3 White Snake Demonstrating Agency Through Rapid Mid-Air Movement



Note. Film still from White Snake: Origin (2024), produced by Light Chaser Animation Studios. Source: film archives. Permission granted for academic use.

Figure 4 Green Snake Performing Hand-to-Hand Combat as a Symbol of Resistance



Note. Film still from Green Snake (2021), produced by Light Chaser Animation Studios. Source: film archives. Permission granted for academic use.

This transformation in character behavior can be analyzed using Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of semiotics, which defines a sign as the relationship among an object (the referent or meaning), a representamen (the perceptible form of the sign), and an interpretant (the meaning constructed by the observer). In the animated trilogy, the character's movement serves as the representamen; the emotional or narrative state implied,such as inner conflict, anger, or self-determination, constitutes the object; and the audience's interpretation becomes the interpretant. Through this triadic process, action sequences in animation become symbolic structures that externalize psychological states and express character identity.

Interview data confirm that movement was deliberately designed to convey emotional nuance and psychological depth. Scholar responses noted that the assertive physical expression of female protagonists in the trilogy challenges traditional gender expectations. Through action as a visual and symbolic medium, the animation constructs a new grammar of female agency in Chinese animated storytelling.

4.2.2 Costume

Costume plays a central role in constructing character identity in the White Snake animation trilogy. In traditional adaptations, White Snake is typically depicted in flowing white robes that signify purity, transcendence, and moral virtue. This stylized costume reflects Confucian ideals of femininity gentle, restrained, and passive. Green Snake, when present, is usually dressed in green or blue garments, visually subordinated to White Snake, and rarely given individual symbolic styling.

The animation trilogy introduces redesigned costumes that align with modern aesthetic sensibilities and narrative functions. White Snake's appearance across the trilogy combines classical elegance with utilitarian detailing. Her outfit incorporates layered textures, subtle armor elements, and a restrained color palette that blends white, silver, and muted gold. These choices signal a fusion of traditional grace and physical strength. The costume is not merely ornamental but supports her role as both spiritual figure and action protagonist.

Green Snake's costume in the trilogy presents a strong visual contrast. Featuring bold cuts, asymmetrical lines, and darker hues, her outfit evokes agility, rebellion, and emotional intensity. The costume becomes a visual extension of her internal state,

emphasizing independence and resistance. As character designer explained during interview, “We didn’t want her to echo White Snake. She had to feel sharp, dangerous, and alive. Her costume had to move like she does”. Ore angular design choices that reflect her aggressive and independent nature.

Figure 5 Concept Art of White Snake’s Costume Design



Note. Concept art created by the Light Chaser Animation Concept Department for White Snake: Origin (2019). Source: studio design archives. Permission granted for academic use.

Figure 6 Concept Art of Green Snake’s Costume



Note. Concept art created by the Light Chaser Animation Concept Department for Green Snake (2019). Source: studio design archives. Permission granted for academic use.

These costume designs can be interpreted through Peirce's triadic model of semiotics. The representamen is the visual design of the costume; the object is the cultural or emotional identity it expresses, such as discipline, power, or resistance; and the interpretant is the viewer's understanding, formed through cultural associations and symbolic reading. White Snake's armored elegance may be read as spiritual authority, while Green Snake's jagged styling may signify inner turmoil and defiance.

According to interview feedback, costume serves not only to distinguish characters visually but also to encode gender, power, and transformation. Interviewed professionals emphasized that costume design in the trilogy prioritized mobility, symbolic detail, and viewer resonance. Through this integration of function and meaning, costume operates as both a narrative device and a semiotic structure.

The trilogy thus uses costume not simply as visual decoration but as a vehicle for expressing ideological and emotional identity. Through wardrobe design, White Snake and Green Snake are constructed as visually encoded representations of empowered femininity in contemporary Chinese animation.

4.2.3 Prop

Props in the White Snake animation trilogy function not only as narrative tools but as semiotic extensions of character identity. Among the most symbolically significant is White Snake's hairpin, which appears throughout the trilogy as a visual marker of memory, transformation, and continuity. In traditional versions, the hairpin is often associated with feminine beauty and romantic restraint. In the animated adaptations, however, the object takes on layered meanings, serving at once as an heirloom, a weapon, and a personal talisman.

In White Snake: Origin and White Snake: Afloat, the hairpin is featured prominently during moments of identity loss, emotional crisis, or transition. Its repeated visual emphasis signals a connection between physical form and psychological state. As one character designer noted during interview, "The hairpin is part of her. When she drops it or holds it, something inside her shifts." This object-centered storytelling reflects the animation's interest in tangible symbols that convey intangible change.

Another prop of narrative and symbolic weight is the paper umbrella, which appears frequently throughout the trilogy in emotionally charged scenes. Most notably, it

first emerges during the pivotal meeting between White Snake and Xu Xian, but it later reappears in flashbacks, memory sequences, and moments of emotional transformation. The umbrella functions as a shared object symbolizing emotional interdependence, mutual trust, and fated connection. Its repeated presence visually reinforces the fragile yet enduring bond between the characters. In Peircean terms, the umbrella acts as a representamen, the object is the romantic unity it signifies, and the interpretant is the audience's recognition of its symbolic role in evoking intimacy, longing, and inevitable separation.

Figure 7 White Snake's Hairpin as a Visual Symbol of Memory, Identity, and Transformation



Note. Concept art created by the Light Chaser Animation Concept Department for White Snake: Origin (2019). Source: studio design archives. Permission granted for academic use.

By contrast, Green Snake is notably presented without a consistent prop. Her identity is expressed primarily through movement, clothing, and spatial interaction. This absence of symbolic objects reinforces her narrative function as a figure of internal autonomy rather than external attachment. Scholar responses emphasized that this contrast between White Snake's material signifiers and Green Snake's embodied agency underscores their differing character arcs.

Props in the trilogy thus operate as semiotic anchors, concrete items through which abstract qualities are conveyed. The careful deployment of the hairpin and umbrella situates White Snake within a visual tradition of emotionally charged femininity, while

Green Snake's prop-less identity signals her break from those traditions. These choices exemplify how animated symbolism can construct and contrast female subjectivities through selective object use.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The development of The Legend of the White Snake in animation can be analyzed across three key dimensions: narrative transformation, technological innovation, and audience reception. These dimensions together demonstrate how a classical Chinese legend has been adapted into a culturally resonant and visually modern animated form.

The trilogy departs from linear, fate driven storytelling found in traditional versions and instead adopts a psychologically complex, character-driven narrative. While earlier adaptations centered on moral lessons and karmic resolution, the animated trilogy especially Green Snake (2021) employs nonlinear timelines, flashbacks, and emotional introspection to explore identity and resistance. This aligns with Liu's (2022) observation that contemporary Chinese animation increasingly embraces narrative fragmentation to match evolving audience expectations.

The technical approaches employed also mark a significant shift in animation aesthetics. From hand-drawn techniques in the 20th century to the sophisticated integration of 3D rendering, painterly textures, and selective motion-capture, the trilogy exemplifies what Wei (2023) describes as "the hybridization of industrial technique and traditional aesthetic logic." White Snake's visual world blends spatial depth with symbolic rhythm, reinforcing both immersion and cultural memory. Such innovation is not only technical but also symbolic.it enables more expressive representation of supernatural elements and internal emotion.

Audience reception further reveals how engagement with the legend has evolved. While older audiences may seek fidelity to folklore, younger viewers respond to emotional resonance, character agency, and modern themes. Chen (2012) and Lu & Gong (2023) emphasize that the success of cultural animation now depends on balancing authenticity with accessibility. Survey responses in this study reflect this balance: viewers appreciated the trilogy's retention of cultural motifs while praising its innovation in tone, pacing, and visual style.

This study identifies a three-dimensional visual transformation in the character images of White Snake and Green Snake through action, costume, and props which reflects a redefinition of female identity in Chinese animated narratives. White Snake is no longer limited to passive gestures and moral symbolism. Instead, her assertive body movement, layered costume with functional elements, and symbolic props such as the hairpin reflect her internal struggle and self-awareness.

Peirce's semiotic model helps decode how audiences arrive at meaning through visual cues. The viewer does not simply see a costume or a gesture, they interpret its symbolic value, which has been deliberately designed to reposition both characters in terms of power and femininity. Thus, semiotic logic is embedded directly in the construction of character image, making it central to the narrative and ideological transformation observed in the trilogy.

Previous studies such as Hu & Tian (2016) and Wang (2018) have interpreted White Snake primarily through moral and literary frames, emphasizing purity, loyalty, and sacrifice. This study differs by employing a semiotic approach to analyze how character meaning is constructed through visual signs. The hairpin functions not as an accessory but as a dynamic sign within Peirce's frameworkit evolves from a static representamen into a trigger for viewer interpretation of emotional and narrative transformation. Compared to Wang (2022), who focuses on discursive representations of female characters in text and dialogue, this study reveals how visual elements serve as signs of agency and identity.

Green Snake's asymmetrical design, aggressive body movement, and lack of personal props visually encode her independence and resistance. These choices, when read as representamen, point to abstract concepts such as rebellion and emotional trauma, which audiences interpret through cultural and gendered expectations.

6. Future Suggestions

Based on the findings, animators and creative teams should approach character development not only through narrative but through visual-symbolic layering. Future productions may benefit from more deliberate integration of visual semiotics in character design, allowing audiences to engage with gender identity and inner conflict on a non-

verbal level. Technical innovation should remain closely tied to cultural expression, ensuring that modern techniques such as motion-capture and layered visual depth serve thematic and symbolic complexity rather than mere spectacle.

Content creators should also recognize the growing importance of audience diversity and generational shifts. Therefore, future adaptations should avoid reductive gender tropes and instead explore nuanced, multifaceted representations of female characters. Integrating feminist aesthetics and semiotic design principles can expand character identity beyond textual conventions.

In addition, future research should emphasize audience reception analysis, employing empirical methods such as surveys, interviews, or streaming platform data to evaluate cross-generational and cross-cultural interpretations of character identity. This empirical dimension would complement qualitative semiotic analysis and provide deeper insights into how audiences engage with reconstructed folklore in animation.

White Snake animation trilogy demonstrates how semiotic reconstruction modernizes female representation, redefines agency, and revitalizes Chinese folklore for contemporary and global audiences. This study highlights animation not only as a medium of artistic innovation but also as a cultural transmitter capable of challenging traditional gender roles and narrating feminine agency through visual-symbolic systems.

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